

An ageless, mystical, middle earth...

A window into the past...

The lowland podocarp species emerged in the Jurassic Era, 200 million years ago. Walk with us and meet **Ngo Rakau Rangatira** - The revered Chieftains of the Whirinaki Forest...

Tōtara

We used as the most important of the native trees by Māori. Using this timber for building, carving, canoe-making, tool-making, and for the ocean-going waka.

Mātai

Mātai used wood for carving. Other uses were for canoes, boats, small agricultural implements and houses. The Mātai also made the liquid (ink) used for writing and was used as an antiseptic.

Miro

Mātai served cut Miro down, but made great use of the tree because of its structure of its fruit to the leaves. Hunters would place water traps near the trees and set snares around them.

Rimu

Rimu is a much-valued timber. Māori used it to produce long spears - these were used for personal defense and to defend pūhaka.

Kahikatea

The Kahikatea or tara was an important food resource and was served in feasts. The wood was favored for making bird spears. Bark obtained from burning the barkwood supplied a pigment for traditional tattooing (tā moko).

Birdlife is diverse and abundant! The Whirinaki Forest supports high numbers of rare and endangered birds. Hear, and hopefully see them, all in their natural habitat!

Piwakawaka

Piwakawaka, grandson of the demi-god Maui (Maui-potiki).

Whio

Key indicators of healthy rivers and streams.

Kārearea

The Kārearea's cry was believed to foretell the weather.

Kākā

One of two game birds that Māori once hunted for food.

Tūi

Tūi's call was thought to bring good or bad news, depending on the time and place.

Kerurū

Kerurū's multicoloured plumage said to be Maui's mother's shirt.

Whirinaki Falls ☉

Waterfall ☉
Fill your own waterbottles

Picnic Area ☉
From Forest to Fork!
Enjoy your packed picnic lunch, infused with traditional Māori delicacies!

Wharepaku ☉

Pahau Kakapo ☉
World's tallest Moss!

Foot Bridge ☉

Waterfall ☉
Fill your own waterbottles

4.5km Return ☉

Whirinaki River Viewing ☉

Bridal Veil Falls ☉

Te Ara Nga Rakau Rangatira ☉
The Chiefs of the Forest Trail

Te Whaiti Nui a Toi ☉
The Great Canyon of Toi

1000 year old Native Totara Tree ☉

Rongoa Trail ☉
Traditional Māori forest medicine

Waharoa Gateway ☉
Start of our journey

“Sssshhhhhh....I’m in dinosaur country! Listen to the forest... for it’s got the most phenomenal story to tell!”
- David Bellamy

“One of New Zealand’s most remarkable and significant forests! A must-see biodiversity hot spot!”
- David Bellamy

The tallest moss in the world only grows in New Zealand and can be found right here in the Whirinaki Forest! Māori likened this moss to the whiskery face of the Kakapo bird, hence the name “Pahau Kakapo” (the moustache of the Kakapo).

Plant medicines and remedies (Rongoa rakau) form an integral part of Rongoa Māori. Numerous native plants are used to treat a variety of conditions. Plants must be carefully prepared as some species are toxic if not used correctly. Let us share with you some of the Rongoa rakau you will find in the Whirinaki Forest.

Forest Bathing

We all know how good being in nature can make us feel. We have known it for centuries. Bathing in the forest atmosphere, connecting with it through our senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. Forest Bathing is like a bridge between us and the natural world. During our guided tour, together, we will enjoy the health benefits of simply “just being” in the forest. Your day concludes with a cup of fresh Kawakawa Tea (traditional Māori healing tea).

Let us share with you our stories and knowledge of the forest, handed down generation upon generation.

Whirinaki Forest
Safety Audit CERTIFIED