

Basilica of Bird Song

I would give the Ecology Trail (4km) at Tawharanui Regional Park eight of ten for these things alone – white sand beaches, rocky coastline, blue-green bays, native forest and views of the spectacular outer Hauraki Gulf. However, what really sets this trail apart for me is the section from the coastline and up through the valley to the paddocks at the crest of the hill – the Basilica of Bird Song.

It's easy to just keep strolling through this section, chatting to friends or family, but I urge you to STOP, LOOK, LISTEN! In this small valley, and through the cathedral of trees at its head, you will hear and see the most beautiful bird life. Go quietly, whisper, stop and wait – the birds will come to you. In the the 15-odd minutes we had between other walkers, we saw and heard bell birds, tui, fantails, saddlebacks and a half-a-dozen others I couldn't identify. It is very special and I encourage you to get out there to experience it, but remember . . . stop, look, listen.