

New Zealand

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Summary

This was a birding trip focusing on outdoorsiness. Camping, especially with tents, is a wonderful way to experience the wildlife and a lot of birds tend to come for free. Some of the species observed from within or close to the tents while not actively birding included North Island brown kiwi, great spotted kiwi, southern brown kiwi, pacific reef heron, kaka, yellow-crowned parakeet, red-crowned parakeet, morepork, shining bronze cuckoo and New Zealand falcon. We were very fortunate with good weather during the entire trip with only one morning lost because of heavy rain.

We observed 135 species of birds during this trip and only missed a handful of additional species. We booked our trip to Tiritiri Matangi a couple of months beforehand but unfortunately that was not enough to secure beds in the cabin to stay overnight and alas we missed the little spotted kiwi. We missed Fiordland penguin as we did not go to Milford sounds, and this species is absent from Stewart Island between late December to late February. The far-eastern curlews were hidden from us in the flock of 4000+ bar-tailed godwits at Miranda, a second visit would probably have given us that one and a couple of other waders. We likely could have increased our numbers of pelagic species, such as grey petrel, grey-faced petrel, mottled petrel, white-chinned petrel, southern giant petrel and broad-billed prion, but we were more than happy with our 3 pelagic trips (as were our wallets). We could also have seen a handful more natives and introduced species but we mostly targeted endemics.

Pelagic summary

The table below summarizes all our observed pelagic species and where they were spotted. Other than our 3 pelagic guided boat tours we also include the one-way ferry in Cook strait from Wellington to Picton, and the two-way Stewart Island ferry, since both provided good opportunities to observe pelagic species. We booked the Hauraki gulf pelagic a couple of months ahead with The Seabird Trust and were pretty lucky that they had a trip planned that fit well within our schedule (they don't conduct guided pelagic tours very often). We booked the pelagics from Kaikoura (Albatross Encounter) and Stewart Island (Rakiura Charters) a couple of days in advance.

The Hauraki gulf pelagic was significantly more expensive than the others, but also the most exciting birding experience. The number of pelagic species was significantly higher than the other two pelagics and the chumming method was better; more spread out across the water allowing more birds to forage, as opposed to having caged fish parts by the boats only allowing the most aggressive albatrosses and giant petrels to fight for the goods. All in all though, all 3 pelagics were well worth the money and provided unforgettable experiences!

Pelagic observations	Hauraki gulf pelagic	Cook strait ferry	Kaikoura pelagic	Stewart Island ferry	Stewart Island pelagic	
Brown skua					X	
Parasitic jaeger		X				
Yellow-eyed penguin					X	
Little penguin		X	X		X	
White-faced storm petrel	X					
New Zealand storm petrel	X					
Antipodean albatross			X			
Southern royal albatross		X	X			
Northern royal albatross*						*only seen from Taiaroa head
Shy albatross		X	X	X	X	
Salvin's albatross			X			
Buller's albatross				X	X	
Northern giant petrel			X		X	
Cape petrel			X	X	X	
Fairy prion	X		X		X	
Cook's petrel	X	X				
Black petrel	X					
Westland petrel			X			
Buller's shearwater			X	X		
Sooty shearwater		X	X	X	X	
Short-tailed shearwater	X					
Flesh-footed shearwater	X					
Fluttering shearwater	X	X				
Hutton's shearwater			X			
Little shearwater	X					
Common diving petrel				X	X	
Australasian gannet	X	X	X			

Practical details

Transport

We rented a small unbranded Toyota Vitz from Omega car rentals. It was fairly cheap compared to the larger rental companies and the automatic gearbox made the transition to left-side traffic a whole lot easier. We added the full insurance which covered everything besides flat tires and non-car related issues such as running out of gas since it was relatively cheap. There were no extra costs to add drivers and unlimited km-rates. All in all we were very happy with the car and we would definitely choose Omega again. Oh, and watch out for the hidden speed cameras...



Our rental Toyota was a trusty steed indeed.

Itinerary, camping and accomodation

We started in Auckland and travelled south according to the map below.



Travel route, start in Auckland and finish in Christchurch.

We aimed for DoC (Department of Conservation) campgrounds as much as possible due to their scenic qualities and low fees but we also regularly chose hostels to get access to showers and wifi etc. Despite the time being peak holiday season, none of the campsites' tent areas were full as we arrived. We had no bad experiences with any camping or accommodation, the manned establishments always had nice and helpful staff. The table below lists all our overnight stays and whether we heard any of the selected species from the campsites. DoC = DoC campsite, C = other campsite, H = Hostel.

Campsite/accommodation and area	Dates	Kiwi	More-pork	Kaka	Para-keet	NZ-falcon	SB-cuckoo
Haka lodge (H), Auckland	28-30/12						
Home bay (DoC), Motutapu	30/12-1/1	X	X		X		
MyHoliday Inn (H), Auckland	1-3/1						
Shekinah farm, Pokeno (C)	3-4/1						
Ngaherenga (DoC), Pureora	4-5/1	X	X	X	X	X	
Mangawhero (DoC), Tongariro	5-6/1		X				
YHA Wellington (H)	6-7/1						
Puhipuhi (DoC), Kaikoura	7-8/1						X
Hawdon shelter (DoC), Arthur's pass	8-11/1	X	X		X	X	X
Mt Jade backpackers (H), Hokitika	11-12/1						
Okarito campground (C)	12-13/1						
Lake Poaka (DoC), Twizel	13-14/1						
Tahuna pod (H), Queenstown	14-16/1						
Stewart Island backpackers (C), Oban	16-21/1	X	X	X	X		X
Papatowai (DoC)	21-22/1		X				
Trotter's gorge (DoC), Moeraki	22-23/1					X	X
Rolleston house (H), Christchurch	23-25/1						

Food

We kept it relatively simple due to the lack of a refrigerator during our travels, making our cooked meals subsequently cheap and quick to cook. It was easy to stock up when needed and we never ran out of food or lacked the opportunity to grab a meal in a restaurant. We could have saved even more money on food, but we were on vacation so a number of meals were from restaurants (lunch and dinners). Of course, the bigger towns had a greater range of groceries and products, but all in all we were always able to find something. If you are gluten intolerant it is really easy to shop in stores in New Zealand as their selection of goods were amazingly diverse. Take note that if you're camping, the provided water is not always drinkable without treatment. We recommend either storing water in the car, or bringing small, handheld purifiers.

Economics

We probably could have gotten cheaper flights if we had booked them earlier, but other than that we managed to keep the costs down pretty well. The average cost for hostels was 37 NZD per night (the cheapest alternatives), for DoC-campsites 8 NZD per night and for other campsites 18 NZD per night. The DoC campsites were almost all unmanned and required cash to pay the fee (a few required booking in advance, using a credit or debit card). All costs below are listed in New Zealand dollars (NZD):

Flight: 2207/person

Camping and accomodations: 603/person

Car rental 1-25 January (including full insurance): 1162 in total

Gasoline: (~3370 km travelled): 499 in total

Pelagics: 490/person (230 Hauraki, 130 Kaikoura, 130 Stewart Island)

Transportation by boat: 427/person (92 Tiritiri, 43 Rangitoto, 133 Cook strait, 159 Stewart I)

Food and gas containers: ~1030/person

Okarito kiwi tour: 75/person

Parking and road tolls: 80 in total

Total travel cost per person: 5 700 NZD = 37 800 SEK

Literature

The Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand (Heather & Robinson, 2015).

Websites and apps

Birds of New Zealand (app, mydigitalearth.com) - a pretty good digital field guide

eBird.org - website with birder-submitted observations, very useful for planning and in action

xeno-canto.org - website with bird sound recordings that you can download

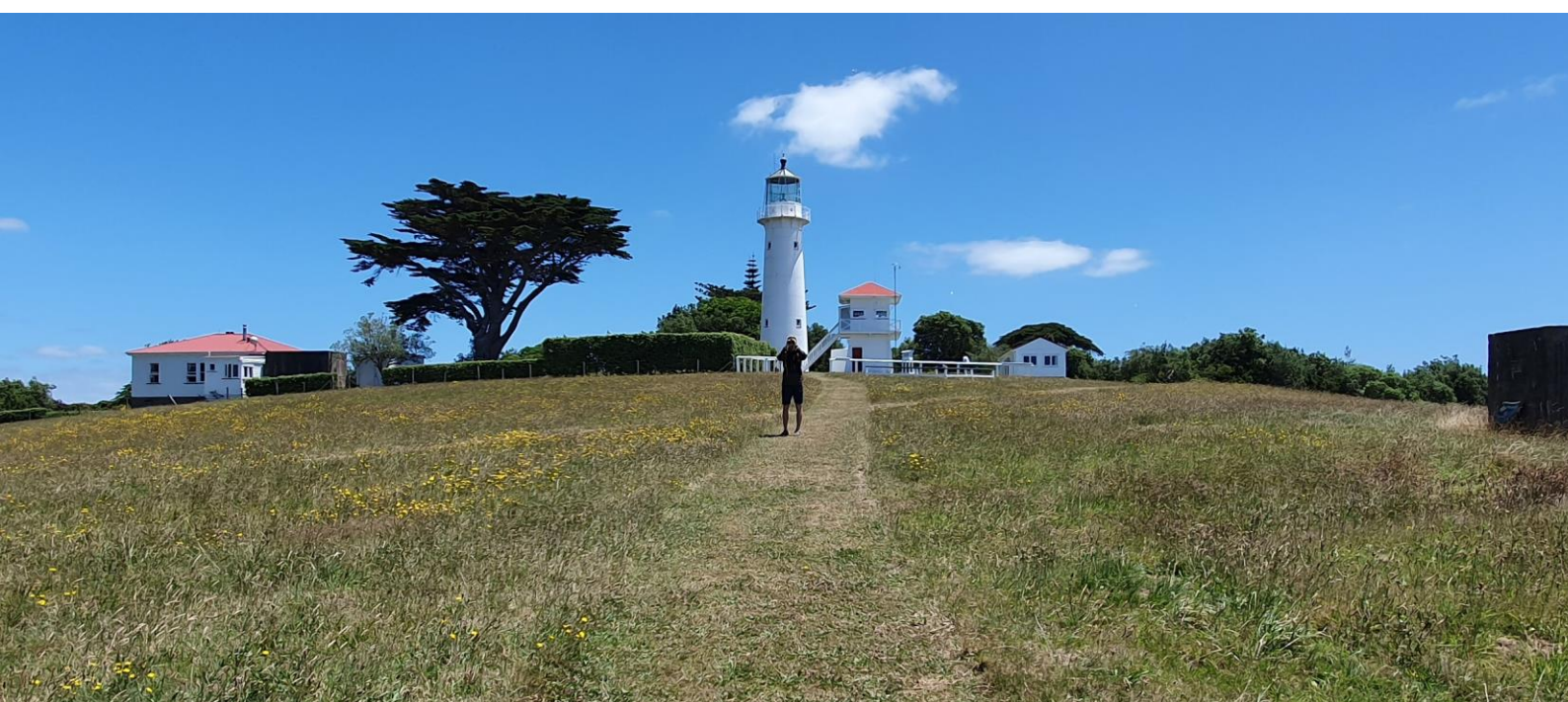
Rankers camping NZ - app detailing campgrounds and hostels etc.

Travel details

North Island

We arrived at Auckland airport early in the morning of the 28th and took a bus downtown. With nothing planned for the arrival day, we spent some time in the city parks and had sights of **welcome swallow, New Zealand fantail, spotted dove, silver gull, kelp gull, common myna** and other common species. We caught up on some sleep and prepared for next days' trip to Tiritiri Matangi island. If you're not accustomed to jet lag, maybe don't cram too much birding in during the first few days, one of us had a somewhat hard time adjusting.

We had added a guided walk on Tiritiri Matangi when we booked the ferry, it was only an additional 10 NZD and it was well worth it. Upon arrival we got to choose between a walk through the older, higher canopy area, and a slightly shorter walk through a lower canopy area. We were told both of the walks offered good birding and that both passed 3 kokako territories. We chose the slightly shorter walk, as the birding supposedly was equally good and we would get more time to explore the island on our own. The guide made us familiar with the islands more vocal species, such as **whitehead, North Island robin, North Island saddleback, stitchbird, bellbird** and **tui**. By one of the water stations we heard a singing **North Island kokako** really well, a little lucky since the guide had not heard any the previous day. We also had a quick view of a **New Zealand falcon** through a gap in the canopy.



The lighthouse of Tiritiri Matangi island.

As the guided walk concluded, we took off on our own and saw a family of **South Island takahe**, **red-crowned parakeets** and a couple of **brown teals** in the lighthouse area. We walked the longer, high-canopy walk back to the marina and failed to hear any more kokako's but managed to spot a couple of **rifleman** in the canopy. The ferry timetable allowed us to stay on the island between 10:30 a.m. - 3 p.m, not the most generous duration but we really only missed little spotted kiwi (pretty much impossible during daytime) and fernbird (we never went to the marshy area).

The following day we took the ferry to Rangitoto island and headed for Home bay campsite on Motutapu island. The islands are connected by a causeway about 1,5 hours on foot from the harbour. This causeway is a good spot for waders and we immediately spotted a **shore plover** foraging in the mudflats pretty close, with colour bands on both legs. Other species in the bay included a few **New Zealand plovers**, **masked lapwings**, **caspian tern**, **black-billed gull**, **white-faced heron** and **sacred kingfisher**. We arrived at the campsite in late afternoon and later, somewhat exhausted from the 3+ hour hike with full gear, failed to stay awake long enough to hear any kiwis. We spent the following day walking around the island, with observations of **North Island saddleback**, **red-crowned parakeet**, **silvereye**, **grey gerygone**, **New Zealand pipit** and **buff-banded rail**. From the campsite we saw a **pacific reef heron** flying by, as well as **Australian pied shags**, **paradise shelducks**, **Australasian swamphens** and **white-fronted terns**. During the last night of the year, we heard **North Island brown kiwi** both foraging and calling just behind the campsite, as well as our first **morepork**. On the dawn of the new year, we headed back towards the harbour on Rangitoto, again stopping at the causeway and spotted some more shore plovers. Back in Auckland, we picked up our tiny rental car and went to our new hostel in the north of the city.



North Island brown kiwi called from behind the tents on the last night of 2019.

On the 2nd of January we had our very anticipated first pelagic half-day trip out of Sandspit into Hauraki gulf. We set course for the waters around Little Barrier island and the first birds to join us along the way were **Cook petrels**, **fluttering shearwaters** and **white-tailed storm petrels**, not to mention a hammerhead shark we almost ran over! Pretty soon we were joined by **flesh-footed shearwaters**, **black petrels**, **fairy prions**, **little shearwaters** and one **short-tailed shearwater**. As the first of three **New Zealand storm petrels** came along, we stopped the boat and let the chum out. The chum spread out like a long sheet along the water and allowed magnificent views of the various foraging seabirds. After roughly an hour, we started our 1,5 hour return cruise to Sandspit.



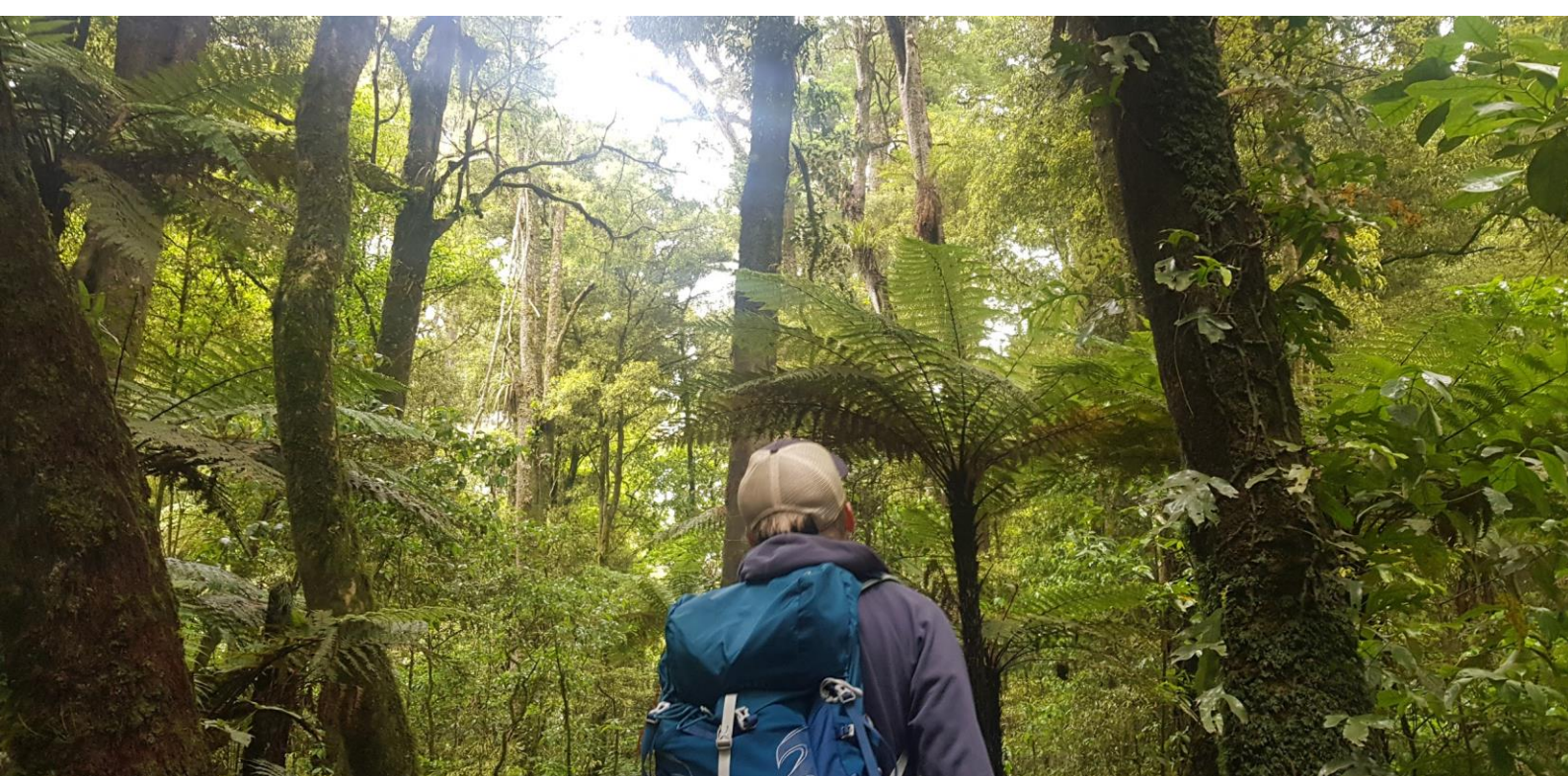
Little Barrier island, closed off for visitors, where the New Zealand storm petrels breed.

On our way back to Auckland, we stopped at a small wetland by Upper Waiwera to look for **New Zealand grebe**, which we found along with a **little black shag**, **australasian shovelers**, **grey teals** among other species. We also quickly scanned Waiwera sewage ponds where a duck caught our eye and after having seen an emerald green wing-panel without white borders we were confident calling it a **Pacific black duck**. There may have been more but we didn't wait along for more exposed wings.

The following day we left Auckland for good and headed north in search for fairy tern. We had several potential spots to scan but luckily we scored on the first, southernmost one at Mangawhai river. Two **fairy terns** were foraging along the river and we also saw a few **royal spoonbills**, a **black-billed gull**, an **african collared dove** and some **bar-tailed godwits**. We turned around south and the heavy traffic around Warkworth and Auckland made us realise how lucky we were not to have missed our pelagic the day before. We arrived at Miranda in

the afternoon during peak high tide, which is optimal for the waders there. No time to waste, we headed for the first lookout along the footpath, at which we were greeted by around 300 **wrybills** as well as **pied stilts**, **red knots**, **double-banded plovers**, **ruddy turnstones** and **sharp-tailed sandpipers**. By the third hide there was a flock of 4000+ bar-tailed godwits and the guide stationed at the hide informed us that there were two far-eastern curlews among them, a needle in a haystack we unfortunately did not manage to find despite an hour of meticulous searching. A few **Pacific golden plovers** and a colony of black-billed gulls offered some comfort and when the receding water made the godwits fly out into the bay, we decided to leave. In hindsight we could have spent the following day at Miranda as well to increase our wader-bounty but we decided to head south towards Pureora instead.

After spending the night at the lovely Shekinah farm, we arrived at Ngaherenga campsite around lunch and were welcomed by singing **tomtits** and some **yellow-crowned parakeets**. Exploring the footpaths in the forest, the shrieking calls of **New Zealand kakas** held a prominent presence along with singing **North Island robins**, whiteheads and calling riflemen. We also heard two **Pacific long-tailed cuckoos** but failed to see either of them. The night chorus at the campsite was among the best of the trip, including North Island brown kiwis, kakas, moreporks and free brownies from our neighbours.



The forests of Pureora are among New Zealand's most well preserved habitats.

The morning after we got good views of a New Zealand falcon before heading off towards Lake Taupo. We had our sights set for wetland species such as crakes, bittern and fernbird but the strong winds completely eliminated any chances of hearing these species. We were lucky to spot a flying **Australasian bittern** at Tokaanu wharf but the crakes were no-shows. After a decent amount of frustration, we managed to hear a **New Zealand fernbird** at Waiotaka scenic reserve before heading into Turangi for lunch. There are plenty of good spots to search for blue duck along the Tongariro river in Turangi, we started from the north and finally managed to see a family of **blue ducks** from Major Jones bridge in the southern part of town. All parts of the river were crowded with fishermen which felt a little sub-optimal but they kept their distance to the ducks when we were there. Amazing birds, this one's a must!



The rocky riverbed of Otaki river where the black-fronted dotterel breeds.

After spending the night at the foot of Mount Doom (Ngauruhoe) we continued south. The last target species of the North island was black-fronted dotterel in Otaki. We parked close to the highway and started walking along the river towards the sea, thinking we would spot it along the way. The walk was longer than we thought, which combined with the strong winds and complete lack of waders really made us question this endeavor. Arriving to the pools by the shore, we saw one banded dotterel, a couple of pied stilts and a handful of other shorebirds but no sight of our target bird. Heading back somewhat gloomy, we miraculously managed to spot a couple of **black fronted dotterels** in the rocky riverbed! Definitely harder to spot than we imagined beforehand. Famished and dehydrated, we had lunch in Otaki and managed to book a ferry across Cook strait for the following day, as well as accomodation in Wellington and a pelagic in Kaikoura for the day after crossing the strait.

South Island

The Cook strait ferry takes approximately 1,5 hours and offers a nice opportunity for pelagic birdwatching. We had our first sightings of albatrosses over the open water but the distances and the swaying of the boat made identification a challenge. We managed to identify at least one each of **Northern royal albatross** and **shy albatross**, along with some Cook petrels, fluttering shearwaters and **sooty shearwaters**. Entering the Marlborough sounds of the South island, our primary objective was the New Zealand king shag, pretty much our only chance at this species since we hadn't planned to do any other boat tours in the area. We had our first sightings of **spotted shags**, a **parasitic jaeger** and a **little penguin** and eventually, the first **New Zealand king shag** passed by to our great relief. Docking in Picton, we had seen a total of 4 New Zealand king shags from the ferry and were happy we could continue south straight away. When we arrived at Puhi Puhi campsite we had our first singing **shining bronze cuckoo**, a welcome addition to our list as we surprisingly missed it at Purerora.



Beautiful scenery around Puhi Puhi campsite.

Kaikoura is known as one of the best places in the world for pelagic birdwatching, so naturally we were very excited for this pelagic tour. As soon as we left the harbour, **Northern giant petrels** started following the boat eager to dig in to the chum. Our first stop of the tour was over deeper waters and we were soon visited by **Antipodean (Gibson's) albatrosses**, **southern royal albatrosses**, **cape petrels**, **shy albatrosses**, **Salvin's albatrosses** and a **buller's shearwater** that unfortunately did not stick around. The chum was attached to the boat in a cage which brought the birds extremely close, almost too close! The northern giant petrels, Gibson's albatrosses and Salvin's albatrosses were the most aggressive of the bunch

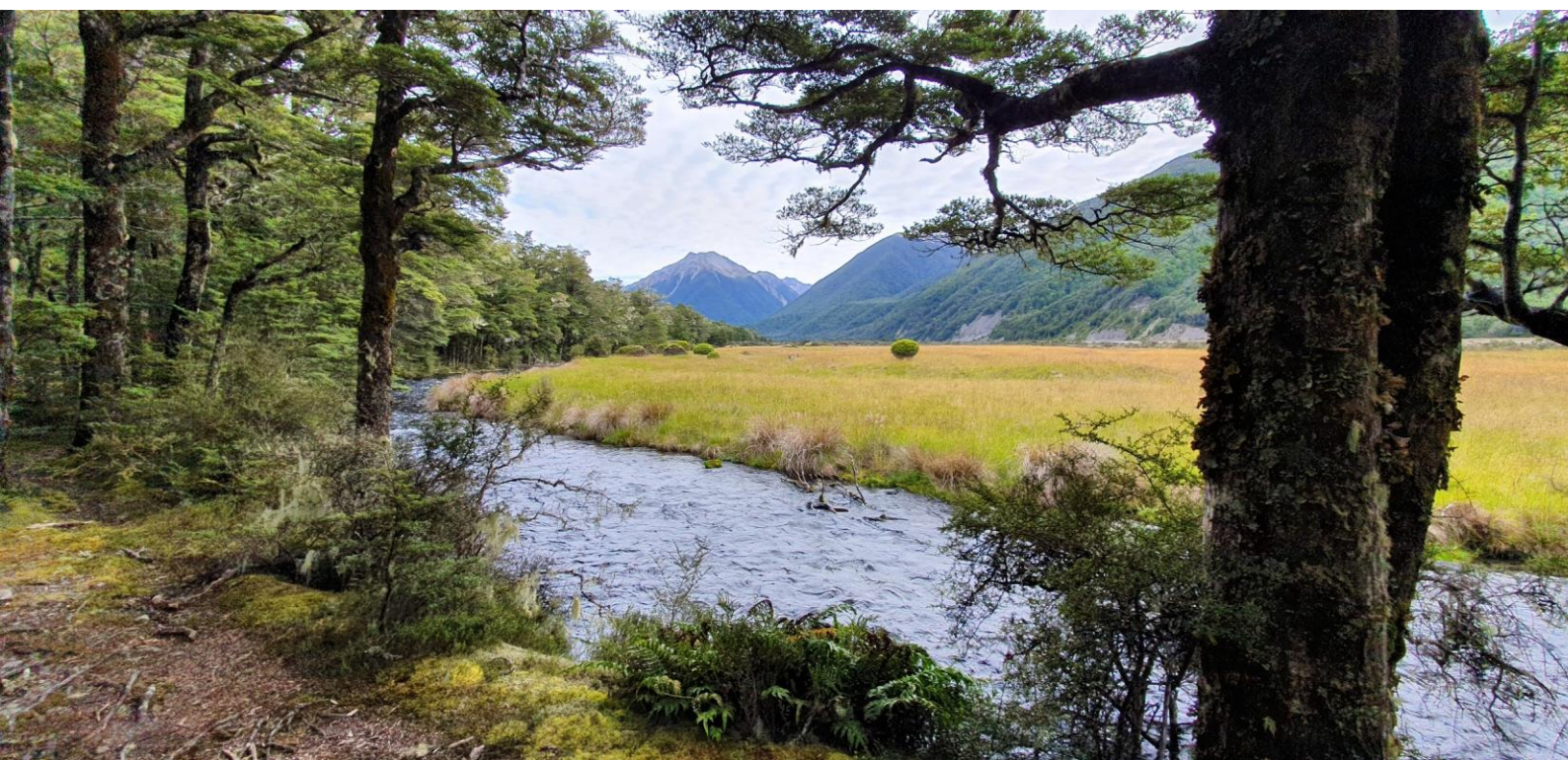
and got their fair share of both fish and blows. The second stop didn't yield any new additions but on the third stop, a couple of **Hutton's shearwaters** and a few **Westland petrels** flew by, albeit keeping their distance. Many shearwaters and petrels apparently keep their distance as long as giant petrels are present, as they are known to kill smaller species. Spreading out the chum across the water surface may be a way to attract a higher diversity of species. After the pelagic, we headed for Arthur's pass and arrived late afternoon to Hawdon shelter campground. **South island robins** and tomtits were less than shy around the tents and around 9:30 p.m we heard our first **great spotted kiwi**, which kept our minds off the ever so present sandflies.

For our first day in the Arthur's pass area, we headed for Otira valley to search for New Zealand rock wren. A couple of **dunnocks** were singing as we ascended along the track and an unfamiliar cry revealed a **kea** soaring among the peaks, a truly remarkable thing to see a parrot in high alpine environments! We would later see an almost tame kea soliciting guests for food at a restaurant in Arthur's pass village, and we concluded we were happy to have first observed it in its natural environment. We continued up the track in Otira valley until the track ended and started scanning the rocky mountain sides. After 2 hours of waiting patiently, we finally heard a **New Zealand rock wren** calling but it was impossible to locate. We heard it calling two more times but still did not manage to find it, and as we didn't want to scramble around in potential nesting cracks off the footpath, we decided to head back.



The breeding grounds of the New Zealand rock wren in Otira valley.

Our second day in the mountains, we hiked the Hawdon valley track to Hawdon hut. A beautiful day hike where you have to wade across the river in a few places. A couple of **black-fronted terns** passed us by as we crossed the river for the first time, and later offered good views while foraging. Hawdon valley is one of three valleys where Malherbe's parakeet still survive naturally and despite hearing calling parakeets regularly along the track, we only got brief glimpses at best and never really felt close to clinching this rare species. The only parakeets we were able to photograph properly were at the campsite by the south end of the valley and these proved to be yellow-crowned parakeets. We heard another kea at Hawdon hut and saw a New Zealand pipit on the riverbed as we came back to the campsite. We enjoyed 3 straight nights of calling great-spotted kiwis at this campsite and as we prepared for departure, a New Zealand falcon flew by close to our heads and then took height calling. It probably had its nest close by.



Hawdon valley is a wonderful hike but we failed to clinch any Malherbe's parakeet.

We left the mountains and headed for Hokitika where we spent the night at a hostel because of a heavy rainfall during the following night and morning. Before leaving Hokitika, we went to Sunset point by the mouth of the river to look for weka but we had no luck. Instead we saw a **great egret** and a few banded plovers among other species. Leaving Hokitika, we stopped by the campsite at Lake Mahanapura where we saw at least 4 **wekas** and heard our first **pipipi**. We arrived in Okarito in the afternoon and had a Okarito kiwi tour booked for the same night. We gathered at the guide's house in Okarito at 8:20 p.m. and left for the forest after a quick briefing. We learned that the kiwis can take several hours to show on these tours, and that the tours therefore may last well past midnight. The guides use radio trackers to locate the kiwis and provide the participants with walkie-talkies to coordinate the search. A

very professional and serious way to conduct a guided kiwi tour! Unfortunately, our group were among the 2 % that don't get to see these kiwis. We came close on a couple of occasions but the male we were tracking eventually headed back to its burrow. We did hear the **Okarito kiwi** calling on 3 occasions during our roughly 3 hours in the forest so we weren't completely left kiwi-less.

The following day was mostly transportation as we drove 5 hours to Twizel. We reached the campsite at Lake Poaka in late afternoon and went for a short walk along the lake. A colony of black-fronted terns just by the tents were nice, and a pied stilts were foraging at several places but no signs of any black stilts. The next morning we headed north for Lake Pukaki and stopped by a small gravel road just north of Glentanner airport where you have good views of the river delta. We saw a **black stilt** almost immediately along with a few pied stilts but the strong light did not do us any favors and we didn't want to go very close and risk disturbing the birds so we continued towards Mount Cook village. On our way back we stopped at the same spot but the black stilt was not there anymore. Maybe we were lucky to see it when we did. We headed south and saw a couple of **great crested grebes** in the small lakes south of Twizel before continuing to Queenstown.



The north end of Lake Pukaki by Glentanner airstrip where we saw a black stilt.

We took a rest-day in Queenstown to do laundry and general touristy things which was a nice change of pace. We also booked our Stewart Island ferry, accommodation and pelagic. The 45 min ferry trip between Bluff and Oban was also a nice opportunity for pelagic birdwatching. We had our first **Foveaux shags** waiting for the ferry in Bluff and over the open water there were plenty of shy albatrosses, sooty shearwaters, little penguins and our

first **common diving petrels**. Our first day on Stewart Island, we took the ferry to Ulva Island. This ferry runs on a timetable 5 times a day during peak season and does not require booking. There are a few tracks to choose from on the island but you have plenty of time to explore them all if you take an early ferry. It didn't take long before we had our first of many **South Island saddlebacks**. We heard singing **yellowheads** at a few places but only got good views at one occasion. We also ran into a flock of pipipis, a lot of red-fronted parakeets and some very intrusive wekas on the beaches. Ulva Island is well worth the trip for some of the otherwise hard-to-see South Island endemics.



A beach on Ulva island with wekas foraging by the shoreline.

Our second day at Stewart Island we had our third and final pelagic boat trip. The trip started in Paterson inlet where we got good views of Foveaux shag, spotted shag, little penguin, New Zealand sea lion and New Zealand fur seal. We passed some fish farms where yellow-eyed penguin can be seen but we didn't see any here. We headed out towards the open water around Bench Island where **brown skua** breeds. Two of them came very close to the boat and caught pieces of fish the skipper threw into the air which was pretty cool! Heading further out into the open water, the chum attracted some shy albatrosses, southern royal albatrosses, cape petrels, a northern giant petrel and we managed to see a **yellow-eyed penguin** fidgeting with its feathers in the distance. We started heading back to Oban and as we passed a fishing boat close to the inlet, there was a stunning **Buller's albatross** among the many shy albatrosses! The Buller's albatross decided to follow our boat almost all the way into Oban and offered some amazing views along the way! After the pelagic, we concluded that 3 pelagic trips and the places we took them were pretty optimal, more trips wouldn't have yielded many more new species and these trips are quite expensive.

Looking for **southern brown kiwi** around Oban is a chapter all on its own. We heard them all nights but trying to see one was a different matter. The rugby field is a good place to start and the key is to wait silently and patiently but there were so many other people wanting to see them and some were looking rather aggressively making a lot of noise and using suboptimal flashlights. When a kiwi finally showed, people started darting towards the spot and the kiwi took off, with only a small portion of the people getting to see it. We realized we had to find less frequented places to try to see one. After a couple of nights of failure our hope started to fade away, until one night when we decided to look around the track towards the swimming beach behind the church. We gave it some time along this track but eventually decided to call it off and started heading back.



One of many scenic tracks on Stewart Island.

As we came back to the streets, we saw two people further down the street and a cat stroking their feet. Something seemed off as we came closer because the two people were standing completely still, not petting the cat or anything. The streetlights were pretty dim and we got within 10 meters before we realized that it wasn't a cat, but a kiwi, that was searching their shoes for something to eat. We immediately froze and the kiwi came running towards us eager to go through our shoes as well. Eventually it decided to look through some buckets in a nearby yard and later disappeared into a hedge, with us still standing frozen completely mesmerized. Finally getting to see a kiwi so far into the trip when hope was almost gone, and the way we saw it as well, it was a no-brainer to declare this the highlight of the trip. The following nights we went to bed early without feeling bad about it.

After a couple of relaxing rest days on Stewart Island, we took the ferry back to Bluff. We briefly saw probably the same buller's albatross outside of Oban but other than that, no more noteworthy seabirds. Back at the mainland, our birding pace drastically decreased as we only had a couple of target species left and we only made a few brief stops during the remaining days. Sinclair wetlands near Dunedin had a lot of calling fernbirds and we even managed to spot one, a nice stop since we only had a very brief observation of this species beforehand. Since we had missed **Northern Royal albatross** on all our pelagics, we headed for Taiaroa head outside of Dunedin, the only mainland breeding spot of this species, and any albatross species for that matter, in the world. We saw one individual over the sea from the observation deck, and later two more individuals from inside the cafeteria of the royal albatross centre. We also saw our first **Otago shags** from Taiaroa head, but stopped at Oamaru the following day anyway to see plenty more, along with spotted shags, on the disused jetty. Our last birding stop of this trip was at Lake Ellesmere south of Christchurch, where **mute swan** became our 135th and final bird species.



View from the royal albatross center at Taiaroa head off of Dunedin.

Species lists

Birds

Southern brown kiwi VU <i>Apteryx australis lawryi</i>	Seen once and heard all 5 nights in Oban
North Island brown kiwi VU <i>Apteryx mantelli</i>	2 on Motutapu, 2 at Ngaherenga campsite, Pureoera
Okarito kiwi VU <i>Apteryx rowi</i>	1 during guided tour in Okarito
Great spotted kiwi VU <i>Apteryx haastii</i>	Heard all 3 nights at Hawdon shelter
Wild turkey <i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>	
Brown quail <i>Coturnix ypsilophora</i>	
Common pheasant <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	
Canada goose <i>Branta canadensis</i>	
Black swan <i>Cygnus atratus</i>	
Mute swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>	Lake Ellesmere
Blue duck EN <i>Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos</i>	3 in Turangi



Paradise shelduck

Tadorna variegata

Australasian shoveler

Spatula rhynchotis

Pacific black duck

Anas superciliosa

1 showing all correct features at Waiwera sewage plant

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

Grey teal

Anas gracilis

Brown teal NT

Anas chlorotis

2 on Tiritiri Matangi, plenty on Motutapu

New Zealand scaup

Aythya novaeseelandiae

Pacific long-tailed cuckoo

Urodynamis taitensis

2 at Pureora, 1 on Stewart island

Shining bronze cuckoo

Chrysococcyx lucidus

1 at Puhi Puhi campsite, 1 at Hawdon shelter,
1 in Oban, 1 at Trotters gorge

Feral dove

Columba livia

African collared dove

Streptopelia roseogrisea

1 at Mangawhai

Spotted dove

Spilopelia chinensis

Several in Auckland

New Zealand pigeon NT

Hemiphaga novaseelandiae



Weka VU

Gallirallus australis australis
Gallirallus australis scotti

4 at Lake Mahanapura
Several on Stewart island

Buff-banded rail

Gallirallus philippensis assimilis

1 in Gardiner gap between Rangitoto and Motutapu

Australasian swamphen

Porphyrio melanotus

South Island takahe EN

Porphyrio hochstetteri

5 on Tiritiri Matangi



Common coot

Fulica atra australis

1 in Lake Taupo

New Zealand grebe NT
Poliocephalus rufpectus

2 at Waiwera, 2 in Lake Taupo



Great crested grebe
Podiceps cristatus australis

2 in Kellands pond, 1 in Queenstown

South Island oystercatcher
Haematopus finschi

Variable oystercatcher
Haematopus unicolor

Pied stilt
Himantopus leucocephalus

Black stilt CR

1 at Lake Pukaki

Himantopus novaezelandiae

Masked lapwing

Vanellus miles novaehollandiae

Wrybill

300 at Miranda

Anarhynchus frontalis

Pacific golden plover

5 at Miranda

Pluvialis fulva

New Zealand plover

5 on Motutapu

Charadrius obscurus aquilonius

Double-banded plover

Charadrius bicinctus

Shore plover EN

2 in Gardiner gap between Rangitoto and Motutapu

Thinornis novaeseelandiae



Black-fronted dotterel <i>Elseyaornis melanops</i>	2 at Otaki river
Bar-tailed godwit NT <i>Limosa lapponica baueri</i>	
Ruddy turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	
Red knot NT <i>Calidris canutus rogersi</i>	
Sharp-tailed sandpiper <i>Calidris acuminata</i>	
Silver gull <i>Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae scopulinus</i>	
Black-billed gull <i>Chroicocephalus bulleri</i>	1 in Gardiner gap, 1 in Mangawhai, 50 at Miranda
Kelp gull <i>Larus dominicanus</i>	
Caspian tern <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	
Fairy tern VU <i>Sternula nereis davisae CR</i>	2 at Mangawhai
White-fronted tern NT <i>Sterna striata</i>	
Black-fronted tern EN <i>Chlidonias albobstriatus</i>	2 at Hawdon valley, 10 at Lake Poaka
Brown skua <i>Stercorarius antarcticus</i>	2 at Bench island
Parasitic jaeger <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	1 in Marlborough sounds (Cook strait ferry)
Yellow-eyed penguin EN <i>Megadyptes antipodes</i>	1 at Bench island

Little penguin*Eudyptula minor iredalei*

1 on Tiritiri Matangi

Eudyptula minor variabilis

1 in Marlborough sounds (Cook strait ferry)

Eudyptula minor minor

Several around Stewart Island

Eudyptula minor albosignata

1 at Kaikoura

White-faced storm petrel

Plenty in Hauraki gulf

*Pelagodroma marina maoriana***New Zealand storm petrel CR**

3 in Hauraki gulf

Fregetta maoriana**Antipodean albatross EN**

6 at Kaikoura

*Diomedea antipodensis gibsoni***Southern royal albatross VU**

1 in Cook strait, 6 at Kaikoura, 2 at Stewart Island

*Diomedea epomophora***Northern royal albatross EN**

3 at Taiaroa head

Diomedea sanfordi

Shy albatross NT
Thalassarche cauta stadi

1 in Cook strait, 4 at Kaikoura, 20 at Stewart Island

Buller's albatross NT
Thalassarche bulleri

1 at Stewart Island



Northern giant petrel
Macronectes halli

12 at Kaikoura, 1 at Stewart Island

Cape petrel
Daption capense australe

16 at Kaikoura, 2 at Stewart Island, 1 at Bluff

Fairy prion
Pachyptila turtur

5 in Hauraki gulf, 1 at Kaikoura, 1 at Stewart Island

Cook's petrel VU
Pterodroma cookii

50 in Hauraki gulf, 5 in Cook strait

Black petrel VU
Procellaria parkinsoni

10 in Hauraki gulf

Westland petrel EN <i>Procellaria westlandica</i>	4 at Kaikoura
Buller's shearwater VU <i>Ardenna bulleri</i>	1 at Kaikoura, 1 at Stewart Island
Sooty shearwater NT <i>Ardenna grisea</i>	10 at Cook strait, 4 at Kaikoura, plenty at Stewart I
Short-tailed shearwater <i>Ardenna tenuirostris</i>	1 in Hauraki gulf
Flesh-footed shearwater NT <i>Ardenna carneipes</i>	15 in Hauraki gulf
Fluttering shearwater <i>Puffinus gavia</i>	20 in Hauraki gulf, 10 in Cook strait
Hutton's shearwater EN <i>Puffinus huttoni</i>	2 at Kaikoura
Little shearwater <i>Puffinus assimilis haurakiensis</i>	5 in Hauraki gulf
Common diving petrel <i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i>	5 at Stewart Island
Australasian gannet <i>Morus serrator</i>	
Little pied cormorant <i>Microcarbo melanoleucos brevirostris</i>	
Spotted shag <i>Phalacrocorax punctatus punctatus</i> <i>Phalacrocorax punctatus oliveri</i>	
Little black cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	
Australian pied cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	

Great cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae

New Zealand king shag VU

Leucocarbo carunculatus

4 in Marlborough sounds (Cook strait ferry)

Otago shag VU

Leucocarbo chalconotus

5 at Taiaroa head, plenty in Oamaru

Foveaux shag

Leucocarbo stewarti

2 at Bluff, plenty at Stewart Island



Royal spoonbill

Platalea regia

Australasian bittern EN

Botaurus poiciloptilus

1 at Lake Taupo

Great egret*Ardea alba modesta***White-faced heron***Egretta novaehollandiae***Pacific reef heron**

1 on Motutapu

*Egretta sacra***Swamp harrier***Circus approximans***Morepork***Ninox novaeseelandiae***Sacred kingfisher***Todiramphus sanctus***New Zealand falcon NT**

1 on Tiritiri Matangi, 1 at Pureora, 1 at Hawdon shelter, 2 at Trotters gorge

*Falco novaeseelandiae***Kea NT**

1 at Otira valley, 1 at Hawdon hut, 1 at Arthur's pass

*Nestor notabilis***New Zealand kaka NT***Nestor meridionalis septentrionalis* Several at Pureora*Nestor meridionalis meridionalis* Several at Stewart Island**Eastern rosella***Platycerus eximius***Yellow-crowned parakeet NT**

10 at Pureora, plenty at Hawdon shelter

*Cyanoramphus auriceps***Red-crowned parakeet**

5 on Tiritiri Matangi, 2 on Motutapu, 10 on Stewart I

Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae



Rifleman

Acanthisitta chloris granti
Acanthisitta chloris chloris

New Zealand rockwren EN

1 in Otira valley

Xenicus gilviventris

Tui

Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae

New Zealand bellbird

Anthornis melanura

Grey gerygone

Gerygone igata

North Island kokako NT

1 on Tiritiri Matangi

Callaeas wilsoni

North Island saddleback NT

Philesturnus rufusater

Plenty on Tiritiri Matangi, plenty on Motutapu

South Island saddleback NT

Philesturnus carunculatus

Plenty on Ulva Island

Stitchbird VU

Notiomystis cincta hautura

Plenty on Tiritiri Matangi

Australian magpie

Gymnorhina tibicen hypoleuca

Yellowhead EN

Mohoua ochrocephala

5 on Ulva Island



Whitehead

Mohoua albicilla

Plenty on Tiritiri Matangi, plenty at Pureora

Pipipi

Mohoua novaseelandiae

1 at Lake Mahanapura, 10 on Ulva Island

New Zealand fantail

Rhipidura fuliginosa fuliginosa

Rhipidura fuliginosa placabilis

Tomtit

Petroica macrocephala toitoi

Petroica macrocephala macrocephala

North Island robin

5 on Tiritiri Matangi, plenty at Pureora

Petroica longipes

South Island robin

Petroica australis australis

Plenty in Hawdon valley

Petroica australis rakiura

Plenty on Ulva Island



Eurasian skylark

Alauda arvensis

Welcome swallow

Hirundo neoxena

New Zealand fernbird

Poodytes punctatus vealeae

1 at Lake Taupo

Poodytes punctatus punctatus

15 at Sinclair wetlands

Silvereye

Zosterops lateralis

Common myna

Acridotheres tristis

Common starling

Sturnus vulgaris

Common blackbird

Turdus merula

Song thrush

Turdus philomelos

New Zealand pipit

Anthus novaeseelandiae

3 on Motutapu, 1 in Hawdon valley



House sparrow

Passer domesticus

Dunnock

Prunella modularis

Common chaffinch

Fringilla coelebs

European greenfinch

Chloris chloris

Common redpoll

Acanthis flammea

European goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

Yellowhammer

Emberiza citrinella

Evertebrates

Common tussock ringlet

Argyrophenga antipodum

Hawdon valley, Sinclair Wetlands

Black mountain ringlet

Percnodaimon merula

Otira valley

Common copper

Lycaena salustius

Small cabbage white

Pieris rapae

Yellow admiral

Vanessa itea

Oamaru

Monarch

Danaus plexippus

Wetapunga VU

Deinacrida heteracantha

Tiritiri matangi

Lancer dragonfly

Adversaeschna brevistyla

Lake Taupo

Migratory locust

Locusta migratoria

Otira valley

Mammals

New Zealand sea lion EN

Phocartos hookeri

Stewart Island

New zealand fur seal

Arctocephalus forsteri

Kaikoura