



Management Plan for Charlie Kākā held at Dunedin Botanic Gardens

General Information

Species	South Island Kākā (<i>Nestor meridionalis</i>)						
Name	Charlie	Life stage	Adult	Age	24+	Sex	Female
Hospital ID	2011155	Band	L49336 (right leg)				

Health Check

In July 2024, a comprehensive health check was performed on Charlie at Dunedin Wildlife Hospital (DWH) prior to moving her to Dunedin Botanic Gardens (DBG).

Due to pre-existing health conditions, it is recommended that Charlie has a comprehensive health check annually, more frequently if any concerns noted.

Next comprehensive health check is due in June 2025

Regular health assessments by keepers should be performed every time Charlie is captured for some reason e.g. weigh ins.

Behaviour and Welfare Assessments

Please refer to the comprehensive Behavioural and Welfare Assessment performed on the 9/8/24 for more context.

DWH Vet recommendations after a behavioural assessment performed at the request of MPI on 23rd July 2024

1. Adequate time is needed for Charlie to settle into the routine at the Dunedin Botanic Gardens. A minimum of 6 months with the caveat that if she does show signs of distress during this time that a prompt re-evaluation by DOC, DBG and DWG will occur to ensure her welfare is maintained.
2. Comprehensive records for Charlie are required to be provided from Te Anau Aviaries. These should include but are not limited to:
 - a. Weights – how regularly she is weighed as well as the range of weights at different times of the year to help generate a picture of her weight range at different stages e.g. winter vs breeding vs Autumn weights etc. Ideally an assessment of body condition score will accompany these weights.
 - b. Diet sheet specifically outlining any foods she prefers or dislikes.

- c. Behavioural observations specifically observations of the described stereotypie, the frequency, patterns and potential triggers (if known).
 - d. Training Routine (if applicable).
 - e. Enrichment routines in particular if she has any preferred enrichment items she likes to engage with.
3. After a settling in period a comprehensive behaviour and welfare assessment is performed by myself, similar to the assessment I provided for Jimmy kākā. Propose mid/late-August as a timeline due to multiple observations already being done recently. A follow-up assessment should be scheduled 6 months later (sooner if concerns are flagged by the DBG Curator) to monitor progress.
4. The curator has already initiated behavioural observations of Charlie. These occur three times a day at the same or similar time each day and the duration is 15 minutes. I recommend these continue for at least another 4 weeks and then we can review the results and make adjustments as needed.
 - a. Once/if records from Te Anau are received a good objective assessment of progress will be possible so that further actions/plans can be implemented, if necessary, by the curator at DBG.

Progress on above recommendations:

Point 1: Still early days, Charlie continues to display stereotypical/abnormal behaviour however a subsequent veterinary assessment in August provides some more insight into this.

Point 2: Some information has been provided re: diet, preferred enrichment and occasional training programme however no comprehensive records appear to exist with regards stereotypical/abnormal behaviour that has been present for 20+ years.

Point 3: August completed, timeline for follow-up assessment moved up to end of October.

Point 4: Completed over 2 months. Unfortunately, there are only scant or no meaningful behaviour records from Te Anau to assist with making objective assessments of Charlie in Dunedin.

Plan August – September

As Charlie has pre-existing stereotypies there is a focus on quantifying this behaviour, determining if there are any current triggers and working on providing enrichment opportunities in an attempt to minimize the stereotypies, if at all possible.

1. DBG team to perform daily observations 3 times a day and document Charlie's behaviour repertoire.
2. Work on slowly building trust with Charlie so facilitate working with her in a mutually trustworthy environment.
3. Weigh Charlie at least every 2 weeks to ensure she is maintaining/gaining weight.

- a. Start to incorporate T-perch training to facilitate easier weighing that doesn't require capture and potential damage to any trust that has been developing.
4. Start to reduce meloxicam dose to Spring levels (*see Long-term medication plan for more details*).
5. Update DWH Vets monthly on progress, more frequently if any concerns.

Plan October – December

1. Daily observations only if required or if any concerns that stereotypical behavioural repertoire is getting worse.
2. Continue working on building trust and if indicated start to incorporate more training e.g. continue with T-perch training, consider incorporating a bridge and reward for taking medication.
3. Monitor any behavioural changes that might be associated with increased pain due to reducing the meloxicam dose.
4. DWH Vets to do follow-up Behavioural Assessment in late October to determine if breeding season has had an impact on changing Charlie's behavioural repertoire as well as determine if stereotypies are getting better (or worse) as the case may be.
5. Weigh Charlie every fortnight and once satisfied she is maintaining weight consistently can revert to 3-6 monthly checks as is standard protocol at DBG.

Enrichment

It is well known that provision of enrichment is essential to reducing stereotypical behaviours and this is something that is being used to distract Charlie from swinging.

Preferred enrichment item for Charlie has been identified as the following:

1. Sprinklers/rain

Other forms of kākā appropriate enrichment are also regularly provided including chew logs, fresh browse, and opportunities to forage for food.

Since moving to DBG Charlie is now also housed with another kākā permanently as well as having pairs in adjacent aviaries she can interact with. This ability to socialize is essential for the mental health of parrots in captivity as they are extremely social and should hopefully help in distracting her from the behavioural repertoire she has developed over the past 20+ years.

General Communication

1. Monthly meetings to discuss progress with DOC SI kākā captive coordinators, DWH senior wildlife vet and DBG curator.
2. DBG curator and DWH vet to communicate regularly on Charlie's progress – currently at least fortnightly but more regularly if any concerns.
3. Monthly reports from DBG to DOC and DWH on Charlie's progress.