

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. 3rd edn.

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Chatham Island taiko: pp 64-65



### CHATHAM ISLAND TAIKO

**Family** Procellariidae

**Species** *Pterodroma magentae*

**Common names** Chatham Island Taiko, Magenta Petrel

**Status** Endemic

**Abundance** Rare

**Size** 380 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm)

**Breeding island close to New Zealand** Breeds on Chatham Island only. Taiko were rediscovered in 1978 by David Crockett, a New Zealand ornithologist. Over the ensuing years he led expeditions to the Chatham Islands in an attempt to locate breeding burrows. Radio telemetric tracking of birds, which previously had been captured and fitted with transmitters, led to the first nesting burrow of a Taiko being discovered in November 1987. A number of Taiko have since been banded and burrows recorded. It is regarded as one of the world's rarest seabirds.

**Breeding months** November to April.

**Relationship with other petrels** Some authorities regard the Taiko as being a

race of the tropical occurring Phoenix Petrel (*Pterodroma alba*). Differences exist in the plumage of this species, with the Taiko having some forehead scalation and cleaner white underparts. It is also a slightly bigger bird. Additional differences occur in breeding habits with the Taiko being a burrow nesting bird while the Phoenix Petrel nests above ground. The Phoenix Petrel also has no fixed breeding season whereas the Taiko is a summer breeder. The Taiko also shows similarities with the Tahitian Petrel (*Pseudobulweria rostrata*).

### **Description**

**Forehead** Grey with variable light grey feather scalation. **Chin** Grey. **Throat and upperbreast** Dark sooty-grey. **Upperparts** Dark sooty-grey. **Underparts** White. **Underwings** Sooty-grey. **Undertail** White tipped with black.

### **Conspicuous feature**

- The Taiko is of a similar size to the Fluttering Shearwater.

### **Where to find**

**Chatham Island** – This is the only place in the world to see this species. There are chances of spotting one at sea but they are unlikely. The best chance of seeing this bird is to visit the breeding site on Chatham Island. Permission would need to be obtained from the Department of Conservation. Volunteers are sometimes invited to join scientific research parties at various times of the year.