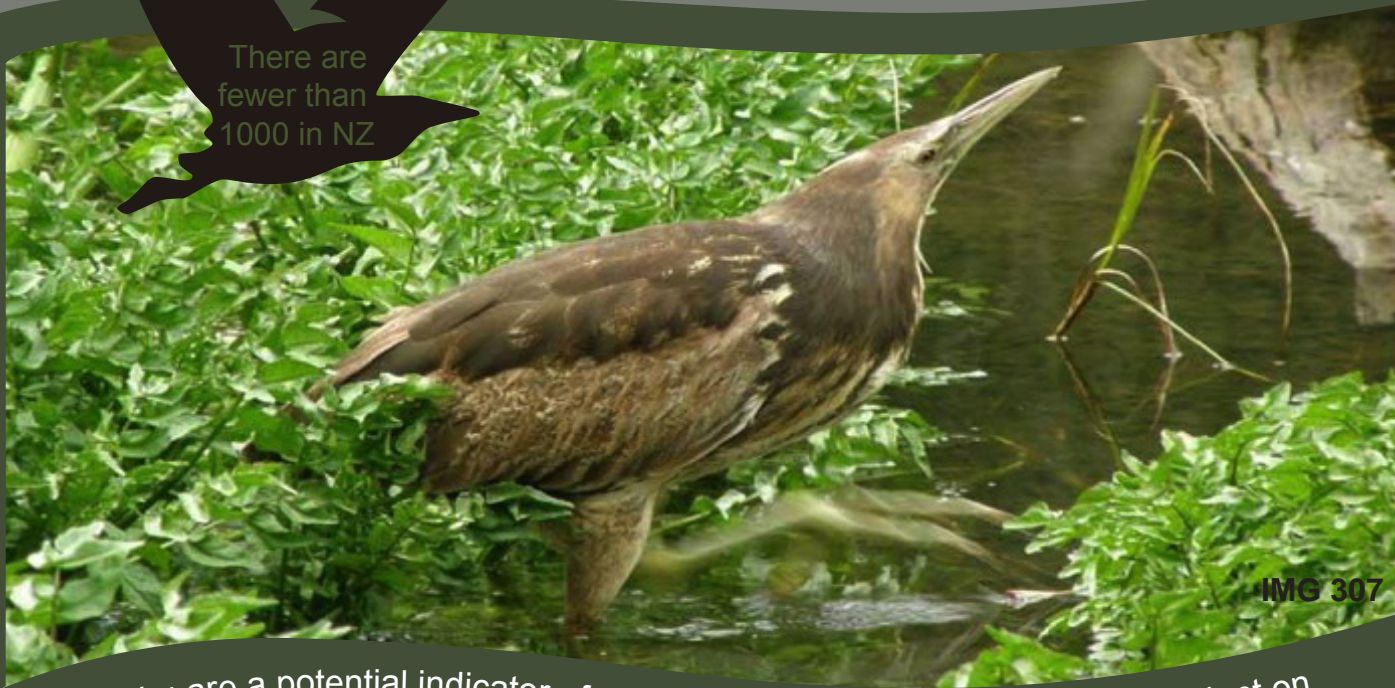


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IMG 308

There are fewer than 1000 in NZ



IMG 307

Matuku are a potential indicator of wetland health because they are dependent on the presence of high quality and ecologically diverse habitats and rich food supplies.

AUSTRALASIAN BITTERN

Botaurus poiciloptilus

The Māori name for Bittern is Matuku. They are important to Māori as they appear in language as part of legends, stories, early pictures and there are numerous place names referring to them. They were an important food source and their feathers were used for ceremonial decoration.

Description

They are a large heron sized bird patterned mottled brown and black, with a pale throat.

Food

Matuku feed mostly at night on fish, aquatic insects, eels, frogs, freshwater crayfish, insects, crustacea, spiders and lizards.

Breeding

The distinctive booming calls of male matuku can be heard at the beginning of the long breeding season. Birds lay an average 4 eggs during November and December. The nest of the bittern is a flat structure made of rushes, raupo and drift borne sticks.