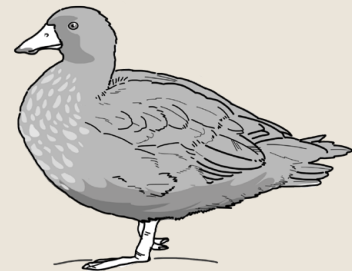




Whio Mountain

By Ranger Mike





Up on the mountain in fast-flowing streams,
Lived whanau of whio, more than you've ever seen.
Into the rapids with a duck and a dive,
Blue-grey with brown freckles, to help stay alive.

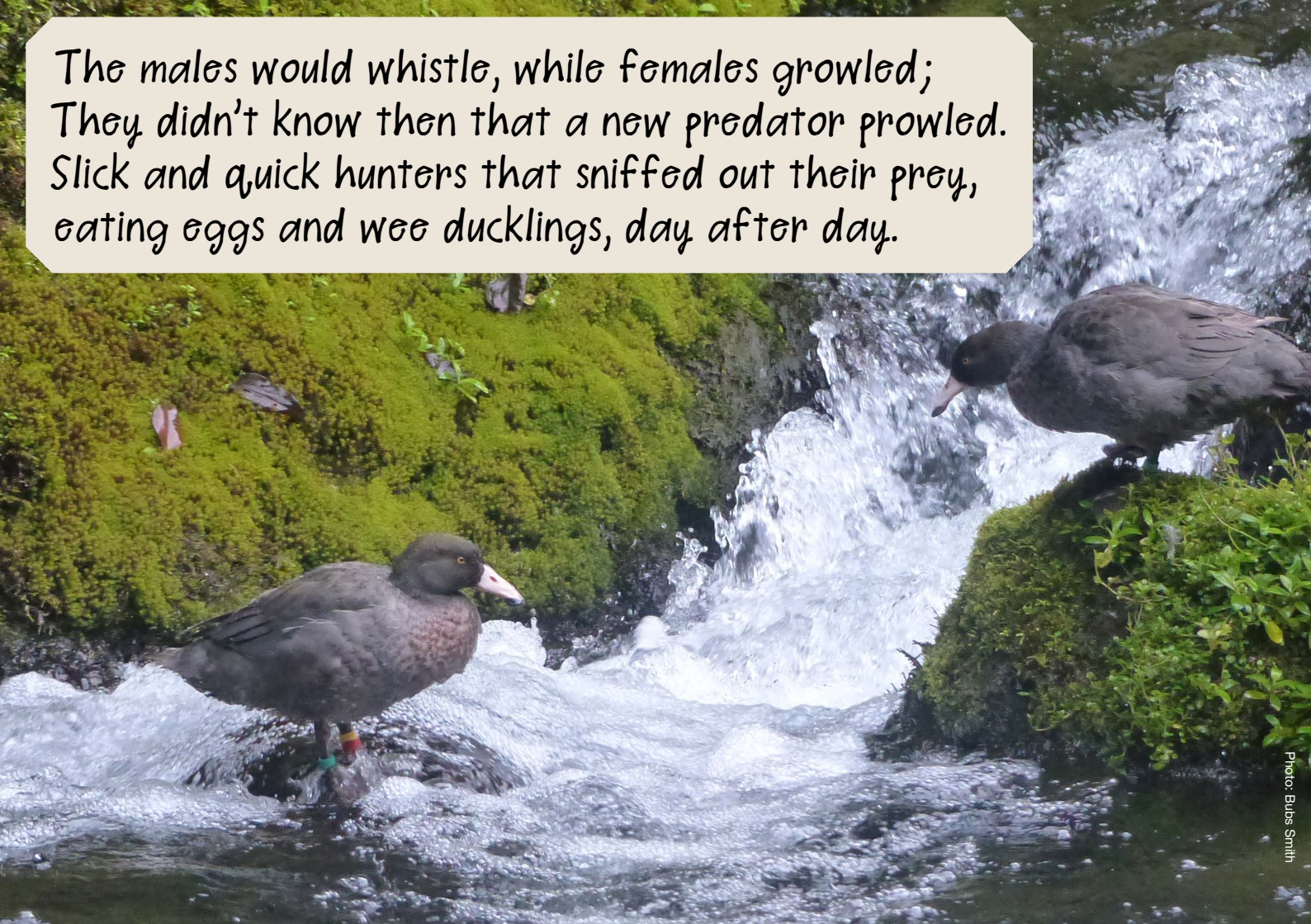


For high in the sky, flew the falcons and hawks,
Who liked to eat whio, that bobbed like corks.
Once in a while, these swift birds of prey,
would sweep on a whio and carry it away.



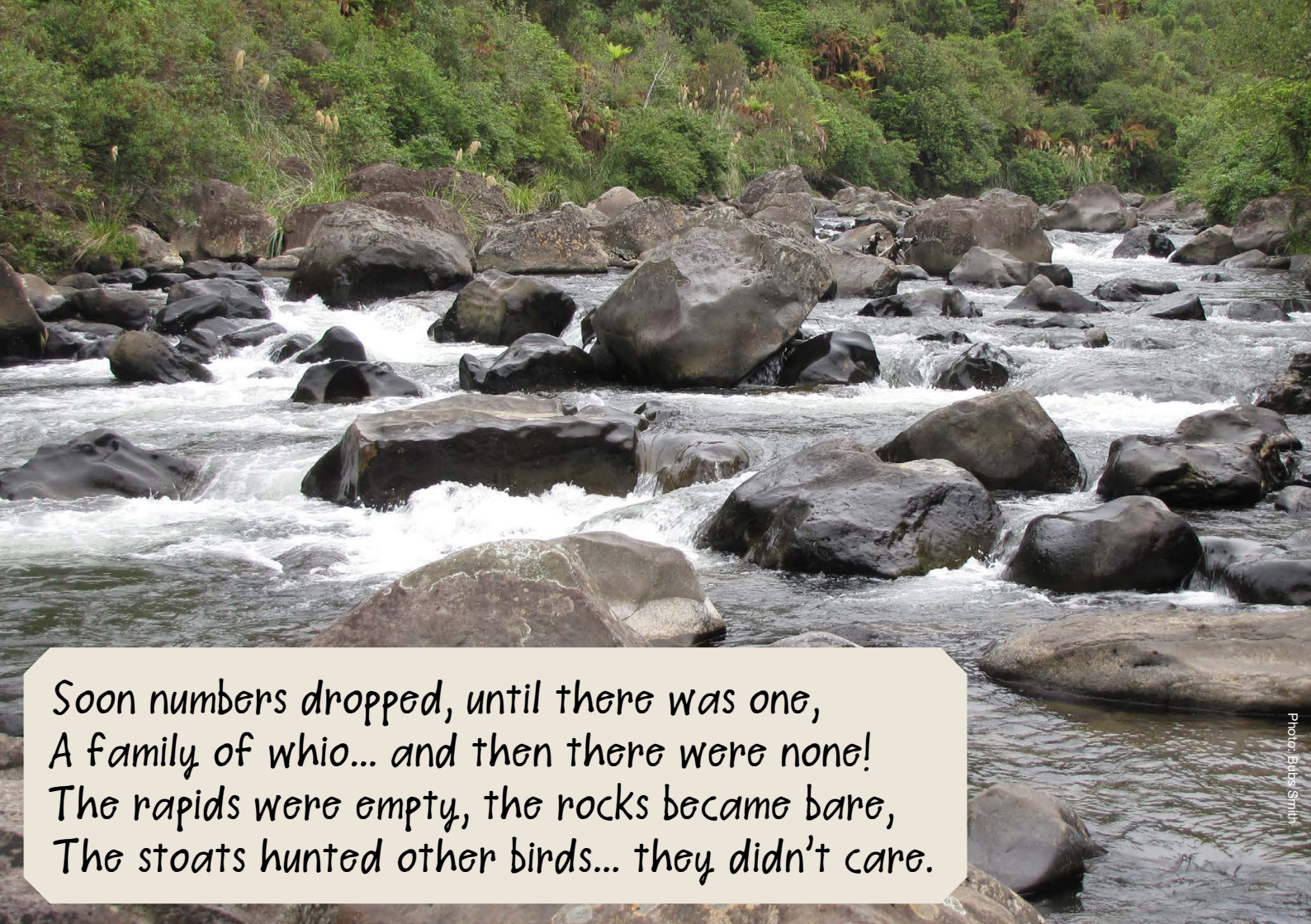
But that was kapai, these birds had to eat.
They didn't get many, the whio were treats!
Life was cool for the whio, at this early stage
Fine food and clear water; most died of old age

The males would whistle, while females growled;
They didn't know then that a new predator prowled.
Slick and quick hunters that sniffed out their prey,
eating eggs and wee ducklings, day after day.

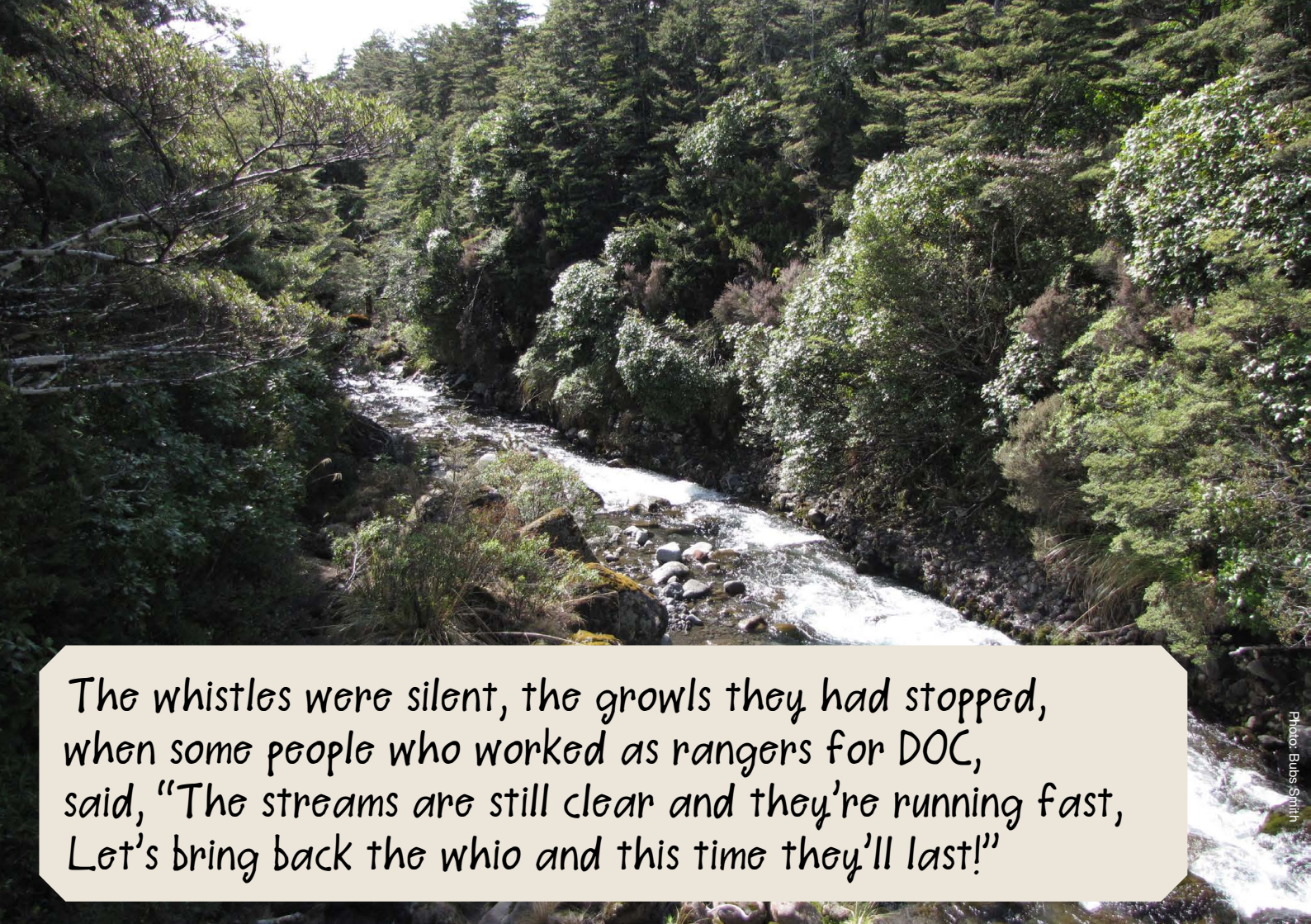


Black spot on the tail and white on the belly,
they found who easily— their poops are quite smelly.
Our families of who, they fell to the stoats,
who seized them and bit them, right on their throats.





Soon numbers dropped, until there was one,
A family of who... and then there were none!
The rapids were empty, the rocks became bare,
The stoats hunted other birds... they didn't care.



The whistles were silent, the growls they had stopped, when some people who worked as rangers for DOC, said, "The streams are still clear and they're running fast, Let's bring back the whio and this time they'll last!"



*“We’ll set out great lines of traps along tracks,
We’ll bait them with eggs, so stoats go for snacks.
The traps will go snap and the stoats will be flat!
And the whio will have a chance to come back”.*



Photo: Barry Harcourt

So back came the whio, in ones and in twos, from forests and avairies; none of them flew! Safe in their boxes they drove to the park, released in the rivers and watched until dark.



Well the stoats are still there and others like rats,
Life is not easy there are even wild cats!
But the traps catch more pests than ever before,
And more and more who are breeding once more.

