

Brainstorming workshop sessions

Mitigating threats to kea (lead, conflict, predation, pest control by-kill, vehicle strike etc)

Facilitator: Tamsin Orr-Walker (KCT)

Time and date: Sunday 30 April 10.45pm – 12noon

Attendees list: (please add your name)

Discussion outcomes:

The threats as identified in the strategy are: predation, lead poisoning, poorly deployed pest control devices, interaction with human objects, persecution, black market, climate change and avian diseases. It was decided that the last three were not within the scope of this meeting and that persecution would be covered by the conflicts resolution session. As such the following were briefly discussed during the meeting:

Lead – the importance of letting people know about the issue of lead highlighted. As such it was considered important to develop an education pack with information on lead (why it needs to be removed, the impact on kea and how to identify it) and what help is available to remove it. Although building suppliers may be approached for donations/sponsorship of replacement tech screws, flashings would need to be custom made and professionally fitted and as such funding is needed. The KCT has developed a community proposal (presented on the Saturday) to disseminate to interested parties (AP team, FMC, F&B).

F&B keen to help as is FMC who is keen to initiate a 5-8 yr plan of lead removal in difficult areas (FMC is a partner in the Outdoor recreational consortium) – can promote at the Ski field summit in Canterbury Oct/Nov. The AP kea team is also keen to work with the local community (local ski fields and KCT to send lead proposal to F&B, FMC and AP kea team (with Claire Newell and Renee Habluetzel). Question arose as to how we engage with farmers (re abandoned old buildings in high country areas in particular)?

Also to investigate other sources of lead; lead weights in car tyres and buckshot used in Thar cull by DOC. The KCT has contacted DOC previously about this (raised last year by the community during the Winter tour) and were informed there was a ricochet issue when shooting from helicopters. DOC at that time also pointed out that lead testing in kea has shown low levels where kea were further away from human habitation (there didn't seem to be any corresponding rise where thar are culled but not sure whether kea have been tested within these areas?). It was mooted that Thar culling could be carried out by hunters on the ground with rifles (NZDA?).



Predation – new DNA evidence that feral cats have preyed on adult females in the Hawdon Valley. Nest camera footage has also shown cats visiting kea nests in Rotoiti. The KCT has earmarked \$24K into supporting nesting kea in the Hawdon through adding onto DOC trapping in the area to directly benefit kea nests higher up. Concerns as to the effectiveness of nest protection programme (Nelson Lakes). A meeting between the KCT and AP Kea Team on Friday has resulted in these funds being redirected into cat trapping in light of this new info. Dean Nelson (DOC Twizel) has been involved in extensive cat control in the Aoraki area and is able to provide additional information.

Predator control

Potential issues with cat control as any trap which can catch a cat is a risk to kea. As such only live capture traps may be used which will be required to be checked daily. To follow up with Dean Nelson, Colleen Philips (WERT) and AP Group (Sandy, AP kea team, Chris and Helen etc). Twizel DOC use the Twizel cat trap (based on a Conibear trap and victor (soft jaw) live traps. They take around 200 cats per year with seemingly no reduction in the feral cat population from year to year. Reinvasion seems to come from the surrounding farmland and trapping is targeted away from areas where kea may be caught.

Additional issue related to screening of new trap devices to ensure kea are safe around them (particularly in relation to the relatively new goodnature self resetting traps). Use of these and results must be transparent to ensure that if kea are getting killed by them, this is reported and changes made to minimise by-kill. Difficult to trial as the kea which come across monitored traps (in-situ or ex-situ) are not necessarily representative of the entire spectrum of kea personalities, life stages or environmental conditions. This should however not discount trials as a good way of generic screening.

Also to advocate for best practice pest control. The KCTs new SOP to be sent out to interested/expert parties for comment and updates (a number of hardcopies distributed at the workshop). Contributors to date have been acknowledged in the document. Kea are renowned for getting into trap and bait devices and modifications to existing traps may therefore be required (for example kea in the Murchison mountains interfering with DOC200 traps). Making others (individuals and community groups) aware of this is vital so knowledge can be shared.

1080 was discussed and the need for more repellent studies mooted. Lots of interest but funding an issue. Alex Taylor (Auckland Uni) to follow up on possible research at Willowbank in conjunction with other universities. Other bait research also mentioned to follow up - PAPP and microencapsulated 1080 (coating breaks down in mammalian gut only, not in avian).

Also noted that it was important to be mindful of possible knock on effects of taking out one predator without considering other predators who may prey switch (eg taking out rats and stoats and cats prey switching to kea) when setting up any community run predator control programmes.

Interaction with human objects - Road kill/injuries

The only threat discussed under this heading was vehicle incidents (particularly an issue for kea in Arthurs Pass). Erecting signs has previously been put forward by the KCT (and signs designed by a volunteer) but the idea was not supported by Arthurs Pass community or the NZTA at that time. Lead poisoning may be a factor with car strikes and testing all dead kea would be good to ascertain whether this is a contributing factor. This may be a good time to re visit this issue (Paradise Valley Springs has said it is happy to pay for kea specific warning signage in AP).

Who are the key stakeholders for each threat?

This question was only briefly touched on and suggestions included the following: DOC (link to community predator control groups), TB Free, F&B branches, FMC, farmers, Predator Free and iwi. Also to add in predator control designers/researchers, builders merchants (lead), local council and government (changes in legislation ie use of lead, feeding kea etc).

Ensuring functional stakeholder relationships is key. How can these be facilitated and encouraged?

Iwi engagement was considered best at a local level (particularly when local projects proposed). It was put forward that one person from the KCT should contact local rununga and meet on their own grounds. Contacts: Klinky – Otago iwi, Kilash – west coast, Andrea – upper north. Others to investigate.

Actions:

Lead

- KCT to disseminate lead proposal to interested parties (FMC, F&B, AP Kea Team).
- F&B to get back to KCT re possible funding.
- FMC to promote lead removal at the Ski field summit.
- The AP Team to initiate a lead removal programme in Arthur's Pass.
- Investigate other sources of lead (buck shot, lead weights in vehicle wheels etc) – NZDA contacts?

Predation

- KCT to work with AP Kea Team to develop cat control programme.
- KCT to follow up with Nelson Lakes DOC re nest protection effectiveness (how can this be increased?).

Predator Control

- KCT to follow up with Dean Nelson (DOC Twizel) re cat control information.
- KCT to disseminate Kea Safe Pest Control SOP for feedback and additional comment.

- More research to be encouraged when deploying new predator control methods (eg Goodnature self-re setting traps).
- Initiate additional 1080 repellent studies – Alex Taylor (UoA) and Ximena Nelson (UoC) to look into repellent studies at Willowbank.
- Investigate other bait research progress (eg PAPP, micro encapsulated baits etc) – Lincoln University?

Road Kill/Injuries

- KCT to revisit idea of putting up kea signs to slow traffic down in Arthurs Pass – Paradise Valley Springs happy to fund signage.
- Encourage blood lead testing of all kea hit by vehicles to ascertain whether this is a contributing factor.

Key Stakeholders and communication

- KCT to work with groups to develop an up to date contacts list of key stakeholders (including local rununga).