

Saving the world's rarest parrot with German tech

Prof Dr Michael Lierz is a world-renowned scientist and a veterinary specialist in avian diseases at Justus-Liebig-Universität in Giessen, Germany.

Michael Lierz and his research team have cooperated with the New Zealand Department of Conservation's Kākāpō recovery programme, providing state of the art artificial insemination technology for the New Zealand parrot that has come dangerously close to extinction.

The kākāpō is the only flightless parrot in the world and there are only 201 kākāpō alive today. Following the work of Prof Lierz and his colleagues, 2019 was the best breeding season on record.



Prof Dr Michael Lierz

“SAVING SPECIES IS HUGELY IMPORTANT. NOT JUST THE KĀKĀPŌ. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE DON'T LOSE ANY SPECIES.”

- Michael Lierz, Professor for Avian Diseases


International research and education

Prof Lierz has nothing but praise for the conservation work being undertaken in New Zealand, noting the project is one of the best organised conservation projects he has ever seen.

“The work with New Zealand researchers was exceedingly good,” he says “After a few days you had the feeling that we had known each other for decades.”

He is also a strong advocate for international education. “I always recommend to my students that they should go offshore and take a look at what is happening elsewhere.

And New Zealand is naturally, because of the kākāpō project, right at the top of the list.”





Longstanding academic and research relationships between New Zealand and Germany

The cooperation between Germany and New Zealand has been developing rapidly over the last few years addressing many different research topics. Both countries contribute with their expertise and infrastructures. The current focus of the Science and Technology cooperation is primarily on climate and energy research.

New Zealand institutions have strong academic relationships with German counterparts, where student exchange and research programmes are at the heart of their partnerships.

“AS A VET WHO WORKS WITH BIRDS, AND WHO WORKS IN SPECIES CONSERVATION, THE KĀKĀPŌ IS LIKE THE HOLY GRAIL!”

EU/NZ: STRONGER TOGETHER

New Zealand’s relationship with the EU is significant. The EU is an important partner for New Zealand; we share values, perspectives and interests that make us closer than geography would suggest.

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