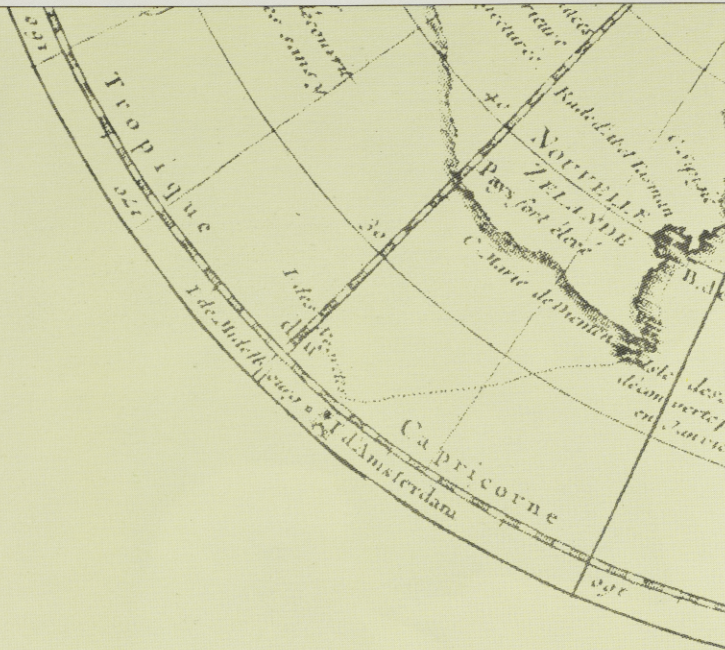


North-West Nelson



HIGH IN THE MIST-SHROUDED FORESTS of North-west Nelson lives New Zealand's largest, most handsome and least known kiwi - the great spotted kiwi (*Apteryx haasti*) or roa. Although it also occurs in Westland, the kiwi's stronghold is along the North-west's western coast. There are two distinct populations: one in rich lowland forest, the other in subalpine vegetation at heights of up to 1000 metres above sea level. The contrasts between the populations are sharp, sufficiently so that they will be different races. The upland kiwi, at home among hanging glaciers and snow, appears not to be disadvantaged by its harsh climate, and in fact is thriving, whereas its lowland counterpart is besieged by possums, traps and pigs. Photo: P & J Morrin



THE ORIGINS of North-west Nelson's limestone "islands" such as the Matiri Range can be traced back 37 million years ago. Flanked by impressive bluffs, the plateaux of the Matiri Range support unusually fertile soils and hence a wonderfully rich and unique ecosystem, embracing an astonishing 437 plant species.

Photo: Craig Potton