

Uncle Don
knows **HEAPS** of
WACKY STUFF



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NEW ZEALAND HAS ABOUT 3,080 MAJIVE PLANT SPECIES AND ANOTHER 20,000 HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED



In the holidays, Sylvie went to stay at her Uncle Don's and Aunt Mary's. They live wayyyy away.

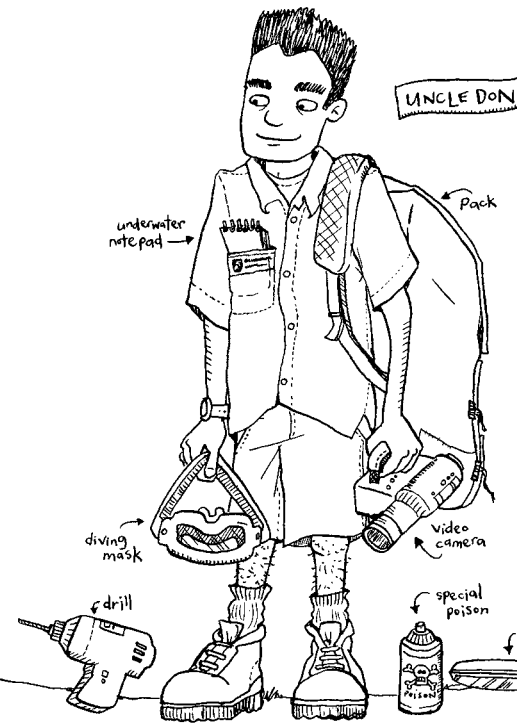
Uncle Don's a DOC ranger and he knows heaps of wacky stuff about wetas and starfish and snails and possums and eels and birds and plants and trees and rivers and lakes and forests and mountains and loads of other things as well.



SOME OF THE WACKY STUFF UNCLE DON KNOWS... NZ'S SHORT TAILED BAT'S NEAREST RELATIVES INCLUDE THE VAMPIRE BAT

... THEY SWIM ON ONE SIDE - WITH BOTH EYES FACING UPWARDS ☆ WETLANDS ARE LIKE FILTERS AND HAVE POTENTIAL AS SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANTS

FLUNDER START OUT LOOKING LIKE NORMAL FISH, BUT AS THEY GROW, ONE EYE MOVES TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THEIR HEAD, THEIR BODIES FLATTEN OUT, AND...



KINA

Kina is one of a number of special dogs in New Zealand that have been trained to find kiwi nests, which are burrows in the ground. When he finds one, he stands still, and points at it with his nose.

Muzzle - just in case Kina forgets he's saving birds and nips one by mistake!



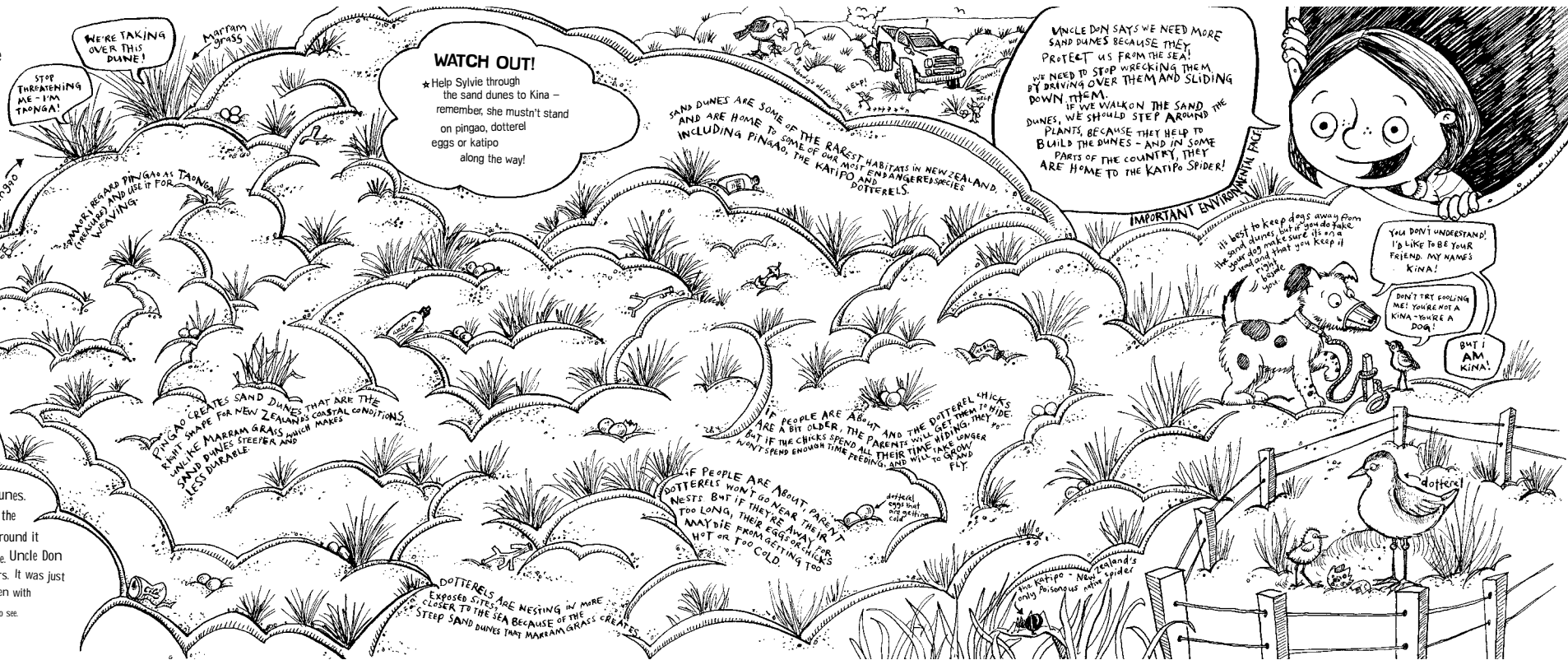
☆ SOME STARFISH DON'T NEED A MATE - THEY SPLIT THEMSELVES IN HALF AND GROW NEW ARMS INSTEAD ☆ MOUNTAINS GROW AND MOVE... VERY SLOWLY

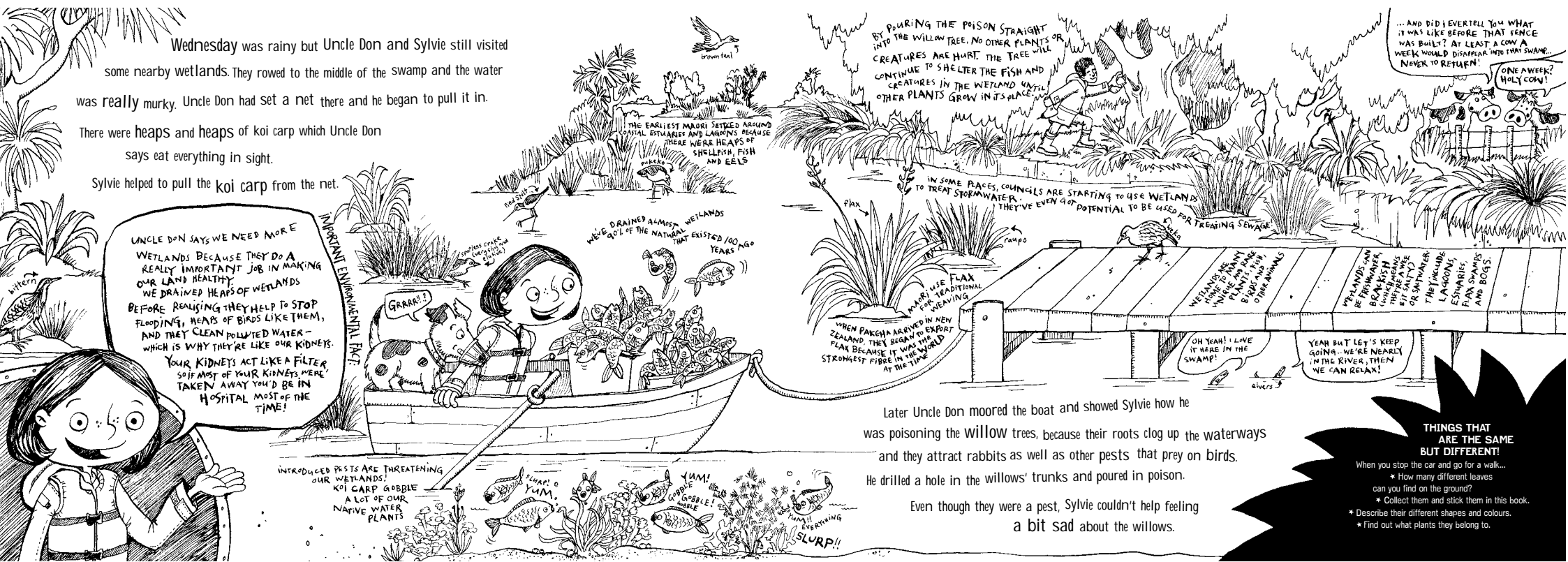
On Tuesday, Uncle Don took Sylvie to see how the pingao grass on the sand dunes was growing.

'Watch where you hop!' he said.
'We don't want to freak out the katipo and dotterel!'

A month ago, Uncle Don and some others spent the day planting pingao and pulling out marram grass to help the sand dunes.

While there they found a dotterel's nest in the dunes, and Uncle Don put a little fence around it so that no-one would stand on it by mistake. Uncle Don showed Sylvie the nest through his binoculars. It was just as well there was the fence, otherwise, even with binoculars the eggs would have been very hard to see.





Wednesday was rainy but Uncle Don and Sylvie still visited some nearby wetlands. They rowed to the middle of the swamp and the water was really murky. Uncle Don had set a net there and he began to pull it in.

There were heaps and heaps of koi carp which Uncle Don says eat everything in sight.

Sylvie helped to pull the koi carp from the net.

UNCLE DON SAYS WE NEED MORE WETLANDS BECAUSE THEY DO A REALLY IMPORTANT JOB IN MAKING OUR LAND HEALTHY. WE DRAINED HEAPS OF WETLANDS BEFORE REALISING THEY HELP TO STOP FLOODING, HEAPS OF BIRDS LIKE THEM, AND THEY CLEAN POLLUTED WATER - WHICH IS WHY THEY'RE LIKE OUR KIDNEYS. YOUR KIDNEYS ACT LIKE A FILTER SO IF MOST OF YOUR KIDNEYS WERE TAKEN AWAY YOU'D BE IN HOSPITAL MOST OF THE TIME!

IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL FACT:

WE'VE DRAINED ALMOST ALL WETLANDS. WE'VE LOST 90% OF THE NATURAL WETLANDS THAT EXISTED 100 YEARS AGO.

INTRODUCED PESTS ARE THREATENING OUR WETLANDS! KOI CARP GOBBLE A LOT OF OUR NATIVE WATER PLANTS.

YUM! O YUM! YUM! GOBBLE! GOBBLE! GOBBLE! YUM! EVERYTHING SLURP!!

BY POURING THE POISON STRAIGHT INTO THE WILLOW TREE, NO OTHER PLANTS OR CREATURES ARE HURT. THE TREE WILL CONTINUE TO SHELTER THE FISH AND CREATURES IN THE WETLAND UNTIL OTHER PLANTS GROW IN ITS PLACE.

IN SOME PLACES, COUNCILS ARE STARTING TO USE WETLANDS TO TREAT STORMWATER. THEY'VE EVEN GOT POTENTIAL TO BE USED FOR TREATING SEWAGE.

WHEN PAKHIA ARRIVED IN NEW ZEALAND, THEY BEGAN TO EXPORT FLAX BECAUSE IT WAS THE STRONGEST FIBRE IN THE WORLD AT THE TIME.

MAORI USE FLAX FOR TRADITIONAL WEAVING.

OH YEAH! I LOVE IT HERE IN THE SWAMP!

YEAH BUT LET'S KEEP GOING - WE'RE NEARLY IN THE RIVER, THEN WE CAN RELAX!

... AND DID I EVER TELL YOU WHAT IT WAS LIKE BEFORE THAT FENCE WAS BUILT? AT LEAST A COW A WEEK WOULD DISAPPEAR INTO THAT SWAMP. NEVER TO RETURN!

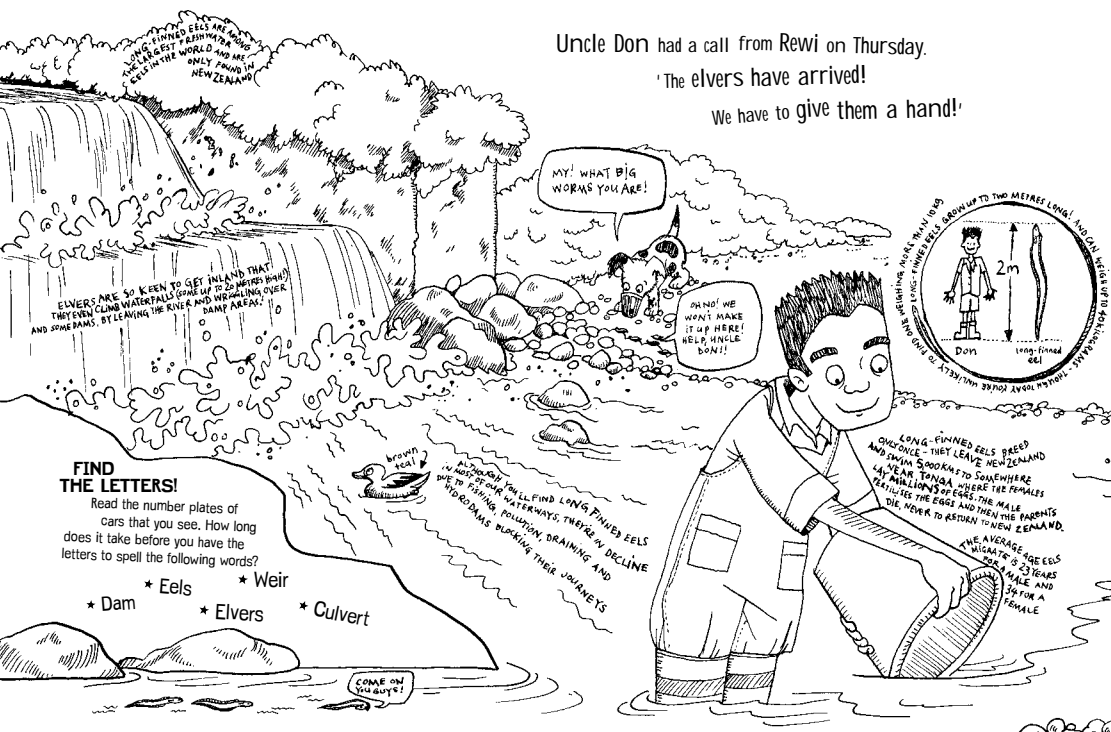
ONE A WEEK? HOLY COW!

Later Uncle Don moored the boat and showed Sylvie how he was poisoning the willow trees, because their roots clog up the waterways and they attract rabbits as well as other pests that prey on birds. He drilled a hole in the willows' trunks and poured in poison.

Even though they were a pest, Sylvie couldn't help feeling a bit sad about the willows.

THINGS THAT ARE THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT!

- When you stop the car and go for a walk...
- How many different leaves can you find on the ground?
- Collect them and stick them in this book.
- Describe their different shapes and colours.
- Find out what plants they belong to.



FIND THE LETTERS!
Read the number plates of cars that you see. How long does it take before you have the letters to spell the following words?

- * Eels
- * Weir
- * Dam
- * Elvers
- * Culvert

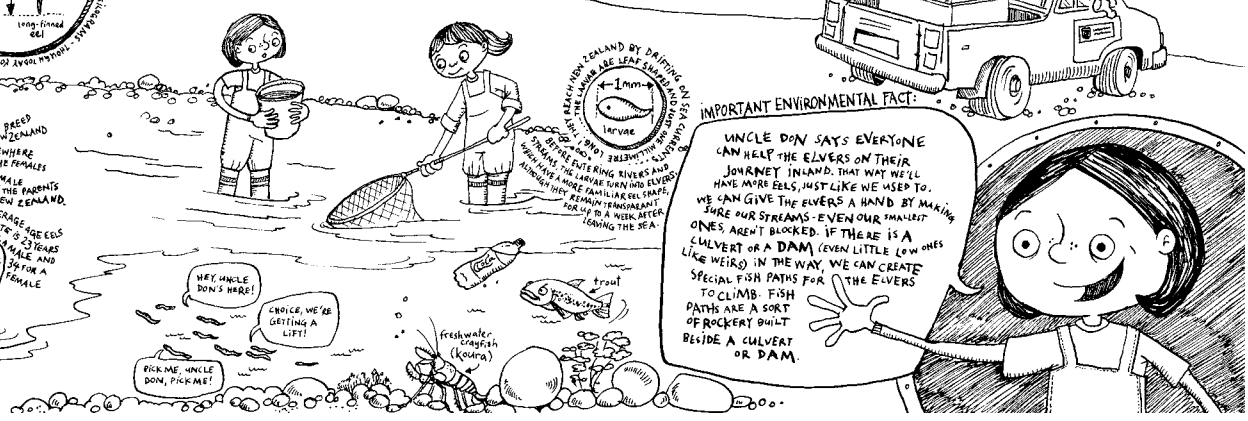
Uncle Don had a call from Rewi on Thursday.
'The elvers have arrived!
We have to give them a hand!'

Uncle Don told Sylvie that elvers, which are baby eels, come all the way from somewhere near Tonga only to get stuck at the dam as they try to swim inland. When they can, he and Rewi help the elvers to continue their journey upstream by scooping them into containers, then setting them free above the dam. The dam was built a long time ago and it was too high for the elvers to cross even though they're really good climbers. Sylvie helped Uncle Don and Rewi but the elvers kept giving her frights!!!

YIKES!

IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL FACT:

UNCLE DON SAYS EVERYONE CAN HELP THE ELVERS ON THEIR JOURNEY INLAND. THAT WAY WE'LL HAVE MORE EELS, JUST LIKE WE USED TO. WE CAN GIVE THE ELVERS A HAND BY MAKING SURE OUR STREAMS - EVEN OUR TALLEST ONES AREN'T BLOCKED. IF THERE IS A CULVERT OR A DAM (EVEN LITTLE LOW ONES LIKE WEIRS) IN THE WAY, WE CAN CREATE SPECIAL FISH PATHS FOR THE ELVERS TO CLIMB. FISH PATHS ARE A SORT OF ROCKERY BUILT BESIDE A CULVERT OR DAM.



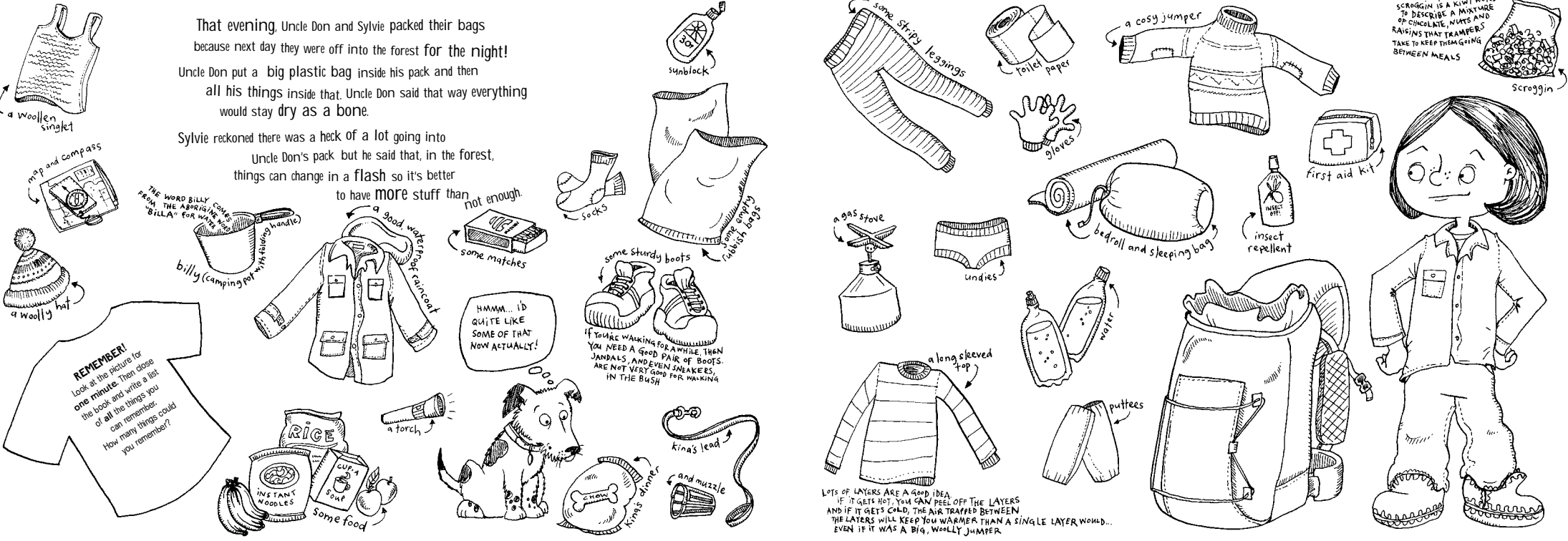
That evening, Uncle Don and Sylvie packed their bags because next day they were off into the forest for the night! Uncle Don put a big plastic bag inside his pack and then all his things inside that. Uncle Don said that way everything would stay dry as a bone.

Sylvie reckoned there was a heck of a lot going into Uncle Don's pack but he said that, in the forest, things can change in a flash so it's better to have **more** stuff than not enough.

HMMM... I'D QUITE LIKE SOME OF THAT NOW ACTUALLY!

LOTS OF LAYERS ARE A GOOD IDEA. IF IT GETS HOT, YOU CAN PEEL OFF THE LAYERS AND IF IT GETS COLD, THE AIR TRAPPED BETWEEN THE LAYERS WILL KEEP YOU WARMER THAN A SINGLE LAYER WOULD... EVEN IF IT WAS A BIG, WOOLLY JUMPER.

SCROGGIN IS A KIWI WORD TO DESCRIBE A MIXTURE OF CHOCOLATE, NUTS AND RAISINS THAT TRAMPERS TAKE TO KEEP THEM GOING BETWEEN MEALS



REMEMBER!
Look at the picture for one minute. Then close the book and write a list of all the things you can remember. How many things could you remember?



SOME FEELS OF KIWIS BECAUSE THEY ARE SO SMALL. BUT KIWIS CAN CLIMB UP TREES AND HIDE IN BURROWS. THEY ARE A REMARKABLE SURVIVORS BECAUSE THEY ARE RETURNING THE NEST. MEAN WHILE THE FAMILY GROUP FAR OF TO

On Friday, Uncle Don and Sylvie set off with Kina into the forest. As well as his pack, Uncle Don took a video camera, some empty rubbish bags, a notebook, and a pair of loppers to help clear the track.

Every so often Uncle Don would pull out the notebook and write stuff in it about birds he could hear or flowers he saw.

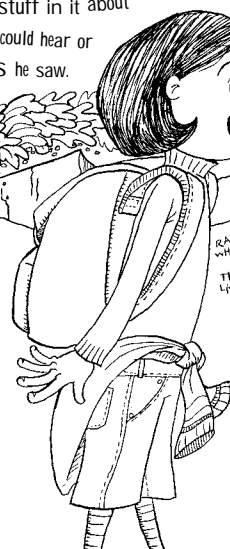
FEELIN' HUNGRY?

- * Find the predators in this picture.
- * What do they eat?
- * If a forest had 41 deer, 328 stoats, 976 possums, 7539 rats and 23,944 mice, how many mouths would be gobbling the forest foliage and creatures?

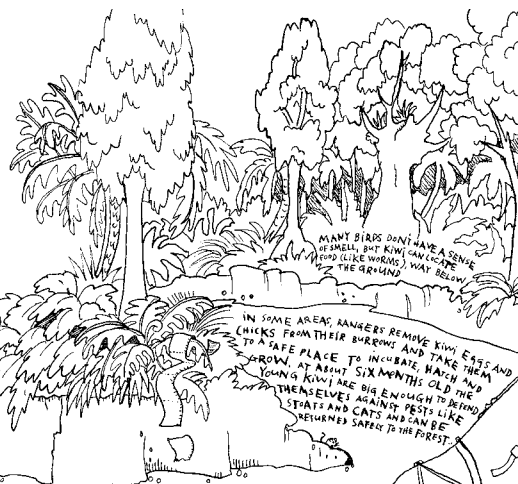
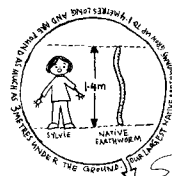
A couple of times he found some droppings and put them in a box that he labelled and popped in his pocket. He even put a dead stoat

from a trap into a bag in his pack. Uuugh!

Along the way, Kina found THREE kiwi burrows. Uncle Don said there was an egg in one! And he found some feathers in another which showed that an egg he'd kept his eye on had hatched recently!



RANGERS TAG KIWI SO THEY CAN TRACE THEIR WHEREABOUTS IN THE FUTURE. SOMETIMES THEY ATTACH RADIO TRANSMITTERS SO THEY CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW KIWI LIVE. THEY ALSO TAKE SAMPLES OF THE KIWI FEATHERS FOR DNA.



IN SOME AREAS RANGERS REMOVE KIWI EGGS AND CHICKS FROM THEIR BURROWS AND TAKE THEM TO A SAFE PLACE TO INCUBATE, HATCH AND GROW. AT ABOUT SIX MONTHS OLD THE YOUNG KIWI ARE BIG ENOUGH TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST PESTS LIKE STOATS AND CATS AND CAN BE RELEASED SAFELY TO THE FOREST.

YOU CAN FIND OUT LOTS MORE ABOUT KIWIS GOVERNMENT AT WWW.KIWISGOVERNMENT.CO.NZ THE WEBSITE OF BANK OF NEW ZEALAND KIWIS RECOVERY



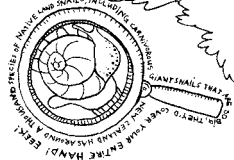
UNCLE DON SAYS WE MUSTN'T LET DOGS ROAM IN THE BUSH - UNLESS THEY'RE SPECIALLY TRAINED AND WEARING A MUZZLE, LIKE KINA. KIWI HAVE A REALLY STRONG SCENT, SO DOGS CAN FIND THEM EASILY. AND AS KIWI DON'T HAVE WING MUSCLES TO PROTECT THEIR CHESTS, DOGS CAN KILL THEM JUST BY PICKING THEM UP!

IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL FACT



IN NEW ZEALAND, KIWI ARE MORE LIKE WOMBATS. THEY HAVE A CAT-LIKE CAT IN THE END OF THEIR BILL, AND THEIR FEATHERS ARE MORE LIKE HAIR!

DOGS MUST BE BEFORE THEY ARE SIX MONTHS OLD - MOST OF THEM KILLED BY STOATS

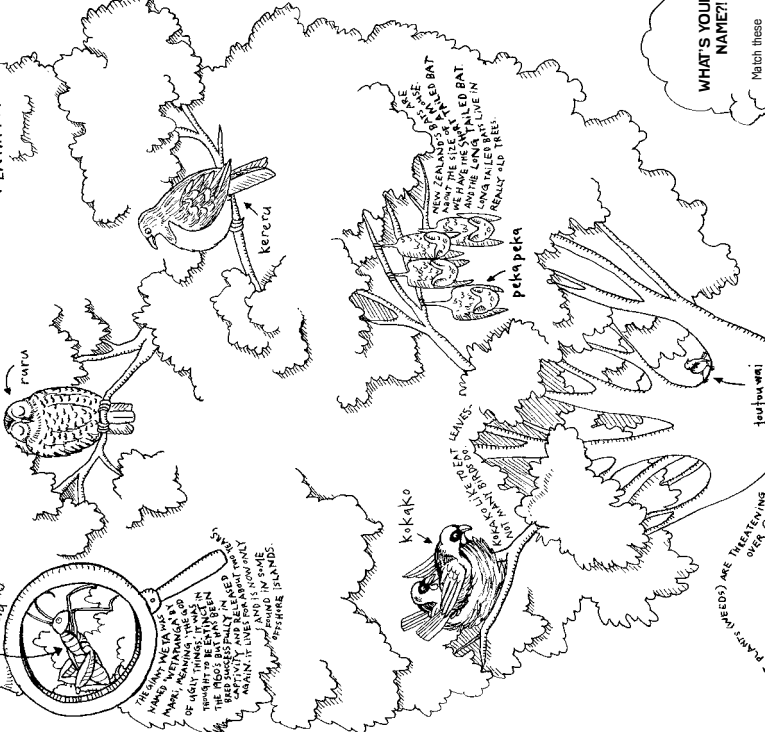


BEFORE PEOPLE CAME TO LIVE IN NEW ZEALAND, IT WAS COMPLETELY COVERED IN FOREST. EXCEPT FOR THE HILLS AND MOUNTAINS, NOW LESS THAN A QUARTER IS COVERED IN NATIVE BUSH.

THE GIGANTID WETA WAS THE FIRST INVASIVE SPECIES TO BE INTRODUCED TO NEW ZEALAND. IT WAS BRINGS WITH IT A LOT OF GREAT THINGS, IT WAS THE FIRST TO BE INTRODUCED TO THE ISLANDS. IT WAS THE FIRST TO BE INTRODUCED TO THE ISLANDS. IT WAS THE FIRST TO BE INTRODUCED TO THE ISLANDS.

UNCLE DON SAYS IF WE SHOULDN'T USE, WE'VE GOT TO WATER. OUR FORESTS, NEW ZEALAND'S LAST OF THE NATIVE BUSH, ARE BEING LOST. THINKING HAVE BECOME EXTINCT. NATIVE LAND AND FRESHWATER BIRDS, ALMOST ONE-FIFTH OF OUR SEABIRDS, THREE-SEVENTH OF OUR FISH, ONE SPECIES OF BAT, AT LEAST 12 INVERTEBRATES SUCH AS SNAILS AND INSECTS, AND 11 PLANTS!

IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL FACTS



WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

Match these English names with the creatures and their Maori names in the picture!

- * weta
- * wood pigeon
- * morepork
- * parson bird
- * brown parrot
- * robin
- * wattle crow
- * fantail
- * bat

When they **FINALLY** got to the hut, it was time to relax. While Uncle Don set a camera to film a pair of kokako and their nest, Sylvie lay beneath the trees. She could see loads of things going on way up high...

MAHA... YAMMA... GOSPEL... INTENSE... EAT THE BERRIES... SURE... BUMP... GARDY... BUMP... TZZZ...

KEEP MOVING... THESE BIRDS ARE TASTY!

piwakawaka

uncle Don's

pool! THESE SNAKES STINK!

HEY, MAMMA, DIDN'T YOU SAY MOTHER TONGUE YOU TO BAME?

WASTES ARE BURNING OUR BACKS ALL AND HINDERS THE DEPRIVING MANT NAKES BED OF AN IMPROBANT FOOD SOURCE

YEAH! I'VE GOT A STING!

WASTES ARE BURNING OUR BACKS ALL AND HINDERS THE DEPRIVING MANT NAKES BED OF AN IMPROBANT FOOD SOURCE

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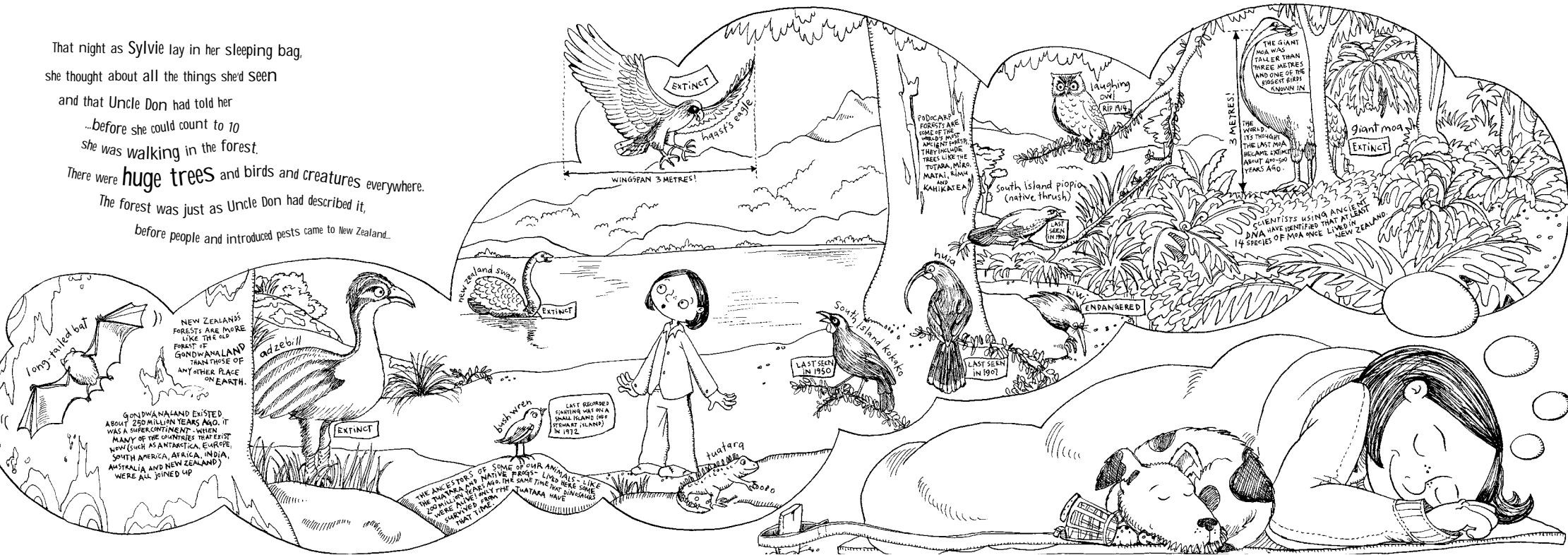
WASTES ARE BURNING OUR BACKS ALL AND HINDERS THE DEPRIVING MANT NAKES BED OF AN IMPROBANT FOOD SOURCE

That night as Sylvie lay in her sleeping bag,
she thought about all the things she'd seen

and that Uncle Don had told her
...before she could count to 10
she was walking in the forest.

There were **huge trees** and birds and creatures everywhere.

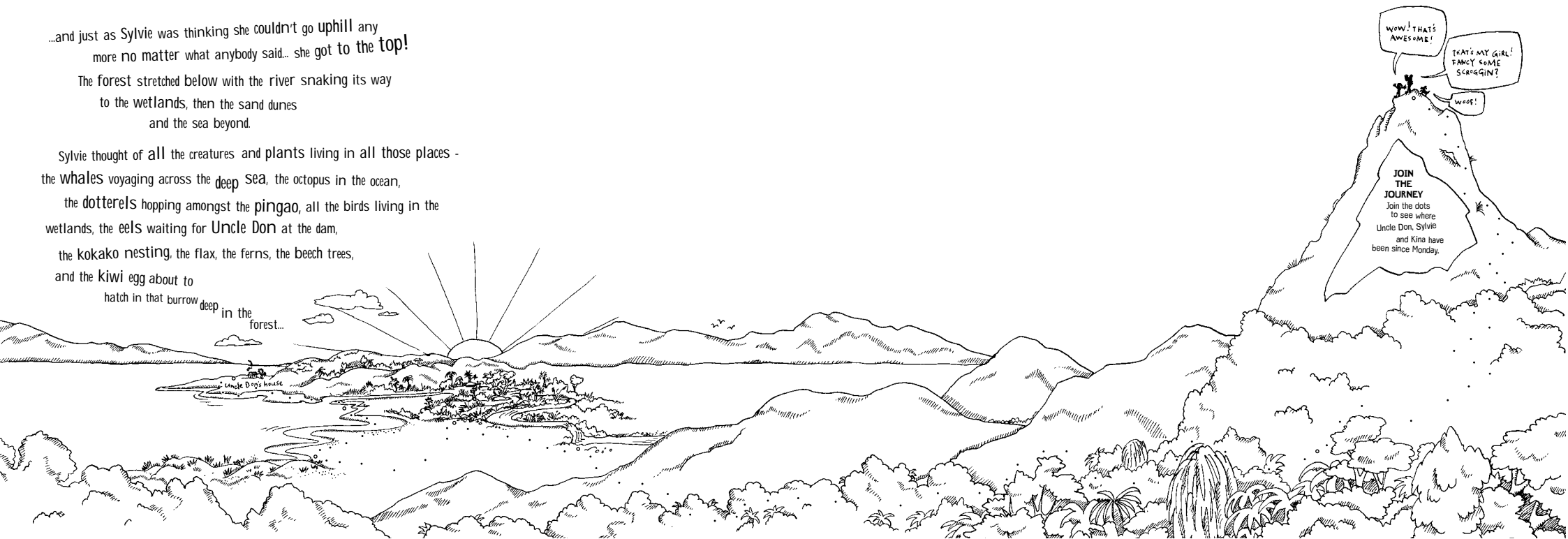
The forest was just as Uncle Don had described it,
before people and introduced pests came to New Zealand.



...and just as Sylvie was thinking she couldn't go uphill any
more no matter what anybody said... she got to the top!

The forest stretched below with the river snaking its way
to the wetlands, then the sand dunes
and the sea beyond.

Sylvie thought of all the creatures and plants living in all those places -
the whales voyaging across the deep sea, the octopus in the ocean,
the dotterels hopping amongst the pingao, all the birds living in the
wetlands, the eels waiting for Uncle Don at the dam,
the kokako nesting, the flax, the ferns, the beech trees,
and the kiwi egg about to
hatch in that burrow deep in the forest...



WOW! THAT'S
AWESOME!

THAT'S MY GIRL!
FANCY SOME
SCRAGGIN'?

WOOS!

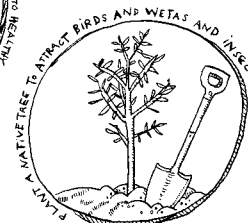
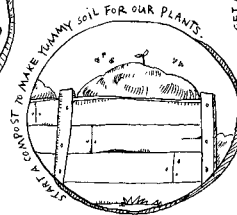
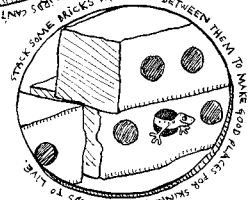
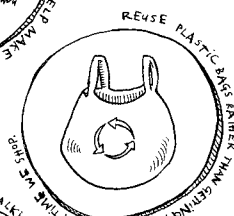
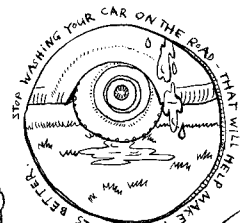
**JOIN
THE
JOURNEY**
Join the dots
to see where
Uncle Don, Sylvie
and Kina have
been since Monday.

When Sylvie got back home,
she told her mum and dad
all about her holiday with
Uncle Don and how there's heaps
more to conservation than meets the eye.

Then Sylvie made a list of all
the things she could do differently
to help New Zealand's plants
and creatures and their
special environments
to survive:

WHAT RUBBISH!

- ★ List all the rubbish you can find in this book.
- ★ Collect all the rubbish you make when you go on holiday.
- ★ Can you recycle any of it?
- ★ What can you do with the rest of it?



YOU CAN GET AN EXAMPLE
JUST LIKE ME! EVEN THOUGH
I'M A DOG I DON'T HURT BIRDS
UNLESS MOST DOGS DON'T
KNOW ANY BETTER.
SOME THINGS DIFFERENTLY
MIGHT SEEM HARD AT FIRST
BUT IT MAKES YOU FEEL
REALLY GOOD!



ANSWERS TO PUZZLES:

ADD 'EM UP!
Q1: 728 new species a year.

REMEMBER!

Raincoat, woolly hat, woollen singlet, long-sleeved top, jumper, stripy leggings, undies, gloves, boots, puttees, torch, matches, gas stove, billy, food, scroggin, water, sunblock, toilet paper, socks, insect repellent, map and compass, empty rubbish bags, first aid kit, Kina's lead, Kina's muzzle, sleeping bag and bedroll, Kina's dinner.

FEELIN' HUNGRY?

Q1: Possums, mice, deer, rats, pigs.
Q2: Possums and deer eat trees and bushes; mice eat seeds and leaves; rats eat eggs and chicks and bushes and seeds; pigs eat leaves and eggs.
Q3: There would be 32,828 gobbling mouths in the forest.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?!

weta: wetapunga.
wood pigeon: kereru or kukupa.
morepork: ruu.
parson bird: tui.
brown parrot: kaka.
robin: toutouwai.
wattled crow: kokako.
fantail: piwakawaka.
bat: pekapeka.

UNSCRAMBLE THE LETTERS!

SCIOMAH: chamois	MPSOUS: possum
EDER: deer	ASTTO: stoat
RATH: thar	TRA: rat
REAH: hare	ECMI: mice

WHAT RUBBISH!

Beer can holder; Beer bottle; apple core; iceblock wrapper; old fishing line; empty water bottle; plastic tape; chippy packets; chocolate wrappers; coke bottle; toilet paper; plastic bag.

This book is about Sylvie
and her holiday with her Uncle Don
and Aunt Mary and their dog Kina.

BUT IT'S MAINLY
ABOUT SYLVIE
AND UNCLE DON
AND THE THINGS
THEY DO EACH
DAY.

Anyhow, they live in the wops and
Uncle Don's a ranger. So it's about
the sea, the sand dunes,
the wetlands, the rivers, the forest
and the mountains
and all the amazing things
going on in the middle of nowhere...
It's got a story, activities
and heaps of
WACKY facts.

Active minds in the
backseat - A Department
of Conservation
activity book for
youngsters on
road trips.



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Also check out our website to find out more stuff: www.doc.govt.nz

