



Precocial Chick Identification Guide for Wild Birds in New Zealand Vol. 1

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Foreword

Identifying these little cuties is often a best guess! For the most part, they look nothing like their parents! Yet identifying them is the first step to deciding on your next steps! Can they be renested? Fostered? Or do they need a permitted wildlife rehabilitator to care for them until they can take on the world? And then the big question, what do they eat and how long do they need care? Hopefully this guide will help in this process.

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References

- NZ Birds Online - <https://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz> (Blue links in document open page)
- Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic birds (HANZAB) – Project managed by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union (RAOU, now known as BirdLife Australia)
- The Cornell Lab of Ornithology - Birds of the World - Online Subscription
- <https://www.doc.govt.nz>
- <https://www.inaturalist.nz>
- <https://www.creativecommons.org>
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- <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>

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Galliformes - landfowl



Observation © margot_oorebeek
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Brown quail/kuera

Coturnix ypsilophora

Conservation status: Introduced and Naturalised

Description: Chicks have dark brown down on upperparts, irregularly, finely streaked with rich brown. Top of head is buff with broad dark-brown central and lateral crown-stripes and hindcollar. Side of head is buff. Underparts are dull brown and mottled cream.

Fledged at 10–17 days, independent 28–30 days. Adult size at 6 weeks, adult plumage at 3 months

Chick weight: approx. 8g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 28 by 23mm

Adult: 17–22cm long, 75–120g

California quail/koera

Callipepla californica

Conservation status: Introduced and Naturalised

Description: Chicks have buff or cinnamon-buff down on upperparts with dark brown to black-brown stripes. Cinnamon-buff heads with dark brown cap, narrowly bordered by white towards rear. White underparts, buff on breast, and blotched brown on flanks and thighs. Buffish pink bill and feet, dark brown iris. Fledged at approx. 14–21 days, independent 21–28 days. Adult size at 4 months

Chick weight: approx. 7–8g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 31 by 24mm, approx. 9g

Adult: Approx. 25cm long, 145–210g



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"guinea fowl chicks" by EssjayNZ is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Helmeted guineafowl

Numida meleagris

Conservation status: Introduced and Naturalised

Description: Chicks have cinnamon-buff down with dark streaks. Pinkish-orange bill and legs. Can fly weakly at 14 days. Fledged at approx. 4 weeks, independent approx. 10 weeks. Adult weight by 30 weeks

Chick weight: approx. 15.6–25.8g at hatching to 1 day old

Egg dimensions: mean 53 by 40mm, approx. 25–41g

Adult: 53–63cm long

Female 1,135–1,823g

Male 1,145–1,816g

Chukor/Chukar Partridge

Alectoris chukar

Conservation status: Introduced and Naturalised

Description: Chicks have dense soft down, light brown crown with dark speckles, cream side of head and supercilium, black streak from eye to back of neck, black back with three longitudinal stripes, off-white breast and underside. Can fly short distances at about 2 weeks old, adult size approx. 12 weeks

Chick weight: 11–16g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 43 by 31mm

Adult: 31–34cm long

Female 450–680g

Male 510–800g



Forest and Kim Starr, CC BY 2.0 www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Galliformes - landfowl



Common pheasant/peihana

Phasianus colchicus

Conservation status: Introduced and Naturalised

Description: Chicks have pale tawny buff to yellow buff down on body and underparts, dark stripes on head, back and sides, black spots on ear coverts and black patches on wings. Dark-brown iris, pinkish white legs and feet. Fledged at approx. 12 days, independent 70-84 days. Adult weight and fully plumaged approx. 20 weeks

Chick weight: approx. 18.5-26g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 46 by 36mm, 31-35g

Adult:

Female 500-1,200g, 50-60cm long

Male 900-3,000g, 60-80cm long (including tail)



Peafowl/pikao

Pavo cristatus

Conservation status: Introduced and Naturalised

Description: Chicks have brown, faintly flecked down on back, pale buff to cream underparts, with yellowish breast. Mottled light brown head and hindneck. In about a week, begin to develop first contour feathers, which are dark brown above and paler below. Sides of head whitish with dark band through eye. Sexes alike for 12-18 months. Fledged at approx. 10-14 days, independent approx. 6-9 months. Adult size approx. 1 year

Chick weight: approx. 120g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 69 by 51mm, weight (fresh) 88.9-101.2g

Adult:

Female (peahen) 2,750-4,000g, approx. 95cm long

Male (peacock) 4,000-6,000g, 100-115cm long to end of tail, 195-225cm long to end of full train



"Turkey chick" by danthedixonman is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Wild turkey/korukoru

Meleagris gallopavo

Conservation status: Introduced and Naturalised

Description: Chicks have brown and buff blotched down on upperparts, pale pinkish buff to cream underparts with whitish breast and throat. Light brown head spotted with dark brown.

Pale pinkish buff bill, pink legs and feet. Fledged at 8-14 days, independent approx. 4 months

Chick weight: approx. 47g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 62.8 by 44.9mm, weight (fresh): approx. 66.7g

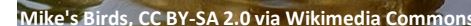
Adult: 90-120cm long, 3,200-10,600g

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AnemoneProjectors (talk) (Flickr), CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Bernard Spragg. NZ from Christchurch, New Zealand,



Anseriformes - waterfowl



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Eric van Esen

Muscovy

Cairina moschata

Conservation status: Introduced, not established

Description: Chicks have either a full covering of yellow down, or otherwise dark brown down above, yellow face and belly, black line from back of eye towards back of head, relatively long tail, yellow spots on wings, grey-brown bill with hook at tip, and greyish-yellow legs. Fledged at approx. 70 days, independent 70-84 days

Chick weight: approx. 41-44g at hatching

Egg dimensions: 6.2-7.1 by 4.4-4.7mm, approx. 70g

Adult: 64-86cm long, 2,300-6,300g

Paradise shelduck/pūtangitangi

Tadorna variegata

Conservation status: Not Threatened

Description: Chicks have white breast and face, dark brown crown covering the eye. White body with dark brown/black stripe running from base of neck to top of tail and dark brown/black patches on sides of body above legs and at base of neck to front of wings and on back of wings. Dark grey/black bill, dark grey legs and feet. Fledged at 55-65 days

Chick weight: 43-53g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 48.6 by 62.7mm, 72-90.7g

Adult: 63-71cm long

Female 1,059-1,700g

Male 1,420-1,980g

Mallard/rakiraki

Anas platyrhynchos

Conservation status: Introduced and Naturalised

Description: Chicks have yellow breast and face, black/dark crown, black/dark eye-stripe running from top of bill, evenly across eye and continuing above the dark ear-covert towards back of crown. Smaller dark stripe running from bottom of bill across face towards ear-covert, stopping before level with eye. Dark brown body with some pale yellow markings on sides of rump and wings. Dark grey/brown/black bill, dark grey/black legs and feet. Fledged/independent 50-65 days

Chick weight: 27-41g at 1 day old

Egg dimensions: mean 43 by 58mm, approx. 52.2g

Adult:

Female 50-60cm long, 735-1,320g

Male 55-70cm long, 870-1,800g

Blue duck/whio

Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos

Conservation status: Nationally Vulnerable

Description: Chicks have white breast and face, dark brown crown, running from top of bill. Dark brown eye-stripe running from top of bill, reaching to back of crown. Dark brown body, with white stripe on wing and reddish-orange spots on sides of rump and bottom edge of tail. Dark grey bill with distinctive wider tip like that of adult, dark grey-brown legs and feet. Fledged at 70-82 days

Chick weight: 39-48g (North Is), 43-56g (South Is) at hatching

Egg dimensions: 59-70.9mm by 40.8-46.7mm, approx. 62.3g

Adult: 53-54cm long

Female 680-870g

Male 820-1,077g



Simon Runting



Wendy Masson - Staglands Wildlife Reserve

Anseriformes - waterfowl



Gary Williams some rights reserved (CC BY-SA)

Grey teal/tētē

Anas gracilis

Conservation status: Not Threatened

Description: Chicks have creamy/off-white breast and face, brown crown. Narrow brown eye-stripe running from top of bill, across eye and stopping above the brown ear-covert, before reaching back of head. Grey-brown body with whitish grey markings on sides of rump and wings. Slate-black to blue-grey bill, slate-grey legs and feet.

Fledged at 35-40 days, independent at 55 days

Chick weight: approx. 23g at 1 day old

Egg dimensions: mean 36 by 49mm, approx. 34.3g

Adult: Female 37-47cm long, 350-602g

Male 42-44cm long, 395-670g



Scott Brooks

Grey duck/pārera

Anas superciliosa

Conservation status: Nationally Critical

Description: Chicks have pale yellow breast and face, dark grey-brown crown, black eye-stripe running from top of bill, widest over eye, tapering off behind eye and stopping above the dark ear-covert before reaching back of crown. Smaller dark stripe running from bottom of bill across face towards ear-covert, stopping below eye. Grey/brown body with whitish-yellow markings on sides of rump and wings. Dark grey bill, dark grey legs and feet.

Fledged/independent at 50-65 days

Chick weight: approx. 28g at 1 day old

Egg dimensions: mean 41 by 58mm, 54-60g

Adult: 50-60cm long, 900-1,200g



Simon Runting

New Zealand scaup/pāpango

Aythya novaeseelandiae

Conservation status: Not Threatened

Description: Chicks have creamy white breast and face, dark brown crown. Brown eye-patch around eye and bill area running from top of bill, tapering off behind eye and stopping above the brown ear-covert before reaching back of crown. Pale brown body with whitish markings on sides of rump and wings. Dark brown/grey/reddish-brown bill. Grey-brown legs and feet. Fledged 75 days

Chick weight: approx. 44g at hatching

Egg dimensions: 59.3-75.1mm by 41.6-46.6mm, 59.5-81g

Adult: 40-46cm long

Female 530-700g, Male 630-760g

Brown teal/pāteke

Anas chlorotis

Conservation status: Recovering

Description: Chicks have brown breast and face, dark brown crown, dark brown eye-stripe running from top of bill, evenly across eye and stopping above the dark brown ear-covert before reaching back of head, lighter brown around eyes. Brown body with light brown markings on sides of rump and wings. Brown bill, legs and feet. Fledged/independent at 50-55 days

Chick weight: 35-45g at 1 day old

Egg dimensions: mean 43 by 60mm, approx. 61.4g

Adult: 36-48cm long

Female 530-600g, Male 620-700g



Eric van Essen

Australasian shoveler/kuruwhengi

Anas rhynchos

Conservation status: Not Threatened

Description: Chicks have pale yellow breast and face, brown crown. Dark brown eye-stripe running from top of bill, tapering off behind eye and stopping above the dark ear-covert before reaching back of crown. Brown body with pale yellow spots on sides of rump and wings. Dark grey bill, similar to the distinctive long, spoon shape of the adult bill, dark brown legs and feet. Fledged/independent 56-60 days

Chick weight: approx. 26g at 1 day old

Egg dimensions: mean 51-57mm by 36-40mm, 38.9-42.1g

Adult: 46-56cm long

Female 545-745g, Male 570-852g



Eric van Essen

Gruiformes - cranes, rails and coots



"The apple doesn't fall far from the tree" by Anita363 is licensed under CC BY-NC

Weka

Gallirallus australis

Conservation status: Not Threatened
Semi-Precocial

Description: Chicks have long, soft, silky brown-black down, black bill with white or pinkish-white egg-tooth, brown iris and dark purple to pink-grey or blackish legs turning brown or orange-brown over first 6 weeks.

Feathered at approx. 28 days, independent at 40-108 days. Attain adult size by independence, adult weight at 6-9 months

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 57.7 by 39.9mm, TBAg

Adult:

Female 46-50cm long, 350-1,035g

Male 50-60cm long, 532-1,605g



Birds New Zealand Otago Region Newsletter 11/2017
Marsh Crakes at Sinclair Wetlands - Mary Thompson

Marsh crane/koitareke/kotoreke

Porzana pusilla

Conservation status: Declining

Description: Chicks have black down with green gloss, bluish brown to black iris, bone white to straw yellow bill, grey-brown to black legs and feet.

Fledged/independent at 35-45 days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 27.8 by 19.6mm, TBAg

Adult: 17-19cm long

Female 17-55g

Male 23-45g

Banded rail/konini/moho pererū

Gallirallus philippensis

Conservation status: Declining

Description: Chicks have black down, grey eye-stripe or cheek patch. Black legs and bill and brown iris. Feathers begin to appear at five days. Fledged at approx. 60 days, independent approx. 5-9 weeks. Adult weight at approx. 3 weeks

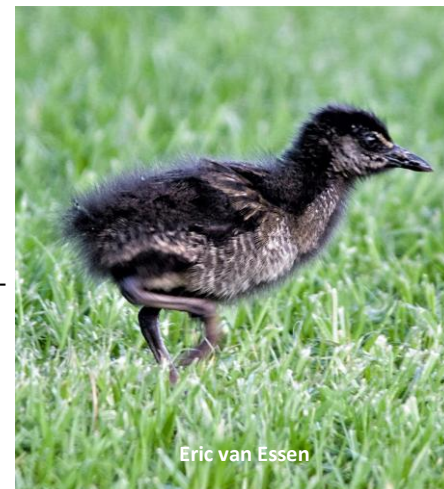
Chick weight: 12-13g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 40.4 by 28.9mm, 13-19g

Adult: 25-33cm long

Female 115-265g

Male 126-234g



Eric van Essen

Spotless crane/pūweto/putoto

Porzana tabuensis

Conservation status: Declining

Semi-Precocial

Description: Chicks have black down with greenish sheen, black bill with pink nares and pink saddle at base of upper mandible (at 3 weeks pink base to both mandibles). White-cream egg-tooth lost at about 2 weeks. Black or blue-grey iris which becomes olive drab at 4 weeks, then develops increasingly orange tinge. Dark brown-grey legs and feet, pink at rear of tarsus and under toes. First feathers appear at approx. 15 days, flight feathers develop around 66 days.

Independent at 4-5 months

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 30 by 22mm, 9-9.5g

Adult: 15-20cm long

Female 21-58g

Male 34-56g



NZ Birds Online - Spotless crane. Chick. Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, January 2009.
Image © Sonja Ross by Sonja Ross

Gruiformes - cranes, rails and coots



Simon Runting

Pukeko/pūkeko

Porphyrio melanotus

Conservation status: Not Threatened

Description: Chicks have black down on head, upperparts and wing-pads, and brownish-black underparts. On upperparts and neck, tips of most filaments of down enclosed in fine white sheaths, looking like fine white spines scattered over neck, mantle, back and wing-pads, exposing well-defined areas of orange-red skin. On forehead, tips of down enclosed in black sheaths, giving appearance of glossy black bristles. Sheaths at tips of down-filaments wear away within a few days and down below begins to fade. Iris, black-brown. Feet and legs, orange-pink becoming brownish at joints over time.

Fed and cared for by parents and helpers. Young begin feeding themselves at approx 14 days, but still fed by adults until 44-60 days old.

Fledged/independent approx. 60 days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 52 by 36mm, TBAg

Adult: 38-50cm long

Female 679-1,252g

Male 785-1,310g

Australian coot

Fulica atra

Conservation status: Naturally Uncommon

Description: Chicks have black down with orange to yellow tips to down of neck and side of head, wings and mantle, and red tips on lores and around red shield. Iris hazel to grey-brown, bare skin of crown red and blue, bill red becoming orange towards tip, which is white and black. Slate/olive-grey legs and feet.

Bright colouring fades after approx 3-4 weeks, replaced by dull greyish-white down on front of neck and breast.

Fed and cared for by both parents, older young help feed chicks of later broods. Begin to dive at 3-5 weeks, self-feeding at 30 days, fed by parents up to two months. May stay with family group until following spring. Fledged/independent at 55-60 days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 50 by 34mm, TBAg

Adult: 35-39cm long

Female 520-750g

Male 520-890g



Simon Runting



"Takahē chick *Porphyrio mantelli*" by markmewat1
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South Island takahē/takahē

Porphyrio hochstetteri

Conservation status: Nationally Vulnerable

Description: Chicks have black down, black-brown iris, bill has black base and frontal shield with terminal two-thirds including egg tooth being ivory-white. Legs and feet pale pink, becoming purple-brown. Down fades to black-brown (pale brown to whitish from face to breast) and replaced by grey second down at 4-5 weeks. Body feathers develop at 5-8 weeks, tail at 14-18 weeks, wings at 9-20 weeks. Legs and feet attain adult size by approx. 3 months old. Young fed and brooded by both parents, dependent on adults for food for approx. 4 months.

Independent approx. 1 year.

Chick weight: approx. 61g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 73.6 by 48.1mm, approx. 96.5g

Adult: 63cm, stands approx. 50 cm tall

Female 1,850-2,600g, Male 2,250-3,500g

Podicipediformes - grebes



Australasian crested grebe/pūteketeke/kāmana

Podiceps cristatus

Conservation status: Native, Nationally Vulnerable, semi-precocial

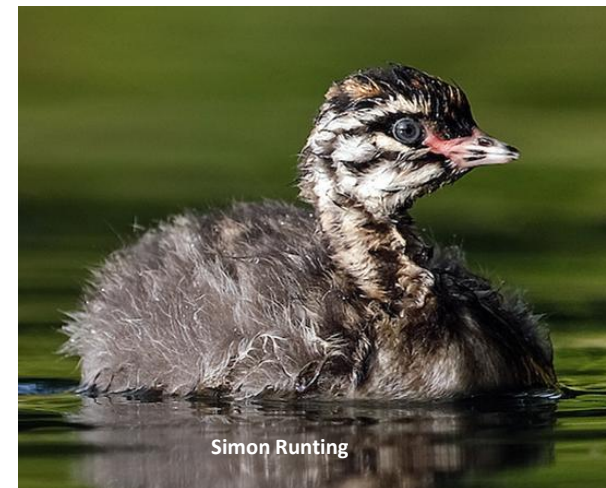
Description: Chicks have buffy grey down with dark brownish-grey stripes on upperparts, paler below. Head and neck whitish with black longitudinal stripes. Bald areas on lores and top of crown. Orange-yellow iris, green-yellow feet, black bill, white tipped and red at base.

Both parents tend chicks, often carrying them on their backs under wings slightly raised into a protecting tent, through which heads of young may protrude. Tend young for 3-4 weeks after hatching. Fledged at 71-79 days, independent approx. TBA days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 57 by 36.25mm, TBAg

Adult: 46-61cm long, 596-1,490g



Australasian little grebe/tokitokipio

Tachybaptus novaehollandiae

Conservation status: Coloniser

Description: Chicks have dark brown down with pale stripes on upperparts, and white and grey-brown underparts. Forehead, crown and nape, black-brown with silvery grey stripe above bare lores. Bill, pink to salmon with narrow dark-brown band across upper mandible. Eggtooth, white. Iris, blackish brown. Eye-ring and bare lores, pink to salmon. Outer side of tarsus and toes, grey to blackish. Soles and inner side of tarsus, brown grey

Chicks spend first night on nest then carried on adults. Fledged/independent approx. 56 days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 36 by 25mm, TBAg

Adult: 23-27cm long, 100-230g

New Zealand dabchick/weweia/totokipio/taihoropi (Hokianga)/taratimoho (Waikato)

Poliiocephalus rufopectus

Conservation status: Recovering

Description: Chicks have blackish-brown down and light brown stripes on upperparts, including top of head, blackish and white pattern on face and throat, white on underparts. Black-brown crown with reddish-brown spot at back on both sides. Fleshy pink-whitish/grey bill with small black tip and markings. Raised on the back of adults for first three weeks. Fledged approx. 35 days, independent approx. 70 days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 43 by 29mm, TBAg

Adult: 28-30cm long, 230-271g

Charadriiformes - shorebirds



Eric van Essen

Variable oystercatcher/tōrea pango

Haematopus unicolor

Conservation status: Recovering

Description: Chicks have variable patterning of down depending on colour morph. For all morphs - back is sandy with dark streaks, legs are dark grey, iris is dark brown-blackish and bill is black with small whitish egg-tooth. By about third week, bill shows dull reddish to orange tinge at base and dark-grey tip. Black morph belly is brown. Pied morph belly is white. Intermediates belly is mixture of brown and white. Some black morphs have dark head. Fledged at 40-50 days, independent within 2-4 weeks of fledging

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 59 by 41mm, fresh weight approx. 48.2-49.4g

Adult: 47-49cm long

Black morph: Female 724g average, Male 678g average

Pied morph: Female 750g average, Male 717g average

Intermediate morph: Female 779g average, Male 710g average



South Island pied oystercatcher. Chick. Mataura River, Eastern Southland, September 2012. Image © Glenda Rees by Glenda Rees

South Island pied oystercatcher/tōrea

Haematopus finschi

Conservation status: Declining

Description: Chicks have whitish tipped, dense, brownish-grey down on upperparts, with blackish bars and lines on back, crown and through eye and on thigh. White underparts from lower breast. Blackish stripe from base of wing to side of tail, which is black with wispy light grey-brown tips. Brown-black bill, yellow at base, small whitish egg-tooth. Dark brown-blackish iris and dark grey or brown legs and feet which become lighter over time. Fledged at 28-42 days, independent at 42-60 days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 55.8 by 38.6mm, approx. 44.2g

Adult: approx. 46cm long

Female 538-622g

Male 518-615g

Pied stilt/poaka

Himantopus himantopus

leucocephalus

Conservation status: Not

Threatened

Description: Chicks have olive-brown down on back and crown, dotted with parallel lines of black spots, larger on back, with black lines on flanks. Off-white underparts, black-brown iris, blackish brown bill, dark legs at hatching, rapidly becoming lighter. Fledged at 28-37 days, independent after a few months

Chick weight: 12-16g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 44 by 32mm

Adult: approx. 35cm long, 138-208g



BirdCare Aotearoa

Black stilt/kaki

Himantopus novaezelandiae

Conservation status: Nationally Critical

Description: Chicks have pale brown down on upperparts, speckled and spotted with black, with larger spots on back in parallel lines. Greyish-black patch on thighs, off-white underparts. Grey-black bill, brown iris, light grey-pink legs and pink toes. Fledged at 28-56 days, independent 6-9 months

Chick weight: 15-20g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 45 by 32mm

Adult: 37-40cm long, 195-220g



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Charadriiformes - shorebirds



Eric van Essen

[New Zealand dotterel](#)/tūturiwhatu/tuturiwhatu-pukunui/rako
Charadrius obscurus

Conservation status: Recovering

Description: Chicks have dense, buffy-white down with black, brown and yellowish speckles and blotches on upperparts. Underparts are whitish with a buff wash across the breast. Forehead and sides of face are white. Faint irregular median crown-stripe from the base of bill to the central crown, breaking up into a line of irregular blotches. Dark grey bill with pinkish tinge, particularly at base. Dark iris and grey legs with pinkish tinge.

Fledged at 35-50 days, independent 1-2 months

Chick weight: 16-18.4g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 44 by 31mm, 18.1-24.3g

Adult: 25-28cm long, 146-179g



NZ Birds Online - Black-fronted dotterel. Two chicks. Waipara river lagoon [Amberley Beach], North Canterbury. Image © K G Shakespeare by K G Shakespeare Kevin Shakespeare Layzeboy Photography © Nature & Wildlife

[Black-fronted dotterel](#)

Elseya melanops

Conservation status: Naturally Uncommon

Description: Chicks have buff brown down on upperparts, speckled and blotched with black. Black along sides of back and leading-edge of wing-pads. White upper hindneck, bordered below by broad black stripe that extends from behind eyes, encircling lower hindneck. White underparts including chin, throat and face below the dark eye-stripe. Dark grey bill, light flesh coloured legs.

Fledged at 23-40 days, independent approx. 56 days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 33 by 20mm, TBAg

Adult: 16-18cm long, 27-42g



NZ Birds Online - Banded dotterel. Chick. Clutha River, Bendigo November 2011. Image © Craig McKenzie by Craig McKenzie

[Banded dotterel](#)/tūturiwhatu/pohowera

Charadrius bicinctus

Conservation status: Nationally Vulnerable

Description: Chicks have two main colour morphs of their down, unrelated to geographical distribution or sex. The gold morph has upperparts and crown speckled buff and black-brown with some black-brown blotches. Underparts and hindneck collar is off-white to cream. Grey-black bill, black iris, pale grey-green legs, feet and toes. The grey morph has light grey speckling on upperparts and crown rather than buff.

Fledged at 35-42 days, independent at 42-56 days

Chick weight: 7-8g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 34.1 by 24.8mm, 10.5-11.5g

Adult: 18-21cm long, 47-76g

Charadriiformes - shorebirds



NZ Birds Online - Wrybill. Front view of chick. Lake Tekapo, November 2008. Image © Craig McKenzie by Craig McKenzie

Wrybill/ngutuparore/ngutu pare

Anarhynchus frontalis

Conservation status: Nationally Vulnerable

Description: Chicks have pale, uniform, off-white to pale grey down on upperparts, with fine, indistinct grey-black flecking and white underparts. Narrow grey black forehead stripe (not extending quite to bill) forks round eye almost encircling it. Black bill (laterally curved to the right as per adult), black-brown iris, dark grey-green or grey-olive legs.

Fledged at 35-40 days, independent at 30-50 days

Chick weight: less than 10g at hatching (approx. 10g at 5 days)

Egg dimensions: approx. 34 by 26mm, approx. 11.4g

Adult: 20-21cm long, 43-71g



BirdCare Aotearoa

Spur-winged plover/masked lapwing

Vanellus miles

Conservation status: Not Threatened

Description: Chicks have brown speckled buff and mottled black down on upperparts, white hindneck collar with a black nape band above extending almost to rear of eye, and a black shoulder mark from early age. Rear-flanks washed buff, with dark-brown line running down outside of thighs. Underparts mostly white. Crown and area directly behind eye, light brown sometimes speckled buff, with much black mottling, heaviest on centre of crown and directly above eye. Area between forehead and bill covered by strip of yellowish skin. Whitish ring around eyes and whitish 'wattles' between the eyes and bill become broader and pale yellow, sometimes tinged pale green over time. At first, bill is pale grey with large dark-grey areas at base and tip, and white egg-tooth. Bill becomes cream and varying pink, with greyblack tip. Black-brown iris. Grey feet and legs, becoming pale grey. Chicks have no carpal spur at hatching.

Fledged at 5-8 weeks, independent 6-9 months

Chick weight: 14-26g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 49 by 35mm, 25-35g

Adult: 30-38cm long, 191-400g



NZ Birds Online - Shore plover. Day old chick. Mana Island November 2009. Image © Peter Reese by Peter Reese

Shore plover/tūturuatu

Thinornis novaeseelandiae

Conservation status: Nationally Critical

Description: Chicks have thick, soft, silky down. Mottled upperparts with grey, buff, tawny-yellow, dark brown and blackish spots, usually lighter on head. Obscure, black-brown median crown-stripe and indistinct dark-brown dorso-lateral stripe. Underparts are tawny-white to cream. Blackish bill with indistinct flesh coloured area at base. Legs and feet are pale pink, pale orange-pink or pale greyish-pink.

Fledged at 35-45 days, independent at 41-67 days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 37 by 26mm, 10.5-14.5g (freshly laid)

Adult: approx. 20cm long, 52-69g

Charadriiformes - shorebirds



NZ Birds Online - Southern black-backed gull. Newly hatched chick and egg in nest. Awarua Bay, January 2015. Image © Glenda Rees by Glenda Rees
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/nzsamphotofanatic/>



NZ Birds Online - Black-billed gull. Two chicks in nest. Near Twizel. Image © Department of Conservation (image ref: 10050072) by Dave Murray, courtesy of Department of Conservation

Southern black-backed gull/karoro

Larus dominicanus

Conservation status: Not Threatened

Semi-Precocial

Description: Chicks have greyish down with black spots, more defined on head. Down appears hairy, mostly light silvery grey, with faint uneven brown or buff tinge, and fine obscure grey-brown mottling not forming a pattern. Head has elongated dark-brown blotches in irregular pattern of crownstrips, elongated blotch in centre of forehead, originating at base of bill, forks to form split medial crown-stripe. Often have blotchy stripe under eye. Throat has series of dark blotches that tend to coalesce towards centre. Breast and belly are cream to pale grey-brown, paler than rest of down. When newly hatched, bill is black or grey-black with large cream tips to mandibles, and small white egg-tooth which is quickly lost. Pale tips on bill gradually reduced and lost before fledging. Mouth is pink-red. Iris is dark brown. Legs are dark grey, with purple or dark-pink tinge. Claws are grey-black.

Fledged at 45-61 days, remain with parents to approx. 3 to 6 months old

Chick weight: approx. 49-69g at hatching to 1 day old

Egg dimensions: mean 69 by 47mm, 57-105g

Adult: 49-65cm long, 810-1,335g

Black-billed gull/tarāpuka

Larus bulleri

Conservation status: Nationally Critical

Description: Chicks have moderate individual variation of down colouring. Upperparts and wing-pads varies from yellow-brown or ginger-brown to cream or off-white, liberally and irregularly blotched black-brown. Ground-colour of head. Blotches very sharp on forehead, ear-coverts, chin and throat, less sharp on crown and hindneck. Sides of neck, not mottled, emphasizing narrow vertebral stripe of blotches along hindneck. Prominent light-grey eye-ring. Narrow stripe on underparts, unmarked, not mottled or blotched, same colour as ground-colour of upperparts. Black-billed gull is best distinguished from red-billed gull by bare parts. Bill is pink-brown or pink-grey, slightly smudged with dark grey, with light pink gape. Iris is dark brown. Legs and feet are dark pinkish-grey, dull pink to dull orange-pink.

Fledged at approx. 26-35 days, independent TBA days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 50.1 by 36.7mm, TBAg

Adult: 35-38cm long, 190-270g



"Red billed gull chick. (From a hide)" by Bernard Spragg is marked with CCO 1.0

Red-billed gull/tarāpunga

Larus novaehollandiae

Conservation status: Declining

Semi-Precocial

Description: Chicks have mottled brown to greyish-brown down. Upperparts vary from light grey-brown to dull light-brown or ginger-brown, overlain with dark-brown blotches which are small and sharp on top of head, and larger, more diffuse and irregular on saddle. Underparts are light grey-brown, often with slight ginger tinge to breast, and with large dark-brown blotches on flanks and smaller blotches on throat. By third week, primaries have emerged, feathering on upperparts and underparts emerging. Best distinguished from black-billed gull by bare parts. Bill is black, with dark-purple tinge and tends to become more grey before fledging but usually has no pink tinge. Small white egg-tooth at hatching. Iris is dull black. Legs are dark grey.

Fledged approx. 35 days, independent approx. 55 days

Chick weight: approx. 23.5-28g at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 52.9 by 37.7mm, 30-47g

Adult: 37-43cm long, 195-430g (most commonly 240-320g)

Charadriiformes - shorebirds



Fairy tern/tara iti

Sternula nereis

Conservation status: Nationally Critical Semi-Precocial

Description: Chicks have at least two colour morphs, both of which may occur in the same clutch. All have short, matted down with speckling, whitish underparts, and pinkish bill and legs. Darkest morph: upperparts and top of head are buff to light brown with black-brown speckling and streaking, black-brown crown stripes and large dark blotches at base of wing-pads. Lighter morphs: upperparts paler grey-brown or whitish, tipped with buff, with sparser brown-black speckling.

Fledged at 20-30 days, independent approx. 50-90 days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 35 by 25mm, 10-15g

Adult: 22-27cm long, approx. 57-70g

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Black-fronted tern/tarapirohe/tarapiroe

Chlidonias albostratus

Conservation status: Nationally Endangered Semi-Precocial

Description: Chicks have soft, woolly down, upperparts off-white to pale grey-brown or olive with heavily mottled with dark speckles, dark patches on cheeks, lores and top of head. Underparts cinnamon, with white breast and belly. Black tipped dark yellowish-orange bill, orange feet. Fledged at 28-35 days, independent 42-60 days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 41 by 29mm, TBAg

Adult: approx. 28-30cm long, 88-96g

Endangered Black-fronted Tern chick (credit Jack Van Hal, DOC)

Caspian tern/taranui

Hydroprogne caspia

Conservation status: Nationally Vulnerable Semi-Precocial

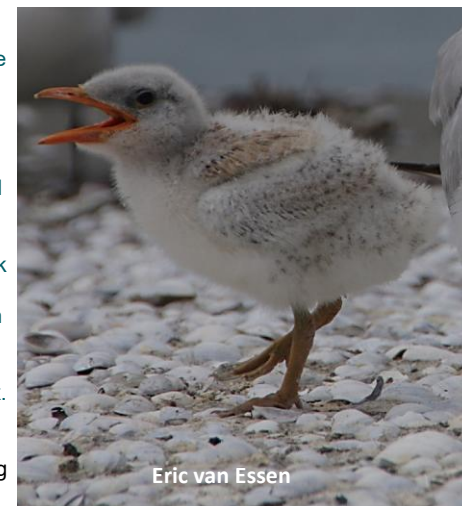
Description: Chicks have varying levels of darkness of down, however individuals of same clutch are usually alike. Ground-colour upperparts varying with black-brown. Underparts paler and unmarked, throat varies between off-white and grey-brown, belly usually off-white. Dark brown iris, yellow-brown or orange-yellow bill, most with black-brown tip. Yellow brown or light brown legs and feet. Hatch with eyes open.

Fledged at 33-45 days, independent approx. 9 months

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 67 by 44mm, TBAg For 51 California eggs, range 53.8-76.9 g

Adult: 47-54cm long, 530-782g



Eric van Essen

White-fronted tern/tara

Sterna striata

Conservation status: Declining Semi-Precocial

Description: Chicks have much individual variation, with at least two morphs from whitish to brownish, speckled, and spiny on crown and upperparts. Pale morph: Top of head and upperparts, off-white to very pale grey-brown, blotched dark brown on head and mottled dark brown elsewhere. Cream chin, off-white throat, with dark-brown mottling. White to cream underbody. Buff morph: As pale morph, but ground-colour (tips of down) on top of head and buff upperparts and chin. Bill is grey-black at first, rapidly turning dull pink with mottled black tip, Gape and mouth, salmon. Dark brown iris. Pink-grey to mottled dark pink-grey legs.

Fledged at approx. 29-50 days, independent approx. 3-6 months



BirdCare Aotearoa

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 46.9 by 33.4mm, TBAg

Adult: 39-42cm long, 103-160g

Procellariiformes - seabirds



Black petrel/tāiko/tākoketai

Procellaria parkinsoni

Conservation status: Nationally

Vulnerable

Semi-Precocial

Description: Chicks have sooty black/slate-grey down when first hatched, changing to a second coat of longer, paler grey-brown down after about two weeks.

Eyes are open at hatching.

Fledged/independent 96-122 days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 70 by 50mm, approx. 88.7-108.5g day after laying

Adult: 41-46cm long, 585-989g



Pycroft's petrel

Pterodroma pycrofti

Conservation status: Recovering

Description: Chicks have dusty grey down, darker on face, palest on underparts. Both the first and second coats of down are dense.

Fledged/independent approx. 77-84 days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 48.3 by 35.1mm, 25.5-35.5g

Adult: 26-28cm long, 112-201g



Fluttering shearwater/pakahā

Puffinus gavia

Conservation status: Relict

Semi-Precocial

Description: Chicks have mid grey to brownish down for their first coat, changing to lighter grey for their second coat. Dark brown iris, blackish bill and dusky brown legs and feet.

Fledged/independent approx. 64-81 days

Chick weight: TBA at hatching

Egg dimensions: mean 57 by 40mm, 41.5-46g

Adult: 31-37cm long, 225-430g

Thank you

We would like to prepare Volume 2 covering cormorants and penguins. Can you help?

Please contact me at lynn.miller@wildways.co.nz.

We need baby photos with permission to use them. Also, if possible, add their basic range information that will help with their identification.