

Footage captures kiwi destroying robin nest, revealing unknown behavior

December 4 2015



A kiwi destroying a robin nest and causing the death of the chicks in it has been caught on camera by a Victoria University of Wellington researcher.

The footage, taken at Zealandia over two consecutive nights, shows a little spotted kiwi pushing the robin [nest](#) down a slope, pecking the chicks, and returning the next night to tear the nest apart.

Dr Rachael Shaw, a postdoctoral research fellow in Victoria's School of Biological Sciences was the first to see the footage, which is thought to be the only recording of this behaviour in Kiwis.

"That morning I went to band the nest of robin chicks, when I discovered the nest had been pulled out from its location and the chicks were dead," she says. "I noticed the chicks had peck injuries on their bodies."

Dr Shaw, who is studying the robin population at Zealandia, decided to investigate the incident and checked the footage from the camera that was monitoring the nest.

"I was shocked to find it was a kiwi. I was expecting a morepork or other bird to have destroyed the nest," she says.

"Although the kiwi doesn't directly kill the chicks, they had pretty severe injuries. The video shows that the [chicks](#) were still alive after being pecked by the kiwi and then fell out of the nest, most likely to their deaths."

Dr Shaw says she can't say for certain what motivated the kiwi to destroy the nest, but speculates it may have been acting defensively.

"One possibility is that the robin may have lined the nest with [kiwi](#) feathers, because robins do like to use these as nest lining. Kiwis are highly territorial, so it may have reacted to the smell of that nest, as if it were an intruder on its territory.

"While it's sad for the robins it's exciting to be making new scientific

discoveries like this, and potentially uncover a new behaviour that might change the way we look at our national icon."

Provided by Victoria University

Citation: Footage captures kiwi destroying robin nest, revealing unknown behavior (2015, December 4) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-12-footage-captures-kiwi-robin-revealing.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--