

## New Zealand

March 2-16, 2026

Join us on our special birding tour across beautiful New Zealand. Leaving from Auckland and ending in Christchurch, this 14-day tour covers both the North and South Islands and takes in all the best birding spots including such places as Tiritiri Matangi, Miranda, the Central Plateau and Pureora Forest, Manawatu Estuary, Kaikoura, the South Island mountains, Stewart and Ulva Islands, Twizel and Central Otago. New Zealand has many

unique bird species and we'll be looking for representatives of the endemic families – kiwis, parrots, wrens, wattlebirds, creepers, and the stitchbird; in addition, expect species such as Wrybill, New Zealand pigeon, Keas, Kakas, Shags, Wekas and Tuis, Penguins, and even Bellbirds and a variety of seabirds - including Albatrosses - during a special pelagic. Expect to see over 120 species: this trip is surely a treat that shouldn't be missed!

## Detailed Itinerary

### Day 0: 2 March 2026

#### Arrival in Auckland

Make your own way to Auckland, NZ (own arrangements) and take a taxi from the airport (own arrangements) to our hotel near the airport (included) for dinner and introductions.

Overnight: Auckland, private en-suite rooms

Meals included: Dinner

### Day 1: 3 March 2026

#### Wader sites and KeriKeri

In the morning we'll visit a couple of wader sites near Auckland with chances of New Zealand Pipit, Paradise Shelduck, Black-billed Gull, New Zealand Plover and our first chance of Wrybill, before heading north. Along the way we'll take a look at the Australian Gannet colony at Muriwai, and a bit further along, at Mangawhai heads, we'll look for Fernbird, Tui, New Zealand Dotterel and Fairy Tern Variable and South Island Oystercatcher and other waders. We'll end today in the town of KeriKeri located in the scenic Bay of Islands, a subtropical micro-region encompassing more than 140 subtropical islands, known for its stunning beauty and history. After dinner we'll undertake a night outing to look for North Island Brown Kiwi and Morepork.

Overnight: KeriKeri, private en-suite rooms

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Day 2: 4 March 2026

#### Pelagic

A leisurely start after a previous late night-spotting, we take a pelagic trip like you've never experienced before. Unlike Australian pelagics, we start mid-morning, and return mid-afternoon, as this trip only takes an hour to the shelf, with birds passing by the boat right from the start. New Zealand and White-faced Storm-petrel, Black, Cook's, Pycroft's Petrel, Common Diving Petrel, Fairy Prion, Fluttering, Buller's, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Grey Ternlet and more. Thousands of seabirds – New Zealand Storm-petrel has never been missed in twenty years. It's not unusual to have 50+ storm-petrels at any time, hundreds if not thousands of Cook's Petrel, large rafts of Buller's Shearwater, and also a reasonable chance of Bryde's Whale.

Overnight: Whangarei, private en-suite rooms

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Blue Duck, Buller's Albatross, Kaka, North Island Brown Kiwi, and North Island Saddleback. All photos by Peter Waanders.



### Day 3: 5 March 2026

#### TiriTiri Island

A day trip to TiriTiri Matangi Island is sure to be a highlight. Tiritiri Island, now a wildlife sanctuary noted for its birdlife, including Takahē, North Island Kōkako and Kiwi, is one of New Zealand's most important and exciting conservation projects. We'll look for Little Blue Penguin, the rare Kōkako, the large swampphen-like Takahē, the near-extinct Stitchbird, New Zealand Bellbird, Whitehead, Red-crowned Parakeet, Fernbird, Whitehead, Brown Teal and with much luck, Rifleman. At the end of the afternoon we return, with lots of great birds 'ticked off'! We'll drive to Miranda for the night.

Overnight: Miranda, private en-suite rooms

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Day 4: 6 March 2026

#### Miranda Mudflats

Miranda is renowned for its mudflats with thousands of migratory waders and local residents, especially the unique Wrybill. We should see a number of these unusual birds, and there is always the chance of rarities such as Hudsonian Godwit which has been around the last few years. We'll spend the morning here and then drive to Taupo for a New Zealand Grebe, New Zealand Scaup and a chance of New Zealand Falcon.

Overnight: Taupo, private en-suite rooms

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Day 5: 7 March 2026

#### Pureora Forest to Turangi

An early departure to visit the ancient Pureora Forest, a hidden wonderland of ancient, tall trees, clear rivers and rare birds. We will look for Kaka, Yellow-crowned Parakeet, Tomtit, New Zealand Bellbird, Whitehead, New Zealand Fantail, Long-tailed Cuckoo, and with luck, Rifleman and New-Zealand Falcon. Our final destination for today is Turangi, where we'll have a look for Blue Duck and New Zealand Falcon.

Overnight: Turangi, private en-suite rooms

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Day 6: 8 March 2026

#### Ferry to South Island

The morning is spent picking up anything we may have missed before heading south, ending up in Wellington to get an afternoon ferry to Pic-



Kokako, Takahē, New Zealand Bellbird, Wrybill, and Tomtit. All photos by Peter Waanders.

ton on the South Island. From the ferry there are chances of sea-birds such as albatrosses, shearwaters, Fairy Prion, Common Diving Petrel, White-fronted Tern, Red-billed Gull, Spotted Shag and more.

Overnight: Picton, private en-suite rooms  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Day 7: 9 March 2026 Marlborough Sounds Boat Trip

This morning we'll take a boat trip on the Marlborough Sounds, an awe-inspiring collection of ancient sunken river valleys filled with the waters of the Pacific Ocean. We head to Blumine Island to see King Shag, Orange-fronted Parakeet, and with much luck, South Island Saddle-back, South Island Robin, and Hectors Dolphin. This trip is on calm, inshore waters – there is even a "no sea-sickness guarantee"! After lunch in Picton we drive to Kaikoura.

Overnight: Kaikoura, private en-suite rooms  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Day 8: 10 March 2026 Kaikoura Pelagic

This morning we'll do the famous Kaikoura pelagic, taking us out to the pelagic shelf which is only a 15 minute boat-ride away! During this half-day pelagic we'll observe a large variety of pelagic birds including Northern & Southern Royal Albatross, Wandering, Black-browed & Salvin's Albatross, Northern & Southern Giant Petrel, Westland, White-chinned & Cape Petrel, Hutton's & Buller's Shearwaters, White-fronted Tern, Red-billed Gull and more.

The birds are up close and personal to the boat, providing an intimate and special experience with great photographic opportunities, that brings you as close to the wildlife as possible. New Zealand Wandering, Southern Royal, White-capped and Salvin's Albatross are expected.

After returning to land we have lunch and the afternoon can be spent relaxing and doing your laundry or swimming with Dusky Dolphins or doing a short whale-watching trip for Sperm Whales. These afternoon activities are not included in the cost. We find that many people like to take a breather at the effective mid-point of the tour.

Overnight: Kaikoura, private en-suite rooms  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Southern Royal Albatross, King Shag, North Island Stitchbird, Southern Giant Petrel, and Variable Oystercatcher. All photos by Peter Waanders.



**Day 9: 11 March 2026**
**New Zealand Alps**

After yesterday's exhilarating experiences we drive to Arthur's Pass in the New Zealand Alps: its high mountains of large scree slopes, steep gorges and wide braided rivers straddle the main divide, and are the 'back bone' of the South Island. We will look for Kea, Brown Creeper, Tomtit, South Island Robin, Rifleman and with luck, the elusive Yellow-head. Tonight, we'll have a listen for Great Spotted Kiwi although seeing them would be a very rare occasion.

Overnight: Arthur's Pass, private en-suite rooms

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Day 10: 12 March 2026**
**Searching for Black Stilt at Twizel**

Morning birding in the woods around Arthur's Pass before we head downhill to the braided riverbeds at Twizel where one of the rarest birds of the world can be found: Black Stilt. While New Zealand's highest mountain, Mount Cook, towers above the landscape, we search for this bird that was brought back from the brink of extinction through a captive breeding program. Black fronted Tern and New Zealand Falcon are also possibilities to-day.

Overnight: Twizel, private en-suite rooms

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Day 11: 13 March 2026**
**Yellow-eyed Penguins and Otago Shag**

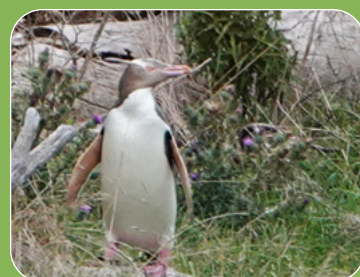
Today we'll head down to the east coast, leaving the New Zealand Alps in the rear-view mirror, where two of the highlights of the trip await us: the cute Yellow-eyed Penguin and the rare Otago Shag. Endemic to New Zealand, Yellow-eyed Penguin numbers have dropped by 75% since the mid-1990s on the South Island. We will visit a small colony of these magnificent creatures, while we'll also stop at a few places on the rocky coastline to have a look for Otago Shag and South Island Pied Oystercatcher.

Overnight: Oamaru, private en-suite rooms

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Day 12: 14 March 2026**
**Flightless Birds at Stewart Island**

We start with a visit to the Northern Royal Albatross colony at Dunedin



Kea, Rifleman, Yellow-eyed Penguin, and Kelp Gull. All photos by Peter Waanders.

and nearby, we look for the rare Foveaux Shag. We then travel through the beautiful Catlins, a world of leafy hill country, where land rises sharply from the coast to the inland ranges, and where rivers and waterfalls abound, picking up any forest birds we still need, as we head to the Bluff on the south coast at Invercargill to take the ferry to Stewart Island. This unique island is hilly and densely forested. Flightless birds thrive because there are few introduced predators. Over 80% of the island is set aside as National Park. Tonight, we'll look for Southern Brown Kiwi.

Overnight: Stewart Island, private en-suite rooms

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## Day 13: 15 March 2026

### Ulva Island and more seabirds

Today we visit Ulva Island and take a half-day pelagic. The exact order of these may differ, depending little on weather and other constraints. Ulva Island is a beautiful predator-free island sanctuary. In this unspoiled temperate rainforest rare birds and plants thrive in a safe environment mostly unchanged by human activity, with healthy populations of South Island Saddleback, Rifleman and Yellowhead. Here we'll also look for Weka, Kaka, Red- and Yellow-crowned Parakeet, and Brown Creeper. The Stewart Island pelagic is close to the Southern Ocean, and large seabird colonies are on many of the surrounding islands, so we may be able to find an excellent array of seabirds. Target birds for the day are Fiordland Crested Penguin, Southern Royal Albatross, White-capped, Buller's and Salvin's Albatross, both Northern and Southern Giant-Petrel, Mottled and Cook's Petrel, Broad-billed and Fairy Prion, and Common Diving-Petrel. Other more common species we will almost certainly see are Cape Petrel, Sooty Shearwater, Spotted and Foveaux Shags, Brown Skua, White-fronted Tern, and Red-billed Gull. Almost any vagrant Southern Ocean seabirds are possible, and we will be keeping our eyes peeled for storm-petrels and other albatross and petrel species.

Overnight: Stewart Island, private en-suite rooms

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## Day 14: 16 March 2026

### Departure from Invercargill

On this final day we do some morning birding on Stewart Island before we take the ferry back to the Bluff and then drive on to Invercargill. From here you can take a flight (not included) back to Christchurch or Auckland and then home.

Meals Included: Breakfast



New Zealand Fantail,  
Orange-fronted Parakeet,  
Whitehead, Weka, New  
Zealand Dotterel. All pho-  
tos by Peter Waanders.

## QUICK OVERVIEW

### SCHEDULED DATES

March 2-16, 2026

### STARTING IN

Auckland International Airport (AKL), New Zealand

### FINISHING IN

Invercargill Airport (IVC), New Zealand

### GROUP SIZE

Minimum 6, maximum 8 participants.

### BRIEF ITINERARY

Day 0: 2 Mar 2026: Arrival in Auckland  
Day 1: Wader Sites and KeriKeri  
Day 2: Pelagic  
Day 3: TiriTiri Island  
Day 4: Miranda Mudflats  
Day 5: Pureora Forest to Turangi  
Day 6: Ferry to South Island  
Day 7: Marlborough Sounds Boat Trip  
Day 8: Kaikoura Pelagic  
Day 9: New Zealand Alps  
Day 10: Searching for Black Stilt at Twizel  
Day 11: Yellow-eyed Penguins and Otago Shag  
Day 12: Flightless Birds at Stewart Island  
Day 13: Ulva Island and more seabirds  
Day 14: Departure from Invercargill

### BOOKING

Please book at: <https://www.bellbirdtours.com/bookings>.





## COST

### COST

AU\$9,150 per person including accommodation and all meals, based on double or twin-share occupancy. Single occupancy surcharge of AU\$1290.

Early bird discount of AU\$99 for bookings received up to 12 months before departure date. Return client discount may apply.

### INCLUDED

All meals commencing with Dinner on Day 0 and finishing with Breakfast on Day 14, morning tea/coffee, some snacks, some fruit, some drinks, unlimited drinking water refills. Accommodation in private en-suite rooms. Transport using comfortable and reliable vehicle, expert local guiding, 2 pelagics, ferry trips, NP entry fees, taxes.

### EXCLUDED

Travel to & from departure and finish points, pre- & post trip accommodation, optional excursions (e.g. in Kaikoura), any meals before dinner on Day 0, any meals after breakfast on Day 14, drinks except where provided, snacks, personal expenses, tips, insurance.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Tour commences with dinner on 2 March 2026. Please arrive in Auckland on or before 2 March. Tour finishes late morning in Invercargill 16 March 2026. Take a domestic flight (not included) from Invercargill to Christchurch or Auckland and home from there. Itinerary contains further details.

### CURRENCY

Please remember that the tour price is set in AU\$.

### PRE & POST TOUR OPTIONS

If you wish to arrive early in Auckland, for one or more days before the tour and want to stay in the same hotel that we use there, please tick the relevant box on the booking form. We can book this for you and add the cost to your tour price – this way you can stay in the same room.

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is compulsory for this tour, and you will be required to provide evidence of such.

### VISAS & INOCULATIONS

Please make your own enquiries regarding visas, inoculations and travel health issues. Visa requirements can be consulted online: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/visas/> Please allow sufficient time.

### BOOKING

Please book at: <https://www.bellbirdtours.com/bookings>.



## PRACTICAL DETAILS

### LEADERS

Bellbird's expert local New Zealand tour guide.

### DIFFICULTY

Medium level of fitness required. The tour has a relaxed pace and walks are on varying surfaces, from paved roads to sandy or rocky walking trails with some short climbs. We generally walk slowly, with lots of stops. You can opt out of any challenging walks. We'll do two pelagics (one short one, and a longer one). While the water is usually calm, motion sickness tablets are recommended.

### ACCOMMODATION

Private en-suite rooms in hotels, motels and cabins. Standards of lodgings are good to very comfortable. Most lodgings offer wi-fi access. Mobile (cell) phone reception is often limited during the day.

### CLOTHING

New Zealand spans several climate "zones", with quickly changing weather, so pack lightweight long pants, t-shirt and long-sleeved shirt, over the top of which you can wear layers that can be taken off as necessary. Ensure to include a warm jumper, pants and a rain-proof jacket in case of rain. Neat casual attire for dinners. Be prepared for cool evenings and mornings with sunny days.

### WHAT TO BRING

Please travel light. Binoculars, camera, mobile phone, chargers, power adaptors if you're an international guest, insect repellent, sunscreen, personal medications, sun hat, water bottle, hand sanitizer. Sturdy footwear recommended. Scopes, super-telephoto lenses with tripods, and very large heavy suitcases discouraged.

### RECOMMENDED READING

[\*The Field Guide To The Birds Of New Zealand\*](#), Revised Edition, by Barrie Heather & Hugh Robertson.

## HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR?

### Step 1: Essential reading

- Download, save and read the itinerary (this document);
- Read our terms and conditions and the release of liability waiver (both can be found on <https://www.bellbirdtours.com/terms-and-conditions>);
- Read our health & safety information page (<https://bellbirdtours.com/health-and-safety/>).

### Step 2: Online booking

Head over to our secure online booking page: <https://www.bellbirdtours.com/bookings> (should you prefer a paper booking form, this can be downloaded from there).

### Step 3: Pay the deposit

To secure your seat, a deposit of 20% of the tour price is required at the time of booking. Full payment is due 60 days prior to the departure date. Until full payment has been received, Bellbird Tours reserves the right to change the tour price (e.g. due to changing fuel prices).

Payment options:

Domestic electronic funds transfer: please send funds to the following bank account:

- bank: Australia & New Zealand Bank (ANZ), 112 Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000
- account name: Bellbird Tours Pty Ltd
- branch no. (BSB) 015-140 and account no. 206136528
  - Please use your surname as the booking reference.

Visa, Mastercard & Google Pay: through Pin Payments (an easy, secure online payment system). They charge us a processing fee of ~3%. Please contact us to use this option, and we'll email you a secure payment link.

International electronic funds transfer: please send funds in Australian Dollars (+ bank charges) to the following bank account:

- international swift code: anzbau3m (no IBAN codes are used in Australia)
- bank: Australia & New Zealand Bank (ANZ), 112 Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000
- account name: Bellbird Tours Pty Ltd
- branch no. (BSB) 015-140 and account no. 206136528
  - If possible, please use your surname as the booking reference.
  - If you are asked to provide our physical address, this is: 101 Chilton Road, Berri, SA 5343, Australia.
  - Please specify AU\$ as the recipient's currency, and the correct amount. Select the option for you to incur any charges at both ends.

Any discrepancy between the amount payable and amount received will be added to the final balance, or payable in cash at the start of the tour. Prices and fees are not negotiable.

### Step 4: You're done!

Sit back and wait for your booking confirmation to arrive (24-48 hrs). Meanwhile, should you have any questions, please contact us via: <https://www.bellbirdtours.com/about-us/>.

## POSSIBLE SPECIES LIST (NOT EXHAUSTIVE)

Okarito Brown Kiwi	Flesh-footed Shearwater (P)	Black-fronted Dotterel
Northern Brown Kiwi	Sooty Shearwater	Masked Lapwing
Great Spotted Kiwi	Short-tailed Shearwater	Southern (Brown) Skua
Little Spotted Kiwi	Fluttering Shearwater	Parasitic Jaeger
Wild Turkey	Hutton's Shearwater	Kelp Gull
Indian Peafowl	Little Shearwater (P)	Red-billed Gull
Common Pheasant	White-faced Storm-petrel	Black-billed Gull
Brown Quail	New Zealand Storm-petrel (P)	Little Tern
California Quail	Common Diving-petrel	Fairy Tern
Black Swan	Australasian Gannet	Caspian Tern
Greylag (Feral) Goose	Little Pied Cormorant	Black-fronted Tern
Canada Goose	Great Cormorant	White-fronted Tern
Paradise Shelduck	Pied Cormorant	Rock (Feral) Pigeon
Blue Duck	Little Black Cormorant	Barbary (African Collared) Dove
Grey Teal	New Zealand King Shag	Spotted Turtle-dove
Brown Teal	Otago Shag	New Zealand Pigeon
Mallard	Foveaux Shag	New Zealand Kaka
Pacific Black Duck	Spotted Shag	Kea
Australasian Shoveler	Great Egret	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
New Zealand Scaup	White-faced Heron	Eastern Rosella
Great Crested Grebe	Eastern Reef Egret	Red-crowned Parakeet
New Zealand Grebe	Royal Spoonbill	Yellow-crowned Parakeet
Australasian Grebe	Swamp Harrier	Orange-fronted Parakeet
Fiordland Crested Penguin	New Zealand Falcon	Shining Bronze-cuckoo
Yellow-eyed Penguin	Buff-banded Rail	Long-tailed Cuckoo
Little Penguin	Weka	New-Zealand Morepork
Southern Royal Albatross	Spotless Crake	Little Owl
Northern Royal Albatross	Purple Swamphen	Laughing Kookaburra
Wandering Albatross	South Island Takahe	Sacred Kingfisher
Campbell Albatross	Eurasian Coot	Rifleman
Black-browed Albatross	Red Knot	South Island Rock Wren
White-capped Albatross	Curlew Sandpiper	North Island Kokako
Salvin's Albatross	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	North Island Saddleback
Buller's Albatross	Pectoral Sandpiper	South Island Saddleback
Southern Giant-petrel	Red-necked Stint	Stitchbird
Northern Giant-petrel	Bar-tailed Godwit	Grey Gerygone
Cape Petrel	Ruddy Turnstone	New Zealand Bellbird
Grey-faced Petrel (P)	Variable Oystercatcher	Tui
Cook's Petrel (P)	South Island Pied Oystercatcher	Whitehead
Pycroft's Petrel (P)	Pied Stilt	Yellowhead
Fairy Prion	Black Stilt	Brown Creeper
White-chinned Petrel	Pacific Golden Plover	Australian Magpie
Westland Petrel	New Zealand Dotterel	New Zealand Fantail
Black Petrel (P)	Double-banded Plover	New Zealand Tomtit
Buller's Shearwater	Wrybill	North Island Robin





South Island Robin  
Eurasian Skylark  
Fernbird  
Silvereye  
Welcome Swallow  
Eurasian Blackbird  
Song Thrush  
Common Starling  
Common Myna  
House Sparrow

New Zealand Pipit  
Dunnoek  
Common Chaffinch  
European Goldfinch  
European Greenfinch  
Common Redpoll  
Yellowhammer  
Cirl Bunting

## **Mammals**

New Zealand (Hooker's) Sealion  
New Zealand Fur Seal  
European Rabbit  
European Hare  
Bottlenose Dolphin  
Short-beaked Common Dolphin  
Hector's Dolphin  
Dusky Dolphin