

Kea Conservation Trust - Winter Advocacy Tour 2013

(Report written by Tamsin Orr-Walker
(Project Coordinator))

Funders

- The Lion Foundation
- Unitec Institute of Technology
- Kea Conservation Trust

Results

Dr Lorne Roberts (Unitec Institute of Technology and KCT Trustee) and Tamsin Orr-Walker (Kea Conservation Trust Chair) visited 8 locations from the 15th July – 23rd July and spoke to over 250 people (8 presentations in the evening and 6 stakeholder meetings during the day). A total of 55.5hrs was devoted to deliver all talks and meetings (not including travel time).



The aims of the tour were to:

1. Actively engage with local media
2. Target and engage with key stakeholders in key areas
3. Facilitate and follow up on existing relationships and projects
4. Promote our new Kids for Kea Conservation education DVD (funded by the Lion Foundation)

1. Actively engage with local media

Prior to the tour we sent out information to 5 media organisations (The Press (Christchurch and West Coast), Timaru Herald, Wanaka Sun and the Otago Daily Times). A total of 3 interviews resulted in 4 articles printed in the following newspapers (refer to appendix for full articles):

- Wanaka Sun (2 articles) – *Kea trust promoting work, projects* (11th July). *Species Given a Hand by Artist* (11th July)
- Kaikoura Star – *Eye Kept on Kaikoura Kea* (25th July)
- Fiordland Advocate – *Kea Conservation* (24th July)

2. Target and engage with our key stakeholders in key areas

Eight community meetings hosted by Department of conservation, Forest & Bird and Kiwi Birdlife Park were held over the 8 days. Key locations are those which over the years have been shown to contain key populations or high risk areas for kea (ie areas of high human activity within kea habitat) such as alpine villages (Arthur's Pass), ski fields (Arthur's Pass, Queenstown, Nelson Lakes and Wanaka), National Parks (Nelson Lakes and Arthur's Pass); or high population areas (large towns/cities) which are gateways to any of the above locations (eg Nelson, Christchurch, Kaikoura, Queenstown, Wanaka

and Te Anau). Key stakeholders include DOC, other conservation organisations, and those communities living in areas of and affected most by kea.

Talk Outcomes

Date	Location	Host	Attendee Numbers	Outcomes
15 July	Nelson	Natureland	30	A smaller turn out than the previous year but still a very enthusiastic crowd. Educators in the audience were very positive about the Kids for kea clips shown and will be using it in their next semesters material.
16	Nelson Lakes	DOC	31	A very good turnout for an area with only a small resident population. Lots of support expressed for the nest monitoring and pest control work we are setting up this coming year. DOC were particularly supportive about the advocacy potential of the talk.
17	Arthur's Pass	DOC	16	Positive discussions with the community about the pest control going on in the area and discussions on how we may help with spreading a consistent message in encouraging appropriate behaviour by tourists interacting with kea. Two donation boxes were provided for use at ski fields.
18	Kaikoura	Encounter Kaikoura/F&B	31	The new population census which is scheduled for Jan 2014 within the Hutton's Shearwater Colony at Kowhai Stream was discussed during the public meeting. We received extremely favourable feedback and expressions of support for this work from Forest & Bird and locals (inclusive of the owners of Shearwater Lodge) and offers of accommodation to research workers. Offers of volunteer help from F&B members.
19	ChCh	F&B	40	A wide range of attendees at the talk resulted in discussions inclusive of the role of university students (Canterbury) in collection of information via our field project work. Orana Park were well represented and stayed for discussions on behavioural interactions with their kea and consistency of advocacy message. A number of people also volunteered their time for the coming years nest monitoring and population field research work.
20	Queenstown	Kiwi Birdlife Park	19	Caught up after the talk with Ultimate Hikes with reference to possible collection of kea sightings by guides. Also made contact with Ray Malloy (DOC) with follow up discussions next week. A great turn out from Kiwi Birdlife Park staff and workers who are keen to ensure their advocacy message is consistent with the new Strategic Plan.
21	Wanaka	DOC/F&B	23	A number of people in the community are keen to set up a local group to drive kea protection actions in the Mt Aspiring area along with the Matukituki Trust predator control group (who started their trust after our talk last year). We will stay in contact with this group and help and advise as required. A

				number of ski field representatives attended and a further donation box was given out.
22				Lots of positive discussion after the talk and concerns of tourist interaction with kea in the Milford area. New signs have been developed (previously with KCT input) and are being erected in the area shortly. These will include donation boxes with the proceeds going to the KCT's work. Useful information was sent through from one of the attendees about creating web based seminars so that we can place our talk online. DOC Te Anau are keen to loop the Kids for Kea DVD clips so visitors to the Centre can view these.
	Te Anau	DOC	23	
	Totals		213	

3. Develop existing relationships and projects

Since the KCT's formation in 2006, a number of projects have been developed across the South Island. Many of these are ongoing and require a certain level of community or conservation group engagement and collaboration. As a result the following meetings were initiated with our project partners (the majority which are DOC):

- i. Nelson (15th July – 6hrs) – Strategic plan for kea conservation. Planning for this document continued with Josh Kemp of DOC Nelson/Marlborough. Recording equipment was investigated with Jason Malham (DOC) for sheep repellent project.
- ii. Nelson Lakes (16th July – 1.5hrs) – Pest control, nest monitoring and population survey site. Discussions were initiated with DOC St Arnaud (Grant Harper, Nic Joice and John Wotherspoon) about instigation of a predator control programme around our monitored nest sites (x 4) this breeding season. In addition to this, predator control was discussed for the Travers - Sabine area which could potentially be funded/managed collaboratively by DOC and the KCT. A project plan has since been developed and we will look to apply for funding to extend our habitat protection next year to protect against a stoat eruption (after a beech mast event predicted for 2014 -2015).
- iii. Arthur's Pass (17th July 3hrs) – A number of projects are being initiated or in progress in this location. These include community awareness programme (talks, signage, and education material for ski fields), nest monitoring at two sites (Otira and the Hawdon Valley), a population survey in the Hawdon Valley and screening of surface repellents at a local ski field. Updates of these projects were discussed with DOC (Chris Stewart) prior to the talk while additional talks about community plans for kea were discussed after the talk (with NZ Wildlife Trust members). Also met up with our new Administrator, Kay Davidson, and handed over material (DVDs and newsletters) to post out to members and relevant groups.

- iv. Rangiora (18 July – 2hrs) A meeting was held with Sandy Yong, Sarah Ensor, John Kearvell (OFP) and Peter Brady (CR) of DOC Rangiora to discuss planned interpretation design and placement and potential extension of pest control in the Hawdon area. Outcomes included formation of an interpretation team for development of Arthur's Pass signage and information material (made up of KCT and DOC personnel). Discussions will continue regarding extension of pest control (and particularly possum control in the Hawdon to protect our survey area). An additional meeting was held directly after this with Michelle Crowell regarding updates with DOC 1080 repellent trial in Otira.
- v. Wanaka (21 July – 4hrs) – A meeting was run prior to the talk to discuss the DOC repellent trials with the field project manager, Paul van Klink.
- vi. Te Anau (22 July 1.5hrs) – A meeting was held with all DOC staff in Te Anau (23 personnel) to discuss the new strategic plan and kea updates in the area. A lot of concern expressed in regards
- vii. Queenstown (23 July – 1.5hrs) – A meeting was held with DOC Wakatipu (Greg Lind and Ray Malloy) about the sheep repellent trials at Halfway Bay as well as other possible funding relationships over the coming years. An additional research site to be investigated as back up to these studies and a shepherd/field hand to be sourced.

4. Promote our New Kids for Kea Conservation education DVD

The new Kids for Kea conservation DVD (funded by the Lion Foundation in 2012) was promoted during our talks at each of the 8 locations. This DVD – free to schools and education groups in New Zealand - provides children and educators with a fun opportunity to actively learn about kea conservation initiatives.

23 DVDs were given out during the tour (free to educators and our hosts. A small koha to cover production costs of the DVDs was asked of individuals). Educators were based at schools, ski fields, zoo facilities, eco -tours and Department of Conservation.

A number of people also provided their contact details to post out the DVDS after the tour (a further 35 are available for this purpose).

Promotion and media

The advocacy tour this year was promoted through the following avenues:

- Emails: Past hosts, press, DOC VC and AO's, Universities, Forest & Bird and Federated Mountain Clubs, NZ.
- Media interviews (as described previously)
- Websites and blogs: Kea Conservation Trust, Federated Mountain Clubs (NZ), NZ Alpine Club, Department of Conservation and Forest & Bird.

- Facebook page (page now has over 1540 friends up from 1300 in June)
- E-newsletter updates – sent out June (and report back results August) to over 550 recipients

Costs

The total cost of the Advocacy Tour (including signage) was projected to be \$9,120. However, only \$8,387.92 was spent due to significant in-kind support from community supporters (providing accommodation for 3 nights) and DOC (who loaned us one of their vehicles for the Nelson – Christchurch leg of the journey).

The \$8,387.92 was divided up as follows:

- \$2,070 – The Lion Foundation
- \$2,760 – Unitec Institute of Technology (provision of staff member)
- \$3,557.92 – Kea Conservation Trust

Donations/memberships

Total funds received \$ 1,492.30

A total of \$367.30 was received in donations or as koha for the DVD s and/or newsletters during the tour. A further \$125 was received for memberships. After the tour an email was received from John Barrell who attended the Wanaka talk. We will be meeting with him next month when he visits Auckland. John has since donated \$1,000 into the KCT account.

Summary

Face to face contact continues to be extremely important enabling us to connect with people in a way that we cannot do by individual email or print form. This year we received enormously positive feedback from Department of Conservation, our other hosts and the general public attending the talks. We also received some useful information to follow up on – namely links to web based presentations to enable increased access for people who for whatever reason were unable to attend the talks on the night.

Although fewer people were reached this year due to the fact that i) the tour was shortened to 8 days (due to other work commitments by both presenters) and ii) schools were not included in this year's tour, the talks were heavily targeted to engage key communities and stakeholders who will be integral in the successful delivery of the new Strategic Plan for Kea Conservation. This included Department of Conservation, Forest and Bird, community pest control groups and educators.

The tour although expensive to carry out continues to be well received and well attended. However a full assessment will need to be undertaken to ensure that it is the best use of funds for the future. e assessed across years as it continues to be quite a resource intensive method of connecting with communities each year. This year we received feedback on the talk run in Te Anau (organised by DOC) – refer appendix. It would be valuable if we were to continue these talks in future years to carry out a similar survey at each talk.

A summary document of this report is now being finalized and will be sent out to all stakeholders over the next month.



*Arthurs Pass residents at the Wobbly Kea
Photo: Kay Davidson*

Appendices

1. Feedback – Te Anau Department of Conservation (DOC)

23 people attended the Te Anau talk and 5 provided feedback after the talk to DOC as follows:

Has this education initiative met its objectives (raise awareness of threats and recent research results/give practical advice on steps to take to protect kea)?

Yes = 5 respondents

No = 0

How effective has this initiative been? (1 = ineffective, 5 = highly effective)

3 = 1 respondent

4 = 3 respondents

5 = 1 respondent

What aspects of the programme were most valuable?

- Learning about the kea conservation programme, especially the education aspects
- Obtaining knowledge of current state of the animal's conservation ecology and human response at this time
- Seeing the website
- Understanding the level of threat facing kea
- The after presentation discussion was very interesting and informative – thought provoking

What aspects of the programme did not work so well?

- Lots of text on a power point (child's response)
- Maybe this is normal for Te Anau but I did expect a bigger audience – this is a star NZ species after all

(no other comments made here)

How do you think we could improve the programme?

- More interaction / pictures
- Greater number of options for people to be able to get involved
- Include more pictures and videos, funny stories about kea (child's response)
- Was it taken to local schools? (Just learned it was last year).

Any other comments?

- Presenters were very engaging – knowledgeable and inspiring
- Really interesting and enjoyed.
- Great kea fans and so thank you.
- Well done!

Kea trust promoting work, projects

CRIS JOHNSTON
THE Kea Conservation Trust rolls into Wanaka later this month as part of its annual Winter Community Advocacy Tour.

Trust chairwoman Tamsin Orr-Walker said the eight-day tour would see the organisation "tripping around" South Island locations that also included Nelson, Kaitiaki, Queenstown and Te Anau.

"The tour provides us with an opportunity to meet local communities and project partners," Ms Orr-Walker said.

The Wanaka meeting would take place on July 27. As well delivering information on kea conservation and monitoring results, the group would also unveil its new "Kids for Conservation" educational DVD and make a poster for the song written and performed by Caron Valley musician and conservationist Merrin Curtis.

The draft strategic plan for kea conservation, a document being developed jointly by the KCT and the Department of Conservation (Doc), would also be discussed. The KCT had worked closely with Doc over the past seven to eight years but there was now concern funds previously available for kea conservation work were drying up in the wake of major Doc restructuring announced earlier this year.

"The changes hitting Doc will impact on us hugely," Ms Orr-Walker said.

"We will certainly be looking to form more partnerships in the hope of securing funding to ensure the survival of the kea."

The draft strategic plan would identify threats to the bird and

THE KEA



□ THE kea is a large parrot found in forest and alpine regions of the South Island. It is the world's only alpine parrot.

□ New an endangered species, it was once killed for bounty due to concerns from farmers it attacked livestock, especially sheep.

□ The Kea Conservation Trust received full protection in 1986.

□ Estimates there are now between 1000 to 5000 individual birds living in the wild.

□ Detail research and conservation projects planned for the next five to 10 years.

□ Doc conservancies in the South Island had provided funding for up to three years to help develop the strategy, Ms Orr-Walker said.

□ What: Kea Conservation Trust Wanaka workshop.

□ When: July 27, 7.30pm.

□ Where: St John rooms, Link Way.

CRIS JOHNSTON

KEA are getting a helping hand from one of their biggest fans — a Cardrona Valley singer-songwriter who is using his talents to raise awareness about what he says is the plight of the endangered native bird.

Merrin Curtis has been entertaining audiences, including school children, with his yarns about the kea for years.

Now, two of his works, the humorous poem *Tale of two Keas* and the song *Prize for the Kea* feature on a DVD being put together by the Kea Conservation Trust and distributed free to schools.

His two contributions been gifted with pupils from Hawea Primary School, Mr Curtis said.

"Kea are my favourite bird. I really don't think that people realise they are endangered. They are just wonderful and believed to be the most intelligent bird in the world."

As an avid tramp and mountaineer, he was no stranger to traditional kea territory in Mount Aspiring National Park such as the west Mamakiri and the New Zealand Alpine Club's Cascade Hut.

He had first encountered the bird in the mid-1970s, while working for the former National Parks Board and had experienced their cheeky behaviour behaviour



Merrin Curtis

first hand. "On one expedition about four or five years ago, I was camping in a rock bivy on the Cascade Saddle... kea appeared at about midnight and immediately set themselves to the busy and amusing task of eating the bivy and anything which we had around around the camp. We didn't get much sleep, I can tell you."

While there were still some "good pockets" of the birds in the area he had noticed a "tremendous decline" in numbers.

"On trips into the Mamakiri this year I never saw a kea, or heard their glorious cry."

A new song, *Sound of the Warning*, written this year, was applicable to the kea's plight.

"I actually wrote it for the kwi but it is totally appropriate to the situation the kea is in. The title was inspired by a poster I saw in a Doc office that was headed: 'The sound of the warning is silence.'" Mr Curtis said.

His kea conservation efforts were not only centred around music. In 2011, he became involved with the Kea Conservation Trust's programme to replace road nails in alpine lines

Species given a hand by artist

around the South Island. "With materials donated by Wanaka Placemakers, we replaced the nails at the Cascade Hut. Although there was no proof kea were being poisoned by the lead, which is toxic to the birds, it was better to be safe than sorry," Mr Curtis said.

Although laws to protect kea from hunters came into place in the 1980s, he remained concerned the birds were still being persecuted in some areas of the South Island.

"Anecdotally, we hear reports that kea are still shot and I have also heard of farmers running pink fens on the top of fences. The birds eat a and choke," Mr Curtis said.

Department of Conservation Wanaka area manager Paul Helebraker said he was not aware of any kea persecution in the national park. As they were ground-nesting, the birds' biggest threat was predators such as stoats, possums and feral cats which ate eggs and chicks.

A new conservation project announced by the Mamakiri Charitable Trust last week would work to reduce predator numbers, he said.

"We are aware of reports saying kea numbers have declined in certain areas. We do not know if that is because the birds have thinned out of those areas or have died out."

The Fiordland Advocate

LATEST EDITION

2013 Jul 24

Fiordland ADVOCATE



25 July, 2013

Local, Loyal and Loving It!

KEA CONSERVATION EFFORTS

PAGE 2

SLOW UPTAKE OF TV TAKEBACK

2013 Jul 24

Kea conservation

By Alina Suchanski

Although still seemingly common, kea are now under severe threat and many people still don't realise that kea are an endangered species.

That was the message given at a public presentation given in Te Anau on Monday evening, by Kea Conservation Trust (KCT) chairwoman Tamsin Orr-Walker and Dr Lorne Roberts of Auckland's Unitec Institute of Technology, aimed raising public awareness about what is planned for kea conservation in the years ahead and how people can get involved.

Kea, the world's only mountain parrot, endemic to the Southern Alps of New Zealand and well known for its intelligence, curiosity, playfulness and character, has not always been appreciated. There was a time when kea were shot as a pest, because of their ability to kill sheep. There was a bounty put on them which was in place until 1971. As a result an estimated 150,000 birds were killed.

Kea have been fully protected since 1986 and 20 years later the Kea Conservation Trust (KCT) was set up to raise public awareness, assist in protection of wild kea in their natural habitat and to increase

the husbandry standards and advocacy potential of those kea held in captive facilities within New Zealand.

The trust is now working with the Department of Conservation (DOC) to quantify and prioritise threats to kea and develop strategies to protect them. Some of the projects include sheep conflict mitigation, nest monitoring, population surveys and pest control. These projects are carried out in Nelson Lakes, Borland, Hawdon, Kiwi Saddle, Otira and Kaikoura.

Ms Orr-Walker said the pest control project in Nelson Lakes illustrated how desperate the kea situation was in some areas.

"Our previous population research in this area has shown a severe crash of over 80 percent in that population since previous work by DOC was carried out (1993-1998 inclusive)," she said.

"There are now only four breeding pairs in the area (almost 14,000ha) producing a total of only two chicks each year. Our nest monitoring has shown predation by stoats and possums to be a major risk to the kea and without effective pest management we could see that population die out within the next 10 years."



Kea pictured on the Kepler Track. Many people fail to recognise these cheeky birds are endangered.

PHOTO: Colin Bishop

While the KCT's main partners continue to be Department of Conservation and Unitec Institute of Technology in Auckland, a strong network of sponsors has been established, including individuals and smaller community groups such as the Kea Scouts.

The trust has also secured operational funding from all five of the South Island DOC conservancies for up to three years. This has been the first time they have received funding for this purpose which will enable them to identify and direct research, threat mitigation measures and community

awareness over the next five to 10 years.

Members of the public can help by providing their expertise (education, IT, design, data entry etc), providing sightings of kea, increasing awareness of kea issues within their local community, removing lead from any buildings in and around kea habitat, or contacting the trust if they have a conflict situation.

Further information can be found at the Kea Conservation Trust website www.keaconservation.co.nz.

Kaikoura Star

Eye kept on Kaikoura kea

Last updated 15:09 25/07/2013

More than 30 people turned out to a meeting last week to hear about plans for researching kea in the Kaikoura district next summer.



Tamsin Orr-Walker, Kea Conservation Trust chairwoman and Dr Lorne Roberts of Unitec Institute of Technology spoke about the research project.

The Seaward Kaikouras are home to the most eastern population of kea in New Zealand and they have not previously been studied.

Little is known about their range and their nesting behaviour.

They share the area with Hutton's shearwaters which nest 1200 to 1800 metres above sea level, making them one of the highest nesting seabirds in the world.

The relationship between kea and the shearwaters is before the seabirds fledge.

This project will not only continue to build on kea population estimates across their range, focusing on numbers of breeding females and nesting survivorship at representative sites undergoing differing predator control regimes, but will also provide a fascinating insight into the relationship between these two species at the Kaikoura site which is poorly understood.

The Kea Conservation Trust plans a 2013-2014 summer survey of this population, supported by funding from the Lottery Grants Board.

Site co-ordinator Corey Mosen has already visited Kaikoura to check access requirements and will be taking an experienced team in during January.

KEA UNDER THREAT

Research by the Kea Conservation Trust and Department of Conservation has identified nine threats to the wild kea population.

Introduced mammalian predators.

Lead in kea habitat (flashings and lead-head nails, tyre weights, lead shot).

Ground-based pest control devices (poison baits and traps laid for pest control).

Aerial 1080 pest control (direct consumption of poison pellets).

Avian diseases.

Climate change (through changes in predator abundance, food availability and habitat).

Accidents with human objects (motor vehicles, snow groomers, rubbish bins, electricity sub-stations, life-stylers).

© **Fairfax NZ News**