

More Money For Mohua

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Efforts to save a rare native bird in the Makarora Valley have received a major boost.

The Mohua Charitable Trust has given \$11,000 towards the Department of Conservation's bid to save the mohua (yellowhead).

The money will be used to provide nearly 200 new predator traps to replace existing outdated ones.

The traps are targeting stoats.

Originally protecting six nests, the project now has 300 traps from the Makarora edge of Mt Aspiring National Park to Haast Pass, including the Young Valley.

A survey of the Makarora mohua population back in November resulted in 34 sightings.

About mohua: These birds are found only in South Island beech forests and are classified as nationally endangered.

With their vibrant yellow head and breast plumage, European settlers called them yellowhead or bush canary. The rest of their body is olive-brown and they usually flit about in small, noisy flocks in the forest canopy.

Habitat loss and predators have had a devastating effect on mohua who, unfortunately nest in holes in trees, making them particularly vulnerable to stoats and rats.

A plus is their reproductive rate, laying up to four eggs. Once these have hatched and fledged the birds can raise another brood.

(Pictured: Flo Gaud Biodiversity Manager from Wanaka DOC and Nigel Babbage from the Mohua Charitable Trust check a trap in Mt Aspiring National Park)