

Rearing kōkako chicks, can your forest support them?

As kōkako are not strong flyers, they generally rely on getting their kai (food) from within their territories, which can be only a few hectares in size.

Kōkako have adapted to eat a wide range of foods including leaves, flowers, fruits and invertebrates. Having a healthy habitat with a diverse range of plant species is essential for them to thrive – but especially so when it comes to raising hungry chicks!

Rapidly growing chicks need high quality, energy-rich foods, leaves no longer quite cut it!

So, how do you know if a forest will support successful breeding of kōkako?

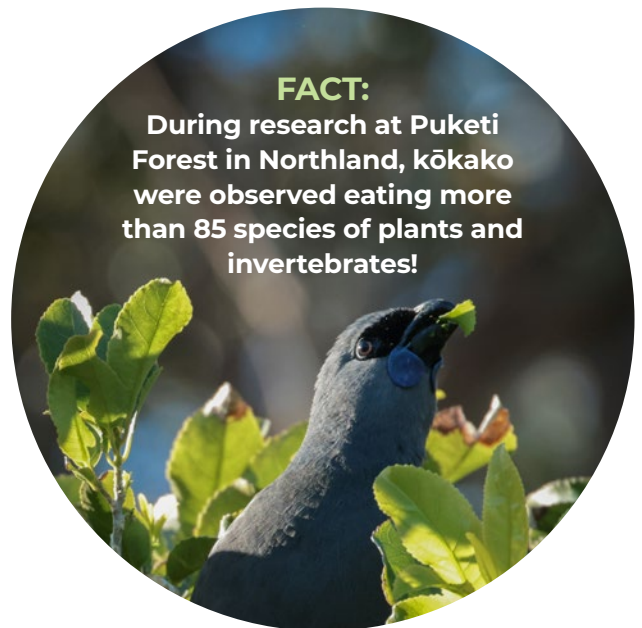
During peak nesting (November – December) the male kōkako will do much of the foraging for a family of up to five, and all within about 200m of the nest, so their territory must include abundant sources of high-quality foods (flowers, fruits and insects) within that small area.

Very few native plant species are yet flowering or fruiting – the early fruiting plants are the key!

Early flowering and fruiting plants are among the 10 plants, (see reverse) that have been identified by experts as being key indicator species of a healthy habitat for rearing kōkako chicks.

Unfortunately, many of these plants are also very tasty to deer, goats, possums, pigs and wallaby, and persistent browse has meant that in some areas they are fruiting poorly, are in very low numbers, or sadly, have disappeared entirely from the forest.

Based on research undertaken at Mapara in the King Country, the Kōkako Recovery Group has developed a methodology for assessing habitat quality and suitability for raising chicks. Please get in touch with us if you want to learn more.



FACT:

During research at Puketi Forest in Northland, kōkako were observed eating more than 85 species of plants and invertebrates!

The 10 Key Species

KEY:

L
Leaf

B
Bud

Fr
Fruit

F
Flower

N
Nectar

I
Invertebrate
host
(sixpenny scale)



**Porokaiwhiri,
Pigeonwood**
*Hedycarya
arborea*

Fr L



Karamu
Coprosma robusta

L B Fr



Kanono
*Coprosma
grandifolia*

L B Fr



**Rewarewa, NZ
honeysuckle**
Knightia excelsa

F N



**Mapou/
Red matipo**
Myrsine australis

Fr



**Makomako,
Wineberry**
Aristotelia serrata

Fr



**Kōtukutuku,
Tree fuchsia**
*Fuchsia
excorticata*

Fr



Puka
Griselinia lucida

L B I



**Tātarāmoa,
Bush lawyer**
Rubus cissoides

Fr



Toro
Myrsine salicina

Fr