

LITTLE PEOPLE OF THE FOREST



By **Tobia Dale**

One of the more unexpected animals you'll find in the ngahere are pepeketua | NZ native frogs!

There are three species of native frog in Aotearoa, and they're the last of their kind. They've not changed very much in over 200 million years and look super like frogs from the Jurassic - back when dinosaurs were still alive.

Hochstetter's frog is semi-aquatic. This means they spend some of their time in the forest and some of their time in the streams within them. They lay their string of eggs in small pools of water at the edge of the stream and have a tadpole-like stage. Hochstetter's frogs have a little bit of webbing on their feet, unlike the other native frog species.



Hochstetter's frog.
© Oscar Thomas



Archey's frog.
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Both Archey's frog and Hamilton's frog live terrestrially (on the land) in the native forest. The males guard the eggs once laid and look after froglets when they hatch. Male frogs will piggy-back their froglets until they undergo metamorphosis, where they turn into tiny adult frogs.



Hamilton's frog.
© Oscar Thomas

Native frogs are found scattered throughout the North Island and on a few islands located in the Marlborough Sounds at the top of the South Island. Just remember, they are usually hiding during the day, so you're unlikely to see them.

To protect our frogs, some have been housed at zoos and ecosanctuaries throughout the country.

All species are endangered, so understanding where they like to live is super important to make sure conservation efforts help our frogs survive.



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Deep in the native forest, Archey's frog and Hamilton's frog spend their days hiding in all sorts of places. The different colours and patterns on their skin help them blend in perfectly with trees, ferns, plant roots, and fallen leaves. *Leiopelma* frogs are nocturnal, so it is important that they can be camouflaged during the day. Each Archey's frog is a different combination of brown and green. But being green doesn't stop them from being experts at camouflage on the forest floor.

Look how well these frogs blend in with the fallen leaves!

FACT: Fallen leaves aren't their favourite hidey-hole - even though they blend in so well. Pepeketua prefer to hide under tree roots and rocks or use the holes inside old ponga fern trunks.



Auckland Zoo
Hamilton Zoo
Zealandia ecosanctuary
Orana Wildlife Park

Map by Tobia Dale



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