

WILDLIFE TRAVEL



3rd-17th September 2018 (15 days)

NEW CALEDONIA

Endemic wildlife of the South Pacific

NEW
ITINERARY
FOR 2018

Set in the idyllic South Pacific, some 1,300km east of Australia, the French territory of New Caledonia is one of the world's great biodiversity hotspots, second only to Madagascar in its levels of endemism.

More than three quarters of the island's more than 4,000 vascular plant species are found only here, including five endemic families. Amongst the many interesting species are the world's largest extant fern, the world's only parasitic conifer, and the bizarre *Amborella trichopoda*, the sole member of the world's oldest surviving plant lineage.

New Caledonia's fauna is equally of interest. Sixty two of the 69 reptiles are endemic, as are 20 extant bird species, including the famously intelligent, tool-using New Caledonian Crow, the beautiful Horned Parakeet, Goliath Imperial Pigeon, the critically endangered Crow Honeyeater and the unique, flightless Kagu, the island's 'National Bird' - our leaders will do their best to ensure we don't leave without finding as many as possible!

Surrounding the island is the New Caledonian Barrier Reef a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the second longest barrier reef in the world, which encloses the idyllic lagoon, home to turtles, Dugong and an amazing diversity of fish.

Our tour will thoroughly explore the main island of Grande Terre, as well as taking boat trips out to some of the smaller outlying, uninhabited islands in the lagoon.

Our guide for this trip is **Mark Hanger**, who has previously guided us around New Zealand, Tasmania and Western Australia. Mark's expert guiding will ensure we have a wonderful time in the idyllic South Pacific.



Price
£4,745
(does not include international flights)

SRS £670

Full board

Day 1 arrive Noumea
Day 2 Mount Koghi
Day 3 Noumea
Day 4-6 north Grande Terre
Day 7 Ilot de Hienga
Day 8-10 NW coast
Day 11 Noumea
Day 12 Great South region
Day 13 Riviere Bleue
Day 14 Madeleine
Day 15 Noumea
end of holiday

Leaders
Mark Hanger
and Philip Precey

Wildlife and culture holidays



Our profits are donated to the **Wildlife Trusts**



NEW CALEDONIA

New Caledonia, an archipelago halfway between Australia and Fiji, is an extraordinary place. While it has all the features you might expect from tropical islands - white sands, blue lagoons, and graceful palms - New Caledonia is also home to some very unusual plants and wildlife. Most striking is the abundance of conifers belonging the ancient plant family Araucariaceae, including the Cook pines, or *Araucaria columnaris*, which grow in the coral-derived soils along the coast.

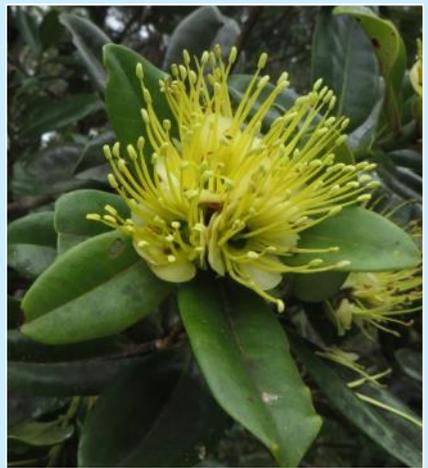
New Caledonia is considered one of the world's most botanically-important, and critically endangered hotspots. Unlike many of the Pacific Islands, which are of relatively recent volcanic origin, New Caledonia is an ancient fragment of the Gondwana super-continent

Indeed, after Madagascar, New Caledonia is the second most important biodiversity hot spot on the planet - 76% of its flora is endemic. The factors contributing to such a rich variety of plant life include the diversity of climate, elevation, and soil found on New Caledonia. The biogeography of the island chain has been shaped by a complex and fascinating geological history. Scientists are still making discoveries about the origins of life on this isolated archipelago, but such dates to the age of the dinosaurs.

But New Caledonia is also, and mainly, known for its lagoon. It is one of the three biggest reef systems in the world. It contains a rare diversity of coral and fish species, and has reef structures that are among the most diverse on the planet. The New Caledonian lagoon is home to unique marine biodiversity and a considerable number of iconic or endangered species, such as turtles, whales or dugongs. 15,000 of the 23,000 km² of this New Caledonian site have been registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Area.

Ancient plant families are more heavily represented on New Caledonia than their more modern counterparts. The larger flora include Nothofagus, Beilschmiedia, Adenodaphne, Winteraceae, Myrtaceae, southern sassafras (Atherospermataceae), conifers of Araucariaceae, Podocarpaceae, and Cupressaceae, and tree ferns. But the angiosperms are also fascinating, among them is *Amborella trichopoda*, which the sole member of the oldest living flowering plant lineage, Amborelleaceae.

New Caledonia fauna is original and for the large part endemic, although it is not as rich and singular as its flora. Similarly to its flora, its fauna is, for some species, of Gondwanian origin. There are 20 endemic species among the 142 bird species recorded, including fascinating species such as the famously intelligent New Caledonian Crow, Horned Parakeet, Goliath Imperial Pigeon and the spectacular and unique Kagu.



ITINERARY

Please note that the itinerary may be changed to suit the weather or other practicalities or at the discretion of the leaders.

Day 1, 3rd Sept. The holiday starts at **Noumea**, where we will meet up at Hotel Beurivage, near the southern beaches in time for dinner. o/n Noumea

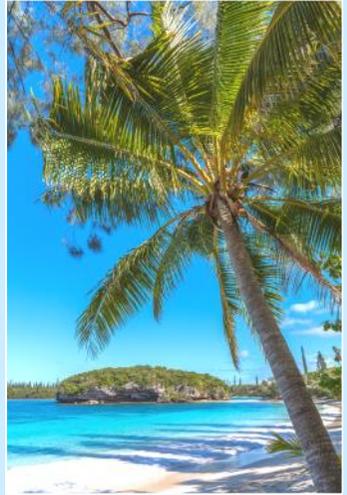
PLEASE NOTE International flights and travel to/from Noumea are not included in the holiday to allow you maximum flexibility in making your personal travel arrangements. Air France and Qantas both fly to Noumea. We recommend giving yourself at least one day either on arrival or to break the journey, to avoid the worst effects of jetlag at the start of the holiday.

Day 2, 4th Sept. Tjibaou Kanak Cultural Centre, Mount Koghi Forests. This morning we drive onto Mount Koghi for our first walk through the lush mesic rain forests that clothe much of inland New Caledonia, with good opportunities here to view several endemic bird species. In the afternoon we have an introduction to the indigenous peoples of New Caledonia at the remarkable Tjibaou Cultural centre. The Kanak Path, meandering along the mangroves, surrounds the Tjiboua Kanak Cultural Centre and links it to Téa Kanaké, the founding hero. It takes the visitors in the discovery of numerous plant species and plants, carrying meanings and functions in Melanesian culture. Early evening return to Noumea.

Day 3, 5th Sept. Mont Dore guided botanical walk, Parc Forestier - Michel Corbasson Zoological and Forest Park. Just a few minutes from the City Centre at Montravel, in the heights of Nouméa, this is a great spot for easy walking to gain a first insight into the natural values of New Caledonia, with beautiful views over the lagoon and along the southern coast of the mainland. The zoological park is home to many endemic birds, including New Caledonia's national bird, the Kagu. Late morning drive north from the city towards Bourail. Early afternoon enjoy a gentle walk through the coastal Cycas forest before continuing through to Kone. o/n Hotel Le Nea, Kone.

Day 4, 6th Sept. Coeur de Voh. We start with a walk up to the lookout over the remarkable mangrove forest and the southern coast of Le Grande Terre with views of the Coeur de Voh. Maquis vegetation dominates this and many other areas in inland New Caledonia. *Alternatively you may take an optional 4WD excursion up to the viewpoint (approx. £60 per person).* o/n Malabou Beach Resort.

Day 5, 7th Sept. Tiebaghi Massif. Situated high on the ultramafic rocks of Tiebaghi massif are the remains of the world's largest chromium mine. Now the site of a significant revegetation the environs are home to many endemic



plants. Today we visit the mine area, learn of the re-vegetation efforts, and discover the flora of the peaks as we travel up to the mine, then on the mined areas themselves. Afternoon return to Malabou Beach.

Day 6, 8th Sept. Northern Grand Terre. Natural features abound in this region of the island that is startlingly different to the south. Rock forms such as the Lindéralique Rocks, and Pule Couveuse will feature. Hienghène has a striking lagoon surrounded by 120m-high (400ft) black cliffs. The region is dotted with churches and Melanesian villages, forests, coconut palms and beautiful beaches. We will enjoy a walk through northern mangrove and coral shore with a local guide at Sainté Marie. o/n Koulnoué Village Resort, Hienghène.

Day 7, 9th Sept. Ilot de Hienga. This morning we take a water taxi out to this botanical and marine sanctuary - enjoying a guided walk through the islet's lush forest, then a guided snorkelling trip to discover the underwater 'forests' that make this part of the lagoon so special. We then have afternoon to relax by the water. o/n Koulnoué Village Resort.

Day 8, 10th Sept. Le Minier landscapes of the north west coast Nickel, chromium, cobalt, iron and gold mining have left their indelible mark on the New Caledonian landscape. The harsh mineral rich environment is challenging for plant life. Today as we travel across the island through this unique landscape we will discover some of the special plants that have evolved to live in this inhospitable environment. Mid afternoon travel amidst the mountains to emerge back at Bourail. Stay Hotel Le Poe two nights.

Day 9, 11th Sept. Dry Eastern Forests of Poe. Half day walk through a rare extensive remnant of dry forest. Afternoon discover the magnificent 'column pines' of the Baie de Tortues. Return to Poe.

Day 10, 12th Sept. Parc des Grandes Fougères Adding to New Caledonia's primeval appearance are some truly giant tree ferns - among them, species from the Cyatheaaceae family, which include the world's largest tree ferns, with trunk heights in excess of 65 feet. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the forests adjacent to Farino. First we will take the short botanical trail near Sarramea before driving a short distance to Parc des Grandes Fougères. There is a wide diversity of walks in this delightful national park located on the southern hills. Arrive Noumea early evening. o/n Hotel Beurivage.

Day 11, 13th Sept. We have a free day in Noumea. o/n Hotel Beurivage.

Day 12, 14th Sept. Bagne - Village de Prony, Cape N'dua. This morning we head south east to Village de Prony, an early penal settlement. The road then winds through the hills of the Sud with numerous opportunities to study the ever-changing botany en route. A short drive this afternoon has us arrive at Cape n'Dua. This reserve is a magical place for nature lovers. Located at the tip of the Great South region; natural steep cliffs and bays make for a stunning landscape. Pitcher plants abound along the track up to the lighthouse overlooking the entrance to Port Prony. Following short walks here we continue on our twisting road to the far south to our lodge set in Port Boise. o/n Kanua Tera Eco Lodge.

Day 13, 15th Sept. Riviere Bleue Provincial Park - Blue River Provincial Park. In the far south of the southern province, this beautiful park is a bushwalker's paradise, extending over 9,000 hectares of wild country rich in native plants and animals. There are lovely picnic and river swimming spots, and good walking tracks. The park's giant Kaori stand 40m high and are almost a 1,000 years old. You'll also likely get to admire New Caledonia's rare national bird, the Kagu in the wild. A bus runs us through the heart of the park enabling us to hop on and off to wander through the varied forests adjoining the lake. o/n Kanua Tera Eco Lodge.

Day 14, 16th Sept. La Chute de la Madeleine

Madeleine Reserve is a botanical reserve in the heart of the Plaine des Lacs. A botanical path enables us to discover the scrub flora and the impressive Madeleine Falls; the scenic highlight. The reserve contains 168 plant species, and its flora is especially remarkable due to the presence of seven primitive conifers; vestiges of the secondary era. o/n Noumea.



Day 15, 17th Sept. Depart for UK. Free time in Noumea before our flights home.

If you are planning on flying straight home, Air New Zealand and Qantas flights leave around midday, Air France departs just after midnight.

Leaders

A graduate in Botany from Otago University, previously employed with the National Parks and Reserves Service in Otago for seven years, **Mark Hanger** is Director of Nature Quest New Zealand. He has been on the Otago branch committee of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society for twelve years. Mark has led our previous visits to New Zealand, Western Australia and Tasmania, and has designed this new itinerary for us.



Mark will be joined by **Philip Precey**. Philip is a Director of Wildlife Travel and has led many of our holidays in recent years, from Galapagos and Botswana to the Isles of Scilly and Bulgaria, including previous trips with Mark to New Zealand, Western Australia and Tasmania. Never far from his binoculars and camera, Philip will help you to enjoy all the aspects of the natural history that we encounter, as well as doing his best to make sure we find as many of the endemic birds and other wildlife as possible.



Weather

The weather in New Caledonia in September is generally dry and warm, with average daily temperatures of between 20 and 25°C during the day. Nights are generally mild, down to around 15°C . Average sea temperatures are 22°C

The sun can be **VERY** strong, even when it is cloudy, and sun protection (hat, sunglasses and sun cream) is essential.

Transport

We shall be travelling by 'people carrier'-style minibus during this trip. Depending on group size, there may be two vehicles.

Accommodation

All accommodation is of a very comfortable standard and all rooms have private facilities. In most locations it is average to good standard, 3 star equivalent, although higher than this on occasion.

Health and Fitness

You should consult your GP for advice on travel health advice **AT LEAST EIGHT WEEKS** before travelling. The 'standard' travel vaccinations to consider are tetanus, diphtheria, hepatitis A and B, typhoid, rabies and cholera.

There is no risk of malaria on New Caledonia, but both Chikungunya and Zika virus and Dengue fever are known to occur on the islands, and you should **avoid mosquito bites**, particularly between dawn and dusk.

There is no risk of yellow fever in New Caledonia, however, a yellow fever certificate is required if you are arriving from a country with a risk of yellow fever transmission or having transited for more than 12 hours through an airport of a country with risk of yellow fever.

This is a 15 day tour, stopping at several locations, and you therefore need to be generally fit and able to cope with 'living out of a suitcase' and frequent journeys between areas.

On some days **we will not be walking very far**, but on others we will take longer walks. Most walking will be at a slow pace to give us the time to enjoy the plants, scenery and wildlife. If you are a slow walker however, please ring us to discuss whether any of the walks will be problem. We do not do any strenuous hikes but we may be out for a few hours at a time on some days. All walks are optional and you can choose to enjoy a day around the hotel if you prefer (or half a day of this fits in with the transport arrangements),



providing we are not moving on to another location that day.

To see the best of the flowers, it is necessary to walk on rougher **ground and up small slopes. Walking boots** are essential for all areas out of the towns as the ground can be rocky, especially on the country tracks.

Safety advice given by the leaders must be heeded at all times particularly when walking in the countryside. We will send you advice on health and safety issues before the tour.

It is essential that, PRIOR TO BOOKING, you ring us to discuss any potential fitness or health problems that may affect you on this trip, 01954 713575.

Passports and Visas

New Caledonia is a dependent territory of France. If your passport describes you as a British Citizen, you do not need a visa to enter New Caledonia. You must have a valid passport for this trip (valid for at least six months after the end of the holiday).

If you are stopping off in Australia, holders of UK or EU passports must apply for an eVisitor visa before arranging your travel. The eVisitor is free, and can be applied for at www.immi.gov.au/visitors/tourist/evisa

For holders of other passports it is essential that you check with your embassy or consulate and obtain the necessary documents prior to travel.

Insurance

Personal travel insurance providing good medical cover is essential for this trip. EHIC cards are not valid in New Caledonia.

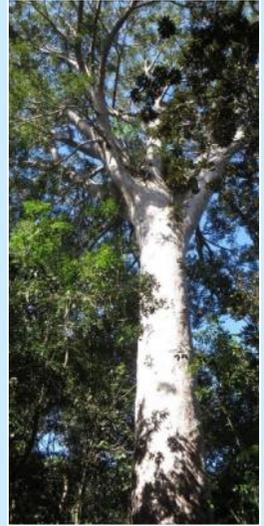


Travelling to New Caledonia

PLEASE NOTE International flights and travel to/from Noumea are not included in the holiday to allow you maximum flexibility in making your travel arrangements.

It is possible to fly to Noumea with Air France (via Japan outbound and returning via LA), Air New Zealand (via Auckland) and Qantas (via Sydney or Brisbane). We recommend giving yourself at least one spare day on arrival or to break the outward journey, to avoid the worst effects of jetlag at the start of the holiday. On the way home, Air New Zealand and Qantas flights depart Noumea around midday, Air France just after midnight. If you wish to extend your holiday, we can arrange accommodation before/after the tour.

If you would like Sunvil to book your flight, please ring their Sales Department on 0208 847 3041. The flight will be invoiced and needs to be paid for separately. Other travel agents are, of course, available to book your flights. **The flights should not be booked until the holiday is confirmed. Once you have booked on the holiday, we will notify you as soon as this is the case.**



To Book

Contact us to check availability and reserve a place. Complete the Booking Form and send to Sunvil Holidays (CAA-ATOL Licence 808, ABTA V6218), our tour operator, with your deposit. All details about booking are given in the Booking Pack.

**PRICE £4,745 per person sharing a twin room
Single room supplement £670**

**DEPOSIT £800 per person, SECOND INSTALLMENT ON
CONFIRMATION OF HOLIDAY £1,700*.
BALANCE DUE BY 04/06/2018**

INCLUDED: Local transport as specified in the itinerary. 14 night's accommodation, full board basis - breakfast, picnic lunch and dinner, **except** evening meal on Day 3, two meals on Day 10. All excursions as described in the itinerary. Admission fees and National Park concession fees, where appropriate. Services of leaders and guides.

NOT INCLUDED: International flights. Evening meal on Day 3, lunch and evening meal on free day in Noumea (Day 10). Refreshments, including dinner drinks. Optional excursions e.g. Day 5. Items of a personal nature. Gratuities. Travel insurance.

*Deposit and cancellation amounts are set in order to allow us to confirm the holiday as soon as possible based on the minimum number of clients needed to cover shared costs and to prevent us from having to cancel the holiday if any individual bookings are cancelled thereafter.

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

**The Manor House, Broad Street,
Great Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6DH**

Tel: 01954 713575 email: wildlifetravel@wildlifebcn.org

www.wildlife-travel.co.uk



*Directors: Christine Donnelly, Brian Eversham, Philip Precey, Michael Russell, Dr Tim Upson
Wildlife Travel Ltd. Reg. No 2237697; (for Registered Charity numbers, please contact us)*