

Significant Ecological Estuarine Area Assessment Sheet for Wading and Aquatic Birds

Name/Area: North Kaipara Harbour

Summary:

The North Kaipara Harbour covers a very large and diverse area of dunes, tidal flats, sub-tidal areas and channels, and intricate arms of the harbour, many of them fringed by mangroves, saltmarsh and other wetlands. It includes the tidal reaches of the Wairoa, Arapaoa and Otamatea Rivers and associated creeks, some of which provide important feeding areas for NZ fairy tern, white heron (both CR), Australasian bittern (EN) and several species of nationally vulnerable waders, plus crakes and fernbirds. The more open parts of the North Kaipara Harbour provide extensive feeding habitat for many thousands of national and international migrant waders, including several nationally vulnerable species (refer Table below), as well as smaller numbers of some nationally endangered species, e.g. black-billed gull and black-fronted tern. Deeper waters of the outer harbour often attract seabirds that are usually more pelagic in foraging, e.g. fluttering shearwater. The North Kaipara is an internationally important site recognised by the Important Bird Area programme¹ triggered by the following species: NZ Fairy Tern; Black-billed Gull, Black Stilt, NZ Dotterel, Wrybill, South Island Pied Oystercatcher and Australasian Bittern. It is also one of the most important estuaries in Northland because of its large size and diversity of interconnected habitat sequences which attract large numbers and a wide variety of estuarine birds.

A large southern section of the Kaipara harbour and Pouto peninsula below is recognised as the North Auckland Seabird Flyway by the Important Bird Area programme as a flight path of international importance for bird conservation (see SEA General Northland Marine Values report).

Table 'Threatened' and 'At Risk' shorebird species present at North Kaipara Harbour

<i>Species Scientific Name</i>	<i>Species Common Name</i>	<i>NZ threat classification</i>		<i>Significance for species</i>
<i>Anas superciliosa</i>	Grey duck	Threatened	Nationally critical	Present, possibly hybridised
<i>Ardea modesta</i>	White heron	Threatened	Nationally critical	Nationally important feeding areas
<i>Himantopus novaezelandiae</i>	Black stilt	Threatened	Nationally critical	Rare visitor to central Kaipara feeding areas
<i>Sternula nereis davisae</i>	NZ fairy tern	Threatened	Nationally critical	Nationally important feeding areas
<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>	Australasian bittern	Threatened	Nationally endangered	Locally important sites
<i>Chlidonias albobristata</i>	Black-fronted tern	Threatened	Nationally endangered	Locally important feeding sites
<i>Larus bulleri</i>	Black-billed gull	Threatened	Nationally endangered	Locally important feeding sites
<i>Poliocephalus</i>	NZ dabchick	Threatened	Nationally	Nationally important dune

¹ Gaskin, C, 2013. Important areas for New Zealand seabirds, Part 1 – North Island. Compilation for Forest & Bird / BirdLife International.

<i>rufopectus</i>			vulnerable	lake sites, rare on harbour
<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	Pied shag	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally important breeding and feeding areas
<i>Egretta sacra sacra</i>	Reef heron	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally important breeding and feeding areas
<i>Anarhynchus frontalis</i>	Wrybill	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally important feeding areas
<i>Charadrius obscurus aquilonius</i>	Northern NZ dotterel	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Nationally important breeding and feeding areas
<i>Charadrius bicinctus bicinctus</i>	Banded dotterel	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Nationally important feeding areas
<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Lesser knot	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Nationally important feeding areas
<i>Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus</i>	Red-billed gull	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally important breeding and feeding areas
<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	Caspian tern	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Nationally important feeding areas
<i>Eudyptula minor</i>	Little blue penguin	At Risk	Declining	Locally important breeding and feeding areas
<i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>	Banded rail	At Risk	Declining	Locally important breeding and feeding areas
<i>Haematopus finschi</i>	NZ pied oystercatcher	At Risk	Declining	Nationally important feeding areas
<i>Himantopus himantopus leucocephalus</i>	Pied stilt	At Risk	Declining	Nationally important feeding areas
<i>Limosa lapponica bauera</i>	Eastern bar-tailed godwit	At Risk	Declining	Nationally important feeding areas
<i>Sterna striata</i>	White-fronted tern	At Risk	Declining	Nationally important feeding areas
<i>Bowdleria punctata</i>	Fernbird	At Risk	Declining	Locally important sites
<i>Haematopus unicolor</i>	Variable oystercatcher	At Risk	Recovering	Nationally important feeding areas
<i>Puffinus gavia</i>	Fluttering shearwater	At Risk	Relict	Occasionally enter harbour to feed
<i>Porzana tabuensis tabuensis</i>	Spotless crake	At Risk	Relict	Locally important sites
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae</i>	Black shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Locally important feeding areas
<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos brevirostris</i>	Little shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Locally important feeding and breeding areas
<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	Little black shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Locally important feeding and breeding areas
<i>Platalea regia</i>	Royal spoonbill	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Uncommon resident and migrant

Key references:

Dowding, J.E. 2013 [updated 2015]. New Zealand dotterel. In Miskelly, C.M. (ed.) *New Zealand Birds Online*. www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz

Heather, B.D., Robertson, H.A. 2000. The field guide to the birds of New Zealand. Auckland, Penguin.

Ismar, S.M.H. et al 2013. Foraging ecology and choice of feeding habitat in the New Zealand Fairy Tern *Sternula nereis davisae*. Bird Conservation International 24: 72 – 87.

Robertson, C.J.R., Hyvönen, P., Fraser, M.J., Pickard, C.R. 2007. *Atlas of bird distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004*. OSNZ, Wellington.

Estuary Reliability Notes and Key References

Site	Assessor	Date	Key references (see below)	Data reliability
North Kaipara	RP	Oct 2015	3, 4, 6, 14, 15	High
Mangawhai	RP	Oct 2015	1, 2, 4, 6, 13, 14	High
Waipu	RP	Oct 2015	1, 2, 6, 13,14	High
Ruakaka	RP	Oct 2015	6, 13	High
Whangarei	RP	Oct 2015	3, 6, 9, 14, 15	High
Taiharuru	RP	Oct 2015	10, 14	High
Pataua	RP	Oct 2015	10, 14	Moderate – High
Horahora	RP	Oct 2015	14, 15	Moderate – High
Ngunguru	RP	Oct 2015	6, 10, 14	High
Matapouri	RP	Oct 2015	10, 15	High
Whananaki	RP	Oct 2015	5, 14, 15	High
Whangaruru	RP	Oct 2015	5, 6, 14, 15	High
Bay of Islands	RP	Oct 2015	5, 6, 14, 15	High
Whangaroa	RP	Oct 2015	14, 15	Moderate – High
Mangonui-Taipa	RP	Oct 2015	14, 15	Moderate –High
Rangaunu	RP	Oct 2015	1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 14, 15	High
Houhora	RP	Oct 2015	3, 6, 11, 14	High
Parengarenga	RP	Oct 2015	1, 3, 6, 7, 14, 15	High
Whangape-Herekino	RP	Oct 2015	14, 15	Moderate – High
Hokianga	RP	Oct 2015	6, 8, 15	High

Key references:

1. Dowding, J.E. 2013 [updated 2015]. New Zealand dotterel. In Miskelly, C.M. (ed.) *New Zealand Birds Online*. www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz
2. Dowding, J.E., Davis, A.M., 2007. New Zealand dotterel (*Charadrius obscurus*) recovery plan, 2004–14. Threatened Species Recovery Plan 58. NZ Department of Conservation.
3. Heather, B.D., Robertson, H.A. 2000. The field guide to the birds of New Zealand. Auckland, Penguin.
4. Ismar, S.M.H. et al 2013. Foraging ecology and choice of feeding habitat in the New Zealand Fairy Tern *Sternula nereis davisae*. Bird Conservation International 24: 72 – 87.

5. O'Connor, S.M., Maloney, R.F., Pierce, R.J. 2007. Pateke (*Anas chlorotis*) Recovery Plan, 2005-10. Department of Conservation Threatened Species Recovery Plan 59. 33 p.
6. OWR 2014. Oiled wildlife response (harbour specific series). Northland Regional Council.
7. Pierce R.J. 1999. Regional patterns of migration in the banded dotterel *Charadrius bicinctus*. *Notornis* 46: 101-122.
8. Pierce R.J. 2002. Assessment of ecological effects of proposed bridges and associated roadworks at Hokianga Harbour, Northland. Wildland Consultants Contract Report No. 575.
9. Pierce R.J. 2005. General patterns of bird use of Whangarei Harbour. Wildland Consultants Report No. 1047 for Northland regional Council.
10. Pierce R.J. 2007. Options for ecological restoration of the Tutakaka Landcare Coalition (TLC) area and neighbouring areas. *Eco Oceania Ltd* report for Tutukaka Landcare Coalition.
11. Pierce, R.J., Kerr, V.C, 2004. Effects of oyster farms on estuarine avifauna at Houhora Harbour, Northland. Contract Report No. 899, Report prepared for: Department of Conservation Private Bag 841 Whangarei.
12. Pierce,R.J., Kerr,V.C., 2007. Ecological Restoration of the Taiharuru Catchment. Report prepared for the Taiharuru Catchment Group. Eco Oceania Ltd.
13. Pulham, G., Wilson, D. 2013 [updated 2015]. Fairy tern. In Miskelly, C.M. (ed.) *New Zealand Birds Online* www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz
14. Robertson, C.J.R., Hyvönen, P., Fraser, M.J., Pickard, C.R. 2007. *Atlas of bird distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004*. OSNZ, Wellington.
15. SSBI. Sites of Special Biological Significance. Department of Conservation Series, Northland.

