



## The Kaimanawa Hunter Liaison Group Predator Control Project

The Kaimanawa Hunter Liaison Group is made up of members from NZDA Taupo, The Central North Island Sika Foundation and Hunters & Habitats Taupo. We meet with the Department of Conservation Taupo on a regular bases and discuss issues that are relevant to all parties involved and also supply volunteers to carry out work such as track clearing and replacing markers, hut maintenance and cleaning up rubbish from popular camp sites in remote locations in the Kaimanawa Forest Park.

At our last meeting which was held at DOC Taupo office on 20 June, we raised the prospect of being involved in a predator control project in the Kaimanawa Forest Park. It was agreed that a good project to start with would be predator control along the Kaipō and Oamaru Rivers, the two main tributaries of the Mohaka River, to protect the struggling Whio populations that are in this area.

### **The plan we have in place is as follows:**

The Kaimanawa Hunter Liaison Group will supply all the volunteers needed to carry out this project from setting out the trap lines to regular ongoing maintenance of the trap lines.

NZDA Taupo, Sika Foundation, Hunters & Habitats and DOC Taupo have donated \$5000 each to start the project, with Bayleys Real Estate Taupo sponsoring the Sika Foundations share of \$5000. These funds go directly to suppling Goodnature A24 traps. With the \$20,000, we were able to purchase 108 x A24 traps complete with lure and counters.

We organised two teams to go into the area on the 27 – 29 July to carry out a survey of the Kaipō River from the swing bridge to the Oamaru Hut and the Oamaru River from the Waitawhero Stream to Oamaru Hut, approximately 10 km on each river. The survey was to determine how many Whio were resident, so we could decide where to place the first line of traps, which need to cover at least 6 km of river to be effective, placed at 100m intervals staggered on each side of the river. One pair of Whio were encountered on each river demonstrating how urgent it was to get this project under way.

On Friday 17 August a team of 12 volunteers went into the Oamaru hut and set out 108 traps along the Kaipō River from the swing bridge down to the confluence with the Oamaru River, protecting just over 10 km of the Kaipō River.

We will go into the area at regular intervals to check the counters and maintain he traps to determine how many predators we are killing and check the Whio population, updating our web sites so everyone can keep track of the project.

This marks the start of a long-term project which could take up to five years before we see a real increase in Whio numbers. We will continue expanding the area protected within this location to create more safe stretches of river as young birds mature and start breeding in larger numbers and move to new territories within the area.

We are now raising funds to protect the 10 km of the Oamaru River from the Waitawhero Stream to the confluence with the Kaipō River. Major sponsors will appear on our web sites,

Facebook pages and all promotional material that is generated to promote this project. Your support for this exciting and important conservation project would be greatly appreciated.

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