

Motuhinahina Island

Motuhinahina Island is a small .454 hectare, lowlying island situated in the Te Whanga lagoon some 1000 metres north east of the bay known as Plum Tree bay.

The island is basically a limestone outcrop rising not more than three metres from the present lagoon level (this tends to fluctuate depending on whether the entrance is open or closed to the sea. At present it is open and at low period).

The central vegetation is densely packed and inaccessible due to the concentration of Pohuehue (*Muehlenbeckia australis*) in and around most other vegetation.

Two slightly higher trees exist (*Olearia traversii* (1) *Hymenathera chathamica* (1) otherwise all other including *Kopi* (*Corynocarpus laevigatus*) are stunted at a 2-3 metre level.

A shore line consists of small beaches 2-20 metres in length broken by groups of limestone outcrops .5-1.5 metres high and up to 2 metres in diameter. These outcrops are used as nest areas by the four species of seabird breeding on the island.

Three small sand and shell beaches are located, two on the south shore and one on the eastern end.

The limestone outcrops have coverings of iceplant, salthorn, *Hebe chathamica* and *Taupata*.

Four species of bird were observed as breeding on the island. Red Billed Gulls were using that area of the northern face from due east, with the greatest population being in the eastern corner using a group of lime outcrops sited of the main island in the lagoon.

Also using this region was a small group of White Fronted Terns whose numbers were spread across the whole northern shore including the two shell beaches.

Black Backed Gulls greatest concentration was on a tongue of outcrops on the south western corner with pairs of birds nesting on the perimeter of the Red Billed Gull colony.

One lone White Faced Heron was seen and a nest containing three chicks approximately two weeks old (Moon) was found in a depression in the limestone one metre above the lagoon and half a metre below a group of Red Billed Gulls nest sites.

Birds Counted 16th Decmeber 1986

Red Billed Gull	56 adult	14	Juvenile	
Black Back Gull	67 adult	3	Juv. 3 nestling	10 immature
White Front Tern	18 adult	7	Juv.	
White Faced Heron	1 adult		3 nestling	
Dunnock	1 adult			

MOTUHINAHINA VEGETATION

Pratia	Pratia areniria
Crenate leaved Cotula	Cotula potentillina
Wild Celery	Apium australe
Southern Salt Horn	Salicornia australis
Ice Plant	Disphyma papillatum
Poa Chathamica	
Chatham Islands Spleenwort	Asplenium Chatham Island
Carax ventosa	
Mingimingi	Cyathodes parviflora
Geranium	Geranium traversii
Chatham Island Koromiko	Hebe chathamica
Barkers Koromiko	Hebe barkerii
C.I. Mahoe	Hymenanchera chathamica
Cooks Scurvey Grass	Lepidium oleraceum
Cox's Matipo	Mysine coxii
C.I. Akeake	Olearia traversii
Harakeke (flax)	Phormium tenax
Poroporo	Solanum aviculare
Kawakawa	Macripiper exelsum
Kopi	Corynocarpus laevigatus
Taupata	Coprosma repens
Phua	
Rush	Jungus maritimus var. australiensis
nettle	Urtica australis (dioica)
Pohuehue	Muehlenbeckia australis

Some five hundred metres south east of Motuhinahina island lies an out crop of limestone stacks and short ridges only some fifty metres by twenty metres in size and no more than 3.5 metres at its highest point.

There is one 'beach' or flat limestone landing on the eastern end.

Vegetation is totally restricted to: Ice plant (*Disphyma papillatum*)
Salt Horn (*S. australis*)

The islet is primarily a shag colony as is indicated by the number of adult and young birds and the number of recently vacated Chatham Island Shag nest sites or mounds.

Many of the valleys appear to contain more than 300mm of iguano indicating a colony of long standing.

Birds Observed.

White Fronted Tern	4 adult (indications of breeding)
Red Billed Gull	10 adult 2 fledglings
Pitt Island Shag	45 birds of indeterminate age
Chatham Island Shag	16 adult 17 Juv. 2 nestlings
	-54 nest stacks of recent use counted.

RG CHAPPELL

CI RESSEVOUS