

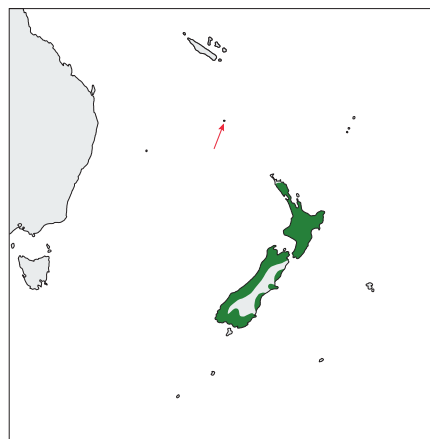
## Genus *Hemiphaga* Bonaparte

*Hemiphaga* Bonaparte, *Compt. Rend. Acad. Sci. Paris*, **39**, 1854, p. 1076. Type, by original designation, *Columba novaeseelandiae* Gmelin.

A distant relationship between this monotypic genus and both *Lopholaimus* and the *Gymnophaps* mountain pigeons has been revealed by molecular analyses (Pereira *et al.* 2007). The sole species is a large pigeon with feathered tarsi, a long broad tail comprising 12 feathers, and a highly distinctive plumage pattern featuring strong iridescence on the head and breast. Goodwin (1983) suggests that this iridescence may not be important to the pigeons, and a lack of

conspicuous 'signal' markings on the head, wings or tail probably represents a simplified version of the ancestral plumage. The sexes are alike, and juveniles resemble adults, but with buff edging to feathers of the breast and with buff under tail-coverts.

This genus is restricted to New Zealand, including larger offshore islands, and formerly occurred on Norfolk Island and in the Kermadec Islands.



## NORFOLK ISLAND PIGEON

### *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae* (Gmelin)

*Columba novae Seelandiae* Gmelin, *Syst. Nat.*, **1**, pt. 2, 1789, p. 773. (New Zealand = Dusky Sound, South Island, *ex* Latham.)

### OTHER NAMES

Wood Quest (Norfolk Island), New Zealand Pigeon, Keruru (New Zealand), Native Pigeon (New Zealand), Wood Pigeon (New Zealand).

1 unsexed (AMNH 611734): wing 258 mm, tail 166 mm, bill 32 mm, tarsus 33 mm.

1 unsexed (NHMUK VEL.32.9a): wing 260 mm, tail damaged, bill 33 mm, tarsus 31 mm.

### DESCRIPTION

Length 45 cm.

#### ADULTS (AMNH 268826 ♀)

Forehead, forecrown and lores to forecheeks, throat and upper breast metallic green with a golden-bronze wash; hindcrown to sides of breast, mantle and upper back glossy copper-rufous; lower back, rump and upper tail-coverts grey with slight dull green gloss; bend of wing, inner lesser wing-coverts and upper scapulars purple; remaining upper wing-coverts and inner secondaries grey with slight dull green tinge; scapulars and tertials grey with variable chestnut-rufous gloss; outer secondaries grey; primaries and primary-coverts grey, suffused with greenish-blue on outer webs; undersides of flight feathers grey; abdomen and flanks to under tail-coverts and underwing-coverts white; tail grey-black above with paler tip, grey below; bill red; legs and feet red.

1 male (NMLUK D3544a): wing 246 mm, tail damaged, bill 31 mm, tarsus 29 mm.

1 female (NMLUK D3544): wing 256 mm, tail 188 mm, bill 28 mm, tarsus 28 mm.

1 female (AMNH 268826): wing 244 mm, tail 162 mm, bill damaged, tarsus 34 mm.

1 unsexed (AMNH 611718): wing 249 mm, tail 181 mm, bill 35 mm, tarsus 33 mm.

### DISTRIBUTION

New Zealand, including larger offshore islands; formerly on Norfolk and possibly Philip Island and the Kermadec Islands.

### SUBSPECIES

#### 1. *H. n. spadicea* (Latham)

*Columba spadicea* Latham, *Ind. Orn.*, suppl., 1801, p. lx. (Norfolk Island.)

This subspecies, as described above, formerly occurred on Norfolk and possibly Philip Islands.

2. Other subspecies occur in New Zealand, including larger offshore islands, on the Chatham Islands, and formerly on the Kermadec Islands.

### GENERAL NOTES

Possibly warranting differentiation as a separate species, the Norfolk Island Pigeon, or 'Wood Quest' as it was known locally, was a distinctive form of the extant New Zealand Pigeon *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*, and is yet another victim in the appalling saga

#### OPPOSITE:

Norfolk Island Pigeon

*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae spadicea*  
with native bleeding heart *Homalanthus populifolius*.

AMNH 268826 adult ♀

*ex*. Museum Derby, 19 December 1836  
(probably died in captivity on this date).