

In days gone by

Giant weta are one of New Zealand's most ancient types of land animals.

Their design is virtually the same as fossil weta found in Queensland, Australia. These fossils date back 190 million years.

This is long before Australia and New Zealand parted company during the split-up of Gondwanaland.



Gondwanaland was a super continent made up of South America, Africa, India, Australia, and Antarctica. It existed from around 300 to 200 million years ago.

Draw up a bigger grid

Add the information below to the plus or minus column.

Justify your choice in the effects column.

The survival of the giant weta

Plus	Minus	Effect

New Zealand splits off from Gondwanaland millions of years ago and becomes a separate set of islands.

The first humans arrive and bring the first mammals - dogs and rats.

Land is needed for farming cattle, cows and sheep.

These islands are colonised by insects, reptiles, amphibians, freshwater fish and a few birds.

More humans arrive and with them come more rodents -rats and mice.

Giant weta grow and breed slowly taking around 18 months to reach maturity .

The islands do not inherit any mammals -apart from bats.

More mammals like cats, possums, stoats , hedge-hogs, pigs and goats arrive.

Weta breed only towards the end of their two years of life.