

# Factsheet



The New Zealand Kingfisher (Kotare) is found on the South and North Islands, Stewart Island and the Kermadec Islands.

It is found in a variety of habitats, but is most commonly seen in coastal or freshwater wetlands, forest edges or farmland. Kingfishers living near the coast enjoy aquatic fare: crabs from mudflats, shrimps, tadpoles and fish. In habitats away from the sea, their diet consists of worms, insects, lizards (unfortunately), freshwater crayfish – and they all enjoy fruits, small birds, mice and other small prey when the opportunity arises!

Kingfishers of both genders are attractive birds, with iridescent ultra-marine and deep green plumage on their upper body, a buff underside and white-buff collar, but prey beware! They are impressive predators, with their sharp eyesight capable of detecting even small movements and their ability to swiftly dart upon and snatch prey with their powerful bill.

A long, powerful bill proves handy for nest building as well. Being ‘cavity nesters’, these birds have been observed flying with force at their selected site, such as clay banks or rotted logs, chiselling out a nesting hole in which to lay their clutch of four to five white eggs.

Look out for these beautiful natives. They’re in the habit of perching and watching alertly from a prominent position. It does seem highly appropriate that the collective noun is a ‘concentration of kingfishers’!

The greatest threats to this species are introduced mammalian predators and human disturbances of their nesting sites.

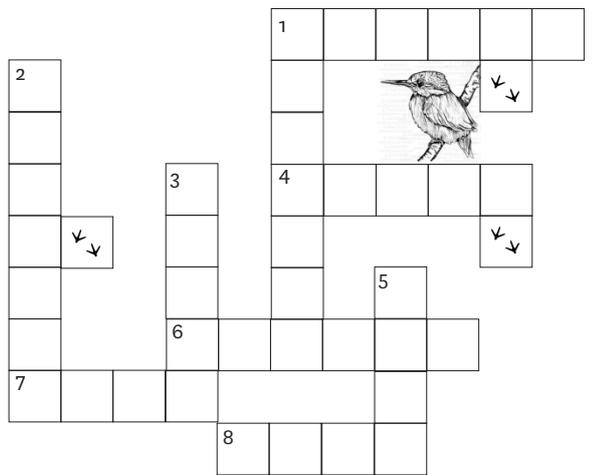
## COASTAL BIRDS

### New Zealand Kingfisher (Kotare)

#### Crossword

Read up about the New Zealand Kingfisher?

See if you can complete this crossword



#### Down

1. Kingfishers find crabs here.
2. Unfortunately Kingfishers like to eat these natives.
3. Nesting cavities are sometimes created in these, made of clay.
5. Some Kingfishers love freshwater ones.

#### Across

1. Colour of the Kingfisher’s plumage.
4. Description of flying towards selected nesting site.
6. The Maori name for the New Zealand Kingfisher.
7. An area near which this species is often found.
8. Fish, worms, shrimp and mice are examples of this for Kingfishers.

# Factsheet

## COASTAL BIRDS

### South Island Pied Oystercatcher (Torea)



The South Island Pied Oystercatcher (SIPO) is one of the two most common oystercatchers and is endemic to New Zealand, which means it is only found naturally in our country.

Oystercatchers are called 'wading birds' because they have long legs and wade in shallow water in search of food.

They are distinguishable by their striking black and white plumage, long, bright reddish-orange coloured bill with a yellow tip, and long pink legs.

They breed only in the South Island, usually on inland riverbeds and farmland, with their nest being a shallow depression, lined with a few twigs or pebbles and positioned to provide an all round view to detect approaching danger.

Once breeding season is over they fly to feeding grounds on estuaries, mudflats and beaches all over New Zealand.

Unlike their name suggests, they don't eat oysters! They use their long beaks to probe for cockles, pipi, shrimp and crabs. They also eat small fish, worms, insect larvae and other small invertebrates.

The male and female share the tasks of incubating their clutch of usually three eggs and feeding their young until they fledge at 6 weeks of age.

This species was once hunted for their meat, resulting in a drastic decline in number. Now protected, their population in 2002 was recorded to be 110,000 birds.

### Lets protect them!

#### How you can help:

- Watch where you are stepping. Birds build their nests in the most extraordinary places!
- Please keep your dog under control.
- Please don't disturb nests or touch eggs.
- Oystercatchers will shout loudly, telling you to stay away. Listen to them because they are protecting their young!
- Take only photos, leave only footprints. Remember to take your rubbish home.
- Help keep the seabirds' habitat an awesome place to live by participating in a coast clean-up. Take a 'before' and 'after' photograph! It's a great feeling of achievement when you see all the rubbish collected, and you are a great example to other people!
- If you must drive on the beach, be responsible about speed and please drive below the high tide line to avoid these birds' nests. Nests are very difficult to see and many are wrecked by vehicles driving over them.

