

High Country hi-tech Video Answers

Wednesday 13 May

1. Weeds in the High Country

Meet Neil Bolton from the Department of Conservation to find out about weeds in the high country and the problems they cause.

1. What are some of the weeds that are found in the Mackenzie Basin?
 - Rosehip, lupins, poplars, pine trees, gorse and lupins...
2. How are pine trees spread?
 - By wind dispersal when the seeds are released from cones
3. How is GPS used by DOC to manage weeds?
 - Locate exactly where different weeds are and how this changes over time

Next step learning: Find out about weeds in your local area and what can be done to control them.

2. Pest animals in the High Country

There are many introduced predators in the high country, find out more about some of the more common predators and what is being done to manage them.

1. What are the different predators that Neil talks about?
 - Possum, weasel, stoat, ferret, cats, hedgehogs, hares (and rabbits, mice and rats)
2. Why are hedgehogs a threat?
 - Because they are good climbers and they eat native bird's eggs
3. How have tracking collars helped in controlling pests?
 - They have shown where animals are, and how they move around at different times of the year giving a better understanding of the behaviour and numbers of pests in certain areas

Next step learning: What do you think is the worst predator in New Zealand and why?

3. Collar that pesky pig!

Meet Billy Joe a working dog used for pig hunting and other conservation work and find out how his collar works.

1. What work does Billy Joe do?
 - He is a pig dog used to bale up pigs when pig hunting and also to track other animals on conservation land
2. What training has Billy Joe had?
 - Basic incentive training plus aversion to birds training so he doesn't harm birds and training with the collar
3. How does the collar work?
 - It uses GPS to track the dog and gives compass direction and distance from the hand held unit to the dog.

Next step learning: What are some of the other ways that tracking collars are used for conservation work?

4. Tracking Chamois and Thar

Check out the stuffed chamois and thar and find out how these introduced animals affect the high country and what's being done to reduce their impact.

1. Which animal is a bigger threat to the high country and why?
 - Thar, because there are more of them and they tend to gather in large groups and trample and over browse plants such as snow tussock
2. Why do some people like thar and chamois?
 - Because they are hunted for sport and the Himalayan thar is threatened in its Himalayan homeland.
3. What technology is used to control these animals?
 - GPS tracking collars and helicopters are used to cull animals rather than ground shooting.

Next step learning: Find out where chamois and thar come from and why they were introduced to New Zealand.

5. Rabbit Control and GIS

Meet Sue Anderson a Ranger for the Department of Conservation and discover how technology is helping to control rabbit numbers in parts of the Mackenzie Basin.

1. How are rabbits controlled in this area?
 - By a contractor that does night shooting
2. What technology does the contractor use?
 - Night vision goggles rather than spot lights and GPS to record where they have been and how many rabbits they have shot
3. What happens to the data that the contractor collects?
 - It is put into a GIS programme which allows DOC to see how many rabbits have been shot, plot trends over time and compare this information with other information on predators, terrain and weeds to give a better understanding of how rabbits are influenced by other factors.

Next step learning: Where else is GIS used and why is it such a useful tool?