

New Zealand Birding & Nature | Species Report

October 29 – November 16, 2023 | with Naturalist Journeys



With guide Pat Lueders, with local guide Mark Ayre and 11 clients: Husam and Carol, Gail and John, Erica and Ron, Ruth and Roger, Pat and John, and Carolyn.

Compiled by Pat Lueders

Summary: We were expertly led on this comprehensive tour of New Zealand by Mark Ayre with Nature Quest. We started in Auckland on the North Island and finished in Dunedin on the South Island. Over 19 days, we viewed 42 New Zealand endemics as well as numerous seabirds, fur seals and dolphins on six cruises. We stayed at lovely and comfortable lodges, enjoyed delicious meals and absorbed all of the interesting information Mark shared with us as we traveled throughout his beloved country.

TOTAL BIRD SPECIES SEEN: 127

New Zealand endemics—E: 42

Heard only—(HO): 1

Seen on Pre-trip Extension only—(PTE): 4

KIWIS: Apterygidae — 2

Southern Brown Kiwi (E) *Apteryx australis* — Seen at length foraging on the Stewart Island airfield.

North Island Brown Kiwi (E) *Apteryx mantelli* (PTE)— Two individuals seen, one adult and one juvenile, on evening walk at Tawharanui Regional Park.

DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: Anatidae — 11

Graylag Goose (I) *Anser anser* — Seen on our visit to Falls Road.

Canada Goose (I) *Branta canadensis* — Seen almost daily at all locations where there was water.

Black Swan (I) *Cygnus atratus* — Very common, many with cygnets, at all locations where there was water.

Paradise Shelduck (E) *Tadorna variegata* — Seen every day at all locations.

Blue Duck (E) *Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos* — Two adults and two juveniles seen at the Mahula Rapids.

Australian Shoveler *Spatula rhynchotis* — Seen at many locations including Mangere and Lake Elterwater.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa* — Seen at many locations, with juveniles at Mirror Lake.

Mallard (I) *Anas platyrhynchos* — Seen often in small numbers at many locations.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*—On the rare bird alert, seen at Pleasure Bay's Tip Lagoon with other waterfowl.

Gray Teal *Anas gracilis* — Fairly common at all locations with water.

Brown Teal (E) *Anas chlorotis* — Seen first in good numbers on the extension at Tawharanui Regional Park, then again at Tiritiri Matangi.

New Zealand Scaup (E) *Aythya novaeseelandiae* — Seen often at many locations with water.

NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae — 1

California Quail (I) *Callipepla californica* — Seen on the extension and at Kaki Lagoons and Ohau C Ponds.

PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS, AND ALLIES: Phasianidae — 3

Wild Turkey (I) *Meleagris gallopavo* — Seen only once while driving near Auckland.

Ring-necked Pheasant (I) *Phasianus colchicus* — Seen on the extension and on our visit to Falls Rd.

Brown Quail (I) *Synoicus ypsilophorus* — Seen along the trail on Tiritiri Matangi.

GREBES: Podicipedidae — 3

Hoary-headed Grebe *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus* — Only seen once, a few individuals seen at Lake Elterwater.

New Zealand Grebe (E) *Poliiocephalus rufopectus* — Seen four times including Mangere and Rotorua.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* — Voted New Zealand's "**Bird of the Century**" during our visit, was seen mating at Wanaka Lake, on nests at Elterwater and Lyndon.

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae — 3

Rock Pigeon (I) *Columba livia* — Seen often while driving.

Spotted Dove (I) *Spilopelia chinensis* (PTE)—Heard and seen well at Tawharanui Regional Park.

New Zealand Pigeon (E) *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae* — This lovely, large pigeon was seen often on walks.

CUCKOOS: Cuculidae — 2

Long-tailed Koel *Urodynamis taitensis* (HO) — Heard during the night walk at Stewart Island airstrip.

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus* — A lovely bird, seen best at Ohau C Ponds.

RAILS, CRAKES, AND ALLIES: Rallidae — 6

Weka (E) *Gallirallus australis* — Greeted us when we landed at the beach at Queen Charlotte Sound.

Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis* (PTE) — Briefly seen by a few at Tawharanui Regional Park.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* — Nice views at many locations including Lake Elterwater, St. Anne's Lagoon and Lake Murray.

South Island Takahe (E) *Porphyrio hochstetteri* (PTE) — Long, satisfying looks at a pair during our walk at Tawharanui Regional Park.

Australasian Swamphen *Porphyrio melanotus* — Seen often at many locations and habitats.

Spotless Crake *Zapornia tabuensis* — Seen by a few around the pond at Tiritiri Matangi.

STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae — 2

Pied Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus* — Seen often at most locations where there was water.

Black Stilt (E) *Himantopus novaezealandiae* — The rarest shorebird in the world, we saw two adults at Lake Murray and two immatures at Glentanner braided river.

OYSTERCATCHERS: Haematopodidae — 2

South Island Oystercatcher (E) *Haematopus finschi* — Lovely oystercatchers seen in good numbers at many locations on the North and South Islands.

Variable Oystercatcher (E) *Haematopus unicolor* — Seen almost daily on both islands at many locations.

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae — 5

Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva* — Large, resting flock at Miranda Wildlife Sanctuary.

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles* — Seen often at a variety of locations and habitats.

Double-banded Plover *Anarhynchus bicinctus* — Best seen, many were breeding pairs, at Glentanner braided river.

Wrybill (E) *Anarhynchus frontalis* — A real treat to have close looks at a flock at Miranda to clearly see the twisted bill.

Red-breasted Dotterel (E) *Anarhynchus obscurus* — Our whole group had good looks at Mangere Lagoon.

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae — 5

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* — A few were standing on the levee, seen from the blind at Miranda.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* — New Zealand is this species' main wintering ground; thousands seen at Mangere and Miranda.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* — A few were mixed in with the Wrybill flock at Miranda.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus* — Good numbers were mixed in with resting Bar-tailed Godwits at Mangere.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* — One individual was seen at close range along with Wrybills at Miranda.

SKUAS AND JAEGERES: Stercorariidae — 1

Brown Skua *Stercorarius antarcticus* — Photographed while resting on the water on our Stewart Island boat trip.

GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae — 8

Silver Gull *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae* — First seen on the city streets of Auckland; common at all locations.

Black-billed Gull (E) *Chroicocephalus bulleri* — Seen often whenever we were in the vicinity of braided rivers.

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Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* — Recorded daily seen at all locations.

Australian Fairy Tern *Sternula nereis (PTE)* — Good spotting by Mark as it was feeding over the Mangawhai Estuary.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* — Seen at Mangere, Miranda and Lake Elterwater.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* — Spotted feeding over the water at Miranda pools.

Black-fronted Tern *Chlidonias albobristatus* — Seen first in good numbers feeding over a field at Arthur's Pass braided river.

White-fronted Tern *Sterna striata* — Seen often around water on both islands.

PENGUINS: Spheniscidae — 3

Yellow-eyed Penguin (E) *Megadyptes antipodes* — How exciting to have close looks at a few on our Stewart Island pelagic.

Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor* — Seen in small groups on five different boat trips and on the rocks in Stewart Island Harbour.

Fiordland Penguin (E) *Eudyptes pachyrhynchus* — An adult and two juveniles spotted in a cave opening on Stewart Island.

ALBATROSSES: Diomedeidae — 5

Northern Royal Albatross *Diomedea sanfordi* — Seen at close range on the Kaikoura cruise and at the Dunedin Harbour entrance breeding colony.

Southern Royal Albatross *Diomedea epomophora* — Seen behind the boat on the Kaikoura and Stewart Island cruises.

Antipodean Albatross *Diomedea antipodensis* — One immature was seen on the Kaikoura cruise.

White-capped Albatross *Thalassarche cauta* — The most common albatross seen on the boat trips.

Salvin's Albatross *Thalassarche salvini* — Very lovely albatross seen on Kaikoura and Stewart Island cruises.

PETRELS AND SHEARWATERS: Procellariidae — 11

Northern Giant-Petrel *Macronectes halli* — Came close to the boat on the Kaikoura and Stewart Island boat trips.

Southern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialisoides* — Two spotted by Mark on the Kaikoura cruise.

Cape Petrel *Daption capense* — Such a cute and colorful petrel, many came to the boat on Kaikoura and Stewart Islands.

Cook's Petrel *Pterodroma cookii* — Only seen once, from the Cook Strait Ferry.

Fairy Prion *Pachyptila turtur* — Sizable flocks seen from the Cook Strait Ferry to the South Island.

Westland Petrel *Procellaria westlandica* — Came to the boat on the Kaikoura and Stewart Island cruises.

Flesh-footed Shearwater *Ardenna carneipes* — Seen from the boat when we approached Tiritiri Matangi.

Buller's Shearwater *Ardenna bulleri* — Two were behind the boat on Kaikoura.

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea* — Seen in large numbers on the Stewart Island cruise.

Fluttering Shearwater *Puffinus gavia* — Very plentiful on Queen Charlotte Sound.

Common Diving-Petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix* — Seen from the Stewart Island Ferry and cruise.

GANNETS AND BOOBIES: Sulidae — 1

Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator* — Hundreds seen at the Muriwai Gannet Colony.

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae — 7

Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucos* — Seen at most locations on both islands.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* — Seen in small numbers, mostly at estuaries.

Spotted Shag (E) *Phalacrocorax punctatus* — Lovely shag seen best in Queen Charlotte Sound on a cliff for great photos.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* — Seen in a roosting tree at Sulphur Point, Lake Rotorua.

Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius* — Seen in small numbers in many locations.

New Zealand King Shag (E) *Leucocarbo carunculatus* — We spent time in Queen Charlotte Sound to get good looks at this large, endemic Shag.

Steward Island Shag (E) *Leucocarbo chalconotus* — Found standing next to Spotted Shags in Queen Charlotte Sound for good comparison.

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae — 3

Australasian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus* — We visited the Tokaanu Old Wharf Rd. to get scope views of this bittern.

Pacific Reef-Heron *Egretta sacra* — Spotted at a known breeding cliff on Kaikoura cruise.

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae* — Lovely heron seen at most locations with water.

IBISES AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae — 1

Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia* — Lovely species; seen first at Mangere Lagoon.

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae — 1

Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans* — Without any other raptors, many harriers caught our attention throughout the tour.

OWLS: Strigidae — 1

Morepork *Ninox novaeseelandiae* — Mark showed us a perched Morepork on Tiritiri, and they were vocalizing on the night visit to the Stewart Island runway.

KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae — 1

Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus* — Seen perched on wires during drives on both islands.

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae — 1

New Zealand Falcon (E) *Falco novaeseelandiae* — Some of the group got good looks behind the hotel at Whakapapa and one was heard with brief looks at Mt. Cook.

NEW ZEALAND PARROTS: Strigopidae — 2

Kea (E) *Nestor notabilis* — We went to the town of Arthur's Pass to see the resident Keas; individuals also seen in Fiordland National Park. Voted "BIRD OF THE TOUR."

New Zealand Kaka (E) *Nestor meridionalis* — Seen in Pureora Forest Park and on Stewart and Ulva islands.

PARROTS: Psittaculidae — 4

Red-crowned Parakeet (E) *Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae* — Nesting, so only fleeting looks available on Ulva Island.

Yellow-crowned Parakeet (E) *Cyanoramphus auriceps* (HO) — Heard well in Pureora Forest Park.

Malherbe's Parakeet (E) *Cyanoramphus malherbi* — A pair and a nest was found on the beach at Queen Charlotte Sound.

Eastern Rosella (I) *Platycercus eximius* — This colorful parrot was seen flying on our drive on the North Island.

NEW ZEALAND WRENS: Acanthisittidae — 1

Rifleman (E) *Acanthisitta chloris* — After scattered sightings, all had good looks at this smallest bird in New Zealand on our walk at Mt. Cook.

HONEYEATERS: Meliphagidae — 2

Tui (E) *Prothemadera novaeseelandiae* — All became familiar with the distinctive vocalization and identity of this common but interesting species.

New Zealand Bellbird (E) *Anthornis melanura* — Distinctive vocalizations; another species seen and heard very often at most locations.

THORNBILLS AND ALLIES: Acanthizidae — 1

Gray Gerygone (E) *Gerygone igata* — Also referred to as Gray Warbler, a species we heard and saw often at many locations.

WHITEHEADS: Mohouidae — 3

Whitehead (E) *Mohoua albicilla* — After the extension, we finally saw it well at Tiritiri.

Yellowhead (E) *Mohoua ochrocephala* — We worked hard and finally had decent looks at this species on Ulva Island.

Pipipi (E) *Mohoua novaeseelandiae* — This became a nemesis bird for the group until we finally had good looks on Ulva Island.

WOODSWALLOWS AND ALLIES: Artamidae — 1

Australian Magpie (I) *Gymnorhina tibicen* — Many seen in the fields during drives on both islands.

FANTAILS: Rhipiduridae — 1

New Zealand Fantail (E) *Rhipidura fuliginosa* — Such a cute little bird, to our delight we saw one almost daily.

WATTLEBIRDS: Callaeidae — 3

North Island Kokako (E) *Callaeas wilsoni* — Seen only once at the offshore island sanctuary of Tiritiri.

North Island Saddleback (E) *Philesturnus rufusater* — Best looks by the group at Tiritiri.

South Island Saddleback (E) *Philesturnus carunculatus* — Quick looks at an individual on Ulva Island.

STITCHBIRDS: Notiomystidae — 1

Stitchbird (E) *Notiomystis cincta* — A little bird with attitude! Found only on North Island Sanctuaries, seen at the feeders at Tiritiri.

AUSTRALASIAN ROBINS: Petroicidae — 3

Tomtit (E) *Petroica macrocephala* — Reminding us of a chickadee, we enjoyed watching this vocal species at Arthur's Pass.

North Island Robin (E) *Petroica longipes* — Seen by the group on the walk at Pureora Forest Walk.

South Island Robin (E) *Petroica australis* — Carrying nesting material at Arthur's Pass and great looks at Knobs Flat.

LARKS: Alaudidae — 1

Eurasian Skylark (I) *Alauda arvensis* — A common species we heard and saw at many of the wetlands as we observed their mating demonstrations.

BUSH WARBLERS: Locustellidae — 1

New Zealand Fernbird *Poodytes punctatus* — A small skulker, only seen by a few at Tiritiri in thick vegetation.

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae — 1

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena* — Everyone enjoyed this lovely swallow seen daily at most locations.

WHITE-EYES: Zosteropidae — 1

Silveryeye *Zosterops lateralis* — We saw them on our walk at Mt. Cook.

STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae — 2

European Starling (I) *Sturnus vulgaris* — Seen often at many locations.

Common Myna (I) *Acridotheres tristis* — Seen often in large numbers on the North Island on roads; only has started moving to the South Island.

THRUSHES: Turdidae — 2

Song Thrush (I) *Turdus philomelas* — Very common on lawns much like our American Robin.

Eurasian Blackbird (I) *Turdus merula* — Very attractive species; seen daily at all locations.

ACCENTORS: Prunellidae — 1

Dunnock (I) *Prunella modularis* — First seen at Arthur's Pass; good looks at Te Anau and Dunedin on hotel lawns.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae — 1

House Sparrow (I) *Passer domesticus* — Huge numbers everywhere!

FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS: Fringillidae — 4

Common Chaffinch (I) *Fringilla coelebs* — Seen and heard often at most locations.

European Greenfinch (I) *Chloris chloris* — A lovely finch, seen often in trees at Arthur's Pass.

Lesser Redpoll (I) *Acanthis cabaret* — Seen in good numbers in evergreens around Wilderness Lodge.

European Goldfinch (I) *Carduelis carduelis* — Attractive bird, seen almost daily at many locations.

OLD WORLD BUNTINGS: Emberizidae — 1

Yellowhammer (I) *Emberiza citrinella* — We had our best looks at this species perched at the Ohau C Ponds.

MAMMALS: — 6

New Zealand Fur Seal *Arctocephalus forsteri* — Seen first around the cliffs Kaikoura and on the cruise.

New Zealand Sea Lion *Phocarctos hookeri* — Resting on a rock in Paterson Inlet.

Hector's Dolphin *Cephalorhynchus hectori* — Seen following our boat on our cruise from Kaikoura.

Dusky Dolphin *Sagmatias obscurus* — Seen on cruises and ferry crossings.

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* — Seen from the Cook Strait ferry.

Rabbits/White & Black---Seen often on both Islands.