

# MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS ICONIC KING SHAG

## HOW TO IDENTIFY THEM – HOW TO HELP PROTECT THEM

	Description	How to identify which species
	<p><b>KING SHAGS</b> King Shags are a rare seabird, which is endemic to Marlborough they are generally located in the Outer Sounds. Colonies nest on rocky outcrop and roost on other rocky points &amp; on mussel floats. The King Shag does not nest or roost in trees, they are very wary &amp; rarely seen in close proximity to boats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black &amp; white plumage which is browner in juvenile birds</li> <li>• White wing patch, especially noticeable when in flight</li> <li>• Black feathers on head reaching below bill giving the appearance of a darker head compared to a Pied Shag</li> <li>• Pink legs &amp; feet</li> <li>• Tends to swim away from you flicking its head from side to side</li> </ul>
	<p><b>PIED SHAG</b> Pied Shags are found throughout the sounds. Their nesting colonies are typically found in trees close to or overhanging the sea. The Pied Shag roosts in other trees or on rocky points &amp; on mussel floats. They are relatively approachable. Birds readily follow boats especially when fishing or harvesting mussels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black &amp; white plumage, brown in juvenile birds</li> <li>• No white wing-patch</li> <li>• Back completely black or brown</li> <li>• Black feathers only on upper head making birds appear more pale-headed than King Shag</li> <li>• Black legs &amp; feet</li> </ul>
	<p><b>SPOTTED SHAG</b> Spotted Shags are found throughout the Sounds. Higher numbers are found in the Outer Sounds. The Spotted Shag nests in small colonies and in small pockets &amp; caves in the steep cliffs. Quiet &amp; approachable bird. Does not usually approach boats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grey plumage</li> <li>• Yellow legs &amp; feet</li> </ul>
	<p><b>LITTLE SHAG</b> Small Shags are found throughout the Sounds in small numbers. Little Shags nest in trees, often in Colonies with Pied Shags. Relatively flighty, and does not usually approach boats. Commonly seen within mussel farms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Size</li> <li>• Variable amount of white on breast of birds, ranging from birds with full white breast to those with just a white chin</li> <li>• Short yellow bill</li> <li>• Black legs &amp; feet</li> </ul>
	<p><b>BLACK SHAG</b> The Black Shags are found throughout the Sounds in small numbers, they are common in the Inner Sounds &amp; around the harbours of D'Urville Island. The Black Shag nests in small colonies in trees. Often in lagoons or lakes back from the sea.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large size (Similar size to King &amp; Pied Shag)</li> <li>• Fully black plumage</li> <li>• Browner in Juvenile birds</li> <li>• Black legs &amp; feet</li> </ul>

**IF YOU ARE APPROACHING A KING SHAG OR A KING SHAG COLONY – YOU SHOULD  
REDUCE SPEED, REDUCE NOISE & KEEP YOUR DISTANCE (at least 200 metres)**