

THE NEW SEASON HAS BEGUN!



Would you believe it, the 2016/17 Kiwi Breeding Season has arrived already! It has been a remarkably mild winter around here so far, and this seems to have stimulated some early activity out there in the Kiwi Sanctuaries. We are very excited to have the first egg of the Rowi season arrive this week. Interestingly, it is the same pair as the first breeders last season! The nest belonged to 'Boof' (male) and 'Snatch' (female), who are obviously keen to uphold their reputation as excellent kiwi chick producers. This pair produced two gorgeous healthy chicks last season, 'McCaw' (top photo right) and 'Verde' (bottom photo right). Department of Conservation Ranger Katherine and volunteers headed out into the Pakahi area of the Okarito rainforest on Monday with the auspicious task of rescuing the egg from the nest. An hour walk into the forest and a little bit of digging around later... and voilà! The inaugural egg was rescued! Waiting (not so) patiently back at the Captive Rearing Centre was Kim, our Kiwi Husbandry Manager, ready to check in the new egg - and what a perfect egg it is! 'Boof's' egg weighs 414.3g and has settled well into the artificial incubation environment. The countdown to hatch is now on, with an expected hatch date of 8th September. The latest Skyrainger flight has detected a further 6 nests out there in Okarito, so this egg won't be lonely for long!

This season is going to be an interesting and experimental season for Kiwi in Okarito and Haast Sanctuaries with a huge 'Battle for our Birds' pest eradication program planned. 2016 is a mast year for Beech and Rimu trees, which means there is tonnes of seed being produced. This seed feeds rodents and causes a boom in the mice and rat population, which in turn causes a boom in the stoat population – a kiwi's worst nightmare. The pest control program will decimate the stoat population, making much safer in the forest for our precious kiwi birds. What that means is that most eggs will be safe enough to stay in their parents nests and won't need to be rescued! And no stoats means a healthier and safer forest for all our native NZ wildlife! ☺

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|-------------------------|---|
| Eggs Incubating | 1 |
| Chicks Hatched | 0 |
| Rowi in Nocturnal House | 2 |

