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

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Spotless crane: pp 137-139.



SPOTLESS CRAKE.

Family Rallidae

Species *Porzana tabuensis*

Common name Spotless Crane

Status Native

Abundance Secretive but not uncommon

Size 600 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Marsh Crane 180 mm)

Habitat Confined generally to wetland habitat and lake verges. These are usually swamps which contain raupo (*Typha augustifolia*) with an over-storey of manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*). On the offshore islands, and on the Poor Knights and Tiri Tiri Matangi Island in particular, they are forest dwellers living away from wetlands.

Worldwide range They have a wide distribution through the Philippines, New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands to Tahiti. The genus *Porzana*, which totals 12 species worldwide, is found in many countries throughout the world but not on the continents of North and South America. New Zealand has two species, the Spotless Crane (*Porzana tabuensis*) and the Marsh Crane (*P. pusilla*). The New Zealand Spotless Crane is regarded as

a fairly recent colonist but because of its very secretive habits, it is relatively unknown.

New Zealand range Throughout the North Island. In the South Island there are scattered populations in Marlborough, North Canterbury, Westland and Southland.

Description

Head and nape Black. **Back and wings** Dull brown. **Underparts** Dark grey. **Eye** Red with red eye-ring.

Conspicuous features

- Red of eye.
- Brown back and wings.

Conspicuous characteristics

- Will fly up from cover if startled by a metallic sound or an engine.
- Runs quickly when away from cover.

Call Sounds are varied. The most common is a “mook mook mook mook”, often followed by a “brururur” bubbly type call. Also isolated “mook” sounds.

Nest On the ground in grass or rushes. Up to 4 pinkish-cream eggs are laid.

Where to find – North Island

Northland – Bay of Islands in swampy areas in the Paihia district and in Waitangi State Forest. P. 283.

North Auckland – Tiri Tiri Matangi Island around the pond up from the wharf and on the Kawarau track. P. 292.

North Auckland – Waiwera in roadside patches of raupo near Strakas Refuge. P. 291.

Hauraki Plains – Torehape East Road on the Hauraki Plains. P. 307.

North Waikato – Whangamarino near the old Meremere Power Station. P. 308.

South Waikato – Oparau near Kawhia. P. 313.

Bay of Plenty – Matata Lagoon and on the gravel road east that leads to the mouth of the Tarawera River. P. 320, 322.

Lake Taupo – Turangi in wet roadside verges along its southern shores. P. 316.

Where to find – South Island

North Canterbury – St Annes Lagoon. P. 347.

Otago – Sinclair Wetlands south of Dunedin. P. 362.

Southland – The verges of Lake Wilkie on the Catlins scenic road. P. 364.

Southland – Lake Murihiku near Invercargill. P. 366.

Southland – Awarua Bay verges. P. 365.

Southland – Bushy Point near Invercargill. P. 365.

Southland – Redcliff Wildlife Reserve on Blackmount Road. P. 369.

Westland – Lake Kaniere in swampy lakeside verges. P. 374.