



Pair of New Zealand pigeons, Tiritiri Matangi Island (Tehzoon)

NEW ZEALAND TOUR

24 OCTOBER – 13 NOVEMBER 2013

LEADER: CHRIS GASKIN

New Zealand's Pacific Ring of Fire geology underpins a diverse array of landscapes: rugged snow and ice-capped mountains, glaciers, steaming volcanoes, the great sweep of braided rivers across outwash plains, high rainfall areas with dry zones a short Kea's flight away. We traced the change in forests from the kauri and nikau palm sub-tropical north through southern beech (*Nothofagus*) to remote uninhabited and wild places of the far south where podocarps and southern rata are shaped by subantarctic winds. Birding hotspots are linked by parkland-like farmland and ever-changing, stunning scenery. The country is a long archipelago, islands set in the Great Southern Ocean. There is high endemism amongst its terrestrial fauna and flora, as well as the greatest diversity of seabirds anywhere in the world. The changes wrought during periods of settlement (New Zealand was the last major land mass to be settled by humans) have created a highly modified environment, and a legacy of some of the world's rarest and most threatened bird species.

Our New Zealand tour captured its landscapes and birds in the full flush of spring. There was just a hint of a lingering winter as we moved through the country: plenty of snow on the mountains in the south and usually

dry grasslands emerald green from recent stormy weather and heavy rain. We connected with the return of migratory summer species, winter breeding species, and throughout our tour had stunning views of New Zealand's 'mainland' endemics. The tour also offered a chance to reflect on the extinctions (approx. 45% of New Zealand's avifauna was lost following the arrival of humans), some as recently as the 1970s. On a much more positive note we could experience the achievements of conservation action in the last 50 years. New Zealand is a world leader through the many invasive species eradication programmes, species recovery work and numerous restoration projects. Wild flowers aplenty from the native endemic Giant Buttercup in alpine herbfields, the blaze of introduced colour in Central Otago, and in the north traces of a hot summer in the offing with red pohutukawa and rata (*Metrosideros* species), massed cabbage tree flowers and nectar rich flax flowers starting to open. The food was excellent throughout, often savoured with hand-rubbing glee by tour members.

Our tour started in Auckland with the group assembling at the international airport. Although a rental vehicle mix-up threatened to throw a spanner into the works, it was all smiles when we made the short drive to Mangere Ponds for our first real birding. We managed to sidestep the worst of Auckland's morning rush-hour traffic and headed west to Muriwai with its spectacular cliffs and seascapes. The Australasian Gannet colony was in full swing with birds on eggs. There was also a lot of action with the large growing colony of White-fronted terns just below the viewing platforms. Continuing north we stopped at Waipu Estuary for NZ Fairy Tern, more NZ Dotterels, both Variable and South Island Pied Oystercatchers. A stop at Waru Lake just north of Whangarei city gave us nice views of New Zealand Little Grebe or Dabchick. Our hotel set beside the Waitangi River just below Haruru Falls offered more birding before an early dinner, then the drive through to Purerau Peninsula, picking up local kiwi guides Detlef and Carol Davies en route. North Island Brown Kiwi have responded to some intensive predator control work and advocacy through community-driven conservation work. We saw three kiwis very well.



*The spectacular Australasian Gannet cliff-top colony at Muriwai Auckland's West Coast (Angeline Hamburg).
Sacred Kingfisher sentinel on flax stalks (Tehzoon)*

We made an early start the next morning for the drive back south to Sandspit near Warkworth and to jump aboard our boat for the first of our seabird pelagics, this one out on the Hauraki Gulf. Stunningly fine, calm conditions, it appeared that the very unsettled weather just prior to the tour start was well over. In fact any anxiety was whether there would be enough wind to attract birds to our berley slicks. Plenty to see on the way out with Little Penguins, then Flesh-footed and Fluttering Shearwaters, good numbers of Australasian Gannets scattered across the glassy sea. Further out, we started picking up White-faced Storm-petrels, Buller's Shearwaters, Common Diving Petrels, Cook's Petrels and Fairy Prions. A big fish work up of trevally attracted good numbers of birds – shearwaters, prions and stormies with diving petrels skipping by. Numbers of Cook' Petrels increased as we approached NW Reef (i.e. northwest of Little Barrier Island/Te Hauturu-o-



A New Zealand Storm-petrel skipping across a glassy sea delights the group. A Buller's Shearwater takes to flight (Tehzoon)

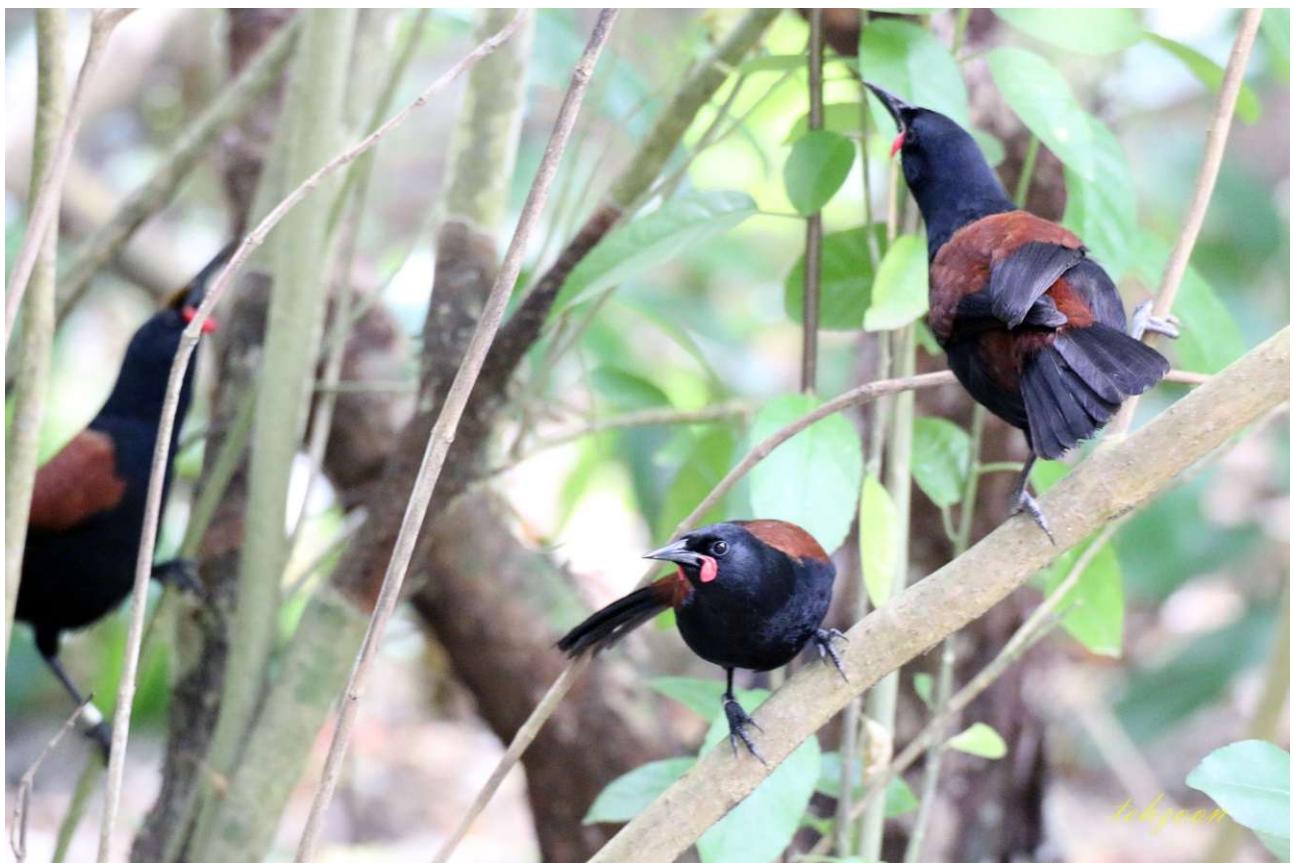
Toi). The sea at this stage was glassy with no wind, although plenty of birds around. On stopping, the berley was tossed into the sea with a quip that it could take a while for key species to be attracted. Not that the birds were listening as almost instantaneously a NZ Storm Petrel came flying in. We were to get excellent views of two birds, along with Cook's Petrels, Fairy Prions and three shearwater species. Seeing the stormies at close range and with the Little Barrier backdrop provided a great opportunity to reflect on the success of the expedition to find the breeding site of the NZ Storm Petrel earlier in 2013. Further north we came across a large active group of shearwaters, hundreds of Fluttering, Buller's, Sooty and Short-tailed Shearwaters, a fantastic sight. At the Mokohinau Islands we stopped for lunch below the lighthouse at Burgess Island, then across to Maori Rocks for gannets, gulls and terns nesting and roosting.

A very active school of trevally with shearwaters, prions and gulls in attendance, all feeding on crustaceans (Chris Gaskin).



Plenty of seabird and fish action close by, once again stunning sights. A quiet chumming session further out to sea followed, not much happening so we pulled the plug and headed towards Little Barrier Island. En route we spotted a fishing boat north of the island, with its gear down and a line of birds in its wake. A chum stop just off its route attracted a number of Black (Parkinson's) Petrel along with Flesh-footed Shearwaters and a Northern Giant Petrel. The build-up of Cook's Petrels around Little Barrier is always quite a spectacle through summer months – during the day these are mostly non-breeding birds. The burgeoning population on the island (over a million birds) is a direct result of eradicating rats and cats. We ducked into Orau Cove on the north coast for a cuppa. Then a cruise along the island's coast allowed us to fully appreciate the extremely rugged nature of the island. We could hear Saddlebacks calling from the shore and could look up the gorge where the newly discovered breeding site of the NZ Storm-petrel is located. The run back to Sandspit was a repeat of what we saw on the way out in the morning.

Next morning, prior to our overnight trip to Tiritiri Matangi, we made a run out to Tawharanui Regional Park, a predator-free peninsula sanctuary jutting out into the Hauraki Gulf and netted a nice selection of birds. At the lagoon some Buff-banded Rails gave a great showing along shoreline, also NZ Shovelers, Bellbirds and plenty of Paradise Shelducks. Shortly after the start of walk from the stunningly beautiful Anchor Bay we had excellent views of North Island Saddleback intermingled with the sort of mix that is very much New Zealand birding: Yellowhammer, Goldfinch, Masked Lapwing, Ring-necked Pheasant, Sacred Kingfisher, NZ Pipit and the endemic Whitehead and NZ Fantail. Beside the stream we spied some skulking Brown Teal, then in forest areas three cavorting North Island Kaka and a couple of Red-crowned Parakeets along with Tui, Bellbird, NZ Pigeons and Grey Warbler.



Saddlebacks at Tiritiri Matangi Island (Tehzoon)

The wind was up for the afternoon boat ride to Tiritiri Matangi, and the landing at the island's wharf required some careful manoeuvrings to get people and gear safely ashore. With the island pretty much to ourselves we could enjoy some easy wanders over the two days to see all the island's endemic specialties (i.e. Stitchbird, Takahe, Kokako, North Island Saddleback and Little Spotted Kiwi) plus a host of other birds. We started the evening excursion after dark down by the Grey-faced Petrel colony, hoping to catch a glimpse

some of these winter-breeders coming in to feed chicks. No such luck there, but did see and hear some Common Diving Petrels which are recolonising predator-free island. Walking quietly up the boardwalk through some of the more mature forest we heard a Little Spotted Kiwi moving through the forest litter, a little too far from the track to get a clear view. Another kiwi was sighted near the lighthouse; unfortunately it scarpered when some volunteers who were also staying on the island came along in a noisy buggy with all lights blazing. We tried another track and sure enough heard the tell-tale noise of a bird in the forest litter – a moment to gather everyone together, then carefully brought the light to play on female bird just a couple of metres away. Next morning was more of the same, easy wanders to complete the island list including extremely elusive Takahe (they were nesting and therefore very secretive) and a couple of Spotless Crakes at the northern end of the island. The wind was still full on for the departure from the wharf, but once again the manoeuvre was conducted safely.

An early start the next morning allowed us to slip through Auckland and avoid the traffic. We were heading for the Central North Island and needed to pack a lot into our day. Timing of the tides meant we swapped a stop at Miranda for Ambury Park and Mangere Ponds in order to see Wrybill and a host of other waders. Shining Cuckoo and a glimpse of an Australasian Bittern flying were the highlights at Whangamarino Wetlands. Raucous North Island Kaka with Yellow-crowned Parakeet, North Island Robin, North Island Tomtit, Whitehead and more Shining Cuckoo the stand-outs at Pureora Forest Park. At Tokaanu Wetlands at the southern end of Lake Taupo we had stunning views a Fernbird at close range, then an Australasian Bittern. The latter, one of three we heard booming, was thanks to Angie's persistence, spying one that slowly stood up amongst the great bed of raupo (rushes).

Secretive North Island Fernbird emerges from amongst raupo leaves, with Australasian Bittern (insert photo) (Tehzoon).



There was a low cloud base and rain when we arrived at our accommodation close to Tongariro National Park. The park is a World Heritage Site for its cultural and landscape values, the world's second national park after Yellowstone. The drive across the plateau hinted at plenty of surprises for the next day. An early

morning start saw the skies clear and it was a quick drive up the road to Whakapapa Village at the base of Mount Ruapehu, a chance for Blue Ducks on the Whakapapanui River. We stopped at a car park just beyond the first bridge, then walked quietly back for great views of a pair in the river below. With a key bird under our belts we could relax a bit and enjoy the views of this spectacular volcanic landscape as the clouds peeled back.



Blue Duck, Whakapapanui River (Tehzoon)



*Mount Ruapehu from the start of the Whakapapanui Track
(Tehzoon)*



Craters on the north side of Mount Tongariro still showing signs of activity following recent eruptions (Tehzoon)

After a short walk along the Whakapapanui Track on the lookout for North Island Rifleman and Tomtit we drove back to Tokaanu and the wetlands. With more time on our hands this time we managed to track down

three more Australasian Bittern (one heard) and gave the lake and abundant waterfowl a good look over: Black Swan, New Zealand Scaup, Australasian Shoveler and New Zealand Dabchick. We picked up some lunch at the bakery in Turangi then headed for Kaimanawa Forest for a couple of walks in the tall red beech forest overlooking the Waikato/Tongariro River. A stop at the bridge just above the Waikato Falls, a spectacular lookout where, was awe-inspiring on two counts. First the scenery, the river rushes through a narrow gorge; the second for an amazing encounter between Long-tailed Cuckoos and a Tui. One of the cuckoos called from trees near our mini-bus and this brought a second bird to the tree-tops high above the other side of the road. Some aggressive calling followed which in turn brought in a Tui. It mobbed the second Long-tailed Cuckoo in its high perch. After some chasing about the branches they both locked talons and fell in tumbling thrashing confusion down to the ground, disappearing into some manuka shrubs at the side of the road. The Tui emerged and flew away. Nothing happened and a couple of us rushed over to get a closer look. As we approached the Long-tailed Cuckoo burst out of the shrubs and flew away across the river calling loudly. Long-tailed Cuckoos can predate eggs of a number of birds, hence the aggressive defence from the Tui.



Long-tailed Cuckoo at Kaimanawa Forest (Tehzoon)

The forest walks at the Urchin Picnic Area were a fairly quiet wander with a focus shifting to the forest habitat. We did however get good looks at Whitehead, Tomtit, Grey Warbler and Bellbird, and also heard Yellow-crowned Parakeet and North Island Robin. A very pleasant lunch spot on our return nevertheless.

We did a short detour from the 'Desert Road' main highway onto the Tukino Ski Field access road and found two New Zealand Pipits out in the dry tephra landscape, a feature of the rain shadow area to the east of the big volcanoes. No sign of the Banded Dotterels that breed there.

We made another forest walk at the Rotokura Lakes Ecological Reserve, more of a slow meander through majestic red beech forest surrounding Dry Lake. A North Island Kaka feeding out along a high limb was a real treat and our wait for Spotless Crakes to show (they didn't) was rewarded by hearing a New Zealand Falcon calling (and calling and calling) from beyond the trees on the far side. It appeared to be flying back

and forth and we could only speculate why it was calling for so long. It was an adult, not a chick or fledgling. Several times we expected it to appear above the trees but no such luck. This dynamic endemic raptor would have to wait for another day. After coffee at Ohakune we drove up the Turoa Ski Field access road for spectacular views across farmland and the mudstone land forms that stretch south from the mountain and another walk, this time in mountain beech forest with Whitehead and Rifleman.

A travel day followed heading south to Wellington to catch the afternoon ferry. We made a couple of stops for birds on this rather wild day. The first at Manawatu Estuary (a Ramsar site) for waders, the second at Plimmerton for a very hopeful search for Shore Plovers straying from nearby Mana Island (a translocation site). Strong winds, some rain, very high tides and a flooded Manawatu River conspired against a decent return for a beach walk at the former, with just Eastern Bar-tailed Godwits, Lesser Knots, Masked Lapwings, gulls and terns in view. Whatever else was around, was well and truly tucked out of sight. There were no Shore Plovers at Plimmerton, the gale force winds heralded what was in store for us with the Cook Strait crossing. We caught the 2.30PM ferry and despite some very tenacious observing from the upper decks amazingly did not see any albatrosses. There were, however, good numbers of Westland Petrels, one Grey-faced Petrel, a number of Sooty Shearwaters, and, as we approached Tory Channel and the Marlborough Sounds, good numbers of Fairy Prions, Fluttering Shearwaters and Common Diving Petrels. Within the sheltered and wonderfully scenic waters of the Sounds we checked off Spotted and Pied Shags along with terns, gulls and Australasian Gannets. Active feeding flocks of Fluttering Shearwaters are a feature of the inner Sounds and we weren't disappointed. We found a very nice restaurant in Picton for a great (mainly) seafood meal that night.



A tranquil start to our Marlborough Sound cruise, Picton. Angeline Hamburg

A cruise on the Marlborough Sounds is always a treat and a beautifully calm morning after the strong winds the day before was a great way to start, especially as we were accompanied by a pod of Little (Blue) Penguins as we cruised out from Picton Harbour. We were soon picking up Fluttering Shearwaters, Australasian Gannets, White-fronted Terns and Spotted Shags, then one Arctic Skua. We made a stop for some close up views of the beautiful Spotted Shags on a

roost and nosed up to Bluemine Island for great views of 40 or so King Shags on their now regular roost. More King Shags in the water followed. We made a stop at Motuara Island for South Island Saddleback, South Island Robin and other forest species. Most of the group made it top to experience the same view James Cook had when he visited this site in the 18th Century. We made a brief stop at Boat Cove, one of Cook's favourite New Zealand sites, visiting here on all three voyages, his naturalists waxing lyrically about the bird song. From Picton we drove through to Lake Grassmere with its slightly unreal spread of salt pans, contrasting pink and white against the muddy waters of the natural lake. Huge numbers of waterfowl, Australasian Shoveler, Grey Teal and Black Swans especially.

The Kaikoura Coast is dramatic, a narrow cut of flat land in places, the road, the railway, the rocky shoreline and gravel beaches between high mountains to one side and the waves and open sea on the other. The journey south passes quickly. We made a stop at Ohau Point for the New Zealand Fur Seal colony and with the colonies of gulls and terns, the first hints of the coast's prolific marine life. After quickly dropping our gear at our motel on The Esplanade, with fine views of the bay and the mountains, we drove the tip of Kaikoura Peninsula and close encounters with fur seals and shorebirds.

We had opted for an extended pelagic trip the next morning and we weren't disappointed. Our little run of fine weather was holding and the four hour trip was magic with Gibson's, Northern and Southern Royal, Campbell, White-capped and Salvin's Albatrosses, giant petrels, Westland, White-chinned, Cape and Grey-faced (Great-winged) Petrels and Buller's, Sooty, Short-tailed and Hutton's Shearwater. Plenty of inshore action too with Spotted Shags, terns, gulls, Dusky Dolphins and New Zealand Fur Seals. Distant blows signalled a couple of Sperm Whales.

After gathering our gear from our motel we headed south and made a couple of stops en route to Arthur's Pass, the first at Saint Anne's Lagoon and the second at the Ashley River Estuary, Waikuku Beach. The first stop was packed with waterfowl including three Cape Barren Geese, members of a long-standing feral population. Two Black Stilts were the highlight of the Ashley Estuary stop, together with good numbers of Black-billed Gulls and distant views of Black-fronted Terns, two species that are increasingly under threat from habitat changes. Irrigation pressure and predation from introduced mammals head the list of threats. After Waikuku Beach our route took us inland through rural Canterbury, now dominated by its burgeoning dairy industry raising concerns about high nutrient flows into the water tables and rivers, a water resource which in turn is being depleted by irrigation schemes that pump water onto pasture for the cows.

We left the great outwash plains (Canterbury Plains) behind as we drove over Porter's Pass and entered the foothills of the Southern Alps, the mountainous backbone of New Zealand's South Island. At Bealey overlooking the Waimakariri River we checked into our accommodation, then headed straight out, first looking for NZ Falcon on the nearby flats, then making for Arthur's Pass, its alpine fields and Kea. After dinner we drove to the Hawdon River valley for a night walk to try for Great Spotted Kiwi and get a sighting of what was proving, rather amazingly, to be something of a nemesis bird for the trip so far, Morepork! We came back empty handed on both counts though heard plenty of the latter.

In the morning Angie opted to stay behind and keep company with the Keas at the hotel. The rest of us went back to the Hawdon Valley, our aim to find Orange-fronted Parakeet which we'd seen the previous year. The river was flowing fast, not flooded by any means. But ice-cold, snow-fed water makes for a bracing challenge. We all linked up – arms over shoulders for support in true Kiwi trapper-style – and took to the river. All was going well until Ron slipped and the current threatened to sweep him downstream. But the line held, especially with Steve holding firm and we managed to swing Ron back to the riverbank. But icy-cold water can take its toll and it was straight back to the hotel for him, a shower, warm dry clothes and Angie's care. The rest of the group stayed behind in the vicinity of the Hawdon Shelter for some forest species birding. But, by the time we were reunited, too much time had slipped by and the risk of further mishap meant for a decision to curtail the Hawdon excursion. A delightful walk for South Island Rifleman and Brown Creepers near Arthur's Pass Village, not to mention Kea and Weka, soon restored the group's spirits.



White-fronted Terns over the Pancake Rocks, Dolomite Point, Punakaiki (Tehzoon)

At Punakaiki we walked out to Dolomite Point (Pancake Rocks) then drove up Bullock Creek where we did a daytime walk along the route we'd follow that night. The drive was also to check the road conditions which proved to be okay (just) after some heavy rain. The night walk gave us five Great Spotted Kiwi heard (different birds), plenty of Kaka and Morepork calling and good views of Common Brushtail Possums (the living ones).

Next morning's drive south along the West Coast of the South Island is very scenic, especially as the land between the Southern Alps narrows the further south. We made stops at Hokitika for souvenirs, books and coffee, and Whataroa for whitebait sandwiches and a New Zealand Falcon flying right past the public loos. Fortunately it stayed around long enough for everyone to see it, although there was a frantic rush from the Mens. At Okarito Lagoon the tide was very full but we saw a number of Great Egrets, birds from the nearby colony where they nest with Royal Spoonbills and Little Shags (Cormorants) in tall podocarp forest. Great Egrets are something of a rarity in New Zealand, Kotuku to Maori and were treated as sacred. At Franz Josef we visited the glacier viewpoint and Peter's Pools, the latter lovely tarns surrounded by forest. Both walks are always good for small bush birds. However, the main reason for staying at Franz Josef is the opportunity to experience Okarito Kiwi with local guide Ian Cooper. The party wasn't disappointed with great views of one kiwi. A New Zealand Falcon flying and calling right over our motel capped a pleasant stay at this tourist hotspot.

After a very early start the next morning, again heading south, we stopped at Lake Paringa and did the walk out to Munro Beach. No Fiordland Penguins but plenty to see both in the forest and out to sea. At Haast Pass, the forested divide between the West Coast and Central Otago, we spent time on the Bridle Trail. In beautiful moss and lichen-covered mixed southern beech forest we had great views of Yellowhead, Brown Creeper, Yellow-crowned Parakeet, Rifleman and New Zealand Pigeon, with several Keas flying over calling loudly. After a lunch stop at Makarora it was over the Lindis Pass to the MacKenzie Basin, the outwash plain spread out at the feet of New Zealand's highest mountains.

We drove to an overlook at the edge of river terraces in the Ahuriri River – an excellent, if windy place this particular day to start our look for braided river birds which are such a feature of this area. Here we saw Black-fronted Tern, South Island Pied Oystercatcher, Banded Dotterel and Pied Stilt along with Paradise Shelduck, Black-billed and Black-backed Gulls and Black Shag. Heavy looking clouds were rolling with the nor-wester wind over the mountains. The nor-wester is a strong föhn-like wind that blows across the plains to the east of the mountains. It also creates stacked pressure layers above the Southern Alps, a feature attracting glider pilots from around the world to Omarama which is where we were staying, right next to the airfield in fact. We did a short evening walk down the Ahuriri River, little in the way of birds, a few Banded Dotterels on the river flats and Black-fronted Terns searching for small fish in the riffles and streams of the river. There were, however, some very colourful lupins in flower, always good for photos but a rampant weed that is choking the life out of breeding habitat for a number of birds.



Ahuriri River (Tehzoon)

Australasian Crested Grebe (Tehzoon)

The road from Omarama to Twizel passes a major hydro-power scheme which had a number of artificial lakes added to the landscape when it was built providing good habitat for Australasian Crested Grebe, New Zealand Scaup, Grey Teal and Black Shag. Heavy cloud cover and misty rain shrouded the mountains when we got to the Tasman River and Mount Cook National Park at the head of Lake Pukaki. Water levels in the lake were exceptionally high cutting off access to the gravel flats and breeding site for Wrybill and other

braided river specialists. Watching these birds feeding along the edges of the fast-flowing streams is always a delight, but something we missed on this trip. However, we did get to see a number of Black Stilts, a mix of adults and juveniles. There were also Black-fronted Tern, Pied Stilt, Banded Dotterel, South Island Pied Oystercatcher and Canada Geese at this site. Just when we thought we may not get a view of Mount Cook/Aoraki, New Zealand's highest peak, a window in the clouds appeared and we caught a brief glimpse the ice-capped summit peaks, long enough to say (or think)" fantastic" before the window closed.

We drove back over Lindis Pass and through to Lake Dunstan where once again lake levels were exceptionally high and there wasn't the usual concentration of birds. However, we did get good views of Australasian Crested Grebe, Australian Coot, New Zealand Scaup and Black-fronted Tern. A stop at one of Cromwell's big fruit stalls for ice cream, fresh fruit and packets of dried fruit made for a nice relaxing interlude on this drive through to Te Anau. We had an early dinner at our hotel then decided to head up the Milford Road for some early evening birding and to enjoy the spectacular scenery of the Eglington valley as well as taking a peek into the Hollyford just to make sure late season snow wasn't going to put a dampener on the following day's excursions. On the way back made a stop at one of the picnic areas for three Moreporks, nice views. There was no way we'd dip on that bird!



First sun, Eglington Valley(Tehzoon)

One of several close sightings of Yellowhead, this one in a small group in the Eglington Valley, Fiordland National Park (Tehzoon)

Next morning we wanted to beat the many buses that also make the trek to Milford Sound, and our early start was well rewarded with the first sun lighting up the great fortress-like walls of the Eglington Valley. We made a stop at Cascade Creek and walked the forest circuit, first out to Lake Gunn then down a secondary trail beside the river where it drains the lake in a narrow stream. The walk is mostly through majestic

red beech forest with a mixed lower canopy beside the river and it was there that we encountered a mixed flock of Yellowheads and Brown Creepers just over our heads.

At Homer Tunnel we set out along the Nature Trail, an easy graded loop track through moraine boulders and areas of fine alpine vegetation out of reach of the avalanches that sweep this area in spring. We took up positions along the track, listening and looking for sign of Rock Wrens, New Zealand's only truly alpine species. It took a little while but eventually we had great views of a pair working their way across the strewn boulders - 'where mountains cast their dice' - and threading their way through the tangle of vegetation between.



*Rock and Rock Wren, Homer Tunnel
Nature Walk (Tehzoon)*

With that little success behind us we drove through Homer Tunnel and down the Cleddau Valley to Milford Sound. We had absolutely stunning weather for this iconic scenic cruise and the wildlife really turned it on for us with several great views of Fiordland Penguins lolling on the surface right next to the boat, a large pod of bottle-nosed dolphins (thirty or so), a White-capped Albatross over open sea at the mouth of the fiord, New Zealand fur seals lazing on flat rocks within the fiord, plus Red-billed and Black-backed Gulls feeding or perched along steep rock edges, and small bush birds (Tomtit and New Zealand Fantail) in the forest clinging the near vertical fiord walls.



*Three Fiordland Penguins beside our
boat, Milford Sound. (Tehzoon)*

It was a leisurely drive on the way back, with a good number of photo stops. The one birding treat was to stop at Kiosk Creek and opening the door with the line, 'hey this is a great place for falcon' to have one fly calling across the clearing. Nice.

The drive south from Te Anau is via Manapouri more or less follows the Waiau River to the coast at Te Waewae Bay. We made four stops en route to Invercargill – at Rakatu Wetlands (a restoration project beside the Waiau River), Tautapere for coffee and morning tea at a cute café filled with history and knick knacks (a timely stop with rain sweeping through), Riverton and Aparima Estuary for waders and Royal Spoonbills, and Riverton Rocks for Stewart Island and Spotted Shags as well as taking our first look at Foveaux Strait and Stewart Island (Rakiura). The small plane flight across to Stewart Island is a great introduction to New Zealand's third island and in less than an hour we were immersed in Halfmoon Bay's spectacle of wheeling Kaka, large parrots behaving like rogue teenagers. The night-time kiwi trip with Bravo Adventures didn't disappoint with great views of two Stewart Island (Southern) Kiwi during the hike out to and along Ocean Beach.



*Stewart Island Brown Kiwi on
Ocean Breach, Stewart Island
(Tehzoon)*



*South Island Kaka feeding on tree
fuschia (Tehzoon)*

Our all day pelagic on board *Aurora* proved to be something of a Fiordland penguin extravaganza as we cruised along Stewart Island's south-eastern coast, sneaking in and out of coves – finding birds at sea, on rocks at the water's edge, standing back at the bush edge or in one case the entrance to a cave. The population and trends of this endangered penguin are poorly known and Stewart Island is a major stronghold for the species. As usual there was plenty to keep us all well-occupied throughout the trip, Tehzoon enthusiastically gave the skipper a hand helping at the chum bin!



Tehzoon helping the skipper (Chris Gaskin)

*Fiordland Penguins at Broad Bay, Stewart Island
(Tehzoon)*

After leaving Halfmoon Bay, we checked out the east side of the Neck as far as Ocean Beach, but no Yellow-eyed Penguins although good numbers of Subantarctic Skua, White-capped Albatross and, as expected, the steady build-up of Sooty Shearwaters the further south we went. We got our first Fiordland Penguin and the first Salvin's Albatrosses off Chew Tobacco Bay, then an intriguing mixed feeding group of Fiordland Penguins, Sooty Shearwaters and White-fronted Terns at the entrance to Port Adventure. The association between the penguins and terns was something we'd seen on previous trips but the very active shearwaters were a new dimension. We were enjoying pretty good, if overcast conditions so opted to head for North Trap after passing through the Lord's River Gap. From there it was albatrosses galore – Northern and Southern Royal, Salvin's, White-capped, Campbell and Gibson's Albatrosses – along with Cape Petrels, a number of Northern Giant Petrels and, throughout, many, many Sooty Shearwaters. The generous sea conditions completed an exhilarating spectacle. Our stop at North Trap, actually more of a steady drift, gave us Fairy Prions and two, possibly three Grey-faced Petrels. Recent tracking has shown these birds which breed in northern New Zealand venture quite a long way south below the Subtropical Convergence so encountering them here was not too surprising, just not commonly seen.

At Wilson's Point near the southern end of Stewart Island we entered Broad Bay and cruised close to the shore counting Fiordland Penguins and checking for any Antarctic Terns amongst the flocks of White-fronted Terns. We had plenty of albatross action as well with White-capped and Salvin's Albatrosses close to shore as the wind had picked up. We counted 18 penguins are four different locations within Broad Bay's lovely little coves - all Fiordland, no Yellow-eyed Penguins. More Fiordland Penguins followed as moved north around into Pegasus Inlet, great views a New Zealand Sea Lion fairly close to the boat and within the inlet



two large pods of Little Penguins – 30 in one and 18 in another. Port Pegasus is a very special place for its scenery alone, with a mostly wind-swept forest crowding the shoreline rocks which in turn gives way to native moorland that stretches up to the remarkable-looking bald granite domes. But the seabirds, the sea lions and fur seals, not to mention the birds on land that were mostly out of reach as we cruised through, make it one of New Zealand's hidden gems. We saw the last of the day's Fiordland Penguins as we moved through North Passage back out into open waters, a single bird in the water preening itself.

Back past Lords River Gap and Breaksea Islands we made one last stop just after seeing a Hutton's Shearwater fly by followed soon after by the first of several Cook's Petrels and a number of Common Diving Petrels. This stop proved rewarding adding a single Buller's Albatross, up to 10 White-chinned Petrels and three Mottled Petrels moving through within easy range, plus all the albatross species we'd seen earlier. We were back at Halfmoon Bay in a good time to relax over a lovely blue cod dinner at the pub, plenty to celebrate.



Our single Buller's Albatross (Tehzoon)

After a pretty good run of fine weather we had to get one really bad day and this was it. We all walked over to Golden Bay to meet our water taxi and head across Ulva Island. The grey skies, grey sea and a decent breeze heralded a difficult day. The poor conditions, and the low numbers of Weka, Saddleback and Stewart Island Robins following an eradication programme to rid the island of rats that had reinvaded, combined for challenging birding. But our group, despite a real drenching, delighted in the rich forest habitat (always luxurious with rain) and the birds we did see, which fortunately were most of the species we expected to encounter. Once back at our accommodating motel we were able to get a nice lunch before catching our flight back to the mainland. From Invercargill we drove through to our next overnight stop. Arrowtown is Queenstown's quiet neighbour, and has a strong 19th Century gold mining heritage; it was one of the gold rush towns.

Next morning we went through to the head of Lake Wakatipu and the Routeburn Valley for another forest walk in a stunning setting: Yellowhead, Brown Creeper, South Island Robin and Yellow-crowned parakeet (heard). A very nice scenic interlude before our drive through to Dunedin via Central Otago. Our lunch stop was at a delightful cidery at Cromwell, a garden setting full of roses and herbs. A pair of New Zealand falcons near Rae's Junction provided the birding highlight for this leg of the journey. First seen flying above a ridge they swooped across our path a kilometre or so further on then circled some pine trees, one chasing the other, before going out of sight.

We stayed at Portobello on the Otago Peninsula and there was a bit of time to check out some of the sights nearby before an expansive dinner at the 1908 Café, treating it almost as if this was our last meal together. The following night we would be late getting back from our trek out to Penguin Beach, but the team was so impressed with our meal we asked the café if they'd stay open for us. They would duly comply, but we had a full day ahead of us before we could finally sit down to our pre-ordered, very delicious dinner with plenty of sweet treats for Herman (and the rest) to choose from.

Penguin pancakes at Portobello's Penguin Café got the next day rolling, then out to Taiaroa Head for the spectacle of Spotted and Stewart Island Shags, the occasional Royal Albatross overhead, and the ever-expanding Red-billed Gull colony that has upset some of the staff working at the Royal Albatross Visitor Centre. The rest of the morning was spent in Dunedin city at the Otago Museum with its world-class exhibits including fossil fauna from the New Zealand region.



We can say that one of these dudes walked out of the Otago Museum, Steve with the moa collection. (Angeline Hamburg)

In the afternoon we did a short cruise aboard the Monarch, out through the heads of the Otago Harbour. Although somewhat jam-packed with budding wildlife enthusiasts it is quite an enjoyable ride and a good way to see those parts of Taiaroa Head not easily seen from land, especially its birdlife (Royal Albatross, Royal Spoonbills, Spotted, Stewart Island and Little Shags). There was plenty of seabird action out beyond the headland with Sooty Shearwaters aplenty, White-capped Albatrosses and Northern Giant Petrels, but our treat were two Hector's dolphins right beside the boat as we turned back towards the harbour as well as some Little Penguins.

Next, it was across to the other side of the Peninsula, first to Papanui Inlet (Black Swans, Sacred Kingfishers, Eastern bar-tailed Godwits, both species of oystercatcher) then out to Cape Saunders and Papanui Beach, very much the Peninsula's wild side. Yellow-eyed Penguins can be seen at a number of places on the Otago Peninsula and elsewhere along the Otago Coast. Papanui Beach is one of the largest mainland colonies – others exist on Stewart Island with the largest on New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands. We certainly had great views of birds coming ashore as well as a peek into a couple of nests with chicks. We even had to give way to a couple of birds that had right of way over the trail down to the beach. Although late back at Portobello we were welcomed by our hosts at café.

The end of the tour. On the way to the airport we dropped Herman off at the intriguingly named Hogwartz hostel (some fun and games and a chance to explore Dunedin's cultural side), everyone else taking flights north and home.

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

E = Endangered, **V** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient.

North Island Brown Kiwi ◊ *Apteryx mantelli* (**EN**) 3 at Purerua Peninsula, 1 heard at Tawharanui Open Sanctuary.

Okarito Brown Kiwi ◊ *Apteryx rowi* (**EN**) 1 at Okarito.

Southern Brown Kiwi ◊ *Apteryx australis* (**VU**) 2 at Stewart Island.

Little Spotted Kiwi ◊ *Apteryx owenii* (**NT**) 3 on Tiritiri Matangi Island.

Great Spotted Kiwi ◊ *Apteryx haastii* (**H**) (**VU**) 5 on Bullock Creek track, Punakaiki.

Californian Quail (introduced) *Lophortyx californicus* Seen in central North Island, Lindis Pass, near Queenstown.

Brown Quail (introduced) *Synoicus ypsilophorus* 10+ at Tawharanui Open Sanctuary, 10+ on Tiritiri Matangi Island.

Common Pheasant (introduced) *Phasianus colchicus* Seen or heard at several North Island locations.

Wild Turkey (introduced) *Meleagris gallopavo* 16 in North Auckland (seen while driving), also several near Taihape.

Black Swan (introduced) *Cygnus atratus* Common and widespread except Stewart Island.

Cape Barren Goose (introduced) *Cereopsis novaehollandiae* 3 at St Annes Lagoon.

Greylag Goose (introduced) *Anser anser* Seen in North Auckland and at Waikuku Beach (Canterbury).

Canada Goose (introduced) *Branta canadensis* Fairly common in both main islands.

Paradise Shelduck ◊ *Tadorna variegata* Common and widespread.

Blue Duck ◊ *Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos* (**EN**) 2 at Tongariro National Park.

Grey Teal *Anas gracilis* Seen at Mangere, Central North Island, Marlborough, Canterbury and Southland.

Brown Teal ◊ *Anas chlorotis* (**EN**) 13 at Tawharanui Open Sanctuary and Tiritiri Matangi Island (incl. 7 ducklings).

Mallard (introduced) *Anas platyrhynchos* Common and widespread.

Grey Duck *Anas superciliosa* 2 at Mangere. See notes.

Australasian Shoveler *Anas rhynchos* Common and fairly widespread in North Island and northern South Island.

New Zealand Scaup ◊ *Aythya novaeseelandiae* Seen in Central North Island and common on lakes in South Island.

Australasian Crested Grebe (Great C C) *Podiceps cristatus* Seen in MacKenzie Basin and lakes in Central Otago.

New Zealand Dabchick (N Z Grebe) ◊ *Poliocephalus rufopectus* (**VU**) 1 Mangere, 3 Hikurangi, 5 Tokaanu

Fiordland Penguin ◊ *Eudyptes pachyrhynchus* (**VU**) 9 at Milford Sound, 30+ at Stewart Island

Yellow-eyed Penguin ◊ *Megadyptes antipodes* (**EN**) 12 at Otago Peninsula (incl. chicks)

Little Penguin (Blue P) *Eudyptula minor* Seen Hauraki Gulf, Tiritiri Matangi, Motuara, Stewart Island, Otago Harbour.

Gibson's Albatross ◊ *Diomedea [antipodensis] gibsoni* (**VU**) Seen at Kaikoura, Stewart Island.

Southern Royal Albatross ◊ *Diomedea epomophora* (**VU**) Seen at Kaikoura, Stewart Island.

Northern Royal Albatross ◊ *Diomedea sanfordi* (**EN**) Seen at Kaikoura, Stewart Island, Otago Peninsula.

Campbell Albatross ◊ *Thalassarche impavida* (**VU**) 1 at Kaikoura, several Stewart Island (incl. immatures).

Black-browed Albatross ◊ *Thalassarche melanophrrys* (**NT**) 1 at Stewart Island.

Buller's Albatross ◊ *Thalassarche bulleri* (**NT**) 1 at Stewart Island.

White-capped Albatross ◊ *Thalassarche steadi* (**NT**) Kaikoura, West Coast, Milford Sound, Stewart Is, Otago Coast.

Salvin's Albatross ◊ *Thalassarche salvini* (**VU**) Seen Kaikoura, Stewart Island.

Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli* Seen Hauraki Gulf, Cook Strait, Kaikoura, Stewart Island, Otago Coast.

Cape Petrel *Daption capense* Seen Kaikoura, Stewart Island, Otago Coast.

Grey-faced Petrel (Great-winged P) *Pterodroma macroptera* Seen Cook Strait, Kaikoura, Stewart Island. See notes.

Mottled Petrel ♀ *Pterodroma inexpectata* (NT) 5 at Stewart Island.

Cook's Petrel ♀ *Pterodroma cookii* (VU) Seen in large numbers in Hauraki Gulf, 5 at Stewart Island.

Fairy Prion *Pachyptila turtur* Seen very large numbers in Hauraki Gulf, also Cook Strait and Stewart Island.

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* (VU) 3 at Kaikoura, 10 at Stewart Island.

Westland Petrel ♀ *Procellaria westlandica* (VU) Seen Cook Strait and Kaikoura.

Black Petrel (Parkinson's P) ♀ *Procellaria parkinsoni* (VU) 5 in Hauraki Gulf. See notes.

Buller's Shearwater ♀ *Puffinus bulleri* (VU) Abundant in Hauraki Gulf, 3 at Kaikoura.

Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes* Good numbers in Hauraki Gulf.

Fluttering Shearwater ♀ *Puffinus gavia* Abundant in Hauraki Gulf, common in Marlborough Sounds.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus* (NT) Huge nos Stewart Is, also Hauraki Gulf, Cook Strait, Kaikoura, West Coast

Hutton's Shearwater ♀ *Puffinus huttoni* (EN) Abundant at Kaikoura.

White-faced Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina* Abundant in Hauraki Gulf.

New Zealand Storm-petrel ♀ *Fregetta maoriana* (CR) 2 in Hauraki Gulf. See notes.

Common Diving-petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix* Abundant Hauraki Gulf, good numbers off Stewart Island.

Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator* Commonly seen along coast of North Island, northern South Island.

Little Pied Cormorant (Little Shag) *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos* Commonly seen along coast of all three islands.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* Lake Taupo, Manawatu, West Coast, MacKenzie Basin, Fiordland.

Pied Cormorant (Pied Shag) *Phalacrocorax varius* Seen on coast of all three islands.

Little Black Cormorant (Little Black Shag) *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* Various locations in North Island.

New Zealand King Shag ♀ *Leucocarbo carunculatus* (VU) 50+ Marlborough Sounds.

Stewart Island Shag ♀ *Leucocarbo chalconotus* (VU) Seen Southland, Stewart Island and Otago Peninsula.

Spotted Shag ♀ *Stictocarbo punctatus* Kaikoura, Canterbury, West Coast, Southland, Stewart Is and Otago.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bululcus coromandus* 6 near Ruakaka (North Auckland).

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae* Common and widespread on coasts and in open country.

White Heron (Great Egret) *Ardea modesta* 4 Okarito Lagoon, 1 Abbotsford near Dunedin.

Australasian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus* (EN) 1 Whangamarino, 6 Tokaanu (Lake Taupo).

Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia* Seen Mangere, Manawatu Estuary, Aparima Estuary (Riverton), Otago Peninsula.

Australasian Harrier (Swamp H) *Circus approximans* Common throughout, except Stewart Island.

New Zealand Falcon ♀ *Falco novaeseelandiae* (NT) 1 Tongariro NP (H), 3 West Coast, 1 Fiordland, 2 Raes Junction.

Banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis* 2 Tawharanui.

Weka ♀ *Gallirallus australis* (VU) 2 Arthur's Pass, common West Coast, (H only) Stewart Island.

Spotless Crake *Porzana tabuensis* 2 Tiritiri Matangi.

Pukeko (Australasian Swamphen) *Porphyrio melanotus* Common except inland South Island and Stewart Island.

South Island Takahe ♀ (reintroduced) *Porphyrio hochstetteri* (EN) 1 Tiritiri Matangi Island. See notes.

Australian Coot (Eurasian C) *Fulica atra* 2 Tongariro NP, St Annes Lagoon, MacKenzie Basin.

Red Knot (Lesser K) *Calidris canutus* Seen at Mangere Ponds, Manawatu Estuary, Otago Peninsula.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* 2 Mangere Ponds.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* 3 Mangere Ponds.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* Mangere, Manawatu & Ashley Estuaries, Okarito, Riverton, Stewart Is, Otago.

Ruddy Turnstone (Turnstone) *Arenaria interpres* 20 Aparima Estuary, Riverton.

Variable Oystercatcher ♀ *Haematopus unicolor* Seen at coastal sites on the three islands (largest numbers in north).

South Island Pied Oystercatcher ♀ *Haematopus finschi* More common in South Island.

Pied Stilt (White-headed S) *Haematopus leucocephalus* Common in North and South Islands.

Black Stilt *Haematopus novaezelandiae* (CR) 2 at Ashley River Estuary, 6 Tasman River.

New Zealand Dotterel ♀ *Charadrius obscurus* (EN) 5 Waipu, 3 Pakiri Beach, 10+ Manukau Harbour.

Banded Dotterel ♀ (Double-banded Plover) *Charadrius bicinctus* 2 Lake Grassmere, seen in Mackenzie Basin.

Wrybill ♀ *Anarhynchus frontalis* (VU) 30+ Mangere Ponds.

Masked Lapwing (Spur-winged Plover) *Vanellus miles* Common throughout.

Subantarctic Skua (Southern or Brown S) *Catharacta antarctica* Pairs seen at several locations Stewart Island.

Arctic Skua (Parasitic Jaeger) *Stercorarius parasiticus* 1 Marlborough Sounds

Southern Black-backed Gull (Kelp G) *Larus dominicanus* Common bird throughout. See notes.

Red-billed Gull ♀ *Larus scopulinus* Common in all coastal locations.

Black-billed Gull ♀ *Larus bulleri* (EN) 10+ Manukau Harbour, Kaikoura, and many coastal sites

Fairy Tern ♀ *Sternula nereis davisi* (VU) 3 Waipu. See notes.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* Seen Waipu, Sandspit, Mangere, Manawatu Estuary, Marlborough Sounds etc

Black-fronted Tern ♀ *Chlidonias albostriatus* (EN) Mostly inland Marlborough, Canterbury, MacKenzie Basin etc

White-fronted Tern *Sterna striata* Seen coastal locations on all three islands. See notes.

Rock Pigeon (introduced) (R Dove) *Columba livia* Seen occasionally North and South Islands.

Barbary Dove (introduced) *Streptopelia risoria* (LO) 1 Muriwai

Spotted Dove (introduced) *Streptopelia chinensis* 1 Mangere

New Zealand Pigeon ♀ *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae* Common bird in forest and scrub, on all islands.

Kaka ♀ *Nestor meridionalis* (EN) Tawharanui, Central North Island, Hawdon, Punakaiki, Fiordland, Stewart Island.

Kea ♀ *Nestor notabilis* (VU) Seen Arthurs Pass, Franz Josef, Haast Pass, Fiordland, Routeburn (H).

Eastern Rosella (introduced) *Platycercus eximius* 1 Northland, 6 Tawharanui, 6 Central North Island.

Red-crowned Parakeet ♀ *Cyanoramphus novaeseelandiae* (VU) Seen Tawharanui, Tiritiri Matangi, Stewart Island.

Yellow-crowned Parakeet ♀ *Cyanoramphus auriceps* Seen Pureora, Hawdon, Punakaiki, Haast Pass, Routeburn(H).

Shining Cuckoo (S Bronze C) *Chrysococcyx lucidus* Seen at Whangamarino, and heard at several locations.

Long-tailed Cuckoo ♀ (L-t Koel) *Eudynamys taitensis* 2 Kaimanawa Forest.

Morepork (Southern Boobook) *Ninox novaeseelandiae* 3 Eglington (Fiordland), H in many places.

Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus* Seen on all three islands in coastal locations and forests.

Rifleman ♀ *Acanthisitta chloris* Seen Hawdon, Haast Pass, Fiordland, Routeburn, H Tongariro NP.

Rock Wren ♀ (South Island W) *Xenicus gilviventris* (VU) 2 Homer Tunnel, Fiordland.

North Island Kokako ♀ (reintroduced) *Callaeas wilsoni* (EN) Seen Tiritiri Matangi Island.

North Island Saddleback ♀ (reintroduced) *Philesturnus rufusater* (NT) Seen Tawharanui, Tiritiri Matangi Island.

South Island Saddleback ♀ (reintroduced) *Philesturnus carunculatus* (NT) Seen Motuara, Ulva Island.

Stitchbird ♀ (reintroduced) *Notiomystis cincta* (VU) Seen Tiritiri Matangi Island.

Grey Warbler ♀ *Gerygone igata* Common bird in forest and scrub.

Bellbird ♀ *Anthonis melanura* Common bird in forest and scrub (except Northland), also seen Auckland city.

Tui ♀ *Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae* Common bird.

Whitehead ♀ *Mohoua albicilla* Numerous at Tawharanui, Tiritiri (reintroduced), several locations Central North Island.

Yellowhead ♀ *Mohoua ochrocephala* (EN) 2 Haast Pass, 4 Eglington Valley (Fiordland), 5 Routeburn.

Brown Creeper ♀ *Mohoua novaeseelandiae* Seen in most forest locations south from Arthurs Pass NP.

Australian Magpie (introduced) *Gymnorhina tibicen* Common and widespread in open country.

New Zealand Fantail ♀ *Rhipidura fuliginosa* Seen in forest and scrub in most locations.

Tomtit ♀ *Petroica macrocephala* Seen Central North Island and most forest/scrub locations south from Arthurs Pass.

North Island Robin ♀ *Petroica longipes* Seen Tawharanui, Tiritiri Matangi, Central North Island.

South Island Robin ♀ *Petroica australis* Motuara, West Coast, Haast Pass, Fiordland, Stewart Island, Routeburn.

Skylark (Eurasian S) (introduced) *Alauda arvensis* Common and widespread

Fernbird ♀ *Bowdleria punctata* 3 Tokaanu, H Tiririki Matangi, Okarito

Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis* Seen in many locations and habitats.

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena* Common and widespread (except Stewart island and Central Otago)

Blackbird (Eurasian B) (introduced) *Turdus merula* Common and widespread

Song Thrush (introduced) *Turdus philomelos* Common and widespread

Starling (Common S) (introduced) *Sturnus vulgaris* Common and widespread

Myna (Common M) (introduced) *Acridotheres tristis* Common bird in northern North Island

House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* Common and widespread

New Zealand Pipit ♀ *Anthus novaeseelandiae* 1 Tawharanui, 2 Central North Island, 1 Kaikoura, 2 Arthurs Pass

Dunnock (Hedgesparrow) (introduced) *Prunella modularis* Kaikoura, Arthurs Pass, Fiordland, Stewart Island etc

Chaffinch (introduced) *Fringilla coelebs* Common and widespread (incl. forest and subalpine areas)

Greenfinch (introduced) *Chlors chloris* Common and widespread

Goldfinch (introduced) *Carduelis carduelis* Common and widespread

Redpoll (introduced) *Carduelis flammea* Seen Southland, Stewart Island

Yellowhammer (introduced) *Emberiza citrinella* Common and widespread

MAMMALS

Common Brushtail Possum (introduced) *Trichosurus vulpecula* Seen Purerua Peninsula, Punakaiki, Okarito.
European Rabbit (introduced) *Oryctolagus cuniculus* Seen North Auckland, drier areas of South Island.
European Hare (introduced) *Lepus europaeus* Seen Central North Island, Arthurs Pass, MacKenzie Basin.
New Zealand Fur Seal *Arctocephalus forsteri* Hauraki Gulf, Kaikoura, West Coast, Milford Sound, Stewart Island
New Zealand Sea Lion ♀ *Neophoca hookeri* Seen Stewart island, Otago Peninsula.
Bryde's Whale *Balaenoptera brydei* 1 Hauraki Gulf.
Great Sperm Whale *Physeter catodon* 1 Kaikoura
Orca (Killer Whale) *Orcinus orca* 1 Hauraki Gulf
Dusky Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus obscurus* 2 large pods seen Kaikoura.
Common Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* c.30 seen Milford Sound.
Hector's Dolphin ♀ *Cephalorhynchus hectori* 2 seen off Taiaroa Head (Otago Harbour)
Feral Cat (introduced) *Felis catus* 1 seen Tongariro NP.

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Grey Duck *Anas rhynchotis*

The New Zealand grey duck population is believed to be extensively hybridised with introduced mallards to such an extent that few pure grey ducks may now exist, hence its “critical” conservation status. While this presumption is based entirely on phenotype, as definitive genetic studies have yet to be undertaken, the diversity of soft part and plumage characteristics of most grey duck-like New Zealand birds compared to those in Australia lends support to this belief. (Williams, M.J. 2013. Grey duck. In Miskelly, C.M. (ed.) *New Zealand Birds Online*. www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz)

Grey-faced Petrel (Great-winged P) *Pterodroma macrocoptera gouldi*

Two subspecies: the nominate *Pt. m. macrocoptera* breeds at Tristan da Cunha, Gough, Prince Edward, Marion, Kerguelen and Crozet Islands, and islands off Western Australia; *Pt. m. gouldi* breeds only in New Zealand.(Taylor, G.A. 2013. Grey-faced petrel. In Miskelly, C.M. (ed.) *New Zealand Birds Online*. www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz). Recent genetic work supports separating Grey-faced Petrel and Great-winged Petrel (Lawrence, H.A., Scofield, R.P., Taylor, G.A., Lyver, P.O'B., Gleeson, D.M. (in prep). Genetic, morphological and behavioural evidence supports the treatment of Grey-faced Petrel as a separate species, *Pterodroma gouldi*)

Black Petrel (Parkinson's P) *Procellaria parkinsoni*

Black petrels have been assessed as the most at-risk seabird species from commercial fishing in New Zealand waters (Richard, Y.; Abraham, E.R.; Filippi, D. 2011. *Assessment of the risk to seabird populations from New Zealand commercial fisheries*. Final Research Report for Ministry of Fisheries projects IPA2009/19 and IPA2009/20. Ministry of Fisheries, Wellington. 137 p.). By-catch has also been recorded in South America – northern Peru and Ecuador (ACAP).

New Zealand Storm-petrel *Fregetta maoriana*

Genetic analysis has confirmed that the NZ Storm-petrel should be placed in *Fregetta* (Robertson, B.C., Stephenson, B.M., & Goldstien, S.J. 2011. When rediscovery is not enough: Taxonomic uncertainty hinders conservation of a critically endangered bird. *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 61(3): 949-952.). Also, recent work by C. Gaskin, M. Rayner et al has led to the discovery of breeding sites on Little Barrier Island (Te Hauturu-o-Toi) in 2013.

South Island Takahe *Notornis hochstetteri*

Text below extracted from Gill B.J.; Bell, B.D.; Chambers, G.K.; Medway, D.G.; Palma, R.L.; Scofield, R.P.; Tennyson, A.J.D.; Worthy, T.H. 2010. *Checklist of the birds of New Zealand, Norfolk and Macquarie Islands, and the Ross Dependency, Antarctica*. 4th edition. Wellington, Te Papa Press and Ornithological Society of New Zealand. Pages 177-178 & 187-189

Porphyrio hochstetteri (A.B. Meyer)

South Island Takahe

Notornis Mantellii Ellman, 1861: *Zoologist* 19: 7470 – New Zealand. Junior primary homonym of *Notornis mantelli* Owen, 1848.

Notornis hochstetteri A.B. Meyer, 1883: *Abbildungen von Vögeln-Skeletten* 1(4–5): 28, pls 34–37 – North of Mararoa R., 3.5 miles east Whitestone R. and 9 miles southeast of south end of Lake Te Anau, Fiordland.

Notornis parkeri Forbes, 1892: *Trans. N.Z. Inst.* 24: 187 – Half a mile east of Patience Bay, Lake Te Anau, Fiordland.

Mantellornis hochstetteri (A.B. Meyer); Mathews & Iredale 1913, *Ibis* 1 (10th ser.): 216.

Porphyrio mantelli hochstetteri (A.B. Meyer); Checklist Committee 1990, *Checklist Birds N.Z.*: 125.

Porphyrio hochstetteri (A.B. Meyer); Holdaway *et al.* 2001, *New Zealand Journ. Zool.* 28(2): 132, 178.

South Island. Four live specimens and one skeleton, recently dead, were collected in the south-west corner of the South Island between 1849 and 1898. Then assumed to be extinct until rediscovered by G.B. Orbell (Nov. 1948) west of Lake Te Anau, and subsequently found to be widespread in the Murchison Mountains. Wild population currently maintained by release of captive-bred birds and intensive predator control. Unsuccessfully re-introduced to the Stuart Mountains, Fiordland, 1987–92. Introduced to Kapiti, Maud, Mana and Tiritiri Matangi Islands since the late 1980s; more recently to Rarotoka (Centre) Island (Foveaux Strait) and to Maungatautari (Waikato). Bones widespread in Late Pleistocene and Holocene fossil sites and in middens (Trewick & Worthy 2001), more often at lowland than subalpine altitudes.

Southern Black-backed Gull *Larus dominicanus*

Known widely as ‘kelp gull’ in other countries. In New Zealand this name is less applicable. Here it is common in estuaries and harbours, rocky and sandy shores and riverbeds, but also occurs inland over farmland, and even subalpine tussockland and herbfields.(information from Miskelly, C.M. 2013. Southern black-backed gull. *In* Miskelly, C.M. (ed.) *New Zealand Birds Online*. www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz).

White-fronted Tern *Sterna striata*

The New Zealand population has declined markedly over the last 40 years and is currently regarded as threatened by (from Mills, J.A. 2013. White-fronted tern. *In* Miskelly, C.M. (ed.) *New Zealand Birds Online*. www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz. R.G., Sagar, P.M., Scofield, R.P., Taylor, G.A. 2013. Conservation status of New Zealand birds, 2012. *New Zealand Threat Classification Series 4*. Department of Conservation, Wellington. 22pp.).

Fairy Tern ♀ *Sternula nereis* (VU)

Three subspecies: nominate *nereis* in Australia, *exsul* in New Caledonia, and *davisae* in New Zealand. This small, dainty coastal tern is the most threatened of New Zealand’s endemic birds. The relict population of fewer than a dozen pairs survives between Whangarei in the north and Auckland to the south. The tiny population is gravely threatened by introduced predators and human disturbance and encroachment. They are intensively managed during the breeding season (Pulham, G.; Wilson, D. 2013. Fairy tern. *In* Miskelly, C.M. (ed.) *New Zealand Birds Online*. www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz).