

New organism incidents and inquiries during 2008/09

Incident	Effects on environment and/or health and safety	Incident management	Follow-up action by ERMA New Zealand
A dead female Golden Bird Wing tropical butterfly found by a member of the public at Mangere, was thought to have come from Butterfly Creek. The butterfly was taken to Auckland Museum which then notified Butterfly Creek.	No inquiry conducted.	Butterfly Creek searched its environs and found no other specimens. The butterfly house was checked for any structural faults, however, no issues were identified. Measures were assessed to prevent the successful accidental or purposeful removal of specimens from the facility.	No inquiry conducted.
A siamang gibbon 'Iwani' bit the hand of a trainee zoo keeper at Auckland Zoo. The trainee was with the primate keeper who was giving the gibbon his morning greet and groom. The keeper considered that the gibbon was calm and allowed the trainee to touch him.	Minor adverse effect on the health and safety of people. The trainee keeper received three stitches and was off work for five days.	The zoo has reiterated its protocol for handling of the gibbon. The gibbon is not to be touched by anyone who does not know the gibbon or have a history of a positive relationship with him.	No inquiry conducted.
A group of capuchin monkeys were being relocated to their new monkey island enclosure at Willowbank Wildlife Reserve when two monkeys slipped through a gap in their old enclosure. Also a zoo keeper was bitten by another monkey, a large male, when trying to net the animal for the move.	Minor adverse effect on the health and safety of people. The keeper received six stitches.	One monkey was recaptured the same day within the zoo. The remaining monkey was recovered from a reserve adjacent to the zoo three days later.	No inquiry conducted.
A member of the public found a Clipper tropical butterfly outside the Otago museum. Further investigation identified that the museum was not following requirements of the zoo containment standard for butterflies in its Discovery World exhibit.	None identified.	The museum undertook a number of structural and procedural improvements to ensure that tropical butterflies remained in the containment facility.	No inquiry conducted.
A member of the public entered a restricted area of Auckland Zoo. The woman was observed by staff touching Kashin the elephant in her enclosure. Following a warning from staff she left the enclosure and was escorted from the area.	None identified.	Auckland Zoo installed a padlocked barrier fence at the end of the dry moat in the elephant enclosure and put up a danger sign.	No inquiry conducted.

Incident	Effects on environment and/or health and safety	Incident management	Follow-up action by ERMA New Zealand
Auckland Zoo was unable to locate one male African clawed frog. It is thought the frog may have been eaten as two separate groups of male frogs were introduced to the enclosure at the same time.	None identified.	The group of frogs were transferred to another enclosure.	No inquiry conducted.
A young girl was petting 'Foxy' a female baboon at Zion Wildlife Gardens when the animal put the girl's hand in her mouth then let go.	Minor adverse effect on the health and safety of people. The skin was not broken on the girl's hand and antiseptic cream and a plaster were applied.	A rope barrier was erected in front of the enclosure.	No inquiry conducted.
Hamilton Zoo was broken into and two Madagascar day geckos were stolen from their display. The geckos were returned to the zoo by the Wildlife Enforcement Group following a tip-off.	None identified.	The zoo upgraded its security.	No inquiry conducted.
A member of the public notified Auckland Zoo staff that two cotton top tamarins were outside their enclosure in an adjacent tree.	None identified.	The animals were quickly recaptured and staff pruned a flax bush inside the enclosure thought to have been their escape route.	No inquiry conducted.
A member of the public notified Otago Museum that an exotic butterfly had escaped from the Discovery World exhibit.	None identified.	The museum determined that mesh covering an extractor fan on the roof of the enclosure was not secure. The mesh covering was replaced.	No inquiry conducted.
The University of Canterbury transferred (incorrectly identified) algal samples to Landcare Research without MAF approval.	None identified.	The university retrained staff about the transfer process and updated their organism registers.	No inquiry conducted.
A new lion den enclosure at Orana Wildlife Park was operational without MAF inspection or approval. The structure did meet zoo standard requirements.	None identified.	The zoo's containment manual was updated to include instructions to notify MAF of any modifications to an enclosure that affects containment.	No inquiry conducted.

Incident	Effects on environment and/ or health and safety	Incident management	Follow-up action by ERMA New Zealand
Plant and Food Research was in non-compliance with HSNO Act controls by allowing GM brassica to flower at a field test site at Lincoln.	A MAF investigation into the risks of flowering GM brassica concluded that GM material was unlikely to have escaped the field test site. Plant and Food Research is required to carry out a programme of surveillance and soil management confined to the site to detect and remove any volunteer plants which might contain GM heritable material. This programme will continue until September 2013.	Plant and Food Research removed and killed all brassica material and undertook an internal review of its management systems. The field test was discontinued.	Inquiry INQ08001.
Unauthorised personnel entered the Plant and Food Research GM brassica field test site at Lincoln. Environmental group members were on the site where GM brassica flowered in breach of HSNO Act controls.	None identified.	No action taken.	No inquiry conducted.
Intruders broke into a circus elephant trailer freeing animals including a llama, goat and miniature horse. Animal rights messages were painted on the side of the trailer.	None identified.	The intruders could not release Jumbo the elephant because of locks in the trailer.	No inquiry conducted.
A keeper was bitten on the hand by a siamang gibbon when feeding the animal through the enclosure mesh at Auckland Zoo.	Minor adverse effect on the health and safety of people. The keeper received small puncture wounds to the hand and was taken to A & E to have the wound dressed.	The zoo reminded staff about primate feeding protocols.	No inquiry conducted.
Willowbank Wildlife Park transferred lemurs to a veterinary clinic for treatment on three occasions without MAF approval.	None identified.	The zoo reviewed their procedures and conducted staff training.	No inquiry conducted.
A keeper was bitten by a tiger at Zion Wildlife Gardens. The animal was being moved down a race to a new enclosure. Following an altercation with an adjacent pride of lions the tiger was startled after bumping into a fence and bit the keeper.	Adverse effect on the health and safety of people. The keeper was bitten four times on his knee requiring surgery.	The zoo reviewed and amended their animal handling procedures.	No inquiry conducted.
NIWA transferred Antarctic samples to the Cawthron Institute without MAF approval.	None identified.	The facility undertook staff refresher training in the transfer process.	No inquiry conducted.

Incident	Effects on environment and/or health and safety	Incident management	Follow-up action by ERMA New Zealand
Massey University and AgResearch micro-organism containment facilities were transferring GM mouse tissue on an expired MAF transfer approval.	None identified.	Both facilities reviewed their procedures and undertook staff training.	No inquiry conducted.
A male chimpanzee escaped from the chimp enclosure into an adjoining service area at Hamilton Zoo after a keeper failed to secure a door.	None identified.	Staff reviewed procedures and made structural improvements to the enclosure.	No inquiry conducted.
MAF conducted an incursion response and destroyed White's tree frogs which had been advertised for sale on TradeMe.	None identified.	A MAF investigation is continuing.	ERMA New Zealand has received an application from MAF as to whether the frog is a new organism. No decision has been made to date.
MAF intercepted a package containing seven live juvenile tarantulas arriving from the Philippines at the Auckland mailroom.	None identified.	An Auckland spider enthusiast was fined \$4,630 under the Biosecurity Act 1993 for trying to import the spiders.	No inquiry conducted.
A serval cat escaped from her collar and harness after being startled when out for a walk at Wellington Zoo.	None identified.	The serval was quickly recaptured. The collar was replaced with a nylon choke collar.	No inquiry conducted.
Two children were found in the meerkat enclosure at Auckland Zoo.	None identified.	The children were removed from the enclosure and their parents located.	No inquiry conducted.
An unauthorised person entered the GM cattle field test at AgResearch Ruakura.	None identified.	Police spoke to the person who was using the facility as a short cut. Structural improvements were made to the gate of the facility.	No inquiry conducted.
A keeper was mauled and killed by a tiger at Zion Wildlife Gardens. Two staff members were cleaning the enclosure when the keeper was attacked. The enclosure had a separation area to isolate the tiger, which was not used by the staff.	Adverse effect on the health and safety of people.	In an attempt to rescue the keeper, the tiger was shot. The zoo was closed until a number of structural improvements were made to enclosures. A Department of Labour investigation is continuing.	No inquiry conducted. ERMA New Zealand had been reviewing the zoo standard when this incident occurred. Improvements to health and safety aspects of human contact with adult exotic cats will be included in the revised standard.
A young bird was found in the Plant and Food Research Mt Albert plant house containing GM plants.	None identified.	A gap identified in the structure of the plant house was sealed.	No inquiry conducted.