

New Zealand

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White-capped Albatross

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First day, south of Auckland

Diary

This trip to North, South and Stewart Island was booked directly with the local company Wrybill Birding Tours. A company owned by Sav Saville and Brent Stephenson, both well known birders and also known for their rediscovery of the New Zealand Storm-petrel in 2003. We were all in all seven who decided to make this trip.



Auckland

From UK Cheryl&Tim, Hazel&Phil and Bill, Marlene from Germany and myself as the only Swede. My flight with Finnair started Nov 1st from Stockholm. Changed flight to NewZealandAir in Osaka. Finally in Auckland in the morning Nov 3rd. Checked in Rose Park Hotel close to the city park with the same name.



Silvereve

One goal for myself was to see representatives from the five endemic bird families in NZ

3/11 Auckland

After check-in I did some birding in the nearby Rose Park and had my first NZ endemics. Silvereye, Grey Gerygone, a pair of Tui with young, Red-billed Gull.



Tui

I was surprised of the many introduced birds like Eurasian Blackbird, Starling, Song Trush and Greenfinch. It was remarkable that all birds feeding on the ground were of introduced species. I also took a walk in the central Auckland and had a nice lunch in an Asian restaurant. Later that evening I met Bill, my room mate for coming three weeks, and we joined for dinner in the hotel .

4/11 Tamaki, Muriwai, Waiwera and Trounson Kauri Forest. First Kiwi!

Up early birding the park again. Some new endemics were NZ Pigeon, Tui and NZ Bellbird and also Sacred Kingfisher.

After breakfast I also met Hazel&Phil and Cheryl&Tim, who also had stayed at the hotel. At about 9 we were picked up by Phil Hammond, our guide for next 3 weeks. Marlene, the last participant, was picked up at a hostel in Auckland.



Point England

Phil knew of a place where the rare Shore Plover recently had been reported, so instead of going north according to the itinerary we took off south to Point England nearby Tamaki Estuary. We did not find the plover in the grasslands but we spotted some other new species like numerous Pukeko (Purple Swamphen), Pied and Variable Oystercatcher, Paradise Shelduck, White-faced Heron and some endemic NZ Dotterels with their chicks hiding in the grass.

We chose our lunch favourites in a 'bakery' and brought it with us. Those NZ 'bakeries' are really not bakeries but they are perfect when you are out birding all day and want to save time. Lots of freshly-made sandwiches and warm pies, a good choice of soft drinks and, best of all, the lovely NZ coffee.



The coffee in NZ is really outstanding, but with have confusing names on the different tastes and sizes.



Then we took off north, following the initial itinerary. Arriving at Muriwai north of Auckland at 12:15.



Fantastic views over the bay and the huge breeding colony of Australasian Gannet on the Sugarloaf Rock, maybe up to 3000 birds.



Muriwai

Also the White-fronted Terns were breeding there with about 150 pairs. Next stop was around some sewage ponds outside Waiwera. NZ Dabchick, Grey Teal, Grey Duck, Australasian Shoveller and some NZ (Grey) Fantails were new birds. Nearby we stopped for two Australasian Harriers.

Then we went north along the Wairoa river, passing Dargaville heading for Trounson. We made a stop for a nice dinner and beer in a country pub, called Kaihu Tavern. We checked in at a motel with small cottages outside Trounson.

At 20:00 we headed out with torches for the first thrilling kiwi walk with a local guide in Trounson Kauri Park. After two laps and almost two hours on the forest gangway we stopped standing in a grassy clearing and made use of our torches and ears. And finally I could get my bins on a male Northern Brown Kiwi. Yippii, first kiwi and first new family! We also had a pair of Morepork before going back for a nice sleep after a very long but rewarding day.

5/11 Kauri Forest and eastern coastline



We started the new day going north to the Waipoua Kauri forest through ancient and fantastic Kauri trees and other flora. We walked the trail listening and looking for birds down to Tane Mahuta. That's the name of the oldest living Kauri tree. It is 2000 years old and is huge with a height of 51 meters and a girth of 14 meters.



(C) Roger Holmberg

I was also lucky to spot our first North Island Tomtit, a male of this lovely black-and-white little flycatcher gem.

We went eastwards to Dargaville to a bakery and had our lunch at a riverside park there.



(C) Roger Holmberg

Waipu River Mouth

Next stop was the Waipu River Mouth Wildlife Refuge where the main target was the Fairy Tern. There are only 36 birds of which only 3 females left in the world. This Tern sub-species might soon be gone. Watching Variable Oystercatchers, Bar-tailed Godwits which return from nesting sites in Alaska and NZ Dotterels for a while a Fairy Tern came in hovering towards us. Success.



(C) Roger Holmberg

Tawharanui Regional Park

Next birding stop was at Tawharanui Regional Park east of Workworth, on the peninsula between Omaha and Kawau bays.

Main attractions here were Buff-banded Rail, we saw 3 + juveniles, and the rare Brown Teal, we spotted 7 of them. We also had our first Whitehead, the fast moving creature almost impossible to photograph.



(C) Roger Holmberg

Buff-banded Rail, Tawharanui Regional Park

The Whitehead belongs to the endemic bird genus NZ Creepers and might be a new bird family in the future.

On the way back we also had Laughing Kookaburra, introduced here from Australia 150 years ago. I felt quite ambivalent whether to count all those introduced species or not.

One good thing with this trip was that we had almost every dinner in a good or even very good restaurant. A second good thing was that two dishes of three were included. And a third good thing was the delicious and varied à la carte lists.

This evening we had our dinner and night in Warkworth. I fell asleep very keen and eager on our first pelagic tomorrow. In the famous Hauraki Gulf!

6/11 Pelagic on Hauraki Gulf



Sandspit Wharf

I woke up tensed by expectations for what should come to be one of two top days. After a short drive to Sandspit Wharf in Kawau Bay we boarded M/S Norma Jean at 8:00. Nice sunny weather and a quite calm sea. Except us, there was also a small Spanish birding group from Zaragoza led by clever Dani López-Velasco on the vessel.



The captain had also loaded the ship with lots of goodies for chumming...

Heading north-east the first seabirds were flocks of Buller's Shearwater and then flocks of Fluttering and Flesh-footed Shearwater.



Fluttering Shearwaters and more, Hauraki Gulf
Every now and then the sea was 'boiling' with krill and fish and that attracted huge flocks of Shearwaters and Fairy Prion.



New Zealand Storm-petrel, Hauraki Gulf
Of course we all wanted the rediscovered New Zealand Storm-petrel and after passing Little Barrier Island we spotted our first of total eight birds on this wonderful day mixing up with the many White-faced Storm-petrels.



As the weather gods were with us we continued further north-east. The endemic and uncommon Black [Parkinson] Petrel was showing up as did Grey-faced Petrel, Sooty and Short-tailed Shearwater, Cooks Petrel, Common Diving-petrel and our first Northern Giant Petrel.



Black Petrel (Parkinson's), Hauraki Gulf
Approaching the Fanal Island and the deep sea the Albatrosses showed up. Shy (NZ White-capped), Black-browed, Salvin's and the very big Wandering (Gibson's) Albatross.



Salvin's Albatross, Hauraki Gulf
Outside Fanal Island were huge flocks of Fairy Prion and Fluttering Shearwater. Now time was about 15:00 and we turned around heading back.



Grey Petrel, Hauraki Gulf
We also had close sighting of one Grey Petrel, the first one ever for both our captain and our guide in Hauraki Gulf.



Gibson's Albatross, Hauraki Gulf
Suddenly Dani shouted out for Little Shearwater. And some of us were lucky to see two of this scarce bird passing by. Thank you Dani!
Almost back home the captain made a loop close to shore for us to see the rare North Island sub-species of Weka.
We landed in Sandspit at 18:30. During this 10,5 hour trip we had also enjoyed Common and Bottle-nosed Dolphin, Long-finned Pilot Whale and our first Little Penguin.
Happy and tired we all enjoyed the excellent dinner back in Warkworth.



Fairy Prion, Hauraki Gulf

7/11 Tiritiri Matangi Island

After years of farming this little Tiritiri island has been restored, mammalian predators have been eradicated and native plants are back. Threatened endemic bird species from both North and South Islands can now reproduce in peace on the island.

We caught the 10:00 modern passenger ferry in Whangaparaoa for a 20 minute trip to this beautiful island.



After landing, on our walk up to the bunkhouse, our home for the night, we spotted endemics such as Fernbird, Red-crowned Parakeet (Kakariki), North Island Saddleback, Whitehead, NZ Bellbird, Tui and NZ Pigeon.



Once up at the bunkhouse we listened to the ranger Dave introducing us to the bunkhouse rules, settled in, had our lunch. We set off on the longest walk of the tour, about 6 kilometres.

Every now and then we made use of our umbrellas and other rain protection gear because of the many short showers on this afternoon.

We searched our ways towards the north-eastern dams. And the walk was very productive. In order we found several Tuis feeding on flowers, Bellbird, Brown Quail, quite a few North Island Saddleback, a couple of Kokako feeding on the ground



In a more open land we spotted our first Takahe and a Fernbird feeding in the low bushes. We had close contacts with the totally unafraid North Island Robin. Other birds seen were NZ Fantail, Red-crowned Parakeet and Pukeko. We had nice spottings of both male and female Stitchbird up in the trees. At the dams we also had a Spotless Crake.



At the end of our walking loop, Marlene and I went up to the beautiful lighthouse. One bird of a nesting pair of Takahe was showing close between the lighthouse and the ranger's house. A really heavy bird in two aspects. Photos!

Back to the bunkhouse at 18:30 we started preparing dinner. No restaurant on the island so NZ Phil had brought prime fillet steak, fresh mixed salad and dessert. UK Phil prepared the steak in an excellent way and the meal was perfect after this intense day in the field. We also got some information from the researchers and volunteers working on Tiri.



But this was not the end of our birding day. At 20:00 we went out in the dark searching for Little-spotted Kiwi. To search for Kiwis is much of standing still for long period listening for calls and prassel. To not disturb the birds the torches are overlayed with a thin reddish paper. After a couple of hours of walking and standing in the night we heard rassel nearby in the forest when standing on the trail. We waited for some minutes – very thrilling. I heard a silent snore close to me and when I looked beside me there was one Little-spotted Kiwi maximum one meter from me. Happiness, Yes! The bird which was a female went back into the forest and after a while we heard female and male calling each other. As not everyone had seen the bird we spent a reasonably time trying to find them again without success.



The bunkhouse, Tiritiri

Coming back to the bunkhouse for sleep, time was almost 00:00.

What a day it had been. Except the kiwi I did get two more new birding families. The

Kakapo and Sadleback belong to the family Wattlebirds, and Stitchbird belongs to the family Stitchbirds. Double Yippie!

8/11 Tiritiri, Manakau to Miranda



Wake up and breakfast in the bunkhouse. At 8:00 we took our packing for a walk down to the wharf. Lovely morning with clear sky, fresh air and sunshine. Down at the beach trail nice spotting on a group of Red-crowned Parakeet. Some Variable Oystercatchers were looking for breakfast in the shoreline.



At 9:30 our water taxi arrived taking us back to Whangaparaoa. Two Little Blue Penguins looked up from the calm sea. Some Little Pied Cormorant welcomed us in Whangaparaoa harbor. As we were travelling south to Miranda this day we made a stop once again in Point England for the Shore Plover. No luck this time either. Next stop was at Mangere Inlet where a fast coming and heavy rain surprised us. We found shelter in a birding hide and had views of thousands of Bar-tailed Godwits and Red Knots.



Bar-tailed Godwits and Red Knots, Mangere Inlet
 A short move to the large dams in Mangere where we scanned for waders. And wait a little, isn't it Wrybills out there? Yes, for sure there were six of this charismatic species out there. Our guide felt a relief at last finding his company logo-bird.

We continued southwards and arrived at Miranda Hot Springs at 20:00 for the night.

9/11 Whitianga Pelagic

The morning started at the Miranda 'Stilt Ponds' where we found 300 Pied Stilt and almost 40 Wrybill. A new one was Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.



We made our way along the scenic Coromandel peninsula up to Whitianga. At 13:00 we entered M/S Sapphire in Whitianga harbour for a half day pelagic. Although the sea was calm we had quite a few tubenoses. Northern Royal Albatross. Buller's, Fluttering, Flesh-footed, Sooty and Short-tailed Shearwater. Northern Giant, Cape, Grey-faced and almost 100 Cook's Petrels.



The main attraction here is Pycroft's Petrel which nests on Mercury Islands.



Needle Island, Whitianga pelagic

We could identify at least two Pycroft's from Cook's just outside those islands. Someone told that the majority of "cookilaria" petrels seen in the morning are Cook's but most of the individuals seen later in the day, beside on their breeding islands are Pycroft's.

One NZ Storm-petrel, twenty White-faced Storm-petrel and ten Common Diving-petrel was also put on the day's list.

We were also lucky to see a group of seven Long-finned Pilot Whales.

Landing in Whitianga harbour at 20:00 for dinner and night.

10/11 Pureora Forest

We started our transport south-west to Taupo at 8:00. First along Coromandel peninsula, then some quite boring farmlands and finally reaching Pureora Forest, an ancient podocarp forest, north-west of Lake Taupo, at 14:00. Along the road we saw some Australasian Harriers.



Podocarp trees, Pureora Forest

Just getting out of the car in Pureora I saw three Kaka parrots flying over and later on I found a pair of Yellow-crowned Parakeet high up in the canopy. One Kakapo was heard. We also had our first NZ Falcon, NZ Pipit and Long-tailed Cuckoo in the neighborhood.

On our way down to Taupo we stopped at Whakamaru for a good array of waterfowl like Australasian Shoveller male in full breeding plumage.



Lake Taupo

Dinner in Taupo at a lakeside restaurant and night in a motel in town.

The Kaka belongs to the endemic bird family NZ Parrots and that was my fourth new family. Yippii!

11/11 Taupo and Napier

This day we headed south-east along the Taupo-Napier highway. Halfway to Napier we took off east towards Boundary Stream in Ruahine Forest Park along a winding, bumpy gravel road.



Waitara road, taupo-Napier

At the forest park we walked for an hour or so in a most pristine and lovely forest.



Entrance to Boundary Stream reserve

Birds there were North Island Robin, Tomtit, NZ Fantail, NZ Pigeon, Grey Gerygone (Warbler). But best of all was the close looks at some North Island Rifleman. The Rifleman belongs to the family NZ Wrens. So this was my fifth and last new bird family. Yippii!



At the entrance was a Kiwi warning sign so of course we had to take some photos of the group in front of the sign. While doing that we also had three Shining Cuckoos. Continuing towards Napier a short stop at Lake Tutira gave nothing of interest.

Whilst a stop at the wetlands just north of Napier presented one Black-fronted Dotterel and some 30 Pied Stilt. And in Anderson Park (from Sweden I suppose) our first Black-billed Gull and a White-faced Heron showed up nicely in front of the cameras.



Bubble celebrating the 5th new bird family

With help from Phil I could also do some purchase in a supermarket in Napier. At 19:30 we checked in Parkland Motor Lodge in Turangi. Before dinner I invited everyone to celebrate my fifth bird family with glasses of Veuve Clicquot Brut and some snacks bought in Napier. After that a lovely dinner in the lodge restaurant. One of these moments!

12/11 Turangi area to Foxton

The main target for today was to find the NZ enigmatic endemic Blue Duck, one of those duck species living in streams.



Looking for the Blue Duck, Tongariro river

We searched for it along a stretch of the Tongariro river, south of Turangi. At the sixth stop at the Turangi Tokaunu Powerstation we finally found a pair of

Blue Duck in reasonable distance. A quite heavy and modest distinguished coloured duck.



Tokaunu Bay, Lake Taupo

We brought our lunch from a bakery and ate it along the shore in the southern-most part of lake Taupo. Walking out on a long old jetty we were rewarded with Little Black, Great and Little Pied Cormorants, NZ Scaup, NZ Grebe (Dabchick) and heard Australasian Bittern.

Then we left at 13:00 going south-west towards Foxton.



We went along the Desert Road and stopped for stunning snow-capped volcanos at Tongariro National Park ('Mordor'), and pressed on through the Tongariro National Park (gum-boot throwing capital of the world – watch out Finland).



Foxton Estuaries

We dropped off our bags and headed for the Foxton Estuaries (Manawatu). It was low tide but we found a small group of waders, Red Knots and a couple of Wrybill, getting a real nice time for photos.



Wrybill, Foxton Estuaries

Marlene also found an Eastern Little Tern for us.

Night at Celtic hotel, Foxton.

13/11 Foxton and to South Island

A bird alert made us start at a pond in Foxton. It was a White-eyed Duck (Hardhead), a wrong navigated poor thing from Australia.

We returned to yesterday's estuary in Foxton. Same birds as yesterday but also two Golden Plovers. One of them was definitely Pacific Golden Plover but the other one was more grey and with longer wings. Maybe an American Golden Plover?

On the way down to Wellington, we made a stop at the Waikanae estuary where we got very close views of feeding Royal Spoonbills and beautiful Red-billed Gulls. . Lunch on the beach.



The harbour in Wellington

At 15:45 the Cook Strait ferry took off. We stood mostly out on deck with our bins.



There were quite good numbers of seabirds. Salvin's, White-capped, NZ Wandering, Northern Royal and Buller's Albatross, Cape, Westland, Northern Giant Petrel, Fairy Prion, Fluttering Shearwater, Australasian Gannet, Eastern Little and White-fronted Tern. And some Dusky Dolphins showed up along the ship. At 18:45 we landed in picturesque Picton.



Picton village

Dinner in the village and night at central Gateway Motel

14/11 Marlborough Sounds to Kaikura

This morning we took a smaller boat for a trip in the beautiful Marlborough Sounds.



The rare NZ King Shag was a main target. And we soon found 4 of them roosting on a cliff. And soon after that, 45 more birds. That total is about 10% of the world population, all living in Marlborough Sounds. We also had some beautifully colored Spotted Shag.



We landed at the protected Blumine Island where we had close contact with three Wekas, saw some Bellbird, Rifleman and Tui. New species was Orange-crowned Parakeet. The ranger offered some scones and coffee.



Matuara Island, Charlotte Sound

Next landing was on Matuara Island where we saw South Island Robin, Bellbird, Arctic Skua and the first seen NZ Falcon on the tour.

On the way back some Dusky Dolphins made company with us and the boat. Back in Picton we chose our lunches at a Dutch bakery and went south at 13:15. We stopped at a riverside having our packed lunch. While eating we had three beautiful Black-fronted Terns foraging along the river and another NZ Falcon.

We did a short boardwalk at Wairau lagoon/saltmarsh –great habitat but no new species, although Royal Spoonbills flying low overhead were spectacular with the sun shining through their wings. Further south at Lake Grassmere/ Marlborough Salt ponds we saw Banded Dotterel, a pair with two young chicks and additional three more adult birds. Really nice.



Waipapa Bay, north of Kaikura

Stunning scenery on the seaside road towards Kaikura. Just before Kaikura, a

stop at a cliff-top, looking down on sunbathing 25 NZ Fur Seals and close views of 15 Spotted Shags on their nests.



Kaikura mountains

At 18:15 we checked in to Alpine View Motel with fantastic alpine surroundings and had dinner at Tutis Indonesian Restaurant which received high praise from all the team. I had a fantastic platter with green-lipped mussels in hot and spicy tomato sauce. Mmm.



15/11 Kaikura with pelagic

This was the day for the famous Kaikura pelagic. Not as long as the one in Hauraki, only 2,5h, but the really deep sea comes very close to the shore.



Kaikura harbour

The skipper had brought fish for chumming, which we did every now and then. The birds came in very close, and with the Albatrosses it was hard to fit them in my telescope lens.



In heaven...Kaikura pelagic

Northern and Southern Royal, NZ Wandering, Snowy Wandering, NZ White-capped, Black-browed, and Salvins Albatross were the species.



Kaikura bay

Target bird here were Westland Petrel, we saw about 20, and big flocks of Hutton's shearwater, maybe 5000 birds were out there. Also the scary Northern Giant Petrel

was numerous. Both subspecies of Cape Petrel, Snares and Southern, were shown. One more excellent pelagic!

After lunch at a café we spent some wasted time upon Kaikura hill searching for the European import Cirl Bunting.

Later on, fast-food in the lodge garden.

At 18:30 we took a ride and walk in the forest around Kowhal river. We found South Island Rifleman, several Brown Creepers, Grey Warbler and NZ Fantail. We also listened for the little owl Morepork along Mt.Fyffe Road, but without result.

16/11 Kaikura to Oamaru

This was mostly a transport day. Beginning with another time-waste search for Cirl Bunting, of which we found a female of. At 9:45 we started rolling southwards.



On a stop at St. Anne's Reserve we found 4 Cape Barren Goose. At 12:00 we made a nice stop at Waikuku/Ashley Estuaries where we had our bakery lunch.

Then strolling out on the sandflats and found a mix of Wrybill, Banded Dotterel, 120 Bar-tailed Godwit, Black-fronted Tern, about 90 White-fronted Tern and Black-billed Gull.



Waikuku/Ashley Estuaries

Then on to Oamaru, arrival at 17:10, where we stood on a hill top and watched the rare Yellow-eyed Penguins come ashore through our bins, totally 5 birds.



Oamaru penguin beach

Then check-in at Eden Motel up in the Oamaru hills. Dinner in a 'britishish' pub among the many people dressed for the on-going Victorian festival.

17/11 To Stewart and Ulva Island

This was the earliest start, at 5:30, for this tour heading for the mid-morning ferry in Bluff to Stewart Island.



Arrival at Bluff 10:00 and while waiting for departure we had Stewart Island Shag

of the bronze morph, and blu morph of Spotted Shag.
 The ferry left at 11:00 over an almost flat sea. Some NZ White-capped and Salvin's Albatrosses showed up in distance.



We arrived to Oban at 12:00 and had our paper bag lunches from the harbor kiosk sitting in the sunshine on the harbor benches.

We checked in at the nice South Sea Hotel in the Half Moon Bay and had some South Island Kaka overflying. Nice start on Stewart Island!

At 13:00 we sat off on foot over the hills to our waiting small water taxi to Ulva Island.



Ulva Island

Ulva Island showed to be a real paradise island with a pristine forest and many bird rarities. Like Tiritiri it's freed from introduced predators. We searched for South Island Saddleback and quite soon we found one young bird.

Marlene also found two Yellowheads for us, a most lovely species. Thank you Marlene!



There were a few Stewart Island Robins around. They seem totally fearless and almost climbed on our feet – not used to predators or raptors as they are.



Brilliant views of both those species, and also Yellow-crowned and Red-crowned Parakeet, Rifleman, Stewart Island Weka, two pairs of Kaka, Brown creeper and South Island Tomtit.



South Island Kaka, Ulva Island

Our water taxi and a short walk got us back to the South Sea Hotel for an excellent dinner.



South Sea Hotel, Oban

At 20:30 we were off again with a boat to Thule Bay for Stewart Island Brown Kiwi, a subspecies of Southern Brown Kiwi. During the boat trip both morphs of Stewart Island Shag and the Stewart Island subspecies of Little (Blue) Penguin showed up. During the walk with torches in the coastal forest to Thule beach, we in the front had spots on a first Kiwi.



Kiwi tracks, Thule Bay

Then on the remote Ocean Beach we had several of these birds coming out in the open beach in the night to feed on Sand Hoppers and we got close views of them feeding. We could see them drilling their bills fully down in the sand and could even see the bugs that they were feeding on—fantastic!! We had now been on the go for 19 hours and were tired but exhilarated but tired so going to bed was next event.

18/11 Stewart Island Pelagic



Morning in Half Moon Bay

I had a lovely breakfast early alone outside the hotel with great views of the sun rising over the Half Moon Bay. At 8:30 we boarded our ship MS Aurora for this full day pelagic, first going south and then westwards out of Stewart Island. We had an extra guide on board, Matt Jones. And the ship was loaded with more than 150 kg fish for chumming. This should become a memorable day!



However, the last days had been very calm so the conditions for the 'cookilaria petrels' were not the best. On the way out we got excellent views of both morphs of Stewart Island Shag and also Southern Skua.



(C) Roger Holmberg

Red-billed Gulls like chum

The first tubenoses were a handful of White-capped Albatrosses. At Eastern Bay we saw 2 New Zealand (Hooker's) Sealion resting on land and also some NZ Fur Seals.



(C) Roger Holmberg

White-capped Albatrosses

Also some Cook's Petrels from the southern population that might be a future split. It was absolutely marvelous seeing all the big birds within touching distance. And on the ship we had 25 beautiful Red-billed Gulls trying to snap fish from the chum box.



(C) Roger Holmberg

White-capped Albatrosses fighting

When chumming in the Wreck Reef area we counted to 65 White-capped, three Salvin's, three Southern Royal, Black-browed Albatrosses, Northern Giant, Cape Petrel (southern) and White-chinned Petrels just close to the ship.



(C) Roger Holmberg

We got good views of both Yellow-eyed and the new endemic Fiordland Crested Penguin in the water around Tikotatahi.



(C) Roger Holmberg

White-chinned Petrel



(C) Roger Holmberg

Pegasus Port

Continuing westwards we passed Pegasus Port at 12:30 and had some of the packed lunch. And the skipper backed the boat to a cliff for photos of a Fiordland Crested

Penguin. We also had some Pied Shags and Fairy Prions there.

Passing North Traps at 14:15 we had some Sooty Shearwaters, Cape Petrels and the White-capps were now decimated to 'only' 40. At 15:00 we turned the ship going back to Oban. We stopped once more for chumming around Wreck Reef. Landed in Oban at 18:30. What a trip this had been!



The filet steak in South Sea's restaurant with a cold beer tasted great after that. Later on at 21:15 we took a walk uphill and was rewarded with close views of a Morepork. After that a welcoming bed.

19/11 To Te Anau and Milford Sounds

We caught the 8:00 ferry back to the South Island and checked for seabirds from deck. Some Sooty Shearwaters, 28 Common Diving-petrels, White-capped Albatross, Cape Petrel and Brown Skua were the results. Landing in Bluff at 9:00. Spotted 25 White-fronted Tern close to the harbor and then we headed for Te Anau.



Mararoa valley south of Te Anau

Quick stop there at 12:45 for a lunch pie, while watching a small flock of Black-

billed Gull by the lakeside, and then driving up to the Southern Alps. The target was the rare endemic NZ Rock Wren.



Hollyford Valley

We drove through the beautiful Eglington and Hollyford Valleys, passed Lake Gunn and Mt.Christina with white snow on the peaks.



Mount Christina, Hollyford Valley

We stopped for our first view of another endemic alpine species, the Kea. A really nice bird and it seems pretty smart too.



At Homer Tunnel

Then we parked close to the Homer Tunnel entrance, 920 masl, at a known location for the Rock Wren.

We stood there in tensing waiting for more than half an hour. Then I was lucky first to get my eyes on the bird and could point it out to the others. It was a male jumping up and down on the rocks.



Rock Wren with nesting material

And it carried a feather as nesting material in its bill. It disappeared among the rock but came out soon again for photos. We also had two more Keas at the parking place. They seemed very familiar with tourists.



Milford Sound

After that we drove through the Homer Tunnel and down through lovely Southern Beech forest to the beautiful Milford Sound for a break, photos, and a look at another Western Weka. On the parking lot we found a mother Paradise Shelduck with seven chicks. The father enjoyed the sun resting on a car roof.

Having seen our Rock Wren, Kea and Milford Sounds we could enjoy the stunning scenery and enjoy the drive back to Te Anau for our motel Explorer. Dinner

in a very fine Dutch restaurant, Keplars. In fact the best one on the whole trip. Excellent food and fantastic service. I can really recommend it, every time you go to Te Anau ;)

20/11 Lake Gunn and Wanaka

Today became the laziest day on the tour, but still a very beautiful day. We once again headed north-west on the Milford highway through Eglinton valley and parked the van at Lake Gunn.



Here we walked the loop trail in the ancient Southern Beech forest, an unique environment really.



Rifleman

A full family of Rifleman, seven birds, were feeding in the trees. Two pair of Kaka flew over us several times. We also saw NZ Bellbird, NZ Fantail, South Island Robin and Yellow-crowned Parakeets.



Beech forest, Lake Gunn

After a short stop back south in Henry Creek, we found Brown Creeper and more Rifleman. We were back at 12:15 in Te Anau for another lunch pie.



Te Anau

In the southernmost bay of Lake Te Anau, at the Wildlife Centre, we got close views of a nesting pair of Crested Grebe before we headed north to Wanaka.

This beautiful drive provided spectacular scenery and another alpine road with hairpin corners up and over the Crown Range.



Crown Range, Te Anau-Wanaka

Along the way we watched a farmer ploughing his remote, stony, high country field with 300 – 400 Black-billed gulls following the plough.



We checked in at Archway Motel at 17:45. Dinner in a lakefront restaurant in Wanaka, in the southernmost of Lake Wanaka.

21/11 Lake Pukaki area



Our target species today was the world's rarest wader, the Black Stilt. At Omarama we got some good coffee and then turned off north. Here the terrain seemed more and more remote.

Where the road crosses the Pukaki channel we turned west to Lake Poaka, which should be a stake-out for Black Stilt. But we only found Pied Stilt and some Pukekos with juveniles.



Lake Pukaki. Mt Cook in behind

We headed north, passed the Twizel village and stopped at the visitors center of Lake Pukaki, the very large dam in front of Mt.Cook. Time was 12:00 so we had our bakery lunch for today there.



Glentanner, the Black Stilt place

We continued north on Mt.Cook Road (as you know Mt.Cook is the highest mountain in NZ) on the western side of Lake Pukaki. Our hawk-eyed Marlene spotted two strange-looking Stilts along the road. When looking close to them we understood sadly they were hybrids of Pied and Black Stilts. We drove on and stopped at Glentanner in the northernmost of the lake. Again Marlene spotted a couple of subadult Black Stilts before we even got

out of the van. In the next half hour we found 7 subadults. We also found two more further up towards Mt. Cook. We had been seeing something like 10% of the world's population of these critically endangered birds!

We also found Black-banded Dotterel and more Pied Stilts here in nice Glentanner wetlands.



Lake Tekapo from Mt John

Next we went north-east to Mt.John Observatory in southern end of Lake Tekapo. Absolutely great views over the landscape. Our guide's main target was the Chukars living here. We found two of them.



Lake Tekapo

Turning back towards Wanaka we made a stop south-east of Twizel at the northern end of Lake Benmore. The target here for Phil was Baillon's Crake. And some of us saw the sculking bird well. Back in Wanaka for dinner and bed at 19:00.



Lake Hawea

22/11 Fiordland coast and forest

This day we went to the Fiordland coast. First going north between the beautiful lakes Wanaka and Hawea, surrounded by snow-capped mountains, through Fiordland Forest and then west following Haast River to the the seaside village Haast.



Mt Aspiring National Park, Haast Pass

One of many stops was in a primary Beech forest at Haast Pass. A quite silent forest but we saw Rifleman, Tomtit, Kaka, Bell-bird and heard Yellowhead calling above.

There had been a landslide close to the pass so the trip was a bit of a thrill. At another stop we had the beautiful NZ Red Admiral butterflies.



Fiordland outside Haast

At 11:45 we reached Haast and bought some lunch which we brought down to the huge beach and enjoyed there.

There were some Variable Oystercatchers on the beach and an Arctic Skua chasing a White-fronted Tern.



Knights Point

We went north along the coast. At a stop at Knights Point we could count up to 60 NZ Fur Seals.



Lunch on Haast beach by the Tasman Seat

At the next stop, at Monro Beach Walk, we took a longer walk through an ancient coastal rainforest until we reached the sea.



Monro beach walk

The surf was rolling in to the sandy beach and on to the big boulders. We saw one Fiordland Crested Penguin coming in on the surf. It needed some tries before it succeeded to jump out of the surf to a boulder and then disappeared for it's nesting site in the forest. We also had some

Black-fronted Terns here and some more South Island Tomtits.



We checked in at our Franz Josef lodge at 17:00, nicely located with the glacier in behind. Dinner and bird list was at an outdoor restaurant in the touristic Franz Joseph village.

The evening was dedicated to find the Okarito Kiwi so at 19:30 we moved to Okarito swamp. While waiting for the ranger we looked for South Island Fernbird. We found one and heard four more.



Our ranger, the 'militantish' but nice Ian Cooper, showed up at 20:00. We got a complete lesson how to behave while searching for the kiwis, of which several pairs are nesting here around the Pakihi track. In the dark we walked in a tight line, being absolutely silent. Every now and then we stopped and Ian made use of his kiwi tracking equipment which received signals from the different birds. Sometimes we made fast and longer walks depending on the signals. We heard the kiwis calling and as closest we had the female from the

breeding F-pair within 1 meter and the male from the breeding B-pair within 5 meters. We could see the movements of the birds but it was quite impossible to see the bird in the dark. And no photos! During the walk we had 5-6 Moreporks. Back at midnight to our lodge I had two more Moreporks.

23/11 Franz Josef Glacier to Punakaiki



After breakfast a drive up towards the glacier and then a nice walk under clear skies and fresh air.



Beautiful scenery and high waterfalls. We enjoyed the glacier from its foothill before walking back. Some lovely South Island Tomtits showed up, one adult and one subadult.

We brought picnic lunch from an European bakery in Franz Josef and drove down to Okarito Lagoon by the sea. While eating our lunch at the beach we could also enjoy one Eastern Great Egret fishing in the pool.



Okarito Lagoon

Then we had a long but beautiful travel north up to Punakaiki. Halfway we met another Wrybill group with 11 jolly Norwegians led by Brent Stephenson. I was happy to at last speak my mother tongue as Swedish and Norwegian are quite similar.

Except for trying to speak Swedish to poor Bill some early mornings before me being fully awake this was the first time in almost three weeks.



We continued our way on winding roads along the beautiful coastline and reached Punakaiki at 17:00.



Of course we had to see the Pancake Rocks and while in the area we also could see

good numbers of White-fronted Terns and Spotted Shags.



We checked in at Punakaiki Tavern and had dinner there before we left at 20:30 for more kiwi spotting along a dirt track in the mountain above Punakaiki. This time it was Greater Spotted Kiwi. These are very rarely seen, but we heard two males and one female calling. Also we saw one Morepork and heard another 10-15. A handful of Western Weka were heard and seen during their territorial disputes. There were a lot of Possums here, we saw 14 of them in short distance. Possums were introduced by the fur industry and the escapes are now a great pest and threat to the NZ ecosystem. Then back to the Tavern for packing our luggage and a last night's sleep in Kiwiland.

24/11 Punakaiki, Arthurs Pass to Christchurch

This was our last day and we had a grand final with stunning sceneries going over the Southern Alps and through Artur's Pass.



At top of Artur's Pass we made a stop for a high air view. There were a flock of some 10 Keas in different ages.



Kea parrots on top of car, Arthur's Pass

You just can't deny being fond of those smart and colorful birds although they try to hide their colors. Lots of photos and then they all suddenly flew off showing their beautifulness. Thank you!

We had a last lunch together outside a pie shop in Sheffield and then I jumped off at the airport in Christchurch. I had my flight comfortably back to Auckland- Shanghai-Helsinki-Stockholm. The others had different agendas after this tour.

Thank you all, I really enjoyed your British and German company!



Summary

This was a very **low paced tour**. I think we only got away two mornings before 8:00. To tell the truth I was quite stressed by this during the first days. But as the days passed I would appreciate the tempo more and more. And I also realized that it's not necessary to be up early to see the New Zealand birds as back home. And you also need time for long transports and to enjoy the environments fully.

Birdwise we observed most of the species and the subspecies which might be future splits. Species we missed were Mottled and Black-winged Petrel, Broad-billed Prion, Grey-backed Storm-petrel and Grey Ternlet, all difficult to very difficult to see. And of course we didn't have the chance to see the Kakapo which I had hoped for but today that's impossible if you don't have a researcher's permission. Total number of species according to Wrybills was 155, including the 64 endemics with 2 more heard, but that included all introduced species (i.e. feral chicken) and some only being subspecies according to Clements, for example some of the albatrosses.

Everything on the tour worked out smoothly and it's obvious that the tour is well trimmed since many years. **Lodging** was mostly in 'motels' which in New Zealand means small bungalows with kitchen, and they held good standard all over.

This was also almost a **gourmet trip** at least when coming to dinners. The tour operator were not saving on food expenses and made very good choices of restaurants. Mostly we choosed our take-away lunch in so called bakeries, bringing it for outside eating in nice surroundings. Costs included in the tour price. As we only had rain on Tiritiri this was perfect.

One thing appreciated especially by ladies were that the operator planned for stops at **clean and fresh toilets** every second hour. Obvious, but I haven't seen that before with any operator.



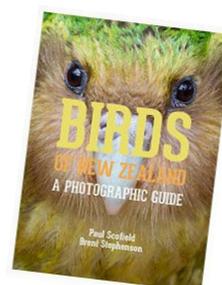
The only thing that I didn't appreciate was the way the operator handled the **trip report**. We were promised a such during the tour and the tour leader also asked for photos which also were handed over. After the tour more and more different excuses were coming to let off. When after pushing the report finally were published it was very incomplete and held many errors, especially in the bird list but also in the diary text. That's why I decided to make my own attempt which you see here.

Maybe this tour may not fit all hard-core birders but I believe it is a **perfect vacation** for couples where not both are keen birders. You will see most of all the **beautiful New Zealand** and also experience all wanted birds. And all the fantastic **pelagics, best in the world!**

Info about Wrybill Birding Tours

If you want more information of their scheduled tours or want to take part of their services on a private planned tour, their website is www.wrybill-tours.com

I can also recommend the newly published photographic guide '**Birds of New Zealand**', where Wrybill's Brent Stephenson is a co-writer. I have learned a lot from it, especially about the tubenoses.



Travel route



Blue = Pelagic/ferry
Red = Road

BIRD LIST
New Zealand
3-24 November 2013

In the bird species list we have followed the systematics and nomenclature of Cornell Labs/Clements version 6.9. **E**=breeding Endemic, **I**=Introduced

Kiwis (*Apterygidae*)



Stewart Island Brown Kiwi (*Apteryx australis lawryi*) E

17.4 4 seen Tule Bay/Ocean Beach

Okarito Brown Kiwi (*Apteryx rowi*) E

22.11 2 Okarito Swamp/Pakini Walk



North Island Brown Kiwi (*Apteryx mantelli*) E

4.11 1s3h Trounson Forest (sorry for the photo, but too dark and flash are not allowed)

Little Spotted Kiwi (*Apteryx owenii*) E

7.11 1s2h Tiritiri

Great Spotted Kiwi (*Apteryx haastii*) E

23.11 3h Paparoa Ranges

Ducks, Swans and Waterfowl (*Anatidae*)

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) I

Common

Cape Barren Goose (*Cereopsis novaehollandiae*) I

16.11 5 birds St Anne's Lagoon



Greyleg Goose (*Anser anser*) I

Common. (Photo:some hybrids was found in Napier)

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) I

4.11 4 ex Waiwera Seage Dams, 11.11 1 pond outside Napier



Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*)

Common



Paradise Shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*) E

Common, seen all days except 3 with 2-20 birds



Blue Duck (*Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos*) E

12.11 2 ex Tongariro River south of Turangi

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) I

Very common, seen all days except 2

Pacific Black (Grey) Duck (*Anas superciliosa*)

4.11 2 ex Point England, 5.11 4 ex Tawharanui



Australian Shoveler (*Anas rhynchos*)

Common, seen 8 days with 2-8 ex



Grey Teal (*Anas gracilis*)

Common, seen 6 days with 2-40 ex



Brown Teal (*Anas chlorotis*) E
5.11 10 ex Tawharanui Regional Park



White-eyed Duck (Hardhead) (*Aythya australis*) E
13.11 1 male in a dam in Foxton



New Zealand Scaup (*Aythya novaeseelandiae*) E
Scarce, seen at 10 location with most 45 ex Waikanae Estuaries

Guineafowl (*Numididae*)

Helmeted Guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*) I

24.11 1 ex West Coast S.I.

New World Quail (*Odontophoridae*)

California Quail (*Lophortyx californicus*) I

Quite common. Seen 7 days on North Island, 1 day on South Island

Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies (*Phasianidae*)



Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*) I

21.11 2 ex Mt.John



Brown Quail (*Coturnix ypsilophora*) I

5.11 2 Tawharanui Regional Park, 7.11 20 Tiritiri

Common Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) I

Scarce

Indian Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*) I

Scarce

Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) I

Common

Grebes (*Podicipedidae*)

Australasian Grebe (*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*)

5.11 2 ex near Waipu caves



New Zealand Grebe (Dabchick) (*Poliiocephalus rufpectus*)

About 25 ex seen on 7 places on both N and S Island, with at most 10 ex on Lake Taupo



Australasian Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus australis*)

20.11 1 on nest, Lake Te Anau

Penguins (*Spheniscidae*)



Yellow-eyed Penguin (*Megadyptes antipodes*) E
16.11 5 ex Oamaru Beach, 18.11 4 ex Stewart Island pelagic



Little (Blue) Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*)
Common. About 75 seen outside S and N Islands



Fiordland Crested Penguin (*Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*) E
18.11 12 ex on Stewart Island pelagic, 22.11 1 ex Monro Beach, Fiordland

Albatrosses (*Diomedeidae*)

Buller's Albatross (*Thalassarche bulleri*) E
13.11 2 ex Cook's Strait ferry, 15.11 5 ex Kaikura pelagic



White-capped (Shy) Albatross (*Thalassarche cauta steadi*)

The most common Albatross. 6.11 4 ex Hauraki pelagic, 13.11 10 ex Cook's Strait ferry, 17.11 4 ex ferry to Stewart Island, 18.11 more than 65 Stewart Island pelagic, 19.11 3 ex ferry from Stewart Island



Salvin's Albatross (*Thalassarche salvini*)

6.11 6 ex Hauraki pelagic, 13.11 10 ex Cook's Strait ferry, 15.11 1 ex Kaikura pelagic, 17.11 2 ex ferry to Stewart Island, 18.11 15 ex Stewart Island pelagic



Black-browed Albatross (*Thalassarche melanophris*)

6.11 4 ex Hauraki pelagic, 15.11 1 ex Kaikura pelagic, 18.11 1 ex Stewart Island pelagic



Campbell (Black-browed) Albatross (*Thalassarche melanophris impravida*) E
 9.11 1 subad Whitianga pelagic was supposed to belong to this subspecies



Southern Royal Albatross (*Diomedea epomophora epomophora*)
 Treated as a separate species in NZ *D.epomophora*. 15.11 1 ex Kaikura pelagic, 18.11 3 ex Stewart Island pelagic



Northern Royal Albatross (*Diomedea epomophora sanfordi*)
 Treated as a separate species in NZ *D.sanfordi*. 13.11 3 ex Cook's Strait ferry, 15.11 1 ex Kaikura pelagic



Snowy (Wandering) Albatross (*Diomedea exulans exulans*)
15.11 1 ex Kaikura pelagic



New Zealand (Gibson's Wandering) Albatross (*Diomedea exulans gibsoni*) E
Treated in NZ as a separate subspecies of Antipodean Albatross in NZ
D.antipodensis.gibsoni. 6.11 1 ex Hauraki pelagic, 15.11 8 ex Kaikura pelagic

Petrels, Shearwaters (*Procellariidae*)



Northern Giant Petrel (*Macronectes halli*)

6.11 1 ex Hauraki pelagic, 9.11 4 ex Whitianga pelagic, 13.11 3 ex Cook's Strait ferry, 15.11 45 ex Kaikura pelagic, 17.11 1 ex ferry Stewart Island, 18.11 2 ex Stewart Island pelagic, 19.11 2 ex ferry from Stewart Island

Southern Cape Petrel (*Daption capense capense*)

13.11 1 ex of this subspecies in Kaikura Gulf



Snares Cape Petrel (*Daption capense australe*) E

13.11 25 ex Cook's Strait ferry, 15.11 24 ex Kaikura pelagic, 18.11 15 ex Stewart Island pelagic, 19.11 1 ex Stewart Island ferry

Grey-faced Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera gouldi*)

Treated in NZ as a separate species *P.gouldi*. 6.11 1 ex Hauraki pelagic, 9.11 7 ex Whitianga pelagic, 13.11 1 ex Cook's Strait ferry



Cook's Petrel (*Pterodroma cookii*) E

6.11 About 150 on Hauraki pelagic, 9.11 30 ex Whitianga pelagic, 18.11 6 ex belonging to the southern (Codfish Island) population on Stewart Island pelagic, 19.11 1 ex Stewart Island ferry

Pycroft's Petrel (*Pterodroma pycrofti*) E
9.11 1 ex off Mercury Island on Whitianga pelagic



Fairy Prion (*Pachyptila turtur*)
6.11 10 ex Hauraki pelagic, 13.11 1 ex Cook's Strait ferry, 18.11
2 ex Stewart Island pelagic



Grey Petrel (*Procellaria cinerea*)
6.11 1 seen on Hauraki pelagic. This species is very rare outside north island, in fact it was a first time observation here both for the captain and our guide



White-chinned Petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*)
15.11 10 ex Kaikura pelagic, 18.11 15 ex Stewart Island pelagic, 19.11 3 ex Stewart Island ferry



Black (Parkinson's) Petrel (*Procellaria parkinsoni*) E
6.11 29 ex Hauraki pelagic, only seen there.



Westland Petrel (*Procellaria westlandica*) E
13.11 1 ex Cook's Strait ferry, 15.11 20 ex Kaikura pelagic



Flesh-footed Shearwater (*Puffinus carneipes*)
6.11 more than 70 seen Hauraki Gulf, 9.11 10 ex Whitianga pelagic, 13.11 5 ex Cook's Strait ferry



Buller's Shearwater (*Puffinus bulleri*) E

6.11 More than 100 seen Hauraki Guld, 9.11 5 ex Whitianga pelagic



Sooty Shearwater (*Puffinus griseus*)

6.11 2 ex Hauraki pelagic, 9.11 1 ex Whitianga pelagic, 18.11 10 ex Stewart Island pelagic, 19.11 3 Stewart Island ferry

Short-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus tenuirostris*)

6.11 5 ex Hauraki pelagic, 9.11 2 ex Whitianga pelagic



Hutton's Shearwater (*Puffinus huttoni*) E

15.11 Maybe more than 5000 on Kaikura pelagic, only seen there.



Fluttering Shearwater (*Puffinus gavia*) E

6.11 More than 2000 Hauraki pelagic, 9.11 5 ex Whitianga pelagic, 13.11 200 Cook's Strait, 14.11 50 ex Marlborough Sounds, 15.11 40 ex Kaikura pelagic

North Island Little Shearwater (*Puffinus assimilis haurakiensis*)

6.11 2 ex Hauraki pelagic. The Spaniard guide first saw them.

Storm-Petrels (*Hydrobatidae*)

White-faced Storm Petrel (*Pelagodroma marina*)

6.11 More than 1000 Hauraki pelagic, 9.11 20 ex Whitianga pelagic



New Zealand (White-faced) Storm Petrel (*Pelagodroma marina maoriana*) E

Treated in NZ as a separate species, NZ Storm Petrel *P.maoriana*.. 6.11 8 ex seen on Hauraki pelagic

Diving-Petrels (*Pelecanoididae*)

Common (Richdale's) Diving Petrel (*Pelecanoides urinatrix urinatrix*)

6.11 50 ex Hauraki pelagic, 9.11 10 ex Whitianga pelagic, 17.11 10 Cook's Strait, 18.11 5 ex Stewart Island pelagic, 19.11 30 ex Stewart Island ferry

Gannets, Boobies (*Sulidae*)



Australasian Gannet (*Morus serrator*)

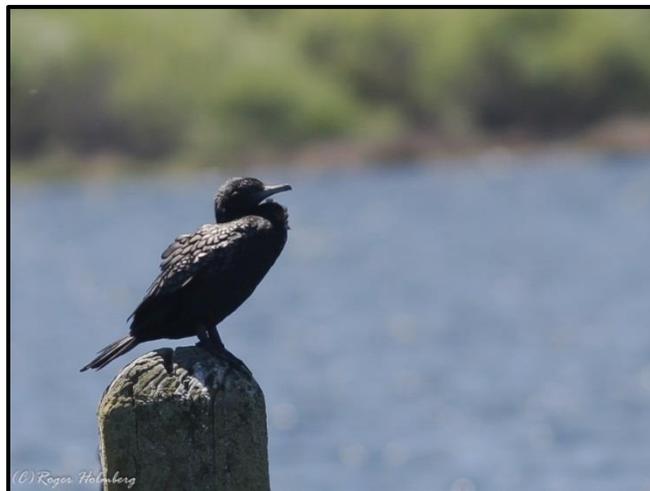
Common, seen at 8 places with at most 3000 in the breeding colony at Muriwai

Cormorants, Shags (*Phalacrocoracidae*)



Little Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*)

Common, Seen during 14 days on North and South Islands. One bird of spotted form (photo)
8.11 Whangaparaoa



Little Black Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*)

12.11 2 at Lake Taupo, 13.11 5 at Waikanae Estuaries

Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)
Common, seen during 7 days with 2-15 individuals



Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax varius*)
Common, seen 12 days with 2-15 individuals



King (Rough-faced) Shag (*Phalacrocorax carunculatus*) E
14.11 49 ex Marlborough Sounds (world population approx. 500)



Stewart Shag (*Phalacrocorax chalconotus*) E
17.11 2 bronze morph at Bluff (photo), 18.11 3 pied morph outside Oban on Stewart Island pelagic



Spotted Shag (*Phalacrocorax punctatus*) E

Common on South and Stewart Islands, seen with 2-25 ex during 5 days

Herons, Egrets and Bitterns (*Ardeidae*)

Australasian Bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*)

12.11 1h Tokaanu



Australasian Great Egret (*Ardea alba modesta*)

20.11 1 at Okarito Lagoon



White-faced Heron (*Egretta novaehollandiae*)

Common, seen with 1-10 ex during 12 days

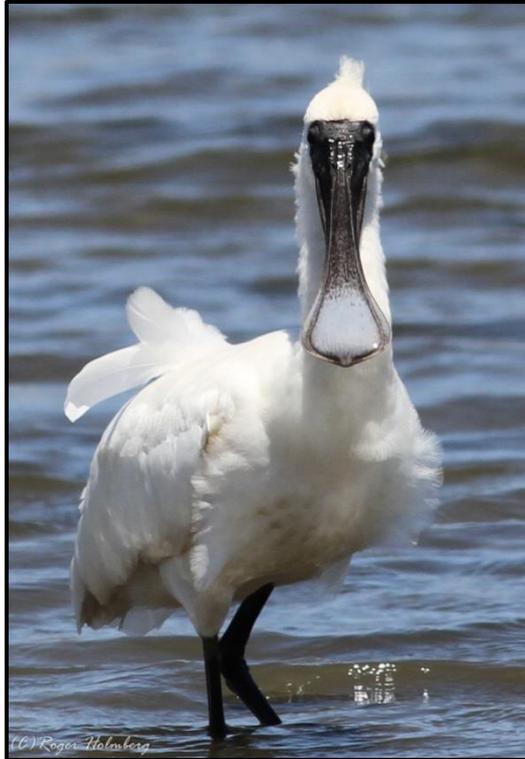
Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

8.11 1 at Mangere. This species is a rare winter migrant to NZ

Pacific Reef Heron (*Egretta sacra sacra*)

9.11 1 at Whitianga, 15.11 1 at Kaikura

Ibises and Spoonbills (*Threskiornithidae*)



Royal Spoonbill (*Platalea regia*)

Common, seen with 1-25 birds during 5 days. Not seen on Stewart Island

Hawks, Eagles and Kites (*Accipitridae*)



Swamp Harrier (*Circus approximans*)

Common, 1-20 seen during 14 days

Rails, Crakes & Coots (*Rallidae*)

North Island Weka (*Gallirallus australis greyi*) E

6.11 3 at Kawau Island on Hauraki pelagic



Western Weka (*Gallirallus australis australis*) E

14.11 3 in Marlborough Sounds, 19.11 1 Milford Sounds, 24.11 1 Punakaiki



Stewart Island Weka (*Gallirallus australis scotti*) E

17.11 3 on Ulva Island



Buff-banded Rail (*Gallirallus philippensis assimilis*)

5.11 4 at Tawharanui

Baillon's Crake (*Porzana pusilla*)

21.11 1s1h Lake Benmore

Spotless Crake (*Porzana tabuensis*)

7.11 1h Tiritiri



Pukeko (Eastern Australian Swamphen) (*Porphyrio porphyrio melanotus*)

Pukeko local name. Treated as a separate species in NZ, *P.melanotus*. Common, seen 11 days with 1-100 birds.



South Island Takahe (*Porphyrio mantelli hochstetteri*) **E**

Treated as a separate species in NZ *P.hochstetteri*. 7.11 2 seen on Tiritiri.

Common Coot (*Fulica atra*)

12 at New Zealand from 2013-11-03 to 2013-11-24. 9.11 2 Miranda, 15.11 10 Kaikura

Stilts, Avocets (*Recurvirostridae*)



Pied (White-headed) Stilt (*Himantopus leucocephalus*)

Common. Seen during 15 days with 1-300 birds. Also described as Pied Stilt
H.h.leucocephales



Black Stilt (*Himantopus novaezelandiae*) E

22.11 7 young birds around Lake Pukaki. Also 2 hybrids Pied Stilt

Oystercatchers (*Haematopodidae*)



Pied Oystercatcher (*Haematopus finschi*) E

Common. Seen during 10 days with 1-120 birds, also on North and Stewart Island



Variable Oystercatcher (*Haematopus unicolor*) E
Common. Seen during 13 days with 1-20 birds.

Plovers and Lapwings (*Charadriidae*)

Pacific Golden Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*)

13.11 1 at Foxton Estuaries. Also 1 suspected American Golden Plover at the same place.



Masked Lapwing (*Vanellus miles novaehollandiae*)
Common. Seen with 1-10 birds during 14 days



Northern New Zealand Dotterel (*Charadrius obscurus aquilonius*) E
4.11 10 at Point England outside Auckland, 5.11 2 Waipu Estuary, 8.11 3 Point England (again), 9.11 1 Miranda Wetlands



Double-banded Plover (*Charadrius bicinctus bicinctus*) E

14.11 6+2 juv Lake Grassmere, 16.11 3 at Waikuku Estuaries, 18.11 1 Stewart Island pelagic



Wrybill (*Anarhynchus frontalis*) E

8.11 6 Mangere dams, 9.11 38 Miranda Wetlands, 12.11 2 Foxton Estuaries, 13.11 2 Foxton Estuaries, 16.11 1 Waikuku Estuaries

Black-fronted Dotterel (*Elseyaornis melanops*)

11.11 1 at Napier

Snipes, Sandpipers and Phalaropes (*Scolopacidae*)



Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

Common. Seen in 7 days. Thousands at Mangere 8.11, 9.11 27 Miranda Wetlands, 12 and 11 2 Foxton Estuaries, 16.11 1 Waikuku Estuaries.

This population flies over 11,000km without stopping from Alaska to NZ. The longest non-stop flight of any bird.

Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

8.11 2 Mangere

Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rogersi*)

8.11 thousands in Mangere, 11.11 25 Foxton

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*)

9.11 2 at Miranda

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

8.11 1 seen Mangere

Skuas and Jaegers (*Stercorariidae*)



Subantarctic Skua (*Stercorarius antarcticus lonnbergi*)

18.11 2 Stewart Island pelagic, 19.11 1 from Stewart Island ferry

Arctic Skua (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)

9.11 1 Whitianga pelagic, 14.11 1 Matuara Island, Marlborough Sounds, 22.11 1 Haast

Gulls and Terns (*Laridae*)



Kelp (Black-backed) Gull (*Larus dominicanus*)

Common. Seen during 17 days on all three islands



Red-billed Gull (*Larus scopulinus*) **E**

Common. Seen during 14 days on all three islands. Most at Kaikura pelagic with 2000 birds



Black-billed Gull (*Larus bulleri*) E

Seen during 6 days with at most 300 birds on a field outside Wanaka

Eastern Little Tern (*Sternula albifrons sinensis*)

12.11 1 Foxton, 13.11 50 Foxton

Fairy Tern (*Sternula nereis davisae*)

5.11 1 Waipu Estuaries (only 36 birds left, only 3 fertile females)

Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*)

Quite common. Seen 8 days with 1-5 birds.

Black-fronted Tern (*Chlidonias albostratus*) E

Seen during 7 days on South and Stewart Islands. Most at outside Twizel, more than 25 birds.



White-fronted Tern (*Sterna striata*) E

Common on both islands. Seen on 11 days. More 300 4.11 at Muriwai (breeding colony)

Doves and Pigeons (*Columbidae*)

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia 'feral'*) I

Common

Barbary (Ringed Turtle) Dove (*Streptopelia roseogrisea 'risoria'*) I

4.11 4 in small village close to Muriwai

Spotted Dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*) I

4.11 2 Auckland



New Zealand Pigeon (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) E

Seen during 9 days on all three islands, at most (12) 5.11 north of Auckland

Cuckoos (*Cuculidae*)

Shining Bronze Cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx lucidus lucidus*)

5.11 1h Tromson, 11.11 3 Boundery Stream and also 12.11 1h

Long-tailed Koel (*Eudynamys taitensis*) E

10.11 2s2h Pureora Stream

Owls (*Strigidae*)

Morepork (*Ninox novaeseelandiae novaeseelandiae*)

4.11 2h Trounson, 7.11 2s3h Tiritiri, 8.11 5 Miranda, 18.11 1 Oban, 22.11 5h Okarito, 23.11 1s10h Punakaiki

Kingfishers (*Alcedinidae*)

Laughing Kookaburra (*Dacelo novaeguineae novaeguineae*) I

6.11 5 Matakana

New Zealand Sacred Kingfisher (*Todiramphus sanctus vagans*)

Common. Seen during 12 days on both islands with 1-3 birds

Caracaras, Falcons (*Falconidae*)



New Zealand Falcon (*Falco novaeseelandiae*) E

14.11 1 at Blumine Island and 1 south of Picton, 17.11 1 at Ulva Island, 21.11 3 south of Omurama, 21.11 1h en route Punakaiki-Christchurch

New Zealand Parrots (*Strigopidae*)





Kea (*Nestor notabilis*) E

19.11 3 near Homer Tunnel, 24.11 12 Arthur's Pass



North Island Kaka (*Nestor meridionalis septentrionalis*) E

10.11 8 Pureora Forest



South Island Kaka (*Nestor meridionalis meridionalis*) E

18.11 6 Stewart Island, 20.11 6 Lake Gunn, 22.11 2 Haast

(Kakapo (*Strigops haprotilus*) E

Not seen. Only semi-captive populations on Codfish, Anchor and Little Barrier Islands, all with landing restrictions)

Parrots and Macaws (*Psittacidae*)



Red-crowned Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae novaezelandiae*) E
7.11 25 Tiritiri, 8.11 10 Tiritiri, 17.11 6 Ulva Island



Yellow-crowned Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus auriceps*) E
2s2h Pureora Forest, 14.11 1h Matuara Island, 17.11 4 Ulva Island

Orange-fronted (Malherbe's) Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus malherbi*) E
14.11 2 Blumine Island



Eastern Rosella (*Platycercus eximius*) I
4.11 3 Auckland, 5.11 4 Tane Mahuta, 7.11 2 Whangaparaoa, 8.11 2 Whangaparaoa, 11.11 2 Napier

New Zealand Wrens (*Acanthisittidae*)

North Island Rifleman (*Acanthisitta chloris granti*)

11.11 6 at Boundery Stream



South Island Rifleman (*Acanthisitta chloris chloris*) E

15.11 2 Kowial River Forest, Kaikura, 17.11 1 Ulva Island, 20.11 12 at Lake Gunn and Henry Creek, 22.11 2 Fiordland Forest east of Haast.



Alpine Rock Wren (*Xenicus gilviventris*) E

19.11 1 building on nest at Homer Tunnel

Honeyeaters (*Meliphagidae*)



New Zealand Tui (*Prothemadera novaeseelandiae novaeseelandiae*) E

Seen during 13 days with 1-30 (Tiritiri) birds on all three islands.



New Zealand Bellbird (*Anthornis melanura*) E

Seen during 11 days with 1-15 (Tiritiri) birds on all three islands.

Thornbills and Allies (*Acanthizidae*)

Grey Gerygone (Warbler) (*Gerygone igata*) E

Seen during 12 days with 1-5 (Boundary Stream) birds on all three islands.

Wattlebirds (*Callaeidae*)



North Island Kokako (*Callaeas cinereus wilsoni*) E
7.11 1 male, 2 females Tiritiri, 8.11 1 Tiritiri, 10.11 1h Pureora Forest



North Island Saddleback (*Philesturnus carunculatus rufusater*) E
7.11 10 Tiritiri



South Island Saddleback (*Philesturnus carunculatus carunculatus*) E
17.11 3 Ulva Island

Stitchbird (*Notiomystidae*)



Stitchbird (*Notiomystis cincta*) E

7.11 1female 1male Tiritiri

Bellmagpies (*Cracticidae*)

Australasian Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) I

Common. Seen all days except 3 with 2-20 bird on all three islands

Whistlers and Allies (*Pachycephalidae*)

Whitehead (*Mohoua albicilla*) E

Seen only on North Island during 6 days with 1-25 (Tiritiri)



Yellowhead (*Mohoua ochrocephala*) E

14.11 1h Motuara Bird Sanctuary, Marlborough Sounds, 17.11 4s1h Ulva Island



New Zealand Brown Creeper (*Mohoua novaeseelandiae*) E

15.11 1 Kowhal River Forest, Kaikura, 17.11 6 Ulva Island, 20.11 2 Henry Creek south of Lake Gunn

Fantails (*Rhipiduridae*)

South Island Fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa fuliginosa*)

Seen 4 days on South and Stewart Islands with 2-5 birds daily



North Island Fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa placabilis*) E

Seen all days without one on North Island with 1-10 birds

Australasian Robins (*Petroicidae*)



North Island Tomtit (*Petroica macrocephala toitoi*) E

5.11 1 at Waipoua Forest, 11.11 1s1h Boundery Stream, 12.11 1h around Lake Taupo



South Island Tomtit (*Petroica macrocephala macrocephala*) E

17.11 3 Ulva Island, 23.11 2 Franz Josephs Glacier



North Island Robin (*Petroica australis longipes*) E

7.11 4 Tiritiri, 10.11 3 Pureora Forest, 11.11 1 Boundery Stream

South Island Robin (*Petroica australis australis*) E

14.11 5 Matuara Island, Marlborough Sounds, 19.11 1h Hollyford Valley, 20.11 3 Lake Gunn, 22.11 3s1h Fiordland Forest, Haast



Stewart Island Robin (*Petroica australis rakiura*) E

17.11 6 Ulva Island

Larks (*Alaudidae*)

Eurasian Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) I

Common. Seen during 15 days with 1-10 birds

Swallows and Martins (*Hirundinidae*)



Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*)

Common. Seen all 21 days with 10-30 birds

Grassbirds and allies (*Locustellidae*)



North Island Fernbird (*Megalurus punctatus vealeae*) E

4.11 2 Tiritiri

South Island Fernbird (*Megalurus punctatus punctatus*) E

19.11 3s2h Okarito

Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies (*Zosteropidae*)



Silver-eye (*Zosterops lateralis*)

Quite common. Seen 8 days on both islands with 1-2 birds. Top day was 4.11 with 10 in and around Auckland

Thrushes (*Turdidae*)

Eurasian Blackbird (*Turdus merula*) I

Common. Seen all 21 days.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) I

Common. Seen all 21 days.

Starlings (*Sturnidae*)

Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) I

Common on North Island where it was seen every day. None seen elsewhere

Common Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) I

Common. Seen all 21 days.

Accentors (*Prunellidae*)

Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) I

Quite common. Seen 6 days on both islands with 1-6 birds

Pipits and Wagtails (*Motacillidae*)



Australasian Pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*) E

10.11 1 Pureora, 11.11 2 Napier area, 12.11 3 Tokaanu, 21.11 3 Omarama

Buntings and New World Sparrows (*Emberizidae*)

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) I

Common

Cirl Bunting (*Emberiza cirlus*) I

16.11 2 Kaikoura

Siskins, Crossbills and Allies (*Fringillidae*)

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*) I

Common

European Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*) I

Common

Common Redpoll (*Acanthis flammea*) I

Common

European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) I

Common

Old World Sparrows (*Passeridae*)

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) I

Common. Seen 20 days.

MAMMAL LIST

New Zealand

3-24 November 2013

In the mammal species list we have followed the systematics and nomenclature of Shirihai/Jarret 2011.

Common Brushtail Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) I

We saw 14 of them in less than an hour in the mountain above Punakaiki. Possums were introduced by the fur industry and the escapes are now a great pest and threat to the NZ ecosystem. The number of possums 2009 was estimated to 30 million individuals down from the peak in 1980 of 70 million.

Fur Seals of the Southern Ocean



New Zealand Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus forsteri*)

14.11 25 outside Kaikura, 15.11 1 Kaikura, 18.11 6 on Stewart Island pelagic

Sea lions



New Zealand (Hooker's) Sea Lion (*Phocarctos hookeri*)

18.11 2 on Stewart Island pelagic

Pilot Whales



Long-finned Pilot Whale (*Globicephala melas*)

9.11 7 seen on Whitianga pelagic

Narrow-beaked oceanic Dolphins

Short-beaked Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*)

9.11 10 seen on Whitianga pelagic

Short-beaked oceanic Dolphins



Dusky Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus obscurus*)

13.11 6 Cook's Strait, 14.11 13 in Charlotte/Marlborough Sounds