

Chatham Islands

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Chatham Islands Latest News

A bloom of phytoplankton—tiny photosynthetic organisms that become visible to satellites when their numbers explode—encircled the Chatham Islands in austral summer recently.

About Chatham Islands

- It is an **island group** in the **South Pacific Ocean**, about 800 km **east of New Zealand**.
- These islands are **New Zealand's most easterly territory**.
- Composed of **10 islands**, they are **primarily of volcanic formation**, but areas of limestone indicate that they may once have been part of New Zealand.
- Only the **two main islands are inhabited: Chatham Island and Pitt Island**.
 - **Chatham Island**, the **largest** of the islands, has a high **southern tableland flanked by towering cliffs** and a gentle northern portion encompassing extensive waterways, low peatlands and long sandy beaches.
 - **Pitt Island** has a **heartland of forest** and a **coast of wild cliffs**, headlands, and sandy beaches.

- Both islands are surrounded by a number of smaller islands, all within a radius of approximately 50 km.
- The Chatham Islands is the **first inhabited place in the world to see the rising sun each day**.
- The islands were **first inhabited by Moriori**, who named the islands 'Rekohu' – translated as 'misty skies' or 'misty sun'.
- **European sealers and whalers were next to arrive, followed by Māori from New Zealand**, who named the islands 'Wharekauri'.
- **Descendants of Moriori still reside** on the Chatham Islands today.
- The **total population in 2024** was estimated to be **720**.
- The **main settlement is Waitangi**. Other settlements are Te One, Port Hutt, Kāingaroa, and Ōwenga.
- The **economy** of the Chatham Islands is heavily dependent on **fishing, farming, and tourism**.

Source: SCNASA

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/chatham-islands/>

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