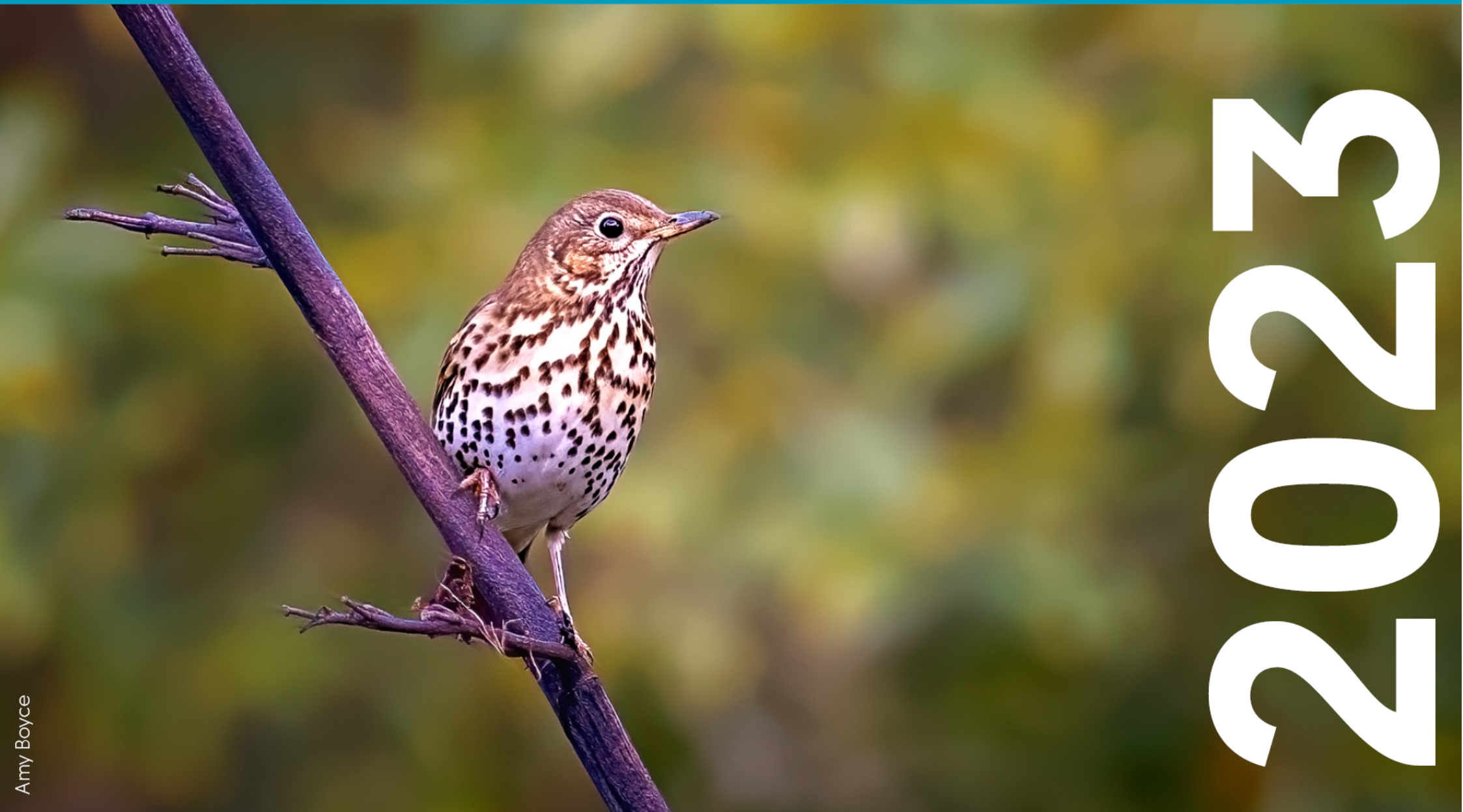
New Zealand
GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

State of NZ Garden Birds

Te Āhua o ngā Manu o te Kāri i Aotearoa

Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research



2023

Amy Boyce

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.

Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research has distilled a substantial information base – bird counts gathered by New Zealanders from more than 45,000 garden surveys since 2013 – into simple but powerful metrics.

Key signals continue for four native species:

Kererū counts show a shallow increase over 10 years (48%), compared to the moderate increase seen previously, and now show a shallow decline over 5 years (12%).

We now see a shallow increase in fantail counts (pīwakawaka) over both the long term (43%) and short term (12%).

Tūī (kōkō) counts continue to show a shallow increase over 10 years (23%) but now show little or no change over 5 years nationally. Their regional long-term trends continue to show a rapid increase in Canterbury (210%).

The long-term shallow decline in silvereye (tauhou) counts continues (16%), but for the first time we see a moderate decline in the short term (26%).

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

Myna counts continue to show a trend of little to no change nationally and shallow increases in four regions over 10 years. There is some evidence that the rapid increase in their counts in Wellington continues in both the long and short term (126% and 122%, respectively) along with a moderate increase in the short term in Manawatū-Whanganui (30%).

For the first time house sparrow counts suggest a shallow decline over the long term (10%) and show a moderate decline over the short term (16%).

Starling, goldfinch, chaffinch, and dunnock counts show a shallow decline over 10 years, with dunnock counts showing a shallow decline over 5 years (11%), and goldfinch and chaffinch counts showing a rapid decline over 5 years (30% for both species).

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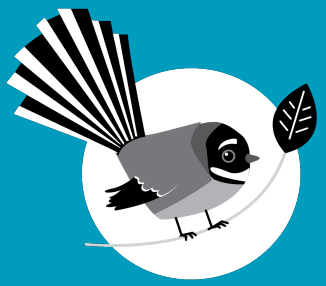

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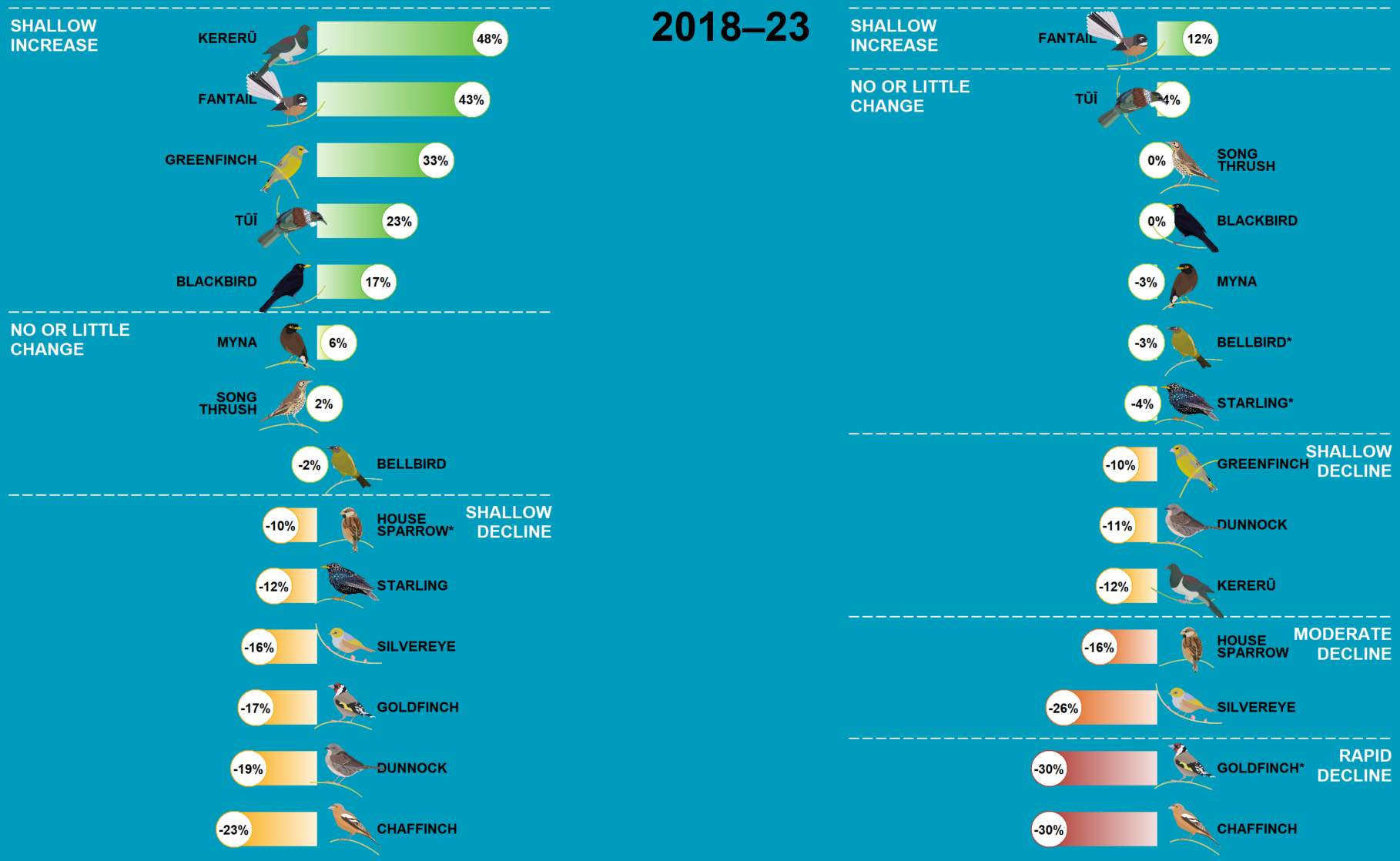
New Zealand
GARDEN
BIRD
SURVEY

NATIONAL PICTURE

How have garden bird counts changed?

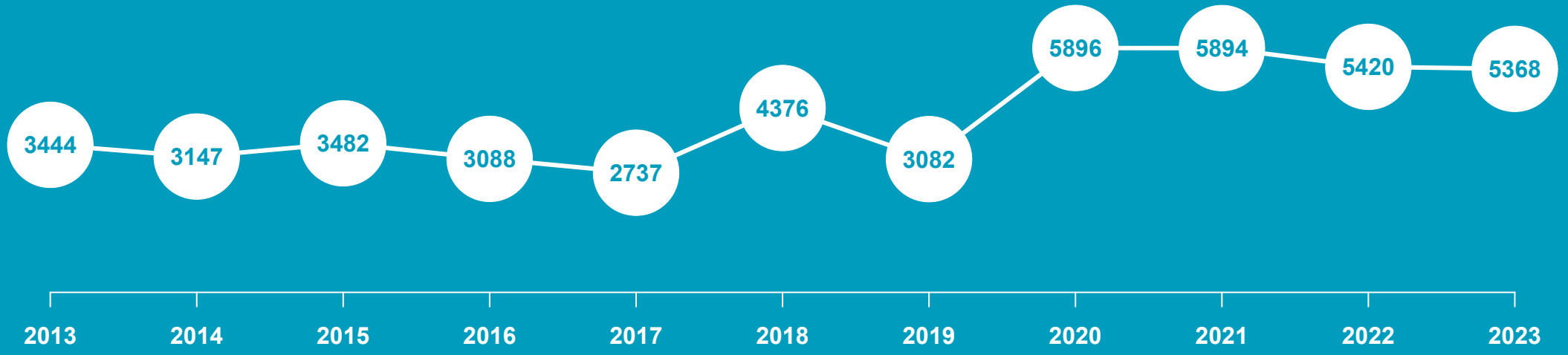


* Based on available data, evidence for these species' estimates is weak.

Data source: 45,934 and 30,036 garden surveys nationwide for 2013–23 and 2018–23, respectively.

45,934
garden
surveys
nationwide

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 2023, 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 and create suitable habitat

● ● ● ● ●
● ● ● ● ●
● ● ● ▲

Manage weeds and 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.

New Zealand GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

gardenbirdsurvey.nz

New Zealand GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

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, 45,934 garden surveys have been completed nationwide since 2013. 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

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New Zealand GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

2013–23

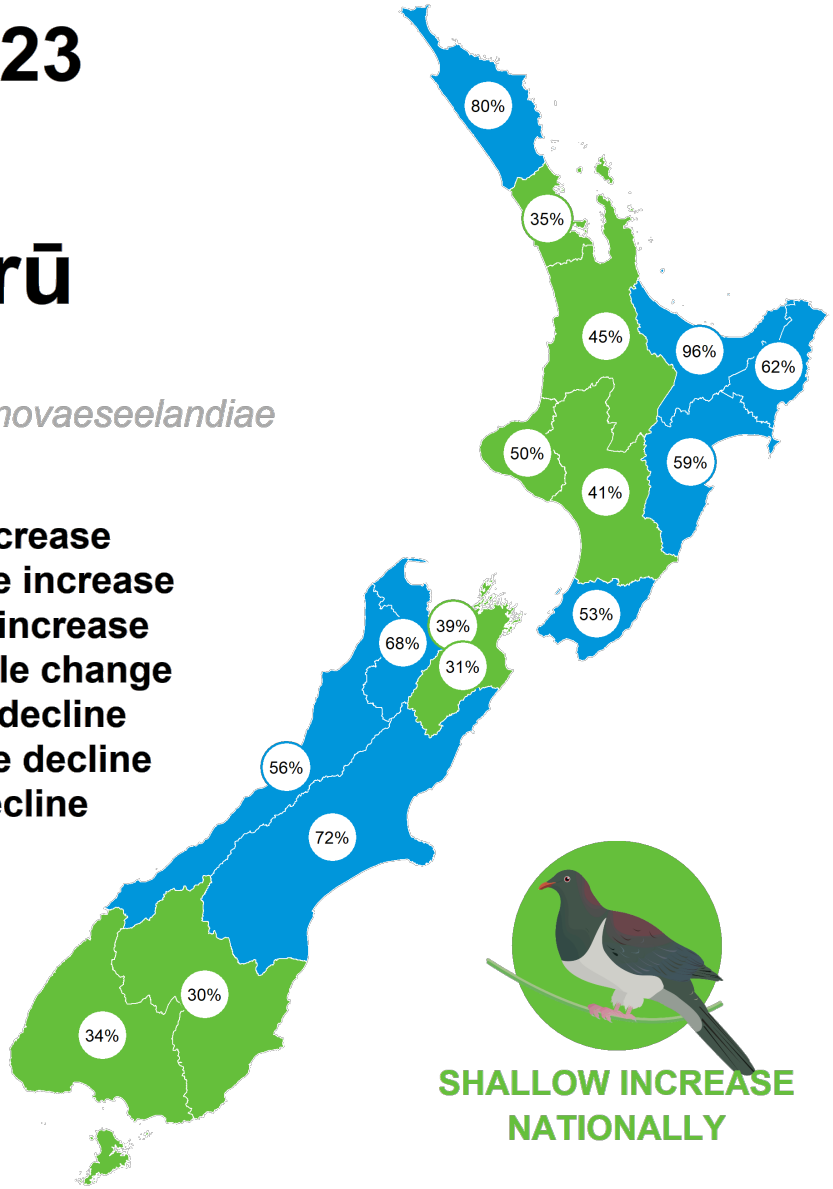
2018–23

Kererū

Kererū

Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae

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



SHALLOW INCREASE NATIONALLY

SHALLOW DECLINE NATIONALLY

DATA SOURCE: 45,934 and 30,036 garden surveys for 2013–23 and 2018–23, respectively.

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New Zealand GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

2013–23

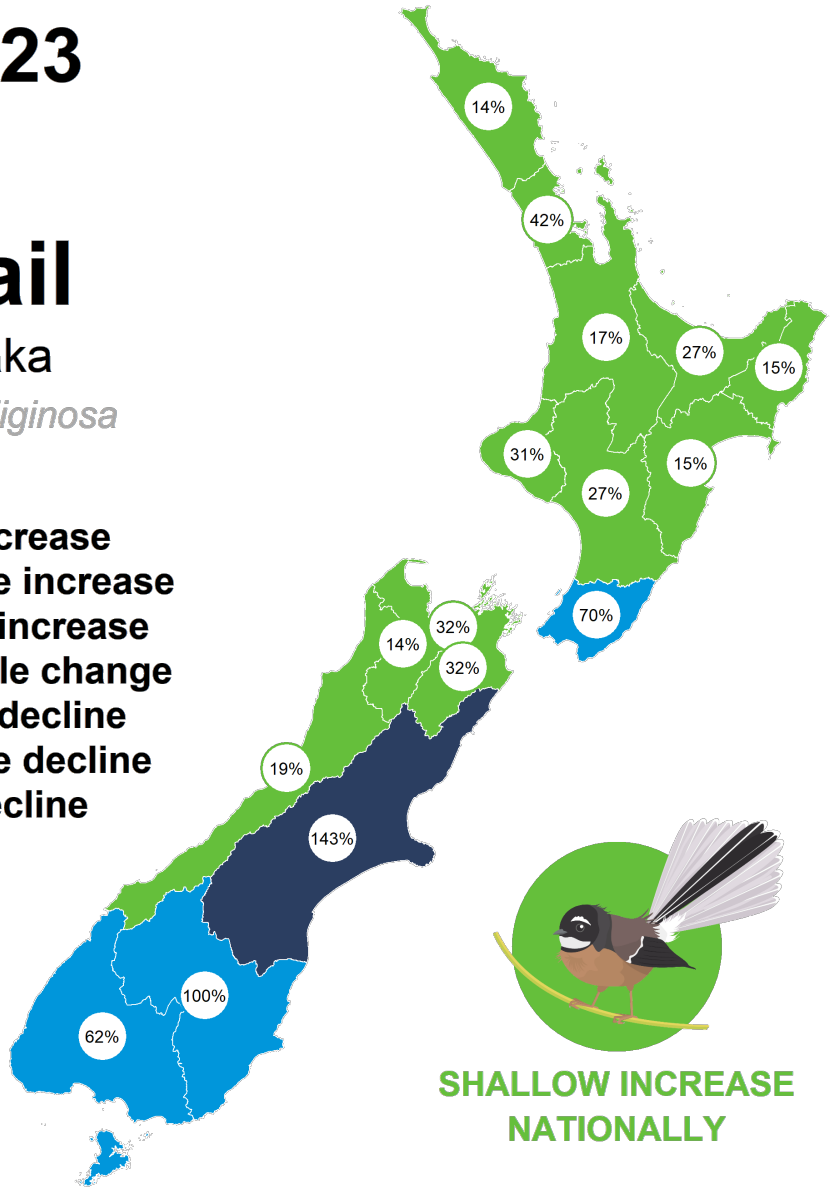
2018–23

Fantail

Pīwakawaka

Rhipidura fuliginosa

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



SHALLOW INCREASE NATIONALLY

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New Zealand GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

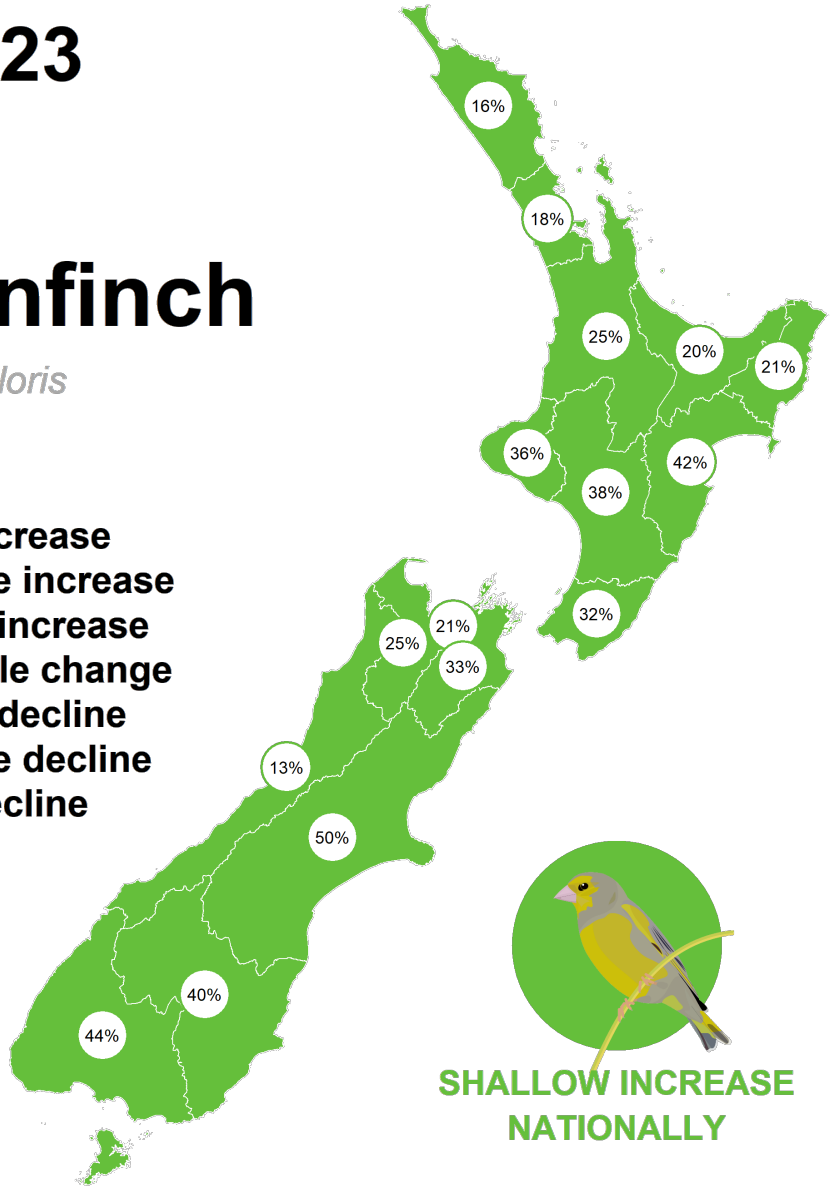
2013–23

2018–23

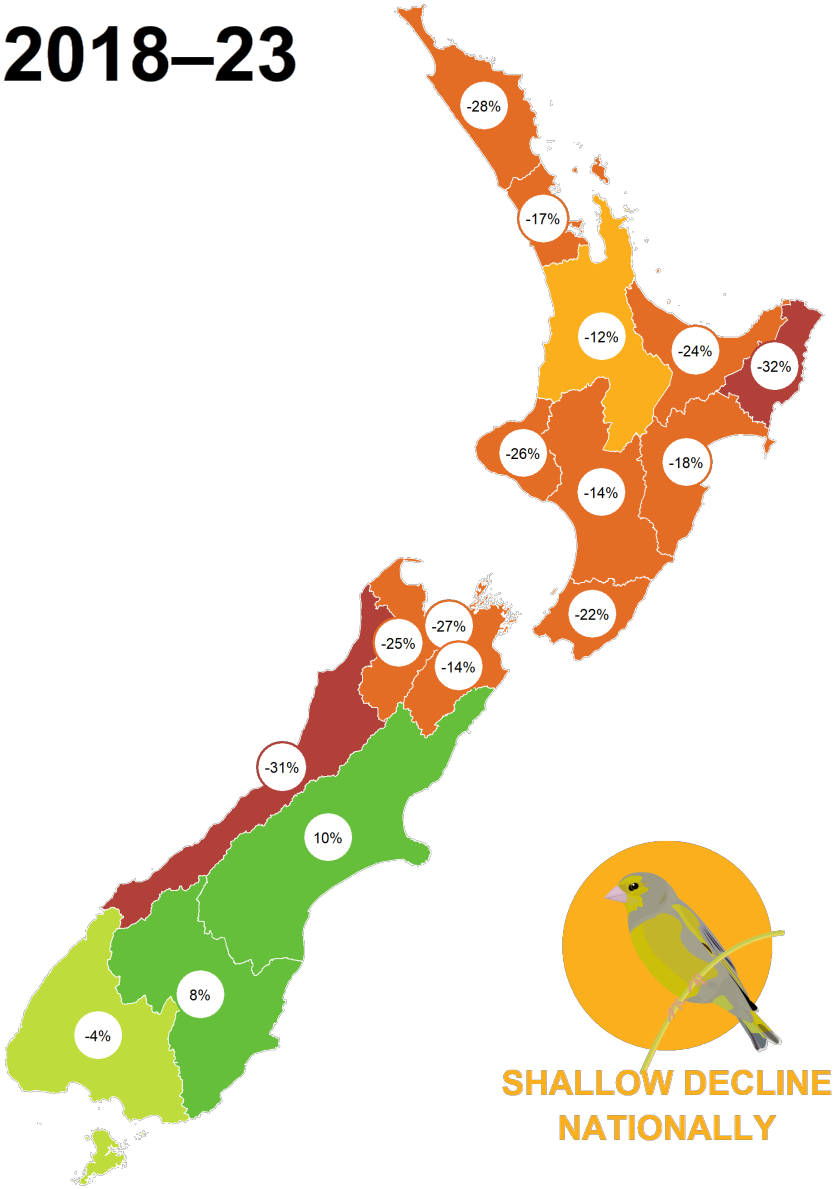
Greenfinch

Carduelis chloris

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



SHALLOW INCREASE NATIONALLY



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New Zealand GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

2013–23

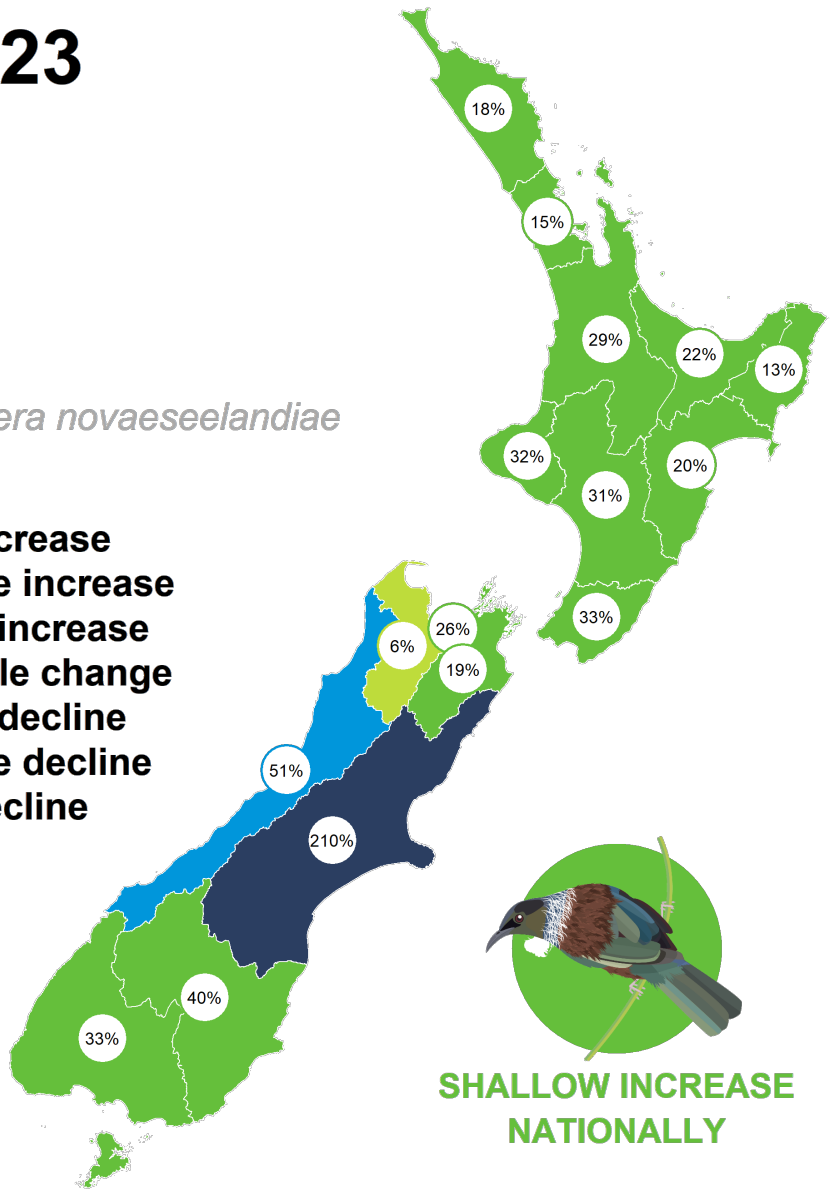
2018–23

Tūī

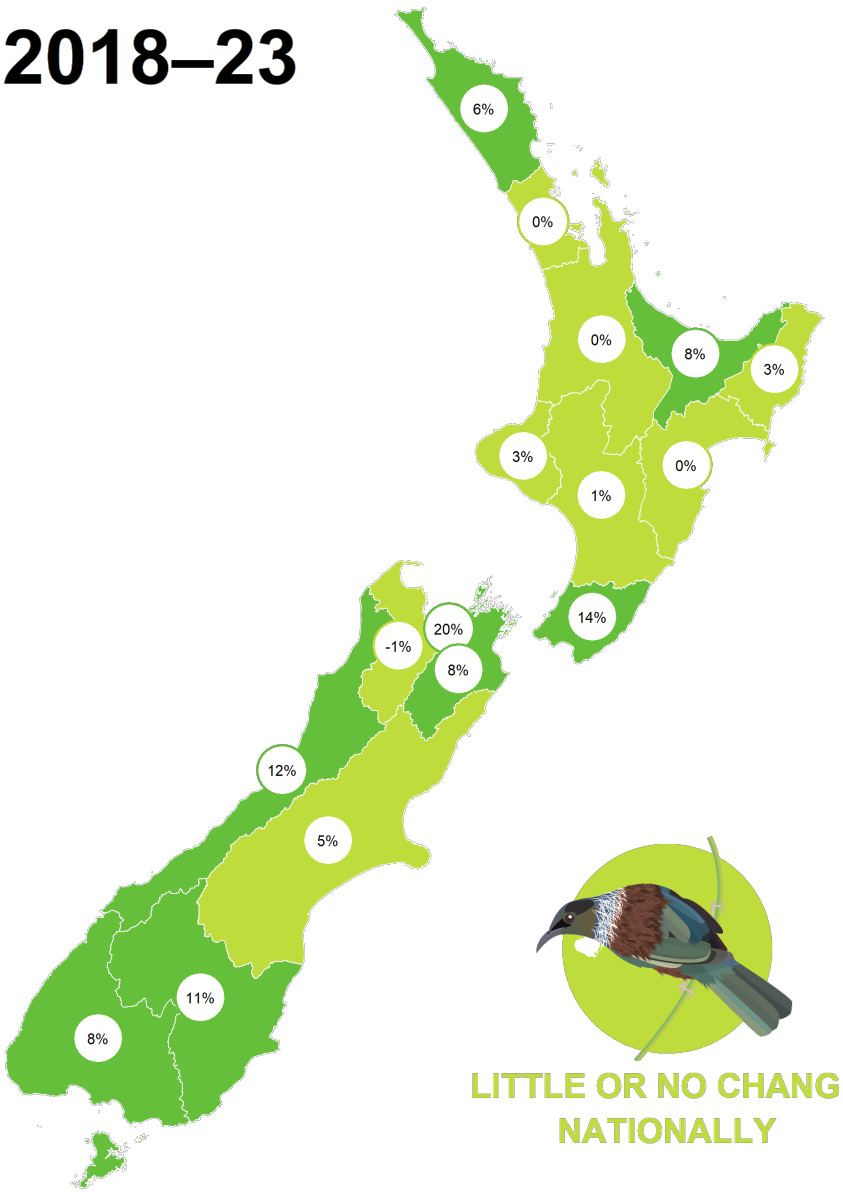
Kōkō

Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae

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



SHALLOW INCREASE NATIONALLY



LITTLE OR NO CHANGE NATIONALLY

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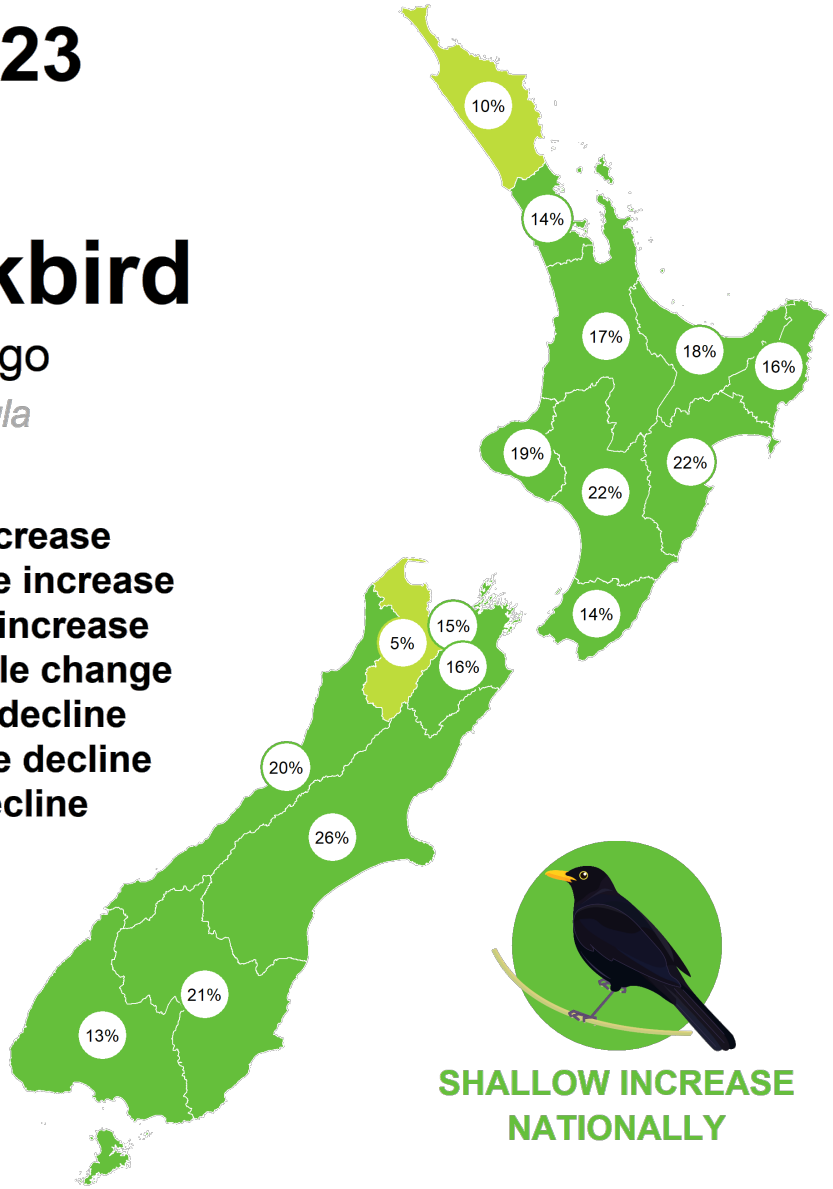
New Zealand GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

2013–23



2018–23

Blackbird

Manu pango

Turdus merula

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

SHALLOW INCREASE NATIONALLY

LITTLE OR NO CHANGE NATIONALLY

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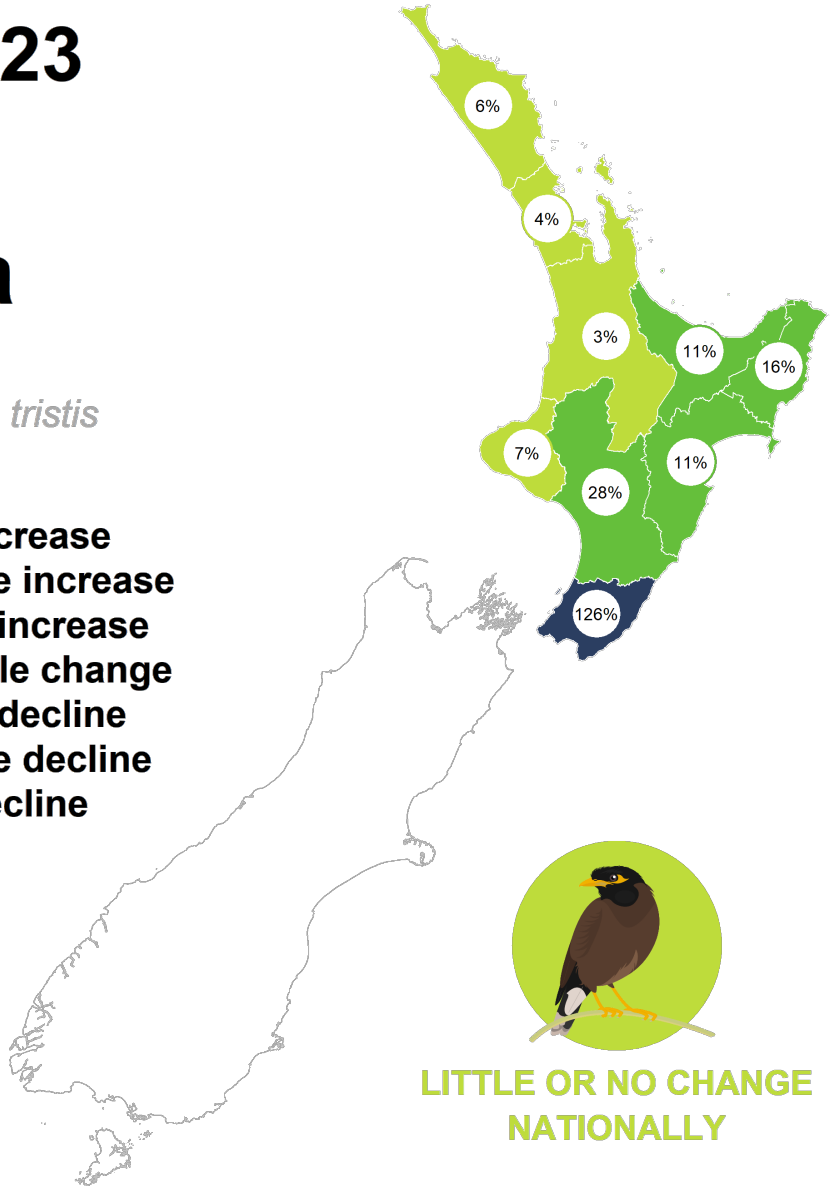
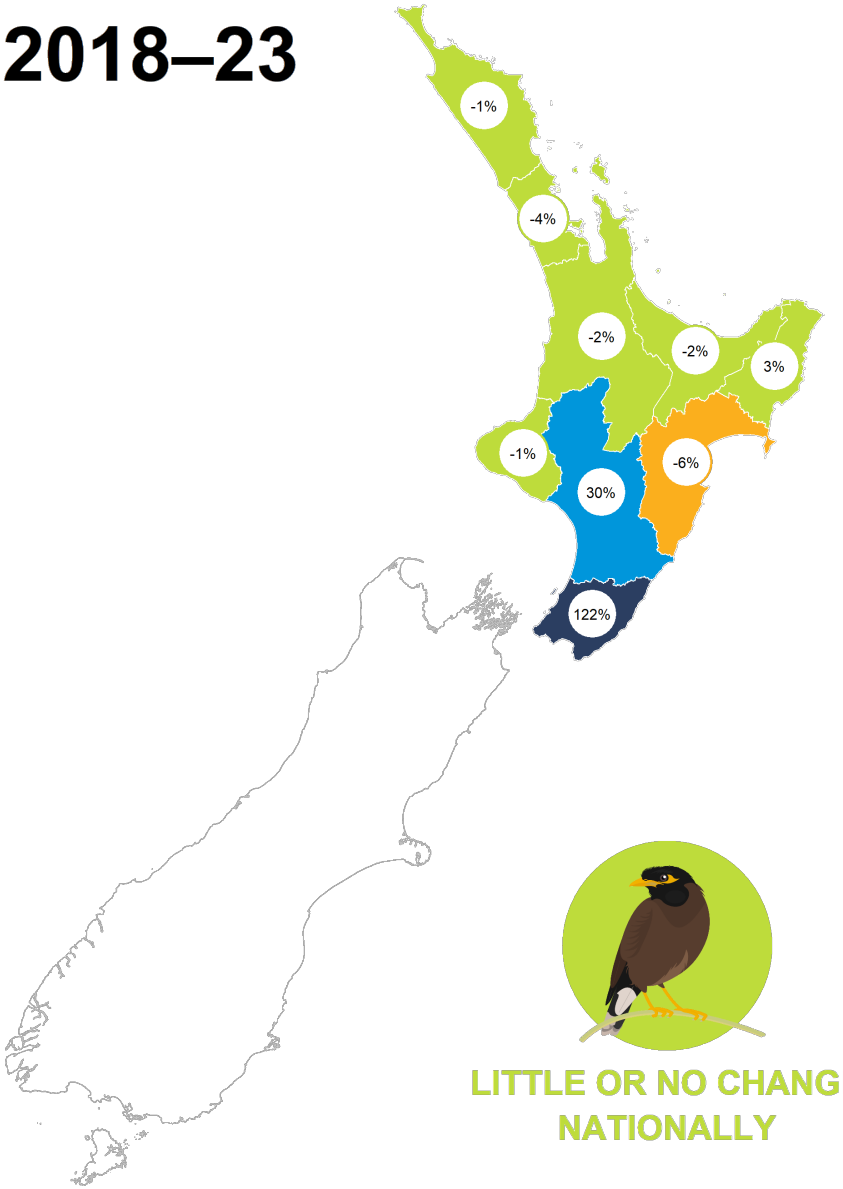
New Zealand GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

2013–23



2018–23



Myna

Maina

Acridotheres tristis

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

LITTLE OR NO CHANGE NATIONALLY

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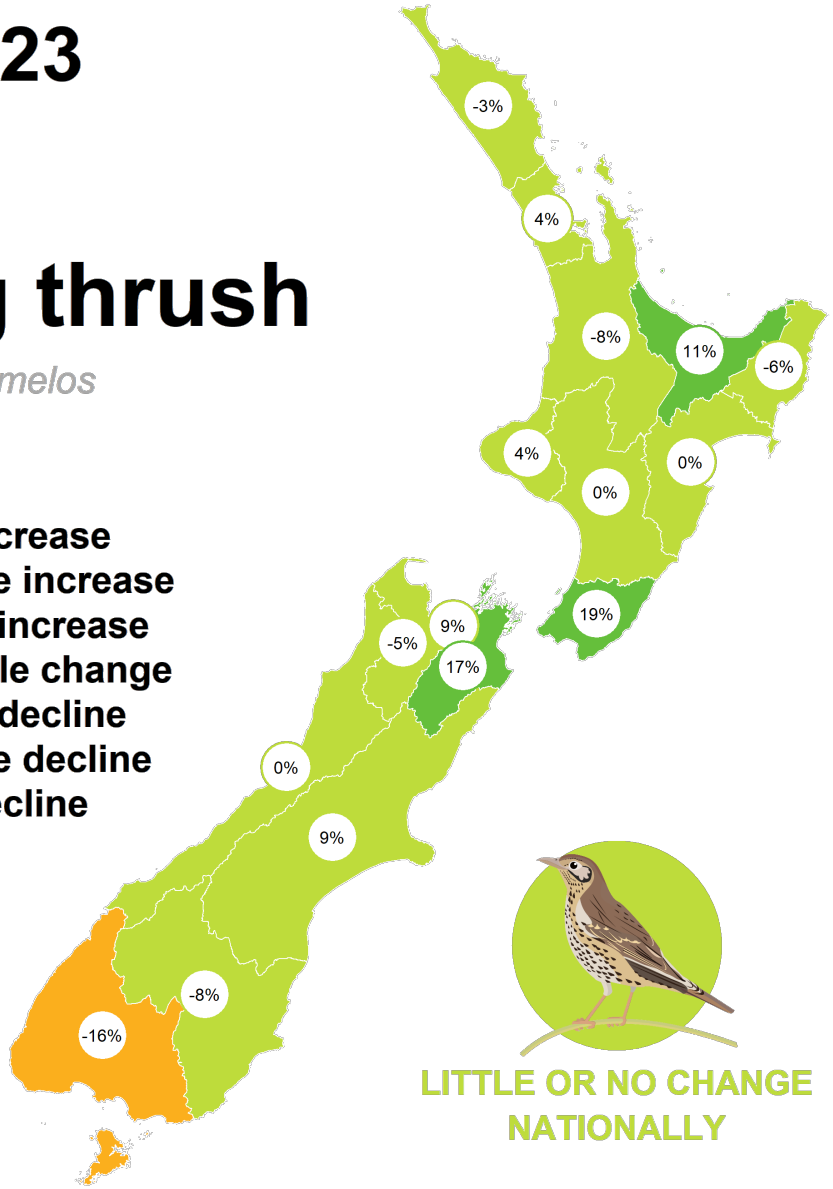
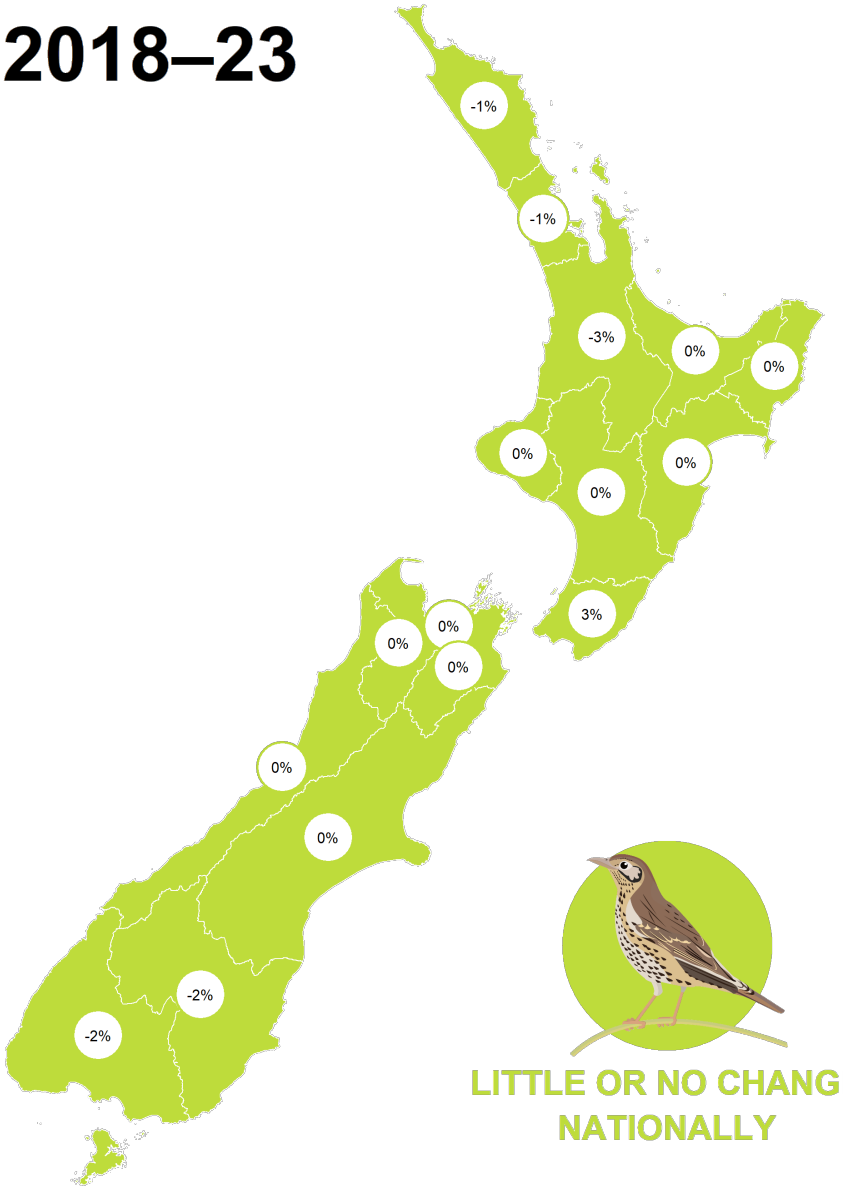
2013–23



2018–23



Song thrush

Turdus philomelos

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

LITTLE OR NO CHANGE NATIONALLY

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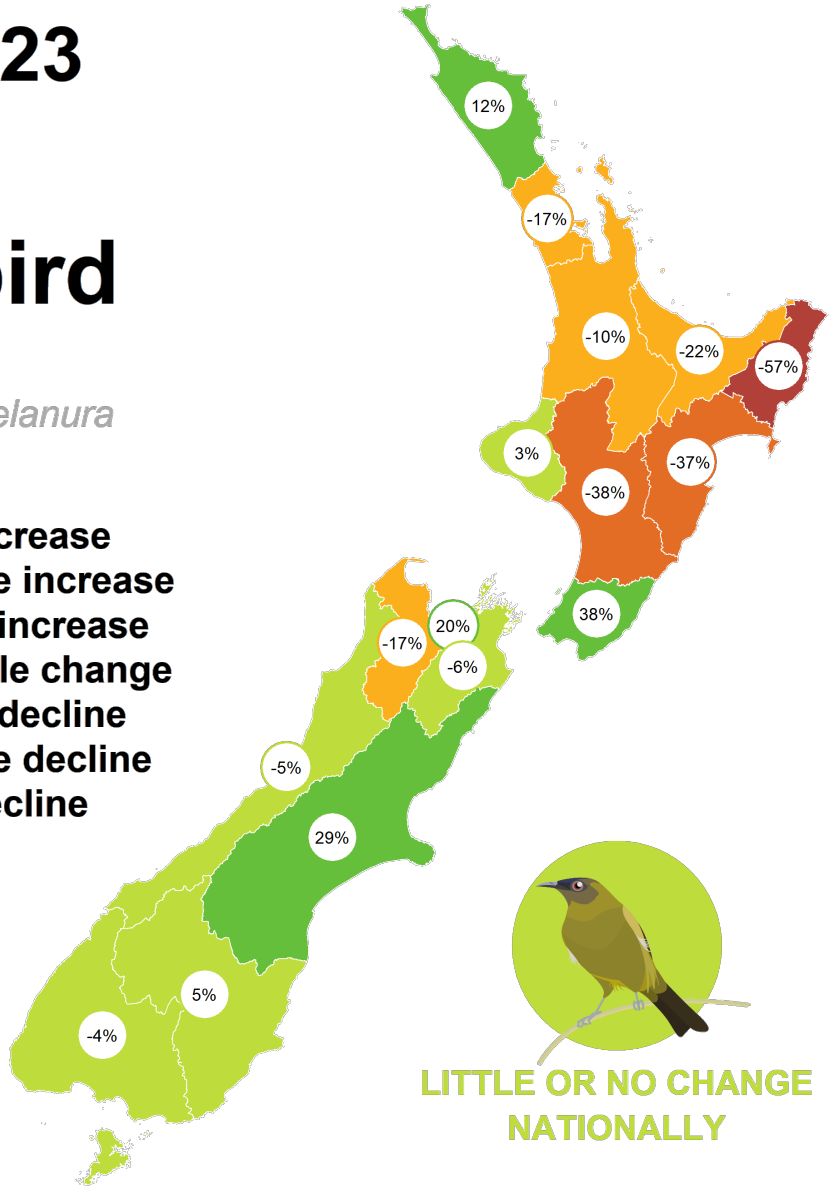
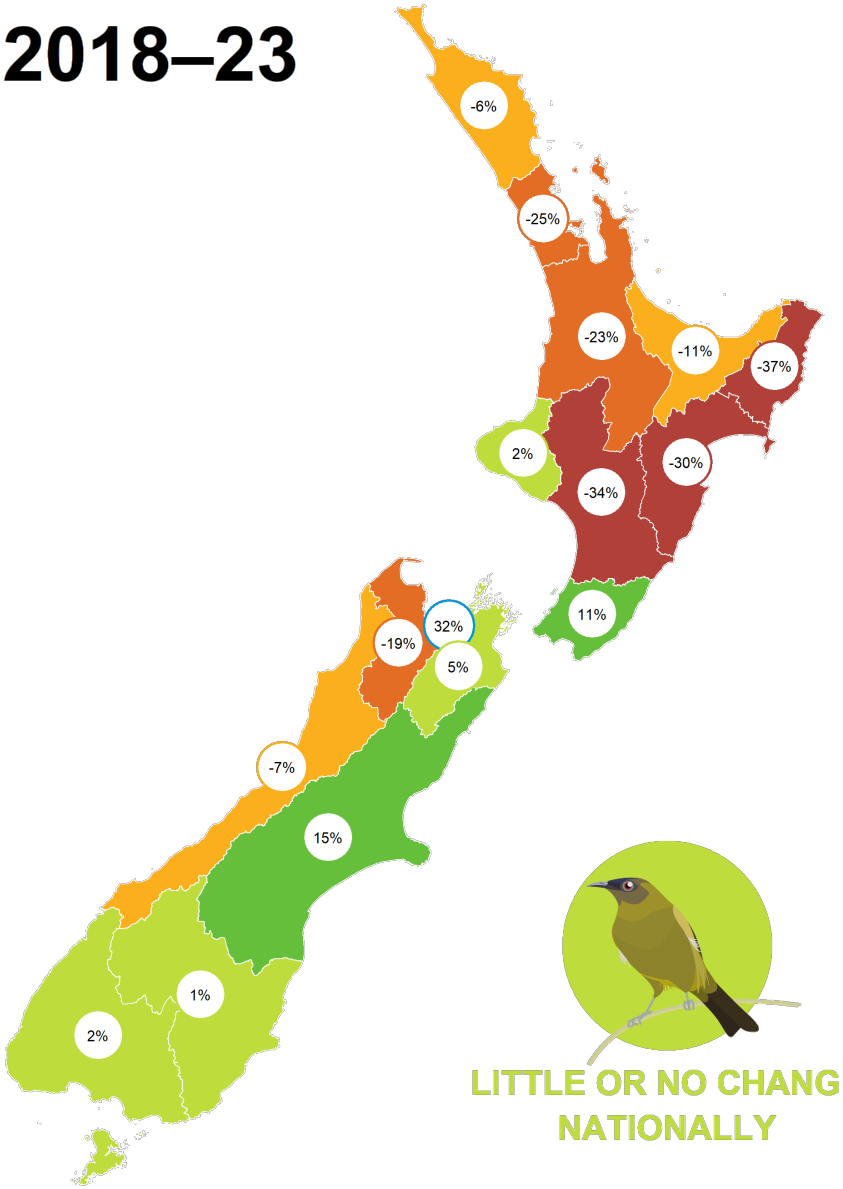


2018–23



Bellbird

Korimako

Anthornis melanura

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

LITTLE OR NO CHANGE NATIONALLY

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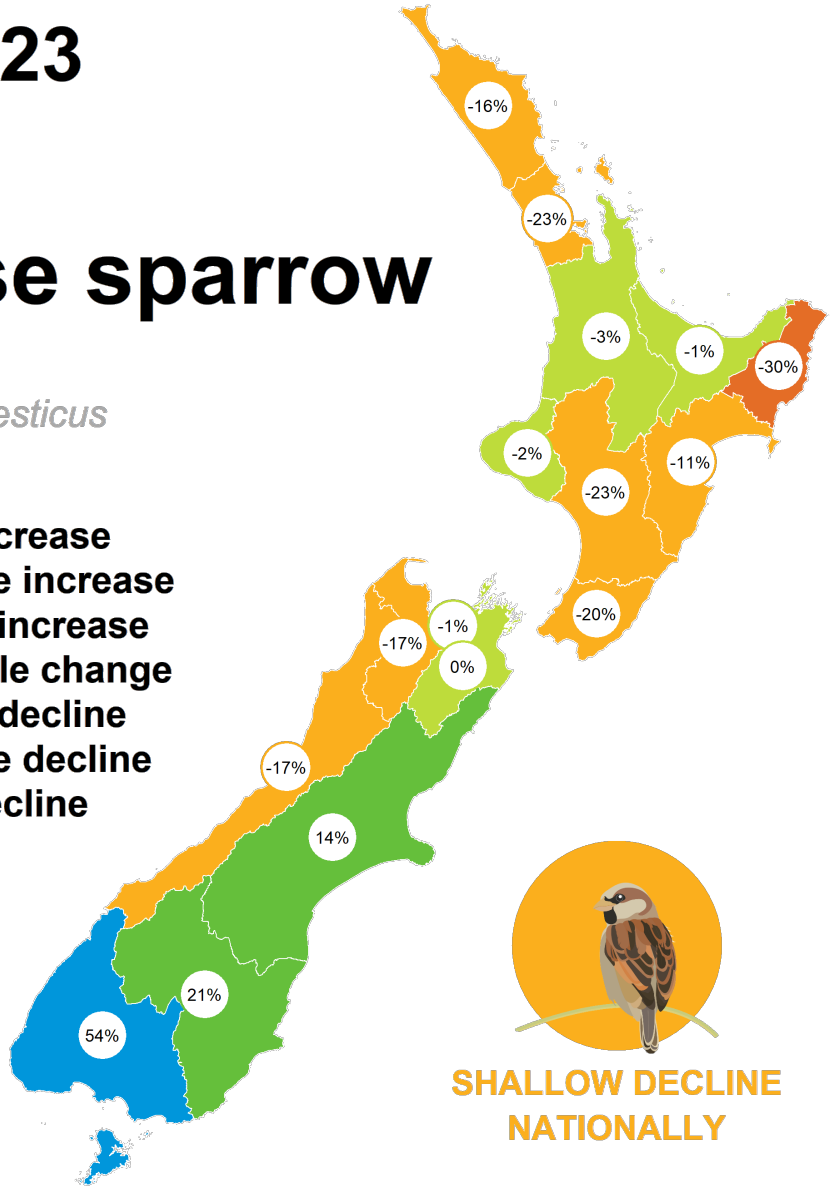

2018–23

House sparrow

Tiu

Passer domesticus

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

SHALLOW DECLINE NATIONALLY

MODERATE DECLINE NATIONALLY

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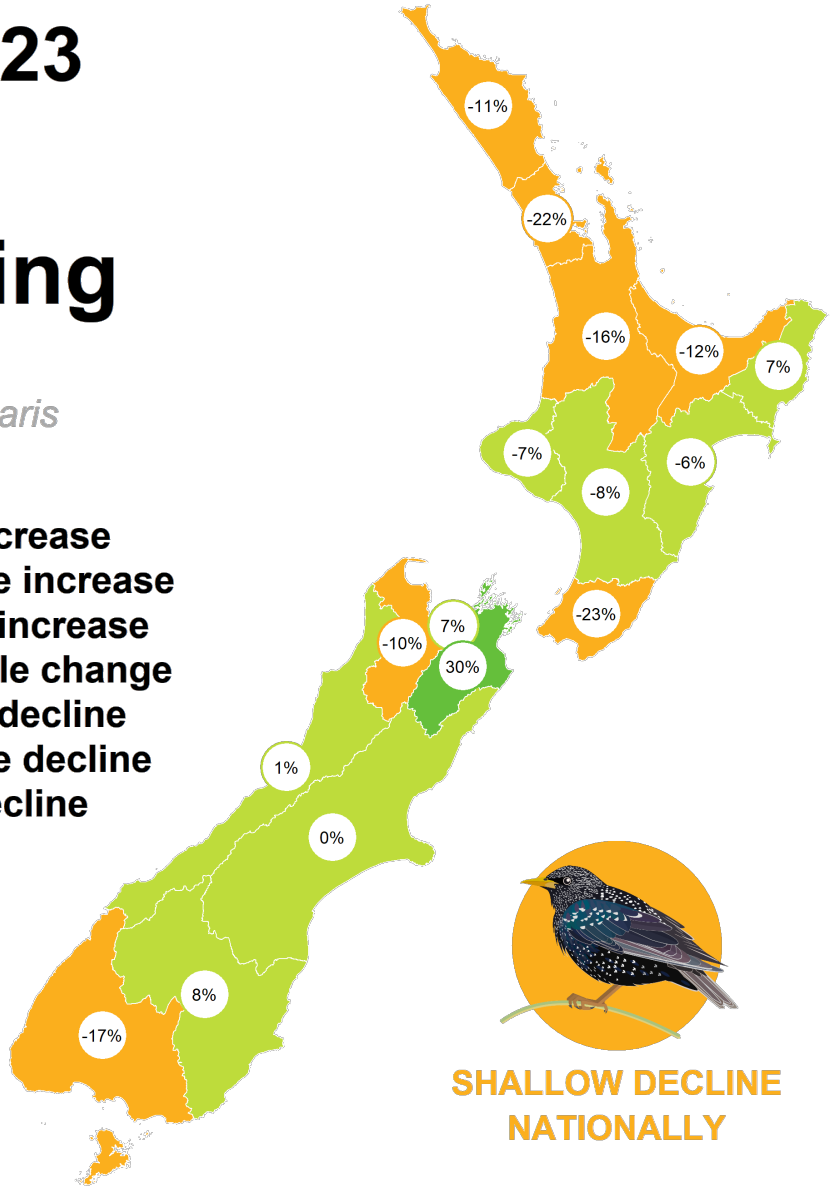
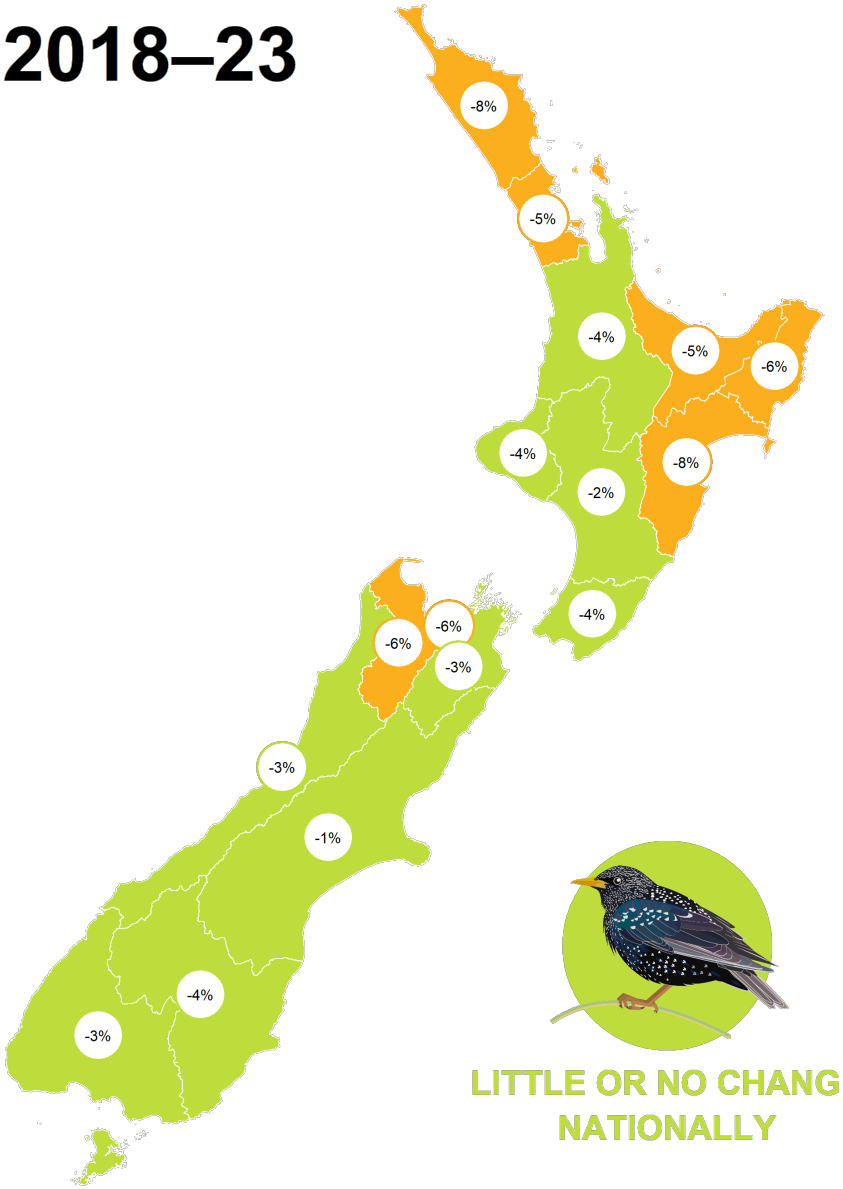
2013–23



2018–23



Starling

Tāringi

Sturnus vulgaris

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

SHALLOW DECLINE NATIONALLY

LITTLE OR NO CHANGE NATIONALLY

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New Zealand GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

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2013–23

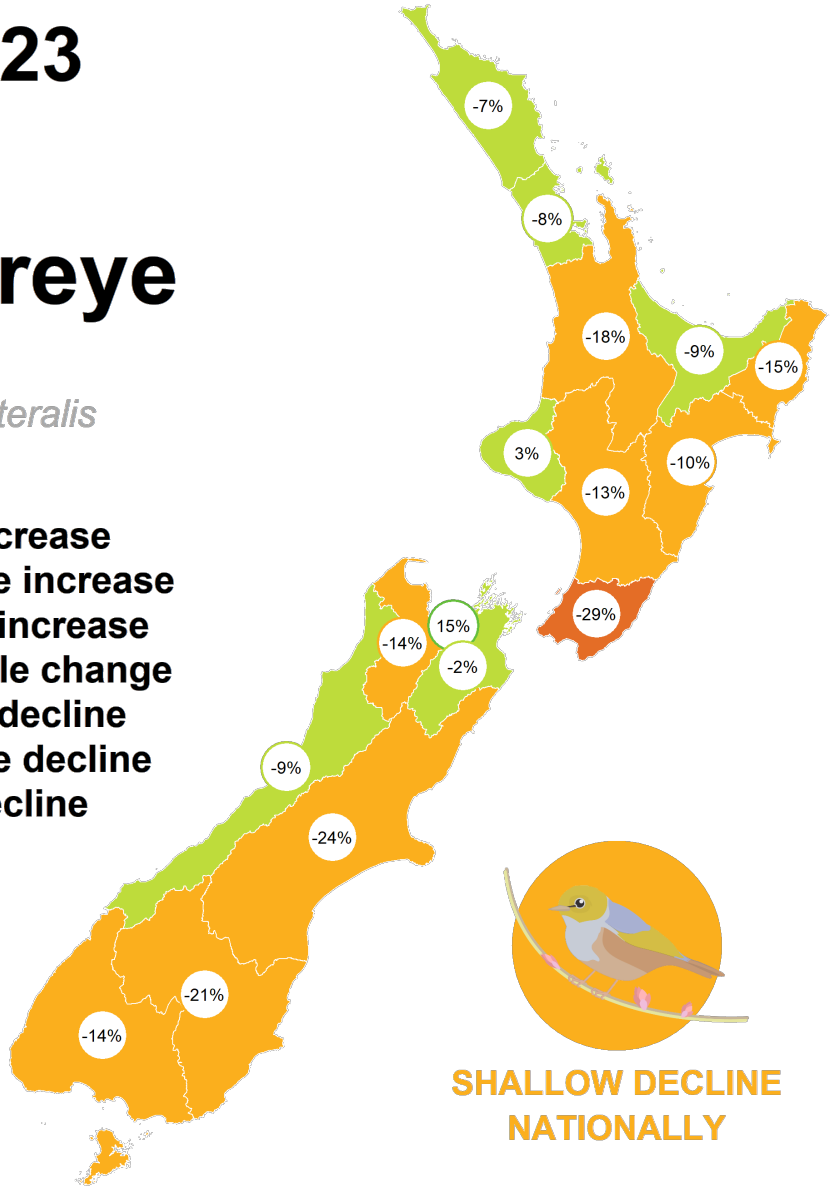
2018–23

Silvereye

Tauhou

Zosterops lateralis

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



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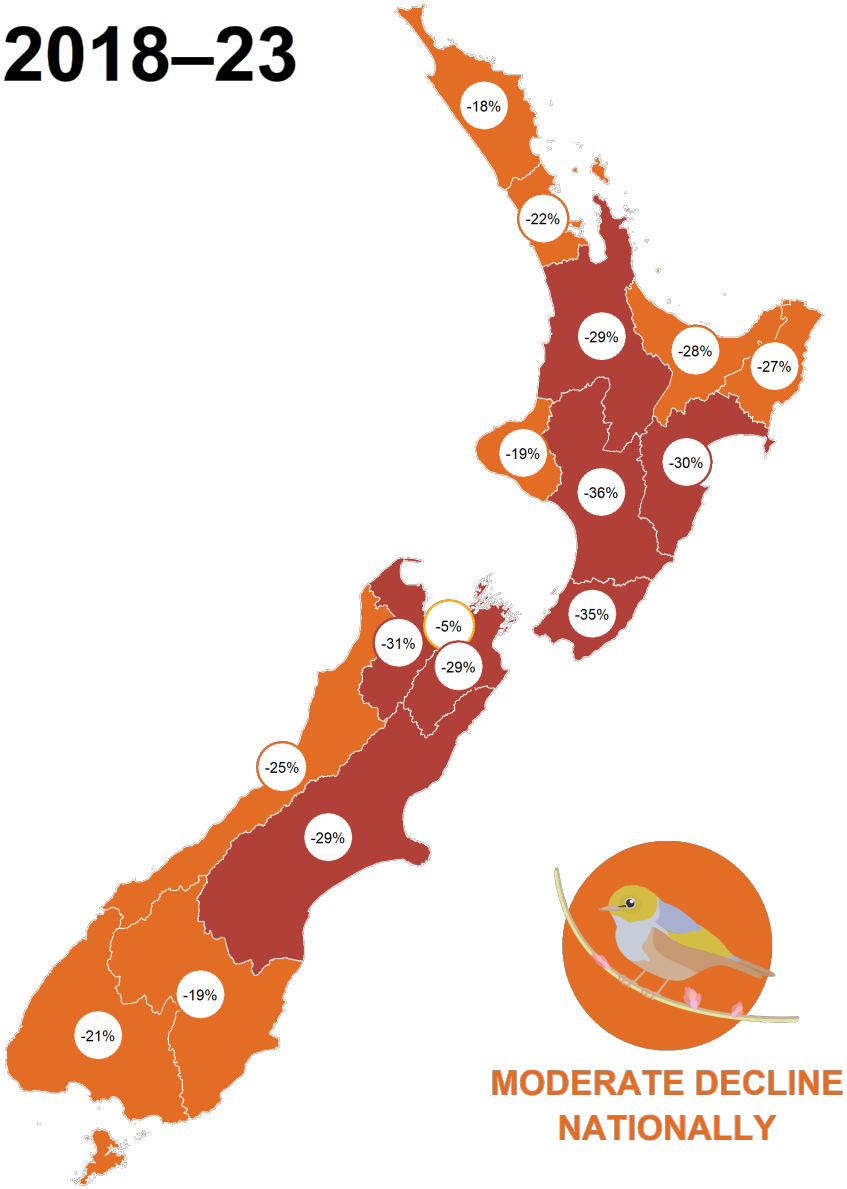

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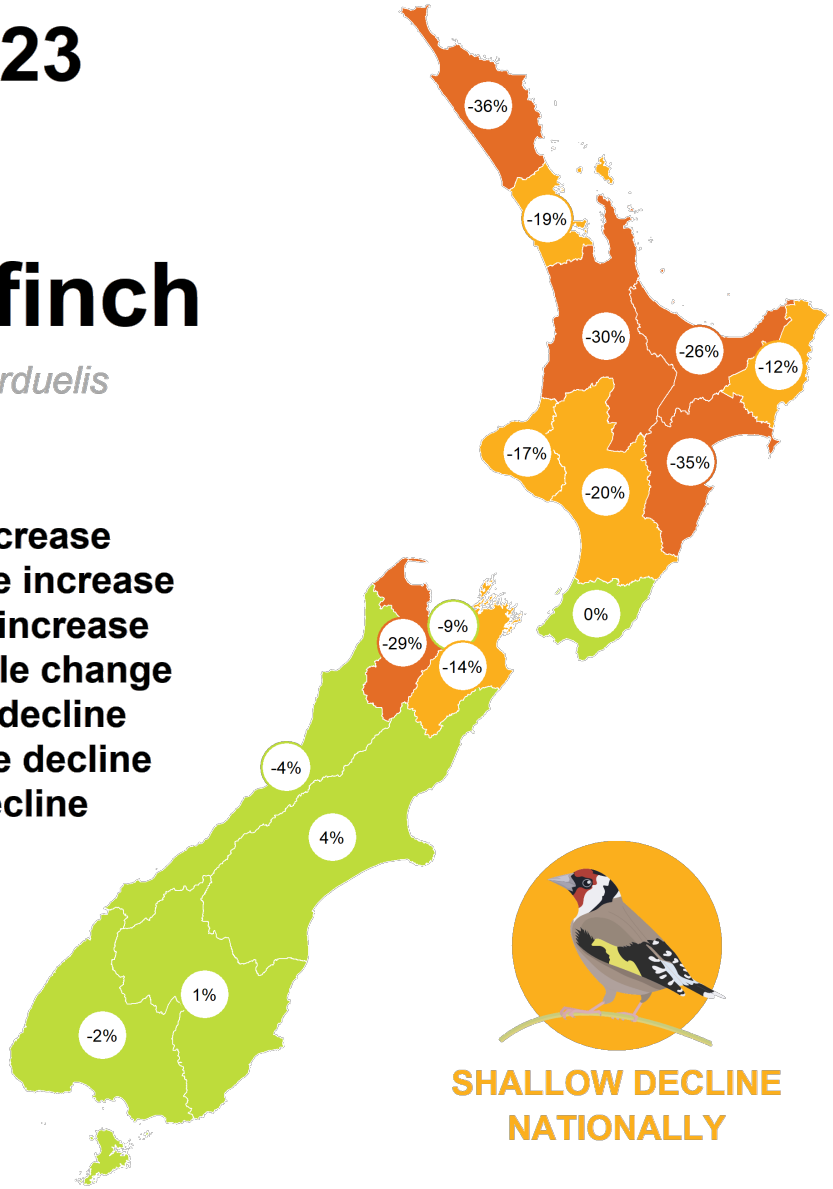
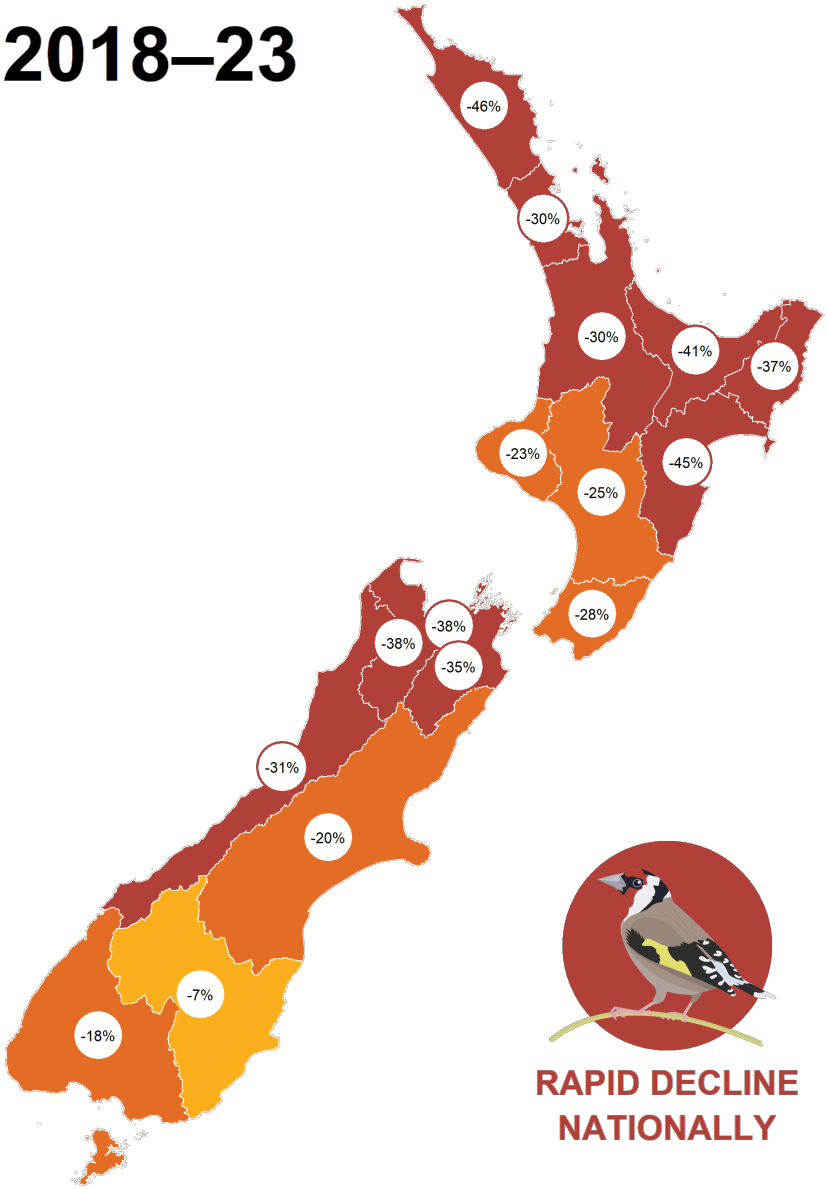
How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

2013–23



2018–23



Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

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

SHALLOW DECLINE NATIONALLY

RAPID DECLINE NATIONALLY

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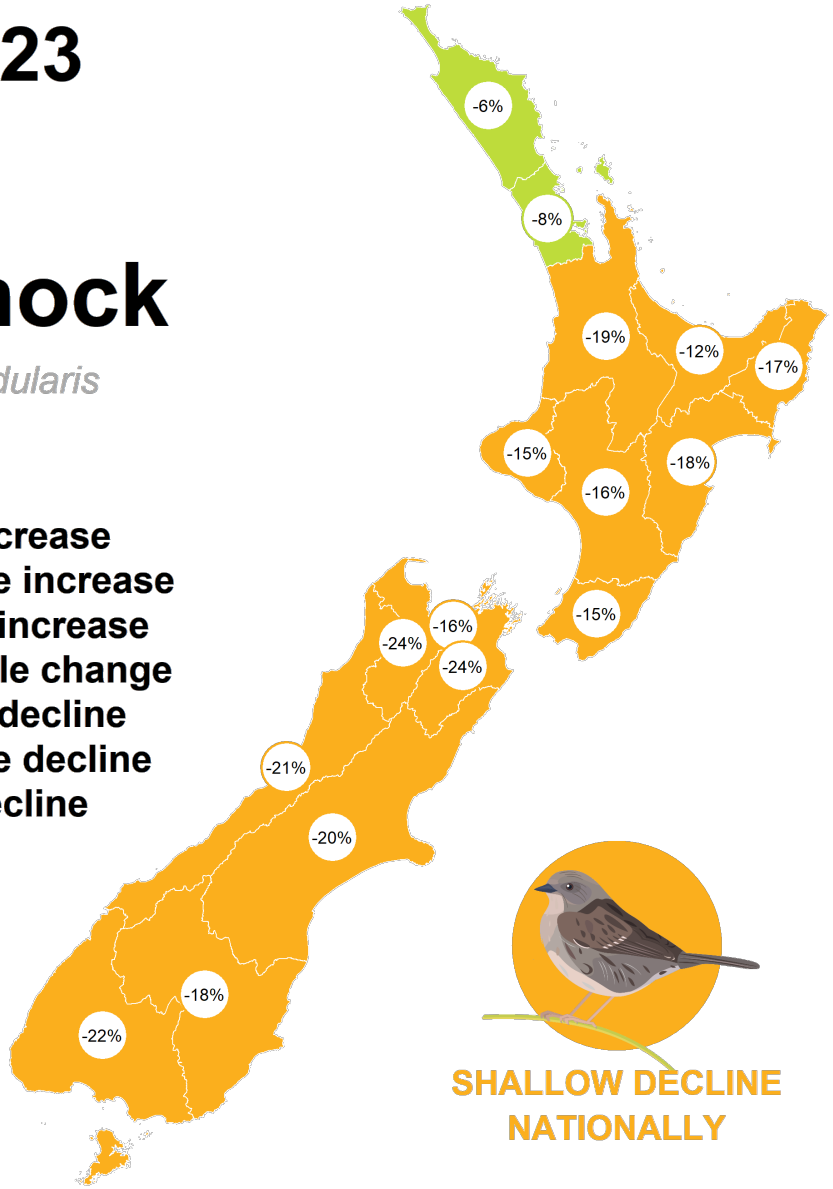
2013–23



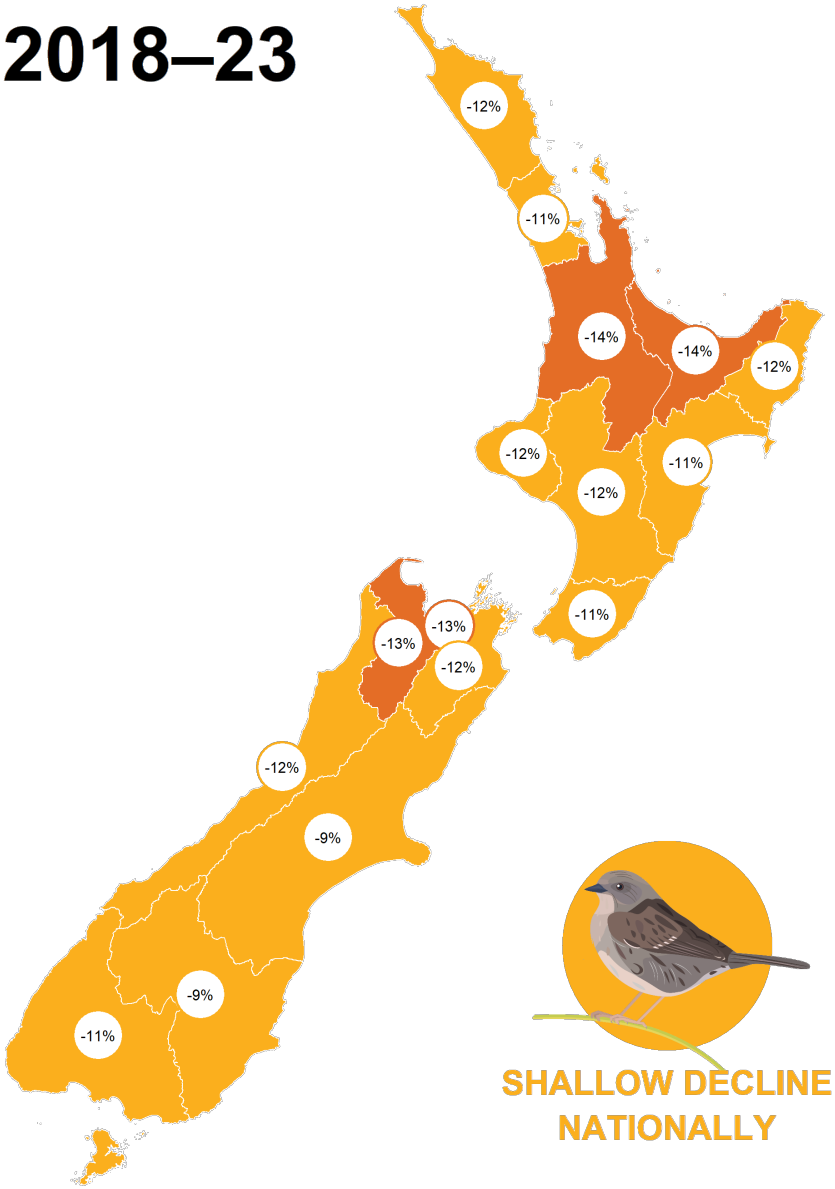
Dunnock

Prunella modularis

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

SHALLOW DECLINE NATIONALLY

2018–23



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New Zealand GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

How have garden bird counts changed across regions?

2013–23

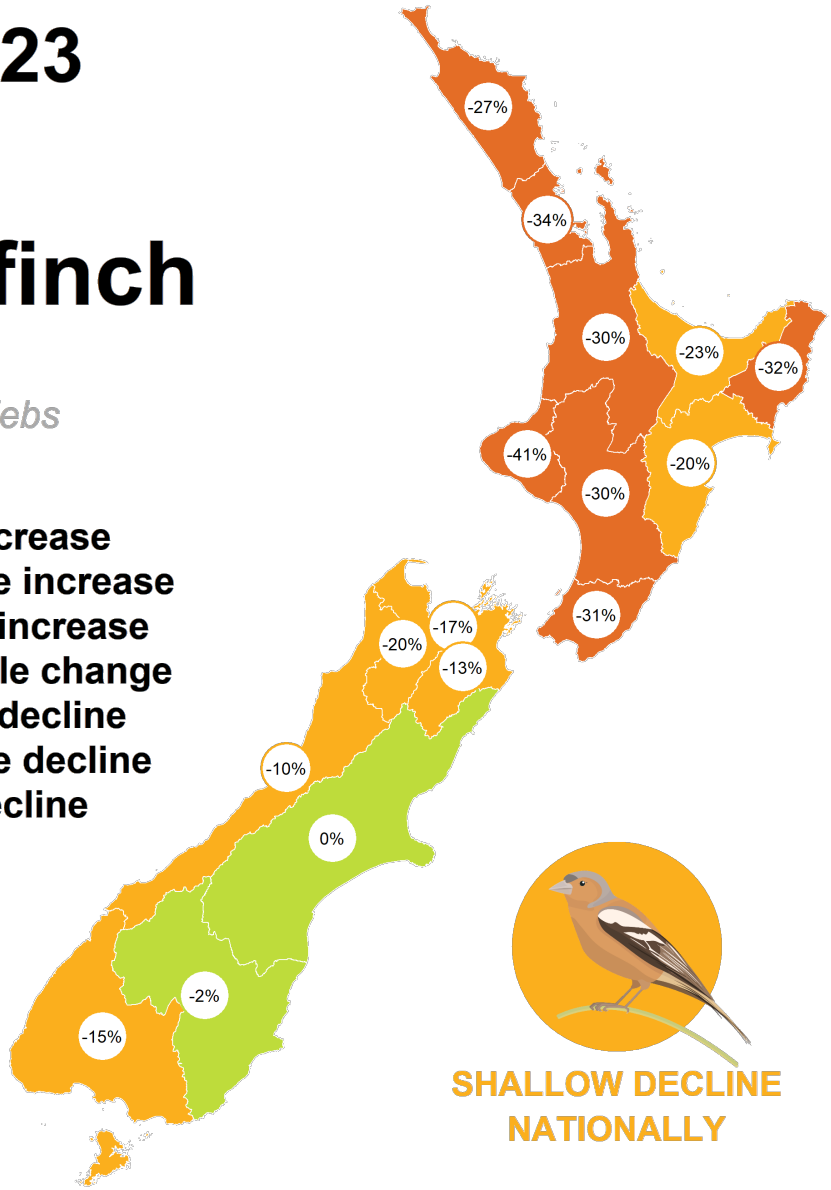
2018–23

Chaffinch

Pahirini

Fringilla coelebs

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



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2024

29 June to 7 July

Visit our webpage to learn more:

https://gardenbirdsurvey.nz/

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Whenua
Landcare
Research

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