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Child-sized parrot once lived in New Zealand – 9th August, 2019

Level 0

Scientists found fossils from the biggest parrot that ever lived. It was a metre tall and weighed eight kilograms - twice the size of any other parrot. The fossils were in New Zealand. Researchers called the parrot Hercules. The largest parrot alive today is the kakapo, a flightless bird also from New Zealand. It is endangered.

New Zealand is famous for birds. The kiwi is its national symbol. Kiwis are endangered. The 3.6-metre-tall moa also came from New Zealand. It was the biggest bird that ever lived. It became extinct 600 years ago. Hercules lived 19 million years ago. It ate nuts, fruit and seeds. Scientists will discover many more species.

Level 1

Scientists found fossilised bones from the biggest parrot that ever lived. It was a metre tall and weighed around eight kilograms. The fossils were in New Zealand. Researchers called the parrot Hercules. They studied the leg bones and said Hercules was twice the size of all other parrots. The largest parrot scientists know about is the kakapo. This is a flightless bird that also lives in New Zealand. The kakapo is very endangered.

New Zealand is famous for its birds. The kiwi is its national symbol. Kiwis could become endangered if their environment does not change. The 3.6-metre-tall moa also came from New Zealand. These flightless birds were the biggest birds that ever lived. They became extinct 600 years ago. Hercules lived 19 million years ago. It ate nuts, fruit and seeds, and other parrots. A researcher said: "There are many more unexpected species yet to be discovered."

Level 2

Scientists found fossilised bones that belonged to the biggest parrot that ever lived. It was probably as tall as a three-year-old child and weighed around eight kilograms. The researchers found the fossils in New Zealand. They called the new parrot Hercules, a name from Greek mythology. The scientists studied the leg bones and said Hercules was about a metre tall. This is twice the size of all other known parrots. The largest parrot scientists know of is the kakapo. This is a flightless bird that also lives in New Zealand. The kakapo is on the critically endangered species list.

New Zealand is famous for its birds. The kiwi is its national symbol. Scientists say kiwis could become endangered if their environment does not change. Another famous New Zealand bird is the 3.6-metre-tall moa. These flightless birds were the biggest birds that ever lived. They became extinct in the 15th century. Hercules lived about 19 million years ago. It probably ate nuts, fruit and seeds, and even other parrots. A researcher said: "Until now, no one has ever found an extinct giant parrot, anywhere. There are many more unexpected species yet to be discovered."

Level 3

Scientists have found fossils that once belonged to a giant parrot. They say the fossilized bones are from the biggest parrot that ever lived. It was probably as tall as a three-year-old child and weighed around eight kilograms. The researchers found the fossils in New Zealand. They have called the new parrot Hercules, after a strongman of ancient Greek mythology. The scientists studied the fossilized leg bones they found and said Hercules was around a metre tall. This means Hercules is twice the size of all other known parrots. The largest parrot scientists know of is the kakapo, a flightless bird that also lives in New Zealand. The kakapo is on the critically endangered species list.

New Zealand is famous for its flightless birds. The kiwi is a symbol of the country. Scientists say these are vulnerable. This means they could become endangered if their environment stays the same. Another famous New Zealand bird is the 3.6-metre-tall moa. These flightless birds were the biggest birds that ever lived. They were overhunted to extinction early in the 15th century. Hercules lived about 19 million years ago. A researcher said it probably ate nuts, fruit and seeds, and "perhaps even other parrots". A researcher said: "New Zealand is well known for its giant birds. Until now, no one has ever found an extinct giant parrot, anywhere. There are many more unexpected species yet to be discovered."

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