

Biodiversity



Number 9

Western brown kiwi (*Apteryx mantelli*)

DESCRIPTION

The Western brown kiwi is the smallest sub-species of brown kiwi in New Zealand. It is usually a streaky brownish-red with a grey-black head, although there are many variations, ranging from dark brown to pure white. Females usually reach up to 40cm in height and weigh around 2.8kg with males being slightly smaller at around 2.2kg. They are flightless and nocturnal and may live for over 50 years.

DISTRIBUTION, BREEDING AND FEEDING



Western brown kiwi were once widespread in the King country, across to western Taupo and throughout inland Taranaki and Whanganui, including Egmont National Park. This range has contracted over the last 40 years with the main concentrations now occurring in the forested areas of Taranaki and Whanganui hill country across to Tongariro.

Kiwi usually breed two times in a year with two eggs per clutch. The peak of nesting occurs through July to November with eggs usually taking 70-80 days to incubate. They mainly feed on invertebrates such as earthworms, spiders, weta and beetle larvae.

KIWI IN TARANAKI

Kiwi are receiving significant attention from DOC, landowners and local conservation groups in Taranaki. These efforts should ensure that viable populations of brown kiwi are secure in Taranaki and will remain for decades to come.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- Use pest control or set traps on your property to control invasive predators such as stoats and ferrets.
- Volunteer with a local kiwi organization.
- Keep your dogs under control in areas where kiwi may be present.



- Use raised sets for leg hold possum traps where kiwi are present.
- Covenant areas of native bush to help protect kiwi habitat
- Report sightings, calls and sign to the Taranaki Regional Council.



CONSERVATION

The Western brown kiwi is a threatened species listed as 'At Risk, Declining'. Populations at unmanaged sites are still declining mostly due to predation from stoats and ferrets. However, there are significant conservation projects in Taranaki that are making good progress to ensure the long-term survival of this species.

THREATS

Threats include:

- Mammalian predators such as cats, dogs, stoats and ferrets.
- Habitat degradation and loss.

QUICK FACTS

- Kiwi are the smallest member of the Ratite family, a group of flightless birds, which includes emus and ostriches.
- They are only found in New Zealand
- Some of the kiwi's features are reminiscent of mammals rather than birds, for example, high blood temperature.
- Western brown kiwi are a protected species.