

Eagles Nest: A Luxurious Home for our Native Birds

Eagles Nest is proud to be home to many of New Zealand's unique and at risk birdlife. The special geography and location of Russell has meant that predator control, though ongoing, has been very successful and shown amazing results. We take very seriously our responsibility to the environment we are blessed to have around us. By creating as little impact as possible on our many acres of Native Bush and working very closely with groups such as the Kiwi Foundation to regularly check and maintain pest traps through-out the property, we aim to encourage our unique residents to flourish and look forward to continuing the repopulation of the Bay of Islands with many more of its former inhabitants.

North Island Brown Kiwi

About: By far New Zealand's best known and iconic birds, the Kiwi is certainly a well loved oddity. Flightless, nocturnal and laying the largest egg for its size in the world, these remarkable birds were perfectly adapted to their pre-European habitat. Unfortunately, Kiwi have been hit hard by the introduction of pests such as the stoat and domestic cat and they currently number just 8000 in the Northland area. Happily Kiwi are resilient and have been responding well to repopulation and pest eradication projects and numbers are once again on the increase.



Picture by Chris McLennan

At Eagles Nest: This year we have been very busy in our Kiwi Care. As well as our ongoing association with the NZ Kiwi Foundation to keep the peninsular predator free, we have also introduced our first "Kiwi House" with the intention to construct and place at least 6 more around the property in the near future. These cosy wooden Boxes are especially designed to simulate a burrow and easily allow the Kiwi to rest, nest and defend itself if necessary. The boxes are also designed with a small viewing window meaning that monitoring can be done easily without any disturbance to the Birds and also allows the opportunity for any interested Guests to have an up close meeting with these very special New Zealanders. This year also marks our first official Kiwi Count where we look forward to listening out for our Kiwi calls at locations throughout the property.

North Island Weka

About: Lesser known and even rarer than its Kiwi cousin, at present The North Island Weka only remain on mainland New Zealand in a handful of locations (Eagles Nest being one of them). Many of our Guests have easily mistaken this timid, Flightless bird for the Nocturnal Kiwi though as they are active during the Day, they are in fact much easier to spot! Weka were believed to have disappeared altogether from the Russell peninsular as early as the 1940's. In 2002, following a widespread predator eradication programme, 39 Weka were localised and released in the area. The Weka quickly moved around and have happily called Eagles Nest home ever since. It is hoped that the success here in Russell will be used as an example and breeding stock for future repopulations through-out New Zealand's North Island.

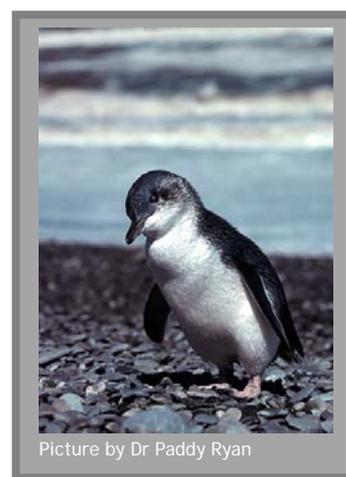


At Eagles Nest: Weka need little encouragement to flourish here at Eagles Nest. There is an estimated 12 breeding pairs on our peninsular and this is rapidly increasing each year. We are very proud of the fact that we are one of the few places in the whole of New Zealand where the true Evening Chorus of the Kiwi, Weka and Morepork can be heard outside from the comfort of any of our Villas.

The Little Blue Penguin

About: The Blue Penguin or Korora are widespread around the coast of New Zealand. They are the smallest of all penguins weighing just 1kg on average and spend their days swimming the oceans, eating fish, squid and crustaceans only coming ashore at night to sleep and nest. The Blue Penguin holds a special place in the history of Russell in particular, with Kororareka, her Maori name meaning Sweet Penguin! They are frequently spotted in the Bay of Islands swimming around charter boats and also around the Russell wharf in search of tasty mackerel. Happily Penguin numbers are very healthy in the area and this is especially helped by the constant control of stoats and rats who are well known to kill nesting parents and chicks.

At Eagles Nest: The Eagles Nest beaches are home to many of these gorgeous little Birds, and for several years now we have placed Penguin boxes along the shore line to provide shelter and nesting places that are used year round.



Picture by Dr Paddy Ryan