

PhD position: Evolutionary genomics of New Zealand birds

The New Zealand bird fauna is unique in the world and is a key element of New Zealand's biological heritage. In the absence of terrestrial mammals, birds have evolved to fill their ecological niches. This unusual situation has for example given rise to the world's largest raptor, Haast's eagle, one of the few alpine parrot species in the world, the kea, and the world's only flightless parrot, the kakapo.

The molecular evolution of these adaptations can help us understand how species respond to changing environments in a dynamic world on the genome level.

We are looking for a PhD student to study the functional genomic basis of adaptations such as island gigantism, flightlessness, and niche specialization in a range of New Zealand bird species. The ideal candidate will have a background in molecular ecology, evolutionary biology, bioinformatics or genome data analyses.

The position is contingent on the candidate obtaining a PhD scholarship, either from the University of Otago (please check eligibility: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/postgraduate-study/scholarships/phd>) or alternative international sources such as the DAAD.

Selection process: Please apply by email with a cover letter and your CV (including grade point average or comparable measure from your qualifying degree) to A/Prof. Michael Knapp (michael.knapp@otago.ac.nz) by 02/August/2024. We will select the best applicant soon after this date and support them in their application for an Otago PhD scholarship. Starting dates are flexible, with an **ideal start date in early 2025**.

About Otago: The University of Otago is one of the most research-intensive universities in New Zealand with a world-class reputation in the life sciences. It provides an environment that allows its students to undertake internationally recognized research, in a diverse and vibrant postgraduate environment and has been ranked as one of the most beautiful campuses in the world. The PhD student will be hosted by the Departments of Anatomy (Primary supervisor A/Prof. Michael Knapp) and Zoology (co-supervisors A/Prof. Nic Rawlence and Dr Pascale Lubbe), which are diverse and research-oriented departments.

A/Prof. Michael Knapp
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