

New Zealand Falcon Survey Newsletter Thirteen 1 June 2016

Hi

A little early this year with this our 13th (unlucky for some) Newsletter and this is due to the fact that the 31 May 2016 marked the completion of ten years of the New Zealand Falcon Survey. Your contribution has been very much appreciated and provided valuable data on the presence of the NZ falcon.

A total of 13,623 records have been received up to and including 31 May 2016 of which 6,507 are for within the 10 yrs of the survey, the remaining being historical records from before 1 June 2006.

It is proposed to produce an updated paper on the 2009 report of the distribution of the NZ falcon around our country. A copy of the 2009 report can be found at: www.nzfalcon.org.nz/uploads/attachments/02Bell&Lawrence2009.pdf

If by chance you have any outstanding observation encounters that haven't been sent in yet, you have time as it will be at least a couple of weeks before preparation of the paper and sorting of all the data is undertaken.

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.

Long-term Observation Records

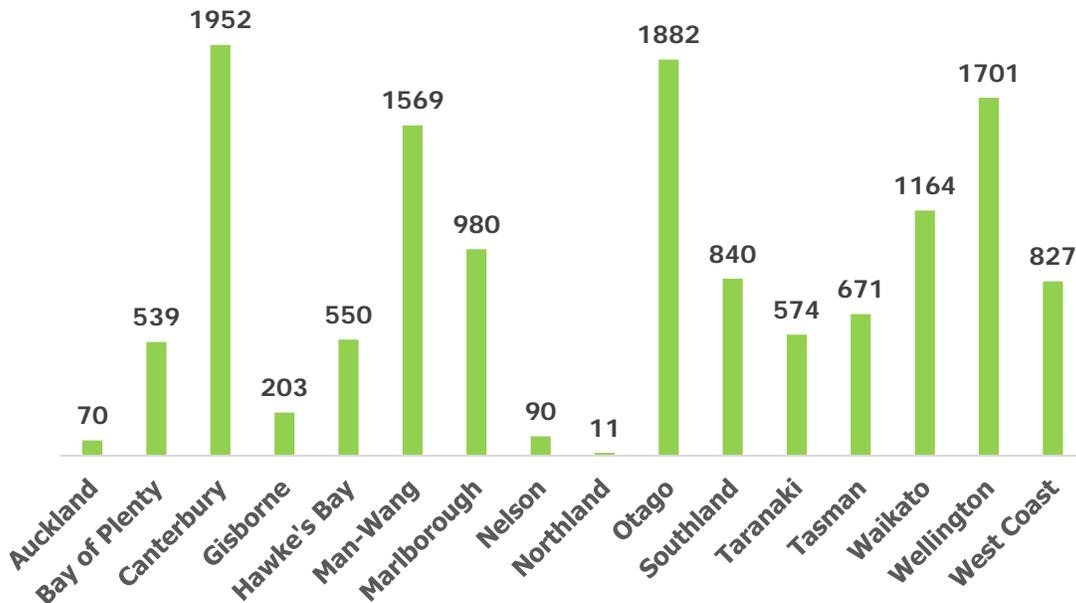
We have been very fortunate that during the course of the survey there has been three individuals that have kept and shared their relative long-term observation records:

- a. First off was Ron E from Tophouse, near St Arnaud who over a period of nine years (December 2006 to November 2015) recorded a total of 201 observations from his home. Ron also managed to take some great video footage and photos.
- b. Then there was Blue C from Waitaanga who had himself a total of 207 encounters for NZ falcon over eight years and one month (May 2008 to May 2016) mostly at his farm but also for around the Waitaanga area.
- c. Last but by no means least Flynn P from Hanmer Springs kept a record of his forty observations from August 2015 to January 2016, (including one confirmed breeding record) these were mainly for around Hanmer Springs but also a couple from surrounding areas.

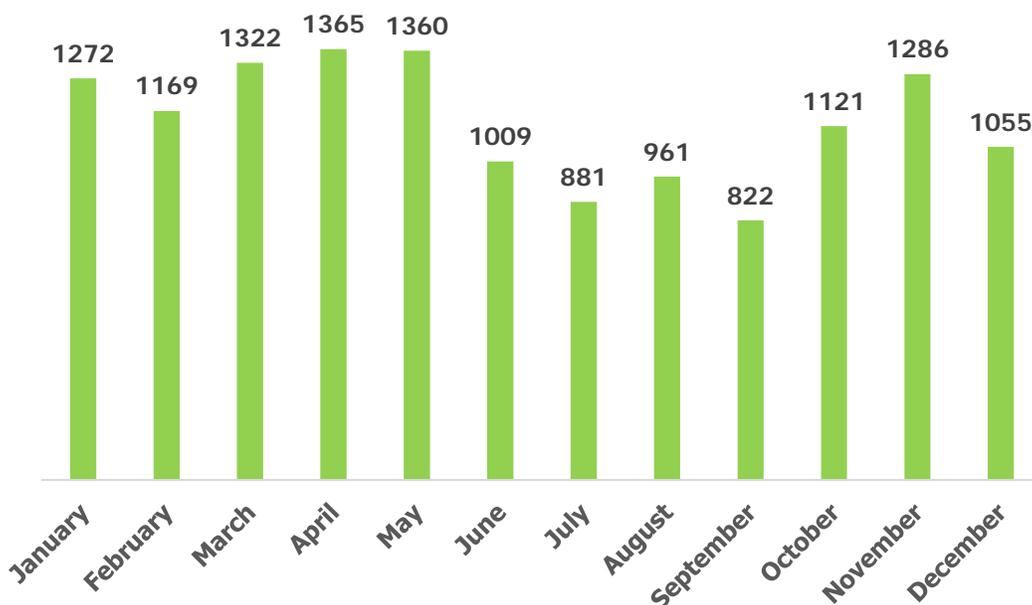
Some Facts and Figures

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** – Canterbury still maintains first place but Otago has closed the gap and Wellington brings up third.



- 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	8948	80.7%
Suspected Breeding	1726	15.6%
Confirmed Breeding	413	3.7%

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

How Tame a Juvenile NZ falcon?

Many have commented on how 'tame' juvenile NZ falcons appear to be, even going as far as thinking perhaps they were escaped pet birds. True the juvenile NZ falcon can be fearless of humans (innocence of youth) allowing very close approach and are also very inquisitive.

But on 10 May 2016 one certain juvenile falcon took this to a whole new level with the Coleman family at Rangiwahia, east of Mangaweka close to the Ruahine Range. Showing no fear of the humans nor dogs this juvenile falcon readily accepted food and willingly perched on heads and arms. Here is one of the photos provided to prove the case.

Subsequently the Coleman family and 'Hawkie' as he has been named have starred in both the print media, on the radio and on TV3. There is a great video clip here in this article:

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/life/80520155/friendly-falcon-moves-on-in>



2 ladies 2 decks 2 falcon and 2 days apart!

In the afternoon of 10 May 2016 Diana C-M was sitting on her deck in Taita, Lower Hutt when a female NZ falcon caught a feral pigeon right above her head (has the feathers to prove it) and then flew to on top of a lamp post to pluck and eat her prey. Diana managed to capture some great photos, one of which is shown below.



Whilst two days later on 12 May Kirsty W was sitting on her deck overlooking their gravel driveway at Hector on the West Coast, when a NZ falcon landed next to the car grabbed something then flew off. Kirsty believed it was a mouse trying to escape under the car.

Postscript – subsequent to Diana’s encounter two additional reports were received from Mike F at Taita Central School of NZ falcons catching and plucking prey items on the school’s sports field on 20 and 26 May.

New to the Website (www.nzfalcon.org.nz)

Two new video clips have been added to the website at the bottom of this page:
<http://www.nzfalcon.org.nz/nz-falcon/resources-on-nz-falcon/flim-footage.html>

- a. **Two NZ falcons, 2 White-faced Herons over 2 days** – great footage of a NZ falcon attacking White-faced Herons, and
- b. **Falcon Plucking Tree** – two clips of an adult NZ falcon plucking prey in the same tree but 16 months apart.

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.

Dave Bell

Coordinator
NZ Falcon Survey

Address: 9 Spencer Place
New Plymouth 4312
Phone: (06) 757 2570 or (027) 432 9570
Email: nativebirds@xtra.co.nz
Website: www.nzfalcon.org.nz