

Significant Ecological Estuarine Area Assessment Sheet for Wading and Aquatic Birds

Name/Area: Taiharuru Estuary

Summary:

The Taiharuru Estuary is a small estuary situated to the east of Whangarei Harbour. It has small areas of tidal flat and the margins are currently recovering from a long history of adjacent livestock grazing. Thus, areas of mangrove and saltmarsh are relatively small but recovering and there are some small areas of adjacent indigenous forest. Some small rocky islands are present at the harbour entrance and forested headlands along the estuary. Residential and development pressure is currently low. Low numbers of a variety of threatened species utilise the estuary mainly for feeding, including penguins, reef heron, shags and waders (refer Table below). The estuary is notable for a shag colony comprising three breeding species. Fernbirds, banded rails, Australasian bitterns and spotless crakes are present on the margins and/or in adjacent freshwater wetlands. The ecological significance of this estuary is currently high, and land management and habitat for many species is currently improving.

Table 'Threatened' and 'At Risk' shorebird species present at Taiharuru Estuary

<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	Rare resident
<i>Anarhynchus frontalis</i>	Wrybill	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Rare visitor
<i>Charadrius obscurus aquilonius</i>	Northern NZ dotterel	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally important breeding and feeding
<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Lesser knot	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally used site for feeding
<i>Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus</i>	Red-billed gull	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally important breeding and feeding
<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	Caspian tern	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Local use for feeding
<i>Eudyptula minor</i>	Little blue penguin	At Risk	Declining	Locally important breeding and feeding
<i>Haematopus finschi</i>	NZ pied oystercatcher	At Risk	Declining	Locally use for feeding
<i>Himantopus himantopus leucocephalus</i>	Pied stilt	At Risk	Declining	Local use for feeding
<i>Sterna striata</i>	White-fronted tern	At Risk	Declining	Local use for feeding

<i>Bowdleria punctata</i>	Fernbird	At Risk	Declining	Locally important saltmarsh populations
<i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>	Banded rail	At Risk	Declining	Locally important populations
<i>Limosa lapponica baueri</i>	Eastern bar-tailed godwit	At Risk	Declining	Local use for feeding
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae</i>	Black shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Rare visitor
<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos brevirostris</i>	Little shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Locally important breeding and feeding
<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	Little black shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Locally important breeding and feeding
<i>Platalea regia</i>	Royal spoonbill	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Rare visitor

Key references:

Pierce, R.J., Kerr, V.C. 2007. Ecological Restoration of the Taiharuru Catchment. Report prepared for the Taiharuru Catchment Group. Eco Oceania Ltd.

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
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 Tutakaka 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.