

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

Aotearoa New Zealand 2026



Aotearoa New Zealand 2026: trip report and species lists

#	DATE	LOCATIONS AND NOTES
1	7 th January	Auckland, Tawharanui Regional Park.
2	8 th January	Tiritiri Matingi Island.
3	9 th January	Muriwai Gannet Colony, Cascade Kauri Park.
4	10 th January	Pūkoro Kororo Miranda Shorebird Centre, Waimangu Volcanic Valley.
5	11 th January	Pureroa Forest Park.
6	12 th January	Tongariro National Park, Taranaki Falls.
7	13 th January	Bushy Park Sanctuary.
8	14 th January	Across the Cook Strait.
9	15 th January	Nelson Lakes National Park, Lake Rotoiti.
10	16 th January	Nelson Lakes National Park, Lake Rotoiti.
11	17 th January	Black Birch.
12	18 th January	Kaikōura.
13	19 th January	Canterbury Plains, Southern Alps, Lake Ōhau.
14	20 th January	Aoraki Mount Cook National Park.
15	21 st January	Kopuawai Old Man Range.
16	22 nd January	Across the Foveaux Strait, Rakiura Stewart Island.
17	23 rd January	Rakiura Stewart Island, Te Wharawhara Ulva.
18	24 th January	Punanga Manu o Te Anau.
19	25 th January	Fiordland National Park.
20	26 th January	Pukekura Taiaroa Head, Muaūpoko Otago Peninsula.
21	27 th January	Dunedin.

Aotearoa New Zealand 2026: trip report and species lists

Leader

Michael Blencowe

Sussex

Local Guide

Mark Hanger

Aotearoa New Zealand

A gallery of photos from the trip is at [Aotearoa New Zealand 2026 | Flickr](#).

All photos courtesy of Michael Blencowe, except where shown.

Front: North Island Kōkako (Laurie Jackson).

Aotearoa New Zealand 2026: trip report and species lists

Day One: 7th January. Auckland, Tawharanui Regional Park.

After being picked up from central Auckland the group headed out of the big city and onwards to our accommodation in Whangaparoa, and out to the Tawharanui reserve.

This afternoon's visit gave us our first taste of New Zealand's special wildlife. And the 2.7 km predator fence that encloses the peninsula gave us our first glimpse at the impressive efforts being undertaken to conserve it.

On a walk around the reserve's wetlands we saw a mix of New Zealand endemics: Pūtangitangi/Paradise Shelduck, the all-black Tōrea/Variable Oystercatcher, Tara/White-fronted Tern, Kererū/New Zealand Pigeon, Tūi/Tui and Riroriro/Grey Gerygone, as well as Australasian species: Swamp Harrier, Pūkeko/Australasian Swamphen, Silver Gull/Red-billed Gull, Kelp Gull, Masked Lapwing, White-faced Heron, Welcome Swallow, and a few birds which reminded us of home: Song Thrush, Goldfinch, Blackbird.

Mark told us about the acclimatisation societies established in the mid-1800s, which released British species in an attempt to recreate the familiar fauna of their homeland. It was the introduction of Rabbits and the subsequent release of Stoats, Weasels and ferrets to control the Rabbit's population which added to the chaos already being caused to native wildlife by rats.

A highlight of the walk was good views of Banded Rail. Usually described as 'secretive' the individuals on the reserve had obviously not read the book as they seemed perfectly happy sat out in open. It was great to have such satisfying views of this strikingly marked bird.



Above: Banded Rail, Tawharanui Regional Park.

Day Two: 8th January. Tiritiri Matingi Island.

Today's trip was a real treat - a glimpse of what New Zealand *should* look and sound like. The island of Tiritiri Matingi in Hauraki Gulf has been restored as a haven for New Zealand's native wildlife. Predators have been eradicated and rare endemic birds thrive in the regenerating native forests.

While waiting for the ferry we had close views of Tūturiwhatu/New Zealand Dotterel - a rare endemic species whose population now stands at just around 2,500 birds.

We arrived on 'Tiri' and, after a welcome from the ranger, made our way along the beaches and into the forest. Almost immediately we heard the haunting 'church organ' call notes of a North Island Kōkako and glimpsed this beautiful wattlebird in the undergrowth. More visible were pairs of another wattlebird species, the Tīeke/North Island Saddleback. This species' introduction on Tiri has been particularly successful and birds are now being returned to predator-free reserves on the mainland. As we walked along the boardwalk the forest around us was alive with Tūī/Tui, Pōpokotea/Whiteheads and Korimako/Bellbirds and we finally found another of Tiri's notable inhabitants - the striking Hihi/Stitchbird.

Walking toward the lighthouse that chiming call alerted us to another North Island Kōkako. But this individual wasn't shy and, in a few powerful bounds, leapt to the top of a dead branch giving us fantastic views.

On the descent to the ferry, we joined other birdwatchers at a small pool as they awaited the appearance of the rare endemic Pāteke/Brown Teal. One eagle-eyed member of our group spotted the teal as it slept in the shadows under a fallen branch. We made it back to the jetty and onto the ferry back to the mainland buzzing after our close encounters with some of New Zealand's rarest birds.



Above: Tiritiri Matingi Island, Toutouwai/North Island Robin (Laurie Jackson).



Top to bottom: Pōpokotea/Whitehead (Laurie Jackson), North Island Kōkako, Brown Quail (Laurie Jackson), Tūi (Laurie Jackson).

Day Three: 9th January. Muriwai Gannet Colony, Cascade Kauri Park.

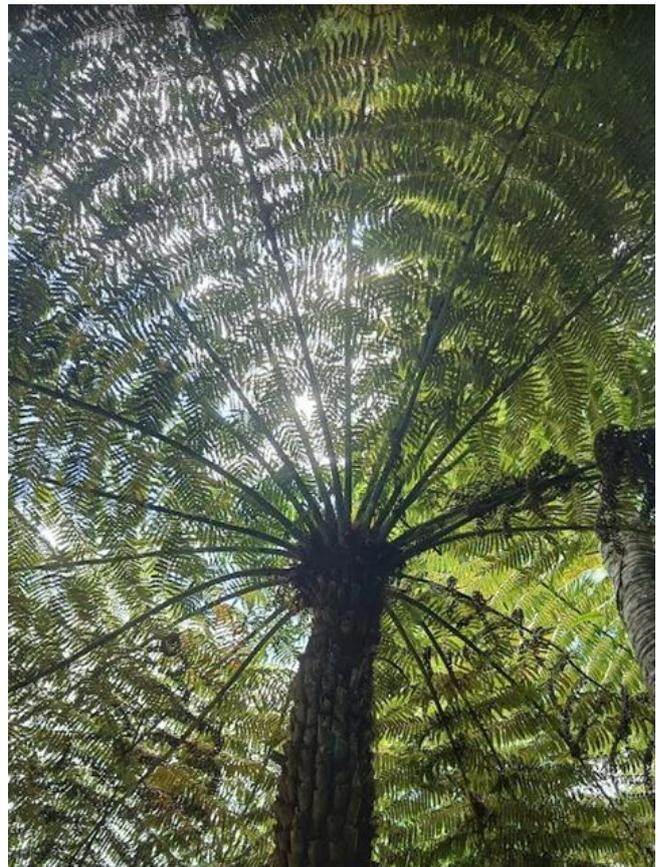
This morning, we took a trip to the west coast. Here at Muriwai, Tākapu/Australasian Gannets have established a colony on the cliffs on the mainland, and viewing platforms took us right into the heart of the action. New Zealand holds the bulk of the world's Tākapu/Australasian Gannet population and, from our front row seats, we were treated to the sights (and smells) of the colony as birds brought food back to their developing chicks and defended themselves against marauding Kelp Gulls. There were also many Tara/White-fronted Terns along the beach and fishing offshore. This tern is a New Zealand endemic whose population has declined markedly over the past 40 years.

We then headed to Te Piringa Cascade Kauri Park - a remnant of rainforest on the outskirts of Auckland with fine examples of Kauri trees. The Kauri *Agathis australis* is a member of the Araucariaceae, a family that also contains the Norfolk Island Pine, and the Monkey Puzzle tree of the Andes. Kauri trees can grow to monstrous proportions and some Kauri in the remaining forests of the North Island rank among the largest trees in the world. The extensive Kauri forests of northern New Zealand once covered an area of 1,200,000 hectares but their valued wood soon saw these forests decimated. Now less than 150 hectares of pristine Kauri forest remain. And this remnant is again under threat today from Kauri Dieback caused by the soil-borne pathogen *Phytophthora agathidica*. We made sure we scrubbed and sprayed our boots as we entered the forest.

Mark gave us an introduction to the trees of the forest. There were equally impressive examples of the cypress-like Rimu *Dacrydium cupressinum*, Kahikatea *Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*, Miro *Pectinopitys ferruginea* and the mighty Tōtara *Podocarpus totara*. We explored under tree ferns and Nīkau Palms *Rhopalostylis sapida* (New Zealand's only native palm) and, amongst a tangle of Supplejack *Ripogonum scandens*, we found the curious Horoeka/Lancewood *Pseudopanax crassifolius* - a plant whose developmental stages may (or may not) be protection from marauding Moa. Michael and Mark gave the evidence for and against.

Noisy Sulphur-crested Cockatoos flew overhead, a Kererū /New Zealand Pigeon sat shaded in a tree fern and an inquisitive Pīwakawaka/New Zealand Fantail dropped down to inspect us.

In the evening Mark undertook a rescue mission back to the first hotel for some missing underpants.



Top to bottom: Tākapu/Australasian Gannet (Laurie Jackson), Tākapu/Australasian Gannet, Te Piringa Cascade Kauri Park (Laurie Jackson), tree ferns.

Day Four: 10th January. Pūkorokoro Miranda Shorebird Centre, Waimangu Volcanic Valley.

We departed Auckland and headed southeast to the mudflats of the Firth of Thames, internationally important feeding grounds for New Zealand's trans-equatorial and internal migrants.

Our target bird was the Ngutuparore/Wrybill - a New Zealand endemic and the only bird in the world with a laterally curved bill (which always curves to the right). And when we arrived at the Robert Findlay Wildlife Reserve, the Wrybills were waiting for us allowing us to observe that weird bill.

As the tide rose in the bay more birds were flushed onto the reserve. Poaka/Pied Stilt, Tōrea/South Island Oystercatcher, Huahou/Red Knot, Tūturiwhatu/New Zealand Dotterel and Pohowera/Banded Dotterel. Scanning across the muddy pools we also found Tētē-moroiti/Grey Teal and some distant Kuriri/Pacific Golden Plover.

Just as we prepared to depart, we were treated to a spectacular fly-by from thousands of Kuaka/Bar-tailed Godwits. These birds are the champions of long-distance migration, flying non-stop from Alaska to New Zealand each year. One record-breaking individual was tagged and recorded flying 8,425 miles non-stop in 11 days. There were also distant views of a flock of Kōtuku Ngutupapa/Royal Spoonbill and a bulky Taranui/Caspian Tern passed overhead.

Lunch was spent with a giant cuddly New Zealand Dotterel at the Pūkorokoro Miranda Shorebird Centre and the opportunity to visit their well-stocked gift shop.

From here we continued towards Rotorua and beyond to our next stop, the Waimangu Volcanic Valley. Here we found ourselves in a steaming, bubbling, spouting geological wonderland. All around us we were serenaded by the constant buzz of cicadas. There are 42 species in New Zealand and we were able to get views of one of the commoner species, Chorus Cicada, on the track.

And another species that had eluded us so far, the Kōtare/Sacred Kingfisher, alerted us to its presence with its loud 'kek-kek-kek-kek' call.



Above: Kuaka/Bar-tailed Godwits



Top to bottom: Kuaka/Bar-tailed Godwits (Laurie Jackson), Chorus Cicada, Kōtare/Sacred Kingfisher.



Top to bottom: Waimangu Volcanic Valley, Waimangu Volcanic Valley (Laurie Jackson), Waiotapu Mud Pool (Laurie Jackson).

Day Five: 11th January. Pureroa Forest Park.

We drove along the northern edge of Lake Taupo, past the steaming Craters of the Moon, through a landscape formed approximately 25,500 years ago by the massive Ōruanui eruption of the Taupō super volcano, the world's largest known eruption in the past 70,000 years.

Our destination today was Purerora Forest Park, (“proper rainforest” as Mark put it). The old forests here are home to some incredible endemic wildlife including one of New Zealand’s few native mammals, the Pekapeka/Short-tailed Bat.

We were greeted by the abrasive call of the Kākā and we watched as one of these boisterous parrots attacked a tree with its powerful beak. We also saw another New Zealand parrot, the Kākāriki/Yellow-crowned Parakeet flying through the canopy.

Here, amongst the towering Tōtara, Mataī *Prumnopitys taxifolia*, Rimu and an impressive giant Kahikatea we found the Kōtukutuku *Fuchsia excorticata*, the worlds’ largest tree fuchsia, with its pale, papery bark. This endemic plant has a green flower, which changes to red as it ages to direct pollinators away from fertilised flowers.

We were surrounded by tree ferns including (Silver Tree-fern *Alsophila dealbata*, Golden Tree Fern *Dicksonia fibrosa*, Black Tree Fern *Sphaeropteris medullaris*, Soft Tree Fern *Dicksonia antarctica* and Hard Tree Fern *Dicksonia squarrosa*), and we also found a Bamboo Orchid *Earina mucronate*, Lady’s Slipper Orchid *Dendrobium cunninghamii* and Pānakenake *Lobelia angulata*.

After a drive through the forest tracks and lunch we embarked on another walk. This time through hill forest where huge Tawa *Beilschmiedia tawa* trees covered in Perching Lilies *Astelia hastata* rose high above the tree ferns. Lower down we found the soft Prince of Wales Feather Fern *Leptopteris superba*, Hen and Chicken Fern *Asplenium bulbiferum* and *Cranfillia fluviatile*, known to the Māori as Kiwikiwi. Even lower down we found *Dawsonia superba*, which holds the lofty and slightly dubious title of ‘world’s tallest moss’.

As we climbed through the forest we heard the calls of Kārearea/New Zealand Falcon and the harsh shrieks of a pair of Koekoeā/Long-tailed Cuckoo high above us.

We continued on our journey south, making a quick stop at the Waihi wetland reserve on the southern shores of Lake Taupo, where scanning across the volcanic crater lake rewarded us with Weweia/New Zealand Dabchick and Pāpango/New Zealand Scaup. Both endemics, the dabchick being restricted to the North Island.



Top to bottom: Kōtukutuku *Fuchsia excorticata*, Pānakenake *Lobelia angulata*, *Dawsonia superba*.

Day Six: 12th January. Tongariro National Park, Taranaki Falls.

From our hotel on the slopes of Mount Ruapehu, New Zealand's largest active volcano (last eruption 2007) we had amazing views across to Mount Ngāuruhoe (last eruption 1977).

Today was spent within Tongariro National Park, the third oldest national park in the world (after Yellowstone and Yosemite). And we're in proper 'Lord of the Rings' country now (Ngāuruhoe played the role of Mordor's Mount Doom in the films).

The morning's weather forecast wasn't great, light rain. "Nice weather for ducks" as Mike pointed out. So, some of the group headed out early on a search for the elusive Whio/Blue Duck on the fast-flowing rivers that cascade down from the volcano. But we returned for breakfast duck-less.

On a pre-lunch trip up towards Mount Ruapehu we were able to add Pīhoihoi/New Zealand Pipit to our bird list but we didn't see much else (including the volcano that was enveloped in low cloud). We did find examples of *Trentepohlia* - the algae that's moving up in the world and becoming the phycobiont component of an increasing number of lichen. Amongst the rocks we found mat daisy *Raoulia sp.*, an eyebright *Euphrasia cuneata* and the mountain daisy *Celmisia spectabilis*.

After lunch we headed out on the Taranaki Falls Walk - a circular route which led us across tussocky habitats and Mountain Beech forest. By now there wasn't a cloud in the sky allowing us to really appreciate this amazing volcanic landscape of peaks and gorges.

One of our target birds was the ragged-tailed Mātātā/Fernbird and, within a few steps, one hopped out of the bush in front of us. We'd later have some more amazing views of this usually elusive bird. Alongside the path we found our first Swamp Sun Orchid *Thelymitra cyanea*.

We continued on the walk through the blooming Mānuka and into the forest of Mountain Beech *Nothofagus solandri var cliffortioides*. Here we found plentiful Umbrella Fern *Sticherus cunninghamii* and heard Tītipounamu/Rifleman, Riroriro/Grey Gerygone and Miromiro/North Island Tomtit overhead. At a bridge crossing a Kārearea/New Zealand Falcon flew powerfully over us and up towards the waterfall.

We paused briefly at the impressive Taraniki Waterfall and took in the delicate flowers of *Forstera tenella*, named after Johann Reinhold Forster and his son, the 18th Century naturalists on James Cook's second voyage. We continued back on our circular walk through incredible volcanic landscapes under a clear blue sky.



Top to bottom: Tongariro National Park, Swamp Sun Orchid *Thelymitra cyanea*, Mātātā/Fernbird.



Top to bottom: Taranaki Falls, *Euphrasia cuneata* (Laurie Jackson), *Forstera tenella*, Rosy Sundew *Drosera spatulata* (Laurie Jackson).

Day Seven: 13th January. Bushy Park Sanctuary.

For the more optimistic of us there was another pre-breakfast excursion and the possibility of a Whio/Blue Duck. We scoured the network of streams on the lower slopes of the volcano; the Whakapapanui, the Wairere... but there wasn't a Whio in sight. And then, at the Mahuia Rapids, Ruth saw them. A pair, battling their way upstream against the fast-flowing water. Amazing.

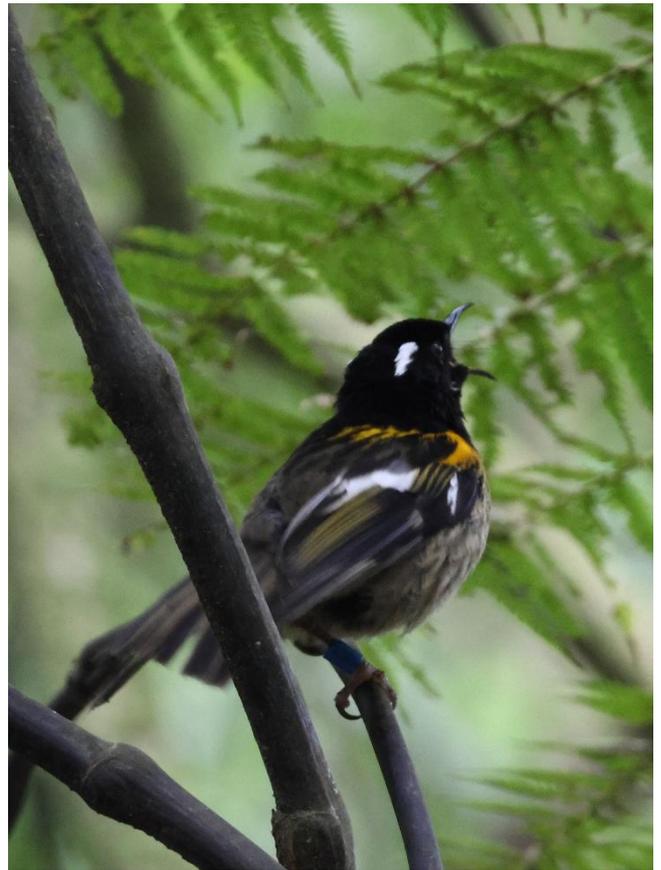
From Tongariro we headed south crossing the headwaters of the River Whanganui until we were following the route of the river as it flowed south to the sea. We dropped down off the volcanic plateau and drove through a landscape scarred by landslides, following the river to Whanganui itself. Here we made a detour west of the town to Bushy Park Sanctuary, a predator free podocarp forest owned and managed by Forest and Bird (the New Zealand conservation charity akin to the RSPB).

Bushy Park is known for its impressive Northern Rātā trees *Metrodieros robusta* - one of the forest giants of New Zealand. There were some awesome examples here and we sat in wonder as we stared up at 'Rātānui', which ranks as one of the tallest Rātā in the country, aged at well over 1,000 years with a height of 39 metres and a girth of 12 metres. There was also an immense Black Tree Fern, towering 70ft high over the Lemonwoods *Pittosporum eugenioides* and Hen and Chicken Ferns below.

On the forest floor an abundance of fallen fruit and emerging Pukatea *Laurelia novae-zelandiae* seedlings was testament to the work undertaken here by volunteers to keep the forest mouse- and predator-free. And more evidence was found in the trees all around us. Noisy North Island Saddlebacks, Tui, Whiteheads, North Island Robin, New Zealand Fantails and Bellbirds were all around and we had fantastic views of a party of Stitchbirds.



Above: Whio/Blue Duck.



Top to bottom: Tieke/North Island Saddleback (Laurie Jackson), Perching Lily *Astelia hastata* (Laurie Jackson), tree fern, Hihi /Stitchbird (Laurie Jackson).

Day Eight: 14th January. Across the Cook Strait.

The main task for today was to get across the Cook Strait and say 'Mā te wā' to North Island and 'Kia ora' South Island. We headed south from Whanganui and boarded the ferry at Wellington. The Cook Strait is only 14 miles at its shortest point but the ferry journey to Picton takes almost four hours.

This gave us the opportunity for some sea watching and we gathered on the top deck as the ship sailed. In Wellington Harbour the ferry sailed through rafts of Pakahā/Fluttering Shearwater - scattering them as they took to the wing. A few birds sitting amongst the raft didn't fly as the ferry ploughed across the harbour. And as they floated past us it became apparent why. They were Kororā/Little Penguins - for some members of the group the first penguins they had ever seen in the wild.

As we left the harbour, we watched an Arctic Skua haranguing a Tara/White-fronted Tern. Once out in the strait we had views of Toroa/New Zealand White-capped Albatross, Tītī/Sooty Shearwater, Rako/Buller's Shearwater and a small group of Tītī Wainui/Fairy Prions which flew close to the ship.

As we entered the shelter of the Marlborough Sound we took in stunning views of this network of drowned river valleys and were able to watch Māpunga/Great Cormorant, Kāruhiruhi/Pied Cormorant and Kawau Tikitiki/Spotted Shag while Tākapu/Australasian Gannets dived alongside us.



Above: entering the Marlborough Sound (Laurie Jackson).

Day Nine: 15th January. Nelson Lakes National Park, Lake Rotoiti.

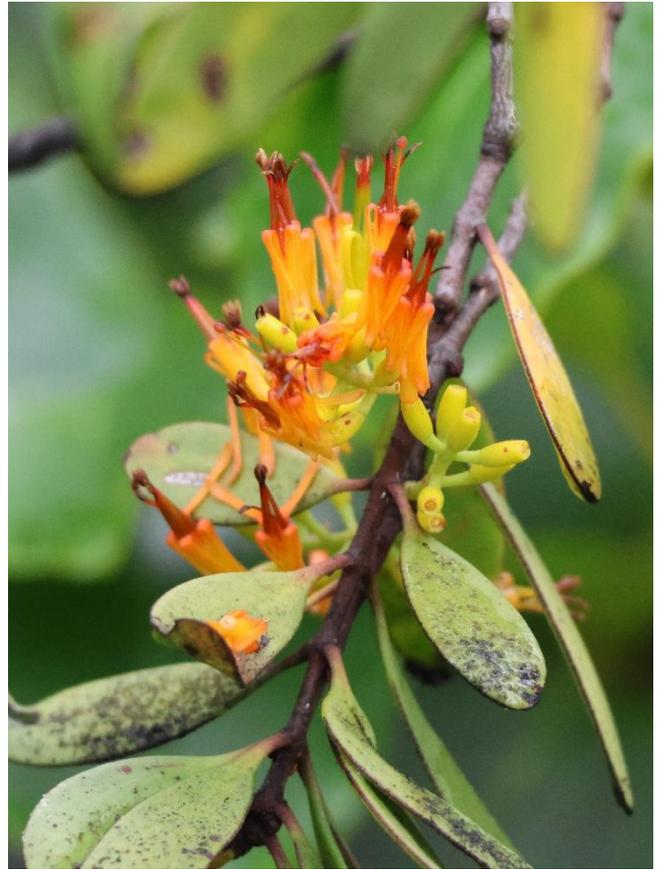
We started today's walk from our hotel on the edge of Lake Rotoiti. In a few steps we were out into mixed beech forests (predominately Tāwhai/Silver Beech *Nothofagus menziesii* and Tawhai Raunui/Red Beech *Nothofagus fusca*) of the National Park.

Straightaway we were greeted by that most mischievous of New Zealand birds - the Weka. These amazing and iconic endemic flightless rails are famous across New Zealand for being curious, bloodthirsty opportunists who will steal or eat anything they find. Wekas were a rarity around here 40 years ago, their presence another testimony to the success of volunteer predator control schemes in this area.

We were joined today by local naturalists Roger and Sarah Frost who know this area, and its wildlife, very well. Along the river stream we discovered a fantastic bloom of hemi-parasitic Red Mistletoe *Peraxilla tetrapetala*, high on a Silver Beech. Red mistletoe is considered a threatened species, with populations having significantly declined due to severe browsing by introduced Brushtail Possums and reduced pollination by birds like Tūī and Bellbird. Along this track we also found Bird Orchid *Chyiloglottis cornuta*, Onion-leaved orchid *Microtis unifolia* and the non-photosynthesising Potato Orchid *Gastrodia* sp.. And we had good views of a noisy group of Kākā in the canopy. By the lake we also found some beautiful flowering Yellow Mistletoe *Alepis flavida*.

Along the Honey Loop track we learnt about the strange ecology of these forests. Hidden in the beech trees are scale insects (*Ultracoelostoma brittini/assimile*) busily sucking sap. The sugary waste is excreted through the long white filaments which cover the trees - these filaments are the longest anal tube in the world! The sugar (not taken by birds, reptiles or insects) drops to the floor and encourages the black sooty mould fungus that covers these trees. The whole forest smelt sugary sweet. Not so sweet were the leaves of Hūpiro/Stinkwood *Coprosma foetidissima*.

In the afternoon we undertook another loop through the forest. Here we were walking through a landscape of tectonic proportions - this edge of Lake Rotoiti sits directly atop a complex, active intersection of the Indo-Australian and Pacific plates. But botanists in the group were focussed on the smaller inhabitants of the landscape and Roger was keen to show us the tiny carnivorous bladderwort *Utricularia dichotoma* subsp. *novae-zelandiae* growing along the damp track. We also discovered some *Gonocarpus aggregatus* a member of the Haloragaceae - watermilfoil family.



Top to bottom: Red Mistletoe *Peraxilla tetrapetala* (Laurie Jackson), Yellow Mistletoe *Alepis flavida* (Laurie Jackson), *Utricularia dichotoma* subsp. *novae-zelandiae*, scale insect filaments

Day Ten: 16th January. Nelson Lakes National Park, Lake Rotoiti.

Today we had the opportunity to explore Lake Rotoiti by water. After a brief stop at the Nelson Lakes visitor centre, we headed to the lake to check in on the tangle of Ōrea/Longfin Eels under the jetty. This eel is a New Zealand endemic species - capable of living to over 100 years old and growing to an impressive size (a photograph on our hotel wall pictured a specimen with an estimated length of 1.7m and a weight of 22kg). Like our European Eels they undertake an unbelievable migration - except these eels end up thousands of kilometres away from Lake Rotoiti, out in the depths of the Tonga Trench.

We headed along the shore, donned our lifejackets and, with Hamish at the helm, we cruised out onto the lake aboard the good ship *Mountaineer*. Hamish gave us a history of the landscape, from its glacial beginnings to tales of the earliest Māori and European explorers who discovered and named this area.

We were taken to see a beautiful Southern Rātā *Metrosideros umbellata* tree on the eastern shore with its red blooms - a rare example this year it seems. Hamish then steered us to the southern end of the lake where the River Travers flows into Rotoiti. Here the wetlands contained Pāpango/New Zealand Scaup, Pūtangitangi/Paradise Shelduck, Māpunga/Great Cormorant, Kāhu/Swamp Harrier, Kawaupaka/Little Pied Cormorant and Matuku Moana/White-faced Heron. We spotted a group of Weka on the southern shore and Hamish steered us into the shallows for a better view.

Back onshore we returned to the hotel through the flock of endemic Tarāpuka/Black-billed Gulls. These birds are the most threatened gull species on the planet. Their population is in a steep decline, with estimates that their numbers have reduced by 80% in 30 years, and some long-established colonies have vanished. This particular flock has only recently arrived at Lake Rotoiti and is being monitored.



Above: Ōrea/Longfin Eels



Above: Kawaupaka/Little Pied Cormorant, Tarāpuka/Black-billed Gulls (Laurie Jackson).

Day Eleven: 17th January. Black Birch.

We departed Nelson Lakes and headed east along the Wairau Valley, following the fault line. Along the braided rivers we watched another endemic - Tarapirohe/Black-fronted Tern. These birds breed only on the South Island and we would continue to see them, often hunting over agricultural fields, on most days for the rest of the trip.

We turned west along the Awatere River and then started to climb, higher and higher into the clouds on a twisting track, until we reached the lunar landscape at the summit of Black Birch.

As we ascended the vegetation changed dramatically until, passing 1,200 metres, it got lower and sparser, with progressively more exposed scree. By the time we reach the summit we were amongst some of the strangest plants you're ever going to see. Most notable were the 'vegetable sheep', cushions of green and blue flowers, which did indeed look like grazing sheep in the mist. The most prominent 'sheep' were the green *Haastia pulvinaris* and the blue *Raoulia bryoides*. We also found the tiny 'spaniard' *Aciphylla monroi*, a diminutive relation of the towering 'Spaniard' *Aciphylla glaucesens* that we encountered on the ascent.

On the descent we stopped to take in the epic views and also encountered a hunter with a huge boar strapped to his roof rack. Evidence that there are large mammals out here in the mountains. But New Zealand's most impressive mammals can be found along its shores and out in the seas, and at Ōhau Point we had the opportunity to watch a large colony of New Zealand Fur Seals as they lazed on the rocks and frolicked in the water.



Top to bottom: *Haastia pulvinaris*, *Raoulia bryoides*, New Zealand Fur Seal.

Day Twelve: 18th January. Kaikōura.

Sea conditions threatened our opportunities to get out to sea today - but all travellers managed to enjoy a trip offshore to witness some of the amazing wildlife this corner of New Zealand has to offer.

Some of us went on a dolphin encounter and watched energetic Dusky Dolphins leaping and pirouetting out of the water. One of us even ventured into the sea to swim with dolphins!

Eight travellers sailed out to sea for an Albatross encounter with the legendary skipper Gary Melville who has been taking people out to see the amazing seabird life off Kaikōura for almost 30 years. We boarded the boat on land, were reversed into the sea and were soon speeding our way across the swelling waves. We were the first boat out for a few days and the birds were waiting for us. It wasn't long before we were being followed by Pāngurunguru/Northern Giant Petrels. These rather intimidating looking birds, with a large wingspan of up to 2 metres, were dwarfed when a magnificent Toroa/Wandering Albatross came effortlessly gliding over the boat with its 3 metre wingspan.

We stopped at 'The Outer Hole' and Gary released some chum into the sea. In a short time, the boat was surrounded by dozens of birds squabbling and feeding in the sea around us - more Northern Giant Petrels (with, unusually, a Southern Giant Petrel amongst them), more Wandering Albatross and Karetai Hukuroko/Cape Petrels. Two Southern Royal Albatross arrived followed by the elegant, dusky Salvin's Albatross. We continued, powering over the waves to 'The Canyon', followed all the way by an ever-growing seabird entourage.

From the boat we also watched New Zealand White-capped Albatross flying past along with Karetai Kauae Mā/White-chinned Petrel, Short-tailed Shearwater, Rako/Buller's Shearwater and Kaikōura Tītī/Hutton's Shearwater. The latter are a Kaikōura speciality with the entire world's population nesting in the mountains above the town, the only mountain-nesting pelagic shearwater.



Above: Dusky Dolphin



Top to bottom: Northern Giant Petrel, Kaikōura albatross encounter, Salvin's Albatross.

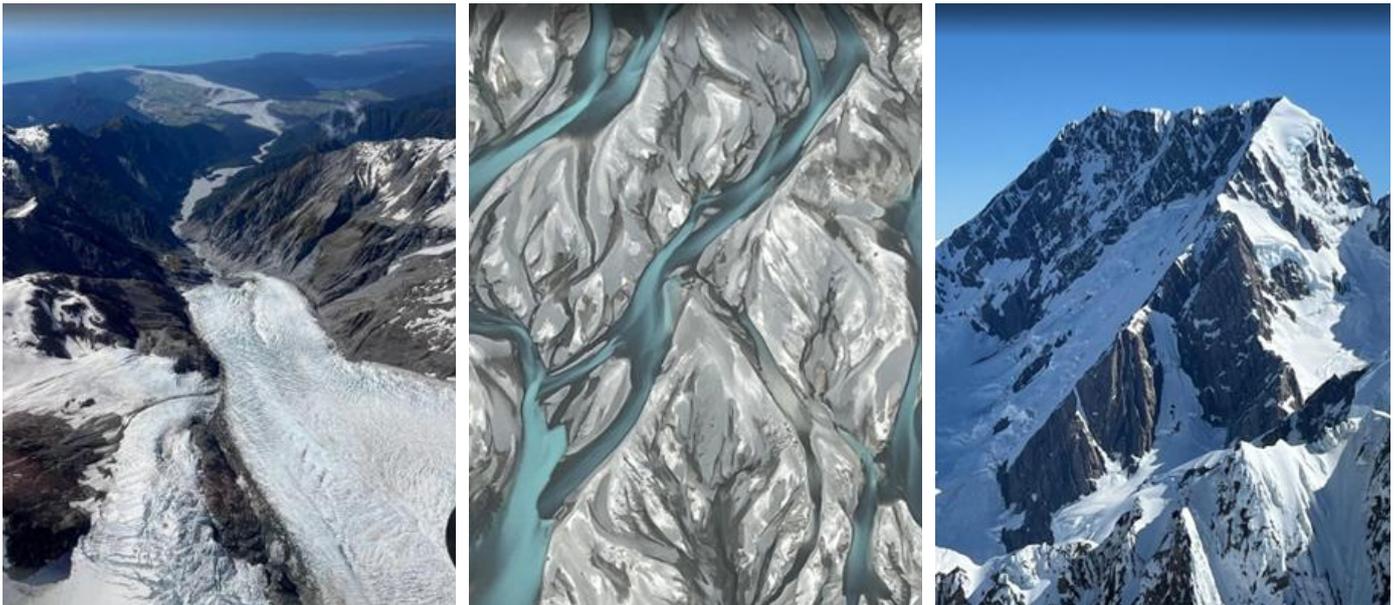
Day Thirteen: 19th January. Canterbury Plains, Southern Alps, Lake Ōhau.

A travel day. South, across the flatlands. Over the Canterbury Plains until the Southern Alps rose before us. Through some familiar-named settlements; Oxford, Sheffield, Arundel and Amberley. Lunch was taken beside the impressive scenery of the Rakaia Gorge.

And, as we headed along Highway 79, the scenery just kept on getting more and more impressive as the unbelievably turquoise, glacial waters of the Mackenzie and Waitaki basins came into view and Aoraki Mount Cook rose above us. Some of us had an opportunity to be even more amazed by this landscape on a flight over Aoraki Mount Cook in a small aircraft.

We took a detour up to Lake McGregor to enjoy more scenery and watch some Pūteketeke/Australian Crested Grebes and other wildfowl but the real birdwatching highlight arrived unexpectedly as we were driving along Highway 8.

Glancing out of the window, as we passed a series of ponds along Irishman Creek, Mark spotted a few birds with distinctive long legs. After a quick turnaround we found ourselves watching a pair of Kakī/Black Stilt - one of the world's rarest birds. At one point in the 1980's there were only 23 Black Stilt left on our planet, restricted to a few braided rivers in this corner of New Zealand. Now, thanks to a very active conservation programme, there are a couple hundred. A very special bird to end the day.



Above: views over Aoraki Mount Cook (Judy Procter).



Above: Kākī /Black Stilt.

Day Fourteen: 20th January. Aoraki Mount Cook National Park.

Today's journey took us closer towards the imposing peak of Aoraki Mount Cook, at 3,742m the highest point in New Zealand. A bit of a cloudy start this morning as we headed out on a hike along the Hooker Valley amongst Wild Irishmen *Discaria toumatou*, Golden Spaniards *Aciphylla aurea* and other upland plants. We shifted a few rocks and found Mountain Stone Weta lurking beneath.

We continued upstream and, right on cue, the clouds parted, the sun returned and Mount Sefton (3,151m) was revealed bedecked with glaciers, avalanches and snowfields. But it was still dwarfed by Mount Cook towering over it.

And with the sunshine the meadows erupted with butterflies and day flying moths; Canterbury Alpine Boulder Copper, Common Tussock, Large Striped Carpet and more.

In the afternoon we hiked through mountain beech forests on the Governor's Bush Track adding some new birds to our list. Finally, we had some good opportunities to watch Titipounamu/Rifleman sneaking along the mossy branches and a confiding Ngirungiru/South Island Tomtit joined us for lunch. The circular walk led us through some beautiful forest and we found local plant specialities including Haast's Carrot *Anisotome haastii*, Richard's Spleenwort *Asplenium richardii* and the platter-sized leaves of the Mount Cook Buttercup *Ranunculus lyallii*, the largest buttercup in the world.



Top to bottom: Aoraki Mount Cook National Park, Boulder Copper.

Day Fifteen: 21st January. Kopuwai Old Man Range.

We continued our journey south and the landscape changed again. From Greywacke rocks to Schist, and up through the characteristic short tussock grasslands of the Lindis Pass into a distinctively different rockier landscape. And then up, up, up again on another twistin', turnin' track to the tundra top of the Old Man Range where schist tors stack up against the skyline.

As the sun burnt through the clouds we were able to get down at ground level to explore the strange, stunted cushion flora vegetation.

And there's were shorebirds way up here too. These ranges are the breeding grounds for Banded Dotterel and South Island Oystercatcher. Under the rocks we found more Mountain Stone Weta lurking in their burrows and the strange, local endemic Otago Alpine Cockroach. At anytime of the year this cockroach can survive freezing solid, and during the winter probably freezes and thaws more than 20 times in a month. With the sun out we were also able to catch up with a few day flying moths including *Aponotoreas anthracias*.



Top to bottom: *Aciphylla hectori*, *Celmisia sessiliflora*, *Gentianella amabilis*, *Veronica buchananii*, *Dracophyllum muscoides*, *Hectorella caespitosa*.



Above: Kopuwai Old Man Range.

Day Sixteen: 22nd January Across the Foveaux Strait, Rakiura Stewart Island.

We've travelled the entire length of the South Island and, to continue our journey, we had to board a catamaran on a trip across the Foveaux Strait to Rakiura Stewart Island. It's a thankfully smooth journey and during the crossing we saw Pakahā/Fluttering Shearwater, Titi/Sooty Shearwater, Kuaka/Common Diving Petrel and the majestic Toroa/New Zealand White-capped Albatross.

After dinner some of us waited at the jetty at sunset for the arrival of Kororā/Little Penguins, coming ashore undercover of the night. But we had to stay up even later to see today's target bird - the Tokoeka/Stewart Island Kiwi.

We were led on a guided walk across the airport runway where our guide shone red-beamed torchlight along the edge of the bush. After a while we saw one - a young kiwi running over the airfield and feeding on the grass.

From all sides we could hear the call of the Ruru/Morepork. The torchlight picked out two eyes gleaming in a tree and we approached to see a Brushtail Possum staring at us. We'd heard plenty of stories about these villains and the damage they are causing to New Zealand forests but now we had the chance to stare at one eye to eye. At the end of our evening adventure the clouds parted above to reveal the Pleiades and other southern stars overhead.



Above: dusk on Rakiura Stewart Island.

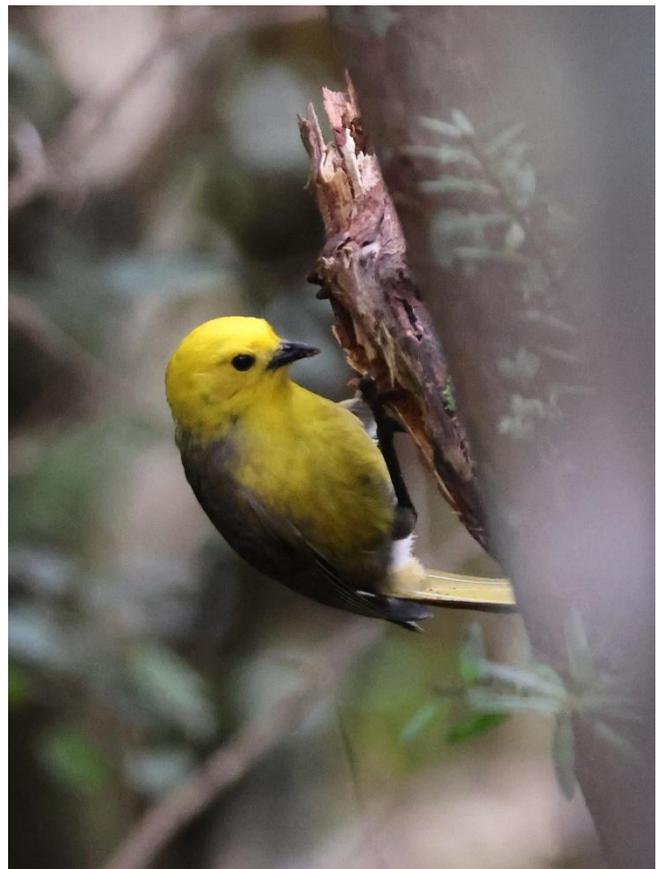
Day Seventeen: 23rd January Rakiura Stewart Island, Te Wharawhara Ulva.

Another special day today (amongst a trip packed with special days). We took a small boat out to Te Wharawhara/Ulva Island, another predator-free paradise in the Paterson Inlet, a few minutes cruise from Oban.

Here the beautiful, tangled forest was alive with New Zealand's endemic birds - Kākā, Weka, Tieke/South Island Saddleback, Tūī. We encountered a feeding party of Pīpīpi/Brown Creeper which, as Mark pointed out, are not brown and don't creep. There were great views of a group of Kākāriki/Red-crowned Parakeet and in a gully we paused as some Mohua/Yellowheads got closer, and closer, eventually giving us amazing views of this striking yellow bird. And Michael was pood on by a South Island Saddleback. Something he was immensely proud of.

On the beach we had great views of a family of Weka and Mapo/Foveaux Shag could be seen on the small islands offshore. Along the trails there were just too many Kakaruai/South Island Robins at our feet to be photographed.

In the afternoon there were options to explore Stewart Island on foot or on bike. Those who took the option to head out to sea were again treated to some amazing seabird encounters including the stunning Toroa/Buller's Albatross and a porpoising Hoiho/Yellow-eyed Penguin 'flying' out of the water.



Above: Kākā (Laurie Jackson), Mohua/Yellowhead (Laurie Jackson)

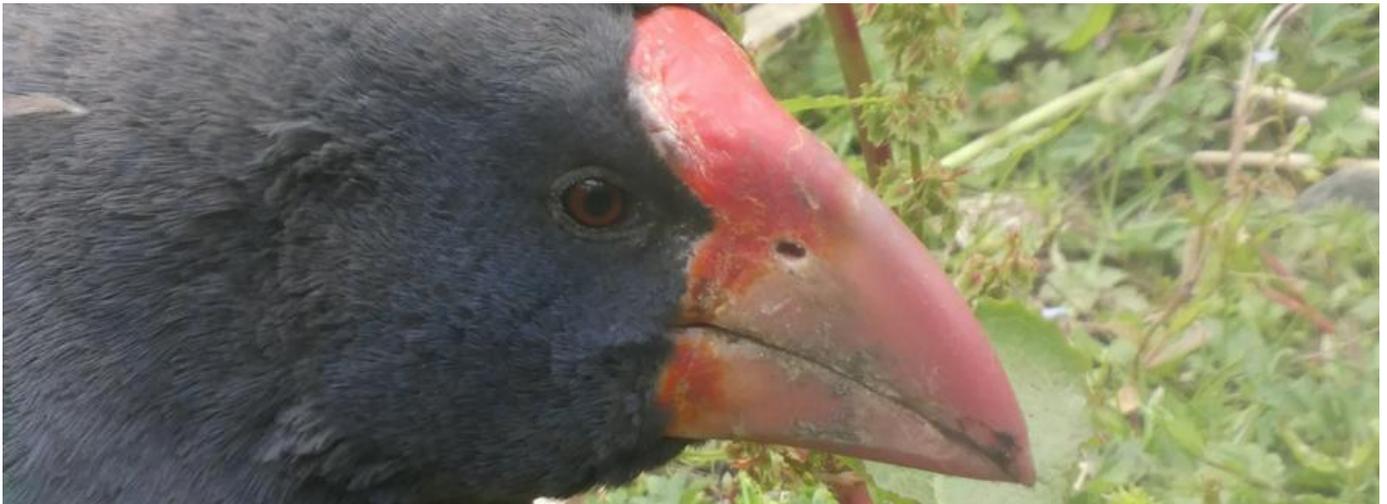


Top to bottom: Weka, Kākāriki/Red-crowned Parakeet (Laurie Jackson), Hoiho /Yellow-eyed Penguin

Day Eighteen: 24th January Punanga Manu o Te Anau.

Time to leave Stewart Island and head back to the South Island. The Foveaux Strait crossing was smooth (again!) and gave us the opportunity to look out for more seabirds. Kōrure/Mottled Petrel, White-capped Albatross, Mapo/Foveaux Shag, Pakahā/Fluttering Shearwater, Kuaka/Common Diving Petrel were noted.

Back at Bluff and we head northwest to Te Anau and a stop off at Punanga Manu o Te Anau/Te Anau Bird Sanctuary. This lakeshore sanctuary supports the Takahē Recovery Programme and a large, fenced enclosure was an opportunity to watch this incredible bird that has defied extinction. Except, even in this fenced enclosure it was tricky to spot them! Matthew's patience paid off and the birds finally wandered out into the open to feed alongside their chick. Michael told the improbable tale of the Takahē's disappearance and rediscovery.



Above: South Island Takahē.

Day Nineteen: 25th January Fiordland National Park.

A full day enjoying the stunning landscapes and wildlife of Fiordland National Park.

Our first stop was the tranquil Mirror Lakes where Pāpango/New Zealand Scaup dived in the reflections of the mountains. And then on to Lake Gunn where a circular walk took us through an amazing, lush forest of orchids, Stinkwood, mosses, ferns, Kākā, Pseudopanax, Pīwakawaka/New Zealand Fantail and Tātaramoa/Bush Lawyer *Rubus* sp.. Herbert remarked 'this is one of the most incredible forests I have ever seen'.

En route there were plenty of opportunities to park the bus and enjoy the fantastic scenery. At Monkey Creek the incredible view had an extra bonus; a family of Whio/Blue Duck asleep on the river bank, giving everyone the opportunity to add this beautiful New Zealand icon to their list.

But you can only stop the bus so many times before your windscreen wipers attract another of New Zealand's famous birds. And at our lunch stop at Gertrude Creek a raucous squawk from the trees behind the bus alerted us to a pair of Kea who alighted on top of our bus and set about attempting to dismantle it. These amazing alpine parrots are in decline, with around 5,000 birds left. After a short

Aotearoa New Zealand 2026: trip report and species lists

walk up the valley we continued through the Homer Tunnel (where another pair of Kea were attacking the traffic lights) and out into the blue skies and sunshine of Milford Sound.

Here we boarded a boat for a cruise out along the towering cliffs and dramatic waterfalls of Milford Sound to the Tasman Sea, enjoying some of New Zealand's most epic scenery.



Top to bottom: Lake Gunn, Kea.



Above: Milford Sound.

Day Twenty: 26th January Pukekura Taiaroa Head, Muaūpoko Otago Peninsula.

Our final full day. We headed back east to Dunedin. And one final trip out to sea.

And New Zealand had organised a special farewell parade for us. Tōrea Pango/Variable Oystercatchers, Pūtangitangi/Paradise Shelduck and Kōtuku ngutupapa/Royal Spoonbill lined the route as we drove out of Dunedin and along the Otago Peninsula.

Here we boarded a small boat for a wildlife cruise. We stopped to observe the Matapo/Otago Shags standing to attention on their flowerpot nests etched into the cliff side. These birds are similar to the Foveaux Shag we saw on Stewart Island (previously, before taxonomic splitting, both were recognised as the Stewart Island Shag). Around 30% of the population are a pied morph, the rest are the brown-black, bronze morph.

Gracefully wheeling around the boat as they headed to their clifftop nests were the impressive Toroa/Northern Royal Albatross, Pterosaur-like, on their three metre wingspans. Their nesting area on the headland at Taiaroa Head on the Otago Peninsula is a 'hot spot' - a sheltered area where summer ground temperatures can reach 50°C. These conditions aren't ideal for a species that's far better adapted to subantarctic conditions, but, for some reason, they have chosen this place as their home and return here to breed and raise their young - one chick every two years. This site is the only mainland albatross colony in the Southern Hemisphere.

As we headed out for one final look at the South Pacific some New Zealand Fur Seals waved goodbye from the shore. But, for our final send-off, New Zealand had arranged for a pair of Hector's Dolphins to swim alongside the boat, joyously riding the bow waves. These are among the world's smallest and rarest dolphins and a real treat to see them so close.



Above: Hector's Dolphin.

Day Twenty-one: 27th January Dunedin.

Time to depart after an amazing trip. But, in the morning there was still one last chance for us to visit the excellent Otago Museum, to walk amongst the moa skeletons, explore the geological, historical and biological exhibitions and remind ourselves of the epic journey we have undertaken and the incredible wildlife we have seen.

Michael Blencowe, Wildlife Travel, February 2026.



Aotearoa New Zealand 2026: some highlights

BIRDS

This checklist follows the taxonomy published in the **HBW and BirdLife International Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of the World**, as updated by www.birdsoftheworld.org

	ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th	21 st	22 ⁿ	23 ^r	24 th	25 th	26 th	27 th	
	E Family Apterygidae (Kiwis)																							
	E Southern Brown Kiwi	<i>Apteryx australis</i>																x					x	
	Family Anatidae (Swans, Geese and Ducks)																							
	I Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>					x									x	x							
	I Black Swan	<i>Cygnus atratus</i>		x		x	x			x		x				x	x			x				x
	E Paradise Shelduck	<i>Tadorna variegata</i>	x		x				x			x				x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
	E Blue Duck	<i>Hymenolaimus malacorhynchus</i>							x													x		
	Pacific Black Duck	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>							x			x				x	x				x	x	x	
	I Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>					x				x					x								
	Grey Teal	<i>Anas gracilis</i>			x												x							
	E Brown Teal	<i>Anas chlorotis</i>		x																				
	E New Zealand Scaup	<i>Aythya novaeseelandiae</i>					x				x	x					x				x	x		
	Family Odontophoridae (New World Quails)																							
	I California Quail	<i>Lophortyx californica</i>			x	x																		
	Family Phasianidae (Pheasants)																							
	I Wild Turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopava</i>							x															
	I Ring-necked Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>			x	x	x		x															
	I Brown Quail	<i>Synoicus ypsilophorus</i>		x																				
	Family Columbidae (Pigeons)																							
	I Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x					x	
	E New Zealand Pigeon	<i>Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae</i>	x	x	x	x	x		x	x						x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x

Aotearoa New Zealand 2026: trip report and species lists

	ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th	21 st	22 ⁿ	23 ^r	24 th	25 th	26 th	27 th
	Family Rallidae (Rails and Crakes)																						
E	Weka	<i>Gallirallus australis</i>									x	x							x		x		
	Buff-banded Rail	<i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>	x																				
	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>													x								
E	South Island Takahe	<i>Notornis hochstetteri</i>																			x		
	Australasian Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio melanotus</i>	x		x	x	x		x	x								x				x	
	Family Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)																						
	Pied Stilt	<i>Himantopus leucocephalus</i>				x									x								x
E	Black Stilt	<i>Himantopus novaezelandiae</i>													x	x							
	Family Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)																						
E	South Island Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus finschi</i>				x											x						x
E	Variable Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus unicolor</i>	x	x														x	x	x			x
	Family Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)																						
	Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>				x																	
	Masked Lapwing	<i>Vanellus miles</i>	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
E	Double-banded Plover	<i>Anarhynchus bicinctus</i>				x											x						
E	Wrybill	<i>Anarhynchus frontalis</i>				x																	
E	Red-breasted Dotterel	<i>Anarhynchus obscurus</i>	x	x																			
	Family Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and allies)																						
	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>				x																	x
	Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>				x																	
	Family Stercorariidae (Skuas)																						
	Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasitica</i>								x													
	Family Laridae (Gulls, Terns and Skimmers)																						
	Silver Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae</i>	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	
E	Black-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus bulleri</i>									x	x			x		x			x		x	
	Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>				x																	

Aotearoa New Zealand 2026: trip report and species lists

	ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th	21 st	22 ⁿ	23 ^r	24 th	25 th	26 th	27 th
E	Black-fronted Tern	<i>Chlidonias albostratus</i>											X		X	X	X	X			X	X	
E	White-fronted Tern	<i>Sterna striata</i>	X	X	X					X				X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Family Podicipedidae (Grebes)																							
E	New Zealand Dabchick	<i>Poliiocephalus rufopectus</i>					X																
	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>													X	X	X						
Family Spheniscidae (Penguins)																							
E	Yellow-eyed Penguin	<i>Megadyptes antipodes</i>																	X				
	Little Penguin	<i>Eudyptula minor</i>								X									X	X		X	
Family Diomedidae (Albatrosses)																							
E	Northern Royal Albatross	<i>Diomedea sanfordi</i>																					X
E	Southern Royal Albatross	<i>Diomedea epomorpha</i>												X					X				X
E	Buller's Albatross	<i>Thalassarche bulleri</i>																	X				
	White-capped Albatross	<i>Thalassarche cauta</i>								X					X			X	X	X			
E	Salvin's Albatross	<i>Thalassarche salvini</i>													X								
Family Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)																							
	Northern Giant Petrel	<i>Macronectes halli</i>													X								
	Cape Petrel	<i>Daption capense</i>													X				X	X			
E	Mottled Petrel	<i>Pterodroma inexpectata</i>																		X			
	Fairy Prion	<i>Pachyptila turtur</i>								X													
	White-chinned Petrel	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>													X								
E	Buller's Shearwater	<i>Ardenna bulleri</i>							X					X									
	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Ardenna grisea</i>							X									X	X	X		X	
E	Hutton's Shearwater	<i>Puffinus huttoni</i>												X									
E	Fluttering Shearwater	<i>Puffinus gavius</i>							X									X	X				
	Common Diving Petrel	<i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i>																X		X			
Family Sulidae (Gannets and Boobies)																							
	Australasian Gannet	<i>Morus serrator</i>		X	X					X													

Aotearoa New Zealand 2026: trip report and species lists

	ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th	21 st	22 ⁿ	23 ^r	24 th	25 th	26 th	27 th	
	Family Phalacrocoridae (Cormorants)																							
	Little Pied Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo melanoleucos</i>									x	x			x							x	x	
	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>				x	x			x		x		x			x	x					x	
E	Spotted Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax punctatus</i>													x	x	x	x	x	x			x	
	Little Black Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>				x																		
	Pied Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>		x	x					x				x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	
E	Stewart Island Shag	<i>Leucocarbo chalconotus</i>																	x	x				
	Family Threskiornithidae (Spoonbills and Ibises)																							
	Royal Spoonbill	<i>Platalea regia</i>				x										x		x					x	
	Family Ardeidae (Hérons)																							
	White-faced Heron	<i>Egretta novaehollandiae</i>	x		x	x	x		x			x			x			x	x					
	Family Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles and Kites)																							
	Swamp Harrier	<i>Circus approximans</i>	x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	
	Family Strigidae (Owls)																							
E	Morepork	<i>Ninox novaeseelandiae</i>																						
	Family Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)																							
	Sacred Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon sancta</i>			x	x	x		x		x				x									
	Family Falconidae (Falcons)																							
E	New Zealand Falcon	<i>Falco novaeseelandiae</i>					x	x																
	Family Strigopidae (New Zealand Parrots)																							
E	Kea	<i>Nestor notabilis</i>					x	x	x														x	
E	New Zealand Kaka	<i>Nestor meridionalis</i>					x				x	x						x	x	x	x			
	Family Psittacidae (Parrots)																							
E	Red-crowned Parakeet	<i>Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae</i>		x																x				
E	Yellow-crowned Parakeet	<i>Cyanoramphus auriceps</i>					x																	
	E Family Acanthisittidae (New Zealand Wrens)																							
E	Rifleman	<i>Acanthisitta chloris</i>		x				H								x			x		H			

Aotearoa New Zealand 2026: trip report and species lists

	ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th	21 st	22 ⁿ	23 ^r	24 th	25 th	26 th	27 th
	Family Meliphagidae (Honeyeaters)																						
E	Tui	<i>Prothemadera novaeseelandiae</i>	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x						x	x	x		x
E	New Zealand Bellbird	<i>Anthornis melanura</i>		x			x		x		x	x	x			x		x	x		x		
	Family Acanthizidae (Thornbills and allies)																						
E	Grey Gerygone	<i>Gerygone igata</i>	x				x	x	x		x					x			H				
E	Family Mohouidae (Whiteheads)																						
E	Whitehead	<i>Mohoua albicilla</i>		x			x	x															
E	Yellowhead	<i>Mohoua ochrocephala</i>																		x			
E	Pipipi / Brown Creeper	<i>Mohoua novaeseelandiae</i>																		x			
	Family Artamidae (Woodswallows, Bell-Magpies and allies)																						
I	Australian Magpie	<i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>			x	x	x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	x		x			
	Family Rhipiduridae (Fantails)																						
E	New Zealand Fantail	<i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x			x	x				x			
E	Family Calleidae (Wattlebirds)																						
E	North Island Kokako	<i>Callaeas wilsoni</i>		x																			
E	North Island Saddleback	<i>Philesturnus rufusater</i>		x					x														
E	South Island Saddleback	<i>Philesturnus carunculatus</i>																		x			
E	Family Notiomystidae (Stitchbird)																						
E	Stitchbird	<i>Notiomystis cincta</i>		x					x														
	Family Petroicidae (Australasian Robins)																						
E	Tomtit	<i>Petroica macrocephala</i>							H			x				x				x		x	
E	North Island Robin	<i>Petroica longipes</i>		x			x		x			x											
E	South Island Robin	<i>Petroica australis</i>																		x		x	
	Family Alaudidae (Larks)																						
I	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>			x	x		x						x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x
	Family Megaluridae (Grassbirds)																						
E	New Zealand Fernbird	<i>Poodytes punctatus</i>						x															

Aotearoa New Zealand 2026: trip report and species lists

	ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th	21 st	22 ⁿ	23 ^r	24 th	25 th	26 th	27 th	
	Family Hirundinidae (Swallows)																							
	Welcome Swallow	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Family Zosteropidae (White-eyes)																							
	Silvereye	<i>Zosterops lateralis</i>			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x								
	Family Sturnidae (Starlings)																							
I	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
I	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	x	x	x	x	x		x	x														
	Family Turdidae (Thrushes)																							
I	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x					x			x		x	x	
I	Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>																				x	x	
	Family Prunellidae (Accentors)																							
I	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>			x		x	x	x		x						x			x				
	Family Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)																							
I	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Family Motacillidae (Pipits and Wagtails)																							
E	New Zealand Pipit	<i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>						x					x									x		
	Family Fringillidae (Finches)																							
I	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x					x	x	
I	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>				x	x	x	x	x					x									
I	Redpoll	<i>Carduelis cabaret</i>						x	x														x	
I	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	x			x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x		x				x	x	
	Family Emberizidae (Buntings)																							
I	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citronella</i>					x	x					x		x	x	x	x						
	MAMMALS																							
I	Brush-tailed Possum	<i>Trichosurus vulpecula</i>	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	X	D	D	D	D	D	D
I	Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>			D		D																	
I	Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>				X	X	X	X	X	X	X				x	X							

Aotearoa New Zealand 2026: trip report and species lists

	ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th	21 st	22 ⁿ	23 ^r	24 th	25 th	26 th	27 th	
I	Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>														D	X							
I	Polecat/Ferret	<i>Mustela putorius</i>														D								
	New Zealand Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus forsteri</i>											X	X	X					X				
E	New Zealand Sea Lion	<i>Neophoca hookeri</i>																	X		x	x		
	Dusky Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus obscurus</i>												X										
E	Hector's Dolphin	<i>Cephalorhynchus hectori</i>												X									x	

	ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th	21 st	22 ⁿ	23 ^r	24 th	25 th	26 th	27 th	
	BUTTERFLIES																							
	Family Lycaenidae (gossamer-winged butterflies)																							
E	Canterbury Alpine Boulder Copper	<i>Lycaena tama</i>														X								
	Family Nymphalidae (brush-footed butterflies)																							
E	Common Tussock	<i>Argyrophenga antipodum</i>														X								
	Monarch	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>			X				X						X									
	Family Pieridae (whites and sulphurs)																							
I	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	x	x	x			x	x				x	x	x									

	ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th	21 st	22 ⁿ	23 ^r	24 th	25 th	26 th	27 th	
	MISCELLANY																							
	New Zealand Longfin Eel	<i>Anguilla dieffenbachii</i>									x													

thank you for travelling with us

www.wildlife-travel.co.uk

01954 713575

wildlifetravel@wildlifebcn.org

 [/WildlifeTravel.UK](https://www.facebook.com/WildlifeTravel.UK)

 [@wildlifetraveller](https://www.instagram.com/wildlifetraveller)

 [@wildlifetraveller](https://www.twitter.com/wildlifetraveller)

The Manor House, Broad Street, Great Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6DH