

Birds in the Abel Tasman National Park

Endemic and native birds are an important part of a balanced, healthy ecosystem. They pollinate and disperse the seeds of plants, spread nutrients and keep populations of insects and other living things stable. Endemic and native birds are a treasure of our National Park. Although the birds have been categorised below into habitats, some birds are found in multiple locations. See the bird species identification pages to find out more about each one!

Forest and mountain

Tūī, korimako/bellbird, pīwakawaka/fantail, kererū/NZ wood pigeon, tauhou/silvereye, riroriro/grey warbler, kākā, kākāriki/yellow crowned parakeet, ngirungiru/tomtit, tieke/saddleback, titipounamu/rifleman, toutouwai/NZ bush robin, kārearea/NZ falcon & weka.

Sea and shore

Tōrea tai/variable oyster catcher, tīti/sooty shearwater, kororā/little blue penguin, tarāpunga/red-billed gull, tākapu/australasian gannet, pārekareka/spotted shag, pakahā/fluttering shearwater & karoro/black-backed gull, pied shag, tūturiwhatu/banded dotterel, Moho pererū/banded rail & kōtare/kingfisher.

Wetland and river

Whio/blue duck, pāteke/brown teal, pūtakitaki/paradise shelduck & pūkeko.



Photo: Pāteke sign Awaroa, fernphotos.com, Ruth Bollongino, Project Janszoon



Kākā



Habitat

Kākā are found in native podocarp and beech forests. They are also seen in urban environments around city sanctuaries such as Zealandia in Wellington. You may see or hear them in the upper reaches of the Abel Tasman National Park.

Diet

Kākā consume seeds, fruit, nectar, sap, honeydew and tree-dwelling, especially wood-boring, invertebrates.

Threats

Habitat destruction, lack of food taken through browsing and competition (honeydew, mistletoe) & predation by stoats, rats and possum.

Lifespan

27 years in the wild or 42 years in captivity!

Breeding

Nests are generally in tree cavities over 5 metres above the ground. Breeding season starts in spring. They lay 1-8 eggs in a clutch taking 20 days to hatch and can lay 2 clutches a season. The female only incubates the egg but is fed by the male throughout the breeding season.

Behaviour

Kākā are generally heard before they are seen. When flying above the forest canopy, you may hear a harsh, repeated, rhythmic “ka-aa” and a harsh grating “kraak” alarm call when disturbed - along with a variety of loud, musical whistles. Otherwise, as conspicuous as they can be when in a group, often the only thing to betray their presence is the sound of wood or seed fragments dropped by the bird as it forages.

Fun fact - In 2015 Project Janszoon and DOC began releasing kākā into Abel Tasman National Park, with plans to release and monitor up to 100 kākā in the future.

Kākāriki

Yellow crowned parakeet



Habitat

They prefer tall, unbroken forest and scrub. There were once flocks of kākāriki in the Abel Tasman National Park and have just started being reintroduced back there.

Diet

Seeds, fruits, buds, flowers and invertebrates.

Threats

Kākāriki are preyed on by stoats, rats and possums, particularly while they are nesting and roosting in holes.

Lifespan

Unknown.

Breeding

They are mostly summer breeders, but when food is abundant they can breed throughout the year and raise multiple broods. They nest in holes in trees – mostly knot holes in large trees up to 32 m off the ground. The 2-9 eggs are laid on to rotten wood; the female alone incubates, but the male remains attentive, and feeds the female by regurgitation near the nest.

Behaviour

Kākāriki spend most of their time high in trees eating. They occasionally come down to the forest floor to eat seeds and to bathe. They are strong fliers and sometimes fly high above the canopy. When breeding, they associate in pairs but at other times they can form large flocks.

Fun fact - Around 50 Kākāriki have been released into the Abel Tasman National Park since 2014. Their characteristic chattering can be heard in the upper reaches of the park.

Kārearea

NZ Falcon



Habitat

Dense forests and open habitats. You may see them in open, cleared forest in the Abel Tasman National Park such as Canaan Downs and Hadfields Clearing.

Diet

They hunt live prey, attacking and grasping with their sharp talons and killing with a quick but powerful bite to the neck. They are capable of catching prey much larger than themselves. Their diet includes a range of animals including insects, mammals, lizards and many birds.

Threats

Predation by cats, mustelids, hedgehogs, rats, possum, pigs, habitat destruction, electrocution and collisions with cars & windows.

Breeding

Kārearea do not build nests, instead it makes a scrape on the ground under a rocky outcrop or in an epiphyte in a forest tree to lay its eggs. They lay 1-4 eggs taking 33 days to hatch.

Breeding begins late August. Both male and female care for the chicks although the male does most of the hunting.

Behaviour

Capable of speeds over 100km/h. They often hunt from a perch $\frac{3}{4}$ up a tree but also hunt along habitat edges or surprise prey by contour-flying close to the ground. Home-range size differs between habitats but is around 9 km² in pine forest.

Fun fact - Males are approximately a third smaller than females.

Kawau pāteketeke

NZ King Shag



Habitat

Low rock plateaus, steep rock faces or rock ridges. They feed at sea on bottom dwelling species. The first recording of a Kawau pāteketeke in the Abel Tasman National Park was on January 1st, 2015 on Adele Island. They are mingling with Spotted Shags on exposed seaward rocks on Adele Island.

Diet

All the preferred prey items are bottom-dwelling species, sole, flounder, perch, cod, pilchard, triple fin and spotty. This highlights the king shag's deep diving abilities and dependence on a healthy sea-bed environment in deep waters.

Threats

Adverse weather events, decrease in water quality impacting food source and/or causing toxic algal blooms that may directly or indirectly kill individuals. Set-nets are also a threat to these birds.

Lifespan

Unknown.

Breeding

Most breeding activity occurs during winter. Nests are platforms of sticks and seaweed, cemented with guano. Unknown incubation period.

Behaviour

They are difficult to study due to their inaccessible nesting sites and sensitivity to disturbance. However, about 90% of feeding birds are recorded foraging in water depths down to 50 m.

Fun fact - Kawau pāteketeke are rarely seen in the Abel Tasman National Park but spotted in 2015 & 2016 by Abel Tasman Eco Tours owner, who took the photo above.

Kererū

NZ Wood Pigeon



Habitat

Kererū inhabit a wide variety of forest types, podocarp, beech and exotic. They also occur in farmland shelterbelts, urban parks, and rural and suburban gardens. They can be seen on Adele Island and bays such as Anchorage and Torrent Bay in the Abel Tasman.

Diet

Foods include buds, leaves, flowers and fruit from a wide variety species, both native and exotic. Also, strawberry fungus and ground vegetation such as clover and other herbs.

Threats

Rats, stoats, cats and possums eat their eggs and young; stoats and cats will also attack and kill adult kererū. Possum also compete for food (leaves, flowers, fruit) and devastate trees by consuming new shoots. Forest clearance and poaching, electrocution and collisions with vehicles are also threats to its survival.

Lifespan

21 years.

Breeding

The nest is a platform of dead twigs, and a single egg is laid which takes 28 days to hatch. Kererū have been recorded breeding in all months, but most eggs are laid in September-April. When fruit is readily available, pairs are able to have overlapping nesting attempts.

Behaviour

Kererū are able to travel between suburbia, remnant forest patches, extensive tracts of native forest and other habitats in their quest for seasonally available foods.

Fun fact - Since the extinction of the moa, the kererū are one of only two bird species that are big enough to swallow large fruit, such as those of karaka, miro, tawa and taraire, and disperse the seed over long distances.

Korimako

Bellbird



Habitat

Korimako live in native forest where there is diverse vegetation. They also enjoy urban areas, especially if there is bush nearby. They can be seen anywhere in the Abel Tasman.

Diet

With their brush-like tongue reaching deeply into flowers, korimako mainly feed on nectar in beech forests. They also take honeydew from beech scale insects on beech trees & insects and spiders from tree trunks, branches and leaves.

Threats

Predation from cats, rats and stoats. Competition from species like wasps & possum, for food such as honeydew and nectar.

Lifespan

8 years

Breeding

Bellbirds breed in spring and summer, building a loose nest of twigs and grasses & lined with feathers and fine grasses. Most nests are in a fork under dense cover, from near ground level up to more than 5m. The clutch size is typically 3-4, taking 15 days to hatch. The female incubates and both parents care for the young.

Behaviour

Bellbirds are territorial when breeding, but may leave the territory to feed at nearby sources of concentrated food, such as nectar.

Fun fact - Most New Zealanders can easily recognise the bellbird by its song, which Captain Cook described as sounding 'like small bells exquisitely tuned'.

Kororā

Little Blue Penguin



Habitat

Oceans and coastal areas such as the coastline of the Abel Tasman National Park and associated islands, Adele, Fishermans and Tonga Island.

Diet

Carnivores - fish, shellfish & squid.

Threats

Predation by cats, dogs, pigs, stoats, rats & weasels, roadkill & set-nets.

Lifespan

Up to 25 years.

Breeding

Kororā nests are found close to the sea. They dig out their burrows or use holes made by other birds or animals. Sometimes they make their burrows in caves, rock crevices or under logs. They will also nest in nest boxes, pipes, stacks of wood and under buildings.

They lay 1-2 eggs sometimes twice a year. Both male and female penguins incubate the eggs, for around 36 days. They also both work together to care for the chicks.

Behaviour

Kororā spend their days at sea, sometimes travelling as far as 25km to search for food. They can dive up to 50m and swim at a speed of 8kph. They feed at sea either on their own or in small groups. They gather in small groups or 'rafts' to come to shore at dusk. They are most vulnerable to predators as chicks or when they must stay ashore during their 'moult' which lasts for 2 weeks. Moulting is when the penguins lose all their feathers at the same time.

Fun fact - Kororā is the world smallest penguin!

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Kōtare

Kingfisher



Habitat

A wide range of forest, river margins, farmland, lakes estuaries and rocky coastlines; anywhere where there is water or open country with adjacent elevated perches. Along the Abel Tasman coastline they can be seen foraging on estuarine flats, or in the upper reaches of the park nesting.

Diet

Invertebrates and vertebrates & small crabs. A range of tadpoles, freshwater crayfish and small fish. Insects such as cicadas, beetles, stick insects and wētā along with spiders and small vertebrates, including lizards, mice and small birds. Prey are swallowed whole and pellets of indigestible remains are regurgitated.

Threats

Kōtare are occasionally caught by cats, and many are killed or stunned by flying into window glass.

Lifespan

Unknown.

Breeding

Nest sites are in a wide range of trees sites, cliffs, banks and cuttings. Mating occurs in early September with nest building or refurbishment in October. Second clutches can be laid as late as February. 3-7 eggs are in a clutch which incubate for 21 days.

Behaviour

They are most conspicuous when roosting on powerlines along estuaries or coastal roads. Kōtare will use a wide range of perches, including washing lines, fences stacked rocks etc. generally more than two metres above the ground.

Fun fact - Visitors to the Abel Tasman National Park may identify the Kōtare by the loud and unmusical 'kek-kek-kek' territorial call.

Mātātā

Fernbird



Habitat

Mātātā live in dense wetland vegetation throughout New Zealand. In the Abel tasman, they are heard in the wetland at Hadfields clearing, by Awaroa and at Totaranui.

Diet

Mātātā are omnivores. They eat insects, spiders and other small animals. Occasionally, they eat seeds and fruit. They also catch blow flies on sleeping sea-lions!

Threats

Predation by cats, dogs, pigs, stoats and weasels. Wetland drainage.

Lifespan

6 ½ years.

Breeding

Mātātā weave a deep feather-lined cup of fine grass or leaves. They build their nest in thick vegetation, usually more than one metre above the ground or water. They lay 3-4 eggs taking 12-15 days to hatch. Both male and female incubate the eggs and care for the young.

Behaviour

Mātātā are rarely due to their secretive behaviour and excellent camouflage. They are poor fliers so generally scramble through the thick vegetation.

Fun fact - Mātātā have a strong smell which makes them easy targets for dogs that have been trained for game hunting.

Moho pererū

Banded Rail



Habitat

Mangroves, salt-marshes, the dry edges of freshwater wetlands and rush-covered pasture. You may spot one at the entrance of the Abel Tasman National Park while walking across the Marahau estuary boardwalk.

Diet

Moho pererū consume snails, crabs, insects, worms and spiders. They also feed on dead fish, seeds and fruit when available.

Threats

Habitat clearance & drainage. Predation by weka, mustelids, dogs, cats & rats.

Lifespan

Unknown.

Breeding

Moho pererū breed in spring and summer, constructing a rough platform of rush and reed fragments. 4-6 eggs and are incubated for 19-25 days.

Behaviour

Moho pererū are reluctant but strong fliers that can travel considerable distances, mainly at night. They are rarely seen, as they are well-camouflaged and remain under the cover of wetland vegetation, although their footprints are often seen.

Fun fact - Moho pererū are a potential indicator of wetland health because they are dependent on the presence of high quality and ecologically diverse habitats and rich food supplies.

Pāteke

Brown Teal



Habitat

Pāteke have a wide range of habitats including wet forests, extensive and occluded swamps, slow-flowing streams, lakes and estuaries. Also in margins of small streams that retain overhanging vegetation. If you are at Hadfields Clearing in the Abel Tasman, you are likely to see these beautiful birds there.

Diet

Pāteke do most of their feeding at night. Their diet is diverse - invertebrates, fungi, and terrestrial and freshwater vegetation. Seeds from sedges, clover leaves, cased caddisfly larvae, beetles, caterpillars, moths and earthworms. They also extract flesh from cockles and small mussels. Pāteke have been observed eating leaves of various wetland plants.

Threats

Predation from introduced mammals especially cats, native predators such as pūkeko, habitat loss (through wetland drainage, forest clearance, and estuary reclamation), hunting, road kill, dry weather conditions which reduce food abundance and competition and hybridisation with mallard ducks.

Lifespan

21 years (captivity).

Breeding

Breeding season starts in July. Pāteke lay 3-9 eggs which take around 28 days to hatch. They nest on the ground in a hollow, their nest made with intertwined vegetation, often wedged deep into base of sedge, grass clumps or in a fern.

Behaviour

They are fiercely territorial and generally occur in a single flock and numerous widely dispersed pairs. In a coastal environment they are more active during a low tide.

Fun fact - As at 2018, close to 92 Pāteke have been reintroduced into the Abel Tasman National Park and they have already started breeding.

Pīwakawaka

Fantail



Habitat

Native forest blocks, small forest patches, scrubland, exotic plantations, farm shelterbelts, orchards, and well-treed suburban parks and gardens. They can be seen anywhere in the Abel Tasman.

Diet

Pīwakawaka mainly eat small invertebrates, such as moths, flies, beetles and spiders.

Threats

Pīwakawaka is one of the few native forest bird species that has coped reasonably well with the extensive conversion of lowland native forest to farmland. However, nesting adults, eggs and chicks are not immune from being preyed upon by introduced mammalian pests, particularly by ship rats.

Lifespan

5 years.

Breeding

Breeding varies with location and weather conditions. 2-5 eggs are laid, with both adults taking turns on the nest through the approximately 14 day incubation period. The nest is constructed of fine materials (mosses, dried rotten wood fibres, hair, dried grasses, fern scales) tightly woven with cobwebs.

Behaviour

When searching for prey, pīwakawaka often flick their wings and fan their tails, probably to frighten hidden prey into movement so that they can be detected. They use their broad tails to change direction quickly while hunting for insects and can hop around upside-down amongst tree ferns and foliage to pick insects from the underside of leaves.

Fun fact - They have a strong association with foraging tīeke, gleaning invertebrates that have been disturbed.

Department of Conservation, *te papa atawhai*, NZ Birds Online. Photo credit: fernphotos.com, Ruth Bollongino, Project Janszoon

Poaka

Pied stilt



Habitat

All kinds of wetlands from brackish estuaries and saltmarshes to freshwater lakes, swamps and braided rivers. Keep an eye out for them in places such as Marahau and the Awaroa estuary.

Diet

Their main foods are invertebrates – terrestrial insects and worms when feeding on land, and aquatic insects and larvae when feeding in ponds, swamps and estuaries.

Threats

Poaka are numerous and not considered threatened in New Zealand. However they are not immune to habitat destruction, poor water quality and attack by introduced mammals.

Lifespan

Unknown.

Breeding

Both parents build the nest on the ground near water, often in a damp situation, and usually surrounded by or next to water. It may be built up to a few centimetres high with mud, vegetation and debris from nearby. Both adults incubate the 3-4 eggs, which hatch after 25 days.

Behaviour

Poaka tend to stay in groups throughout the year. They feed and roost together in what can become large and noisy flocks. They often associate with other waders – feeding and roosting alongside and flying with birds such as oystercatchers and godwits.

Fun fact - They are believed to have been in New Zealand since the early 19th century, with the main growth in population from about 1870-1940.

Tākapu

Australasian Gannet



Habitat

Tākapu nest in dense colonies on coastal rocks and islands, preferring flat ground over cliff ledges. You will see them in open waters all along the coast of the Abel Tasman.

Diet

Their main diet is fish, particularly pilchards, Australian anchovies, barracouta, garfish, mackerel and horse mackerel.

Threats

Lack of food supply.

Lifespan

Greater than 25 years.

Breeding

Breeding season starts in winter and each pair will lay one egg. Tākapu can only incubate a single egg which will take 45 days to hatch. A replacement egg can be laid within 4 weeks if the first egg is lost. Both parents incubate the egg and care for the chick.

Behaviour

Fledglings from New Zealand fly directly to Australia, and typically do not return to their home colonies until their third year. They are known for their torpedo-like plunge dive, which is a spectacular sight.

Fun fact - Decoy birds and a speaker system have been fixed to a site at Separation Point to encourage Tākapu to join an already 'established' site!

Department of Conservation, *te papa atawhai*, NZ Birds Online. Photo credit: Chris Golding

Tārapunga

Red-billed Gull



Habitat

Tārapunga are found in most coastal locations throughout New Zealand. They are also commonly found in towns, scavenging on human refuse and offal from fish and meat processing works. Tārapunga are ubiquitous and seen on most beaches in the Abel Tasman.

Diet

Earthworms, small fish, small invertebrates and kelp flies. They are dependent upon an abundant and regular supply of the surface-swarming krill for successful breeding. Human sources such as handouts in towns or cities, offal being discarded from fishing boats and garbage at rubbish dumps.

Threats

A major threat to breeding birds is predation from introduced predators such as cats, ferrets, rats and stoats. Climate-induced fluctuation in the availability of krill.

Lifespan

30 years.

Breeding

Breeding season starts in September. Nests are well developed and consist of grass, seaweed or twigs. The clutch size is normally two eggs which hatch after 21-25 days.

Behaviour

At most colonies, especially the largest, adults and chicks return to the same colony in which they previously bred or were hatched.

Fun fact - In a Kaikoura study, approximately 83% of pairs retain partners from one season to the next. The longest period that a pair remained together was 17 years.

Department of Conservation, *te papa atawhai*, NZ Birds Online. Photo credit: fernphotos.com, Ruth Bollongino, Project Janszoon

Tauhou

Silvereye or waxeye



Habitat

Urban areas, farmlands, orchards and all native and exotic forests and scrublands, including scrubby edges of wetlands. They can be seen anywhere in the Abel Tasman.

Diet

Tauhou are omnivorous and eat a range of small insects such as aphids, caterpillars and flies, also spiders, gleaned from shrubs and trees. They eat a range of small and large fruits, nectar of native and exotic plants and they visit bird feeders more than any other species in NZ voraciously feeding on fat and lard, especially in winter.

Threats

Cats, rats and stoats are as great an enemy to tauhou as they are to other native birds.

Lifespan

9 years.

Breeding

Nesting starts in August when delicate cup nests are woven into small, outermost branches and comprising moss, lichen, small fine twigs, hair, spider web and thistledown. 2 or 3 clutches may be raised in a season with 2-5 eggs per clutch. Eggs take 10-12 days to hatch.

Behaviour

One of New Zealand's most abundant and widespread bird species. It is an active, mobile species that moves about frequently, including making sea crossings.

Fun fact - tauhou is a māori word, which means "stranger" or more literally, "new arrival".

Tīeke

Saddleback



Habitat

Coastal forest and regenerating native forest, and occur at lower densities in mature tall native forest. In the Abel Tasman, Tīeke are only found on Adele Island at this stage.

Diet

Predominantly invertebrates, tīeke use their long, sharp bill to pick through and toss aside leaf litter, pry apart and probe trees and rotting wood, and strip bark off of trees and tree-ferns. They also take fruit and nectar.

Threats

Tīeke are extremely vulnerable to introduced mammalian predators such as ship rats and stoats due to their tendency to nest, forage and roost on or low to the ground.

Lifespan

10 years.

Breeding

The female builds a cup-shaped nest in cavities of mature native trees such as southern rata, cavities under banks, in overturned roots of trees, inside derelict buildings, in the crown of tree-ferns, or in dense epiphytes and shrubs. 2 eggs are incubated by the female only, which take about 20 days.

Behaviour

Tīeke are poor fliers, and pairs are often seen noisily foraging together on the forest floor or quickly bounding between branches.

Fun fact - Tīeke were released onto Adele Island in 2014.

Tīti pounamu

Rifleman



Habitat

Predominantly mature forest, especially beech, kauri, kāmahī and podocarp forest. Titi pounamu can be seen on both the Abel Tasman coast and inland parts of the park.

Diet

Exclusively insectivorous, feeding on a large variety of small invertebrates, particularly beetles, spiders and moth species (both adults and caterpillars).

Threats

Habitat clearance initially, compounded by the impacts of introduced pest species - particularly stoats.

Lifespan

8 years.

Breeding

Titi pounamu breed from August through to February. They build enclosed spherical nests within existing cavities. They lay 2-5 eggs which take about 20 days to hatch.

Behaviour

They live in family neighbourhoods and are often seen in cooperative groups which raise broods together. They typically move through the forest using short flights, mainly from canopy to canopy.

Fun fact - Its name is derived from the males green plumage - NZ infantry riflemen wore green coats and pounamu is the Maori word for greenstone.

Department of Conservation, *te papa atawhai*, NZ Birds Online. Photo credit: wikipedia commons.

Tōrea tai

Variable Oystercatcher



Habitat

Sandy beaches, sand spits, and in dunes, but will use a wide variety of coastal habitat types, including shell banks, rocky shorelines, and less often gravel beaches. They will roost on sandbars in the Abel Tasman or elsewhere above the high tide.

Diet

A wide range of invertebrates, including molluscs, crustaceans, and worms. They favour bivalve molluscs (e.g. mussels, tuatua, cockles) when these are available; these are opened either by pushing the tip of the bill between shells and twisting, or by hammering.

Threats

Habitat and nest destruction by dogs, humans and flooding. Predation by mammals and birds. Pollution such as old fishing line and plastics.

Lifespan

At least 30 years.

Breeding

Nests are normally simple scrapes in the sand and the 2–3 eggs are laid from October onwards. Incubation is shared and takes about 28 days.

Behaviour

Tōrea tai are often highly aggressive towards people close to nests or chicks, dive-bombing (sometimes making contact) and screeching. Unlike most shorebirds, Tōrea tai feed their young.

Fun fact - Tōrea tai have been heard to be referred to as 'carrot nose'!

Toutouwai

New Zealand Robin



Habitat

Mature forest, scrub and exotic plantations, particularly those that are fairly mature with an open under-storey. Their friendly presence can be seen at higher altitudes in the Abel Tasman, as well as closer to the coast.

Diet

Invertebrates, and large prey items include earthworms, cicadas, stick insects, wētā and slugs. Also small ripe fruit in summer and autumn.

Threats

Forest clearance and predation by introduced mammals such as cats, stoats, possum and rats.

Lifespan

16 years.

Breeding

Nesting starts in July. Only females incubate the 2-4 eggs which will hatch after 18 days. The female builds the nest which is a woven cup, while her mate brings her food 2-3 times per hour.

Behaviour

Toutouwai use a variety of activities to flush hidden or camouflaged prey, such as foot trembling, wing-flicking and tail-flicking. Occasionally they capture relatively large prey, which are killed, dismembered, and some portions are often cached.

Fun fact - In 2016, around 50 toutouwai were translocated from Adele Island to Pitt Head.

Department of Conservation, *te papa atawhai*, NZ Birds Online. Photo credit: fernphotos.com, Ruth Bollongino, Project Janszoon

Tūī



Habitat

Tūī are found in native forest and scrub (sometimes in exotic forests), and in rural gardens, stands of flowering kōwhai and gums, and in suburban parks and gardens. They are one of the most common birds in the Abel Tasman National Park.

Diet

Nectar, fruit and in the breeding season large invertebrates such as cicadas and stick insects. They also enjoy sugar-water feeders in gardens.

Threats

Possum, rats, mustelids, feral cats and habitat destruction.

Lifespan

12 years +

Breeding

The nest, built by the female, is a rough bulky structure of twigs and sticks, lined with fine grasses, high in the canopy or subcanopy. They lay 2-4 eggs in a clutch which take about 14 days to hatch. Breeding season starts in September.

Behaviour

Tūī play a very important role in the dynamics of New Zealand forests because they are one of the most common pollinators of flowering plants, and also disperse the seeds of trees with medium-sized fruits. They vigorously chase other birds away from their feeding territory with loud whirring wings.

Fun fact - Like all birds tūī have 2 voice boxes which allows a large range of sounds - some inaudible to the human ear. They can also mimick other birds!

Weka



Habitat

Weka occur in a wide variety of habitats, from the coastline to above the tree-line, including wetlands, rough pasture, shrubland, and native and plantation forests. They are now being seen throughout the Abel Tasman National Park.

Diet

Weka are omnivorous, and are both scavengers and predators. They consume a wide variety of fruit and invertebrates, also eggs, lizards, small mammals and birds, and carrion.

Threats

Starvation during droughts, and predation by mustelids, especially ferrets. Weka are often killed by uncontrolled dogs.

Lifespan

11-19 years

Breeding

The nest is a woven cup of fine grass or sedge leaves in dense vegetation, usually under an object or within a burrow with very little head space. Clutch size is typically 2-4 eggs. The female does most incubation (25 days) between early morning and late afternoon and the male does the rest, and most of the parental care.

Behaviour

Weka are flightless, charismatic birds that are often attracted to human activity. Weka are usually heard, not seen, although some birds, usually those living near farms or tramping huts, get a reputation for pilfering crops, food and other small objects.

Fun fact - After disappearing in the Abel Tasman National Park in the 80's & 90's, weka have made a come-back. They were reintroduced at Totaranui in 2006.

Whio

Blue duck



Habitat

Whio are a key indicator of healthy rivers and streams. They require stable river channels with a coarse riverbed, high water clarity, narrow stream/river widths, shallow river margins, pool and riffle sequences and forested river margins. In the Abel Tasman, Whio have been seen around Falls river, Torrent river and the Wainui River.

Diet

It is almost exclusively freshwater invertebrates. During periods of prolonged high river levels, the birds scrape at silt-laden rocks consuming silt and periphyton.

Threats

Nesting females are especially vulnerable to mammalian predators, particularly stoats and possums, while rats and weka have been implicated in nest and egg destructions.

Lifespan

9 years (female) 13 years (male).

Breeding

Nests are generally close to the river edge and well hidden from above. Sites include riverside caves, holes in river banks, at bases of fern clumps or beneath fallen trees.

Nesting starts in late August producing 3-8 eggs which incubate for 35 days.

Behaviour

Whio are generally encountered year-round as territorial pairs and once established, the territory is generally held for life.

Fun fact - Whio is an iconic back-country species, and features on the NZ \$10 note.