

The World of New Zealand Birds





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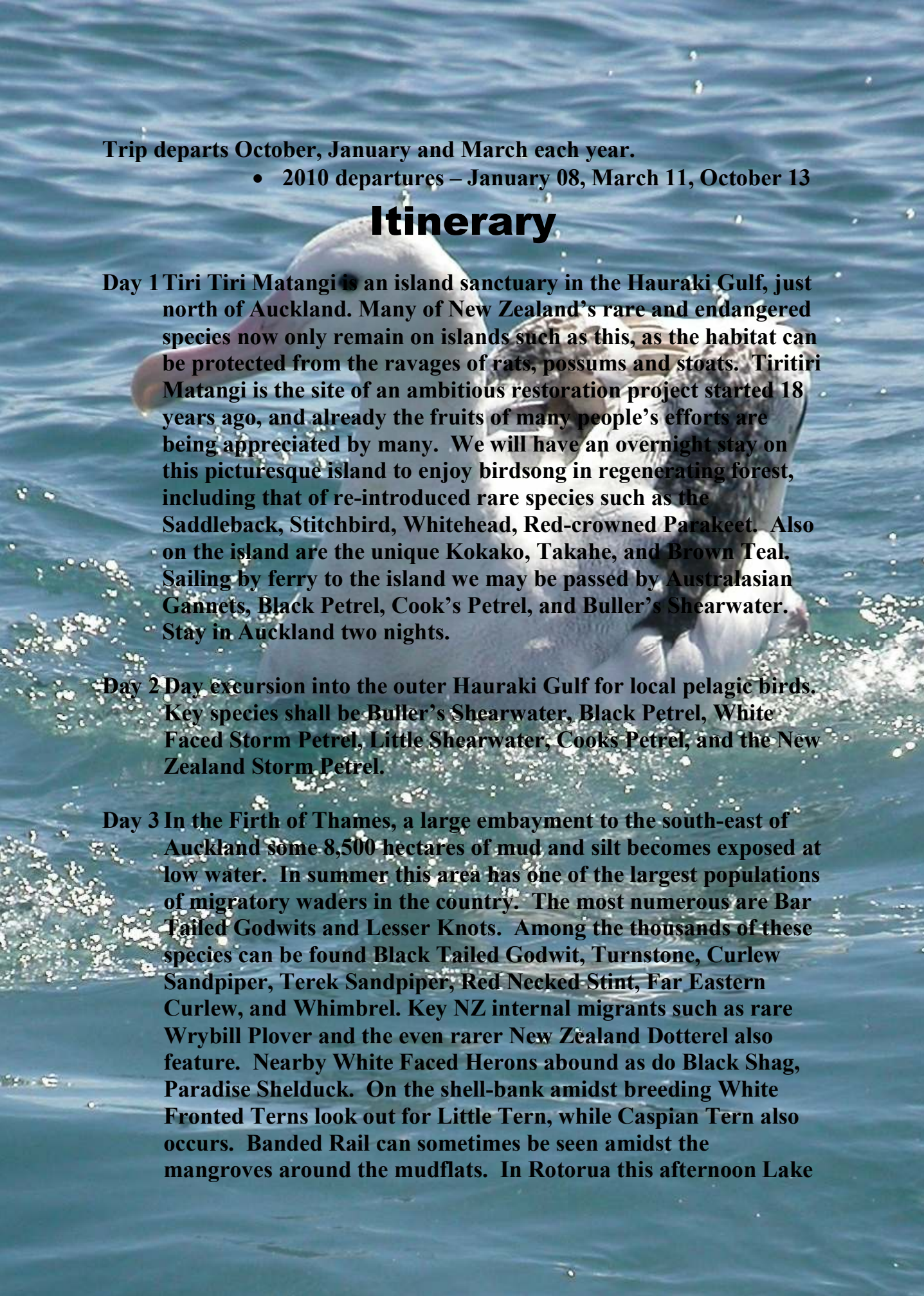
While not over-endowed with species, what makes New Zealand stand out are, the quality of the endemics, the superb viewing possible of so many of them, and without doubt the sea-birding. Where else can one watch 14 different pelagic species all within just a few yards of the vessel, and that vessel being only 20 minutes from shore!

Almost half the New Zealand species are sea birds, and for anyone interested in seeing the widest possible array on a series of short, often even gentle, pelagics, then New Zealand is a must. Over a few days around the country's more southern shores you can reasonably expect to see five to seven species of albatross (more with the new splitting of the Wandering Albatross), three penguin species including two endemics, and a wide variety of shearwaters and petrels, with many being endemic to these southern ocean islands.

Equally attractive is that often on the same day that you have been viewing pelagics, you can enjoy rare endemics such as the ubiquitous Kiwi, Saddleback, and even the so-called semi-flightless avian squirrel, Kokako.

New Zealand is but the size of the typical USA state, being about 100,000 square miles. But unlike any USA state it has the diversity of landscape usually only found in a continent. Never more than 105 kilometres from the sea, one finds semi-desert, lush podocarp (coniferous) rainforest, cool montane evergreen beech forest, tall tussocklands, and high alpine environments, all virtually within spitting distance of one another.

Consequently the birding, while not rich in species numbers, is fascinating, with a high degree of endemism, flightlessness, and antiquity characterising the avifauna. We try to locate all of the possible New Zealand endemics in this sojourn to the South Pacific, while at the same time enjoying scenic grandeur as can only be seen in this country.



Trip departs October, January and March each year.

- **2010 departures – January 08, March 11, October 13**

Itinerary

Day 1 Tiri Tiri Matangi is an island sanctuary in the Hauraki Gulf, just north of Auckland. Many of New Zealand's rare and endangered species now only remain on islands such as this, as the habitat can be protected from the ravages of rats, possums and stoats. Tiritiri Matangi is the site of an ambitious restoration project started 18 years ago, and already the fruits of many people's efforts are being appreciated by many. We will have an overnight stay on this picturesque island to enjoy birdsong in regenerating forest, including that of re-introduced rare species such as the Saddleback, Stitchbird, Whitehead, Red-crowned Parakeet. Also on the island are the unique Kokako, Takahe, and Brown Teal. Sailing by ferry to the island we may be passed by Australasian Gannets, Black Petrel, Cook's Petrel, and Buller's Shearwater. Stay in Auckland two nights.

Day 2 Day excursion into the outer Hauraki Gulf for local pelagic birds. Key species shall be Buller's Shearwater, Black Petrel, White Faced Storm Petrel, Little Shearwater, Cooks Petrel, and the New Zealand Storm Petrel.

Day 3 In the Firth of Thames, a large embayment to the south-east of Auckland some 8,500 hectares of mud and silt becomes exposed at low water. In summer this area has one of the largest populations of migratory waders in the country. The most numerous are Bar Tailed Godwits and Lesser Knots. Among the thousands of these species can be found Black Tailed Godwit, Turnstone, Curlew Sandpiper, Terek Sandpiper, Red Necked Stint, Far Eastern Curlew, and Whimbrel. Key NZ internal migrants such as rare Wrybill Plover and the even rarer New Zealand Dotterel also feature. Nearby White Faced Herons abound as do Black Shag, Paradise Shelduck. On the shell-bank amidst breeding White Fronted Terns look out for Little Tern, while Caspian Tern also occurs. Banded Rail can sometimes be seen amidst the mangroves around the mudflats. In Rotorua this afternoon Lake

A blue duck is swimming in the water, its head and neck visible above the surface. The water is a deep blue with some white foam from the duck's movement. The duck's body is mostly submerged, with its tail and legs visible below the surface.

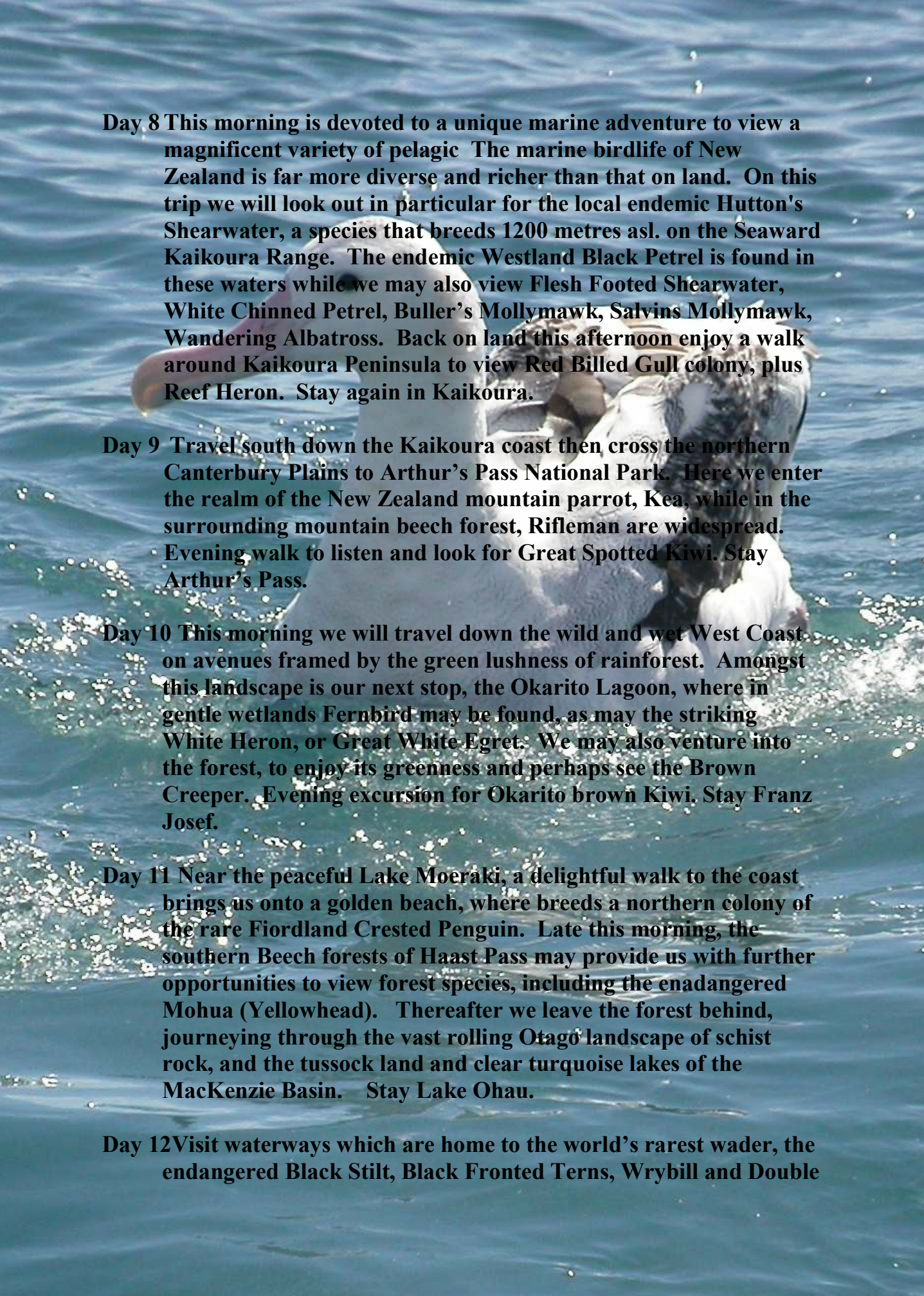
Rotorua contains NZ Dabchick, Black Swan, Little Pied Shag, NZ Scaup. Late afternoon travel on to Taupo. Stay tonight by Lake Taupo.

Day 4 An early morning sojourn to forest near Rotorua for endangered Kokako. Here in the so-called 'dinosaur forests' of Pureora, so typical of the world as it was 100 million years ago, are superb stands of tall ancient podocarp forest. In the high canopy lives the Blue Wattled Crow or Kokako. To see these splendid canopy gliders is a sight few can experience. To hear the call of this timeless bird in this majestic forest is a joy never to be forgotten. Other forest birds this morning shall include Kaka, Fantail, Pied Tit, Grey Warbler. Mid afternoon continue to Tongariro National park via Lake Taupo, stopping to look for NZ Fernbird in the wetlands by the lake. Stay Skotel one night.

Day 5 Early morning travel to the rivers flowing westward off the volcanic plateau to seek out endangered Whio (Blue Duck). Travel to the Wellington coast for afternoon crossing over to Kapiti Island. By night seek out the endangered Little Spotted Kiwi, and New Zealand's only native owl, the Ruru or Morepork. Stay on Kapiti tonight.

Day 6 After an early morning stroll on this very special island sanctuary, return to the mainland. Later, travel south to the southern tip of the North Island. Connect with ferry to South Island. This crossing of Cook Strait gives good opportunities to observe Giant Petrel, Cape Pigeon, Fluttering Shearwater, Fairy Prion. Stay Picton this evening.

Day 7 The only way to explore the South Island's northern sounds is by charter vessel. Our boat takes us out beyond the sound into the Tasman Sea. Focus of the trip is White Rocks and their population of King Shags, of which fewer than 400 survive. Little Blue Penguins are also abundant in the surrounding waters, while en route keep an eye out for Diving Petrel, Reef Heron, Spotted Shag, Arctic Skua, Pied Shag. Late afternoon travel down east coastline to Kaikoura Peninsula. Stay Kaikoura two nights.



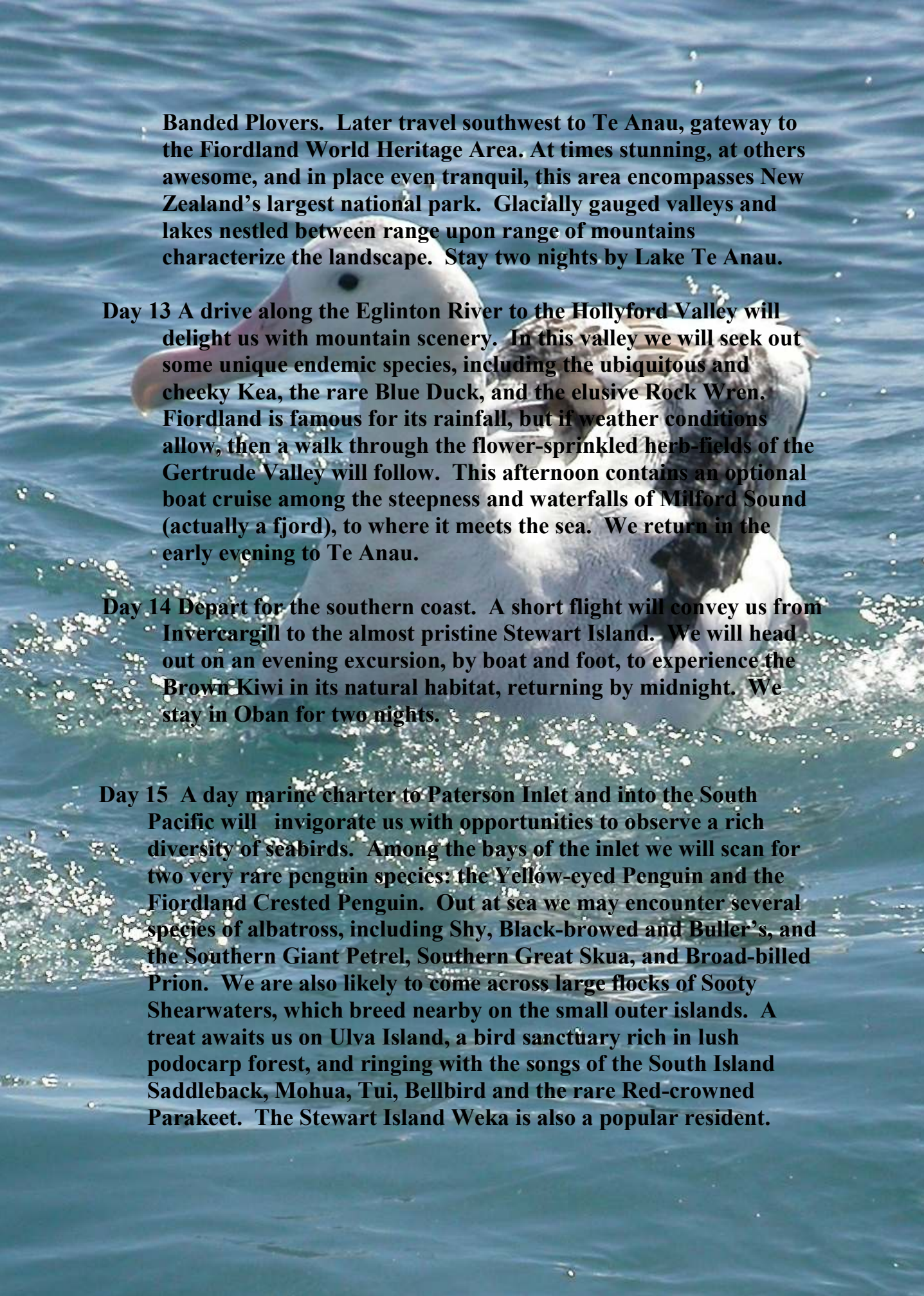
Day 8 This morning is devoted to a unique marine adventure to view a magnificent variety of pelagic The marine birdlife of New Zealand is far more diverse and richer than that on land. On this trip we will look out in particular for the local endemic Hutton's Shearwater, a species that breeds 1200 metres asl. on the Seaward Kaikoura Range. The endemic Westland Black Petrel is found in these waters while we may also view Flesh Footed Shearwater, White Chinned Petrel, Buller's Mollymawk, Salvins Mollymawk, Wandering Albatross. Back on land this afternoon enjoy a walk around Kaikoura Peninsula to view Red Billed Gull colony, plus Reef Heron. Stay again in Kaikoura.

Day 9 Travel south down the Kaikoura coast then cross the northern Canterbury Plains to Arthur's Pass National Park. Here we enter the realm of the New Zealand mountain parrot, Kea, while in the surrounding mountain beech forest, Rifleman are widespread. Evening walk to listen and look for Great Spotted Kiwi. Stay Arthur's Pass.

Day 10 This morning we will travel down the wild and wet West Coast on avenues framed by the green lushness of rainforest. Amongst this landscape is our next stop, the Okarito Lagoon, where in gentle wetlands Fernbird may be found, as may the striking White Heron, or Great White Egret. We may also venture into the forest, to enjoy its greenness and perhaps see the Brown Creeper. Evening excursion for Okarito brown Kiwi. Stay Franz Josef.

Day 11 Near the peaceful Lake Moeraki, a delightful walk to the coast brings us onto a golden beach, where breeds a northern colony of the rare Fiordland Crested Penguin. Late this morning, the southern Beech forests of Haast Pass may provide us with further opportunities to view forest species, including the endangered Mohua (Yellowhead). Thereafter we leave the forest behind, journeying through the vast rolling Otago landscape of schist rock, and the tussock land and clear turquoise lakes of the MacKenzie Basin. Stay Lake Ohau.

Day 12 Visit waterways which are home to the world's rarest wader, the endangered Black Stilt, Black Fronted Terns, Wrybill and Double



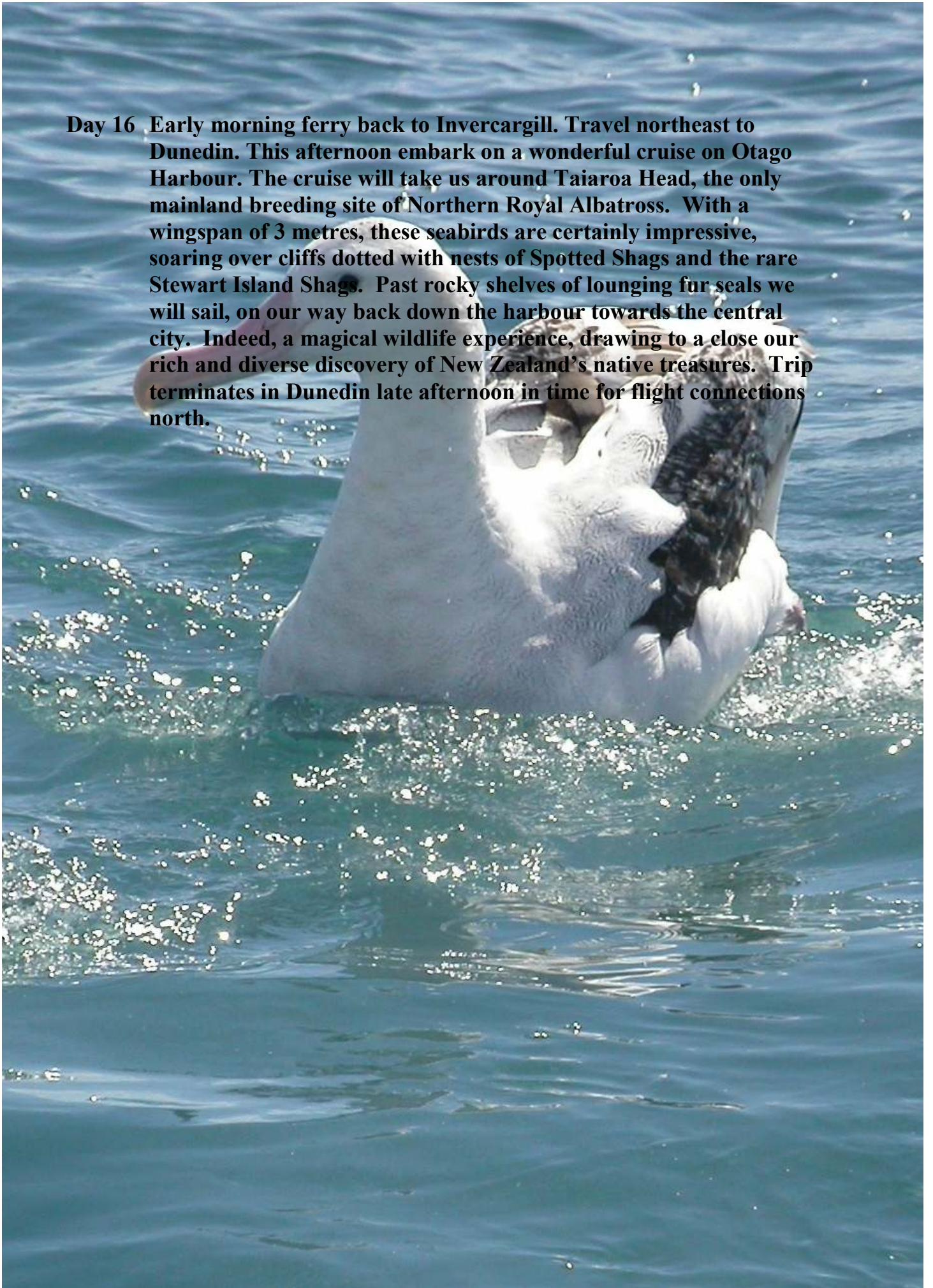
Banded Plovers. Later travel southwest to Te Anau, gateway to the Fiordland World Heritage Area. At times stunning, at others awesome, and in place even tranquil, this area encompasses New Zealand's largest national park. Glacially gauged valleys and lakes nestled between range upon range of mountains characterize the landscape. Stay two nights by Lake Te Anau.

Day 13 A drive along the Eglinton River to the Hollyford Valley will delight us with mountain scenery. In this valley we will seek out some unique endemic species, including the ubiquitous and cheeky Kea, the rare Blue Duck, and the elusive Rock Wren. Fiordland is famous for its rainfall, but if weather conditions allow, then a walk through the flower-sprinkled herb-fields of the Gertrude Valley will follow. This afternoon contains an optional boat cruise among the steepness and waterfalls of Milford Sound (actually a fjord), to where it meets the sea. We return in the early evening to Te Anau.

Day 14 Depart for the southern coast. A short flight will convey us from Invercargill to the almost pristine Stewart Island. We will head out on an evening excursion, by boat and foot, to experience the Brown Kiwi in its natural habitat, returning by midnight. We stay in Oban for two nights.

Day 15 A day marine charter to Paterson Inlet and into the South Pacific will invigorate us with opportunities to observe a rich diversity of seabirds. Among the bays of the inlet we will 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 Shearwaters, which breed nearby on the small outer islands. A treat awaits us on Ulva Island, a bird sanctuary rich in lush podocarp forest, and ringing with the songs of the South Island Saddleback, Mohua, Tui, Bellbird and the rare Red-crowned Parakeet. The Stewart Island Weka is also a popular resident.

Day 16 Early morning ferry back to Invercargill. Travel northeast to Dunedin. This afternoon embark on a wonderful cruise on Otago Harbour. The cruise will take us around Taiaroa Head, the only mainland breeding site of Northern Royal Albatross. With a wingspan of 3 metres, these seabirds are certainly impressive, soaring over cliffs dotted with nests of Spotted Shags and the rare Stewart Island Shags. Past rocky shelves of lounging fur seals we will sail, on our way back down the harbour towards the central city. Indeed, a magical wildlife experience, drawing to a close our rich and diverse discovery of New Zealand's native treasures. Trip terminates in Dunedin late afternoon in time for flight connections north.



Inclusions

Departs from Dunedin

Price Prices per person twin-share

With minimum of two persons \$(NZ)9485.00

With minimum of four persons \$(NZ)6585.00

With minimum of six persons \$(NZ)5605.00

Includes Services of tour naturalist.

All tour travel departing from Auckland and terminating in Dunedin

All Meals (three daily) excepting one night in Te Anau.

All accommodation, twin-share basis in quality hotels, motels and motor lodges, with private facilities in all locations (excepting on Kapiti Island).

Ferry - Invercargill/Stewart Is./Invercargill.

Charters - Otago Harbour, Kaikoura, Stewart Is., Marlborough Sounds, Tiri Tiri Matangi Island, Hauraki Gulf.

Kiwi Excursions, Kapiti Island, Stewart Island, Okarito.

Inter-island ferry.

On Board library

Information folio including background ecological information and species lists for areas visited.

Admission fees where applicable

Goods and Services Tax of 12.5%

Add-ons For single room add \$(NZ)850.00 per person

For Milford Sound cruise add \$NZ55.00 per person



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