



Variable Oystercatcher

Haematopus unicolor J.R. Forster, 1844

Length: 48cm **Weight:** 720g

Similar species: South Island pied oystercatcher, Chatham Island oystercatcher

New Zealand status: Endemic

Conservation status: Recovering

A large heavily-built wader with black upperparts, and underparts that vary from all black through a range of 'smudgy' intermediate states to white. The long straight bill is bright orange, the stout legs coral-pink, and the red eyes are surrounded by an orange eye-ring.

Voice: variable oystercatchers are very vocal; loud piping is used in territorial interactions and when alarmed, and they have a loud flight call similar to other oystercatchers. Chicks are warned of danger with a sharp, loud 'chip' or 'click'.