

G E B R U E D E R B E E T Z F I L M P R O D U K T I O N

New Zealand from Above (Episode 1)

The Far South

In coproduction with Making Movies (New Zealand), Bearcage (Australia) and ZDF/ARTE

In the first episode of "New Zealand from Above" we discover the Fiordland national park, the greatest national park of the country. Fiordland is located at the south tip of the Southern Island and with Milford Sound and Doubtful Sound one of the most amazing nature sights of New Zealand.

In this region the only way to get around is by helicopter. Pilot Hannibal Hays works in the sparsely populated and remote areas of the 12.500 km² the big national park Fiordland. In 1952 it was made a nature reserve, since 1986 the area with its 15 fiords is part of the UNESCO World Natural Heritage. Milford Sound and Doubtful Sound are considered natural wonders and belong to the most astonishing nature travel destinations of the country. The difficult accessibility of the landscape give pilots an important role, they are responsible for ambulance transportation, help deer hunting, which became a plague after the import from Europe as they were lacking a natural enemy. Like the whole country also Fiordland doesn't have any native mammals. In the nutritious waters at the coastline of Fiordland large numbers of fish are found, but also seals are attracted by the big food supply found in the Tasman Sea and the fiords. At the coastline crayfishers make a living by importing for the international market. Again the helicopter helps to bring the fresh fish immediately to the airport.

On a steamer we travel further north to Queenstown, the mountain capital of the southern island. The area around Queenstown is not just a Mecca for paragliding, but also has been scenery for The Lord of the Rings Trilogy. Not far behind the city the Southern Alps form an impressive mountain range, which remind of the European Alps in name and vegetation.

The Tasman Sea blows humid air at the western hillside of the mountains. The western mountain slopes belong to the rainiest areas of the world and are covered with chilly rain forests. Apart from giant ferns and moss, southern beeches ground their roots into the thin, fertile stratum. The forests are the natural habitat of the Kakapo, the only parrot, which is unable to fly. The Kakapo is one of the most endangered species and a special breeding program was founded to secure its future existence.