

Population recovery and foraging behaviour of North Island Little shearwaters

North Island Little shearwaters (*Puffinus assimilis haurakiensis*) are a cryptic species and little is known of their behaviours during the breeding season. Surveys of Taranga (Hen Island) and the Marotere (Chickens) island groups in 2018 indicated that their population size has increased substantially since the kiore eradications in 1990's and 2011 (Taranga), offering the opportunity to and build on prior work regarding their breeding biology.

Research priorities for North Island Little shearwaters include foraging distribution, dietary data and population dynamics. This project aims to address these knowledge gaps through an in-depth study of this species breeding on Motu Muka (Lady Alice island). The three aims of this project are:

1. To determine foraging distributions and behaviours of chick-rearing adults using high-resolution GPS tracking,.
2. To monitor breeding success and validate observations of breeding timing using burrow-scope surveys and trail cameras on study burrows.
3. To identify important dietary components.

Funds provided from the BNZRF will enable the purchase of GPS loggers and facilitate island visits throughout the breeding season to undertake tracking work and burrow-monitoring.



North Island Little shearwater, Motu Muka (Lady Alice Island) Photograph: Edin Whitehead