

Facts about the *bellbird/korimako*



Identifying features

- Bellbirds/korimako are about 20 centimetres long from the tip of their beaks to the end of their tails.
- They are green, with short curved beaks and slightly forked tails.
- **Males** are olive green with purple on their heads. They also have black shading on their wings and tails.
- **Females** are more of a muddy green with a bluish tinge on their heads. They also have a pale cream or yellow stripe on their cheeks.
- **Young** bellbirds/korimako start life with brown eyes that turn a deep red when they are adults.
- **The song** of the bellbird/korimako is different in every region, but the birds are still easy to recognise by their 'bell chiming' and 'croaking' sounds.
- Bellbirds/korimako often sing in groups or pairs.
- Sometimes their song can be confused with the song of their relative, the tui.



Predators

- Bellbirds/korimako are hunted by rats, stoats, ferrets, weasels and cats.
- Although numbers have dropped dangerously low, bellbirds/korimako are making a comeback and are no longer considered to be endangered.
- If a predator goes near a bellbird/korimako nest the bird may attack it, but usually the female pretends she has a broken wing and tries to draw the predator away.



Habitat

- Bellbirds/korimako can be found all over New Zealand and on its surrounding islands.
- They are no longer common north of Waikato, around Otago or in inland Canterbury.
- Bellbirds/korimako live in native bush or introduced forests. They can be seen in town gardens as long as there is bush or forest nearby.
- Areas where people are most likely to see bellbirds/korimako visiting their garden are the west and south of the South Island and from Hawke's Bay to the East Cape in the North Island.

Diet

- Bellbirds/korimako have long tongues that are shaped like toothbrushes. The shape of the tongue helps them get nectar from deep inside flowers. Their main food is nectar.
- Bellbirds/korimako also eat fruit, honeydew from beech trees, and small insects.
- Bellbirds/korimako play a vital role in pollinating native trees, carrying pollen on their head feathers as they travel from tree to tree looking for nectar.
- They also spread the seeds of native trees when they eat the mature fruits.



Life cycle

- Bellbirds/korimako nest in spring and summer.
- They can build their nests anywhere from ground height to 15 metres above ground, as long as they are in a well-hidden place.
- Bellbird/korimako eggs are spotted white-pink or pink-pale brown and they take 14 days to hatch.
- There are usually three or four chicks in a clutch.
- A bellbird/korimako can live for around eight years.

References

www.doc.govt.nz • www.landcare.nz
www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz • www.visitzealandia.com