



## Overview

The tākapu is also called the Australasian gannet. In this article, the author explains why she thinks the tākapu is an amazing bird. The text contains specialised vocabulary and some unfamiliar concepts, which are well-supported by the context, photographs, and maps.

The text is suitable to be read over two or more sessions and follows on from “Visit to Muriwai”, an article about a visit to the Muriwai tākapu colony.

“Tākapu” requires students to “confidently use a range of processing and comprehension strategies to make meaning

from and think critically about” text (from *The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 14). The characteristics of this text provide opportunities for students to make connections and inferences, summarise the main ideas and use these to form an opinion, ask questions and look for answers, and use multiple sources of information to clarify meaning.

There is an audio version of the text on the *Readalong 2012: Ready to Read and Junior Journal 44 and 45 CD* as well as on an MP3 file at [www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz](http://www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz)

## Text characteristics

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school are shown in the boxes with a solid outline.

Some unfamiliar words and phrases, the meaning of which is supported by the context or illustrations, including subject-specific vocabulary

The possibly unfamiliar contexts and settings of a tākapu colony

A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences

**Nesting**  
The birds make their nests from seaweed and **guano**. The female bird lays one egg, and the female bird and male bird take turns to **incubate** the egg. The chick hatches about forty days later.

**Leaving Home**  
When the chicks are about sixteen weeks old, they leave Muriwai and fly to the east coast of Australia. This is more than 2000 kilometres away, and it takes them eight to fourteen days to get there. The chicks haven't flown at all before they make this journey. All they have done to prepare is to spend hours flapping and stretching their wings. It's a dangerous journey for the chicks. They may have to fly through wild, stormy weather, and they may be attacked by **predators**. Once they have safely reached Australia, the chicks stay for two or three years.

Visual language features, such as subheadings, glossary, and maps that are clearly explained and linked to the body text

A mix of implicit and explicit content within the text and illustrations that requires students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge in order to make simple inferences

**English (Reading)**

Level 2 – Structure: Show some understanding of text structures.

**Science (Living World)**

Levels 1 and 2 – Life processes: Recognise that all living things have certain requirements so they can stay alive.

**Suggested reading purpose**

*(What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?)*

- To find out about tākapu and what the author thinks about them

**Suggested learning goals for this text**

*(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond, and think critically about” texts?)*

**Select from and adapt** the suggestions below according to your students’ strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

- The students make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge to make simple inferences.
- They ask questions and look for answers in the text.
- They summarise the main ideas and use these to form an opinion about whether they think tākapu are amazing. They justify their ideas.
- They use multiple sources of information to clarify the meaning of unfamiliar words and ideas.

**Text and language features****Vocabulary**

- Possible unfamiliar words and phrases, such as “beak”, “swallows”, “air sacs”, “colonies”, “guano”, “incubate”, “hatches”, “flapping”, “stretching”, “mate”
- Phrases that relate to measurement, such as “145 kilometres an hour”, “about forty days later”, “about sixteen weeks old”, “more than 2000 kilometres away, and it takes them eight to fourteen days”.

**Possible supporting strategies**

Some of the words that relate to movement can be acted out. Model one word, such as “flapping”, then have students act out other words as they encounter them.

Identify the key “bird” words that your students will need to understand as they read the text. Have the students think, pair, and share what they know about birds, including the life cycle (egg to chick to adult, laying eggs), where they live, behaviours, and how they feed. Record this information on a graphic organiser. As you do this, explore the vocabulary as well as concepts the students will encounter as they read. Support them to explain, demonstrate, or illustrate their ideas. Feed in any other key vocabulary.

*See below for ways to support terms of measurement.*

**Text features**

- The visual features, including subheadings, the glossary, and the map
- The footnote on page 19.

If necessary, discuss visual features of articles, such as subheadings, glossaries, and maps, and how these features support the reader.

**Specific knowledge**

- Some familiarity with birds and their behaviours and life cycle
- Some understanding of the concepts of speed, measurement, force, and distance and the ability to make simple comparisons within these concepts.

Refer to the graphic organiser mentioned above exploring key vocabulary and concepts.

Support students to understand the measurements by using familiar comparisons, for example, the speed of a car, the length of a school term, the distance between nearby towns and cities.

**Metacognition**

Effective readers are metacognitive. They are aware of the processes and strategies they draw on and are able to explain how they use these to successfully make meaning and think critically. Examples of metacognitive behaviours, or strategies teachers can use to promote metacognition, are threaded through the notes and indicated by

**HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO READ, RESPOND, AND THINK CRITICALLY**

Ask questions: *How did you know that bit was wrong? Or: I noticed that you reread that bit when you got confused. How did rereading help you?*

Use prompts: *How did you know that bit was right? Think about the strategy you used. How did it help you?*

## Introducing the text

- Have the students read the title. If necessary, remind them that the macron over the “a” means that the sound is drawn out. *What are tākapu? Do you know that this is the Maori name for a gannet?* Have the students quickly preview the photographs and illustrations in the whole article. *What information do you expect to read about in this article?* Have the students share their ideas. These ideas are likely to include what

gannets eat, where they live, and what they look like. You could note these ideas on a summary chart now or start one during the reading. *What questions do you have?* You may want to record these on a chart or just have the students orally share them.

- Share the reading purpose and learning goal(s).

## Reading and discussing the text

Instructional strategies you can use to support the students to achieve the learning goals are in the right-hand column. **Select from and adapt** the suggestions below according to your students’ needs.

### What to look for, prompt, and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal

#### Page 19

The students identify words from the text, for example, “dives”, “hitting the water”, “holds”, and use their own experiences to visualise the way tākapu catch fish.

They locate the sentence “The tākapu is an amazing bird” and notice the supporting detail about it diving into the sea at an incredible speed. They make connections with something they know, for example, the speed of a car, and together with the other clues in the text, they infer that this is why the author believes they are amazing birds.

They summarise the main ideas from this page. They continue to ask questions and look for answers in the text.

#### Page 20

Students read the explanation and use word-solving strategies, the context, and prior knowledge of diving and swimming to understand the way the air sacs protect the tākapu.

The students summarise the idea about the air sacs by identifying the topic sentence.

#### Page 21

The students use the map to identify where the colonies are in New Zealand.

They summarise the main idea.

#### Pages 22–23

The students make connections between the text and what they know about getting fit and travelling long distances to infer that the flight is an amazing journey for the chicks.

They infer that the author thinks it’s amazing.

Students summarise the information about the chicks not having flown before, the distance and length of time they have to fly, and the dangers they will face, and conclude that they undertake a dangerous journey. They decide whether they think this is amazing.

### How you can support students to read, respond, and think critically

If necessary, explain the use of the asterisk to signal the additional information in the form of a footnote at the bottom of the page.

*As you read this page, I want you to use the photo and visualise (create pictures in your mind) to better understand how the tākapu catches a fish.* You could provide extra support by using actions as you read each sentence to demonstrate each stage of the process.

*What words helped you “see” what the tākapu does?*

*How fast does the tākapu dive? What else goes that fast? It’s faster than the cars on the motorway!*

*Why does the author think that tākapu are amazing? What do you think?* Have the students identify the information in the text that supports their ideas.

Create a summary chart if you didn’t start one during the introductory discussion. Have the students summarise the main ideas. Remind them to look for topic sentences and key words as these will help them to identify the main ideas. Write their ideas on the chart.

Have the students share what they wanted to find out and whether their questions have been answered.

*I’m thinking that these air sacs are like the airbags in a car. Why do they need air sacs? How do the air sacs protect the birds?*

*What can we add to the summary chart?*

*What did you need to do to help you look for the main idea?*

*What information did you find out on this page about where tākapu live?*

Briefly discuss that words in bold have a definition in the glossary. Have the students predict what “colonies” are by having them use the context and the photo. Then have them confirm their prediction by checking the glossary.

*Is there any information from this page that you might add to the summary chart?*

You could support the students with the distance of the flight by making an analogy to travelling within New Zealand.

Have the students visualise the way the chicks prepare for their long journey.

Prompt them to think critically. *Is this an amazing journey? Why? What information in the text supports your thinking?* If necessary, prompt the students to notice the information about the distance the chicks travel, that they haven’t flown before, and the dangers of weather and predators.

*What clues tell the reader what the author thinks about this journey? What does that tell us about what she thinks of these birds?* If necessary, prompt the students to notice the words “All they have done” and “dangerous”.

*What are the main ideas we need to record?* Have the students think, pair, and share their ideas and add them to the summary chart.

Check if the students have any new questions or have had any questions answered.

## Page 24

The students use the heading to infer that New Zealand is home.

The students evaluate information across the text to decide whether they agree that tākapu are amazing. They are able to justify their decision with evidence from the text.

☑ With support, the students reflect on their learning. They revisit the reading purpose and learning goal(s) and can explain how they met their goals, for example, by summarising the main ideas to evaluate whether they agreed with the author.

☑ The students identify some challenges in the text and how they worked (or tried to work) them out.

Where is “home” for the tākapu? How do you know that?

Have the students summarise the last page. *What is the most important information here? How do you know?*

Revisit the summary chart. *Do you agree with the author that the tākapu is an amazing bird? Why or why not?*

Revisit the reading purpose and learning goal or learning goals.

☑ Ask questions: *What helped you decide if you agreed with the author?*

☑ *What strategies did you use to help you solve any difficulties you had when reading this text? If necessary, model or explain some strategies they could use.*

## After reading

- Students can reread the article as they listen to the audio version on the *Readalong 2012: Ready to Read and Junior Journal 44 and 45 CD* or MP3 file. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Provide opportunities for the students to further practise their skills of identifying and summarising main ideas:
  - Have them draw a life cycle diagram for tākapu and write a label for each stage. Stages will include egg, chick, young adult (in Australia), and adult. Each label should record at least one important fact about the tākapu at that stage.
  - Use the ideas from the summary chart and the text to model writing a summary sentence, for example, “Tākapu eat fish.” Have students then choose another aspect and write a sentence describing this, for example, “Tākapu live in colonies”. Students could share these sentences and identify which ones contribute to a useful summary and discuss why.
- Provide opportunities for the students to further practise their skills of forming an opinion and justifying their ideas:
  - Discuss the idea that sometimes, whether a fact is amazing or not is a matter of opinion. Have the students share their ideas about what they think makes the tākapu amazing. Draw a cline (a sloping line across the board or chart). Write “ordinary” at the lower end and “amazing” at the higher end. Give the students sticky notes and ask them to work in pairs to write or draw the many features of the tākapu, one on each sticky note. The students can then place their notes on the cline, explaining why they chose the position for each feature. *Which facts are amazing in everyone’s opinion?*
  - Have them choose one or two aspects about the tākapu that they thought were amazing. Have them write two or three sentences describing the aspect and why they thought it was amazing. For students who will find constructing these sentences challenging, you could provide a writing frame. Tell the students about a feature of another bird that you think is amazing and why. Model writing two sentences about it. Then erase the interchangeable parts of the sentence (see example below) to create a writing frame. Model two new sentences about another bird by filling in the gaps. Support the students to create their own sentences about the tākapu, using the frame.  
The \_\_\_\_\_ has \_\_\_\_\_. I think this is amazing because \_\_\_\_\_.
- Provide opportunities for the students to further practise their skills of using multiple sources of information to clarify meanings of unfamiliar words and ideas:
  - Have them make a “bird word” book or poster. Students can locate and record bird-related words from the article, then give a brief explanation or make a drawing to help others understand what the word means. Alternatively, students can create a new glossary, identifying more words they think should be in the glossary and writing definitions for them. Encourage students who have first languages other than English to provide definitions and/or translations in their first languages.
- Provide opportunities for the students to practise and consolidate their skills of summarising and forming an opinion about information across other texts. See the Related texts section below for an example of a text you could use in a guided reading session.

## Related texts

Texts that provide opportunities for students to summarise the main ideas and form an opinion: *Extraordinary Earthworms*, *The White-tailed Spider* (both RTR, Gold)

Texts about other animals that live in colonies: “New Zealand Sea Lions” (JJ 38)

Texts about tākapu: “Visit to Muriwai” (JJ 45)