



Welcome Swallow
Warou



Tern
Tara



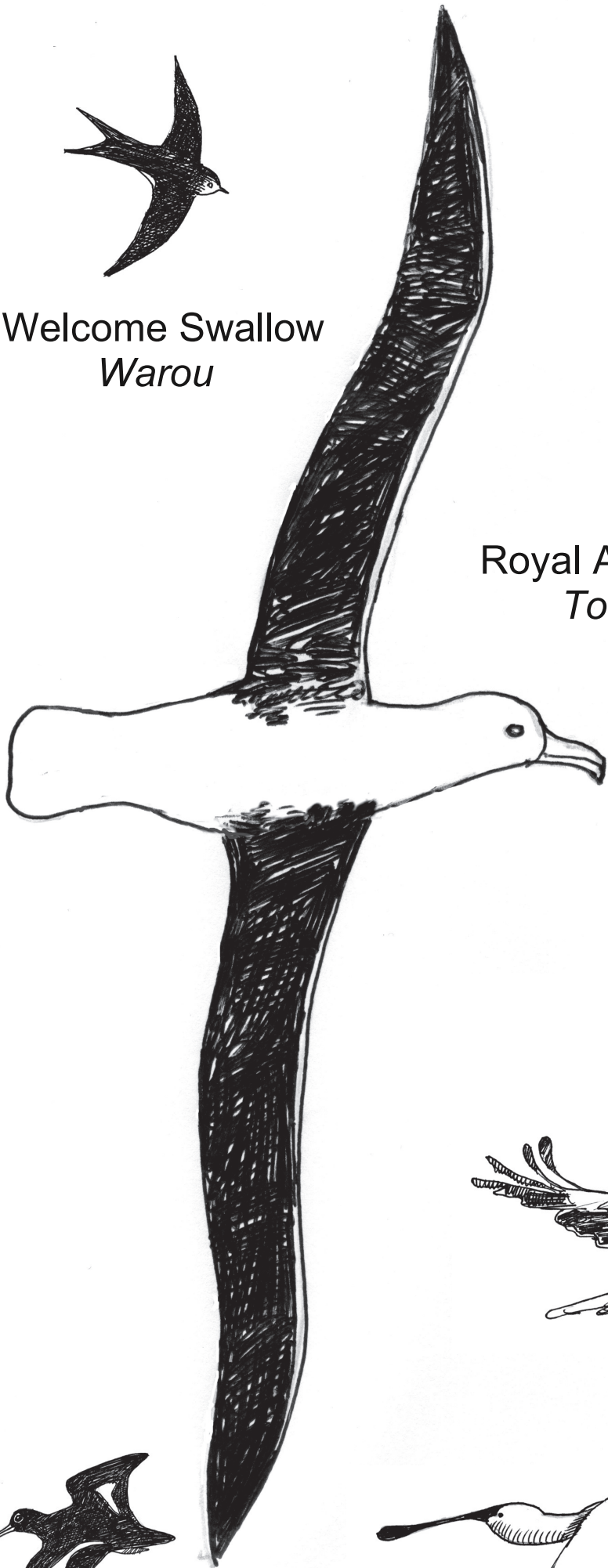
Red-Billed Gull
Tarāpunga



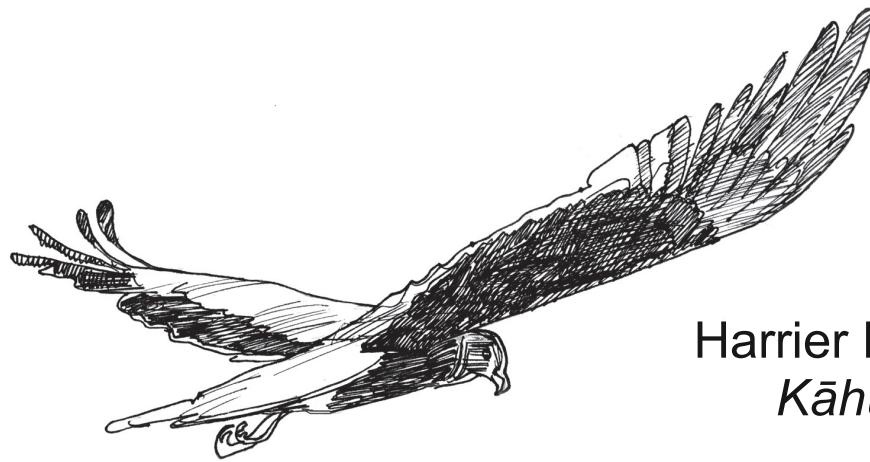
Black-Backed Gull
Tarāpuka



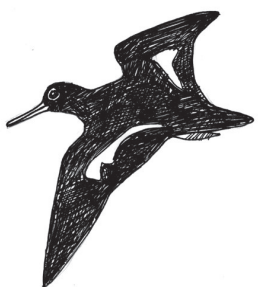
Gannet
Tākapu



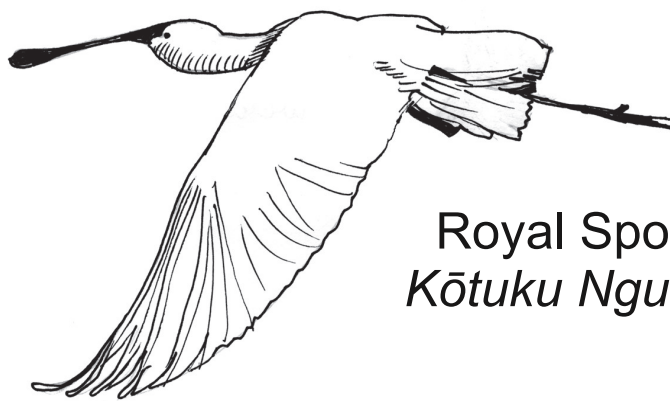
Royal Albatross
Toroa



Harrier Hawk
Kāhu



Oyster Catcher
Tōrea



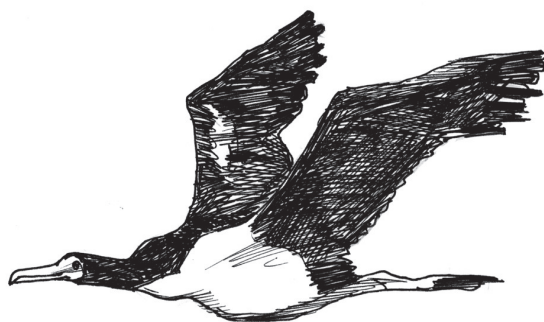
Royal Spoonbill
Kōtuku Ngutupapa



Paradise Shell Duck (f)
Pūtangitangi



Spotted Shag
Parekareka



Otago Shag
Kawau



Little Shag
Kawaupaka

Vic Mills 2014

Who are the locals of Taiaroa Head?

Northern Royal Albatross / Toroa, with an impressive three metre wingspan, are the kings and queens of Taiaroa Head. These birds are very slow breeders laying one egg every two years, and usually mate for life. They are relatively long lived with an average lifespan of 25 years, and will continue to breed until the time they pass away. They have nested here for just over 100 years, and due to their 12 month breeding cycle there are always some albatross to see at the headland! <http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/northern-royal-albatross>

Otago Shags / Kawau, were formerly called Stewart Island Shags as that is where they originated from, but after discovering a genetic difference between the two populations they were renamed Otago Shags in 2016. They are only found in the Otago region of the South Island of New Zealand and prefer to nest in large colonies for extra safety and protection. They also have two plumages – pied is black and white, while bronze is all black plumage. <http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/stewart-island-shag>

Spotted Shags / Parekareka nest on tiny crevices on sheer cliff faces to avoid predation by rats and stoats. They have a single spot on each adult feather and bright green-blue colouring around their eyes. They are good divers and can travel as far as 16 kilometres from land to forage for small fish and squid! <http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/spotted-shag>

Red Billed Gulls / Tarāpunga, are seen breeding at Taiaroa Head over the summer months, and the colony here now consists of several thousand birds. Usually laying two to three eggs, they'll incubate for about one month before tiny spotty chicks hatch out. Their main threats are predators on land and depleting food sources at sea. Their favourite food is krill, tiny pink crustaceans that go deeper to colder water where the gulls can't diver to reach them. Because of these factors, red billed gull populations are in decline causing them to become more endangered than the Northern Royal Albatross – save the gulls! <http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/red-billed-gull>

Little Blue Penguins are the world's smallest penguin, and Taiaroa Head is home to one of the largest populations in New Zealand. They return each evening at dusk to their underground burrow or nest box, after spending all day fishing out at sea, potentially having travelled over 70 kilometres in one day. They are one of the most productive seabirds on Earth and can raise up to four chicks in one year – pretty impressive when you only stand 25cm tall and weigh only one kilogram! <http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/little-penguin>

Other species you will frequently see visiting Taiaroa Head include:

Black-backed Gull / Tarāpuka

Tern / Tara

Gannet – Tākapu

Harrier Hawk / Kāhu

Paradise Shell Duck / Pūtangitangi

Little Shag / Kawaupaka