

Rare kiwi hatches in quake-hit N.Zealand

September 13 2010



File photo shows an endangered kiwi chick. One of the extremely rare animals that survived a buffeting in its egg during this month's Christchurch earthquake has hatched safely, in a boost to conservation efforts, officials said Monday.

An endangered New Zealand kiwi that survived a buffeting in its egg during this month's Christchurch earthquake has hatched safely, in a boost to conservation efforts, officials said Monday.

Named Rickter, after the scale of the 7.0-magnitude quake, the chick hatched on Sunday at the Willowbank Wildlife Reserve in Christchurch.

"Our first egg hatch this year is one breakage that is a welcome relief after the recent quakes," [Conservation](#) Minister Kate Wilkinson said.

The ground-dwelling kiwi, the avian symbol of New Zealand, is

threatened by a host of introduced [predators](#) including rats, cats, dogs, [ferrets](#) and possums.

Department of Conservation spokesman Rory Newsam said there were fewer than 70,000 kiwis left in New Zealand and the rowi, the sub-species to which Rickter belongs, numbered only 300.

Newsam said Rickter's egg rolled around in its [incubator](#) during the September 4 earthquake but rubber matting prevented any damage.

He said the chick would be taken to a small island sanctuary until it was about one year old and better able to defend itself, then released into a wildlife protection area on the South Island.

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