

Draw New Zealand Birds

A step-by-step guide



North Island Kōkako

The kōkako is one of New Zealand's most ancient birds. It is the last species of the wattle family to live on the mainland. Its relatives include the huia, which died out 100 years ago, and the saddleback which survives only on predator-free islands.

The North Island kōkako is larger than a tui in size, with denim coloured feathers, a black strip across its eyes, and striking blue wattles hang beside its beak. It is considered endangered with only 780 pairs left.

The South Island kōkako is slightly smaller than the North Island kōkako, with dusky grey feathers, and orange wattles. The South Island kōkako was declared extinct in 2007.

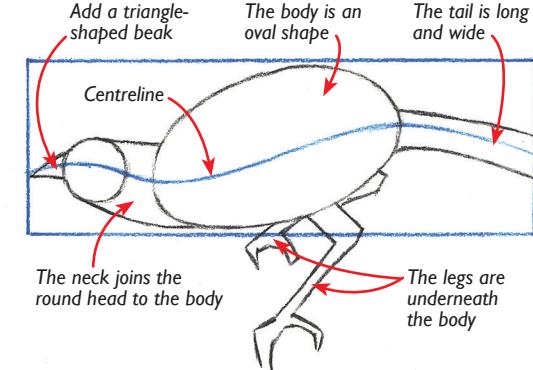
If you hear the haunting melodic call of the kōkako – it is a sign you are in a healthy forest.

by Maria Gill

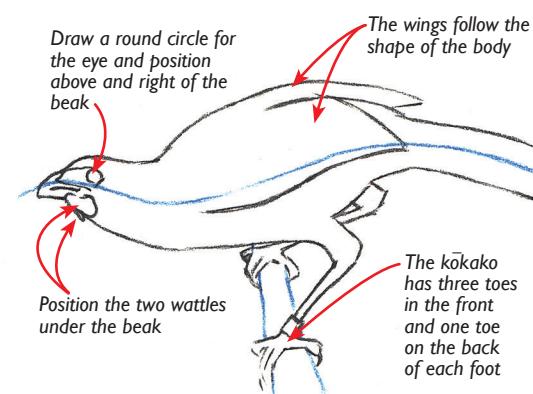


Photo: Pukaha Mount Bruce

Step 1 Study the shape of the kōkako and see how the body fits within a rectangle.



Step 2 Find the centreline. Draw a round circle for the head and an oval for the body. Join with the short neck. Use guidelines to position the feet. The left foot is in front of the right.



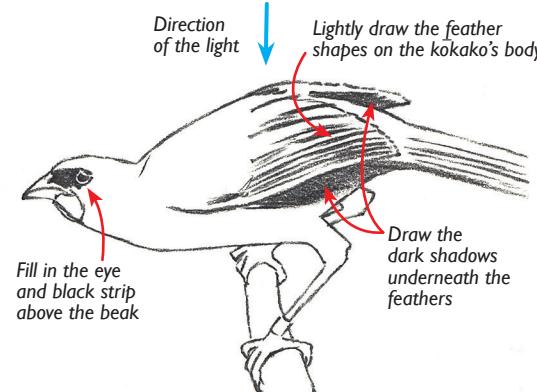
Step 3 Refine the shape of the kōkako's body and feet, and add the wings. The neck has a gentle curve to join the head to the body; the curve follows through to the tail.

Draw lightly at first to establish the shapes. Check that the shapes, size, proportions and position are correct. The blue lines are guidelines and can be rubbed out later.

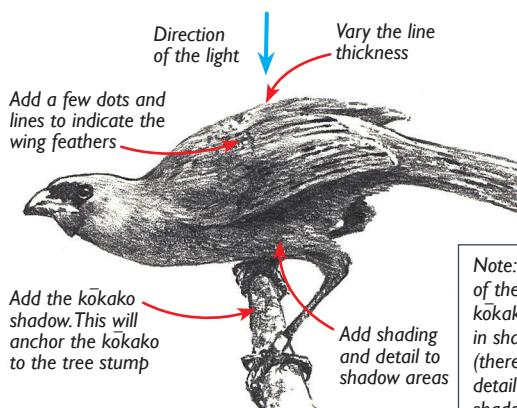
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Step 4 Lightly draw the feather detail and shadow lines on the kōkako's body. Draw in the dark shadows under the feathers, and around the eye. Note the direction of the sunlight.

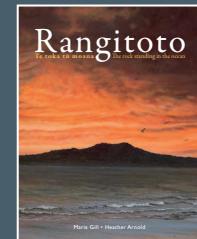


Step 5 Add shading to the kōkako. Leave the light areas white. Vary the tone (drawn with the side of the pencil) and detail (point of pencil). Draw the lines in the same direction as the feathers. Finally, add some detail on the tree stump using the side and point of the pencil.

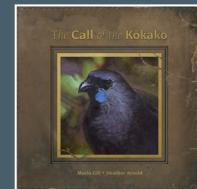
Note: most of the kōkako is in shadow (there is detail in the shadows). The highlight is on the top of the head and back



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