

FORMAK Bird Count - *Kaute Manu*

Field instructions

Preparation

Field team of one

- Is best done by one person. It is important that this person will be available to do subsequent counts.

Planning Checklist

Have you:

- Determined how many counts and where they will be located?
- Chosen an observer who has sufficient bird identification knowledge, and is likely to be available for a number of years to do counts.

See *Bird Count Planning Instruction* for further explanation.

Equipment Checklist

- FORMAK Field Instruction
- FORMAK Field Guide
- FORMAK Header Guide
- FORMAK Bird Count Plot Form
- Wristwatch
- Binoculars
- GPS (optional – but use it if you have one)
- NZMS 260 series map of the area.
- Aerial Photograph – if available
- Clipboard
- Pencils
- Rubber
- Compass
- Count location markers
- Permanent marker pen
- Hammer
- Nails (60mm galvanised flat head).

On Site

Locate count

1. Navigate to your count location.
2. Check conditions are OK (wind of 1 or less and precipitation of 2 or less – see Bird Count Form). If conditions are not OK, abandon the count.

5 Minute Count

3. Note start time on field form.
4. Stay still for 5 minutes recording all birds seen or heard.
 - Birds which are identified by sound only are noted as heard. All others (those that are heard and seen or just seen) are recorded as seen.
 - Never knowingly record the same bird twice.
 - One way to keep track of birds that have been counted is to use count diagrams in a field notebook (see appendix). At the end of the count these diagrams can be converted to counts on the field sheets.

Fill in Form

5. Fill in plot header (see FORMAK Header Guide), including location diagram and any notes.
6. Complete the record of environmental information during the 5 minute count.
7. Record any plant species fruiting or flowering at the time of the count on the table at the bottom of the Bird Count Form.

Mark count location

8. If this is the first time a count is being made, permanently mark the count location. This is done by nailing a location marker to the nearest sound tree, leaving 2 cm of the nail protruding to allow for tree growth. Mark the tag with bird count and number. If it is a re-count, check the location marker is intact and replace if necessary.

Next Count

9. Navigate to your next count location, and repeat the steps.

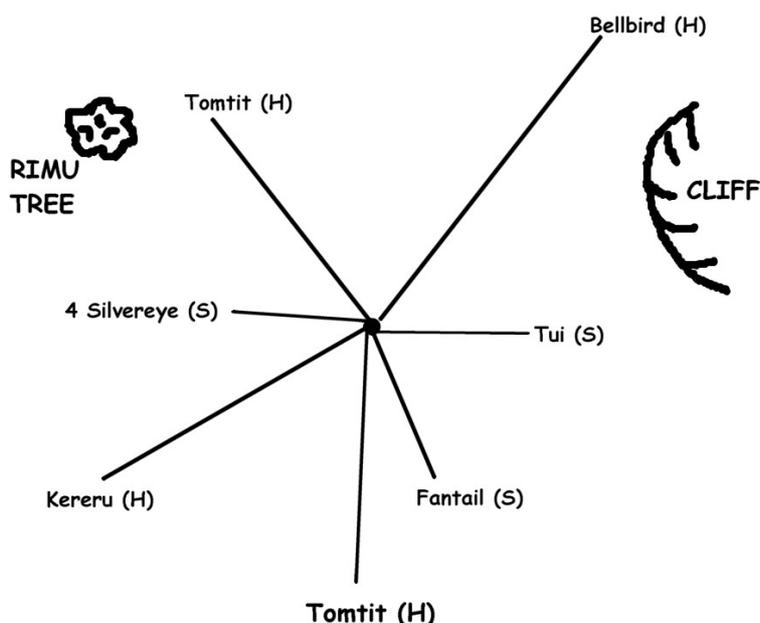
APPENDIX

Bird Count Diagrams

A good way to keep track of birds when you are doing a five minute bird count is to use bird count diagrams. These help you avoid counting birds twice.

1. On a blank sheet of note paper mark a point in the centre. This is the point where you are standing.
2. If there are any major landscape features such as a cliff, a large tree, a lake, within your listening area (i.e within 200m). Mark these in relation to the point where you are standing on the diagram.
3. When you start the count, draw a straight line from your location point to each bird you see or hear.
4. Write the species name, the number if more than one, and if it was seen (s) or heard (h).
5. Repeat this drawing of lines to the bird each time you hear or see a new bird.
6. When you finish the count, transfer the information to the count form.

Example of bird count diagram



In this count diagram the number of birds recorded on the count form would be:

Seen

- 4 Silvereys
- 1 Tui
- 1 Fantail

Heard

- 2 Tomtit
- 1 Bellbird
- 1 Kereru

Total of 10 birds