

# Whatever Happened To the 80 Million Sheep Myth in New Zealand?

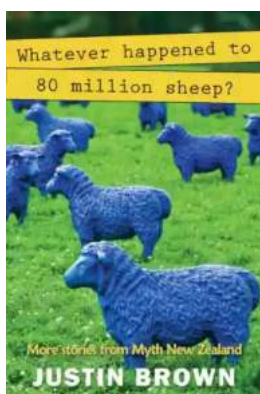


In the 1980s and early 1990s, New Zealand became known worldwide for its "80 Million Sheep" myth. This catchy phrase, often repeated in travel brochures and postcards, alluded to the extraordinary number of sheep that roamed the picturesque landscapes of the island nation. But what exactly happened to this iconic myth? Has New Zealand's sheep population drastically declined? Let's dive into the story and discover the truth behind the myth.

## **The Rise of the Myth**

New Zealand, with its vast green pastures and ideal climate, was indeed a sheep paradise. Livestock farming played a significant role in the country's economy

and cultural identity. Sheep farming boomed, and the number of sheep increased rapidly, reaching around 70 million by the mid-1980s.



## Whatever Happened to 80 Million Sheep? (Myth New Zealand Book 1) by Justin Brown (Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 269 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 61 pages
Lending	: Enabled



The "80 Million Sheep" myth emerged as a marketing strategy to promote New Zealand as a picturesque destination. It became deeply ingrained in tourist literature and marketing campaigns. The myth helped create an image of New Zealand as a land filled with woolly inhabitants, evoking a sense of tranquility and natural beauty.

### Changing Times and Global Market Shifts

As the years went by, the New Zealand sheep industry faced significant challenges. Global market shifts, fluctuations in wool prices, and the rise of alternative agricultural practices undermined the profitability of sheep farming. Farmers started diversifying their income sources by focusing on other sectors, such as dairy farming and horticulture.

The country's sheep population faced a gradual decline due to changing economic dynamics. By the early 2000s, the number of sheep had dropped below 40 million. This decline led to questions about the future of the iconic myth.

## **A New Era: Farming Efficiency and Sustainable Practices**

While the actual number of sheep in New Zealand has decreased, the sheep industry has undergone a transformation. Today, New Zealand is known for its efficient and sustainable farming practices. The focus shifted from quantity to quality, emphasizing higher-value products and optimizing resource utilization.

Farmers have adapted to changing market demands and adopted innovative methods for improved productivity. Advances in technology, genetics, and pasture management have played a crucial role in maintaining the economic viability of sheep farming.

## **The Reality Today**

While the 80 million sheep myth might not reflect the current state of affairs, New Zealand remains a significant player in the global sheep industry. The sheep population, as of 2021, stands at approximately 26 million.

However, in terms of productivity and sustainability, New Zealand has positioned itself as a world leader. The country specializes in breeding high-quality sheep, producing premium wool, lamb, and meat products. The sheep industry contributes significantly to the economy and continues to attract tourists interested in experiencing New Zealand's agricultural heritage.

## **Preservation of Culture and Heritage**

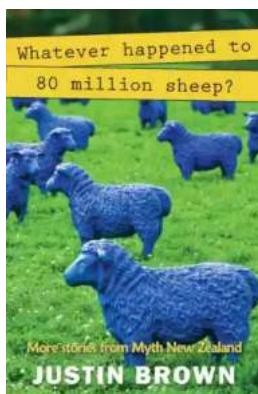
Despite the decline in sheep numbers, New Zealand's culture and identity are still deeply intertwined with sheep farming. The love for these fluffy animals can be

seen in festivals, shows, and museums across the country.

Efforts are being made to preserve and promote the heritage associated with sheep farming. Traditional shearing competitions, sheepdog trials, and farm tours provide locals and tourists an opportunity to connect with New Zealand's rural roots.

So, what happened to the 80 million sheep myth in New Zealand? While the actual number of sheep has decreased over the years, it doesn't diminish the significance of sheep farming in the country's history and economy.

New Zealand's sheep industry has evolved, embracing innovations and sustainable practices to maintain its global presence. While the myth might remain a relic of the past, the spirit and legacy of New Zealand's sheep farming continue to thrive.



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New Zealanders have endured jokes about sheep for as long as they remember. It goes with the territory in a country where sheep once outnumbered people by

more than 20 to 1.

But just as New Zealand's image as a country overrun by woolly beasts is no longer valid, such is the case for many other facets of Kiwi life.

Is New Zealand still the land of milk and honey, where men worship the gods of rugby, racing and beer and the women know how to whip up a pavlova for dessert?

Author Justin Brown set out on a mission to find out what's happened to modern New Zealand. Having turned 36½ and discovered by chance that's the age of the 'average' New Zealander, Brown figured it was time he rediscovered the country he'd grown up in.

Brown's findings reveal a side to the nation you might not have expected. His light-hearted approach will make you smile as he turns up some surprises - and the odd sheep joke.

Essential reading for Kiwis - and anyone planning to go to New Zealand.

Other titles in the Myth New Zealand collection are Some of My Best Mates are Metrosexuals; The Greatest Place to Bring Up Kids?; Whatever Happened to Our National Dish?; plus, Myth New Zealand (All the Stories from Series One), which includes two bonus chapters.

Brown's Myth New Zealand collection has earned glowing reviews:

'A guidebook that explains what makes Kiwis tick' - Jackie Russell, The Times

'An insightful humourous meander through our history with a look into our future' - M2 magazine

'I borrowed it off a friend and I'm not giving it back' - entertainer and author Max Cryer

'Justin Brown is the natural heir to Max Cryer, except he's shorter and can't play the piano'. - national broadcaster Jim Mora

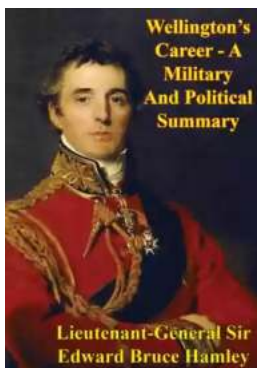
'A humorous and provocative look at New Zealand and the way we see ourselves today' - book critic Graham Beattie

'I would like to say I have read it, but my wife nicked my copy and is laughing so much reading it , she will not give it back until its finished! - photographer Brendon O'Hagan

'Comical, thought provoking look at our country' - Nicky Pellegrino, Herald On Sunday

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'A fantastic book' - radio host Andrew Dewhurst



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