

THE SUBANTARCTIC ISLANDS OF NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIA

31 OCTOBER – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

TOUR REPORT

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This cruise, which visits the Snares, the Auckland Islands, Macquarie Island, Campbell Island, the Antipodes Islands, the Bounty Islands and the Chatham Islands, provides what must surely be one of the most outstanding seabird experiences possible anywhere on our planet. Anyone interested in seabirds and penguins must do this tour once in their lifetime! During our 18 day voyage we visited a succession of tiny specks of land in the vast Southern Ocean that provided an extraordinary array of penguins, albatrosses, petrels, storm-petrels and shags, as well as some of the world's rarest landbirds. Throughout our voyage, there was a wonderful feeling of wilderness, so rare these days on our overcrowded planet. Most of the islands that we visited were uninhabited and we hardly saw another ship in all the time we were at sea.

On the 2011 tour we recorded 125 bird species, of which 42 were tubenoses including no less than 14 forms of albatrosses, 24 species of shearwaters, petrels and prions, and four species of storm-petrels! On land, we were treated to magical encounters with a variety of breeding penguins (in total a whopping nine species) and albatrosses, plus a selection of the rarest land birds in the World. Trip highlights included close encounters with the Royal, King and Gentoo Penguins on Macquarie Island, face-to-face contact with Southern Royal Albatrosses on Campbell Island, huge numbers of Salvin's and Chatham Albatrosses squabbling for food off the stern of the ship, Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses performing their beautiful display flight over a cliff face on Campbell, the triple sighting of the rare Magenta Petrel after we had given up all the hope of seeing this enigmatic species, large numbers of delightful Snares Crested and Erect-crested Penguins at their breeding colonies, close encounters with flightless Auckland Island and Campbell Island Teals, several New Zealand Snipe on Enderby Island, and excellent sightings of rare Chatham Island Oystercatchers and Shore Plovers in the Chatham Islands. The six species of shags with very restricted ranges in the Subantarctic islands, although perhaps not quite as exciting, are also worth a mention here! Mammalian highlights included magnificent New Zealand Sea-Lions in the Auckland Islands and on Campbell Island, a large rookery of New Zealand Fur Seals in the Bounty Islands, large numbers of Southern Elephant

Seals including some massive beach masters on Macquarie and a nice selection of cetaceans including a very close pod of curious Common Bottle-nosed Dolphins and a great show, including aerial jumps, by two Southern Bottlenose Whales.

The tour started in earnest in Invercargill, at the extreme south end of New Zealand's South Island. Most of the participants had arrived in Invercargill some days earlier, and were doing their own program in southern New Zealand, but the two of us, who followed the official tour itinerary, were heading for some leisurely birding in the Invercargill area on our first morning. At Daffodil Bay in the Sandy Point area, on the outskirts of the town, we found a good assortment of waterbirds including Great Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Royal Spoonbill, Black Swan, Paradise Shelduck, Grey Teal, Australasian Shoveler, Swamp Harrier, Pied Stilt, South Island Pied Oystercatcher, Turnstone, several hundred Bar-tailed Godwits, Australian Swamp-hen, Masked Lapwing, Southern Black-backed (Kelp) and Black-billed Gulls and Caspian Tern. In a nearby patch of forest we came across Grey Warblers, New Zealand Pigeons, Yellow-crowned Parakeets, New Zealand Creepers, Tomtits, Silvereyes, Bellbirds and the amazing Tuis. In addition we had many encounters with the introduced European species including Yellowhammer, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Lesser Redpoll and Starling, and the also introduced Australian Magpies. In the afternoon, after a good lunch break, our dynamic duo headed for the Queen's Park for some relaxed afternoon birding, where the most noteworthy species was Grey Fantail. Back at our hotel that evening, we met up with the rest of the Birdquest group and the other passengers on our Subantarctic cruise.

Before leaving Invercargill the next day, we were taken to Southland Museum in the morning where there was excellent exhibit on the Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand. However, for some of us the adjacent Queen's Park and its New Zealand Fantails were equally tempting! After lunch in our hotel we then drove the 25 or so km to Bluff Harbour and with mounting excitement boarded the Professor Khromov (renamed as Spirit of Enderby by our New Zealand tour operator). We set sail at four pm, and due to an unusual strong eastern wind, took a course to the south west side of the Stewart Islands. Despite the rain and rather grim weather, upper decks of the ship were heavily manned when we left the harbour and started our 18 day cruise, and we soon enjoyed our first White-capped, Salvin's and Buller's Mollymawks, Sooty Shearwaters, a single White-chinned Petrel, many Cape Pigeons, Northern Giant Petrels, Fairy Prions, White-faced Storm-petrels and Common Diving Petrels, Stewart Island and Spotted Shags, two Blue Penguins, and a single Fiordland Crested Penguin (a write in) along with a single Hutton's Shearwater.

We had arrived off the main island in the Snares group by early the next morning and immediately after breakfast boarded the ship's zodiacs for a close-up look at these islands, renown for their huge breeding colonies of seabirds, notably Sooty Shearwaters. Rather rough seas and the unfavourable east wind didn't make the operation too easy, but thanks to our experienced expedition team we were able to explore the sheltered bays and coves of the main island. The Snares are a strict nature reserve, where ordinary tourists are not allowed to land. The star attractions here were the endemic Snares Crested Penguins which we were able to approach closely as they came ashore on the rocks. Other common birds here included Cape Pigeons of the relatively dark Subantarctic race, Subantarctic Skuas, Red-billed Gulls and Antarctic Terns. A group of one adult and five juvenile Little Pied Cormorants were a big surprise and possibly the first ever sighting on these islands. We also managed to spot several Tomtits of the all-black race unique to the Snares, and some Fernbirds, also of an endemic race. We left the Snares before noon and continued south towards the Auckland Islands enjoying good sea-watching on the way, with many Southern Royal, and our first Gibson's and Wandering Albatrosses, good numbers of Campbell, Salvin's, White-capped, and Buller's Mollymawks, hundreds of Sooty Shearwaters, some Mottled, White-chinned, Common Diving and

Northern Giant Petrels, many Fairy, two Antarctic and 50 Broad-billed Prions and our first Grey-backed and Black-bellied Storm-petrels. A Humpback Whale was also seen.

Next day was spent in the shelter of Port Ross – the channel between Enderby Island and the main island in the Auckland group. After an early breakfast we were taken to the shore of Enderby Island where we spent an excellent day taking a long walk around the eastern end of the island. The weather for the day was typical for these islands and could best be described as extremely variable, with nice warm sunshine, gale force winds, heavy rain showers and an hour long snow storm! After landing on the sandy shore inhabited by many rather aggressive male sea-lions, we made our way up through the Rata forest, with its ancient, moss-covered gnarled trees, onto the open grasslands in the interior of the island, where there was a loose colony of Southern Royal Albatrosses, and an Yellow-eyed Penguin sitting on its nest deep inside a bush right next to the trail. Here, by the boardwalk, we found several New Zealand Snipes creeping about in the grass, along with several extraordinarily tame Double-banded Plovers and New Zealand Pipits. On the north coast of the island, we were able to admire beautiful Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses on their nests at a cliff ledge, and photograph an adult Yellow-eyed Penguin that walked past us only ten metres away. At Derry Castle Reef, a pair of flightless Auckland Island Teal were sleeping by a small pond, but refused to lift up their heads thus disappointing the photographers. Luckily several more Auckland Island Teals were found later, and everyone had good opportunities to photograph this amazingly confiding species. We were also surprised to see a flock of 16 Grey Teals flying around. This is apparently the first time this species has been seen on these islands. Further along the bushy eastern side of the island we saw Red-crowned Parakeets, Tomtits, Silvereyes, Bellbirds and Tuis plus the usual array of introduced European songbirds. Also the colonies of the endemic Auckland Island Shag offered great views and photo opportunities. In addition two Southern Right Whales were seen by some members of the group. Back at the landing site we were entertained by several young male New Zealand Sea-Lions having territorial disputes on the beach.

During the night, we moved the short distance from Port Ross to sheltered Carnley Harbour, between the main island and Adams Island in the south of the Auckland group. By the time we arrived in Carnley Harbour, there was a severe gale blowing, and it soon became apparent that we would not be able to make a landing to visit the White-capped Albatross colony at South West Cape. Instead, we dropped anchor at the sheltered bottom of the North Arm, and, after breakfast, launched the zodiacs for a short landing at Epiwait. The weather was not the best possible this morning as the temperature was close to zero and it was snowing heavily, but those of us who were not intimidated by the foul weather, took a walk in the tall Rata forest where we found the Yellow-crowned Parakeet plus Tuis, Tomtits, and Bellbirds. Before we left the bay in the early afternoon, we experienced an amazing gathering of tens of thousands Sooty Shearwaters around our ship which offered plenty of opportunities for photography. Another massive congregation of Sooty Shearwaters was experienced later during the day when we rounded the south end of the Auckland Islands and hit the stormy sea. All in all we estimated seeing around 100,000 Sooties during the day, which is about 5 % of the population breeding on Auckland Islands. Now we were ploughing almost head-on into the teeth of a south-easterly gale with sea-watching being difficult as it was becoming dangerous to stand outside, and visibility from the bridge was very poor. Nevertheless, we managed to see our first Grey-headed Mollymawks and White-headed Petrels during the afternoon, along with Wandering, Gibson's and Southern Royal Albatrosses, Campbell and White-capped Mollymawks, Little Shearwaters, two Antarctic Fulmars, 50 Antarctic Prions, and Grey-backed and Black-bellied Storm-petrels.

The next day was a full day at sea as we continued south-west towards Macquarie. Unfortunately the southeasterly gale continued unabated causing the ship to roll heavily, and the number of people suffering from seasickness increased among the passengers! Despite these hardships the Birdquest

branch office on the bridge of the ship was open from early morning till evening. As we were sailing through an area of very deep sea without any upwellings the expectations on the seabird front were not very high, but we worked hard for the whole day and saw good birds including our second Black-browed Mollymawk, another Grey-headed Mollymawk, Little Shearwater, and our first Southern Giant and Blue Petrels.

Next morning we arrived off the ANARE base on the Isthmus at the north end of Macquarie Island, the single Australian island on our itinerary. Unfortunately the strong easterly wind and big swell ruined our plans to land on Sandy Bay, the site of large colonies of King and Royal Penguins, but we found small parties of both species swimming around our ship. We shipped ourselves to the sheltered NW side of the island and landed at Hasselborough Bay, where the Australian research station is situated. Guided by local rangers we walked for a couple of hours on the isthmus in lovely sunny weather. Here we admired the sympathetic Southern Elephant Seals, which not only crowded the beach but were also found all around the research station, visited couple of small groups of Gentoo Penguins with their adorable little chicks, and the several hundred head strong colony of noisy King Penguins, with many large woolly chicks, watched an angry mob of Southern and Northern Giant Petrels squabbling over the rotting carcass of a seal, had good looks at some Macquarie Shags on the rocks, and found a few Lesser Redpolls at their only locality in Australia. In addition a single Royal Penguin was trying to hide on the beach among some King Penguins, and we also saw six Southern Rockhopper Penguins hiding among tussock grass. A four strong team of rangers from the research station followed us onto the ship and stayed with us for the night, as we were still planning to visit the Sandy Bay the next morning, and a local escort is needed for this. In the afternoon we sailed towards Sandy Bay in anticipation of the next days excursion, and spent a lot of time seawatching on the deck, but the numbers of seabirds was surprisingly low, the best birds being 15 or so Soft-plumaged Petrels, a new bird for us.

Next day was mainly spent moored around Macquarie waiting for the wind to drop so that we could land on Sandy Bay, but unfortunately this never happened, and we barely managed to drop our Australian guests back at their base before we set off on the next leg of our journey to Campbell Island, over 720 kilometers away. Thanks to the strong wind seabirds were very active and on the way we logged Antarctic Fulmars and Blue, Mottled, White-headed, and good numbers of Soft-plumaged Petrels. In addition a Short-tailed Shearwater was identified by one of our group members.

A whole day at sea between Macquarie and Campbell Island. Thanks to a strong tailwind we made good progress riding from wave top to wave top at top speed even with one of the ship's engines turned off. Also the birds seemed to like the windy conditions, and the shallower waters of the Campbell plateau, providing us with much to look at during the 12 hour seawatching session. New species seen during the day included Antipodean and Northern Royal Albatrosses, Kerguelen Petrel and two Arctic Terns, and an excellent supporting cast of tubenoses including Gibson's and Southern Royal Albatrosses, Black-browed, Campbell, White-capped and Grey-headed Mollymawks, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, some Sooty and Little Shearwaters, Common Diving, White-chinned, many Mottled and even more White-headed Petrels, a handful of Soft-plumaged Petrels, some Blue Petrels, an Antarctic Fulmar, Cape Pigeons, and Wilson's, Grey-backed and Black-bellied Storm-petrels. Many of the birds hung around the boat for long periods giving multiple close-up views and good photo opportunities.

We reached the Perseverance Bay of the Campbell Islands the next morning, and were ready for the land excursions after early breakfast. The group was split into two, one group taking the more strenuous trek to NW Bay, and the other the easier walk along the boardwalk to a col which is a very scenic spot and a well known stake-out for Southern Royal Albatrosses. Before landing we cruised the

bay in the zodiacs checking local sights including the world's loneliest tree and a rusty stove! Here we also witnessed a sealion attacking a recently fledged Southern Royal Albatross, which couldn't take off or defence itself and was eaten bit by bit by the sealion while still alive. A heartbreaking sight! Our Zodiac cruise also produced some endemic Campbell Island Shags and a pair of Campbell Island Teal which were feeding at the water's edge before disappearing into thick vegetation on the shore. This recently discovered flightless duck, has only become more habituated to visitors in the last couple of years, and consequently only few people have seen it. A large part of the rest of the day was dedicated to Southern Royal Albatrosses which were amazingly tame, and very obvious photo subjects. Scattered on the grassy slopes of the col these giant, and very tame, creatures offered great photo opportunities. An especially popular target were a pair of albatross that were constantly preening each other only short distance away from a wall of keen photographers. Another great show was put on by albatrosses flying low over the slopes, whilst their comrades sitting among the tussock, responded to every overfly by raising their bills towards the sky and giving their cackling call. A truly magical experience! Back on the shore some of us had another go for the teal, which we eventually even managed to photograph, and we also witnessed another incident where a sealion slowly butchered a young Southern Royal Albatross. Nature is cruel!

Next day was spent at sea between Campbell Islands and the Antipodes. A full day's hardcore seawatching session finally produced Grey Petrel, which was actually relatively common later in the day. In the afternoon a good numbers of tubenoses were following the ship, and, despite the rather bumpy conditions, there was a crowd of photographers at the stern filling up their memory cards.

We continued our seawatching the next morning seeing, among other things, our first Salvin's Albatross for several days, and numbers of Grey Petrels which were still rather common. We reached the Antipodes, a rather uninviting looking high island at noon. Despite the difficult conditions, high swell and strong wind, our expedition leader decided to launch zodiacs for a cruise along the steep shores of the main island as there were some important target birds to be had. The key species here was Erect-crested Penguin, which we all saw well, and Antipodes Island Parakeet, which only some of us managed to see. Back on the ship champagne bottles were opened as the Erect-crested was the last missing penguin for three of the ship's passengers! In the evening there was a great gathering of seabirds, including several thousand White-chinned Petrels, around the boat.

We reached the Bounty Islands, a mere collection of 20 bare rocks covered with breeding sea-birds and fur seals, in the middle of the vast southern ocean, during the morning. The high winds that had been forecasted for the day were easing off, and we had a great sunny conditions when we zodiac cruised around some of the islands. Birds seen here included many Fulmar Prions, unusually for a prion they visit their cliff nesting sites by day, Salvin's Mollymawks, of which over 30,000 pairs are estimated to breed here, excellent encounters with some Erect-crested Penguins which are estimated to have a breeding population of 28,000 pairs on these tiny islands, and the endemic Bounty Island Shag, one of the worlds rarest shag with some 500-600 pairs. Some of us even managed to see a Leopard Seal, a rare sight in these waters, and two Fin Whales were later sighted from the ship. We rounded off our short visit to the Bounty Islands with a session of 'chumming' as we moved slowly away from the islands. The rotting fish that we tossed overboard were clearly irresistible to the Salvin's Albatrosses, and within minutes we had many of these gorgeous birds squabbling in our wake, only a few feet away. In the afternoon we continued our cruise towards the Chatham Islands. We were now approaching the main area of occurrence of the extremely rare Magenta Petrel. The excitement was getting higher and higher, and the decks were well manned for the rest of the afternoon as we sailed due northeast.

As I climbed up to the bridge at sunrise the next morning there were already some keen birders watching the sea, and before six o'clock pretty much every birder on the ship was up and scanning. On earlier trips this stretch of water had produced amazing variety of tubenoses including practically all 'at sea' records (five or so in total) of the legendary Magenta Petrel or Taiko. The first hours of this lovely, sunny day were promising producing some Cook's Petrels and a number of Grey-faced Petrels, both new birds for, plus White-headed, Soft-plumaged and Mottled Petrels. After a very quick breakfast, however, the wind abated, clouds of thin fog started to drift on the calm sea making the visibility poor, and the birds simply stopped flying. To bolster things up a bit we released a slick of fish oil in order to try and attract seabirds, which it actually did, but the Magenta Petrel was a definite no show. We repeated the slick trick later in the afternoon with similar results. Noteworthy birds seen during the first part of the day included large numbers of Broad-billed Prions and White-faced Storm-petrels, our first Chatham Mollymawk, and a few Wandering, Gibson's and Antipodean Albatrosses. When the first islands of the Chathams appeared on the distant horizon, we knew that we had failed in a big way as our chances for the Taiko had gone. By early evening we had arrived at Pyramid Rock, the southernmost of the Chatham Islands and only breeding site for the entire world population of Chatham Albatrosses. We slowly circled the rock, 'chumming' as we went, and enjoyed wonderful views of thousands of albatrosses sitting on their nests, circling over the top of the island and squabbling for food only feet away off the stern of the ship. A truly magical experience! Later we moved the short distance to South East Island where we dropped anchor for the night. In the evening, when many of us had already retreated to their cabins, we realised that there were hundreds of small tubenoses circling around the ships lights like moths, and tens of birds were flapping around on the deck. We threw tens of very cute White-faced Storm-petrels, some amazingly small Grey-backed Storm-petrels and one Broad-billed Prion with a gigantic bill, back, to freedom, while others were busy turning off all the ships light sources that were not needed for safety purposes. To me this seabird frenzy was one of the most memorable experience of the whole trip, but apparently a very well known phenomenon on foggy nights at these islands.

The next morning we did a zodiac cruise along the shore of the SE Island, where, in between watching several handsome and extremely rare Shore Plovers, close Pitt Shags and a pair of Blue Penguins trying to hide from us in a shallow cavity, we admired a pod of very curious Common Bottle-nosed Dolphins that were swimming all around us. Later we had another zodiac cruise along the shores of Mangere and Little Mangere Islands, home to several of the world's rarest birds. The conditions were very difficult with strong winds and a big swell, but Adam and Rodney took us safely to see the very rare (only about 310-325 individuals exists) Chatham Island Oystercatcher, and several of us even managed to see the Forbes's Parakeet, another rare species with perhaps 800-1000 individuals left, which only occurs on these two tiny islands. In the afternoon we headed off across the Chatham Strait towards the main island. Despite a great day with some very special birds already under our belt, some of us still had the stamina to persevere on the bridge checking the seabird scene, which, to be honest speaking, didn't seem to have much to offer. Things changed suddenly however, when a marvellous MAGENTA PETREL was spotted flying in front of the boat! A general alarm was immediately given through the ship's PA system and in no time the bridge was full of people, one of them barefooted! Meanwhile the bird had disappeared, and there were many disappointed faces around, but soon the Magenta Petrel was spotted again, now a bit further away, but giving tickable views for many of those who had missed it the first time. However, the icing of the cake was when the Magenta Petrel showed for the third time within an hour, now much closer right in front of the bow, giving great views to all who had decided to stay on the bridge. This was a perfect end to a great day with many extremely rare species seen, and an amazing escape from the jaws of defeat.

Next morning we landed at Waitangi, the capital of the Chatham Islands, from where we were transported to a private nature reserve at Awatōtra, a real oasis of indigenous bushes and trees among the endless pasturelands and patches of planted coniferous forests which cover nearly the whole island. Here the group was again split to those who wanted to do a longer walk and those who opted for the more leisurely approach. Needless to say the last group included most of the birders and photographers. Key birds in this area included two Chatham Island endemics, the pigeon and the warbler. In addition we noted Fantail, Red-crowned Parakeet, Tui and Weka, and good images were obtained of almost every species. Later we returned back to Waitangi for some shopping before being taken back to the ship for lunch. Later in the afternoon we started our two day cruise due west to New Zealand. While heading out of the Chathams we had an amazing flight of thousands of small prions (Fairy/Fulmar) and also hundreds of White-faced Storm-petrels heading against strong wind in front of the boat.

A full day at sea with wind conditions varying from high winds to a nearly calm weather. Hardcore seawatching from early morning on produced good selection of species, including Gibson's, Antipodean, Southern Royal and Northern Royal Albatrosses, Black-browed, Campbell, White-capped and Salvin's Mollymawks, several Cook's Petrels, including our best views so far, two Grey Petrels, reasonable numbers of White-chinned, Mottled, Grey-faced, White-headed and Soft-plumaged Petrels. The only new bird for the trip was a single Buller's Shearwater, which showed well but rather briefly for some. However, the most memorable event of the day was, when two Southern Bottlenose Whales suddenly appeared next to the ship and did a few spectacular jumps in front of us before disappearing again.

Another full day at sea between the Chathams and Dunedin started with nice sunny conditions and a very good showing of Buller's Shearwaters, of which several hundreds were seen before breakfast, but only a few later in the day. The weather stayed sunny for the most of the day, the sea grew calm and most of the passengers were having a good time on the sunny decks. Great conditions for sun bathing, but less so for seawatching.

We arrived in the harbour of Dunedin in the morning, and after the border formalities, were transferred into the town, where we had plenty of time for sightseeing and shopping. After a lunch in an interesting Chinese restaurant it was time to transport ourselves to the airport from where we continued our homeward journeys via Auckland.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).
Species which have been seen by the leader only are indicated by the symbol (LO).

DIOMEDEIDAE

Wandering Albatross (Snowy Albatross) *Diomedea [exulans] exulans*: Identification of the great albatrosses of the Wandering group was one of the most intriguing challenges on this cruise, as adults of the two commonest forms, Gibson's and Antipodean, closely resemble early immature stages of the nominate form (Snowy Albatross). We picked out birds showing the characters of Snowy Albatross as follows: one between the Snares and Auckland Island, two between Auckland Island and Macquarie Island and one between Bounty Islands and the Chathams. This form, which breeds in very small numbers near the south end of Macquarie Island, is listed as 'Vulnerable' in the 2000 edition of BirdLife International's *Threatened Birds of the World*. The total population is estimated to be 8,500 pairs or 28,000 mature individuals. As with most albatrosses, the greatest threat is from accidental catch by longline trawlers, with some populations decreasing at a frightening rate of 10% per annum.

Gibson's Albatross *Diomedea [exulans] gibsoni*: Birds showing characters of this form were the most widespread of the Wandering group of albatrosses with sightings on 11 days. Our highest count was between Macquarie and the Campbell Island where we estimated seeing at least 10 different birds. It should be noted that many of the seabirds seemed to have a habit of following our ship for hours making it very difficult to estimate the total number of birds seen during the day. This form is restricted as a breeding species to the Auckland Islands where it breeds mostly on Adams Island, with just a few on Disappointment and Auckland Island. The total population is estimated at about 3,277 annually breeding pairs. The taxonomic treatment of this form and Antipodean Albatross remains in some doubt. Several authors have treated them as separate species or 'allospecies', but according to BirdLife International (2000), recent molecular work suggests that the two forms should be treated as a single species. Certainly we had problems with some individuals which could have been either Gibson's or adult male Antipodean.

Antipodean Albatross *Diomedea [exulans] antipodensis*: We first encountered the classic dark capped males and wholly dark-backed females of this form at sea between Macquarie Island and Campbell Island. All in all we had sightings of small numbers on seven days with a highest total of 10 between Campbell Island and the Antipodes. Apart from a few pairs on Campbell Island, the entire population breeds on the Antipodes Islands, where there were 565 breeding pairs annually between 2007 and 2009. BirdLife International treats Antipodean and Gibson's Albatrosses as conspecific under the name *D. antipodensis*, and lists the species as a whole as 'Vulnerable' but the recent decline both in the numbers of breeding birds and breeding success could result in a reclassification of Endangered or Critically Endangered.

Southern Royal Albatross *Diomedea [epomophora] epomophora*: This was much the commonest of the great albatrosses during our oceanic adventure, recorded on virtually every day at sea except in the far south. Best were the birds on Campbell Island where we had an opportunity to sit and watch these magnificent birds at very close quarters. The total population of this species is estimated at 8,200-8,600 pairs, most of which breed on Campbell Island with just small numbers on Enderby, Auckland and Adams islands in the Auckland group. It is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International because of the high mortality associated with longline fisheries, degradation of the nesting habitat and introduced predators.

- Northern Royal Albatross *Diomedea [epomophora] sanfordi*: This easily identified albatross was noted daily in small numbers at sea from Chatham Islands to Dunedin. In addition a non-leader bird was identified at sea between Macquarie and Campbell Island by some members of the group. Most of the population of 6,500-7,000 pairs breeds on islands in the Chatham group, including Forty-Fours and Big and Little Sister Islands, but there is also a small colony (27 pairs in 1995) on the mainland of New Zealand at Taiaroa Head, which we passed on our last morning. This species is listed as 'Endangered' by BirdLife international.
- Black-browed Mollymawk (Black-browed Albatross) *Diomedea [melanophrys] melanophrys*: Small numbers of this attractive albatross were encountered on six days between the Snares and the Antipodes, and a singleton was at sea between the Chathams and Dunedin. This species still remains locally abundant with a world population estimated at 680,000 pairs, 90% of which breed in the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. Nevertheless, the species is listed as 'Near threatened' by BirdLife International because of the high mortality caused by longline fisheries. The smaller species of albatross are often called mollymawk, a name derived from the old Dutch name Malle Mok (stupid gull), and are often placed in the genus *Thalassarche*.
- Campbell Mollymawk (Campbell Albatross) *Diomedea [melanophrys] impavida*: This was the commoner of the two 'Black-browed Albatrosses' at sea. The honey-coloured eye was reasonably easy to pick out in birds passing close alongside the ship, while the greater extent of the black on the underwing was a useful feature in birds weaving back and forth in the ship's wake. The largest numbers were recorded in the region of Campbell Island where the entire population of some 19,000-26,000 pairs breeds. This species is listed as 'Vulnerable' because of its tiny breeding range and the high mortality caused by longline fishing for tuna.
- White-capped Mollymawk (White-capped Albatross) *Diomedea [cauta] steadi*: This was much the commonest albatross on our first few days at sea, with the first birds appearing shortly after we left Bluff Harbour, and up to 150 being recorded in a day around the Snares and Auckland Islands. However, none was recorded around Macquarie, and we found only small numbers on our way back north. The great bulk of the population breeds in the Auckland Islands, where there are 70,000-80,000 pairs on Disappointment, 3,000 pairs on the main island and 100 pairs on Adams. Sadly, because of a strong wind we were unable to land on the main island and hike up to the breeding colony at Southwest Cape. About 100 pairs also breed on Bollon's Island in the Antipodes group. BirdLife International treats this form as conspecific with the very similar nominate form (Shy Albatross) which breeds on islands off Tasmania. Together the two forms are listed as 'Near threatened' because of the high mortality caused by longline and squid fisheries.
- Salvin's Mollymawk (Salvin's Albatross) *Diomedea [cauta] salvini*: One seen on our first day at sea, and we found at least 100 around the Snares, where about 650 pairs breed, but the best encounters with this species were in the Bounty Islands, where we had excellent views of many thousands at their main breeding colony. 'Chumming' from the stern of the ship as we left the Bounties also gave us some incredible views. We found good numbers of birds as we cruised south-west from the Chatham Islands towards Dunedin. The breeding population in the Bounty Islands was estimated at 76,000 pairs in 1978 and 30,750 pairs in 1998, but different techniques were employed in the two surveys and the results may not be comparable. The species is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International because of its tiny breeding range and possible decline in numbers since the 1970s.
- Chatham Mollymawk (Chatham Albatross) *Diomedea [cauta] eremita*: This very attractive albatross is abundant around the Chatham Islands but surprisingly scarce away from these islands.

We had brilliant views of thousands of birds as we circumnavigated the breeding colony on Pyramid Rock and threw out rotten fish from the stern of the ship. Elsewhere we noted one at sea between the Bounties and Pyramid Rock, and a total of five around other islands of the Chathams group. BirdLife International has recently down listed this species from 'Critical' to 'Vulnerable' as there is no evidence of ongoing habitat degradation at its one breeding site (The Pyramid) and the global population is either stable or increasing. The entire world population is now 5,300 pairs.

Grey-headed Mollymawk (Grey-headed Albatross) *Diomedea chrysostoma*: Small numbers were noted on six days between Auckland and Campbell Islands. This species, of which about 100 pairs breed on Macquarie, is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International. The world population is estimated at around 250,000 adults and is declining rapidly due to accidental mortality associated with commercial fishing.

Buller's Mollymawk (Buller's Albatross) *Diomedea [bulleri] bulleri*: Small numbers were noted during the first two days of the trip. BirdLife International treats this and the following form as a single species and lists this as 'Vulnerable' because of its very restricted breeding distribution. There are about 11,500 pairs of this southern form in the Snares and Solander Islands.

Pacific Albatross (Pacific Mollymawk) *Diomedea [bulleri] un-named form*: Fairly common in and around the Chatham Islands, where we recorded up to 50 a day and had some exceptionally close views of birds coming in to the stern of the ship for scraps of food. These birds belong to the northern form which has been proposed as a separate species, the Pacific Albatross *D. nov. sp.* BirdLife International treats this, and the previous form, as a single species and lists this as 'Vulnerable' because of its very restricted breeding distribution. There are about 18,000 pairs of the northern form in the Chatham Islands.

Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *Phoebastria palpebrata*: Small numbers were noted daily from the Auckland Islands until leaving the Campbell Islands. A very elegant albatross, both when perched and especially in flight. We had great views of birds on the nest on Enderby Island and in noisy display flight around the crags above the landing site on Campbell Island. This species is currently listed as 'Near threatened' by BirdLife International.

PROCELLARIIDAE

Buller's Shearwater *Puffinus bulleri*: One rather brief sighting on our first day at sea between Chathams and Dunedin, but several hundreds the next morning including some really close and photogenic birds.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*: Abundant in the Foveaux Strait, around the Snares and amongst the Auckland group, and fairly common throughout the rest of our voyage. Most impressive were the tens of thousands gathering in Carnley Harbour in the Aucklands during our stay.

Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* (NL): One individual identified by Mike at sea between Macquarie Island and Campbell.

Hutton's Shearwater *Puffinus huttoni* (LO): One individual was seen on the first afternoon at sea by a small group of birders including the leader of the Birdquest group.

Little Shearwater *Puffinus assimilis*: Small numbers, with some good views, were noted on eight days between the Snares and the Chathams. The Subantarctic form *elegans* does not show a pale face. Recent studies of the Little and Audubon's Shearwater complex have indicated that the northern and southern hemisphere forms of the Little Shearwater are not closely related!

Grey Petrel *Procellaria cinerea*: A total of 30, with some great views, on both days at sea between Campbell Island and the Antipodes Islands. This is a winter breeder on Macquarie, Campbell and Antipodes islands, and generally very scarce in these waters at this season.

It is currently listed as 'Near threatened' by BirdLife International because of high incidence of mortality associated with commercial fisheries and threats from introduced predators.

- White-chinned Petrel (Shoemaker) *Procellaria aequinoctialis*: Fairly common and widespread, except in the far south. Our largest number, a massive gathering of at least 2,000 individuals was at the Antipodes. Although the world population is still estimated at about 5,000,000 individuals, the species is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International because of a rapid decline in numbers linked to the by-catch in commercial fisheries.
- Cape Petrel (Cape Pigeon, Pintado Petrel) *Daption capensis*: Common, and widespread, usually in moderate numbers, but an estimated 2000 birds, at sea between the Snares and Auckland Island. Most of those seen were of the Subantarctic form *australe* which shows reduced white in the upperparts, but also birds showing the characters of the paler nominate form, were noted regularly.
- Antarctic Fulmar (Southern Fulmar) *Fulmarus glacialoides*: A total of 10 birds spread over six days between the Foveaux Strait and Macquarie.
- Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*: First two birds were identified at sea between Auckland and Macquarie, but our best encounters were on Macquarie Island where there are about 2,500 breeding pairs. Here we found a good number of smart white-phase birds which reach their highest percentage in the population on Macquarie. This species is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International. The world population is estimated at about 62,000 individuals and is thought to be declining rapidly due to the accidental mortality associated with commercial fishing.
- Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli*: Generally much the commoner of the two giant petrels, although outnumbered by Southern Giant Petrels at Macquarie where there are about 1,800 pairs of Northerns. We saw Northern Giant Petrels on almost every day of the cruise, and had ample opportunity to study the birds closely as they followed in the wake of the ship. This species is listed as 'Near threatened' by BirdLife International. Some recent genetic studies suggest that the two giant petrels should be re-lumped as the genetic divergence is not great enough to merit specific separation.
- Fairy Prion *Pachyptila turtur*: This was probably the commonest prion except in the southernmost areas, with up to several thousand being recorded in a day, but it was seldom possible to be sure that we were not also seeing some Fulmar Prions. The most memorable encounter was in the afternoon we left the Chathams when a steady stream of thousands of small prions flew against the wind in front of the ship.
- Fulmar Prion *Pachyptila crassirostris*: Our most convincing views were in the Bounty Islands, where unusually for a prion the birds were visiting their breeding cliffs during daylight. Most of the birds seen flying around the cliffs in the Antipodes Islands were probably this species also. A few individuals photographed at sea could be assigned to this species on the basis of high quality images showing the details of the bill structure.
- Antarctic Prion *Pachyptila desolata*: The common prion in the south, especially around Macquarie where there are thought to be over 100,000 breeding pairs. However, our first encounter was after we had left the Snares. Noticeably bulkier than Fairy Prion with a heavier bill, darker breast patches and more clearly marked head pattern.
- Broad-billed Prion *Pachyptila vittata*: Our first encounter with this massive prion was at sea between the Snares and Auckland Island where we logged in around 50 individuals. Then we had to wait till the Bounty Islands for our next encounter with a few birds, but the next day at sea we were blessed with a good showing of a thousand or so birds. Small numbers were also noted at sea around the Chathams. A very distinctive prion with bold head pattern and huge bill.

- Blue Petrel *Halobaena caerulea*: A total of eight spread over three days in the deep south around Macquarie. The white tip to the tail is easily seen and diagnostic. The small breeding population on Macquarie is thought to number less than 500 pairs.
- Cook's Petrel *Pterodroma cookii*: Two 'cookilaria' petrels (the collective name for Cook's Petrel, Pycroft's Petrel *P. pycrofti* several other very similar small *Pterodroma*) were recorded at sea between Bounty Islands and the Chathams, and 16 birds were noted during our two day cruise back to Dunedin. Cook's Petrel is much the most likely species in these waters. Despite having an estimated world population of 100,000 individuals, this species is listed as 'Endangered' because of its small breeding range and vulnerability to introduced predators. The species is, of course, named after Captain James Cook (1718-1779), the English explorer and navigator.
- Mottled Petrel *Pterodroma inexpectata*: One of the commoner and more distinctive *Pterodroma* (gadfly) petrels, seen regularly throughout the cruise, with up to 25 in a day. This species, which breeds in large numbers on Stewart Island and the Snares, is listed as 'Near threatened' by BirdLife International.
- Grey-faced Petrel (Great-winged Petrel) *Pterodroma macroptera*: Not encountered until we were at sea approaching the Chatham Islands, where we logged at least 30 individuals. Later, on the day after we left the Chathams, we saw about 100 individuals, and 25 birds were seen the next day. The subspecies concerned, *gouldi*, breeds only around the North Island of New Zealand and is sometimes treated as a separate species, the Grey-faced Petrel. The nominate form (Great-winged Petrel) lacks the grey face and breeds in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans east to south-western Australia.
- Kerguelen Petrel *Pterodroma brevirostris*: Two at sea between Macquarie Island and Campbell Island.
- White-headed Petrel *Pterodroma lessonii*: Another very striking gadfly petrel that was common and recorded on most days after we had left the Auckland Islands. Unlike the Mottled Petrel, this species had no fear of the ship and often gave close views as it came in to investigate us.
- Magenta Petrel (Taiko) *Pterodroma magentae*: One of the absolute highlights of the tour, and the winner of the 'Bird of the Trip' contest. After an epic failure to find this bird between Bounty Islands and the Chathams, where all previous five or so at sea records have been made, we had an amazing encounter, including three sightings in an hour, the next afternoon while sailing from Mangere to Waitangi in the Chathams. Although Magenta Petrel has never been seen in this stretch of water, the sighting didn't perhaps come as a complete surprise as we were just sailing past the area of the main island of the Chathams, where this species is known to breed. First described from a single specimen collected in the South Pacific in 1867, this species remained an enigma until 1978 when it was rediscovered breeding in a wooded valley on the main Chatham Island. Since then, it has been the subject of a major conservation effort, but the population remains tiny – perhaps no more than 100-150 birds, with 12 known breeding pairs last year. Not surprisingly, it is listed as critically endangered by BirdLife International.
- Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis*: This attractive fast flying *Pterodroma* was encountered almost daily (with a maximum estimate of 15 a day) between Macquarie Island and the Chathams, and then again on both days at sea on the way to Dunedin with 25 and one individual each day respectively.

HYDROBATIDAE

- Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*: The least numerous of the four storm-petrels; we recorded a handful of birds around Macquarie and there was a single non-leader bird between the Snares and Auckland Island.

Grey-backed Storm-petrel *Oceanites nereis*: This tiny storm-petrel was noted in 11 days in small to moderate numbers with a maximum count of 50 between Bounty Islands and the Chathams.

White-faced Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina*: This very attractive storm-petrel with an extraordinary bouncing flight was confined to more northern waters on this route. After our first encounter with a small number of birds between the Snares and Auckland Island, we had to wait until we were approaching the Chatham Islands, where we had a good count of ca1000 birds at sea and the mind blowing experience of large numbers of small tubenoses, mainly White-faced Storm-petrels, coming to the lights of our ship the same evening. Good numbers, ca500 birds, were noted again at sea during the afternoon we left the Chathams, and smaller numbers were noted the following two days at sea when we were heading back to Dunedin.

Black-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregetta tropica*: First recorded in small numbers after we had left the Snares and then noted in small to moderate numbers on nine days. Individuals often approached close to the ship and gave excellent views from the bow.

PELECANOIDIDAE

Common Diving Petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix*: Usually seen in small numbers only in the vicinity of most island groups, and sometimes even in the middle of the vast Southern Ocean but we witnessed a massive flight of several thousand individuals from the shore of Enderby Island in Auckland Islands.

SPHENISCIDAE

King Penguin *Aptenodytes patagonicus*: Close encounters with few hundreds of these superb penguins and their adorable 'teddy bear' chicks at the colony near ANARE base on Macquarie Island provided us with some of the most magical moments of the trip. We also had distant views of the enormous colony at Lusitania Bay, where there are somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 birds. The total population on Macquarie is estimated at about 300,000 individuals and thought to be increasing.

Yellow-eyed Penguin *Megadyptes antipodes*: A total of 15 individuals, including some excellent close-up views and great photo opportunities on Enderby Island. We also saw a singleton at sea between the Auckland Islands and Macquarie, and two birds on Campbell Island. This New Zealand endemic is classified as 'Endangered' by BirdLife International. The total population is estimated at only around 4,000 individuals, including 520-570 pairs in the Auckland Islands and 490-600 pairs on Campbell Island. It is under threat from introduced species, climate change and degradation of nesting habitat, and is vulnerable to natural disasters such as avian flu and natural fires.

Gentoo Penguin *Pygoscelis papua*: Splendid views of about 25 birds, including some cute chicks, in the small colony at the ANARE base on Macquarie Island. We also saw two birds at sea just away from the island while waiting for the wind to abate. Forster, who described this species in 1781, was mistakenly under the impression that the bird occurred in New Guinea, hence the misnomer *papua*. The subspecies concerned is the nominate form. It is classified as 'Near Threatened' by BirdLife International.

Blue Penguin (Little Blue Penguin) *Eudyptula minor*: Brief views of two at sea after leaving Bluff Harbour, great views of a pair during our zodiac cruise off South East Island and finally three at sea between Mangere and Waitangi.

Southern Rockhopper Penguin *Eudyptes chrysocome*: Good views of six birds near the ANARE base at Macquarie, and a singleton for some of us with Erect-crested Penguins on the rocks in the Antipodes Islands. The subspecies concerned, *filholi*, shows bare pink skin at the base of the bill and has sometimes been considered a separate species, the Eastern

Rockhopper Penguin. It occurs in the southern Indian Ocean and Subantarctic regions of New Zealand and Australia. This species still has a world population of over 7,000,000, but is declining for a number of reasons, the most devastating of which is likely to be the effect of climate change on food supply. For this reason, it is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International. *Eudyptes chrysocome* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) has been split into *E. chrysocome* (Southern Rockhopper Penguin) and *E. moseleyi* (Northern Rockhopper Penguin) following Jouventin *et al.* (2006) on the basis of clear morphological, vocal and genetic terms, and this treatment has been accepted here following a review by the BirdLife Taxonomic Working Group. However, although *E. filholi* has been proposed as a split from *E. chrysocome* by Banks *et al.* (2006), both the sample sizes and the degree of morphological difference are small and this view is not accepted here.

Royal Penguin *Eudyptes schlegeli*: Due to the unfavourable weather conditions we were only able to get a very distant view of the huge breeding colony at Sandy Bay on Macquarie, but luckily there was one very confident bird with the King Penguins near the ANARE base. In addition several small groups were noted swimming around our ship as we sailed around the northern end of the island. It has been estimated that one million pairs breed on the island. Like the Rockhopper Penguin, the Royal Penguin is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International because of the potential effects of climate change on food supply.

Snares Crested Penguin (Snares Island Penguin) *Eudyptes robustus*: Excellent views of hundreds of these superb birds during our zodiac cruise in the Snares. Despite the choppy conditions, our boat drivers were able to bring us to within a few feet of the rocky shoreline where we enjoyed close views of the birds coming ashore and scrambling up steep rocky slopes to their breeding colonies on the hillsides above. This species is restricted to the Snares, where the population is thought to be stable at about 46,500 birds. It is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International because of the possible effects of climate change on food supply and the possibility that introduced predators might one day reach the islands.

Fiordland Crested Penguin *Eudyptes pachyrhynchus* (NL): One swimming bird seen by some of us soon after we had left the Bluff on our first afternoon was a good find and a write-in! It breeds on Stewart Island and several of its offshore islands, Solander Island and on the west to south-west coast of the South Island. The New Zealand population, is currently, at 2,500-3,000 breeding pairs, classified as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International.

Erect-crested Penguin *Eudyptes sclateri*: We enjoyed superb views of this dandy, aptly named penguin in the Antipodes Islands and Bounty Islands. This species is confined to the Antipodes and Bounty groups, and is thought to number about 154,000 individuals. It is listed as 'Endangered' by BirdLife International because the population appears to be declining rapidly, possibly because of a shortage of food.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Great Cormorant (Black Shag) *Phalacrocorax carbo*: A few in the Invercargill area and a single bird when we left the Bluff.

Little Pied Cormorant (Little Shag) *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*: One was seen at the Bluff, and, rather surprisingly, one adult and five dark juveniles were identified on the Snares. This was apparently the first ever record of this species on the Snares.

Macquarie Shag (Macquarie Island Shag) *Phalacrocorax purpurascens*: Good views of about 30 at Macquarie Island, in flight, on the water and on the rocks. This species is confined to Macquarie Island. Unlike the black and white shags that we encountered in New Zealand's Subantarctic islands, this species is closely related to the Imperial Shag *P. atriceps* of southern South America and often lumped in that species. The total population

of Macquarie Shags is currently estimated at only 600 pairs, which would justify its listing as 'Endangered' were it to be recognised as a separate species by BirdLife International.

Stewart Island Shag *Leucocarbo chalconotus*: Good views of about 20 when we were heading out into Foveaux Strait on our first day at sea, and then 10 in Otago Harbour as we were approaching Dunedin. This species has a very restricted breeding range in southern South Island and Stewart Island, and has a total population of only about 5,000-8,000 individuals. It is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International.

Chatham Island Shag *Leucocarbo onslowi*: Not quite as easy as we had thought! We saw a single bird at Mangere Island, a total of eight birds, all of them in flight, as we cruised north from South East Island, and four at Waitangi the next day. This species is confined to the Chatham Islands and is listed as 'Endangered' by BirdLife International. Until recently, the population was thought to number about 1,700 individuals, but a census in 2003 found only 270 breeding pairs. Although colonies are spread over three islands, the species's breeding range totals less than 1 ha! The various threats include human disturbance, illegal shooting, introduced predators and accidental mortality in fishing nets.

Bounty Island Shag *Leucocarbo ranfurlyi*: About 200 were seen well during our zodiac cruise in the Bounty Islands, including many birds at their nests. Another New Zealand endemic, found only in the Bounty Islands where the population is thought to number about 1,140 individuals. The species is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International because of its small population size, restricted distribution and the chance that predators such as rats might one day get to the islands.

Auckland Island Shag *Leucocarbo colensoi*: Great views and photo ops of the birds in the small colonies around Enderby Island and about 10 next day on the North Arm in the Auckland Islands. The total population is estimated at only about 2,000 individuals, and considered to be at risk from further introductions of predators. For this reason it is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International.

Campbell Island Shag *Leucocarbo campbelli*: Good views of about 10 in Perseverance Harbour on Campbell Island. The total population is estimated at about 8,000 individuals and thought to be at risk from further introductions of predators. This species is also listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International.

Spotted Shag *Stictocarbo punctatus*: Two were sighted in Bluff Harbour as we set sail.

Pitt Island Shag *Stictocarbo featherstoni*: Excellent views of about 25, during our zodiac cruise off South East Island; about 10 around Mangere Island that afternoon, and 10 in Waitangi Harbour on the main Chatham Island the next day. In addition small number of birds were seen in flight around Pyramid Rock. This species is a duller version of the Spotted Shag with which it forms a super-species. It is restricted to the Chatham Islands and, with a total population of only about 1,400-1,600 individuals, is yet another species of shag listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International.

ARDEIDAE

White-faced Heron *Ardea novaehollandiae*: Common in the Invercargill area, and also seen on Auckland Island, the main island in the Chatham group, and in Otago Harbour as we were approaching Dunedin

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia*: Rather distant views of four at Sandy Point near Invercargill.

ANATIDAE

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus* (introduced): Common in the Invercargill area and a singleton in Otago Harbour.

- Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* (introduced): Four at Invercargill.
- Paradise Shelduck *Tadorna variegata*: Ten during our morning excursion in the Invercargill area, a singleton from the bus on the way to Bluff harbour, a total of three in Dunedin, and two badly needed last minute birds at Dunedin airport.
- Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (introduced): Common in the Invercargill area and a few in Dunedin. We also recorded two at the Snares, two on Enderby Island and eight in Carnley Harbour in the Auckland Islands, and eight on the main Chatham Island. Mallards hybridise freely with the Pacific Duck, and several of the birds we saw seemed to show some mixed characters.
- Grey Teal *Anas gibberifrons*: A total of six at Sandy Point near Invercargill on our first morning. A flock of 16 on Enderby Island in the Auckland Islands was a big surprise and possibly the first record of this species on these islands.
- Auckland Island Teal *Anas aucklandica*: At least 15 birds, including some great views and excellent photo opportunities on Enderby Island in the Aucklands. This flightless form, which is confined to seven of the smaller islands in the Aucklands group, is now usually considered a full species. The total population is estimated at between 600 and 2,000 individuals. It is classified as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International because of the constant risk of introduced predators getting to the islands.
- Campbell Island Teal *Anas nesiotis*: Two individuals, a pair, were seen well by all of us at Perseverance Bay on Campbell Island. At one time believed to be extinct, the Campbell Island Teal was rediscovered on tiny Dent Island in 1975. Following successful conservation efforts including captive-breeding, reintroduction and a translocation programme, the population is now thought to include between 100 and 200 mature individuals, which has lead BirdLife International to downlist its conservation status from 'Critical' to 'Endangered'. Like the Auckland Island Teal, this flightless form is now usually considered a full species.
- Australasian Shoveler *Anas rhynchos*: Good views of three during our excursion in the Invercargill area.

ACCIPITRIDAE

- Australasian Harrier (Swamp Harrier) *Circus approximans*: Common in the Invercargill area, and also quite common in the Chatham Islands, where a few were recorded on South East Island, Mangere and the main island. Also noted at Dunedin.

RALLIDAE

- Weka *Gallirallus australis* (introduced): Great views of two photogenic birds at Awatotra, on the main Chatham Island, plus several roadside birds between Awatotra and Waitangi. The form in concern, hectori ('Buff Weka'), is now extinct in its natural range in eastern South Island, but has been introduced to a number of areas including the Chatham Islands where it is regarded almost as a pest. The species is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International because most populations are declining as a result of mortality on the roads, habitat loss and degradation, and introduced predators.
- Australian Swamp-hen (Pukeko) *Porphyrio melanotus*: A few individuals were observed in the Invercargill area.

HAEMATOPODIDAE

- South Island Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus finschi*: Small numbers were found both in the Invercargill area and in Otago Harbour.
- Variable Oystercatcher *Haematopus unicolor*: Two as we set sail in the Bluff Harbour.

Chatham Islands Oystercatcher *Haematopus chathamensis*: Good views of two birds, a copulating pair, on Mangere Island in the Chatham group. With a world population of only about 310-325 individuals, this is one of the rarest shorebirds in the world. Although the population has been increasing in recent years, it is still listed as 'Endangered' by BirdLife International because of the continuing threats from introduced predators, habitat degradation and human disturbance.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Pied Stilt (White-headed Stilt) *Himantopus leucocephalus*: Five at Sandy Point near Invercargill.

CHARADRIIDAE

Double-banded Plover (Banded Dotterel) *Charadrius bicinctus*: Superb views of at least 30 ultra-tame birds on Enderby Island in the Aucklands. The form concerned, *exili*, is confined to the Auckland Islands.

Shore Plover *Thinornis novaeseelandiae*: Good views of five on the wave-platforms of South East Island in the Chatham Islands. Once widespread on the New Zealand mainland (at least on South Island), the Shore Plover is now largely confined to South East Island and one small reef in the Chathams, having been eradicated from most of its former haunts by introduced predators. With a total population of only about 160 individuals, this really is one of the rarest shorebirds in the world! Not surprisingly, it is listed as 'Endangered' by BirdLife International. Of the many threats which the species faces, introduced predators top the list.

Spur-winged Plover (Masked Lapwing) *Vanellus miles*: Noted on agricultural land around Invercargill and Dunedin. There were also three non-leader birds on Enderby Island and at least six birds in farmland on the main Chatham Island.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*: A single bird with Bar-tailed Godwits near Invercargill and another one on Derry Castle Reef on Enderby Island in the Aucklands.

New Zealand Snipe (Subantarctic Snipe) *Coenocorypha aucklandica*: Great views of about 10 of these wonderfully rodent-like birds on Enderby Island in the Aucklands. They preferred to scuttle through the grass rather than fly, often crouching low with their bills stretched forwards. The form that we saw was the nominate form. Two species may be involved in this complex, Snares Island Snipe *C. huegeli* and Auckland Island Snipe *C. aucklandica* which also has a distinct subspecies in the Antipodes Islands (*meinertzhagenae*). A hitherto undescribed subspecies has recently been caught and photographed on a small island off Campbell Island. Two other forms (Stewart Island Snipe and Little Barrier Snipe) are now extinct. The species is listed as 'Near threatened' by BirdLife International, with the principal threat being introduced predators.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*: A party of 300 at Sandy Point near Invercargill and two birds on Enderby Island in the Aucklands.

STERCORARIIDAE

Subantarctic Skua (Antarctic Skua) *Catharacta antarctica*: Moderate numbers were seen throughout the trip, with birds breeding in all of the island groups that we visited. The subspecies involved is *lonnbergi*.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*: One was seen briefly at sea between the Bounty and Chatham Islands.

LARIDAE

- Kelp Gull (Southern Black-backed Gull) *Larus dominicanus*: The common and widespread gull, present on all the island groups that we visited, and also seen in good numbers at Invercargill and Dunedin. This is a widespread southern hemisphere species, although it is possible that more than one species is involved. New Zealand birds are currently included in the nominate form which also occurs in southern South America.
- Red-billed Gull *Larus scopulinus*: First seen around Invercargill and common in the Snares, Auckland Islands, Campbell Island, Chatham Islands and Dunedin. This New Zealand endemic is often considered conspecific with the Silver Gull *L. novaehollandiae* of Australia and New Caledonia. It differs in being slightly smaller and in having slightly darker upperparts and a relatively deeper bill. Recent mitochondrial DNA research and anatomical studies suggest a closer relationship to the Black-billed Gull.
- Black-billed Gull *Larus bulleri*: 50 non-breeding individuals, at Sandy Point area near Invercargill. This New Zealand endemic is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International. The total population is estimated at 96,000 and is declining rapidly, apparently as a result of introduced predators, invasive weeds on the shingle banks where the birds breed, and human disturbance.

STERNIDAE

- Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*: Two at Sandy Point area near Invercargill.
- White-fronted Tern *Sterna striata*: Five in Bluff Harbour, another five in Carnley Harbour in the Auckland Islands, common in the Chatham Islands and a few in Otago Harbour as we were approaching Dunedin. A noteworthy observation was a lone individual that came to investigate our boat in the middle of the ocean, 120 kilometers from the nearest shore, between Bounty Islands and the Chathams. The White-fronted Tern is confined to New Zealand as a breeding species, but migrates to Australia in winter.
- Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*: Two at sea between Macquarie and Campbell Island. A winter visitor from the northern Hemisphere during the Austral summer.
- Antarctic Tern *Sterna vittata*: First seen around the Snares, and then found on Enderby Island in the Auckland Islands group, Macquarie Island, Campbell Island, the Antipodes and the Bounty Islands. The form *bethunei* is restricted to the Subantarctic islands of New Zealand, while the form *macquariensis* breeds on Macquarie.

COLUMBIDAE

- New Zealand Pigeon *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*: A handful of birds in the Invercargill area, and one on Campbell Island. This species seems to be doing better than most of New Zealand's native woodland birds, but is still classified as 'Near threatened' by BirdLife International.
- Chatham Island Pigeon *Hemiphaga chathamensis*: Ten or so of these large, colourful pigeons in native woodland near the south end of the main Chatham Island, including some extremely confident birds. Often treated as conspecific with New Zealand Pigeon, the Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds Volume 3 (1996) states that a "combination of allopatric distributions, differences in ecology and many differences in morphology clearly indicate that *chathamensis* and *novaeseelandiae* are different species". BirdLife International does not split this form in *Threatened Birds of the World*, but notes that if it is split, it should be listed as 'Endangered'. Apparently this isolated island population had declined down to 40 individuals in 1990 due to hunting, habitat degradation and predation by introduced mammals, but it has recently recovered to a more healthy level at around 600 birds, thanks to a number of conservation measures.
- Rock Dove (Rock Pigeon) *Columba livia* (introduced): A few at Invercargill and common in Dunedin.

PSITTACIDAE

Antipodes Island Parakeet *Cyanoramphus unicolor* (NL): Sadly, only some of us were lucky enough to see one of these rare parakeets with a group of Red-crowned Parakeets as we cruised along the shore of Antipodes Island in the zodiacs. The total population of this single-island endemic is only 2,000-3,000 birds, and the species is therefore listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International.

Red-crowned Parakeet *Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae*: We enjoyed many close views of the nominate form on Enderby Island in the Aucklands, and also saw ten of the form *hochstetteri* on Antipodes Island, and a couple of birds of the form *chathamensis* on the Chatham Islands.

Forbes's Parakeet *Cyanoramphus [auriceps] forbesi*: Decent views of two individuals for most of us from the zodiacs as we cruised along the shore of Mangere Island in the Chatham group. This parakeet, which is given full specific status by BirdLife International, is confined to Mangere and Little Mangere Islands, where, thanks to a number of conservation measures, the population is now estimated at 800-1,000 individuals. Until recently, the greatest threat to the population was hybridisation with the Red-crowned Parakeet, but measures have been taken by the New Zealand Department of Conservation to remove Red-crowned Parakeets and hybrids from the two islands, and most of the birds that remain are now believed to be pure *forbesi*.

Yellow-crowned Parakeet *Cyanoramphus auriceps*: Three in the Sandy Point area near Invercargill area on our first morning, and one in the snow storm at Epiwait in the Auckland Islands for some of us.

ALAUDIDAE

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* (introduced): Noted in agricultural land around Invercargill and on the main Chatham Island.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*: A few at Invercargill, about six near the harbour at Waitangi on the main Chatham Island, and one at Dunedin. This species colonised New Zealand from Australia in the late 1950s.

MOTACILLIDAE

New Zealand Pipit (Australasian Pipit) *Anthus novaeseelandiae*: At least 30 on Enderby Island in the Aucklands, at least 25 on Campbell Island, ten during the zodiac cruise along the coast of Antipodes Island, and about ten in the Chathams. Those on Enderby and Campbell were particularly confiding and photogenic. It has recently been suggested that the Australian Pipit *A. australis* is specifically distinct from the New Zealand Pipit. Four subspecies occur in New Zealand, the nominate on the main islands, *chathamensis* on the Chathams, *aucklandicus* on the Aucklands and Campbell, and *steindachneri* on the Antipodes.

PRUNELLIDAE

Dunnock *Prunella modularis* (introduced): A few in the Invercargill area and at Dunedin. Also noted in small numbers on Campbell Island and in the Chathams.

TURDIDAE

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula* (introduced): Very common around Invercargill and Dunedin, and recorded in small numbers on Auckland Island, Campbell Island and the Chathams.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* (introduced): Very common around Invercargill, Dunedin and on the main Chatham Island. In addition a singleton was heard on the Snares.

SYLVIIDAE

Fernbird (New Zealand Fernbird) *Bowdleria punctata*: A total of five with some good views (from the zodiacs) of the subspecies *caudata* in the Snares. This form, which is confined to the Snares, is almost flightless and may warrant specific status.

PACHYCEPHALIDAE

New Zealand Creeper (Brown Creeper) *Mohoua novaeseelandiae*: Very common, with ca 15 individuals, in the Sandy Point area near Invercargill.

ACANTHIZIDAE

Grey Warbler (Grey Gerygone) *Gerygone igata*: Ten or so with some great views in the Invercargill area.

Chatham Islands Warbler (Chatham Islands Gerygone) *Gerygone albofrontata*: Ten or so, including several recently fledged juveniles, in native woodland near the south end of the main Chatham Island. This species is slightly larger than the closely related Grey Warbler, with a much longer bill and white supercilium and forehead. Apparently the song is also discernibly different.

MONARCHIDAE

Grey Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa*: Few birds in the Invercargill area, and six birds in native woodland near the south end of the main Chatham Island. The form on the Chathams is *penitus*.

EOPSALTRIIDAE (PETROICIDAE)

Tomtit *Petroica macrocephala*: Three at Sandy Point near Invercargill on our first morning, and five of the subspecies *dannefaerdi* were seen well during our zodiac cruise in the Snares. This form, which is uniformly black, numbered about 500 pairs in 1987, and is surely a good candidate for splitting. The form *marrineri* in the Auckland Islands is rather similar to the mainland form, but shows reduced sexual dimorphism. We saw at least 20 of these on Enderby Island and two at Epiwait on the Auckland Island.

ZOSTEROPIDAE

Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*: Fairly common around Invercargill, one on Snares, six on Auckland Island, ten on Campbell Island and 15 on the main Chatham Island. This was a natural colonist from Australia in recent times.

MELIPHAGIDAE

New Zealand Bellbird *Anthornis melanura*: A few in the Invercargill area, and also in the Auckland Islands, where we saw about 10 on Enderby Island and a couple at Epiwait.

Tui *Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*: Common around Invercargill, two on Enderby Island and two at Epiwait in the Auckland Islands, and two on South East Island and six on the main island in the Chathams. The form on the Chathams is *chathamensis*, elsewhere the nominate subspecies.

EMBERIZIDAE

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* (introduced): Two on our first morning around Invercargill.

FRINGILLIDAE

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* (introduced): Common in the Invercargill area, and also recorded in small numbers on the main island in the Chathams.

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* (introduced): Common in the Invercargill area, and also noted in Dunedin.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* (introduced): Common in the Invercargill area, and a singleton on the main island in the Chathams.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret* (introduced): Common in the Invercargill area, on Enderby Island in the Aucklands, on Campbell Island, and on the main island in the Chathams. In addition a singleton was noted on Antipodes, and we found a total of ten on Macquarie Island – the only Australian territory in which this species occurs.

PASSERIDAE

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (introduced): Common on the mainland and also seen in Waitangi in the Chatham Islands.

STURNIDAE

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* (introduced): Common on the mainland and in the Chatham Islands, and also seen in very small numbers on Enderby Island in the Aucklands, Macquarie Island and Campbell Island.

CRACTICIDAE

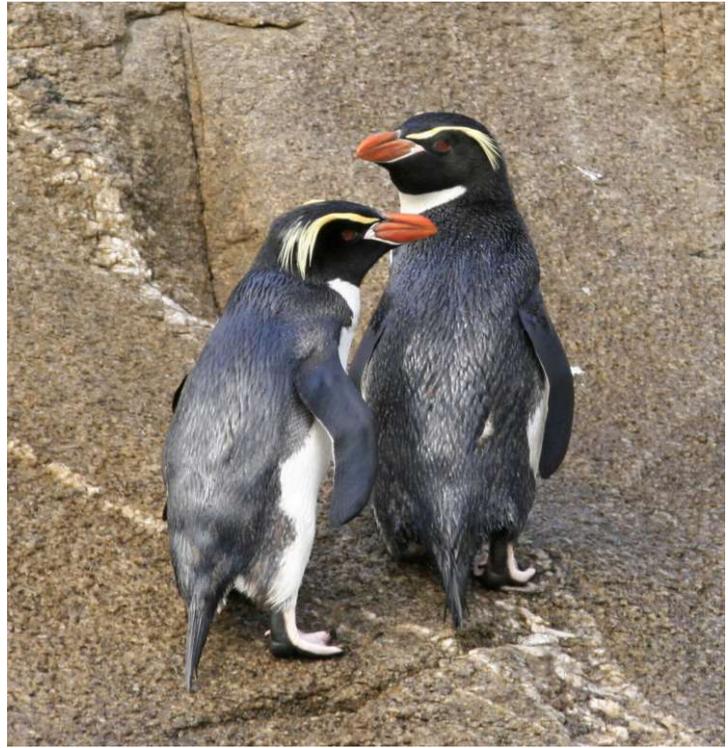
Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen* (introduced): A few were seen in the Invercargill area.

MAMMALS

- New Zealand Fur Seal *Arctocephalus forsteri*: This charming species was noted in variable numbers on all islands, except Macquarie, we visited. As a truly pelagic species singletons or small groups were also seen swimming in the middle of the ocean on several occasions.
- Subantarctic Fur Seal *Arctocephalus tropicalis* (NL): One was seen by some of us on Antipodes.
- New Zealand Sea-Lion (Hooker's Sea-Lion) *Phocarctos hookeri*: Our best encounters were on Enderby Island, where there were at least 50, trying to block our access to the shore, and on Campbell Island, where a young bull came to greet us at the wharf. Here we also witnessed a dramatic episode where sea-lions devoured a recently fledged Southern Royal Albatross.
- Southern Elephant Seal *Mirounga leonina*: Some great encounters with several hundred of these monsters on the beaches on Macquarie. There were still several huge males about showing off their fantastic proboscis, while the wide-eyed youngsters were particularly endearing. We also found the odd individual on Campbell Island and Antipodes Island.
- Leopard Seal *Hydrurga leptonyx*: Some of us saw one of these nasty looking seals as we were cruising along the shores of Bounty.
- Great Sperm Whale *Physeter catodon*: Two individuals at the surface as we cruised north between the Bounty Islands and the Chathams.
- Gray's Beaked Whale *Mesoplodon grayi*: A group of three individuals as we cruised north between the Bounty Islands and the Chathams. In addition a group of three beaked whales was seen briefly as we were cruising towards the Chatham Islands.
- Common Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*: One between Campbell Island and the Antipodes, and a school of 14 circling close to our zodiacs, when we were cruising along the shores of the SE Island in the Chathams.
- Long-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala melas* (NL): One between Campbell Island and the Antipodes.
- Southern Right-Whale *Eubalaena australis* (NL): Two on Enderby Island in the Auckland Islands.
- Fin Whale *Balaenoptera physalus*: Two on the Bounty Islands. The claims that this is the national mammal of Finland are simply not true!
- Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae*: One between the Snares and Auckland Island.
- Southern Bottlenose Whale *Hyperoodon planifrons*: On the way to Dunedin we had great views of two jumping out of the water several times right next to our ship. Despite the difficulties presented Steve managed to take some great images of one of them.



Erect-crested Penguin (H. Jännes)



Snares Crested Penguin (H. Jännes)



Royal Penguin (H. Jännes)

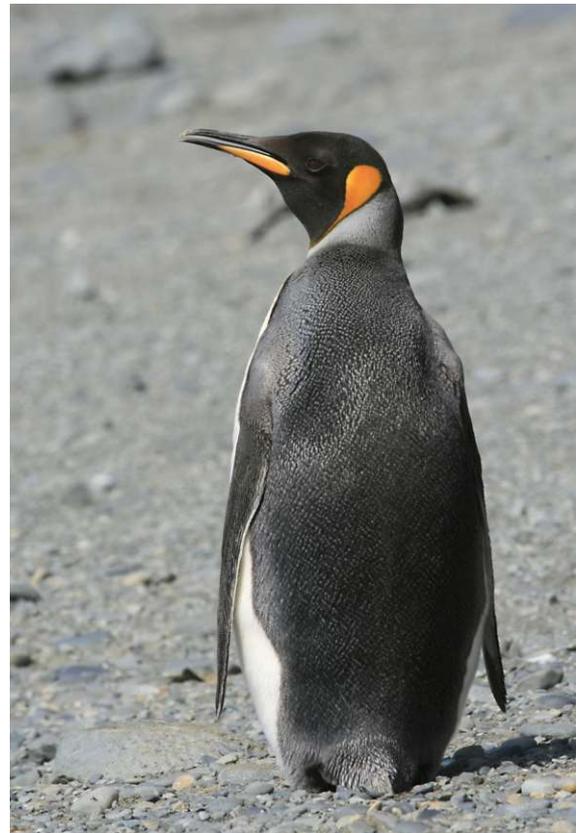


Gentoo Penguin (H. Jännes)

A remarkable nine species of penguin were seen on this trip.



King Penguins on Macquarie (all images by H. Jännes)



A visit to King Penguin colony on Macquarie was one of the absolute highlights on this tour.



Chatham Mollmawk (H. Jännes)



Pacific Mollmawk (H. Jännes)

Campbell Mollmawk (H. Jännes)

Salvin's Mollmawk (H. Jännes)



Black-browed Mollmawk (H.Jännes)



Southern Royal Albatross (H. Jännes)



**Auckland Island Shag (H. Jännes)
Campbell Island Teal (H. Jännes)**



**Southern Royal Albatross (H. Jännes)
Antipodean Albatross (H. Jännes)**





Shore Plover, one of the rarest waders in the world (H. Jännes)



Red-crowned Parakeet (H. Jännes)



New Zealand Pipit (H. Jännes)



New Zealand Snipe (H. Jännes)



Banded Plover (H. Jännes)



Birdquest group and a pod of Common Bottle-nosed Dolphins (Keith Barnes)



New Zealand Fur Seals; adult and juvenile (H. Jännes)

Best ever photograph of a Southern Bottlenose Whale (Steve Gast)

