



## Media Release

### **Rotorua wildlife park wins prestigious Tourism Industry Award**

Rainbow Springs Kiwi Wildlife Park, an exceptional tourism attraction that lets visitors get up close and personal with New Zealand's endangered species and educates them about the natural environment, has won the DOC Conservation in Action Award in the 2009 Tourism Industry Awards.

Managed by the Tourism Industry Association New Zealand\*, the Award was announced at a special event in Wellington today.

TIA Chief Executive Tim Cossar says Rainbow Springs Kiwi Wildlife Park is an outstanding example of excellence and a tourism operator that goes out of its way to be involved in practical conservation projects.

"They have invested significant effort and resources in successful conservation initiatives, a strategy that has financial as well as environmental benefits."

Department of Conservation Director General Al Morrison says "DOC supports this Award because it celebrates the value that tourism operators contribute to our country's prosperity.

"Conservation is at the heart of what makes New Zealand special, and DOC congratulates Rainbow Springs for their success in helping many people experience that."

Rainbow Springs has been involved in a captive breeding programme for kiwi for many years, and has the only kiwi conservation centre in the world where visitors can get a behind-the-scenes look at the work being done to save New Zealand's national icon from extinction.

The Rotorua wildlife park currently has over 90 native plant species and 13 native or endemic animal and bird species on site, including tuatara, with all enclosures planted to replicate the bird or animal's natural environment as closely as possible.

Throughout the year, the team at Rainbow Springs participates in pest trapping, weed control and tree planting onsite, and through external volunteer programmes in their local community. They facilitate courses to teach the correct handling of kiwi eggs for DOC staff, and involve schools and local organisations in conservation initiatives such as worm growing (for kiwi food) and tree planting.

Recent developments include planting an organic garden which now provides food for the birds and supplies the onsite café, signing up to join Green Globe, calculating the park's carbon footprint and installing industrial worm farms.

\* The Awards are managed by the Tourism Industry Association on behalf of the Tourism Industry New Zealand Trust.

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**Key Facts**

- Tourism contributes close to 10% of gross domestic product (GDP) for New Zealand
- Tourism directly and indirectly employs nearly one in ten New Zealanders (this includes 108,100 FTE directly and 73,100 FTE indirectly).
- Tourism in New Zealand is a \$50 million per day industry. Tourism delivers \$24 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributes another \$26 million in economic activity every day.
- Total tourism expenditure reached \$20.1 billion for the year ended March 2007. International visitor expenditure accounted for \$8.8 billion or 18.3% of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings.

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