



# BIRDS AT PEKAPEKA

## Introduction

The suggested aim of this section is for students to experience New Zealand's native and exotic birdlife within a natural setting of significant cultural heritage. Students will have the opportunity to study, observe and identify birds in and around Pekapeka.

This resource provides information about birds at Pekapeka Wetland and includes a list of books and websites suitable for students to further their knowledge of these, and other bird species.

Activity sheets can be manipulated and adjusted to suit the intended learning outcomes and photographs can be used as teacher aids or included in classroom activities, powerpoints and for other curricular activities.

The following activities are based on 'pre-visit', 'on site' and 'post visit' categories and can be chosen according to ages, levels, interests or needs.





### PUKEKO

*Porphyrio porphyrio*

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Unlike many other native birds, the pukeko has adapted well to new habitats, such as grassed paddocks, croplands and even city parks. They have needed to do this because of the disappearing wetlands. However, the pukeko is really a bird of swampy ground, lagoons, rushes and swamps.

**Description**  
Pukeko are around 51 cm long with a deep blue colour, a black head and upperparts, white feathers under their tail, and a red bill and legs.

**Food**  
They are mostly vegetarian, but also eat invertebrates, eggs, frogs, small fish, chicks and mammals, especially in breeding season where chicks are fed protein-rich animals. Pukeko are very widespread as they have adapted well to urbanisation and are as at home in pasture and farmland as they are in wetlands.

**Breeding**  
Pukeko are cooperative breeders, with multiple male and female birds often sharing a nest and responsibility for the incubation of eggs and the guarding and feeding of chicks.

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Pukeko fin fan  
Pukeko's are from the same family as the Takahe

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Pekapeka WETLAND

## STUDENT INFORMATION SHEETS

A set of Student Information Sheets have been prepared covering basic information on the main birds present at Pekapeka wetland. This list is by no means exhaustive and we encourage additional research through the provided links and information sources listed on the following pages.

- INFO300 Pukeko
- INFO301 Fantail
- INFO302 NZ Shoveler
- INFO303 Bittern
- INFO304 Marsh Crake
- INFO305 Tui
- INFO306 Spotless Crake
- INFO307 NZ Dabchick
- INFO308 Australasian Coot
- INFO309 Grey Teal

### NZ SHOVELER

*Anas rhynchos variegata*

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The Great Water for the NZ Shoveler is Kaurahanga. They are one of the few native birds that are not protected during the duck hunting season each year. Shovelers are the largest form of an anatid, as they weigh 4kg at the tail end of a shoveler during hunting season helps their survival.

**Description**  
The male shoveler has a long grey head with a white vertical stripe between the eye and bill. They have a bright red-brown breast, breast and blue wings. Females are not as brightly coloured.

**Food**  
Shovelers swim with their bill submerged, sweeping food from the water surface or through mud. They eat primarily fresh water invertebrates and the seeds of aquatic plants.

**Breeding**  
Gross nests are lined with down, and well hidden in vegetation. Six to ten orange coloured eggs with a blue blot are laid between August and December.

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### TUI

*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*

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Tuis are considered to be very intelligent, much like parrots. They are the main pollinators of flax, scilla, kaka hebe and some other plants. Do you think it is a coincidence that the flowers of these plants are similar in shape to the tui's beak?

**Description**  
Tui have a multicoloured coat that changes with the angle from which the light strikes them. They have small, white feathers on the back and sides of the neck that look like a hair collar.

**Food**  
Nectar is the normal diet but, insects, pollen and seeds are frequently eaten. Particularly popular is the New Zealand flax, whose nectar sometimes ferments, resulting in the tui flying in a 'fizz' suggests that they might be drunk.

**Breeding**  
The breeding season is early spring (September and October).

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### AUSTRALASIAN COOT

*Fulica atra*

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The Australasian Coot was a rare species in New Zealand until the 1950's when they moved across the Tasman sea and began to breed here. They are now widespread especially around water margins fringed with reeds. The New Zealand Coot *Fulica chathamensis* is now unfortunately extinct.

**Description**  
The coots (Coot) are long-necked waterfowl, members of the family of the duck. They are a large patch on the forehead that looks like a white shield.

**Food**  
The Coots are omnivorous, and will take a variety of food including algae, vegetation, insects and fish. It is a common sight to see them feeding themselves, grasping an object in the water. Coots are highly intelligent, which they show readily by using tools.

**Breeding**  
Eggs are laid from August to February and laid a floating nest of reeds and twigs, anchored to vegetation. They are 4 - 6 cm long, each egg will contain several speckled chicks. They can lay up to 16 eggs, 2 or 3 times per season. Incubation usually only a few weeks as they are prey for birds such as terns and gulls.

They are sometimes called 'Ward Coot' because of the white hair patch on their forehead

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# BIRDS AT PEKAPEKA

## Activities

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### PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- Type, cut and laminate thirty questions about birds. Make twenty questions correct, and ten false. Ask the students to group them under true or false and discuss their findings.
- Find out why wetland environments are great for birds.
- Look at birds around the school. Discuss the different shaped bills and feet; why are they likely to be shaped that way? Think about what type of food they eat or whether they are ground dwelling or tree dwelling birds.
- Learn about migratory birds and discuss why birds migrate - are they moving to warmer climates during winter?
- Map migration patterns of birds on a world map.
- Listen and learn different bird calls.
- Use Activity Sheets ACT007, ACT009, ACT011, ACT017

**BIRD WATCHING**

Sit quietly near the waters edge for 3 - 5 minutes. ... Look out for birds in the wetland. What are the birds doing? Write your observations in the table.

What bird was it?	How many were there?	Where did you see it/them?	What was the bird doing?

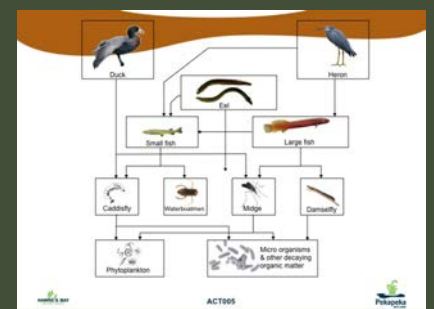
ACT001

### FIELD DAY ACTIVITIES

- While at Pekapeka, listen, observe and record the different birds at Pekapeka.
- Sit quietly near the waters edge for 5 minutes. Look out for birds in the wetland. Identify the birds and what they are doing.
- Look at the birds feeding, what type of bills and feet to they have. Sketch a few of the birds and on the drawing write small descriptions.
- Use Activity Sheets ACT001, ACT012, ACT017

### POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- Do a comparison of birds at different types of wetlands. For example, compare the birds at Ahuriri estuary with those found at Pekapeka wetland. Look at birds around the school. Discuss the different shaped bills and feet; why are they likely to be shaped that way? Think about what type of food they eat or whether they are ground dwelling or tree dwelling birds.
- Design a wetland that encourages birds to return to the area. What attributes would it have?
- Learn about some migratory birds at Pekapeka or might in the future habitat Pekapeka. Would they come to it for feeding or breeding?
- Make a song about wetland birds and their adaptations.
- Use Activity Sheets ACT002, ACT005, ACT008, ACT009, ACT011, ACT 017





## Additional Resources

### BOOKS

#### **Diary of a Pukeko** (fiction)

By Sally Sutton

Pub Scholastic 2011

ISBN: 978-1-86943-975-0

Life in the wetlands is humorously told through the diary of a young pukeko; issues of conservation, predators and other wildlife are included within the story.

#### **New Zealand Wetland Birds and their World**

By Geoff Moon

Pub New Holland 2009

ISBN: 9781869661977

Features portraits of the birds that use New Zealand's wetlands on a permanent or seasonal basis.

#### **The Life Cycle of the Pukeko**

By Betty Brownlie

Pub Scholastic 2010

ISBN: 9781869439637

An illustrated and photographic book that describes the anatomy, behaviour, habitat, diet and breeding habits of the pukeko.

#### **Pukeko (New Zealand Bird series)**

By Natasha Fijn

Photography Rod Morris

Pub Raupo 2005

ISBN: 9781869485405

How pukeko came to New Zealand, their biology, where they live and how they have adapted to their changing environments, and more, with photographs.



### WEBSITES

[www.teara.govt.nz](http://www.teara.govt.nz)

[www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

[www.forestandbird.org.nz](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz)

[www.fishandgame.org.nz](http://www.fishandgame.org.nz)

[www.ducks.org.nz](http://www.ducks.org.nz)

[www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org)

[www.nzbirds.com](http://www.nzbirds.com)

[www.learnz.org.nz](http://www.learnz.org.nz)

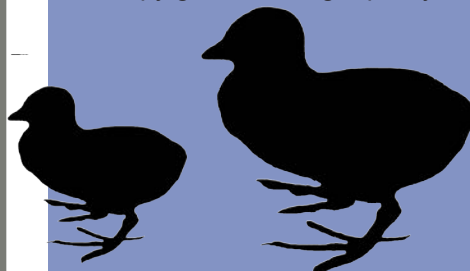
[www.birdingnz.co.nz](http://www.birdingnz.co.nz)

[www.brownteal.com](http://www.brownteal.com)

[www.tuitime.org.nz](http://www.tuitime.org.nz)

[www.osnz.org.nz](http://www.osnz.org.nz)

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)



### OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES

School Journals:

Part 3 No. 1, 2009. The Bittern, story by Diana Noonan. Grandad is commemorated for saving wetland from development and thereby helping the bittern.

Part 1 No.1, 1992. Look out for Pukeko, story by Brian Birchall. To find pukeko you need to look around the edge of a lake or a pond, or in swampy ground. But go quietly.

Part 1 No.1, 2001. Te Tui, poem by Rira Jones.

Part 3 No.3, 2000. Tui, poem by Mary Cresswell.



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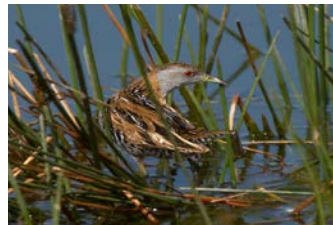
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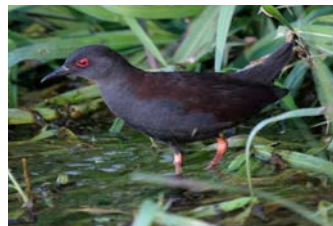
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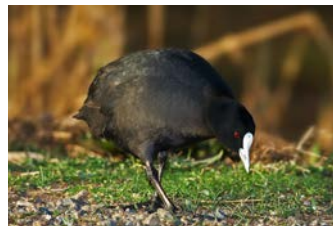
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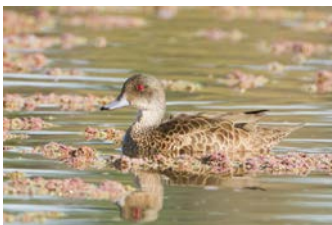
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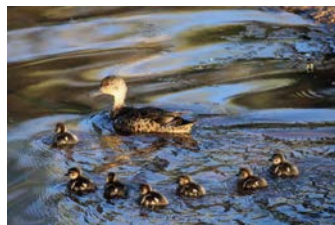
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