

New Zealand Falcon Survey Newsletter Fifteen 1 April 2018

Hi

Welcome to this our 15th Newsletter that marks the near completion of twelve years of the New Zealand Falcon Survey. Your contribution has been much appreciated and provided valuable data on the distribution and presence of the NZ falcon.

Another major milestone was reached late in February on reaching 16,000 records and have now progressed to a total of 16,111 as at 31 March 2018. More detailed examination of these records is shown below. In addition, a total of 25 records for NZ falcon encountered in the Auckland Islands, in the sub-Antarctic Ocean have been received/collected to date.

Of course, we are still very interested in receiving one and all reports you may get in the future as we keep an eye on the distribution of the falcon in NZ and learn more and more about their behaviour and activities.

Future of the Survey Data

Obviously, all this data is a valuable resource, not only for now but also for in the future. So, to ensure this data is available it is planned that those records that can be, that is not belonging to other organisations, will be posted to the New Zealand eBird online checklist program. You can learn more about this program here:

<http://osnz.org.nz/ebird-1>

Of course, preparing the NZ falcon records held will take some time but rest assured without appearing to take any credit personal names will not be used nor will street/road numbers. This will be done as a safeguard as eBird is a public portal and we would not want to be the cause of any unwanted attention.

Previous Newsletters

For those that might be interested, especially those new contributors copies of the more recent previous Newsletters are at the bottom of this page:

<http://www.nzfalcon.org.nz/nz-falcon/distribution-of-nz-falcon>

NZ Falcon Nest at Taupo

There was some great footage captured of a falcon nest by Huka Falls close to Taupo that has been posted on YouTube. The footage is a collection of shorter clips filmed over time that have been combined to show the growth of the one chick and can be viewed at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=NA_ffe6TVXQ

Publication of Survey Results

On 30 May 2016 the New Zealand Falcon Survey completed 10-years of the collection NZ falcon encounter records, we prefer to use the word encounter rather than sighting as this encompasses the hearing of the distinctive falcon calls.

A total of 7,083 were received over the 10-year period (1 June 2006 – 31 May 2016) and an article was prepared, accepted and published as a Short Note in *Notornis*, the Journal of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand. You can download a copy of this article at: <http://www.nzfalcon.org.nz/uploads/10-Year-Survey-Results-file.pdf>

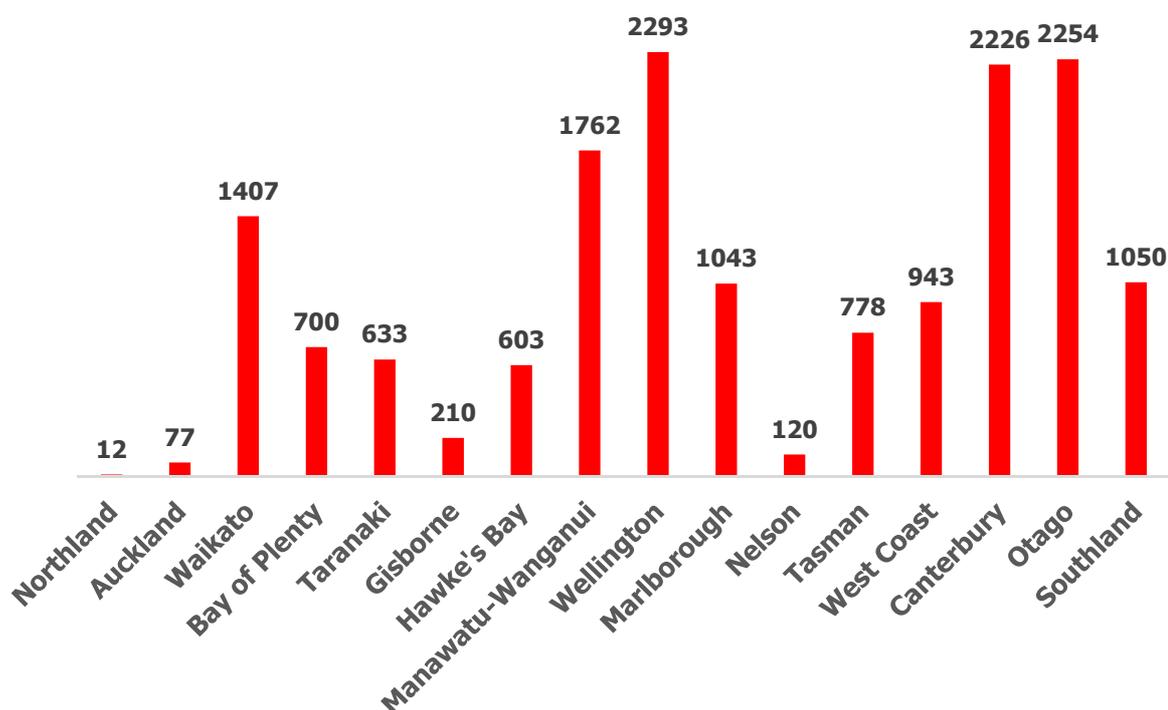
'Southern' NZ Falcon

An additional article was written, but not accepted for publication on the presence and distribution of the 'Southern' NZ falcon both historic and current from Fiordland, Stewart Island and the Auckland Islands. You can download a copy of this article at: <http://www.nzfalcon.org.nz/uploads/Southern-NZ-falcon.pdf>

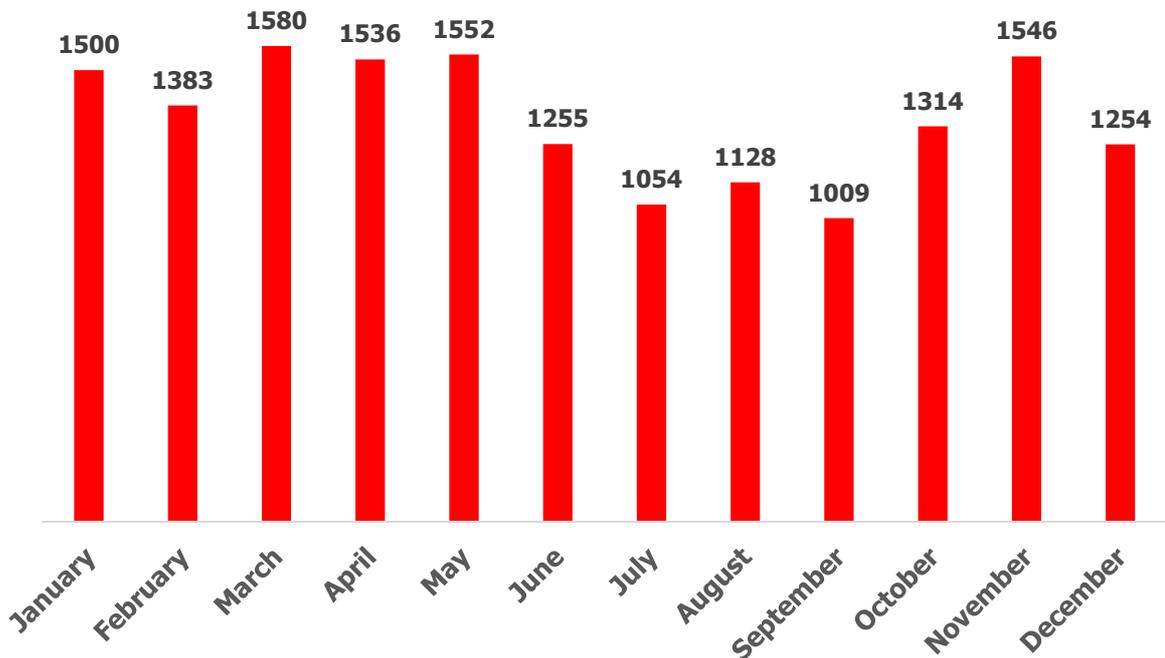
Some Facts and Figures

With all this great data now available there are some interesting and valuable facts and figures that can be ascertained:

- a. **Observation Records by Region** – Wellington has finally managed to 'sneak' into first place, with Otago now second and Canterbury moving back to third. It is notable that only three regions are over 2,000 records, but geographical and population size for each region need to be considered when comparing these figures.



b. Observations Records by Month – these monthly totals make for interesting viewing when taking into consideration the seasons involved.



c. Breeding Records – to be considered as a breeding record either a nest needs to have been observed or for the observer to have been dive-bombed. A suspected breeding record is when two or more falcons are seen together, whereas single falcon observations are counted as no for breeding.

No Breeding	11,080	81.6%
Suspected Breeding	2,048	15.1%
Confirmed Breeding	447	3.3%

Note – these figures do not include the 2,536 records from Birds New Zealand (previously OSNZ) Atlas schemes, as these two surveys didn't have 'suspected' as a recorded category.

Some Comments

It is often asked how important or valuable a reported NZ falcon encounter might be by itself. Well it may not seem too important but when combined with others over an extended timeframe is when the data becomes valuable. Also, as it often happens perhaps there had not been a previous report from that location.

Those that are unable to access the electronic copies of the documents referred to above can be sent printed copies on request, contact details are listed below.

We have had over a 1,200 photos of NZ falcon submitted with reports (and some great video footage), one of which appears below, but we are never too worried about the quality, just pleasing to see what people are seeing.

A Unique Encounter



On 31 December 2017, Ian and Nicola Dickie were walking the Elvy Waterfalls Track at Pelorus Bridge, Marlborough when they came across two NZ falcons on the ground beside the track. Though initially noisily screeching both birds went silent and 'froze' in situ, allowing for some photographs to be taken, one of which has kindly been shared here. Obviously, some sort of conflict, perhaps territorial as both are adult falcons and one has the other's head in a firm grasp. Both birds were gone when Ian and Nicola returned along the track some 60 minutes later.

Many Thanks

Again, many thanks to you for taking the time and energy to participate in the NZ Falcon Survey, though some might not be aware they have! The information collected is adding greatly to our knowledge of the NZ falcon and providing an invaluable resource and record of their presence and distribution around New Zealand.

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