

Fairy prion *Pachyptila turtur*

25 cm

NEW ZEALAND NATIVE, NOT THREATENED

Prions are medium-sized seabirds with blue-grey upperparts and white underneath. They have a bold black 'M' marking across the back and outstretched wings, and the tail has a broad black tip. The fairy prion is slightly smaller than the broad-billed prion, with similar plumage apart from a wider black tip to the tail. The bill is much smaller and narrower than that of the broad-billed prion. Fairy prions are circumpolar in distribution, and are abundant around New Zealand (more than one million pairs). In the Chatham Islands, c.40,000 fairy prion pairs breed on Mangere, and smaller numbers breed on the Star Keys, Tapuaenuku, the Murumurus, The Sisters, Rabbit Island, and Kokope. They occur at sea in large loose flocks. Fairy prions are vulnerable to rats and other introduced mammals at their breeding grounds.



Adult fairy prion, Mangere, Chatham Islands. Photo: Dave Crouchley (DOC).