

The Wilson Sisters' Inspiring Journey to Save New Zealand's Wild Horses

Deep in the heart of New Zealand's central North Island, amidst rolling hills and rugged terrain, roams a unique and endangered species: the Kaimanawa wild horse. These horses, descendants of animals introduced to the region by early settlers, have adapted to the harsh conditions of the Kaimanawa Ranges and now number around 3,000.



For the Love of Horses: The Wilson Sisters' Inspiring Journey to Save New Zealand's Wild Horses

by Sorin Dumitrascu

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 24432 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 394 pages



For years, the fate of these wild horses hung in the balance. The government, unable to manage their growing population, resorted to culling as a means of control. This practice, however, ignited a passionate outcry from animal welfare advocates and conservationists.

Enter the Wilson sisters: Nikki and Sally. These two remarkable women, driven by a deep love for animals and a profound sense of justice,

embarked on a mission to save the Kaimanawa horses from extinction.

Nikki, a horse trainer and experienced equestrian, had witnessed firsthand the grace and spirit of these wild creatures. Sally, a veterinarian, was equally concerned about their welfare and knew that culling was not a humane or sustainable solution.

In 2001, the sisters established the Kaimanawa Horse Welfare Group (KHWG). Their goal was to end the culls and develop a compassionate and effective management plan for the horses.

The journey, however, was not an easy one. The sisters faced opposition from both the government and some farmers who feared that the horses competed with their livestock for grazing land. Undeterred, they persisted with their campaign, raising awareness, organizing protests, and lobbying for change.

In 2005, their efforts paid off when the government finally halted the culls. It was a significant victory, but the battle was far from over.

The KHWG continued to advocate for the horses, working with the Department of Conservation and other stakeholders to develop a sustainable management plan. This plan included aerial surveys to monitor the population, research into the impact of the horses on the environment, and the establishment of protected areas to safeguard their habitat.

In 2018, the KHWG launched a groundbreaking program to round up and rehome surplus Kaimanawa horses. The sisters, along with a team of volunteers, spent countless hours on horseback, mustering the horses into

large yards. Once captured, the horses were assessed by veterinarians, socialized, and prepared for adoption.

The rehoming program has been a resounding success. To date, over 2,000 Kaimanawa horses have been placed in loving homes throughout New Zealand and overseas. These horses have brought joy and companionship to countless people, while also helping to preserve the unique heritage of the Kaimanawa wild horse.

The Wilson sisters' journey is an inspiring testament to the power of passion, determination, and unwavering commitment. Through their tireless efforts, they have not only saved the Kaimanawa wild horses from extinction but have also created a model for compassionate and sustainable conservation.

Today, the Kaimanawa horses continue to roam freely in the ranges that have been their home for centuries. Thanks to the Wilson sisters and the many supporters who have joined their cause, these magnificent creatures have a secure future, forever wild and free.

Meet the Wilson Sisters

Nikki Wilson is a highly respected horse trainer and equestrian with over 40 years of experience. She has a deep understanding of horse behavior and a lifelong passion for animal welfare.

Sally Wilson is a veterinarian with a special interest in the welfare of wild animals. She has worked extensively with the Department of Conservation and other organizations to develop and implement conservation strategies for endangered species.

Together, Nikki and Sally have dedicated their lives to protecting the Kaimanawa wild horses. Their unwavering commitment and tireless advocacy have made a profound difference in the lives of these animals and the ecosystem they call home.

How You Can Help

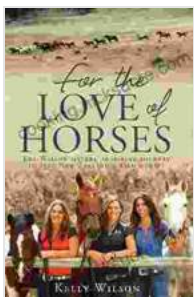
There are many ways you can support the work of the Kaimanawa Horse Welfare Group and help protect the Kaimanawa wild horses:

- Donate to the KHWG to help fund their ongoing efforts.
- Spread the word about the plight of the Kaimanawa horses and encourage others to support their cause.
- Adopt a Kaimanawa horse and give one of these amazing animals a loving home.
- Visit the Kaimanawa Ranges and experience the beauty of these wild horses in their natural habitat.

By joining forces with the Wilson sisters and the KHWG, we can ensure that the Kaimanawa wild horses continue to thrive in the heart of New Zealand for generations to come.



Photo courtesy of the Kaimanawa Horse Welfare Group



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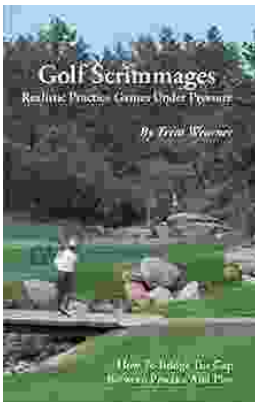
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