

## Fauna and flora

### A luxurious and unique nature

The fauna in New Zealand is made up of insects, molluscs and birds, 25% of which are endemic, and 80% of the flora is endemic. Isolated for centuries on these islands until the arrival of the first settlers, these species still survive. Today the New Zealand ecosystem is fragile and protected by the Department of Conservation and it is important to respect it. In your motorhome you can discover the wild and unique nature New Zealand has to offer.

Given the number of unique species of trees, plants and animals that it shelters, New Zealand is often compared to Noah's Ark. Detached and isolated for thousands of years from the continents, its fauna and flora have evolved and have adapted to the environment of the islands. The lush, colourful vegetation will surround you in the many forests in the country. For a complete change of scenery visit the Kauri forests in **Northland** where you will see enormous trees, some almost 2000 years old. You will see podocarps in **Pureora**, beech woods near **Main Divide** on the South Island and the **Whirinaki forest** in the centre of Northland.

**New Zealand** is also home to unique, **primeval forests** like the **Totara forests** with beech and kauri giants and shrubs, lichens and ferns, growing underneath, including the silver fern which is the emblem present on the **All Blacks** rugby shirts. You will see other endemic species such as kowhai (pretty yellow flowers) and pohutukawa, whose red flowers bloom in December making it known as the country's Christmas tree.

The country is also home to **many animal species**. The iconic bird of New Zealand is the **kiwi**. This nocturnal, flightless bird is protected because it is increasingly killed by mammals introduced to the country by man (opossums, rats, cats and dogs ...). The moa and huia bird species have completely disappeared due to habitat destruction. The kea, the only mountain parrot species, lives in the glacier region. The weka can not fly and lives near **Punakaiki** and in the **Paparoa National Park**. The tui is able to imitate the human voice and has a pretty white neck. The **tuatara** is a very unique reptile because it has existed since the time of the dinosaurs and remains the only billed reptile in the world. This species survived for hundreds of thousands of years in New Zealand and can be seen in captivity.

New Zealand's **marine life is abundant**. **Diving** or **snorkelling** will offer you an amazing and unforgettable **underwater spectacle**. You can also spot whales from the **Kaikoura Peninsula**, or blue fur seals and penguins basking on the rocks. You can swim with Hector dolphins (the smallest in the world and only found in this region).

New Zealand has 34 marine reserves, **14 national parks** and **2 regions classified as UNESCO World Heritage Sites** (**Tongariro** and **Te Wahipounamu**).