

Welcome to the Manawatu Estuary



Bar tailed godwits and pied stilts,
snoozing on the spit at high tide.



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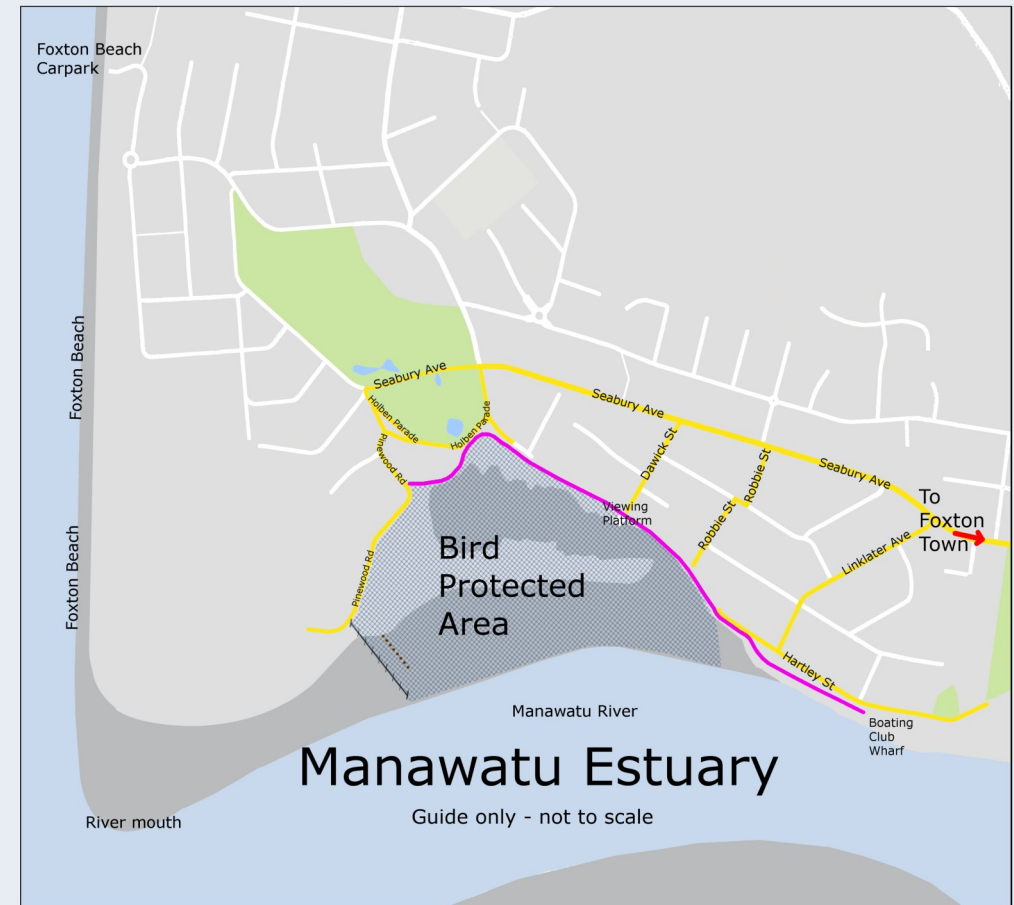
The Manawatu Estuary is a living habitat where international migratory birds and New Zealand shore birds use its ecological diversity to sustain their populations. The estuary is a Ramsar wetland of international significance.

The Manawatu Estuary trust was formed in 2001 with the aims of conserving the estuary for its biodiversity value.

The trust hopes that this booklet helps you to enjoy the mystery, magic and mana of this bird protected area. It describes some of the birds you might see from the Dawick Street Platform, which overlooks part of the Ramsar site.

Photos by Terry Oliver-Ward

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There is a viewing platform is at the end of Dawick St, and a good walking track around the edge of the bird protected area, with access at Hartley St, Robbie St, Dawick St and Holben Parade.

Bar tailed godwit, kuaka

Bar tailed godwits visit New Zealand for the southern summer and then return to Alaska to breed. Before they leave, the male turns a rich chestnut/ brown. Medium sized, they have long dark legs, with a long two toned bill, which curves slightly upward, which they use to find worms, crabs and other small aquatic invertebrates.

Native



Lesser or red knot, huahou

Another southern summer visitor. Red knot are a similar in colour to godwits, but they are smaller, with a shorter bill and legs. They're often with the godwits. Knots turn chestnut brown before they return to Siberia to breed.

Native



Royal spoonbill, kotuku ngutupapa

A large white bird, with long black legs, a long neck and a long spoon-shaped bill. These birds eat fish, crabs and other aquatic invertebrates, by walking with their bill in shallow water, swinging the bill from side to side.

Native



Shags, kawau

Several species of shag can be seen at the estuary. They're fish eating, diving birds. When fishing they swim with only their heads and necks above water, and then dive under water to catch the fish.

Native



Oyster catchers, torea

There are two endemic species of oyster catchers at the estuary, the South Island pied oystercatcher and the variable oystercatcher. Medium sized birds, with strong legs and thick, strong bills. They eat crabs, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates.

Endemic



White faced heron, matuku

An elegant, grey bird with a white face. They have long legs, and a long neck. Juveniles have a grey face. They are often seen actively catching small fish, crabs, worms and other aquatic vertebrates.

Native



Pied stilts, poaka

Elegant in appearance, pied stilts have slim bodies with long thin legs. They eat worms, crabs and other aquatic invertebrates.

Native



Pukeko

These large black and purple birds have long red legs, and often hold their food in their feet while eating. Primarily vegetarian, they occasionally eat crabs, insects and other aquatic invertebrates.

Native



Wrybill, ngutuparore

The small grey and white wrybills are the only bird in the world with a beak that curves to the right. They put their head on the side, and sieve through the wet sand for aquatic invertebrates, insects and worms etc. Wrybills only breed in the South Island and come to the estuary in the between breeding seasons. (January to July.)

Endemic



Banded dotterel, tūturiwhatu

These small brown and white shorebirds are often seen often with the wrybills, and likewise feed on aquatic invertebrates etc. During the breeding season the male develops a chestnut band/ shield on his chest.

Endemic



Caspian tern, taranui

Caspians are large grey and white terns, with strong red bills, dark legs and a speckled cap, which turns solid black when breeding. They are often seen flying high, then plunge diving into the water to catch fish, which they usually swallow while still flying.

Native



Sacred kingfisher, kotare

Often seen perched on powerlines, branches or poles, kingfishers swoop down into the water to catch fish, or onto the mudflats to catch crabs.

Native



Spur winged plover

A noisy bird, with a bright yellow mask. The spur winged plover is often seen in paddocks and wasteland, where it eats bugs and worms etc, they are often seen on the sand or by the water edge at the estuary.

Native



White heron, kotuku

A tall, elegant, pure white bird, with a long neck, the white heron breeds in Westland, but spends the winters around the country.

In recent years the Estuary has been the winter home for one or two of these beautiful birds. They eat fish, crabs and aquatic vertebrates.

Native

Below the platform

If you look down below the platform you can often see hundreds of small crabs, young fish, whitebait, eels, shrimp and even flounder.



Mai te wao tapu o Tane Mahuta
He hekenga, ka timata
Ko te hekenga nui o nga manu
Ka rere tika ki uta
Ka rere tika ki tai
Kua huri te wa o te tau

Tihei Mauriora

From the sacred forest of Tane Mahuta
A journey has begun
It is the great journey of the birds
Fly directly to the foreshores and the sea
Let you whisper into the four winds
That a change of season has come

I sneeze the breath of life.

Wylie Te Peeti



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