

Weta Motels

Look for wooden pencil boxes near the track on the Bush Walk.

Open gently to see if anyone is home. **Male or female?** Males have big heads and rounded”

bottoms”. Females have a long ovipositor for laying eggs at the rear end.

Tree wetas are most commonly found here but cave wetas (smaller than tree wetas with very long feelers) have also been found. Tree wetas can jump 1 metre.

Life cycle: When the female weta is 1.1/2 - 2 yrs old she lays 100-300 eggs in the leaf litter. She then dies. The baby wetas hatch out 3-5 months later. They have lots of enemies, rats, mice, even their own big brothers and sisters and Ruru (morepork) so need to quickly find a hiding place.

Houses: There are few old rotten trees with holes for the baby wetas to hide in, so we are helping by providing artificial homes.

Diet: At night they eat leaves and other small insects.

Noises: Come to the bush at night and hear the male wetas making rasping noises by rubbing their spiny back legs over their bodies.

The dinosaur insect: Wetas pre date dinosaurs They have been around for 200 MILLION YEARS! In the absence of efficient predators wetas became large and flightless occupying niches similar to mice elsewhere in the world.

The giant weta: These are the size of a mouse. You can see these on Matiu/Somes Island in Wellington harbour.

