

WELLINGTON ZOO TRUST CONSERVATION STRATEGY 2008–2010



WELLINGTON

Zoo



introduction



Wellington Zoo is, and has always been, a conservation organisation.

As well as the work we do as a Zoo in getting people up close to animals for advocacy and learning, conservation and research projects have always gone on behind the scenes at the Zoo. Wellington Zoo has been involved in myriad conservation projects during its existence.

Notably, for native species the Zoo has been involved with the initial implementation of Operation Nest Egg for the North Island Brown kiwi, the captive breeding of Campbell Island teal and an ongoing involvement with the captive management of the tuatara. Through the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria (ARAZPA) and the Australasian Species Management Programme (ASMP) we are involved in securing the genetic diversity of the common chimpanzee, Malayan sun bear, Sumatran tiger, red panda and many other species. Other current conservation projects involve community-based school ecosystem programmes, veterinary research, rehabilitation of native species and breed and release of North Island kaka.

Most of these conservation projects involve strong partnerships with other conservation agencies like the Department of Conservation, Wellington City Council, Victoria University of Wellington, Massey University, Te Papa, the Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture, Landcare Research, Pacific Radiology, Wellington Hospital, Karori Sanctuary, other zoos and other government and non-government agencies.

In 2005 the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) published the second World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy (WZACS, 2005). This document provides a blueprint for the conservation challenges for all members of the zoo community. As a signatory to WZACS and a member of WAZA, Wellington Zoo is emphasising its commitment to conservation with this strategy. The importance of this strategy in the day to day life of the Zoo will underline our commitment to what is at the very heart of what we do. It will also directly influence all other strategies of the Zoo (see **Appendix 1** – Wellington Zoo Strategy Flow Chart).

definition of conservation

The Wellington Zoo Conservation Strategy employs a definition of conservation from WZACS: Conservation is the securing of long-term populations of species in natural ecosystems and habitats wherever possible. (WZACS, 2005)

This includes:

- 1** Increasing secure populations of species in the wild.
- 2** Increasing areas/volumes of secure, sustainable habitat.
- 3** Greater knowledge and application of species biology, ecology and conservation science.
- 4** More political awareness of environmental issues with better environmentally-friendly decision making and increasingly higher conservation priorities.
- 5** Increasing capacity in habitat areas through training, education and public awareness (WZACS, 2005).



The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy 2005 states:

Only zoos, aquariums and botanic gardens can operate across the whole spectrum of conservation activities, from ex situ breeding of threatened species, research, public education, training and influencing and advocacy, through to in situ support of species, populations and their habitats; they uniquely have a massive 'captive audience' of visitors whose knowledge, understanding, attitude, behaviour and involvement can all be positively influenced and harnessed. They have a huge resource of technical skills and dedicated people. As habitats shrink and collection-managed populations grow, the definition of what is a zoo, what is a botanic garden, what is a reserve, and who is a collection-based conservationist, who is a field-based conservationist, will inevitably blur.

statement of conservation intent

Conservation is at the core of all we do at Wellington Zoo. We aim to be a 21st century conservation agency which builds community understanding and support for positive action for the environment.

Our mission is to connect people from all walks of life with wildlife. Through these experiences we hope to engender behavioural change with clear, practical conservation actions which our visitors and partners can feel inspired to achieve in their own lives.

We will support applied field conservation projects long term and will use these projects to involve, teach, mentor and share our experiences and knowledge with our community.

summary: key conservation strategic intents

1	<i>Conservation in-situ</i>	maximise resources allocated to support a limited number of field conservation programmes
2	<i>Conservation ex-situ</i>	support for conservation breeding programmes and integrate our collection with conservation programmes
3	<i>Integrating conservation</i>	in all aspects of the Zoo's work and providing opportunities for staff throughout the Zoo to be involved
4	<i>Rehabilitation and medical care</i>	through the work of the Wellington Zoo Conservation Hospital, provide medical care and rehabilitation for wildlife
5	<i>Research</i>	develop a framework for integrating veterinary and animal management with conservation/research activities
6	<i>Environmental sustainability</i>	create a culture of the wise use of natural resources at the Zoo and ensure that we "walk the talk"
7	<i>Advocacy and community conservation</i>	use the resources of the Zoo to create awareness, a call to conservation action and provide opportunities for visitors to participate in conservation initiatives
8	<i>Sustainable financial support</i>	create a sustainable funding stream from across the Zoo, its partners and the community for conservation initiatives
9	<i>Partnerships</i>	actively seek and nurture partnerships that progress and support Wellington Zoo's Conservation Strategy
10	<i>Assessment of impact</i>	assess the measurable outcomes of the Conservation Strategy annually to ensure the best use of resources and maximum conservation outputs



1: conservation in-situ

maximise resources allocated to support field conservation programmes

WZACS Intention

Zoos and aquariums will make further contributions to conservation in the wild by providing knowledge, skills and resources through initiatives in zoo breeding, translocations and reintroduction, wildlife health, research, training, education and by funding field activities. Zoos and aquariums will be an important force for worldwide conservation by their employment or support of field workers active in the conservation of wild animals and their habitats.

Wellington Zoo will:

- Raise funds to support in-situ conservation projects.
- Support up to three each of both native and exotic species field conservation projects that are attached to species in the Wellington Zoo collection.
- Offer staff the opportunity to participate in these projects in-situ.
- Maximise the benefit of the Wellington Zoo Conservation Hospital to those conducting field projects and in the training of staff involved in wildlife health care.
- Act as a community advocate for the conservation initiatives of the Wellington City Council, the Greater Wellington Regional Council and Department of Conservation.
- Act as a facilitator for key conservation actions that visitors can employ at home.
- Ensure in-situ work recognises the human dimension necessary to achieve conservation outcomes.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of Wellington Zoo's in-situ involvement on an annual basis.



2: conservation ex-situ

support for conservation breeding programmes and integrate the collection with conservation programmes

WZACS Intention

All zoos and aquariums will be primary centres of expertise in small population management and will be involved in global or regional cooperative breeding programmes. All such programmes will be based on sound knowledge using the latest available data on population management, reproductive biology, genetics, behaviour, physiology, nutrition, veterinary care and husbandry.

Wellington Zoo will:

- Maintain the highest standards of animal welfare and ethics.
- Actively participate in Australasian Species Management Programme (ASMP) and New Zealand Species Management Programme (NZSMP) work.
- Actively encourage partnerships that are seeking species for release to the wild.
- Link some of these species, through advocacy, to field conservation projects.
- Ensure the animal collection plan will be driven by regional priorities in conjunction with internal selection criteria that ensure a balance of conservation, learning, research and visitor experience.
- Manage the collection through modern husbandry standards allowing the species to display their natural behaviour and physiological needs. In instances where it is considered physiologically beneficial this includes breeding.
- Manage populations so that unplanned surplus animals do not result.



3: **integrating conservation**

in all aspects of Wellington Zoo's work and providing opportunities for staff throughout the Zoo to be involved

WZACS Intention

The major goal of zoos and aquariums will be to integrate all aspects of their work with conservation activities. The fundamental elements of each organization's culture will be the values of sustainability and conservation, and social and environmental responsibility. These values will permeate all areas of their work and will be understood and promoted by all those working within the WAZA network.

Wellington Zoo will:

- Ensure that conservation permeates every activity across Wellington Zoo and be acknowledged by staff and the community to be of the utmost importance.
- Reflect a conservation perspective in all policies and practices.
- Ensure that visitors complete their visit with a better understanding of Wellington Zoo's conservation role, and the role that each of them can play in their day-to-day lives.
- Actively involve all staff and visitors in reducing Wellington Zoo's environmental footprint.
- Establish a Conservation Steering Group to coordinate the conservation activities and the conservation fund.



4: **rehabilitation and medical care**

through the work of the Wellington Zoo Conservation Hospital, provide medical care and rehabilitation for wildlife

WZACS Intention

Zoos and aquariums have large numbers of veterinary professionals working with non-domestic animals and these veterinarians can actively contribute to field conservation, as well as building a body of skills and scientific knowledge to aid intervention in the wild. Zoos and aquariums also provide a key resource for training wildlife veterinarians.

Wellington Zoo will:

- Ensure that the Wellington Zoo Conservation Hospital will be the region's leading provider for wildlife veterinary advice and care.
- Ensure the Wellington Zoo Conservation Hospital will provide an animal rehabilitation service for stranded, sick or injured native wildlife in the lower North Island and top of the South Island and serve as a portal to the wildlife rehabilitation community.
- Encourage evaluation and research on release techniques and success of release programmes.
- Showcase wildlife rehabilitation and medical care to visitors at the Wellington Zoo Conservation Hospital and ensure key messages of conservation are integrated into visitor experience and communication.
- Provide work experience and formal learning opportunities for veterinary students and postgraduate students in exotic and native wildlife medicine in collaboration with Massey University.



5: research

develop a framework for integrating veterinary and animal management with conservation/research activities

WZACS Intention

Zoos and aquariums are fully and actively integrated into the research community and into public consciousness and understanding of science, as serious, respected scientific institutions that make significant contributions and sound scientific decisions for wildlife worldwide.

Wellington Zoo will:

- Promote itself as a resource for external parties undertaking applied research.
- Actively seek to conduct, and be utilised by external parties for veterinary and conservation research projects.
- Increase the profile of Wellington Zoo as a conservation research agency among the wider community through promotion of research projects at Wellington Zoo.
- Give priority to applied research that maximises conservation outputs.
- Use an animal ethics committee to guide research.
- Showcase research to Zoo visitors and integrate these messages into visitor experience and communication.
- Enable and encourage staff to develop research and publication skills.



6: *environmental sustainability*

create a culture of the wise use of natural resources at Wellington Zoo and ensure that we “walk the talk”

WZACS Intention

All zoos and aquariums will work towards sustainability and reduce their ‘environmental footprint’. They will use natural resources in a way that does not lead to their decline, thus meeting the needs of the present without compromising future generations. All zoos and aquariums will serve as leaders by example, using green practices in all aspects of their operations and by demonstrating methods by which visitors can adopt sustainable lifestyles.

Wellington Zoo will:

- Constantly seek ways to reduce its environmental footprint through an Environmental Management System (EMS).
- Showcase examples of the wise use of natural resources to visitors.
- Support regional and local environmental initiatives.



7: *advocacy and community conservation*

use the resources of the Zoo to create awareness, a call to action and provide opportunities for visitors to participate in conservation initiatives

WZACS Intention

Zoos and aquariums with their unique resource of live animals, their expertise, and their links to field conservation will be recognized as leaders and mentors in formal and informal education for conservation.

The educational role of zoos and aquariums will be socially, environmentally and culturally relevant, and by influencing people's behaviour and values, education will be seen as an important conservation activity. Zoos and aquariums will expand the training of their own staff and of others engaged in in situ and ex situ work.

Wellington Zoo will:

- Provide visitor experiences and conservation learning that empowers and enables visitors to implement sustainable practices in their day-to-day lives.
- Advocate the Zoo's involvement in and the success of conservation projects to enhance the credibility of the Zoo as a conservation organisation.
- Reflect key conservation messages in all external and internal communication where appropriate.
- Develop communications and visitor experience strategies informed by the conservation strategy.



8: *sustainable financial support*

create a sustainable funding stream from across the Zoo, its partners and the community for conservation initiatives

WZACS Intention

...fund-raising activities are open to zoos of all sizes; the smaller can contribute to larger consortia to ensure that enough funds are raised overall to make a difference on the ground. There is no doubt that by being seen to be actively involved in field conservation, zoos and aquariums will attract a wider donor base.

Wellington Zoo will:

- Create a sustainable funding stream and related framework to support conservation activities.
- Integrate the Wellington Zoo Conservation Fund with the Zoo's fundraising strategy.
- Set annual criteria for how the funds are allocated.
- Create ways for visitors to contribute resources in support of the Zoo's conservation initiatives.



9: *partnerships*

actively seek and nurture partnerships that progress and support Wellington Zoo's Conservation Strategy

WZACS Intention

Through increased cooperation and judicious encouragement, zoos and aquariums will continue to raise standards of animal management, educate the public to act on behalf of conservation issues, and assist in field projects. Partnerships will strengthen global cooperation and help all zoos, aquariums and other conservation organisations to improve and to achieve their conservation goals. Zoos and aquariums will be encouraged to help one another, particularly those that have fewer resources and/or expertise.

Wellington Zoo will:

- Prioritise partnerships with recognised conservation agencies and those with the ability to enhance and support the Zoo's conservation outputs.
- Provide opportunities for the Zoo's partners to participate in conservation initiatives.
- Assist local conservation initiatives where feasible.



10: assessment of impact

assess the measurable outcomes of the Conservation Strategy at least annually to ensure the best use of resources and maximum conservation outputs

WZACS Intention

It is essential that zoos and aquariums use a variety of methods to evaluate the impact of their education and training programmes. This will influence their planning for the future and help them to collect evidence illustrating their effectiveness as centres of good conservation education and as agents of change in affecting human behaviour and values for the benefit of wildlife and society.

Wellington Zoo will:

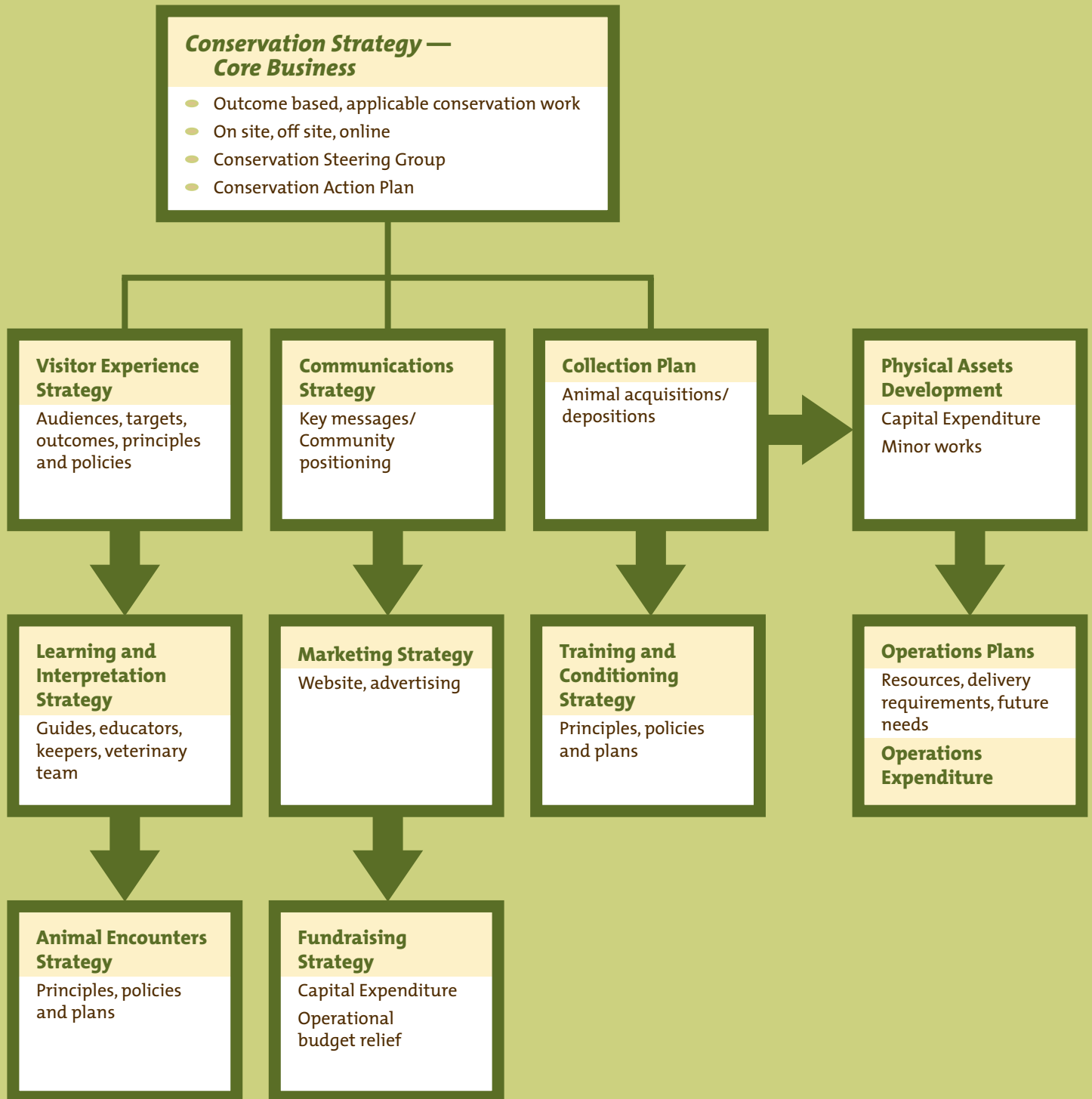
- Create qualitative and quantitative assessment measures for each key area.
- Evaluate visitor perception of Wellington Zoo's positioning as a conservation agency in the first year of the strategy and then again in year three.

WELLINGTON

Zoo

appendix 1:

Conservation Strategy



appendix 2:

Relevant Documents from other stakeholders

- 1** **WAZA** (2005): Building a Future for Wildlife: The World Zoo and Aquariums Conservation Strategy. World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Berne, Switzerland.
- 2** **Wellington City Council** (2007): Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 3** **Wellington City Council** (2006): Environmental Strategy – Protecting and enhancing our natural environment.
- 4** **Department of Conservation** (2000): The New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy.
- 5** **Disney** (2005): Disney’s Commitment to Conservation. Published by Walt Disney World Conservation Initiatives, Lake Buena Vista, Florida.
- 6** **Zoos Victoria** (2006): Conservation Strategy.
- 7** **Auckland Zoo** (2006): Auckland Zoo Strategic Plan — 2006 – 2010.

WELLINGTON

Zoo

the dream:
***To be absolutely,
positively the best
little zoo in the world***

For more information on
how to help Wellington Zoo Trust,
please contact:

Katja Geschke, DVM, PhD
*Manager, Conservation
& Veterinary Science*

DDI: 04 381 6757

M: 021 227 8304

Katja.Geschke@wellingtonzoo.com
www.wellingtonzoo.com