



# Pekapeka tou-roa

## NZ'S THUMB-SIZED BUG BUSTERS

This precious species, also known as the long-tailed bat, is Aotearoa's only endemic land mammal and one of the world's rarest mammals.

### What's their superpower?

Pekapeka use sound to see in the dark through a process called echolocation. They make clicking noises with their mouths and listen for echoes. This helps them create a mental map of their surroundings and pinpoint the location, size and movements of tasty treats like moths, mosquitoes and beetles.

### Why do we need them?

**They devour hundreds of bugs every night**, including mosquitoes, moths, midges and beetles. Without them, insect numbers would explode, upsetting our ecosystem balance and causing major issues for our environment.

**They're also a key indicator of a healthy environment** - a drop in pekapeka numbers can signal habitat loss, pollution or rising predator populations which could mean trouble for the entire ecosystem.

**Habitat:** Native and exotic forests across Aotearoa, Stewart Island, Little Barrier and Great Barrier Islands and Kāpiti Island.

**Nesting season:** December, when females give birth to a single pup.

**Diet:** Small flying insects like moths, midges, mosquitoes and beetles.

## Fascinating facts

**Tiny treasures:** These twilight travellers are the size of a human thumb, with a wingspan as wide as a hand and weigh less than a tablespoon of sugar.

**Full-throttle fliers:** Bats are the world's only mammals capable of flying for long periods of time, and long-tailed bats can reach speeds of up to 60 km per hour.

**Masters of disguise:** Their chestnut-brown fur helps them blend into tree bark, making them tricky for predators to spot when they're roosting inside tree hollows during the day.

**Flying favourites:** These nocturnal navigators soared past the competition to win NZ's Bird of the Year 2021 contest, receiving the highest number of votes in its 17-year history.

## Did you know?

**They can eat 1000 mosquitoes (25% of their body weight) in a single night. That's like the average human demolishing 25 pizzas in one day.**



## Conservation corner

Pekapeka are at serious risk of extinction, now classified as Nationally Critical – the highest threat level. Their biggest threats include habitat loss from forest clearing and urban development, predators like cats, stoats, and rats and increased light pollution which messes with their nighttime hunting.

### How you can help

- ✓ **Avoid cutting down mature trees** as they're ideal roosting spots for pekapeka.
- ✓ **Join a local trapping group** to help control pests like rats, stoats, wild cats and possums.
- ✓ **Keep your cat indoors at night** as they love to hunt bats (30 mins before sunset until 30 mins after sunrise).
- ✓ **Learn about bats and spread the word.** Many people don't even realise we have pekapeka in Aotearoa.
- ✓ **Reduce light pollution.** Switch off unnecessary outdoor lighting to keep the sky as dark as possible at night.



**Get involved** Connect with local groups and help protect biodiversity in your area  
[pfwra.org.nz/find-your-people](http://pfwra.org.nz/find-your-people)

