



New Zealand

**GARDEN BIRD  
SURVEY**

# State of NZ Garden Birds

Te Āhua o ngā Manu o te Kāri i Aotearoa



Manaaki  
Whenua  
Landcare  
Research



2022

Rowan Nicholson

# BACKYARD BEATS

*What are our birds telling us?*

**Birds act as backyard barometers – telling us about the health of the environment we live in. They are signalling significant changes in our environment over the last 10 years. We should be listening.**

Using cutting-edge techniques, Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research has distilled a substantial information base – bird counts gathered by New Zealanders from over 44,000 garden surveys since 2012 – into simple but powerful metrics.



## Positive signals are emerging for four native species:



Kererū counts show a moderate increase over 10 years (83%), with only a shallow increase over 5 years (10%).



Fantail (pīwakawaka) counts now show a moderate increase (55%) over 10 years, compared to the shallow increase seen in recent years, and the moderate increase over 5 years continues (26%).



We continue to see a shallow increase in tūī (kōkō) counts in the long term (30%) and short term (9%). Their regional long-term trends show a rapid increase in Canterbury (266%) and moderate increases in Taranaki (59%) and the West Coast (61%).



There is still a long-term shallow decline in silvereye (tauhou) counts (12%), but there has been little or no change in their counts over 5 years compared to the short-term moderate increase seen last year.

## Key signals for introduced species that also act as environmental indicators:



The trend of little or no change in myna counts nationally continues, as does the trend of shallow increases in their counts in four regions over 10 years. Their counts continue to show a rapid increase in Wellington over both 10- and 5-year periods (193% and 248%, respectively), and now show a rapid increase in Manawatū-Whanganui (49%), a moderate increase in Gisborne (30%), and a shallow increase in Taranaki (12%) over 5 years.



Starling counts again show a shallow decline over both the long and short term (13% and 5%, respectively).

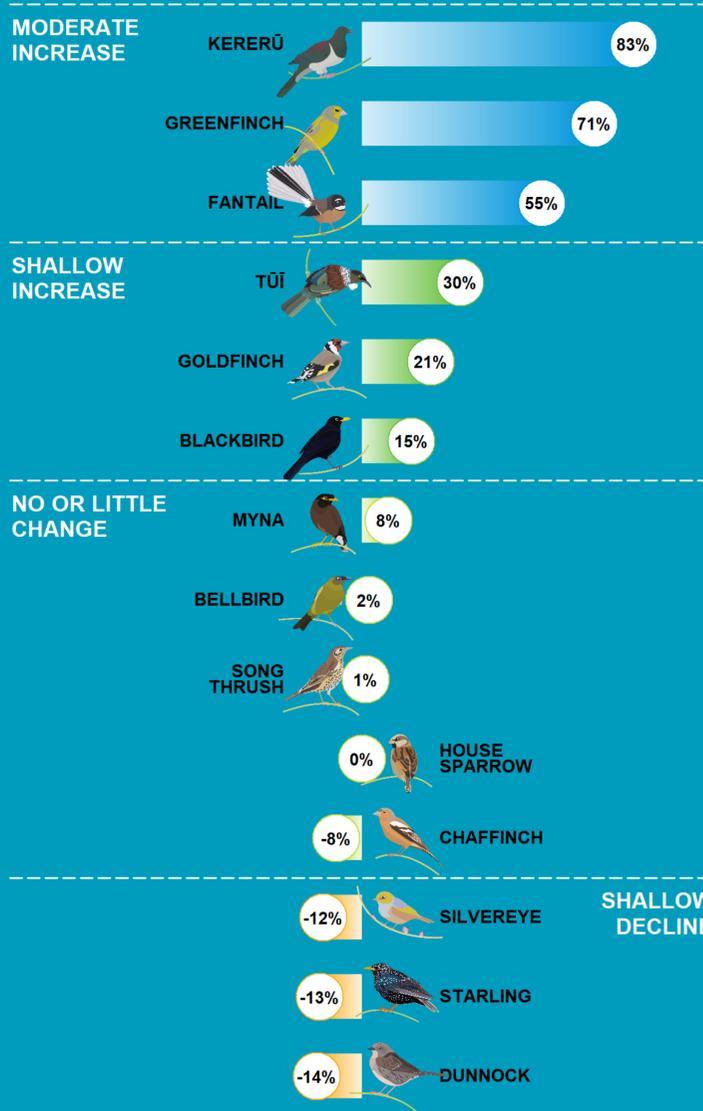


While chaffinch counts show little or no change over the long term, for the first time they show a moderate decline over the short term (20%).

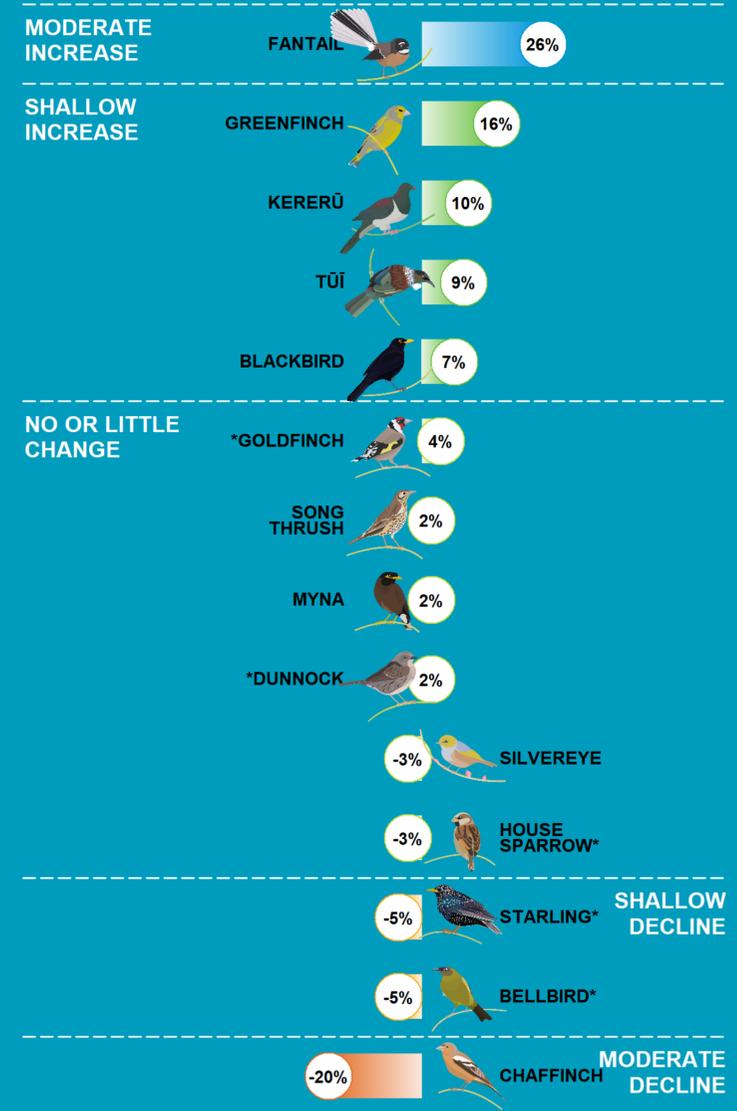
# NATIONAL PICTURE

## How have garden bird counts changed?

2012–22



2017–22



\* Based on available data, evidence for these species' estimates is weak.  
Data source: 44,357 and 27,405 garden surveys nationwide for 2012–22 and 2017–22, respectively.

**44,357**  
garden  
surveys  
nationwide

**THANK YOU!**



**Thanks to all our  
volunteer bird counters!**



# What more needs to be done to care for birds?

Since 2021 we've asked New Zealand Garden Bird Survey participants what more needs to be done to care for birds in Aotearoa New Zealand. In 2022, 3684 participants responded to the question. We've analysed the responses, and they reflect the five themes below.

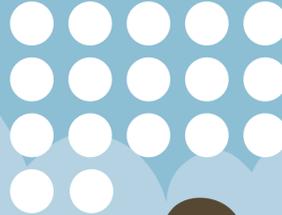
● 100 comments

▲ < 100 comments

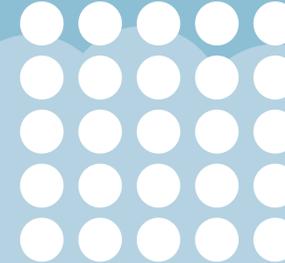
Increase engagement, education, and awareness



Protect & create suitable habitat



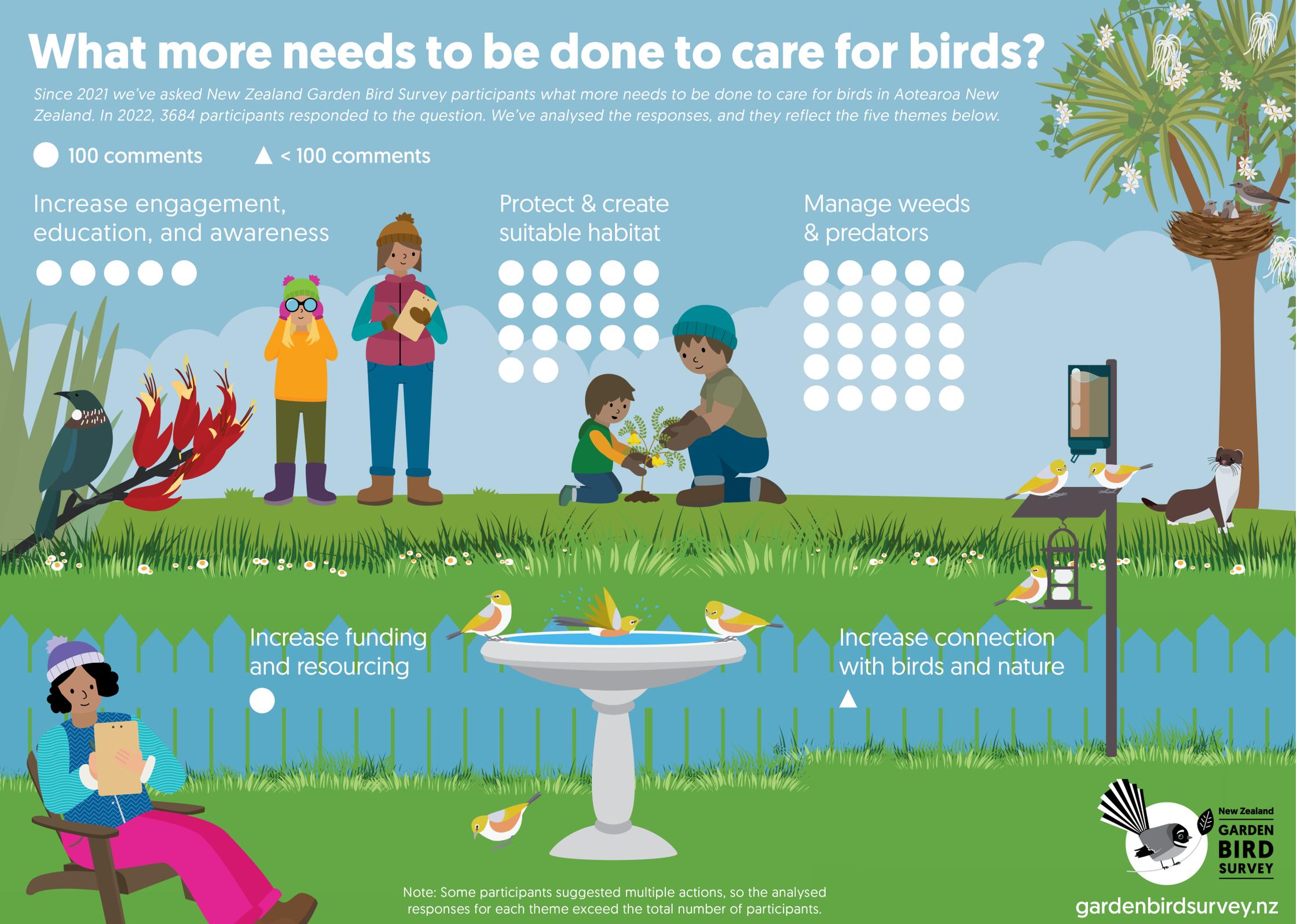
Manage weeds & predators



Increase funding and resourcing



Increase connection with birds and nature



Note: Some participants suggested multiple actions, so the analysed responses for each theme exceed the total number of participants.



[gardenbirdsurvey.nz](http://gardenbirdsurvey.nz)

We have estimated how bird counts have changed over the last 10- and 5-year periods in different regions, districts, and neighbourhoods across New Zealand for 14 common garden visitors – five native and nine introduced birds.

Thanks to all our volunteer bird counters, 44,357 garden surveys have been completed nationwide since 2012. We use specialised statistical tools to account for variation in sampling effort between regions, districts, and suburbs over time. We also account for variation in bird counts depending on whether the surveyed gardens were in a rural or urban setting, and whether birds were fed or not. Finally, we correct for the actual number of gardens in each area.

We then classify these changes according to their direction and size (see diagram below) to help us identify changes of potential concern or interest.

## How have bird counts changed?

### Drawing attention to changes in counts that may be of concern or interest



# How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

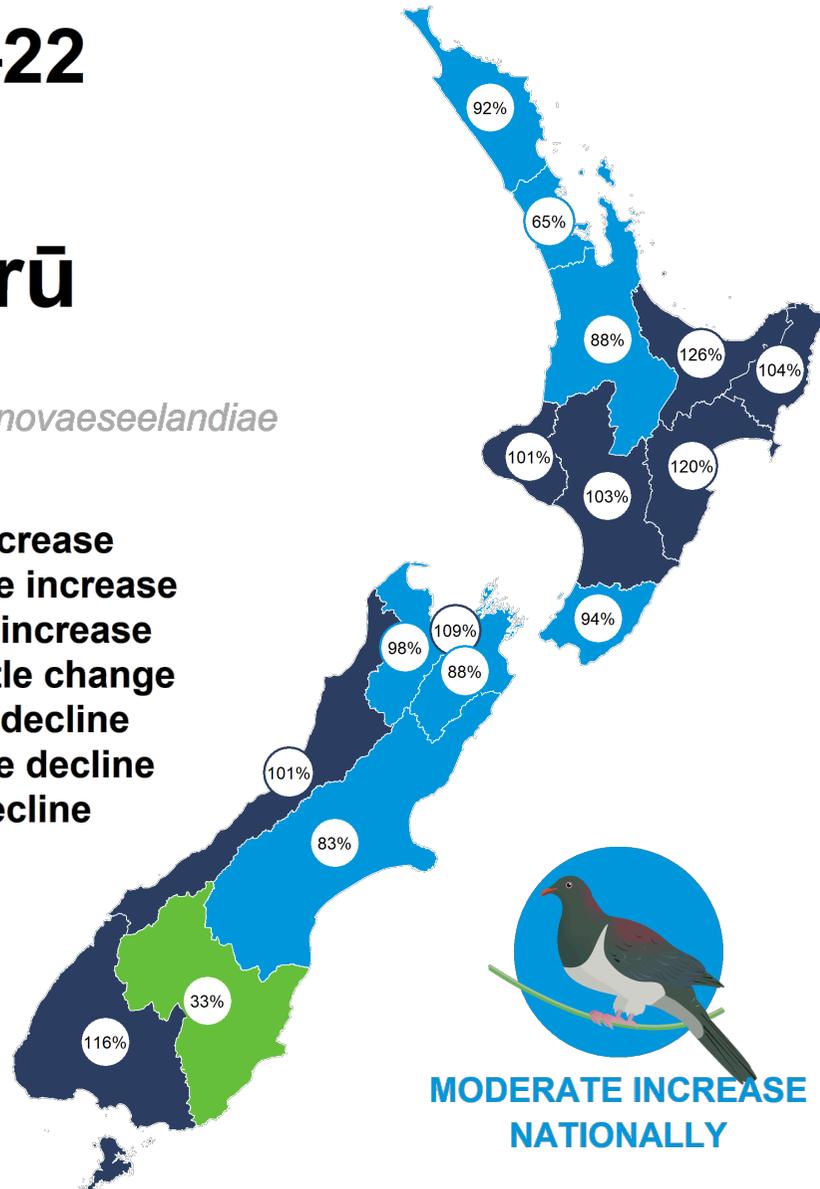
## 2012–22

### Kererū

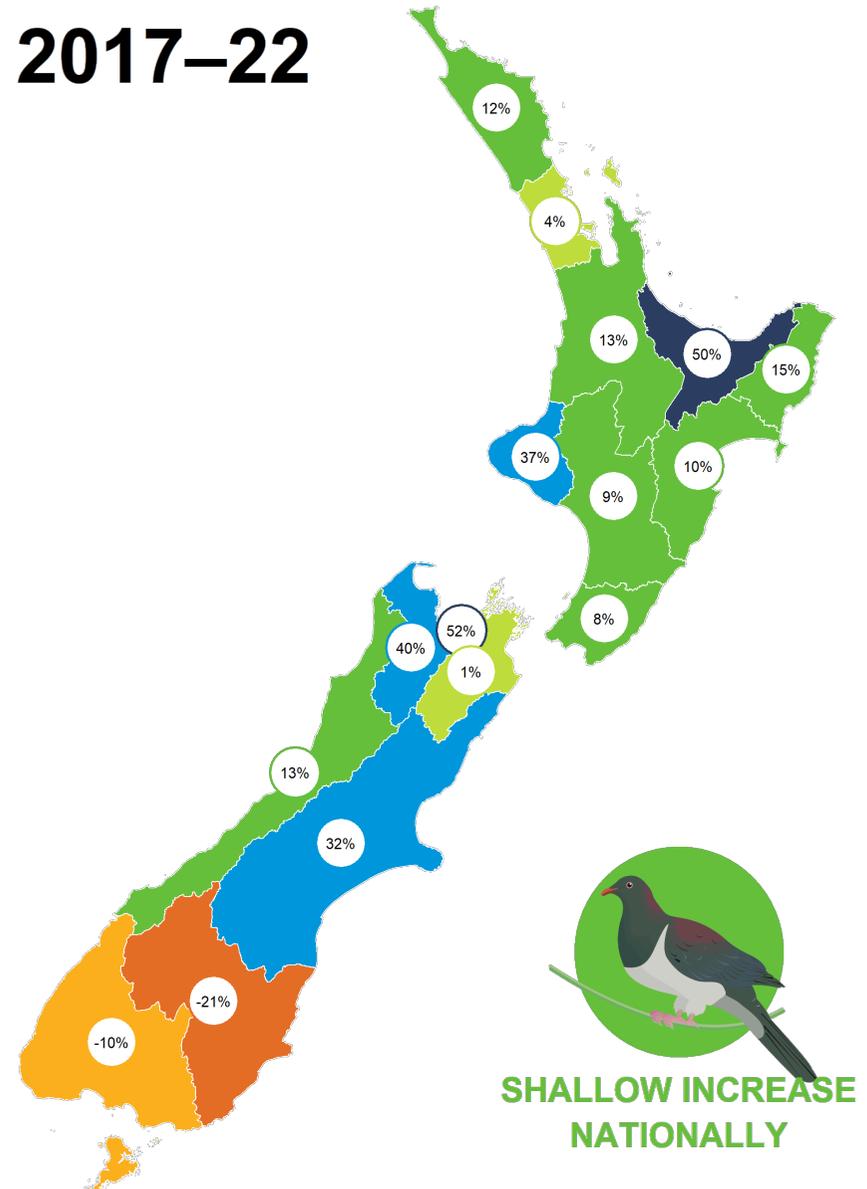
Kererū

*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*

- Rapid increase
- Moderate increase
- Shallow increase
- No or little change
- Shallow decline
- Moderate decline
- Rapid decline



## 2017–22



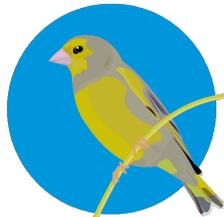
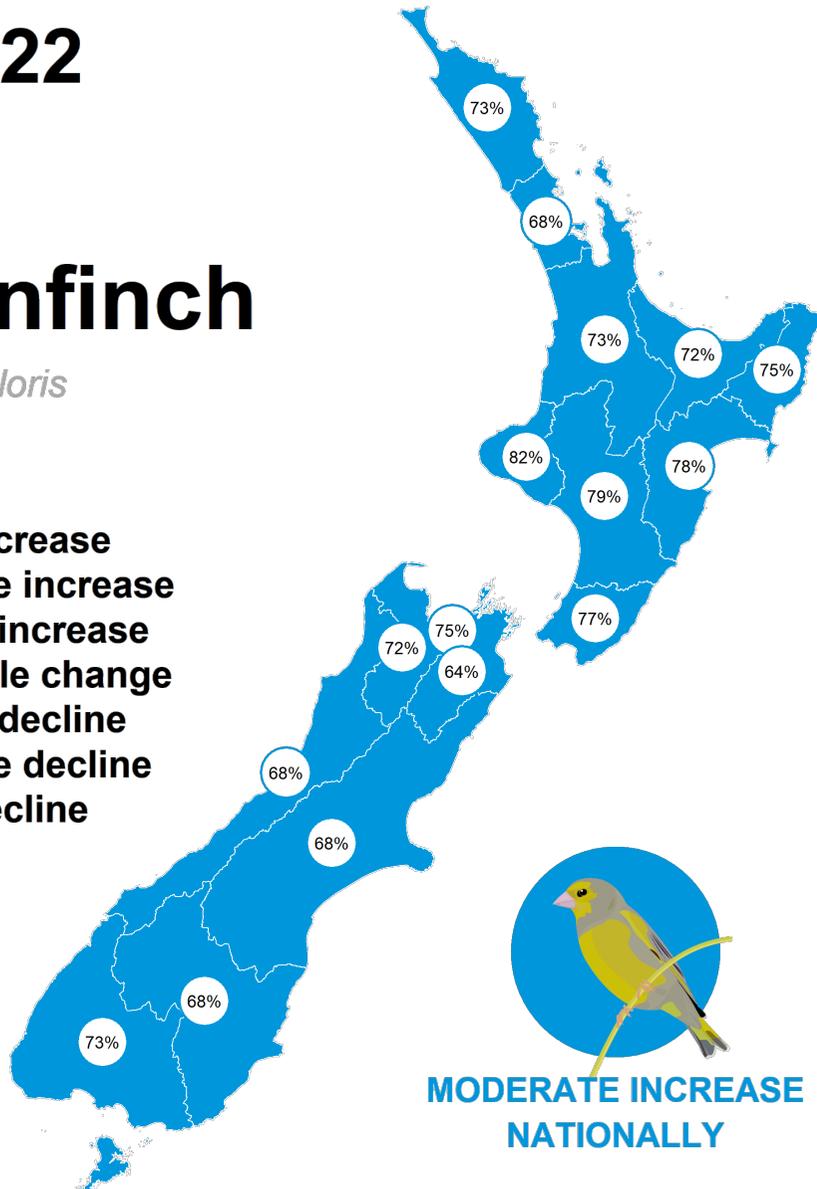
# How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

2012–22

## Greenfinch

*Carduelis chloris*

- Rapid increase
- Moderate increase
- Shallow increase
- No or little change
- Shallow decline
- Moderate decline
- Rapid decline



**MODERATE INCREASE  
NATIONALLY**

2017–22



**SHALLOW INCREASE  
NATIONALLY**

# How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

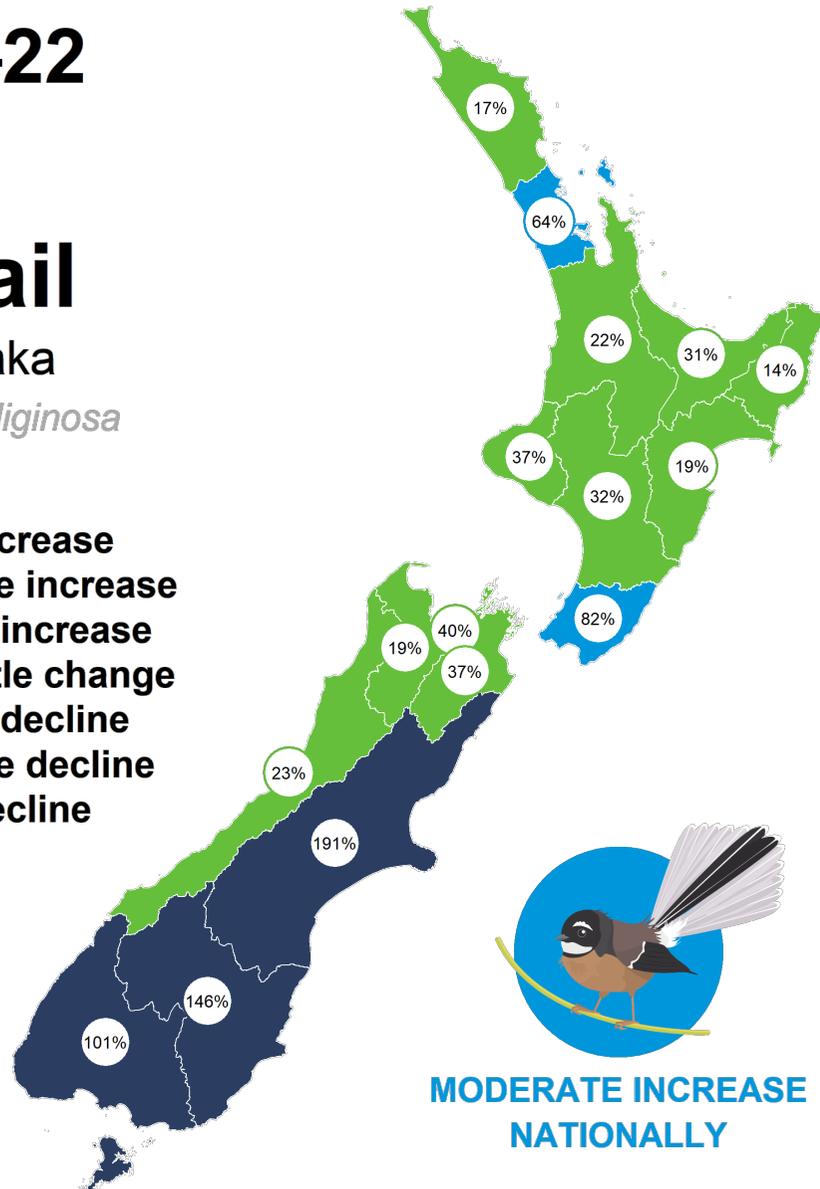
## 2012–22

### Fantail

Pīwakawaka

*Rhipidura fuliginosa*

- Rapid increase
- Moderate increase
- Shallow increase
- No or little change
- Shallow decline
- Moderate decline
- Rapid decline



**MODERATE INCREASE  
NATIONALLY**

## 2017–22



**MODERATE INCREASE  
NATIONALLY**

# How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

## 2012–22

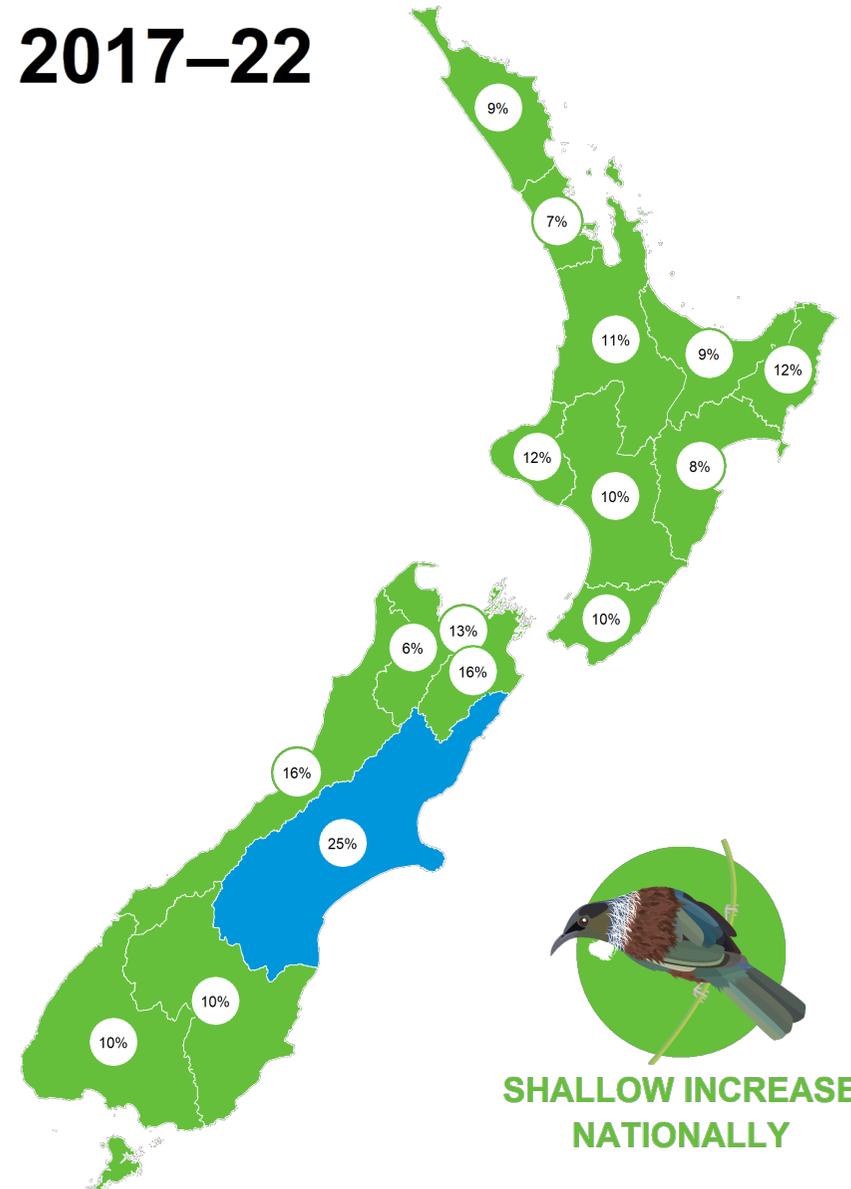
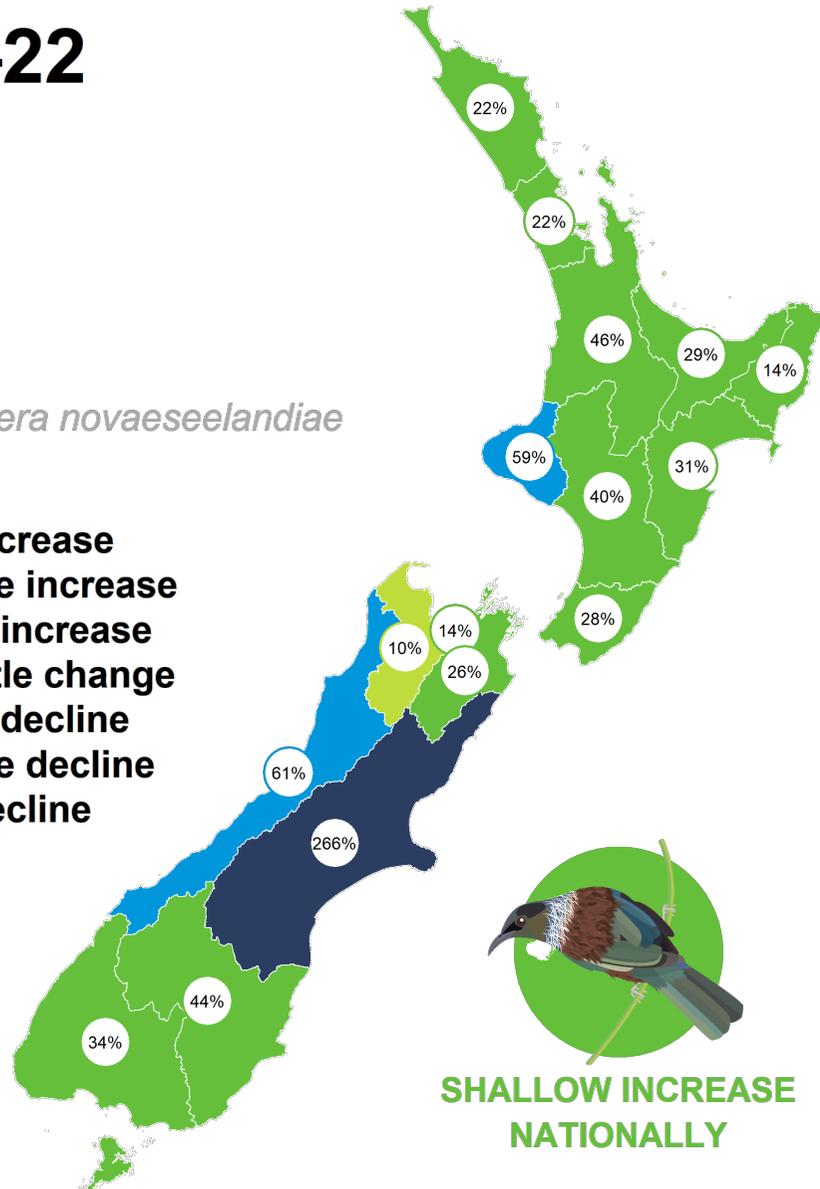
## 2017–22

### Tūī

Kōkō

*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*

- Rapid increase
- Moderate increase
- Shallow increase
- No or little change
- Shallow decline
- Moderate decline
- Rapid decline



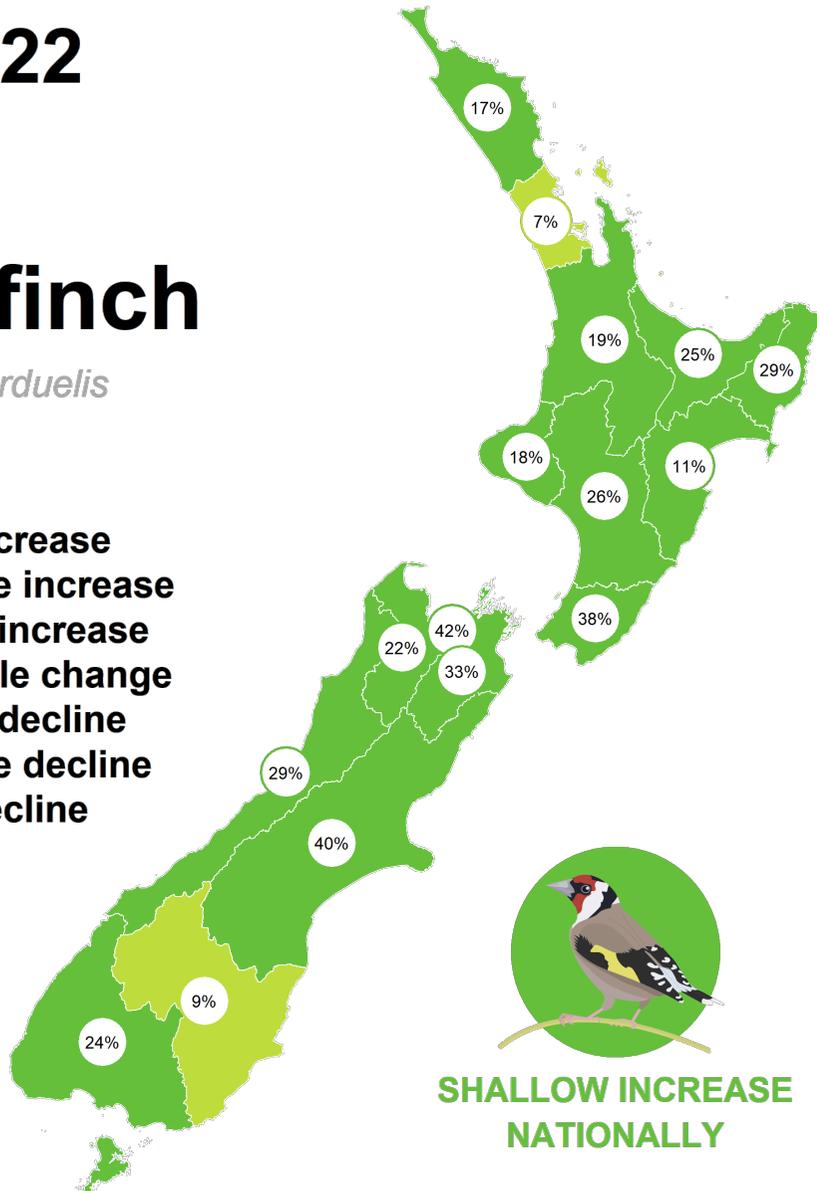
# How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

## 2012–22

### Goldfinch

*Carduelis carduelis*

- Rapid increase
- Moderate increase
- Shallow increase
- No or little change
- Shallow decline
- Moderate decline
- Rapid decline



**SHALLOW INCREASE  
NATIONALLY**

## 2017–22



**LITTLE OR NO CHANGE  
NATIONALLY**

# How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

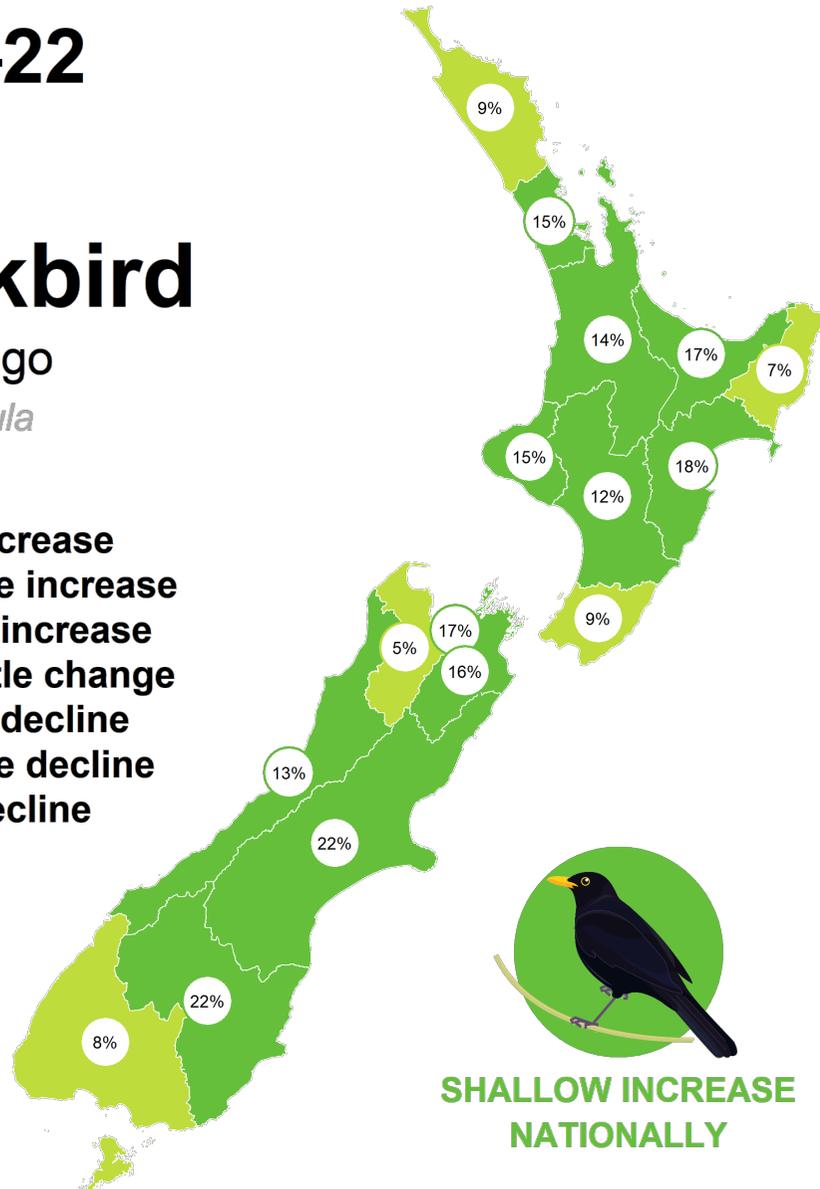
## 2012–22

### Blackbird

Manu pango

*Turdus merula*

- Rapid increase
- Moderate increase
- Shallow increase
- No or little change
- Shallow decline
- Moderate decline
- Rapid decline




**SHALLOW INCREASE  
NATIONALLY**

## 2017–22




**SHALLOW INCREASE  
NATIONALLY**

# How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

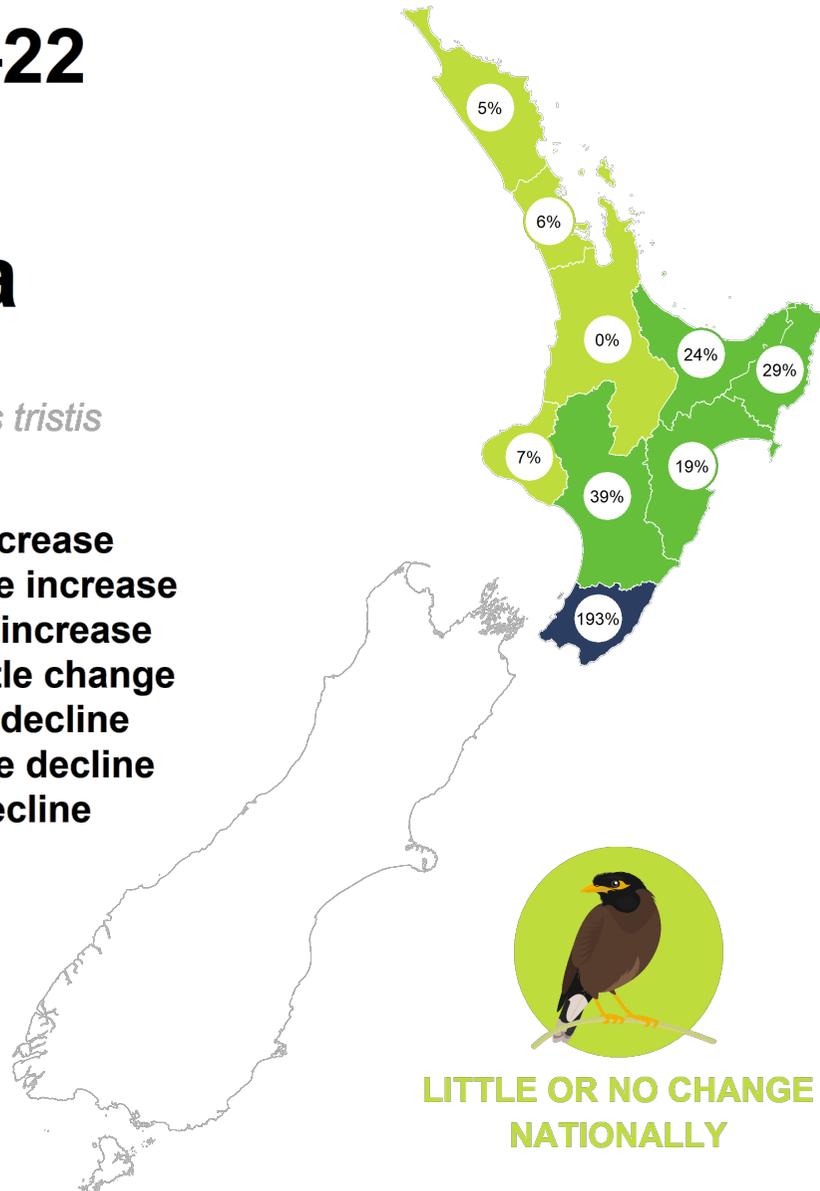
## 2012–22

### Myna

Maina

*Acridotheres tristis*

- Rapid increase
- Moderate increase
- Shallow increase
- No or little change
- Shallow decline
- Moderate decline
- Rapid decline



## 2017–22



# How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

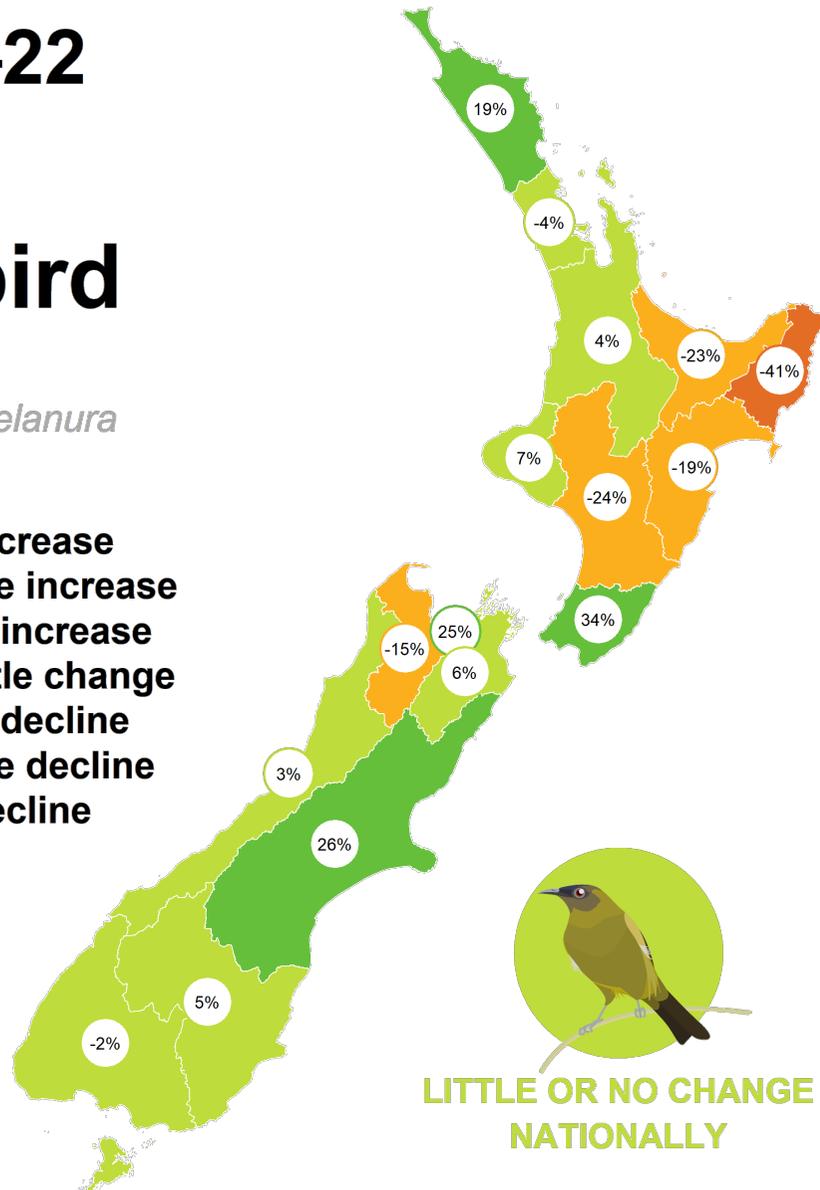
## 2012–22

### Bellbird

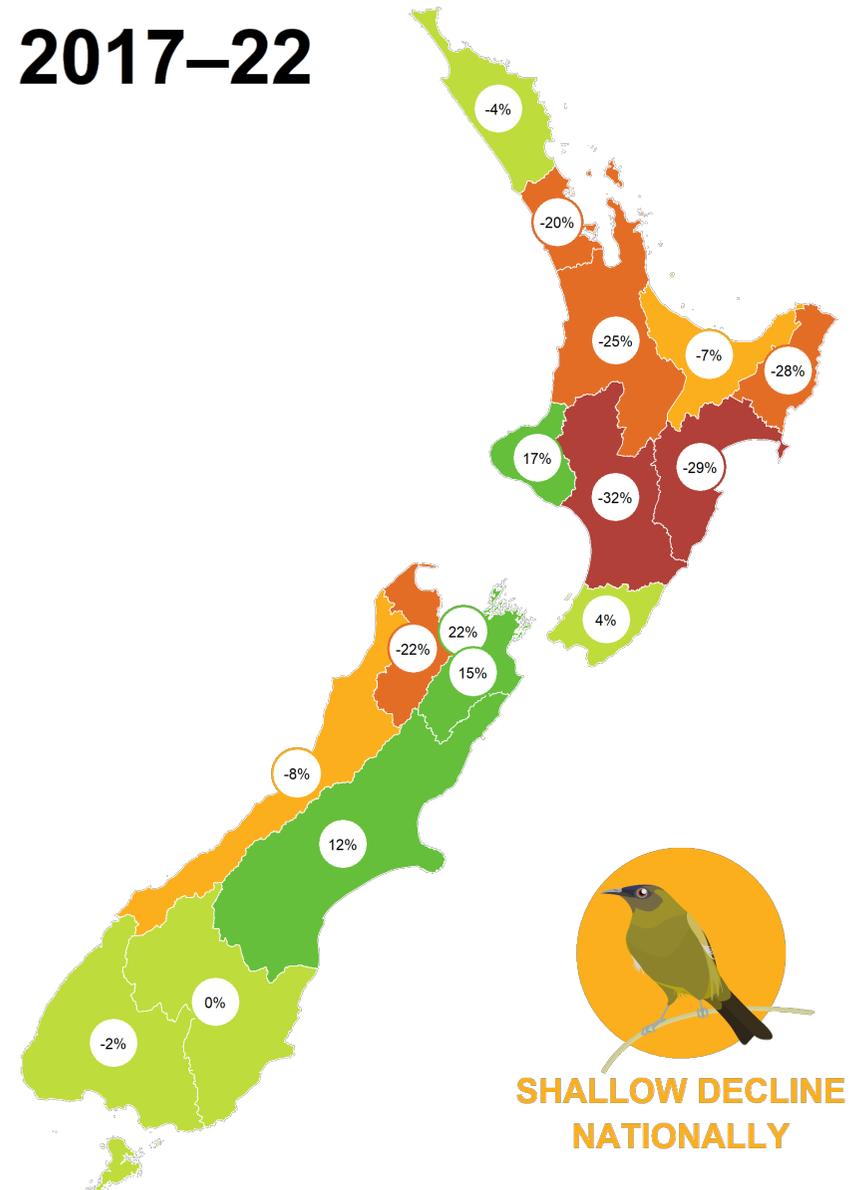
Korimako

*Anthornis melanura*

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- Moderate increase
- Shallow increase
- No or little change
- Shallow decline
- Moderate decline
- Rapid decline



## 2017–22



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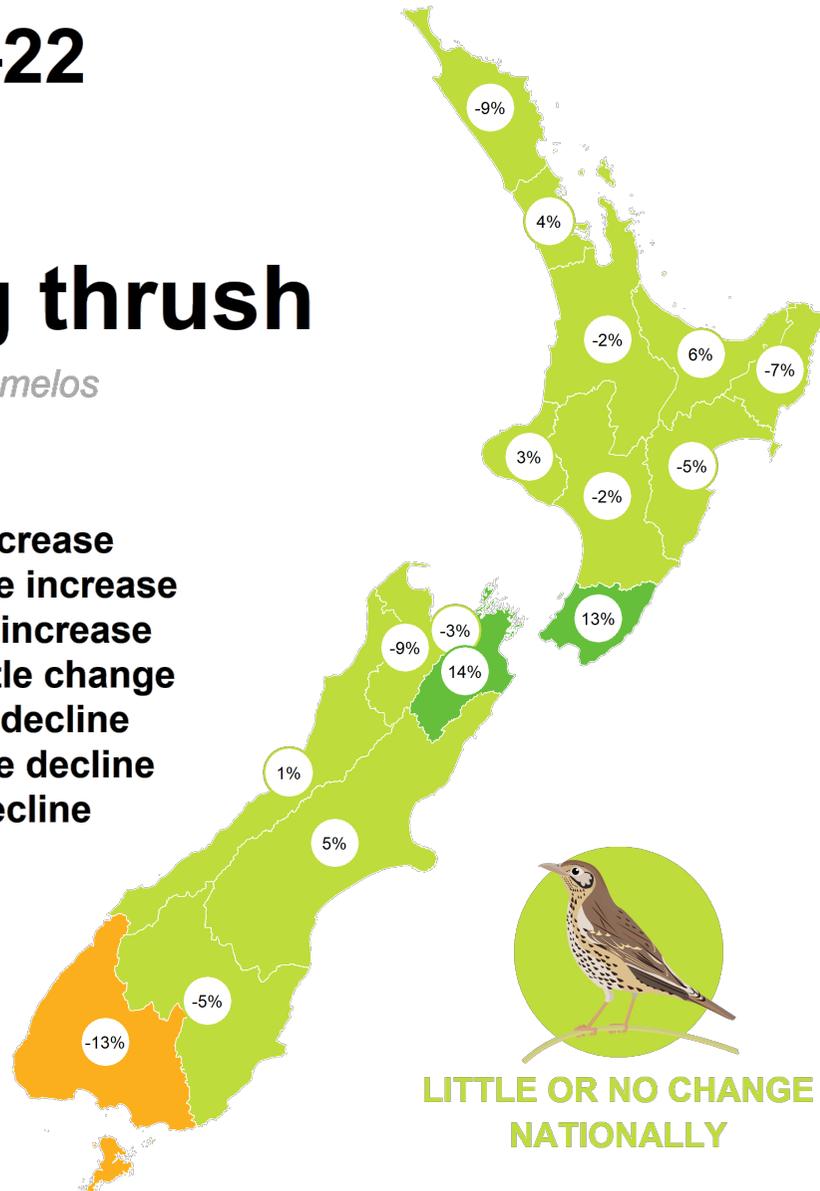
2012–22

2017–22

## Song thrush

*Turdus philomelos*

- Rapid increase
- Moderate increase
- Shallow increase
- No or little change
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- Rapid decline



# How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

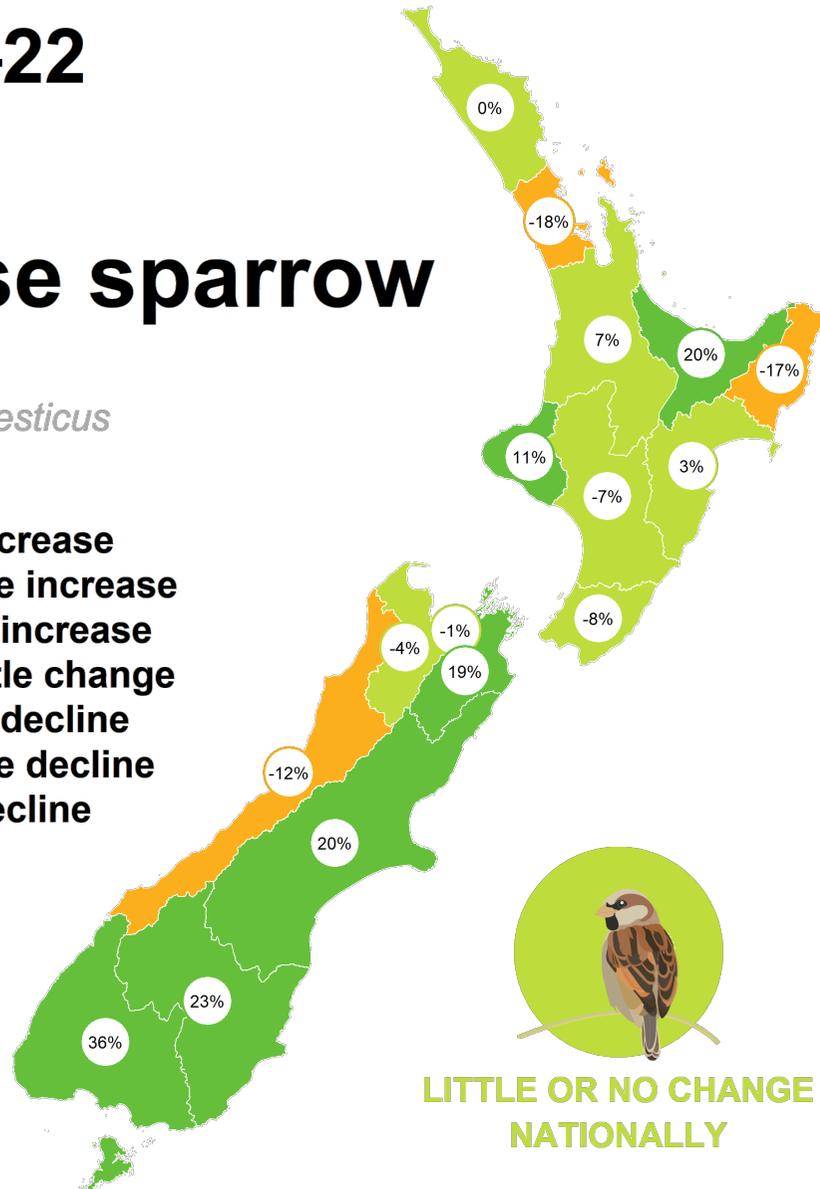
## 2012–22

### House sparrow

Tiu

*Passer domesticus*

- Rapid increase
- Moderate increase
- Shallow increase
- No or little change
- Shallow decline
- Moderate decline
- Rapid decline



LITTLE OR NO CHANGE  
NATIONALLY

## 2017–22



LITTLE OR NO CHANGE  
NATIONALLY

# How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

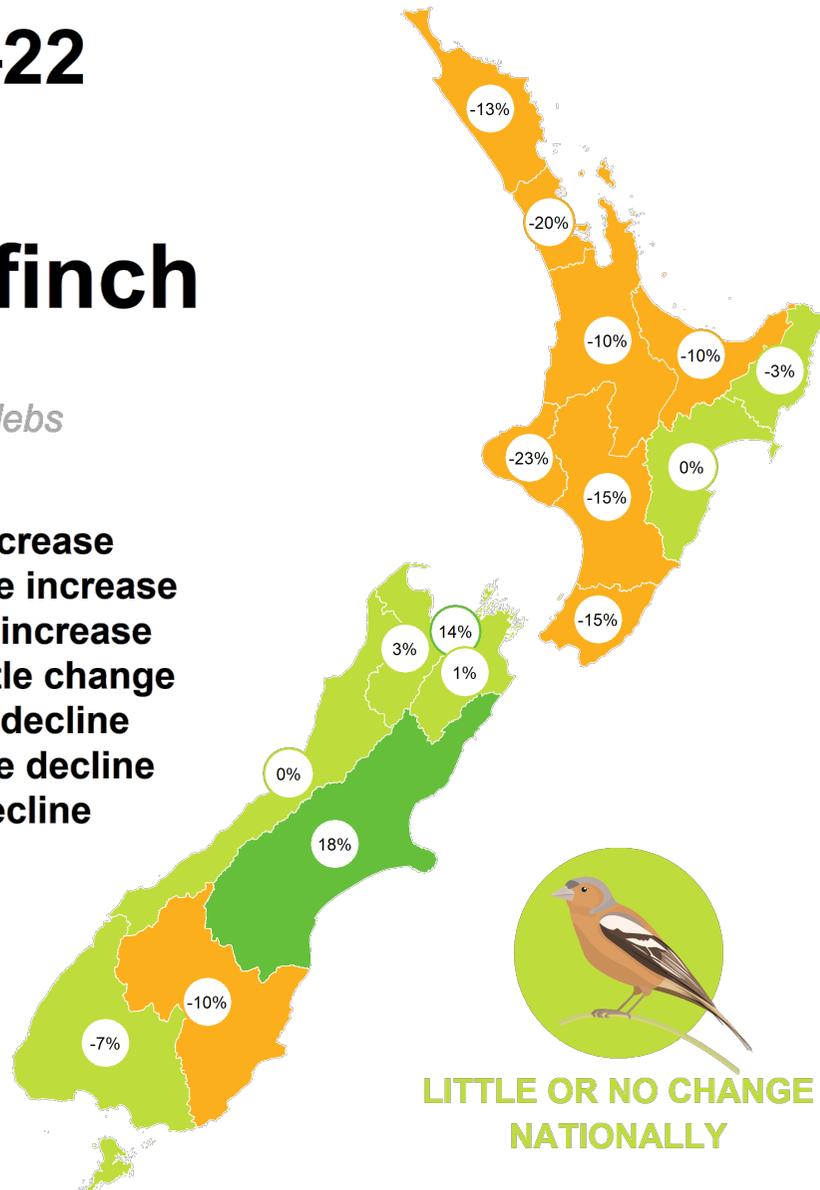
2012–22

## Chaffinch

Pahirini

*Fringilla coelebs*

- Rapid increase
- Moderate increase
- Shallow increase
- No or little change
- Shallow decline
- Moderate decline
- Rapid decline



2017–22



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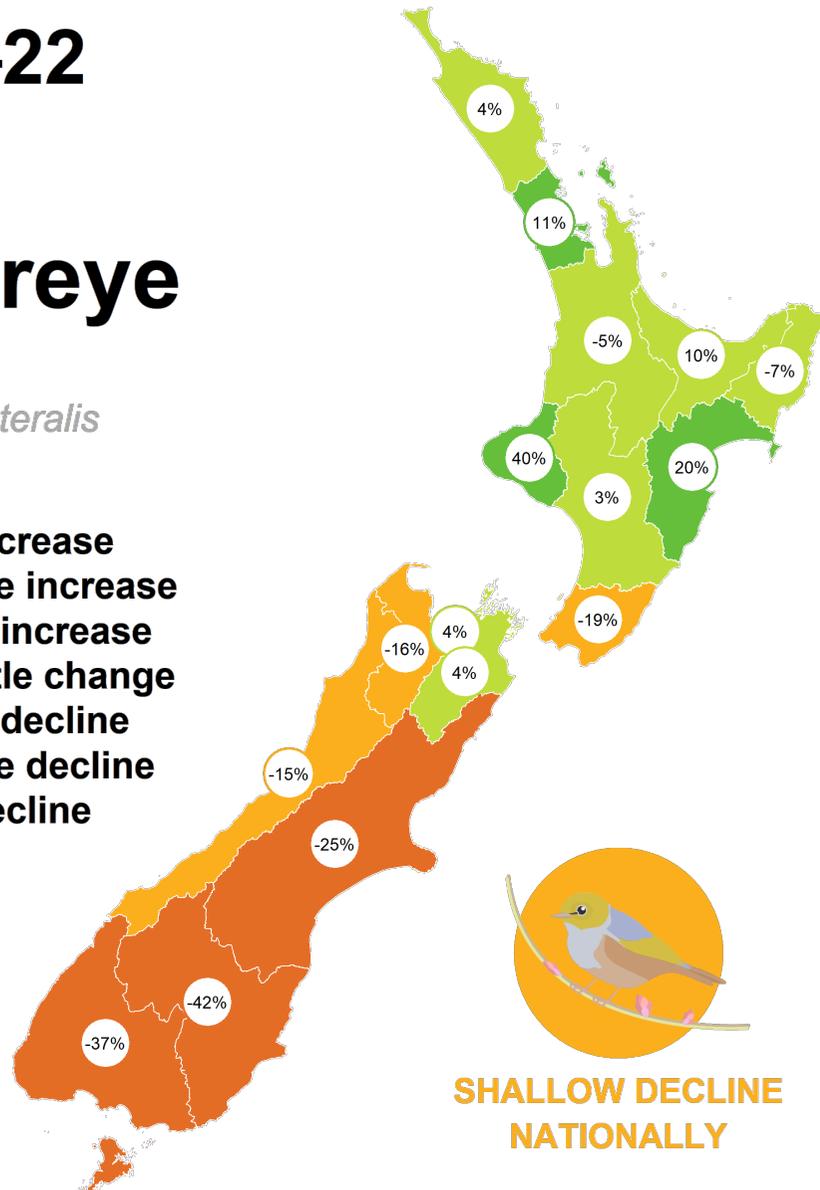
## 2012–22

### Silvereye

Tauhou

*Zosterops lateralis*

- Rapid increase
- Moderate increase
- Shallow increase
- No or little change
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- Moderate decline
- Rapid decline



## 2017–22



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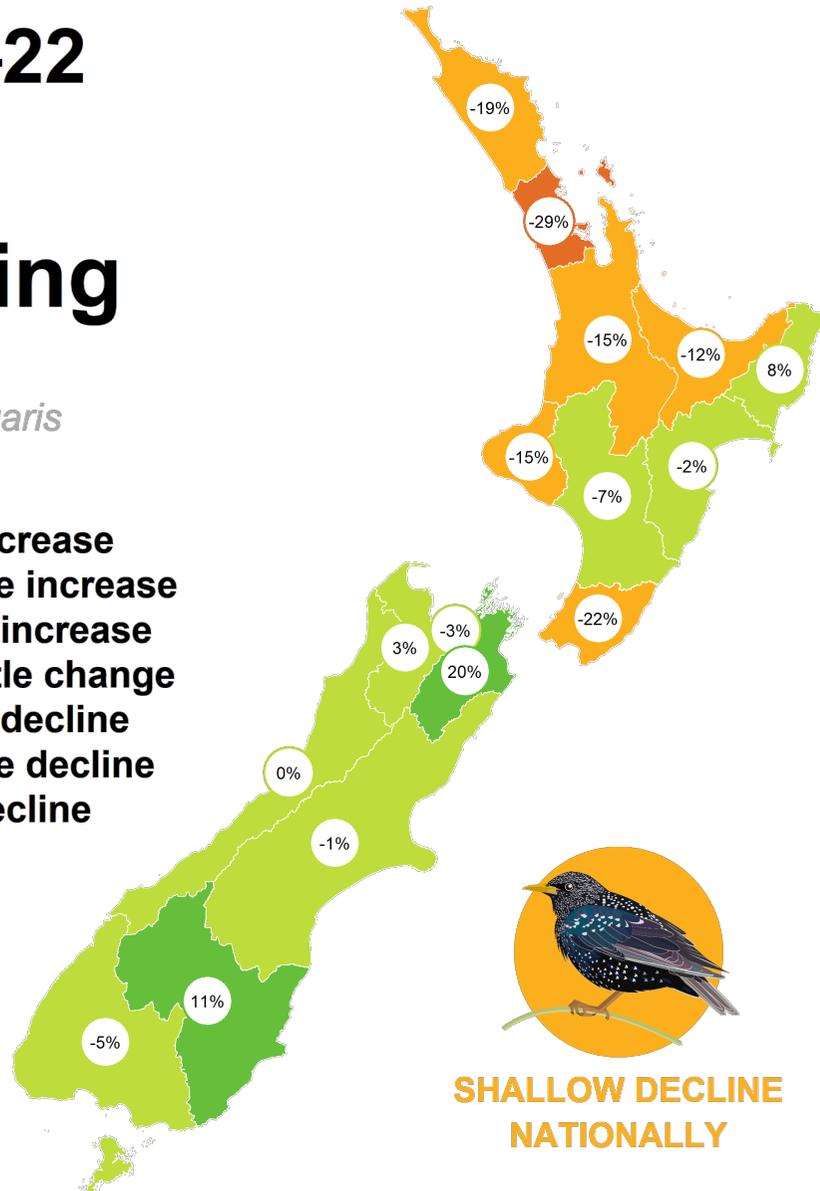
## 2012–22

### Starling

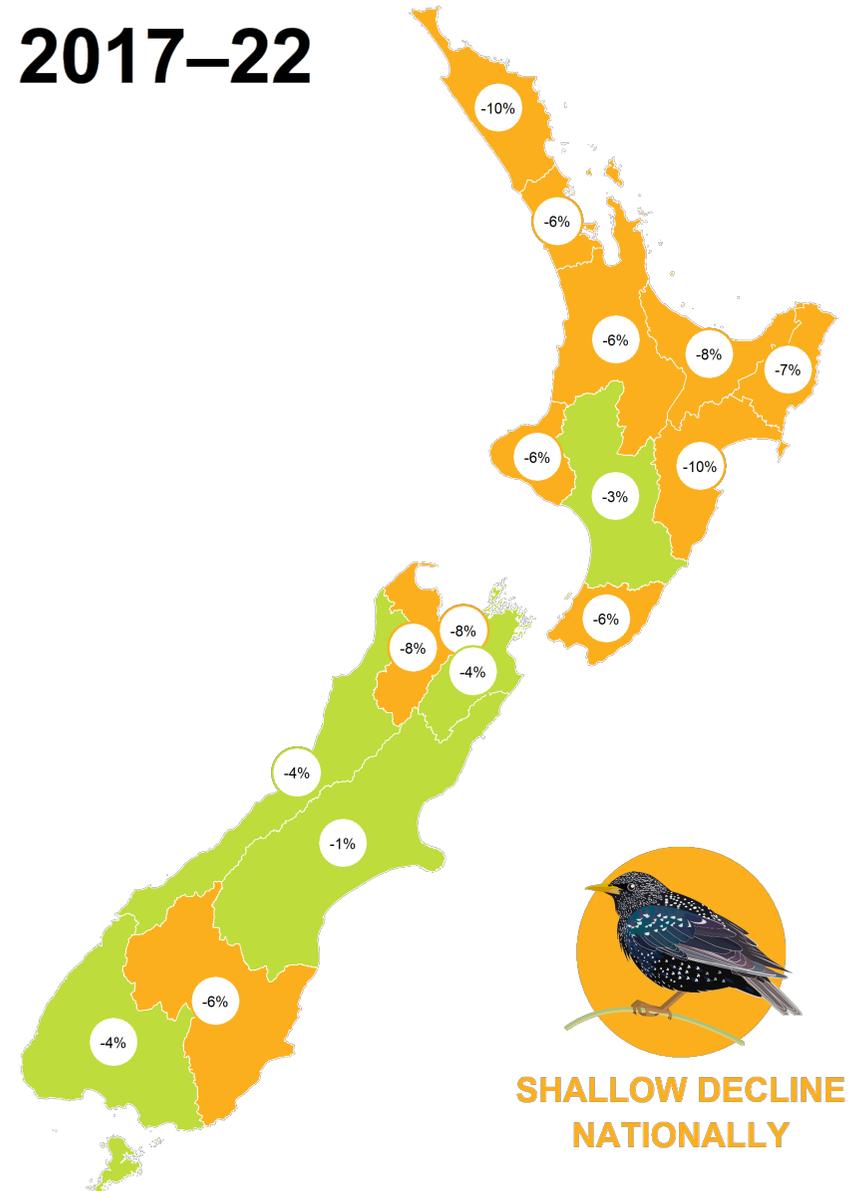
Tāringi

*Sturnus vulgaris*

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- Moderate increase
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- No or little change
- Shallow decline
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- Rapid decline



## 2017–22



# How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

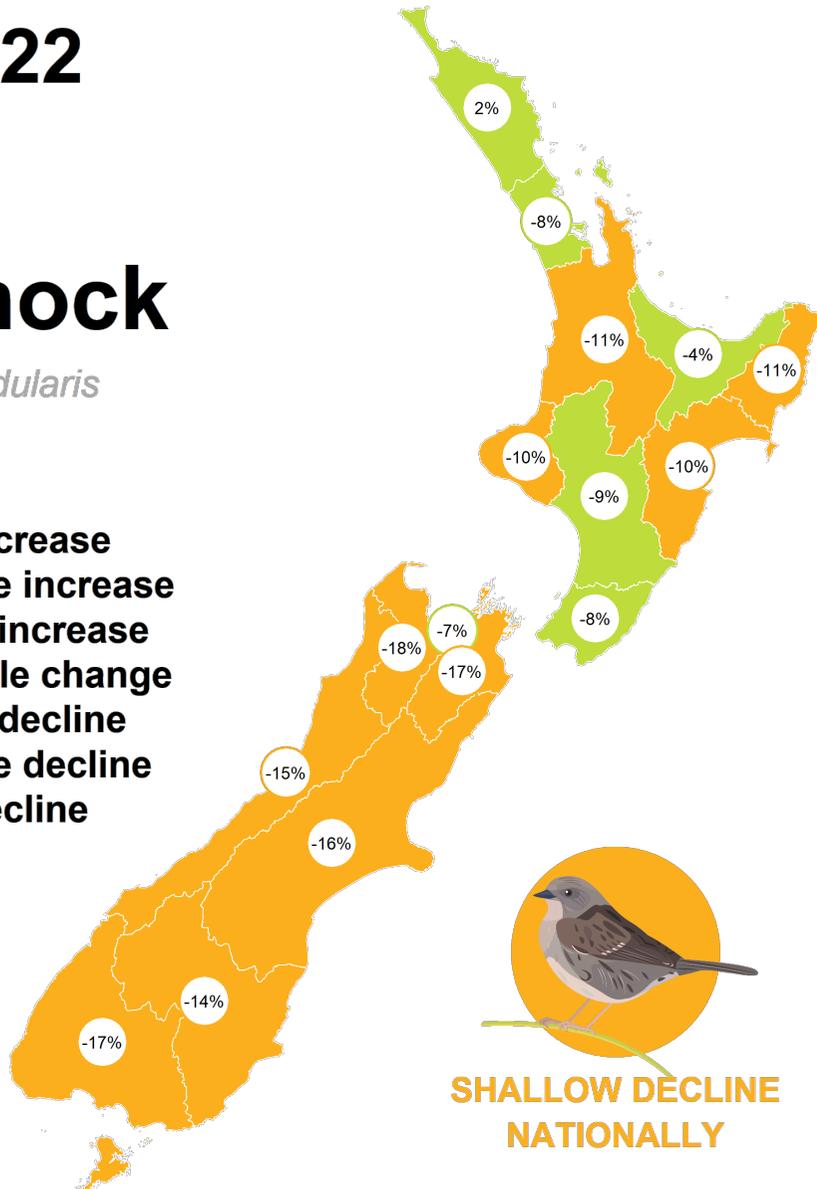
2012–22

2017–22

## Dunnock

*Prunella modularis*

- Rapid increase
- Moderate increase
- Shallow increase
- No or little change
- Shallow decline
- Moderate decline
- Rapid decline





New Zealand  
**GARDEN  
BIRD  
SURVEY**

**2023**  
24 June to 2 July

**Visit our webpage to learn more:**

<https://gardenbirdsurvey.nz/>

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