

# Kea Conservation Trust

## Submission on the draft Biodiversity Strategy for Selwyn District

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The Kea Conservation Trust was set up in 2006 to assist in conservation of wild Kea (*Nestor notabilis*) in their natural habitat and to increase the husbandry standards and advocacy potential of those Kea held in captive facilities within New Zealand. The Kea Conservation Trust was registered as a charitable entity under the Charities Act 2005

Kea are of particular importance for the Selwyn Biodiversity Strategy because as well as being endangered and iconic they are also active off public conservation land on land that is owned, managed or regulated by Selwyn District including local roads, Selwyn District assets and on private and other land regulated under the District Plan and subject to bylaws.

The Trust is a charitable organisation with a strong community focus, which is dedicated to the conservation of kea, one of New Zealand's most charismatic flagship species. We achieve these objectives through partnerships with people and communities to research and raise awareness of kea, their habitat and the unique issues impacting on kea and our fragile NZ mountain ecosystems. We also investigate and initiate practical methods of mitigating impacts through promoting community conservation efforts and collaborating with relevant community groups and stakeholders.



**KEA**  
CONSERVATION  
**TRUST**

This information is disseminated free through our website, Facebook page, email updates to over 500 subscribers and annual reports to members, community talks and presentations, professional conferences and scientific papers, and production of free education material and promotional material (DVDs/books) for schools and community groups.

We are active in helping protect kea in the Selwyn District with a focus on managing human-kea interactions. The District is a key location for kea in New Zealand and Arthur's Pass was the venue for a recent Kea Recovery Group meeting for that reason. The first ever Kea Konvention was held in Arthur's Pass in 2017, supported by DOC

Work that the Trust does in the District includes:

- Lead removal project – A Jobs for Nature funded project to remove lead building material in areas where kea are present and which has led to lead removal from most structures in Arthur's Pass Village.
- Kea patrol – A new initiative with Arthur's Pass Wildlife Trust and Fulton Hogan to help protect Kea in Arthur's Pass village. This includes cleaning up food and removing anything that could harm kea, reporting any matters of concern
- Advocating for lower speeds – supporting the Arthur's Pass community to make a submission to Waka Kotahi which includes letters of support from all local businesses, Arthur's Pass Association, YMCA, Arthurs Pass Wildlife Trust as well as Kea Conservation Trust.
- Seeking a by-law to manage kea feeding off public conservation land
- Working with Forest & Bird and DOC to transport sick and injured birds to the South Island Wildlife Hospital

In this work the Trust partners with the Department of Conservation, Arthur's Pass Wildlife Trust, Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society, The Kind Foundation (formerly YMCA).

The main problem facing kea in our village is access to food which brings them close to the main road where they are often hit by vehicles or brings them into contact with other dangers such as poisons, including lead, or electrical wiring. The nature and risks of kea-human interactions and the fact that these interactions frequently occur on land that is not public conservation land, but is subject to territorial authority regulation (such as local roads, private property and council property) means that the district has a key role to play in kea protection.

The changes that the Kea Conservation Trust wants to see in the strategy are:

### **Acknowledgment of the organisations protecting kea**

Organisations that help protect kea in Arthur's Pass include the Arthur's Pass Wildlife Trust, South Island Wildlife Hospital (SIWH) The Kind Foundation, Forest & Bird.

### Inclusion of kea in the list of Special Features of Selwyn's Biodiversity

Kea should be added to section 3.2 of the strategy as a special feature of Selwyn's biodiversity. Our proposed wording is:

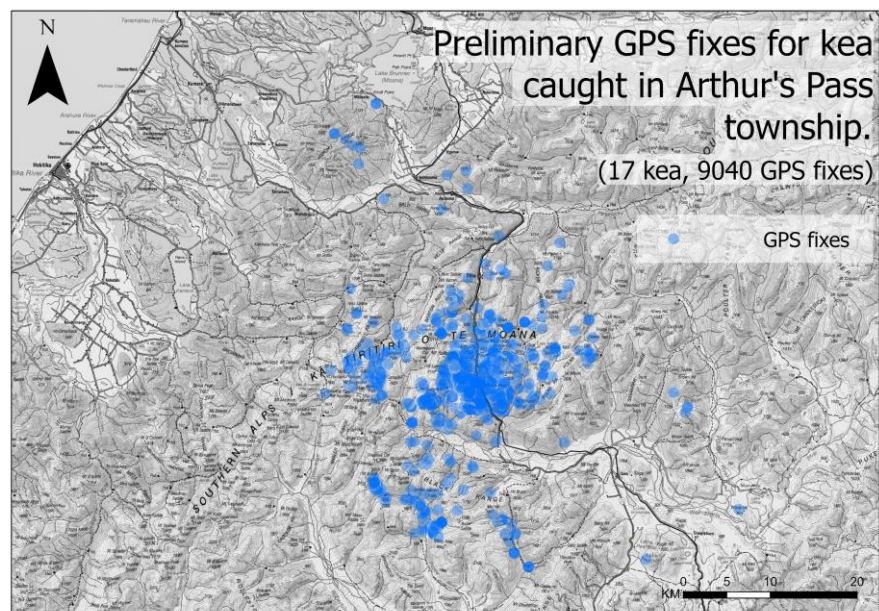
“Kea (*Nestor notabilis*) – Threatened – Nationally Endangered. Kea are the only mountain parrot species in the world and now number fewer than 5,000 individuals in the wild. They occur throughout the mountain lands of the District and are frequently visible in and around Arthur's Pass Village, Arthur's Pass National Park and the skifields.”

### Ensuring kea are acknowledged across their range

Kea should be added to the list of species in the High Country and Foothills landscape types as they utilise all of these landscapes as well as in the montane and subalpine landscape. Restoration of eastern populations of kea through improved pest control is likely to lead to more presence at the margins of the Southern Alps. Pests, lead and human interactions should be identified as key threats in all landscape types utilized by kea.

Information on the locations of kea sightings held by the Department of Conservation in relation to public conservation land in the District shows that kea have been observed from the Main Divide through to the foothills of the Kowai River valley and the upper Selwyn River catchment: [https://doc-deptconservation.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/79ea1d1b63fa436ca8702b1d459b4c7f\\_0/explorer?location=-43.306798%2C171.799808%2C11.54](https://doc-deptconservation.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/79ea1d1b63fa436ca8702b1d459b4c7f_0/explorer?location=-43.306798%2C171.799808%2C11.54)

Similarly mapping of kea caught in Arthur's Pass Village and then released with GPS trackers shows that kea travel outside the national park into the surrounding high country



Map courtesy of Jodanne Aitken, Kea Ecology PhD candidate, Lincoln University

### **Action to protect kea**

Goal 4: There should be an action attached to Goal 4 about supporting communities to manage interaction with kea, including through the development of a bylaw to ban kea feeding on non-conservation land except for a conservation purpose and through advocacy to other agencies such as NZTA Waka Kotahi about the importance of managing kea-human interactions.

Sincerely,

**Renée Habluetzel**