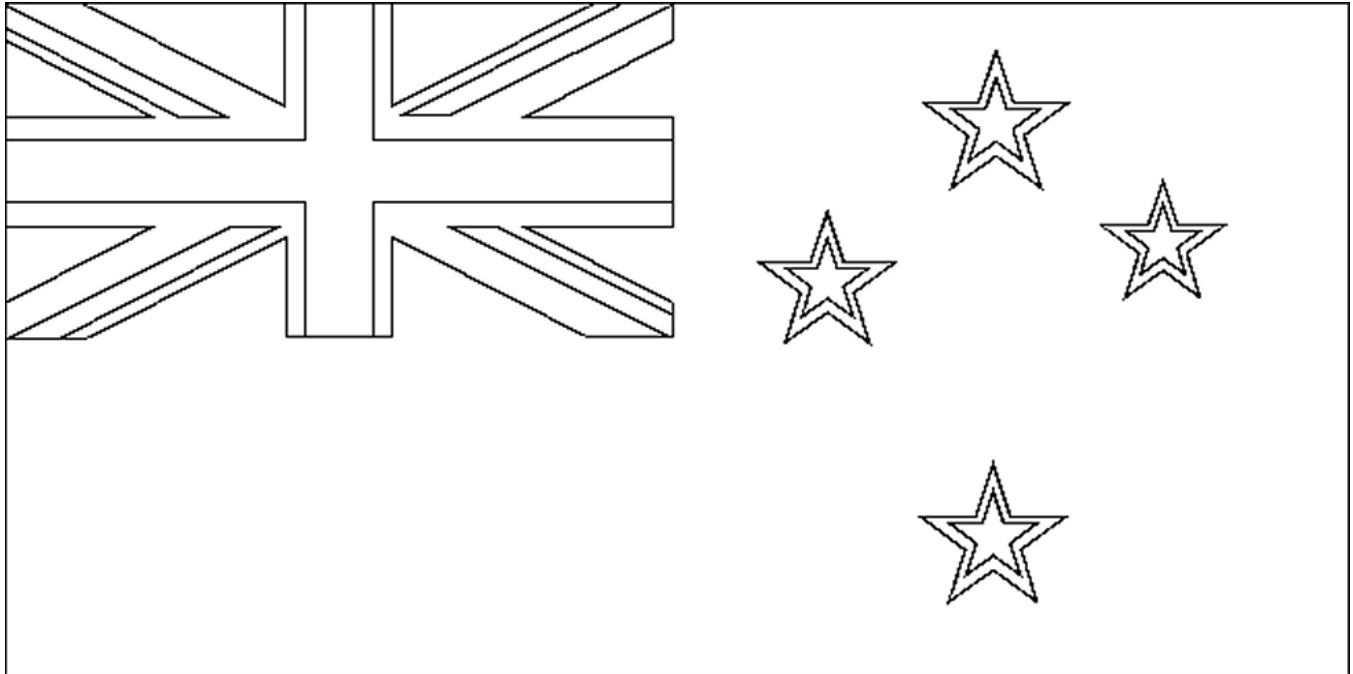


The New Zealand Flag



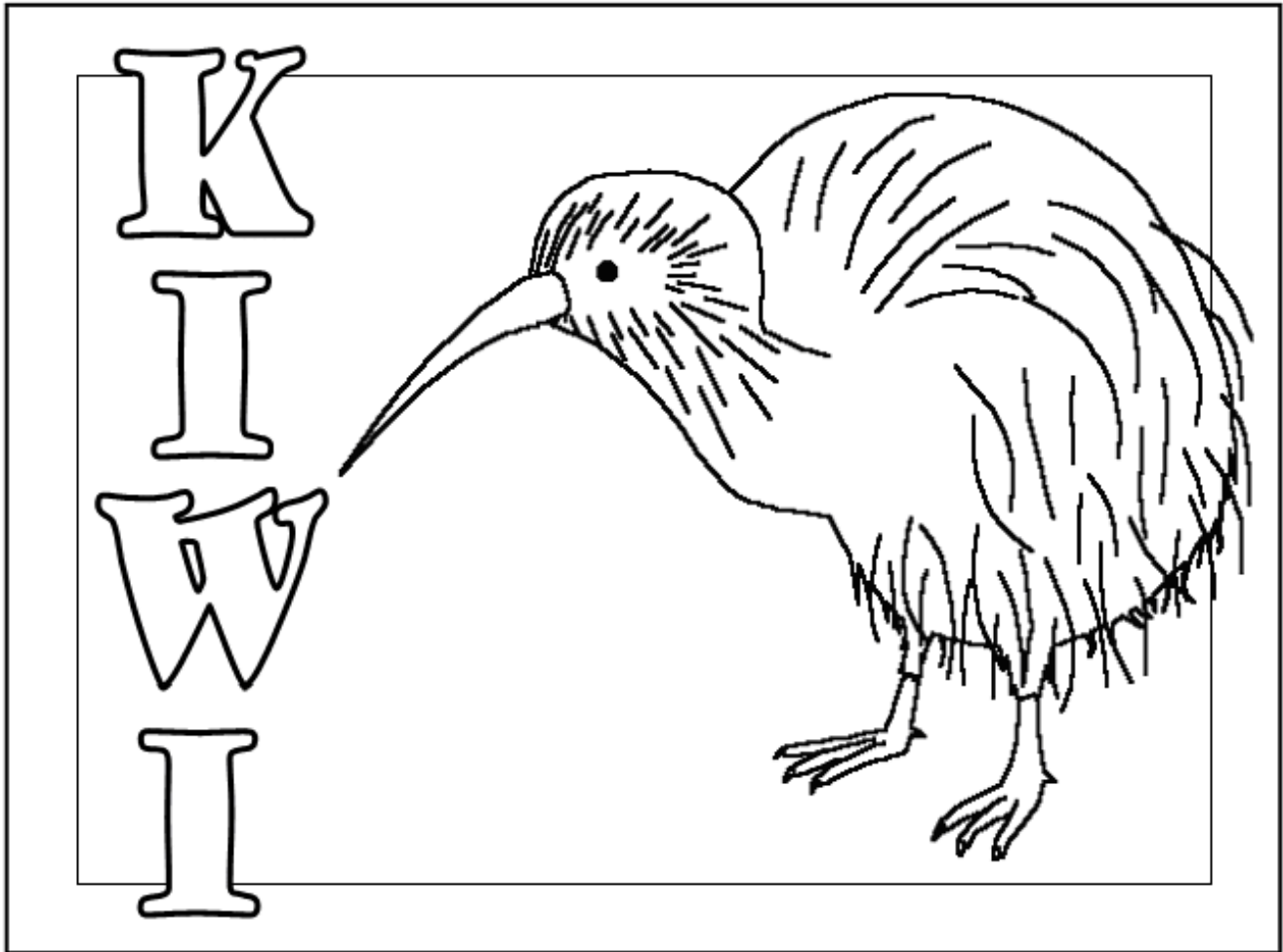
The New Zealand Flag is the symbol of the government and people of New Zealand. Its royal blue background is reminiscent of the blue sea and clear sky surrounding the islands. The stars of the Southern Cross emphasize this country's location in the South Pacific Ocean representing the constellation Crux, the Southern Cross. The Union Flag gives recognition to their historical foundations and the fact that New Zealand was once a British colony.



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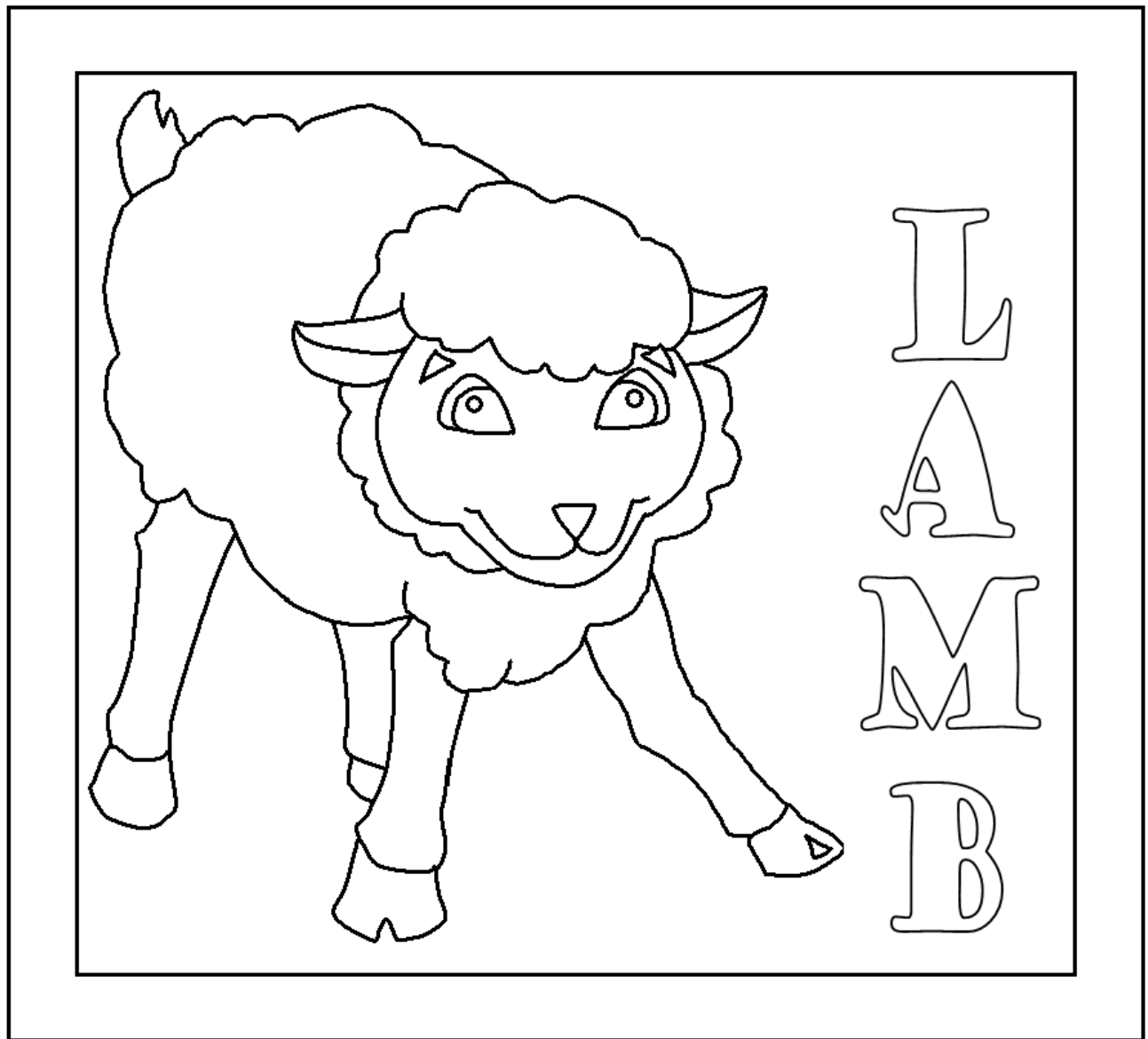
The kiwi bird is a flightless, nocturnal bird and is the only bird in the world that has its nostrils at the end of its beak. The kiwi has the largest egg, in proportion to its body size, of any bird in the world (except maybe the hummingbird). Kiwi birds are about the size of chickens, but their eggs are almost as big as those of ostriches! There are five kinds of kiwi in New Zealand - three closely related are the Brown Kiwi, the Little Spotted Kiwi and the Great Spotted Kiwi.



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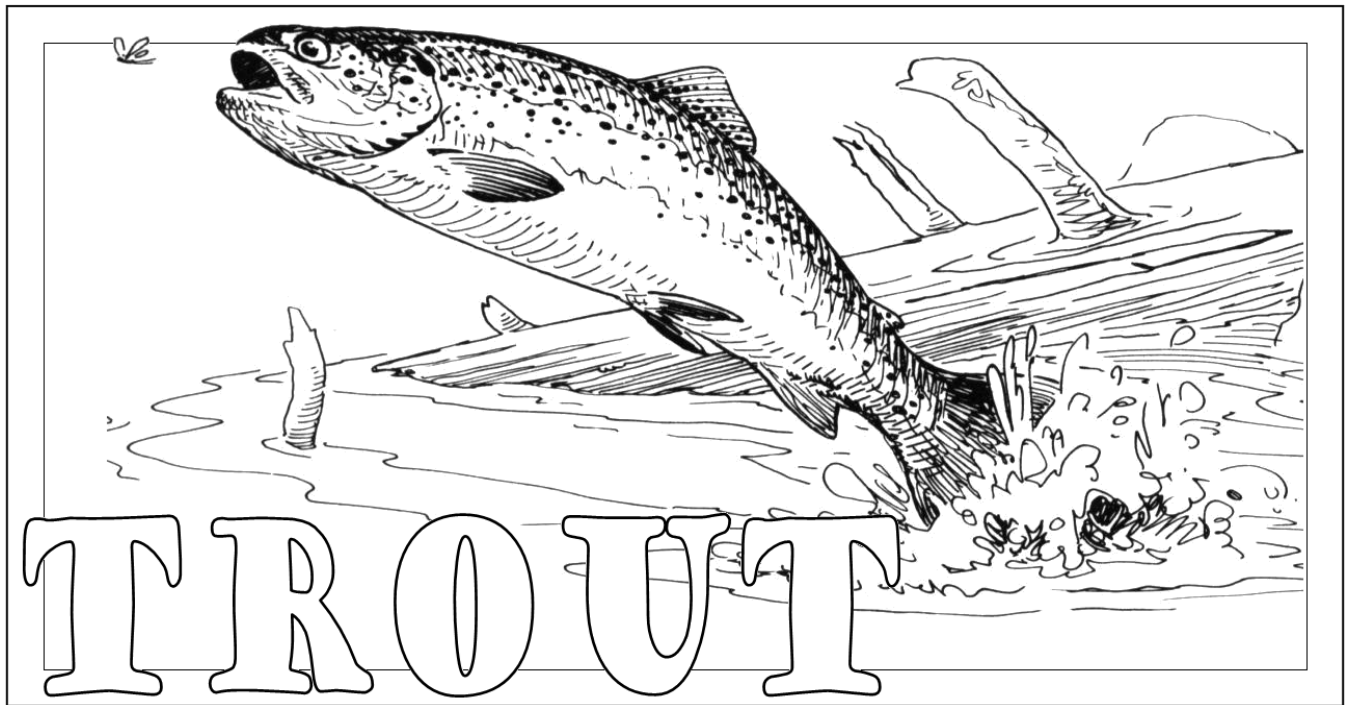
New Zealand is sometimes called “the world’s biggest farm”. This is because New Zealand is the world’s largest producer of crossbred wool, and is second only to Australia in the export of all wool.



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Rainbow trout in New Zealand thrive in cool clear streams and lakes which are abundant throughout the country. Reaching a weight of over 20 pounds, these fish feed on insects, invertebrates, fish eggs and small fish. They are a favorite of fly fisherman, but can also be caught on spinners, plugs and a wide variety of baits ranging from worms to marshmallows. The town of Turangi, in New Zealand, is known as the 'Trout Fishing Capital of the World.' In this small town, many trophy trout over 10lbs have been landed, with an overall average of over 5 lbs. Just north of this town, in the city of Rotorua, the 2008 World Fly Fishing Championship will take place during the last week of March.



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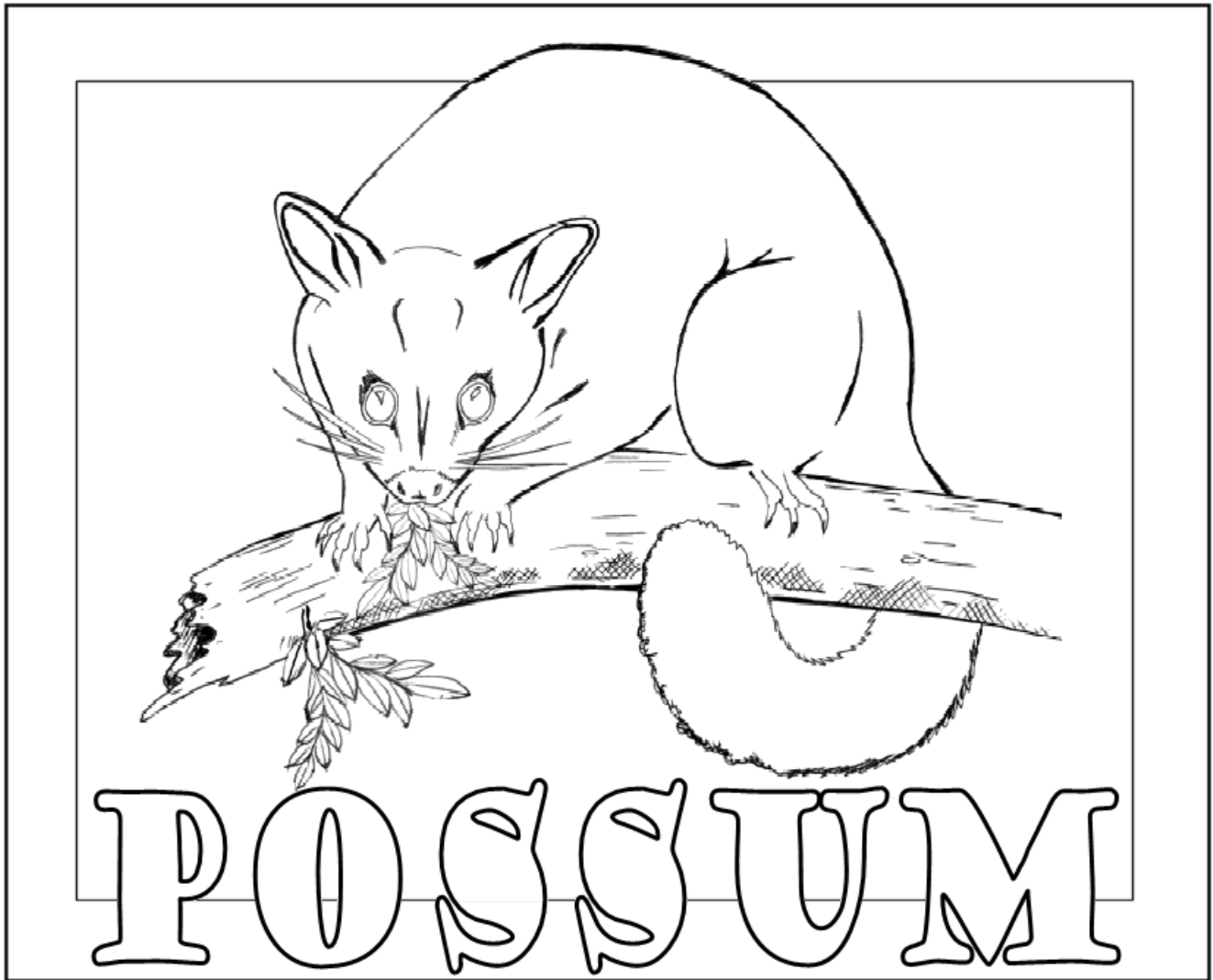
The Kea is an unusual species of parrot found in the alpine regions of the South Island of New Zealand. The Kea is one of the few alpine parrots in the world, with a diet consisting mainly of roots, leaves, berries, nectar and insects. Now almost extinct, the Kea was once killed for money and to protect livestock it preyed upon.



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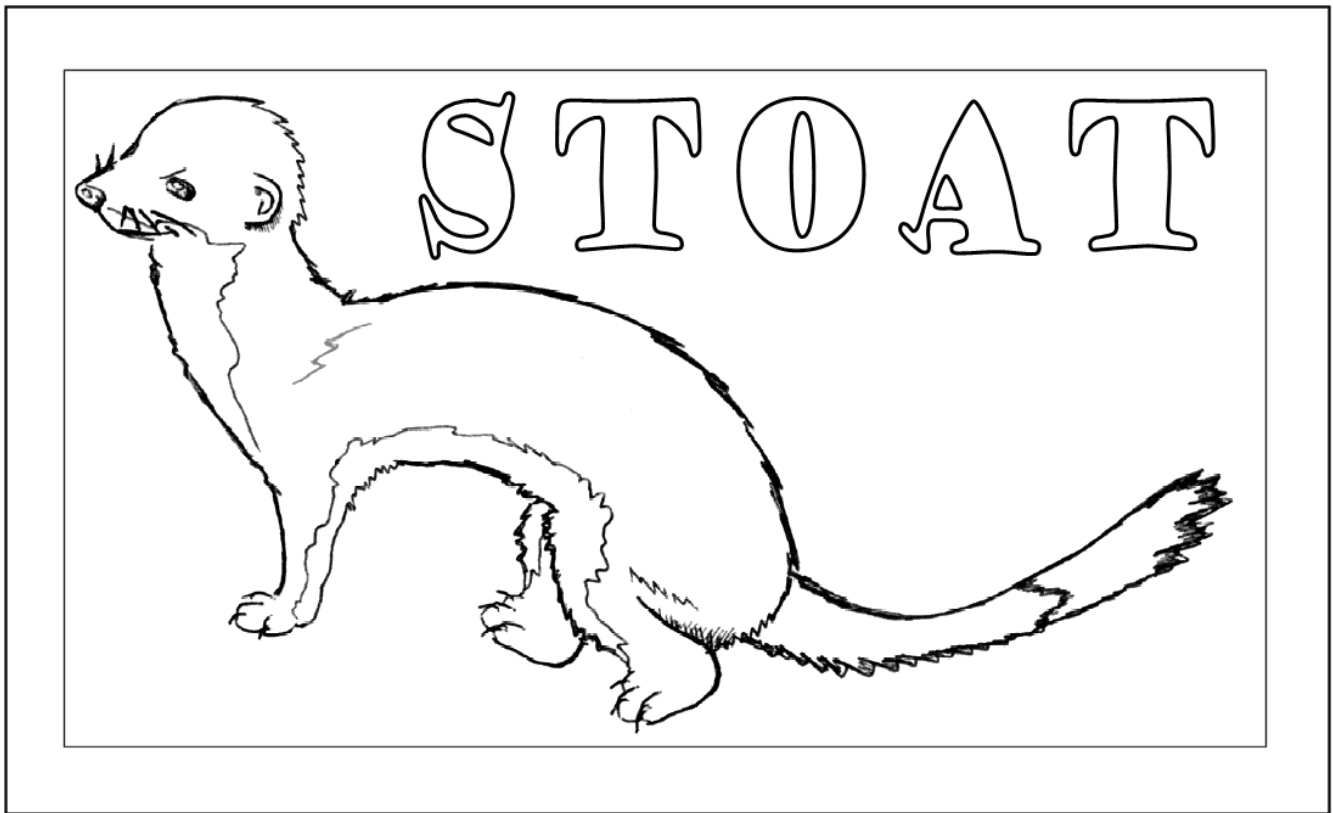
Unlike the possums found in the United States of America, these pests have a bushy tail and furry body. The first possums were brought to New Zealand in 1837 from Australia. Though protected in Australia, the possum is a pest in New Zealand. In one night, the 70 million possums in New Zealand eat 20,000 tons of vegetation.



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The stoat is also known as the short-tailed weasel. The stoat is undoubtedly one of New Zealand's worst immigrant pests. It was introduced into New Zealand in an unsuccessful attempt to control the rabbit population. Its predation of young kiwi is currently the most important factor contributing to the continuing decline of mainland kiwi populations. Stoats kill an average of 40 kiwi chicks per day – this adds up to 15,000 per year and accounts for 60% of North Island brown kiwi born. Stoat numbers can be extremely low and yet can still make a substantial difference to kiwi survival.



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