ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

New Zealand

Comprehensive III

14th November to 30th November 2022 (17 days)



Little Spotted Kiwi by Adam Riley

New Zealand supports a host of unusual endemic land birds and a rich assemblage of marine birds and mammals. Our comprehensive tour is designed to seek almost every possible endemic and take full advantage of New Zealand's oceanic diversity. Beginning in Auckland, we target North Island Brown Kiwi, amongst a multitude of other species that will no doubt be lifers. The first of our several pelagic excursions then takes place in the Hauraki Gulf in search of 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. We finish our time on North Island visiting Kapiti Island searching for the endangered Little Spotted Kiwi, migrant Long-tailed Cuckoo and Tomtit.

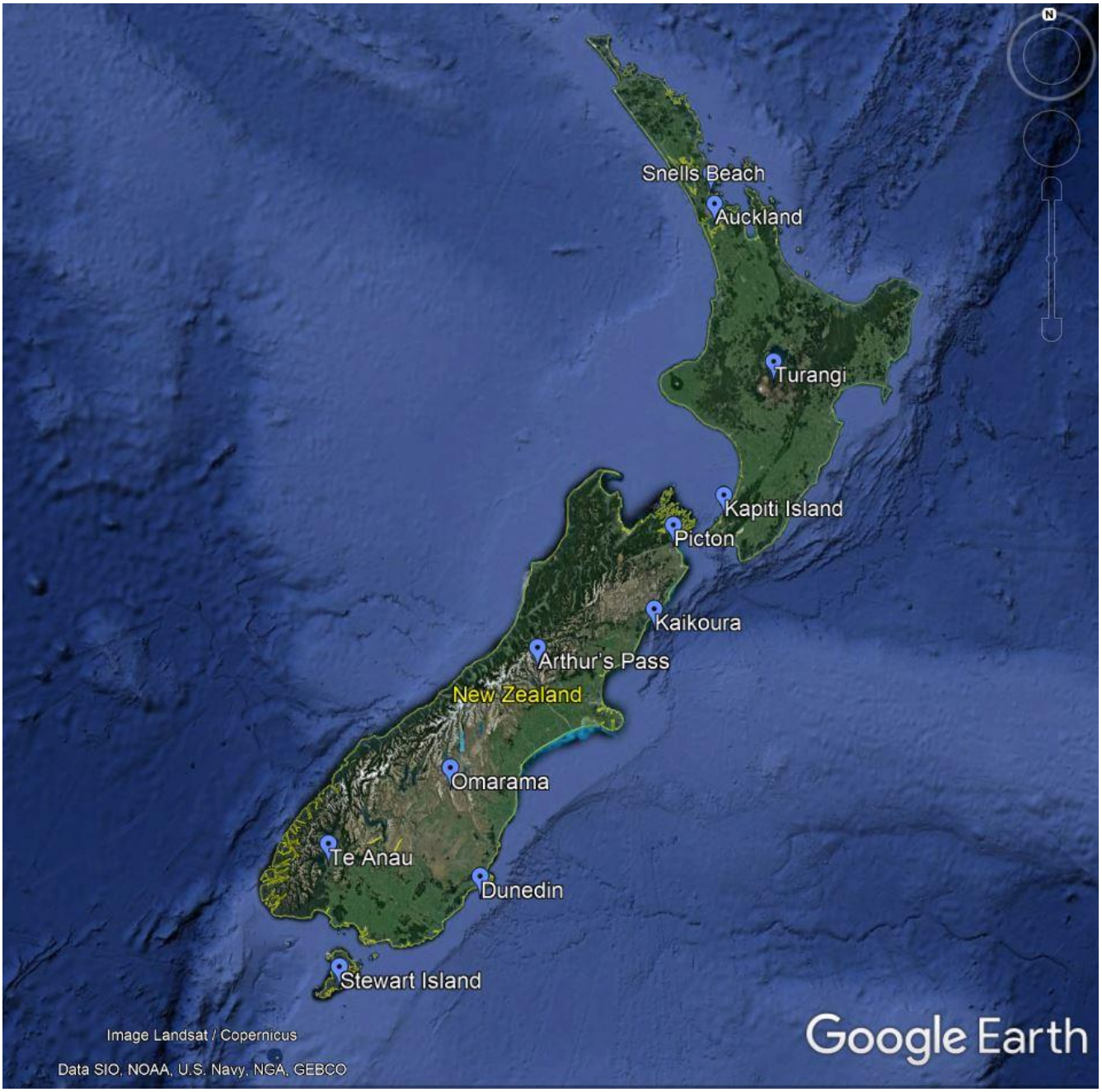
Crossing onto South Island, our first stop is Blumine Island Bird Sanctuary, where the dazzling South Island Saddleback and New Zealand Robin will no doubt entertain us, before we embark on another pelagic adventure into the fantastic upwelling off Kaikoura, searching for an abundance of albatrosses, shearwaters and petrels. Travelling across South Island, we will seek the endemic flightless rail known as the Weka, as well as the critically endangered Black Stilt, before hiking through pristine Red Beech forest surrounded by breathtaking glacier-lined mountains, where Pipipi (Brown Creeper) and the massive Kea can be found. In Fiordland National Park our targets will include 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 and a variety of other specialities prior to another pelagic outing visiting several nearby islands. Our final destination will be Dunedin, where a visit to a Northern Royal Albatross colony and a Yellow-eyed Penguin breeding site 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!

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE…

THE ITINERARY

Day 1	**Auckland to Snells Beach**
Day 2	**Snells Beach and surrounds**
Day 3	**Pelagic off Hauraki Gulf**
Day 4	**Day trip to Tiritiri Matangi Island**
Day 5	**Warkworth to Turangi via Miranda**
Day 6	**Turangi to Kapiti Island**
Day 7	**Kapiti Island to Picton**
Day 8	**Picton to Kaikoura via Marlborough Sounds**
Day 9	**Kaikoura Pelagic and drive to Arthur's Pass**
Day 10	**Arthur's Pass to Omarama**
Day 11	**Omarama and Mount Cook area**
Day 12	**Omarama to Te Anau**
Day 13	**Fiordland National Park**
Day 14	**Te Anau to Stewart Island**
Day 15	**Stewart Island Pelagic**
Day 16	**Stewart Island to Dunedin**
Day 17	**Final departures**

TOUR ROUTE MAP…



THE TOUR IN DETAIL…



The impressive Tui by Erik

Day 1: Auckland to Snell's Beach. This morning we will depart from Auckland and head straight to the delights of Muriwai Beach, where there is a spectacular Australasian Gannet colony surrounded by craggy rocks and pounding surf. Here we can 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. Thereafter we will drive northward through Helensville to Waipu on the east coast. Here we will walk out onto the Waipu Estuary where we will specifically search for the elegant Fairy Tern and endemic New Zealand Plover. We will then drive south to Snell's Beach for a four-night stay. In the late evening, we will undertake a nearby night walk for 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.

Day 2: Snell's Beach and surrounds. Today we will make several birding stops at a series of wetlands. 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.



New Zealand Storm Petrel by Andrew Sutherland

Day 3: Pelagic off Hauraki Gulf. Early this morning 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.



North Island Kokako by Adam Riley

Day 4: Day trip to 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 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.

Day 5: Warkworth to Turangi via Miranda. Early this morning we will drive southwards through the city of Auckland to 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 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. From Miranda, we then head southwards through to the vast Lake Taupo where we will enjoy a short break before continuing to Turangi. If time permits, we will visit the nearby Tongariro River to look for the endemic Blue Duck. They enjoy fast-flowing streams and we will search the best areas for this species.



Wrybill by John Graham

Day 6: Turangi to Kapiti Island. Early this morning, we will scan a reedbed for a resident pair of Australasian Bittern, which

can often be heard calling and with luck, seen in flight over this reedbed. Spotless Crake and Fernbird also occur, and we hope for sightings of either of these species. Thereafter, we will return to the Tongariro River to scan for the endemic and torrent-loving Blue Duck if still needed. These birds are difficult to spot as they blend into the grey rocky habitats below. By mid-morning, we will leave Turangi and drive south towards Wellington, where we will board a ferry for the nearby Kapiti Island for an overnight stay. Kapiti Island is a predator-free conservation area and has a good population of Little Spotted Kiwi, and we will undertake a guided walk to look for this endangered species. Other great birds that we may find during our stay here include Morepork, the huge New Zealand Kaka, New Zealand Robin, Whitehead, Red-crowned Parakeet, Shining Bronze and Long-tailed Cuckoos, and further opportunities to look for Takahe, if previously missed.



New Zealand Pigeon by Erik Forsyth

Day 7: Kapiti Island to Picton. This morning, after some early morning birding, we will catch our ferry back to the mainland and then drive south through to Wellington, the capital city of New Zealand. Here we will board the Cook Strait ferry heading to the South Island. The ferry crossing takes about three hours, during which time we'll have a chance to look out over the sea for pelagics, which might include any of several possible albatross species plus a variety of shearwaters and prions. We stay overnight near the centre of Picton, a scenic area that overlooks the waterfront.

Day 8: Picton to Kaikoura via Marlborough Sounds. This morning we will undertake an exciting boat trip from Picton to Blumine Island Bird Sanctuary. Here we hope to find the dazzling South Island Saddleback, flighty New Zealand Bellbird, South Island form of New Zealand Robin, plus other more widespread bush species. We will also make a concerted effort to locate the difficult Rough-faced (or King) Shag, a localised species found only in the Marlborough Sounds. Along the way, there are opportunities to view marine mammals such as Dusky Dolphins and playful New Zealand Fur Seals. Returning to Picton in the early afternoon, we will then begin driving south to the lovely seaside village of Kaikoura, along the way passing through Marlborough with its many vineyards and orchards. A stop at Lake Eltewater should give us good looks at Great Crested Grebe and possibly Hoary-



New Zealand Kaka by Erik Forsyth

headed Grebe which have taken up residence here. Kaikoura is located on a most extraordinary peninsula with offshore canyon systems creating an upwelling of nutrients, thereby attracting a wide variety of marine life. Our lodging is located on the foreshore with a direct view of the majestic scenery of the mountainous coastline.



The critically endangered Black Stilt by Erik Forsyth

Day 9: Kaikoura Pelagic and drive to Arthur's Pass. This morning we enjoy the spectacular mix of marine life, seascape and mountains that make Kaikoura so unique. Weather permitting, we will set out on a morning boat trip in search of pelagic species. About forty species of pelagic birds have been recorded in this area over the past two decades and we hope to encounter a wide variety of these ocean denizens during our time at sea.

The continental shelf swings close to the shoreline here, allowing for an upwelling of nutrients from the seafloor that attracts both seabirds and marine mammals. Amongst the many possible bird species, we will be specifically targeting the locally endemic Hutton's Shearwater and Westland Petrel, both of which nest on the mainland of South Island. Other possibilities include both Southern and Northern Royal Albatross, Wandering Albatross of three varieties, Shy and Black-browed Albatross, Southern Giant and White-chinned Petrels, the quick Common Diving Petrel, and Arctic Skua. After lunch, we will drive to Arthur's Pass, where we will look for Black-fronted Terns feeding over fast-flowing streams and the large and friendly Kea, an Alpine parrot, around the village. At night we may hear the calls of Great Spotted Kiwi from the surrounding forest.

Day 10: Arthur's Pass to Omarama. After breakfast today, we will walk a trail near the village, through beautiful Beach Forest to look for the tiny Rifleman, Pipipi (Brown Creeper) and South Island forms of New Zealand Robin and Tomtit, the latter with a yellow-breast. We will also have another search for the Kea if not found from the previous day. Later in the morning, we will begin our drive to Omarama in the MacKenzie Country, so-named after an early pioneer. En route, we will detour slightly to Mount John Observatory to look for Chukor, an attractive partridge of the hill country. If time permits, we will also search for the critically endangered Black Stilt before arriving in Omarama in the late afternoon.



South Island Saddleback by Adam Riley

Day 11: Omarama and Mount Cook

area. Today, we will search in earnest for Black Stilt if not found the previous day. 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 (3724m). 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, Yellowhammer and Common Redpoll.



Blue Duck with chick by Erik Forsyth

Day 12: Omarama to Te Anau. This morning we visit several wetlands, again searching for Black Stilt in case we missed it the previous day. While searching for this enigmatic species, we will also look for other river-loving species which may include further chances for the endemic Double-banded Plover, Black-fronted Tern, Black-billed Gull and New Zealand Pipit. 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. From here we will drive along the southern shores of Lake Wakatipu and then through rolling open country to Te Anau for a two-night stay.

Day 13: 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. En route we'll be on the lookout for the scarce New Zealand Falcon and also for 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!



The entertaining Kea by Erik Forsyth

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. There

are also some beautiful forest walks in this area, so we will take our time before heading back to our accommodation.



Buller's Albatross by Erik Forsyth

Day 14: Te Anau to Stewart Island. After driving down to Invercargill, we will catch a ferry from Bluff 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 Golden Bay on Stewart Island. During one of our two evenings in this area, we will search for the localised Stewart Island form of Southern Brown Kiwi.

Day 15: Stewart Island Pelagic. 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 a number of 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.



Salvin's Albatross off Kaikoura by Erik Forsyth

Day 16: Stewart Island to Dunedin. After some final birding in this area, we will catch the ferry to Bluff and drive to Dunedin for an overnight stay. Once in the Dunedin area we will visit Taiaroa Head and spend time at the 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. In the late afternoon, we will visit a Nature Reserve of the Yellow-eyed Penguins, New Zealand's rarest endemic penguin species, where the adults may be seen returning to their nesting burrows after fishing at sea.

Day 17: Departure day. After breakfast, we transfer to the airport at Dunedin where our tour of New Zealand concludes.



Yellow-eyed Penguin by Erik Forsyth

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES below.

This includes:

- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 17;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation;
- All national park entrance fees; and
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services.)

The tour fee does not include:

- **ANY** flights (see above);
- Visa fees;
- Any drinks;
- Special gratuities; and
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.
- Optional Royal Albatross hide visit

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.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold (New Zealand Dollar - NZ$), and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the

time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.
b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.
c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.
d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader. If, therefore, you feel that he has given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip him.

Please note:

- 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 various pelagic trips can be unpredictable and participants who opt of these pelagics must, therefore, bear this in mind. If you have any medical conditions or physical limitations relating to balance and mobility, please do let the Rockjumper office know. Furthermore, 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.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:

This tour **does not** include **ANY** airfares. The tour will begin in Auckland on aay 1, according to the above itinerary. The tour will conclude after breakfast at Dunedin International Airport on Day 17.

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.

FLIGHTS:

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. The tour ends at Dunedin International Airport, Dunedin (IATA: DUD). **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**