

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



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

Back cover: Frederic Pelsy (Ahuriri River)

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NZ087	Lower Clutha River Mata-Au	Otago
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Location	New Zealand, Otago
Central coordinates	45.818571°S, 169.527283°E (Beaumont Bridge), 46.345091°S, 169.810524°E (Clutha R. mouth - Koau Branch)
IBA criteria	A1
Area	3,155 ha
Altitude	0 - 50m
Year of Assessment	2013

Populations of IBA trigger species:

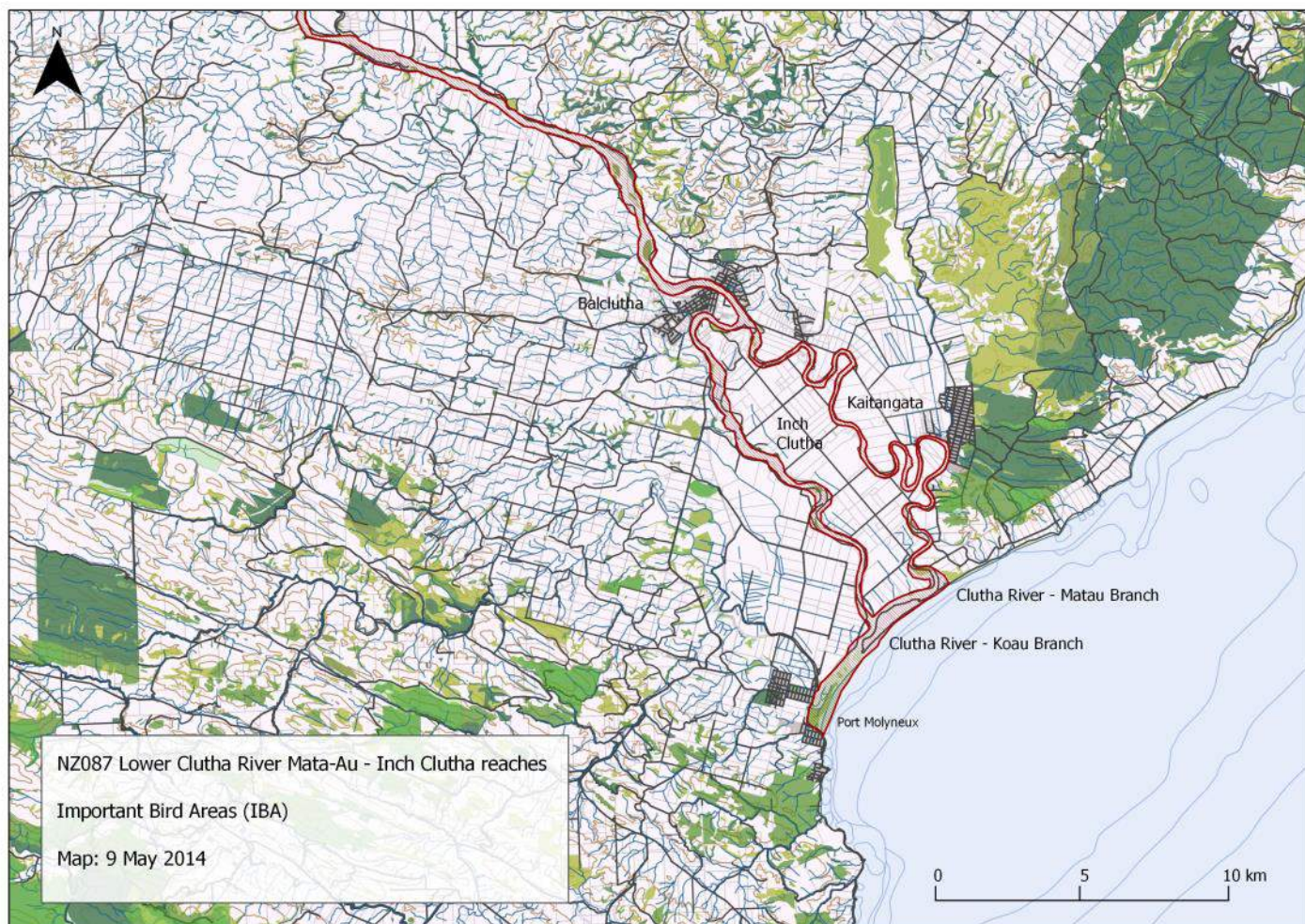
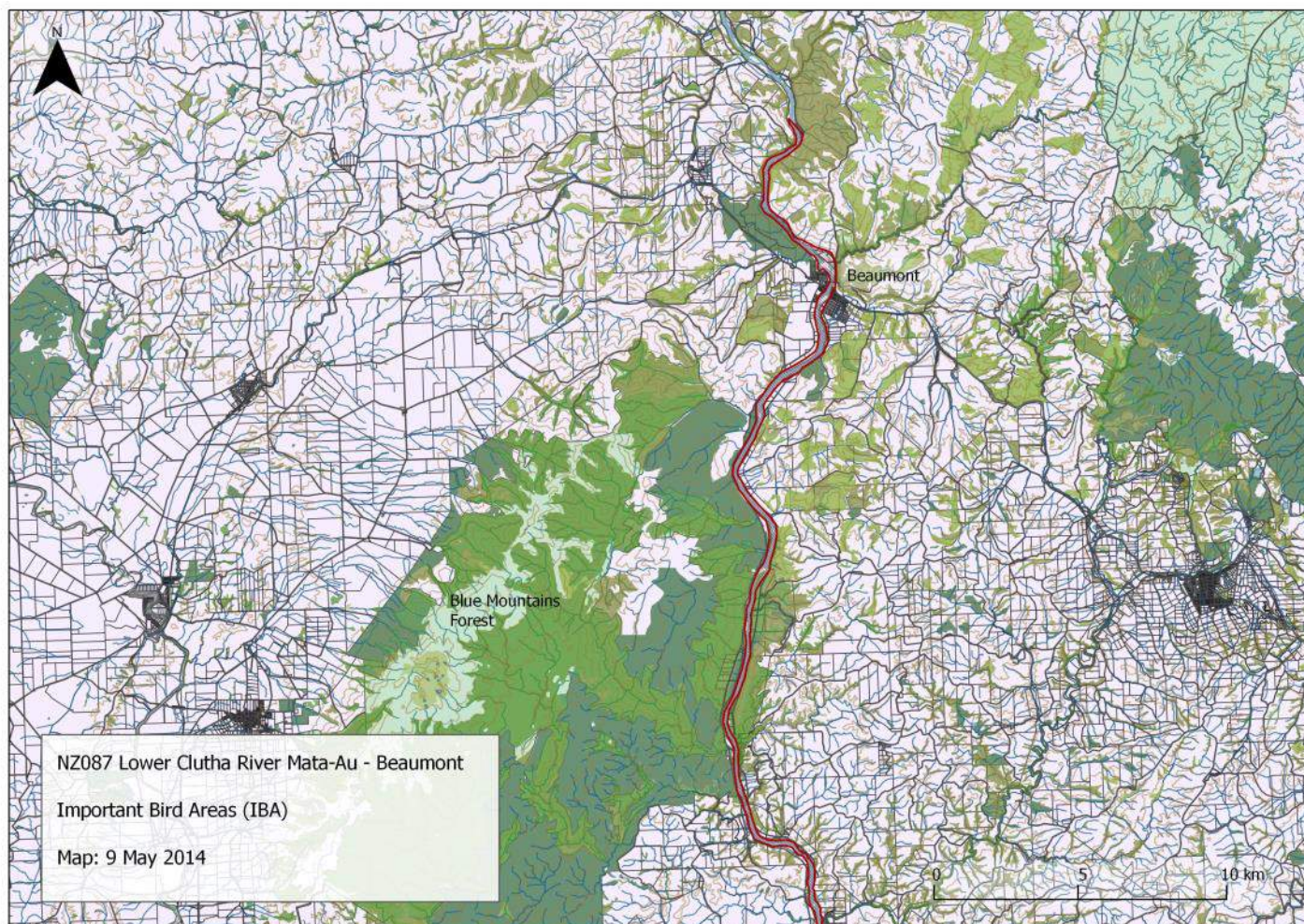
Species	Season	Period	Population estimate	IBA criteria	IUCN cat.	NZ Threat Class.
Black-billed Gull	Breeding	1985	494 (nests)	A1, A4i	EN	Nationally Critical
Black-fronted Tern ¹	Breeding	1985	12 (individuals)	A1	EN	Nationally Vulnerable

¹ Recent (2013) ad-hoc observations from the Beaumont bridge and comments from locals suggest a greater number breeding on islands both upstream and downstream from the bridge.

Ornithological information: Besides the trigger species the following species are confirmed or likely to be breeding: Black Shag, Little Shag, White-faced Heron, Paradise Shelduck, Grey Duck, Australasian Harrier, Variable Oystercatcher, Spur-winged Plover, Southern Black-backed Gull, Red-billed Gull, Black Swan, Mallard, Rock Pigeon, NZ Pipit, Grey Warbler, Silvereye, Bellbird, Tui, Skylark, Hedge-sparrow, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Yellowhammer, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Redpoll, House Sparrow, Starling, Australian Magpie. Other species recorded include: Royal Spoonbill, South Island Pied Oystercatcher, Eastern Bar-tailed Godwit, Pied Stilt, Banded Dotterel, Caspian Tern, White-fronted Tern.

Protected area	Designation	Relationship with IBA
Puerua	Wildlife Management Reserve	Protected area contained within site
Clutha River Mouth	Conservation Area	Protected area contained within site
Clutha River	Marginal Strip	Protected area contained within site
Gull Island	Conservation Area	Protected area contained within site
Clydevale/Clutha River	Conservation Area	Protected area contained within site

The IBA includes sections of riverbank and an island, part of the Blue Mountains Forest Conservation Area. It also borders some of the Tupeka West “Scenic Reserve.” Conservation Area.



IUCN Habitat	Habitat detail	Extent (% of site)
Marine Intertidal	Shingle Shoreline	Minor
Marine Coastal/Supratidal	Rivermouths (Estuary and Spit); Coastal Brackish Lagoons	Major
Wetlands (inland)	Permanent Rivers; Extensive River Gravel Beds; Small Swamps	Major
Introduced Vegetation	Broom, gorse, pasture grasses & rank weeds, willow margins	Major
Shrubland	Manuka, matagouri (<i>Discaria toumatou</i>), bracken	Major
Forest	Southern beech along margins of IBA	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 river users - includes dogs.	Happening now	Some of area/ population (10-49%)	Slow but significant deterioration
Natural system modifications	Water management/use - abstraction of surface & ground water (agricultural use)	Happening now	Some of area/ population (10-49%)	Slow but significant deterioration
Pollution	Agricultural & forestry effluents - nutrient loads (rivers)	Happening now	Some of area/ population (10-49%)	Slow but significant deterioration
Pollution	Domestic & urban waste water - run-off	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

References:

- Hughey, K.F.D., Smith, L.A., Preston, D.C. 1986. Birds of the lower Clutha River, their distribution and habitat use. Occasional Publication 11. Wellington, New Zealand Wildlife Service, Department of Internal Affairs.
- O'Donnell, C.F.J., Hoare, J.M. 2011. Meta-analysis of status and trends in breeding populations of black-fronted terns (*Chlidonias albobristatus*) 1962-2008. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 35: 32-43
- Robertson, C.J.R., Hyvönen, P., Fraser, M.J., Pickard, C.R. 2007. *Atlas of bird distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004*. Ornithological Society of New Zealand, Inc. Wellington.



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Photo: Frederic Pelsy
Front: Rachel McClellan, Craig McKenzie