

## Stuffed Kiwi Explodes Poison Myth

GEOFF KEEY explains Forest and Bird's position on 1080.

An anti-1080 campaigner from Wairoa was recently convicted of wildlife offences in the Wairoa District Court after falsely claiming a kiwi had been killed by 1080, a synthetic version of a naturally occurring plant poison that is used for pest control.

Over 70 kiwi have been monitored during 1080 operations and not one died from 1080 poisoning. In fact no monitored, endangered, brown kiwi, great spotted kiwi, blue ducks or kaka have died in 1080 operations, so it's not surprising that anti-1080 campaigner Phillip Anderton's claim was proven false.

This unusual saga started on June 30 when a reporter from the *Gisborne Herald* contacted the Department of Conservation about a story in the *Wairoa Star* relating to a photo of Mr Anderton holding a kiwi corpse. Mr Anderton claimed to have found the dead bird in Te Urewera National Park, four days after an Animal Health Board (AHB) aerial application of 1080 in the area.

According to the Department of Conservation's regional conservator, Peter Williamson, 'One of our local officers immediately contacted Mr Anderton to try to get the kiwi autopsied by any agency acceptable to him. Mr Anderton claimed to have returned the kiwi to Te Urewera National Park and buried the body in the bush.'

On Friday July 2, the Department of Conservation executed a search warrant for the kiwi after Mr Anderton refused to cooperate. Three warranted DoC officers accompanied by two police officers found it in a freezer. The kiwi body was sent to Massey University for autopsy.

When a pathologist, Associate Professor Maurice Alley, examined the kiwi it was discovered that all skeletal and

internal organs had been removed and the skin was filled with a mixture of felt and polystyrene. A clay mould replaced the skull and wire filled the legs. It appeared to have died well before the 1080 operation that Mr Anderton claimed had killed it. The bird also had a fractured leg at a site where breaks commonly occur in leg trap injuries.

Mr Anderton was subsequently prosecuted for taking and possessing an absolutely protected species, namely a kiwi. At the hearing he pleaded guilty to the charges and admitted that the kiwi in his possession had been photographed by a reporter from the *Wairoa Star* in June of this year.

'Mr Anderton actually told one of our officers that he did not know what killed the kiwi but hoped the photo in the *Wairoa Star* would cause speculation,' the DoC conservator Peter Williamson said.

Unfortunately misleading claims like this have dogged the use of 1080, undermining its legitimate use for pest control.

Forest and Bird supports the continued use of 1080 because it is one of the best ways of protecting native forests and their threatened inhabitants from the destruction wrought by pests.

In a public discussion document on 1080, the Department of Conservation has warned that the decline of native wildlife will continue unless, 'we reverse the onslaught of pests on a massive scale.'

This will involve taking a 'landscape' approach to managing pests, which is where 1080 comes into the picture. The protection of just three pairs of whio (blue duck) in the Flora Stream in Kahurangi National Park requires 57 kilometres of trap lines — extending that approach over all public conservation land is simply not feasible. Aerial use of 1080

provides the possibility of controlling pests over the large areas needed to protect whio and other wildlife.

Contrary to the claims of anti-1080 campaigners, research shows native wildlife benefits from 1080 operations. Research into the breeding success of robins after 1080 control showed robins fledged over eight times as many chicks because of the dramatic drop in predation by pests.

In part of Pureora Forest, the kaka population increased by 33 percent within six months of an aerial application of 1080 poison in 2001. In nearby Waimanoa Forest, stoats killed at least five of nine kaka females during the same breeding season.

One of the benefits of using 1080 is that aerial and ground-based 1080 operations pose an

extremely low risk to people, because of the low doses used in baits. The possibility of anyone eating the number of baits required to kill a person is extremely unlikely.

Furthermore, only trace amounts of 1080 have ever been found in water following an operation, and even trace amounts are rare. Water monitoring is a requirement of aerial operations.

Sadly, these facts are unlikely to sway some of 1080's most vociferous opponents. We can only hope that the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) pays attention to the facts when carrying out its 1080 reassessment early next year.

— A staff member of Forest and Bird, GEOFF KEEY has responsibilities for biosecurity and pest-control issues.



### Kiwi Wildlife Tours NZ

50% DISCOUNT FOR F&B MEMBERS

Karen Baird Chris Gaskin  
Kiwi Wildlife Tours NZ  
Box 88, Orewa

#### Nature tours for 2004/2005

- South Pacific Islands – discover the natural worlds of Fiji & New Caledonia; also Solomon Islands and Samoa. Off the beaten track. Great adventures.
- Explore the natural treasures of Sri Lanka and Thailand – biodiversity riches.
- Scotland: Land, Sea and Skye – wildlife and history of Highlands and Isle of Skye.
- Te Kauri Birding & Nature Lodge Homestay-style lodge in kauri forest just north of Auckland. Guided excursions. Enjoy a comfortable stay with top wildlife & birding guides.

Ph 09 422 2115 Fax 09 422 2358  
Email [info@kiwi-wildlife.co.nz](mailto:info@kiwi-wildlife.co.nz)  
[www.kiwi-wildlife.co.nz](http://www.kiwi-wildlife.co.nz)



### Pterodroma Pelagics: Hauraki Gulf Seabirds NZ

Hauraki Gulf day and overnight trips. Northern New Zealand and Hauraki Gulf seabirds are our speciality. Marine life and island visits. Contact Pterodroma Pelagics

PO Box 88 Orewa, Auckland Ph 09 422 2115 Fax 09 422 2358  
Email [info@haurakigulfseabirds.co.nz](mailto:info@haurakigulfseabirds.co.nz)  
[www.haurakigulfseabirds.co.nz](http://www.haurakigulfseabirds.co.nz)

