

# What makes our Pepeketua special?

*Leiopelma* are endemic to New Zealand, and are the world's most ancient frogs. *Leiopelma* evolved during the Jurassic Period, over 200 million years ago, when dinosaurs still roamed the Earth. Because of this, *Leiopelma* frogs look and behave very differently to almost all other frogs!

There are three living *Leiopelma* species: Archey's, Hamilton's and Hochstetter's frogs.

## Check out what makes them so unique:

After eggs hatch, male Archey's and Hamilton's frogs carry froglets on their back until they finish developing

No middle ear or external eardrum, *Leiopelma* frogs cannot hear

If something is endemic to a place it means it can only be found there and nowhere else in the world!

Nine vertebrae instead of eight

Large round pupils are specially adapted to see at night

Tail wagging muscles, retained after metamorphosis

No vocal sac, *Leiopelma* frogs do not croak or call

Male Archey's frog carrying its froglets

'Inscriptional ribs' made from cartilage protect *Leiopelma* frogs when jumping

Semipermeable skin that must stay damp so they can breathe

Scientists discovered fossil frogs in Argentina which lived 200 million years ago, and look very similar to *Leiopelma* frogs!

Almost all frog species swim using a typical 'breaststroke' and are excellent jumpers, but not *Leiopelma*! They are similar to ancient frogs and have kept some primitive traits. Although most primitive frogs have become extinct, *Leiopelma* frogs give us an idea of what frogs looked like millions of years ago.

Most frogs swimming

Most frogs on land

*Leiopelma* swimming

*Leiopelma* on land

Archey's frog  
Kuri peke

Hochstetter's frog  
Pepeketua

Hamilton's frog  
Pepeketua



**CURIOUS MINDS**  
HE HIHIRI | TE MAHARA

