

# WILDLIFE TRAVEL

20th January to 9th February 2018 (21 days)

## NEW ZEALAND

Natural history from North to South



"a wonderful leader, very knowledgeable... we were very lucky to have him"

New Zealand 2009/10

**Stunning landscapes, lush vegetation, unique wildlife and friendly people make New Zealand a paradise for nature lovers.**

Whether its birds or botany, landscapes or general natural history, this holiday has something for everyone. We will explore a wide range of habitats with the scenic backdrop of New Zealand's spectacular landscapes. Along the way the highlights of this trip should include the endangered birdlife of **Tiri Tiri Matangi**, where Saddleback, Takahe and Kokako will entertain us; the ancient **Kauri forests** of the Waitakere Ranges; the spectacular peaks and glaciers of Mount Cook National Park, with **alpine flora** and the critically endangered Black Stilt; albatrosses, dolphins and **Sperm Whales** out from Kaikoura; the spectacular scenery of Milford Sound; and the bizarre crepuscular **kiwis** feeding on Stewart Island.

New Zealand is a remarkable assemblage of islands, stretching from the subtropics in the north to the subantarctic in the south. This holiday has been planned to enable us to see a very wide range of the ecological diversity that occurs in the islands, starting far enough north in North Island to see mangroves and the huge Kauri trees and ending on Stewart Island off the southern tip of South Island, the magical climax of the trip.

Our foremost objective is, of course, to enjoy the incredible variety of scenery and wildlife, but the holiday offers much more than that for those who are keen to learn more. The leaders have extensive knowledge of the fauna and flora and will be able to offer detailed information about the wildlife of a country where more than 90% of the native plants and animals are endemic to Oceania.



**Price**  
£5255

(does not include international and Dunedin - Auckland flights)

**Single Room Supplement**  
£895

**Full board**

**Day 1** meet in Auckland  
**Day 2-7** North Island inc. Tiri Tiri Matangi, Waitakera, Taupo, Tongariro Nat'l Park.  
**Day 8** ferry to S. Island  
**Day 9-17** South Island inc. Kaikoura, Ohau Mt Cook Nat'l Park Fiordland & Otago.  
**Day 18-20** Stewart Island  
**Day 21** depart Dunedin

**Leaders**  
Mark Hanger  
with Chris Donnelly & Henry Stanier

Wildlife and culture holidays



Our profits are donated to the **Wildlife Trusts**



## ITINERARY

Please note that the itinerary may be changed to suit the weather or other practicalities or at the discretion of the leaders.

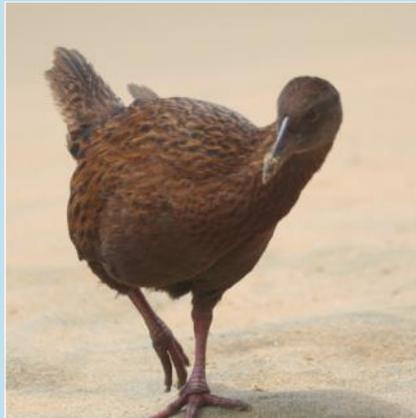
**Day 1 Sat 20th** After making our way to Auckland, our holiday starts with dinner at our hotel in the city centre. ***International flights are not included to allow flexibility.***

**Day 2 Sun 21st** Today we take a boat out to **Tiri Tiri Matangi** Island in the Hauraki Gulf. This island is home to superb coastal pohutukawa forest and acts as an 'ark' for endangered bird species all-but exterminated from the mainland, such as North Island Saddleback, Takahe, Brown Teal and Stitchbird. The opportunities for photography are tremendous. The island is also an excellent example of what can be achieved by conservation volunteers involved in a major re-vegetation project. Our visit will contribute to the on-going conservation work on the island. Overnight Auckland.

**Day 3 Mon 22nd** Depart for the majestic ancient Kauri forests in the **Waitakere Ranges**. Once widespread in the north, just 150 hectares remain of pristine forest, containing three species of tree ferns and some of the world's largest trees, members of the *Auracariaceae* family. A gentle walk here provides an excellent introduction to New Zealand's lowland forests. Later, we visit an Australasian Gannet colony on the coast. Overnight Auckland.

**Day 4 Tue 23rd** Continuing southwards, the landform abruptly changes as we climb from the base of the peninsula onto the central North Island volcanic plateau. This region is the heart of New Zealand's geothermal activity. Many of the thermal regions are now major tourist attractions which has also been to their detriment. A few, however, remain relatively natural geothermal wonderlands. At **Waimangu Valley**, we study the impact of the major Tarawera eruption of 1886 and the successive lesser periods of activity - a rift valley undergoing primary succession, sinter terraces and large steaming cauldron lakes. The valley is also home to a variety of sub-tropical fern species found only in New Zealand, within metres of the steam vents. Overnight **Taupo**.

**Day 5 Wed 24th** This morning we have a dawn start, in order to experience the haunting call of the endangered North Island Kokako in its natural, misty rainforest environment. **Pureora Forest Park** contains one of the finest areas of podocarp forest in the country, the so-called 'dinosaur forests', as well as a large variety of native invertebrates, like the curious *Peripatus*, and numerous birds. We will have most of today to gain more insight into the nature and conservation of this special forest, and to enjoy the birds, including the Kaka, Yellow-crowned Parakeet, North Island Robin, Whitehead and Rifleman. We shall walk through three magnificent areas of rainforest today before returning to Taupo.



**Day 6 Thu 25th** Immediately to the south of **Lake Taupo** are the three high volcanic peaks of Tongariro National Park. Today we travel into this, the earliest national park in NZ, and spend the day on the slopes of the highest peak, Ruapehu. With laval and/or mud flows having occurred in recent years off both **Ruapehu** and nearby Ngauruhoe, the vicinity is an excellent one in which to study the impact of volcanism on subalpine and montane vegetation. Stay Skotel, Whakapapa on the slopes of Mt Ruapehu two nights.



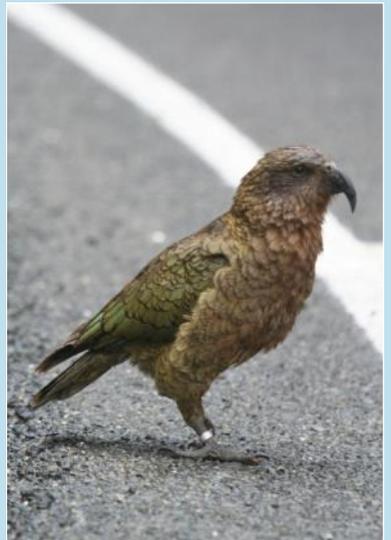
**Day 7 Fri 26th** Further walks today onto the slopes of Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe, or relax and enjoy the alpine splendour. Today's explorations will include opportunities to study the sub-alpine shrublands, alpine herbs, and montane/sub-alpine NZ beech forests, and upland birds such as New Zealand Falcon, and Fernbird. There will be an opportunity to seek out the endangered **Blue Duck** while in this region. Overnight Whakapapa.



**Day 8 Sat 27th** Continue south to New Zealand's capital city, **Wellington**. Here we embark on the three-hour ferry crossing to Picton in the South Island. The sailing takes you first through Wellington Harbour, then across a short stretch of **Cook Strait** before the final hour is spent travelling up the drowned valleys of the Marlborough Sounds. The scenery is spectacular and we should see our first albatrosses, Blue Penguin and other seabirds along the way. Late afternoon drive to Nelson Lakes National Park. Stay St Arnaud three nights.



**Day 9 Sun 28th** At the head of nearby Wairau Valley lies the Nelson Lakes National Park. The beautiful **Lakes Rotoiti and Rotoroa** nestle amongst the northern peaks of the Southern Alps. Today we will enjoy short walks in the enchanting forest surrounding the lakes and keep eyes peeled for the diversity of birdlife that makes such forests home. The more energetic may walk up through the forest beyond the treeline and out into the subalpine tussocklands for breathtaking panoramas of the national park's mountains and lakes. Overnight St Arnaud.



**Day 10 Mon 29th** Travel down the **Motueka Valley** and to North West Nelson. The Graham Valley provides the easiest access to the recently formed Kahurangi National Park. This national park is perhaps the botanically most diverse in the country. Enjoy relaxing or more taxing walks into the **Mount Arthur** region and the surrounding tablelands. Late afternoon return to St Arnaud for our overnight stop.

**Day 11 Tue 30th** The journey today takes us back east. A study of New Zealand alpine scree and rock outcrop vegetation begins with a trip to the summit of **Blackbirch**. Here, giant 'vegetable sheep' abound amidst a dry cushion flora. If the plants do not take your breath away, the panoramic views are sure to! Mid

**Endemic birds of New Zealand** (clockwise from top): Wrybill, North Island Saddleback, Blue Duck, Kea, North Island Kokako, Stewart Island Weka and Takahe

-afternoon return to sea level and continue to **Kaikoura**, where we spent the next two nights.

**Day 12 Wed 31st** Kaikoura is famed for its whales and seabirds. An optional three-hour whale watching trip, weather permitting, should enable viewing of **Sperm Whales**, as well as large schools of acrobatic Dusky Dolphins and a wide array of seabirds which inhabit the deep water just off the coast, including six species of albatross. You may also opt for the spectacular albatross and seabird trip, which focuses more on bird watching. There should be time during our stay in Kaikoura to enjoy both trips. For those who prefer to stay on dry land, today will be a day to relax and explore the town at your own pace.

**Day 13 Thu 1st Feb** In the case of poor weather yesterday, there will again be the chance to go out on an early morning whale trip, followed by late morning departure along the rugged Kaikoura coast for the **Canterbury Plains**. Then it is on to Mackenzie Country, a dry intermontane basin with glacial lakes. Here there should be time for those wishing to take an optional flight over Mount Cook National Park and the highest peaks and glaciers of the Southern Alps, before we arrive at **Lake Ohau**, where we stay for the next two nights.

**Day 14 Fri 2nd** A day to explore **Mount Cook National Park**. The walk along the trail through the spectacular Hooker Valley, at the foot of Mt Cook, enables us to study the changes in vegetation on successive moraines as the Hooker and Mueller Glaciers are reached. Giant Mt Cook buttercups, Golden Spaniards and subalpine shrubs abound amidst unforgettable landscapes. An alternative for the more energetic is to walk up the Sealy Range to Sealy Tarns. Several alpine plant communities are seen en route with tussockland, herb field, and outcrop plants most conspicuous. Late examples of the famed Mt Cook 'lily' (actually a buttercup) may be found up here. Descend past Lake Pukaki to Ohau. This area is home to one of New Zealand's rarest birds, the **Black Stilt**, and we will spend some time looking for this critically endangered wader on the braided river and lake shore.

**Day 15 Sat 3rd** Leave the Mackenzie Basin and the Waitaki Valley and cross the Lindis Pass - gateway to **Central Otago**. Inland Otago is a great fragmented schist plateau that now appears as a series of block mountain ranges. A region of climatic extremes, the dry core of New Zealand is also home to a vast array of cushion alpine tussock species. The afternoon is spent on the Old Man Range near Alexandra, typical of the block mountains of Otago, and its extremes of climate have produced a cushion flora unsurpassed elsewhere. Snowbank vegetation is also seen here. Stay Queenstown one night.

**Day 16 Sun 4th** To the west of Queenstown lies the **Fiordland World Heritage Area**, a stunning area encompassing New Zealand's largest national park. Recent glacially-gouged valleys nestled between mountain ranges characterise the landscape. We devote the next two days to this, the grandest and most rugged part of New Zealand. After travelling to Lake Te Anau on the eastern edge of the park we continue into the Eglinton Valley, a valley



famed for its superb red beech forests and the array of forest birds therein. Stay **Te Anau** three nights.

**Day 17 Mon 5th** The upper Hollyford Valley through which the famed Milford Road passes contains superb boulder fields and herb fields. The Gertrude Cirque has arguably the finest accessible alpine communities in the country. The day will be spent exploring this botanical treasure trove in the **Darran Mountains** where we will also look for Kea and NZ Rock Wren. Early afternoon descend to sea level at **Milford Sound**, in time for an (optional) afternoon cruise along the sound to the fjord entrance, keeping our eyes peeled for Fiordland Penguin and Bottle-nosed Dolphins. We return early evening to Te Anau.

**Day 18 Tue 6th** Alas we must leave this wild land and cross the southern South Island to Invercargill from where we take the ferry across the Foveaux Strait to Stewart Island. Afternoon for exploration of the forest and coastal tracks in the vicinity of the village. Stay Oban two nights.

**Day 19 Wed 7th** We discover the grand diversity of life on this, the least modified of the three main islands of New Zealand. This afternoon we take a short boat trip across Paterson Inlet to near-pristine Ulva Island. This evening there is an optional excursion to seek out the Stewart Island Brown Kiwi feeding along the beach on the southern side of Paterson Inlet. We return to hotel in the small hours!

**Day 20 Thu 8th** We fly back to the mainland early afternoon and drive to **Dunedin** via the forgotten corner of New Zealand, **the Catlins** with some of the finest coastal scenery and lowland forests in the country. Endemic species inhabit coastal cliffs, below which New Zealand Fur Seals breed. Beyond, lush forests, tropical in character, run down to superb sweeping sandy beaches with not a soul in sight. We shall visit the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust's recently acquired Long Point Reserve and look at the efforts and plans to restore the area. Late afternoon arrival in Dunedin. Stay final night in Dunedin.

**Day 21 Fri 9th Feb** A free morning gives us time to discover some of historic Dunedin's special attractions before our farewell lunch after which the holiday ends. There are afternoon flights north to Auckland, where you can connect with international flights home. **NB To allow maximum flexibility, the flight from Dunedin to Auckland and the international flights are not included in the holiday.**

(opposite) Stitchbird **Endemic flora of New Zealand** (clockwise from top): *Pterostylis banksii*; *Aciphylla colensoi*; *Haastia pulvinaris*; *Peraxilla colensoi*; *Raoulia grandiflora*; *Celmisia semicordata*; *Parahebe decora* on Mt Ruapehu, *Metrosideros excelsa*;



## Weather

New Zealand's summer months are December to February, bringing high temperatures and sunshine. Days are long and sunny, nights are mild. Summer is an excellent time for walking in the bush and a variety of other outdoor activities. New Zealand has a relaxed lifestyle, so dress will be informal at all times. Bring comfortable clothing and anticipate a similar range of temperatures to Britain - it should be pleasantly warm/hot in the North Island but, as in all mountainous areas, expect some cold and windy weather in the Southern Alps. Rain is possible at all times. Comfortable footwear is essential -as it must be strong enough to withstand rough ground underfoot; walking boots or stout shoes are recommended. Likely temperature range is 10 C to 25 C.

## Transport and travelling

We shall be using an air-conditioned coach throughout with microphone, ample luggage storage in the trailer, and tea and coffee provisions. The coach will travel on the inter-island ferry with the group. The ferry between North and South Islands is a large rail, freight and passenger ferry taking several hundred cars and passengers. A smaller, passenger ferry (with comfortable indoor seating) takes us across to Stewart Island, while the flight back is on 9 seater Islanders with limited luggage space hence on days 18-20 it will be necessary to travel with small, soft bags, leaving our main luggage in Invercargill.

## Accommodation

All accommodation is very comfortable and all rooms have private facilities. In most locations it is average to good standard, 3 star equivalent, although higher on occasion.

## Leaders

**Mark Hanger** was a principal in the formation of Nature Quest New Zealand and continues to be a Director today. A graduate in Botany from Otago University, Mark was previously employed with the National Parks and Reserves Service in Otago for 7 years. Along with a professional involvement in conservation since 1979, Mark has had an equally long private interest in and concern for conservation. Mark is a very popular leader: he led both our previous visits to New Zealand, as well as our holidays to Tasmania and Western Australia.

**Christine Donnelly** and **Henry Stanier** will accompany Mark (unless it is a small group) and sharing the co-leading of this trip. Chris is a Director of Wildlife Travel and has led many tours for the company including trips to the southern hemisphere (Chile, Argentina and South Africa). Henry works for the Wildlife Trust as Ecology and Recording Officer at the Great Fen in Cambridgeshire. They are both experienced wildlife holiday leaders and wildlife educators and, between them, have an extensive knowledge of natural history including plants, birds, mammals, invertebrates, geology and ecology. This will be their 'antipodean' trip.



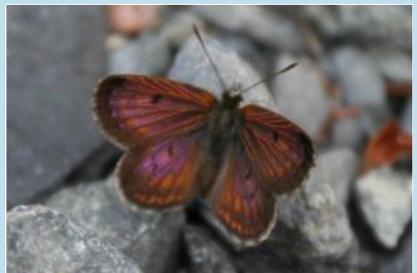
## Fitness and health

- This is a 21-day tour, stopping at several locations, and you therefore need to be generally fit and able to cope with 'living out of a suitcase' and frequent journeys between areas.
- On some days we will not be walking very far, but on others we will take longer walks. Most walking will be at a slow pace to give us the time to enjoy the plants, scenery and wildlife. If you are a slow walker however, please ring us to discuss whether any of the walks will be problem. We do not do any strenuous hikes but we may be out for a few hours at a time on some days. All walks are optional and you can choose to enjoy a day around the hotel if you prefer (or half a day of this fits in with the transport arrangements), providing we are not moving on to another location that day.
- To see the best of the flowers, it is necessary to walk on rougher **ground and up small slopes**. **Walking boots** are essential for all areas out of the towns as the ground can be rocky, especially on the country tracks.
- The sun can be **VERY** strong, even when it is cold or cloudy, and sun protection (hat, sunglasses and sun cream) is essential.
- Personal travel insurance providing good medical cover is essential for this trip. Safety advice given by the leaders must be heeded at all times particularly when walking in the countryside. We will send you advice on health and safety issues before the tour.

**It is essential that, PRIOR TO BOOKING, you ring us to discuss any potential fitness or health problems that may affect you on this trip, 01954 713575.**

## Passports and Visas

You must have a valid passport for this trip (valid for at least 6 months after the end of the holiday). **Please note that you need a machine-readable passport in order to pass through the USA.** No visa is required to visit New Zealand for up to six months if you hold a UK passport. For holders of other passports it is essential that you check with your embassy or consulate and obtain the necessary documents prior to travel.



(clockwise from top): Salvin's Albatross, Northern Royal Albatross, Dusky Dolphin and Sperm Whale, all off Kaikoura; Boulder Copper; Eglington Valley, South Island; *Thelymitra cyanea*, Mount Cook,

## Travelling to New Zealand

**Flights are not included in the holiday package** to allow travellers to make flexible, individually-suited arrangements. Flights can be booked through Sunvil if wished (eg Air New Zealand via Hong Kong/Los Angeles, Emirates Airlines via Dubai/Melbourne). If you would like Sunvil to book your flight, please ring their Travel Agency on 0208 847 3041. Flight costs are dependent on individual requirements at time of booking. The flight will be invoiced and needs to be paid for separately.

**The flight from Dunedin to Auckland should be booked with your international flight.**

If you wish to extend your holiday, we can arrange accommodation before or after the tour. We will give advice on how to transfer from Auckland airport to our hotel.



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### TO BOOK

Contact us to check availability and reserve a place. Complete the Booking Form and send to Sunvil Holidays (CAA-ATOL Licence 808, ABTA V6218), our tour operator, with your deposit. All details about booking are given in the Booking Pack.

**PRICE £5255 per person sharing a twin room**

**Single room supplement £895**

**DEPOSIT £750, SECOND INSTALLMENT ON CONFIRMATION OF HOLIDAY £1500.**

**BALANCE DUE BY 21/10/2017**

**INCLUDED:** Local transport as specified in the itinerary. 20 nights accommodation, full board basis (breakfast, picnic lunch and dinner). Inter-island ferry, water-taxi to/from Ulva Island and ferry to/flight from Stewart island. Services of leaders and guides.

**NOT INCLUDED:** International flights. Internal flight Dunedin to Auckland. Optional activities. Evening meal on day 17. Refreshments, including dinner wine. Entrance fees during any optional sightseeing (e.g. museums). Items of a personal nature. Gratuities. Travel insurance.

\*Deposit and cancellation amounts are set in order to allow us to confirm the holiday as soon as possible based on the minimum number of clients needed to cover shared costs and to prevent us from having to cancel the holiday if any individual bookings are cancelled thereafter.

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### WILDLIFE TRAVEL

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*Directors: Christine Donnelly, Brian Eversham, Philip Precey, Michael Russell, Dr Tim Upson  
Wildlife Travel Ltd. Reg. No 2237697; for registered charity numbers lease ask us*

All photos taken by Philip Precey on our 2009/10 New Zealand holiday (trip report downloadable on our website): **Front** (clockwise from top): New Zealand road sign, Yellow-eyed Penguin, Red-crowned Parakeet, tree fern forest on Stewart Island **Back:** *Bulbinella hookeri*