

SHORT NOTE

Assessment of relative conspicuousness: a correction to McKinlay (2001)

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McKinlay (2001) reported on a study to determine "the amount of time observers should spend in each [100 ha] square to have a 50% chance of detecting any given bird species". His paper contains some mathematical errors and, although these errors do not influence the overall recommendation of the paper, two sentences under "Results" may now be a source of confusion to readers.

There is a consistent error in the four equations and some significant misleading errors in Table 3. There does not appear to be any corrigendum or subsequent note in *Notornis* pointing out these errors. The errors are:

1. A set of brackets is missing from all four equations (labeled 1,2,3,4) on p.48: there should be an opening bracket immediately before "EXP" and a closing bracket after "+1". For example, equation 1 should read
$$p = 1 / (\text{EXP}[-b_0 + b_1x_1 + \dots + b_px_p] + 1)$$
When the four equations are corrected in this manner, the figures shown in the paper can be replicated.
2. Some of the values in the "Open" and "Urban" columns of Table 3 seemed to be transposed. A check with the graphical equivalents for the three species given in Fig. 3 confirmed this, and a calculation using the corrected equations confirmed the figures for the remaining eleven species.
3. Some of the values in Table 3 differ from the calculated values.
4. If the coefficient calculation is not significant for a particular species and habitat (McKinlay's Table 2), then results should not be presented in Table 3. This has been followed where no habitat results can be reported but not where the coefficient for a species is significant for some habitats (and so can be used reliably) but not significant for other habitats (and so should not be used). A corrected version of McKinlay's Table 3 is presented here.

Table 1 A correction of McKinlay's (2001) Table 3. The original legend read "Time required in minutes to have a 50% chance of detecting a bird species in 3 habitats". The numbers in parentheses are those in the original table that were incorrect. "n.s." means that there was no significant relationship between the presence of that species and the time spent surveying that habitat.

Species	Habitat		
	Open	Urban	Bush
Bellbird	60 (149)	149 (<1)	<1
Blackbird	<1	<1	<1
Chaffinch	n.s. (59)	59 (72)	58
Dunnoek	n.s. (62)	n.s. (72)	77
Fantail	n.s. (162)	20 (88)	<1 (71)
Goldfinch	n.s. (93)	n.s. (111)	55
Greenfinch	132 (226)	n.s. (132)	260 (560)
Grey warbler	98 (74)	n.s. (98)	28
House sparrow	<1 (43)	n.s. (<1)	94
New Zealand pigeon	n.s. (310)	310 (136)	96
Silvereye	<1 (46)	46 (<1)	<1
Song thrush	n.s. (57)	57 (26)	44
Starling	<1 (9)	9 (<1)	76
Tui	321 (631)	631 (321)	202

The comments under "Results" need to be changed as a consequence. The third and fourth sentences of the fourth paragraph should read as follows

For the greenfinch, there was little difference in conspicuousness between "urban" and "bush" habitats and in both these habitats greenfinches were less conspicuous than in "open habitat" (Fig. 3A). In contrast, New Zealand pigeon were equally conspicuous in "bush" and "open" habitats, but far less conspicuous in "urban" habitats (Fig. 3B). The text correctly interpreted the numbers in the table but it was confusing to read that greenfinches were more conspicuous in "urban" habitats, and that New Zealand pigeons were less conspicuous in "bush" habitats, especially when Figs 3A & B are not consistent with what was written.

Other minor errors in the paper include paragraph 3 of "Methods" stating that 21 species were analysed, when 19 only were listed in paragraph 3 and Table 2; and the sentence after equation (2) should read "The coefficient values are taken from Table 2" (not Table 1).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Colin Miskelly for his comments and Bruce McKinlay for his reading of the draft and permission to proceed with publishing under my name.

LITERATURE CITED

McKinlay, B. 2001. Counting terrestrial bird species in mixed habitats: an assessment of relative conspicuousness. *Notornis* 48: 47-53

Keywords bird counts: data analysis; census methods