

Kōtuku White heron

Ardea modesta



Conservation status

Regional | Migrant
National | Threatened: Critical



Main threats

Entire population breeds
at a single location



Length:
83–103 cm



Weight:
700–1200 g

A bit about me...



New Zealand native

A large, slender heron with immaculate white plumage and a long, pointed bill. Breeding adults have a black bill, a turquoise face and long plumes on the back. Non-breeders have an orange bill, a yellow face and no plumes. Flies slowly with neck retracted and feeds opportunistically, taking fish, frogs, reptiles and small birds. Call is a harsh croak generally heard in the colony.



 Migratory range

Range:

Frequents harbours, estuaries and freshwater wetlands. Aotearoa New Zealand has a stable population of around 200 birds, which only breed on the Waitangiroto River on Te Tai Poutini / West Coast. A handful of birds migrate to Otago from autumn to spring. Abundant in Australia and Southeast Asia.

Key Otago sites:

- Matainaka / Hawksbury Lagoon
- Tomohaka / Tomahawk Lagoon

Similar birds:



Cattle egret



Royal spoonbill /
kōtuku ngutupapa