

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND DESCRIPTIVE NOTES

General Description

New Zealand consists of three main islands, many small adjacent islands, and a group called the Chatham Islands 800km to the east of New Zealand. The main islands are North Island, South Island, and Stewart Island. New Zealand's overseas territories cover the Tokelau Islands and the Ross Dependency in Antarctica.

Historical

The Polynesians who first settled in New Zealand about A.D. 1350 were the ancestors of today's Maori. They named the country Aotearoa (Land of the Long White Cloud). Abel Tasman was the first European to visit New Zealand in 1642, but no landing was made. James Cook, in 1769, was the first European to land. He was also first to claim New Zealand for a European sovereign, George III of England. Whaling stations were established, and in 1814 Samuel Marsden began the first mission. On 6 February 1840 the Treaty of Waitangi was signed by Governor William Hobson and the Maori Chiefs, giving sovereignty to Queen Victoria of England and recognition of Maori rights to their land. Land wars between Maori and European raged intermittently between 1846 and 1870 before being settled by Governor Grey.

Population

New Zealand's multi-racial society numbers approx 3 951 700 of which 74.3 percent live in the North Island.

Geographical

New Zealand's geographical boundaries extend from 33° to 53° south latitude and from 162° east to 173° west longitude and enclose approximately 270 000 sq. km. Only 25 percent of the land is below 200m above the sea level. The length of the coastline is 6900km. New Zealand has 10 national parks, the largest, Fiordland, covers 1 232 000ha and encloses the famous Milford Track scenic walkway. New Zealand has large thermal areas with active volcanoes, geysers, boiling pools, and hot springs. A massive mountain chain known as the Southern Alps runs almost the length of the South Island, and it contains New Zealand's highest mountain, Mt Cook at 3754m. The largest lake, Lake Taupo, covers 606 sq. km. Of the many glaciers the Taomari is the largest, being 23km long and 2km wide. There are many rivers, and the longest, the Waikato, runs for 420km and has eight hydro power stations built on it.

Climate

New Zealand has a variable climate, from sub-tropical in the north to a cooler climate in the south. Extremes of climate are mainly confined to mountain areas. The chain of high mountains which extends through the length of the country acts as a barrier to prevailing westerly winds and produces distinct climate contrasts from west to east. Generally, New Zealand's climate is mild with ample rain.

Flora & Fauna

New Zealand has large areas of luxuriant forest. The forests may be broadly grouped into two main divisions - mixed temperate evergreen forest and beech forest. The former contains a mixture of broadleaved trees and conifers and is common in the north and also in warm, wet lowlands and on lower mountain slopes. This forest has a subtropical appearance, enhanced by such species as nikau palm and tree ferns. In places, the undergrowth is dense with creepers, orchids, ferns and many varieties of other plants. In the far north, remnants of the giant kauri pine still stand. Beech forests of one or more species, are found in the south and in the uplands and drier lowlands. About 90 percent of the native flowering plants in New Zealand are not found in any other land. Many trees have beautiful flowers such as the brilliant red pohutukawa and rata, the distinctive yellow kororia, and the delicate white bushy flowers. The lakes and rivers contain an assortment of fish and marine life. A large variety of birds exist in New Zealand, from the common sparrow to the rare takahē and very rare kakapo. In particular, the birds of New Zealand's coastal waters are abundant and varied. The kōi, a nocturnal ground bird, is found only in New Zealand. Some species now extinct on the main islands survive and thrive on off-shore island sanctuaries: the albatross, sandalwood, shore dove, black robin. The extinct moa, a giant flightless bird, once roamed the land and was hunted by the Maori. Deer, goats, pigs, rabbits and many other animals are all introduced. The poisonous katipo spider is one of the few indigenous dangerous species in New Zealand. A "living fossil", is a term often to describe the native tuatara, the tuatara. It is the only living representative of its order. It is protected and now found only on some of the off-shore islands. The fern and the kōwhiri and sometimes the kōwhiri feature in emblems of the country.



REFERENCE

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| State Highways | Major urban areas |
| Roads | Towns or communities |
| Vehicle tracks | |
| Foot tracks | |
| Railway tracks | |
| Tunnels | |
| Stream or watercourse | |
| Sand and mud | |
| Sand and shingle | |
| Swamp | |
| Sandhills | |
| Permanent snow and ice | |
| Spot elevation | |

HYPOMETRIC TINTS

3754
2500
1500
1000
500
0
500
1000
2000
3000
4000
5000
6000

SCALE 1:2 000 000 Kilometres
20 0 20 40 60 80 100

Heights are in metres above mean sea level.
New Zealand Map Projection
Bathymetry compiled from New Zealand Oceanographic Institute charts.

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Aotearoa NEW ZEALAND 1:2 000 000

Aotearoa

New Zealand
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Scale 1:2 000 000 InfoMap 266

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