



New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone extends 200 nautical miles from any of our islands, covering some 4.8 million square kilometres. This vast area is the extent of fisheries governed by our fishing quota management system. It still does not encompass the area of our continental shelf, coloured yellow in this map from the National Institute of Water and Astmosphere. Governments worldwide are currently investigating the possibility of extending national waters to cover the continental shelf.

live around 'Blue Zealand'. Thirteen of the 16 species in the world occur here, including the world's smallest penguin, the little blue; and the world's rarest penguin, the endangered yellow-eyed penguin or hoiho, which forage up to 60 kilometres offshore and dive to depths of 160 metres.

'Blue Zealand' also has an incredible variety of marine fish and invertebrates. Two of the largest fish in the world occur in our waters — the globally vulnerable whale shark and the basking shark that reach up to 14 metres long. In comparison, the tiny triplefins and blennies are less than five centimetres long. Last year a new invertebrate species, dubbed the colossal squid, was found in the Ross Sea, south of the subantarctic islands. The specimen was a juvenile, but the adults are thought to reach up to 18 metres long.

Amongst our most exotic-looking fish are splendid perch, blue and pink maomao, and multicoloured Sandagger's wrasse. As for the weirdest, take your pick from the black sea dragon — festooned with bioluminescent light organs — the eccentric goblin shark, or the aptly named black swallower.

an archipelago of subantarctic islands to the south. Even the inshore habitats vary, through mangrove forests, seagrass beds, warm-water corals and temperate rocky reefs, to colourful sponge gardens that bask in the sun. Further out lie submerged volcanic seamounts adorned with ancient coral forests, standing above vast plateau seascapes carved with meandering 160-kilometre channels and deep-sea canyons. Another reason, no doubt, why the BBC filmed parts of its Blue Planet series here as well.

The superlatives that distinguish our islands extend to our oceans. Almost half the world's 84 species of whales and dolphins occur in 'Blue Zealand', including the world's rarest and smallest marine dolphin — the endangered Hector's dolphin — and the even rarer Maui's dolphin subspecies. We have the world's largest dolphin species — the whale-sized orca — and the world's largest toothed predator, the sperm whale, and the world's largest animal, the blue whale. We also have the world's rarest sea lion, the globally threatened New Zealand or Hooker's sea lion.

Our islands also rank as the seabird capital of the world, with more seabird species breeding here than in any other country. For example, 14 of the 24 species of albatrosses breed on our islands. Our seabirds range

from the tiny storm and diving petrels around the size of a blackbird, to the majestic wandering and royal albatrosses with their three-metre wingspans which make them the largest flying birds in the world. They are also among the rarest.

Then there are the various penguins that



By-catch of non-target fish and crustacea, including starfish, caught during bottom trawling for orange roughy over a seamount on New Zealand's continental shelf. The picture was taken by a Greenpeace expedition, close to New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone in June this year.