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

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

New Zealand pigeon: pp 201-202.



NEW ZEALAND PIGEON

Family Columbidae

Species *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*

Common names New Zealand Pigeon, Kereru, Kukupā (Northland)

Status Endemic

Abundance Common in selected areas

Size 510 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Rock Pigeon 330 mm)

Habitat A bird of both secondary forest and old forest which contain fruiting varieties such as puriri, kohekohe, taraire, tawa and miro. It commonly enters suburban gardens to feed on flowering or fruiting trees.

New Zealand range Found throughout the forested areas and on the offshore islands. It is a very common bird on Stewart Island.

Discussion New Zealand has only one endemic pigeon. It has missed out on any major spread of the order Columbiformes from Australia and further afield. Australia has some 22 species, while New Caledonia and Vanuatu both have five and Fiji has ten. The ancestor of the New Zealand Pigeon is considered an early arrival later adapting and spreading to Norfolk Island and the Chatham Islands.

Description

Upperparts Greenish with feathers showing a metallic purplish iridescence, especially around the neck. **Underparts** White, this white appearing like a white “apron” on abdomen.

Conspicuous feature

- The white abdomen “apron”.

Conspicuous characteristics

- Pigeon flight “swish” noises are audible as it flies from branch to branch.
- Open-country flight is level and steady.
- Courtship display of soaring out from high in trees, gaining altitude and then suddenly stalling and swooping earthward is often seen.

Call Usually silent but often soft “kuu kuu kuu” sounds are heard in the breeding season.

Nest A loose structure of sticks at about four metres above ground. 1 white egg only is laid.

Where to find – North Island

Northland – Kerikeri often has birds in old trees.

North Auckland – Waiwera at Wenderholm Park. P. 291.

North Auckland – Whangaparaoa at Wade River Road wharf area. P. 294.

North Auckland – Tiri Tiri Matangi Island. P. 291.

King Country – Pureora. P. 314.

Where to find – South Island

Dunedin – Common in gardens, and the botanical gardens. P. 359.

Fiordland – Eglinton Valley has good numbers. P. 370.

Where to find – Stewart Island

Half Moon Bay – Large numbers around Oban. P. 367.

General – Expect it in many places.