

Chatham Island seabird research 2016-17



Seabird research

- Pitt Island shag
- Chatham Island shag
- Chatham Island Mollymawk
- Northern Buller's Mollymawk
- Northern Royal Albatross
- Northern Giant Petrel



Pitt Island shag

- Endemic to the Chatham's
- Reported significant population declines

1997- 729 breeding pairs

2003 – 547 breeding pairs

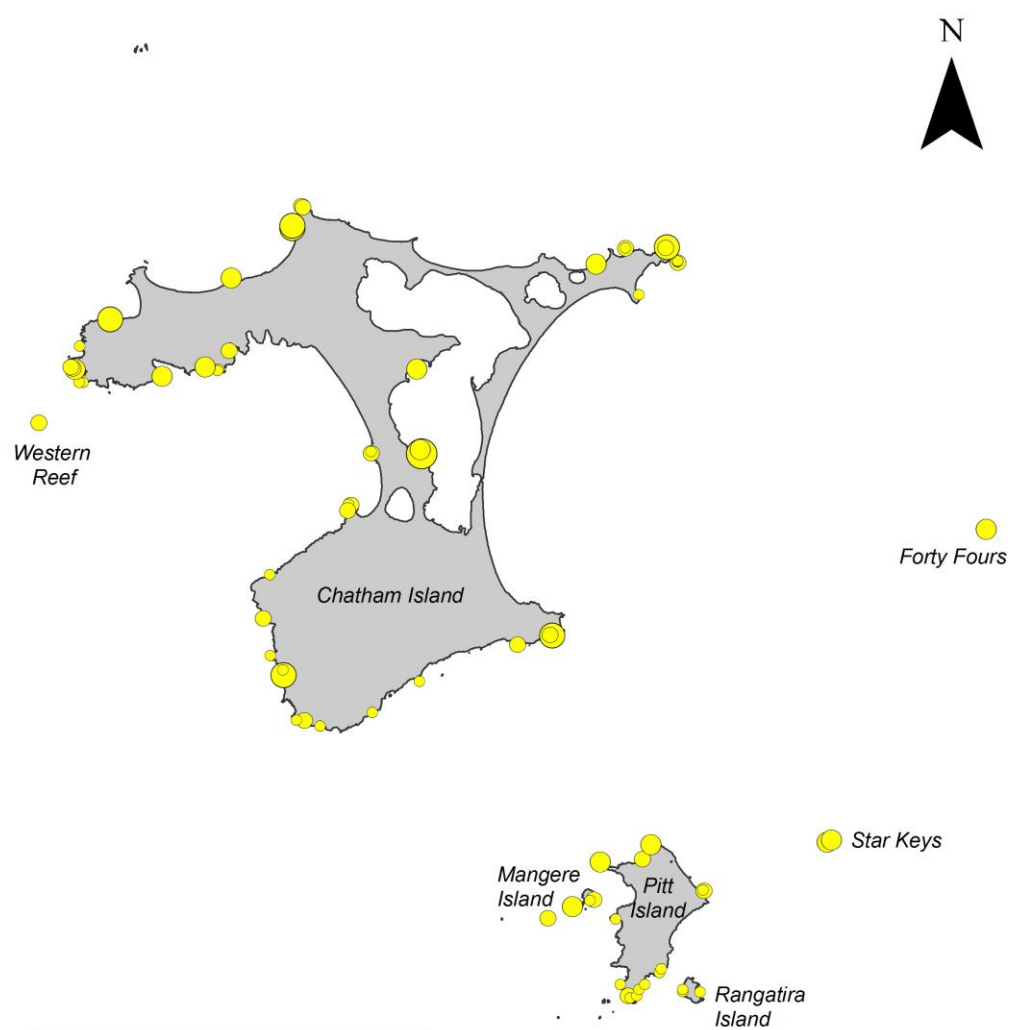
2011 – 434 breeding pairs



Pitt Island shag – population census

- All rocky coastline (coast and lagoon) surveyed
- 673 breeding pairs
- Scattered across 88 “colonies” on the islands





Pitt Island shag – population trends

- Results similar to 1997
- Population probably stable, or slowly declining
- High variability in breeding time impacts census results

Pitt Island shag – recommendations

- Still some uncertainty on population trend – future census warranted
- Census should include multiple counts in any one season
- Still know very little about breeding ecology and productivity – research required



Chatham Island shag

- Endemic to the Chatham's
- Reported significant population declines

1997 – 842 breeding pairs

2003 – 271 breeding pairs

2011 – 355 breeding pairs

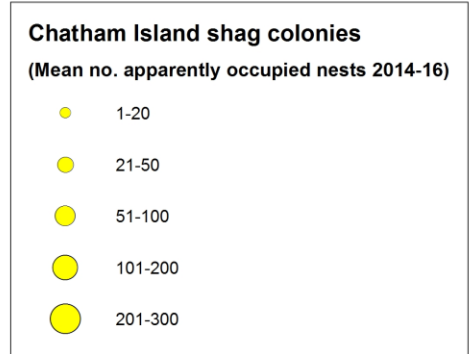
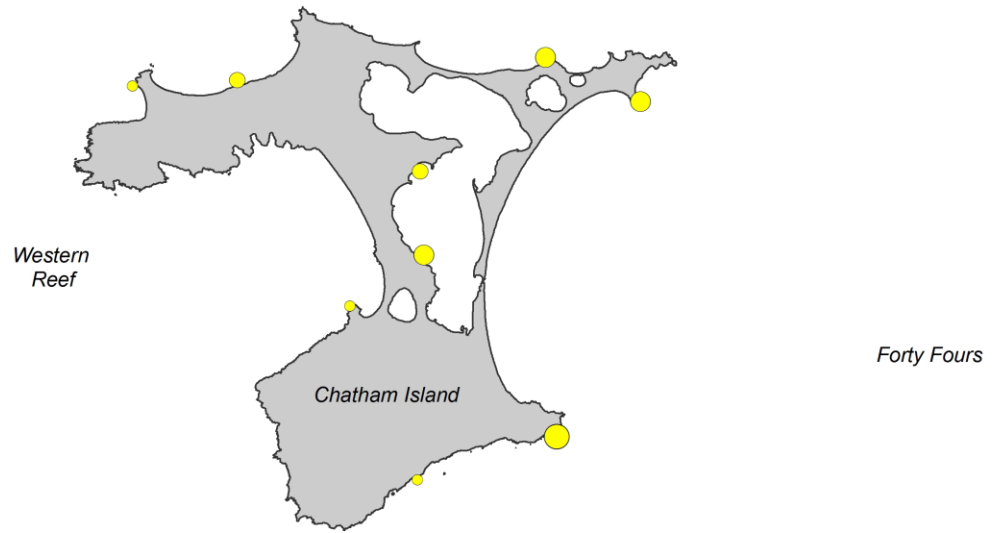


Chatham Island shag – population census

- Three years aerial survey (years 1-2 funded by the Taiko Trust)
- All known colonies surveyed, new colony discovered
- Mean - 856 breeding pairs
- 13 discrete breeding colonies



N

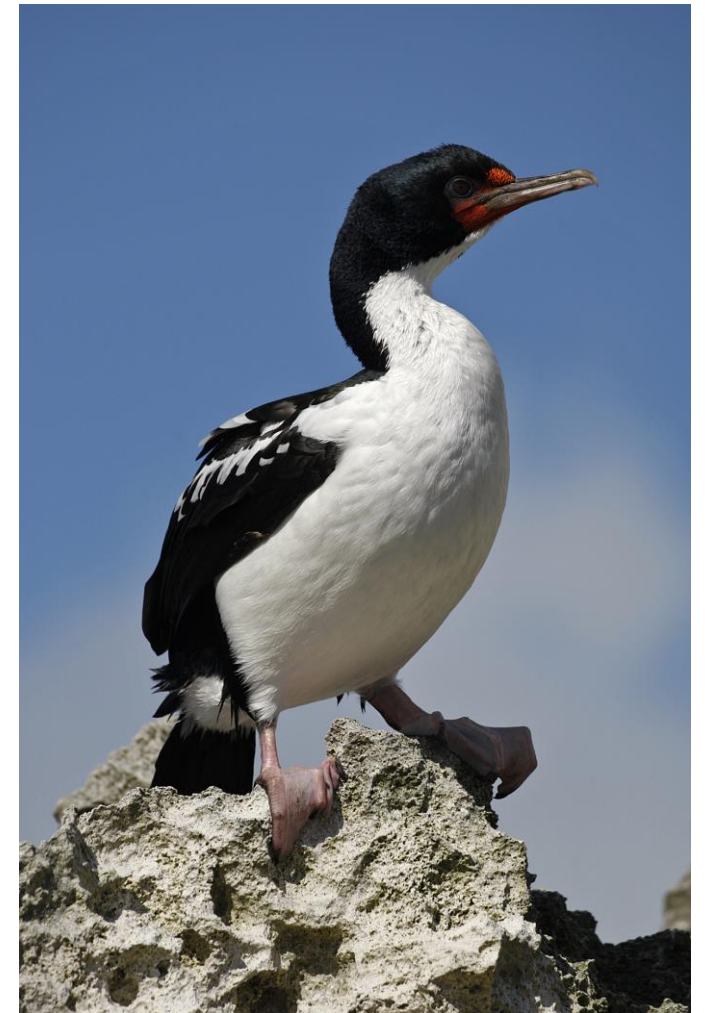


Chatham Island shag – population trend

- Results similar to 1997
- Population probably stable
- High variability in breeding time impacts census results

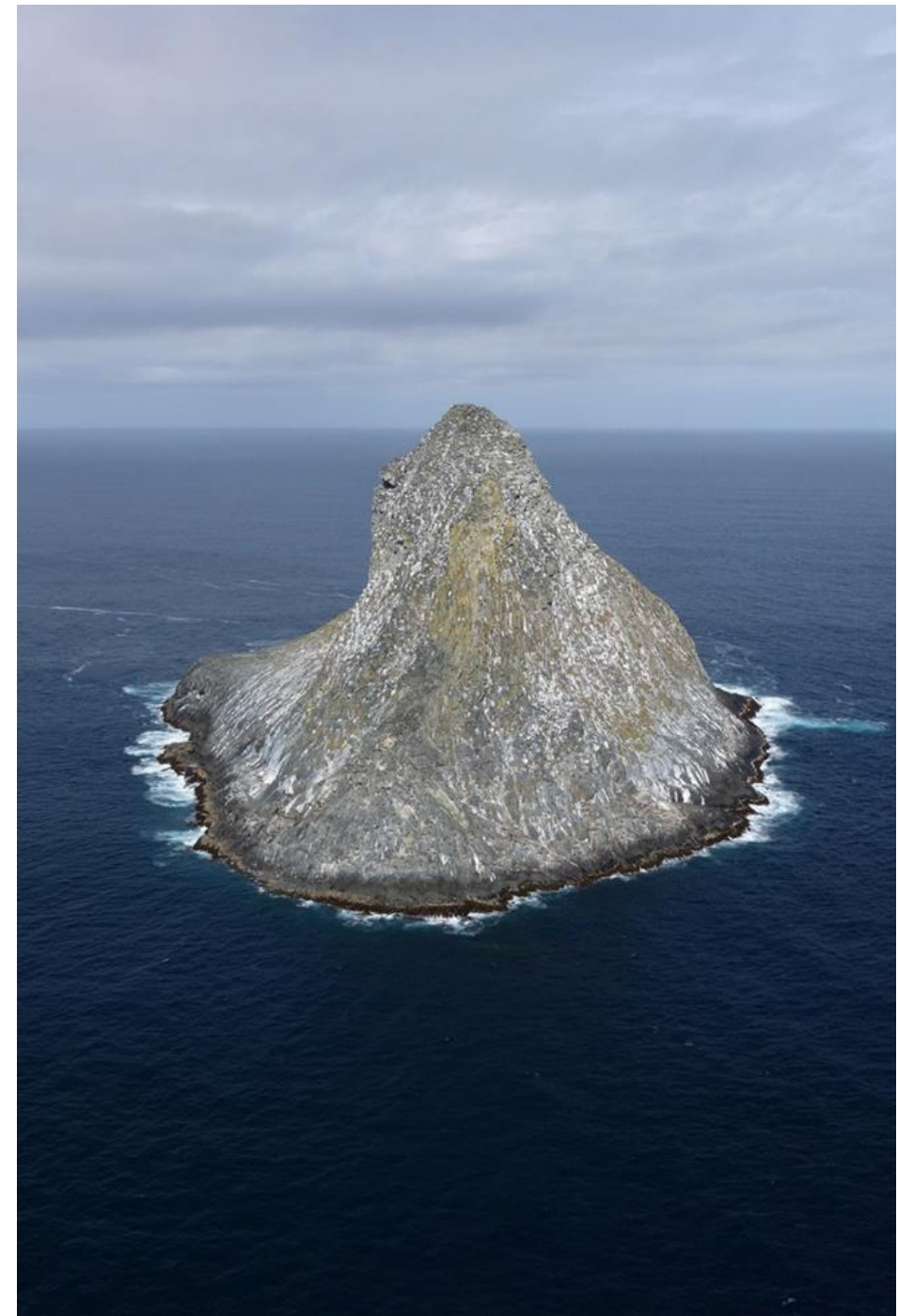
Chatham Island shag – recommendations

- Aerial census works very well
- Regular surveys recommended – every 5 years?
- Multiple flights each season (2-3 needed)
- Little known about breeding ecology and productivity – research needed



Chatham Island Mollymawk Te Tara Koi Koia

- Only breeding site for Chatham Island Mollymawk
- Since 1999 the population appears stable at @5,300 pairs



Te Tara Koi Koia Field trip

- Thanks to the Daymond Whanau for granting permission to Camp on the island
- Nov 9-14 2016
- Island in very good condition – significant vegetation



Results

- Full census - 5,296 breeding pairs
- Very Similar to 1999-2010 results
- Potential long term trend showing slow decline

Chatham Mollymawk - recommendations

- Regular census to confirm population trends – every 3-5 years?
- Potential to work together with the Taiko Trust who have interest in visiting the islands



Motuhara Seabird Research

- Northern Royal Albatross
- Northern Buller's Mollymawk
- Northern Giant Petrel



Motuhara field trip

- Thanks to the Island owners for granting permission to camp on the island
- Dec 5-9th 2016
- Island in excellent condition



Northern Buller's Mollymawk

- Full census of entire island - 17,682 nests
- Increase from 2007-2009 average - 14,699 nests
- Increase due to improved count methodology?



Potential demographic study

- Investigation of demographic study
- Island owner support of future work
- Biologically no likely issues



Northern Royal Albatross

- Full census 1,400 incubating birds
- 1,650 pairs including failed and empty nests
- Significant decline, 2006-2009 average 2,209 breeding pairs (from aerial photography)
- Issues interrupting count data due to biannual breeding



Northern Giant Petrel

- Full census 1,235 chicks
- Population estimate 1,935 breeding pairs
- No previous island wide census to determine trends



Motuhara - recommendations

- Concerning counts of Northern Royal Albatross
- Count chicks Late Aug/early Sep to determine productivity (either shore based or aerial survey)
- Field trip Dec 2017, re-census island
- Start a demographic study on Northern Royal?



Rangitatahi

- Due to weather no landing possible this season.
- Results from Motuhara indicate a land based survey is vital



Acknowledgements

- Chatham Landowners
- Daymond Whanau
- Motuhara Island owners;
especially George Goomes and
Joss Thomas
- Robert and Celine Lanauze, and
Skipper Justin Greenbank
- Air Chatham's
- Kris Ramm

