



## Department of Biological Sciences Seminar Announcement

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### Why do kereru (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) eat what they eat?"

New Zealand has been isolated from other continents for about 80 million years. This has led to a somewhat unusual and impoverished flora and fauna. The New Zealand landmass has been colonised in many waves, the most recent of these associated with the arrival of humans. My PhD study looked at fruiting patterns, fruit features, dispersal and seed predation of native New Zealand fleshy-fruited species. I concentrated mainly on tree-borne fruits larger than 10-mm in diameter. There are several species with large tree-borne fruits in New Zealand and they currently only have one seed disperser (the native fruit pigeon, kereru, *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*). Historical evidence suggests that kereru might have been the sole effective disperser for most of the Quaternary. Thus the New Zealand large-fruited frugivore system is relatively simple.

Introduced mammals have impacted significantly on New Zealand forest ecosystems, including fruit production. An experiment was designed to measure the level of mammalian fruit consumption. Three paired forest patches, with similar topography, aspect and forest type, were selected. Mammalian pests were suppressed in three forest patches, but left unchanged at the paired site. This allowed comparison of fruit production and fruit phenology at sites with and without pest suppression and provided some measure of how pest mammals are disrupting the fruit-disperser system.

**Date:** 21 Feb 2003, Friday  
**Time:** 3 - 4pm  
**Venue:** Life Sciences Lab 7,  
Blk S2 Level 3  
**Host:** Prof Chou Loke Ming

*All are welcome*

