

Kea Conservation Trust - Winter Advocacy Tour 2012

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

Funded by:

Federated Mountain Clubs NZ (\$4,000)



Background

The winter advocacy tour, now a separate entity, was originally a much smaller part of the KCT kea winter survey which ran every July between 2008-2011. The Advocacy tour was developed solely as a method to connect with key stakeholders in key areas throughout the south island, one week – 10 days prior to the winter kea survey. Over the years, due to increasing interest from the public, the advocacy tour was extended to include a number of talks on kea, the issues facing the species and the role of communities and stakeholders in collaboration with the KCT, in protecting this species.

The Winter kea survey was discontinued in 2011 however the list of talks delivered during the advocacy portion of the tour continued to steadily increase with demand driving the number of locations and numbers of people attending talks.



Tamsin Orr-Walker talking to FM, NZ members in Timaru. Photo credit: Dr L Roberts

In 2009, the first year that the talks were given, 2 presentations were delivered (1 school and 1

public talk) with a total of 27 people attending. In 2010, 7 talks were delivered (1 school and 6 public talks) with 125 people in attendance. In 2011, 13 talks were presented (5 school and 8 public talks) over a 10 day period resulting in 270 people attending (139 adults and 131 children). An additional 4 stakeholder meetings were also conducted throughout the tour with 2 potential sponsors and 2 DOC conservancies. This year 790 people attended 21 talks across the 10 day period (333 adults and 457 children) and a total of 9 meetings and 5 media interviews were also conducted.

Talk Details

The winter advocacy tour has now become an entity in itself and this year was conducted between the period 26 June – 6 July 2011. Dr Lorne Roberts and Tamsin Orr-Walker (Trust Chair) spoke at a number of public venues during this time which also

provided the opportunity for public discussion. These were hosted by the following groups in the following locations:

Date	Location 2012	Host/Venue	Adult numbers	Child numbers
26 June	Christchurch	F&B	10	0
26 June	Christchurch	Limited School	1	6
26 June	Christchurch	Avonside School	3	17
27 June	Carew	Carew Peel forest School	6	73
27 June	Fairlie	St Joseph's School	3	47
27 June	Twizel	DOC	9	2
28 June	Twizel	Twizel School	3	37
28 June	Mt Cook	Mt Cook school	4	5
28 June	Dunedin	Roslyn Kea Scouts	6	14
28 June	Dunedin	FMC – Alpine Club NZ	26	0
29 June	Te Anau	Te Anau primary school	9	200
29 June	Te Anau	Fiordland College	8	42
29 June	Te Anau	Te Anau DOC	22	2
1 July	Queenstown	Kiwi Birdlife Park	17	0
2 July	Wanaka	DOC	40	1
3 July	Timaru	FMC – Sth Canterbury Alpine Club	36	4
4 July	Arthurs pass	DOC	8	0
5 July	Hokitika	DOC	33	1
5 July	Greymouth	DOC	24	6
6 July	Nelson	Forest & Bird	65	0
	Totals	21	333	457
				790

All community talks were a minimum of 2 hours in duration (including discussion afterwards) whilst school talks were each at least 1 hour. Including set up and travel time this resulted in over 75 hrs hours of personnel time invested in this year's talks and 11.5 hours in meetings and media interviews.

Distance travelled: 2,813kms

The following talks resulted in some interesting outcomes as follows:

School talks:

Christchurch - Unlimited School – one of the smallest schools but with a strong conservation ethic and older students able to grasp advanced concepts. The teacher is keen to increase involvement in kea conservation education in coming years.

Christchurch - Avonside School – we experienced our first earthquake during this talk.

Carew – Peel Forest School – We were greeted by an enthusiastic group of children who in kea masks sang a lively song about kea to open our talk. Loads of questions afterwards by students and teachers made this a very interactive presentation. We asked the school if they would be able to film their children singing their song and send to us.

Fairlie – St Joseph School – a very attentive group of pupils and interactive teachers. We received an email at the beginning of the new school term with a raft of questions from the students about kea as well as a review by the teachers and students who felt they learnt the following – *“* It was good to learn about the enrichment programmes being planned for the kea *That they are such an intelligent bird and so good at puzzles *That they once ate moas and that there is a reason that they eat sheep *That a spray has been invented to spray on sheep to keep them safe from kea *That they are more endangered than many birds we hear about”*

Mt Cook – Aoraki School – great to get back to see the children at this school who as ever were very enthusiastic. We managed to show them some snippets of video work by Roland Payne, which showcased the children singing their kea song for the start of the Kids Kea Conservation DVD.

Twizel – Twizel School – this was a last minute addition due to a parent attending our evening talk the night before. The students were learning all about native birds so our talk fitted in well with their curriculum. The teacher also showed us a children’s interactive learning site which will prove very useful to us.

Dunedin - Roslyn Kea Scouts – this was our first talk to the Kea Scouts in the South Island. This is an association that we are keen to foster as we already have many kea scout groups helping with raising awareness and funds from their communities in the North Island.

Te Anau – Fiordland College – a forward thinking school involved in Kids Restore with the Kepler Track. Our largest group of secondary school students on the trip.

Te Anau Primary School – we ran two talks at the Primary School on their last day of term. One of the groups had just visited the Meridian Energy site so were very excited about the idea of seeing kea in the mountains.

Public adult talks:

Christchurch – South Canterbury Forest and Bird – our first talk was also one of our smaller talks however good discussions and positive comments after the talk. A generous donation of \$200 was also received from SC F&B.

Twizel – Department of Conservation – although our smallest audience we had very positive discussions with a local farmer and DOC Twizel staff about conflict issues and follow up contacts after the talk.

Dunedin – FMC NZ – Alpine Club – A very good turnout of Alpine Club members on what had been an eventful week of southerly blasts across the region. This was a very understanding group of trampers who expressed a concern at the number of issues facing the species which they had previously been unaware of.

Te Anau – Department of Conservation – A positive session followed the talk with main issues raised centering around the feeding of kea by tourists and how bus operators could help out. Ongoing discussions to be had with DOC about alternative ways of public interaction with kea and getting across the no feeding kea message in an effective way. Good representation from locals and DOC.

Queenstown – Kiwi Birdlife Park – A good turnout by a very interested group from Birdlife Park staff, and local community and ski-fields. Staff are keen to follow up on connections with the local farming community to spread the word of the kea repellent work.

Wanaka – Department of Conservation/Forest & Bird – a great turnout with a very interactive group of Forest & Bird members as well as members of the public. The high level of lead in whitebait huts on the West coast, south of Jackson Bay to Milford was brought to our attention. Also mentioned was the use of Bunoyl on the top of old roofing as possibly the cheapest way to protect the Kea from accessing lead. To follow up with the Whitebait Association and TJ Irvin. Also ongoing discussions about the feeding issue and alternative public interaction methods with DOC Wanaka.

Timaru – FMC NZ – South Canterbury Alpine Club – a very productive evening and great contacts made. This has resulted in on-going discussions with Dr Nick Wall looking at methods of kea repellent application etc to help with our sheep trials and surface repellent work. Additional connection was made with the ex Chair of the Merino Association of Canterbury who also additional provided contact details.

Arthurs Pass – Department of Conservation – A small but productive gathering with follow up discussions about the Arthurs Pass Community Project. An additional meeting was scheduled for the following day with Chris Stewart (DOC) about sheep strike.

Hokitika – Department of Conservation – A good turn out on the west coast with very positive follow up talks with DOC personnel about our surface repellent trials and trap types. DOC also supplied us with a number of traps and bait stations for our upcoming captive trials.

Greymouth – Department of Conservation – a further good turn out on the Coast and great support from the venue who have requested a KCT poster highlighting kea issues to be put up in their window.

Nelson – Forest and Bird – Our final talk was also attended by the largest audience of the tour. Ongoing support was expressed by very enthusiastic F&B personnel. Several key kea researchers who attended the talk also gave great feedback to us. Follow up

talks were held with Josh Kemp and Corey Mosen (DOC Nelson/Marlborough) about surface repellent trials and future research collaborations. All in all a great end to what has been an excellent tour.

Additional Meetings

The following 9 meetings were held in between the public talks:

organisation	Name	Meeting description
Lincoln University	Brent Barrett	Discussion on project methodology (trailing of surface repellents on possums/stoats)
Otago University	Mick Abbott and Grant Baxter	Education – university student involvement in web based applications
Arthurs Pass	Maree Goldring	Education framework (AP Community Project)
Kiwi Birdlife Park	Staff	Sheep trials
Arthurs Pass	Community	AP community project
Arthurs Pass	Chris Stewart (DOC)	Sheep strike data
Hokitika DOC	Mark Martini	Trap info - project - surface repellents
Nelson DOC	Josh Kemp	project planning
Natureland	Gail Sutton	Discussions on their 3 kea and the kea audits

Promotion and media

A large number of emails were sent prior to the advocacy tour to schools (33 in total), past hosts, press, DOC VC and AO's, Otago and Lincoln Universities, Forest & Bird and Federated Mountain Clubs, NZ. A total of 158 email responses were sent by the Project Coordinator during this time.

A total of 5 media interviews were generated which substantially increased our profile during the tour. Two radio interviews were conducted (including Breakfast with Spanky (ChCh)) and at least three newspaper articles written by the Wanaka Sun, The Timaru Herald and Twizel (refer to the appendix for details).

Additionally, the tour was also promoted on the following websites: Kea Conservation Trust, Federated Mountain Clubs (NZ), NZ Alpine Club, Department of Conservation and Forest & Bird.

Costs

Winter Advocacy Tour and Education Drive Expenditure

Item	Description	Actual
Project Coordinator	12 days @ \$240/day (10 days travel + 2 days preparation, liaison and reporting work)	2880.00
Education person	10 days @ \$240/day (in-kind support – Unitec, NZ)	0.00
Return flights	2 return flights Auckland – Christchurch (\$160 x 2)	537.90

Accommodation	10 nights @ \$100/night	1038.54
Vehicle Hire	4WD vehicle (full insurance and snowchains) 11 days @ \$105/day	1328.95
Petrol	\$40 per day	616.21
Expenses	\$30 per day	308.10
Misc	Speakers for presentations	144.00
Misc	Printing and cassettes	144.94
Misc	Taxi - ChCh airport	26.50
Total		7025.14

Funding Partners:

\$4,000	Federated Mountain Clubs
\$3,025.14	Kea Conservation Trust
\$2,400	Unitec, NZ (In-kind support)

Summary

The tour was a resounding success with 2.5 times more people than in 2011 attending over 1.5 x the number of talks in the same period. Email feedback received after the talks, continues to be very positive with many of these enquiring about membership or offering to volunteer their time.

Our relationships with groups such as DOC, F&B, FMC and Otago and Lincoln Universities has also been strengthened. More interest has also been generated on our Facebook page which at the start of the tour had 415 likes (after 22 months since its inception) and a further 1 month later – between the period 25 June – 26 July 2012, a further 200 likes were generated.



Dr Lorne Roberts talking to children at Carew – Peel Forest School.
Photo credit: T Orr-Walker

Appendix - Media Articles

The Timaru Herald

Kea treading along an endangered path

RHONDA MARKBY

04/07/2012

There are as few kea left in the world as there are tigers, and think how much is being spent on saving tigers. That's the message from the Kea Conservation Fund when it comes to the future of New Zealand's native parrot.

Trust chairwoman Tamsin Orr-Walker and scientific adviser Lorne Roberts discussed their work last night in Timaru at a New Zealand Alpine Club meeting.

The kea population stood at between 1000 and 5000 but research on four separate populations indicated numbers were decreasing.

In the 1990s 11 breeding pairs were rearing 10 chicks a year in a 7000-hectare area of the Nelson Lakes. Ten years later that area was checked twice and only three pairs were found. Those birds were raising two chicks annually. While the actual number of birds in the wild was unknown, Ms Orr-Walker said people frequently said they weren't seeing as many kea as they had in the past. The age of the birds was also a concern. Whereas they should live to about 30, many were dying when only four or five years old.

Decrease in numbers appeared to be the result of several factors including lead poisoning (from eating the lead off nails in high country huts), degraded environment and predation from stoats and possums. "It would be such a tragedy if we lost them, they are so charismatic," Ms Orr-Walker said.

The trust was working on several projects it hoped would help protect kea, including a bird repellent to be included in all 1080 poison. A farmer near Queenstown was working with the trust, trialling a spray that should keep the birds away from sheep. The kea can smell the compound and when they ingest the material they feel sick. Dr Roberts hoped the birds would come to associate the smell with becoming unwell, and stay away from the flock.

The birds' intelligence can be their undoing. A Conservation Department worker spent days laying 200 stoat traps in the remote Murchison Valley, as stoats are a major predator of young kea. The keas always remained some distance behind him. It was only when all the traps were set that he realised what the birds had been doing – using a stick to set them off.



BIRD STUDY: Kea Conservation Trust chairwoman Tamsin Orr-Walker and scientific adviser Lorne Roberts tag a kea.

Twizel Update

Welcome to issue 392

To clever for their own good!

Only a few people took the opportunity to go along to the Kea Conservation Trust (KCT) presentation on Wednesday evening last week. Those that did were given a rather bleak picture of the state of the Kea. There are possibly as few as 1000 birds left in the wild and they appear to be dwindling at a rapid rate.

There are many factors that contribute to this demise. Some even think that a change in the habitat by the shutting up of the high country may be contributing to this? Certainly those present were shown evidence of the effect that predators are having.

Cameras positioned around nests showed a stoat attacking a young bird on the nest taking up to 1.5 hours to make its kill. More surprising was the sight of a possum entering a nest and eating a young Kea in front of the parent bird.

There is also a by-kill from trapping and poisoning operations. The Kea's natural curious and intelligent nature gets them into some trouble here. They have been reported to be following pest controllers and then helping themselves to the baits or coming off second best with traps! The KCT does not suggest 1080 operations should stop on the contrary they believe that these predators have to be dealt too.

To this end they have been trialling repellents to mix with poison baits and are now confident they have something that will work and this should go into production in the near future. They are taking this a step further and now have trials underway to ascertain if this can also be used to dissuade Kea from attacking sheep. Maybe even a spray to keep your car safe from attack in the future?

The problems with lead poisoning have been well documented and efforts continue to replace lead on high country buildings.

The trust has also been concerned about the conditions that captive Kea is being kept under in zoos around the world. Many don't understand the high intelligence of the Kea and the need for stimulation.

KCT is very keen to get local communities involved in finding out more about this iconic bird that is endemic to the South Island High Country.

They are keen to hear from tamper's, hunters or anyone who is out in the high country and have sightings of the Kea.

Or maybe you would like to show your support by donating or offering your services to the trust. Tamsin Orr-Walker Chairman can be contacted at E-mail info@keaconservation.co.nz
Web; www.keaconservation.co.nz



Tamsin Orr- Walker from KCT addresses the small but interest audience at Hunters Cafe and Bar

Kevin Moore
Editor

Additional Articles:

- Wanaka Sun – June 27 - p4 http://issuu.com/thewanakasun/docs/wanaka_sun_563