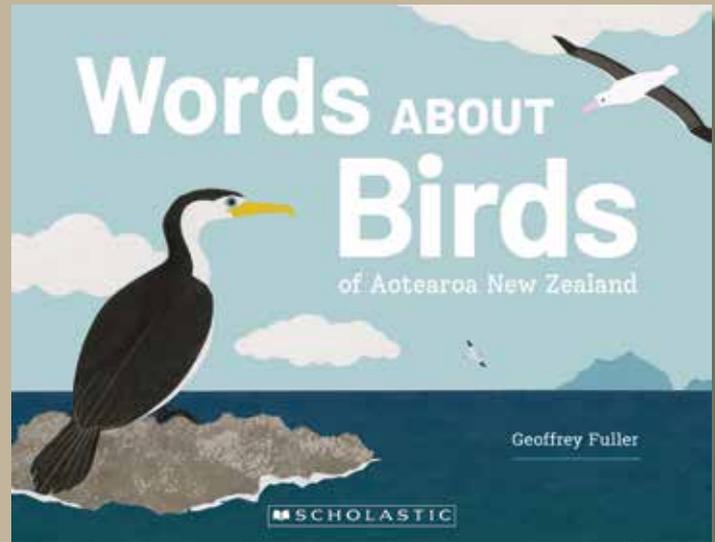


Words About Birds of Aotearoa New Zealand by Geoffrey Fuller



• Reading • Writing • Thinking Skills • Research Skills

Synopsis

Words About Birds of Aotearoa New Zealand is a collection of poems about birds and their habits and habitats. They are complimented with illustrations by Geoffrey Fuller.

The birds included in this book are: albatross, bellbird, bittern, gannet, godwit, gulls, harrier hawk, kākāpō, kea, kererū, kiwi, mallard, ruru, yellow-eyed penguin, pūkeko, pied shag, pied stilt, takahē, tūi and moa.

The te reo Māori names of these birds are also featured in the heading on each page.

About the Author

Geoffrey Fuller was educated at Rongotai Boys' College in Wellington before pursuing his love for art through Wellington Technical College and Canterbury University School of Art in Christchurch. In 1952 he graduated with a Diploma in Fine Arts in Painting, and trained as a teacher of Art at Auckland Teachers' College. He taught at four different secondary schools before eventually retiring as Head of Art in 1985.

A talented painter in oils, acrylics and watercolours, Geoffrey was regularly featured in exhibitions throughout Hawke's Bay, and has paintings in both private and public collections around the world.

From his middle name, his wife and daughters dubbed him 'Saint Francis', after Saint Francis of Assisi, who shared his love for birds and nature.

Geoffrey passed away in 2011. This book was published in his memory.

Writing and Illustration Style

Words About Birds of Aotearoa New Zealand is a gift to the senses. While the content of this picture book is an informative non-fiction catalogue of birds of Aotearoa New Zealand, the text is written as rhyming, playful, sometimes humorous, verse. The lyrical quality of the text makes *Words About Birds* a delight to read aloud, but the real worth of this book lies in the stunning illustrations.

The simple, flat, graphic style of the illustrations by the late award-winning New Zealand artist Geoffrey Fuller showcase not only his talent, but also his love for birds. The illustrations are striking and feature birds in their natural New Zealand habitats. Available in both English and te reo Māori editions, this picture book is a celebration of New Zealand birdlife.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

During the shared sessions, encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of characters and events. Have them make predictions and inferences and relate these to their own experiences. Read the passages aloud and have students read alongside or by themselves.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

Look at the cover and read the blurb.

- Can you name the two birds on the front cover?
- Can you name all of the birds on the back cover?
- Read the title and the blurb. What do you notice?
- What kind of book is this?

Comprehension

- What do you notice about the rhyming structure of the first spread? (Each stanza / verse has an A, B, C, B rhyming structure.)
- Can you name the four birds on the first spread?
- What word describes birds that 'are only seen at night'?
- Why has the author said 'we must protect each one'? What function does the first spread serve?
- Why do you think the author has used both the English and te reo Māori name for each bird?
- What do you know about the albatross / toroa? How has the rhyming structure changed? (A, A, B, B)
- Why is the text for the bellbird / korimako divided into four stanzas / verses? What is the rhyming structure? (A, A, B, B, C, C, D, D)
- Have you ever seen the secretive bittern / matuku? What is the rhyming structure on this spread? (A, B, C, B) What is meant by the word 'booming'?
- How does the gannet / tākapu find its food? What is the rhyming structure on this page? (A, A, B, B)
- What is the name of the journey made by the godwit / kuaka? Can you identify the rhyming structure in this poem? (A, B, C, B) What does the word 'coast' mean?
- Can you make 'the cry' of karoro and akiaki? What does 'native' mean? Where would you find these birds?
- How does the harrier hawk / kāhu fly?
- Why is the kākāpō also called the 'night parrot'?
- What is the cheeky kea known for?
- There are five adjectives (describing words) on the kererū / wood pigeon page. Can you find them all?
- How has the rhyming structure changed on the kererū / wood pigeon page?
- What is an ornithologist? How could an ornithologist tell where a kiwi has been?
- Where would you find a mallard / rakiraki?
- What kind of bird is a ruru / morepork?
- Which bird 'glides with flippers – not with wings'?
- What does 'foraging' mean? Which bird from Aotearoa New Zealand is part of the rail family?
- Where do kāruhiruhi like to rest?
- What is the meaning of the word 'pied'?
- Which bird was thought to be 'extinct for fifty years'?
- Where may a tūi be heard? What distinctive physical feature does it have?
- Where could you see a moa now?



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC

Activities

ACTIVITY 1: TWITTERS AND TWEETS, FEATHERS AND FEET

As a class, listen to recordings of the songs and calls of the birds in *Words About Birds*. Run a competition to see who is best at identifying each bird. Excellent free recordings can be found at: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/birds/bird-songs-and-calls/>

Then go into a green space and listen for bird calls. Can you identify any of the birds by their calls? Look for birds and, if possible, photograph them. Also look for clues that birds may have left behind, such as feathers, nests, or footprints. Back in class, create a bird display area with information on birds found in your area.

ACTIVITY 2: ONLY IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Discuss the words *endemic* (birds that live and breed naturally only in Aotearoa New Zealand); *native* (birds that arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand by themselves and became established here – these birds are also found in other countries); and *introduced* (birds that humans have brought to Aotearoa New Zealand). Invite the students to pick one living bird from *Words About Birds* and research to find out more about it. Possible research questions include:

- Is it endemic, native, or introduced?
- Where does it live?
- What does it eat?
- Is it endangered or under threat?

Excellent information is available online at: <https://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/>

Create posters with headings, illustrations and information on each bird. Alternatively, challenge the students to write their own rhyming poem about their chosen bird and illustrate it. Display the posters and poems in the bird display area.

ACTIVITY 3: CONSERVE THAT BIRD!

Many birds of Aotearoa New Zealand are threatened. Learn more about these birds and what is being done to help them. Helpful online resources include:

- <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/conservation-status/threatened-birds/>
- Radio New Zealand has excellent audio stories on a wide range of Bird Conservation Projects at: <https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/ourchangingworld/collections/birdsocw/conservation>
- forestandbird.org.nz have a range of conservation projects
- <https://www.keaconservation.co.nz/>

ACTIVITY 4: MAP IT!

As a class, find the locations named on the tūi / parson bird page on a map of Aotearoa New Zealand. Just for fun, try singing the text on this page. Then have the students find and mark where they live plus the named locations on their own individual maps.

ACTIVITY 5: THE MIGHTY MOA

Research to learn more about moa. Possible research questions include:

- How many species of moa were there?
- Where did moa live?
- What did moa eat?
- What did Māori use moa for?
- When did moa become extinct?

It may be possible to arrange a field trip to a museum to see a moa skeleton. If not, moa skeletons from the Canterbury Museum can be seen online at <https://joyofmuseums.com/museums/australasia-museums/new-zealand-museums/museums-in-christchurch-new-zealand/canterbury-museum-christchurch/moa/>

Written by Frances McBeath



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