

Seabirds landing on ships



Buller's Shearwater. Photo: Gregory Smith cc BY-SA 2.0

Many New Zealand seabirds feed at night and – during the breeding season (Nov–June) – travel to and from their breeding colonies in darkness. The birds can be attracted to ship lights and may land on deck. They may be momentarily stunned and disorientated and therefore unable to take off from the deck.

To ensure the birds' and your passengers' safety:

1. Manage lights on the ship to prevent birds landing.

- Close blinds/curtains on cabin windows.
- Reduce unnecessary exterior lighting.
- Try to shield essential external deck lights so they are directed downwards and reduce light wattage where practical.

2. If birds land on the ship, assess them quickly.

- If they are feisty with no obvious injuries, simply release them over the side of the ship. They will glide down to the sea or fly off.
- If they are stunned or injured, hold the birds in boxes:
 - ONE bird per box – so they don't harm each other
 - Place the boxes in the shade to keep the birds cool
 - Release any birds overboard that have fully recovered after resting in boxes
 - Inform port authorities as soon as possible to arrange pickup, of birds still in boxes, by DOC staff or local bird rescue.

3. If the ship is heading out to sea and won't be in port the next day, release all birds overboard regardless of their injuries.

- To support ongoing research and data collection please:
 - Take two photographs of each bird prior to release; close-up of the bird's head from the side and the entire bird showing the underwing pattern
 - Keep records of date and location where birds came onboard and weather conditions at the time. Note if the bird was alive and unharmed, injured or dead
 - Send photos and bird notes to csp@doc.govt.nz. (This is the email address of the Conservation Service Programme.)



New Zealand Government

If in doubt, contact the **Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)** on **0800 00 83 33**.

You can also contact **DOC** on **DOC HOT 0800 / 0800 362 468**

See the list of other useful numbers overleaf.

New Zealand Customs Service

	Phone	Alternative phone
Tauranga	07 927 5700	07 571 4133
Whangarei	029 250 9305	
Auckland	09 307 6516	029 359 6738
Opuia	029 602 1669	
Nelson	03 548 1484	
Lyttelton	03 328 7259	029 233 5770

MPI Biosecurity New Zealand

	Phone	Alternative phone
Tauranga	07 927 5700	029 909 5017
Whangarei	09 430 7848	
Auckland	09 909 3019	029 909 3019
Opuia	09 402 5946	029 909 5504
Nelson/Picton	03 545 7774	
Lyttelton	03 328 7166	029 943 1514

Port telephone numbers – international code is (+64)

	Phone	Fax
Auckland	09 366 0055	09 366 0219
Bluff	03 212 8159	03 212 8685
Gisborne	06 868 5129	06 867 8084
Greymouth	03 768 1700	03 768 1710
Lyttelton	03 328 8198	03 328 7828
Napier	06 834 4400	06 834 4408
Nelson	03 548 2099	03 546 9015
Opuia	09 402 7505	09 402 7763
Otago	03 472 7890	03 472 7891
Picton	03 573 8000	03 573 7695
Taranaki	06 751 0200	06 751 0886
Tauranga	07 572 8899	07 572 8800
Timaru	03 684 4199	03 684 5615
Wellington	04 495 3800	04 495 3820
Westport	03 789 7249	03 789 6269
Whangarei	09 438 1279	09 438 7067