

W.A.E.S.

Wasatch Avian Education Society

March 2019



At this month's meeting, we welcome Kylie Jones-Greenwood, community programs coordinator with Tracy Aviary. She will give us a presentation about the conservation of a most interesting New Zealand native, the Kea parrot.



The article below, from the Lafeber website, will introduce you to the Kea, in case you can't wait until Saturday to find out more.

Meet the Kea "Mountain Parrot"

There are many species of exotic birds. Many of them have their homes in jungles, and warmer regions like the Amazon rainforests, where the highest quantities of exotic bird species reside. However, there is one exotic bird, a parrot, that lives in the cold and challenging Alpine region of New Zealand. The Kea is its name, given it due to the "keeeaaa" sound of its call and cry. The Kea is a bird that is set apart from others in not only that it's a cold weather parrot, but also that it's quite intelligent.



Get To Know The Kea

The Kea is an olive-green colored bird, making it not as flashy as its cousins in warmer climates. Typically, they weigh in around 2 pounds, more or less. They are approximately 19 inches in length. The underparts of their wings are colored a brilliant, dark orange. As to their diet, they are considered omnivorous with a diet of berries, grasses, roots, insects, and the occasional mammal or bird. It is their affinity for sheep that puts the bird at odds with the shepherds that reside in their regions. In fact, the Kea can be brutal in its attack on any unattended sheep. It is this preference that helped to lead the bird into an endangered situation, as farmers and shepherds had made it a point to kill them in large numbers. Currently, the Kea is listed as Threatened, with an estimated but cautious approximation of 3,000 to 7,000 remaining in the wild. In 1986, the New Zealand government had granted the Kea full protection, making it illegal to harm these unusual parrots.

Monthly Meeting

March 9, 2019

7:00 pm

**Salt Lake County
Complex**

2001 S. State Street

Room N1100

(North Building)

Our meetings are free
and open to the public.

Come meet other parrot
enthusiasts.

Refreshments & Raffle
Table

Come see what our
volunteer

Flock is all about.

WAES 2018 Board

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Kea Brain Power And Status

Many of these parrots have been witnessed creating tools with which to forage and extract their food. They have been filmed moving objects in efforts to reach food, often working together for the common good. In studies, scientists have been consistently wowed by these birds, prompting the scientific communities to label them one of the more intelligent bird species in the world. Due to the bird's protected status, in order to have a Kea in captivity, a stringent permit system is in place. Today, there are only 65 birds held captive by around 20 permit holders, primarily as insurance against the sudden disappearance of the species in their natural habitat of the mountainous regions.

A Kea Documentary

In 1993, the Natural History New Zealand commissioned the filming of a documentary featuring the extraordinary parrot. Written and narrated by Barry Paine, and directed by Rod Morris, the documentary, **Kea – Mountain Parrot**, has won several awards for its thorough exploration of the beautiful bird. The full-length video can be viewed on the website *NZOnScreen* in four parts that seamlessly play through without the need to click through to the next part. You can watch it from [here](#).

Saving The Kea

In 2006, the Kea Conservation Trust was set up to help educate and assist the inhabitants of the regions where the Kea makes its natural home. They also help to acquire funding for research and to assist in the needed conservation efforts designed to keep the bird safe and with us indefinitely. You can read more on the organization [here](#).

The world is an amazing place. Sometimes, we're quite surprised to learn of the existence of an unusual bird that is as similar in appearance as its warmer climes cousins, but as different in its living arrangements. For a variety of reasons, the Kea is called "the Clown of the Alps."

<https://lafeber.com/pet-birds/meet-the-kea-the-mountain-parrot>

Posted on [January 23, 2019](#) by [Matt Rowe](#)

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