

Tiritiri Matangi Kids,

by Stacey

Seabirds are unique in that they breed on land, but spend the majority of their lives out at sea. Because of this, they have developed specific physical and biological adaptations that allow them to fly, float, swim, dive and thrive in the marine environment. It's truly remarkable! Enjoy the seabird facts and help them below to find their way back to Tiritiri Matangi Island.



Kawaupaka/ little shag



Tarāpunga/ red-billed gull

When the seabirds come ashore they bring a gift from the oceans with them, nutrient rich guano (poo). Guano has a high content of nitrogen, phosphate and potassium, all key nutrients for plant growth.

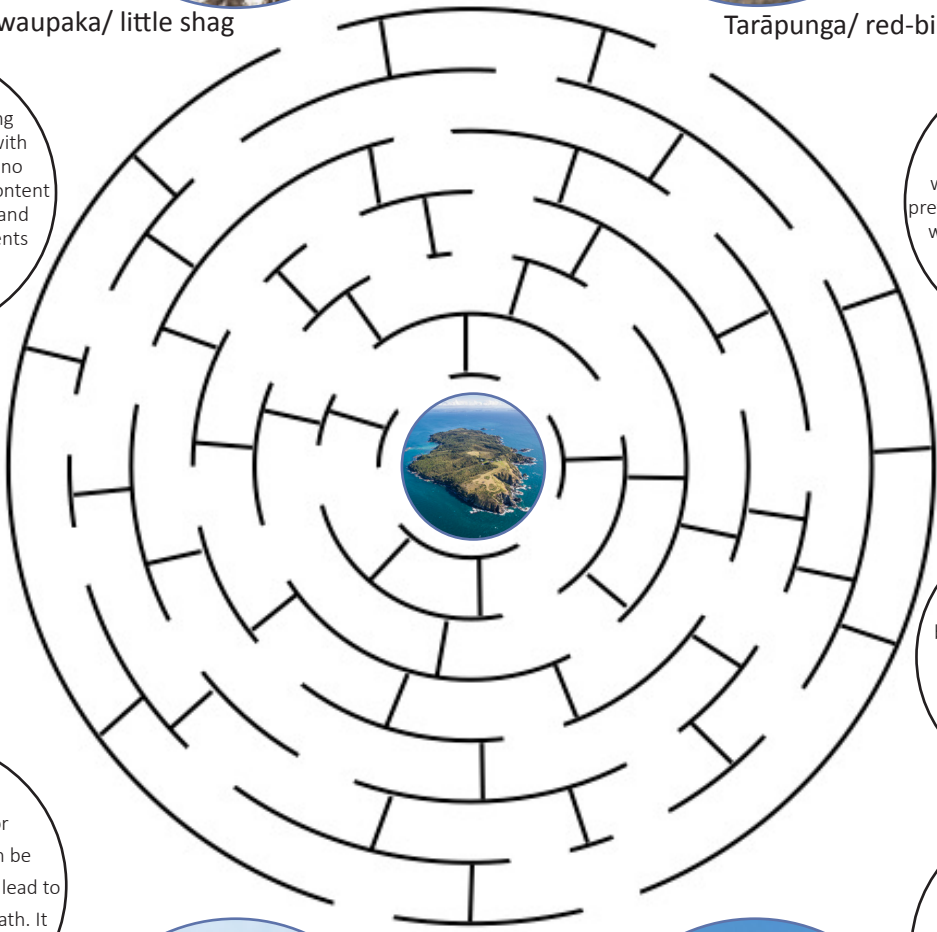
The feathers of seabirds are densely packed and coated with waterproof oils. This prevents them from becoming waterlogged, allows them to stay buoyant and maintain their body temperature.

Overfishing depletes fish stock and this impacts the availability of food for seabirds.

Approximately one-quarter of the worldwide seabirds breed in New Zealand and 10% are only found here in New Zealand. They are endemic, making it a hub of seabird diversity.

Plastic pollution is a huge problem for seabirds because it can be mistaken for food and can lead to injury, suffocation, or death. It also affects nesting sites and food sources.

Following the removal of rats off Tiritiri Matangi and other islands around Tikapa Moana/ Hauraki Gulf seabirds are returning, establishing the region as one of the world's most significant seabird habitats.



Kāruhiruhi/ pied shag



Tara/ white-fronted tern

Photos: Simon Fordham