

# Banded Rails in Mangroves

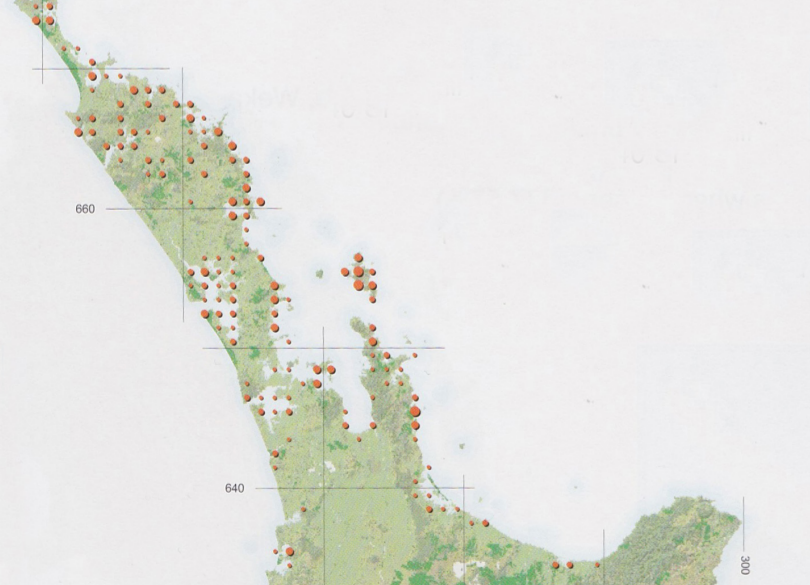
Ian Southey



Banded rails are a pretty bird but also well camouflaged and they hide very well.



They were spread throughout New Zealand and actually increased when bush was cleared from the land but were becoming rare by the 1920s after stoats and ferrets became widespread.



Few Banded Rails now exist inland except on Great Barrier Island but since the 1970s they have spread in the harbours and estuaries in the northern North Island in response to the recent spread of mangroves.



The easiest way to study Banded Rails is to look for their footprints.



Before mangroves were removed from Pahurehure Inlet near Papakura, Banded Rails were widespread provided there was even a narrow strip of rank grass or rush at the edge of the mangroves to make their nests in.



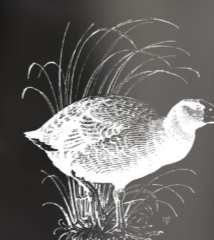
Since the clearance of mangroves Banded Rails are restricted to the last fragment near Pak'n'save and a small arm accessible from Westholm Way where they use rush cover and manage to breed.



They are reasonably tolerant of people on the footpath and don't always run for cover when they pass. They tend to be only a little more flighty when people are moving fast, loud or if they stop nearby. They usually hide for just a few minutes.



They are really scared of Harriers. They always flee, sometimes from more than 500m and hide much longer, sometimes over an hour after a close call.



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