

Behind the Eyes

In 1820, after various failed attempts to succeed in business, Audubon settled down to his life's ambition, to paint every bird in the "United States and its Territories," as he defined his own boundaries. Although he did not succeed in capturing every bird, the enormity of what he accomplished is staggering in its size and beauty. Audubon's plan was to have prints made from his paintings, which he would sell on a subscription basis.[*]

*These prints were later compiled to form books.

Kea the destroyer?

19 July 2009, 17:24

Hi,

We are visiting New Zealand in early November, travelling from Christchurch to Mount Cook, Queenstown and back via Franz Josef to Greymouth by rental car. We recently watched a wildlife film which featured Keas destroying the wipers, rubber trip, ski bindings etc. on cars and motorhomes and are now concerned that we might be their victims!

We would like to encounter them, but are not too keen on seeing our rental car destroyed. Where should we avoid leaving the car please?

The completed work is known as “the double elephant folio” or DEF edition of *The Birds of America* by John James Audubon. The term “double elephant” refers to the large size of the paper.[*]

*Double elephant folio was the largest standardised paper size at the time.

Re: Kea the destroyer?

19 July 2009, 21:58

You will probably encounter kea, or they will encounter your car, at Aoraki/Mt Cook, Homer Tunnel (if you go to Milford) and Arthur's Pass. The best way to protect your rental is to park with other vehicles... and hope the car you are parked next to looks more tasty than your own.

Kea also like to pull the laces from your sneakers and hiking boots so don't leave unattended footwear outside either.

And if all else fails... don't forget full travel insurance :)

Re: Keas: How much of a concern?
07 September 2013, 03:22

We had kea damage at Cragieburn ski field (our own car, not a rental). They tore out the windscreen wiper blades and a fair portion of the door seals. We had spare windscreen wiper blades with us since we knew there were likely to be keas there, and we got the door seals replaced when we got home. All up the cost was less than \$200 from memory, not that big a deal. Don't let worrying about it spoil your holiday.

Audubon's need for birds to serve as models was constant. He was noted for the way he would wire a dead bird and shape it into a realistic position [...]

Audubon was determined to paint each bird life-size. In the case of the larger species, this took some doing. For example, note the way the head and neck of the Roseate Spoonbill (Plate CCCXXI) are bent down in a feeding position, a clever way to fit this large bird onto the paper.

Re: Keas: How much of a concern?
16 October 2017, 05:22

Hi,

If you park at the Homer Tunnel car park the Keas will find you and your vehicle and eat the soft bits, diito Arthurs Pass, Cardrona, Treble Cone, The Remarks, etc, etc.

They have no respect for law and order.

Texts excerpted from

<http://www.tripadvisor.co.nz>

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By Susan M. Low

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Behind the Eyes

By Scott Rogers

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