

# Species Fact Sheets

**Order:** Struthioniformes  
**Scientific Name:** *Apteryx mantelli*

**Family:** APTERYGIDAE  
**Common Name:** Brown Kiwi

**AZA Management:**  Green  Yellow  Red  None

**Photo (Male):**



**Photo (Female):**



## NATURAL HISTORY:

**Geographic Range:** Europe  Asia  North America  Neotropical   
 Africa  Australia  Other  New Zealand

**Habitat:** Forest  Desert  Grassland  Coastal   
 Riverine  Montane  Other  dense subtropical and temperate forests, and scrubland

**Circadian Cycle:** Diurnal  Crepuscular  Nocturnal  Other  [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Cold Tolerance:** To 70° F  To 60° F  To 50° F  To 40° F   
 To 30° F  To 20° F  Other  Can handle below freezing with dry burrows. Need a slightly warmed shed if deep snow or ice.

**Heat Tolerance:** To 30° F  To 50° F  To 70° F  To 90° F   
 To 110° F  Other  Kiwi do not like hot/humid weather. If exposed to temps above 80F, should have an air conditioned shed or underground burrows available.

**Diet:** Frugivore  Carnivore  Piscivore  Insectivore   
 Nectivore  Omnivore  Folivore  Other (Add Below)

### Captive Dietary Needs:

Smithsonian National Zoo; diet for a pair of breeding birds [Contact Studbook keeper for diet specifics]  
 MEAT-EATING BIRD DIET 150 g (Ox or Beef Heart is acceptable, sliced thin)  
 BIRD OF PARADISE PELLETT (Zeigler Bros) 80 g  
 SCENIC BIRDFOOD, PARADISE, SOAKED (Marion) 30 g

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FRUIT MIX, FINELY CHOPPED 50 g  
MIXED VEGETABLES 40 g  
GREENS, MIXED, FINELY CHOPPED 10 g  
Items 1-6 thoroughly mixed and formed into 'meatballs'.  
7 EARTHWORMS 120 g

Chicks are fed the same diet as adults. Some chicks can be picky eaters, so diet may need to be watered down and/or add different food items to make it palatable. Live prey (insects) should not be added to chick diets until they are eating the normal diet for at least a few months. Mealworms may be used to entice extremely picky eaters but only as a last resort.

**Life Expectancy in the Wild:** Males: ~40-60 years Females: ~40-60 years

**Life Expectancy in Captivity:** Males: 40-60 years Females: 40-60 years

## BREEDING INFORMATION:

**Age at Sexual Maturity:** Males: 2-3 years Females: 3-5 years

**Courtship Displays:** Before copulation, the male will “mew” softly to the female and tap her head/neck region. If the female is receptive, she will get down on the ground for the male to mount before finally standing up and dumping him off when copulation is done. Pairs duet call throughout the year and have long term monogamous relationships.

**Nest Site Description:** Kiwi typically dig out nest burrows which are fairly simple with one entrance. In the wild they have been known to use hollowed out logs and thick bushes.

**Clutch Size, Egg Description:** One to two eggs are normally laid. If two eggs are laid, the 2nd egg will be at least 26 days after the first one. Brown kiwi have been known to lay up to 4 eggs in one season.

**Incubation Period:** 68-90 days

**Fledgling Period:** Chicks can walk at day 5

**Parental Care:** None. Brown kiwi do not rear their young. Chicks leave the burrow after day 5 and start self-feeding as early as day 6, but as late as day 16. A 20% initial weight loss is acceptable. Any weight loss greater than 20% requires force feeding.

**Chick Development:** Chicks are “little adults” and are among the slowest growing of birds, so size and weight will be slower than most species. Refer to Please see Kiwi Egg/Chick Husbandry Manual for more detailed information on incubation and rearing [manual available from Studbook Keeper].  
Kiwi do not imprint and even if left under the male to hatch out, must be removed at day 5 or the male may injure or kill the chick. In general, it is recommended to remove the egg at day 30, artificially incubate the egg and hand rear the chick.

## CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

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**Social Structure in the Wild:** Brown kiwi live alone or with their mate

**Social Structure in Captivity:** Brown kiwi live as a pair. Sometimes two males may be housed together but it will depend upon the individual personality of the males. Two females should never be housed together and females as young as 6 months will show aggression towards other females.

**Minimum Group Size:** One

**Maximum Group Size:** Two

**Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:** Yes **Comments:** Do not house kiwi with any other ground birds as they have been known to kill other ground birds. Arboreal species are ok, but avoid kea.

**Optimal Habitat Size:** Minimum husbandry standards: 30 square meters for single birds; 50 square meters for pairs. They need cover and lots of dead wood to dig in. They also need at least two burrows per bird (three is fine for a pair). Kiwi do like water and to splash around so a pool with running water is ideal. Several days before egg laying, females may sit in water presumably to relieve the discomfort caused by the large egg. Consult Husbandry Manual for more information.

**Management Challenges:** Being nocturnal makes them more of a challenge to display, but off exhibit they are relatively easy to care for. Kiwi are prone to consuming metal objects, and birds should be scanned monthly for metal ingestion.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Although rarely seen in captivity, given the right enclosure, kiwi can make a great exhibit and are fairly active. Viewing the birds at their level will improve the guest experience. Exhibits should be sound proof as birds will “shut down” if it’s too noisy. Breeding pairs are not recommended for display but young pairs or two males can be on display until they are of breeding age at which point, two males should be separated. Some kiwi can be conditioned to be ambassador birds. These programs are hugely popular with visitors due to the rarity of seeing kiwi in zoos.

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