

## Red-billed gull

*Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus*

37 cm

NEW ZEALAND ENDEMIC SUBSPECIES, NOT THREATENED



Red-billed gull on nest,  
Rangatira, December 1981.  
Photo: Dave Crouchley  
(DOC).

The red-billed gull is a medium-sized, predominantly white-and-grey gull with distinctive red bill, legs and eyelids. The head, breast, underparts and tail are pure white; the back and wing coverts are pale grey and the primaries are black with white spots. Immature red-billed gulls have dark bills, eyes and legs, and dark speckles on the upper-wing in their first plumage. Red-billed gulls are found in coastal areas throughout New Zealand, including most islands in the Chatham Islands group, where they breed on Chatham Island (including Te Whanga Lagoon), Rangatira, Mangere, Star Keys, Houruakopara, Little Sister Island, The Pyramid, Rabbit Island, Kokope, Western Reef, and Blyth Stack. Red-billed gulls are gregarious, roosting and feeding in large flocks, and breeding in densely packed colonies. Breeding extends from July to January. They have benefited from human settlement through increased availability of food in the form of fishing and other waste. There are no comprehensive estimates of numbers of red-billed gulls for all of the Chatham Islands. The maximum combined number of nests on Rangatira and Mangere in any one season between 1986 and 1995 was 54.