

Rako Buller's shearwater survey Poor Knights - Overview article

The purpose of this project is to repeat the 2016-2018 population survey for Rako Buller's shearwater is to contribute towards the first accurate population trend for rako. The previous survey came up with an estimate that was much lower than previously published assessments. While that survey excluded steep, densely burrowed, and inaccessible areas, it is a repeatable quantitative study of the rako breeding population, including breeding activity, thus providing critical baseline data.

We will use the same methodologies adopted previously: Random plots for burrow density; burrow occupancy - incubating adults (December), and chicks (late March); habitat modelling; permanent plots for breeding activity. Fieldwork will be undertaken in December and March on both Aorangi and Tawhiti Rahi, the largest of the Poor Knights Islands. Parties of six will undertake each island survey. Personnel will be experienced fieldworkers and Ngātiwai kaimahi. Determining population trends through repeat surveys is vital for the conservation management of a species. Our surveys 2016-2018 provide a solid baseline from which to repeat to establish the first population trend for rako.

Chris Gaskin, October 2024



*Buller's shearwater in
Photo: Alan Tennyson*



*Aorangi Island
Photo: Chris Gaskin*