



Autumn Kererū Discovery Project News 2008

Whaia tonu tō mātauranga o te kererū hei painga mō ngā uri o āpōpō.

Increase your knowledge of the kererū for the benefit of tomorrow's generations.

Victoria University of Wellington

Monica Awasthy, Victoria University researcher/PhD student, is continuing the Kererū Discovery Project education programme (developed with Wellington Zoo) on kererū and wildlife ecology in the Wellington area.

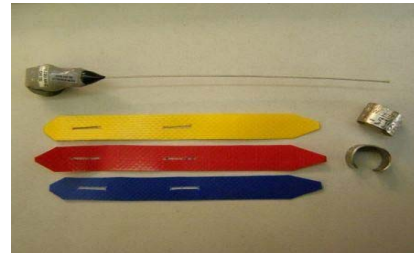
Part of the programme enables students to learn about field techniques. They can have hands-on experience in working with radio-tracking equipment currently being used in kererū research in Wellington.

If you are situated in the Wellington area and interested in having Monica visit your school or class, or would like more information, please contact her at monica.awasthy@vuw.ac.nz.

In the meantime, Monica asks that people send their sightings of BOTH tagged and untagged birds within the Wellington region to her, or through the Kererū Discovery Project website, as soon as possible. From these sightings she can build a distribution map of kererū within the region.



*Kererū with jesses and transmitters.
Photo by Monica Awasthy*



Colour jesses, transmitter, & bands. Photo by Monica Awasthy

Department of Conservation

Wanted - flight speeds of kererū

We are always after snippets of information about kererū to fill gaps in our knowledge. With regard to flight speed, there is now a management need for this information. Given the tendency of kererū to fly into various man-made objects (windows, moving vehicles), there is a concern that wind turbines might be another hazard for the species to cope with. To estimate the impact of collisions with wind turbines on bird populations, people carry out collision risk modelling. Among several other pieces of information that are needed is the flight speed of the species modelled. So if you just happen to be driving along and a kererū flies along beside you briefly, please let us know its estimated flight speed. Of course the flight speeds of other bird species would be of interest for the same reason.



Kererū in flight. Photo by Peter Reese

Karori Sanctuary

Kererū have been breeding successfully in the Sanctuary on and off for a number of years. This is a great sign, that kererū are using the predator-free area as a haven to rear their young safely.

Karori Wildlife Sanctuary also has an array of native and exotic shrubs and trees that are probably attracting kererū back to feed within the Sanctuary boundaries year after year. Natives such as poroporo (*Solanum aviculare* and *laciniatum*) and New Zealand broom (*Carmichaelia australis*) have been flowering over the summer in the Sanctuary. Kererū eat the ripe fruits of poroporo in autumn and the leaves of native broom are also part of the kererū diet.



Sanctuary kererū feeding a chick. Photo by Tom Lynch

Te Papa Museum

Te Papa Education | Te Ipu Kahuirangi

Te Papa's education team provide the following education programmes for the Kererū Discovery Project throughout the year. Remember to look out for the annual Matariki programme available for schools this year from June 3–16.

Beaks 'n' Feet

For years 0–8. Levels of achievement 1–4. Get up close and personal with bird specimens from our Education Collection - including our latest arrival, a kererū! Your students will discover and investigate the external characteristics that help these birds survive in their environment.



Te Papa's mounted kererū.
Photo by Raymond Coory

Kahu Toi - The Art of Cloaks

For years 0–10. Levels of achievement 1–5. Investigate cloak design, both traditional and contemporary. Students can compare Māori, European, and Pacific cloak-making traditions and the depiction of cloaks in other art forms. A workshop enables them to design their own cloak, inspired by what they have seen.

Environmental Education - Our Forests

For years 0–10. Levels of achievement 1–6. Introduce your students to the richness and diversity of New Zealand's forest with this science-based environmental education programme. Students will discover the stories of Tāne's children and their interaction in the forest environment, and learn how to care for our forests and their inhabitants using Te Papa's fantastic natural environment exhibitions.

Matariki programme

For years 0–10. Levels of achievement 1–5. This programme is available at Te Papa from June 3rd - June 16th 2008. Our Matariki, Māori New Year celebration this year, will have an Arts focus aimed at looking at how people retain and disseminate their traditions. There will also be an opportunity to learn about the various stars and constellations that are indicators of where Matariki and her children are in the sky in the StarLab, Te Papa's portable planetarium.

To book an education programme at **Te Papa contact Te Papa Education | Te Ipu Kahuirangi:**

Ph: (04) 381 7087

Fax: (04) 381 7170

Email: reservations@tepapa.govt.nz

Feather cloak research

Identification of the birds on Te Papa's Māori feather cloak collection has now been completed by Hokimate Harwood, Te Papa bicultural science programme developer. This information will go towards a Te Papa publication and then exhibition on its cloaks in 2009. Almost 20 native bird species and 8 introduced bird species were recorded in 106 of Te Papa's cloaks containing feathers.:

<u>Native</u>	<u>Introduced</u>
Brown kiwi	Chicken
Kererū	Pheasant
Kākā	Peafowl
Tūī	Turkey
Kākāriki	Guinea fowl
Pūkeko	Duck
Weka	California quail
Albatross	Yellowhammer
Bittern	
Harrier hawk	
Kākāpō	
Long-tailed cuckoo	
Morepork	
Huia	
Heron	
Paradise duck	
Takahē	
Banded rail	

Brown kiwi (North & South Island), kererū, kākā (mainly North Island) and tūī were the most common native species present in the cloak collection. The contrasting colours of these birds were used in striking geometric patterns. Chicken, pheasant, peafowl (peacock) and turkey were the most commonly used introduced birds recorded in the cloaks and were sometimes integrated in with native feathers.

For kererū, generally the bright green neck feathers and white chest and/ or belly feathers were used in Māori feather cloaks. However the maroon back feathers have been identified in some of Te Papa's cloaks, and split tail and wing kererū feathers were recorded in a Māori rain cape or pākē.



Kererū upperwing feathers



Kererū back feathers

The next stage of bicultural science research will look at identifying feathers on the remaining of Te Papa's taonga Māori collections. Identifications will be conducted using the feather Image database of Te Papa's Natural Environment bird collections, and the microscope nodule Image database of bird family groups.

This research is an important output for the Project as the use of kererū feathers in all taonga Māori will give us an idea of the breadth and depth, as well as the importance, of kererū to Māori in general, and to different iwi.

Website

We are now pleased to have viewable versions of the CD Rom "Urban Jungle" game and documentary "Te Kererū" on the website's home page.

We would like to continue to provide free access to the game and documentary for educational purposes and home use for our registrants.

Don't forget your link to our website to view our documentary or play our game:
<http://www.kererudiscovery.org.nz/>



Wellington Zoo kererū in "Te Kererū"

Image Gallery

Please keep sending the Project your images. They will eventually be loaded onto our online gallery.

Also, if you aren't quick enough to photograph a kererū feeding in your garden, don't forget that an image of the tree (fruit or flowers) they were feeding on would also be great!



Kererū in tree fern. Photo by Errol Thompson

Registrations

The Kererū Discovery Project is still growing in numbers and range across New Zealand. The majority of registrants are still from these regions: the Wellington region including Kapiti Coast, the wider Auckland region, Northland, Wairarapa, Palmerston North, Napier-Hastings, New Plymouth, Waikato, Rotorua, Gisborne and Wanganui. We also have a good number of registrants in the South Island, mainly in Dunedin, Christchurch, and Nelson.

Sightings

Most of the sightings are coming from Auckland, then Wellington, Dunedin, Christchurch, New Plymouth, Napier and Kapiti, Palmerston North, Tokoroa, Masterton, and Paihia.

Fortunately there are a number of regular kererū recorders among our registrants who have taken the time to log, mail or fax their sightings to the Project, so thank you to those people.

Over the summer, registrants have recorded kererū feeding on a mix of native and exotic species. Prunus trees (including cherry blossom), virgilia and robinia leaves, and the flowers of the introduced tree broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) have been popular. The leaves, flowers and fruit of the native pigeonwood (*Hedycarya arborea*), puriri (*Vitex lucens*), karaka (*Corynocarpus laevigatus*), kōwhai (*Sophora* spp.), tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*), māhoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*), and kōtukutuku (*Fuchsia excorticata*) are all coveted summer foods for kererū.



*Kererū eating karaka (*Corynocarpus laevigatus*). Photo by Monica Awasthy*

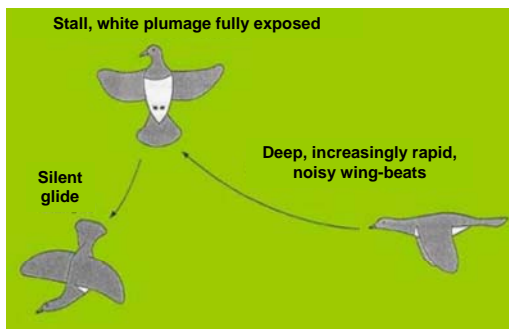
Large flocks of kererū have been recorded in Wellington this summer! Ten birds were recorded in Tawa on 21 January 2008. Ten birds were seen flying towards Barton's Bush in Upper Hutt. A flock of 20 kererū were spotted in Wainuiomata on 14 February, another 10 birds were then recorded in a Wadestown tree on 22 February, and 18 in Tawa on the 27 February. We had one sighting of 10 in August 2007, and 10 in October 2007, both in Lower Hutt. These numbers in the last two months are amazing and a good sign.

Thank you to all those who have sent in their sightings, particularly our regulars!

There have also been numerous reports of display diving or display flights over the summer, which is good news. If you are not sure what a display flight looks like, or think you may be witnessing one, below is some information on how to identify a kererū **display diving**.

Display Flights

- During breeding, spectacular aerial displays occur close to the time of egg laying, or when a nest fails.
- Nesting usually occurs in spring or summer (November–March) when most fruits are available.
- One sign of pre- and post-mating behaviour is a kererū (usually male), one of a mating pair, bobbing and swaying on a branch in front of its mate. Another sign is a kererū carrying twigs to a possible nesting site.



Display flight of the kererū, from James (1995)

Motatau kukupa project – Ngāti Hine, Northland

The Motatau kukupa project is a co-operative conservation initiative between Māori (Ngāti Hine) landowners, the Department of Conservation and Manaaki Whenua / Landcare Research.

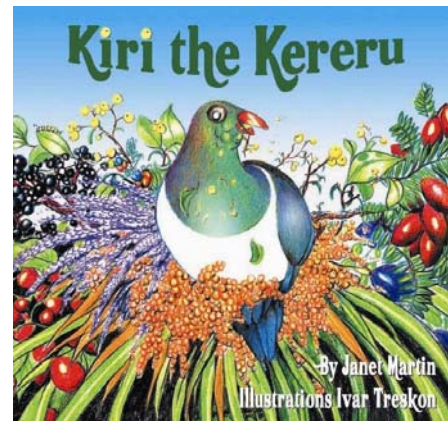
Headed by Kevin Prime (Ngāti Hine), the project has started to reverse the decline of kukupa (kereru) in Northland forests. Intensive trapping and poisoning of ship rats and possums in the Motatau forest (350 ha) from 1997 to 1999 lead to an increase in kukupa nests. It is thought that similar predator control in similar small forest areas can assist in the conservation of kererū.



Motatau landowners heading out to fill possum bait stations in 1996

Teacher resource - book

Kiri the Kereru



Kiri the Kereru, written by Janet Martin and illustrated by Ivar Treskon.

Subjects: Fiction - New Zealand pigeon, birds, food habits, stories in rhyme; Non-fiction – kererū.

Suggested level: junior, primary.

Description:

"Kiri the Kereru loved feasting on sweet juicy berries. The only trouble was, she didn't know when to stop. Then one day, a cat, a boy and a dog made Kiri pause and think about her hungry habit."--Back cover. Includes brief factual information on Kererū and pictures to identify berries they like to eat.

Jampot Productions, Auckland, N.Z. 2007.

ISBN / ISSN: 9780473127664

NZ \$15.95 each. Available from most retailers, or order from Jampot@xtra.co.nz
Paperback. 1 v. (unpaged): col. ill.; 21 x 22 cm.

References:

James, R.E. 1995. Breeding ecology of the New Zealand pigeon at Wenderholm Regional Park. Unpubl. MSc thesis. University of Auckland, Auckland.

Innes, J.; Nugent, G.; Prime, K.; Spurr, E.B. 2004. Responses of kukupa (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) and other birds to mammal pest control at Motatau, Northland. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 28: 73-81.