

# New Zealand

## South Island Endemics

***30<sup>th</sup> November to 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024 (10 days)***

## North Island Extension

***9<sup>th</sup> December to 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024 (9 days)***



**Whitehead by Adam Riley**

*New Zealand supports a host of unusual endemic land birds and a rich assemblage of marine birds and mammals. We start our South Island Endemics tour in the beautiful grasslands of the Mackenzie region of the South Island where we will take in the beauty of the Southern Alpine range, while looking for the critically endangered Black Stilt, before hiking through pristine Red Beech forest surrounded by breath-taking glacier-lined mountains, where the massive Kea (an Alpine parrot) can be found. In Fiordland National Park we will search for Blue Duck, the cute New Zealand Rockwren and New Zealand Falcon, before catching our ferry to the rugged Stewart Island in search of Southern Brown Kiwi, Yellow-eyed and Fiordland Crested Penguins and a pelagic outing visiting several nearby islands in search of a variety of seabirds including 8 species of albatross! Our final destination will be Dunedin, where a visit to a Northern Royal Albatross colony will certainly be amongst the many highlights of this rewarding tour. With excellent lodging and meals, awe-inspiring scenery, and fantastically friendly “Kiwis”, this is sure to be a tour of a lifetime!*

*Our North Island Endemics tour begins in Auckland, as we target North Island Brown Kiwi, amongst a multitude of other species that will no doubt be lifers for everyone. Our pelagic into the Hauraki Gulf searches for the recently rediscovered New Zealand Storm Petrel and a myriad of other species. Continuing to the fabled Tiritiri Matangi Island, we will bird this predator-free reserve for the prehistoric South Island Takahe, strange North Island Kokako and Stitchbird, before combing the Miranda shoreline for the bizarre Wrybill and numerous migrant waders. From here we visit the scenic Tongariro National Park in the centre of the North Island where we check fast-flowing streams for the rare Blue Duck. We finish our time on the North Island visiting the famous Zealandia Reserve searching for the endangered Little Spotted Kiwi, New Zealand Falcon and Stitchbird.*

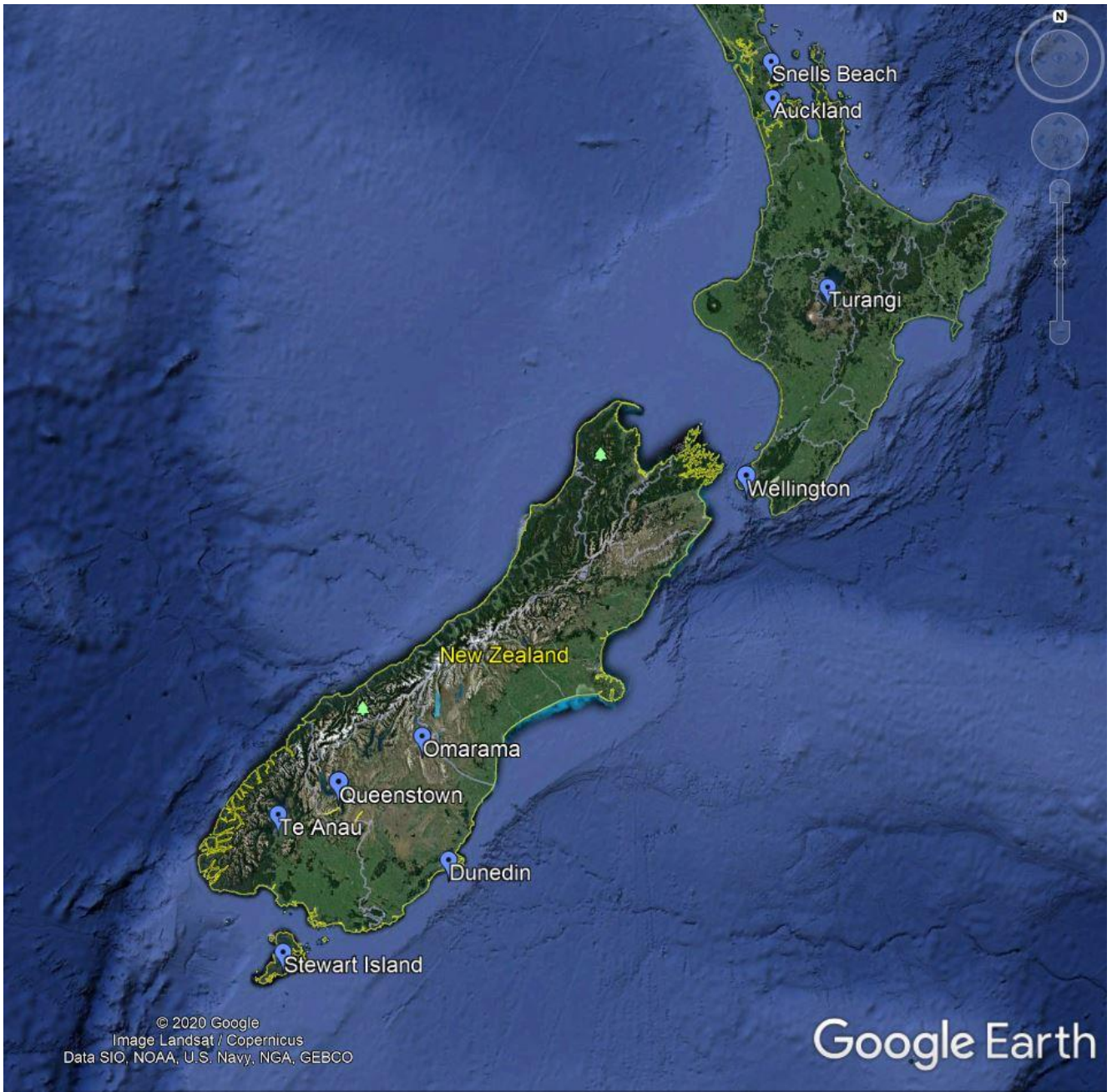
## ***Itinerary & Map***

### **South Island Endemics**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Arrival in Queenstown, transfer to Omarama</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Mount Cook area</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Omarama to Te Anau</b>
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Fiordland National Park</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Te Anau to Stewart Island</b>
<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Stewart Island</b>
<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Stewart Island Pelagic</b>
<b>Day 8</b>	<b>Stewart Island to Dunedin</b>
<b>Day 9</b>	<b>Dunedin area &amp; pelagic</b>
<b>Day 10</b>	<b>Final departure</b>

### **North Island Extension**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Auckland to Snells Beach</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Snells Beach and surrounds</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Pelagic off Hauraki Gulf</b>
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Tiritiri Matangi Island</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Warkworth to Turangi via Miranda</b>
<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Turangi area</b>
<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Turangi to Wellington</b>
<b>Day 8</b>	<b>Wellington area</b>
<b>Day 9</b>	<b>Wellington to Auckland and depart</b>



## Birding sites in detail



South Island Saddleback by Adam Riley

**Omarama area.** We will search the Omarama area in earnest for Black Stilt. This is one of New Zealand's most endangered species and thought to be the world's rarest wader at less than 250 individuals. We also have further chances for the beautiful endemic Double-banded Plover (Banded Dotterel) Black-fronted Tern and Wrybill, which nest on the braided riverbeds. The scenery is breath-taking, and we will see New Zealand's highest peak, the snow-covered Mount Cook at (3 724m). Other species possible in this area may include New Zealand Falcon, Swamp Harrier, Paradise Shelduck, New Zealand Scaup, Grey Teal, Eurasian Coot, Great Crested Grebe, Masked Lapwing, New Zealand (Australasian) Pipit, Australian Magpie and Common Redpoll.

Small passerines introduced from Europe are another feature of this area, with possibilities for Yellowhammer, European Greenfinch, European Goldfinch, Common Redpoll, Song Thrush and Dunnock.

**Fiordland National Park.** This morning we head through to Fiordland National Park, allowing for breath-taking views of this area, New Zealand's largest national park, also rightfully declared as a World Heritage Area. We'll be on the lookout for the scarce New Zealand Falcon as well as Blue Duck, should we still need this species. Near the Homer Tunnel, we will take a hike of 2 - 3km return, to look for the rare and localised New Zealand Rockwren. We will have to be patient and scan the large boulders carefully for this tiny bird!

Afterwards, we will take various stops in Beech Forest to look for New Zealand Kaka, Yellow-crowned Parakeet, New Zealand Robin, Tomtit, Pipipi (Brown Creeper) and Rifleman, a member of the endemic family of New Zealand Wrens. The fantastic Kea, a true Alpine parrot are also found here.

**Stewart Island.** After boarding a ferry in Bluff, we'll sail to Stewart Island, New Zealand's third largest island and newest national park. Stewart Island is wild and rugged, with few roads and high numbers of birds, making it a very exciting place indeed! This afternoon we will catch a water taxi to Ulva Island in Paterson Inlet, a forested jewel, which will put us into some of the best avian bush walking in New Zealand. Ulva Island is a predator-free haven for a variety of birds, including the Stewart Island form of Weka, Tui, New Zealand Bellbird, the South Island form of New Zealand Kaka, both Red-crowned and Yellow-crowned Parakeets, South Island Saddleback, the endangered Yellowhead, New Zealand Robin and New Zealand Pigeon (locally known as the Kereru). There is an excellent series of paths around the island, and we'll be out for several hours before taking the water taxi back to



Buller's Albatross by Erik Forsyth



**The entertaining Kea by Erik Forsyth**

Golden Bay on Stewart Island. On one evening, we will search for the localised Stewart Island form of Southern Brown Kiwi.

**Pelagic – Stewart Island.** A highlight on Stewart Island is the opportunity for a pelagic tour exploring nearby islands and the spectacular coastal scenery. Again, those who require motion sickness medication will want to plan ahead, as our trip will take us around the south-eastern side of the island, to South Cape and the Southern Muttonbird Islands.

We will encounter several new species of albatross, shearwaters, and diving petrels today, with possibilities including Wandering, Northern Royal, Campbell's, Salvin's and Buller's Albatross, Southern Giant Petrel, Brown Skua, Sooty Shearwater, Cape and Mottled Petrels, Common Diving Petrel as well as chances for Grey-backed Storm Petrel and three species of penguins – namely Yellow-eyed, Fiordland and Little (Blue). Antarctic Terns also have a small breeding colony south of here and we will be looking for sightings of this rare bird for New Zealand.

**Taiaroa Head.** We will spend time at this headland looking for Northern Royal Albatross, here at their only mainland breeding site. Depending on the conditions (the windier the better), we can admire these gigantic and extremely impressive birds (weighing up to 9kg!) as they fly past the headland. Active colonies of Spotted Shags, Red-billed Gulls, White-fronted Terns, and a few Royal Spoonbills will vie for our attention as they nest on a nearby cliff face.

**Dunedin area.** We'll visit a nature reserve dedicated to protecting the Yellow-eyed Penguin, New Zealand's rarest endemic penguin species, where the adults may be seen returning to their nesting burrows after fishing at sea.

**Dunedin pelagic.** The short boat trip takes place against a dramatically scenic backdrop. Before departing the lagoon, we'll pass an Otago Shag breeding colony and get views of Spotted Shag and New Zealand Fur Seal. We'll then cast our eyes to Taiaroa Head where Northern Royal albatross breed, indeed, these are the only mainland breeding albatross species in New Zealand which numbered 22pairs in 2022. At sea proper, we can expect to have some close encounters with Northern Royal, White-capped and Salvins Albatrosses, Cape and Westland Petrels, Sooty and Buller's Shearwaters and Northern Giant Petrel.



**Northern Royal Albatross by Erik Forsyth**



**Wrybill** by John Graham

**Muriwai Beach.** This site hosts a spectacular Australasian Gannet colony surrounded by craggy rocks and pounding surf. We'll marvel at this impressive natural display from a scenic viewpoint atop an overlooking cliff, where Silver Gulls and elegant White-fronted Terns attend their nests. Often present and feeding on the flowering Flax bushes are the outrageous Tui (an endemic honeyeater), New Zealand Fantail and gorgeous New Zealand Pigeon.

**Waipu Estuary.** Here we will search for the elegant Fairy Tern and endemic New Zealand Plover.

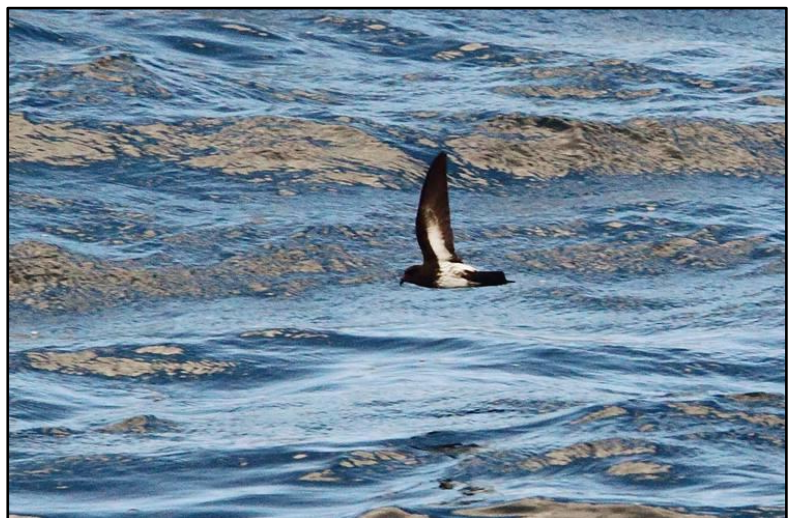
**Snell's Beach.** We will make several birding stops at a series of wetlands in the Snell's Beach area.

Possible species to keep our eyes open for include Little Black and Pied Cormorants, White-faced Heron, Masked Lapwing, Paradise Shelduck, Australasian Shoveler, Grey Teal, endemic New Zealand Scaup and New Zealand Grebe, Buff-banded Rail, Swamp Harrier, Pacific Reef Heron, Royal Spoonbill and Caspian Tern. Later, we will explore a nearby Regional Park for some of New Zealand's most endangered wildlife, including the endangered North Island Saddleback, New Zealand Bellbird, and the prehistoric looking and critically endangered Takahe. We will also look for New Zealand Pigeon, Red-crowned Parakeet, Tui, Whitehead flitting through the undergrowth, the north island forms of New Zealand Robin, Brown Quail, Silvereye and New Zealand Fantail.

A night walk in the area gives us our first opportunity to look for the amazing North Island Brown Kiwi, one of five representatives of this terrestrial bird family that is endemic to New Zealand.

**Pelagic – Hauraki Gulf.** We depart for a pelagic seabird tour of the Hauraki Gulf. In the gulf, there are a wealth of breeding seabirds, including the endemic Buller's and Fluttering as well as Flesh-footed Shearwaters. Endemic Cook's and the localised Black Petrels are present and may be seen alongside the boat, along with the active White-faced Storm Petrel and Fairy Prions. Little Blue Penguin, Australasian Gannet and White-fronted Tern are often seen at some point throughout the day and if we are very lucky, we might even obtain views of the New Zealand Storm Petrel! This species was only rediscovered in 2004 after a fifty-year absence and the first chicks and nesting burrows were found on Little Barrier Island in January 2013. It is now hoped that a conservation effort can help save this critically endangered species.

**Tiritiri Matangi Island.** We depart today by water taxi for the fabled Tiritiri Matangi Island. Several highly endangered endemic species can be seen here, including rare species sadly extirpated from the mainland. One of the Jewels of the Hauraki Gulf, Tiri is an amazing example of habitat restoration with over 200,000 native trees meticulously replanted. We will explore this predator-free haven for some of New Zealand's most endangered wildlife, including the outrageous North Island Saddleback, localised Stitchbird, New Zealand Bellbird, the spectacular North Island Kokako, and the



**New Zealand Storm Petrel** by Adam Riley



**New Zealand Kaka** by Erik Forsyth

total population has been estimated at a mere 5,000 individuals. It nests on stony riverbeds in South Island and winters in flocks on wetlands with marsh and expansive tidal flats, Miranda being its favoured area. Other potential species here include Variable and South Island Oystercatchers, Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Red Knot, Pacific Golden Plover, Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpipers, Red-necked Stint, Whimbrel and Ruddy Turnstone.

**Tongariro River.** We will stop at this fast-flowing river to search for the endemic Blue Duck.

**Turangi area.** We will visit a nearby reedbed to look for a resident pair of Australasian Bittern, which can often be heard calling and with luck, seen in flight over this reedbed. Fernbird also occur, and we hope for sightings of either of these species. Other species often seen here at the lake include Little Black and Pied Cormorants, White-faced Heron, Masked Lapwing, Paradise Shelduck, Australasian Shoveler, Grey Teal, endemic New Zealand Scaup and New Zealand Grebe, Swamp Harrier, Royal Spoonbill and Caspian Tern.

**Lake Rotopounamu.** We'll enjoy a walk through a stunning forest with large Ferns and several species of native New Zealand and trees. Target birds will be New Zealand Falcon, Yellow-crowned Parakeet, Tomtit and Long-tailed Cuckoo.

**Zealandia Reserve.** This site is well-known for its Conservation education programme and a predator-proof fence surrounding over 300 hectares of native bush. This area protects many of New Zealand's threatened wildlife and reptiles including the endangered Tuatara. Birds are particularly confiding as they are used to many visitors and photographic opportunities are endless especially at several well-placed feeders.

Birds that we should see well are the dazzling North Island Saddleback, the huge New Zealand Kaka, New Zealand Bellbird

prehistoric looking Takahe. Throughout our time on the island, we will also see New Zealand Pigeon, Red-crowned Parakeet, Tui, Whitehead flitting through the undergrowth, the north island forms of New Zealand Robin and Fernbird, Brown Quail and New Zealand Fantail. In addition, we'll be on the lookout for Brown Teal and Spotless Crake, which are sometimes seen at a small pond near the jetty.

**Miranda.** The mud flats and shell banks near the Miranda Trust Wildlife Centre are a fantastic place to find large flocks of shorebirds, and here we will diligently scan while searching especially for Wrybill. This small, bizarre plover is confined to New Zealand and is the only bird species with a laterally asymmetrical bill uniquely curving to the right. Its



**Little Spotted Kiwi** by Adam Riley

and Tui, Red-crowned Parakeet, New Zealand Robin, Grey Warbler, New Zealand Fantail and possibly New Zealand Falcon, plus other more widespread bush species. We will enjoy lunch at the reserve's cafeteria overlooking the park. In the afternoon there will be time to relax or a walk through the botanical gardens.

In the evening we will return to Zealandia Reserve and partake on a guided tour to look for the Little Spotted Kiwi. This species was re-introduced to Zealandia as it became extinct on the mainland due to introduced predators such as stoats. To save the species it was placed on several offshore predator-free islands. We will hope for a sighting here as the birds are breeding and population increasing.

### ***Tour Grading & Key***

<b>Overall Ease</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moderate. Suitable for all birding / wildlife interest levels and most mobility capabilities.
<b>Birding Ease</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Undemanding, most species provide good visuals. Night birding for kiwis can be tricky. A small number of scarce/rare target species.
<b>Accommodation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comfortable.
<b>Walking / Trails</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate. Short walks on flat ground, with a few longer hikes. Night walks for kiwis can be challenging on narrower trails, some might be muddy.
<b>Vehicles / Roads</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Comfortable vehicle on good quality sealed roads. Several long drives.
<b>Photography</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good to very good. Pelagic opportunities can be outstanding in good weather conditions.
<b>Annoyances</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Pelagic conditions can vary from calm to rough.

### ***Financial Arrangements and Important Notes***

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 10 of the South Island Endemic tour;
- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 9 of the North Island extension;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- Pelagic trips;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;



- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions (ie: Royal Albatross hide);
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

**Single Supplement:** The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

**Tipping:** As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**
- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg (44lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+-18lb) for hand luggage.
- We recommend an overnight bag/backpack during our short stay on Kapiti Island. We will carry our gear on a trail from the beach to our lodge. Suitcases will be safely locked in the vehicle. Two trips can be made to fetch gear from the landing area if need be.
- Accommodation throughout the trip is of a good standard and the hotels and resorts that we make use of range from comfortable to good. There is no camping on this trip.
- Please note that the seas during the pelagic trips can be unpredictable, and guests who opt for this activity, must bear this in mind. It is essential that you bring along some motion sickness medication if you suspect that you could be prone to seasickness. We suggest that you contact your travel doctor for information regarding the various medication options.
- If you have any medical conditions or physical limitations relating to balance and mobility, please do let the Rockjumper office know.

## ***Arrival and Departure Details***

The South Island Endemics tour will begin in Queenstown on day 1, with a transfer from the airport to Omarama. Please arrive in Queenstown before 11:00. The tour will conclude after breakfast at Dunedin International Airport on Day 10.

The North Island extension will begin in Auckland on day 1, with a transfer from the airport to Snell's Beach. Please arrive in Auckland before 13:00. The tour will conclude after breakfast with a flight from Wellington to Auckland on Day 9.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Auckland Airport, Auckland (IATA: AKL) is the main port of entry for international flights into New Zealand and is well serviced by many of the world's major airlines. Dunedin International Airport, Dunedin (IATA: DUD) and Queenstown Airport (IATA: ZQN) are both easily reached via internal flights from Auckland).

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements. The following website provides detailed information about visa eligibility and assistance with online applications options where viable: [Visa HQ for Travel](#)

**DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.**