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# Kiwi surprise trust with pair of late-season eggs

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One of the most out-of-season kiwi eggs has been taken for artificial incubation by Hawke's Bay-based Forest Lifeforce Restoration Trust.

The egg, lifted from a nest in the Maungataniwha Native Forest, west of Lake Waikaremoana, was now at the Kiwi Encounter hatchery at Rainbow Springs Kiwi Wildlife Park in Rotorua and as a young chick would be cared for at Cape Kidnappers.

Yet the Department of Conservation said eyebrows in conservation circles were set to be raised further as the trust confirmed yesterday that yet another egg will soon be lifted from a nest in the same forest, more than two months later than usual.

Eggs are typically lifted

between September and March and deliveries to the hatchery are complete by early April.

"At this point we're unsure whether to classify this new egg as really late for this season or really early for next," trustee and estate manager Pete Shaw said. "The bird has been on the egg for about 24 days and, as most eggs are lifted after the 60-day mark and hatch at around 85 days, it still has a fair way to go.

"Either way, it's well out of season and this is something we'd be keen to explore and discuss with the kiwi conservation community at large."

The first egg, lifted from Maungataniwha on June 5, was driven to Kiwi Encounter, five hours away.

It was produced by North Island brown kiwi male Para and

his partner.

Para was one of the first kiwi fitted with a transmitter in the trust's Maungataniwha Kiwi Project and was named after the kaumatua who originally blessed the work there, the late Paratene Te Huia.

Para and his mate have produced eight healthy kiwi chicks since the project started.

The egg looked perfectly healthy and would probably hatch in early July.

■ A team of river-rafters made headlines earlier this month after discovering a thriving population of whio, or blue duck, including 19 breeding pairs, 13 ducks and 29 juveniles along 41km of rivers and streams bordering the Maungataniwha Native Forest.



**HIDDEN TREASURE:** Forest Lifeforce Restoration Trust contractor Barry Crene places a kiwi egg from northern Hawke's Bay into a padded chilly bin for transportation. PHOTO/SUPPLIED