

New Zealand

Chatham Islands Extension I 2023

25th January to 28th January 2023 (4 days)

Trip Report



Chatham Albatross by Erik Forsyth

Trip report compiled by Tour Leader: Erik Forsyth

Tour Summary

We arrived on the Chatham Islands in the late afternoon and quickly started our Chathams bird list. Out in the bay opposite the hotel we found the endemic Pitt Island Shag feeding nearby, Silver and Kelp Gulls, while a walk along the beach yielded few birds. We then headed to Owenga harbour and on route saw our first Weka (in the Rallidae family). Loads of Eurasian Skylark flew off the roads and on approaching the coast we stopped to scan. Here we were delighted to find three of the very rare and endemic Chatham Oystercatchers. The population fluctuates with only around 180 - 220 birds due to predation by cats and rats. Trapping of the latter has kept the population of oystercatchers going. A few more Pitt Island Shags were seen on the rocks here.



Chatham Shag by Paul Neldner

Today was a big day as the seas were calm enough to undertake a pelagic boat tour. We headed off and not far into our trip and we were seeing Buller's Albatross of the northern sub-species, a few Chatham Shag and further out we started seeing small numbers of White-faced Storm petrels. Arriving at Rangatira Island we scanned carefully from the boat for the endangered Shore Plover, and it wasn't long before we spotted one albeit a ways off. Following the shoreline, we soon found birds in another bay. Here we managed to get the boat closer allowing great looks. In the end we had counted around 10 with a total world population of around 150-200 birds. Other species seen included Brown Skua, two Chatham Oystercatcher and White-fronted Terns. We then headed off to Pyramid Island and en route saw a Northern Royal Albatross which passed close to the boat. Approaching Pyramid Island, we could see the spectacle off hundreds off Chatham Albatross swirling around the peak! A fantastic sight. We anchored and a few fish scraps were thrown alongside



Cape Petrel by Paul Neldner

the boat. Within minutes had several Buller's, two Salvin's and several Chatham Albatross landing alongside us. Fantastic close views were obtained and a few Cape Petrel also joined in and a huge Southern Royal circled the boat a few times. We also recorded two NZ White-capped Albatrosses, but they stayed away from the boat.

We then headed to a quite bay alongside Mangere Island where we could see several Tui of the *chathamensis* sub-species flying across open areas. It was here that we had four sightings of Chatham (Forbe's) Parakeets crossing the open gaps between trees albeit distant



Shore Plover by Polly Neldner

views. In the late afternoon we visited a Chatham Island Shag roosting colony where we also had good close looks and a few Pitt Island Shags. En route to the hotel we found our first New Zealand Pipit.

The following morning saw us at the Tuku Reserve in the South of the island. It did not too long before we had our final endemics in the bag. The Chatham Pigeon was scoped in a nearby tree and a further one seen flying through the hillside forest and a pair of singing Chatham Warblers performed close by. We also had several good views of Red-crowned Parakeet and Tui, the latter a large honeyeater. Lesser Redpolls were seen coming into drink at a small stream.

Our last adventure on the Chatham's adventure took us to a brackish Lake to the North of the island where we added Pacific Golden Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Weka (in the Rallidae family) and two Chatham Oystercatcher. Our final bird of note was a New Zealand Pipit bidding us farewell at the airport.

Annotated List of species recorded

For the species list and more photos, please see the eBird Trip Report [here](#).

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