NAVIGATION – Birds and Whales

Birds and Whales helped navigators predict the existence of the land mass of Aotearoa (New Zealand) thousands of miles away.

- Whales travel in multiple family groups, or pods, on annual migration routes.
  The Polynesians saw the whales swim away south in the spring after breeding and calving and would return again in the autumn. The Polynesians knew that whales feed near land rather than in the middle of an ocean.

- Every spring the Polynesian cuckoo flies further south than all the Polynesian islands and then returns in autumn.

- Polynesian Islands pigeon's also migrate and flocks of these would be easy for navigators to follow

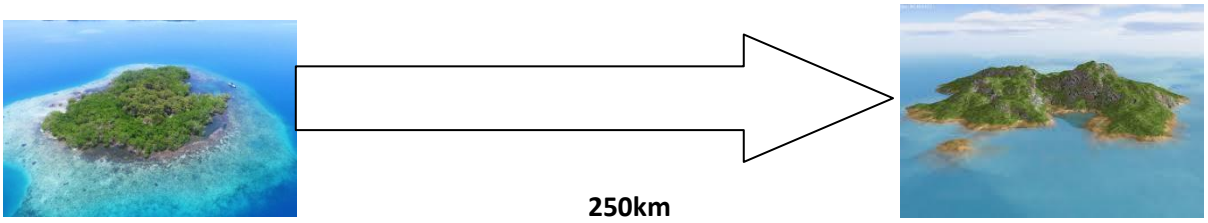
Knowing how different bird species fished for food would also help the navigators.

Imagine you sailed far out in the ocean. You stand up in your Sailing Waka to spot land but you can only see land on the horizon 5km away and the ocean looks completely empty except for some birds and you know that -

- Frigate birds fly up to 100 km from land to fish

- Gannets and petrels fly 70 km from land to fish

- Terns fly up to 50 km from land to fish



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Can you use birds to point you away or towards land?

First you would have to identify the birds in pictures A. B. C. D.

Identify the bird and put them in the right order for a navigator leaving one Polynesian island and arriving at another.

Answer

NAVIGATION – Pupil Worksheet – Birds and Whales

A. 

B. 

C. 

D. 

The Polynesians watched the whales and at the same time watched the stars.

What might they be able work out from this?

Answer