

spot our birds

cornwall park

Birds of
the Park





our birds

You'll see (or hear!) more than 30 species of birds as you explore the park. Some are passing through, others call Cornwall Park home, and all provide the choir we listen to each day.

We're a central pit stop for birds as they move through Auckland and beyond. Many birds only fly up to 2.5km at a time and need places to rest and feed on their journey. Some are on their way to the North-West Wildlink, a 50km corridor for birds linking wildlife sanctuaries in the Waitakere Ranges and the Hauraki Gulf. Other birds may be heading south or checking out other central locations around us.

How many different types of birds can you spot around Cornwall Park?



Front—Juvenile | Back—Adult

karoro

black-backed gull

Karoro Black-Backed Gull

Larus dominicanu

Māori tamed these gulls to help them with pest control – they eat the caterpillars which infest kūmara crops! They are both predators and scavengers, taking anything from marine animals, birds and eggs to carcasses and food scraps. They are abundant in Auckland and are often seen feeding on worms in paddocks around Cornwall Park during winter. The black-backed gull is the only large gull found in New Zealand.

Size

1000g
60cm

Eats

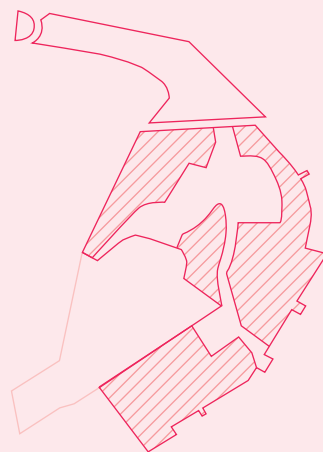
Shellfish, molluscs, worms,
insects, food scraps

Found

Paddocks and
open areas
in the park

When

Especially
winter



1.

Native to New Zealand



manu pango

Front—Female | Back—Male

eurasian blackbird

Manu Pango Eurasian Blackbird

—

Turdus merula

Male blackbirds have a distinctive song that can be heard from winter to summer. You will often see them perching at the top of a tree or power pole to sing; otherwise, they are usually spotted among ground leaf litter. Blackbirds are New Zealand's most widely distributed bird species – they help us by feeding on garden pests such as snails and slugs. When blackbirds have mites, they seek out ants and squat among them; the ants defend themselves by shooting formic acid – a natural insecticide which helps the birds get rid of their mites.

Size

90g
25cm

Eats

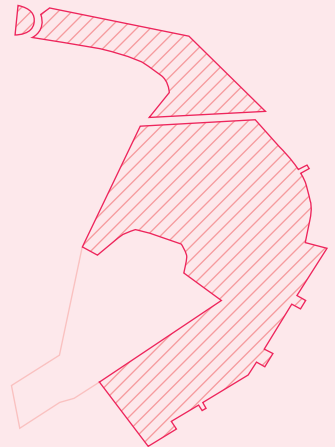
Insects, molluscs,
worms, fruit

Found

Throughout
the park

When

All year



2.

Introduced from Europe



Front—Female | Back—Male

california quail

California Quail

Callipepla californica

During autumn, family groups of quail gather together in large coveys, in which they feed and roost. Males attract mates by courtship displays and can be aggressive towards one another during the breeding season. Juveniles eat only insects, whereas adults have a more varied diet. They were introduced to New Zealand as game birds and are now common throughout the country. Quails like to stay hidden and are often found among dense vegetation, logs and rocks in areas where people don't usually go.

Size

180g
25cm

Eats

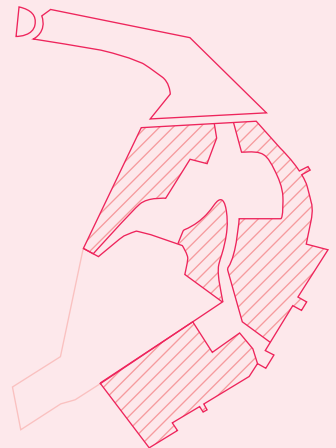
Seeds, fruit,
leaves, insects

Found

Areas where
there are less
people

When

All year



3.

Introduced from Europe



Top—Male | Bottom—Female

chaffinch

Chaffinch

Fringilla coelebs

Chaffinches feed mostly on seeds in winter, but in warmer months, during breeding season, they feed on invertebrates too. Thus, they can be seen feeding on the ground and in trees. They form flocks with other birds, such as greenfinches, silvereyes and yellowhammers, when there are good food sources around for them all to feed off. They are the most common finch species in New Zealand and are found in a wide range of habitats.

Size

22g
15cm

Eats

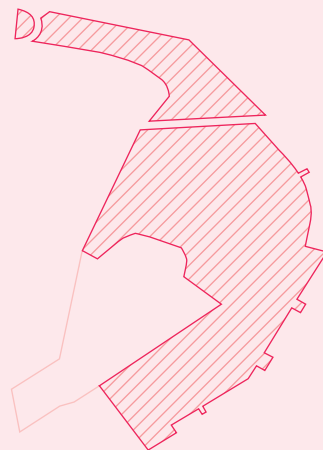
Seeds, insects during
breeding season

Found

Throughout
the park

When

All year



4.

Introduced from Europe



common myna

Common Myna

Acridotheres tristis

Mynas mate for life, and both parents help to raise the chicks. They are also pests known for killing other birds and kicking them out of nest sites. They destroy eggs and nestlings of any birds within their territory, especially starlings. Mynas are native to India, Pakistan and Myanmar and have evolved to live in the tropics. They are found on most continents and throughout the Pacific Islands and are regarded as invasive pests in these areas as well as in Aotearoa (New Zealand).

Size

125g
24cm

Eats

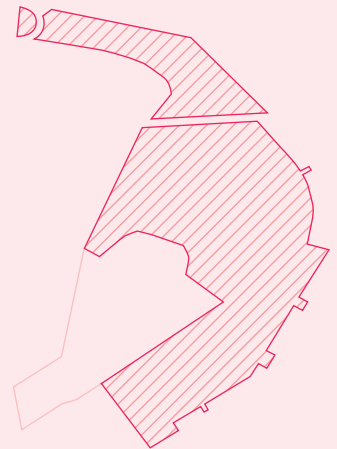
Insects, fruit, nectar,
food scraps

Found

Throughout
the park

When

All year



5.

Introduced from South Asia



eastern rosella

Eastern Rosella

Platycercus eximius

When rosellas were first brought over from Australia in 1910, customs in Dunedin denied them entry, so the exporter released them further up the coast. In some areas, they compete with our endemic kākārīki and spread parrot-specific diseases which pose a threat to our native parrots. They often move around in pairs or small flocks and make themselves known by their noisy chatter and loud alarm calls. They are easy to spot with their colourful feathers but like to stay high in the treetops.

Size

110g
32cm

Eats

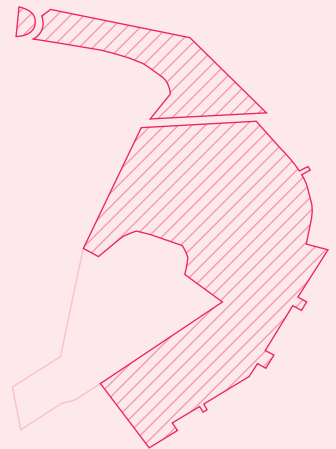
Seeds, fruit, nectar,
buds, insects

Found

Throughout
the park

When

All year



6.

Introduced from Australia



pīwakawaka

New Zealand fantail

Pīwakawaka New Zealand Fantail

Rhipidura fuliginosa placabilis

The fantail's jerky movements meant that Māori sometimes described a restless person as a pīwakawaka. The reason they seem so friendly is that people disturb insects while walking, making it easy for the fantail to snatch up prey around them. They also flick their wings and tail to disturb prey. Due to their small size and vulnerability to cold weather, they often roost communally. In the South Island, 5% of the fantail population is black or dark brown all over, but these are quite rare in the North Island and most birds are light brown.

Size

8g
8cm

Eats

Invertebrates such as moths, flies, wasps, beetles, spiders

Found

Throughout the park, especially where there is dense vegetation

When

All year



7.

Endemic to New Zealand



Top—Female | Bottom—Male

goldfinch

Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

Goldfinches have powerful stomach muscles which help them grind up tough seeds. They are helpful to us in that they prevent the spread of introduced weeds, such as thistles, by eating their seeds. They are common in open country throughout New Zealand and often found in flocks. They have short life cycles and are able to produce 10 or more chicks per breeding season, with both parents helping to raise the young.

Size

15g
13cm

Eats

Seeds, insects during
breeding season

Found

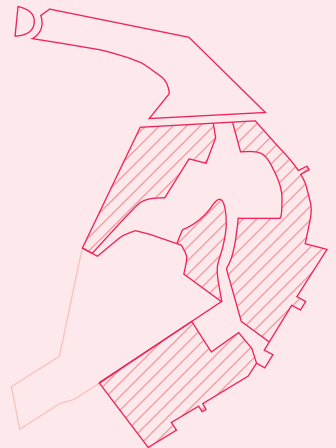
Around the park,
especially in
paddocks

When

All year

Best time

Late spring



8.

Introduced from Britain



Top—Male | Bottom—Female

greenfinch

Greenfinch

Chloris chloris

New Zealand greenfinches are descended from fewer than 100 birds which were introduced from Britain between 1862 and 1868. They can form large flocks with other finches in autumn and winter. They are the largest of our finches, and their heavy bills allow them to crack open large, tough seeds. As such, they can be damaging to ripening seed crops, such as rapeseed and radish.

Size

28g
15cm

Eats

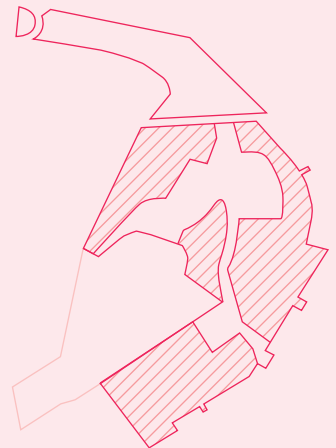
Seeds

Found

Feeding alongside other finches in fields and pasture

When

All year





riroiri

grey warbler

Riroriro Grey Warbler

Gerygone igata

Grey warblers are more often heard than seen – they have a distinctive loud trilling song but like to stay hidden in the treetops. They have a behaviour unique among New Zealand birds – they glean (pluck) insects from the outside of trees while hovering. You’ll find them in areas of native trees around the park (grotto, Kauri groves). Grey warblers are victims of brood parasitism by shining cuckoos. Shining cuckoos lay their eggs in grey warbler nests, tricking the grey warbler into raising the cuckoo chick.

Size

6.5g
8cm

Eats

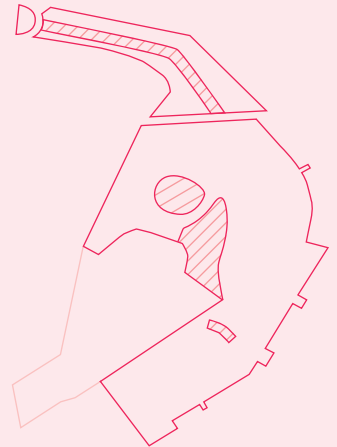
Insects such as caterpillars, flies, beetles and moths

Found

In and around natives and tall trees

When

All year



10.

Endemic to New Zealand



guineafowl

Guineafowl

Numida meleagris

This African game bird was introduced to New Zealand in the 1860s. Guineafowl tend to stay together in flocks of 6–20 birds and roost together in trees at night. The young are called keets, not chicks. Guineafowl can harm new seedlings of agricultural crops, but they do good by eating the insect pests that damage crops. They are not common in New Zealand, and are found only in areas where domesticated birds have been released.

Size

1300g
53–58cm

Eats

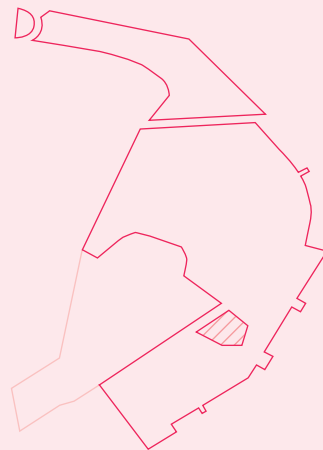
Grass, seeds,
fruit, leaves

Found

Corner of Twin
Oak Drive and
Bollard Avenue

When

All year



11.

Introduced from Europe and India



kahu

swamp harrier

Kahu Swamp Harrier

Circus approximans

While in flight, harriers' wings have a distinctive shallow V shape. During the breeding season (spring), they perform courtship displays in which the pair dive, swoop and call over their nesting area. Harriers are good to have in the park as they help control introduced mammal populations (such as rats, mice and stoats) and remove carcasses. Being a generalist predator, they feed on a wide variety of prey, and are often found hunting in open areas.

Size

650–850g
55–60cm

Eats

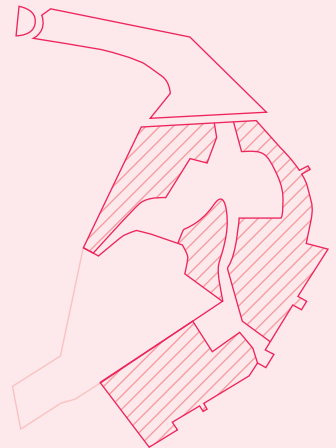
Small birds and mammals,
lizards, frogs, insects

Found

Flying high
above paddocks

When

All year





tiu

house sparrow

Tiu House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

Sparrows are some of the most common birds in the world, found naturally on over two thirds of the earth's land area. They were introduced to New Zealand in the 1860s and were initially successful in combating plagues of agricultural pests, but by the 1880s they were regarded as pests themselves. They are a flocking species, feeding and roosting together in close association with humans. They can be damaging to crops as they feed on the ripening grain.

Size

30g
14cm

Eats

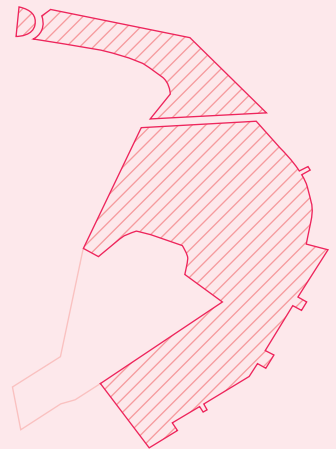
Seeds, fruit, buds, flowers, nectar
of introduced plants, food scraps

Found

Throughout
the park

When

All year



13.

Introduced from Europe



kākā

Kākā

Nestor meridionalis

These endangered forest parrots are chatty and social – Māori used to call them “gossips” because of their large social groups. Their range and numbers are reduced on the mainland due to forest clearance and predation by introduced mammals – particularly stoats. They feed on what’s readily available in the forest and switch food sources depending on the season. They get all their food from trees and often congregate at localised food sources (such as a flowering tree).

Size

475–525g
45cm

Eats

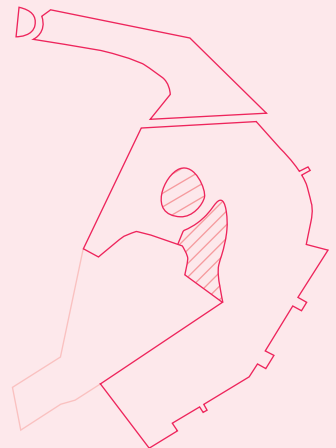
Seeds, fruit,
nectar, insects

Found

In areas of
native trees

When

Kaka are rare
visitors to the
park in winter





kōtare

sacred kingfisher

Kōtare Sacred Kingfisher

Ninox novaeseelandiae

Kingfishers nest in holes in trees, cliffs and banks. Adults defend the nesting site aggressively and often use the same nesting burrow every year. They are common birds found throughout New Zealand, anywhere where there is water or open country. We have plenty of skinks in the park, which they like to feed on. They are easily recognised by their hunched silhouette, large black bill and blue/green back and head.

Size

65g
24cm

Eats

Insects, small crustaceans,
fish and reptiles

Found

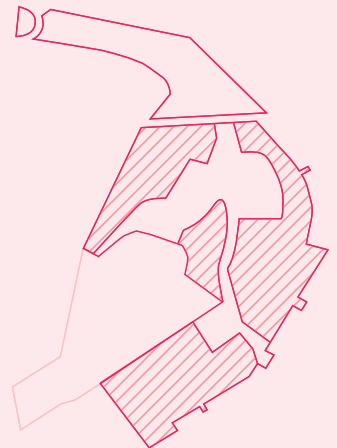
On perches
above water
or open fields

When

All year

Best time

Spring and in
warmer months



15.

Native to New Zealand



makikipai

magpie

Makipai Magpie

—
Gymnorhina tibicen

Magpies are aggressive in the breeding season (spring–summer), particularly to other birds that come close to their nests. They were introduced from Australia in the 1860s to control insect pests. Magpies have a complex social structure, with pairs or family groups defending a territory year-round and the chicks staying with the parents until the following breeding season. Flocks of non-territorial birds (consisting of young birds that have been evicted from the nest) can number 80 or more.

Size

350g
41cm

Eats

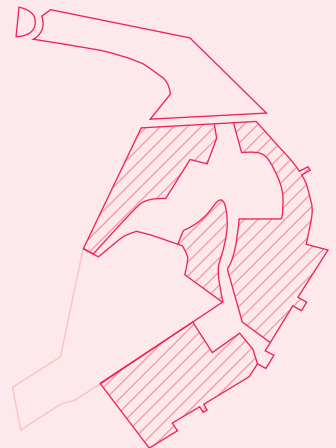
Insects, worms,
occasionally small birds

Found

Paddock fences,
old macrocarpa
or pine trees

When

All year



16.

Introduced from Australia



uru

morepork

Ruru Morepork

Ninox novaeseelandiae

The ruru is New Zealand's only surviving native owl and can fly almost silently, thanks to a layer of soft feathers on the edges of its wings. They are nocturnal so are not often seen in the park. They are particularly prone to predation by introduced mammals while nesting and are widely distributed throughout native and exotic forest. Moreporks are strongly territorial birds, and calls of fighting males can often be heard during warmer months. Their diet varies depending on the season and abundance of prey species.

Size

175g
29cm

Eats

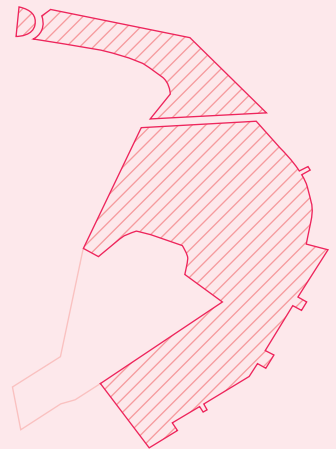
Insects, small mammals,
small birds

Found

Amongst
trees

When

All year,
only come
out at night



17.

Native to New Zealand



Kererū

New Zealand pigeon

Kererū

New Zealand Pigeon

—

Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae

Kererū are an important keystone species in New Zealand, as they are the only birds left that are able to swallow large fruits of native trees (such as taraire and karaka) and are therefore the only birds that can help these trees' seeds disperse. They are widespread throughout the country, particularly in forests and urban parks. They can be found feeding in flocks of 20–50 birds, mostly on fruit during warmer months and leaves, buds and flowers during cooler months.

Size

650g
51cm

Eats

Fruit, leaves,
buds, flowers

Found

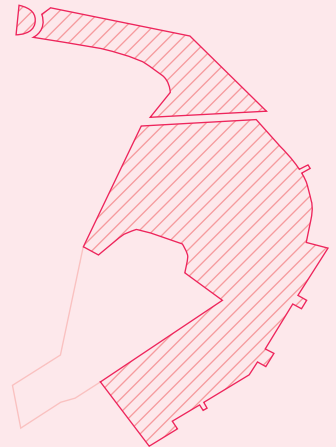
Where there
are fruiting and
flowering trees

When

All year

Best time

Spring and
summer



18.

Endemic to New Zealand



pūtangitangi

paradise shelduck

Pūtangitangi Paradise Shelduck

Tadorna variegata

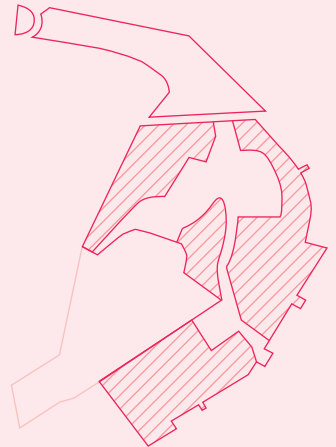
Paradise shelducks are New Zealand's most widely distributed waterfowl. Pairs usually mate for life and occupy their territory year-round, except when congregating in flocks near rivers and lakes to moult (shed their feathers). Ordinary ducks' legs are far back on their bodies, which is better for swimming; however, paradise shelducks' legs are in the middle of their bodies, which is better for walking. You may be able to spot the black and white striped chicks around the park during spring.

Size
140–1700g
63cm

Eats
Grass, clover,
seeds

Found
Around the park,
especially in the
paddocks

When
All year





peihana

Front—Female | Back—Male

pheasant

Peihana Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

Pheasants are found throughout the country in a variety of open habitats, especially farmland and open woodland. Adults are omnivorous, feeding on both plants and animals, and chicks are mainly fed insects. Pheasants swallow sharp pebbles to help them grind up tough plant matter. They were introduced by early European colonists for hunting purposes and are still hunted in some areas today. Their populations are kept steady by releases of captive-reared birds.

Size

240–1400g
60–80cm

Eats

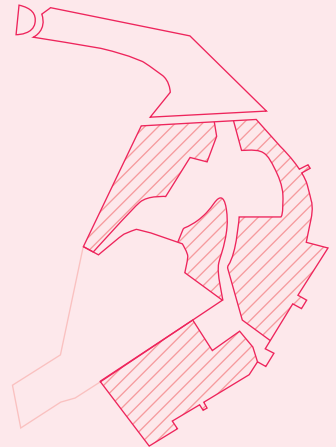
Leaves, seeds, fruits,
invertebrates

Found

In paddocks,
open areas, behind
Huia Lodge

When

All year



20.

Introduced from Europe



Left—Juvenile | Right—Adult

alkiaki

red-billed gull

Akiaki Red-billed Gull

Larus novaehollandiae

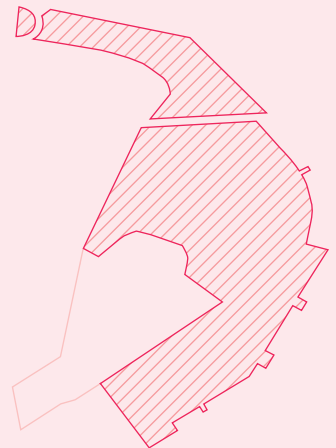
Red-billed gulls are considered tapu by Te Arawa people because their calls are said to have warned of a stealth assault by Ngā Puhī fighters paddling to Mokoia Island, Lake Rotorua. Although they are common, their breeding colony has been declining significantly due to introduced predators and climate change. Red-billed gulls breed in large, dense colonies on the mainland and in more sparse colonies on sub-Antarctic islands. They are often found in association with humans as they like to feed on food scraps.

Size
260–300g
37cm

Eats
Krill, food scraps,
insects

Found
Throughout
the park

When
All year





rock pigeon

Rock Pigeon

Columba livia

Many of the rock pigeons in New Zealand are descended from the homing pigeons once used by newspapers, businesses and government for communication and racing. Hence, they occur in a variety of plumages – from white, black and brown to the common grey with iridescent colours and even pied forms. They are a gregarious species, often feeding, roosting and travelling in flocks. They nest on ledges in buildings, caves and cliffs.

Size

400g
33cm

Eats

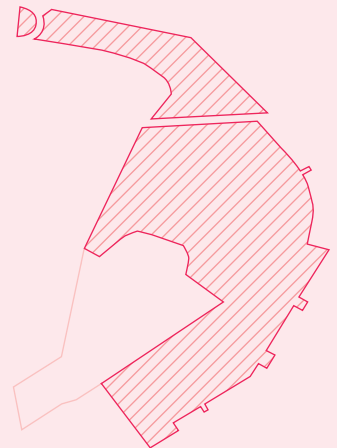
Food scraps,
grains

Found

Throughout
the park

When

All year





pīpīwhararoa

shining cuckoo

Pipīwharauroa Shining Cuckoo

Chrysococcyx lucidus

Every single year, the shining cuckoo does a round-trip journey between New Zealand (where it breeds) and the Solomon Islands. They are brood parasites, laying their eggs in the nests of grey warblers so they don't have to raise them themselves. They are more often heard than seen, as their plumage camouflages well in the forest. They love to feed on caterpillars of native moths, and are one of the few New Zealand birds able to eat the toxic monarch butterfly caterpillars.

Size

25g
16cm

Eats

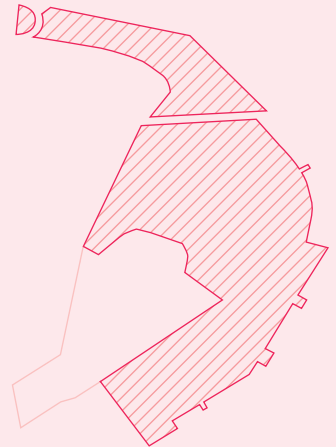
Insects and
their larvae

Found

Throughout
the park

When

Spring and
Summer



23.

Native to New Zealand



tauhou

silvereye

Tauhou Silvereye

—
Zosterops lateralis

When silvereys made their way to New Zealand, in the 1850s, Māori gave them the name “tauhou”, meaning “stranger”. They are very important seed dispersers for many of our native trees and also assist in pollination of trees such as kōwhai and fuchsia. They form large flocks in winter to search for food. Silvereys are one of New Zealand’s most common and widespread bird species. The silver/white ring around their eyes makes them easy to identify.

Size

13g
12cm

Eats

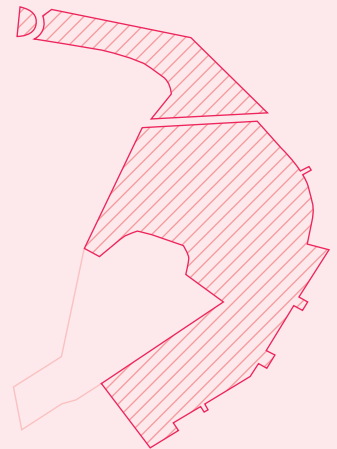
Insects, grubs, spiders,
small fruit, nectar

Found

Amongst
fruiting and
flowering trees

When

All year



24.

Native to New Zealand



skylark

Skylark

Alauda arvensis

During breeding season (August–January), you can see the skylark’s courtship display, in which the male sings while hovering up to 100m in the air. However, when they are on the ground, they are hard to spot, due to their brown, streaky plumage. They are common and widespread in open habitats, particularly in farmland. Pairs stay together during the breeding season and are strongly territorial, but outside of the breeding season they congregate in flocks to feed.

Size

38g
18cm

Eats

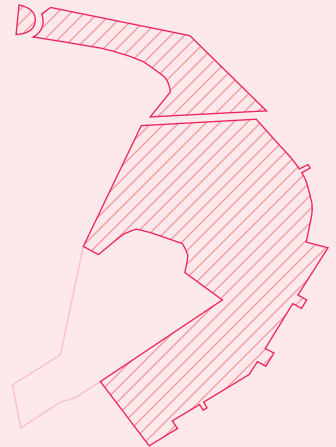
Seeds,
insects

Found

Throughout
the park

When

All year



25.

Introduced from Britain



song thrush

Song Thrush

Turdus philomelos

Song thrushes sometimes smash open snail shells on a favourite stone, called an anvil stone, so they can eat the snail inside. Like blackbirds, they are territorial and sing a melodious song from the tops of trees or poles. They are usually seen in pairs or alone. They often feed on the ground and find food by listening for invertebrates beneath the soil.

Size

70g
23cm

Eats

Insects, molluscs,
small fruit

Found

Feeding in open fields,
singing from treetops
or power poles

When

All year



26.

Introduced from Britain



spotted dove

Spotted Dove

Turdus philomelos

Spotted doves are native to Southeast Asia and were introduced to New Zealand in the 1920s by releases of captive birds in Auckland. They occur only in the North Island, in urban parks and gardens. They can be seen perching in trees and along power lines alongside rock pigeons and foraging on the ground. Pairs groom each other by tidying and cleaning with their beaks (called allopreening), especially around the head and neck.

Size

160g
32cm

Eats

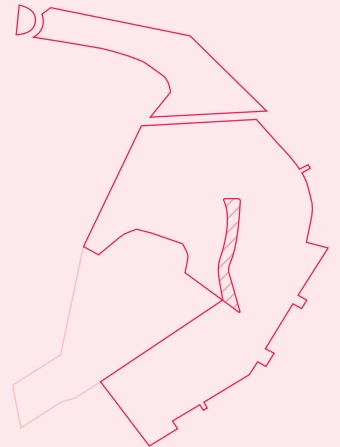
Seeds

Found

Twin Oak Drive

When

All year





Top—Male | Bottom—Female

spur-winged plover

Spur-Winged Plover

Vanellus miles

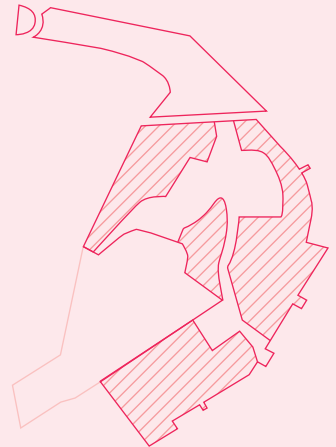
Spur-winged plovers get their name from a long yellow spur protruding from the carpal area (“elbow”) of each wing. Along with black-backed gulls, they had their legal protection status removed due to extensive crop damage, reports of harming other native birds and their interactions with aircraft (high number of strikes). They breed as isolated pairs and aggressively defend their breeding territory and nest. They often pretend to be injured to lure predators (including humans) away from their nest.

Size
350–370g
38cm

Eats
Insects,
crustaceans

Found
On the ground
feeding in paddocks

When
All year





târingi

starling

Tāringi Starling

—
Sturnus vulgaris

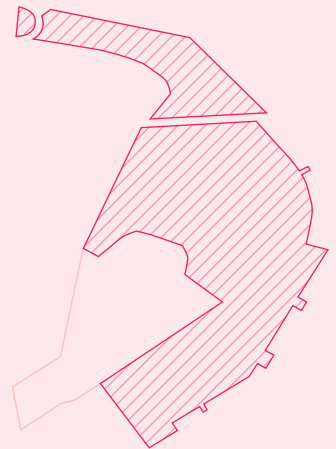
In summer, starlings will often grab a mouthful of worker ants to rub into their feathers as insecticide. They were introduced to New Zealand to control caterpillar plagues and grass grubs and are helpful by remove ticks from livestock. They are very social birds, feeding, travelling and roosting in large flocks. Starlings nest in cavities in trees, houses and cliffs and, commonly, in bird boxes.

Size
350–370g
38cm

Eats
Insects, food scraps,
nectar

Found
In treetops and
foraging on the
ground

When
All year



29.

Introduced from Europe



tūi

Tūi

Prothemadera novaeseelandiae

Tūi are skilled mimics and used to be tamed by Māori and trained to repeat phrases of up to 70 words. They are notoriously aggressive and will chase away other birds from their feeding territory. Tūi are very important to the ecosystem because they are one of the most common pollinators and seed dispersers. Their distinctive white throat tufts (poi) and loud, complicated song make them easy to identify.

Size

90–120g
30cm

Eats

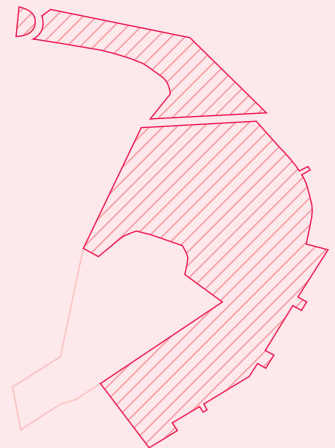
Fruits, nectar,
insects

Found

Amongst fruiting
and flowering trees

When

All year





warou

welcome swallow

Warou Welcome Swallow

Hirundo neoxena

You might catch these little birds following you around the park to feed on the insects that get stirred up from the grass as you walk. They make their nests out of mud and grasses. They can be recognised by their forked tail, long, pointed wings and fast, elegant flight. Welcome swallows got their name from people welcoming their appearance at the beginning of spring in southern Australia. They self-introduced to New Zealand from the 1960s.

Size

14g
15cm

Eats

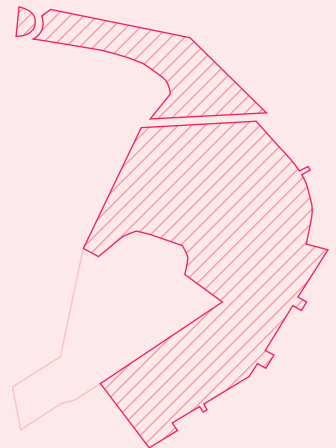
Insects such as blowflies,
midges, beetles, moths

Found

Throughout
the park

When

All year



31.

Native to New Zealand



matuku moana

white-faced heron

Matuku Moana White-faced Heron

Ardea novaehollandiae

White-faced herons wait for their prey to come close enough to grab or find food by combing through mud with their feet. They are commonly found in the tops of tall pine and macrocarpa trees, where they also nest. Both parents incubate the eggs and help raise the chicks. They roost alone or occasionally in pairs. White-faced herons are New Zealand's most common heron and are also found in Australia and New Guinea.

Size

550g
67cm

Eats

Small fish, crabs, worms, insects, spiders, mice, lizards, tadpoles, frogs

Found

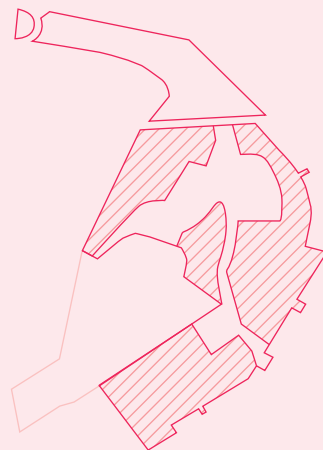
Paddocks and open areas of the park

When

All year

Best time

Following heavy rain





Left—Female | Right—Male

yellowhammer

Yellowhammer

Emberiza citrinella

During spring (mating season), male yellowhammers turn a bright golden yellow, and turn more drab/brown during winter. They defend a territory throughout their long breeding season and can raise two broods per season. They spend most of their time on the ground feeding, and flocks can cause considerable damage to grain crops, as they feed on the newly sown seeds. Juveniles are fed mostly invertebrates (such as beetles, cicadas and spiders) before they leave the nest.

Size

27g
16cm

Eats

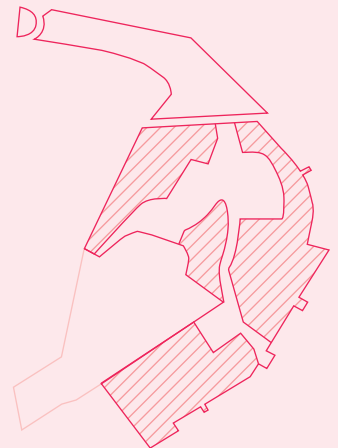
Seeds,
insects

Found

On fence posts,
feeding in fields

When

All year



33.

Introduced from Britain

glossary of terms

Brood The group of chicks produced at one hatching

Endemic Found only in New Zealand

Flock A congregation of birds of one kind that often feed, rest and travel together

Introduced Birds that were deliberately introduced to New Zealand (for game/sport or pest-control purposes) from other countries. Most are introduced from Europe or Australia

Invertebrate Invertebrates are defined as animals not having a backbone, and make up over 90% of all animal species. All insects, spiders, worms, crustaceans and molluscs are invertebrates

Native Naturally found in New Zealand as well as other countries. Some birds made their own way over to New Zealand from Australia or the Pacific Islands, and some migrated from New Zealand to elsewhere

Plumage A bird's feathers

Roost Where birds settle or congregate for rest or sleep



1

Pūiri Dr

MAIN GATE

Pōhukāhā Dr

2

3

4

5

6

7

Olive Grove

8

9

10

Michael Horton Dr

11

Twin Oak Dr

Kenneth Myers Dr

12














Grand Dr

Bollard Ave



200m

park map

- 1 Campbell Statue/Fountain
- 2 Rangitoto Steps
- 3 Fitness Keep
- 4 Band Rotunda
- 5 Belvedere & Pergola
- 6 Poplar Steps
- 7 Native Arboretum
- 8 Acacia Cottage
- 9 Memorial Steps
- 10 Kauri Steps
- 11 Folly
- 12 Grotto
-  Sir John's Burial Site "Obelisk"
-  Discovery Hub 'Huia Lodge'
-  Bistro/Creamery
-  Park Cafe
-  Gardens
-  Public Toilets
-  Disabled Access
-  Pedestrian Access
-  Drinking Fountains
-  BBQ Areas
-  P Parking
-  Defibrillator
-  Sports Clubs

Sir John Logan Campbell gifted Cornwall Park to New Zealand in 1901. His wish was that the park be free for every New Zealander to enjoy, forever.

Today, the Cornwall Park Trust Board, who manages and operates Cornwall Park, continues to honour his wish. Cornwall Park is for you — and all New Zealanders — to enjoy and experience nature in the heart of New Zealand's biggest city, for free.

It is more than just a park — it is 425 acres/ 172 hectares of New Zealand's living history, weaving together our heritage, ecology, agriculture, wildlife, mauri, and community within its lush landscape.

For more information on the park visit cornwallpark.co.nz

cornwall park





cornwall park

cornwallpark.co.nz