

## Significant Ecological Estuarine Area Assessment Sheet for Wading and Aquatic Birds

Name/Area: Whangaruru Harbour

### Summary:

The Whangaruru Harbour is a moderate sized harbour situated to the east of the Bay of Islands. It has variable land management and protection along the edges, some of it well-buffered comprising mangroves, saltmarsh and adjacent shrubland and forest. There are some residential areas (Whangaruru, South and North Whangaruru) on the western and north-eastern sides of the harbour. Moderate numbers of several threatened species frequent or visit the estuary, many of which breed there (refer Table below). The more significant species populations are those of Australasian bittern, pied shag, reef heron, northern NZ dotterel, fernbird, banded rail and pateke. The ecological significance of this estuary is Moderate given the local importance to some species.

**Table 'Threatened' and 'At Risk' shorebird species present at Whangaruru Harbour**

<i>Species Scientific Name</i>	<i>Species Common Name</i>	<i>NZ threat classification</i>		<i>Significance for species</i>
<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	Locally important breeding and feeding
<i>Charadrius obscurus aquilonius</i>	Northern NZ dotterel	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Local use for 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>Himantopus himantopus leucocephalus</i>	Pied stilt	At Risk	Declining	Local feeding
<i>Bowdleria punctata</i>	Fernbird	At Risk	Declining	Locally important breeding and feeding
<i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>	Banded rail	At Risk	Declining	Locally important breeding and feeding
<i>Anas chlorotis (North Island)</i>	Brown teal	At Risk	Recovering	Nationally important breeding and feeding
<i>Haematopus unicolor</i>	Variable oystercatcher	At Risk	Recovering	Local feeding
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae</i>	Black shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Local feeding
<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>	Little shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Local feeding and breeding

<i>brevirostris</i>				
<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	Little black shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Local feeding

Key references:

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. ().

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:

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