

Significant Ecological Estuarine Area Assessment Sheet for Wading and Aquatic Birds

Name/Area: Hokianga Harbour

Summary:

Hokianga is a moderate sized harbour located on the west coast of Northland. It has a combination of steep relief (at The Narrows) and more gentle flanking terrain, much of it farmed or with plantation forestry. There are significant areas of mangrove, saltmarsh and shrubland, and several small residential communities around the edge. Tidal flats are limited and so wader species are few and dominated by locally resident species, but white heron is also a rare but regular visitor (refer Table below). The mangrove-saltmarsh areas support Australasian bittern, banded rail, spotless crane and fernbird, while reef heron and pied shag and foraging terns and other shags are more common in the outer harbour. The ecological significance of Hokianga is Moderate-High given they do support several threatened species in representative estuarine habitat and that habitat does form reasonable sequences in places.

Table 'Threatened' and 'At Risk' shorebird species present at Hokianga 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 area
<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>	Australasian bittern	Threatened	Nationally endangered	Locally important breeding and feeding
<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	Pied shag	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally important breeding and feeding
<i>Egretta sacra sacra</i>	Reef heron	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Local breeding and feeding
<i>Charadrius obscurus aquilonius</i>	Northern NZ dotterel	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Local breeding and feeding
<i>Charadrius bicinctus bicinctus</i>	Banded dotterel	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Local feeding
<i>Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus</i>	Red-billed gull	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Local feeding
<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	Caspian tern	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Local feeding
<i>Eudyptula minor</i>	Little blue penguin	At Risk	Declining	Local feeding and breeding
<i>Haematopus finschi</i>	NZ pied oystercatcher	At Risk	Declining	Local feeding
<i>Himantopus himantopus leucocephalus</i>	Pied stilt	At Risk	Declining	Local feeding

<i>Sterna striata</i>	White-fronted tern	At Risk	Declining	Locally important feeding
<i>Bowdleria punctata</i>	Fernbird	At Risk	Declining	Nationally important breeding and feeding
<i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>	Banded rail	At Risk	Declining	Nationally important breeding and feeding
<i>Limosa lapponica baueri</i>	Eastern bar-tailed godwit	At Risk	Declining	Local feeding
<i>Haematopus unicolor</i>	Variable oystercatcher	At Risk	Recovering	Local feeding
<i>Porzana tabuensis tabuensis</i>	Spotless crake	At Risk	Relict	Local breeding and feeding
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae</i>	Black shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Locally important feeding
<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos brevirostris</i>	Little shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Local feeding
<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	Little black shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Local feeding

Key references:

Pierce R.J. 2002. Assessment of ecological effects of proposed bridges and associated roadworks at Hokianga Harbour, Northland. Wildland Consultants Contract Report No. 575.

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

Estuaries 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:

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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.