



A JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC



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# NEW CALEDONIA NEXT TO PARADISE

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Executive producers: **Sabine Holzer, Walter Köhler**  
**1x 50 min., 4K, 5.1**



## New Caledonia, a French overseas territory in the South Pacific, is a remote and remarkable destination located near the International Date Line.

It's a long way from France – about 16,700 kilometres – but only 1,300 kilometres from Australia. New Caledonia is known for its extraordinary landscapes and unique wildlife, making it a hidden gem in a vast ocean.

The reef systems of New Caledonia are considered to be the second largest in the world after the Great Barrier Reef of Australia, and its lagoon, the largest in the world, with an area of 24,000 square kilometres.

This extensive reef system protects vast seagrass meadows, where dugongs, sea turtles, and a variety of colourful reef fish thrive. The marine protected area surrounding the islands is one of the largest in the world and crucial for preserving the region's rich marine biodiversity.

New Caledonia's landscape is as diverse as its marine life. The main island, Grande Terre, features a rugged, 1,600-metre-high mountain range. The eastern slopes are covered in tropical rainforests, while the western regions are home to dry forests and bushland. In the forested interior of Grande Terre live some of the island's most remarkable species. The giant gecko, one of the world's largest, can grow up to 40 centimetres and weigh half a kilo. It inhabits tall trees and preys on insects, other lizards and young birds.

Among the territory's birdlife the New Caledonian crow is best known for its intelligence. Recognizable by its black-violet plumage this crow has extraordinary cognitive abilities. It is capable of crafting fine, flexible tools from twigs and stems to extract insect

larvae from tree bark. This behaviour is usually only seen in chimpanzees and humans!

And then there is the Kagu, a flightless bird with bright orange legs. This striking bird is a symbol of New Caledonia's distinct biodiversity. The Kagu strides gracefully across the forest floor. During territorial disputes, males puff up their crest and body feathers to engage in fierce but non-lethal battles using their legs and beaks.

New Caledonia is also home to rare and endemic plants. The resin yew, considered the rarest conifer in

the world, is nicknamed the "weeping tree" due to its sticky, oozing resin. These ancient trees with their twisted branches, grow only in a small area in the south of Grande Terre. Another iconic plant is the tall, slender Araucaria tree, which grows on Île des Pins, or Pine Island. They line the island's bays which are known for their crystal-clear, sky-blue waters. Locals refer to Île des Pins as "the island right next to paradise."

New Caledonia's stunning natural environments, from expansive coral reefs to mountainous interiors, and its unique flora and fauna, make it truly exceptional. It is a world of extraordinary beauty and ecological significance, remaining largely untouched and undiscovered by the wider world.

A Terra Mater Studios / Cosmos Factory production

