



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



## **International Year of Biodiversity 2010**

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### **Activity update - Department of Conservation, New Zealand**

The Department of Conservation is leading the New Zealand government in the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity.

#### **Official launch**

The Department announced its involvement with the International Year of Biodiversity with a media release on Friday 29 January. The media release (Appendix A) promoted the appointment of a critically endangered native parrot, a kakapo, as Spokesbird for Conservation. The Spokesbird for Conservation is a multi-level campaign involving social media, traditional media and event production to highlight New Zealand's biodiversity.

The announcement received media coverage in New Zealand, Australia, the US, the UK, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Romania, Russia, Poland and India.

Social media activities include Twitter entries, Facebook page entries, Facebook fanpage, Youtube videos, and dialogue with online communities of interest.

[www.Spokesbird.com](http://www.Spokesbird.com)

[www.Sirocco2010.com](http://www.Sirocco2010.com)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUmfdRmWiHE>

<http://www.twitter.com/Spokesbird>

#### **Websites**

The Department's involvement in the International Year of Biodiversity and information about New Zealand's biodiversity has been published to the Department's website:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved/events-and-awards/international-year-of-biodiversity/>

The multi-New Zealand agency website [www.biodiversity.govt.nz](http://www.biodiversity.govt.nz) has been updated to provide a link to the Department's website for International Year of Biodiversity information.

#### **Events and community engagement activities**

The Department is liaising with other government agencies including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry for the Environment, the Ministry of Fisheries and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and will be planning activities in association with local government, organisations such as Landcare Research and Non-Government Organisations.

In April the Department is hosting an international workshop focussing on collaboration of regions with islands around the issue of invasive species management and biodiversity protection.

Our ongoing community engagement work includes aligning our national events programme, such as World Wetlands Day, Seaweed and Arbor Day, with International Year of Biodiversity. A full list of national events is provided (Appendix B).

Conservancies and area offices around New Zealand are linking regional activities and events to the International Year of Biodiversity. A full list of regional events can be located on our website:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved/events-and-awards/regional-events/>

### **Programme of international speakers**

The Department hopes to co-host a programme of international speakers throughout the year. This programme will culminate in a forum for government and business leaders during Conservation Week 2010 (September). The programme is currently being planned and more information will be provided throughout the year.

### **External publications**

The Department will provide a feature story about the International Year of Biodiversity for the Statistics New Zealand Yearbook 2010.

### **Contacts**

Key contacts at the Department of Conservation's International Relations Unit:

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## **Appendix A – International Year of Biodiversity media release**

29 January 2010

### **Sirocco the kākāpō named a conservation ambassador**

New Zealand's world famous parrot – Sirocco the kākāpō – has been officially recognized as a conservation ambassador by the Prime Minister John Key.

To launch New Zealand's involvement in the International Year of Biodiversity and in recognition of Sirocco's own celebrity status the 12-year old kākāpō has been named New Zealand's "Official Spokesbird for Conservation".

Sirocco, one of only 124 kākāpō remaining in the world, was catapulted into stardom after featuring in the BBC's "Last chance to see" programme. This saw a huge rise in popularity of kakapo and interest from people wanting to know more about New Zealand's unique native wildlife.

"Sirocco was an obvious choice for the role – he has a huge worldwide following and he demonstrates the importance of looking after the very special nature that makes New Zealand so different", said Conservation Minister Kate Wilkinson.

"New Zealand is home to the world's only flightless and nocturnal parrot, the last surviving member of a dinosaur family and the world's smallest marine dolphin - we have so much unique native wildlife in every nook and cranny across the country. This is our biodiversity to protect and Sirocco can help spread that message.

"We're justifiably proud of our natural living space and our reputation as a destination where people can experience amazing wildlife, landscapes and wilderness.

"I have every confidence that Sirocco's natural charm and charisma will encourage people to become more engaged with conserving New Zealand's natural heritage", said Ms Wilkinson.

A new website, created jointly by the Department of Conservation and Tourism New Zealand, has also been unveiled to help profile the on-going work of protecting New Zealand's unique wildlife and plants. People can continue to interact with Sirocco on the new [spokesbird.com](http://spokesbird.com) website which will include regular blog updates from this charismatic character, as well as videos, photographs and links to his Facebook and Twitter accounts.

The International Year of Biodiversity was launched at a ceremony in Berlin with the German Chancellor Angela Merkel warning the world will face "enormous costs" if no action is taken against securing biodiversity. The world is facing a global extinction crisis which threatens not only the natural environment but mankind itself - all life on Earth depends upon species, ecosystems and natural resources.

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## Appendix B – National events 2010

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
World Wetlands Day	2 February
Seaweeek	7-14 March
BioBlitz	April
International Day of Biodiversity	22 May
Youth Week	22 – 30 May
Arbor Day / World Environment Day	5 June
World Oceans Day	8 June
Conservation Week	12-19 September
World Parks Day	September