



KEA
CONSERVATION
TRUST



Media Statement

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Tahr hunters contributing to kea conservation

The NZ Tahr Foundation, Kea Conservation Trust and Game Animal Council have collaborated to develop the Tahr Ballot Kea Sightings Project.

With the annual tahr rut getting underway, tahr ballot block holders are being asked to record their kea sightings to help conserve kea in the central Southern Alps.

“Kea are a fantastic part of the mountain hunting experience in the Southern Alps, and given how much time tahr hunters spend in the backcountry they are ideally positioned to help monitor these special alpine parrots,” says NZ Tahr Foundation Scientific Advisor Kaylyn Pinney.

Each hunting party receives a Tahr Ballot Kea Sightings Project pamphlet along with the NZ Tahr Foundation’s tahr returns and information booklet at the helipad before being flown in to their ballot block. They are requested to record their kea sightings on the pamphlet and submit it along with their tahr returns in a dedicated box at the hanger following their flight out.

“This project will help provide valuable information to the kea database and ensure better management decisions are made for kea in the future,” says Tamsin Orr-Walker, Chair of the Kea Conservation Trust. “We know that kea are attracted to tahr carcasses and tahr hunters have a lot of interaction with the birds so this project is a really great way for them to help contribute information on kea ecology and behaviour.”

“Tahr hunters are really passionate about kea and many already do support kea conservation,” says Game Animal Council General Manager Tim Gale. “This project is a great example of how hunters, who spend long periods in the mountains, can contribute to achieve good outcomes for native species.”

The kea sightings pamphlet asks for detailed recordings including; sex, age, behaviour and if any leg bands are identifiable. Hunting parties are also provided information to help identify different kea.

“A big thank you goes to the helicopter operators who have come on board to help facilitate the distribution and returns of both the kea sightings pamphlet and tahr returns booklet,” says Pinney. “It is this on-the-ground support that is so important to ensure the success of a project such as this.”

While the Tahr Ballot Kea Sightings Project is specific to tahr ballot holders, other hunters and members of the public are encouraged to report kea sightings at www.keadatabase.nz.

The Tahr Ballot Kea Sightings Project form and information pamphlet can be viewed at www.bit.ly/3eyDyKQ.

Contacts:

Kaylyn Pinney, NZ Tahr Foundation
Phone: 0273795428
kaylynmcb@gmail.com

Tamsin Orr-Walker, Kea Conservation Trust
Phone: 0274249594
tamsin.orr-walker@keaconservation.nz

Tim Gale, Game Animal Council
Phone: 021688531
tim.gale@nzgac.org.nz