

# Reading Comprehension — The Curious Kiwi

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## The Curious Kiwi

New Zealand is home to one of the most unusual birds in the world: the kiwi. About the size of a chicken, the kiwi is so special to New Zealanders that they even call themselves "Kiwis."

The kiwi is a bird, but it is unlike almost any other. It cannot fly. Its wings are tiny and hidden beneath shaggy, hair-like feathers that look more like fur. Instead of flying, the kiwi runs about on strong legs, poking its long beak into the ground.

That long beak hides a clever secret. The kiwi is the only bird in the world with nostrils right at the tip of its beak. This gives it an excellent sense of smell, which it uses to sniff out worms and insects hidden in the soil at night. The kiwi is nocturnal, which means it sleeps during the day and comes out to feed after dark.

The kiwi is very important to the Māori, the first people of New Zealand, who have long treasured it. But the kiwi is in trouble. When people arrived in New Zealand, they brought animals such as cats, dogs and stoats, which hunt kiwi and their eggs. Because the kiwi cannot fly away, it is easily caught.

Today, many New Zealanders work hard to protect the kiwi — guarding nests and removing the animals that threaten it — so that this curious, much-loved bird will survive for the future.

## Questions

1. What do New Zealanders call themselves, after the bird? (1 mark)
2. Can the kiwi fly? (1 mark)
3. What is special about where the kiwi's nostrils are? (2 marks)
4. Find and copy a word that means "active at night." (1 mark)
5. How does the kiwi find its food? (2 marks)
6. Why is the kiwi "easily caught" by animals like cats and stoats? (2 marks)
7. Why do you think the kiwi is so important to New Zealanders? Use the text. (2 marks)
8. Summarise three unusual facts about the kiwi. (3 marks)

## Answer Key / Mark Scheme

1. Kiwis.
2. No.
3. Its nostrils are at the very tip of its beak — the only bird in the world like this.
4. "nocturnal."

5. It uses its excellent sense of smell to sniff out worms and insects in the soil at night.
6. Because it cannot fly away to escape.
7. It is treasured by the Māori, the first people, and New Zealanders even name themselves after it.
8. Any three: cannot fly; feathers like fur; nostrils at the beak tip; great sense of smell; nocturnal.