

## NZ Pigeon



COMMON NAME: **NEW ZEALAND PIGEON** – Gmelin, 1789

LATIN NAME: ***Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae***

LATIN MEANING: Hemiphaga Gr. *hemi*, half (ie. between);  
The NZ Pigeon was regarded as intermediate between *Carpophanga*  
and *Magaloprepia* (Splendour) pigeons.

MAORI NAME: Kereru, Kuku, Kukupa

CLASS: Avis

ORDER: Columbiformes

FAMILY: Columbidae

GENUS: *Hemiphaga*

SPECIES/SUB SPECIES: *Novaeseelandiae*

CHATAM ISLAND PIGEON: *H. n. chathamensis*

### DESCRIPTION:

A large pigeon 51 cm in size. The sexes are alike. The head, throat and upper breast are metallic green. The nape, back and wings are purple with a coppery green sheen. Breast and belly and feathered legs are white. The iris is dark red, the mandible crimson with a yellow tip. The feet are red with black claws.

The Chatham Island Pigeon is larger than the mainland species, has greyer upper parts and breast and a heavier mandible.

### HABITAT / DISTRIBUTION:

Found throughout mainland New Zealand in forested areas and residual forest remnants including some offshore islands.

The Chatham Island Pigeon survives on Pitt Island and the main islands, where it inhabits lowland coastal forests.

### BREEDING:

Nests from November to March with just a single white egg laid. The incubation period is approximately 30 days with the squab fledging some 6–7 weeks later. The nest is a flimsy structure of twigs and sticks supported on several branches (at times the egg can be observed through the bottom of the nest).

### SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR:

Kereru are generalist herbivores eating fruit, foliage and the flowers of native and introduced plants (*Notornis* Vol.55).

### DIET:

Diet consists of various native and introduced fruits and dupes of trees and shrubs with a large helping of young foliage. Common fruits eaten include Fuchsia, Puriri, Makomako, Tawa, Taraire, Matai, Kahikatea, Titoki, Maire, Hinau, Pigeonwood and Mahoe.

### PRINCIPAL THREATS:

- Habitat destruction and illegal hunting
- Introduced predators destroying nests and eating eggs and squabs.

### CONSERVATION STATUS:

Gradual decline.



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