



Overview

Although the kererū is a fairly common bird, its numbers are actually declining. The article describes an initiative by Ngāi Tahu that is helping the threatened kererū population on Banks Peninsula. The article includes contemporary and historical photographs and art works from the students of Banks Peninsula School.

Students will gain an awareness of the historical and contemporary importance of kererū from environmental and cultural perspectives. The article links to other items in this Journal that also have a strong conservation theme.

Text characteristics from the year 5 reading standard

abstract ideas, in greater numbers than in texts at earlier levels, accompanied by concrete examples in the text that help support the students' understanding

sentences that vary in length and structure (for example, sentences that begin in different ways and different kinds of complex sentences with a number of subordinate clauses)

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE KERERŪ

Where do they live?
Kererū can be found in lowland native forests throughout the North and South Islands, Stewart Island, and many offshore islands. The Chatham Islands have a separate species, the parea.

What do they eat?
Kererū eat the fruit, leaves, twigs, buds, and shoots of many plants. Sometimes kererū eat so much that they fall out of the trees.
The kererū plays a very important role in spreading the seeds of native trees. It is the only native bird large enough to eat the seeds of some trees, including miro, tawa, pūriri, nikau, karaka, and kahikatea. As it moves through the forest, it spreads the seeds through its droppings.
Kererū also eat introduced plants, such as tree lucerne, privet, elderberry, and plums. Because native bush has disappeared in many parts of the country, people's gardens have become an important food source for kererū.

How do they raise their chicks?
Kererū become adults at one or two years and can live for ten to twenty years.
The adult birds build their nests in late spring and summer (November to March), when there is plenty of food available. At this time of year, the males show off by swooping and diving. Their nests are an untidy platform of sticks. They lay only one egg in the nest at a time. The parents take turns to look after the egg, which takes about a month to hatch.
The new chicks are fed with a type of milk that comes from their parents' stomachs. They are later fed on fruit that has been chewed by their parents first. The chicks grow quickly, leaving the nest when they are thirty to forty-five days old. If there is plenty of food, kererū might raise two or three chicks in a season. If food is scarce, they might lay only one egg or none at all.

Glossary
hinu oil
mahinga kai traditional food
tā moko tattooing

some ideas and information that are conveyed indirectly and require students to infer by drawing on several related pieces of information in the text

illustrations, photographs, text boxes, diagrams, maps, charts, and graphs that clarify or extend the text and may require some interpretation

Possible curriculum contexts

SCIENCE (Living World)

LEVEL 3 – Ecology: Explain how living things are suited to their particular habitat and how they respond to environmental changes, both natural and human-induced.

ENGLISH (Reading)

LEVEL 3 – Structure: Show a developing understanding of text structures.

ENGLISH (Writing)

LEVEL 3 – Structure: Organise texts, using a range of appropriate structures.

Possible reading purposes

- To find out why kererū are threatened
- To explore the importance of kererū in the past and the present
- To identify the risks for kererū and what we can do to help them survive.

Possible writing purposes

- To research and write about another threatened species
- To describe how a chosen species is suited to its environment
- To compare the way Māori have regarded another bird species and how it has responded to environmental changes.

See [Instructional focus – Reading](#) for illustrations of some of these reading purposes.

See [Instructional focus – Writing](#) for illustrations of some of these writing purposes.

Text and language challenges

VOCABULARY:

- Possible unfamiliar words and phrases, including “peninsula”, “plump”, “sleek”, “plumage”, “raise awareness”, “inspired”, “plentiful”, “fully protected”, “whakatauki”, “adorning”, “feeding troughs”, “lowland”, “offshore”, “introduced plants”, “scarce”
- The use of alliteration: “Kaupapa Kererū”; and “plump” and “plumage”
- The names of bird and tree species.

Possible supporting strategies

Provide opportunities for students to encounter and practise key low-frequency words such as “peninsula”, “sleek”, “plumage”, and the plant and bird names before and after reading.

Before reading, tell students the title and make predictions about the article. Give pairs or small groups selected photographs (without captions) from the article. Ask them to discuss the photos and what they suggest about the content. Tell them to prepare to present their photographs and their ideas to the class. If possible, provide opportunities for students who have a first language other than English to explore the ideas in this language. Work with the groups and support them, introducing key vocabulary as you do so. Have the groups present their ideas. As part of the discussion, introduce and record some of the key vocabulary in the article. Identify the academic and/or subject-specific vocabulary that students should prioritise for learning. Support students with strategies for learning vocabulary and provide opportunities for revisiting this vocabulary over time and in different contexts. The *English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has some useful information about learning vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Seeing and hearing kererū
- Observing kererū feeding on plants
- The concept of changes to environments over time
- Knowledge of geography and where different iwi are from
- Knowledge of percentages (“90 percent”, “75 percent”)
- Knowledge and/or experience of working on a conservation project.

Possible supporting strategies

If you have kererū in your area, arrange a walk to spot them in trees, on power lines, or in local gardens. Alternatively, use photographs or video clips to help students gain a sense of the size and characteristics of kererū.

Use the article as part of a science inquiry into the ways that living things respond to changes in the environment. Extend the discussion to include historical information to help students understand the kinds of changes that have taken place in New Zealand.

Provide information (and ask students to share their own knowledge) of iwi in Aotearoa New Zealand.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- The title, subtitle, and introduction
- The subheadings in the form of questions
- The whakatauki in te reo Māori and English
- The drawing and the historical and contemporary photographs with captions
- The explanation of a conservation effort
- The explanation of how kererū came to be threatened
- The range of verb forms – simple present verbs to talk about facts that are always true, present verbs to describe current events, and past verbs to describe past events.

Possible supporting strategies

If necessary, support the students to identify the structure of the text, skimming the article with them. Prompt them to examine the photographs and the captions, as well as the text.

You could give pairs of students one of the headings and ask them to predict what kind of details (not necessarily the specific content) they think will be in that section. You could have the pairs share their predictions and then read the text together.

If students need more support to understand the explanations in the text, work through one, breaking down complex sentences and structures so they can understand the relationships, including time, sequence, and cause and effect.

Instructional focus – Reading

Science (Living World, level 3 – Ecology: Explain how living things are suited to their particular habitat and how they respond to environmental changes, both natural and human-induced.)

English (Reading, Level 3 – Structure: Show a developing understanding of text structures.)

Text excerpts from “Kaupapa Kererū”

Students (what they might do)

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

A project called Kaupapa Kererū aims to increase the number of kererū on Banks Peninsula, near Christchurch.

Local people are growing plants that kererū like to eat, especially native species. Because cats are one of the major predators of kererū, people are also trying to keep cats away from the places where kererū breed.

The latest counts have shown an increase in the numbers of kererū on Banks Peninsula.

*As the students read the text, they **make connections** between related pieces of information and their own experiences of bringing about change. Students **integrate** the information and **infer** that the actions taken on Banks Peninsula are having the desired effect.*

*The students **ask and answer questions** about the project and **evaluate** its effectiveness, based on their inferences and answers.*

PROMPT the students to integrate information.

- The text tells us that kererū are threatened, and that a project was set up to change this on Banks Peninsula. As you read, search for pieces of information that tell you exactly what people did.
- Now, locate information that shows the result or effect of the project.
- What can you infer about why the numbers have increased? What does that tell you about the project?
- What questions do you have about the project and how it brought about change?

ASK QUESTIONS to activate or build on the students' prior knowledge.

- What do you know about whakataukī? (Note that they are sometimes known as pepeha.)
- Where have you heard or read whakataukī? What was the context?
- Why do you think whakataukī are used, especially in formal speeches?

If necessary, explain that whakataukī are sayings that reflect the values and thoughts of past generations. They are usually short and to the point, using metaphor to convey an idea.

- What key idea or value does this whakataukī express?

MODEL OR EXPLAIN ways to analyse complex sentences.

With the first sentence, write the first clause, “Kererū also eat introduced plants.”

- What kinds of plants are meant here? What does introduced mean?
- The linking words “such as” tell me that the author is about to give examples.
- The plants listed here are all examples of introduced plants that kererū eat.

With the second sentence, write out the two clauses as separate sentences. “Native bush has disappeared in many parts of the country.” “People’s gardens have become an important food source for kererū.”

- What connections are there between these two ideas?
- A cause-and-effect relationship is often signalled by words such as “because”. The clause with “because” gives the cause and the other clause gives the effect.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- Thank you for telling us about your koro and the whakataukī you’ve heard him use on the marae. This helped you to make real connections to ...
- I noticed you connected and integrated several pieces of information across the text to make an inference. That’s an important strategy to have in your toolbox as texts get longer and more complex.

Whakataukī

Kai ana ngā kākā, noho ana ngā kererū.

The kākā are eating while the kererū are sitting.

(The kākā makes a lot of fuss while the kererū quietly gets on with its business.)

*The students **make connections** between their own experience of whakataukī and the text to **infer** that the author is using this as an example of the way kererū feature in whakataukī. They understand the translation and the explanation, and **make connections** with their own experiences to **infer** that the whakataukī is a metaphor that describes the way some people fuss about things while others do what is needed without any fuss.*

Kererū also eat introduced plants, such as tree lucerne, privet, elderberry, and plums. Because native bush has disappeared in many parts of the country, people’s gardens have become an important food source for kererū.

*Students use word-solving strategies to work out unfamiliar words. They use knowledge of sentence structure to understand the use of a list in the first sentence and the cause-and-effect relationship in the second sentence. Students **make connections** between the text and their own knowledge of plants to **infer** that the plants listed grow in people’s gardens.*

METACOGNITION

- What did the author mean by the words “kererū are a taonga”? How did you know that? What helped you?
- What helped you to work out the expression “fully protected”? How did your knowledge of conservation help you?
- How did you make the inference that the more food kererū have, the faster their numbers will grow? What parts of the text helped you?

Reading standard: by the end of year 5

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

Science (Living World, level 3 – Ecology: Explain how living things are suited to their particular habitat and how they respond to environmental changes, both natural and human-induced.)

English (Level 3 – Structure: Organise texts, using a range of appropriate structures.)

Text excerpts from “Kaupapa Kererū”

It’s hard to ignore the kererū. When you’re walking through the bush, you’re likely to hear them crashing through the trees, wings flapping noisily. Their plump shape and sleek, colourful plumage also make them easy to spot.

Although Māori hunted kererū and lit fires that destroyed some of the forest, kererū were still plentiful when the first Pākehā arrived in Canterbury.

During the nineteenth century, however, most of the forest on Banks Peninsula was destroyed. Pākehā settlers felled trees for timber and burnt the forest to clear the land for farming.

Early Pākehā hunted kererū with guns. They also introduced predators ...

According to one legend, the beautiful colours of its feathers come from the clothes Māui wore when he changed into a bird.

Some facts about the kererū

Where do they live?

Kererū can be found in lowland native forests throughout the North and South Islands, Stewart Island, and many offshore islands. The Chatham Islands has a separate species, the parea.

Examples of text characteristics

INTRODUCTION

In a factual article, the introduction is used to engage the reader’s interest and show what the article will be about. When readers can relate the introduction to something they already know, they are better able to make connections as they read.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Careful research can provide accurate information and give an article credibility. Giving readers an insight into the history of a topic also helps them to understand the context. Sources of information can include first-person stories, oral histories, books and articles, websites, and museum exhibits.

HEADINGS AND QUESTIONS

Headings help writers to plan their writing. They also help readers know what to expect in each section.

Questions used as headings are another way of planning and of helping readers to locate information.

METACOGNITION

- What structure have you used to organise your information? How did reading this article help you to make this decision?
- What was challenging about finding information? What strategies helped you?
- How does working with a partner to give and receive feedback help you as a writer? What (if anything) could improve the feedback process?

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

ASK QUESTIONS to help the students draft or edit their writing.

- How have you “set the scene” or introduced the topic?
- Have you used an introduction?
- If so, how did you decide what to write?
- If not, how will you let your readers know the topic (apart from the title)?
- How will your introduction help readers make connections with their own experiences and knowledge?

DIRECT the students to work with a partner to review introductions in other articles to find models they can use for their writing.

ASK QUESTIONS to support the students’ research.

- What information will help your readers understand the context or how a problem came about?
- How will you find reliable information?

PROMPT the students to identify and discuss sources they can use for research. If possible, refer to a set of questions (formulated in earlier inquiries) that you have developed with them to help interrogate sources for reliability.

- Remember to keep your critical hat on when you do research: be a detective, not a magpie.
- Use the questions we’ve developed and keep asking, “How do I know this is correct?” or “Is there another side to this story?”

DIRECT the students to share their work with a partner. Have them focus on one aspect of their writing at a time. Get them to ask each other questions, such as:

- How have you organised the information?
- What do your headings tell your readers?
- Is all the information under each heading relevant to that heading?
- Do you need to use subheadings as well?
- Give each other feedback then revise your writing if necessary. Ask your partner to review your writing, checking that the headings are used in a logical, helpful way.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- This introduction gives me just enough information to make me interested, and it helps me relate the topic to things I already know. That is what a good introduction should do.
- You planned your writing by using questions, and then you turned the questions into headings. Your partner said the headings were helpful. This shows me that you’re thinking about what you write and about how you want readers to read your work.