

MARSH CRAKE

Porzana pusilla

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The Māori name for Marsh Crake is Koitareke. They live in both fresh and salt water swamps and also the banks of rivers. They can run quickly among vegetation and can swim well but they hardly ever fly. They call at dusk and into the night – one call is a harsh shrill sound.



IMG 309



Description

The Marsh Crake is only 18cm in size. Their body is brown with black and white feathered streaks. Their face and abdomen are a blue grey colour and they have a green bill, legs and feet with a red eye.

Food

Their diet is mainly of insects such as beetles, bugs, flies, worms and mosquitos. Food is either taken from the surface or the bill may be fully immersed to catch aquatic prey. They sometimes eat small fish (up to 2cm long) and some plant material and seeds.

Breeding

Their nest is made of rushes and aquatic plants woven together and hidden in vegetation that grows in shallow water. There are two entrances into the nest through the vegetation. They lay 5-7 eggs in October to December in a shallow nest made of short vegetation that is raised about 30cm above the water level.

This bird is known by many common names including 'African spotted crake, dwarf rail, koitareke, lesser spotted crake, marsh crake, pygmy crake and tiny crake'