



Field Guides Tour Report

New Zealand 2018

Nov 11, 2018 to Nov 29, 2018

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For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).



New Zealand birds have some of the best names.... For instance, this is the Pipipi, a small songbird endemic to New Zealand. Participant David Woods captured this shot of a curious individual.

New Zealand is a country that is like no other. It is “at the end of the world” in some respects, having been isolated for millions of years from the rest of the world. Its flora show its link to other southern land masses with such native species as Podocarp conifers, Nothofagus beeches, and fuchsias, all shared with Australia and Patagonia, harkening back to the time of Gondwanaland. The native fauna was all but exclusively made up of birds, but thanks to the arrival of humans (particularly Europeans), what is present today is but a shadow of what once was. Nevertheless, we still can see an impressive variety of birds, including six endemic families, and a whole host of native species. Happily, New Zealanders seem to have taken their unique avifauna to heart, and have made great strides to remove the exotic mammalian predators that have been responsible for the extinction or rarity of so many species. As a result, native bird voices once again fill the beech and podocarp forests, and the predator-free offshore islands are havens for communities of native species.

Our tour took us from the southern end of the South Island to Stewart Island, and back north again, crossing Foveaux Strait, along the length of the South Island (and both sides!) to the Cook Strait, and then north across the North Island to Auckland. Those who remained for the extension then enjoyed two additional days in the area along the Hauraki Gulf north of Auckland before we said our final goodbyes and headed for home!

Highlights from the tour were many, ranging from experiences such as the gorgeous scenery and lodging at Arthur’s Pass, where the sheep farmer showed us how his dogs rounded up sheep, to the seabird smorgasbord at Kaikoura, to the sneaky Betty the male Okarito Kiwi who was decidedly uninterested in showing himself to us. In addition to these experiences, we also enjoyed some iconic NZ birds such as the South Island (or Rock) Wren, who performed pushups on the rocks at Homer Tunnel, the rather bizarre Wrybill, which we enjoyed watching as it flicked pebbles aside with its right-turn bill, the curious Australasian Bittern that responded by *climbing atop* the cattails and showing itself to us brilliantly(!), or the gawky Salvin’s Albatrosses as they squabbled over chum behind several of our boats, or glided effortlessly on their elegant wings over the water, or our first penguins: the Fiordland Crested that hopped about on rocks along Milford Sound. The Saddlebacks, a native “wattled crow” that showed well for us on several offshore islands, were another favorite, as were the elegant Tuis that regularly sported orange foreheads from the flax pollen. The endemic members of the Mohuidae, including the bold Yellowhead, the sneakier Pipipi (or Brown Creeper) and the loud Whitehead... NZ’s answer to titmice and chickadees. The bold and mischievous Wekas were another bird that warmed our hearts, particularly the one that stole the sandwich bag of the French campers on

Blumine Island. Speaking of mischievous, both Kaka and Kea showed off this side of their personalities to us. The latter is famous for its destructive ability, and the collection of rubber gaskets at a parkinglot at Arthur's Pass attested to this! The cute and friendly NZ Fantails, with their broad, white tails that they flipped around actively as they foraged etched their way into our memories, as did the hyperactive and tiny Rifleman, the nest of which we enjoyed at the Arthur's Pass Lodge. The goofy Pukeko (Australasian Swamphen, a decidedly less interesting name) earned some fondness, as did the loud and attention-grabbing Masked Lapwings. The lovely songs of Bellbird, Tomtit, and NZ Robin filled the forests we walked through and gave us an inkling what it must have been like to walk through those same forests hundreds of years ago when a fuller compliment of native species would have been present. The cryptic Fernbird was a lovely species to see in the marshes we stopped at. Coastal localities were also enlivened by the likes of the New Zealand (Red-breasted) Dotterel, the two attractive oystercatchers: Variable and South Island. And of course the pelagic and nearshore boat rides and ferries were made more interesting by the albatrosses, Cape Petrels, penguins, buzzy-winged Diving-Petrels, and other seabirds we encountered.

Overall, it was a fun tour! I sure am glad you all decided to accompany me and our hard-working driver/local guide Mark for this visit to Aotearoa, land of the long white cloud! Whakawhetai koe or thank you, and I hope we are able to bird together again somewhere down the road!

Good birding until then!

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 (*Apteryx australis*)

OKARITO BROWN KIWI (*Apteryx rowi*) – "Betty" gave us a run for our money. Most heard him grunting, some may have seen a bill or dark shape, but the performance was a bit underwhelming. [E]

NORTH ISLAND BROWN KIWI (*Apteryx mantelli*) – Well finally! For those who decided to try our very last night of the extension at Tawharanui, we succeeded in seeing a male kiwi as he slipped away in the understory! [E]

GREAT SPOTTED KIWI (*Apteryx haastii*) – Heard well at Arthur's Pass for those who tried. [E*]

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) – Canada's greatest export? [I]

BLACK SWAN (*Cygnus atratus*) – Numerous on several water bodies. Introduced from Australia, but subfossils suggest it had naturally colonized NZ in recent prehistory.

AUSTRALIAN SHELDUCK (*Tadorna tadornoides*) – Three birds in the estuary at Invercargill were among our first birds of the tour!

PARADISE SHELDUCK (*Tadorna variegata*) – A common and widespread endemic, the first we saw on the tour! [E]

BLUE DUCK (*Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos*) – Two family groups in the Whakapapa area of Tongariro NP were great! [E]

AUSTRALIAN SHOVELER (*Spatula rhynchotis*) – Like eclipsed-plumage Northern Shovelers, these were a common duck on most of the tour.

PACIFIC BLACK DUCK (*Anas superciliosa*) – Locally called "Grey Duck," this species has suffered strong genetic swamping from introduced Mallards, and now few "pure-bloods" exist on NZ.

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Yup. [I]

GRAY TEAL (*Anas gracilis*) – Often in estuaries at various sites on the islands.

BROWN TEAL (*Anas chlorotis*) – A greatly reduced population of this duck, which has fallen victim to mammalian predators, we encountered it at Tiritiri and Tawharanui. [E]

NEW ZEALAND SCAUP (*Aythya novaeseelandiae*) – Rather common on larger water bodies. Luckily, we don't have to deal with the Lesser/Greater issue here! [E]

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

CALIFORNIA QUAIL (*Callipepla californica*) – These wind-up toy birds were comedic on the North Island. A male who took to greeting dawn from the roof of our Taupo hotel was entertaining. [I]

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

BROWN QUAIL (*Synoicus ypsilophorus*) – Introduced from Australia, but there is subfossil evidence that it occurred naturally in NZ in recent history. [I]

RING-NECKED PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*) [I]

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – The same two birds along the highway north of Auckland got on several of our day lists. [I]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

AUSTRALASIAN GREBE (*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*) – Good on Mark for spotting this Australian visitor to the South Island (they're more established on the North Island) at St. Anne's Lagoon.

HOARY-HEADED GREBE (*Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*) – A pair were canoodling with a single NZ Grebe on Lake Elterwater near Blenheim. John's persistence got them for the group! This is a rare transient from Australia.

NEW ZEALAND GREBE (*Poliiocephalus rufopectus*) – One at Lake Elterwater with the previous species was our first, but more were to come on various water bodies on the North Island. [E]

GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Podiceps cristatus*) – Good views at several sites on the South Island including Te Anau and Wanaka.

Spheniscidae (Penguins)

YELLOW-EYED PENGUIN (*Megadyptes antipodes*) – We encountered at least four of these rare and attractive penguins on our boat ride around Paterson Inlet near Stewart Island. [E]

LITTLE PENGUIN (*Eudyptula minor*) – Good numbers around Stewart Island, Otago Harbor, and Queen Charlotte Sound.

FIORDLAND PENGUIN (*Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*) – Seen both in Milford Sound and around Stewart Island. [E]

Diomedidae (Albatrosses)

WHITE-CAPPED ALBATROSS (CAUTA) (*Thalassarche cauta cauta*) – The common "mollymawk" toward the south.

SALVIN'S ALBATROSS (*Thalassarche salvini*) – The common "mollymawk" towards the northern part of the South Island. [E]

BLACK-BROWED ALBATROSS (BLACK-BROWED) (*Thalassarche melanophris melanophris*) – Mark and David got looks at a distant bird that didn't seem to want to play off of Otago head.

ROYAL ALBATROSS (SOUTHERN) (*Diomedea epomophora epomophora*) – Close views of this large albatross off Otago and again at Kaikoura.

ROYAL ALBATROSS (NORTHERN) (*Diomedea epomophora sanfordi*) – First seen at the nesting area at Otago, and a few at Kaikoura. [E]

WANDERING ALBATROSS (*Diomedea exulans*) – One briefly at Otago, but several squabbling over chum at Kaikoura.

Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)

NORTHERN GIANT-PETREL (*Macronectes halli*) – This demon-bird was a major presence at chum scrums at Kaikoura.

CAPE PETREL (*Daption capense*) – Our first was on the ferry from Oban to Bluff, but we saw them better off Otago and Kaikoura.

GRAY-FACED PETREL (*Pterodroma gouldi*) – A bird came in to the Kaikoura boat trips. Nice! [E]

COOK'S PETREL (*Pterodroma cookii*) – A small number on the Cook Strait ferry (conveniently enough), but a major presence on the Hauraki Gulf pelagic. [E]

FAIRY PRION (*Pachyptila turtur*) – Mark got a few folks on some birds on Cook's Strait. Seen far better on the Hauraki pelagic.

WHITE-CHINNED PETREL (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*) – Close views on the Otago and Kaikoura pelagics. Pale bill tip.

PARKINSON'S PETREL (*Procellaria parkinsoni*) – The "Black Petrel" on the Hauraki pelagic. [E]

WESTLAND PETREL (*Procellaria westlandica*) – The dark petrel we saw particularly around Kaikoura and in the Cook Strait. Dark bill tip (compared to the White-chinned). [E]

FLESH-FOOTED SHEARWATER (*Ardenna carneipes*) – One on the second Kaikoura pelagic was early, but we had good numbers on the Hauraki pelagic.

BULLER'S SHEARWATER (*Ardenna bulleri*) – One or two birds passed us on the Kaikoura pelagics, but we had good numbers in Hauraki Gulf, near the only nesting islands in the world! [E]

SOOTY SHEARWATER (*Ardenna grisea*) – A few passing individuals on several boat trips.

SHORT-TAILED SHEARWATER (*Ardenna tenuirostris*) – A couple of short-billed, dark underwinged birds passed the boat on the Hauraki Gulf.

HUTTON'S SHEARWATER (*Puffinus huttoni*) – Large congregations at Kaikoura, with some in the Cook Strait, where comparisons with the next were possible. [E]

FLUTTERING SHEARWATER (*Puffinus gavia*) – Large concentrations in the Queen Charlotte Sound with several in Cook Strait as well, and also in Hauraki Gulf. Compared to the last, these are browner above, shorter-billed, whiter on the throat and underwings, and tended to have white patches on the sides of the rump. [E]

LITTLE SHEARWATER (HAURAKI) (*Puffinus assimilis haurakiensis*) – A small shearwater that we saw in meager numbers on the Hauraki Gulf pelagic. The whiter face distinguished it from Fluttering.

COMMON DIVING-PETREL (*Pelecanoides urinatrix*) – Many on the Stewart Island ferry runs, and several in the Hauraki Gulf.

Hydrobatidae (Storm-Petrels)

WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL (*Pelagodroma marina*) – Effectively replacing Albatrosses off the North Island, storm petrels were common in the Hauraki Gulf. This species was notable for its kangaroo-hopping locomotion across the waves.

NEW ZEALAND STORM-PETREL (*Fregetta maoriana*) – Perhaps the biggest target on the Hauraki Gulf pelagic of the extension, we saw several around the first chum slicks. Thought to be misidentified or extinct for about a century, it is now known to nest on Little Barrier Island here. [E]

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

AUSTRALASIAN GANNET (*Morus serrator*) – Fine views of this attractive sulid in Queen Charlotte Sound and Hauraki Gulf, among other places.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

LITTLE PIED CORMORANT (*Microcarbo melanoleucos*) – One of the more common cormorants of the tour, distinctive in shape.

GREAT CORMORANT (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae*) – Locally called "Black Shag," this is the same species that occurs in the northeast US and Maritime Canada, as well as Europe, but an Antipodean form.

SPOTTED SHAG (*Phalacrocorax punctatus*) – An attractive endemic marine shag. We saw several nesting colonies. Unfortunately, we never really saw an adult in full breeding finery. [E]

LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) – Perhaps the rarest of the NZ cormorants, we enjoyed close views on the fencing around a salmon farm in Queen Charlotte Sound and a few others on the North Island.

PIED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax varius*) – An attractive cormorant we saw mostly in marine environments, but nests in trees unlike most of the other species found around salt water.

NEW ZEALAND KING SHAG (*Phalacrocorax carunculatus*) – Several swimming and two perched individuals showed well on our Queen Charlotte Sound boat ride. [E]

STEWART ISLAND SHAG (*Phalacrocorax chalconotus*) – We saw both taxa that are considered separate by both NZ and IOC authorities (not by Clements, which we follow here at Field Guides). The Foveaux Shag (*P. stewarti*) and the Otago Shag (*P. chalconotus*) have been shown to be fairly distinctive genetically and in some physical characters. Foveaux occurs in the strait of that name between South and Stewart islands, and Otago occurs from Otago harbor north to Oamaru, where we saw that nesting colony on the dock. [E]

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

AUSTRALASIAN BITTERN (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*) – Wow! Often a very hard bird, but perhaps the overcast sky stoked its courage, and one climbed onto the cattails on Lake Taupo for a great view! That, or another, sang later on.

GREAT EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Ardea alba modesta*) – Mostly distant views near the nesting colony at Okarito, but one near the road on the drive north through Westland was a bit better (but brief!).

WHITE-FACED HERON (*Egretta novaehollandiae*) – THE heron of NZ! Everywhere!

PACIFIC REEF-HERON (*Egretta sacra*) – Two flew by on our first visit to Tawharanui on the first day of the extension.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – Several young at nests in the Blenheim Water Treatment Plant with a cluster of adults nearby.

ROYAL SPOONBILL (*Platalea regia*) – A species that has colonized NZ in historic times, it seems to have pretty much spread across the country!

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

SWAMP HARRIER (*Circus approximans*) – Pretty much the only raptor in NZ (the falcon is pretty rare by comparison), and it fills the role of Buteo, harrier, and vulture all at once. Seen daily.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

WEKA (*Gallirallus australis*) – The bold, flightless rail that we enjoyed encountering on Ulva and Blumine islands. One stole those French guys' bag while we were at the latter island. [E]

BUFF-BANDED RAIL (*Gallirallus philippensis*) – A rather good view of one in the mangroves at Miranda was great!

BAILLON'S CRAKE (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Zapornia pusilla affinis*) – A pair showed remarkably well around those marshy ponds in the Ohau outlet area.

SPOTLESS CRAKE (*Zapornia tabuensis*) – Mostly heard at the south end of Lake Taupo, Guy caught a glimpse.

SOUTH ISLAND TAKAHE (*Porphyrio hochstetteri*) – Heard only on Tiritiri, but we did see two captive birds at the Te Anau bird park. [E*]

AUSTRALASIAN SWAMPHEN (*Porphyrio melanotus*) – The Pukeko became a daily item around Moeraki Beach and north, and particularly numerous on the North Island. A goofy big gallinule.

EURASIAN COOT (*Fulica atra*) – Seen on a few ponds and marshes on both South and North islands. A fairly recent colonizer from Oz.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

PIED STILT (*Himantopus leucocephalus*) – Rather common and widespread in the country, this species has been responsible for the decline of the next.

BLACK STILT (*Himantopus novaezelandiae*) – It took some searching, but we eventually saw several (mostly young) birds at the Tasman River mouth at the top end of Lake Pukake. [E]

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

SOUTH ISLAND OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus finschi*) – Locally called "SIPOs" (South Island Pied Oystercatchers), these were the common inland oystercatcher also present at some estuaries in non-breeding concentrations. [E]

VARIABLE OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus unicolor*) – The common coastal oystercatcher. Most on the South Island are black, but we did see some pale-bellied birds on the North Island, where the name finally seems appropriate. [E]

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis fulva*) – A surprising concentration of this breeder from Alaska and Siberia at Miranda was nice.

MASKED LAPWING (BLACK-SHOULDERED) (*Vanellus miles novaehollandiae*) – Locally called "Spur-winged Plover," this species is another historic colonizer of NZ and is now widespread and common countrywide in open habitats.

RED-BREASTED DOTTEREL (*Charadrius obscurus*) – Locally called "New Zealand Dotterel," (which seems a more appropriate name, honestly), we saw these in good numbers on the North Island from Miranda to Tiritiri and the beaches on the extension. [E]

DOUBLE-BANDED PLOVER (*Charadrius bicinctus*) – Locally called "Two-banded Dotterel," we saw this best on the South Island in Mackenzie country. [E]

BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL (*Euseiornis melanops*) – A pair at the Otaki waste water plant on the North Island made us sweat a little before finally showing themselves. A handsome bird!

WRYBILL (*Anarhynchus frontalis*) – One of the most wanted species for several of the participants. Our first views left a little to be desired, but we had far better a few days later, including watching them feed with that weird asymmetrical bill. [E]

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa lapponica*) – Perhaps one of the most impressive avian athletes in the world, these birds can fly from Alaska to New Zealand without stopping in about 10 days! An important bird to the Maori.

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – Several of these were scattered at several estuarine sites with the last species.

RED KNOT (*Calidris canutus*) – Another shorebird we saw at several estuaries with godwits.

RED-NECKED STINT (*Calidris ruficollis*) – A lucky pick of a single bird on a small pond in the far south of the South Island was our only record! A far view, unfortunately.

Stercorariidae (Skuas and Jaegers)

BROWN SKUA (SUBANTARCTIC) (*Stercorarius antarcticus lonnbergi*) – A scattered few birds around the nesting islands of shags and other seabirds in Paterson Inlet off Stewart Island.

PARASITIC JAEGER (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) – We had a healthy number of these arctic breeders in Queen Charlotte Sound!

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

BLACK-BILLED GULL (*Chroicocephalus bulleri*) – Mostly an inland gull, we had our best views at Wanaka. [E]

RED-BILLED GULL (*Chroicocephalus scopulinus*) – Common everywhere, but mostly tied to the coast. A close view of this gull's head reveals striking white eyes. [E]

KELP GULL (*Larus dominicanus*) – Locally called "Black-backed Gull," this is presently considered the same species that also occurs in South America, South Africa, and a few other austral sites.

AUSTRALIAN FAIRY TERN (*Sternula nereis davisae*) – Two of these very rare small terns showed well at Waipu Beach on the first day of our extension.

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – Present in small numbers at several estuaries.

BLACK-FRONTED TERN (*Chlidonias albobristatus*) – A very attractive "marsh tern" we saw in some numbers on the South Island, perhaps best in Fiordland. [E]

WHITE-FRONTED TERN (*Sterna striata*) – A widespread marine tern.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Yup. There were a few "wild" birds nesting on cliffs on the South Island. [I]

SPOTTED DOVE (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – A few birds on wires on the drive two and from Gulf Harbour from Auckland. [I]

NEW ZEALAND PIGEON (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) – A huge pigeon we saw often over the course of the tour. [E]

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

LONG-TAILED KOEL (*Urodynamis taitensis*) – Our first one as a group was a sneaky bird at the edge of Lake Rotoaira, followed by flyovers at Pureora forest. [E]

SHINING BRONZE-CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx lucidus*) – A few views on the South Island, with our best perhaps at Haast Pass.

Strigidae (Owls)

SOUTHERN BOOBOOK (MOREPORK) (*Ninox novaeseelandiae novaeseelandiae*) – Heard while waiting for Okarito Kiwi, but seen on our last evening of the extension at Tawharanui.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

LAUGHING KOOKABURRA (*Dacelo novaeguineae*) – A silent (sadly) bird at close quarters on the lines near Tawharanui on the extension was a nice sighting! [I]

SACRED KINGFISHER (*Todiramphus sanctus*) – Apparently, more common on the North Island than the South.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

NEW ZEALAND FALCON (*Falco novaeseelandiae*) – Leslie and Guy got us on a flying bird at Lake Lyndon. Good spotting! [E]

Strigopidae (New Zealand Parrots)

KEA (*Nestor notabilis*) – This cunning and mischievous bird approached closely in Fiordland, and proved to be a nuisance at Okarito. We found their sign (removed gaskets) at a parking area at Arthur's Pass as well. [E]

NEW ZEALAND KAKA (*Nestor meridionalis*) – Easiest to see at Oban, but we saw it at several other sites on both main islands. [E]

Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots)

RED-CROWNED PARAKEET (*Cyanoramphus novaeseelandiae novaeseelandiae*) – Mostly present on offshore islands such as Ulva and Tiritiri.

YELLOW-CROWNED PARAKEET (*Cyanoramphus auriceps*) – More common than the other "kakariki" on the main islands. [E]

MALHERBE'S PARAKEET (*Cyanoramphus malherbi*) – Also called "Orange-fronted Parakeet" (which makes it confusable with a Middle American parakeet), we saw this with some work on Blumine Island. [E]

EASTERN ROSELLA (*Platycercus eximius*) – An Ozzie introduction, we had brief views near Dunedin and again at Tawharanui. [I]

Acanthisittidae (New Zealand Wrens)

RIFLEMAN (*Acanthisitta chloris*) – Several views of these adorable nuthatch-kinglets, but our best was probably the nesting pair at Arthur's Pass. [E]

SOUTH ISLAND WREN (*Xenicus gilviventris*) – The Rock Wren, we waited for a while at Homer Tunnel before one revealed itself near the car park. [E]

Meliphagidae (Honeyeaters)

TUI (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*) – One of the most visible of NZ's native passerines, and one that seems to be rapidly winning back territory on the main islands, as proven by our first views around Invercargill! An impressive songster. [E]

NEW ZEALAND BELLBIRD (*Anthornis melanura*) – A commonly heard, but more seldom seen, native passerine. Best views were probably on Blumine and Ulva islands. [E]

Acanthizidae (Thornbills and Allies)

GRAY GERYGONE (*Gerygone igata*) – The "Grey Warbler" is an often-heard, melancholy song in both native and exotic woodlands countrywide. We had some good views at Tongariro NP. [E]

Mohouidae (Whiteheads)

WHITEHEAD (*Mohoua albicilla*) – Surprisingly, this forest bird is quite common on the North Island, unlike its South Island counterpart. [E]

YELLOWHEAD (*Mohoua ochrocephala*) – Rare, but we saw it both on Ulva Island and at Haast Pass. [E]

PIPIPI (*Mohoua novaeseelandiae*) – Locally called "Brown Creeper," but no relative to the North American creeper. A curious forest bird that seems to respond well to Long-tailed Koel playback! This family, the Mohouidae (including the previous two species) is endemic to NZ, and seems to replace titmice here. [E]

Callaeidae (Wattlebirds)

NORTH ISLAND KOKAKO (*Callaeas wilsoni*) – Mostly heard by the group at Pureora. John and I saw one at Tiritiri. [E]

NORTH ISLAND SADDLEBACK (*Philesturnus rufusater*) – Common and easy to see at Tiritiri. [E]

SOUTH ISLAND SADDLEBACK (*Philesturnus carunculatus*) – One showed well on Ulva Island, and another was on Blumine Island. [E]

Notiomystidae (Stitchbird)

STITCHBIRD (*Notiomystis cincta*) – Another endemic NZ family, this species has not fared well generally, but seems to be increasing on Tiritiri. [E]

Cracticidae (Bellmagpies and Allies)

AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) – A common bird of open country throughout NZ, but an exotic from Oz. A pair of the black-backed subspecies were at Tawharanui on the extension. [I]

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

NEW ZEALAND FANTAIL (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*) – The Maori name is the amusing "Piwakawaka." This endearing bird has little fear of humans and shows off its white tail as it fans it exaggeratedly and chases insects in a fashion similar to the American Redstart. [E]

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

ROOK (*Corvus frugilegus*) – A few flyby birds on the North Island as we headed to Tongariro NP. [I]

Petroicidae (Australasian Robins)

TOMTIT (*Petroica macrocephala*) – An endearing species of montane forests. We noted the difference in plumage between the orange-stained South Island and the clean white-breasted North Island populations. [E]

NEW ZEALAND ROBIN (*Petroica australis*) – We saw all three forms found on the main islands: longipes on the North Island, australis on the South Island, and rakiura on Stewart Island. It's bold song and habits make it a favorite of New Zealanders. [E]

Alaudidae (Larks)

EURASIAN SKYLARK (*Alauda arvensis*) – At home in the open country of NZ, we saw them at many points. [I]

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

WELCOME SWALLOW (*Hirundo neoxena*) – A fairly recent colonist from Oz, and now common and widespread countrywide.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

FERNBIRD (*Megalurus punctatus*) – A unique, wrenlike denizen of open, brushy marshes and heath habitats on both islands. We enjoyed fine views at Okarito and Taupo. [E]

Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)

SILVER-EYE (*Zosterops lateralis*) – A white-eye that colonized NZ from Oz in historic times, and is now fairly widespread. It seemed strangely rare on this tour, however.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EURASIAN BLACKBIRD (*Turdus merula*) – A common species everywhere in terrestrial habitats. [I]

SONG THRUSH (*Turdus philomelos*) – Like the last, this species is common throughout. Apparently, far more common in NZ than in its native Europe! [I]

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Seems to have taken to NZ like a duck to water. [I]

COMMON MYNA (*Acridotheres tristis*) – Found only on the northern 2/3 of the North Island, but not rare there. [I]

Prunellidae (Accentors)

DUNNOCK (*Prunella modularis*) – Primarily on the South Island, though also at Tongariro NP. [I]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AUSTRALASIAN PIPIT (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*) – Formerly considered conspecific with Richard's Pipit of the Palearctic. Now restricted to Australasia, some authorities further separate the NZ bird from birds in New Guinea and Australia.

Emberizidae (Old World Buntings)

YELLOWHAMMER (*Emberiza citrinella*) – An attractive European field bird we saw at several points on the tour. [I]

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

COMMON CHAFFINCH (*Fringilla coelebs*) – Abundant throughout. [I]

EUROPEAN GREENFINCH (*Chloris chloris*) – Its characteristic call is frequently heard. [I]

LESSER REDPOLL (*Acanthis cabaret*) – Quite common, particularly on the South Island, but usually seen as a flyover rather than perched and showing its finery. Clements seems to have split the form *A. cabaret* (Lesser Redpoll) from the more widespread Common. It appears that it is the Lesser that was introduced from Britain to New Zealand, but authorities seem to be a bit confused on this point. For now, we call it "Lesser" and see what happens when the dust settles (especially since all redpolls may be lumped into one species some day!). [I]

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH (*Carduelis carduelis*) – Fairly common most places, but usually seen as flybys. [I]

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

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

MAMMALS

COMMON BRUSHTAIL POSSUM (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) – Generally DOR (dead on road). A detested pest from Oz. [I]

EUROPEAN HEDGEHOG (*Erinaceus europaeus*) – Mostly DOR. [I]

OLD WORLD RABBIT (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) – Common at several places, most notably at Gulf Harbour wharf. [I]

CAPE HARE (*Lepus capensis*) – The jackrabbit-like animals we saw at several points. [I]

BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN (*Tursiops truncatus*) – These seemed to play around us at Queen Charlotte Sound.

DUSKY DOLPHIN (*Lagenorhynchus obscurus*) – Several seen at at Milford and Queen Charlotte sounds.

HECTOR'S DOLPHIN (*Cephalorhynchus hectori*) – Some folks saw them along the coast of the south Island at Moeraki and between Invercargill and Te Anau.

SPERM WHALE (*Physeter catodon*) – Those who did the whale watch at Kaikoura saw one well, and we saw what must have been one behind the Cook Strait ferry.

SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE (*Eubalaena australis*) – A sounding whale off the Otago Head was likely this species (no dorsal fin and sluggish habit).

STOAT (SHORT-TAILED WEASEL) (*Mustela erminea*) – Seen on two days, most notably at Cosy Nook. [I]

HOOKE'S SEA LION (*Phocarcetos hookeri*) – One seen on our boat trip off Stewart Island.

NEW ZEALAND FUR SEAL (*Arctocephalus forsteri*) – A widespread eared seal we saw (and smelled) from Stewart Island north to at least Kaikoura.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 143 bird taxa and 12 mammal taxa