

NELSON NATURE



Nelson City Council
te kaunihera o whakatū

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Counting the country's kereru

Did you know that large flocks of more than one hundred kereru were once a common sight in skies over New Zealand?

The overall aim behind the Great Kereru Count, running from Saturday 19 September to Sunday 27 September, is to see more of these birds in our skies again.

Observations from the public will help us find out whether kereru are becoming rarer or more common in Nelson (and New Zealand) - so they can be better protected.

Nelson ecologist and ornithologist David Melville says learning more about the distribution and abundance of kereru through the kereru count and similar initiatives helps conservationists plan for the future of this special native bird.

"Kereru are a key stone species for native forests as they transport seeds over large distances. Conserving this endemic bird helps to safeguard many species of plants and the animals that depend upon them," he says.

Nelson City Council is supporting the national campaign as part of its Nelson Nature project to protect and restore Nelson's biodiversity.

Chair of the Nelson Biodiversity Forum, Councillor Brian McGurk, says data from the count will be used to help measure the success of Nelson Nature, which will be carried out over the next 10 years.

"The information collected through this process will tell us whether our efforts to improve biodiversity are helping to bring back an abundance of bird life to the city. Kereru are sensitive to changes to their habitat. In time, we hope that the hard work carried out as part of Nelson Nature results in an increase of these beautiful and unique birds in our region," he says. "The Great Kereru Count is the largest citizen science project in the country and we hope that as many Nelsonians as possible take part."

Last year, people in Nelson contributed to spotting 14,000 kereru across the country and this year it is hoped that even more people will get out and count kereru in their backyards, and in public parks and reserves.

How to take part

To participate in the Great Kereru Count, go to www.greatkererucount.nz between 19 and 27 September. All you need to enter is



INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT KERERU

Known as "the gardeners of the skies", kereru play a crucial role in dispersing the fruit of large native trees such as tawa, taraire, puriri and matai.

With the extinction of the moa, the kereru is now the only bird that has a bill large enough to eat the larger fruit from these trees.

They play a vital role in helping New Zealand's native forest regenerate; if they disappeared, so would our forests!

Kereru eat up to 70 different species of plants, and have a feeding range of up to 25 square kilometres.

Kereru are found only in New Zealand and are easy to see and hear.

They are the largest living pigeon species in the world weighing between 550 and 850 grams. At this time of year, they can be often seen enjoying early blossoms such as on plum trees and early flowering kōwhai. You may have also spotted kereru as they perform spectacular displays of flying as high as they can till they run out of wind, and swooping and diving in an effort to impress their mate.

Kereru are no longer considered to be threatened, but the species has declined significantly since the arrival of Europeans. Not only were they hunted for food and sport, but loss of habitat and the introduction of pests such as rats, stoats, cats and possums, have impacted on their numbers. Three things you can do now to help Kereru are:- Place something in front of, or on your windows to stop kereru flying into them such as a decal or a wind chime. - Plant native trees and plants they like to eat (kōwhai, cabbage tree, and matai).- Tell us when you see them during the Great Kereru Count.

In the lead up to the Great Kereru Count, Natureland's Meg Selby and Councillor Brian McGurk inspect a kereru that is in "rehab" at Natureland.

WIN A NATIVE PLANT!

Nelson City Council has 80 native plants that kereru love to eat to give away. Simply tell us three plants kereru love to eat via email to susan.moore-lavo@ncc.govt.nz with 'kereru competition' in the subject line, or enter the competition in person at our Customer Service Centre from 19 September. We will let you know where and when you can pick up your plant. Entries close at the end of the Great Kereru Count on September 27.

where and when you saw kereru, and how many you saw.

You can also enter sightings via

Twitter using

#GreatkereruCount.

If you're having trouble entering

hashtag

the information

contact Council

Moore-Lavo,

online,

please

contact Council

Moore-Lavo,

please

contact Council

Moore-Lavo,

Susan.Moore-Lavo@ncc.govt.nz or

phone: 545 8742 and she will be

happy to do it for you.

Hira School pupils restore native forest

Last month, 50 children and staff from Hira School converged on the Edens' property at Delaware Bay to plant 400 native trees to

help restore an important forest remnant as part of Nelson Nature.

The forest type is now very rare in the Tasman Bay area and

represents the magnificent native coastal valley-floor forests that once clothed the lowlands of Nelson.

This site is one of nearly 200 significant natural areas classified by Council within the Nelson area, of which 50 of the top

sites are eligible for assistance through the Nelson Nature programme over the next 10 years.

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