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NZ zoos apply to import Tas devils

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New Zealand zoos want to import disease-free tasmanian devils to assist in conservation. (University of Tasmania)

Two New Zealand zoos want to import up to 20 tumour-free tasmanian devils.

Wellington Zoo's Simon Eyre says New Zealand wants to assist in protecting the vulnerable marsupial in any way it can.

He says the Wellington and Auckland zoos are likely to take animals born in the population free of the facial tumour disease.

Mr Eyre has told ABC Local Radio the core business of any zoo is to assist in conservation.

"As we all know, the tasmanian devil doesn't have long left in the in the wild unless we can do things to help them," he said.

Mr Eyre said zoos planned to build enclosures to take up to 20 devils from a tumour-free population.

"We're more than likely to take the post-reproductive animals from the program that are actually filling up the valuable spaces for the breeding to happen in Australia," he said.

"So we can take those ones out so the Australian institutions can still breed."