

May 2021 Nature Report

Shaun Lee

NATURE WALK

Rowena West, Claire Hotchin and I did a high tide walk at 8am on the 29th of April. See the [checklist here](#). It was a 3.6m tide and shorebirds were crammed together on the end of the spit, the roost would have been compromised if the water wasn't so still. Of note were two flocks of Black swan on the water, totalling 23 birds, which is a record high on eBird. We did look out for invertebrates but it was a cold morning and the only observation was a mud crab prey item (photo below).



It was sad to see the white domestic duck dead and inaccessible in the pond.

BIRDS

Three historical birding reports have been entered into eBird by Bill Reynolds, David Bradshaw and Michael Brinch-Pedersen. Their records give us valuable insights into how the reserve has changed over time.

[Renolds December 1983 record](#) of New Zealand Dotterel at the reserve is the earliest ever recorded, I have even gone to Auckland Museum to search through old notebooks looking for records so this is very interesting. It's also interesting that Lesser / Red Knots are not recorded with the Godwits indicating that numbers of migrants had already begun to decline, this is inline with the oral history I have from Tahuna Torea Rangers.

[Bradshaws December 1986 record](#) does have Red knots but a count is not provided. It looks like large flocks have not been counted but we can not assume any abundance measurements.

[Brinch-Pedersens January 1988 record](#) has 37 Grey duck and no Mallards, 28 Grey warbler and no Silveryeye. I expect this birder was mistaken on these species, however the following month he recorded both Mallard and Grey ducks. Our native Grey ducks are disappearing fast around the Country due to hybridisation with introduced Mallards. He also recorded 61 Godwit and 198 Red knots. Lockley and Barfoot recorded numbers of 500 each in the late 1970's.

Brinch-Pederson has been in touch with me and confirmed the records:

“

*I can validate the submissions made to ebird from my original notes:
23/1-88: Grey warbler 28 and no Silveryeye.*

25/1-88: Silvereye 31 and no Grey Warbler.

29/1-88: none of the species (but late evening observation can explain that).

I admit it looks a little funny this total shift in appearances, but difficult to change today.

Have added a note under each species that det total count may include some of the other species.
”

It's interesting to note that both Bradshaw and Brinch-Pederson counted only two White-faced herons. We know that numbers have grown fast since they self-introduced in the 1940s. We now often count more than 30 herons in the lagoon.

RARE MOTH



In October 2020 I photographed this Moth (*Pseudocoremia insignita*) in the reserve. It has not been recorded in the Auckland district since the 1960s. Please look out for the known host plant Weeping Mapou and send any reports to shaun@stet.co.nz

MANGROVE MANAGERS SPOT BANDED RAIL

A banded rail was seen by the mangrove seedling working bee on 11th April 2021 at about 3.30pm from the Lockley lookout. It was walking very quickly eastward from mangrove cover near the weir to mangrove cover near Lockley Island. – Rowena West

Have residents and rangers anything interesting to report?