

Forest bird monitoring 2019



**Stewart Island / Rakiura
Community & Environment Trust**
for people for environment

Why?

SIRCET coordinates the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project ('the Project') which involves controlling animal pests and weeds, monitoring of pests and native species and re-vegetation, over a 210ha area around Halfmoon Bay, Stewart Island/Rakiura, including Ackers Point. The main objective of the Project is to protect and enhance the native bird life around the township of Halfmoon Bay.

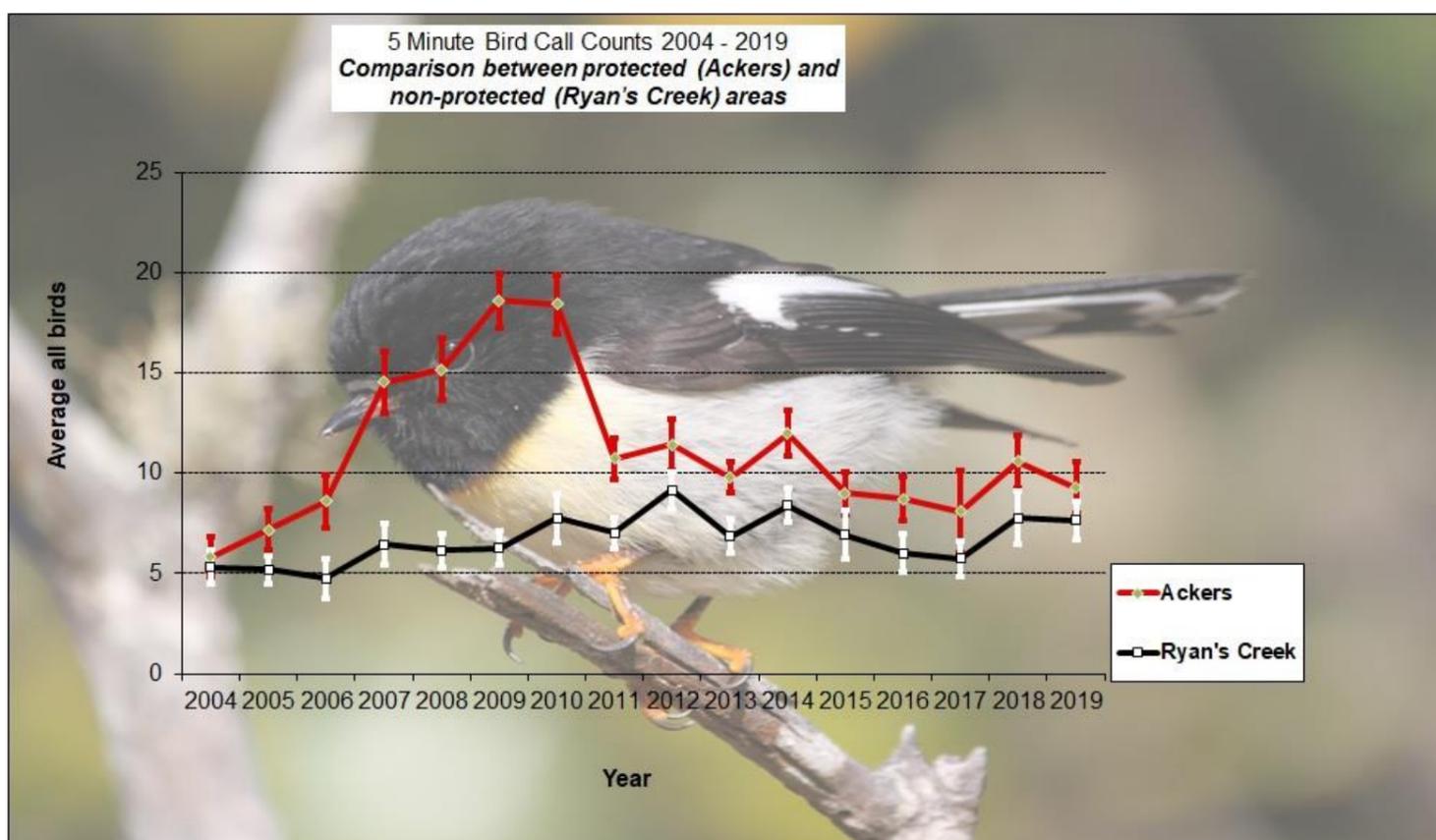
How we monitor the forest birds

We monitor the number of native forest birds (specifically tomtit, fantail, grey warbler, tui, bellbird, silvereye, kereru, kaka, kakariki and weka) seen and heard at twenty-five sites around Acker's Point within our Project area and at fifty sites around Ryan's Creek. The method used is called a five minute bird call count. Five minute bird counts, began in 2004, were the first monitoring of the Project's success. With limited resources, it was felt more appropriate to focus our efforts on measuring for this target, as an increase in bird life, if that was what would be shown, was something everyone could relate to and value. We also monitoring the pest control work we do (e.g. number of pest caught, rat tracking and possum trap catch) and monitor night birds every second year (Stewart Island tokoeka (kiwi), morepork and Stewart Island weka).

There are other methods to use to monitor birds; we use this one because it is easy to do, doesn't use many resources and helps us understand population changes over time. The technique is recognised as being reasonably subjective, depending on the recorder's ability to hear and interpret bird calls. By using the same person to measure progress each time, and by focusing on the changes over time, rather than comparisons of actual bird numbers between areas, this subjectivity can be reduced.

The objective is not to compare numbers of birds at Ackers Point with numbers at Ryan's Creek, but rather to compare how the bird numbers change over the years. Five minute bird counts have been carried out in April each year since 2004. Matt Jones, ornithologist of Matt Jones Wildlife Photography, has undertaken counts since 2011.

Brown creeper. Photo: NZ Birds online



2019

- The initial indication is that the overall number of birds within the Project area has decreased since last year, while outside the Project area is similar to last year.
- There is still an increase in the overall number of birds since records started.
- Bellbird and Tui are now being recorded as separate species, this has had no impact on reporting.
- Bellbird and Silvereye remain the birds most encountered, followed by Tui and Fantail.

Thank you to Environment Southland for funding the 2019 forest bird monitoring for SIRCET

