



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.



Wellington Gardens

Wellington Botanic Garden

Otari-Wilton's Bush

Bolton Street Cemetery

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 or speak to a staff member. You can also share your observations online via ebird.org or inaturalist.nz.

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

Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Poneke

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Wellington Gardens Bird Watcher's Guide



Wellington Gardens

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Photo by Pseudopanax/Wikimedia Commons.

Kererū
New Zealand Pigeon
51cm long



Large native pigeon with predominantly white and metallic-green feathers, orange-red bill and red eyes. Has a noisy swish of wings in flight, but is often quiet and still when at rest. Feeds mainly on fruits, and plays a key role in dispersing seeds of large-fruited native trees.



Photo by Sid Mosdell/flickr.

Korimako
Bellbird
20cm long



Named for its liquid bell-like song, which can be distinguished from the tūi by its lack of grunts and wheezes. Like the tūi, it feeds on insects, fruits, nuts and nectar. The male has soft olive-green plumage; the female is brown.



Photo by Sid Mosdell/Wikimedia Commons.

Kākāriki
Red-Crowned Parakeet
28cm long



Small native parrot found in the gardens in increasing numbers, thanks to nearby Zealandia. Often heard chattering and cackling in the forest canopy, and occasionally seen feeding cautiously on bush paths. Mostly green with a red blotch above the beak.



Photo by Toby Hudson/Wikimedia Commons.

Tauhou
Silvereye
12cm long



Small green bird easily identifiable by white circles around its eyes. Is active and noisy, often seen in the gardens in flocks feeding on insects, fruit and nectar. Call in flight is a chirping “cli, cli, cli”.



Photo by Mosborne01/Wikimedia Commons.

Ruru
Morepork
29cm long



A dark mottled-brown nocturnal owl. Rarely seen in the gardens, but occasionally heard at night making a double hoot or “more pork”.



Photo by Matt Binns/Wikimedia Commons.

Pūtangitangi
Paradise Shelduck
63cm long



A large duck sometimes seen near the Duck Pond or Lady Norwood Rose Garden in summer. The female has a white head, the male black. The male makes a deep honking noise.



Photo by Matt Binns/Wikimedia Commons.

Tūi
30cm long



Can be seen throughout the gardens, wherever there is fruit or nectar. Feeds on coprosma berries and nectar from pūriri, pōhutukawa, kōwhai, harakeke and eucalyptus. Easily identified by the iridescent metallic-green colour and double white throat-tuft. Song has fluid melodic notes mixed with coughs, clicks, grunts and wheezes.



Photo by Dave Young/flickr.

Kōtare
New Zealand Kingfisher
24cm long



Small green-blue native kingfisher with a long straight bill. Sometimes seen perched on power lines and branches around the Soundshell Lawn. Has distinctive loud “keck, keck, keck” call repeated at length. Diet is small crabs, fresh water crayfish and small fish, as well as insects, lizards, mice and worms.



Photo by Bernard Spragg/Wikimedia Commons.

Piwakawaka
Fantail
16cm long



Small, abundant native recognisable by its fanned tail and erratic movements as it seizes flying insects. Often seen feeding with silvereyes on the forest remnants. Its two distinctive calls are a penetrating “cheet” and the rhythmical song of the male “tweet-a-tweet-a-tweet”.



Photo by Dibyendu Ash/Wikimedia Commons.

Riroriro
Grey Warbler
10cm long



Very small grey native commonly heard in the gardens by way of its distinctive long, musical, wavering trill. Feeds mostly on invertebrates by flitting and hovering on outer foliage of trees or catching prey while in mid-air.



Photo by Small/Wikimedia Commons.

Kākā
45cm long



A large forest parrot often seen in the gardens as a result of successful reintroduction to Zealandia. A rowdy, boisterous bird with calls ranging from whistling to harsh grating. As sap is a part of its diet, kākā often pries bark off trees with its brush-like tongue.



Photo by Tony Wills/Wikimedia Commons.

Kārearea
New Zealand Falcon
43cm long



Occasionally seen in the gardens, this brown raptor is endemic to Aotearoa. It flies fast with rapid wing beats, and often perches high in trees. Has been seen swooping down on prey such as rock pigeons.



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.

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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 How many can you find? Tick the boxes
- Native to Aotearoa
- Introduced to Aotearoa
- cm** Size of bird from beak to tail end