

Press Release

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Charitable Trust Established to Save the New Zealand Falcon Trust To Be Launched At Marlborough Wine Festival

Two of the more unusual guests at this year's Marlborough Wine Festival won't be interested in sipping on the renowned wines or the gourmet food. Instead they will be highlighting the plight of the native Falcon – Karearea.

Delphine and Wilson are two of the 27 of New Zealand Falcons that have been successfully raised in a conservation programme run in the Marlborough region.

In an effort to continue the work undertaken in the past three years, a charitable trust has been established.

The Marlborough Falcon Conservation Trust is to be launched at the Marlborough Wine Festival, an appropriate location given how the initial preservation programme began.

In 2005 a project was established with the help of New Zealand Winegrowers, Sustainable Farming Fund and International Wildlife Consultants (UK) Ltd to increase numbers of the falcon on the Wairau Plains in Marlborough. Known as The Falcon For Grapes programme, it not only successfully relocated birds from the wild, with the help of DOC, but also established breeding pairs.

Delphine and Wilson are two of those that have been bred as part of the programme.

Funding however has been difficult to source, with International Wildlife Consultants and The Emirates Falconers Club now footing the bill for the entire conservation programme.

Marlborough Falcon Conservation Trustee Chair, Kathy Hughes said the aim of the newly established trust is to raise funds to ensure the excellent work already undertaken continues.

“We have a unique bird in the New Zealand falcon, but it is under serious threat. Its habitat is being gradually eroded and natural predators mean up to 75% of all chicks born in the wild do not survive. The Falcon for Grapes programme turned those statistics around. But we require ongoing funding to ensure the recent successes are maintained.”

Raising awareness of the falcon is another major goal of the Trust which is why it is being launched at the Marlborough Wine Festival. Eight thousand people attend the annual event and it is expected the falcons being onsite, will be a major attraction.

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Photo Opportunities and/or images of the falcons are available.