

Trip report New Zealand 15/12 2006 – 14/1 2007
By Svend Aage Linderström

Birds are not plenty in New Zealand, however you will have a good chance to find some very interesting species in spectacular surroundings. It is no wonder why tourists invade New Zealand as logistic is easy too.

My wife Dorte and I had planned this trip on our own primarily by using the internet. Our agency in Denmark "Rejsegalleriet" booked our flights and hotel in Tokyo.

Car rental by Avis, most accommodation were booked through Top Ten Holiday Parks as we considered it a good option to stay in self contained cabins – Golden Chain could be an alternative. If you join TOP 10 Club, you will get 10 % discount at any Top Ten Holiday Park, good value for the money as the membership will cost you 30 NZD.

Total costs were some 8.700 euro two persons all included. Petrol where cheap according to Denmark, some 1,10-1,25 NZD, 1 NZD = 0,55 Euro. Visas are not needed but don't bring any soil, mud or food into New Zealand !

Logistic is a piece of cake. Roads are good, but often narrow and winding, accommodation is plenty. Annoyances are few, expect many tourists in some areas as well as sand flies may occur anywhere.

Svend Aage Linderström, Solrød Strand December 8 2007, mail sal (at) c.dk

Itinerary

Friday December 15 2006

Left Solrød Strand at 12.30, arrived Copenhagen Airport Kastrup 13.00 – airport very busy and crowded. Boarded SAS's Airbus 380, take off 16.15 (GMT -1). Weather : SW 10 m/s, 8/8, > 10 km, showers, 10 C.

Saturday December 16

Arrived Tokyo Narita Airport 10.20 (GMT -9), transfer from terminal 1 to terminal 2, got lunch and some sleep, boarded Air New Zealand's Boeing 777, take off 19.10, half hour delayed. Weather : East 5 m/s, 8/8, visibility more than 10 km, dry, 12 Celcius.

Sunday December 17

Finally we landed in Christchurch 9.40 (GMT – 12) just for a stop over before continuing to Auckland. For the first time ever we experienced a security check when leaving the plane ! Take off 11.10, arrival Auckland 12.45. Red tapes went smoothly and 13.30 we stood at our rental car, had some lunch, and left the airport 14.00, headed north through the suburbs to Helensville for a short stop, then further to Dargaville, where we shopped at Woolworth before arriving at Trounson Kauri Coast Park Top Ten 18.00, where we had a short walk along the river.

NW 5-2, 8/8, > 25, showers, 17-22 C

Monday December 18

Had a good nights sleep becoming even better as I heard a calling Brown Kiwi at 4 o'clock. Woke up late, did some birding along the river 8.30-9.10. We took a short drive to Tounson Kauri Park and walked the loop 9.30-10.40 in tall and dense kauri forest. Drove to Lake Waikere and Lake Kaiwi 11.50-13.00, didn't see much. Back to Top Ten, walked at the river 13.30-14.20 and 17.00-17.40. We had booked the kiwi spotting and spent 20.30-22.40 walking the loop at Tounson Kauri Park again. The first kiwi was heard shortly after we left the car park and as we walked a few hundred meters along the path we saw a Brown Kiwi on close range. Heard more kiwis and Morepork, saw glowworms, weta, eels etc. and met Paul, a birder from Norfolk UK.
SW 5, 8/8, > 10 km, showers, 17-23 C

Tuesday December 19

Left Top Ten and drove through the beautiful Waipoua forest to the north to Arai te Uru, 8.55-9.55. Enjoyed the view of the sea and the bay 9.55-10.15, then we followed the road from coast to coast and arrived 11.45 at Bay of Islands at Baihia. The showers had now turned into heavy rain, and what is said to be one of the most spectacular sites in New Zealand was washed away. We gave up and continued to the south to Auckland 12.30-16.10. Checked in at Aspen House close to the harbour, walked the fancy harbour front and had dinner at a Japanese restaurant.
NW 5-10, 8/8, 1-10 km, rain, 17-21 C.

Wednesday December 20

Boarded Kawau Cat for Tiritiri Matangi 9.00-10.15 – short stop at Gulf Harbour. Stayed at the bunk house next to the light house and after a quick check in, we explored the island. A singing Kokako was the first important bird to be found and within an hour we had seen most of the endemic. We met Paul again, and he joined us for some pleasant birding 10.15-17.30 and again 20.30-22.45. The staff were celebrating the Christmas holiday and we were all invited to the party – but at least three of us insisted to go kiwi-watching. Unfortunately a sewer storm hit the island at night making it impossible to locate kiwis in the woodland, we tried hard searching the lanes but had no luck.
NW 6-25, 6-8/8, > 25 km, dry, 17-20 C.

Thursday December 21

The staff were suffering from hang over – our problem was that the ferry was cancelled due to the weather as the Kawau Cat won't sail when wind is above 15 m/s. Anyway Paul arranged a water taxi (300 NZD) to take us to Gulf Harbour – the trip was really rock'n'roll 9.20-10.05. Got our return tickets refunded and were pleased to join Paul in his camper van back to central Auckland 10.25-11.10. Did some sightseeing before we checked in again at Aspen House.
NW 20, 6-8/8, > 25, showers, 18-22 C.

Friday December 22

Left Auckland 8.15, traffic rather heavy as this was start of Christmas holiday and many people seemed to be going to Coromandel Peninsula. We stopped at Miranda 9.20-11.20 started at the wardens house to get news on the birds – were told where to look for Hudsonian Godwit and he promised that Wrybill wouldn't be a problem – and he was right ! Found the Hudsonian Godwit amongst the Bartailed – rather hard work – just to see the

bird fly off to the coast exposing all the features. Found easily two groups of Wrybills – amazing to see their foraging technique.

Continued further to the south to Lake Waikare just to find another rarity – Australian Tree Martin 11.30-12.10. Arrived at Waitomo 14.35, got tickets for the glow worms 16.00, which is 5 minutes introduction, 30 minutes very slow descent to the river through the caves and finally 7 minutes at the glow worms – a spectacular, but too expensive sight – 33 NZD each.

Had a pleasant sun set walk in the hills 20.05-21.10. A New Zealand Falcon was seen twice.

SW 5, 1-4/8, > 25 km, dry, 18-22 C.

Saturday December 23

Woke up to rain and fog. Left Waitomo 8.35 and reached the boarder of Tongariro NP 11.25, went to Manganuiateao River 11.45-12.30 in order to find Blue Duck, walked down stream seeing next to nothing, walked back to the car just to find a Blue Duck in the river bend. Drove to Ohakune, checked in at Top Ten 13.00, drove back towards Tongariro 14.00-15.15, later we walked along the river and the loop in the memorial forest opposite the camp 17.30-19.20

SW 4, 8-5/8,0,5- > 25 km, showers, 12-15 C.

Sunday December 24

A short morning walk in the forest 7.00-7.35, then we went to Le Chateau 9.00-12.30, after lunch we went to the volcanoes north of Ohakune 13.45-15.15 and finally we celebrated Christmas Eve.

SW 5, 4-8/8, >10-25, dry, 12-20 C.

Monday December 25

Did some early morning birding along the river then we left Ohakune 9.30 following the eastern boarder of Tongariro NP towards Lake Taupo where we stopped at Waihi on the southern shore of the lake 10.35-11.05. Continued to Pureora Forest 11.45-14.15 where we birded the lower parts of the forest due to rain and mist in the higher parts.

Headed towards Rotorua passing the beautiful Lake Whakamara 14.15-14.40. Checked in at 15.15 and went to the city centre and the lake shore 16.30-18.15, and again to the lake 19.05-19.35.

SW 5, 6-8/8, 0,5->25 km, showers, 12-22 C

Tuesday December 26

Drove south to Waitapu first to see Lady Knox geyser then visiting the thermal wonderland 9.25-12.30 – the geyser goes off every day at 10.15. Spent rest of the day in Rotorua enjoying the weather acting like summer.

NW 4-5, 2-0/8, > 25 km, dry, 17-26 C.

Wednesday December 27

Got up early to drive Rotorua-Hamilton-Auckland 6.20-10.00 – we were told to allow at least 5 hours. Boarded Air New Zealand, take off 13.35 for Christchurch 14.35-15.05, then on the next plane for Invercargill 16.10-17.05 until we finally reached Stewart Island 17.30 – the latter being a memorable flight on a small plane with the captain telling jokes and entertaining the passengers.

Took the airport shuttle to Orban and checked in at South Sea Motel where we were told to meet 21.00 in the harbour for the famous kiwi spotting. Boarded Wild Fire and sailed in the sunset to Ocean Beach. The first kiwi occurred while climbing the hill near the jetty the second was seen in the moon light running along the beach – even picking our shoes.

21.00-0.30.

NW 4, 2-4/8, showers, > 25 km, 22-10 C.

Thursday December 28

Walked to the light house at Ackers Point 8.30-12.30, saw New Zealand Shy Albatrosses at close range and got good views of New Zealand Fur Seals along the coast. At the light house two Buller's Albatrosses appeared close enough for identification – really a nice bird watching spot. A short walk around the harbour 14.30-15.00 and then afternoon trip to Horseshoe Bay 16.00-18.15 – most spectacular sight was the telephone in a road side tree – what on earth was it doing there – anyway it seemed to be in function.

Our “room with view” was a good base, we enjoyed looking at Half Moon Bay being able to see penguins and albatrosses.

SW 5-10, 6-8/8, > 25, showers, 12-18 C.

Friday December 29

Left the motel 8.15 and walked over the hill to Golden Bay Warf where we joined Peter's Water taxi (20 NZD each) for Ulva Island 9.05-12.10. The island is rodent and possum free and the forest is dense which meant that birds like Yellowhead was not that easy to find or get good views of. Wekas are real bandits, some visitors had been foolish enough to leave their lunch bags in the shelter at the warf, and as we passed a Weka family were busy tearing the bags apart. However the best experience was the Fiordland Crested Penguin swimming along the coast – Peter saw it on his return to Golden Bay and really hoped that we would find it – and sure we did.

A short walk around the motel 14.20-14.55 then again Ackers Point 16.05-18.30 – best bird was a Brown Skua crossing the point.

NW 2-10, 8/8, > 25 km, showers, 12-16 C

Saturday December 30

Short walk around the harbour 8.15-8.40, then check out from the motel and check in for the flight to Invercargill 9.25-9.45. Got our rental car and drove to Curio Bay 10.10-11.20, found two view points 11.20-11.55 but did not see much. Continued through Catlins to Nugget Point 11.50-13.25. Sea mammals were plenty, we saw many New Zealand Fur Seals – even baby pools where mothers were teaching their pups how to behave in shallow water. Amongst the seals we found a few male sea lions and much to our surprise even two elephant seals – though they are regular here, they are not easy to find.

From Nugget Point we headed north to Dunedin and found our prebooked Top Ten just to be told that our booking was overruled (first they wouldn't recognize it, but a copy of their mail reply was hard to reject) – they found alternative accommodation turning out to be a much better option on foot of the Otago Peninsula and close to the coast.

NW 6, 5-8/8, > 25 km, showers, 12-18 C

Sunday December 31

Morning walk along the beach 8.30-9.00, then Otago Peninsula, followed the high road to Taiaaroa Head where the Northern Royal Albatrosses are hidden behind a fence and trips to

the hide should be booked well in advance. However it is possible to see the breeding albatrosses from the bay just before arriving at Taiaroa Head – we also saw a albatross flying to the colony. 9.00-11.20. Did some sightseeing in Dunedin 11.20-12.30 saw the steepest street in the world and the start of the new year carnival – bitterly cold wind meant that absolute no skin should be exposed by the dancers – really not like Rio. Another walk along the beach 14.30-15.05, then back to Otago Peninsula, this time to Sandfly Bay where four Yelloweyed Penguins were seen coming on shore 16.10-18.55. Back for a good new year diner and ABBA show on tv – nearly no firework at midnight – it seemed that nobody celebrated new year.
NW-SW 6, 3/8, > 25 km, dry, 14-17 C.

Monday January 1 2007

Left Dunedin 8.45 followed the presidential highway from Clinton to Gore and reached Te Anau 12.25 and checked in at the very pleasant Top Ten. Walked along the lake 13.10-14.10 and 15.15-15.50 – relaxed and enjoyed the sunny afternoon.
SW 5-10, 8-3/8, > 25, showers, 15-20 C.

Tuesday January 2

Against all odds this day turned out to be hot and sunny though we visited one of the wettest spots on earth. Through Top Ten we had booked a trip on Milford Sound 12.30-14.55, so we left Te Anau 7.10 and worked our way slowly towards the sound, arrived 11.15, we stopped a couple of times along the river but no signs of Blue Duck. The fields close to the river were all covered with flowering lupines – a beautiful sight however making it hard to see the river amongst the flowers. First longer stop at Knobs Flat 8.00-8.20 where a Yellowhead was singing. Next stop Cascada Creek where we walked the loop and passed Lake Gunn – we cannot remember having seen such a green and dense forest before. Yellowfronted Parakeets were common, again a singing Yellowhead and three family groups of Rifflemen at close range and a New Zealand Robin attacking my shoes at the car park. 8.30-9.40. Next stop the east entrance of Homer Tunnel where we followed the alpine loop north of the tunnel – heard Southern Island Rock Wren calling but could not find it – like a needle in a haystack. Much to our surprise three Deers stood in the snow above the tunnel. A short stop at the western entrance too gave next to nothing. 10.10-10.55. Joined the Real Journey Nature Cruise at Milford Sound by many tourists regarded as the most spectacular sight in New Zealand. Got good views of Bottlenose Dolphin but birds were few. Drove non stop back to Te Anau 15.15-16.50.
SE 5, 4/8, > 25 km, dry, 17-22 C.

Wednesday January 3

First some early morning birding driving towards Manapouri looking for the promising ponds and marshes stuffed with bitterns and crakes only to find that everything had dried out. 6.05-7.00. Left Te Anau 7.50, short stop at Mossburn and Oreti River gave good numbers of Blackfronted Terns, then continued to Kingston and a stop at Lake Wakati 9.10-9.25, passed the junction outside Queenstown 9.55, short stop at Lindis Pass before reaching Omarama 12.00., where we had lunch at Ahuriri Bridge a little north of Omarama – breeding ground for Black Stilt. A truck arrived, some motorbikes were unloaded and instead of bird watching we found ourselves in the middle of a motocross race on the river

banks. However again the flowering lupines made it hard to find birds along the river. 12.00-12.50. Continued towards Twizel, the weather was excellent and the views of Mount Cook stunning, so we decided to go further north towards the mountains. Returned to Twizel 14.30. Birded along Ohau River – or rather the remains – followed the river to Lake Benmore, where a group of Stilts appeared – one of them turned out to be completely black ! 15.50-17.15. Then a short stop at Kelland Ponds close to the dam, saw Great Crested Grebe there. 17.15-17.50.
SE 3, 1/8, > 25 km, dry, 7-24 C.

Thursday January 4

Had to drive the longest stretch. First some early morning birding toward Ohau Lake 6.00-8.10 then left Twizel 9.00, short stop at Ahuriri Bridge 9.00-9.35 and then at Ahuriri River 9.45-10.05, reached Haast Pass, stopped at Davis Flat 12.40-13.10 – the pass was crowded as this was in the middle of the holiday. Reached Haast 14.10. Afternoon at Knights Point 15.35-15.50 and then Monro Beach 15.55-17.20.
SE 4, 0-6/8, > 25, dry, 10-24 C.

Friday January 5

Started at Haast Beach 9.20-9.35 – most interesting feature here was the beach filled with timber washed on shore. Then a short stop at Lake Moreaki 9.55-10.10. We continued to Fox Glacier 11.05-11.50 and were a bit disappointed as the glacier really does not look of much. Arrived at Franz Josef Village 12.20 for lunch, checked in at Top Ten, then back to the glacier 14.30-15.40 – this was more like, however rain and fog made the top of the glacier invisible. Due to bad weather we gave up finding kiwis in the nearby Okarito area – distant Morepork was all 21.45-23.05.
SW 3, 8/8, <2 km, rain, 17 C

Saturday January 6

Started revisiting Franz Josef Glacier in the morning 8.40-9.20 – now we could at least see the icecap on top of the grey and dirty glacier. Headed north through deserted mining villages and ended up in Greymouth 11.50-12.45 for lunch. This was the only day on the entire trip where we haven't got prebooked accommodation as booking at Moana failed. Reached Lake Brunner and Moana 13.10 and found a cabin at the motel. Had a walk on the north shore of Lake Brunner 13.35-15.10 and birded the ponds along the road 17.30-18.10. Then 21.35-22.30 we made our own kiwi spotting as we walked the loop at Arnold River. First we heard Great Spotted Kiwi male calling being answered by a female, later we heard another distant male. Australian Bittern was booming somewhere upstream the river and glow worms were tinkling in the night. Satisfied we went back to the cabin and celebrated our success drinking some good red wine.
SW 5-15. 6-8/8, 5-10 km, showers, 12-19 C

Sunday January 7

Left Moana 8.45 and continued through the spectacular Arthur's Pass, reached Springfield 10.45 for a short stop. Followed highway one to Kaikoura the last stretch along the coast, arrived at the city centre 13.25 – had lunch, did some shopping and drove a little bit south

to our accommodation at South Bay. Walk to the tip of the peninsula 15.40-18.25, had a look at the seal colony and saw some distant Dusky Dolphins and a few seabirds.

E 2-10, 2-8/8, 1->25 km, showers, 10-18 C

Monday January 8

Walked over the hill 8.10 to arrive at the Whale Watch Centre 9.00 – check in time.

Wasted half an hour before we drove back to South Bay to enter the boat 9.45-12.00. The catamaran goes fast and had no problems locating the Sperm Whales, however seabirds are few as you go too fast for bird watching. Lunch and sight seeing in Kaikoura, back at South Bay 14.25, walked along the bay 17.30-19.25.

SE-W 15-3. 4/8, > 25 km, showers, 15-25 C

Tuesday January 9

A short walk along the coast 7.25-7.55, then we headed north to Picton 9.15-12.00, had a look at Lake Grassmere 10.30-11.05. Boarded the Marlborough Sound Dolphin Watch 13.25, sailed to Motuora Island 14.55-16.00 and returned to Picton 17.50.

Highlight were King Cormorants but dolphins failed, seeing just 3 near Picton harbour. The first cormorants were seen a few kilometres outside the harbour, however most were seen close to Motuora.

Anyway it was not the ideal trip, the engine broke down, we had to pick guests up at different locations (and give them a return as well) so the other main target, Hector's Dolphin – an endemic – failed – and I don't have to mention the rain too.

Saw a beautiful Pomarine Skua on close range.

NE 2, 8/8, < 5 km, all day rain, 18 C

Wednesday January 10

Crossed the hill 8.15, reached Albatross Encounter 8.40, pick up at 9.00 and boarded the boat on land at South Bay and were on sea 9.10-11.40. Hutton's Shearwater in great numbers close to the coast, went further out, some frozen fish in a basket attached soon a lot of seabirds and 1 Royal and 3 Wandering Albatrosses appeared – at some times less than half a metre from the boat (beware of your fingers – they might snatch !) A small Blue Shark got its share and even Greybacked Storm Petrel turned up.

As we still haven't seen Hector's Dolphin we tried the point near the seal colony 12.30-14.00 and 17.55-19.20, but had no luck. Had a walk along the bay 15.10-15.45.

S 10, 8/8, 5-10 km, showers, 10-18 C.

Thursday January 11

As we had a plane to catch in Christchurch we left Kaikoura 8.50 making some stops south of the city in a desperate try to find some dolphins. Shortly after the tunnel we saw a group of dolphins rather close to the shore, unfortunately they turned out to be Dusky.

While watching the Dusky however two Hector's Dolphins appeared showing their Micky Mouse Ear fins. Reached Christchurch airport 12.15, take off for Auckland 13.40, arrival Auckland 14.50, found the shuttle bus to city centre and checked in at Copthorne Hotel.

Met a colleague from Denmark, she was visiting her son and daughter in law, were invited to their house and had dinner at an Italian restaurant.

S 5, 8/8, > 5 km, showers, 15 C – in Auckland dry and 18-23 C.

Friday January 12

What should have been another pelagic cruise ended up in bad weather and just a harbour cruise in Auckland. We never succeeded in getting in touch with the tour operator – neither them with us. Anyway rain, mist and fog wouldn't have been worth the effort, we later found out that the trip was run the following Sunday instead. Strolled around in Auckland, harbour cruise 10.45-12.15 – saw Arctic Skua and bungy jump at the harbour bridge. We will highly recommend Seattle Coffee at the Ferry Building – their chocolate cakes are high class,

NE 10, 8/8, 0,5-2, rain, 20 C

Saturday January 13

Found the shuttle bus next to the hotel and went to the airport 6.10-6.35, easy check in, left New Zealand 10.10 (GMT -12) and arrived at Tokyo Narita airport 16.50 (GMT -9). It was already dark when we entered the airport express 17.50 and reached Shinagawa 18.50 and walked the short distance to our hotel in Takanawa. Got genuine Japanese sushi at our hotel.

Auckland : E 12, 6/8, > 10 km, showers, 17 C.

Tokyo . NW 2, 4/8, > 25 km, dry, 10 C

Sunday January 14 2007

Early breakfast, then a walk in Takanawa and Shinagawa 7.15-8.50 towards the bay. Took the airport express 8.50-10.00 – saw a few birds in the rice fields en route to Narita Airport. Check in went very slowly – due to bad weather in Denmark the flight the day before was cancelled so staff tried to find volunteers for an extra night in Tokyo paid by SAS.

Left Tokyo Narita 12.55 (-9 GMT), arrived in Copenhagen Kastrup 16.05 (-1 GMT) and at last Solrød 17.20.

Tokyo : NW 5, 1/8, > 25 km, dry, 0-6 C

Copenhagen : SW 18, 7/8, > 25, dry, 8 C

List of accommodation etc

Trounson – Kauri Coast Top Ten Holiday Park, studio unit 162 NZD + 40 NZD kiwi walk

Auckland – Aspen House Hotel 124 NZD a night

Tiritiri Matangi – Bunk House 40 NZD

Waitomo Top Ten Holiday Camp – park motel unit 96 NZD, caves 2 x 33 NZD

Ohakune Top Ten Holiday Camp – motel studio unit, 167 NZD

Lakewood Rotorua – studio unit 180 NZD + 2 x 25 NZD Waiotapu

Stewart Island - South Sea Hotel – room with view, 100 NZD a day, flight 2 x 155 NZD, kiwi spotting 2 x 95 NZD

Dunedin – Adrian Motel, 200 NZD

Te Anau Top Ten 261 NZD, Milford Sound cruise 2 x 80 NZD

Twizel, Mountain Chalet Motel, studio chalet, 105 NZD

Haast, Wilderness Motel, double room 95 NZD

Franz Joseph Top Ten Holiday Park – studio unit, 177 NZD

Lake Brunner, Country Motel – unit with shared facilities, 74 NZD

Kaikoura, Bay Cottages – studio unit 320 NZD

Auckland -Cophthorne Hotel Harbourcity 1.182 Dkr

Whale Watch Kaikoura – 2 x 130 NZD

Wildwings Albatross Encounter, Kaikoura 2 x 80 NZD
Dolphin Watch, Picton 2 x 95 NZD

Sites

Auckland

The airport is situated at Mangere next to Manukau Harbour – the bay west of Auckland city. We saw a few waders in this area, Variable Oystercatcher and Bartailed Godwit. Wrybill may occur.

Spotted Doves are found in the suburbs, we saw Spotted dove close to Mangere and north of the harbour bridge in Takapuna.

The parks of central Auckland are pleasant but no birding spots. At the harbour front we saw a single Arctic Skua and even on a harbour cruise Australian Gannet will occur. Just north of Auckland we saw Mute Swan in a lake next to highway 1.

North of Auckland

The scenic route north of Auckland towards Helensville and Dargaville goes mostly through farmland. Paradise Shelduck is one of the few native birds you will come across. A Shining Cuckoo was seen just north of Dargaville.

Kauri Coast Top Ten Holiday Park is located next to a river. Tui is common in the flowering trees and several pairs of Fantails are breeding along the river where you will find Grey Warbler and Silvereye too – an ideal introduction to New Zealand bird life. New Zealand Pigeon was seen in display and the best bird however was a calling Brown Kiwi heard at four o'clock in the morning somewhere west of the holiday park.

Eastern Rosellas are common.

Trounson Kauri Park is less than 10 minutes drive to the northwest of Top Ten. It is a mixed kauri and fern tree forest containing some of the oldest and largest kauri trees in New Zealand. The management of Kauri Coast Top Ten arrange kiwi spotting tours in this park – pick up at the office, they arrange transport to the park and this will probably be your only chance to see Brown Kiwi – but they should easily be heard as kiwis in this area are very vocal November-December. Moreporks are also common at night.

They work hard to keep the forest possum and rodent free – or at least reduce the populations as much as possible. Kokako has been introduced but failed so far.

Only option is to walk the loop starting at the car park. The billboards of the tented information centre tells the sad story of man spoiling the New Zealand nature.

Waipoua Forest just north of Trounson is the major site for the northern population of Brown Kiwi but due to the size of the forest you will have to work much harder to get across a kiwi here. New Zealand Pigeons are common in the forests.

To the southwest we visited the lakes Waikere and Kaiwi – at the latter we saw California Quail and Pheasant but no birds on the lakes. The lakes are popular picnic sites and many boats were on both lakes.

Arai te Uru is located at the mouth of Hokianga Harbour north of Waipoua Forest. From the hills you will get good views of the Tasman Sea and Australian Gannets and the bay. Near the car park at the view point we had two New Zealand Pipits.

We followed the “coast to coast road” to Bay of Islands where we birded around Paihia. South of the city at the bay we saw a pair of New Zealand Dotterels and a Caspian Tern. The area looked promising with a small stream running into the bay connected to some mangrove-like swamp west of highway 11 just before the point where the highway turns to the west off the bay and up a hill. This could be a good spot for crakes and Fernbirds, however weather was terrible during our short visit.

Tiritiri Matangi

A rodent free island in the Pacific Ocean reached by Kawau Kat Cruises departing from Auckland ferry terminal and Gulf Harbour – check their time table as cruises are not always running daily. You have two options either a daytrip leaving 9.00 and returning 15.30 or stay for the night at the bunkhouse next to the lighthouse – you will have to book well in advance as the bunkhouse has few beds and surely is a popular option. It should be easy to find all the specialities on a daytrip except Little Spotted Kiwi. However Kokako can be hard to find and Brown Teals are often absent in the morning but present in the afternoon.

Few birds on the island are native such as Spotless Crake, Tui and Bellbird. A lot of birds are introduced such as Stitchbird, Saddleback, Whitehead and New Zealand Robin, all found with ease at Wattle Track and Kawerau Track, the most well forested tracks on Tiritiri. We had Kokako at Wattle Track and in the trees at the power station next to the light house – their organ-like song ko-ka-ko is unmistakeable. A pair of Brown Teals in a small pool in the bend of Wharf Road next to the Tiritiri Warf. Takahe in more open areas, especially the northern part of Ridge Road held good numbers – we even saw chicks here. Beware Purple Swamphens are common on the island – it seemed that at least some people identified all large purple swamphens as Takahes.

Fernbird was seen briefly along Ridge Road as well as Tomtit – one of the latest introduced birds (and not mentioned in all books).

Blue Penguins are breeding in nest boxes along Hobbs Beach Track.

Due to bad weather – heavy storm – we could not find any kiwis at all. Both Wattle and Kawerau Tracks are ideal for calling Little Spotted Kiwi, but kiwis may be seen on any lawn as well – even the lawn in front of the bunkhouse. Kiwis are nocturnal and are most vocal in beginning and end of the night and can be heard calling at any time of the year.

Otherwise you will have to listen for the kiwis walking in the leaves searching for food which mean that all movements heard should be investigated.

Little Spotted Kiwis at Tiritiri are introduced from Capiti Island to where visionary people brought some of the last mainland birds in the 1920-es – otherwise Little Spotted Kiwi would have been extinct.

Miranda-Waitomo

Miranda at the Firth of Thames is the major shorebird site in New Zealand and just an hour's drive from Auckland to the southeast. The Miranda Shorebird Centre at bit north of the main area is the place to start as the warden will tell you the recent sightings – and rare birds are often seen in the area – we had Hudsonian Godwit amongst 5.200 Bartailed Godwits. From the car park south of the Shorebird Centre you may walk to the hide overlooking some banks in the Firth of Thames – we saw good numbers of Pied Oystercatcher and Bartailed Godwit and a group of roosting Wrybills from the hide. At the Stilt Pond on the meadows northwest of the hide we found the Hudsonian Godwit and saw

Wrybills feeding on the mudflats. The path continues north to the Shorebird Centre, but birds are few north of Stilt Pond.

Lake Waikare south of Miranda is a wildlife refuge. We found our only Wild Turkey in this area and to our surprise an Australian Tree Martin – seen in the northeastern corner of the lake in a group of Welcome Swallows.

Waitomo is most famous for caves and glow worms. Probably the same new Zealand Falcon was seen twice flying pass in the hills at the Top Ten Park. Some dense forest near the glow worm cave looked promising but birds were few – anyway the first of many mainland Bellbirds was seen here, Bellbirds are not found north of Auckland.

Tongariro National Park

Tongariro National Park is the central plateau on Northern Island. Coming from Waitomo the first place you will meet is the small village National Park, where we took highway 47 to the east and then highway 48 to the south. Birded along highway 48 stopping at every bridge as any stream in this area is worth checking for Blue Duck. At Le Chateau we birded along the river opposite Le Chateau, a well known site for Blue Duck and Fernbird – both were absent, but we saw some Tomtits. The shrub towards Le Chateau hosts few Brown Kiwis.

Makutate Railwaybridge is spectacular. A little bit south of the bridge in the forest we saw a Riffleman.

We stayed at Ohakune where the memorial park – rather a forest – had calling Morepork at night. From Ohakune we headed northeast to Turna Skifield. Riffleman is often seen in the forest but we failed.

When we left Ohakune, we followed highway 1 north on the eastern boarder of the national park and saw Fernbird somewhere along the road in the northern part.

Manganuiateao River was the site where we found Blue Duck – just outside Tongariro National Park. The following description is provided by Lars Hansson :” Ruatiti west of Ohakune. Just north of Raetihi on SH4 there is a sing for “Ruatiti 22” towards the west.

Drive that winding road that gets smaller for 12,2 km and take left over a small bridge and directly after turn right. After 1 km you will start to see the Manganui A Te Ao river on your right. I stopped at the first available parking place and found the family right away.”

We saw just one bird on a stone in the river bend when we got back to our car after having searched in vain walking along the river.

Lake Taupo, Pureora Forest and Rotorua

At Lake Taupo we stopped in the southern end of the lake at Waihi off highway 41 to the northwest of Turangi. At Waihi you will pass a swamp just before reaching the small village – we found Spotless Crake and Fernbirds in the swamp. At the car park just before the village you get good views of Lake Taupo and New Zealand Dabchick and Scaup.

West of Lake Taupo is Pureora Forest. We entered the forest north of the lake at Kakaho Campground and followed the dirt road toward the ranger station. Unfortunately mist and fog forced us to bird the lower parts of the forest – the ranger station and the nearby tower in the higher parts of the forest is a reliable site for Kaka and Kokako – the latter best when singing in early morning. Longtailed Cuckoo was calling from a hill just above Kakaho Campground and New Zealand Falcons were seen near Swamp Road. Tui and Bellbird were common, a few Tomtit and a single New Zealand Robin turned up along the dirt road as well as Whitehead.

Lake Whakamaru and the dam is a very beautiful area but few birds.

Lake Rotorua is another place to look for New Zealand Dabchick – we saw two, New Zealand Scaup is common. Mokoia Island in Lake Rotorua is a popular picnic spot where Saddleback and Sticbird are introduced and Wekas are tame – we did not visit this island.

Waiotapu is the thermal area southeast of Rotorua famous for the Lady Knox geyser. Pied Stilts are breeding in the thermal area.

South Island

The southeast

Dunedin is the major city of south eastern South Island where some shorebirds can be seen at Otago Harbour.

Otago Peninsula is world famous for the colony of Royal Albatross at Tiaroa Head at the point of the peninsula. However albatrosses are cool business so Tiaroa Head is fenced as the so called albatross-centre earns fortunes on showing tourists the colony. However you can view the albatross colony from the coast road south of Tiaroa Head.

Spotted and Steward Island Cormorants are breeding at the head.

At Sandfly Bay reached by the high way Yelloweyed Penguins are coming ashore every afternoon, during our visit from 15.00 and onwards. From the car park follow the path down the dunes, walk along the coast and you will find the hide a little bit before the sandy beach ends at some rocks. You might see some penguins climbing all the way up the hill. Between Dunedin and Invercargill we visited Nugget Point where we found New Zealand Sealion and Southern Elephant Seal amongst the furseals. From the penguin hide – well marked before reaching the car park at the point, we saw a single Yelloweyed Penguin coming ashore. Shy Albatrosses were seen from the lighthouse.

Further to the south along the coast we visited Curio Bay saw a single Shy Albatross at the point and a few shorebirds in the bay.

We drove through Catlins but did not stop, however the forest looked ideal for Yellowhead.

Fiordland

Te Anau is the pleasant base for many tourist going on a daytrip to Fiordland. The city lies next to the lake where Blackbilled Gulls are common. The road towards Manapouri is said to be good for crakes and Australian Bittern if the area is wet – during our visit it was completely dry.

Towards Milford Sound the road follows Eglinton River. We stopped a couple of times to look for Blue Duck. At Knobs Flat a Yellowhead was singing in the small forest a little southwest of the buildings.

Cascada Creek and Lake Gun Walk is a must for the birder. We had never seen such a green and dense forest before. Tomtit and Rifleman were common, a Yellowhead was singing in the forest just a few hundred meters from the car park and a New Zealand Robin was attacking my shoes. Brown Kiwis should be found here at night. Yellowcrowned Parakeets were seen at very close range too.

Homer Tunnel at the east end is where all busses stop to rest. The alpine loop north of the tunnel is perhaps the most reliable site for Rock Wren. We heard one calling but could not find it even though we think we were close. Not much to see at the western entrance.

Milford Sound is spectacular but birds are few. Fiordland Crested Penguins leave the fiord in the middle of December and swim into the sea and will not turn up again before June. Tomtits were seen at the car park.

Mossborn is situated between Te Anau and Lomsden next to Oreti River a little north of the town. The Oreti River bridge is good for Blackfronted Tern.

Twizel

Southwest of Omarama highway 8 runs through Lindis Pass, one of few sites where we saw New Zealand Pipit. Northeast of Lindis Pass you will reach Ahuriri River. We stopped at the car park and walked to the river. Black Stilt is sometimes found here, we saw Blackfronted Tern, but no stilts.

North of Omarama at Ahuriri Bridge you will pass the river. Black Stilts breeds east of the bridge along the river according to DOC. A track goes east on the northern side of the bridge at a gate and Black Stilt is possible here from September to December. If you are lucky you will find Black Stilt while looking from the bridge, but in early January beautiful flowering lupines made it hard to see anything along the river.

Ohau River or rather the remains of the river due to the power stations south of Twizel is another site for Black Stilt. Northeast of the Ohau River dam DOC runs their Black Stilt Centre where visitors are allowed to see birds in captivity. Chicks are every year realised as DOC collect eggs from wild breeding birds too. Coot was best bird in this area.

To the east Ohau River runs into Lake Benmore where a group of Pied Stilts were roosting, amongst the Pied Stilt we saw a single Black Stilt. In late December and January the best chance to find Black Stilt is in a group of Pied Stilt, the bird we saw, was an adult making identification easy. Black Stilts are probably breeding in this area – anyway it is close to the DOC centre. Remember most Black Stilts seen have probably been handled by man !

Lake Ohau to the west is another site for parties of stilts, during our visit birds were few here.

Kelland Ponds south of the dam hosted single Blackfronted Tern and Great Crested Grebe.

Birds do not abound Twizel a Cockatiel represented perhaps a new bird to be introduced into New Zealand.

North of Twizel Lake Pukaki is situated – on bright days you will get spectacular views of Mount Cook – and surely the weather was excellent during our stay. In the north of the lake Black Stilts are breeding. The area is enormous and finding stilts at this site must be like finding a needle in a haystack.

West Coast

Temperate rainforest dominates the west coast and many areas are inaccessible. Highway 6 through Haast Pass is a popular way to reach the west coast. We went through the pass on a real summer day where most of the picnic sites and popular tracks were crowded. Yellowhead occur at several sites along the pass, we stopped Davis Flat and walked along the river towards the bridge and saw Brown Creepers and Tomtits. Near Gates of Haast we saw a New Zealand Robin.

We found Haast and Haast Beach disappointing and would have been better off going straight to the glaciers.

Knights Point north of Haast provided few birds, Fiordland Crested Penguins are sometimes seen here. A few New Zealand Fur seals turned out to be the best.

Monro Beach is breeding site for Fiordland Crested Penguins but as in Milford Sound they vanish into sea December to June. It is a nice walk through beautiful forest to reach the coast and you might see Tomtit, Brown Creeper and New Zealand Robin.

A bit further Lake Moreaki is found east of highway 6 – nice area, common birds.

Fox Glacier is the smallest, look for Tomtit as you walk to the viewpoint.

Franz Josef Village is surrounded by forest, we saw a single Kaka, and a single Kea at Franz Josef Glacier. Some 20 minutes drive to the north Okarito is situated at the coast.

When you turn to the west off highway 6 the narrow and winding road goes through Westland National Park, where the Okarito form of Brown Kiwi may be heard at night. Try along the road in the signposted kiwi zone or walk the loop north of the road in the kiwi zone. White Heron is regular at Okarito Lagoon where a few shorebirds might occur as well. The only breeding colony of White Herons is at Waitangiroto National Park a little further to the north – tours are made to a hide next to the breeding ground.

Towards Greymouth we passed several rivers and meadows but we did not bird this area.

Lake Brunner

Southeast of Greymouth you will find Lake Brunner. In the northern part of the lake Moana village is a popular holiday resort and trout fishing is the big issue. For the birdwatcher this is a reliable spot for Great Spotted Kiwi. At Moana turn west, pass the Lake Brunner motor camp and the railway and the road ends at a car park. A trail is signposted and you will cross Arnold River by a narrow hanging bridge. Follow the loop walk and where the path forks, we heard the kiwis calling around 22.15 somewhere near Arnold River. Another distant Great Spotted Kiwi was heard as well as an Australian Bittern.

Around Moana Wekas are quite common. We drove south to highway 73 through Arthur's Pass. Great Spotted Kiwi is often heard close to Arthur's Pass Village.

Kaikoura

Where mountains meet the sea. Anyway the sea covers some deep canyons making the sea off Kaikoura probably the best seabirding area in the world.

First we joined the very commercial Whale Watch and saw at least five Sperm Whales.

Secondly we went by Albatross Encounter and saw many seabirds including Wandering and Royal Albatrosses at very close range. Our guide Alastair Judkins is a keen birder know his stuff. Other seabirds included Greybacked Storm Petrel and Fairy Prions.

The mountains of Kaikoura are the only breeding ground in the world for Hutton's Shearwater. At the moment DOC tries to create another breeding ground at Kaikoura Peninsula sponsored by Whale Watch but this will be doubtful as Hutton's Shearwater prefers to breed in a much higher altitude.

At Kaikoura you might see at least some seabirds from the peninsula as well as dolphins and New Zealand Fur Seals.

When we visited Kaikoura dolphins seemed to prefer the coast south of Kaikoura, we saw Dusky and Hector's Dolphins shortly after the first tunnel following highway 1 to the south.

We stayed in South Bay which is a pleasant alternative to Kaikoura and just a short 25 minutes walk away. Check the coast at South Bay and the Kaikoura Peninsula for shorebirds, we saw several Banded Dotterels but Tattlers are regular in summer.

Picton

When we stayed in Kaikoura we had booked a cruise from Picton into Marlborough Sound or perhaps more correct Queen Charlotte Sound. The main target was easy to get as the first King Cormorant was seen a few kilometres off Picton. However Hector's Dolphin failed. We saw a few Arctic Skuas and a single Pomarine Skua.

We visited Motuara Island where Saddlebacks are released. As you are not allowed to stay at the island over night you will never get across the introduced Brown Kiwis. Instead of walking to the top stop at the very small waterhole a little above the wharf – if not raining this is where birds come in to drink.

Towards Picton we stopped at Lake Grassmere – a part of the lake is used as a salt pan. The lake is situated next to the sea and you will find the most common shorebirds in this area.

Our only Grey Teal was seen in a pond south of Picton.

Stewart Island

Locals refer to the island as the third island of New Zealand. The island is popular if you want to hike or tramp the many trails.

From Oban it is a short walk to Ackers Point at Halfmoon Bay. At the lighthouse you get good views of Shy Albatrosses and perhaps Buller's Albatross as well – we saw both and a Brown Skua too. DOC and local people try to keep this point as rodent and possum free as possible and Saddlebacks will soon be reintroduced in the area. A few Brown Kiwis should be found at Ackers Point to – and remember – at Stewart Island kiwis are diurnal. Opposite Oban is Horseshoe Bay – Yellow- and Redcrowned Parakeets are easy to see along this road.

Blue Penguins breed at Halfmoon Bay and are often seen in the harbour, Shy Albatrosses get close to the harbour and Yelloweyed Penguins breed on the islands close to the bay.

Ocean Beach is world famous for Brown Kiwis on the beach at night. Only a limited number of 15 guests a night are permitted to visit the area and you will have to make your booking well in advance. Seeing a kiwi on the beach is one of my best birding experiences ever. Mottled Petrel can be seen or heard at Ocean Beach too.

Ulva Island is a rodent free paradise off Stewart Island easily reached by water taxi or one of the many guided tours. Yellow- and Redcrowned Parakeets are common, beware of the Wekas going right into your bag if left unattended. Saddlebacks here are native and species like Rifleman and Yellowhead are introduced – look for them in the central forest. We were very lucky and saw Fiordland Crested Penguin. The island is unique and many very rare flowers are found here too. Ulva Island is definitely a must.

Bird List

Southern Brown Kiwi *Apteryx australis*

Endemic and vulnerable. 1 male and 1 female Ocean Beach, Stewart Island of the race lawryi.

Northern Brown Kiwi *Apteryx mantelli*

Endemic and endangered. 1 heard calling Kauri Coast Park. 1 2cy male and 3 heard calling Trounson Kauri Park.

The nominate race.

Great Spotted Kiwi *Apteryx haastii*

Endemic and vulnerable. 2 males and 1 female calling Lake Brunner along Arnold River.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*
1 Kelland Ponds, Twizel of the race australis

New Zealand Dabchick *Poliiocephalus rufopectus*
Endemic and vulnerable. 16 Lake Taupo at Waihi and 2 Lake Rotorua – notably larger than Eurasian Dabchick

Notthern Royal Albatross *Diomedea sandfordi*
6 Taiaroa Head at breeding colony and 1 Sandfly Bay - both Otago Peninsula, endangered

Southern Royal Albatross *Diomedea epomophora*
1 Kaikoura whale watch and 1 Kaikoura albatross encounter, vulnerable

Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*
3 Kaikoura albatross encounter of the race gibsoni, vulnerable

Shy Albatross *Diomedea cauta*
22 Stewart Island, 1 Curio Bay, 4 The Nuggets, 1 off Kaikoura, 2 Kaikoura albatross encounter of the New Zealand race steadi.
6 Kaikoura whale watch and 4 Kaikoura albatross encounter of the race salvini, vulnerable

Buller's Albatross *Diomedea bulleri*
2 Ackers Point, Stewart Island and 1 Kaikoura whale watch, vulnerable

Antarctic Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*
1 white morph Kaikoura whale watch

Hall's Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli*
3 off Kaikoura, 2 Kaikoura whale watch and 2 Kaikoura albatross encounter. 2 unidentified off Sandfly Bay, Otago Peninsula.

Buller's Shearwater *Puffinus bulleri*
1 off Kaikoura and 2 Kaikoura albatross encounter, vulnerable

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*
150 Stewart Island, 400 Curio Bay, 500 Nuggets, 60 Otago Peninsula, 2 Monro Beach, 20 Okarito and 1 Kaikoura albatross encounter

Fleshfooted Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes*
30 Auckland-Tiritiri Matangi and 1 Kaikoura albatross encounter

Fluttering Shearwater *Puffinus gavia*
200 Auckland-Tiritiri Matangi, 40 Tiritiri Matangi and 180 Queen Charlotte Sound

Hutton's Shearwater *Puffinus huttoni*
3.000 off Kaikoura and 1.400 Kaikoura albatross encounter, endangered

Common Diving Petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix*

2 Stewart Island when sailing back from Ocean Beach – most likely the subspecies *chathamensis*

Whitechinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*

2 Kaikoura albatross encounter

Westland Petrel *Procellaria westlandica*

2 off Kaikoura, 12 Kaikoura whale watch and 20 Kaikoura albatross encounter, vulnerable

Mottled Petrel *Pterodroma inexpectata*

At least 2 heard Ocean Beach, Stewart Island

Greyfaced Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera*

1 Tiritiri Matangi

Cape Petrel *Daption capense*

1 Kaikoura whale watch and 4 Kaikoura albatross encounter – all nominate *capense*

Fairy Prion *Pachyptila turtur*

1 Kaikoura whale watch and 6 Kaikoura albatross encounter

Greybacked Storm Petrel *Oceanites nereis*

1 Kaikoura albatross encounter

Yelloweyed Penguin *Megadyptes antipodes*

Endemic. 6 Halfmoon Bay, Stewart Island; calling birds heard at Ocean Beach, Stewart Island. 2 Nuggets and 4 Sandfly Bay, Otago Peninsula. Endangered

Blue Penguin *Eudyptula minor*

2 Tiritiri Matangi in nest boxes of the race *iredalei*, 25 Halfmoon Bay, Stewart Island of the nominate race, 2 in nest boxes and 1 at sea Motaora Island, Queen Charlotte Sound of the race *variabilis* and 1 Kaikoura albatross encounter

Fiordland Crested Penguin *Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*

Endemic. 1 Ulva Island, vulnerable

Australian Gannet *Morus serrator*

60 Arai Te Uru, 3 Auckland Harbour, 7 Auckland-Tiritiri Matangi, 8 Tiritiri Matangi, 1 off Kaikoura and 2 Kaikoura albatross encounter. 67 Queen Charlotte Sound.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

2 Auckland, 1 Miranda, 1 Lake Taupo, 2 Lake Wakati, 2 Ahuriri Bridge, 13 Lake Benmore, 1 Ahuriri River, 1 Haast, 2 Okarito, 1 Blenheim-Picton and 4 Kaikoura and 32 Kaikoura-Christchurch. The race *steadii*.

Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius*

20 Auckland, 2 Auckland-Tiritiri Matangi, 19 Tiritiri Matangi, 1 Baihia, 2 Stewart Island, 60 Kaikoura, 16 Queen Charlotte Sound, 2 Motaora Island and 20 Kaikoura-Christchurch.
Nominate race.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

2 Auckland, 1 Miranda, 1 Lake Waikare, 1 Waitomo, 2 Tongariro, 6 Lake Taupo, 2 Lake Whakamara, 22 Lake Rotorua, 1 Ulva Island, 3 Otago Peninsula, 3 Te Anau, 1 Te Anua-Milford Sound, 1 Lake Benmore, 12 Lake Moreaki, 2 Okarito and 2 Kaikoura. The race *brevicauda*

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

1 Miranda, 1 Lake Taupo, 4 Lake Whakamara, 66 Lake Rotorua, 2 Otago Peninsula, 1 Lake Benmore, 2 Kaikoura-Picton and 1 Kaikoura

Spotted Cormorant *Stictocarbo punctatus*

Endemic. 28 Stewart Island, 4 Ulva Island, 3 Curio Bay, 80 Nuggets, 8 Dunedin, 320 Otago Peninsula, 63 Queen Charlotte Sound and 1 Motoura Island

King Cormorant *Leucocarbo carunculatus*

Endemic. 24 Queen Charlotte Sound and 4 Motuora Island, vulnerable

Stewart Island Cormorant *Leucocarbo chalconotus*

Endemic. 50 Stewart Island, 18 Ulva Island, 2 Curio Bay, 220 Nuggets, 80 Dunedin and 440 Otago Peninsula, vulnerable

Whitefaced Heron *Ardea novaehollandiae*

1 Auckland, 1 Lake Kaiwi, 1 Baihia, 1 Baihia-Auckland, 9 Miranda, 2 Tongariro NP, 1 Lake Taupo, 1 Otago Peninsula, 2 Clinton-Gore, 2 Te Anua-Kingston, 1 Haast-Fox Glacier, 3 Kaikoura-Picton, 8 Lake Grassmere, 7 Kaikoura, 2 Kaikoura-Christchurch

White Heron *Egretta alba*

Better known as Great Egret, 1 Okarito Lagoon

Australian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus*

1 booming upstream Arnold River, Lake Brunner, endangered

Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia*

8 Nuggets and 5 Taiaroa Head, Otago Peninsula – both at breeding sites

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Introduced. 6 feral at Rotorua even 1 hybrid Canadian X Greylag Goose

Canadian Goose *Branta canadensis*

Introduced. 1 Ahuriri Bridge, Omarama and 2 adult 4 pulli Lake Benmore, Twizel

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Introduced, 2 north of Auckland

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

Introduced. 22 Auckland, 80 Lake Waikare, 430 Lake Taupo, 230 Rotorua, 40 Curio Bay-Nuggets, 28 Otago Peninsula, 60 Dunedin-Te Anua, 30 Lake Moreaki and 2 Lake Brunner

Paradise Shelduck *Tadorna variegata*

Endemic. 5 Auckland, 2 Tiritiri Matangi, 14 Waitomo-Tongariro, 3 Tongariro NP, 8 Ohakune, 8 Lake Taupo, 2 Rotorua, 2 Oban, Stewart Island, 6 Curio Bay, 70 Dunedin-Te Anua, 40 Te Anau-Milford Sound, 3 Knobs Flat, 3 Lake Gun, 12 Queenstown-Omarama, 8 Lake Benmore, 3 Franz Josef village, 6 Arthur's Pass and 8 Springfield-Kaikoura – and probably some more not noted while driving

Blue Duck *Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos*

Endemic and endangered. 1 Manganuiateao River – read more in the site chapter for Tongariro NP. The northern form *hymenolaimus*

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Introduced. 17 Auckland, 20 Auckland-Dargaville. 6 Oban, Stewart Island. 60 Dunedin-Te Anua, 20 Queenstown-Omarama, 80 Franz Josef-Greymouth, 1 Kaikoura-Picton, 4 Picton and 9 Kaikoura. Some obviously feral.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*

1 Trounson-Lake Kaiwi, 1 Baihia-Auckland, 10 Auckland, 16 Miranda, 12 Lake Waikare, 12 Waitomo-Tongariro, 1 Tongariro NP, 4 Lake Taupo, 40 Lake Whakamara, 16 Waiotapu, 1 Stewart Island, 1 Catlins, 1 Dunedin, 40 Dunedin-Te Anau, 40 Te Anau of which several were hybrids Black Duck x Mallard, 20 Te Anau-Kingston, 1 Ahuriri Bridge, 50 Franz Josef-Greymouth. Nominate form

Australian Shoveler *Anas rhynchos*

3 Mossborn-Kingston

Brown Teal *Anas aucklandica*

Endemic and endangered. 2 Tiritiri Matangi

Grey Teal *Anas gracilis*

1 Blenheim-Picton

New Zealand Scaup *Aythya novaeseelandiae*

Endemic. 3 Lake Taupo, 4 Lake Whakamara, 123 Rotorua, 2 Invercargill-Curio Bay, 2 Te Anau, 2 Lake Gun, 19 Lake Wakati, 40 Queenstown-Omarama, 14 Lake Benmore, 12 Kelland Ponds, Twizel and 2 Lake Moreaki.

Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans*

59 North Island and 79 South Island – often seen while driving, mostly in farmland and meadows but even in forest edge

New Zealand Falcon *Falco novaeseelandiae*

Endemic. 1 seen twice and even heard Waitomo and 2 Pureora Forest

Peacock *Pavo cristatus*

Introduced. 1 Miranda

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Introduced. 4 Trounson area and 2 Waitomo

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo*

Introduced. 1 Lake Waikare

California Quail *Callipepla californica*

Introduced. 2 Lake Kaiwi and 6 Pureora Forest

Brown Quail *Synoicus ypsilophorus*

Introduced, 6 Tiritiri Matangi

Weka *Gallirallus australis*

Endemic and vulnerable. 2 Stewart Island, Orban, at least 13 Ulva Island of the subspecies scotti. 2 Greymouth-Lake Brunner, 5 Lake Brunner and 12 Moana-Arthur's Pass, nominate australis

Spotless Crake *Porzana tabuensis*

1 seen briefly Tiritiri Matangi and 1 heard Lake Taupo at Taihi

Takahe *Porphyrio mantelli*

Introduced endemic. Tiritiri Matangi – 13 adults and 2 pulli. Endangered

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

32 North Island, 7 Tiritiri Matangi and 23 South Island – typically seen in swamps and ponds while driving. The race melanotus

Common Coot *Fulica atra*

2 Ohau River, Twizel of the race australis

Southern Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

220 Miranda. 148 South Island, mostly at coast, but even a few inland

Variable Oystercatcher *Haematopus unicolor*

Endemic. 4 Bay of Islands, 8 Auckland. 6 Gulf Harbour, 5 Tiritiri Matangi. 11 adults and 4 pulli Orban, Stewart Island and 9 Ulva Island. 75 at coast South Island.

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*

94 North Island and 164 South Island of the race novaehollandiae

Whiteheaded Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

420 Miranda, 6 Baihia, 4 Waiotapu. 32 Curio Bay, 12 Lake Benmore, 1 Franz Josef-Greymouth, 2 Kaikoura and 8 Lake Grassmere

Black Stilt *Himantopus novaezelandiae*

Endemic. 1 adult Lake Benmore, Twizel at Ohau River mouth. Critically endangered

Doublebanded Plover *Charadrius bicinctus*

Endemic. 22 Miranda, 8 Kaikoura, 9 South Bay, Kaikoura and 6 Lake Grassmere

New Zealand Dotterel *Charadrius obscurus*

Endemic. 2 Baihia – the northern form *aguilonius*, endangered

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

720 Miranda

Rednecked Knot *Calidris ruficollis*

4 Miranda

Wrybill *Anarhynchus frontalis*

Endemic and vulnerable. 78 Miranda – a few at Stilt Pond, most seen from the hide

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

8 Kaikoura

Bartailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

5.200 Miranda, 60 Auckland, 130 Curio Bay, 4 Otago Peninsula, 7 Okarito Bay and 12 Lake Grassmere

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*

1 Miranda – a rare but almost yearly summer visitor in this area

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

6 Kaikoura and 1 Albatross encounter, 5 Queen Charlotte Sound and 1 Auckland

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

1 adult Queen Charlotte Sound – came close to the boat

Brown Skua *Catharacta skua*

1 Acker's Point, Stewart Island, the race *lonnbergi*

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*

184 North Island along the coast and 19 inland lakes. Another 40 Tiritiri Matangi. 853 South Island coast and 29 inland lakes. 180 Stewart Island. Nominate form

Redbilled Gull *Larus novahollandiae*

800 Auckland and 500 Rotorua were most. 20 Tiritiri Matangi and another 575 North Island. 2.087 South Island and 450 Stewart Island.

Blackbilled Gull *Larus bulleri*

Endemic and endangered. 4 Auckland, 40 Lake Taupo, 20 Rotorua, North Island. More common South Island 200 Gore-Tē Anau, 200 Tē Anau, 20 Tē Anua-Fiordland, 20 Tē Anau-Kingston, 2 Lake Wakatī, 20 Ahuriri Bridge and 30 Lake Benmore. All seen inland at rivers and lakes.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*

1 Baihia – Bay of Islands, 16 Miranda and 1 Albatross encounter Kaikoura

Whitefronted Tern *Sterna striata*

Coastal areas. 1 Baihia, 40 Auckland, 12 Auckland-Tiritiri Matangi, 18 Tiritiri Matangi, 8 Stewart Island, 10 Ulva Island, 6 Curio Bay, 8 The Nuggets, 18 Otago Peninsula, 1 Knights Point, 2 Haast Beach, 1 Okarito, 18 Kaikoura-Picton, 42 Kaikoura, 2 Kaikoura Whale Watch, 16 Kaikoura Albatross Encounter, 1 coast at Lake Grassmere, 7 Queen Charlotte Sound, 16 Kaikoura-Christchurch

Blackfronted Tern *Sterna albobstriata*

Endemic and endangered, rivers and lakes of South Island. 8 Knob's Flat, 20 Oreti river at Mossborn, 1 Ahuriri Bridge, 2 Twizel, 6 Lake Benmore, 4 Kelland Ponds and 4 Ahuriri River.

New Zealand Pigeon *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*

Endemic. 2 Helensville-Dargaville, 3 Tounson Park, 1 Kaiwi, 1 Kauri Park, 3 Tiritiri Matangi, 1 Tongariro and 3 Ohakune on North Island. 11 Stewart Island and 2 Ulva Island. 2 Invercargill, 6 Cattlins, 3 Haast, 4 Munro Beach, 3 Haast-Fox Glacier, 1 Franz Josef township, 4 Franz Josef-Greymouth, 4 Greymouth-Lake Brunner, 5 Lake Brunner, 4 Arthur's Pass, 6 Springfield-Kaikoura and 1 Picton.

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*

Introduced. Seen in most towns.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia roseogrisea*

Introduced. 4 suburbs of Auckland.

Kea *Nestor notabilis*

Endemic, the famous parrot of the highland. 2 Homer Tunnel, 1 The Divide near Homer Tunnel and 1 Franz Josef Glacier. Vulnerable.

New Zealand Kaka *Nestor meridionalis*

Endemic. 21 Stewart Island and 28 Ulva Island. 2 Haast and 1 Franz Josef township. The southern nominate form. Endangered

Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius*

Introduced. 2 Dargaville-Tounson, 5 Kauri Coast Park and 6 Purerora Forest.

Cockatill *Nymphicus hollandicus*

Introduced. 1 Twizel.

Yellowfronted Parakeet *Cyanoramphus auriceps*

Endemic. 6 Stewart Island and at least 14 Ulva Island. 22 Cascada Creek, Fiordland

Redfronted Parakeet *Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae*

22 Tiritiri Matangi, 8 Stewart Island and 25 Ulva Island. Vulnerable

Shining Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*

1 Trounson-Kaiwi, 1 Stewart Island and 2 Ulva Island

Longtailed Cuckoo *Eudynamis taitensis*

Endemic. 1 singing Purerora Forest and 1 seen Te Anau-Fiordland

Morepork *Ninox novaeseelandiae*

4 Trounson Kauri Park, 1 Ohakune of the northern form *venatica*, 1 Stewart Island and 1 near Franz Josef township of the southern nominate form

Sacred Kingfisher *Halcyon sancta*

6 Tiritiri Matangi and another 37 North Island. 1 Stewart Island, 1 near Haast, 1 Kaikoura and 1 Kaikoura-Picton of the race *vagans*

Australian Tree Martin *Hirundo nigricans*

1 Lake Waikare – a rare visitor seen well in a group of 80 Welcome Swallows

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo tahitica*

356 North Island and 6 Tiritiri Matangi. Not seen daily on South Island, just 35 between Nuggets and Okarito – none in the north.

Rifleman *Achanthisitta chloris*

Endemic. 1 Tongariro near Makatote Scenic Railway Bridge, nominate race. 2 Ulva Island and 10 Cascada Creek, Fiordland of the southern form *granti*

Rock Wren *Xenicus gilviventris*

Endemic and vulnerable. 1 heard Homer Tunnel east end – also known as South Island Wren

Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*

12 Trounson, 4 Lake Kaiwi, 8 Kauri Park, 8 Tongariro, 2 Manganuiatapo River, 4 Ohakune, 13 Purerora Forest, 6 Rotorua and 4 Waiotapu. 12 Stewart Island, 12 Ulva Island, 2 Te Anau-Fiordland, 1 Cascada Creek, 11 Lake Brunner and 4 Kaikoura.

Grey Warbler *Gerygone igata*

Endemic. 126 North Island, 105 South Island, 3 Tiritiri Matangi, 26 Stewart Island and 22 Ulva Island – common in all areas with bushes or trees

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Introduced and common. 200 North Island, 3 Tiritiri Matangi, 26 Stewart Island, 22 Ulva Island and 455 South Island.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Introduced and common, not as shy as in Europe. 171 North Island, 24 Stewart Island, 2 Ulva Island and 262 South Island. 1 above Homer Tunnel, Fiordland in an area with next to no vegetation was unusual.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Introduced. 3 Dargaville-Kauri Forest, 7 Tongariro NP and Ohakune, 2 Waitomo and 3 around Rotorua. 6 Stewart Island, 7 Nuggets, 6 Otago Peninsula, 3 around Twizel, 2 around Haas, 5 at the glaciers and 2 Lake Brunner.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Introduced. 100 North Island, 486 South Island, 1 Tiritiri Matangi and 2 Stewart Island.

New Zealand Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

1 Arai Te Uru, 1 Miranda, 1 Lindis Pass, Omarama and 1 Ahuriri River.

Fernbird *Bowdleria punctata*

Endemic. Noisy but elusive. 1 seen briefly at Tiritiri Matangi, 2 Tongariro somewhere between Ohakune and Lake Taupo, 3 in the swamp Lake Taupo at Waihi of the northern form *vealeae* and 1 Nuggets at penguin hide of the southern nominate form.

Brown Creeper *Mohoua noveaseelandiae*

Endemic. 19 Stewart Island and 21 Ulva Island. South Island 7 Te Anau-Fiordland, 2 Knob's Flat, 7 Cascade Creek, 2 David's Flat, 4 Muro Beach, 1 Lake Moreano and 2 Okarito.

Whitehead *Mohoua albicilla*

Endemic. 34 Tiritiri Matangi where introduced. 6 Pureora Forest were the real stuff.

Yellowhead *Mohoua ochrocephala*

Endemic and endangered. 1 Ulva Island – a few birds had been introduced to this island. In Fiordland NP 1 singing Knob's Flat and 1 singing Cascade Creek. We had no luck at Haast Pass.

Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa*

23 in Trough area, just 2 Waitomo, 4 Ohakune, and 2 Tongariro. 4 Tiritiri Matangi, 4 Stewart Island and 2 Ulva Island, the northern form *placabilis*
5 Nuggets, 2 Te Anau, 1 Cascade Creek, 4 Davis Flat, 2 Haast, 8 Munro Beach. 4 Munro Beach-Fox Glacier, 2 Fox Glacier and 4 Lake Brunner, the southern nominate form.

Tomtit *Petroica macrocephala*

Endemic. 1 Tiritiri Matangi – birds have been released here recently. 1 Tongariro, 2 Ohakune-Lake Taupo, 4 Pureora Forest of the northern form *toitoti*. 2 Stewart Island. 3 The Anau-Fiordland, 1 Knob's Flat, 8 Cascade Creek, 3 David's Flat, 2 Munro Beach, 2 Haast-Fox Glacier, 2 Fox Glacier and 3 Franz Josef Glacier of the southern nominate form..

New Zealand Robin *Petroica australis*

Endemic. The northern race longipes seen 5 Tiritiri Matangi (introduced) and 1 Pureora Forest.

Southern nominate race 9 Ulva Island (introduced) 4 Cascada Creek, 1 Haast Pass, 1 Munro Beach and 2 Motuora Island (introduced)

Kokako *Callaeas cinerea*

Endemic and endangered, introduced 2 males and 1 seen briefly Tiritiri Matangi of the northern wilsoni

Tui *Prosthemadera noveaseelandiae*

Endemic. 2 Auckland, 49 around Tounson, 70 Tiritiri Matangi, 4 Waitomo, 8 Ohakune, 23 Pureora Forest, 4 lake Whakamara, 5 Rotorua, 1 Waitotapu, 60 Stewart Island, 40 Ulva Island, 2 Catlins, 8 Te Anau, 5 Te Anau-Fiordland, 4 Knobs Flat, 2 Lake Wakati, 6 Davis Flat, 4 Haast Pass, 2 Knights Point, 7 Munro Beach, 2 Lake Moreaki, 3 Fox Glacier, 4 Franz Josef Glacier, 2 Okarito, 10 Lake Brunner and 6 Kaikoura.

Stitchbird *Notiomystis cincta*

Endemic and vulnerable. 9 Tiritiri Matangi where introduced

New Zealand Bellbird *Anthornis melanura*

Endemic. 40 Tiritiri Matangi. 2 Waitomo and 14 Pureora Forest of the northern form dumerillii. Nominate southern form : 40 Stewart Island and 30 Ulva Island. 4 Te Anau, 4 Knobs Flat, 7 Cascada Creek, 1 Homer Tunnel west, 8 Davis Flat, 6 Munro Beach, 2 Franz Josef village, 6 Lake Brunner and 12 Motuora Island

Saddleback *Philesturnus carunculatus*

Endemic. The northern nominate race 17 Stewart Island, introduced. The southern race rufusater 18 Ulva Island genuine population and 5 Motuora Island, introduced.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Introduced. 830 North island, 2 Tiritiri Matangi, 40 Stewart Island and 384 South Island.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Introduced. 115 North Island, 2 Tiritiri Matangi, 28 Stewart Island and 235 South Island.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis carbareta*

Introduced. 1 north of Auckland, 22 Tongariro, 4 Waihi, 2 Waihi-Pureora, 28 Pureora Forest and 4 Waiotapu. 8 Stewart Island, 4 Curio Bay, 4 Catlins, 3 Nuggets, 6 Dunedin, 6 Otago, 6 Te Anau, 4 Fiordland, 3 Cascada Creek, 2 Lake Wakati, 1 Ahuriri Bridge, 2 Twizel, 2 Kelland's Ponds, 2 Ahuriri river, 1 Haast Beach, 2 Haast-Fox Glacier, 2 Fox Glacier, 6 Franz Josef Glacier, 1 Okarito, 9 Lake Brunner, 10 Arthur's Pass, 12 Kaikoura and 2 Kaikoura-Christchurch

Adult males having red breast resembling Linnet more than Redpoll

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Introduced. 192 North island, 9 Tiritiri Matangi, 8 Stewart Island and 141 South Island.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Introduced. 2 Miranda, 24 Miranda-Waitomo, 1 Tongariro, 2 Pureora-Rotorua and 4 Rotorua. 1 Invercargill, 2 Dunedin, 5 Mossburn, 3 Te Anua, 3 Ahuriri Bridge, 2 Twizel, 2 Twizel-Mount Cook, 4 Ahuriri River, 10 Haast area, 12 Kaikoura, 4 Lake Grassmere and 10 Kaikoura-Christchurch

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Introduced. 98 North Island, 3 Tiritiri Matangi and 128 South Island

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Introduced. 1.164 North Island, 8 Tiritiri Matangi, 80 Stewart Island and 2.389 South Island

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

Introduced. 834 North Island and 6 Tiritiri Matangi

Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*

9 Torunson area, 11 Miranda- Waitomo, 8 Waitomo-Tongariro, 10 Ohakune, 6 Waihi-Pureora, 8 Pureora-Rotorua and 4 Rotorua.

1 Invercargill, 4 Invercargill-Curio Bay, 8 Dunedin-Te Anau, 6 Te Anau-Kingston, 2 Kingston-Omarama, 4 Twizel, 4 Lindis Pass-Haast, 2 Franz Josef village, 4 Lake Brunner, 8 Kaikoura-Picton, 3 Lake Grassmere and 6 Kaikoura-Christchurch

List of mammals etc

Hundreds of possums were found dead along the roads, some hares, rabbits and hedgehogs were seen as road kills too, even a few weasels.

Brushtailed Possum *Thricosurus vulpecula*

1 Kauri Coast Park

Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

4 Trounson area, 1 Waitomo, 4 Rotorua-Hamilton and 1 Dunedin-Clinton

Brown Hare *Lepus capensis*

1 Lake Brunner, 1 Kaikoura-Picton and 1 Lake Grassmere

Mice sp

1 Cascada Creek

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*

3 Homer Tunnel

New Zealand Fur Seal *Arctocephalus forsteri*

8 Stewart Island, 280 Nuggets. 56 Otago Peninsula, 12 Milford Sound, 34 Knights Point, 1 Haast Beach, 80 Ohau Point north of Kaikoura and 180 Kaikoura

New Zealand Sea Lion *Phocarctos hookeri*
11 males Nuggets

Southern Elephant Seal *Mirounga leonina*
2 young males Nuggets

Sperm Whale *Physeter macrocephalus*
5 whale watch Kaikoura

Dusky Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus obscurus*
1 whale watch Kaikoura and 17 seen from coast at Kaikoura

Hectors Dolphin *Cephalorhynchus hectori*
Endemic. 2 Kaikoura

Bottlenosed Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*
24 Milford Sound and 3 off Picton

Glowworm
Several in the cave at Waitomo, some at Tounson and Lake Brunner

Weta
3 Tounson and 5 Motaora Island – endemic insect, 70 species

Monarch
1 South Bay, Kaikoura

Eel
2 Tounson

Kokapu
1 Tounson

Blue Shark
1 Kaikoura Albatros Encounter foraging on chum

Frog sp
1 Lake Brunner

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Talbot : New Zealand Dec 2003 – Jan 2004

Mammals :

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Shirihai : Whales, Dolphis and Seals – A Field Guide to the Marine Mammals of the World, 2006

Websites :

www.top10.co.nz or www.goldenchain.co.nz - accommodation

www.Stewartisland.co.nz

www.tiritirimatangi.co.nz

www.dolphinwatchmarlborough.co.nz

www.whalewatch.co.nz

www.oceanwings.co.nz

philldismith@xtra.co.nz – kiwi spotting Stewart Island – must be booked well in advance !

Appendix 1 – Birds seen in Tokyo

Takanawa and Shinagawa 14-th January 2007

Great Cormorant 2, Common Teal 1, Spotbilled Duck 3, Blackheaded Gull 200, Common Gull 1, Blacktailed Gull 2, Feral Dove 20, White Wagtail 3, Iugens, Pale Thrush 1, Browneared Bulbul 4, Japanese Silvereye 5, Gray Starling 1, House Sparrow 30, Jungle Crow 20

Shinagawa-Narita Airport 8.50-10.20

Great Cormorant 2, Grey Heron 1, Great White Egret 1, Common Teal 1, Wigeon 60, Blackheaded Gull 50, Oriental Turtle Dove 1, Jungle Crow 8

Narita Airport 10.20-12.55

Feral Dove 4, Jungle Crow 2