

# Age structures and counts of gulls and terns at post breeding roosts in Canterbury

A preliminary investigation 2007 to  
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# Black-backed gull

- First year- 10-15%
- 2/3 year- 14-25%
- Adult 75-80%
  
- Over 50 breeding colonies on braided rivers with up to 3000 birds in some colonies

# Impact of black backed gulls

- Known to be a active predator of eggs and chicks of black-billed gulls and waders
- Potentially a major predator of wrybill chicks
- Spatial displacement of smaller waders not just on rivers but at coastal sites eg Washdyke Lagoon
- Highly adaptive and long lived

# Black-billed gull



- First year 1-6%
  - 2/3 year 7-8%
  - Adult 85-95%
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- Consistently low number of juveniles sighted very much a concern
  - No clear evidence that juveniles segregate from adults but may be some dispersal away from roosts with adults and possibly juveniles are foraging some distance offshore (as this species will move out to 40 km to feed over the continental shelf)
  - Band returns indicate that this species is long lived and birds banded from local sites in 1997-98 are still being sighted- therefore this may offer some buffer with overall poor annual recruitment

# Black billed gulls in winter plumage at the Kahutara Rivermouth- Kaikoura



# White-fronted tern

- First year 4-6%
- Sub adults and adults – 94-96%
- Juveniles will segregate from adults in late summer and early autumn so counts data was only collected from roosts immediately post breeding in January. Not a braided river specialist but will use braided rivers for breeding with at times large colonies eg. lower Rangitata
- Overall a major concern as there is very little targeted monitoring of this species in NZ waters but preliminary data suggest that breeding success is very low and counts at roost of total numbers of birds have declined markedly over the last twenty years in Canterbury.



# Black-fronted tern

- First year 2-6%
- Sub adults and adults – 94-98%
- Samples from large wintering coastal flocks of up to 400 birds
- No evidence that adults and juveniles segregate feeding range over the winter
- Similar lack of juvenile production to black-billed gull





# Summary

-Black-backed gulls are consistently breeding successfully with steady recruitment that will allow population growth

-Overall the other species are not breeding at a rate to produced enough juveniles for population viability.

-While it is known that black-billed gulls and black-fronted terns are declining it is also a concern that the more coastal white-fronted tern is also in a similar situation