The Munu-punga (Mowique) is a large bird of prey, native to New Zealand. It is 1 metre long and has a wingspan of 2 metres and weighs up to 10 kilograms. The Mowique is part of the Accipitride family, and its closest relatives are the Kahu (harriers hawk) and the extinct Haasts eagle.

The Mowique is on the verge of extinction and has adapted to live in forests throughout the North and South islands of New Zealand. It has very little competition which allows it to be at the top of the food chain. The Mowique also plays a very important part in New Zealand’s eco-system.

The Mowique is a nocturnal feeder which enables it to remain undetected while it searches for prey. The Mowique’s diet consists of small rodents, rabbits, stoats and occasionally small birds (e.g. sparrows and robins.) The Mowique used to be a common site around but due to their habitat being chopped down they are now very rare.

The Mowique colours have adapted to suit its environment. It is chocolate brown all over and dark green under its wings. These colours help it to camouflage against its environment.

The males and females can be told apart from their size and colour. The males are bigger than the females. A male also is a lighter shade of green.

The Mowique has adapted to catch its prey. It has a streamline body which enables it to fly faster, sharp talons to grip prey, and a sharp hooked beak (approx. 5cm long) to rip open prey.

The Mowique’s mating ritual is quite simple. First the male calls out to a female waiting for a reply. Once together the male does a small dance showing the female he is ready to mate. Once mated they become long-life partners.

Once together the pair build a large nest, made from twigs, branches,leaves, flax and any other things that they think will make a strong nest. The nests are built high in trees away from anything that will eat their eggs (e.g. stoats and rats). A nest usually lasts up to 12 months before falling apart.

A female Mowique lays 2-4 eggs a year. The eggs are large with brown speckles. They take 7-8 weeks to hatch. The chicks are small, brown and fluffy and take 10 weeks to fly. They stay with their parents for 11-12 months and then fly away to find their own partner.

A Mowique can live up to 13-14 years in the wild and 13-16 years in captivity. When a Mowique is close is dying it starts to shed and its green feathers turn grey. The Mowique can not hunt in their last 5 months and have to eat insects and bugs unless they have a partner still capable of hunting.