

## Brief summary of avifauna evidence for hearing – John Cockrem

1. Birds in the Project Bird Area
  - I have defined the Project Bird Area as the coastline along which the Shared Path will be constructed, together with the waters immediately offshore
  - kororā / little penguins breed in the Project Bird Area
  - variable oystercatchers spend their time on the foreshore and there is one oystercatcher nest in the Project Bird Area
  - some other species of birds spend time in the area
2. The Project is an opportunity for shorebirds.
  - the Project will provide increased opportunities for shoreline birds at Eastbourne, in particular kororā / little penguins and oystercatchers
3. Sorrento Bay Oystercatcher Protection Area
  - oystercatchers nest each year on a rock just offshore from the point between Lowry Bay and Sorrento Bay
  - the new oystercatcher protection area, information signs along the edge of the path, and exclusion of dogs from the Sorrento Bay foreshore all year round will bring net benefits to the Sorrento Bay oystercatchers
4. Whiorau Reserve Protection Area for kororā / little penguins
  - a new fenced, safe nesting area with permanent nesting opportunities not previously available for kororā / little penguins will be created in the Whiorau reserve
5. Bishops Park Protection Area for shorebirds and kororā / little penguins
  - a large new area of safe habitat will be created for shorebirds and for kororā / little penguins
  - it is envisaged that there will be open areas for shore bird roosting and breeding, and permanent nesting opportunities in mounds of rocks together with shrubs for cover for kororā / little penguins
  - the 230 metre length of beach adjacent to the new protection area will become a new area where oystercatchers (including chicks) can forage safely and kororā / little penguins can cross the beach without the threat of disturbance or predation by dogs
  - a safe nesting area with permanent nesting opportunities not previously available for kororā / little penguins will be created in the Bishops Park Protection Area
6. H W Shortt Protection Area for shorebirds and kororā / little penguins
  - this will also be a new area of safe habitat for shorebirds and for kororā / little penguins
  - a new fenced area of beach will provide open safe breeding and roosting areas for shore birds
  - it is envisaged that new safe permanent nesting opportunities in mounds of rocks will be provided for kororā / little penguins
7. Response to Dr Uys' section 42A addendum

- Population numbers for variable oystercatchers in the Wellington Region have been increasing since the 1970s, with an estimated (2019) breeding population of at least 728 variable oystercatchers
- Oystercatchers are dispersed widely in the Wellington Region, with high local concentrations on Mana, Matiu/Somes, and Mākaro/Ward Islands
- Only a small part of the Project Area (Eastbourne to the southern end of Day's Bay) has been included in the 2019 WMIL list of coastal habitats of significance for indigenous birds
- Adopting the EIANZ guidelines, I have assessed the overall level of effects of the Project on oystercatchers as *Low*, in light of their *Moderate* ecological value and my assessment of the magnitude of effects of the Project on oystercatchers as *Low*
- It is unlikely that any oystercatchers will be displaced by the Shared Path given only one pair of nesting oystercatchers has been identified in the Project Bird Area, and the proposed Shared Path will not run through the location of that nest
- The presence of people does not in itself mean that variable oystercatchers will be affected by the presence of people. Nonetheless, we have included a range of measures aimed at limiting possible effects of the presence of people and dogs, and at reducing adverse effects of dogs on oystercatchers along the Eastbourne coast line
- Whilst it is impossible to quantify with absolute certainty the expected effect of the Shared Path on the number of variable oystercatcher breeding territories, it is likely that the number of variable oystercatcher breeding territories will not be reduced from the current number of one, and that the number of breeding territories will be increased if oystercatchers begin to nest in one or more of the new bird protection areas
- Climate change will affect variable oystercatchers in future. Key issues for oystercatchers will be a significant reduction in habitat as sea level rise and increasing effects from storm events. By providing protection areas higher up on beaches (and above storm tide effects) the Project provides protected habitat for oystercatchers that would not otherwise exist.
- While only one pair of oystercatchers has been identified in the Project Bird Area, I have nevertheless made a number of recommendations (accepted by the Applicant) including four fenced protection areas, a Habitat Enhancement Plan, dog exclusion from two beaches, a managed works zone in Sorrento Bay, an oystercatcher study, signage, educational campaigns, construction restrictions and setbacks near kororā / little penguin and oystercatcher nest sites, surveys, at least 100 permanent nesting opportunities for kororā (little penguins) and \$60,000 in funding for pest management, among others.

## 8. Overall conclusion

- In my view, when all the potential effects, measures to address potential effects, and benefits to kororā / little penguins (and all shorebirds) are considered, then the overall adverse effects of the Project on kororā / little penguins, variable oystercatchers and other bird species are likely to be less than minor and that the Project may have net benefits for coastal birds at Eastbourne.