

# 'BLUE ZEALAND'

## *The World Beneath Our Waves*

MICHAEL SZABO and BARRY WEEBER explain why Forest and Bird wants to save our seas.

**I**t has been said New Zealand's 'out of this world' wildlife and wild places are the nearest thing on Earth to life on another planet. It is little wonder that our southern beech forests and ponga groves were used to such great effect as some of the settings for the BBC television series *Walking with Dinosaurs*. Our unique wildlife includes

large flightless birds such as the kiwi, takahe and kakapo found nowhere else on Earth, as well as the prehistoric tuatara, giant weta, and the world's only mountain parrot, the kea.

But this is not even half the picture. More than 80 percent of our wild places and wildlife are found in the marine environment. This is 'Blue Zealand', where most of the country's unique biodiversity is found. At 4.8 million square kilometres, New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is the fourth largest in the world. 'Blue Zealand' itself is 15 times larger than the terrestrial parts of New Zealand.

'Blue Zealand' is also a submerged continent — a world beneath the waves — spreading from the subtropical habitats of the Kermadec Islands to the north through

*Grey petrel make up more than a quarter of seabirds killed in the New Zealand fishery. A circumpolar bird of the subantarctic, the New Zealand population breeds at the Auckland and Campbell islands. Following fishing vessels, as they discharge offal, the petrels get hooked on long-lines set for tuna and ling.*

BRENT STEPHENSON

New Zealand's huge underwater territory has been dubbed 'Blue Zealand' in a campaign to save our marine world from destructive fishing practices. Unsustainable commercial fishing over-exploits too many fish stocks, while often killing other wildlife, particularly birds and seals, and damaging underwater habitats. Forest and Bird's latest marine campaign focusses on helping consumers select fish products which are taken with least damage to that environment.



GREENPEACE/GRACE

*The New Zealand vessel Ocean Reward bottom trawling for orange roughy over a seamount on the New Zealand continental shelf. Deep-water fishing was pioneered in New Zealand seas. This photograph was taken outside our territorial limits by a Greenpeace expedition.*