

New Zealand Birding & Nature

With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures



Jan. 20 – Feb. 1, 2018
With Hauraki Gulf Rare Birds
Pre-Extension Jan. 18 – 20
& Steward Island
Post-Extension February 1 – 4

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Discover New Zealand, a land of soaring snowy peaks, turquoise mountain lakes, white sandy beaches, and lush mountain valleys. And while scenery is a true highlight, New Zealand's wildlife is sure to awe birders and nature enthusiasts, alike — endemics abound.

Enjoy delightful lodgings and delicious dining options as we explore both the North and South Islands. Immerse yourself in steamy rainforests, embark on boat and ferry trips teeming with seabirds and marine life, hike in awe-inspiring mountain settings, and sense the great spiritual significance of the Maori people. This trip is a must.

Interested in extending your New Zealand adventure? We offer pre- and post-trip extensions that are sure to impress.

Tour Highlights

- Search for one of the 50 – 60 remaining Fairy Terns on a pre-tour extension to the Hauraki Gulf
- Visit Tiritiri Matangi Island, in search of rare species like the Saddleback, Stitchbird, Whitehead, and Red-Crowned Parakeet
- Discover Miranda Wildlife Sanctuary, home to excellent active shell chenier plains and plentiful sea and shorebirds
- Experience the haunting call of the endangered Kokako in the misty rainforest of Pureora Forest Park
- Embark on a three-hour ferry crossing to the South Island — not nearly long enough for all the wildlife watching from the deck!
- Cruise the Marlborough Sounds, listening for Orange-Fronted Parakeet and watching for Hector's Dolphin
- Discover Kaikoura on a free afternoon; stroll the peninsula, take a whale watching trip, or browse shops



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- Walk amongst the spectacular limestone formations of Castle Hill Basin
- Take a charming cruise around Taiaroa Head, the only mainland breeding site of Northern Royal Albatross
- Explore Stewart Island on a post-tour extension, and search for Brown Kiwi in their natural habitat

Tour Summary

13-Day / 12-Night New Zealand Birding & Nature Tour with local experts and, with 8 or more, Greg Smith
\$4995 from Auckland

Pre-tour rare bird extension, \$825; post-tour Stewart Island extension, \$1595

Airport is Auckland International (AKL)

Itinerary

Sat., Jan. 20 Auckland

We meet our local expert naturalist guide at our hotel for a welcome dinner and introduction to the tour. Auckland is a modern city surrounded by water, volcanoes, and islands. We escape the bustle of the city to enjoy a gentle introduction to the West Coast and to watch Australasian Gannet soar towards their dotted rock outcrop colonies. A relaxed walk in the lush New Zealand rainforest rounds out our first full field day.

Please Note: We can easily book you into the same hotel a night early for a reasonable extra cost, an excellent idea to rest up from the flight and more fully enjoy your stay. Please request this when booking or confirming with your flights.
Accommodations at the Grand Millenium Auckland (L,D)

Sun., Jan. 21 Tiritiri Matangi Island Birding

Tiritiri Matangi is an island wildlife sanctuary in the Hauraki Gulf, just north of Auckland. A century of farming left this unique island all but deforested, however an ambitious restoration project launched 17 years ago, and the fruits of these labors are already noticeable — 60% of the island now boasts lush forests that are home to some of the rarest birds in the world. In fact, many of New Zealand's rare and endangered species now only remain on these types of islands; their habitat protected from the ravages of rats, possums, stoats, and other mammalian predators.

A picturesque island, we have a day in the regenerating forest to enjoy birdsongs, including that of re-introduced rare species like the Saddleback, Stitchbird, Whitehead, and Red-Crowned Parakeet. Also on the island are the unique Takahe and Brown Teal. As we pass the Whangaparaoa Peninsula by ferry to and



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from the island, we can hope to be visited by Australasian Gannet, Black Petrel, Cook's Petrel, and Buller's Shearwater.

Dinner tonight is at your leisure so you can enjoy some local fare in the neighborhood or down along the waterfront.

Accommodations at the Grand Millenium Auckland (B,L)



Mon., Jan. 22 Miranda Wildlife Sanctuary / Rotorua

An hour's drive southeast of Auckland to the southwest shore of the Firth of Thames lies Miranda Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary is an incredible feeding ground for many shorebirds, which migrate from the tundra of the arctic regions for the northern winter. Among the thousands of Eastern Bar-Tailed Godwit on the shell banks or silt flats, we can hope to view many knots and South Island Pied Oystercatcher, the rare endemic Wrybill, the endangered New Zealand Dotterel, Far Eastern Curlew, Whimbrel, several sandpipers, Caspian Tern, Little Tern, and Sacred Kingfisher.

Miranda is home to one of the best active shell chenier plains in the world; these incredible geological formations, made almost entirely of seashells and mud, prove to be excellent roosts for many local shorebirds that are attracted to the sanctuary, in large part by the presence of so many of these shells' inhabitants.

Later in the morning, we travel towards Lake Rotorua, the second largest lake on the North Island, where New Zealand Dabchick, New Zealand Scaup, and Little Black Shag often feed or roost. Rotorua is situated in the central plateau of the North Island, a region of much geothermal activity, and boasts thermal hot pools on the lake's edge, as well as freshwater springs.

Accommodations in Taupo (B,L,D)

Tues., Jan. 23

Endangered Kokako / Pureora Forest Park / Tongariro National Park

This morning we have a dawn start in order to experience the haunting call of the endangered Kokako in its natural, misty rainforest environment. Pureora Forest Park extends over the Hauhungaroa and Rangitoto ranges west of Lake Taupo and is home to the 1165 meter-high Mount Pureora. The park contains one of the finest areas of Podocarp forest in the country, as well as a large variety of native invertebrates, like the curious Peripatus, and numerous birds.

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Pureora Forest Park was also the site of a ground-breaking conservation effort in the 1970s after decades of logging. We have most of today to gain insight into the nature and conservation of this special forest, and to enjoy the sounds of the Kaka, Yellow-Crowned Parakeet, Tomtit, New Zealand Robin, Long-Tailed Cuckoo, New Zealand Falcon, Whitehead, and Grey Warbler.



Later, our day winds up in Tongariro National Park. On the rivers running off the volcanoes, a small number of the endangered Whio, or Blue Duck, survive. Today we also make a special trip to search for these birds.

Accommodations at Ohakune/Whakapapa (B,L,D)

Wed., Jan. 24 Foxton Estuary / Ferry from Wellington to the South Island

This morning we enjoy a walk amongst sub-alpine forest and tussocklands on the slopes of Mt. Ruapehu, before departing for Wellington and crossing to the South Island. En route, we bird Foxton Estuary, with opportunities for Pacific Golden Plover and Royal Spoonbill.



From Wellington we embark on an evening ferry crossing to the South Island. Three hours, however, is at times not enough for all the wildlife watching to be done! Wandering and Shy Albatrosses often pass by, as do Giant Petrel, Arctic Skua, and many shearwaters. Towards the entrance of the Marlborough Sounds we can often see Little Blue Penguin, Spotted Shag, and sometimes dolphins.

Accommodations in the Picton Area (B,L)

Thurs., Jan. 25 Marlborough Sounds / King Shag

The waters and inlets of the Marlborough Sounds are our playground this morning. The boat carries us past the islands that dot Queen Charlotte Sound to a small rocky islet, where a small colony of the rare King Shag breed and roost. There may also be an opportunity to listen for the endangered Orange-Fronted Parakeet on one of the sound's predator-free islands. This is also our best chance to get up close views of Hector's



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dolphin, another New Zealand endemic, complete with a Mickey Mouse dorsal fin.

Before returning to Picton, we land to introduce ourselves to the curious Weka, which inhabits local marshlands. Mid-afternoon sees us heading south down the east coast, past the snow-capped peaks of the Kaikoura Range, to the town of Kaikoura.

Accommodations in White Morph (B,L,D)

Fri., Jan. 26 Kaikoura / Seabird Excursion / Free Afternoon

Kaikoura is a breath-taking place where snow-clad mountains reach down to a turquoise sea. It is also the first city in New Zealand to earn Environmental Benchmark status through Earth Check, after an initiative to attain an environmentally sustainable tourism industry. Just off shore, the continental shelf drops abruptly, resulting in an upwelling of nutrients from the sea's depths, attracting a rich and abundant marine life.

An excellent opportunity for bird lovers and generalists alike is a seabird excursion, where one can see flocks of cawing albatrosses (four to five species) and numerous petrels and shearwaters, just meters from the boat. Photographers, prepare to be thrilled. On our last trip, one anxious shearwater landed on the boat and had to be tossed back into the wind!

In the afternoon we are at leisure to stroll on Kaikoura Peninsula, opt for a second pelagic, or join a whale-watching excursion for Sperm Whale. This is a lovely, small coastal town and some may wish to just have a coffee and wander. Lunch and dinner are at leisure, with many dining choices. As you can imagine, fresh seafood is top of the list on most menus.

Accommodations in White Morph (B)



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Sat., Jan. 27

Canterbury Plains / Castle Hill Basin

Today we depart Kaikoura and travel south to cross the agricultural patchwork of the Canterbury Plains. Now one of New Zealand's most intensive agricultural regions, the plains lie between snowcapped mountain ranges and run down from the foothills to the central Southern Alps.

Nestled between Porters and Arthur's Passes, lies the Craigieburn Range and the renowned Castle Hill Basin. We marvel as we walk amidst the spectacular limestone formations that make up this basin.

Our final destination today is the spectacular Arthur's Pass Wilderness Lodge, set amidst a delightful mix of high country beech forest and tussocklands, and a working sheep farm. The owner may be willing to show off his fine working sheep dogs, and baby lambs prove a serious distraction!

Accommodations at Arthur's Pass Wilderness Lodge (B,L,D)



Sun., Jan. 28

Waimakariri Valley / Moa Forest

Today brings an adventure amidst the mountain beech forests and braided rivers of the upper Waimakariri Valley. The Moa Forest discovery morning involves no driving from the lodge for those who want a "no driving" morning. As you walk, enjoy a relaxed and fascinating discovery of a "micro world" of riverbed, rock bluff, shrub land, beech forest plants, and animals. An afternoon guided excursion is available for those wishing to further explore the mountains and lakes near the lodge.

Accommodations at Arthur's Pass Wilderness Lodge (B,L,D)



Mon., Jan. 29 Over Burkes Pass to Lake Tekapo / Optional Flight over Mount Cook National Park

The day starts by crossing back onto the Canterbury Plains and south over Burkes Pass. As we wind across the foothills, with snow-capped mountains in the background, we overlook the vivid turquoise waters of Lake Tekapo and other large glacial lakes.

We make time for an optional flight over Mount Cook



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National Park, flying over the highest peaks and glaciers of the Southern Alps, before continuing to Lake Ohau Lodge for two nights.

Accommodations at Lake Ohau Lodge (B,L,D)



Tues., Jan. 30 Braided Rivers / Mount Cook National Park

The braided rivers in this region are the habitat of the endangered Black Stilt. It is in this scenic realm that we also look for Banded Dotterel and a range of inland waterfowl.

Later today we travel up the Aoraki, the mountain that Sir Edmund Hillary trained on in preparation for his ascent of Mount Everest, in Mount Cook National Park. While serious climbers seek out Mount Cook for some of the best mountaineering in Australasia, we take the opportunity to explore more modest trails and walk amidst the alpine splendor of beautiful herb fields and incredible glacial views, in search of the rare New Zealand Falcon, additional Black Stilt, and Wrybill Plover on their breeding grounds.

Accommodations at Lake Ohau Lodge (B,L,D)

Wed., Jan. 31 Dunedin / Otago Peninsula

This morning we depart for the southeastern coast, arriving in Dunedin, New Zealand's "wildlife capital," in the early afternoon. A charming Otago Harbour cruise takes us around Taiaroa Head, the only mainland breeding site of Northern Royal Albatross. With a wingspan of three meters, these seabirds are certainly impressive, soaring over cliffs dotted with nests of Spotted Shag and the rare Stewart Island Shag. Taiaroa Head's famous lighthouse completes the picturesque scene.



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Past rocky shelves of lounging fur seals, we sail our way back down the harbor towards the central city. Indeed, a magical wildlife experience draws to a close in our rich and diverse discovery of New Zealand's native treasures.
Accommodations in Dunedin (B,L,D)

Thurs., Feb. 1 Main Tour Departures

For those not staying for the extension, flights home from Dunedin to Auckland depart today. (B)

Pre-Tour Extension: Hauraki Gulf Rare Birds

Thurs., Jan. 18 Arrivals in Auckland / Fairy Tern & Shorebirds

Our local expert naturalist guide meets our arriving flights, which typically land in the morning. If you choose, come in a day early at your leisure to rest up and be ready to explore. If you choose to come in early, you can be picked up at your hotel.

Auckland is a modern city surrounded by water, volcanoes, and islands. We escape the bustle of the city to enjoy a gentle introduction to the East Coast as we drive up to Warkworth and search for the very rare Fairy Tern. It is estimated that there are only 50 – 60 individuals of this species left in the world and we search the one area where they nest. We also search through flocks of shorebirds for rarities like 2016's Terek Sandpiper or the Latham's (Japanese) Snipe. We arrive at our lodging in Sandspit with enough time to relax and prepare for tomorrow's boat trip to find the New Zealand Storm-Petrel.

Accommodations in the Sandspit Area (L,D)

Fri., Jan. 19 Hauraki Gulf / New Zealand Storm-Petrel, Pelagic Seabirds & Whales

New Zealand has some of the greatest seabird and marine mammal diversity in the world. On today's half-day charter into Hauraki Gulf, there are a number of species we may encounter that are less likely or unlikely elsewhere else on the tour, including Little and Buller's Shearwaters; Parkinson's (Black), Gray-faced, and Cook's Petrels



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(and more rarely Pycroft's and Black-winged); and White-faced Storm-Petrel. But what makes this trip of particular interest is the possibility of encountering the endangered New Zealand Storm-Petrel, recently rediscovered in 2004. Sightings often include interesting cetaceans as well, including several dolphin species and Bryde's Whales. We visit Tawharanui Sanctuary this afternoon and then have the option of a North Island Brown Kiwi search this evening.

Accommodations in the Sandspit Area (B,L,D)

Sat., Jan. 20 Return to Auckland

After breakfast we head back to Auckland and return in time to pick up participants for the main tour. (B)

Post-Tour Extension: Stewart Island



Thurs., Feb. 1 Ferry to Stewart Island / Search for Brown Kiwi

For those staying on, we depart for Stewart Island today, an important conservation island off of New Zealand's southwest coast. Lunch today is at your leisure at the airport or something we pick up en route.

A short ferry ride over the Foveaux Strait takes us from Invercargill to the almost pristine Stewart Island. Once we arrive on New Zealand's third-largest island, we head out on an evening excursion, by boat and foot, to search for the Brown Kiwi in its natural habitat, returning by midnight. In January Little Blue Penguins are rafting up in the evening just off shore before dark and can often be seen on this evening excursion.

Accommodations in Kaka Retreat (B,D)



Fri., Feb. 2 Boat to Paterson Inlet / Ulva Island Bird Sanctuary

A day marine charter to Paterson Inlet's hidden coves and beaches and into the South Pacific invigorates us with opportunities to observe a rich diversity of seabirds. Among the bays of the inlet, we scan for two very rare penguin species: the Yellow-Eyed Penguin and the Fiordland Crested Penguin. Out at sea we may encounter several species of albatross, including Shy, Black-Browed,

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and Buller's, and the Southern Giant Petrel, Southern Great Skua, and Broad-Billed Prion. We are also likely to come across large flocks of Sooty Shearwater, which breed nearby on the small outer islands.

A treat awaits us on Ulva Island, a three and a half kilometer long island in the middle of Paterson Inlet — a bird sanctuary rich in lush Podocarp forest, and ringing with the songs of the Kaka, Tui, Bellbird, and the rare Red-Crowned Parakeet. The Stewart Island Weka is also a popular resident.

Accommodations in Kaka Retreat (B,L,D)

Sat., Feb. 3 Fiordland National Park / Hollyford Valley

Back on the mainland, we are enticed by the glacially sculptured mountains and valleys of Fiordland National Park. A drive along the Eglinton River, known for its fly-fishing, to the Hollyford Valley delights us with mountain scenery. In this valley we seek out some unique endemic species, including the ubiquitous and cheeky Kea, and the elusive Rock Wren.

You may opt for a mid- to late-afternoon cruise on Milford Sound, where heavily forested mountains and snow-capped peaks quite literally rise from the deep blue waters of the sound.

Accommodations at Milford Sound Lodge (B,L,D)

Sun., Feb. 4 Departures

Today we travel across Southern South Island to arrive in time for a late afternoon flight from Dunedin to Auckland International Airport. Most should be able to connect to evening flights home. If not, we can help you book accommodations near the airport (additional cost). Or, if you wish, stay on at leisure to enjoy Dunedin and make your flights accordingly. (B,L)



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Your Guides

Mark Ayre

A keen birdwatcher for most of his life, Mark began working as a warden at bird reserves in the UK. He then emigrated to New Zealand 32 years ago. Mark is very active in the local Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, and is the current branch chairperson. He is particularly involved in the conservation management of the endangered Mohua (Yellowhead), managing and maintaining trapping and monitoring programmes in the Haast region and the Makarora Valley.

Mark has led birding trips for Nature Quest for the past ten years. During that time he has led for a variety of UK birding tour operators, Audubon societies, and others such as the Western Field Ornithologists and Connecticut Audubon, along with other general nature tour operators.



Greg Smith

Greg Smith is a senior guide for Naturalist Journeys who regularly guides in Alaska, places far afield like Australia, Antarctica, and Botswana, and in his home state of California. Greg looks forward to sharing photography skills and helping Mark show off the wonders of New Zealand.

Cost of the Journey

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. Offset your carbon footprint on one of the many online programs. Show us the receipt and we'll take 50% — up to \$50.00 — of your carbon offset fee off your final payment!

Cost of the Journey

The cost of this journey is \$4995 DBL / \$5745 SGL, from Auckland, New Zealand, based on double occupancy. Cost of the pre-tour extension is \$825 DBL / \$SGL please ask. Cost of the post-tour extension is \$1595 DBL / \$1845 SGL. If you would like to book a pre-trip hotel in Auckland, one can be reserved for you for a cost of around \$110 per night, per room — please let us know. All pricing is calculated on the exchange rate on Google.com. If a significant shift in this rate occurs we will need to adjust tour pricing accordingly, up to the time that final payment is made. As of February 14, 2017: 1 NZD = .72 USD

The tour and extension costs include: all accommodations, most meals as specified in the itinerary (B=breakfast, L=Lunch, D= dinner), professional guide services, ferry and boat day-tour fees, park and program entrance fees and miscellaneous program expenses.

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Tour does not include: round-trip transportation from your home city to Auckland. It does not include optional activities such as horseback riding or fishing with a guide, or items of a personal nature such as laundry, luggage portage, telephone charges, maid gratuities, or beverages from the bar.

Group Size

Maximum of 12, minimum of 5 persons. Tour and Extension prices are based on a group size of 6 persons, with fewer than 6, a small group surcharge (typically \$100-\$300) may apply.

Photo Credits

Kaka, Lynn Feryus; Fighting Great Crested Grebes, Greg Smith (GS); Maori Mask, Peg Abbott (PA); Mount Cook National Park, GS; Kiwi Crossing Sign near Arthur's Pass, PA; Tree Ferns, PA; Road to Arthur's Pass, PA; Australasian Gannet, GS; Fern, PA; Group Hiking, PA; Takahe, Mark Hanger (MH); Oystercatchers, Naturalist Journeys Stock (NJS); Kokako, MH; Whio, MH; Northern Giant Petrel, GS; White-capped Albatross, GS; Hector's Dolphin, GS; Kaikoura, PA; Sperm Whale, GS; Arthur's Pass, PA; Lynn Feryus with Lamb and Sheepdog, NJS; View from Arthur's Pass Lodge, GS; Swingbridge at Aoraki National Park, MH; Black Stilt, MH; New Zealand Falcon, GS; Salvins Shy Albatross, MH; White-capped Albatross, GS; Australasian Gannet, GS; Cape Petrel, GS; Hiking Steward Island, PA; Red-crowned Parakeet, PA; Yellow-eyed Penguin, GS; Milford Sound, GS; Keas Preening, Bud Ferguson.

