



# Miromiro

## INSECT HUNTERS OF THE FOREST

Five species of miromiro flutter around Aotearoa, each sticking to its own or outlying islands. In the Waitākere Ranges, you can spot the *toitoi*.

### What's their superpower?

Miromiro (aka tomtit) have exceptional agility and sharp eyesight, making them expert insect hunters. They can spot bugs as small as a grain of sand hiding in tree bark or under leaves.

### Why do we need them?

These forest foragers play a crucial role in controlling pests by munching on harmful insects like looper moth caterpillars which, if left unchecked, can kill entire forests by stripping tree leaves.



### Did you know?

Miromiro have impressively large heads for their tiny bodies. So large, it'd be like humans walking around with giant pumpkins as heads. The reason? They house large eye sockets for sharp vision and powerful jaw muscles for expert hunting.

### Conservation corner

While numbers are stable, miromiro face threats from habitat destruction and introduced species, especially ship rats.

#### How you can help

- ✓ **Protect their homes** by not disturbing native forests, especially during nesting season.
- ✓ **Set traps** in your area to reduce rats, stoats and other predators.
- ✓ **Keep cats indoors** or within your yard as they love to snack on miromiro eggs and can kill chicks and grown birds.
- ✓ **Plant native trees** in your garden. Totara, rimu, kahikatea and mataī are great miromiro-friendly habitats.

**Habitat:** Mature exotic forests across NZ.

**Nesting season:** September to February.

**Diet:** Small invertebrates including spiders, amphipods, beetles, flies, moths and their larvae, wētā and (occasionally) small fruits.

### Fascinating facts

**Tiny but tough:** Despite their small size, miromiro are fierce defenders of their turf and will boldly chase away much bigger birds like tūī, kererū and kakariki.

**Together forever:** Miromiro are generally monogamous, creating a bond with a single mate then raising their chicks together.

**Determined dads:** Unlike most other birds, if mum dies, dad will sometimes raise his chicks alone.

**Perch and pounce:** Miromiro typically hunt by perching quietly on a branch, surveying the area then darting out to snatch their prey mid-air before moving to a new perch to eat then hunt again.

**Curious by nature:** They aren't shy about making friends, often hopping close to humans to investigate or in hope of a cheeky snack.



IMAGE CREDITS: MIROMIRO ON BRANCH - ERIC WILSON

**Get involved** Connect with local groups and help protect biodiversity in your area  
[pfwra.org.nz/find-your-people](https://pfwra.org.nz/find-your-people)

