

Scientists look at deodorant for New Zealand's smelly birds

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This handout photo taken on September 12 and provided by New Zealand's Department of Conservation shows a newly born kiwi chick at the Willowbank Wildlife Reserve in Christchurch. Scientists say they are hoping to develop a deodorant for New Zealand's native birds to stop them falling prey to introduced predators.

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New Zealand has an abundance of native bird species, including the famous kiwi, but no native land mammals, meaning introduced animals such as cats and stoats have had a devastating impact on bird numbers.

Canterbury University researcher Jim Briskie said Friday it appeared New Zealand birds suffered from body odour, making them an easy

target for [predators](#).

Briskie said unlike their overseas counterparts, which evolved alongside mammals, New Zealand birds emitted a strong smell when preened to produce wax to protect their feathers.

He said the kiwi smelled like mushrooms or [ammonia](#), while the flightless kakapo parrot's odour was like "musty violin cases", possibly contributing to its endangered status.

The Marsden scientific research fund has given Briskie a 600,000 [New Zealand](#) dollar (440,000 US) grant to study native bird body odours over the next three years in the hope of making them less exposed to predators.

"Down the line, if we do find some species are particularly smelly or vulnerable, perhaps I can design a deodorant for kiwis," he told the Dominion Post newspaper.

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