

# STORY TIME: “HOW THE KIWI LOST ITS WINGS” MĀORI MYTH.

## WHAT'S A MYTH?

A myth is an ancient story or set of stories, especially explaining the early history of a group of people or about natural events and facts. For example:

- Ancient myths
- The children enjoyed the stories about
- The gods and goddesses of Greek and Roman myth.

Source: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/myth>

## WHO ARE THE MĀORI PEOPLE?

Māori are the tangata whenua, the indigenous people, of New Zealand. They came here more than 1000 years ago from their mythical Polynesian homeland of Hawaiki. Today, one in seven New Zealanders identify as Māori. Their history, language and traditions are central to New Zealand's identity.

Source: <https://www.newzealand.com/int/maori-culture/#:~:text=M%C4%81ori%20are%20the%20tangata%20whenua,central%20to%20New%20Zealand's%20identity>

## WHAT'S A KIWI BIRD? Read the following facts about this surprising animal.



**KIWI**  
OUR UNIQUE, ICONIC,  
ENDANGERED BIRD

**UNIQUE BIRDS**  
Kiwi are amazing and very special birds. Flightless and nocturnal, they evolved for life on the ground with their fine feathers like hair, unusual long beak, and large, strong feet.

**VULNERABLE CHICKS**  
Most kiwi mate for life. The male kiwi does most of the egg incubation – but often he is disturbed by predators, and only half of kiwi eggs hatch. In unprotected areas, just 5% of chicks survive to adulthood.

**THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION**  
Kiwi are threatened due to habitat loss, and introduced predators which prey and feed on defenceless chicks. Our iconic national bird could go extinct, unless we do more to protect kiwi.

**SAVING KIWI**  
Despite the significant efforts to save kiwi, their numbers are still declining. Dedicated volunteers, community-led groups and conservation organisations are all working hard to save kiwi. But we can't do it without you. Every kiwi counts in the species' battle for survival. Together with your support kiwi can have a safe future.



## KNOW YOUR KIWI

PRESENT DISTRIBUTION  
OF KIWI (*APTERYX SPP.*)  
IN NEW ZEALAND



**THERE ARE FIVE SPECIES OF KIWI**  
- BROWN KIWI, ROWI, TOKOEGA,  
GREAT SPOTTED KIWI OR ROROA,  
AND LITTLE SPOTTED KIWI.

There are four populations of brown kiwi – the Northland, Coromandel, western and the eastern brown kiwi. There are also four populations of tokoeka – the Haast, the northern Fiordland, the southern Fiordland and the Stewart Island tokoeka.

Scientists have discovered that each population is genetically different.

Nationally, kiwi numbers are in decline. But some populations – such as the western brown kiwi in East Taranaki – are recovering, thanks to dedicated conservation efforts.

**You can find out more about kiwi and donate to help fund WWF's efforts to protect our iconic native birds at [wwf.org.nz](http://wwf.org.nz)**

1. Kiwi bird is a small flightless (can't fly) bird endemic to New Zealand.
2. Kiwis have the size of a domestic chicken.
3. Kiwis have nostrils at the end of their beaks (the only birds with this feature!)
4. The kiwi bird is believed to be the most ancient bird of the world that evolved over 30 million years ago.
5. Their beaks are very long and flexible to eat bugs.
6. Their wings are so small that they look like tiny feathers.
7. Their feathers are long and loose, and look much like hairs. They help camouflage them from predators in the sky
8. Their eyesight is poor and they use their keen sense of smell to find prey, like worms, spiders, insects, caterpillars, snails, freshwater crayfish, frogs, and grubs.

# ACTIVITIES

## 1. Listen to & Read the story.

Source: <http://hoopermuseum.earthsci.carleton.ca/flightless/losewing.htm> & video from youtube

*A long time ago*, in Aotearoa, Tanemahuta was walking through the forest. He looked up at his children, the trees, reaching for the sky and he noticed that they were starting to grow sick. Bugs were eating the roots of their trees, so he asked his brother, Tanehokahoka, to call all his children, the birds of the air, together.

Tanemahuta spoke to them: “*Bugs are eating my children and making the trees ill. I need one of you to come down from the forest roof and live on the floor, so that my children can be saved, and your home can be saved. Who will come?*”

All was quiet, and not a bird spoke.

Tanehokahoka turned to Tui.

*“E Tui, will you come down from the forest roof?”*

Tui looked up at the trees and saw the warm bright sunlight shining through the leaves. Tui looked down at the forest floor and saw the harsh, dark earth and shuddered.

*“Kao, Tanehokahoka, for it is too dark and I am afraid of the dark.”*

All was a quiet, and not a bird spoke.

Tanehokahoka then turned to Pukeko.

*“Pukeko, will you come down from the forest roof?”*

Pukeko looked down at the forest floor and saw the cold, muddy earth and shuddered.

*“Kao, Tanehokahoka, for it is too damp and I do not want to get my feet wet.”*

All was quiet, and not a bird spoke.

Tanehokahoka turned to Pipiwharauroa.

*“Pipiwharauroa, will you come down from the forest roof?”*

Pipiwharauroa looked up at the trees and saw the sunlight skipping through the leaves. He looked around and saw his family flittering through the branches.

*“Kao, Tanehokahoka, for I am busy at the moment building my nest.”*

All was quiet, and not a bird spoke.

And Tanehokahoka was saddened, for he knew, that if one of his children did not come down from the forest roof, not only would his brother loose his children, the trees, but the birds would have no home.

Tanehokahoka turned to Kiwi:

*“E kiwi, will you come down from the forest roof?”*

Kiwi looked up at the trees and saw the sun dancing through the leaves. Kiwi looked around and saw his family. He looked at the dark, damp earth. Looking around once more, Kiwi turned to Tanehokahoka and said, "I will."

Great was the joy in the hearts of Tanehokahoka and Tanemahuta, for this little bird was giving them hope. But Tanemahuta felt that he should warn kiwi of what would happen.

*"E kiwi, do you realise that if you do this, you will have to grow thick, strong legs so that you can rip apart the logs on the ground to find the bugs and you will loose your beautiful coloured feathers and wings so that you will never be able to return to the forest roof. You will never see the light of day again."*

All was quiet, and not a bird spoke.

*"E kiwi, will you come down from the forest roof?"*

Kiwi took one last look at the sun filtering through the trees and said a silent goodbye. Kiwi took one last look at all the other birds, their wings and their coloured feathers and said a silent goodbye. Looking around once more, he turned to Tanehokahoka and said, "I will."

Then Tanehokahoka turned to the other birds and said,

*"E Tui, because you were too scared to come down from the forest roof, from now on you will wear two white feathers at your throat so everyone will know you are a coward.*

*Pukeko, because you did not want to get your feet wet, you will live forever in the swamp.*

*And Pipiwharauroa, because you were too busy building your nest, from now on you will never build another nest again. You will have to lay your eggs in the nests of other birds.*

*But you, Kiwi, because of your great sacrifice, you will become the most well known and most loved bird of all Aotearoa."*

# The End

**2. Make a drawing of a kiwi bird in your notebook.**