

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

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

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Kaka: pp 208-209.



## KAKA

**Family** Nestoridae

**Species** *Nestor meridionalis*

**Common name** Kaka

**Status** Endemic

**Abundance** Common in selected areas

**Size** 450 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Kea 460 mm)

**Habitat** A bird of old forests, remnant forests, gardens, orchards and even suburban gardens outside of the breeding season.

**New Zealand range** In the North Island birds are concentrated in the centre of the island and on the offshore islands. It is well spread in the South Island and on Stewart Island.

**Discussion** A bird of relatively ancient origin with stocky build, brush-tipped tongue, ceres bristles and short tail. This suggests an evolution separated from other parrots. Its adaptation to a temperate climate reinforces this. Its closest relatives are the Australian lorikeets all of which have brush-tipped tongues and

nectar-eating habits (Fleming 1982). The South Island Kaka (*N. m. meridionalis*) is larger than the North Island bird (*N. m. septentrionalis*) with more grey colouring on the cap.

### **Description**

**Head** Cap greyish on the North Island Kaka and grey on the South Island Kaka. Behind the eye is orange. **Upperparts** Brown with tonings of green and red.

**Breast** Brown with tonings of green and red. **Abdomen** Brown with crimson tonings. **Underwings** Red.

### **Conspicuous features**

- A large overall brown looking parrot.
- Large head of the in-flight bird.

### **Conspicuous characteristics**

- Harsh calls when in flight gives it away.
- Flying birds always appear to be poorly proportioned.
- Rounded wings.
- The sound of breaking sticks can indicate a feeding Kaka.

**Call** Usually harsh guttural calls but also sweet musical notes.

**Nest** Usually a hole in an old tree high up. Up to 5 white eggs are laid.

### **Where to find – North Island**

**Great Barrier Island** – Good populations here especially at Tryphena. P. 290.

**Coromandel** – Opoutere near the backpackers. P. P. 307.

**King Country** – Pureora Forest at Bismarck Road. P. 314.

**Urewera** – Lake Waikaremoana on Lake Waikareiti Track. P. 328.

**Taupo** – Lake Rotopounamu Track. P. 316.

**Wellington** – Karori Wildlife Sanctuary. P. 340.

### **Where to find – South Island**

**West Coast** – Lake Brunner and other West Coast forests. P. 374.

**Fiordland** – Eglinton Valley and Cascade Creek. P. 370.

### **Where to find – Stewart Island**

**Oban** – Common around the town. P. 367.