

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

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

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Summary of shags: pp 75-76.

Stewart Island Shag: pp 83-84.



### STEWART ISLAND SHAG

**Family** Phalacrocoracidae

**Species** *Phalacrocorax chalconotus*

**Common name** Stewart Island Shag

**Status** Endemic

**Abundance** Common in localised coastal places

**Size** 680 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, King Shag 760 mm)

**Habitat** Strictly coastal favouring rocky coastlines.

**New Zealand range** Around the coast of the South Island from the Otago Peninsula to Stewart Island and into Fiordland.

**Discussion** The Stewart Island Shag has in common with the King Shag the orange-yellow caruncles on the face, the blue eye-ring, the pink feet and in its pied phase the white scapular slash markings on the wings. It differs by being dimorphic coming in two phases – the pied and an all black phase known as the “bronze” phase. The name Bronze Shag was given to the black phase when at first it was considered to be a separate species. The name was derived from the green iridescent sheen which covers the black upper feathers of this bird.

### **Description – pied form**

**Head** Black. **Eye-ring** Blue. **Caruncles** Orange-yellow, tending to more orange than the King Shag. **Upperparts** Black. Feathering has a noticeable sheen when in breeding plumage. **Wings** Black, with a slash of white on scapular feathers. **Underparts** White from the throat down. **Bill** Grey. **Feet and legs** Pink.

### **Description – “bronze” form**

**Upperparts and underparts** Black, with an iridescent green sheen to the feathering.

### **Description – intermediate phases**

**Upperparts** Black. **Underparts** White, in varying amounts.

### **Conspicuous features**

- All black head is conspicuous.
- Look for the blue eye-ring. A telescope is really needed for this.

### **Conspicuous characteristics**

- Often seen in groups on offshore rocks.
- Usually seen feeding in deeper water than Pied Shags.
- A more confiding bird than the King Shag of the Marlborough Sounds.

**Call** Silent except when displaying at the colonies when grunts are made.

**Nest** It nests on the ground on rock ledges or among rock crevices where it builds a nest made of plant and vegetable material. 2 pale blue eggs are laid.

### **Where to find – South Island**

**Otago** – Oamaru at the breakwater. P. 357.

**Otago Peninsula** – Taiaroa Heads from the Royal Albatross observatory. P. 361.

**Southland** – Jacks Bay to Tautuku Bay, Porpoise Bay and Curio Bay. P. 364.

**Southland** – Riverton and Colac Bay west of Invercargill. P. 366.

### **Where to find – Stewart Island**

**Whero Island** – see from boat. P. 367.

**Ackers Point** – see from land. P. 367.



