

# Impact Report

2024-2025

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*“We’ve had way more silvereye in the garden this last month than I’ve ever seen before, trees literally covered in them, and bellbirds which I’ve not seen at home before either... So good to see increased abundance! Now to get some takahē roaming around!”*

*- Mel, Arrowtown*



# Our work is enabling native wildlife to flourish again around Whakatipu-Wai-Māori

## What Drives Us?

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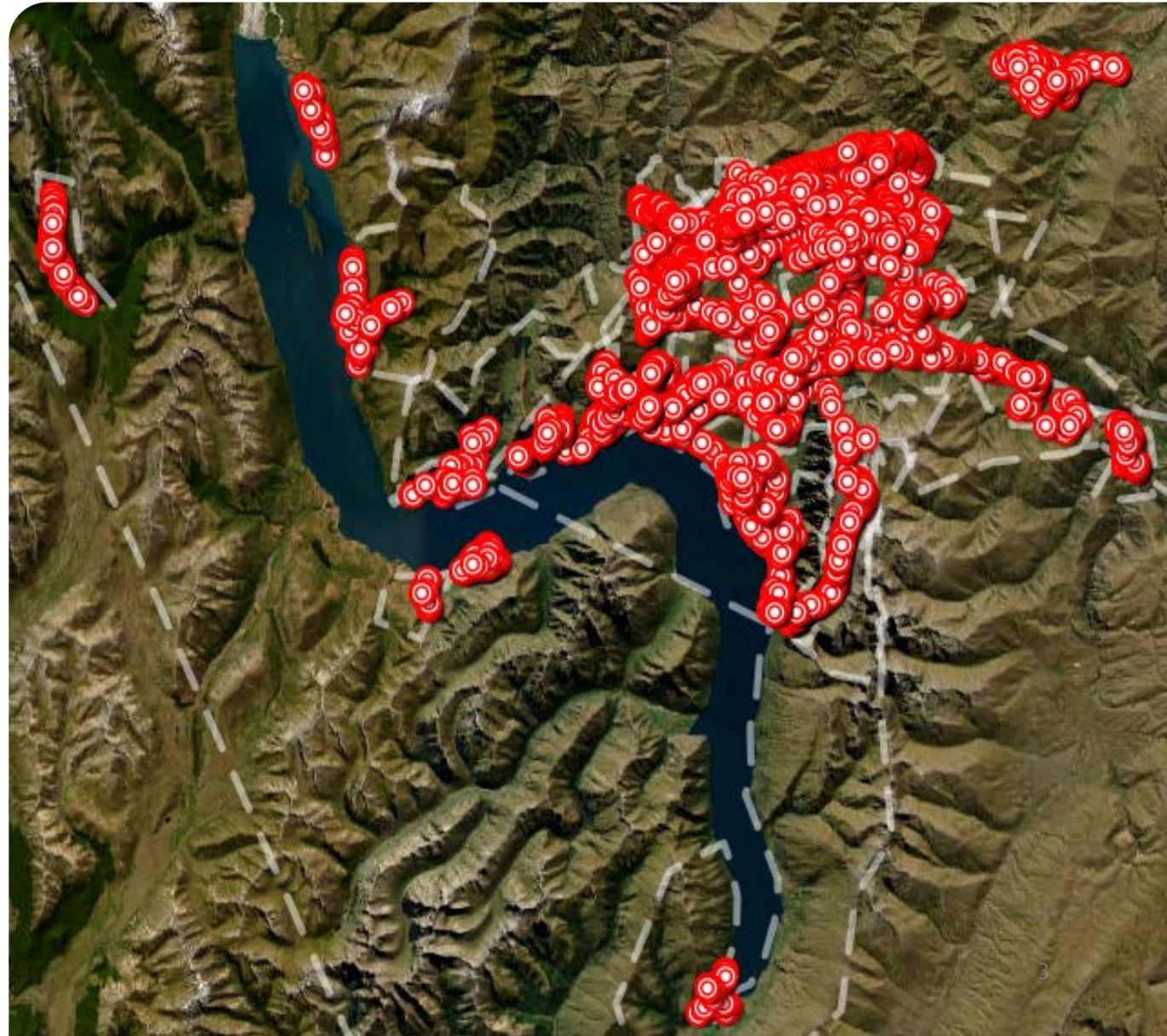
Like the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand, the Queenstown-Lakes area is experiencing a biodiversity crisis. People like to describe reversing this catastrophic loss of native wildlife as “no small feat”. But in fact, it’s through many small feats that our work is making a difference.

Every day, small actions taken by individuals from our 70 community trapping groups are helping to protect our native wildlife. For every rat or stoat trapped, a nest of chicks has a better chance of survival. For every person who learns how to reset a possum trap, our precious alpine birds benefit.

These small actions are keeping habitats safe for native invertebrates, protecting our fascinating lizards and reducing the predation of native birds.

From a group of 21 trappers in 2017, we are immensely proud to report that our network of people contributing to the predator-free cause now exceeds 255 active trappers, with each small action amounting to big gains for native wildlife.

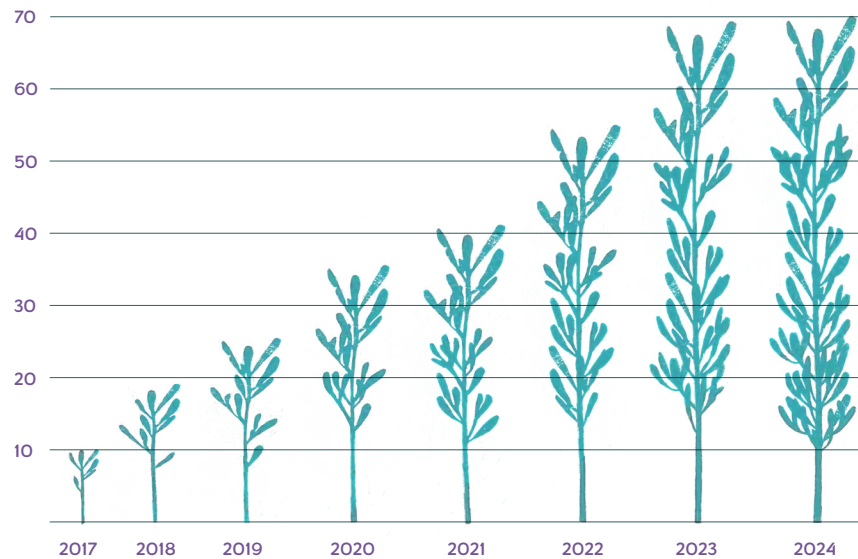
*4214 traps are checked regularly by our 255 active volunteer trappers*



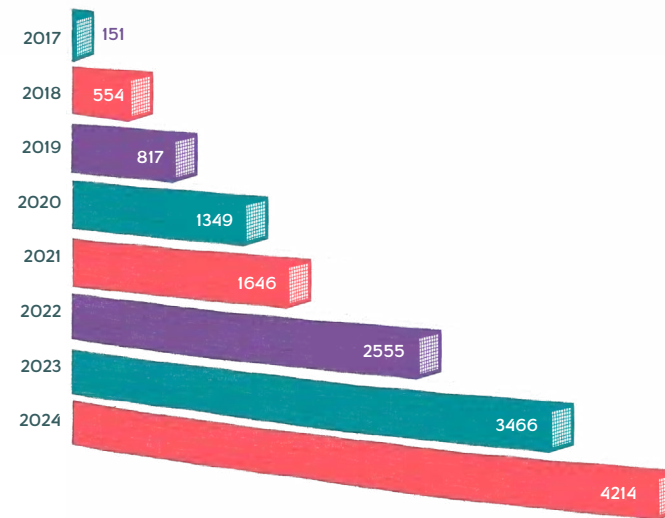
## How We Are Growing!

From a group of 21 trappers in 2017, we are immensely proud to report that our network of people contributing to the predator-free cause now exceeds 255 active trappers, with each small action amounting to big gains for native wildlife.

## Trapping Groups



## Trap Inventory



## Active Trappers



# 2024 - 2025 Highlights



**Total predators caught**  
**13,919**  
up from **12,312** over the  
same period in 2024  
and **7,117** in 2023



**4,000+**  
traps



**70**  
active  
trapping  
groups



**43,335**  
trap checks



**61**  
new trapping  
volunteers  
recruited



**12** trapping  
training  
sessions



**104** workshop /  
field outing  
participants



## Worth Singing About

- Finalists in the 2024 Spirit of the Wakatipu Awards (Environment & Sustainability)
- Being present at the takahē release into the Rees Valley
- 2024 Trapper of the Year - Denise Andrews
- 2024 Trapping Group of the Year - Predator Free Arrowtown

### 2024 Wildlife of the Whakatipu Photography Competition Winners:



Over 18 Category: Martin Barwood



Under 18 Category: Kobe Evans-Kent



# Chair's Message

The year ending June 2025 has been a productive one for the Whakatipu Wildlife Trust. It is pleasing to see that through the collective efforts of our trapping groups and volunteers we have continued to push forward to develop our presence throughout the greater Queenstown community.

The ongoing challenge of securing adequate funding for the scale of work needed continues.

Conservation work requires sustained, long-term investment that doesn't always align with traditional funding cycles. We're grateful that our core supporters – Queenstown Lakes District Council, Central Lakes Trust, and Community Trust South – understand this reality and continue their vital support for the operational costs and multi-year support required to deliver on our mission.

Local business backing, from sponsors like Altitude and Hugo Foundation to community supporters including Arrowtown Four Square and Mercure Hotel, demonstrates that our community truly values our native wildlife. This grassroots support enables us to expand our reach and effectiveness across the region.

This year was marked by profound sadness with the passing of trustee Ben Perchik after

a courageous health battle. Ben's unwavering dedication, reliability and quiet competence helped shape the Trust's foundation. His legacy lives on in the flourishing birdlife in Fernhill, with a new possum trapline recently installed there: Ben's Barrier.

As we welcome new trustees, we farewell others, with Chrissy, Warren and Brett stepping away. On behalf of my current trustees, I wish to thank each of these individuals for their dedication and efforts as they have given their time and resources to help steer and grow the trust.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to my fellow trustees who have dedicated many hours behind the scenes.

As many of you are aware, although we are a charitable organisation, putting the ground-work into completing applications for grants and co-ordinating with other biodiversity groups takes considerable time and energy. I want to take this opportunity to thank Anna Harding Shaw, our Executive Officer, who has been a shining light and instrumental in leading us over the last year. Through Anna's leadership the Whakatipu Wildlife Trust is in very good hands.

David Penrose



*"We often hear ruru at night near Centennial end of Cornwall St and I also saw the kingfisher at the river yesterday. We're seeing more kārearea in town, typically around streets and adjacent reserves."*

- Fiona, Arrowtown



## Executive Officer's Report

It has been a year since I was appointed Executive Officer and what a journey it's been!

This exciting year has been all about collaboration. We've strengthened partnerships with Southern Lakes Sanctuary, Whakatipu Reforestation Trust, Mana Tāhuna, WCG, QT Trails Trust and local schools, working together on joint habitat restoration projects that connect young people with nature and amplify our impact. As well as native birds, we are now also focusing on protecting our smaller, less well-known species. We have joint projects in the pipeline focused on lizards and native pollinators, and I look forward to seeing what our collective mahi can achieve for biodiversity.

Our trapping strategy over the last year has focused on getting new technology into the hands of our volunteers. We rolled out advanced AT220 self-resetting traps to community traplines, which dramatically increased possum control effectiveness while reducing volunteer workload. These smart traps work continuously with less volunteer intervention, scaling up our success. Support from funders like Love Queenstown, Alexander McMillan, Mazda, Transpower, and Les Hutchins enabled us

to invest in this technology with confidence, aided by Southern Lakes Sanctuary's expertise.

We are now removing over 13,000 predators every year and residents are witnessing the return of kākā, kōtare, and kererū to their neighborhoods. However, we need more data to track our progress towards a predator-free Whakatipu and help tell the story of our local wildlife. To help with this, we start our 'Building Community Monitoring Capability' Eco-fund project this spring. This long-term project will create more conservation opportunities for our community, and upskill volunteers in biodiversity monitoring.

The heart of our success remains our 255 active trapping volunteers who completed over 43,000 trap checks this year, plus our incredible trustees contributing governance hours and supporting me in our work. Last but not least I need to thank Bonnie Wilkins from Southern Lakes Sanctuary. We work closely together on trapping and biodiversity projects, and it makes a huge difference to have someone with Bonnie's skills and experience working alongside me.

Anna Harding-Shaw

# Strategic Braids

Taking inspiration from the braided rivers that feed into and out of Whakatipu-Wai-Māori, we structure our work around three intertwining streams.

## 1: Community Engagement

We work with the community to support and connect people to facilitate the protection of wildlife.



## 2: Communication & Advocacy

We represent the unified voice of native wildlife in the Whakatipu Basin.



## 3: Trapping For Success

We develop focused projects that deliver increasingly successful biodiversity outcomes.



# Braid 1: Community Engagement

People are absolutely central to our success. It takes hands and heart to do this voluntary work, and, by engaging both, our vision of a predator-free Whakatipu basin gains more traction each year.

Practical trapping education remains a core offering in our calendar and a broader range of events in 2024-2025 allowed us to showcase the beauty of our native wildlife to new audiences, share knowledge of our unique local ecosystems as well as fortify our motivated network of community trappers. In particular, turnout to Talk on the Wild Side events is increasing with each event.

## How We Connected

- Four public conservation talks with 252 total attendees
- Birding workshops and field trips
- Market presence at Remarkable Markets and Arrowtown Markets over summer
- Community events: Lake Hayes A&P Show and Arrowtown Autumn Parade participation
- 1000+ supporter database receiving regular newsletters
- Active social media presence
- 2024 Native Wildlife Photography competition, prizegiving and fundraising calendar
- Beginner and advanced trapping training
- Two day trapping course for volunteers with DOC and NMIT
- Trappernatter – a regular social catch up for volunteers and supporters





## Braid 2: Communication & Advocacy

Acting as a unifying voice for the native wildlife of the Whakatipu, we lend our expertise to conversations at a local and regional level. Through story-telling, advocacy and education we ensure that wildlife remains front of mind.

But amidst a biodiversity crisis, our work does not stand alone. In this reporting period we are proud to have strengthened collaborative relationships that amplify our impact.

### Collaborating For The Next Generation

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Several holistic restoration projects and youth education projects are now underway with more in the pipeline. We're proud to be working alongside the following partners to deliver locally specific and action-provoking learning about our unique ecosystems and the wildlife that inhabit them.

- Southern Lakes Sanctuary
- Whakatipu Reforestation Trust
- Mana Tāhuna
- Whakatipu Wilding Control Group
- Enviroschools
- Otago Regional Council
- QLDC
- Queenstown Primary School
- Shotover Primary School
- Liger Leadership Academy
- Wakatipu High School

One representative event was the Edu Walk and Talk on Ben Lomond with Queenstown Primary School students and teachers. Together with Whakatipu Wilding Control Group and Skyline we delivered learning around the specific threats to that ecosystem, and the measures being taken to protect it.

To ensure a plurality of voices at a strategic level, we recently appointed a youth representative, Nikau Farrell, to our board of trustees.

## Policy Leadership

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### A Cat Management Strategy for Queenstown-Lakes

We played an advisory role in developing QLDC's approach to cat management. We made submissions to QLDC 2024-2034 Draft Long Term Plan supporting responsible cat ownership and the Cat Management Bylaw.

Additionally, we provided technical expertise and research on the impacts of feral cats on native wildlife and convened a working group that included local veterinarians, conservationists, and cat rescue organisations to discuss draft plans with QLDC.

QLDC Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2025-2028, recently adopted, now includes a dedicated section on cat management, informed by WWT's submissions and stakeholder engagement. We will continue to work with QLDC and other stakeholders on practical approaches to rolling out a cat management plan.

### Further policy input

- QLDC Reserve Management Plan for the Te-Taumata-o-Hakitekura Ben Lomond and Te Tapunui Queenstown Hill Reserves
- QLDC Te Tapunui Queenstown Hill Forestry Management Plan 2025
- DOC Biodiversity Strategy review
- DOC Predator Free 2050 Strategy review



*"We've spotted a flock of tomtits on Sawpit Gully a few times recently and only used to see the occasional one up there in years gone by. We regularly see them on the Bush Creek track too. We are so lucky to live here and the amazing trapping being done in the region is definitely having a positive impact."*

- Helen Coupe, Arrowtown Museum



## Strengthening Ties to Support Wildlife

**1:** New trapping initiatives on the Wharehuanui trail and near the Kimi-ākau Bridge. Fundraising and installation in collaboration with Queenstown Trails Trust.

**2:** Regular community birding outings in cahoots with Birds NZ representative Dawn Palmer.

**3:** A braided river bird survey recorded colonies of black fronted terns, black billed gulls and banded dotterels on the Shotover River. Team effort with Tucker Beach Wildlife Reserve and Southern Lakes Sanctuary, and support from Shotover Jet and Real NZ Rafting.

**4:** Slopehill Reserve trapline monitoring and planting maintenance with the dream team: Liger Leadership Academy, Mana Tāhuna and the Whakatipu Reforestation Trust.

**5:** Community planting and pop-up trap library for Conservation Week 2024, with Whakatipu Reforestation Trust and DOC at Whitechapel Reserve. No library card needed.

**6:** A trap install on the Wharehuanui trail made better by e-bike and trailer, thanks to Better by Bike Arrowtown.



# Braid 3: Trapping For Success

Through targeted trapping, empowering successful trapping groups and adopting new technologies, we are achieving increasingly impressive biodiversity outcomes each year.

## Setting a New Standard

This year has seen a major rollout of advanced trap technology, resulting in strong increase in possum catches. 62 new self-resetting AT220 traps were installed on community volunteer traplines across Arrowtown, Kawarau River, Queenstown Hill, Fernhill and Tucker Beach.

### Impact of self-resetting technology on possum catches

Year	Possum catches
2023	2209
2024	3952
2025	<b>5457</b>

*Supported by funding from Leslie Hutchins Conservation Foundation, Transpower Community Fund, Alexander Macmillan and Mazda Foundation*



*We've got kererū who love the tall slender tree at the front. We laugh at them because the tree bends beneath their bulk and when they fly away, they catapult into the air – and always seem surprised by this, even though they do it multiple times a day!*

*- Bethany, Fernhill*



# New Trapping Projects 2024-2025



## AT220s on Queenstown Hill

25 new AT220 self-resetting possum traps at Queenstown Hill.

*Funded by Alexander McMillan*

## AT220s in Arrowtown

18 new AT220 self-resetting possum traps along Arrow River and Tobin's Face/ New Chums hillside.

*Funded by the Les Hutchins Conservation Fund and Mazda*

## AT220s along the Kawarau River

12 AT220 possum traps along Kawarau River.

*Funded by Transpower Community Fund*

## AT220s at Fernhill

5 AT220s for Alpine Birdsong  
*Funded by Fernhill Community Association*

## Stoat traps along the Wharehuanui Trail

16 DOC200 stoat traps along Queenstown Trails' newest track. Installed with e-bikes and trailers thanks to Better By Bike.

*Funded by M Developments and private donations*



## Bush Creek Area, Arrowtown

Two new DOC200 traplines (Goat Hill and Wildcat), and one double set DOC200 trapline; 31 traps total.

*Supported by a private volunteer donation*

## Shotover Gorge/Kimi-ākau

10 DOC200s and 2 AT220s  
*Funded by The Sargood Bequest*



## Lake Hayes Estate (Walnut Grove Reserve)

6 DOC150 rat traps after trail camera monitoring confirmed rat presence  
*Supported by QLDC*

## Arrowtown Backyard Trapping

Rat and possum traps for individual households with great uptake from Arrowtowners. Extended to Tewa Banks (Queenstown Community Housing Trust neighbourhood)

*Funded by Predator Free New Zealand Trust*

## Associated Trapping Initiatives



### Possum nightclub of Flipping Timmy traps

Supported by Topflite's Soar Initiative Fund

### AT220 possum trap lure and consumables

Supported by Love Queenstown



### Reserves of long-life bait for volunteers

(Erayz dehydrated rabbit and Luregard eggs)  
Supported by Lottery Environment and Heritage Fund and Topflite's Soar Initiative Fund



"We have karearea in Gibbston Valley close to the Nevis Bluff. Tūi have been arriving as kōwhai begins to flower on Mount Rosa. Bellbirds and fantails are here feeding too."

- Amy, Gibbston Valley



# What We're Looking Forward To

## Community Monitoring Initiative

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While we're removing 13,000+ predators annually and seeing anecdotal increases in birdlife (like kākā visits), we need systematic data to show biodiversity impact, track progress and help tell our story.

Rolling out in spring 2025 is a major new initiative. This Whakatipu-wide citizen science biodiversity monitoring project will:

- Create a coordinated, long-term, large-scale dataset benefiting all conservation groups
- Train volunteers in outcome monitoring to measure collective impact
- Use advanced technology including AR5 bioacoustic recorders for birds and bats
- Verify citizen science data and monitor hard-to-access habitats
- Prepare for emerging AI analysis technologies

*Made possible by the Otago Regional Council's Eco-Fund and Love Queenstown*





*Credit: Samuel Purdie*



*Credit: Samuel Purdie*

## And:

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- Inducting our new trustees
- Announcing the winners of the 2025 Wildlife Photography Competition
- Expanding our backyard trapping project into Lake Hayes Estate
- Getting stuck into a joint restoration project at Matakauri Wetland with WRT, QLDC, ORC, SLS EnviroSchools and QPS.
- Developing wildlife signage for QLDC reserves
- Beginning the search for endangered moths last seen on Ben Lomond. This study will involve schools, Skyline and Whakatipu Wilding Control Group and Samuel Purdie from Southern Lakes Sanctuary
- Lizard monitoring and protection project involving school students and volunteers
- Looking into remote communication nodes for remote traplines
- Continuing the roll-out of AT220 possum traps on community volunteer traplines
- Looking at future trapping plans for 7 Mile Reserve, Feehly Hill and the future Queenstown to Glenorchy section of Queenstown Trails



*"We counted 25 tūi on our feeder and trees today. We regularly have 10 tūi and 2 bell birds."*

*- Jane, Arrowtown*

# Our People

In addition to our legendary network of volunteers, we've got a strong team that works hard behind the scenes to coordinate our work.

**Anna Harding-Shaw** – Executive Officer

**Brett Butland** – Trustee

**Chrissy Becker-Fifield** – Trustee (Outgoing)

**Daniel Sweeney** – Trustee, Hanley's Farm Predator Free

**David Penrose** – Chair, Lake Hayes Predator Free

**Jo Conroy** – Treasurer

**Nicky Gray** – Trustee, Enviroschools

**Nikau Farrell** – Youth Representative

**Niki Gladding** – QLDC Representative

**Phil Green** – Trustee, Conservation Officer, Queenstown Climbing Club

**Tony Paterson** – Trustee, Representative to Southern Lakes Sanctuary

**Warren Skerrett** – Trustee, Ngāi Tahu Representative



# Our Supporters

## Platinum



## Gold



# Our Mates



*“Our vision is for a predator-free environment throughout the Lake Whakatipu area in which birds and native wildlife can flourish”*



[whakatipuwildlifetrust.org.nz](http://whakatipuwildlifetrust.org.nz)

