



Established in 2010 the Arthur's Pass Wildlife Trust is a community-driven initiative supporting conservation and species recovery projects operating within and adjacent to the Bealey Valley, Arthur's Pass National Park, through independent funding and resources.

Vision Statement :

To foster our native wildlife's true potential and uniqueness.

Mission Statement :

To enhance the protection of indigenous flora and fauna within the Arthur's Pass area through -

- the development, initiation and management of sustainable protective projects.
- an encouragement of conservation awareness and participation.
- securing information on target wildlife, for sharing with interested parties.
- the education of people about such wildlife and its habitat.
- an advocacy of policies or actions for the benefit of the wildlife and its habitat.
- having relationships with like-minded individuals, agencies and organizations.
- sourcing of funds and services to further the objects of the Trust.
- a utilization of resources to undertake chosen tasks and projects.

The Role of the Trust :

The primary responsibility of the Board of Trustees is the exercising of governance over the operations undertaken within its Mission Statement, ensuring that the interests of contributory donors, and recipients - the wildlife - are secured, and that a high standard of integrity and transparency is evident in all financial transactions, sufficient to meet all regulatory requirements.

Working alongside the Department of Conservation, it follows the Department's guidelines in its project work, however as an independent body the Trust has the ability and willingness to operate at arm's length, when and where appropriate.

Private and community conservation and recovery projects have been undertaken and progressively enhanced in the Bealey Valley since 2003, the Trust's 2010 formation providing an umbrella for these activities, whilst also enabling essential planning and resource allocation for the future. The scientific study of the local great spotted kiwi population, started in early 2008, became an important early component of the Trust's governance arena.

Wildlife and habitat education is also seen as a priority for the Trust, which views considerable potential in the cross-pollination of outdoor interpretation material relating to its project work, and the environment - past and present. In conjunction with DOC, educational and other agencies, it intends

to value-add to younger people's conservation experiences and knowledge, reinforcing the benefits and principles of National Parks and species recovery. Where possible the Trust will also encourage tourist and other visitor operators to enhance their knowledge of the local wildlife and habitat, together with the conservation work in progress, and to inform and enthuse their guests accordingly.

The Trust intends to maintain a good dialogue with recovery projects in adjacent territory, to ensure a consistency in methodology, policies and reporting.

Trustee Profiles :

Pete Neale - Pete Neale moved to Arthur's Pass Village with his wife, Fiona, in October 2013. Having sold up their house in Christchurch, they were fortunate enough to be in a position to purchase the Alpine Motels. Pete has a long history with Arthur's Pass. His Grandmother purchased a bach in 1964 and shortly after that Pete made his first visit to the Pass at the age of 2. During the summer months of 1980/81 and 1981/82, Pete had a summer holiday job working at Temple Basin skifield. This was when we became Pete and Fi. Over the following 30 years as our children were growing up Arthur's Pass was our number 1 holiday destination. Pete has always wanted an opportunity to be able to live here, and now that his wish has come true, he is taking every opportunity to promote, protect and enhance this unique environment. Pete has spent the last 15 years on various hockey committees in Christchurch and hopes to try to continue his luck with funding applications to ensure The APWT and other organisations in the local community have enough money and resources to carry out their objectives. Email: chairperson@apwt.org.nz

Judy Charles - Judy Charles has lived in Arthur's Pass for 45 years and is currently chairperson of the Trust. She does weed eradication, records kiwi calls and manages traps for the Trust, having been a foundation member of the project. Judy has been involved in the Arthur's Pass community as chair and secretary of the Community Centre, as a trustee for the Arthur's Pass school, and as a committee member of the Otira play centre. She operates Snowgrass cabin, a small accommodation business. Married to John, an ex National Park ranger, they have two grown up children and four grand children. In Judy's spare time she enjoys the outdoors, gardening and capturing the scenery in her artwork.

Arapata Reuben - Arapata is an Executive member of Te Ngai Tu Ahuriri Runanga Inc., and represents the Runanga on the Arthur's Pass Wildlife Trust.

Jon Everist Everist BAgriSci: Dip Teach: LLB - Jon was born in Christchurch in 1949. Jon's parents purchased a bach in Arthur's Pass in 1960, and the family spent as much time as they could tramping the valleys, climbing the mountains and skiing the Basin. Jon and his wife Marilyn are partners of Everist Gilchrist Lawyers. They continue to cherish the flora, fauna and the special environment of the Pass. Inspired by Graeme Kates, climber and conservationist of Arthur's Pass, they contributed their own traps to the project, undertake trapping management, spray weeds and enjoy community life.

Dean Turner - Dean is the Services Manager, Department of Conservation, Rangiora, and oversees their biodiversity operations in Arthur's Pass National Park and the Craieburn Conservation area. He is the appointed DOC representative Trustee.

Len Doel - From his teenage years Len has been passionate about New Zealand's natural environment, increasingly becoming concerned about the threats facing it and the need to be

increasingly proactive - particularly in Canterbury, to which he has recently moved. From a working background at Marsden Point Oil Refinery, to teaching in Primary Schools, he became progressively involved in the illustration and text of flora and fauna publications, with a particular emphasis on native species photographic imagery, including that of Museum collections. In 2008 he joined NIWA's RV 'Tangaroa' studying the Chatham Rise, and also spent three months in the Antarctic with a Waikato University and Landcare Research team undertaking survey work in the Miers Valley and Capes Bird and Royds. During these periods he has built up a good knowledge of IT applications, infra-red monitoring cameras and species knowledge, and has more recently assisted in trap line monitoring with considerable enthusiasm, and now seeks to further assist the Trust in its local species recovery work.

Graeme Kates - Graeme moved to Arthur's Pass from Australia in 1994, in doing so moving his passion for the environment and mountains in the process. He is self-employed but also does forays for the Department of Conservation and is one of the Trust's Kiwi Handlers. In 2003 becoming very concerned about the obvious decline in native birds about the Village he led a private initiative to trap stoats, this trapping project now forms the hub of numerous other trapping networks in the Bealey Valley.

Helen Hamblin - The great outdoors has always been Helen's passion supported by many outdoor activities including tramping, skiing, kayaking; and a range of professions including plant research, field monitoring in agriculture, classroom teaching and more recently outreach education. Helen runs a small farm with her family and is a bach owner on Bealey Spur actively involved in the Spur trapping programme. Wildlife photography is Helen's hobby in NZ, and wherever she travels, most recently to Galapagos and Iceland. Helen is excited to be part of the Wildlife Trust, and is keen to learn alongside the Trust about the management of our unique native flora and fauna and the challenges of introduced species and biodiversity in our ecosystems.

Past Trustees & Contributors :

The Board acknowledges the contribution from Jeremy Agar, Gerald Bruce-Smith, Eleanor Reid, Mike Ambrose, Geoff Keey and Tony Edney whilst serving as Trustees, together with the field kiwi handling and monitoring skills provided by Sarah Forder, Melanie Nelson, Paddy Moran, Nic Menary and Graeme Kates within the Bealey Valley GSK study. The early developmental work undertaken by Wayne Costello, Malcolm Wylie, Hamish Reid and Sam McLeod, together with the on-going financial and technical support provided both by Michelle Impey and Wendy Sporle of Kiwis for Kiwi, and the Kiwi Recovery Group, assisted greatly in the Trust's progression to the present day.

Jeremy Agar - Unfortunately Jeremy passed away in December 2022. Jeremy will be remembered as an extremely kind, passionate, and generous man. He was a committee member of the Arthur's Pass Association, and represented them as a trustee on the Arthur's Pass Wildlife Trust from its inception. Jeremy was a stalwart for conservation, involved in predator and weed control in Arthur's Pass, but also serving on the Summit Road Society and supporting Predator Free Port Hills.

Jeremy had been visiting the Pass all his life. After spending many years teaching in Toronto, he returned to Lyttelton, and was elected to the Community Board, later serving as a councillor on Banks Peninsula. He helped establish Bird-Safe Whakaraupo, which aims to eradicate pests in the Lyttelton harbour basin.

Gerald Bruce-Smith - Returning to New Zealand in 2004, following 27 years working in Papua New

Guinea and Australia, Gerald chose semi-retirement in Arthur's Pass. A 2005 foundation member of the GSK recovery project, he became increasingly involved in its expansion and management, and has assisted with BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust media work. As well as managing local trap lines, he also carried in and manages his own line in the nearby Crow Valley, and assists in Kiwi monitoring. He has also been a contractor to the Coast to Coast Blue Duck Recovery Project, assisting with the placement, and undertaking the management, of their extensive trap network through the Mingha, Edwards, Waimakariri and lower Bealey catchments. Within the Arthur's Pass community he maintained a variety of voluntary roles, and enjoys tramping, climbing, photography and travel.

Ross Ruddenklau - Ross was invited to join APWT in 2011 having recently purchased the Arthur's Pass Cafe and Store. As an employer of seasonal staff he wanted to learn about the inhabitants (wildlife) and environment in Arthur's Pass and help spread this information to his staff and customers. His staff were mostly young travelers with a strong interest in the environment and the local alpine area. Having spent 40 years living in Southland and farming he realised the importance of understanding and preserving our environment for future generations. Ross offered his business experience to APWT to help move it forward and achieve the desired goals. Ross served as the APWT Treasurer.

The Arthur's Pass Kiwi Recovery Story :

Arthur's Pass National Park was gazetted in 1929 as the South Island's first - and New Zealand's third - National Park. The Park's location astride the major alpine railway and road thoroughfare, together with its close proximity to Christchurch, made it a popular destination, though its popularity had an early detrimental impact on the flora. The 1935 Park Handbook emphasized the broad flora variety, the challenging terrain available for mountaineering and tramping, the ski grounds, and the wild game available for hunters, however no acknowledgement was made of the birdlife.

Arthur's Pass Village became Headquarters for the ever increasing Arthur's Pass National Park and Craighburn Conservation territory and infrastructure, at the same time becoming a popular holiday destination and stopover point for travellers.

Fast forward now to the late 1990s when the realization was dawning on some Park users and staff that many of the local bird species were under threat from introduced predators - particularly the very mobile and fast breeding stoat - and that the prospect of some species being wiped out within their traditional territory was a real threat. Their dawn chorus, presence and territory was increasingly being diminished.

Graeme Kates, a perceptive Village resident, became particularly concerned on this ominous trend, and in 2003 privately funded and deployed an initial 32 traps through the Valley floor, the early stoat catch count even astounding him.

In early 2005 a joint initiative of the BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust (now renamed Kiwis for Kiwi) and the Department of Conservation spearheaded a community-based project to set up predator control trap lines through the Bealey Valley, from the Otira Valley to Greyneys Flat, primarily to halt a decline in the local Great Spotted Kiwi numbers, however with tangible benefits for other species. Over the next several years these line networks, primarily funded by the BNZSTKT and supported by increasing public donations, were further added to, and possum control work also commenced - all work being undertaken by the community volunteers.

During this period frequent Kiwi listening survey work was also undertaken to ascertain the location, number and sex of calling birds, in an effort to gauge the true local population size and territory of the GSK. It was generally expected that this project would follow the ONE (Operation Nest Egg) policy of other recovery groups, where the eggs and/or chicks would be removed for incubation and/or weight enhancement, and later re-introduced - particularly as Kiwi are unable to defend themselves until over one kilo in weight. Once the picture had developed of the species local numbers, the project's first (muzzled) Kiwi tracker dog was used in February 2008 to undertake a search of selected locations in the Valley to locate actual birds in their nests. Several young birds were amongst those successfully located, and fitted with transmitters, indicating both the robustness of the GSK population and the success of the predator control project - and also most significantly, resulting in a policy decision being made to leave all future Kiwi eggs and chicks in situ - still a unique position for such a recovery project. (Also more surprising given that an assumption had been made by some residents that the local GSK was an aged and non-breeding population).

Given these encouraging results, the BNZSTKT substantially increased their annual grants to the project, to facilitate the study of the GSK population and its territory, breeding patterns, and chick development - with up to 27 birds progressively being radio-tagged, including 12 breeding pairs, together with their juvenile and chick offspring. Regular telemetry monitoring of transmitter data was strictly maintained and two Village kiwi handling contractors were tasked to appraise the bird growth, relationship and territorial elements within the study population, together with undertaking transmitter changes, during bird/nest visitations.

The nearby Bealey Spur community, keen to also protect and promote an increase in their local bird species numbers, laid down a number of trap lines to control predator numbers both in their immediate vicinity and those heading upstream into the extensive upper Waimakiriri River catchment. Their attention to the extensive adjoining weed issues has also been most welcome.

Graeme Kates, during this period, also developed a unique and particularly valuable IT database, permitting broad species data to be recorded, including predator catch details, which has evolved into an exceptional and key species recovery resource and archive. The study results indicate the local GSK population to be particularly communal, caring and inter-acting with their offspring, and having the ability and willingness to move territory - often through challenging terrain and over serious distances. Camera footage has also provided valuable information, particularly on chick development.

The Kiwis for Kiwi generous funding continued into 2013, however, under pressure from reduced conservation funding and the view of the national Kiwi Recovery Group that the study size was inadequate for a truly scientific appraisal, the recommendation was made to remove all the transmitters, whilst still maintaining the Trust's important community volunteer-based predator control work. That removal policy was completed during the 2013/14 year. During that same period there was a further depletion in the resources available within and from the Department of Conservation, the Trust's own conservation role becoming more significant within the National Park.

The lengthy period of predator trapping has been complemented by consistent voluntary weed control work within and adjacent to the Village and along the rail and road corridor. The spread of lupin has been particularly targeted, together with gorse and broom, all three being conspicuously present in the nearby high country and increasingly threatening native water catchment biodiversity.

The Trust currently maintains 55 trap lines of varying length that extend through the Bealey, Crow, Mingha, Edwards and upper Waimakariri Valleys, which, together with those on Bealey Spur, currently contain 1300 traps for mustelids, rats, possums and wild cats. Over 7,000 predators have been captured - primarily stoats, but also weasels, rats, possums, feral cats, and mice - and over 11,000 volunteer hours have been logged since Jan 2008 - not an inconsiderable contribution by a small group of volunteers!

The sixteen plus years of predator control has contributed to a conspicuous improvement in the local species variety and numbers, with Weka, Rock Wren, South Island Robin, Tomtit, Rifleman, Fantail, Falcon, Kereru and Whio/blue duck, amongst the beneficiaries, together, of course, with the rowdy and often annoyingly conspicuous Kea, which would appear to be experiencing a particularly encouraging resurgence. And, whilst we no longer physically interact with the Great Spotted Kiwi, their distinctive evening calls and signature prints will continue to confirm their undisturbed presence.

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To learn more about the Trust's work and achievements, please visit the website –

www.apwt.org.nz