

Birding New Zealand: Christchurch to Queenstown

Trip Report

By Marta Curti

5-13 November 2024



One of two Keas observed at the Otira Viaduct Lookout. Photo by Marta Curti

Over 350 bird species have been recorded in New Zealand. Of these, a whopping 85 are endemic. It is also home to a number of endemic reptiles, two endemic bat species, and many endemic plants. On our 9-day tour, we observed over 90 species of birds, 33 of which were endemic, including the iconic **Southern Brown Kiwi**, **Kea**, **New Zealand Kaka**, and many more. We also learned a lot about the flora of New Zealand. We were lucky to see three species of native mammals including **New Zealand Fur Seals**, **New Zealand Sea Lion** and **Bottlenose Dolphin**. We stopped to photograph countless waterfalls, moss-covered trees, crystalline lakes, and snow topped mountains. We hiked beautiful trails and enjoyed some delicious food and great company.

Local Guide: Brent Stephenson

Tour Leader: Marta Curti

Highlights of the trip

1. Our **Kea sightings!** Our first, in the parking lot at the Devils Punchbowl trailhead.
2. Seeing two very rare shorebirds on the same day - **Black Stilt** and **Wrybill**.
3. Our penguin sightings! We saw three different species on this tour: **Yellow-eyed**, **Little**, and **Fiordland penguins**.
4. Getting fabulous views of a very cooperative **New Zealand Fernbird**, literally singing in the rain.
5. Seeing four **South Island Takahes** (3 adults and one chick) during our walk at the lovely Orokonui Ecosanctuary.
6. Getting great looks of a **Southern Brown Kiwi** foraging in the grass on our night walk on Stewart Island.
7. Our lovely walk through the forests on Ulva Island where we saw several lifers including **Weka** and the beautiful **South Island Saddleback**.
8. Observing a pair of **South Island Wrens** as they bathed in a small puddle, collected nesting materials, and hopped around the boulders.
9. Spending quality time with a pair of **Moreporks** as they perched within just a few feet from us.
10. Taking in the incredible scenery of New Zealand from waterfalls to wetlands, from stunning forests to rushing streams, and from high, snow-capped peaks to the incredible shorelines of New Zealand's beaches.



New Zealand's highest peak, Aoraki (Mount Cook). Photo by Marta Curti

Itinerary

Day 1: November 5 – Start of the Tour: Christchurch to Arthur’s Pass

We left the Christchurch airport and were on the road headed to our first destination, Arthur’s Pass National Park, just after 1 p.m. On the drive, among the lovely open fields and rolling hills, apart from the sheep and other domestic animals, we spotted some birds along the road. **Eurasian Starling**, **House Sparrow**, and **European Blackbirds** were quite common. But we also began seeing some lifers for the group - **Australian Magpie**, **Black-fronted Tern**, **Kelp Gull**, and the majestic **Swamp Harrier**.

We made a quick stop at the World Famous Sheffield Pie Shop for some tasty, savory New Zealand pies, and continued the drive to the entrance to Arthur’s Pass National Park. We pulled over for some pictures and to take in the incredible views of the river beside us, the snowcapped mountains, and a distant waterfall. We heard, but didn’t get to see a few more species including **Dunnock** and **Redpoll**. It began to drizzle as we climbed higher into the park. Our next stop at the Otira Viaduct Lookout yielded the lovely, endemic **Brown Creeper**, otherwise known as **Pipipi**. We all got great views of three individuals flitting in the bushes.

We then traveled a short distance to the Devils Punchbowl Trailhead. In the parking lot we spotted our first **Kea**! It was beneath a car feeding. After a while it came out and walked briefly around the parking lot. We were able to see it in the light and appreciate the beautiful green tones of its feathers. We continued our walk up the trail and observed a **Tomtit** perched in the open. The trail was beautiful, with a waterfall in the background, the rushing river, and the lovely forest. Brent gave us some nice lessons on some of the different trees and other plants we saw along the way. On our way back, we finally got really nice looks at a male and female **Grey Gerygone** in a tree right above us. Our last stop of the day was at Greyney’s Shelter. Here we spotted another endemic, the **South Island Robin**. We also got fabulous views of 3 **New Zealand Fantails** flying back and forth in the trees above us. We then made our way to the lodge.



One of many endemics seen on the trip, the South Island Robin. Photo by Marta Curti

We enjoyed our first dinner together and then we returned to Greyney's shelter in the hopes of hearing Greater Spotted Kiwi or Morepork. But the night was pretty quiet. After about 20 minutes we returned to our lovely hotel and turned in early for the night, resting up after a long travel day.

Day 2: November 6 – Arthurs Pass to Twizel

One of the many nice things about a New Zealand birding tour, is there is no need to wake up before dawn to get good birds. We woke up at our leisure and had time for a cup of coffee or tea from our balconies, enjoying the lovely view of the river and mountains just outside our window. After breakfast, we departed our hotel by around 8:30 a.m.

We returned to the Otira Viaduct Lookout and right away spotted two **Keas** perched on a rock, vocalizing. After a few moments, they flew across the road and landed on the opposite mountain. It was a treat to see them fly, and to note the beautiful red in their wings. Shortly after, one of the birds returned and sat on a rock for quite some time. It then flew again to the opposite mountain. What a treat. We also saw a lovely **Tomtit** in the bushes. We continued on our way, driving for



A preening Kea observed in Arthur's Pass National Park. Photo by Marta Curti

several hours, taking in the incredible scenery. On our way, while waiting for our turn to pass at a road construction site, Brent heard a falcon calling somewhere over the fields! We pulled off and scanned the sky. High above us, we were able to get our first looks at the endemic **New Zealand Falcon**, likely a female, flying high in the sky. We watched her for several minutes before she disappeared into the clouds.

After driving a ways, we stopped at Fairlies Bakehouse in the town of Fairlie, for lunch. We picked up some lovely New Zealand pies and ate lunch at the Burkes Pass Cemetery. There, we picked up some **European Goldfinches**, **Silvereyes**, and **Australian Magpies**. Our most anticipated stop of the day was at the shores of Lake Tekopo: blue water, snow-capped mountains, and some new species for the day. **Australasian Shoveler**, **Double-banded Plover**, **Southern Island**

Oystercatcher with a chick, **Pied Stilts**, a hybrid **Pied Stilt x Black Stilt**, and our main target, three **Black Stilts**, one of the world's rarest shorebirds! We also saw **Gray Teal**, **Black-billed Gulls**, **Giant** and **Little Pied cormorants**, and our first mammal, the introduced **European Rabbit**.

After an hour or so, we made our way to the top of the Mt. John Observatory. We were hoping to see Chukars along the way, but instead picked up a few **Black Swans** and several **Paradise Shelducks**. Along the Cass River (Godley's Road) we picked up another lifer for the group - two **Wrybills** running among the rocks along the river. Though we didn't get great views, we were happy to see these birds, the namesake of our guide's local company! We also saw **Silvereye**, and several **Swamp Harriers** being mobbed by **Black-fronted Terns**.

We made several other stops during our drive, including at Lake Pukaki to take in the sweeping views. We were very lucky to see New Zealand's tallest mountain Aoraki (Mt. Cook), which sits in the Southern Alps. It was covered in snow and reflected in the lake below. We then continued on to Twizel. We enjoyed a lovely dinner and turned in for the evening.

Day 3: November 7 — Twizel to Oumara

We once again started off at a reasonable hour, departing our hotel around 8:00 a.m. We drove toward Glentanner, a beautiful riverine area with dramatic views of Mt. Cook. On our way there, we spotted a new bird for the trip - the introduced **Ring necked Pheasant**. A male and a female were on a slight slope beside the road. We passed farm fields dotted with cream colored sheep, the sky was blue and the day was perfect. We stopped at a lovely riverine habitat in Glentanner. We parked the car and walked about a mile along the river. There were several highlights of our morning here (without even mentioning the stunning scenery). We got great views of a **New Zealand Falcon** as it hunted across the open areas. We saw it take off with prey in its talons and disappear into the mountains. Not too long after, it came back and we got great views as it flew low to the ground in front of us with perfect light! We picked up two **Pacific Black Ducks** for our trip list and then watched as a juvenile **Black Stilt** meandered up the stream getting closer and closer to us. While we were busy admiring this beautiful and rare shorebird, Brent spotted two **Wrybills** off in the distance. We walked a bit closer and were able to get some decent looks. But, as luck would have it, they began to come toward us and before we knew it, they were walking along the rocky shore just beside us. It was a great sighting.



One of two Wrybills seen up close in Glentanner. Photo by Marta Curti

After about an hour or so, we returned to the car and made our way toward Oumara. We made a brief stop at the High Country Salmon farm and got nice looks at a **Great Crested Grebe**. We also saw **Great** and **Little Pied cormorants**, around 40 **Black-billed Gulls** and over 60 **New Zealand Scaups** milling about. It was a fantastic stop.



New Zealand Scaup. Photo by Marta Curti

We then continued on to a local restaurant, grabbed some lunch and ate it picnic style along the Broken Hut Road. We scanned some of the abandoned barns along this road in hopes of seeing Little Owl, but instead got our first good looks at **Yellowhammers**. We also saw **New Zealand Fantail**, **Eurasian Goldfinch**, and **Song Thrush**, among a few other common birds we have been seeing daily on our trip.

We ended the day with a stop at Bushy Beach Scenic Reserve, searching for Yellow-eyed Penguins coming to shore. The view from the overlook was stunning. It started off foggy, but by the time we left, after 6 45 p.m. it had cleared and we had great visibility. Though we didn't get to see the penguins, we picked up **Variable Oystercatcher**, **Spotted Shag**, **Northern Giant Petrel**, **Salvin's Albatross**, **White-faced Heron**, **Silver Gull**, and **Sooty Shearwater**. We also got some nice views and nice photos of a small flock of **Silvereyes**. We also saw a few **New Zealand Fur Seals** in the water and on the beach. We then returned to town for a delicious kiwi-style meal and headed to our hotel for an early night. We were all tired but it was a fabulous day.

Day 4: November 8 — Oumara to Balclutha

Since we weren't able to see the **Yellow-eyed Penguin** yesterday, we left our hotel around 6:30 a.m. and headed back to the Bushy Beach Scenic Reserve. Brent got another lifer for the group as we made our way to the lookout point, an **Australasian Gannet**. Then, almost as soon as we made it to the observation deck, he spotted a **Yellow-eyed Penguin** standing in the vegetation

near the cliff. It slowly made its way down the small slope and stood for a while on top of a fallen log, preening and spreading its wings and calling occasionally. After more than 10 minutes it slowly made its way down the beach and into the water. But the show wasn't over! It spent another 10 minutes or more swimming in the ocean just below us, giving us some wonderful views. After it swam out of sight, we made our way back to the car. We heard another penguin calling nearby, but couldn't see it in the thick vegetation.



Yellow-eyed Penguin at Bushy Beach Scenic Reserve. Photo by Marta Curti

Our next stop was at Sumpter's Wharf. Here we were treated to the sight of probably over 400 **Steward Island (Otago) Shags** perched on the wharf. Adults and babies crowded together on the wooden pier, while a few **Spotted Shags** and **Silver (Red-billed) Gulls** hung around. Not too far away, we saw our first **White-fronted Terns** as they landed on an outcropping, some with their latest catch of fish.

After about 20 minutes here, we continued on our drive to Shag Point. It was drizzling slightly, but we saw two **Northern Giant-Petrels** and another lifer for the day, **Hutton's Shearwater**. We also got some nice views of some **Yellowhammers** on the ground. We spotted some **Fur Seals** on the rocks beyond and even one in the grass catching a nap.

One of the highlights of the day was our visit to the Orokonui Ecosanctuary. We got several lifers and some nice views of some of New Zealand's most impressive species. We got our first good looks at **New Zealand Pigeon**, we also saw **Eastern Rosella**, **Rifleman** lurking in the trees, several **New Zealand Kakas**, and perhaps the best sighting of the day - 3 adult and one young **South Island Takahē**. We strolled the trails under a light rain and had a splendid time learning about the native plants in the reserve. We enjoyed a delicious lunch at the cafe before heading to our penultimate birding stop for the day.

At the Aramoana Conservation Area, we observed several **Northern Royal Albatrosses** on their ground nests on the hill across the way from us. We also got some nice close-up looks at **Variable Oystercatcher**. Our last stop for the day was at the Sinclair Wetlands. Though it was raining a bit



South Island Takahē at the Orokonui Ecosanctuary. Photo by Marta Curti

hard, we went for a walk along the boardwalk in search of our target bird for this location - the **New Zealand Fernbird**. We had been walking for about 10 minutes, spotting **Australasian Shoveler** and **Gray Teal**, when Brent heard a **New Zealand Fernbird** calling. We were able to see it as it flitted about the bushes, catching a nice glimpse of its long tail. We continued walking the boardwalk and were making our way back when Brent heard the bird calling again. We spotted it in the distance and decided to walk back to try for some better photos. And we are glad we did. The bird was perched on an open branch, singing away in the rain. It made for some lovely views and allowed us to take some nice pictures.



New Zealand Fernbird. Photo by Marta Curti

Day 5: November 9 - Balclutha to Stewart Island

We left our hotel around 8 a.m. and began our drive south. Today was planned as a travel day, but we did make a few stops along the way to stretch our legs and do some birding. Our first stop was at a beautiful overlook of Roaring Bay. The weather was a bit rainy and windy, but we took a short walk down to the beach anyway. We saw a beautiful flock of 8 **Royal Spoonbills** flying overhead. Though we didn't pick up any new species, the walk was lovely.

We then continued on to Cannibal Bay. We saw more than 300 **Sooty Shearwaters** flying over the ocean in the distance and some **White-fronted Terns** as well. We observed some **Silver Gulls** and two **Variable Oystercatchers**. Our next stop was at the Invercargill Estuary bird hide at the Tripp Wetlands. By this time, the rain had stopped and the sun was out, but the wind had picked up and was super strong. We walked to the bird hide and scanned for anything unusual in the water. We saw over 300 **Black Swans**, many **Australian Shovelers**, and a few **Grey Teal**. We then returned to the car and drove to another spot where we picked up our first **Bar-tailed Godwit**, a new species for the trip. As we continued our drive, Brent spotted quite a few **Pied Cormorants** near the Bluff Highway Wetland Ponds, by the road. We quickly turned around and watched these birds (new for the trip) for several minutes before continuing on.

At 5 p.m. we took the ferry across to Stewart Island. The ride lasted about an hour and it was windy, so there were some swells, but nothing this intrepid group couldn't handle. We were able to pick up a few new species for the group including **Fairy Prion** and **Common Diving-Petrel**. After landing on the island, we walked the short distance to our hotel and settled in. After a delicious dinner, we walked to the edge of the water where Brent spotted a **Little Penguin** on the rocks. Another new bird for the day! We then returned to our hotel room to prepare for our night walk.



Little Penguin seen at dusk on Stewart Island. Photo by Marta Curti

We met Brent and a local guide at 10 p.m. We, along with a few other small groups, drove up to an open, grassy area in search of one of New Zealand's most iconic species. We walked for several minutes as the local guide used a red light to search the grass along the forested edges. While we walked, we heard **Morepork** and **New Zealand Kaka** calling. After about 10 or 15 minutes, the guide spotted a **Southern Brown Kiwi** feeding in the grass. What a sighting! We were able to watch it for several minutes. We watched it run around the grass while it foraged for food. As we were watching this lovely bird, we heard a male Southern Brown Kiwi calling in the distance. It was an awesome sighting and an awesome end to the day.

Day 6: November 10 — Stewart Island, Ulva Island, and a Pelagic Trip

It was a beautiful morning! Today we took a short water taxi ride to Ulva Island. On our short walk to the dock, we got another lifer for the group - a **Red-crowned Parakeet**! We also got nice views of **New Zealand Pigeon**, and a few **New Zealand Kakas** flying over.



New Zealand Pigeon on Stewart Island. Photo by Marta Curti

Once in the water taxi, we made the short trip to Ulva Island, Rakiura National Park. Here, we explored the park on foot. We walked around 3 miles of trails within the beautiful forest and along the beach. We heard birds calling throughout the day - **New Zealand Bellbirds**, **Tuis**, and **New Zealand Kaka**. The forest symphony was spectacular. We also got better looks at **Red-crowned Parakeet**, and another lifer for the group - **Yellowhead**, which were seemingly all around us during our walk. Our other lifer in the forest was the **Yellow-crowned Parakeet**. Brent also showed us some of the island's beautiful, native plants including a spider orchid.

After about 30 minutes, we arrived on Boulder Beach. Here we got two additional lifers - a **South Island Saddleback**, and a **Weka** as it strolled on the sand right in front of us. We then made our way back to the water taxi pickup. Along the way, several **South Island Robins** were hopping



Weka, seen on Boulder Beach on Ulva Island. Photo by Marta Curti



New Zealand Kaka on Ulva Island. Photo by Marta Curti

about the ground very close to us. And we got some really nice views of a **South Island Saddleback** as it fed on the ground on a trail just below us. Before returning to Stewart Island to prepare for our next birding adventure - a pelagic trip, we scanned some of the shoreline and got incredible views of nesting **Fiordland Penguins**. We saw quite a few adults and young!

At around 2 p.m. we took a fishing boat out on a pelagic tour. What an incredible treat. We were able to see at least 20 **White-capped Albatross** and 3 or 4 **Savin's Albatrosses** up close as they soared gracefully around us and landed next to the boat. **Silver Gulls** joined the group hoping to get some scraps and two even landed on the boat. We got another lifer for the group, a **Brown Skua** that flew in and spent some time floating on the water beside us. We also saw several **Little Penguins** in the water. It was a fabulous day!

Day 7: November 11 — Stewart Island to Te Anau

Today we woke up to a beautiful, sunny day. After breakfast, we took the 8 o'clock ferry from Stewart Island back to the mainland. On the way, we picked up two new birds for the trips, **Cape Petrel** and **Mottled Petrel**.

After driving for a while, we made a quick stop at a local estuary in Invercargill and spotted a couple of hundred **Black Swans** and cygnets, **Royal Spoonbills**, **White faced Heron**, and dozens of **Bar tailed Godwits**. The weather was cold and windy so we continued on our way to Te Anau. Along the way, we picked up another new species for the trip list and a lifer for the group, a **Sacred Kingfisher** perched on a power line. We made a quick stop for photos and got back in the car to the drive. We made a quick stop at our hotel in Te Anau and then immediately continued the drive into the spectacular Fiordland National Park. The scenery was absolutely stunning, with open green fields, waterfalls, and snow-capped mountains. We headed to a parking along the road and made a short walk among the rocks. We split up along the trail looking and listening for our target, the Rock Wren. About 30 minutes passed before Brent heard it calling. We scanned the rocks around us and Elcira noticed movement in the vegetation just above. We quickly spotted at least two **South Island Wrens**, a male and a female hopping around in the vegetation, and on and around the large boulders. The female spent some time on a rock bathing in a small puddle while the male came in quite close! After watching the birds for several minutes, we got back into the car



South Island Wren. Photo by Marta Curti

and made the lovely drive back to our hotel. We enjoyed a delicious dinner at a local Thai Restaurant.

But our day was not quite done. After dinner, we had one more stop to make. Though we had heard Morepork several times on this trip, we had yet to see one. Just before dark, we drove out to an area where some of Brent's friends knew they had been seen recently. We got super lucky. Soon after dark, we heard them calling and right away Brent noticed 2 **Moreporks** perching together in a tree just in front of us. We watched the pair perched together for several minutes. Another incredible sighting!



One of two Moreporks observed near Te Anau. Photo by Marta Curti

Day 8: November 12 — Milford Sound

We left the hotel around 7:30 am, picked up some breakfast to go, and headed toward Milford Sound for our morning cruise. The scenery along the drive was amazing, of course, and the cruise itself was spectacular: waterfalls, dramatic cliffs, mountain peaks, forested hillsides, blue water! We spotted some nice wildlife, including **Fur Seals** lazing on the rocks, **Fiordland Penguins** in the water and on the rocks, **Pied Cormorants** and a new mammal for the trip, a pod of **Bottlenose Dolphins**, with some young, swimming alongside our boat for several minutes.

After the two-hour cruise, we headed back to Te Anau. We stopped at a few scenic areas to search for Blue Duck along rivers, and New Zealand Pipits in grass fields. Though we didn't find these particular species, we enjoyed the opportunities to take in more of the country's spectacular scenery. We took a short walk along Mirror Lake trail and a longer walk along the Lake Gunn Nature Walk Trail. The forest here was spectacular. From the ground to the tree tops, everything was covered in moss. Though we didn't get any lifers today, we had very close-up looks at **New Zealand Fantails**, at several **Keas** in a pull out area and even one on top of a car as we waited in line to pass through a one way tunnel, lovely looks at **Black-capped Terns**, and **South Island Oystercatcher** with a chick.

Day 9: November 13 — Te Anau to Queenstown and Departure

On our last morning, we picked up some breakfast and made our way to Queenstown. Our first stop was a small wetland. Here, we spotted **Australian Shovelers** with ducklings, **Australian Magpie**, and a **Swamp Harrier** before catching a quick glimpse of our target species - the **Baillon's Crake**, a new species for the trip. After some time in Queenstown, we drove the windy road up to the top of the Remarkables Mountains for lunch and got a new species for the trip, which was a lifer for the group and endemic to boot - the **New Zealand Pipit**. We heard them calling and Brent eventually spotted one fly over us. It landed on the ground and we were able to get some nice views and photos. On the way back down the mountain, we saw two more just along the road! It was a great way to end the trip. At the airport, we said goodbye to Brent and boarded our flight to Australia where the adventure continued!



Our first day in New Zealand visiting Arthur's Pass National Park. Photo by Brent Stephenson

Thanks!

As always, we want to thank Jeanette and Elcira for being part of this tour. We also thank our fantastic local guide, Brent Stephenson, who went above and beyond to make this an amazing experience for us all. We thank Sav Saville for helping to organize everything on the ground, and our boat captain, Anthony (Ant), who took us on the amazing pelagic tour. Finally, we thank Neil and Elaine who opened their home to us and helped us see a pair of Morporks - a special sighting indeed.

Wildlife Observation List

Birds

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Clements, J. F., T. S. Schulenberg, M. J. Iliff, D. Roberson, T. A. Fredericks, B. L. Sullivan, and C. L. Wood. 2018.

E - Endemic species

eBird Trip Report: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/295418>

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
1	Southern Brown Kiwi (E)	<i>Apteryx australis</i>	One seen and 2 heard during our night walk on Stewart Island
2	Graylag Goose (domestic)	<i>Anser anser</i>	3 seen in total
3	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Several spotted during the tour, including in Fiordland NP
4	Black Swan	<i>Cygnus stratus</i>	Fairly common and seen throughout the trip in most wetland areas. Even seen flying over us on the ferry from Stewart Island. Over 600 seen during the tour
5	Paradise Shelduck	<i>Tadoma variegata</i>	Very common, seen nearly every day of the tour
6	Australian Shoveler	<i>Spatula rhynchotis</i>	Seen in many of the waterways including in Lake Tekapo, Sinclair Wetlands, and in Te Anau. Over 100 individuals seen during the tour.
7	Pacific Black Duck	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>	Two seen in Glentanner riverine area.
8	Hybrid Mallard x Pacific Black Duck	<i>Anas platyrhynchos x superciliosa</i>	Seen at Mirror Lake, Fiordland National Park
9	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Very common throughout tour
10	Gray Teal	<i>Anas gracilis</i>	19 seen during the tour.
11	New Zealand Scaup (E)	<i>Aythya novaeseelandiae</i>	Over 160 individuals seen
12	Wild Turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>	2 seen in total during the tour
13	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba Livia</i>	Fairly common throughout tour.
14	Ring-necked Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicum</i>	3 seen in total during the tour
15	New Zealand Pigeon (E)	<i>Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae</i>	10 total seen during the tour, with particularly good looks on Stewart Island
16	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chalcites lucidus</i>	1 heard at the Orokonui Ecosanctuary
17	Weka (E)	<i>Gallirallus australis</i>	1 seen on Ulva Island and 1 in the parking lot at Milford Sound
18	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Seen at Lake Tekapo and in Twizel
19	South Island Takahe (E)	<i>Porphyrio hochstetteri</i>	4 total seen. 3 adults and 1 young at Orokonui Ecosanctuary

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
20	Australasian Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio melanotus</i>	Over 10 individuals seen during the tour
21	Baillon's Crake	<i>Zapornia pusilla</i>	1 seen in a small wetland outside Te Anua
22	Pied Stilt	<i>Himantopus leucocephalus</i>	11 seen during the tour
23	Black Stilt (E)	<i>Himantopus novaezelandiae</i>	A total of 6 seen on this trip; in Glentanner and Lake Tekapo
24	South Island Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus finch</i>	19 seen during the tour, in inland water ways
25	Variable Oystercatcher (E)	<i>Haematopus unicolor</i>	A total of 27 seen during the tour, along the coast lines
26	Masked Lapwing	<i>Vanellus miles</i>	Fairly common throughout tour.
27	Double-banded Plover	<i>Anarhynchus bicinctus</i>	13 individuals seen during the tour
28	Wrybill (E)	<i>Anarhynchus frontalis</i>	4 individuals seen, with particularly good looks at Glentanner
29	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa Lapponia</i>	Not very common
30	Brown Skua	<i>Stercorarius antarcticus</i>	1 seen during pelagic tour off Stewart Island
31	Silver Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus longicaudus</i>	Very common throughout tour near water
32	Black-billed Gull (E)	<i>Chroicocephalus bulleri</i>	Seen in particularly large group near Lake Tekapo.
33	Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	Fairly common near waterways throughout tour
34	Black-fronted Tern (E)	<i>Chlidonias albostratus</i>	Seen at Lake Tekapo, Glentanner, Te Anau, and Fiordland National Park
35	White-fronted Tern	<i>Sterna striata</i>	Seen in a few areas throughout the tour, notably Shag Point and Cannibal Bay
36	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	Seen at High Country Salmon ponds and Lake Tekapo. 7 seen in total
37	Yellow-eyed Penguin (E)	<i>Megadyptes antipodes</i>	1 seen and 1 heard at Bushy Beach Scenic Reserve
38	Little Penguin	<i>Megadyptes antipodes</i>	A total of 23 seen on land and in the water around Stewart Island
39	Fiordland Penguin (E)	<i>Eudyptes pachyrhynchus</i>	Several seen around Stewart Island and 2 seen during Milford Sound cruise
40	Northern Royal Albatross	<i>Diomedea sanfordi</i>	3 seen in the Aramoana Conservation Area
41	White-capped Albatross	<i>Thalassarche cauta</i>	Seen very well during pelagic trip off Stewart Island
42	Salvin's Albatross	<i>Thalassarche salvini</i>	Seen very well during pelagic trip off Stewart Island
43	Northern Giant-Petrel	<i>Macronectes halli</i>	5 seen in total from Shag Point and Bushy Beach Scenic Reserve
44	Pintado Petrel	<i>Daption capense</i>	1 Seen from Stewart Island ferry
45	Mottled Petrel	<i>Pterodroma inexpectata</i>	2 Seen from Stewart Island ferry
46	Fairy Prion	<i>Pachyptila turtur</i>	2 Seen from Stewart Island ferry

Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
47 Sooty Shearwater	<i>Ardeanna grisea</i>	Hundreds seen in distance off of Cannibal Bay, and other seen from Shag Point and Stewart Island Ferry
48 Hutton's Shearwater	<i>Puffinus huttoni</i>	1 seen from Shag Point
49 Common Diving-Petrel	<i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i>	Many seen from Stewart Island Ferry
50 Australasian Gannet	<i>Morus serrator</i>	2 seen from Bushy Beach Scenic Reserve
51 Little Pied Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo melanoleucos</i>	Seen regularly throughout tour
52 Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	6 seen, mainly in Twizel and Lake Tekapo
53 Spotted Shag (E)	<i>Phalacrocorax punctatus</i>	Seen around Shag Point, Bushy Beach Scenic Reserve, Stewart Island (both Otago and Foveaux)
54 Pied Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	Over 30 seen on the tour, mostly near Bluff Highway Wetland Ponds
55 Stewart Island Shag (E)	<i>Leucocarbo chalconotus</i>	Over 400 seen on the tour, mainly at Sumpters Wharf
56 Royal Spoonbill	<i>Platalea regia</i>	26 seen throughout the tour
57 White-faced Heron	<i>Egretta novaehollandiae</i>	2 seen during the tour, with good looks at one from Bushy Beach Scenic Reserve
58 Swamp Harrier	<i>Circus approximatus</i>	Very common, seen nearly every day of the tour
59 Morepork (E)	<i>Ninox novaeseelandiae</i>	Heard on Stewart Island, and 2 seen really well in Te Anau
60 Sacred Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	1 seen perched on a power line en route to Te Anau
61 New Zealand Falcon (E)	<i>Falco novaeseelandiae</i>	2 seen during the tour, with the best views in Glentanner when one flew low in front of us after hunting in the open fields
62 Kea (E)	<i>Nestor notables</i>	Seen very well at Arthur's Pass National Park
63 New Zealand Kaka (E)	<i>Nestor meridionalis</i>	31 seen in total. Seen well in a few areas, particularly Ulva Island and Orokouui Ecosanctuary
64 Red-crowned Parakeet (E)	<i>Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae</i>	Seen on Stewart and Ulva islands
65 Yellow-crowned Parakeet (E)	<i>Cyanoramphus auriceps</i>	2 Seen on Ulva Island
66 Eastern Rosella	<i>Platycercus eximius</i>	2 seen at the Orokouui Ecosanctuary
67 Rifleman (E)	<i>Acanthisitta chlorine</i>	6 total seen and heard in Orokouui Ecosanctuary, Ulva Island, and Fiordland NP
68 South Island Wren (E)	<i>Xenicus gilviventris</i>	2 seen at Fiordland National Park
69 Tui (E)	<i>Prothemadera novaeseelandiae</i>	24 seen during the tour, in Orokouui Ecosanctuary, but also on Stewart Island, Ulva Island, and Fiordland NP

Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
70 New Zealand Bellbird (E)	<i>Anthornis melanura</i>	21 seen during the tour, mostly in Orokonui Ecosanctuary, but also on Stewart Island, Ulva Island, and Fiordland NP
71 Gray Gerygone (E)	<i>Gerygone igata</i>	Several seen and heard throughout tour
72 Yellowhead (E)	<i>Mohoua ochrocephala</i>	Several seen in Rakiura NP as we walked the trails
73 Pipipi (E)	<i>Mohoua novaeseelandiae</i>	6 seen on the tour, at Arthur's Pass NP and Ulva Island
74 Australian Magpie	<i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>	Relatively common and seen most days of the tour
75 New Zealand Fantail (E)	<i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>	Seen often throughout the tour; 12 seen in total
76 South Island Saddleback (E)	<i>Philesturnus carunculatus</i>	3 seen at Rakiura National Park, Ulva Island
77 Tomtit (E)	<i>Petroica macrocephala</i>	Total of 5 seen on the tour
78 South Island Robin (E)	<i>Petroica australis</i>	Great, up close views on Ulva Island, and also seen at Arthur's Pass and Fiordland NP, and Orokonui Ecosanctuary
79 Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	15 seen throughout the tour
80 New Zealand Fernbird (E)	<i>Poodytes punctatus</i>	1 heard and 1 seen very well at Sinclair Wetlands
81 Welcome Swallow	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	Seen quite often throughout the tour
82 Silvereye	<i>Zosterops lateralis</i>	Seen quite often throughout the tour
83 European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Very common, seen nearly every day of the tour
84 Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Very common throughout tour
85 Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Very common throughout tour
86 Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Seen or heard most days on the tour
87 House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Seen nearly every day of the tour
88 New Zealand Pipit (E)	<i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>	3 seen at the Remarkables Mountain Range outside of Queensland
89 Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Very common, seen nearly every day of the tour
90 European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	9 in total seen throughout the tour
91 Redpoll	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>	Seen and heard often throughout the tour
92 European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Seen often throughout the tour; 11 seen in total
93 Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	8 in total seen throughout the tour

Mammals

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
1	European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	Occasionally seen in open fields throughout the tour
2	New Zealand Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus forsteri</i>	Seen a few times, but our best view was during our tour of Milford Sound, as they sunned on the rocks, and at Bushy Beach Scenic Reserve
3	New Zealand Sea Lion	<i>Phocarctos hookeri</i>	Seen in Otago
4	White-tailed Deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	1 Seen on Stewart Island during our night walk
5	Bottle-nosed Dolphin	<i>Turnips sp</i>	A large pod seen during our tour of Milford Sound



White-capped Albatross photographed off of Stewart Island. Photo by Marta Curti