

North Island Fernbird: Moulting and morphometrics

This project aims to describe the moulting and morphometrics of the North Island Mātātā Fernbird *Poodytes punctatus vealeae* (At Risk/ Declining). The sequence, timing and extent of post-juvenile and post-breeding moulting is not well documented and will be the main research objective for this study. Knowledge about the South Island Fernbird moulting by the Nelson Birds NZ Fernbird study will be shared with North Island Birds NZ banders to support ongoing Fernbird studies. BNZRF funded field work in November 2023 and April 2024 resulted in 46 Fernbirds banded from four sites across the Whangarei region. The BNZRF will enable a second year of study to increase the sample size for juvenile and older birds, to describe and confirm further details of their moulting strategies and continue training local banders in moulting recording techniques.

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Juvenile fernbird completing partial post-juvenile and eccentric moult, also replacing the outer primary coverts and feathers.