

Trip Report — New Zealand 2024

November 9-27, 2024 with Dan Lane & local guide



An image of a Black-billed gull colony that seems to have a surreal light to it, with the Southern Alps in the background. Photo by Dan Lane.

A trip to Aotearoa (Land of the Long White Cloud, or New Zealand) should make clear just how isolated this land mass is. As you may know by now, the long isolation of these islands resulted in one of the most amazing faunas anywhere in the world, with birds filling nearly all terrestrial vertebrate niches! From grazing moas (instead of ungulates) and giant eagles (instead of big cats and other predators) down to the Tui, Bellbird, and Stitchbird (instead of hummingbirds), flightless rails (instead of small land mammals) and Kiwis (instead of... well... not sure, really), and densities of nesting seabirds that would have been incalculable. It must have been a sight to behold! If only we could have run tours about a thousand years ago! In the past thousand years, New Zealand has lost at least 30% of its avifauna outright, and much of the rest of the land birds are fighting for their existence only with dedicated help from people maintaining predator-free islands and reserves where they can exist relatively safely! Our tour felt a little like a connect-the-dots drawing as we drove from one of these reserves to the next to see these species! Today, much of the main islands has been converted to a nearly European landscape, complete with the birds, and various introduced land mammals have taken their toll on the native species that had no experience with them until the past few hundred years. Yet there remain some impressive podocarp and

southern beech forests, heathlands and tussockgrass patches, and one can still see some idea of how this land must have been before humans came along.



Spotted Shags have impressive colors of their facial skin as revealed in this photo by Dan Lane.

So in November, we came along... We started in the deep South, getting off the plane in Queenstown where a Cape Barren Goose was on the docket, and after a bit of a snafu, we ended up making a brief trip to Stewart Island, including a near-shore pelagic and a night outing to see South Island Brown Kiwi. Then, we paid a visit to the scenic Fiordland National Park, spotting the endemic Yellowhead, South Island (NZ Rock) Wren, and a surprise vagrant Black-tailed Nativehen from Australia! From here, we headed to Dunedin to do a boat trip in the Otago Harbor, seeing the Northern Royal Albatross colony there and a taste of several seabirds offshore. Next, up to the Mackenzie basin to see a few rare shorebirds such as Black Stilt and Wrybill. Thanks to landslides on the wet Westland side of South Island, we had to change plans on the fly and visited Hokatika and Punakaiki for the Pancake Rocks and a night outing to see

Westland Petrels at their nesting colony. Crossing back over Arthur's Pass and a brief stop at Ashley River mouth, we motored up to Kaikoura where a storm kept us onshore for a day, but we managed to get out the following morning for a nice pelagic with five albatrosses, four shearwaters, and several petrels. We then had to head up to Picton, with a brief stop at Lake Elterwater for Hoary-headed Grebe, and do another boat trip on the Queen Charlotte Sound and Blumine Island for a few more South Island specialties such as the Malherb's (Orange-fronted) Kakariki, Little Penguin, NZ King Shag, and Fluttering Shearwater. The next morning, we took the ferry to the North Island, stopped at a water treatment plant (what good birding trip doesn't?) for Black-fronted Dotterel, on to see the only colony of Nankeen Night-Herons in the country, and then finally to the volcanic slopes of Tongariro National Park. The volcanic theme continued the next day, after a successful visit to Pureora Forest and Lake Taupo, when we pulled in to stinky Rotorua. From there, we headed north to the shorebird reserve at Miranda, where an impressive collection of Bar-tailed Godwits, South Island Oystercatchers, and some other shorebirds were collecting at high tide. On past Auckland, and a stop to see the critically endangered endemic subspecies of Australia Fairy Tern, then checked in to our hotel in Whangaparaoa. From here we did a day trip to Tiritiri Matangi Island, enjoying the "grand finale" of North Island specialties there including Takahe, North Island Saddleback, Stitchbird, Brown Teal, Whiteheads, and even a few lucky folks got onto a Tuatara! The final night, we joined Ness to see a North Island Brown Kiwi at Tawharanui Reserve, and so ended our tour.



Here, a trio of White-capped Albatrosses look like they were startled by seeing a mouse running around their feet.
Photo by Dan Lane.

Thanks for weathering this tour, and despite any mishaps, we actually accumulated an impressive bird list! I hope those will be the memories that stick with you most!

Mammals seen (alive):

Old World Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)
European Brown Hare (*Lepus europaeus*)
Short-beaked Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*)
Dusky Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus obscurus*)
Hector's Dolphin (*Cephalorhynchus hectori*)
Hooker's Sea Lion (*Phocarctos hookeri*)
New Zealand Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus forsteri*)
Domestic Goat (*Capra aegagrus*)

Herps seen:

Tuatara (*Sphenodon punctatus*)

Good birding!



The group watching Blue Ducks at Monkey Creek in Fiordland National Park. Photo by Dan Lane.



Bar-tailed Godwits have impressive lines when they fly. They'd better, since it's how they survive an 11-day odyssey from Alaska to New Zealand! Photo by Dan Lane.

You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link:

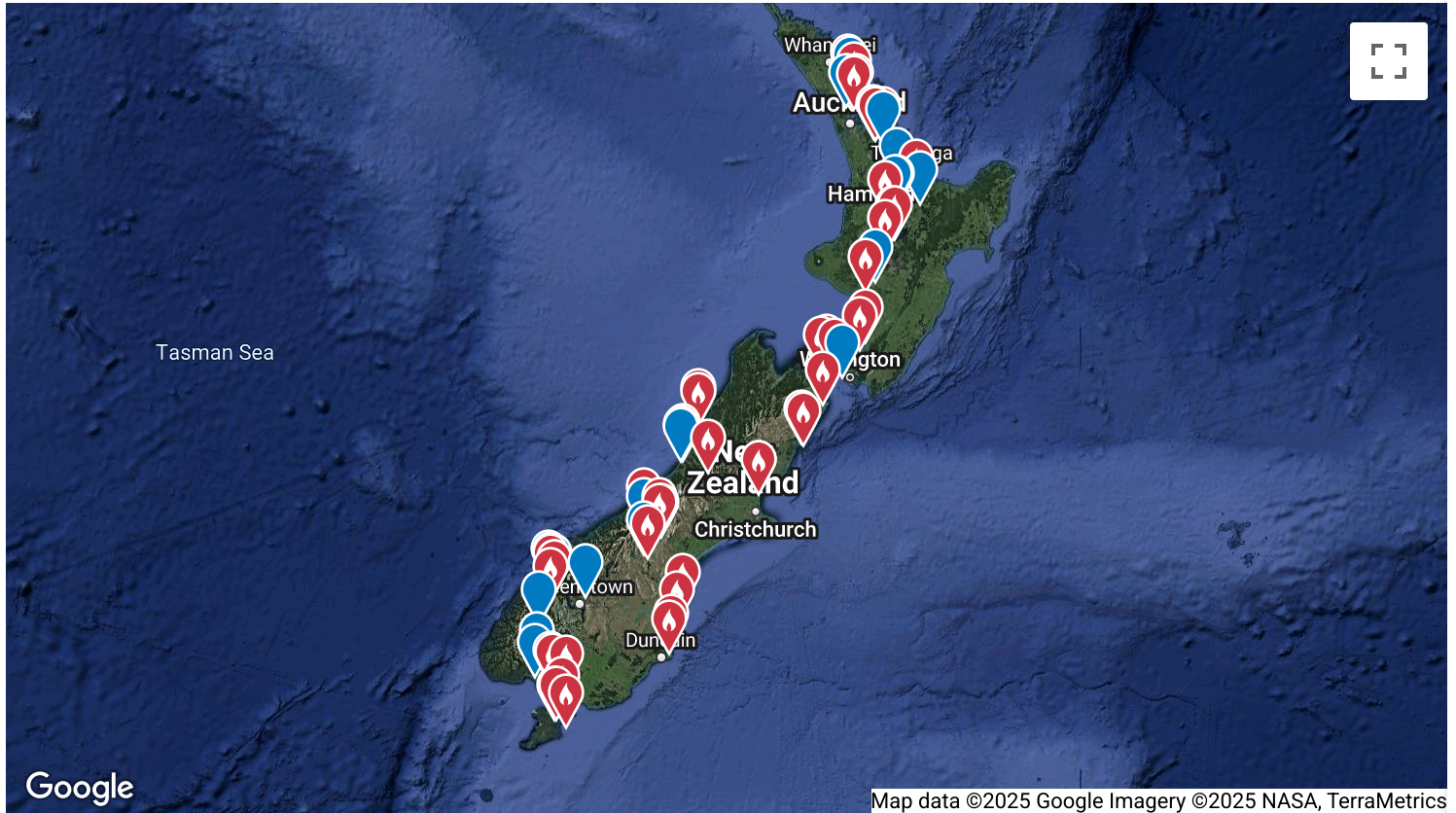
<https://ebird.org/tripreport/296445>

Dan (the Barbet)

Field Guides' New Zealand tour 2024 with Dan Lane and Mark Ayer



11 – 27 Nov 2024 (17 days) Link-only



New Zealand

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Subregions

Daniel Lane



For a narrative summary of this...

 **131**
Species Observed

 **73**
Checklists












 **4**
Species with Photos

 **3**
Species with Audio

LIFERS  4  3  2 

Species Observed





















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3	Southern Brown Kiwi <i>Apteryx australis</i>	 1
4	North Island Brown Kiwi <i>Apteryx mantelli</i> 	 1  1
106	Canada Goose <i>Branta canadensis</i> *	 7
1	Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i> *	 1
372	Black Swan <i>Cygnus atratus</i> *	 16
168	Paradise Shelduck <i>Tadorna variegata</i>	 15
4	Blue Duck <i>Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos</i>	 1
139	Australasian Shoveler <i>Spatula rhynchotis</i>	 13
164	Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> *	 18





















367	Gray Teal <i>Anas gracilis</i>	▶ 📷 12
6	Brown Teal <i>Anas chlorotis</i>	▶ 📷 2
451	New Zealand Scaup <i>Aythya novaeseelandiae</i>	▶ 📷 10
3	California Quail <i>Callipepla californica</i> *	▶ 📷 2
6	Ring-necked Pheasant <i>Phasianus colchicus</i> *	▶ 📷 5
8	Indian Peafowl <i>Pavo cristatus</i> *	▶ 📷 1
3	Brown Quail <i>Synoicus ypsilophorus</i> *	▶ 📷 1
38	Rock Pigeon <i>Columba livia</i> *	▶ 📷 5
5	African Collared-Dove <i>Streptopelia roseogrisea</i> * ✓	▶ 📷 1
3	Spotted Dove <i>Spilopelia chinensis</i> *	▶ 📷 2
18	New Zealand Pigeon <i>Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae</i>	▶ 📷 6
2	Long-tailed Koel <i>Urodynamis taitensis</i>	▶ 📷 1
5	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo <i>Chalcites lucidus</i>	▶ 📷 5
10	Weka <i>Gallirallus australis</i>	▶ 📷 5
1	Buff-banded Rail <i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>	▶ 📷 1
1	Black-tailed Nativehen <i>Tribonyx ventralis</i> ✓ 📷	▶ 📷 4 📷 1
21	Eurasian Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	▶ 📷 4
5	South Island Takahe <i>Porphyrio hochstetteri</i> 🔊	▶ 📷 1 📷 2
155	Australasian Swamphen <i>Porphyrio melanotus</i>	▶ 📷 12
1	Baillon's Crake <i>Zapornia pusilla</i> 📷	▶ 📷 1 📷 1

279	Pied Stilt <i>Himantopus leucocephalus</i>	▶ 📄 18
6	Black Stilt <i>Himantopus novaezelandiae</i>	▶ 📄 2
791	South Island Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus finschi</i>	▶ 📄 13
106	Variable Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus unicolor</i>	▶ 📄 19
2	Black-fronted Dotterel <i>Thinornis melanops</i>	▶ 📄 1
85	Masked Lapwing <i>Vanellus miles</i>	▶ 📄 16
23	Double-banded Plover <i>Anarhynchus bicinctus</i>	▶ 📄 5
19	Wrybill <i>Anarhynchus frontalis</i>	▶ 📄 3
10	Red-breasted Dotterel <i>Anarhynchus obscurus</i>	▶ 📄 2
3950	Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	▶ 📄 4
74	Ruddy Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	▶ 📄 2
1350	Red Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	▶ 📄 2
5	Parasitic Jaeger <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	▶ 📄 3
1	Brown Skua <i>Stercorarius antarcticus</i>	▶ 📄 1
1129	Silver Gull <i>Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae</i>	▶ 📄 25
2589	Black-billed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus bulleri</i>	▶ 📄 8
1475	Kelp Gull <i>Larus dominicanus</i>	▶ 📄 30
2	Australian Fairy Tern <i>Sternula nereis</i>	▶ 📄 8 📄 1
11	Caspian Tern <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	▶ 📄 4
45	Black-fronted Tern <i>Chlidonias albostratus</i>	▶ 📄 9

- 466 **White-fronted Tern** *Sterna striata* ▶ 📄 17
- 6 **Hoary-headed Grebe** *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus* ▶ 📄 1
- 17 **New Zealand Grebe** *Poliiocephalus rufopectus* ▶ 📄 4
- 2 **Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* ▶ 📄 1
- 4 **Yellow-eyed Penguin** *Megadyptes antipodes* ▶ 📄 3
- 15 **Little Penguin** *Eudyptula minor* ▶ 📄 5
- 13 **Fiordland Penguin** *Eudyptes pachyrhynchus* ▶ 📄 2
- 38 **Northern Royal Albatross** *Diomedea sanfordi* ▶ 📄 3
- 7 **Southern Royal Albatross** *Diomedea epomophora* 🔊 ▶ 📄 1 📄 2
- 13 **Antipodean Albatross** *Diomedea antipodensis* ▶ 📄 2
- 89 **White-capped Albatross** *Thalassarche cauta* ▶ 📄 6
- 85 **Salvin's Albatross** *Thalassarche salvini* ▶ 📄 6
- 36 **Northern Giant-Petrel** *Macronectes halli* ▶ 📄 4
- 104 **Pintado Petrel** *Daption capense* ▶ 📄 5
- 6 **Cook's Petrel** *Pterodroma cookii* ▶ 📄 1
- 545 **Fairy Prion** *Pachyptila turtur* ▶ 📄 2
- 8 **White-chinned Petrel** *Procellaria aequinoctialis* ▶ 📄 3
- 35 **Westland Petrel** *Procellaria westlandica* ▶ 📄 5
- 24 **Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Ardenna carneipes* ▶ 📄 3
- 3 **Buller's Shearwater** *Ardenna bulleri* ▶ 📄 3

1474	Sooty Shearwater <i>Ardenna grisea</i>	▶  6
5	Short-tailed Shearwater <i>Ardenna tenuirostris</i>	▶  1
30	Hutton's Shearwater <i>Puffinus huttoni</i>	▶  1
859	Fluttering Shearwater <i>Puffinus gavia</i>	▶  8
226	Common Diving-Petrel <i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i>	▶  5
18	Australasian Gannet <i>Morus serrator</i>	▶  6
57	Little Pied Cormorant <i>Microcarbo melanoleucos</i>	▶  13
23	Great Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	▶  7
93	Spotted Shag <i>Phalacrocorax punctatus</i>	▶  11
13	Little Black Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	▶  4
62	Pied Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	▶  14
16	New Zealand King Shag <i>Leucocarbo carunculatus</i>	▶  2
762	Stewart Island Shag <i>Leucocarbo chalconotus</i>	▶  7
2	Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	▶  1
301	Royal Spoonbill <i>Platalea regia</i>	▶  11
3	Australasian Bittern <i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>	▶  2
1	Nankeen Night Heron <i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i> ✓	▶  1
75	White-faced Heron <i>Egretta novaehollandiae</i>	▶  14
1	Great Egret <i>Ardea alba</i>	▶  1
9	Swamp Harrier <i>Circus approximans</i>	▶  7

7	Morepork <i>Ninox novaeseelandiae</i>	▶  3
12	Sacred Kingfisher <i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	▶  1  9
2	New Zealand Falcon <i>Falco novaeseelandiae</i>	▶  2
8	Kea <i>Nestor notabilis</i>	▶  3
14	New Zealand Kaka <i>Nestor meridionalis</i>	▶  7
11	Red-crowned Parakeet <i>Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae</i>	▶  1
13	Yellow-crowned Parakeet <i>Cyanoramphus auriceps</i>	▶  4
2	Malherbe's Parakeet <i>Cyanoramphus malherbi</i>	▶  1
2	Eastern Rosella <i>Platycercus eximius</i> *	▶  1
15	Rifleman <i>Acanthisitta chloris</i>	▶  4
1	South Island Wren <i>Xenicus gilviventris</i>	▶  1
83	Tui <i>Prothemadera novaeseelandiae</i>	▶  12
43	New Zealand Bellbird <i>Anthornis melanura</i>	▶  10
28	Gray Gerygone <i>Gerygone igata</i>	▶  17
46	Whitehead <i>Mohoua albicilla</i>	▶  2
2	Yellowhead <i>Mohoua ochrocephala</i>	▶  1
4	Pipipi <i>Mohoua novaeseelandiae</i>	▶  1
15	Australian Magpie <i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i> *	▶  7
42	New Zealand Fantail <i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>	▶  20
1	North Island Kokako <i>Callaeas wilsoni</i>	▶  1

15	North Island Saddleback <i>Philesturnus rufusater</i>	▶  1
15	Stitchbird <i>Notiomystis cincta</i>	▶  1
11	Tomtit <i>Petroica macrocephala</i>	▶  8
16	North Island Robin <i>Petroica longipes</i>	▶  2
9	South Island Robin <i>Petroica australis</i>	▶  4
77	Eurasian Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i> *	▶  19
9	New Zealand Fernbird <i>Poodytes punctatus</i>	▶  6
211	Welcome Swallow <i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	▶  21
33	Silvereye <i>Zosterops lateralis</i>	▶  17
230	European Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> *	▶  24
19	Common Myna <i>Acridotheres tristis</i> *	▶  6
37	Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i> *	▶  20
67	Eurasian Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i> *	▶  30
22	Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i> *	▶  13
190	House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i> *	▶  28
3	New Zealand Pipit <i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>	▶  1
89	Common Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> *	▶  31
24	European Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i> *	▶  14
38	Redpoll <i>Acanthis flammea</i> *	▶  12
34	European Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i> *	▶  16

22 Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* *

▶ 📄 8

EXOTIC: PROVISIONAL

1 Cape Barren Goose *Cereopsis novaehollandiae* * ✓

▶ 📄 1

HYBRIDS

30 Mallard x Pacific Black Duck (hybrid) *Anas platyrhynchos x superciliosa*

▶ 📄 6

ADDITIONAL TAXA

20 Procellaria sp. *Procellaria sp.*

▶ 📄 1