

The Nature of New Zealand

With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures



January 8 – 20, 2019
With Hauraki Gulf Rare Birds
Pre-Extension Jan. 6 – 8
& Stewart Island
Post-Extension Jan. 20 – 23

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Naturalist Journeys, LLC



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Discover the nature of New Zealand, a country of lush valleys, soaring peaks, white beaches, and turquoise lakes. Scenery is a true highlight of this tour, however New Zealand's wildlife is sure to inspire both nature enthusiasts and birders alike.

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.

And if you are interested in extending your New Zealand adventure or looking for Kiwi, we offer pre- and post-tour extensions that are sure to impress! Our pre-trip extension to the Hauraki Gulf gives you the opportunity to see incredibly rare Fairy Tern and the New Zealand Storm-Petrel (an extinct bird re-discovered in 2003). Our Stewart Island post-tour extension is the primary opportunity to find the Brown Kiwi.

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



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- 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
- 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 Steward 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 Mark Ayre with 8 or more, Greg Smith
\$5290 from Auckland, departing Dunedin

Arrival airport is Auckland International (AKL), departure airport is Dunedin Airport (DUD)

Itinerary

Tues., Jan. 8 Auckland

Auckland is a modern city surrounded by water, volcanoes, and islands. Your morning is open to explore the waterfront or to pick up last minute needs as we meet our guides for the start of our New Zealand journey. After our first meal together at lunch, 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. On the edge of the gannet colony are nesting White-fronted Tern, and there is the ever-present Kelp and Red-billed Gulls looking for an easy meal. A relaxed walk in the lush New Zealand forest rounds out our first field day before returning to Auckland for our welcome dinner.



Please Note: We recommend coming in a day or two early to adjust to the time change and be well rested for the start of the tour. We recommend the Grand Millennium Hotel in Auckland, where we stay on the first night of our tour, for a reasonable extra cost. We can help you book this — please let us know.
Accommodations at the Grand Millennium Auckland (L,D)

Wed., Jan. 9 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 that launched two decades ago shows the fruits of those



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labors. Sixty percent 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 only remain on these types of islands; their habitat protected from the ravages of rats, opossums, stoats, and other mammalian predators.

A picturesque island, we have a day in the regenerating forest to enjoy birds and their songs, including that of re-introduced rare species like the Saddleback, Stitchbird, and 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 from the island, we can hope to be visited by more 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. The multi-cultural population of New Zealand's largest city provides the basis for different ethnic foods.

Accommodations at the Grand Millennium Auckland (B,L)



Thurs., Jan. 10 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 that migrate from the Arctic tundra 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 flocks of Red Knot and South Island Pied Oystercatcher, the rare endemic Wrybill, the endangered New Zealand Dotterel, Far Eastern Curlew, Whimbrel, several sandpiper species, Caspian 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 of the local and migrant shorebirds that are attracted to the sanctuary. This is in large part due to the food source provided by many of these shells' inhabitants. After emerging from the blinds on the edge of the chenier plains, we drive to the Sanctuary's visitor center for an opportunity to learn more about the area's birds and resources.

Late in the morning we travel towards Lake Rotorua, the second largest lake on the North Island. New Zealand Dabchick, New Zealand Scaup, and Little Black and Pied Shags often feed or roost along the

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shore, giving us great looks and photo opportunities. Rotorua is situated on the central plateau of the North Island, a region where much of the country's geothermal activity is located that provides electricity. The area boasts thermal hot pools on the lake's edge, as well as freshwater springs. To get a more in-depth feeling of these thermal features, we stop at Waimangu Volcanic Valley. This is an easy downhill hike (with a shuttle back to the top) that provides us with an opportunity to experience some additional geothermal features while looking for New Zealand Falcon, and other endemics. Accommodations at Chelmswood Motel (B,L,D)



Fri., Jan. 11

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 (a species of velvet worm), and numerous birds. Breakfast is in the field at the edge of the forest, and this gives us a chance to hear and find birds using the forest edge as a flyway.



Pureora Forest Park was also the site of a ground-breaking conservation effort in the 1970s after decades of logging. We have most of the morning to walk in, and gain insight into, the nature and conservation of this special forest. The early morning sun finds the Kaka, another endemic parrot, enjoying treetop perches while calling out to others. Fernbird, Yellow-Crowned Parakeet, Tomtit, New Zealand Robin, Long-Tailed Cuckoo, Whitehead, and Grey Warbler are all present in this native forest utilizing the incredible abundance and diversity of fern species that make up the understory.



Later, our afternoon is spent driving towards Tongariro National Park and one of its volcanic peaks, Mount Ruapehu. Glacier and snow-melt provide plenty of water

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for streams that run down slope. These fast moving streams are the habitat in which we look for the endangered Whio, or Blue Duck. The National Parks Service has done an outstanding job of removing exotic predators along the streams that run down the slopes of Mount Ruapehu, and so the Whio numbers are increasing. We spend the remainder of the day taking in the inspiring sight of the volcano-filled skyline, learning about the plants that make up this habitat, and how these communities adapt to the constant threat of lahars moving downslope.

Accommodations at Chateau Tongariro Hotel (B,L,D)



Sat., Jan. 12 Foxton Estuary | Ferry from Wellington to the South Island

This morning we begin with a drive to the top of Mt. Ruapehu. This gives us the opportunity to view the stratification of the different vegetation zones as we motor up to over a mile in elevation. We enjoy a walk through the stunted alpine habitats near the top of Mt. Ruapehu and take in the stunning views of the surrounding volcanic peaks of Tongariro and Ngauruhoe. The barren Meade's Wall of "Lord of the Rings" fame is home to the New Zealand Pipit and to wildflowers that are starting their bloom in January. We descend and start making our way south towards Wellington.

Before finishing our drive to Wellington and crossing to the South Island, we stop in the community of Foxton and make our way to the coast. Here the Manawatu River mouth and estuary are listed as a Ramsar sight with world-class recognition of the area's 250-hectare wetlands. We bird this intersection of Foxton Beach and the river, with opportunities to view Pacific Golden Plover, Royal Spoonbill, Grey Teal, and a number of other shorebird species. On a previous trip we were treated to a Terek's Sandpiper foraging with a group of Red Knots.

From Wellington we embark on a late afternoon ferry crossing to the South Island. Three hours, however, may not feel like enough time for all the wildlife watching to be done! Wandering and Shy Albatrosses often pass by, as do Giant Petrel, Arctic Skua, Fairy Prion, and different shearwater species. Towards the entrance of the Marlborough Sounds we can often see Little Blue Penguin, Spotted Shag, and sometimes Hector's Dolphin. Our late afternoon choice of departure affords us dramatic lighting as we enter the Marlborough Sounds. We wind our way through the fiord-like surroundings before docking in Picton and heading to our lodging for the night. There are plenty of fine restaurants within a few blocks of our lodging in Picton, which provides ample choices for dinner at your leisure tonight.

Accommodations at Broadway Motels (B,L)

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Sun., Jan. 13 Marlborough Sounds | King Shag

The waters and inlets of the Marlborough Sounds are our playground this morning. We board our boat for a morning-long tour of the Sounds that carries us past the islands that dot the Queen Charlotte Sound. We first head to a small rocky islet, where a small colony of the rare King Shag breed and roost. Our timing has allowed the shags to do their morning foraging, and we should be able to find them roosting on the rocks. Fluttering Shearwater are not uncommon in the Sounds, and we should also get good looks at Arctic Skua and White-fronted Tern. There may also be an opportunity to listen for and maybe even see the endangered Orange-Fronted Parakeet on one of the sounds' predator-free islands. With less than 400 free-flying individuals left in the world, we hope to be successful in our quest to see this small parakeet. This is also our best chance to get up close views of Hector's Dolphin, another New Zealand endemic, complete with its Mickey Mouse dorsal fin.

Before returning to Picton, we land to introduce ourselves to the curious Weka, which inhabits local marshlands and offshore islands. Variable and South Island Pied Oystercatchers are also probable, along with the huge Southern Black-backed Gull.

Mid-afternoon sees us heading south down the east coast, past the snow-capped peaks of the Kaikoura Range, to the town of Kaikoura. This is an area of dramatic and stunning scenery! As we get closer to Kaikoura, we start seeing evidence of the huge 7.8 earthquake that hit this area in November of 2016. Huge expanses of the coast's intertidal zone were thrust up and now lay completely out of the water. Truly something to view and help understand just how much land can move in a single jolt. Miles of the coastal highway were destroyed in the quake, and there is a four-year project to rebuild this highway on



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the elevated bench. There is a temporary road that has been constructed and now provides year-round access to our lodging in Kaikoura.

Accommodations at White Morph Inn (B,L,D)

Mon., Jan. 14 Kaikoura | Albatross 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 rich and abundant marine life.

An excellent opportunity for bird lovers and generalists alike is a seabird excursion, where we see flocks of cawing albatrosses (Wandering, Southern Royal, Salvin's, White-capped, and possibly others), Westland and White-chinned Petrels, and shearwaters, just meters from the boat. Photographers, prepare to be thrilled. On a previous trip, one anxious shearwater landed on the boat and had to be tossed back into the wind! This is a unique opportunity to view these different seabirds at a distance that allows for stunning photographs, even with your cell phone!

In the afternoon, we are at leisure in this lovely, small coastal town and some may wish to just have a coffee and wander. But there are also opportunities to hike the Kaikoura Peninsula, opt for a second pelagic trip out to view the albatross, or join a whale-watching excursion by boat or helicopter for Sperm Whale. This area is renowned for the number of Sperm Whale that are here during the summer months. Capable of diving over a mile in depth, they log on the surface while getting ready for their next dive. If you take the boat excursion, there is plenty of time for birding too! Lunch and dinner are at your leisure, with many dining choices. As you can imagine, fresh seafood is top of the list on most menus.

Accommodations at White Morph Inn (B)

Tues., Jan. 15 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.

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Our final destination today is the spectacular Arthur's Pass Wilderness Lodge, a working sheep farm set amidst a fine mix of high country beech forest and tussocklands. 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)

Wed., Jan. 16

Waimakariri Valley | Moa Forest

This morning we have the opportunity to explore the mountain beech forests and braided rivers of the upper Waimakariri Valley. We walk through Moa Forest with one of the Arthur's Pass Lodge's natural history guides discovering and learning how the plant communities support the local endemic bird populations and how those same birds benefit the plants. As you walk, enjoy a relaxed and fascinating discovery of a "micro world" of riverbed, rock bluff, shrub land, beech forest plants, and wildlife. We do have a chance for up close views of New Zealand Fantail, Yellowhead, and maybe even a flyover Kea.



The morning involves no driving from the lodge until we head out for lunch up at Arthur's Pass. Here is where New Zealand's mountain Kea likes to move from tree to tree, suddenly ending up under a shrub near folks having a picnic (yes, it's happened!). The goal is to always spot them before their inquisitive nature has them rounding you up! After lunch we head a little higher into a different type of alpine plant community. Small streams keep pocket meadows flooded, while out of the wet areas, the epiphytic rata should be blooming in mass on the sides of the mountains. Later in the afternoon we scan the braided rivers for Black-fronted Tern and Black-billed Gull.

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



Thurs., Jan. 17 Over Burkes Pass to Lake Tekapo | Optional Flight over Mount Cook National Park

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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. These waters host waterfowl and waders (North American definition), and it is one of the more picturesque lakes in the South Island. Here we look for the very rare Black Stilt that sometimes forages along the lake's edge or along the edge of some of the adjacent sag ponds.

We make time for an optional flight over Mount Cook/Aoraki National Park, flying over the highest peaks and glaciers of the Southern Alps, before continuing to Lake Ohau Lodge for two nights. If conditions don't allow for the optional flight, we head up to the St. John Observatories above the Lake for a stunning 360-degree view of the area, and probably take time for tea at the Astro Café.

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

Fri., Jan. 18 Braided Rivers | Mount Cook | Aoraki National Park

The braided rivers in this region are the habitat of the endangered Black Stilt. In the morning we search some of the overflow channels of these rivers for the stilt and for the Banded Dotterel. There are usually loads of Black Swan and an assortment of waders working these shallows. The adjacent reservoirs are used to create power for much of the South Island, and it is in this scenic realm we search for Great-crested Grebe, New Zealand Dabchick, and New Zealand Scaup. This is also a fine area to photograph the mountains of the national park.

Later today we travel up towards 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. The view of this glaciated valley is one that has immense ice fields as a backdrop and flocks of gulls in the foreground foraging and bathing. We also take time to drive out to the Tasman River delta where both Black Stilt and Wrybill are known to nest, along with foraging Paradise Shelducks, all with those stunning mountains as a backdrop.

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

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Sat., Jan. 19 Dunedin | Otago Peninsula

This morning we depart for the southeastern coast, but we want to be out on the deck of our lodge for the morning sunrise. Mt. Cook Aoraki is across the lake in the distance and the glaciers can sparkle in the morning sun. We have some distance to cover, but we plan for stops that give us some early history with 19th Century Maori rock pictographs, geology in the Elephant Rocks area, and some birding in the hills above Dunedin.

Dunedin is New Zealand's "wildlife capital," and we arrive in time to change into some warmer clothes for our late afternoon harbor cruise. A fascinating 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 Otago Island Shag. New Zealand Fur Seals bask on the rocks as we round the point and head into the ocean for one more short pelagic birding trip. Again, numerous shearwater, petrel, and albatross species make their presence known, as does a nesting colony of Royal Spoonbills. Taiaroa Head's famous lighthouse completes the picturesque scene as we head back towards the harbor with a few attendant Royal Albatross overhead. Indeed, a magical wildlife experience draws to a close in our rich and diverse discovery of New Zealand's native treasures.

Accommodations at Mercure Dunedin Leisure Lodge (B,L,D)

Sun., Jan. 20 Main Tour Departures

For those not staying for the extension, there are flights home from Dunedin to Auckland that depart just prior to noon. (B)

Pre-Tour Extension: Hauraki Gulf Rare Birds

Sun., Jan. 6 Arrivals in Auckland | Fairy Tern & Shorebirds

Our expert local 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 do choose to come in early, you can be picked up at your hotel.

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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, Bryde's Whale, and other pelagic species.

Accommodations at the Salty Dog Inn (L,D)

Mon., Jan. 7

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 on the tour, including Little and Buller's Shearwaters; Parkinson's (Black), Gray-faced, and Cook's Petrels (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 at the Salty Dog Inn (B,L,D)



Tues., Jan. 8 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

Sun., Jan. 20 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

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Zealand's southwest coast. We drive along sections of the South Island's south coast, where there is a great diversity of wetlands, and where there is that kind of diversity, we should find some interesting mixed flocks of birds. Lunch today is at your leisure at the ferry terminal 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. The island is home to plenty of Kakas, and we should see these outside our lodging or along the short walk to the center of town. We unpack for dinner and then return to the boat dock where we head out on an evening excursion, by boat and foot, to search for the Brown Kiwi in its natural habitat. It is surprising as we walk through the forest on one of the predator-free islands and end up on a beach. And it is this intertidal area that we start searching for the Brown Kiwi. Those long bills are used just like a Curlew's as they push them deep into the sand probing for invertebrates. We return by midnight after retracing our steps through the island's forest. 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)



Mon., Jan. 21 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, 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 also breed nearby on the small outer islands. This is another great opportunity to view the different pelagic species at a very close distance, and with some islands protecting us from most of the ocean swell, photographic opportunities and great looks abound.



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A treat awaits us on Ulva Island, a 3.5 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, as are Yellowhead and sometimes diurnal foraging Brown Kiwi. The fine condition of the island's resources is almost like a step back in time, with tree ferns, ancient tree species, and flightless birds.

Accommodations in Kaka Retreat (B,L,D)

Tues., Jan. 22 Fiordland National Park | Hollyford Valley

We take the morning ferry back to the South Island where the glacially-sculpted mountains and valleys of Fiordland National Park await us. A drive along the Eglinton River, known for its fly-fishing, to the Hollyford Valley entices us with more mountain scenery. It is in this valley we seek out more of the South Island endemic species, including the ubiquitous and cheeky Kea and the elusive Rock Wren.

Fiordland National Park does get a fair amount of precipitation, and this is one of the stops that you actually want it to rain. Land of a thousand waterfalls would be an appropriate name, as the steep, glaciated valleys have rivulets of water flowing down in an abundance that just has to be seen. This doesn't deter the Rock Wren.

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



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and even some shearwaters make it back into these U-shaped valleys. Fish and invertebrates are everywhere and the setting is dramatic!

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

Wed., Jan. 23 Departures

We drive back to Dunedin this morning for flights back to Auckland and then on to the evening flights back to the U.S. (B)

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. This tour is Greg's fourth visit to New Zealand and he looks forward to sharing photography pointers and helping Mark show off the wonders of New Zealand.



Cost of the Journey

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. Their website will show a grid of tour cost and your age category for you to make selections. As of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

Cost of the Journey

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The cost of this journey is \$5290 DBL / \$5895 SGL, from Auckland, New Zealand, based on double occupancy. Cost of the pre-tour extension is \$795 DBL / \$850 SGL. 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 August 30, 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.

Tour does not include: transportation from your home city to Auckland or from Dunedin back to your home city. 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.

Travel Information

Arrival airport is Auckland International (AKL), departure airport is Dunedin Airport (DUD). Please arrive by the morning of January 8, 2019 in time for a group lunch. We recommend coming in a day or two early to adjust to the time change and be well rested for the start of the tour. We recommend the [Grand Millennium Hotel in Auckland](#), where we stay on the first night of our tour, for a reasonable extra cost. We can help you book this — please let us know. Please be sure to let us know where you are staying before the start of the tour when you send us your flight details. Please plan flights out of Dunedin from 10:00 AM onward on either January 20 (for those leaving from the main tour) or January 23 (for those leaving from the Stewart Island extension).

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); New Zealand Falcon, GS; Kokako, MH; Tomtit (Juvenile), Bud Ferguson; Whio, MH; Northern Giant Petrel, GS; White-capped Albatross, GS; Little Blue Penguin, GS; Hector's Dolphin, GS; Kaikoura, PA; Buller's Albatross, GS; 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; Westland Petrel, GS; Hiking Stewart Island, PA; Red-crowned Parakeet, PA; Yellow-eyed Penguin, GS; Pelagic Boat Trip, MH; Tui, PA; Yellowhead, NJS; Milford Sound, GS.