

KERERU NEWS No. 52 (21 February 2006)

Information about kereru / kukupa / parea

1. Rain-bathing by kereru - Ann Pullen, Kirsty Moran & Sarah Kivi

Occasionally, but not often, kereru have been seen rain-bathing. The activity involves the bird leaning over to one side, lying partly on one wing and raising the other so that rain can fall on its under-surface and on the flank. Sometimes the bird will continue to rain-bathe after having folded the wing so that just the flank is exposed. During a rain-bathing session, the bird usually swaps from one side to the other so that the under-surface of both wings receive rain. For a report on this activity of kereru and other species of pigeon see: Gibb, J.A.; Flux, J.E.C. 1994. Rain-bathing by pigeons. *Notornis* 41: 146-147.

Ann Pullen was looking out over her verandah at Halfmoon Bay, Stewart Island, recently when she saw a kereru standing on top of the forest canopy nearby rain-bathing. Luckily she had a video camera handy and was able to get some footage. Ann said that the rain-bathing occurred during heavy rain following a dry spell. The bird lifted the wing on each side about four times.

Kirsty Moran & Sarah Kivi, of the DOC kereru and tui in fragmented landscapes project, set up a time-lapse video system at a kereru nest at Omata, near New Plymouth, in November 2005. The nest contained a nestling about 15 days old, and the camera system was set up mainly to record any visits by predators. On five occasions during the 21 days of filming the chick rain-bathed. Unless it rained reasonably heavily it was not obvious when viewing the tape, and so whether the chick rain-bathed each time it rained is not known. On four occasions the bathing sessions occurred during the day, and lasted for 2-15 minutes. The chick exposed the underside of one wing for 2-6 minutes before swapping to the other side. The fifth occasion occurred at night and lasted for 49 minutes, and only appeared to stop when the rain did. Although the activity was not continuous, the wing-raising being interspersed by sitting or preening, in total the underside of each wing was exposed to rain nine times.

Anybody seen kereru / kukupa / parea bathing in standing water?

2. Juvenile kereru at subsequent nest of its parents - Les Moran, John Henderson

The activities at a kereru nest in Invercargill have been recorded using time-lapse video equipment. There were a couple of unusual incidents recorded involving a juvenile at the nest. This juvenile fledged on 11 November 2005.

On 15/12/05, the juvenile arrived at the nest at 12:58 pm while the male was incubating. It moved up to the male and started pecking at his beak, presumably wanting to be fed. As it was leaving at 1:38 pm it ended up walking over the back of the male! The male rose up slightly but then resumed incubating - such a tolerant parent.

On 17/12/05, the female left the nest at 10:48 am, and the juvenile arrived at 10:52, pecked at the egg and then sat on it. The male arrived a minute later and quickly pushed the juvenile aside. The juvenile wasn't perturbed but sat beside the male pecking his beak and flicking a wing as they do when wanting to be fed. Eventually the juvenile left at 11:30.

3. Nesting kereru and myna interaction - Sarah Kivi

On the 19 December 2005 during a check at a kereru nest in the very top of a large puriri tree in Brooklands Park, New Plymouth, a lot of loud flapping was heard. Several mynas were squawking in a neighbouring tree and one was seen flying into the nest area. The male kereru that had been incubating, came off the nest and was seen flapping agitatedly about the top of the tree and being chased by the myna. As the nest was not visible from the ground it is not know whether the mynah went on to the nest or not. The kereru perched in the top of the tree for several minutes after the myna had left and then returned to his nest. Incubation apparently continued as normal after that because a chick subsequently hatched.