



WILDERNESS LODGE
LAKE MOERAKI

Tawaki Penguins

Tawaki breed in jungle-like temperate rainforest along the rugged Lake Moeraki coastline. Seeing tawaki on wilderness beaches is one of New Zealand's great wildlife experiences.



The Rainforest Penguin

Tawaki, or the Fiordland Crested Penguin (*Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*), are unique among penguins.

They breed in temperate rainforest, only in the southwest corner of New Zealand. During the July to December breeding season they are most easily seen along the Lake Moeraki coastline.

Tawaki build their nests beneath logs and boulders. These will be deep in the forest, often hundreds of metres inland and up steep hillsides.

Adults must negotiate the pounding surf, wild beaches and dense undergrowth as they make their way between the Tasman Sea and their rainforest nests.



Guided Penguin Trips

Since 1989 Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki has taken guests to see tawaki under a special license from the Department of Conservation.

Our guides are experts in penguin ecology and delight in sharing this once in a lifetime experience with guests.

Hike through lush rainforest to a wilderness beach then sit quietly as penguins emerge from the surf and make their way across the beach and into the rainforest.

Guided penguin trips last about 3 hours, include light refreshments and require a low to moderate level of fitness. Group sizes are always kept small.



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Penguin Photography

Tawaki are the 'rockstars' of the penguin world. The Wilderness Lodge guides are experienced at working with photographers shooting these endearing birds.

From an open hide, capture their natural behaviour as they emerge, preen & interact with one another.

We recommend photographers book an exclusive guide. Your private guide will guarantee the best chance of getting the shots you are after.

Tawaki Facts

- Tawaki are the world's only penguin to breed in temperate rainforest.
- They stand 60cm tall (2 ft) and weigh approx. 4kg.
- Females lay two eggs each year but only one chick is ever fed. This chick grows quickly while the other generally won't survive more than a few days.
- The breeding season runs between July and early December. Outside of this period tawaki are at sea, fishing and sleeping on the surface of the ocean.
- The main threats to tawaki are domestic dogs, introduced stoats (weasel family) and disturbance.





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Tawaki Conservation

For 27 years Wilderness Lodge has worked to conserve Tawaki. We campaigned to establish and enforce a Wildlife Refuge for the penguins to stop people taking dogs into the colonies where they would attack and kill penguins.

Since 1998 we have championed an extensive aerial pest control programme by the Conservation Department on the Lake Moeraki coastline to control predatory rats and stoats that also kill penguin chicks.

Our daily guided penguin trips are carefully managed to avoid disturbance. Small groups sit quietly and discreetly while penguins come & go naturally across the beach.

Each trip spends around 2 hours at our Viewing Hide. As part of our trips we monitor penguin numbers with around 80 trips per season. Over the last 20 years since pest control started here, penguin movements across the beach have shown a small but significant increase growing from an average of 10 to 14 penguins seen on each trip (see Graph).

This is an encouraging result from this long term monitoring and Tawaki breeding success here is in stark contrast to the catastrophic decline in the Hoiho/Yellow Eyed penguin population on the south-eastern South Island coastline.

