

## **Orari River Annual Survey 8<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

The survey was carried out a week after it was originally planned. On the original planned date, 1<sup>st</sup> November, the river was running at 13 cumecs due to adverse weather conditions a week before. We aim to survey at 10 cumecs or below. The 8<sup>th</sup> was our stated postponement date; the river was down to 7.2 cumecs.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> November 6 people met at 8.30am at SH79/Orari Bridge. There are 7 sections of the river plus the lagoon section. 16 people would've been ideal. The previous week, going on email responses sent to 20 people, it was anticipated at least 14 would be surveying the river.

We worked in pairs and covered 4 sections (1 team did two sections). Burdon's Road to SH79/Orari Bridge, SH79/Orari Bridge to Bennett Rd, Bennett Rd to SH1/ Victoria Bridge and SH1/Victoria Bridge to Factory Road Bridge.

4 colonies of Black Billed Gull/Black Fronted Tern were identified. 1 near to Thatcher Road. This was the largest Gull/Tern colony found this year of 150+ nests. This was revisited 4 days later to put out signs and start monitoring but the colony had disbanded. It is believed that some Terns had relocated to join others at a smaller colony at SH1/Orari Bridge because this colony increased in size the following week.

A week later this colony was confirmed to contain around 30 nests and fledgling chicks on the east side of the bridge with a further 25 nests on the west side upstream of the bridge. 1 White Winged Black Tern was seen at the same amongst the BFT. This was confirmed by an observer on E-Bird. A third and fourth colony of BFT at Bennett Road and 25 BFT at Vance Road respectively. 3, maybe 4 Black Fronted Dotterel were seen between Victoria Bridge and Factory Road Bridge. Some of the regularly seen species included Duck spp, Large Black Shag, Hawk/Harrier, Black Backed Gull, Black Billed Gull, Black Fronted Tern, Paradise Shelduck, Spur Winged Plover, Kingfisher, SIPO, Heron, Pied Stilt.