

Existence of Zealandia confirmed

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In news- After 375 years of speculation and exploration, scientists have finally confirmed the existence of a “missing” continent known as *Zealandia*.

About Zealandia-

- *Zealandia* which is approximately **1.89 million square miles in size**, was **once part of an ancient supercontinent called Gondwana**, which also included Western Antarctica and Eastern Australia over 500 million years ago.
- However, it began to “pull away” from Gondwana for reasons that geologists are still trying to understand roughly 105 million years ago.
- As it did so, **it gradually sank beneath the waves, with over 94% of the landmass remaining underwater** for millennia.
- It is called as Te Riu-a-Māui in the Māori language (It is an Eastern Polynesian language spoken by the Māori people, the indigenous population of mainland New Zealand).
- **The existence of Zealandia was first recorded in 1642 by Dutch businessman and sailor Abel Tasman**, who was on a mission to find the “great Southern Continent” or Terra Australis.
- **In 2017, GNS geologists finally confirmed the existence of Zealandia**, which had been hiding in plain sight all along.
- The vast majority of this “new” continent is located underwater, lying beneath 6,560 feet (2km) of water.
- **Zealandia is now recognized as the world’s eighth continent, but its unique characteristics make it stand**

out from the other continents on the planet.

- Every other continent is home to multiple countries, while Zealandia has only three territories.
- Despite its underwater location, Zealandia is an important discovery that sheds light on the earth's geological history and the forces that shaped the planet as we know it today.