



## Foraging behaviour and non-breeding dispersal of Fiordland penguin/Tawaki

The Fiordland penguin or tawaki has been one of the least known penguins for the longest time. This is despite it being one of three penguin species that currently live and breed on the New Zealand mainland. In 2014, the Tawaki Project set out to undertake the first comprehensive, long-term study of the species since the 1970s. The project's main focus is the investigation of tawaki's marine ecology, their foraging ranges and diving behaviour in relation to environmental variables. Of particular interest are anthropogenic threats at sea, such as fisheries impacts and pollution. The penguins can furthermore help us with identifying areas of high ecological significance which will then aid with the development of Marine Protected Areas.

The project operates at three sites across the species' entire breeding distribution, namely Jackson Head on the West Coast, Milford Sound in Fiordland, and Codfish Island/Whenua Hou in Foveaux Strait. In the first three years, the project focussed on examining the penguins' foraging behaviour during the breeding season. While this work continues, investigations now expand to include the crucial pre-moult period when breeding birds have to replenish their body resources in preparation for the annual moult, and their winter migration. First results indicate that tawaki may travel further than any other crested penguin species outside the breeding season. With the support of Birds NZ, we will find out very soon if tawaki are indeed the Marathon runners of the (crested) penguin world.

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