

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

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

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Blue penguin, including white-flipped penguin: pp 70-72 .



BLUE PENGUIN

Family Spheniscidae

Species *Eudyptula minor*

Subspecies Five subspecies, based on localities, are currently recognised. The most distinctive one is the White-flipped Penguin found around Banks Peninsula.

Common names Blue Penguin, Little Blue

Status Endemic

Abundance Common

Size 400 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm). The smallest of the penguins.

Habitat Outside of the moult and the breeding season when they come to land, Blue Penguins are strictly sea living birds in coastal waters. It breeds on both the mainland and offshore islands.

New Zealand range Found right around the New Zealand coast. Also found around the south Australian coast and Tasmania.

Description

Upperparts Blue. **Throat** Grey. **Underparts** White. **Flippers** Blue edged with white. Note that the White-flipped variety has very bold white leading edges to the flippers. **Bill** Black.

Conspicuous features

- Small when compared with other penguins.
- Has a heavy bill.
- Of blue colouring.

Conspicuous characteristics

- When on the surface of the sea only the head and the upperpart of the back are noticeable.
- At times birds will loaf on the water in rafts.
- Birds will “porpoise” when swimming towards the shore.

Call At sea a duck-like quack is often heard. At the nesting site, deep toned growls with some trumpeting and mewing sounds are made.

Breeding season The breeding season is from August to February. Birds nest in burrows or rock cavities, sometimes high up on cliff faces. Burrows are usually isolated but within calling distance of each other. Birds return to the burrows just after dark hopping from the water on to rocks.

The moult Birds come ashore to moult after the breeding season during the months of December to March when they hide in caves often close to the shoreline where they stay for periods of up to two weeks. During this period they become vulnerable to holidaymakers who often suspect the birds are sick and attempt to assist them. Also at this time dogs on beaches often attack them.

Where to find – North Island

Northland – In Bay of Islands common in these waters.

North Auckland – Breeds in large numbers on the Hen and Chicken Islands and on Little Barrier Island. P. 289.

North Auckland – Birds are regularly seen on the crossing from Whangaparaoa to Tiri Tiri Island. Nesting birds can also be seen on the island in special viewing nesting holes. P. 292.

Wellington – Cook Strait From the inter-island ferry.

Where to find – South Island

South Canterbury – Oamaru at the breakwater. P. 357.

Fiordland – Milford Sound From boating trips. 371.

Where to find – Stewart Island

Oban and Paterson Inlet 367.

Ackers Point – At night birds come ashore after 10 pm. Burrows usually give themselves away by their stench. P. 367.



WHITE-FLIPPED PENGUIN

Family Spheniscidae

Species *Eudyptula minor albosignata* (regarded by some as a distinct species)

Common name White-flipped Penguin

Status Endemic

Abundance Uncommon

Size 400 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm)

New Zealand range Found around Banks Peninsula near Christchurch in the South Island.

Subspecies *Five subspecies, based on localities, are currently recognised. The most distinctive one is the White-flipped Penguin found around Banks Peninsula.*

Description

Flippers The main difference when compared with the Blue Penguin is the heavy white leading edge to flipper, and whiter underparts.

Where to find – South Island

Banks Peninsula – Akaroa Harbour from tourist boats. P. 351.