



# Wellington Gardens Bird Watcher's Guide



Wellington Gardens

Absolutely Positively  
**Wellington City Council**  
Me Heke Ki Pōneke



Photo by de\_zigeuner/pixabay.

## **Goldfinch**

*13cm long*



A small finch, slightly smaller than a sparrow. Easily identified by a gold band on black wings, and brilliant red face. Can often be seen in flocks feeding on seeds of thistles or other weeds. Male song is a pleasant twittering “tsitt, tsitt, tsitt”.



Photo by Tony Hisgett/flickr.

## **Dunnock**

### **Hedge Sparrow**

*14cm long*



Similar to a house sparrow but with a grey breast and fine black bill. Often seen on the side of paths, feeding on the ground close to cover. Flies a short distance when approached. Seen throughout the Botanic Garden, often along the hydrangea and herb garden paths.



Photo by JJ Harrison/Wikimedia Commons.

## **Eastern Rosella**

*32cm long*



Australian native parrot introduced to Aotearoa from Australia about 100 years ago as a caged bird. Has a distinctive crimson head, yellow and black back, blue wings and lime-green tail feathers. In flight it has a loud “kwink, kwink” call. Also emits chattering notes. Feeds mainly on seeds, fruits, buds, shoots, and occasionally insects.



Photo by Geraldine Rose/pixabay.

## **Australian Magpie**

*41cm long*



Introduced from Australia to control pests such as grass grubs, they can be fiercely territorial during the breeding season. The poet Denis Glover described their mellifluous song as “Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle”. Often seen in the pines around the Magpie Lawn.



Photo by Alain Carpentier/Wikimedia Commons.

**Mallard**  
*58cm long*



Most common duck found in the Botanic Garden. Males have dark, glossy green head and pale grey body. Females are streaked and spotted brown. Feeds by dabbling on the water surface. The repeated “quack, quack” of the duck is well known. Always found at the Duck Pond and Rose Garden. Can breed with the native Grey Duck.



Photo by Andreas Trepte/Wikimedia Commons.

**Yellowhammer**  
*16cm long*



Introduced in the 19th century and are now widespread. Adult males have a bright yellow head, while females are a paler yellow. Feeds on seeds and invertebrates, and often forms large flocks in autumn and winter.

## Other birds seen in Wellington



**Blackbird**



**Starling**



**Song Thrush**



**House Sparrow**



**Rock Pigeon**



**Black-backed Gull**

Blackbird. Photo by Andreas Trepte/Wikimedia Commons.  
Starling. Photo by Pierre Selim/Wikimedia Commons.  
Song Thrush. Photo by Tony Hisgett/Wikimedia Commons.  
House Sparrow. Photo by Adamo/Wikimedia Commons.  
Rock Pigeon. Photo by Mindaugas Urbonas/Wikimedia Commons.  
Black-backed Gull. Photo by Andreas Trepte/Wikimedia Commons.

Due to the diversity of life here, Aotearoa is recognised as a global biodiversity hotspot. Some birds only occur in Aotearoa and nowhere else in the world - they are **endemic**. Some birds also naturally occur in other places as well as Aotearoa - they are **native** here but not endemic. Many birds have been **introduced** to Aotearoa by humans in the last few hundred years.

### Key



Endemic to Aotearoa



Native to Aotearoa



Introduced to Aotearoa



How many can you find? Tick the boxes

**cm** Size of bird from beak to tail end



Wellington Gardens

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Wellington Botanic Garden

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Otari-Wilton's Bush

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Bolton Street Cemetery

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Truby King Park

Wellington is one of the few cities in the world where native biodiversity is increasing. Nature is returning to our eco-city thanks to restoration action by the Council and community volunteers.

For more information visit [nzbirdsonline.org.nz](http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz) or speak to a staff member. You can also share your observations online via [ebird.org](http://ebird.org) or [inaturalist.nz](http://inaturalist.nz).

**Thank you for not feeding the birds beyond the Duck Pond at Wellington Botanic Garden.**

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[wellingtongardens.nz](http://wellingtongardens.nz)