

## 'Big cat' country? New Zealand's obsession with giant feline sightings

**Level:** Elementary

**Article summary:** Is New Zealand's mysterious big cat fact or fiction? Why do we find sightings of mythical creatures so interesting?

**Time:** Up to 90 minutes

**Skills:** Reading, Speaking, Writing

**Language focus:** Animal vocabulary

**Materials needed:** One copy of the worksheet per student

### 1. Warmer

To introduce the topic of well-known mythical creatures, ask the students to match the creatures with the place they are said to live. Find out how many of these creatures the students have heard of and whether they believe that any of them actually exist.

Show students online depictions or drawings of these creatures, or ask them to find them themselves. Ask students to describe the creatures.

**Key:**

1. *c*
2. *d*
3. *b*
4. *a*

### 2. Key words

- a. Have students read the words in the box and match them to the definitions.

**Key:**

1. *witness*
2. *aura*
3. *feral*
4. *aerial*
5. *expert*
6. *wilderness*
7. *headlights*
8. *border*

9. *exist*
10. *pleasure*
11. *awful*

- b. Before reading the article carefully, students should use some of the key words to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they understand and know how the words are used in other contexts.

**Key:**

1. *witness*
2. *aerial*
3. *exist*
4. *aura*
5. *expert*
6. *awful*
7. *feral*

### 3. Comprehension check

Working with a partner, have students read the statements, decide whether they are true or false according to the article and write corrections for any statements that are false.

**Key:**

1. *F – People say that there is a strange big cat living on New Zealand's South Island.*
2. *F – It is strong and short and about knee-height, and it's not a dog.*
3. *F – They have not found any footprints or hair from the big cat.*
4. *F – There have been no reports of a big cat eating farm animals.*
5. *T*
6. *T*

### 4. Using key language

- a. Students should find all the animals in the article, write them into the box and answer the questions on them.

**Key:**

*big cat, feral cat, goat, wild pig, dog, possum, puma*

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- b. Have students write a personalized sentence that is relevant to their own lives for each animal. Prompt them to write about animals that live with them, ones they have seen on holiday or in a zoo, and ones that they hope never to meet while they are out in the wilderness.

### 5. Discussion

Pair students or form small groups to discuss the questions.

### 6. In your own words

Get students to do this task in pairs or small groups to encourage speaking. Provide help with the writing task, and check what students have written before asking them to share their paragraphs with other students.