



MĀTAKITAKI MANU REPO WATCHING WETLAND BIRDS

Did you know? Wetland habitats including swamps, freshwater lakes, rivers and streams are home to 30% of New Zealand's native bird species, some of which are very rare.

To find out more about wetland birds visit teara.govt.nz and search 'wetland birds'.

For help with bird identification visit nzbirdsonline.org.nz and click on 'Identify that bird'.

The Auckland region has about 3,700ha of freshwater wetland, 14,000ha of estuarine wetland, 10,000km of rivers and streams and over 30 lakes. To discover more about these special places and where you can go to explore them visit aucklandcouncil.govt.nz and search 'wetland'.



KĀRUHIRUHI / PIED SHAG

Native to New Zealand. They are often seen basking with their wings spread out to dry because their feathers are not waterproof. They dive for fish and eels. Females lay 3-4 eggs at any time of year in a nest that's built as a platform of sticks in a tree overhanging the water.



KAWAUPAKA / LITTLE SHAG

Native to New Zealand. Their plumage can vary from completely black through to white and combinations in between. They can be distinguished from other types of shag by their small size, short yellow bill and relatively long tail. They dive for small fish and other aquatic animals.



PŪTANGITANGI / PARADISE SHELDUCK

Endemic to New Zealand. Females have a white head and chestnut-coloured body, while males have dark plumage. Breeding pairs mate for life and return to the same nesting sites each year. Females lay a clutch of 8-12 eggs in spring, and both share the parenting of chicks when they hatch a month later.



PĀPANGO / NEW ZEALAND SCAUP

Endemic to New Zealand. They are New Zealand's only species of diving duck. They can dive more than 2m to feed on aquatic plants, snails and other invertebrates. Females lay 2-15 eggs in spring and summer, caring for the eggs and chicks by themselves. Day-old chicks can swim and dive down to 1m.



PĀRERA / NEW ZEALAND GREY DUCK

Native to New Zealand. They look similar to female mallard ducks but have a distinguishing facial stripe and olive-coloured legs (mallard feet are orange). They have naturally interbred with introduced mallard ducks to such an extent that pure grey ducks have been given a critical conservation status.

'Native' means a species is living in its natural range, including areas it has reached without human introduction. 'Endemic' means that a species can only be found in a particular place.



WEWEIA / NEW ZEALAND DABCHICK

Endemic to New Zealand. They can dive down to 4m, holding their breath for 30 seconds to catch small fish, aquatic insects, snails and crayfish. Females lay 2-3 eggs from winter to summer. Chicks can swim as soon as they hatch but often ride on their parents backs until they are about 4 weeks old.



KŌTUKU NGUTUPAPA / ROYAL SPOONBILL

Native to New Zealand, also found in Australia and parts of South-East Asia. They sweep their long spoon-shaped bills from side to side to catch crustaceans, fish and small insects. When breeding, long white plumes grow from the back of their heads and coloured patches appear on their face.



MATUKU MOANA / WHITE FACED HERON

Native to New Zealand having self-introduced from Australia in the 1940s. They are often seen walking slowly in shallow water looking for fish, crabs, worms and other small animals which they can catch at lightning speed. They build nests and roost in tall trees with both parents raising their chicks.



PŪKEKO / SWAMP HEN

Native to New Zealand, also common in Australia. They are mostly vegetarian but also eat fish, frogs, eggs and other small animals. They live in extended family groups and can breed all year round with females laying eggs in one nest. All the adults in the group help to incubate the eggs and rear the chicks.



AUSTRALIAN COOT

They self-colonised from Australia in the 1950s and are classified as native. Coots are related to pūkeko and takahe. They breed during the spring and summer, laying 3-5 eggs on a floating nest of twigs anchored to branches or reeds. They dive to feed on aquatic vegetarian and invertebrates.



KAKIĀNAU / BLACK SWAN

They were introduced in the 1860s from Australia but are classified as native to New Zealand as they probably self-colonised around the same time. They mainly feed on aquatic plants and grass. Breeding pairs are strongly territorial, protecting their eggs and chicks in nests made of mounds of grassy vegetation.

OTHER BIRDS

Other native birds that you are likely to find in wetlands include kōtare (kingfisher), warou (welcome swallow), tarāpunga (red-billed gull), karoro (black-backed gull), along with species such as tūi and pīwakawaka (fantail).

Rakiraki (mallard ducks) and kuihi (geese) are also commonly seen in wetlands. Please don't feed the birds bread, it makes them sick, disrupts their natural feeding behaviours and pollutes the water; peas or seeds are healthier alternatives.