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Biodiversity

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Numerous conservation groups and passionate individuals are working to protect and enhance the Chatham Islands' unique flora and fauna – from [Department of Conservation\(external link\)](#) staff to [Chatham Islands Taiko Trust\(external link\)](#) volunteers.

Chathams' birdlife

Birdlife on the Chatham Islands includes the red-crowned parakeet, Chatham Island black robin, shore plover and Chatham Island taiko – one of the rarest seabirds in the world.

There are several albatross colonies around the islands, which can be viewed from a boat, and oystercatchers roam freely around Chatham and Pitt islands.

Conservation programmes have had great success on the islands with both the taiko and black robin populations coming back from near extinction.

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The taiko was thought to be extinct but was rediscovered by New Zealand ornithologist David Crockett in 1978.

Very few breeding pairs remain so the bird is the focus of an intensive conservation programme at the southern end of main Chatham Island.

The black robin population got down to just five birds when 'Old Blue' stepping in to save the day – as the last female to breed.

There are now 300 black robins on two nature reserves in the Chathams that are not accessible to the public.

Offshore islands

Pitt, Rangatira, Mangere and Little Mangere islands all have a vitally important role in protecting native birds and plants by providing an environment that is largely pest-free.

Surrounded by water, the islands' ecosystems are relatively easy to protect against introduced predators and can provide a safe haven for endangered species.

The offshore islands have an important role to play in the conservation of the Chatham Islands' flora, fauna and ecosystems.

Rangatira, Mangere and Little Mangere are free from all introduced predators and pests and contain some of the last remaining endemic species.

The islands' pest-free status is much easier to maintain than mainland sites given the barrier that the sea imposes.

Mangere and Rangatira islands are Crown-owned and have been designated as nature reserves. These islands are the only home of the black robin.

To keep Mangere and Rangatira islands predator-free, access is tightly-controlled and is by permit only.

Privately-owned Little Mangere Island is also an important site for the conservation of many species including Forbes' parakeet and the Chatham Islands button daisy.

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