

Second rare white kiwi hatches in New Zealand

December 22 2011



This handout photograph taken in May 2011, by the Department of Conservation, shows a rare white kiwi chick at Pukaha Mount Bruce. A second rare white kiwi has hatched at New Zealand's national wildlife centre, conservation officials announced Friday, months after the world's first hatched in captivity.

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The chick is believed to have the same parents as Manukura, which arrived in May, and it has given its carers an extra treat in the festive period.

"We were gob-smacked really," said Kathy Houkamau, the manager at the Pukaha sanctuary north of Wellington.

"To have a second white chick is a delightful gift, especially at this time of year. We thought Christmas had come early in May when Manukura arrived, but now it's come twice."

A small number of North Island brown kiwi carry a recessive white gene which both the male and female must have to produce a white chick.

Department of Conservation [captive](#) breeding ranger Darren Page said it was remarkable two birds with the rare white gene had paired up in the 940-hectare (2,323 acre) Pukaha forest to produce two white chicks over two seasons.

"Both white birds have the same father, who we have identified through his transmitter. We can't identify the mother but assume she is the same because of the rarity of the white gene," Page said.

The new chick has been named Mauriora, meaning "sustained life" in the indigenous Maori language, while the earlier white kiwi was named Manukura meaning "of chiefly status".

The flightless [kiwi](#) is a national symbol of [New Zealand](#).

However, it is threatened by predators including rats, cats, dogs, ferrets and possums, and it is estimated there are fewer than 70,000 left with several sub-species listed as critically endangered.

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Citation: Second rare white kiwi hatches in New Zealand (2011, December 22) retrieved 6 June 2023 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-12-rare-white-kiwi-hatches-zealand.html>

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