

Brooklands Lagoon-Lower Waimakariri River-Styx  
Rivermouth

# Threatened/at-risk bird species

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# Introduction

Brooklands Lagoon/Te Riu o Te Aika Kawa (Figure 1) coastal wetland system is nationally important habitat for birdlife with approximately 150 species recorded, including over 80 residents and regular visitors. Many species classified as “Threatened” or “At Risk” occur within this area.

Threat classifications are reviewed by the NZ Department of Conservation every three-to-four years and this document provides a local update based on the most recent review: Robertson *et al.* 2021 "Conservation status of birds in Aotearoa New Zealand 2021", DoC.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/science-and-technical/nztcs36entire.pdf>

The area covered in this document is outlined in Figure 2, and includes:

- ✓ *Brooklands Lagoon,*
- ✓ *Brooklands Sandspit,*
- ✓ *Lower Styx Ponding Area,*
- ✓ *Styx Rivermouth wetlands,*
- ✓ *Kainga Road Saltmeadow,*
- ✓ *Waimakariri Rivermouth,*
- ✓ *Kairaki Paddocks, and*
- ✓ *The Kaiapoi Wastewater Treatment Ponds.*



**Figure 1:** Brooklands Lagoon/Te Riu o Te Aika Kawa (Photograph A. Shadbolt, 2024)








Figure 2: Brooklands Lagoon/Te Riu o Te Aika Kawa and environs covered by this document.

# Species by threat classification






## Threatened – Nationally Critical

Common name	Scientific name	Comment	
Australasian bittern/matuku	<i>Botarus poiciloptilus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year-round in saltmarshes and freshwater wetlands.</li> <li>• Highest numbers in autumn-winter.</li> <li>• Feeding, roosting and breeding. 1% of NZ likely population present.</li> <li>• Sensitive to disturbance from people and dogs.</li> </ul>	
White heron/kōtuku	<i>Ardea alba</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 2 present late summer – winter.</li> <li>• On lagoon and wetlands.</li> <li>• Feeding, roosting.</li> <li>• Not breeding.</li> </ul>	

## Threatened – Nationally Endangered


Common name	Scientific name	Comment	
Black-fronted tern/tarapiroe	<i>Chidonias albobriatus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year round in small numbers.</li> <li>• More present autumn - winter.</li> <li>• Feeding, roosting. Not breeding.</li> </ul>	

## Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable




Common name	Scientific name	Comment	
Grey duck/pārera	<i>Anas superciliosa superciliosa</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very low numbers persist.</li> <li>• Year-round in saltmarshes and wetlands.</li> <li>• Late summer-autumn influx on Kaiapoi WWTP.</li> <li>• Feeding, roosting and breeding.</li> </ul>	
Caspian tern/taranui	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year round with an autumn influx.</li> <li>• Throughout lagoon and rivermouth.</li> <li>• Feeding, roosting.</li> <li>• Not breeding.</li> </ul>	
Spotted shag/parekareka	<i>Phalacrocorax punctatus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year round with highest numbers late summer-winter.</li> <li>• Feeding mostly at sea and roosting at the tip of Brooklands Spit.</li> <li>• Not breeding.</li> </ul>	
Eastern New Zealand falcon/Kārearea	<i>Falco novaeseelandiae novaeseelandiae</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occasional visitor at any time of year.</li> <li>• Over woodland and grassland habitats</li> <li>• Not breeding.</li> </ul>	
Huttons shearwater/titi	<i>Puffinus huttoni</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Late summer-autumn visitor to inshore waters and surf line along the spit and rivermouth.</li> <li>• Not coming to land.</li> </ul>	








## Threatened – Nationally Increasing

Common name	Scientific name	Comment	
Wrybill/ngutu-parore	<i>Anarhynchus frontalis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occasional visitor, mostly in spring.</li> <li>• On mudflats and the beach.</li> <li>• Feeding, roosting.</li> <li>• Not breeding.</li> </ul>	

## At Risk – Declining




Common name	Scientific name	Comment	
White-flipped Penguin/ kororā	<i>Eudyptula minor albosignata</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeds in the sea off the spit and sometimes in the rivermouth and lagoon.</li> <li>• Sometimes come to shore when unwell or to moult.</li> <li>• Nesting in dunes possible but not confirmed.</li> <li>• Vulnerable to disturbance from people and dogs.</li> </ul>	
Marsh crake/ koitareke	<i>Zapornia pusilla</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year round in saltmarshes and wetlands.</li> <li>• Feeding, roosting.</li> <li>• Breeding.</li> </ul>	
Spotless Crake/ pūweto	<i>Zapornia tabuensis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has expanded into the Brooklands area post-quake.</li> <li>• Now year-round.</li> <li>• Freshwater wetlands and some saltmarsh habitats.</li> <li>• Feeding, roosting.</li> <li>• Likely breeding.</li> </ul>	

## At Risk - Declining (cont'd)


Common name	Scientific name	Comment	
banded rail/ moho pererū	<i>Gallirallus phillippensis assimillis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Last recorded in the 1930s (probably the last site in Canterbury where this species survived).</li> <li>Abundant suitable wetland/marsh habitat.</li> <li>Potential for reintroduction.</li> </ul>	
banded dotterel/ tūturiwhatu	<i>Charadrius bicinctus bicinctus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year-round, with highest numbers late summer – winter.</li> <li>Breeds along the spit ocean beach.</li> <li>Post-breeding flocks feed, roost on mudflats and saltmeadows.</li> </ul>	
New Zealand pipit/pīhoihoi	<i>Anthus n. novaeseelandiae</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Autumn-winter visitor.</li> <li>Prefers short grassland, firm shoreline substrates and beaches.</li> <li>Feeding, roosting.</li> <li>Not breeding.</li> </ul>	
South Island pied oystercatcher/tōrea	<i>Haematopus finschi</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year-round with 100-200 in late summer-autumn.</li> <li>Feeding, roosting.</li> <li>Not breeding.</li> </ul>	
Eastern bar-tailed godwit/kūaka	<i>Limosa lapponica baueri</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arctic migrant.</li> <li>Present year-round with up to 400 through summer.</li> <li>Immatures stay over winter.</li> <li>Feeding, roosting on mudflats.</li> <li>Not breeding.</li> </ul>	




## At Risk - Declining (cont'd)

Common name	Scientific name	Comment	
Black-billed gull/tarāpuka	<i>Chroicocephalus bulleri</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year-round on lagoon, rivermouth and oxidation ponds.</li> <li>• Feeding, roosting.</li> <li>• Not breeding.</li> </ul>	
Red-billed gull/tarāpuka	<i>Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae scopulinus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year-round.</li> <li>• Feeding &amp; roosting on shoreline, beach, mudflats or rafting on open water.</li> <li>• Not breeding.</li> </ul>	
White-fronted tern/tara	<i>Sterna striata striata</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year-round with peak in autumn.</li> <li>• Feeding, roosting over water and mud.</li> <li>• Not breeding.</li> </ul>	



## At Risk - Recovering

Common name	Scientific name	Comment	
Variable oystercatcher/tōrea-pango	<i>Haematopus unicolor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year-round resident beach and mudflats.</li> <li>• Feeding, roosting.</li> <li>• Occasional breeding on Brooklands spit beach.</li> <li>• Inter-breeds in this area with SI Pied Oystercatcher with hybrids young.</li> </ul>	




## At Risk - Recovering

Common name	Scientific name	Comment	
Pied cormorant/kōau	<i>Phalacrocorax varius varius</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year-round.</li> <li>• Feeding in water, roosting on shoreline and channel edges.</li> <li>• Roosts in trees at tip of Brooklands spit.</li> <li>• Not breeding but likely to breed in the future as population expanding through CHCH area.</li> </ul>	

## At Risk - Relict

Common name	Scientific name	Comment	
Black cormorant/kawau	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seasonal visitor, usually in summer-autumn.</li> <li>• Feeding in water and roosting on shoreline and channel edges.</li> <li>• Not breeding.</li> </ul>	
Little cormorant/kawau-paka	<i>Microcarbo melanoleucos</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year-round in small numbers.</li> <li>• Feeding in water and roosting on shoreline, channel edges and trees overhanging water.</li> <li>• Not breeding.</li> </ul>	

## At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

Common name	Scientific name	Comment	
Little black cormorant/kawau tūi	<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year-round in small numbers.</li> <li>• Feeding in water and roosting on shoreline, channel edges and trees overhanging water.</li> <li>• Roosts mainly on jetties in oxidation ponds.</li> </ul>	
Royal Spoonbill/kotuku ngutupapa	<i>Platalea regia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year-round throughout study area.</li> <li>• Up to 100 present at times.</li> <li>• Feeding, roosting on mudflats and channel edges.</li> <li>• Breeding colony in the Kaiapoi WWTP oxidation ponds.</li> </ul>	
Black-fronted dotterel	<i>Euseyonis melanops</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• occasional visitor to shallow brackish and freshwater pools.</li> <li>• Roosting, feeding.</li> <li>• Not breeding.</li> </ul>	



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