

## Ecologically Significant Marine Area Assessment Sheet for Wading and Aquatic Birds

Name/Area: Poor Knights Islands

### Summary:

The Poor Knights islands include Tawhiti Rahi, Aorangi, many small islets and the Pinnacles (High Peak Rocks and Sugarloaf) and are located approximately 10 nautical miles (18.5 kilometres) offshore from the east coast. They are characterised by steep rocky cliffs and some rock platforms backed by coastal forest.

The Poor Knights Islands are designated as a Nature Reserve and the surrounding sea as a Marine Reserve.

Seabirds present include pied shag, red-billed gull, little blue penguin, sooty shearwater, white-fronted tern, little shearwater, Pycroft's petrel, common diving petrel, fairy prion, fluttering shearwater, white-faced storm petrel, Buller's shearwater, grey ternlet, grey-faced petrel and Australasian gannet. The PKI is the breeding stronghold of Buller's shearwaters; several other seabird species also breed on the islands. Australasian gannets, though not threatened, have a large breeding colony on the Pinnacles, which is the only colony on the east coast of the North Island north of Cape Kidnappers.

### Threatened and At Risk bird species – Poor Knights Islands

<i>Species Common Name</i>	<i>Scientific Name - updated 2013</i>	<i>NZ threat classification</i>		<i>Site status/ significance NB. Specific to site</i>
Reef heron	<i>Egretta s. sacra</i>	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Possibly breeding
Pied shag	<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Possibly breeding
Red-billed gull	<i>Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus</i>	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Breeding
Sooty shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	At Risk	Declining	Breeding
Flesh-footed shearwater	<i>Puffinus carneipes</i>	At Risk	Declining	Visitor, may be breeding
Little blue penguin	<i>Eudyptula minor</i>	At Risk	Declining	Breeding
White-fronted tern	<i>Sterna striata</i>	At Risk	Declining	Breeding
Pycroft's petrel	<i>Pterodroma pycrofti</i>	At Risk	Recovering	Rare, breeding
Little shearwater	<i>Puffinus assimilis haurakiensis</i>	At Risk	Recovering	Breeding
Fairy prion	<i>Pachyptila turtur</i>	At Risk	Relict	Breeding
Common diving petrel	<i>Pelecanoides urinatrix urinatrix</i>	At Risk	Relict	Breeding
Fluttering shearwater	<i>Puffinus gavia</i>	At Risk	Relict	Breeding
NZ white-faced storm petrel	<i>Pelagodroma marina maoriana</i>	At Risk	Relict	Breeding
Grey ternlet	<i>Procelsterna cerulean albivittata</i>	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Seasonal visitor
Spotless crane	<i>Porzana t. tabuensis</i>	At Risk	Relict	Resident, breeding
Little shag	<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos brevirostris</i>	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Visitor

Buller's shearwater	<i>Puffinus bulleri</i>	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Breeding
Black-winged petrel	<i>Pterodroma nigripennis</i>	Not threatened	Not threatened	Visitor
Grey-faced petrel	<i>Pterodroma macroptera gouldi</i>	Not threatened	Regionally significant/mainland population	Breeding
Arctic skua	<i>Stercorarios parasiticus</i>	Not threatened	Migrant	Seasonal visitor offshore
Yellow-nosed mollymawk	<i>Thalassarche chlororhynchos</i>	Not threatened	Vagrant	Seasonal visitor offshore
Black-browed mollymawk	<i>Thalassarche melanophrys</i>	Not threatened	Coloniser	Seasonal visitor offshore
Short-tailed shearwater	<i>Puffinus tenuirostris</i>	Not threatened	Migrant	Seasonal visitor offshore
Australasian gannet	<i>Sula serrator</i>	Not threatened	Regionally significant	Breeding

### Assessment of Ecological Significance for birds – Coast outside Harbours and Estuaries

Bream Tail to Waipu Cove Bird Values: Assessment of Ecological Significance			Hen and Chicks Islands	Poor Knights Islands
Overall Ranking		Notes		
Representation	supports most taxa expected for habitat type		H	H
	large example of its type	1.	H	H
Rarity and Distinctiveness	supports indigenous species threatened, at risk, or uncommon, nationally or within the relevant ecological scale		H	H
	supports species endemic to the Northland-Auckland region or at distributional limits within the Northland region		M-H	M-H
	distinctive of a naturally restricted occurrence		L-M	L-M
Diversity and Pattern	high diversity of indigenous ecosystem or habitat types		M	M
	high diversity of indigenous taxa		M-H	M-H
	its composition reflects the existence of diverse natural features or ecological gradients		M	M
	contains intact ecological sequences		M-H	M-H
Ecological Context	provides or contributes to ecological linkages, networks, buffering functions	?N/A	M	M
	supports the natural functioning of freshwater or coastal ecosystems	2. ?N/A		
	supports life stages of indigenous fauna		H	H

1. Arbitrary as partly based on size of area selected for assessment
2. All could be ranked high as the areas were considered as coastal zones with connections to adjoining estuarine or freshwater wetlands.

## Coastal and offshore birds information notes and references

Site	Assessor	Date	Key references (see below)	Data reliability
Bream Tail to Waipu Cove	KH	Oct 2015	10, 14, 19	High
Bream Bay – except Waipu and Ruakaka estuaries	KH	Oct 2015	14	High
Bream Head to Taiharuru Head	KH	Oct 2015	9, 19	High
Taiharuru Head to Cape Brett, excluding estuaries (Taiharuru, Pataua, Horahora, Ngunguru, Matapouri, Whananaki, Whangaruru)	KH	Oct 2015	1	High
Cape Wiwiki to Berghan Point, excluding Whangaroa Harbour and Cavalli and Stephenson Islands	KH	Oct 2015	7, 22	High
Cavalli Island and Stephenson Islands	KH		7	High
Doubtless Bay, Rangaunu Bay, Great Exhibition Bay, excluding Rangaunu, Houhora and Parengarenga Harbours	KH	Oct 2015	4, 5	High
Ohau Point to Scott Point	KH	Oct 2015	2, 13	Moderately High
Scott Point to Maunganui Bluff	KH	Oct 2015	8, 13, 16	Moderately High
Aranga Beach to Pouto Peninsula	KH	Oct 2015	8, 21	High

### Key References and Bibliography

- 1 Booth, A. 2005. Natural areas of Whangaruru Ecological District: reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. N.Z. Dept. of Conservation, Northland Conservancy, Whangarei.
- 2 Conning, L. 1998. Natural areas of Ahipara Ecological District: Reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. Department of Conservation, Northland Conservancy, Whangarei.
- 3 Conning, L. 1999. Natural areas of Whangaroa Ecological District: Reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. N.Z. Dept. of Conservation, (Northland Conservancy), Whangarei.
- 4 Conning, L. 2002. Natural Areas of Maungataniwha Ecological District: reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. N.Z. Dept. of Conservation, Whangarei.
- 5 Conning, L. and Holland, W. 2003. Natural Areas of Aupouri Ecological District: reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. N.Z. Dept. of Conservation, Whangarei.
- 6 Conning, L., Holland, W. and Miller, N. 2004. Natural areas of Hokianga Ecological District: reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. N.Z. Dept. of Conservation, Northland Conservancy, Whangarei.

- 7 Conning, L. and Miller, N. 1999. Natural areas of Kerikeri Ecological District: reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. N.Z. Dept. of Conservation (Northland Conservancy), Whangarei.
- 8 Dowding, J.E. 2001. Natal and breeding dispersal of northern New Zealand dotterels. Conservation Advisory Science Notes 338. Department of Conservation, Wellington.
- 9 Goldwater, N. and Beadel, S. 2010. Natural areas of Manaia Ecological District: reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. N.Z. Dept. of Conservation, Northland Conservancy, Whangarei.
- 10 Goldwater, N., Graham, P., Holland, W. Beadel, S., Martin, T. and Myers, S. 2012. Natural areas of Rodney Ecological District (Northland Conservancy): Reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. New Zealand Dept. of Conservation, Northland Conservancy, Whangarei.
- 11 Heather, B.D., and Robertson, H.A. 2005. The Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand. Auckland, Penguin.
- 12 Lux, J. and Beadel, S. 2006. Natural areas of Otamatea Ecological District: reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. N.Z. Dept. of Conservation, Northland Conservancy, Whangarei.
- 13 Lux, J., Holland, W., Rate, S. and Beadel, S. 2009. Natural areas of Te Paki Ecological District: reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. N.Z. Dept. of Conservation, Northland Conservancy, Whangarei.
- 14 Lux, J., Martin, T., and Beadel, S. 2007. Natural areas of Waipu Ecological District: reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. N.Z. Dept. of Conservation, Northland Conservancy, Whangarei.
- 15 Marchant, S. & Higgins, P.J. (co-ordinating editors). 1990. Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic Birds (HANZAB).
- 16 Miller, N. and Holland, W. 2007. Natural areas of Tutamoe Ecological District: reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. N.Z. Dept. of Conservation, Northland Conservancy, Whangarei.
- 17 OWR 2014. Oiled wildlife response (harbour specific series). Northland Regional Council.
- 18 Robertson, C. J. R., Hyvonen, P., Fraser, M. J. and Pickard, C. R. 2007. Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004. Ornithological Society of New Zealand, Wellington.
- 19 Sim-Smith, C. and Kelly, M. 2009. A literature review on the Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve. N.Z: Dept. of Conservation, Northland Conservancy, Whangarei.
- 20 Smale, M.C., Clarkson, B.R., Clarkson, B.D., Floyd, C.G., Cornes, T.S., Clarkson, F. M., Gilmour, D.C., Snell, T.M. and C.M. Briggs. 2009. Natural areas of Kaipara Ecological District (Northland Conservancy). Reconnaissance Survey Report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. Dept. of Conservation, Northland Conservancy, Whangarei.
- 21 [www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz](http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz)  
© New Zealand Birds Online 2013 – Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa), The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.), New Zealand Department of Conservation
- 22 New Zealand Dotterels *Tūturiwhatu pukunui* in the Bay of Islands factsheet. 2014. Department of Conservation, Pēwhairangi/Bay of Islands Office, Kerikeri.