



EcoWorld Aquarium & Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre

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Media Release

for immediate release

Lucky lost Weka rescued in Picton's High Street

One very hungry and lost young weka was lucky to be spotted in Picton's High Street and then quickly caught by EcoWorld Aquarium & Wildlife Rehabilitation manager.

"We had been told by concerned members of the public that there was a juvenile, very tame weka wandering about the Picton CBD" said EcoWorld manager Janelle White.

"We got the call about midday that it was scavenging around the cafes. It took a bit of time to find it, but it was so weak and hungry that it was not that hard to net."

Tita, as the EcoWorld team have affectionately called him, is now in EcoWorld's rehabilitation centre for assessment and treatment.

"He was starving. His keel (breastbone) was protruding, and he was significantly underweight. He is now eating lots of worms and fruit and seems to be really enjoying the foraging activities provided by staff. Foraging enrichment is an extremely important part of rehabilitation because it teaches him behaviours necessary to find food in the wild. All going well he will be released in the next few days", said Janelle.

Tita will be released into the wild (far from Picton township) once he has regained enough weight and energy to survive our harsh New Zealand winter.

The weka (*Gallirallus australis*) is a native ground dwelling bird found only in New Zealand. It is currently listed on the IUCN red list as vulnerable which means they are particularly at risk from predators and people. As people are encroaching more and more on our native bush habitats, encounters with wildlife in urban areas are becoming more common as animals are adapting to townships to scavenge and forage. Urban areas pose a wide range of threats to wildlife: dogs, cats, motor vehicles and even harm from people themselves.

If you find any wildlife that appears to be in distress or danger, please notify the Department of Conservation or call the friendly staff at EcoWorld Aquarium & Wildlife Rehabilitation.

John Reuhman – Director, EcoWorld

*****Ends*****

Photo EcoWorld Manager Janelle White with recovering Tita.

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