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Chasing Turbo Chooks

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To me Science is all about answering "Why?" and I'm very curious! "Why is this type of tree here but not there?", "why does this bird behave differently from this one?" Questions are endless, and the more I learn about evolution and natural processes, the more curious I become. Things can look and behave very differently in different states, countries, or even hemispheres and there is still so much we can learn and understand. Hearing wonderful stories about the natural world and discovering how evolution crafted such a diversity of animals and plants still amazes me and makes me grateful to live in such a beautiful and unique world.

I'm from France, and I quickly realised that speaking English was necessary to do research anywhere else in the world (because it's the international language). So, I made two hits in one stone and travelled to New Zealand for a year after University: at the complete opposite side of the Earth from France. There I learnt English and above all, I explored a completely different world filled with giant fern trees and birds that didn't even fly. Everything was so different from what I knew, so odd, and so intriguing! I had so many questions…

Coming to Tasmania, I realised that a local Tasmanian bird was not flying either, the Tasmanian native-hen, or turbo chook! Fascinating! I was hooked, and I am now doing research to understand why and how this flightless bird can live alongside us and our activities, while their flightless cousins disappear in other parts of the world. I also want to make sure they have the potential to resist future threats, such as climate change and other environmental changes, so turbo chooks can keep on running in Tasmania forever.

Find me on Twitter at @Lucile_Leveque

For more information about my work:
www.ecological-dynamics.org/people/lucile-leveque