



Tivi Kids, by Stacey

The kererū is often heard before you can see it because the beat of its wings makes a distinctive sound as it flies from tree to tree. They have a huge impact on the forest ecosystem because of the natural relationship they have with native trees by increasing the tree numbers through seed dispersal, this is called propagation. This is why they are one of New Zealand's keystone species. Find the route through the maze and answer the quiz. Have fun!

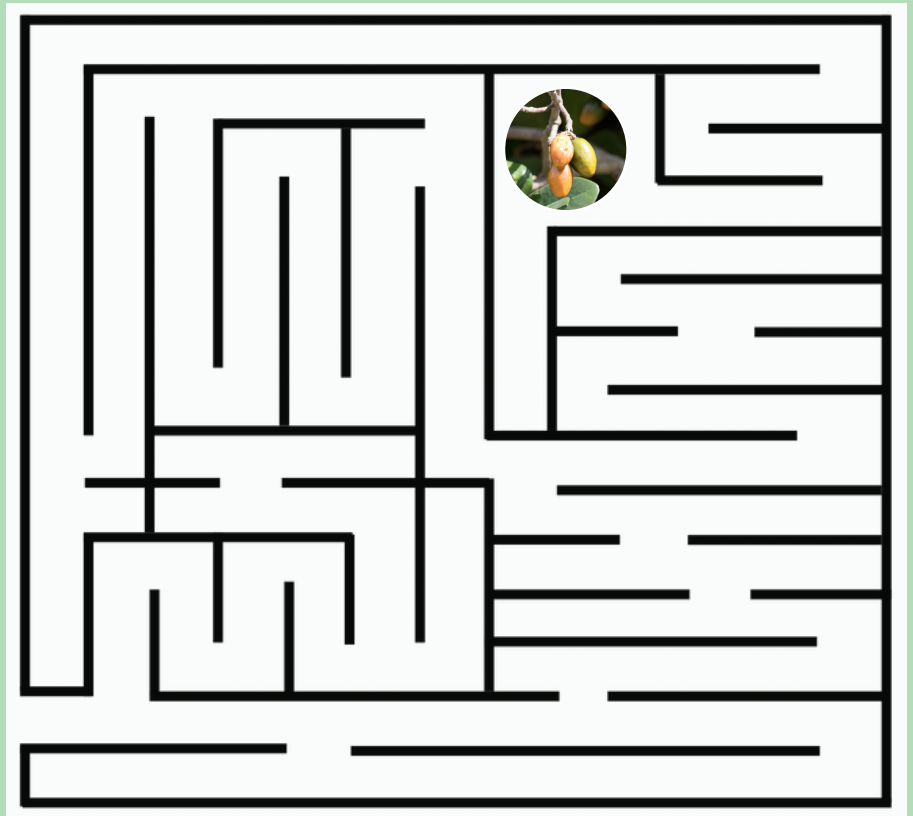
The kererū is a large bird, weighing on average 650g and measuring up to 510 mm from tail to beak. They are only found in New Zealand which means they are endemic. They are slow breeders because they usually lay one egg a year, but if there is plenty of food available they might nest twice. Kererū stack sticks in the fork of a tree to make their nest. They can live up to 20 years.



Kererū are essential for seed dispersal because they have the widest gape of all the fruit-eating birds, which allows them to swallow large berries such as karaka, miro, taraire and tawa. When the seeds in these berries pass through the gut of the kererū it makes them more likely to develop into plants, or 'germinate'. Moa also used to play this role but, of course, they are extinct.



Find the route through the maze to the karaka berries



Photos / Geoff Beals, Derek Tearne

helpful tip

The next time you notice a pile of bird droppings on the path, look up as there may be a kererū resting on a branch. Please remember to close your mouth as you look up!

Quiz

1. What is the average weight of a kererū?
2. Are kererū endemic to New Zealand?
3. How do kererū help with seed dispersal?
4. What colour are kererū?
5. How many eggs do kererū usually lay a year?

Answers: 1 650g. 2 Yes. 3 They are able to eat large berries. 4 Green, purple and white. 5 They have one but, if there is plenty of food available they might nest twice.