

Orana Wildlife Park MEDIA RELEASE – For Immediate Release

Multiple Mums for Gorgeous Chick

Orana Wildlife Park's seventeen day old Kiwi chick is lucky enough to have multiple 'mums' all checking its ongoing development! Head Keeper of Native Fauna, Tara Atkinson, describes the role of her team with the baby: *"We spend a lot of time checking on the progress of our gorgeous little Kiwi chick. Each day we need to monitor the chick's weight, check how much food it has eaten and ensure that its navel and vent are clean and clear. We all feel like proud mums as the chick reaches each milestone, such as starting to eat and gaining weight."*

The healthy chick is the second Kiwi hatched at the Park within six months. The arrival of the baby is the combined effort of staff members at Southern Encounter Aquarium & Kiwi House (where parent birds Tu and Ana produced the egg) and Orana Wildlife Park (where at 43 days the egg was transferred for incubation - it hatched at 69 days). Both attractions are operated by Orana Wildlife Trust.

The fluffy little chick now weighs 236 grams, 30 grams under its hatch weight of 266 grams. Upon hatching, Kiwi chicks continue to lose weight for around ten days whilst they slowly absorb an internal yolk sac. They put on weight once they start eating.

"The next milestone will be when the chick reaches its hatch weight. We are thrilled with the progress of our little baby though and it is developing a very distinct attitude – it's very feisty and extremely fast at running around its home. The chick remains off public display in the warmth of its brooder" adds Tara.

Kiwi are under constant threat, particularly from introduced mammals and habitat loss. Captive breeding programmes play a vital role in the conservation of the species. People can help wild Kiwi by being more aware that dogs kill Kiwi and hence need to be controlled in Kiwi habitat.

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Notes to the editor

1. About Kiwi

- Kiwi are fascinating birds and are unique to New Zealand. They are flightless as well as nocturnal and have nostrils at the tip of the beak which helps them sniff out food and probe for insects.
- Kiwi eggs are proportionately one of the largest of any bird and can weigh between one quarter to one sixth of the female's body weight! (or averages 15%) The male incubates the eggs for 72–85 days.
- Kiwi can live for over 30 years and in the wild pairs may mate for life.
- Like most of New Zealand's native fauna, kiwi are under constant threat, especially from introduced mammals including stoats, weasels, ferrets, cats and dogs, as well as from habitat loss. While adult kiwi are capable of defending themselves from everything except dogs, kiwi eggs and chicks are particularly vulnerable. Captive breeding programmes are vital if New Zealand's national symbol is to survive.
- Kiwi are related to the ostrich of Africa and the emu of Australia.
- There are six Kiwi sub-species, all of which are threatened to varying degrees: North Island brown; Okarito Brown kiwi/rowi; Haast Tokoeka; Southern Tokoeka; Great Spotted and Little Spotted.

2. About Orana Wildlife Park

Orana Wildlife Park is NZ's only open range zoo and is home to over 400 animals from more than 70 different species. The Park is owned and operated by Orana Wildlife Trust, a registered charitable trust, which also runs Southern Encounter Aquarium & Kiwi House in Christchurch and Natureland Zoo in Nelson. The Trust is committed to the conservation of wildlife diversity on this planet. Our aims, along with being dedicated to the conservation of endangered species and the welfare of our animals, are to provide education, recreation and enjoyment to the public and to support research relating to endangered animals. The Trust is a member of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria (ARAZPA), and the New Zealand Conservation Management Group (CMAg:ARAZPA NZ), which is the New Zealand branch of ARAZPA.

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