

Invitation Evaluation – Minister of Conservation

Name of requestor and reference #	Karen Fifield MNZM, Chief Executive, Wellington Zoo. 24-I-0094		
Due to Office	26 July 2024		
Priority	Low	Medium	High
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of audience	Private individual	Public/Media	Iwi
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	NGO	Business	Other
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nature of meeting	Standard meeting	Event/Visit	Political
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting purpose	To showcase the Wellington Zoo's contribution to conservation nationally and internationally and the support they provide to the Department in the Wellington Region, with a focus on their Whittaker Skink and other captive breeding programmes for endemic species.		
Recommendation	<p>Accept, but defer until later in the year.</p> <p>Visiting Wellington Zoo would be of value to the Minister to understand how the Zoo contributes to conservation, specifically in Wellington. A visit would offer the Minister an opportunity to gain insight into the strong partnership the Zoo has with the Department and how they contribute to the care and rehabilitation of native species.</p>		
Minister/SPS/Advisor/Press Sec comment	<p><i>[For office use only – Office comment / Further actions requested / Calendar conflicts i.e. House leave request required]</i></p> <p>Accept / Decline</p> <p><i>Comment:</i></p> <p><i>[i.e. alternative actions / decline for now but wrap into future regional visits etc]</i></p>		

Opportunities

The Department has a strong and enduring partnership with the Wellington Zoo Trust to support conservation, including:

- Native species make up at least 70% of patients at The Nest / Te Kōhanga facility providing veterinary care and rehabilitation. The facility was opened in 2009 and the has an agreement to receive injured wildlife from the Department.
- The Twilight Te Ao Māhina re-opened in 2016 for kiwi and tuatara.
- Meet the locals – celebrating Aotearoa’s native species opened in 2017.
- The state-of-the-art, Te Piringa iti, captive breeding facility opened in 2020 to support the Wellington Green Gecko captive breeding programme has expanded in 2024 to include Whittaker Skink captive breeding.

A behind-the-scenes visit will highlight the work the Wellington Zoo does with us and their contribution to conservation, including:

- providing in-field vet advice to the local DOC office for marine mammal welfare, such as injured fur seals, leopard seals and blue penguin;
- collaborating with DOC on delivering community workshops, advocacy, and education to community conservation groups through the Restoration Day volunteer network;
- providing peer support to DOC vet with technical advice and disease investigation support;
- contributing to national guidelines and best practice for animal health such as the kiwi best practice manual;
- treating sick or injured threatened species including critically endangered species such as rowi, taiko and kakapo; and
- acting as a host site for post-graduate wildlife veterinary residency programme with Massey University Wildbase providing wildlife vet experience in caring for native and exotic species.

A joint Matiu/Somes island lizard project has been going since 2017 with Zoo staff gaining valuable field experience through the monitoring of Wellington Green Gecko and

	Ngahere Gecko on Matiu/Somes Island in the Wellington harbour, contributing to DOC's understanding of species on predator free islands.
Risks to consider	No risks identified
Background information	<p>Wellington Zoo is New Zealand's oldest zoo, established in 1906. It was initially housed in the Wellington Botanical Gardens, moving to their current location in Newtown Park in 1907.</p> <p>Wellington Zoo has a strong national and international conservation and sustainability focus.</p>