



SOUTHERN
LAKES
SANCTUARY

PROJECT UPDATE II 12.2022



Kowai tatou

WHO WE ARE

The Southern Lakes Sanctuary is a landscape scale conservation project focused on a long term strategy to increase biodiversity, and protect our native taonga through the suppression and eventual eradication of introduced predators from our incredible region.

Southern Lakes Sanctuary consists of six founding partner organisations, collectively representing the mahi of hundreds of volunteers from over 80 community groups, landowners, and businesses who have been working for many years to protect and restore the declining biodiversity of our region.

Kaupapa

COLLECTIVE VISION

A Southern Lakes Sanctuary of spectacular mountains, lakes and rivers, with thriving ecosystems and abundant wildlife enjoyed by people who respect this whenua puiaki.

Tukanga

OUR APPROACH

The Southern Lakes Sanctuary project is implementing a phased approach to the long term goal of total elimination of predators within the 660,000 ha project area, whilst providing a haven for our native taonga, including the 30 Threatened / At-Risk species within its boundaries.



Kia ora!

This morning I went out to check a trap line with one of our team and it really brought it all home for me. With infectious enthusiasm, she told me about all of the different things she's been doing since she took on her role... how much she loves waking up in the morning and looking out from her front window onto all of the places that she has gotten to know intimately this year... how much she's learned... all of the wildlife she's helping to protect... the colourful characters in the community she's come to know. We talked about how living here matters to her and how much interest there has been in her work from the community, especially from people who weren't really engaged before.

She asked me if I felt proud of what we've accomplished so far, and I found that I do, but more so, I feel inspired to do so much more, especially when I know we have such an enthusiastic and talented team who are doing all of this incredible and challenging mahi and loving it. If this was year one, I can't wait to see how much further we'll be by this time next year.

Nāku noa, nā,
Leslie Van Gelder, Co-Chair
Southern Lakes Sanctuary



30
AT RISK
SPECIES

660,000
HECTARE
PROJECT AREA

80+
COMMUNITY
TRAPPING GROUPS




KERERŪ © Matthew Cattin



One year down, 29 more to go! We feel that we have achieved so much in our first year in operation, but we are just getting started. Thank you to our supporters, our founding partner groups, DOC / Te Papa Atawhai, AJ Hackett Bungy (GSD), and to each and every volunteer. The relationship with our delivery partners GSD has been instrumental in the efficiency of our project. For our Trust, their support has been invaluable and showcases AJ Hackett Bungy's commitment to conservation and community.

Our trustees, who represent our founding partners, give countless hours of their own time to our project. Their experience and dedication is truly inspiring and we feel supported every day. They are the ones who secured the funding to enable us to get underway and to hire our staff (myself included).

A special word of thanks to our incredible staff. Their enthusiasm is infectious and their thirst for learning is inspiring. Most importantly though, they are great people and are a pleasure to work with!

Our project has been discussed since 2017. Mahi mō te Taiao / Jobs for Nature was the springboard for us getting operational, but we see this as being an intergenerational project and are busy trying to secure funding post 2024.

The future for conservation in this region is looking really bright and we hope to play a key role in it alongside our partners. We have lots of very exciting plans for the coming year and we thank you all for your continued support.

Kā mihi,
Paul Kavanagh, Project Director
Southern Lakes Sanctuary

 **\$3.7m**
FUNDING
SECURED TO DATE

 **20**
STAFF

Project Developments



BLUE RIVER VALLEY

Spirits were as high as the ridges, as some of our crew got to spend a few days in the amazing Blue River Valley, Tititea / Mount Aspiring National Park near Makarora. Our crew installed 97 traps to protect kea, whio, rock wren, mohua and other bird species, along with long-tailed bats that call the valley home. Our team got to see and hear some of these amazing taonga too. This new line must be one of the most remote in the country! Kia ora to all of those involved.



CONSERVATION STANDARDS

In May of this year we welcomed representatives of the conservation community from across our region to Cardrona Alpine Resort for a very special event. The Conservation Standards Workshop brought training specialist Philippa Walsh to our shores for the very first workshop of its kind in New Zealand. We were so impressed with the turnout and for the enthusiasm from the participants. Thanks to RealNZ, ORC, QLDC, The Nature Conservancy and US Embassy.



MOHUA © Oscar Thomas

TŪPIKI TRUST

Biodiversity monitoring has begun in partnership with the Tūpiki Trust to inform the protection of vulnerable native species in the Upper Young Valley, part of the Makarora catchment. [“The Tūpiki Trust welcomes the opportunity to partner with Southern Lakes Sanctuary in funding the Upper Young project,”](#) said Ross Cullen, a trustee of the Tūpiki Trust. [“This will have a very significant impact on native biodiversity in a part of the Southern Alps that is very familiar to Kiwi climbers and alpinists.”](#) The Tūpiki Trust will support the Southern Lakes Sanctuary with funding of \$122,000 for which we are so grateful.



SHARING REES-OURCES

We have been working closely with the Routeburn Dart Wildlife Trust, one of our founding partners to tackle some ambitious projects in remote areas like the Rees Valley. Our trapping efforts in the Rees will focus on the eventual goal to release endangered takahē in the Rees and teamwork is essential to this. We are so excited about the prospect of playing a part in reintroducing these magnificent birds to our region!



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Our project is based on collaboration and community. Community engagement has been a really key part of the Southern Lakes Sanctuary and will continue to grow in the future. We have partnered with some of our founding groups to run workshops and a talks series through the winter and spring. The level of interest and enthusiasm for conservation in our region is so motivating and inspiring. Stay tuned for more community sessions in the future.



TRAPPING GAINS

To date, 1,162 box traps have been built by the team in our customised workshop. These are in addition to traps and trapping equipment purchased and distributed to our partner groups, all thanks to the generous support of Central Lakes Trust.



WORKING SMARTER WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY

In August 2022, we began a project to expand our possum control efforts using the NZ AutoTraps AT220, a self-resetting and self-rebaiting trap. We have removed approx. 600 possums using only 50 of these traps in Bob's Cove and Bush Creek within just four months! Watch this space as we will be rolling out some more of these traps, with some incredible tech solutions added, in the new year. This mahi helps keep our ngahere/forest and our native wildlife safe as we progress our predator elimination efforts.



REMARKABLE PARTNERS

Work is under way to protect and enhance valuable habitat at the Jardines Boulders on QEII National Trust's Remarkables Station in a partnership between QEII National Trust, Whakatipu Wildlife Trust and Southern Lakes Sanctuary. The new collaboration launched with a planting day involving representatives from each trust, along with volunteers from Queenstown Climbing Club. Thanks to Whakatipu Reforestation Trust who generously donated the native plants. Thanks also to QEII National Trust, who part-funded traps to help protect this land, which was put into QEII covenant in 2018.



FILLING OUR KETE OF KNOWLEDGE

Upskilling our staff is integral to the success of our project and we have been fortunate to offer them many training opportunities over the past year. These include; Conservation Standards, DOC Trapping Workshop, First Aid Training, 4WD Training, River Crossing Skills and Biodiversity Monitoring Surveying. It's fair to say that our team are well prepared for the bold ambitions of the project ahead.

Progress Report: Jobs for Nature



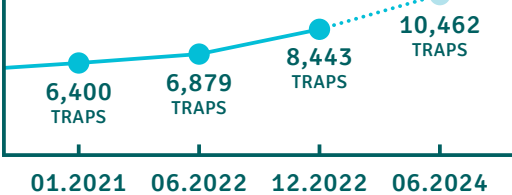
YEAR 1 (END 06.22)

TRAP CALIBRATION:

20% REPAIRED / 30% CALIBRATED / 86% AUDITED



TRAP TOTALS:



- ✓ Establish baseline monitoring
- ✓ Trap audit & calibration
- ✓ Grow knowledge & innovation
- ✓ Plan for new Cardrona Valley Hub

YEAR 2 (END 06.23)

NEW TRAPS:

1,155

TRAP TOTAL:

8,644

SUPPRESSION AREA:

121,100 ha

- Connect two Hubs
- Plan for new Cardrona Valley Hub
- Long-term operational plan completed

YEAR 3 (END 06.24)

NEW TRAPS:

1,818

TRAP TOTAL:

10,462

SUPPRESSION AREA:

155,400 ha

- Establish Cardrona Hub
- Assess biodiversity & trapping gains
- Secure funding for long-term plan

Partners Update

“Southern Lakes Sanctuary Trust received DOC Jobs for Nature funding in late 2021. Since then they’ve successfully set up eight hubs throughout their 130,200 hectare project area. They are supporting community groups, DOC and other agencies with their work, as well as extending trap lines and setting up monitoring to ensure they have the data to tell the whole story. Southern Lakes Sanctuary Trust are efficient, well governed and a great conservation group to work with. Their project incorporates large areas of Public Conservation Area including Tititea/Mt Aspiring National Park and part of Te Wāhipounamu World Heritage Site. It has been exciting to see the Trust and the project staff bring this project to fruition, and I look forward to continuing to work with them on our shared conservation journey in the years ahead.”

David Butt, Pou Matarautaki / Operations Manager
– Whakatipu-wai-Māori

**Te Papa Atawhai / Department of
Conservation**

“Highlights for the past year were of course Southern Lakes Sanctuary securing the Mahi mō te Taiao funding, going into action after a lot of hard work and years of planning. For Forest & Bird this meant that we gained new Makarora co-ordinators, which certainly took a lot of the workload off our volunteers. Having other team members to do much of the boots-on-ground work like trap calibration, clearing snow damage, and cutting new trap lines means that our existing traps are operating more efficiently and we have a lot more traps out there. There is also a lot more monitoring going on; with mohua surveys and remote acoustic monitoring work, we now know a lot more about our mohua populations and additional tracking tunnel operations helping to inform our trapping.

A particular highlight is the new Blue Line - a big logistic exercise for the Southern Lakes Sanctuary team in some fairly remote country. Additional funding for more traps has also been welcome from various new partnerships. Few, if any, of these initiatives could have been handled by our volunteers - there is no doubt that the Southern Lakes Sanctuary has dramatically increased the amount of predator control at Makarora. Long may it continue!”

Mo Turnbull, Trustee

Forest & Bird, Central Otago Lakes Branch / Southern Lakes Sanctuary



“Matukituki Charitable Trust have seen a real increase in bird activity in the valley with regular sightings of kea, kākā, kārearea, kererū, oystercatchers and robins. There is optimism that the predator control work is building a resilient stock of birds. We event spotted the first whio in the west Matukituki in 30 years which is truly exciting.

Trapping kills appear to be lower than previously, which might indicate lower predator numbers and it seems that hedgehogs have been significantly reduced and may be eliminated from the Upper Matukituki with very few kills compared to previous years. We are also encouraged that Southern Lakes Sanctuary have enhanced the control activities in the East Matukituki as the two catchments are complementary.

The new staff resources from Southern Lakes Sanctuary have been fantastic and the continued support and dedication from volunteers is very encouraging. We also appreciate the even greater focus on Safety by using Southern Lakes Sanctuary systems and processes to ensure every effort is made to be safe in all our activities.

Huge thanks to the Southern Lakes Sanctuary team for your support and encouragement during this past year.”

Derek & Gillian Crombie
Matukituki Charitable Trust

Paul Hellebrekers, Trustee
Southern Lakes Sanctuary

“The Routeburn Dart Wildlife Trust has had a very positive year, one of the highlights being our new feral cat trapping activities. In a short season we caught 59 of them! Another highlight has been working closely with Southern Lakes Sanctuary and its wonderful staff. Mahi mō te Taiao funding means we now have 2.5 dedicated field workers - equivalent to 90 hours/week. It is a pleasure to have them engaged in activities in and around Glenorchy. Another highlight was the Conservation Standards Workshop, held in winter at Cardrona Alpine Village. The energy, enthusiasm and networking that grew as the week progressed was fantastic. It is our belief that conservation efforts in the region can only go from strength to strength with the support of the Southern Lakes Sanctuary.”

Geoff Hughes, Trustee
Routeburn Dart Wildlife Trust / Southern Lakes Sanctuary

“We are very excited that the traps being supplied by Southern Lakes Sanctuary have started to arrive. We have begun to deploy them and remove obsolete traps in our system and old DOC 150s, which will be made available to other groups to redeploy in new areas. The Econodes are making life much easier for our trapping team, who report that it is much more pleasant to remove fresh kills from traps than rotting old carcasses.”

Jo Booker, Trustee
Soho Properties Ltd / Southern Lakes Sanctuary

“The highlight of the past year for Wānaka Backyard Trapping was the series of community engagement talks supported by Southern Lakes Sanctuary over the winter and spring. The range and depth of knowledge and experience of the speakers was inspiring. We learnt about fascinating invertebrates and eBirding; we heard from Billy the Trapper from waaay back, and got to appreciate the higher levels of cat management policy. We learnt about high flying / high living kea and hedgehogs; stunning yet secretive skinks and geckos, rabbit numbers driving ferret numbers, and falcons in the ‘hood - all really illuminating and gathering larger audiences with every talk - and not just trappers! We hope to follow this up with similar knowledge sharing and discussion with the public next year, to raise awareness and to grow the number of locals trapping predators in their - big and small - backyard.”

Kris Vollebregt, Trustee

Wānaka Backyard Trapping / Southern Lakes Sanctuary

“The Whakatipu Wildlife Trust have seen significant benefits in the Southern Lakes Sanctuary’s first year of operations. A labour intensive trap audit took place, providing insights into trap efficacy and performance. Some of our groups are already seeing improved capture rates due to calibration efforts, which in turn has bolstered volunteer engagement and enthusiasm.

Southern Lakes Sanctuary now boast an impressive team of staff with skills and knowledge that we could previously only dream of - it is invaluable to be able to tap into this resource and to provide additional support to our volunteers. Retaining and building on this expertise is essential to achieving our predator free goal.

With the backing of the Southern Lakes Sanctuary, the ambition and drive of our own Trust has also been boosted. We can clearly see how volunteer groups within the Whakatipu link to others on our catchment boundaries, as part of a wider landscape-scale predator free mission. We are excited to see what can be achieved for our native wildlife over the next few years and beyond.”

Daniel Sweeney, Trustee

Whakatipu Wildlife Trust / Southern Lakes Sanctuary





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[SOUTHERNLAKESSANCTUARY.ORG.NZ](https://southernlakesanctuary.org.nz)



THANKS TO OUR PROJECT PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS:



OUR FOUNDING PARTNERS:

