

**Ken and Dion Arnold
Operators White Heron Sanctuary Tours**

Operator Issues - the reality of operating a small ecotourism business

Welcome everyone my name is Ken Arnold I am here today to tell you a bit about my ecotourism business White Heron Sanctuary Tours.
We operate the only tour to New Zealand's sole nesting site for the Kotuku or White Heron.

White Heron Sanctuary Tours started 20 years ago.

(Ken to go on and explain:

- how it started and what with.e.g size of boat, van, office, shareholders e.t.c.
- who did what, how many staff
- what kens role was
- What sort of numbers you were doing
- how did you advertise
- what role did doc play
- what you have operating now e.g. boat size, van, office, motels and how and when you came about getting these assets in place.
- who does what nowadays and how many staff, what numbers you are doing, who are your clients.

In our experience over the last 20 years ecotourism has developed into a key part of the tourism industry in New Zealand, A lot of visitors are here solely for the eco tourism experience. Most people that join our tour are generally interested in learning a bit about the area they are visiting and how we manage these special places.

Conservation is the main part of managing this reserve and our company is very much involved with predator control the main ones being possum and stoat and also monitoring the bird numbers and protecting the area
Conservation to us is also about educating and informing, and we see eco tourism when conducted well as a great chance to educate and inform not only visitors from overseas but also local new Zealanders about some of these precious environments we have around us and what conservation measures we have in place to maintain and then hopefully expand these delicate ecosystems

So hopefully in years to come with the modern changing world and the impact of mankind nature will still be there to enjoy and learn from.