

Great Barrier Island Korora Survey

7th-17th June 2022 Summary Trip Report

Summary

All finds and waypoint details are in an excel spreadsheet KORORA_AOTEA_DOGSURVEY_JUNE2022.xls (sent separately). All areas (except Awana) had definite active penguin burrows found, with birds seen in many of these. This is not a comprehensive survey of the island, but certainly gives an indication of penguin densities and activity in the areas surveyed.

- A total of one hundred and five penguin burrows were found and marked
- Four grey-faced petrel burrows were also found.

We walked about 30 km so roughly about 15-20km of coastline was surveyed (as I always had to return back to my vehicle after searching). Tracking didn't always record for Tryphena, Awana and Mulberry Grove. Some photos are included here but will be sent separately with some videos.

Sunday 5th – Monday 6th

Travel days

Tuesday 7th June Overcast and heavy rain

Blind Bay

Okupu Bay was surveyed before torrential rain arrived.

Twelve penguin burrows were detected and marked. Birds were seen in some of these. This includes one detection under a house.

New Zealand dotterel and variable oystercatchers seen here as well.

Wednesday 8th June Sunny light winds

Tryphena Point

Nineteen detections were recorded between the Tryphena Wharf and Taylors Bay. One of these a bird was found roosting at about the high tide mark so assumed this was a roost not a burrow. All others were burrows. Approximately half of these, birds were seen. Two were found along the end of the stone wall near the wharf, one was found under a shed. In addition, an extra bird (P13) was found incidentally (while waiting for roadworks) in an old stormwater pipe, (near a bigger working culvert) in Shoal Bay opposite the car rental property.

Mulberry Grove School Area

Met Taryn and some students at the school. Rua found 2 active burrows here just above the creek (P33 & P34) One I couldn't confirm presence of a bird, but the second burrow had two birds home (video sent).

The stone wall was searched with no penguins found, then a quick look south of the creek where several burrows were found. One was just below the road amongst long kikuyu and rocks where two birds were seen (P38).

One reef heron, one Caspian tern and two variable oyster catchers were seen near here as well.

Thursday 9th June, Overcast

Blind Bay Wharf and Awana

Nine detections were made around the Okupu wharf area, with 3 north of the wharf, and six in the artificial rock wall.

Awana: One detection made that may be a rabbit hole but was bigger than a typical rabbit burrow with rabbit sign here, under muehlenbeckia. This particular area could be very suitable for penguins as easy access from the beach with sand and vegetation but the presence of rabbits and dogs negates this.

In addition two active grey faced petrel burrows were found under pohutakawa on the headland just south of Awana.

Friday 10th June Westerly winds

Millers Point and part of Puriri Bay.

Eleven penguin burrows were identified at Millers Point, as well as a dead penguin up on the bank. No penguins were found in the nest boxes but there were penguins in tree roots/stumps nearby. This was really nice habitat with rocks, pohutakawa and puriri trees all providing good natural habitat. Not all Millers Bay was surveyed due to the incoming tide and strong winds so there are likely to be more penguins than this here.

Only a small part of Puriri Bay was surveyed south of Tryphena House. But eight burrows were identified with penguins home in some of these.

Monday 13th June

Appalling weather.

Started report and excel spreadsheet.

Tuesday 14th June Strong westerly winds

Glenfern

Twelve burrows found. Birds seen in half of these. Most burrows were under roots or in the stumps/trunks of trees.

Wednesday 15th June Strong westerly winds

Okiwi School visit with the dogs in the morning, talking about korora, pateke and using dogs to find birds safely.

Karaka Bay survey

Ten detections made in the bay. There will be more out towards Mohunga Peninsula as well. Of interest, a storm wrecked diving petrel was found by the dog, so I moved to a higher place above the high tide mark to let it recover in relative safety.



Okiwi School talk

Thursday 16th June Mild breeze and temperature
South Medlands area.

Twelve penguin burrows found between the creek, boathouse rock and Shakespeare Point. The last burrow (P93) was found near the rat trap line and looked like a rabbit hole amongst kikuyu, under a manuka approximately 60m above sea level. There was an additional indication from Rua as well on top of Boathouse Rock but it was too dangerous to investigate properly.

In addition, two active grey-faced petrel burrows were found. One was low down near penguin burrows amongst pampas and flax in the gully on the headland. I suspect there are more petrel and penguin burrows in here but decided not to keep looking as it is quite fragile and time was running out. The second burrow was high up on the edge of the cliff near some astelia. It is hard to confirm presence of a petrel as the burrows are very long, and they are just returning to lay eggs, but feathers were evident and the dog reacted very strongly to these burrows, which means they have been visited recently by a petrel.

Friday 17th June
Data and report writing

Sunday 19th-Monday 20th
Travel Days

APPENDICES: MAPS SHOWING TRACKS AND PENGUIN BURROWS FOUND















Rua indicating on an active penguin burrow at Millers Point



A pair of korora inside the trunk of a pohutakawa, Millers Point



Miro indicating that there is an active grey-faced petrel burrow here under the astelia