

Wellington's wildlife 'halo': What it means for the City, for wildlife, and for our future

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Halo is a conceptual term and Wellington City has adopted it as a way to explain the phenomenon of birds spreading out from Zealandia, Wellington's fenced eco sanctuary. Traditionally cities have been developed as places for people, where the unpredictability of nature is designed out. However, Wellington recognises that nature is a critical part of a successful city, both for the health and wellbeing of citizens and also as a key economic and competitive advantage. There is a growing body of research on the importance of nature for cities, for example the Biophilic Cities programme, but what of the importance of cities for nature? Is it possible for cities to provide resilient habitats for New Zealand's threatened species? Wellington is experiencing breeding success of species such as tieke and kaka in the City's parks, but urban living also presents challenges for these species; the usual suite of predators, domestic pets, window and car strikes, lack of suitable nesting sites, and food sources. Can these challenges be overcome? As a city our biggest strength and opportunity is our community. The most significant conservation resource cities can offer, is people and a capability for high and sustained levels of human interventions. Do these interventions have the power to turn human and wildlife interactions into positive outcomes, both for the good of nature and for the City?