



URBAN ARK MANAWA TAIAO

Nature in the city

Level 2

Yay! COVID-19 Level 2 is almost here. Everyone breathe a sigh of relief.

Thanks to everyone who has been trapping in their backyards through Level 4 and Level 3. During that time, trapping on conservation and Auckland Council land has been on hold. Come Thursday we should be free to get trapping again. Of course, you'll still want to maintain physical distancing, and stay safe. Wearing gloves is essential when checking traps anyway (good protection against [Leptospirosis](#)), and will minimise potential virus transfer between trappers.



Blair racks up 50

[Predator Free Morningside / Western Springs](#) are celebrating. Blair Giles (pictured showing his primary school pupils how to clear a trap), has just clocked up 50 rats on a single Victor trap since October 2017. Blair's tips...

- **Make sure your trap is in the right place** Rats tend to use motorways rather than village streets – by this I mean, they travel along fence lines and try to stay under cover when they move. The safest route across a garden for a rat is rarely the shortest. They are highly risk adverse and very wary of new things, so a trap may take a while to smell, feel and look safe for them.
 - **Make sure your trap is appealing (to rats)** You want to create a rat 'night club' that has all the right smells and attractions. Peanut butter may not be enough to get them through the door. I use a mixture of pop corn or oats to provide some carbohydrate attraction as well as sometimes putting other lures in the trap. A bit of chicken skin or mutton fat rubbed around the entrance to the trap will transform it into a popular place to be for rats – keeping the bait fresh is also really important. After 5 or 6 days, the smells fade and predators will look elsewhere for their nutritional requirements.
 - **Go basic** I have had much better luck with my basic victor trap in a box than I have with more expensive, complicated traps.
 - **Join a predator free group** Make your efforts support the big picture of supporting our birds to thrive!
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Are your rats sick of peanut butter?

Did you know that you can use a range of foods that you probably have in your cupboard to catch rats? Check out just a few rat favourites below. Thanks for our friends at [Eastern Bays Songbirds Project](#) for the photo.

Tell us about your favourite lures. Head over to our new [Facebook group](#) (see below) and start a conversation.



New Urban Ark Facebook group

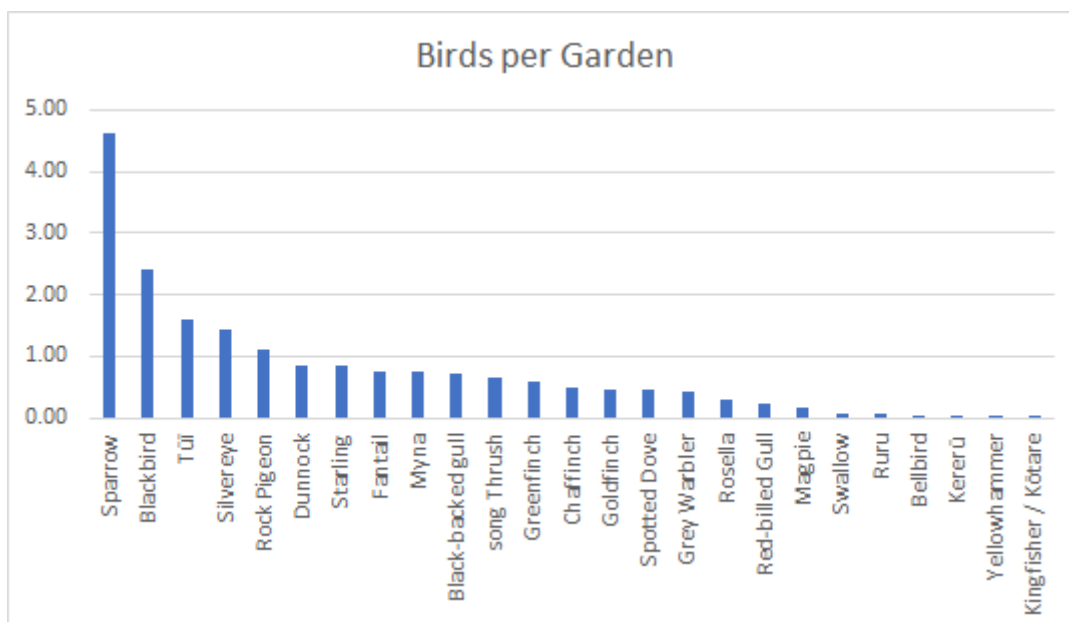
For a while now we've had an [Urban Ark Facebook page](#). That's great up to a point, but we'd love to generate a good deal more conversation around trapping, pest weeding, native planting and advocacy for our awa, our maunga

and everything in between. We feel this is better done with a Facebook Group. It is not so much us telling you stuff, as all of us discussing stuff together. It is a private group, so you'll need to request membership, but I'm not turning people away. Join our [Facebook Group](#) and tell us what trapping you've been up to over lockdown. Caught anything much?

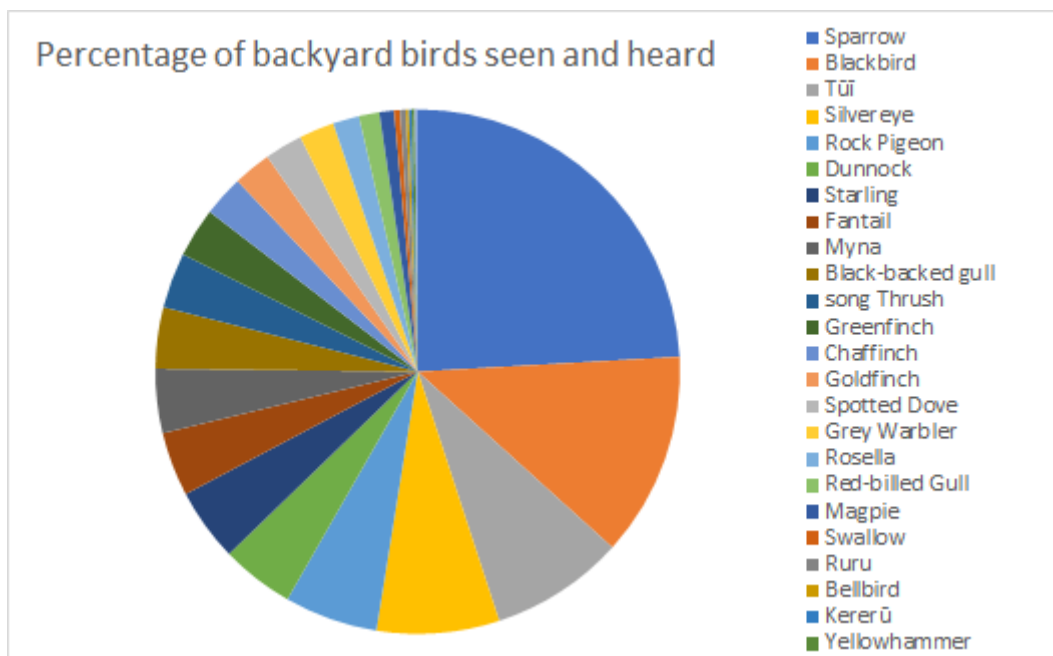


The results are in!

Thanks again to those who took part in our Garden Bird Surveys a few weeks back. We've had over two dozen responses all up. In collaboration with Eric Spurr, who has long been the man behind the annual NZ Garden Bird Survey, we've been analysing the data. Most of the observations were in Grey Lynn, Westmere and Pt Chevalier.



As you can see, sparrows and blackbirds are everywhere. Of the native (or self-introduced) species, touhou / silvereyes and tūī did best with pīwakaka / fantail and riroriro / grey warblers putting in a good showing. We also had a couple of reports of ruru / morepork and one bellbird sighting. Yay!



Dunnocks are surprising well represented for a species not usually common in Auckland, and mynas were relatively uncommon for a bird you see everywhere.

As we move to Level 2, most of us will be spending less time in our own back gardens. But if you still want to contribute to our little bit of citizen science, feel free to join our Garden Bird Survey. You don't need to be an expert birder but it helps if you can recognise a few species. All you need to do is:

Pick your survey location Home or local reserve

Download the bird [tally sheet](#) (optional but recommended)

Find a comfy spot A chair in your garden or even looking out your window.

Set aside one hour Record what you see (or hear). For each species record the **highest number** you see (or hear) **at one time**.

Record your observations Our survey is separate from Manaaki Whenua's, so please click [this link](#). It should only take 5 minutes to record your observations.

This year's Manaaki Whenua [NZ Garden Bird Survey](#) will take place from 27 June to 5 July. We'll remind you closer the time. Happy observing!

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