



The Predator Free 2050 Goal



PEOPLE—NATURE  
TOGETHER WE FLOURISH  
TUIA TE TAIAO




Te Kāwanatanga  
o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Government



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A large, fluffy green kākāpō is perched on a thick tree branch. The bird has a large, hooked beak and is looking towards the viewer. The background shows a lush forest with green foliage and some small white flowers.

Meet the incredible kākāpō, the world's only flightless parrot. It's a highly intelligent nocturnal forager, the heaviest parrot in the world, and it can live to be up to 90 years old.

A true one-of-a-kind wonder, a taonga for Ngāi Tahu and only found right here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

A kākāpō is shown hanging upside down from a tree branch, its wings spread out. The bird has a surprised or wide-eyed expression. In the background, another kākāpō is perched on a branch, and the forest is filled with greenery and hanging branches with small red berries.

They used to be plentiful.

In the 1890s, West Coast surveyor Charlie Douglas wrote that there were so many that you could shake a bush and sleeping kākāpō would fall out like apples.



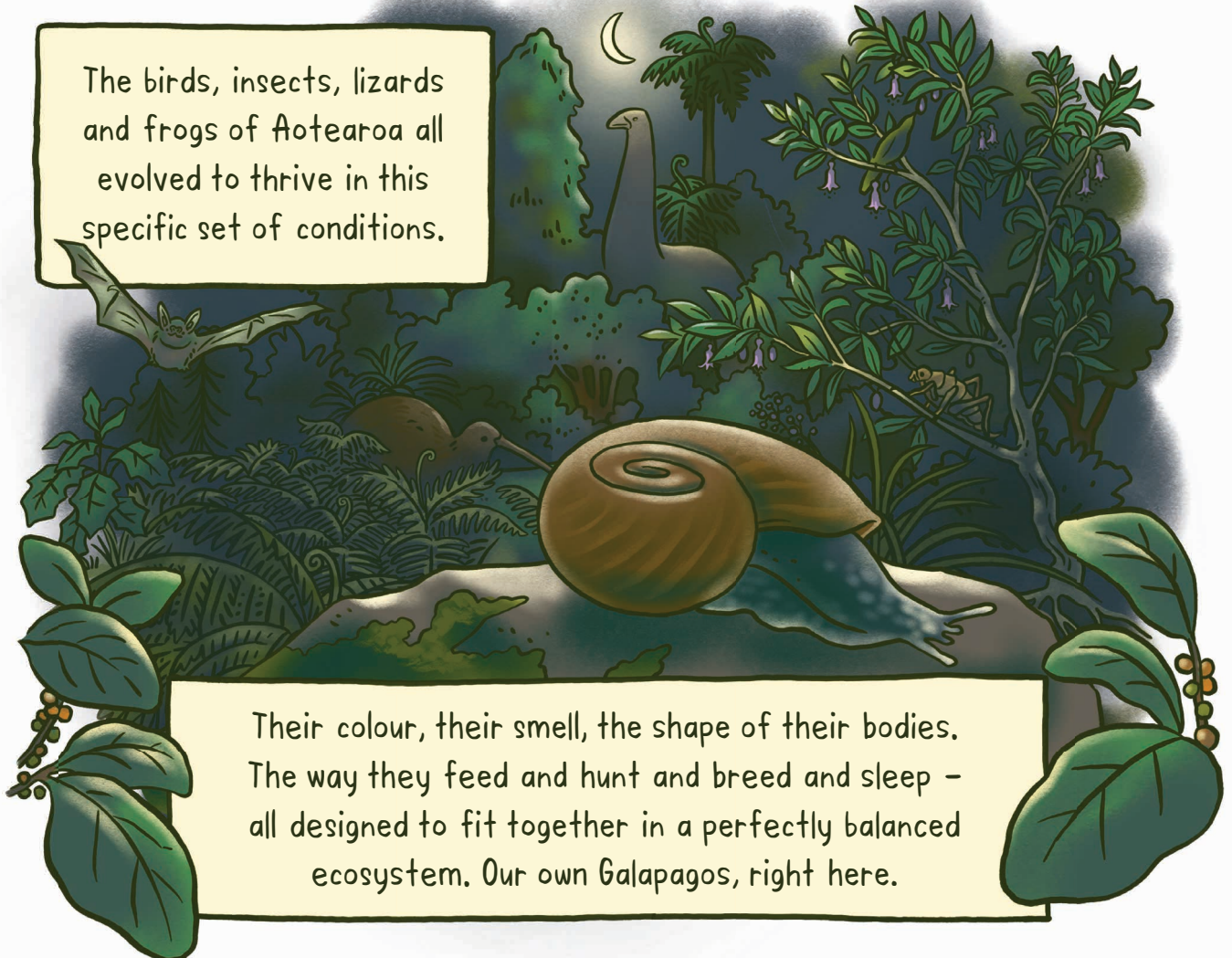
After 85 million years in physical isolation, the animals and plants of Aotearoa adapted to the landscape, and the other species around them, in unique ways.



So, we ended up with completely unique species: ancient river ducks, a parrot that lives from the mountains to the sea, predatory land slugs, giant carnivorous snails, a giant wingless cricket and of course, nocturnal ground-foraging birds.



The birds, insects, lizards and frogs of Aotearoa all evolved to thrive in this specific set of conditions.



Their colour, their smell, the shape of their bodies. The way they feed and hunt and breed and sleep – all designed to fit together in a perfectly balanced ecosystem. Our own Galapagos, right here.



The kākāpō, for example, evolved to only breed when there's an extra large crop of rimu berries, which happens every 2 to 4 years.



Their natural predators were in the air, so they stuck to the ground. Their defence - if spotted - was to freeze. From above, their fluffy green feathers would look like a small shrub.



And then everything changed. People arrived and they also brought with them new introduced predators, including rats, possums and stoats.



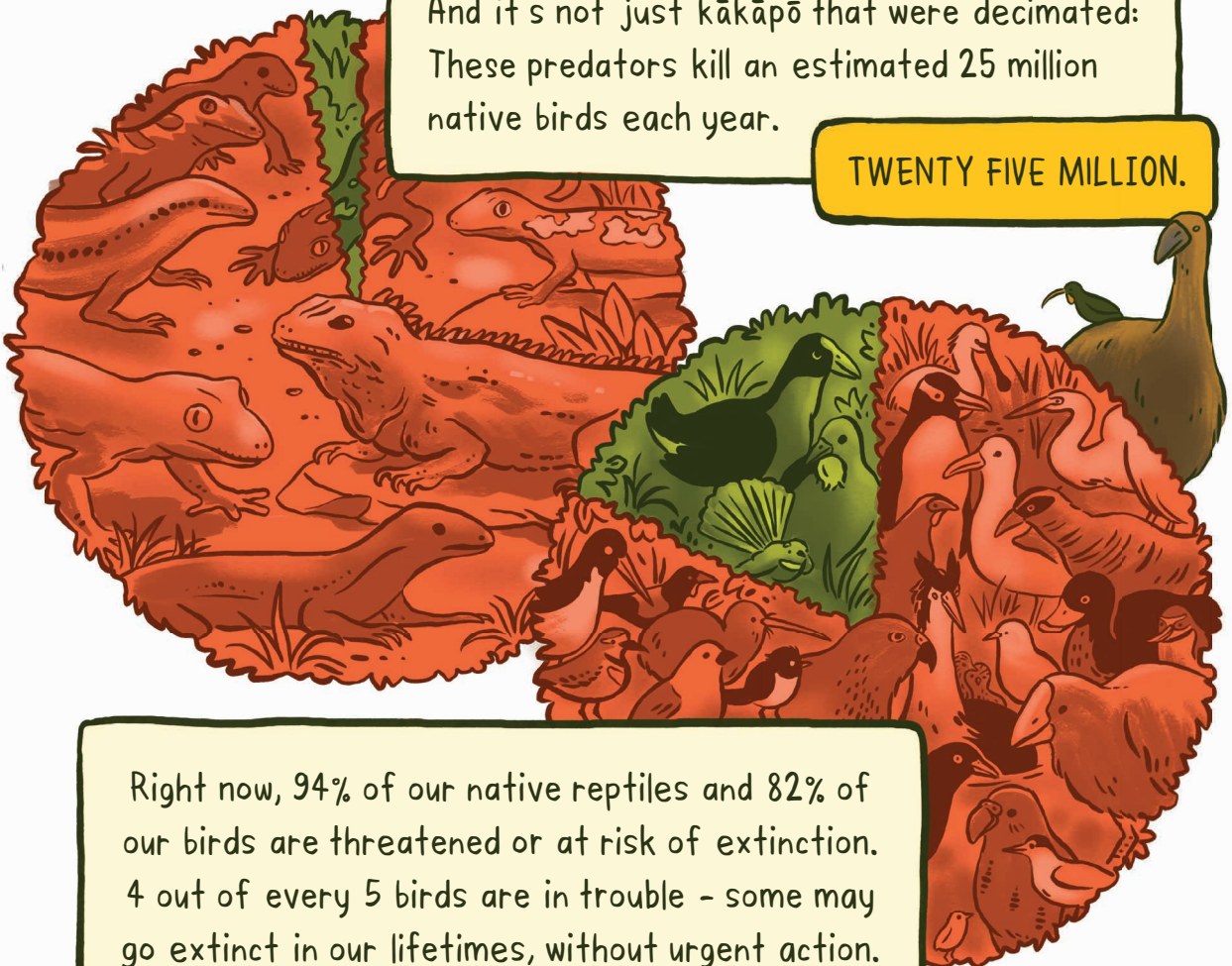
And now - there are only around 250 kākāpō left.



Living on the ground, freezing as a defence: suddenly their successful evolutionary survival tactics made them easy prey.

And it's not just kākāpō that were decimated: These predators kill an estimated 25 million native birds each year.

TWENTY FIVE MILLION.



Right now, 94% of our native reptiles and 82% of our birds are threatened or at risk of extinction. 4 out of every 5 birds are in trouble - some may go extinct in our lifetimes, without urgent action.



The good news is, it doesn't have to be like this. Our connection to this land and its wildlife runs deep. There's a practical concern - our economy depends on a healthy environment...



... but more importantly, it's personal too - it's deeply tied into our whakapapa, our physical and mental health, our sense of self.

We're doing what we can to protect what precious plants and animals we have left. But we're also working towards a future where native species will thrive once again.



We might perceive the goal of conservation as only 'protect what we have left' or 'limit the damage', when it's that and more. We're now aiming higher: our native birds will thrive once again if we eradicate introduced predators.



With investment in the predator free movement, it's not just a dream. We've already made great progress all around the country, like on Miramar Peninsula in Wellington, where there are now zero Norway rats, stoats, weasels, and possums, and the community have seen native birdlife soar by 71% with more tūī, kākārīki, pīwakawaka, and kākā.



In short, when we take predator free action, it works. Aotearoa is already a world leader in predator eradication - now we're stepping it up to the next level.

So, Predator Free 2050 is the goal: Eradicate the most damaging introduced predators (stoats, rats and possums) from all of Aotearoa by 2050.



And it's a journey we're all on together. It's not just a government thing, it's something we can all play a part in: landowners, iwi, businesses, schools, communities and individuals.



And we've got a three part plan to get us there. We're mobilising a nationwide movement to focus effort, resources and thinking on achieving the goal. New Zealanders are already taking action - with over 5,400 trapping groups around the country.




We're using our Kiwi ingenuity to create new tools and technology to eradicate predators. It's highly possible we'll use tech solutions by 2050 we can't even imagine today. Could we see biodegradable aerial traps? Predator detection using A.I.? A new predator birth control technique?

Then, once we have support systems, active communities, and innovative tools, we'll be ready to accelerate eradication of introduced predators across the whole country.



So we all have a role to play - whether that's getting involved in trapping, or spreading the word, or simply understanding and supporting the goal - keeping it top of mind.






And that's easy to do when there's something so amazing to look forward to: a country where our wildlife can flourish again without the threat of introduced predators.

And that helps all of us, not just the birds. Like the whakataukī says: 'Ko au te whenua, ko te whenua, ko au': I am the land and the land is me. When nature flourishes, the people flourish.

Imagine kiwi at our feet, the song of the bellbird in the air, incredible one-of-a-kind wonders, abundant like apples on trees. That's all of us thriving.



But let's just take it easy on shaking the kākāpō out of the bushes eh? Let's let them sleep this time.







