



## ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

(INCORPORATED)

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### TE MATUKU BAY, WAIHEKE ISLAND

Te Matuku Bay in the south east of Waiheke is a regionally important site for shorebirds.

The bay is a feeding ground and roost for wading birds, it contains shellbanks which provide nesting sites, and it is a flocking area for several species, particularly New Zealand Dotterel (an endemic bird which is close to the endangered level in numbers). Some ornithological records follow:

1. The shellbank as a nesting site:- In recent summers the nesting species have been:

Variable Oystercatcher 3 or 4 pairs, usually raising chicks.  
New Zealand Dotterel 2 or 3 pairs, failed to raise chicks in 1987.  
Pied Stilt, several pairs usually raise chicks.  
Caspian Tern 1 pair which provides comparison with colonial nesting; e.g. at Mangawhai.

2. Use of the bay by migrant wading birds:- The population contains several hundred birds, with Godwits predominant in summer and Dotterel & Oystercatcher in winter. Our survey figures for the past three years, 1985-87 reveal

	Summer	Winter
Variable Oystercatcher	6	42
N.Z. Dotterel	5-9	13-21
Banded Dotterel	-	18
Bar-tailed Godwit	150	-
Pied Stilt	10	30

The main wader roost is the shellbank and the pan on the landward side. On a recent visit (31.1.88) the birds present were:

Variable Oystercatcher 16 (10 adults and 6 juveniles)  
New Zealand Dotterel 24 (including a bird banded as a chick on the Wade Rd.  
Banded Dotterel 11  
Wrybill Plover 1  
Bar-tailed Godwit 220  
Pied Stilt 33 (one in smudgy plumage indicating likely Black Stilt lineage)

3. Seasonal flocking location for New Zealand Dotterel:- Flocking occurs in Te Matuku Bay during January-April and has been observed in this bay over a number of years. A flock of 24 birds was present on 31.1.88 (above). There are few flocking sites in the region (others are at Mangawhai and Whangateau Harbours) and of these Te Matuku Bay is least disturbed by human activities.

CONCLUSION Te Matuku Bay is important for ornithological studies and merits protection for its shorebird populations. Conservation measures are highly desirable. The vicinity of the shellbanks is a key location for which long-term protection is needed.

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