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

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Hoary-headed grebe: pp 16-17.



HOARY-HEADED GREBE

Family Podicipedidae

Species *Podiceps poliocephalus*

Common name Hoary-headed Grebe

Status Native

Abundance Rare vagrant. It has not been recorded in New Zealand for some years.

Size 280 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, dabchick 280 mm)

Habitat Deep water lakes. In Australia also a species of coastal waters.

Range In limited locations in both North and South Islands.

Discussion This bird has bred in New Zealand but there have been no records over recent years.

Description – breeding

Head Brownish horizontally streaked with silver feathers. **Upperparts** Greyish-brown. **Breast** Buff coloured. **Wings** Greyish-brown. **Underwings** White, with dark grey tips to primary feathers.

Underparts Silvery-white. **Bill** Black, with white tip. **Legs** Greenish. **Eye** Iris brown, pupil black.

Description – non-breeding

Crown Brown to below eye and down hind-neck. **Wings** Dark grey. **Underparts** Pale grey.

Conspicuous features

- Silver-streaked head.
- If in flight wide white wing-patches.

Differences between Hoary-headed Grebe and Dabchick

- The Hoary-headed has a bigger and more elongated head.
- Its head is adorned with brushed-back type silver feathering in the breeding season. These feathers are distinctive.
- Its breast lacks the dark chestnut colouring of the Dabchick, being of a light buff colouring.
- Has a more conspicuous white wing bar which is noticeable on the resting or diving bird.

Where to find – North Island

Northland – Awanui lakes There maybe a chance of a sighting from the lakes in the Awanui area. P. 280.

Where to find – South Island

Marlborough – Try Lake Elterwater. P. 348.