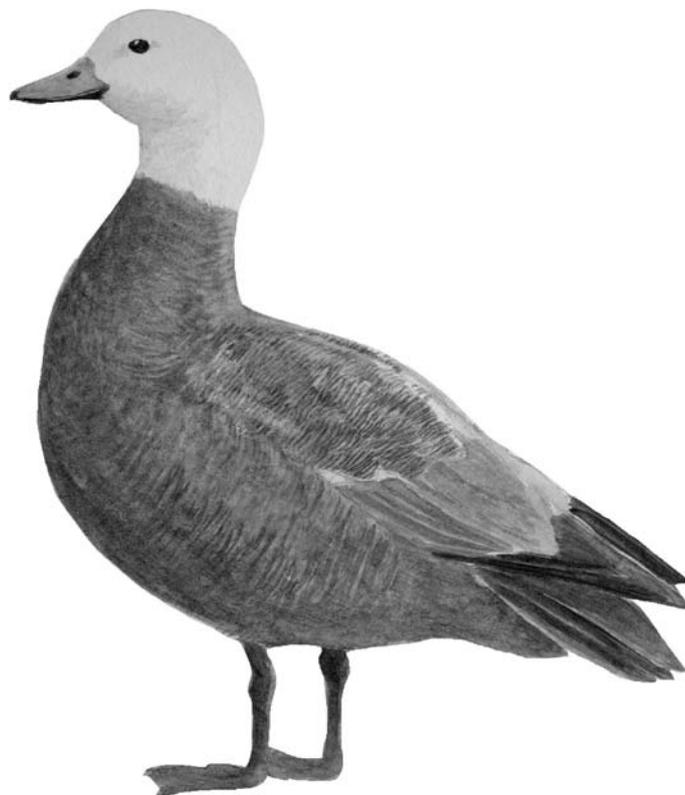
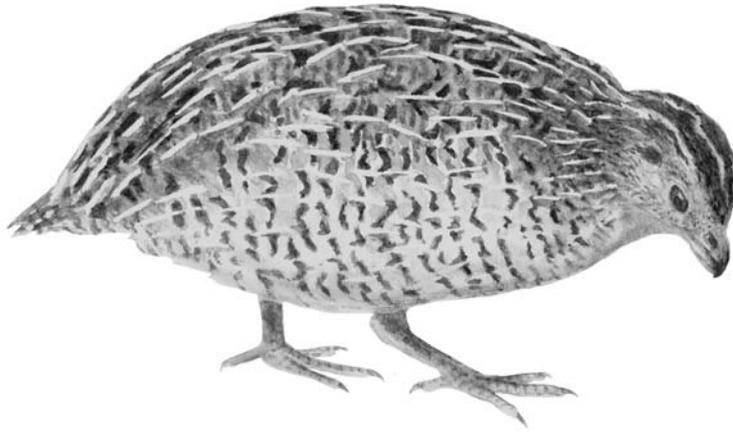


## Other birds



# Brown quail

*Synoicus ypsilophorus*



Brown quail are one of the birds most commonly seen by day visitors. These have always been considered to be introduced birds, but there are no records of quail being released on the island.

Research on Tiritiri Matangi has been initiated to ascertain whether they are the New Zealand species, *Coturnix novaezelandiae*, the Tasmanian brown quail, *Synoicus ypsilophorus* or a hybrid between the two. Results of tests are still awaited.

Little brown quail can often be seen along the sides of the roads, or even in the middle of the road taking a dust bath.

## What do they look like?

They are very small birds with a round dumpy body, about two-thirds the size of the more-commonly seen Californian quail. The females are buff-brown and are heavily mottled black above, whereas the males are a brownish grey above. Both have fine wavy black bars down their fronts. At times they scuttle through the undergrowth like mice, although on first catching a glimpse of them, some people think they have seen a baby kiwi! They have a short, dark, downward-curved bill and their short legs are yellowish in colour.

If they have to, they will fly up with a rapid whirring wing noise, but mostly they will scamper ahead of the visitor until they find a handy entrance to the bushes, then dash in out of sight.

On the bush floor on Tiritiri Matangi they are extremely well camouflaged.

## What do they sound like?

They make a plaintive, 'ker-wee' call, on a rising note, and can quite often be heard, especially as you walk along the Wattle Valley Track.

## What do they eat?

They feed on the ground, searching for seeds from grasses, weeds and shrubs. To a lesser extent they will also eat vegetation, flowers and insects.

## Breeding

Brown quail lay seven to 12 eggs between September and January. A few years ago, there were lots of baby quail around, but in recent years they have bred a bit later and do not seem to be producing many chicks. This is probably because the island is too small to support any more. Their nests are a slight depression lined with grass, and the female alone incubates for 21 days. Chicks leave the nest while they are still very small and vulnerable. At that stage they look like little brown bumblebees.

## Where else are they found?

Australian brown quail were introduced to both North and South islands in the 1860's and 1870's from Tasmania. They are now only seen north of Auckland, and in parts of the Waikato and Bay of Plenty.

Brown quail species also exist in Australia, New Guinea and Indonesia.

### References:

Kids for Birds website: [www.janetmarshall.co.nz/kids/aviary](http://www.janetmarshall.co.nz/kids/aviary)

SOTM Bulletin 21, May 1995, pp4 – 5.

'Dawn Chorus' 50, Winter 2002, p3.

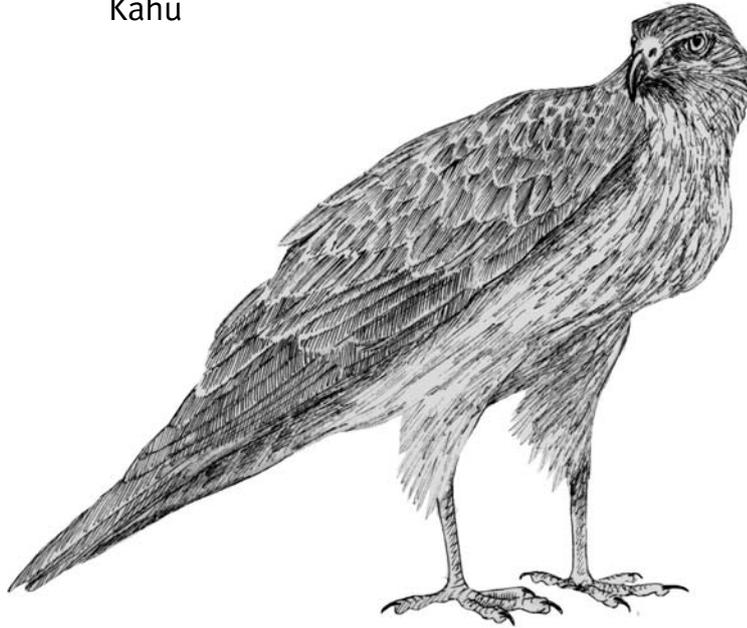
'Dawn Chorus' 66, August 2006, p11.



# Australasian harrier

*Circus approximans*

Kahu



The Australasian harrier is a native bird. It is New Zealand's most common raptor (bird of prey) and has been protected in New Zealand since 1985. Harriers are usually solitary birds and often travel long distances during the year, especially between breeding and wintering areas. On Tiritiri Matangi they can be seen circling the island in search of food.

## What do they look like?

The harrier is a large brown hawk with long wings, tail and legs. Their legs and eyes are yellow. Young adults have a dark brown head and upper parts, with reddish brown underparts streaked with dark brown. As they grow older, harriers become paler. Females are larger and heavier than males.

## What do they sound like?

Harriers are mostly silent, except during the breeding season, when they perform aerial displays accompanied by lots of high pitched 'kee-a' calls. From June to September pairs can be seen soaring and diving and making these loud calls over the area of their chosen nest site.



## What do they eat?

Harriers eat carrion, especially road kills, as well as live prey such as small mammals, birds, frogs, fish and even large insects such as grasshoppers.

They can be seen hunting during the day, using a slow quartering of the suspected prey's habitat and making sudden quick dives.

On Tiritiri Matangi they have been caught on video taking kokako nestlings from the nest. They have also been known to have predated adults and fledglings. They regularly predate parakeets and saddlebacks.

In earlier times bounties used to be paid for dead harriers. Since 1985, they have been partially protected, although they can still be shot when damaging property such as farmers' stock.

## Breeding

In June, harriers start their aerial displays, which are part of their courtship.

Nests are usually on the ground and roughly made of sticks, fern and grass. They prefer to put their nests in wet areas, grain paddocks or the long grass at the edges of roads.

Only the female incubates the eggs and feeds the chicks, although the male gathers food for the female and the chicks. He passes it to her by dropping it as both birds fly close to the nest. When the chicks are older, both parents hunt food for them. Chicks leave their parents' territory approximately seven weeks after fledging.

## Where else can they be found?

Harriers are widespread throughout New Zealand farmland, wetlands and coastal areas. They also occur on the Chatham Islands and in parts of the Pacific and Australia.

### Reference:

Warne, Kennedy 'Masters of the Sky' in 'New Zealand Geographic' No. 4, 1989.

# Kaka

*Nestor septentrionalis*



Kaka are large parrots which live in large areas of mature native forest containing huge trees. Because they prefer to be high in the canopy they are more often heard than seen.

They are protected threatened endemics, and it is thought there are fewer than 10,000 left.

Small numbers of kaka visit Tiritiri Matangi Island from time to time and can sometimes be seen and heard in and around the eucalyptus trees near the Bunkhouse, as well as along the Kawerau Track. As yet, none have decided to remain on the island to breed.

## What do they look like?

North Island kaka are olive brown and dull green, with a reddish rump and abdomen, a grey head and scarlet underwing. They are large birds, up to 45 centimetres long and about 450 grams in weight.

## What do they sound like?

When they are 'talking' to each other they make liquid whistling and chortling noises, but when flying or calling out, their cries are more harsh and grating.

## What do they eat?

Kaka eat fruit, nectar, seeds and insects. As they tear bits of bark off with their large powerful beaks while searching for grubs and insects, the sound of the falling pieces of bark or decaying wood draws the attention of passing visitors. They have a delicate brush-tipped tongue that enables them to take honeydew and nectar from bark and flowers.

## Breeding

Kaka nests are a shallow bowl of decayed wood dust in the bases of hollow trees or in hollow branches or trunks. The female incubates the eggs alone, and the eggs hatch out over several days, which means the chicks initially vary in size. The male calls the incubating female from the nest approximately every 80-90 minutes to feed her by regurgitating vegetable food. He then helps feed the chicks, which take 60-70 days to fledge. The chicks are not fully independent until they are at least seven months old.

## Where else can they be found?

On the mainland, kaka can usually only be found in areas that still have large trees, such as Pureora in the King Country. However, they sometimes visit urban gardens when trees are blossoming and fruiting. Mostly, they are found on offshore islands such as Kapiti, Little Barrier (Hauturu) and Great Barrier.



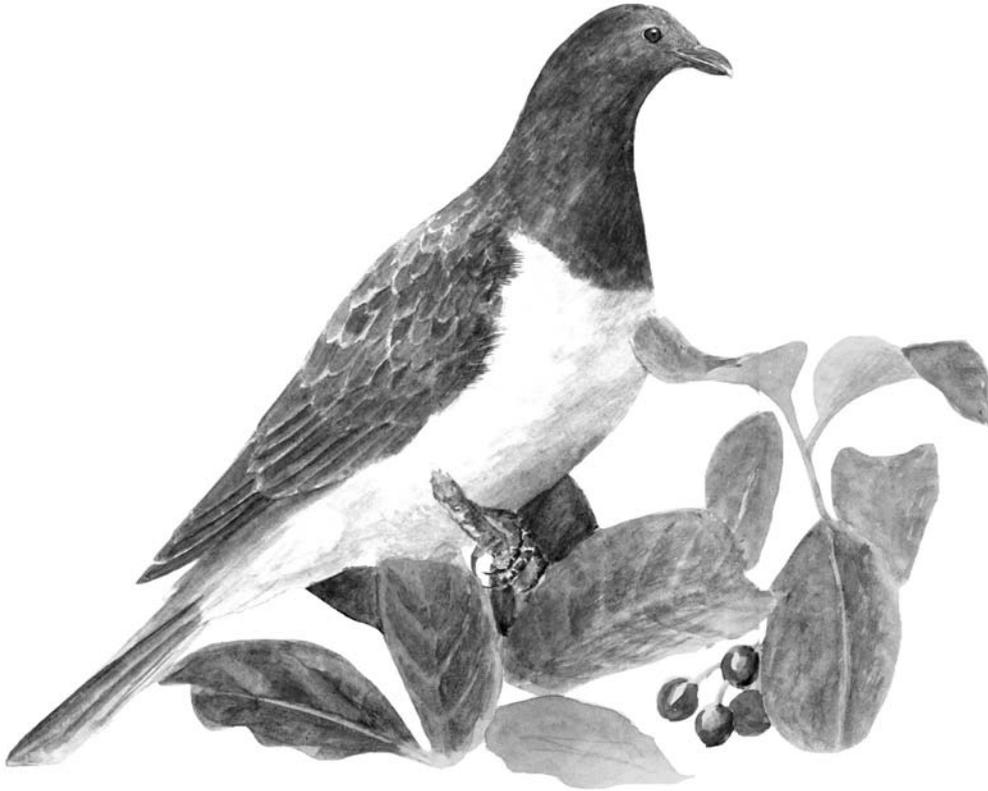
Did you know?

South Island kaka are larger and more brightly coloured than North Island kaka and have an almost white crown.

# Kereru / kukupa

*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*

New Zealand pigeon or wood pigeon



Kereru are a threatened endemic bird.

It is very important to ensure Kereru survive, not only for their own sake, but also because they are the only birds large enough to eat, and so disperse, the seeds of some large-fruited native trees and shrubs.

They can often be seen performing aerobatic display; repeatedly flying well up into the sky, then swooping directly down towards the ground, before suddenly pulling out of the dive and flying straight up again.

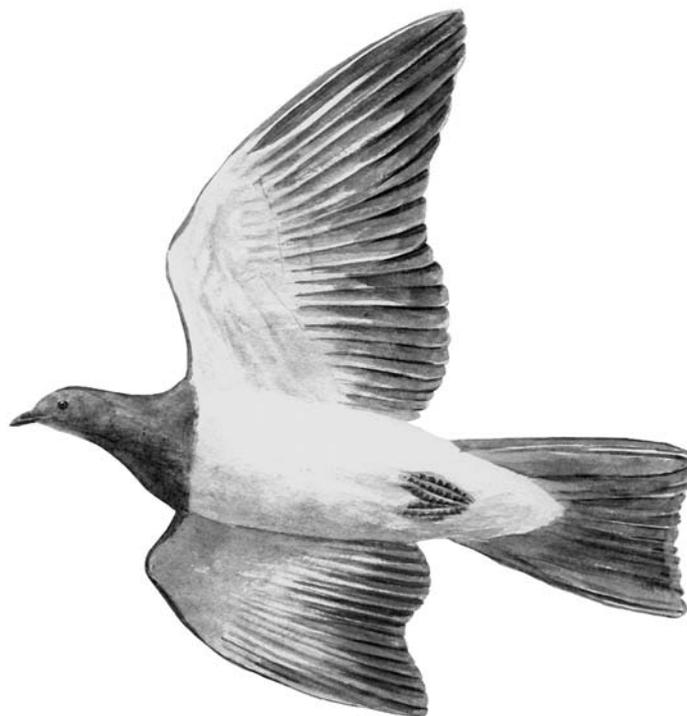
## What do they look like?

Kereru are a large fruit-dove with a bright red bill and eye. The head, upper breast and back is a purplish bronzy green, and the underparts are white, with slightly curved thin lines of white continuing towards the neck, somewhat like a low-slung bib. Male and female are alike.

## What do they sound like?

They make a soft 'kuu' sound, and they will also make grunting sounds when defending their nests.

When flying, kereru make an unmistakable noisy, whooshing sound with their wings.



## What do they eat?

Kereru eat mainly fruits, from miro, tawa, puriri and pigeonwood, as well as from nikau, kahikatea and even plum trees. If fruit is in short supply, they will eat foliage from such trees as kowhai, broom, willow and poplar.

## Breeding

Kereru breeding patterns are closely linked to the availability of their favoured foods. In a bad fruiting season they may not breed at all.

Nests are a flat, loosely-formed platform of sticks about ten metres above the ground and shaded from sun. Chicks are fed only once a day through regurgitation, initially with a creamy fluid known as 'pigeon milk', then later with vegetable or fruit pulp.

Both adults incubate the single egg, and brood and feed the chick.

## Where else can they be found?

Kereru numbers are low due to illegal hunting, loss of habitat and the presence of introduced predators. However, they can be found all over New Zealand, as well as on the Chatham Islands, where they are known as para.

# Long tailed cuckoo

*Eudynamys taitensis*

Koekoea



Long-tailed cuckoos are endemic birds, and are not commonly seen on Tiritiri Matangi Island. People get excited when they do manage to spot one. However, the thriving population of whitehead should gradually draw them to the island, and they are expected to become more common in years to come.

## What do they look like?

They are very large brown cuckoos with an extremely long tail. They are bigger than a kokako. When you see them flying you can see that their tail is as long as their body.

Adult birds have lots of black and brown stripes along their pale creamy-brown face and undersides, and their backs are a rich brown crossed by wide black bars. Juvenile birds are paler, with spots on their backs and not many stripes underneath.

## What do they sound like?

Mainly, they make a really loud, harsh rising rasp. They do this when flying, or when perched in tall trees. They also chatter ('zip zip zip' or 'rrrp pe pe pe pe'), and sometimes combine chattering and shrieking. They can be very vocal birds.

## **What do they eat?**

Being large birds, they are able to eat quite large prey, including skinks, geckos, eggs and small birds. They mainly eat insects such as weta, beetles and spiders.

## **Breeding**

Long-tailed cuckoos breed only in New Zealand but they migrate to the Pacific tropics (Micronesia, French Polynesia and to the east of Fiji) between January and April each year.

Like many other cuckoos, they lay their eggs in the nests of other birds (nest parasitization), especially the three closely-related song birds – the whitehead in the North Island, and the yellowhead and brown creeper in the South Island. To a much lesser extent, they also lay in the nests of robin, fantail, tomtit and silvereye.

For nesting, cuckoos return to the same general area each year when they return to New Zealand.

They lay just one egg, which is considerably larger than the eggs of the host bird. When the big chick hatches, it tips out the eggs or chicks of the little host bird and is then raised as the little foster parents' only baby.

The cuckoo chick is so demanding that it takes both foster parents and often also their helpers to keep it fed.

## **Where else can they be found?**

(See 'breeding' for where they spend our winters).

Long-tailed cuckoos can be found throughout New Zealand, both on the mainland and on offshore islands, wherever there are enough host species. If they are seen or heard where those species do not exist, they will be just passing through on migration.

# Kingfisher

*Todiramphus sanctus*

Kotare



The kingfisher is a protected native bird.

Most summers, a kingfisher pair nests in the clay bank near the wharf shed, and a kingfisher can often be seen perched on the wharf railing. Other kingfishers can be seen and heard by visitors walking in most parts of the island.

## What do they look like?

Kingfishers are a deep green-blue bird with off-white feathers underneath and in a collar around the neck, and a black band passing through the eye line and around the back of the neck. Bills are long, strong and dagger-like.

## What do they sound like?

When perched, they call loudly and monotonously with a 'kek, kek, kek' sound. They sometimes 'chir' to their chicks in the nest and make a repetitive screech when hunting.

## What do they eat?

Depending on their habitat, kingfishers eat small crabs, small fish, earthworms, large insects, lizards, mice and small birds. They swiftly dart at their prey and then carry it back to a perch to eat. On Tiritiri Matangi, they are commonly observed eating skinks.



## **Breeding**

Kingfishers nest in holes in rotten tree trunks and in clay bank burrows. They loosen and hollow-out the clay burrow by repeatedly flying high, uttering a peculiar whirring call and then crashing into the bank with their bill. They eventually perch in the shallow hole and scoop out the remaining dirt to make the hole deep enough.

They lay five to seven white eggs which are incubated for about three weeks. The chicks fledge at around 26-27 days old.

## **Where else can they be found?**

Kingfishers can be found throughout New Zealand, especially around coastal bush, estuaries and mangrove swamps. They are also found on farmland and the edges of towns, perched on power lines and on branches near water.

They are also found in Australia and New Caledonia, and in the Kermadec, Loyalty, Lord Howe and Norfolk islands.

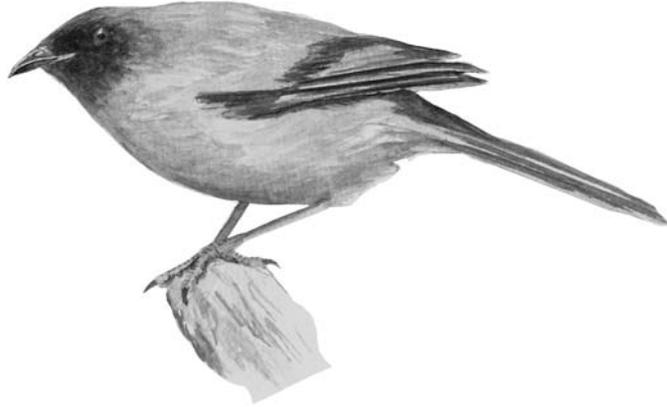
### **Reference:**

Moon, Geoff 'The Sacred Kingfisher' in 'New Zealand Geographic' No 31, 1996.

# Bellbird

*Anthornis melanura*

Korimako



An endemic bird, bellbirds were already on Tiritiri Matangi Island in small numbers before restoration began. For about 100 years there were about 20 pairs on the island, which survived using a grove of brush wattle and a few remaining pockets of native bush. In 1969 just 24 were counted during a survey by the Ornithological Society.

## What do they look like?

Males and females are both green, with the male a darker olive-green with a purple gloss on his head. The slightly smaller female has a narrow white stripe that travels from cheek to bill. Adult birds have red eyes. Juveniles look similar to females but have brown eyes.

Bellbirds are slightly larger than a house sparrow, but because of their strong voices, many visitors to the island expect to see a much larger bird.

## What do they sound like?

The call, which gives them their name, is a clear, bell-like tune. At times the call can be confused with that of the tui, but the bellbird song generally lacks the clicks, wheezes and grunts which intersperse the tui's song.

It also has a harsh, scolding, repetitive alarm call that is completely different to its other calls. If you hear this on Tiritiri Matangi, look around and you may see a roosting morepork nearby being mobbed by several bellbirds.

Research on Tiritiri Matangi identified nine common distinctive male songs and nine common female songs among the island's bellbirds.

## What do they eat?

Bellbirds mainly eat nectar, but will also eat fruit. They also glean insects and spiders from tree trunks and leaves. The ratio of nectar to protein intake changes with the seasons and with the need to feed growing juveniles.

In early spring they sip nectar from kowhai flowers, then a little later, from flax flowers. At this time, a dusting of orange pollen is often seen on their heads. They can also be found feeding in puriri trees throughout the year.

They aggressively defend feeding territories as well as nesting territories from other bellbirds, and keep the same breeding territory year after year. In males, one of the leading wing feathers is notched and this produces a whirring sound as they fly about during territorial encounters.

Bellbirds can often be found bossing the stitchbird at the supplementary feeding stations on the island.

## Breeding

On Tiritiri Matangi, the breeding season extends from October to January. The female builds the nest, made of a twig base insulated with moss and fern scales, and lined with feathers, taking three to seven days to do so. There are usually three to four pale pink eggs that have brownish-pink splashes. The female does all the incubation, but the male helps with feeding the chicks.

## Where else are they found?

Bellbirds are more widely distributed in the South Island than in the North Island, although in some forested areas of the North Island they are locally common.

Bellbirds disappeared from the Auckland region in the 1860s, possibly due to disease. However, as rats can survive the milder winters in larger numbers than further south, this might also have contributed to their decline.

With efforts in pest eradication and forest restoration, bellbirds have recently been found breeding successfully on Whangaparaoa Peninsula and at Tawharanui.

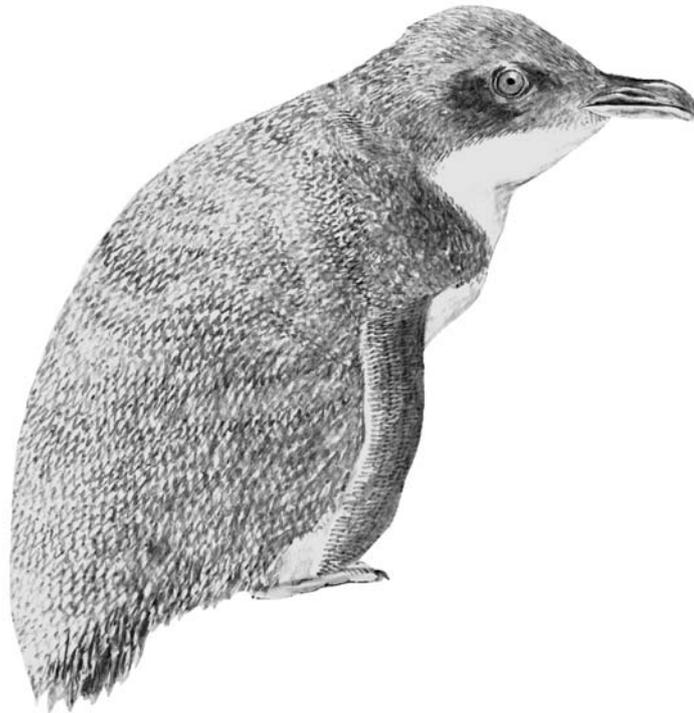
### References:

- Lee, Michael. 'Notornis' Vol. 52 Part 3, September 2005, pp150 – 157.
- Rimmer, Anne. 'Tiritiri Matangi, A Model of Conservation'.
- 'Dawn Chorus' Bulletin 56, Summer 2004, p3.

# Little blue penguin

*Eudyptula minor*

Korora



On very calm crossings to Tiritiri Matangi Island, these little native penguins can sometimes be seen from the ferry, floating in the sea. While hundreds of them live and breed on Tiritiri Matangi they aren't often seen, as daytime they are out at sea or, in the breeding season, sitting on their nests. The only place day-visitors get to see them is by peering into the island's artificial nesting burrows. These can be found a few metres along the pathway leading from the wharf shelter.

## What do they look like?

'Little blue's' are the world's smallest penguin.

Their heads and backs are a light blue, while below their eye and all of their underparts are white.

Babies look quite different at first – for the first few days they are covered in black downy feathers, which then change to chocolate brown. At this stage they look as though they are considerably larger than their parents!

## **What do they sound like?**

Korora are often very vocal when they come ashore at night. They have a range of different sounds, often sounding like a donkey, as well as making deep growling sounds, and even screaming and trumpeting.

## **What do they eat?**

Little blue penguins mainly eat small fish, squid and similar items. When they have growing chicks, both parents need to be out fishing every day. If they have had a good season with plenty of food, the chicks soon outweigh the parents.

Research is currently being done on Tiritiri Matangi to discover exactly what korora there eat.

## **Breeding**

Korora are monogamous during the breeding season. Both parents incubate the eggs and they share the care of the chicks. The success of a breeding season depends on both parents remaining well and alive. The breeding season is very hard on the adults, as they struggle to keep their insatiable chicks fed. It can last from July or August well into summer, but most eggs are laid in August and September.

## **Where else can they be found?**

Little blue penguins are found all around the New Zealand coast, although in places numbers are becoming very low. Main populations of little blue penguins are around Foveaux Strait, the southern Otago coast, Cook Strait, and the islands off Northland and the Hauraki Gulf. The korora is known as the fairy penguin where it is found in southern Australia.

### **References:**

'Dawn Chorus' 54, Winter 2003, p3.

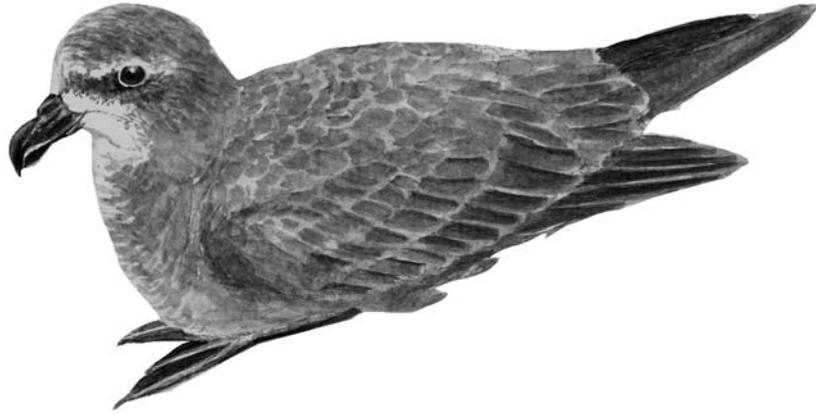
'Dawn Chorus' 64, February 2006, p13.

'Dawn Chorus' 66, August 2006, p13.

# Grey faced petrel

*Pterodroma macroptera*

Oi



These common native seabirds are also known as the northern muttonbird, because they were the main seabird caught and eaten like the muttonbirds (sooty shearwater) of the Foveaux Strait area. Many oi nest on Tiritiri Matangi, with the largest and most accessible numbers in the cliffs above the northern end of Hobbs Beach.

## What do they look like?

They are quite big birds, weighing about 550 grams. They are blackish-brown, except for the pale grey forehead, chin and throat. They have a strong black bill and black legs and feet. Their wings are long and narrow, and they can be heard and seen at night coming in to their burrows from the sea.

## What do they sound like?

When they are on the ground near their nesting area they make a very distinctive 'or-wik' call. One starts up the call and others then start up as well. While flying over and about the burrows, they more often make a call a bit like their name: 'o-hi'.

## What do they eat?

Oi mostly eat squid, but they also eat fish and crustaceans. Mostly, they feed at night while sitting on the sea surface.

## Where else can they be found?

The subspecies *gouldi* breed around New Zealand, but other oi breed around the Atlantic and Indian oceans, as well as off southwestern Australia.



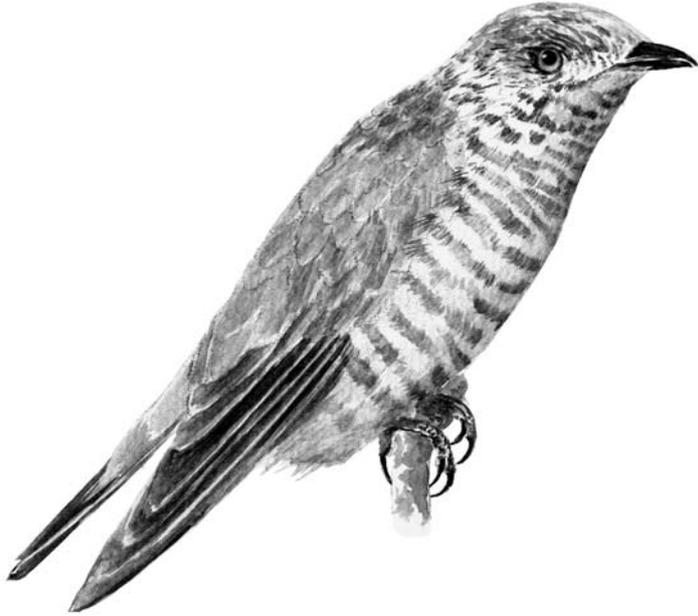
Did you know?

Oi are the most common petrel breeding in the New Zealand region.

# Shining cuckoo

*Chrysococcyx lucidus*

Pipiwharau



These common migratory birds arrive in late September and are much more often heard than seen, especially in late spring and early summer.

## What do they look like?

They are not very large birds – about the size of a house sparrow. They have a short tail compared to other cuckoos, and have attractive metallic bronze-green feathers on their backs, as well as in bars which transverse their white underparts and face.

## What do they sound like?

When they arrive back in their breeding grounds they call in flight ‘tsee-ew’. Their territorial call is a very distinctive ascending ‘coo-ee, coo-ee, coo-ee’ often followed immediately with a descending ‘tsee-ew, tsee-ew.’

## What do they eat?

Shining cuckoos mostly eat little green kowhai caterpillars and hairy black magpie moth caterpillars, as well as other insects.

## **Breeding**

Like most cuckoos, they lay their eggs in the nests of an unsuspecting host bird – usually the tiny grey warbler. How the relatively large cuckoo manages to lay its egg in the hanging dome shaped nest of the tiny warbler without damaging it, remains a puzzle.

The cuckoo's egg is usually laid in the warbler's second nest, so each year the warbler's first clutch can grow to maturity without interference.

## **Where else can they be found?**

Four subspecies are known to exist, with the three others found in Australia, Vanuatu and New Caledonia.

In New Zealand, they are found everywhere grey warblers live – in the South, North and Stewart islands and smaller offshore islands.

In late summer, early autumn, most return to the Solomon Islands and nearby areas, although a few do over-winter here.