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

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Pycrofts petrel: pp 57-58.



PYCROFTS PETREL

Family Procellariidae

Species *Pterodroma pycrofti*

Common name Pycrofts Petrel

Status Endemic

Abundance Rare

Size 280 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm)

Breeding islands close to New Zealand Hen and Chicken Islands, Poor Knights and Mercury Islands.

Breeding months November to April. Birds lay 1 white egg in isolated burrows often located in flat areas among the forest.

Range worldwide Range is uncertain but it is known to move north from New Zealand into the Pacific Ocean at the end of the breeding season in a narrow belt to the Equator.

New Zealand range Waters to the north of the Bay of Plenty.

Discussion Similar to Stejnegers Petrel (*Pterodroma longirostris*) a bird of the west coast of South America. Can easily be confused with Cooks Petrel.

Description

Head Dark grey crown with light forehead feather scalation. **Face, throat and around bill** White with dark grey through the eye. **Upperparts** Grey. **Upperwings** Grey, with dark grey open M marking across wings and rump to wing-tips. **Underparts** White. **Underwings** White, with black edges and a small black tag at the leading wing joint. **Tail** Grey with dark grey tip.

Conspicuous feature

- Similar to Cooks Petrel but with more dark grey on wings and tail.

Differences between Pycrofts and Cooks Petrel (from Chris Gaskin and Hadoram Shirihai)

- Pycrofts Petrel is slightly smaller than Cooks Petrel.
- Pycrofts Petrel has plumage which is more dark and dusky grey than Cooks Petrel.
- Pycrofts has almost no white supercilium stripe above the eye, its head and nape appear darker, and its neck shows more grey.
- Pycrofts has less abdominal white showing when sitting on the water.
- In flight, Pycrofts looks shorter with more rounded wings and a longer tail.

Breeding habitat difference between Pycrofts and Cooks Petrel

- Pycrofts Petrel tends to nest at lower altitudes and on different terrain from Cooks Petrel. Nests are found on flattish areas at low altitudes with rat-hole like burrows penetrating soft soils, unlike Cooks which digs its holes on the steep sides of banks and among old roots high up on its Little Barrier Island colony.

Call “Ti ti ti ti ti”, higher-pitched than Cooks and more delicate. Calls commence about one hour after dark on the Hen and Chicken Islands.

Best viewing months October through to March.

Where to find – North Island

Northland – Bay of Islands beyond Cape Brett and towards the Poor Knights Islands.

North Auckland – Towards Little Barrier Island where they nest and around Great Barrier and Mokohinau Islands. P. 289.

Coromandel – Towards Mercury Island.