

New Zealand Birds & Adaptation — Knowledge Organiser

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Key facts

- For millions of years, New Zealand had almost no land mammals.
- With no mammals to hunt them, many birds fed on the ground.
- Some, like the kiwi and kakapo, lost the ability to fly.
- This left them at risk when mammals were later introduced.

Key vocabulary

- Adaptation — a feature that helps survival.
- Flightless — unable to fly.
- Niche — the role a living thing plays.
- Introduced — brought to a place by people.

Birds in charge

Without mammals, New Zealand's birds took over roles mammals played elsewhere — some even gave up flying.

A hidden danger

These adaptations left ground-dwelling birds defenceless when people brought rats, stoats and cats.