



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.



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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 Takaha

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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

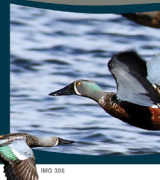
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The Maori Name for the NZ Shoveler is Kuruwhero. They are one of the few native birds that are not protected during the dark-hunting seasons each year. Shovelers are the largest of waterfowl, so their swift flight at the first sound of a shotgun during hunting season helps their survival.

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

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

Breeding
Grass nests are lined with down, and oiled hidden in vegetation. Six to ten cream coloured eggs with a blue tint are laid between August and December.



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TUI

Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae

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Tui are considered to be very intelligent, much like parrots. They are the main pollinators of flax, scotch, kaka beak 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 multi-coloured 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 lacy collar.

Food
Nectar is the normal diet but fruit, 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 'drunk' state that suggests that they might be drunk!

Breeding
The breeding season is early spring (September and October). Tui build nests of flax, grasses and twigs. The eggs are white.




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AUSTRALASIAN COOT

Fulica atra

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

Description
The coot is 34-42 cm long and has shiny black plumage. A characteristic of the adult is a bare patch on the forehead that looks like a white shield.

Food
The coot is an omnivore and will take a variety of food including algae, vegetation, seeds and fruit. It shows considerable variation in its feeding techniques, grazing on land or in the water. Diet is mainly vegetable, which they obtain mostly by diving.

Breeding
Eggs are laid from August to February and build a floating nest of reeds and raupo, anchored to vegetation. They lay 4 - 8 creamy white eggs with reddish-brown speckles all over. They can lay up to 10-15 eggs, 2 or 3 times per season. Incubation usually only a few days as they are prey for birds such as terns and gulls.

They are sometimes called 'Bald Coot' because of the white bare patch on their forehead




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BIRDS AT PEKAPEKA

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Activities

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?

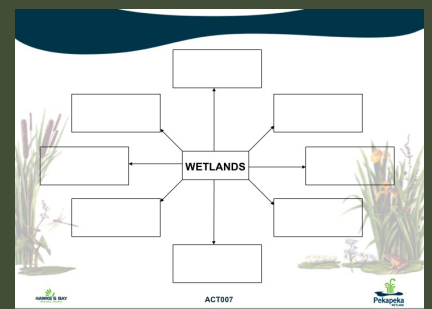
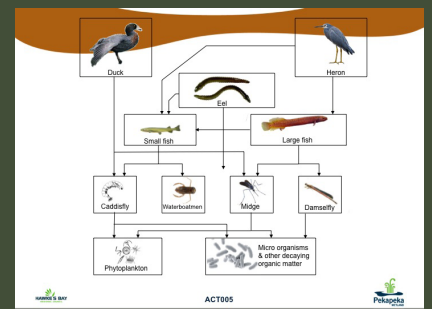
ACT001

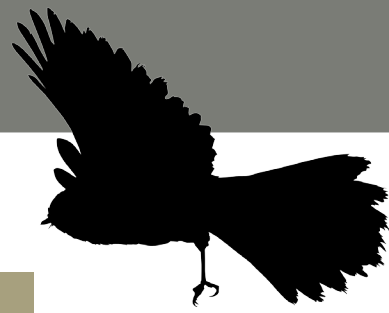
FIELD DAY ACTIVITIES

- 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
- www.doc.govt.nz
- www.forestandbird.org.nz
- www.fishandgame.org.nz
- www.ducks.org.nz
- www.birdlife.org
- www.nzbirds.com
- www.learnz.org.nz
- www.birdingnz.co.nz
- www.brownteal.com
- www.tuitime.org.nz
- www.osnz.org.nz
- www.wikipedia.org



OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES

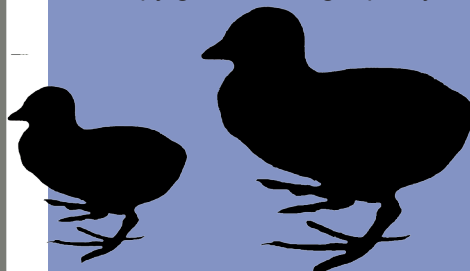
School Journals:

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.



Images



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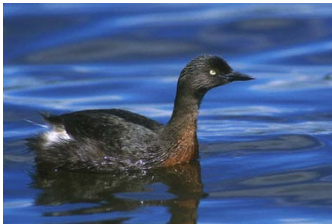
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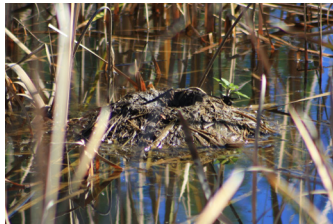
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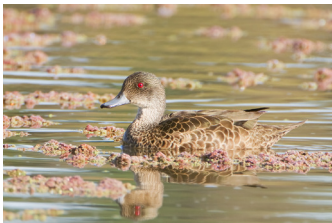
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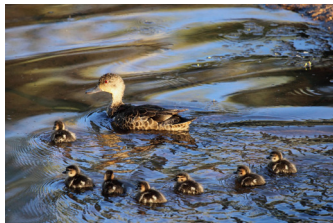
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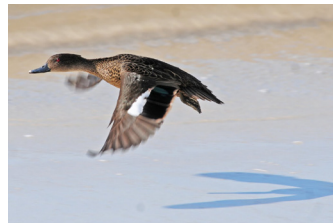
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