

Alert
Level **4**

**KERERU
ALERT!**

Bush Haven Trust

**September—
March every year**



**UNITE to stop
bird-strike...**

Do you know...? From March 2019 to March 2020 we had 51 injured kereru brought into us at Bush Haven.

Of those, 20 birds—nearly 40% —were injured beyond repair and died. Many of these casualties were full grown birds in their prime.

This year, since March, we have had 18 birds brought to us, of which 9 have died. The carnage is heart-breaking.

We can all do our bit to make Otatara safer for our beautiful birdlife.



This is the time of year that Kereru are at their most vulnerable because they are displaying and mating, bringing up chicks and learning to fly.

Birds are not stupid. They don't smash into trees or walls of houses.

**Birds smash into windows.
WHY?**

Windows reflect the trees and the flight paths through them.

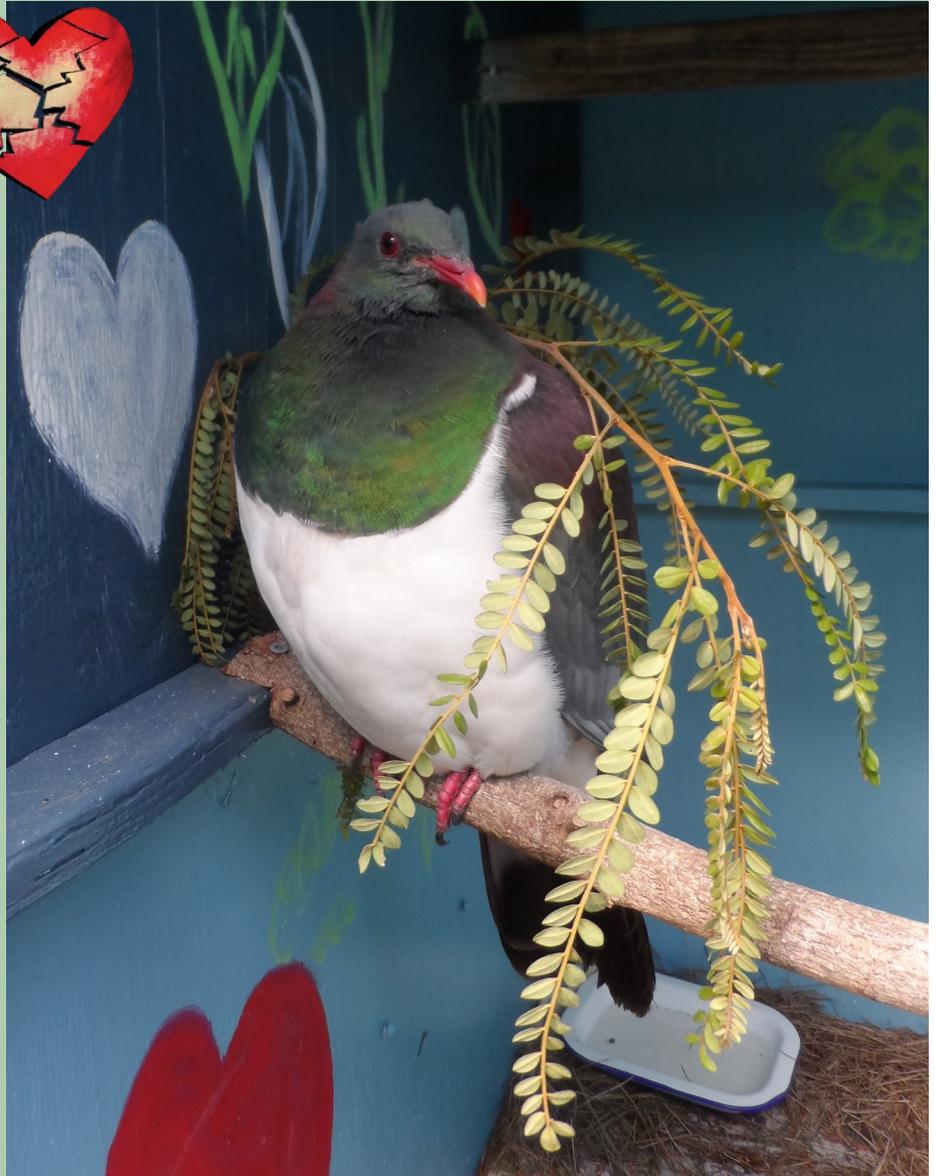
What can each of us do?

1. Stand back from your windows and imagine what a bird sees with its sharp vision.
2. Don't clean your windows. **"WHAT?"** I'm serious. Spiders' webs and fly poo save lives. Kereru can see those better than we can and don't want to go there.
3. Dress your windows with curtains or blinds—there are some excellent UV reflecting products available that will save your photos, fabrics and artwork as well as the kereru.
4. Put dreamcatchers and/or decals in your windows. You can make eye-catching ones yourselves and we have some on offer at Bush Haven.

None of us wants an adult bird dead or stuck in a cage recovering at this time of year when they probably have a chick to help care for.

We are at Alert Level 4 for kereru from September until March.

With us all paying attention we should be able to reduce and even beat this bird-strike epidemic and save more of our Southland kereru.



Encouraging kereru in your area

Recent research suggests that urban gardens are critical to the survival of kereru (and other native birds) – so what can we do?

Plant food sources such as kowhai and tree lucerne in your garden. Kereru love the leaves of kowhai, and tree lucerne provides food for kereru all year round!

For a complete list, visit <https://kererudiscovery.org.nz/get-involved/growing-food-for-kereru/>

Provide fresh clean water (not sugar water!) in a large dish – but be sure to keep it clean and change it frequently, as some other birds carry salmonella which can make kereru very sick.



Some interesting facts about kereru

The life expectancy of a kereru is now only 5-6 years, compared with 20-25 years in an intact ecosystem environment. This is due to major loss of the kereru's forest habitat, introduced competitors for food and pest species such as rats and possums, as well as collisions with windows and cars—that is why we all need to protect these majestic birds around our homes!

Kereru are now the only long-distance seed spreaders for large forest fruiting trees in New Zealand. They are spectacular flyers and can travel up to 70km in a single day.

Kereru also spread the seed of about 70 other native plants, including miro, their favourite berry.

Kereru usually raise only one or two chicks per year in the South, between October and April; whereas they may raise up to three chicks over the breeding season in the North.

The survival and care of their chicks are very important for our kereru population.

A kereru nest is like a pile of pick-up sticks in a tree. An egg takes a month to hatch usually through October / November.

NB: Please be aware of kereru and their chicks at Guy Fawkes and join the growing movement to celebrate with fireworks only at Matariki.

Chicks leave the nest after 30-55 days and their parents then continue to feed them up to a further four weeks. The bond between them can last for two years, as the young learn what they need to know for their longer term survival.

The kereru was our NZ Bird of the Year in 2018.

Sources:

kererudiscovery.org.nz; www.projectkereru.org.nz; "Coo-coo Kereru" Terry Fitzgibbon, Reed New Holland Publishers (2018)



More on preventing bird-strike

If the simple remedies suggested here are not successful, further excellent information is available at <https://www.urbanwildlifetrust.org/portfolio/project-window-strike/> .

What to do if a kereru strikes a window

If you find a kereru on the ground, this is an indication that something is definitely wrong. Please do not leave it there. Kereru on the ground are at risk of further injury from pets or predators as they cannot readily escape. Instead, put a towel over it and pick it up gently, taking care that its wings are correctly folded in. Place it in a soft-padded ventilated box somewhere warm with a bowl of water and...

phone or text Bush Haven on 027 786 5365 or 022 104 8661.

Pest Control

Join **Otatara Pestbusters** – it's free and you can then access low cost pest control equipment and supplies, plus get free advice on what to do on your section to control pests which can threaten kereru and other native birdlife in our community. Contact Dallas Bradley at amberg2@gmail.com for more information.

