

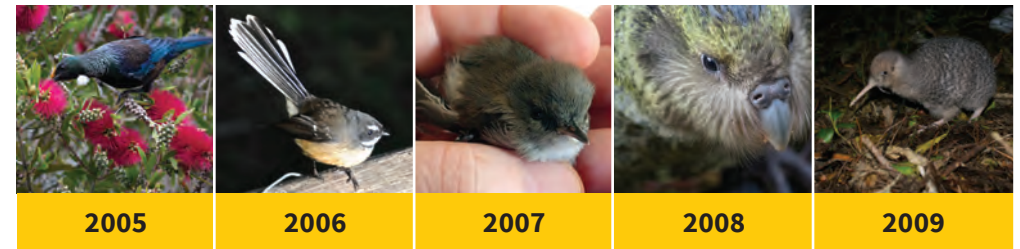
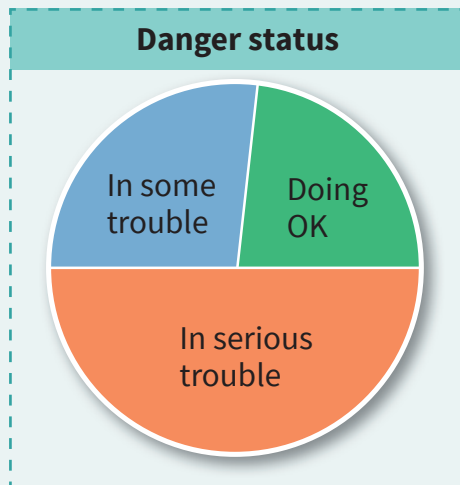
AND THE WINNER IS ...

by Iona McNaughton

The Bird of the Year competition was started as a way of making people more interested in native New Zealand birds. Many of our native birds are endangered, so if people know more about them, they can help to keep the birds safe.

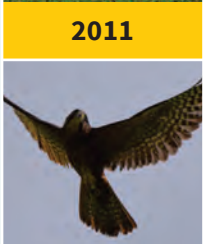
New Zealand native birds are given a “danger status”. This shows how much danger they are in of becoming extinct. The birds are either “doing OK”, “in some trouble”, or “in serious trouble”. Sadly, only about 20 percent of New Zealand native birds are “doing OK”.

This article has information about some of the birds of the year – including their danger status.



The Winners So Far

- 2005:** Tūī
- 2006:** Pīwakawaka – Fantail
- 2007:** Riroriro – Grey warbler
- 2008:** Kākāpō
- 2009:** Kiwi
- 2010:** Kākāriki karaka – Orange-fronted parakeet
- 2011:** Pūkeko
- 2012:** Kārearea – New Zealand falcon
- 2013:** Mohua – Yellowhead
- 2014:** Tara iti – Fairy tern
- 2015:** Kuaka – Bar-tailed godwit
- 2016:** Kōkako
- 2017:** Kea
- 2018:** Kererū – New Zealand pigeon





Bird of the Year 2005: Tūī

Danger status	Doing OK
Description	Endemic A large bird (up to 32 centimetres long) with shiny green-black feathers and a tuft of white throat feathers
What it eats	Insects. Also sucks nectar from flowers
Habitat	Forests, orchards, and gardens
Where it's found	Widespread (found in many places)
Interesting facts	An amazing mimic, it can copy sounds including other birds' calls. Long ago, some Māori kept pet tūī that they trained to speak.



Bird of the Year 2006: Pīwakawaka – Fantail

Danger status	Doing OK
Description	Endemic Small body with a long tail that it can spread out like a fan About 16 centimetres long
What it eats	Insects
Habitat	Forests and gardens
Where it's found	Widespread
Interesting facts	The fantail is very active and often uses its fanned tail to disturb insects so it can catch them. It may also fly around people to catch any insects they stir up. Fantails are often found in pairs or groups.



Bird of the Year 2008: Kākāpō

Danger status	In serious trouble
Description	Endemic A large, flightless parrot with green feathers and a pale, round face Nocturnal (awake at night and asleep during the day)
What it eats	Fruit, seeds, leaves, buds, flowers, bark, roots
Habitat	Native forests
Where it's found	Only on three small New Zealand islands
Interesting facts	The kākāpō is the world's heaviest parrot. The male can weigh up to 2.2 kilograms. When in danger, the kākāpō stops moving or "freezes", which makes it very easy for predators to catch. This is one of the reasons there are not many kākāpō left. In the 1990s, there were only about 50. These birds were put on three predator-free islands, and now there are over 200.



Bird of the Year 2012: Kārearea – New Zealand Falcon

Danger status	In some trouble
Description	Endemic A large hunting bird with long legs and talons (claws)
What it eats	Small birds and animals
Habitat	Forests and farmland
Where it's found	Widespread, but in low numbers
Interesting facts	Adult kārearea can fly at 100 kilometres per hour and can kill birds and animals bigger than they are. One of the reasons kārearea are "in some trouble" is that predators eat the young birds in their nests.



Bird of the Year 2015: Kuaka – Bar-tailed Godwit

Danger status	In some trouble
Description	Native A large bird (around 40 centimetres long) with long legs and a long beak. It has brown and grey feathers on its body and bands (or bars) of brown on its tail.
What it eats	Snails, crabs, and sea worms
Habitat	Places with water, sand, and mud, such as harbours and river mouths
Where it's found	Widespread
Interesting facts	Every March, the kuaka flies more than 11,000 kilometres to Alaska, where it breeds. About 80,000 kuaka return to New Zealand every September to feed and grow strong, ready for their long journey back to Alaska.



Bird of the Year 2018: Kererū – New Zealand Pigeon

Danger status	Doing OK
Description	Endemic A large green pigeon with a white chest and a long tail
What it eats	Leaves, buds, flowers, berries, and fruit
Habitat	Trees
Where it's found	Widespread
Interesting facts	The kererū can swallow large fruit and berries. The seeds pass through its body, which is an important way for the seeds of our native trees to spread.

And the Winner Is ...

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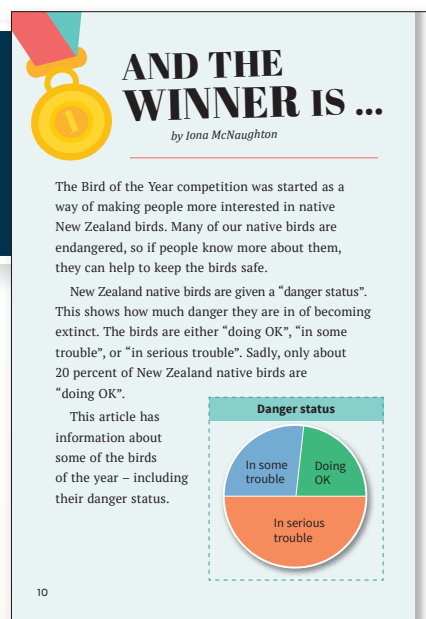
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