

# **New Zealand Celebrations of the International Year of Biodiversity 2010**

## **Final report**

**Prepared by the Department of Conservation, New Zealand**

### **Introduction**

International Year of Biodiversity 2010 was celebrated in New Zealand at a number of events throughout the year. The NZ government (through the Department of Conservation) took the lead in organising IYB activities with local government authorities and other organisations also organizing activities. International Year of Biodiversity was used as an opportunity to promote the value of global and national biodiversity and the wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Young people and families living in urban areas were target audiences for many of the year's activities.

### **Main activities during the year**

#### January - Launch

International Year of Biodiversity was officially launched by the New Zealand Prime Minister in conjunction with the launch of a Ministry of Tourism/Department of Conservation website [www.spokesbird.com](http://www.spokesbird.com). On this site, Sirocco the kakapo – a New Zealand endangered species - acted as a 'spokesbird' for New Zealand nature-based tourism and conservation. This was an online and media launch, and was covered by domestic and international media. Sirocco 'spokesbird' ran a blog throughout the year reporting on the bird's activities and giving biodiversity news updates.

#### April – Bioblitz

BioBlitz is a unique opportunity for scientists, students and the public to experience the vast array of species (biodiversity) living in an urban reserve. The goal is to count as many species as possible in a 24-hour survey of a large urban area. BioBlitz 2010 was organised principally by Landcare Research and the Auckland Museum. Auckland Regional Council, DOC, other Crown Research Institutes, University of Auckland and others supported and participated in the event.

#### May – International Day of Biodiversity

Awareness-raising events were held on International Day of Biodiversity on May 22<sup>nd</sup> in New Zealand's main cities and other areas. In Auckland and Wellington, the Department of Conservation partnered with the Auckland Museum and Wellington Zoo to stage a day of biodiversity-related activities involving local musicians and artists. The Words on a Wing education initiative was launched at these events, when two giant kakapo models made their first public appearance and began to collect 'feather messages' from young people about why biodiversity matters. Also launched at the events was the national photo competition: Biodiversity Captured, a partnership project involving the Department of Conservation, UNESCO, the National Institute of Water and Atmosphere (NIWA) and the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society.

### September – Biodiversity Captured Awards and Exhibition

The Biodiversity Captured photo competition celebrated New Zealand's unique plant and animal life and the value of biodiversity in our lives. The competition had sections for 'Land and Sky', 'Water' and 'People and Biodiversity', with an adult and youth category for each section. More than 350 photos were received from amateur and professional photographers from a wide range of age groups. The winners of each theme in both the young and adult categories won a cash prize of \$300. The overall winner received a \$1000 cash prize and runner-up \$500. The awards were presented at a special ceremony during New Zealand's Conservation Week. For more information and to view the winning photographs see [www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved/events-and-awards/international-year-of-biodiversity/photo-competition/](http://www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved/events-and-awards/international-year-of-biodiversity/photo-competition/)

### October – Kiri te Kakapo and the New Zealand government delegation travel to Japan for the CBD COP10 meeting.

The kākāpō, one of this country's most endangered species, was a flag bearer for New Zealand's International Year of Biodiversity celebrations during 2010. Two three-metre long steel and mesh models of the endangered flightless bird were created by the New Zealand Department of Conservation as part of its national biodiversity campaign called 'Words on a Wing'. The birds visited schools, museums and zoos collecting messages from young people about why biodiversity matters, what they want world leaders to do about its loss, and what they are doing themselves.

One of the kākāpō, named 'Kiri te Kakapo' by Auckland schoolchildren, was flown to Nagoya to be part of the CEPA fair showing the best examples from around the world of International Year of Biodiversity education and awareness activities. It became a star attraction at the fair, and took centre stage at a special ceremony in which the CBD's executive secretary Dr Ahmed Djoghlaif accepted a selection of the 20,000 plus messages New Zealanders have composed.

### October – Environmental Professionals at National Museum.

The year's largest gathering of Australian and New Zealand environmental professionals was held at Te Papa National Museum in Wellington. The Chair of the NZ Organising Committee said the IYB presented a significant opportunity to recognize the interconnectedness of challenges and solutions for the environment and especially the importance of biodiversity.

### October – Awareness events in Twizel.

The South Island town of Twizel organized a week of events to celebrate the IYB at the Twizel Event Centre in Canterbury. Events included workshops, exhibitions and discussions. [www.canterburybiodiversity.org.nz](http://www.canterburybiodiversity.org.nz)

#### November – MyBiodiversity film competition.

Peter and Martin Langlands and the Kaikoura Suburban School were the winners of the MyBiodiversity Film competition. Their winning entries focused on the Australasian bittern (matuku), a New Zealand native bird, and on local efforts to protect the endangered seabird Hutton's shearwater. [www.voxy.co.nz/national/biodiversity-film-competition](http://www.voxy.co.nz/national/biodiversity-film-competition)



Mandy Hague and Merryn Giblin stand in front of their winning photos in the Biodiversity Captured competition.

#### November – Ecological Society conference.

Some 360 people, including nine main speakers from Canada, the United States and New Zealand, attended the New Zealand Ecological Society annual conference. The conference theme recognized and celebrated the IYB.

#### December – Outlook for Someday International Year of Biodiversity Film Award

A special Biodiversity Award was sponsored in the 2010 Outlook for Someday Sustainability Film Challenge for young people under 25. There were so many outstanding entries that two biodiversity awards were given! Winning entries, both made by small teams of secondary school students, were *Sam the Superworm*, a story about saving our food that shows how everyone, including a small stripy worm, can help nurture and protect nature; and *The Kaitiaki Children and the Birds*, about a group of children who protect birds and have a message that we should all become guardians of nature. The winning films can be seen at <http://theoutlookforsomeday.net/films/2010/>.

#### **Other initiatives during the year**

- A scoping exercise for a New Zealand Clearing House Mechanism was carried out, involving New Zealand government agencies and research institutes. This will be progressed during the Decade of Biodiversity.
- Ongoing implementation of the NZ Biodiversity Strategy.
- The development of new training programmes to increase biodiversity and conservation management skills
- The development of a comprehensive biodiversity and conservation education programme for teachers and students. This will be an online resource linked to classroom and field activities.