

Biodiversity

Northern Blue Penguin / Kororā (*Eudyptula minor iredalei*)



DESCRIPTION

The kororā, native to New Zealand, is the world's smallest penguin at 25-33 cm tall and around 1 kg.

They have blue back feathers, white undersides, dark grey bills, and off-white feet. Males are slightly larger than females.

During the day, kororā are out at sea foraging, or in their burrows roosting, moulting, or tending eggs or chicks.

They are rarely seen on land and generally only come ashore under the cover of darkness.

DISTRIBUTION, FEEDING, BREEDING AND MOULT

Kororā are found along the coasts of Aotearoa and Australia.

They eat small fish, squid, octopus, and crustaceans.

From June to July, they come ashore to nest, sometimes venturing up to 1.5 km inland and 300 m uphill. They lay two eggs, incubated for 36 days, with chicks fledging after 7-8 weeks, between October and January.

During their annual moult (feather replacement) between November and March, they remain on land for 2-3 weeks as they are not waterproof.

LITTLE BLUE PENGUIN KORORĀ LIFE CYCLE



LITTLE BLUE PENGUIN KORORĀ IN TARANAKI

Kororā nest along much of the Taranaki coastline, mostly in and around estuaries, river mouths, seawalls and built-up areas in New Plymouth, such as Port Taranaki.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- Keep dogs on a leash around penguin areas, particularly May to March
- Trap predators on your property or join a local predator control group working near the coast
- Be a responsible cat owner - keep your pet indoors at night
- Record sightings of penguins or their footprints on iNaturalist
- Report sick/injured birds to the DOC emergency helpline 0800 362 468.



CONSERVATION

Kororā populations are in decline, especially in areas without predator control or where there is coastal development. They are especially vulnerable to disturbance during the breeding and moulting periods.

THREATS

Threats to this species include:

- Dogs are the greatest threat, but cats, ferrets, stoats and wild pigs will also kill adults, eggs and chicks
- Coastal development and clearance of native vegetation from traditional nesting sites
- Kororā are also killed crossing roads, hit by boats or caught in fishing nets.

QUICK FACTS

- Their paddle-like flippers are excellent for 'flying' through the water at speeds of up to 6 km/h.
- Kororā are protected by the Wildlife Act (1953), which is administered by the Department of Conservation.
- They often nest under and around coastal buildings, keeping the owners awake at night with their noisy vocal displays that sound a little like braying donkey.