



Miromiro / North Island tomtit

Petroica macrocephala toitoi

INSECT HUNTERS OF THE FOREST

Aotearoa New Zealand has five tomtit subspecies. The North Island subspecies is miromiro.

What's their superpower?

Miromiro (aka tomtit) have exceptional agility and sharp eyesight, making them expert insect hunters. They can spot bugs as small as a grain of sand hiding in tree bark or under leaves.

Why do we need them?

These forest foragers play a crucial role in controlling pests by munching on harmful insects like looper moth caterpillars which, if left unchecked, can kill entire forests by stripping tree leaves.

Habitat: Native forest and scrub, plus mature exotic plantations with plenty of native understorey.

Breeding season: September–February

Diet: Small invertebrates including spiders, amphipods, beetles, flies, moths and their larvae, wētā and (occasionally) small fruits.

Fascinating facts

Tiny but tough: Despite their small size, miromiro are fierce defenders of their turf and will boldly chase away much bigger birds like tūī, kererū and kākāriki.

Together forever: Miromiro are generally monogamous, creating a bond with a single mate then raising their chicks together.

Determined dads: Unlike most other birds, if mum dies, dad will sometimes raise his chicks alone.

Perch and pounce: Miromiro typically hunt by perching quietly on a branch, surveying the area then darting out to snatch their prey mid-air before moving to a new perch to eat then hunt again.

Curious by nature: They aren't shy about making friends, often hopping close to humans to investigate or in hope of a cheeky snack.

Did you know?

Miromiro have impressively large heads for their tiny bodies. So large, it'd be like humans walking around with giant pumpkins as heads. The reason? They have large eye sockets for sharp vision and powerful jaw muscles for expert hunting.

Conservation corner

Good news: miromiro are **Not Threatened** nationally. But habitat loss and predators, especially ship rats, can still reduce local numbers. Protecting forest and controlling predators keeps these tiny, fearless hunters thriving in our neighbourhoods.

How you can help

- ✓ **Protect their homes** by not disturbing native forests, especially during nesting season.
- ✓ **Set traps** in your area to reduce rats, stoats and other predators.
- ✓ **Keep cats indoors** or within your yard as they love to snack on miromiro eggs and can kill chicks and grown birds.
- ✓ **Plant native trees** in your garden. Tōtara, rimu, kahikatea and mataī are great miromiro-friendly habitats.



Get involved with a local group: pfwra.org.nz/find-your-people

More fact sheets and information: livingintheranges.co.nz

