

**KERERU NEWS No. 65 (9 July 2008)**

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An email newsletter of views and information about and observations of kereru / kuku / kukupa / kokopa / New Zealand pigeon / parea / Chatham Islands pigeon

**1. Kereru status re-evaluated – Ralph Powlesland & Colin Miskelly**

The New Zealand Threat Classification System, operated by the Department of Conservation, provides a tool for assigning a threat status to candidate taxa. In 2002 and 2005, the kereru was classified as in gradual decline. This meant that there were more than 5000 mature individuals, the birds were distributed among more than 15 subpopulations, and there was a predicted decline of at least 5% in the total population in the next 10 years and beyond due to existing threats. The main threat to kereru then was that of predation of eggs, nestlings and adults by introduced mammalian predators – rats, cats, possums and stoats.

A few weeks ago the threat status of each New Zealand bird (native, introduced, migrant, vagrant and coloniser) was re-evaluated. As a result of information available to the threat ranking panel, the threat status of the kereru has been changed to not threatened. In order to qualify for the status of not threatened, the national kereru population had to number more than 20,000 mature individuals, and be stable or increasing. Part of the information that was considered by the panel when carrying out the re-evaluation was that presented in Kereru News No. 63 relating to the OSNZ atlas survey results for 1969-79 and 1999-04.

These survey results showed that the distribution (presence/absence in grid squares) of the kereru had improved by 26% during the 20-year period between the two surveys. RP believes that the increased distribution of the species is as a result mainly of the many introduced predator control programmes that have occurred and are on-going in many forest patches through the country. While much of the pest control is carried for the conservation of forest ecosystems, including plants, reptiles, invertebrates and birds, kereru do benefit from this management.

A variety of organisations have been involved in pest control operations that have benefitted local kereru populations, including the Department of Conservation, Animal Health Board, regional councils and city councils, as well as the public operating individually or as landcare groups on public and private land. The improved threat status of the kereru on a national basis does not mean that some local populations are not in decline, particularly where no mammalian pest control is occurring.

**2. Kereru – continuation of where various topics of information about kereru are available, and where the gaps in our knowledge about kereru are** (full listing available to DOC staff at docdm-117328) – Ralph Powlesland

Juvenile kereru

Description of

- Gill, B.J. 2006. Post-mortem examination of New Zealand pigeons (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) from the Auckland area. *New Zealand Journal of Zoology* 33: 31-37.
- Heather, B.D. and Robertson, H.A. 2005. New Zealand pigeon (kereru, kukupa, parea). Pages 134-135, 348-350 in *The Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand*. Viking (Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd), Auckland.
- Higgins, P.J. and Davies, S.J.J.F. 1996. New Zealand pigeon. Pp. 1016-1025 in *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*. Vol. 3, Snipe to Pigeons. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

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- Mander, C., Hay, R. and Powlesland, R. 1998. Monitoring and management of kereru (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*). Department of Conservation Technical Series No. 15. Department of Conservation, Wellington.

### Foraging

- Bell, R. 1996. Seed dispersal by kereru (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) at Wenderholm Regional Park. Unpubl. MSc thesis. University of Auckland, Auckland.
- Very little is known about the foraging behaviour of juvenile kereru in comparison to that of adults.

### Movements and Home range

- Bell, R. 1996. Seed dispersal by kereru (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) at Wenderholm Regional Park. Unpubl. MSc thesis. University of Auckland, Auckland.
- Powlesland, R., Grant, A., Flux, I. and Dilks, P. 1994. Some aspects of the ecology and breeding biology of parea on southern Chatham Island, July 1992-April 1993. Science and Research Series No. 66. Department of Conservation, Wellington.
- Powlesland, R., Grant, G., Dilks, P., Flux, I. and Bell, M. 1995. Some aspects of the ecology and breeding biology of parea on southern Chatham Island, July 1993-April 1994. Science & Research Series No. 82. Department of Conservation, Wellington
- Except for the information in Bell (1996), very little is known about the movements and home ranges of juvenile kereru. Some comparative information on the movements of juvenile parea is available in Powlesland et al. (1994, 1995).

### Age at first breeding by males and females

- I'm not aware of any nestling or juvenile kereru that have been banded or radio-tagged, and then monitored to determine the age of first breeding.
- A few parea were monitored from fledging to breeding on Chatham Island; Flux, I.A., Powlesland, R.G., Dilks, P.J., Grant, A.D. 2001. Breeding, survival and recruitment of Chatham Island pigeon (*Hemiphaga chathamensis*). *Notornis* 48: 197-206.

### Life expectancy

- Clout, M.N., Karl, B.J., Pierce, R.J. and Robertson, H.A. 1995. Breeding and survival of New Zealand Pigeons (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*). *Ibis* 137: 264-271.
- Flux, I.A., Powlesland, R.G., Dilks, P.J., Grant, A.D. 2001. Breeding, survival and recruitment of Chatham Island pigeon (*Hemiphaga chathamensis*). *Notornis* 48: 197-206.
- Grant, A.D., Powlesland, R.G., Dilks, P.J., Flux, I.A. and Tisdall, C.J. 1997. Mortality, distribution, numbers and conservation of the Chatham Island pigeon (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae chathamensis*). *Notornis* 44: 65-77.
- Pierce, R.J. and Graham, P.J. 1995. Ecology and breeding biology of kukupa (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) in Northland. Science & Research Series No. 91. Department of Conservation, Wellington.
- Powlesland, R.G.; Wills, D.E.; August, A.C.L.; August, C.K. 2003. Effects of a 1080 operation on kaka and kereru survival and nesting success, Whirinaki Forest Park. *NZ J of Ecology* 27: 125-137.

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### Longevity

- Heather, B.D. and Robertson, H.A. 2005. New Zealand pigeon (kereru, kukupa, parea). Pages 134-135, 348-350 in *The Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand*. Viking (Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd), Auckland.
- Kereru News 48: Pidge on Little Barrier, 21 years.

### Population Viability Analysis (PVA)

- Keedwell, R.J. 1995. A preliminary population viability analysis of kereru (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) populations and implications for customary use. University of Otago Wildlife Management Report No. 74. Zoology Department, University of Otago, Dunedin.