

## 15. BIRDS OF THE FOREST

**Kākā** a large forest parrot usually found in the canopy of the forest where they feed and nest. Distinguished by its big red rump belly and under wing plus a large concave beak, kākā eat mainly fruit, insects and nectar. Look up and you might see them silhouetted against the sky, swooping through the forest or perched in the tops of the tallest trees feeding. They make a unique harsh 'ka' like sound. You may see them at dusk flying high over the forest. **Large**

**Kererū** (New Zealand wood pigeon) are large with a white belly and a green upper body wings and head with a red beak and claws. Found through out the forest feeding on a wide variety of fruits and leaves. Kererū play a major role in forest regeneration by helping disperse seed. You can usually tell when a bird is a kererū before you see it because they are a large bird and when flying the wings make a woofing kind of sound. **Large**

**North Island robin** (toutouwai) is dark, slate grey, forest dwelling bird with long legs and an upright stance. It sometimes looks like it has no tail. It is found in the lower half of the forest often on the forest floor. It has a tendency to inspect intruders so can be seen close to the ground and on the lower branches of small trees near tracks. It eats insects and worms so one of the reasons it will be following you is that it will be catching the insects you may have disturbed. It has a small chirping sound. **Small**

**Fantail** (pīwakawaka) is small with a large fan-like tail. The North Island fantail has a dark olive brown on the upper side and on the head with a yellowish belly, a white throat and a band of sooty black on the upper breast. Fantails are quite common so you are likely to see them today in the under-storey. They mainly inhabit the tops of small trees about 3-6 metres off the ground. Fantails also eat insects. It makes a penetrating cheeting call and a chattering sound derived from the same note. **Small**

**North Island tomtit** (miromiro) has a small body with a large head and a short tail. The male is largely jet black with white under and a white dot on the forehead. The female has the same markings but is greyish brown instead of black. They also eat mainly insects. They can be found darting around in the lower storey on tree trunks where they catch insects from the bark. **Small**

**Whitehead** (pōpokatea) is small, it is largely pale brown over its upper body and tail. Its head, as you may have guessed, is white, as is its belly. Often seen in family flocks especially in the non-breeding season. Calls vary but the commonest sound is a rapid series of chirping notes. They are insect

eaters and are seen searching for them in the canopy especially on tree trunks and branches.

**Grey Warbler** (riroriro) is small bird with a grey back and white belly. You will see it fluttering almost stationary on trees and shrubs or hovering next to a food source. They are commonly seen in pairs. As you guessed by its name its song is like a sweet trill that varies in notes and tone. It mainly feeds on insects and spiders. **Small**

**Thrush** is a warm olive-brown coloured bird that is found throughout NZ. You will hear it sing throughout April-January with what has been described as a "fine careless rapture". Its song is varied and musical. The thrush will feed mainly on the ground looking for insects, snails and some berries and small fruit from shrubs. The thrush is not a native of New Zealand. It has been introduced from England since European settlement about 200 years ago. **Medium**

**Blackbirds** vary between male and female. The male is black with an orange-yellow bill, while the female is dark brown with a grey chin and brown bill. The blackbird song period is between July-January and is more like a flute than the thrush. This bird also feeds mainly on the ground, but prefers to eat more fruit than the thrush. The blackbird is not a native of New Zealand. It has been introduced from England since European settlement about 200 years ago. **Medium**

**Bellbird** (makomako) is generally a soft olive-green colour. You will also see iridescent purple on its head. The female is drabber than the male. It can be seen moving throughout the forest with vigourous and lively flight movements. It sings throughout the year but more often in spring and summer. Its beautiful song sounds remarkably like a series of bells - hence its name. The bellbird honey eater and eats fruits, nectar and some insects. **Small**

**Tuī** (parson bird). The tuī is an iridescent metallic-green with bluish purple reflections. It has a lacy white collar on the back and sides of the neck - hence its comparison with a Parson. You can often hear a tuī flying with its quick vigorous noisy flight movements. You may see it performing interesting aerobatics. You can confuse the tuī song with that of the bellbird, though it will intersperse its stunning song with harsher sounds. The tuī is also a honey eater and feeds on fruits, nectar and some insects. **Medium**

**Silvereeye** (tauhou) is sometimes referred to as waxeye. The throat and undertail may be tinged a bright yellowish-green. The under-belly is a light colour, with an orange tinge at the base of the wings. Its most recognisable feature is a white ring around the eye. You will see active noisy flocks in the autumn and winter. Its song varies depending on the time of

the year, but while in flight they make cli-cli-cli sound. Silvereve will feed mainly on insects and fruits, but will also take nectar. **Small**

**New Zealand Kingfisher** (kōtare) is a deep sea-green colour, tinged with olive on top, with a white underbelly. It looks rather squat, with its head and beak not in proportion with the rest of the body. You will notice it by its kik-kik-kik-kik sound. It occupies a range of habitats, though you are more likely to see it in the open parts of a forest. It will eat worms, insects, spiders, crabs, shellfish, small fish, lizards and the like. **Medium**

**Shining Cuckoo** (pīpīwharouroa) is a migratory species visiting New Zealand annually from the Solomon and nearby islands, during the spring and summer. It is a similar size of a house sparrow. Its upper body is metallic green with a golden coppery glint. Underparts are white, and finely barred with glossy green. You are more likely to hear this bird than see it. You will hear it calling using a series of double notes, upward slurs which are repeated, followed by a few downward slurs. It can sound like a ventriloquist. You will see this bird from mid-August onwards. This bird feeds mainly on insects and in particular the caterpillars of the Magpie Moth. **Small**

**Long-tailed Cuckoo** (koekoeā) is also an annual migratory species from the South Pacific especially Micronesia. It is more often heard than seen. Underparts white with dark reddish brown streaks on the upper parts the feathers are dark brown with reddish brown spots the spots on the wings and head are white. The tail of the cuckoo is very long hence the name. The long-tailed cuckoo' sound is harsh, piecing, long drawn out screech *zzsheesh*, unlike any other sound in the bush.

**Kākāriki** there are two main types of kākāriki the uncommon red-crowned parakeet (confined to offshore islands) and the more common yellow-crowned parakeet. The yellow-crowned has a red stripe on the forehead with a yellow patch behind extending to just beyond the eye. Both birds have violet blue on their wingtips. It makes a *Ki-ki-ki-ki-ki-ki* when flying. It is most commonly seen in Whirinaki in the dense podocarp forest.

#### **Less likely to be seen:**

**Kiwi** is nocturnal and flightless burrowing bird with a long bill that is more often heard than seen. Their whistling calls can be heard throughout the year, but more often during the autumn and early winter. Kiwis use a good sense of smell and strong bill to probe for earthworms. To hear kiwi you have to find somewhere comfortable with in the forest between dusk and midnight. You need to sit very still and

very quiet if you want to hear a kiwi. If there are any near the camp you will hear them rather than see them. **Large**

**Blue duck** (whio) is a white water specialist, preferring to live in fast flowing mountain rivers. Whio feed on freshwater invertebrates while swimming or diving even when only days old. They are easily recognised by the slate and mainly blue feathers and distinctive whistling call. They are found along the Whirinaki River mainly in the forested mid and upper sections. **Large**

### 15.1 BIRD IDENTIFICATION SHEET

<i>BIRD SPECIES</i>	<i>COLOUR</i>	<i>SIZE</i>	<i>SOUND</i>	<i>WHERE SEEN</i>	<i>COMMENTS</i>
Not sure	Grey Colour	Small not much bigger than a sparrow	Didn't make any	On the ground	Appeared to be hovering around after us on the track
Kereru	Could only see underneath. White belly and dark colour	Large	Woofing sound as it flew	Flying	none

