

Buller's shearwater survey, Aorangi Island, Poor Knights Islands.

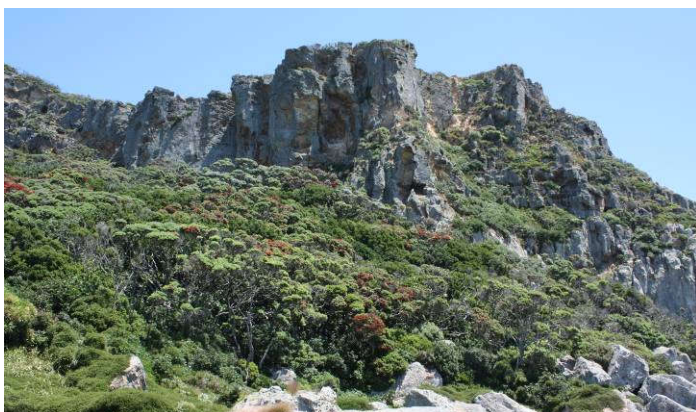
Buller's shearwater (*Puffinus bulleri*) is an endemic Procellariiform to New Zealand. It's only breeding site is the Poor Knights Islands group. In spite of it being a commonly seen species in the Hauraki Gulf during their breeding season the overall ecology of this species remains little studied. The objective of this study this coming season is to investigate Buller's shearwater populations at Aorangi Island using the same methods that we employed on Tawhiti Rahi in 2016/2017. Random plots at various elevations and vegetation types will address the density of burrows across landscapes, aspects and vegetation structures, and transects and permanent plots will identify the occupancy rate of burrows and breeding success. Establishing permanent plots will allow us to continue monitoring in future years. Our survey methods include a comprehensive application of passive bioacoustic techniques to build soundscapes across difficult terrain with a number of seabird species.

Combined with our data from last season, we aim to have a population estimate for this species by the end of 2018. These data could potentially lead to a change in the conservation status of the species and management in New Zealand, while also contributing to the biological understanding of a little-known seabird at an international level. The results of this survey will feed into a larger, separately funded project that will investigate the foraging behaviour of Buller's shearwaters throughout their range and consider the indirect impact of fisheries on an endemic and threatened species.



Buller's shearwater in tree

Photo: Alan Tennyson



Aorangi Island

Photo: Chris Gaskin