



Field Guides Tour Report

New Zealand 2014 (with Hauraki Gulf extension)

Nov 9, 2014 to Nov 27, 2014

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For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE.

New Zealand was once the Land of Birds. Much like Hawaii, this isolated archipelago had no terrestrial land mammals, and so birds (and a few other organisms that made it here) had to fill the niches filled by mammals elsewhere. Moas and flightless geese were the ungulates, the world's largest eagle was the lion, kiwis were the shrews, Takahes were like rodents (eating low growing grasses and herbs), and the giant crickets, wetas, were the mice. Meanwhile, passerines filled the podocarp forests and montane beech forests with haunting songs, and incredible numbers of seabirds nested both on the main islands and, especially, on the offshore islands surrounding them.

All this changed when the first people arrived about a millennium ago. Humans, now called Maori, and the mammals that they brought, both intentionally and unintentionally, wrought havoc on the native avifauna... and this was worsened considerably by the second wave of humans, the Europeans. Today, the islands are very changed, both in their vegetation and their fauna. Most of the native landbirds cling to life on predator-free islands, and they may never be able to re-colonize their original ranges due to the presence of predatory mammals. Intensive management is necessary to assure their long-term survival. This is a bit of a depressing reality, but the fact that many of these species have dedicated conservation programs and can still be seen by birders is something comforting. What's more, a whole suite of introduced species have filled novel niches on the main islands... and some day may evolve to become a whole new endemic avifauna unique to New Zealand -- one that grew up with mammalian predators, and thus can coexist with them!

Our visit to "Middle Earth" (principal filming for *The Lord of the Rings* took place here) left us with many memories, among which were the impressive spectacle of the gannet colony we enjoyed our first day (including the crafty Kelp Gull that snuck off with an egg when no one was looking!); the delightful little Rifleman that we encountered several times in the forests of the South Island; the jazzy little Tomtits in their tuxedos and happy tunes; the diminutive Little Penguins that gathered in rafts at last light near Stewart Island to fish; the attractive Silver-eyes as they hopped about like warblers; the unique Stitchbird whose loud, electric song echoed in the forests of Tiritiri Matangi Island; the bouncy South Island (Rock) Wren that hid like a mouse among the rocks at Homer Tunnel; the rasping of the Long-tailed Koel as it fled from a Tui; the Tui itself with its flashy plumage (little white curl on its chin) and attractive song; the pair of Blue Ducks that didn't mind our presence as they worked upstream against a stiff current; the curious hooded orchids beside the road at Pureora forest; the goofy Salvin's Albatrosses that eyed us, wondering when we would break down and toss them some food; the reptilian kiwis we glimpsed in the dark; and (of course) Ian: Master Kiwi Hunter! And for those who joined us on the extension, the views of the recently rediscovered New Zealand Storm-Petrel, a living testament to the hope that we may yet be able to bring some of the endangered avifauna of New Zealand back from the brink, was also a great thing to see!

I hope you enjoyed your visit to this island nation as much as I did, and that we may meet again somewhere in the future with binoculars in hand! Until then, good birding!

--Dan

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Apterygidae (Kiwis)

SOUTHERN BROWN KIWI (STEWART ISLAND) (*Apteryx australis lawryi*) – Two birds on the beach at Stewart Island allowed close approach.

What a treat! [E]

OKARITO BROWN KIWI (*Apteryx rowi*) – Only fairly recently split from South Island Brown, this species is very limited in distribution. Luckily for us, there was Ian! And Ian is very good at showing this bird to people... [E]

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) [I]



Tui, one of two endemic New Zealand honeyeaters (Photo by participants David & Judy Smith)

CAPE BARREN GOOSE (*Cereopsis novaehollandiae*) – A species introduced from Oz, we saw some as we drove to Hokitika on the west coast of the South Island. [I]

BLACK SWAN (*Cygnus atratus*) – Although introduced from Oz in historic times, there is evidence that the species was present in NZ prehistorically. It is rather common on some large water bodies!

PARADISE SHELDUCK (*Tadorna variegata*) – A common native waterfowl, but one we mostly saw from the moving bus. [EN]

BLUE DUCK (*Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos*) – What a great experience! Thanks to Mark's careful searching, we found a pair, and happily we were able to bring everyone down to the creek to see the birds at close quarters. [E]

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Introduced from Europe for heaven knows what reason... but it has resulted in the genetic swamping of the next species. [I]

PACIFIC BLACK DUCK (*Anas superciliosa*) – The native member of the Mallard complex in NZ and other southwest Pacific areas, this species has been nearly hybridized out of existence in NZ by introduced Mallards. A combination of green speculum, strong face pattern, and gray or blackish bill are the best indicators of a 'pure' individual, but even those are likely marred by Mallard genes.

AUSTRALIAN SHOVELER (*Anas rhynchos*) – Much like our Northern Shoveler during its 'eclipse' plumage.

GRAY TEAL (*Anas gracilis*) – Apparently more restricted to estuaries and braided rivers than some of the other widespread waterfowl in NZ.

BROWN TEAL (*Anas chlorotis*) – A rather endangered species that we saw both at Tiritiri (at the pond behind the sign proclaiming "Brown Teal"), and also at Tawharanui Regional Park on the extension. [E]

NEW ZEALAND SCAUP (*Aythya novaeseelandiae*) – A common diving duck found on most water bodies around the country. [E]

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

CALIFORNIA QUAIL (*Callipepla californica*) – A familiar species from back home that has done remarkably well in NZ. [I]

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

BROWN QUAIL (*Coturnix ypsilophora*) – Introduced from Australia, we had a fine pair at Tiritiri. [I]

RING-NECKED PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*) – Only a quick glimpse on the main tour, but many were around Sandspit on the extension. [I]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

NEW ZEALAND GREBE (*Poliiocephalus rufopectus*) – It took a little bit of searching in Rotoroua, but we eventually saw one 'dabchick' there, and others on Lake Taupo. [E]

GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Podiceps cristatus*) – Several on lakes on the South Island were lovely to see! A fine lookin' grebe!

Spheniscidae (Penguins)

YELLOW-EYED PENGUIN (*Megadyptes antipodes*) – Three on our day on the boat out from Stewart Island were a great prize for such a rare penguin! [E]

LITTLE PENGUIN (*Eudyptula minor*) – Also called "Blue" or "Fairy" (in Oz) Penguin, we encountered this species in several sites, mostly on the South Island, but also on the extension pelagic.

FIORDLAND PENGUIN (*Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*) – Our first were at Monroe Beach in Westland, with more at Stewart Is and still more on our boat ride around Millford Sound.

Diomedidae (Albatrosses)

WHITE-CAPPED ALBATROSS (*Thalassarche cauta cauta*) – Formerly part of Shy Albatross, this was the more common albatross in Stewart Island, but we saw some at Kaikoura as well.

SALVIN'S ALBATROSS (*Thalassarche salvini*) – The gray-headed "Shy Albatross" that we saw at several point, but especially at Kaikoura. [E]

ROYAL ALBATROSS (SOUTHERN) (*Diomedea epomophora epomophora*) – Using Clements', the Royal Albatross is still considered one species, but the two populations are rather distinct, and this may change soon. We saw the southern birds (with white on the upperwing) at Kaikoura and Stewart Is.

ROYAL ALBATROSS (NORTHERN) (*Diomedea epomophora sanfordi*) – The northern Royals, with all-dark upperwings were easiest to see near the breeding colony at Otago head, by Dunedin. [E]

WANDERING ALBATROSS (*Diomedea exulans*) – Another species that may be split into several at some point. We saw the "New Zealand" form(s) that include the Antipodean (subspecies *antipodensis*) and perhaps Gibson's (*gibsoni*). There are another three forms that we probably did not encounter (but are very difficult to distinguish in the field at most ages).

Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)

SOUTHERN GIANT-PETREL (*Macronectes giganteus*) – The less common of the two giant petrels, but we saw a few mixed in with northern behind our boat at Kaikoura.

NORTHERN GIANT-PETREL (*Macronectes halli*) – The more common giant petrel on the tour.

CAPE PETREL (*Daption capense*) – Also called "Pintado Petrel" or "Cape Pigeon", this handsome petrel was not hard to see at Kaikoura or Stewart Is.

COOK'S PETREL (*Pterodroma cookii*) – Only on the extension pelagic, but plenty common there! [E]

FAIRY PRION (*Pachyptila turtur*) – We saw this first as we crossed between the islands on the ferry, but also on most pelagics after that.

WHITE-CHINNED PETREL (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*) – The yellow bill-tipped dark petrel we saw at several points. The white throat is not easy to see!

PARKINSON'S PETREL (*Procellaria parkinsoni*) – Called "Black Petrel" in NZ, this species was on our extension pelagic only. [E]

WESTLAND PETREL (*Procellaria westlandica*) – The dark petrel we saw off Kaikoura. [E]

FLESH-FOOTED SHEARWATER (*Puffinus carneipes*) – Similar to the Procellaria petrels above, this shearwater differs in having pink feet (!). Briefly seen on the ferry crossing between the islands and at Kaikoura, we saw it best on the extension pelagic.

BULLER'S SHEARWATER (*Puffinus bulleri*) – Formerly called "New Zealand Shearwater" we enjoyed this handsome shearwater briefly at Kaikoura, but had great views on the extension. [E]

SOOTY SHEARWATER (*Puffinus griseus*) – One of the most numerous birds on earth, we had these on most of our boat trips.

SHORT-TAILED SHEARWATER (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) – Another "muttonbird" that we saw in small numbers on the Kaikoura boat trip.

HUTTON'S SHEARWATER (*Puffinus huttoni*) – Very local, this shearwater breeds at Kaikoura, where we saw it in good numbers. [E]

FLUTTERING SHEARWATER (*Puffinus gavia*) – Similar to the last species, but paler, we saw this in Queen Charlotte Sound, and on the west coast of both North and South islands, as well as on the extension. [E]

Pelecanoididae (Diving-Petrels)

COMMON DIVING-PETREL (*Pelecanoides urinatrix*) – Small and alcidlike (particularly like a Dovekie), with rapid wingbeats. We saw many of these on the ferry to Stewart Island particularly.

Hydrobatidae (Storm-Petrels)

WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL (*Pelagodroma marina*) – A handsome storm-petrel we saw well on the extension pelagic!

NEW ZEALAND STORM-PETREL (*Fregatta maoriana*) – Wow! A lifebird for Mark (one of two on the tour)! We enjoyed views of perhaps four birds on the extension pelagic! [E]

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

AUSTRALASIAN GANNET (*Morus serrator*) – The colony at Muriwai was a nice stop on our first day.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) – Largely confined to the North Island, we saw these small cormorants at Rotoroua, among other sites.

GREAT CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – Locally called "Black Shag", but not very common compared to several other species of cormorant.

PIED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax varius*) – Perhaps one of the more common cormorants in NZ.

ROUGH-FACED SHAG (*Phalacrocorax carunculatus*) – Also called "King Shag", this species is restricted to the area around the Queen Charlotte Sound. [E]

BRONZE SHAG (*Phalacrocorax chalconotus*) – Also called "Stewart Island Shag", we saw this species at the ferry terminal at Bluff, Stewart Island, and Dunedin. [E]

SPOTTED SHAG (*Phalacrocorax punctatus*) – A very attractive shag with a black and white stripe down the face and neck. We got to see them at several nesting colonies. [E]

LITTLE PIED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*) – Similar to the Little Black Cormorant above, but this one is more widespread and usually has a white throat.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Locally called "White Heron" and a sacred bird to the Maori (they had no idea how common it is elsewhere in the world!). We did not visit the nesting colony near Okarito, but saw one at the salmon hatchery in the Mackenzie Basin, thanks to Barbara.

WHITE-FACED HERON (*Egretta novaehollandiae*) – The most widespread heron in NZ.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

ROYAL SPOONBILL (*Platalea regia*) – A very attractive spoonbill we enjoyed at several sites, including the precarious nesting colony on the Otago headlands!

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

SWAMP HARRIER (*Circus approximans*) – The only large raptor on NZ, and quite common!

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

WEKA (*Gallirallus australis*) – Our first was a bird that flustered the King Shag colony in QC Sound, but we had them at several other sites after, including a remarkable dark individual that crossed the road in front of us at Millford Sound. [E]

BUFF-BANDED RAIL (*Gallirallus philippensis*) – A great view of a bird out in the open amid the mangrove swamp at Miranda was nice!

BAILLON'S CRAKE (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Porzana pusilla affinis*) – Called "Marsh Crane" in NZ, we had some quick views around the ponds in the Mackenzie Basin.

PURPLE SWAMPHEN (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) – Locally called "Pukeko", this is a common bird in open country throughout NZ. We saw one teasing its cousin, a captive Takahe, at the bird park in Te Anau.

EURASIAN COOT (*Fulica atra*) – One bird in ponds on day 8 as we drove across the South Island was our only view.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

PIED STILT (*Himantopus leucocephalus*) – A more recent immigrant from Oz, this species has been genetically swamping the next, causing some serious conservation problems! We saw several obvious hybrids.

BLACK STILT (*Himantopus novaehollandiae*) – One of the rarest waders in the world, we nevertheless were lucky enough to see several of these rather striking stilt in the Mackenzie Basin. [E]

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

SOUTH ISLAND OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus finschi*) – Often referred to as "SIPO" or South Island Pied Oystercatcher locally, this species is rather more like the Eurasian Oystercatcher in breeding in non aquatic situations rather than being strictly tied to coastal habitats like most others. [E]

VARIABLE OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus unicolor*) – Unlike the previous species, this one is indeed strictly coastal. We saw mostly black-bellied birds, but a few pale-bellied ones were around. [E]

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis fulva*) – A single individual at Miranda was nice.

MASKED LAPWING (*Vanellus miles novaehollandiae*) – Locally called Spur-winged Plover.

RED-BREASTED DOTTEREL (*Charadrius obscurus*) – We were calling this one "New Zealand Dotterel"... I don't know why that name was superseded by "Red-breasted" in Clements... especially since the North Island birds (which we saw) hardly have any color below! [E]

DOUBLE-BANDED PLOVER (*Charadrius bicinctus*) – After a few fruitless searches, we had this species in spades around Kaikoura and the Mackenzie Basin. [E]

WRYBILL (*Anarhynchus frontalis*) – A few in the distance at Miranda were bested by close views at the Mackenzie Basin. [E]

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa lapponica*) – Amazing to think that this species flies nonstop from Alaska to NZ! One of the greatest bird migrations in the world!

RED KNOT (*Calidris canutus*) – Presumably Asian in origin, these were the second most common boreal shorebird we saw.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER (*Calidris acuminata*) – Some washed-out birds at Miranda were nice to see.

CURLEW SANDPIPER (*Calidris ferruginea*) – Although they didn't stick around long, we enjoyed seeing a few of these at Miranda.

RED-NECKED STINT (*Calidris ruficollis*) – Only present early in our visit to Miranda, we still glimpsed these small stints.

Stercorariidae (Skuas and Jaegers)

BROWN SKUA (SUBANTARCTIC) (*Stercorarius antarcticus lonnbergi*) – The local breeding skua in Stewart Island and thereabouts. We saw a few on our boat trip out there.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

BLACK-BILLED GULL (*Chroicocephalus bulleri*) – More like a Bonaparte's or Black-headed Gull in wing pattern, this species is largely inland (except at Miranda, where we first saw them). [E]

RED-BILLED GULL (*Chroicocephalus scopulinus*) – The most common small gull in NZ, and largely coastal... except around Rotoroua, where we saw them in droves! [E]

KELP GULL (*Larus dominicanus*) – Locally called Southern Black-backed Gull, this species has populations in southern Africa, Madagascar, Australia, South America, and here. Several of these populations may merit species status. Interestingly, this was the only native species we saw every day of the tour!

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – Far from the Caspian Sea! We saw this species around Auckland.

BLACK-FRONTED TERN (*Chlidonias albobristatus*) – Recently reclassified into the same genus as our Black Tern (a "marsh tern"), a decision that is in accord with this inland breeding tern's natural history. We enjoyed viewing this lovely tern in fields near the braided rivers of the South Island. [E]

WHITE-FRONTED TERN (*Sterna striata*) – The NZ version of Common Tern, and fairly strictly coastal.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

AFRICAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia roseogrisea*) – Only around Auckland. [I]

SPOTTED DOVE (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – Also only around Auckland. [I]

NEW ZEALAND PIGEON (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) – A large and attractive pigeon. Strangely, it is rather silent. [E]

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

SHINING BRONZE-CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx lucidus*) – After hearing several singing birds, Mark brought in one lovely male around Pureora Forest.

LONG-TAILED KOEL (*Eudynamis taitensis*) – After many misses, we finally encountered this very skulky cuckoo in Fiordland. Never saw it perched, but we enjoyed it shrieking by with a Tui hot in pursuit! [E]

Strigidae (Owls)

SOUTHERN BOOBOOK (MOREPORK) (*Ninox novaeseelandiae novaeseelandiae*) – Unfortunately, only a few folks heard this native owl as we hiked out and back to see the kiwis at Stewart Is. [E*]

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

SACRED KINGFISHER (*Todiramphus sanctus*) – Heard far more than seen, we nevertheless had a few nice looks at this handsome kingfisher.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

NEW ZEALAND FALCON (*Falco novaeseelandiae*) – Ann got us on a fine individual at Fiordland after one or two brief glimpses at this rare endemic raptor. [E]

Strigopidae (New Zealand Parrots)

KEA (*Nestor notabilis*) – Famous for their mischievousness, we didn't get to see any of that behavior. [E]

NEW ZEALAND KAKA (*Nestor meridionalis*) – After mostly very distant views on the North Island, the in-our-face views at the hotel on Stewart Island seemed a bit better. And no puns about the name, for crap's sake! [E]

Cacatuidae (Cockatoos)

SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO (*Cacatua galerita*) – A few at Waitakere (Ark in the Park) were our only views of this Oz introduction. [I]

Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots)

RED-FRONTED PARAKEET (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae novaezelandiae*) – A nice look at Tiritiri was our only one on the main tour, but we saw a few from the boat on the extension, too.

YELLOW-FRONTED PARAKEET (*Cyanoramphus auriceps*) – After several disappointing views, we finally had them in the scope, thanks to Judy, in Fiordland. [E]

MALHERBE'S PARAKEET (*Cyanoramphus malherbi*) – Also called Orange-fronted Parakeet, this was the one we saw on the island in QC Sound. [E]

EASTERN ROSELLA (*Platycercus eximius*) – An attractive introduction from Oz that we saw particularly on the North Island. [I]

Acanthisittidae (New Zealand Wrens)

RIFLEMAN (*Acanthisitta chloris*) – Take a kinglet, and shape it into a nuthatch and you have a Rifleman! What delightful little birds! And to think, their family is the first branch off of the passerines that is still extant! [E]

SOUTH ISLAND WREN (*Xenicus gilviventris*) – Also called "Rock Wren", Barbara got us onto a pair at Homer Tunnel that we returned to see again the next day. Great bird! [E]

Meliphagidae (Honeyeaters)

TUI (*Prothemadera novaeseelandiae*) – One of the two native honeyeaters in NZ, and the more gaudy. The views at Tiritiri were pretty amazing! [E]

NEW ZEALAND BELLBIRD (*Anthornis melanura*) – Doesn't look like much, but its song is impressive! [E]

Acanthizidae (Thornbills and Allies)

GRAY GERYGONE (*Gerygone igata*) – The sad little warble of this "Grey Warbler" is rather lovely. [E]

Mohouidae (Whiteheads)

WHITEHEAD (*Mohoua albicilla*) – Although we heard these on the North Island on several days, we only saw them well on Tiritiri. [E]

YELLOWHEAD (*Mohoua ochrocephala*) – It's sad to hear about the drastic population crash of this formerly rather common species. Happily, it seems to be catching on at Ulva Is. [E]

PIPIPI (*Mohoua novaeseelandiae*) – Also called "Brown Creeper", this species turned out to be fairly common in the understory of the South Island forests. [E]

Callaeidae (Wattlebirds)

KOKAKO (NORTH ISLAND) (*Callaeas cinereus wilsoni*) – The blue-wattled North Island birds are the only ones hanging on, and they're not doing so hot. So we were pleased to see a pair on Tiritiri, and later hear another at Pureora.

SADDLEBACK (NORTH ISLAND) (*Philesturnus carunculatus rufusater*) – Not hard on Tiritiri, we also saw one at Tawharanui Park on the extension. [E]

SADDLEBACK (SOUTH ISLAND) (*Philesturnus carunculatus carunculatus*) – It took some patience, but those who remained on Ulva Is eventually were rewarded with views of this rare bird! [E]

Notiomystidae (Stitchbird)

STITCHBIRD (*Notiomystis cincta*) – Another sad story of population collapse, we nevertheless enjoyed this attractive bird on Tiritiri. [E]

Cracticidae (Bellmagpies and Allies)

AUSTRALASIAN MAGPIE (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) – Introduced from Oz and common in open country. [I]

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

NEW ZEALAND FANTAIL (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*) – A real snazzy little flycatcher that can't help to bring a smile to your face. The mindless warbling of the young bird in Fiordland where we had the cuckoo was particularly endearing. Also, bear in mind that its Maori name is Piwakawaka! [E]

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

ROOK (*Corvus frugilegus*) – Despite efforts to eliminate this European introduction from the NZ avifauna, it's still holding on. We glimpsed some around Miranda. [I]

Petroicidae (Australasian Robins)

TOMTIT (*Petroica macrocephala*) – White-chested on the North Island, and orange-washed in the South, but common in native forests on both. [E]

NEW ZEALAND ROBIN (NORTH ISLAND) (*Petroica australis longipes*) – We first saw this rather thrush-like bird at the Ark in the Park area as it fed around us at lunch time. We then had more at Tiritiri. [E]

NEW ZEALAND ROBIN (SOUTH ISLAND) (*Petroica australis australis*) – Nice views both at QC Sound and again in Fiordland. [E]

NEW ZEALAND ROBIN (SOUTH ISLAND) (*Petroica australis rakiura*) – This is the Stewart Island form that we enjoyed hopping around our feet on Ulva Is. [E]

Alaudidae (Larks)

SKY LARK (*Alauda arvensis*) – A widespread European introduction that provided background music for us pretty much everywhere in open country. [I]

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

WELCOME SWALLOW (*Hirundo neoxena*) – Particularly welcoming this year!

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

FERNBIRD (*Megalurus punctatus*) – We enjoyed watching a bird carrying food to a hidden nest at the shores of Lake Taupo on the North Island. [E]

Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)

SILVER-EYE (*Zosterops lateralis*) – A white-eye that introduced itself (never one to wait for someone else to introduce it) to NZ in the late 1800s and has pretty much occupied the entire country.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EURASIAN BLACKBIRD (*Turdus merula*) – Another European introduction that has done well in its new home. [I]

SONG THRUSH (*Turdus philomelos*) – As with Blackbird, this European thrush has managed easily in NZ. [I]

Sturnidae (Starlings)

COMMON MYNA (*Acridotheres tristis*) – An introduction from India that is found in the northern half of the North Island (presumably where the temperatures are more subtropical). [I]

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Prunellidae (Accentors)

DUNNOCK (*Prunella modularis*) – Also called Hedge Accentor or Hedge Sparrow, this European species is remarkably easy to see in NZ. Most surprising was seeing a banded individual in Dunedin! [I]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AUSTRALASIAN PIPIT (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*) – Formerly considered conspecific with the Palearctic Richard's Pipit, but it seems the two have been split. We enjoyed seeing this species at Miranda and in the Mackenzie Basin areas. [E]

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

YELLOWHAMMER (*Emberiza citrinella*) – This lovely field bunting was mostly seen from the bus, but eventually we had good looks at a few spots.

[1]

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

COMMON CHAFFINCH (*Fringilla coelebs*) – This and the next three finches were among the most regular passerines we encountered in NZ, all European introductions! [1]

EUROPEAN GREENFINCH (*Chloris chloris*) [1]

COMMON REDPOLL (*Acanthis flammea*) – Perhaps the least common of the European finches, and (to be honest) I'm not exactly clear which form is that which is present in NZ. Presumably it's the British breeding population, which would make it subspecies cabaret, which is called "Lesser Redpoll" and sometimes considered a separate species. [1]

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH (*Carduelis carduelis*) [1]

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Yup. [1]

MAMMALS

COMMON BRUSHTAIL POSSUM (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) – One of the more common roadkills we saw. Mostly nocturnal and thus not something we had much chance of seeing alive. [1]

EUROPEAN HEDGEHOG (*Erinaceus europaeus*) – Another common roadkilled species. [1]

OLD WORLD RABBIT (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) – One of the more common diurnal terrestrial mammals. [1]

CAPE HARE (*Lepus capensis*) – Common particularly in the Mackenzie Basin. [1]

SHORT-BEAKED COMMON DOLPHIN (*Delphinus delphis*) – Something we saw on our day out from Stewart Is.

DUSKY DOLPHIN (*Lagenorhynchus obscurus*) – The common dolphin at Kaikoura.

ORCA (*Orcinus orca*) – Wow! What luck we had in seeing this, the largest of the dolphins!

NEW ZEALAND FUR SEAL (*Arctocephalus forsteri*) – According to Mark, this is actually a sea lion, but is called a fur seal out of habit.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 132 bird taxa and 8 mammal taxa