



Top 10 places to go birding in New Zealand

[Link: Top 10 places to go birding in New Zealand](#)

New Zealand is undoubtedly known for its spectacular scenery, but the following 10 birding locations provide fantastic opportunities to see the native birdlife in all its glory.

1: Tiritiri Matangi Island

Want to visit an island sanctuary that is loaded with native wildlife? This is a highlight of any visit to New Zealand and a location not to be missed. You can spot the largest living member of the rail family - the **South Island Takahē**. You could also spot the ancient Tuatara, which is a reptile most closely related to a lizard or you may hear the mournful call of the Kōkako, an endemic wattlebird, before you see one. The island's close proximity to Auckland city makes this a perfect day-trip excursion!



Takahē New Zealand

2: Hauraki Gulf

New Zealand has an abundance of seabirds so a pelagic trip (or two) is a must and the Hauraki Gulf ranks highly for its pelagic birds, in particular the **New Zealand Storm-Petrel**. You should expect to see numerous shearwaters, petrels and storm-petrels in the Hauraki Gulf, which, like Tiritiri Matangi, can be done comfortably as a day-trip from Auckland.



New Zealand Storm-Petrel

3: Miranda Pūkorokoro Shorebird Centre

Say hello to a shorebird hotspot where you can spot Arctic migrants like the Bar-tailed Godwit and Red Knot by the thousands, or the local migrants like the South Island Pied Oystercatcher and the endemic **Wrybill**, which is the only bird in the world with a laterally curved bill. There is always something to be seen and if you like shorebirds, then you'll love this location!



Wrybill

4: Muriwai Gannet Colony

The **Australasian Gannet** colony at Muriwai Beach west of Auckland boasts upwards of 1,200 gannet nests and is located on the mainland with two viewing platforms, which means you can leave your zoom lens at home and get close-up views of these birds as they tend to their nests and young (or squabble with their neighbours).



Australasian Gannet Colony © Abram Tompkins

5: Pureora Forest Park

This forest park located west of Taupo is home to native, giant ancient trees that highlight a forest rich in bird life, including the **North Island Kokako**, Kaka, Yellow-crowned Kākāriki, North Island Robin and Rifleman. You will feel transported back in time once you enter this forest and a meander through the forest will be appreciated by both your eyes and your ears.



Kokako

6: Marlborough Sounds

Two of the most rare New Zealand species, the **King Shag** and the Orange-fronted Kakariki, can be spotted in the sounds. Any keen birder wouldn't miss the opportunity to try and see both of these species on a day out from Picton, which requires a calm and leisurely boat ride into the sounds for King Shag sighting opportunities and a stop at Blumine Island for the Orange-fronted Kakariki.



King Shag © Paul Prior

7: Kaikōura (pelagic)

A pelagic experience that needs to be seen to be believed. Envision the mountains meeting the sea and an abundance of marine life and seabirds. Have you ever seen numerous albatross species, such as the **Wandering Albatross** with its 3 metre wingspan, in addition to shearwaters and petrels, at close range where binoculars are not needed? This is your dream come true! Sperm whales are also commonly seen here and can be spotted year-round. The lack of a continental shelf off the Kaikoura coast provides the perfect location for a short and highly productive pelagic excursion that could be the highlight of your entire New Zealand experience.



Wandering Albatross

8: Arthur's Pass National Park

A number of native species call the dense forests of the Southern Alps home. The alpine parrot, known as the **Kea**, is a common visitor into the village. These very large and cheeky parrots are highly intelligent and an absolute joy to watch. At night, you could be lucky enough to hear a Great Spotted Kiwi, one of the five kiwi species located in New Zealand.



Kea in Arthur's Pass

9: Fiordland National Park

Known for its scenery and hiking, Fiordland National Park also showcases a number of sought after bird species ranging from Kea and Kaka to Rock Wren and Blue Duck, all within a day trip from Te Anau. With a bit of luck, Fiordland Crested Penguins are sometimes seen in Milford Sound.



Fiordland Penguins

10: Stewart Island/Ulva Island

Ulva Island is the "Tiritiri Matangi of the South Island". It's a predator-free island sanctuary that is a safe haven for a number of species that aren't easily seen elsewhere in New Zealand and is a short 15 minutes by boat from Stewart Island. You would expect to see **South Island Saddleback**, Yellowhead, South Island Kaka and more! Stewart Island itself is known for its kiwi population. The Southern Brown Kiwi is commonly seen after dark and occasionally is spotted during the daytime as well.



South Island Saddleback

Interested in visiting these locations and seeing these incredible birds? Consider joining our [New Zealand Birding Tour](#). Our experienced, expert guides will take you these top birding locations in New Zealand.