

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. 3rd edn.

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Little shearwater: pp 40-41.



LITTLE SHEARWATER

Family Procellariidae

Species *Puffinus assimilis*

Common names Little Shearwater, Allied Shearwater

Status Endemic

Abundance Common in northern waters

Size 300 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Fluttering Shearwater 330 mm)

Subspecies Four races are recognised. These are almost impossible to separate at sea. The Kermadec Little Shearwater (*P. a. kermadecensis*) has less white above the eye than the North Island Little Shearwater (*P. a. haurakiensis*).

Breeding islands close to New Zealand The Kermadec Little Shearwater breeds in the Kermadec Islands while the North Island Little Shearwater breeds on many islands from the Cavalli Islands in the north to the Mercury Islands off the Coromandel Peninsula in the south.

Breeding months July to December. 1 white egg is laid in a burrow.

Range worldwide The New Zealand subspecies are considered sedentary and

not thought to range widely from their nesting islands.

New Zealand range Around New Zealand.

Habitat The Little Shearwater tends to keep well offshore in northern New Zealand waters unlike the Fluttering Shearwater.

Description

Upperparts Black. **Underparts** White. **Face** White to just above the eye. **Bill** Dull lead-blue. **Feet** Blue.

Conspicuous features

- The smallest shearwater in New Zealand waters.
- Bigger than the Diving Petrel and the White-faced Storm Petrel which might also be seen in the same waters.
- A small dark shearwater in appearance.
- Its blue feet are conspicuous.

Conspicuous characteristics

- A fast flying bird.
- Flight pattern is of several fast wing beats followed by a short glide period.
- Will skip and skim the waves in rough weather.

Call Heard usually just on dusk near the breeding colony, is a rapid “kakakakakaka...urr”, sound.

Where to find – North Island

Bay of Islands – Waters near to the Cavalli Island group.

Northland – Hen and Chickens Islands where it nests in small numbers.

North Auckland – Waters towards Little Barrier Island. P. 289.

Coromandel – Whitianga to the Mercury Islands.