

2 Important Areas for New Zealand Seabirds

Sites on Land

Rivers, estuaries, coastal
lagoons & harbours



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IMPORTANT AREAS FOR NEW ZEALAND SEABIRDS



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This document has been prepared for Forest & Bird by Chris Gaskin, IBA Project Coordinator (NZ).

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Contributors

The following individuals have contributed to the profiles in this document in a variety of ways, including supply of data and information about seabirds, and reviewing draft material, site profiles, species lists and site maps.

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Cover design: Danielle McBride, Paradigm Associates, Auckland

Front cover: Rachel McLellan (Black-billed Gulls), Craig McKenzie (Black-fronted Tern)

Back cover: Frederic Pelsy (Ahuriri River)

Recommended citation: Forest & Bird (2016). *New Zealand Seabirds: Sites on Land, Rivers, estuaries, coastal lagoons & harbours*. The Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.

NZ066	Opihi River	Canterbury
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Location	New Zealand, Canterbury
Central coordinates	44.191996°S, 171.043233°E (Hanging Rock bridge)
IBA criteria	A1
Area	2,758 ha
Altitude	0 - 500m
Year of Assessment	2013

Populations of IBA trigger species:

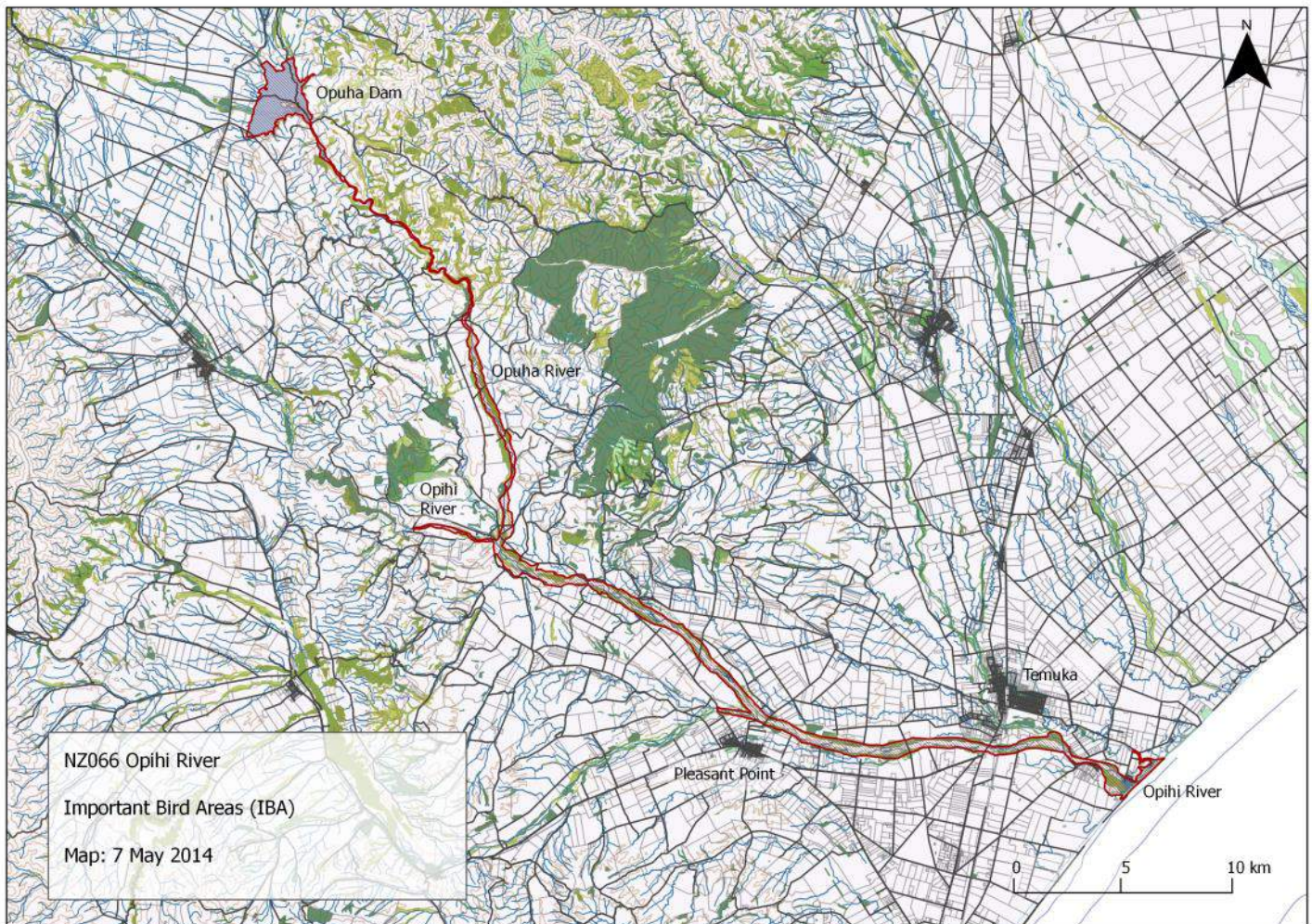
Species	Season	Period	Population estimate (pairs)	IBA criteria	IUCN cat.	NZ Threat Class.
Black-billed Gull	Breeding	1995-2014	1,741-3,824	A1, A4i	EN	Nationally Critical
Black-fronted Tern	Breeding	1983-2011	37-62	A1, A4i	EN	Nationally Vulnerable

Black Stilt (CR) have been observed at Opuha Dam (N. Allen pers. comm.)

Ornithological information: Besides the trigger species the following species are confirmed or likely to be breeding: Black Shag, Little Shag, White-faced Heron, Canada Goose, Paradise Shelduck, Australasian Shoveler, Mallard, Grey Duck, Grey Teal, NZ Scaup, Australasian Harrier, South Island Pied Oystercatcher, Pied Stilt, Banded Dotterel, Black-fronted Dotterel, Spur-winged Plover, Southern Black-backed Gull, Red-billed Gull, White-fronted Tern, NZ Kingfisher, Welcome Swallow, NZ Pipit, Grey Warbler, Silvereye. Rock Pigeon, Skylark, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Yellowhammer, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Redpoll, House Sparrow, Starling, Australian Magpie. Other species recorded: Australasian Crested Grebe, Australian Little Grebe, Royal Spoonbill, Spotted Shag, Variable Oystercatcher.

Protected area	Designation	Relationship with IBA
Milford Lagoon	Conservation Area	Protected area contained within site
Opihi River	Marginal Strip	Protected area contained within site
Opihi River	River Conservation Reserve	Protected area contained within site

IUCN Habitat	Habitat detail	Extent (% of site)
Marine Intertidal	Shingle Shoreline	Minor
Marine Coastal/Supratidal	Rivermouth (Estuary and Spit); Coastal Brackish Lagoon	Major
Wetlands (inland)	Permanent Rivers; Extensive River Gravel Beds (Braided River); Small Swamps	Major
Introduced Vegetation	Broom, gorse, pasture grasses & rank weeds, willow margins	Major
Shrubland	Kanuka, matagouri (<i>Discaria toumatou</i>), bracken	Major
Artificial - Aquatic	Water Storage Area (Opuha Dam)	Minor



Threats to the site (pressure) - IUCN Classifications

Threat Level	Notes	Timing	Scope	Severity
Invasive & other problematic species, genes & diseases	Invasive alien species - mustelids, cats, rats, hedgehogs	Happening now	Some of area/ population (10-49%)	Moderate to rapid deterioration
Human intrusions and disturbance	Recreational activities by lake and beach users - includes dogs.	Happening now	Some of area/ population (10-49%)	Slow but significant deterioration
Biological resource use	Hunting - intentional use (waterfowl - seasonal); Persecution	Happening now	Some of area/ population (10-49%)	Slow but significant deterioration
Natural system modifications	Water management/use - abstraction of ground water (agricultural use)	Happening now	Some of area/ population (10-49%)	Slow but significant deterioration
Pollution	Agricultural & forestry effluents - nutrient loads	Happening now	Some of area/ population (10-49%)	Slow but significant deterioration
Natural system modifications	Weed encroachment on nesting sites (rivers)	Happening now	Some of area/ population (10-49%)	Slow but significant deterioration
Climate change and severe weather	Floods	Likely in short term (within 4 years)	Some of area/ population (10-49%)	Moderate to rapid deterioration

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Photo: Frederic Pelsy
Front: Rachel McClellan, Craig McKenzie