

Great spotted kiwi changing gears: What activity can tell us about the translocation process

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Great spotted kiwi (GSK) (*Apteryx haastii*) or roroa/roa are highly cryptic with isolated habitat and low numbers making them difficult to study and therefore less studied than more accessible species. GSK are listed by the National Threat Classification Series as 'nationally vulnerable' while facing ongoing or predicted decline due primarily to significant predation pressure affecting population recruitment. In a joint venture between the Department of Conservation and the community-run Nina Valley Recovery Group, the Nina Valley GSK sub-adult population was supplemented with genetically diverse birds from the Hawdon Valley in April 2015. Eight individual paired adult GSK were translocated (wild to wild) from the Hawdon Valley (Arthurs Pass National Park) to the Nina Valley (Lake Sumner Forest Park) in the northwest of the South Island of New Zealand. The GSK were released near areas of five known resident, previously translocated captive reared sub-adults. All subject birds were tracked for four months pre translocation and six months post translocation with activity data collected via radio telemetry from GSK 2.0 diagnostic transmitters. Notable differences in the activity pre translocation were detected between both sites. The activity of the wild birds increased overall from pre to post translocation with no change from the captive reared birds already resident in the Nina Valley. Social behaviour of kiwi is complex and many of their behaviours are not well explained or studied. Understanding the differences in activity levels between individuals can help wildlife managers understand whether unquantified differences exist between source and recipient sites or if the health of any translocated individuals is adversely affected by the translocation process. New Zealand is a significant leader in the international community with regards to translocations for biodiversity management and therefore developing management processes that can mitigate against negative outcomes is vital.