

# LIFE CYCLE OF THE NORTH ISLAND BROWN KIWI

FACT SHEET  
3



**ADULT KIWI**

- Kiwi couples share a territory.
- They mate for life.
- Females are bigger than males and have longer bills.



**MATING**

- Mating takes place between April and June.
- Kiwi call to each other in the night to identify mates and territories.



**CARRYING THE EGG**

- The female kiwi carries the egg in her belly while it forms.
- The egg can reach up to one-fifth of her body weight.
- Kiwi females have two ovaries (unusual for birds), so she will often produce two eggs about 10 days apart.



**LEAVING THE BURROW**

Chicks are very vulnerable to attack by animals. Dad provides some initial protection, but chicks leave the burrow within a few days of hatching.



**HATCHING THE CHICKS**

- Chicks hatch between August and February.
- When two eggs are laid, hatching is staggered (10-14 days apart)
- The chick breaks out of the egg using its strong bill.
- The chick is about the size of a tennis ball when it emerges. (It is covered with feathers and looks like a small adult.)
- Dad doesn't feed the chick. The chick feeds on the large yolk sack in the egg until it is ready to leave the nest.



**INCUBATING THE EGG**

- Once Mum lays the egg, Dad takes over.
- Dad sits on the egg to keep it warm inside the burrow. Normally he has two eggs to care for, so it can get crowded!
- Incubation takes 70-80 days (twice as long as most birds).
- Dad only leaves the egg for an hour or two while he feeds.

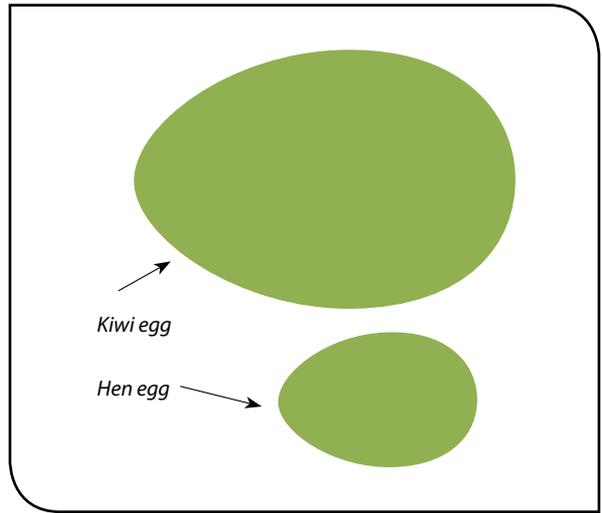


**KIWI EGGS**

- Eggs are laid over winter between July and October in the burrow.
- Eggs are about 120mm long and have a smooth, thin, white shell.
- They are big for the size of the bird. (Think about the size of a chicken egg, produced by a bird of similar size).
- The yolk takes up almost three quarters of the egg (bigger than most birds).



*X-ray of kiwi and egg*



*Egg size comparison*



*Kiwi eggs in reeds*



*Kiwi chick hatching*



*Kiwi burrow*