



Kororā

NZ'S PINT-SIZED PADDLERS

While Aotearoa is home to three penguin species, kororā are the smallest and most common of the bunch. But life isn't all smooth swimming for them - with their homes under threat, many have moved to quieter offshore islands. Keep your eyes peeled and you might just spot some in Piha.

What's their superpower?

Kororā (aka little penguin) are speedy swimmers for their size. Their sleek bodies and powerful flippers help them reach speeds of 6km/h and depths more than 35m, which makes them effective hunters.

Why do we need them?

Native to Aotearoa, kororā are crucial to the balance of our marine ecosystem. As predators of small fish, squid and crustaceans, they help maintain the balance of these species in the ocean's food chain.

Plus, they recycle nutrients through their waste which helps coastal plants and marine algae thrive. Without them, our ecosystem would be out of balance and in trouble.



Did you know?

Just like humans, kororā can recognise each other's faces and voices, which is rare in the animal world. But it doesn't stop there, some research suggests they may even recognise humans.

Conservation corner

Sadly, kororā are at risk and in decline due to starvation, habitat destruction, pollution, climate change and introduced predators like dogs, cats, ferrets and stoats.

How you can help

- ✓ Respect 'No Dog' zones and keep them out of the sand dunes and rocky coastal areas.
- ✓ Keep cats indoors or enclosed in the yard as they love to catch kororā.
- ✓ Set backyard traps to keep pesky predators in check.
- ✓ Give kororā space if you see them – on land or in the ocean.
- ✓ Clean up beaches as rubbish and pollution can be deadly for kororā.
- ✓ Support conservation programmes that protect kororā and their natural habitats.

Habitat: Sandy shores, forests and rocky outcrops on NZ's coastal areas and nearby islands.

Nesting season: May to April.

Diet: Small fish, squid and crustaceans.

Fascinating facts

Tag-team parents: Kororā are pros at sharing the load. While mum goes fishing, dad cares for the chicks, then they swap.

Mini marvels: As the world's smallest penguins, they weigh just 1kg and stand at just over 25cm tall – about the size of a loaf of Vogels.

Social swimmers: Kororā are super social, often teaming up to hunt, making it easier to catch their dinner.

Mates for life: If their last breeding went well, they'll often reunite year after year, taking the same route to the same burrow. Although, this makes them more vulnerable if that area is compromised.

Dressed to impress: Kororā sport over 10,000 blue and white feathers. That's 3-4 times more than most flighted birds.

Long-distance waddlers: They can roam up to 3 km inland and climb up to 500m to find the perfect nest.



IMAGE CREDITS: KORORĀ IN NESTING BOX AT PIHA BY PETER HOSKING - KORORĀ AT PIHA NESTING SITE BY DUDLEY BELL

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