

# BLACK PETREL

TĀIKO

## FAST FACTS

- The black petrel is one of New Zealand's at risk seabirds.
- They spend half their lives in South America, in the waters of Ecuador and Peru. When it's time to breed they return to New Zealand, arriving in October.
- Black petrels have one chick each summer and it needs both adults to feed it. If one parent dies the chick starves to death.
- They mate for life, meeting their partner in the same burrow each year. If one bird dies the survivor has to find another life partner and can miss a breeding season.
- In May the chicks are ready to leave the burrow and fly to South America. Only a small percentage make it to breeding age.



Photo: Philip Griffin

## FEATURES

- Bill - pale yellow with a grey/black tip
- Body - medium-sized, very dark brown or black
- Wings - dark brown or black
- Legs - black

## RANGE

Black petrels forage mainly off the eastern North Island and in the Tasman Sea. They migrate across the Pacific to South America after breeding.

## THREATS

- Commercial longline and trawl fisheries
- Recreational fishing
- Feral cats

## TOP TIPS FOR FISHERS

- Sink your baits fast
- Avoid attracting birds by managing your bait and offal
- Learn more at [www.southernseabirds.org](http://www.southernseabirds.org)



Photo: Jonathon Walker



Photo: Cameron Long

# PETREL HEAD



**Southern Seabird  
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## CAM SPEEDY

Hi, I'm Cam Speedy, a Wildlife Biologist. I became really interested in seabirds when I came across disused breeding burrows while hunting sika in the Kaimanawas. It blew me away that black petrels came that far inland to dig in the forest floor to raise a chick. Our forests were teeming with breeding seabirds before predators were introduced. There were millions of them, all contributing to the richness of the land we now farm. Seabird guano is a highly effective fertilizer due to its exceptionally high content of nitrogen, phosphate, and potassium: nutrients essential for plant growth.

Unfortunately, the black petrel's choice of home made them particularly vulnerable to predators. Stoats have wiped them out everywhere but for small populations on Great Barrier Island (Aotea) and Little Barrier Island (Te Hauturu-o-Toi). We currently only know of about 2700 breeding pairs, and the biggest threat to these survivors is fishing.

When you are fishing in the outer Hauraki Gulf you may see black petrels diving - sometimes as deep as 16 metres - to catch a feed of squid, or soaring low across the water as they follow your boat, looking for food. The birds are oblivious to the risk and a lot of fishers don't know how vulnerable black petrels are.



## JOIN ME

It's critical we all work together, looking after seabirds, inspiring and educating other commercial and recreational fishers, New Zealanders and visitors to New Zealand. How?

- Always fish 'Seabird Smart' and teach others to do the same.
- Think up, test and share new ways to protect seabirds while fishing.
- Subscribe to Southern Seabird Solutions' YouTube channel and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.
- Check out [www.southernseabirds.org](http://www.southernseabirds.org) and give feedback.
- Grab classic Petrel Head merchandise for you and the family at [www.petrelhead.ezymerch.co.nz](http://www.petrelhead.ezymerch.co.nz).
- Get snapping and share photos and videos of seabirds and your seabird smart fishing setup on social media, tagging [@seabirdsmart](#) and using the hashtags [#seabirdsmart](#) [#petrelhead](#).

