

Te Mahia pupils help island conservation

A PAIR of Te Mahia School students had the trip of a lifetime recently when they spent a week on Portland Island.

As part of a year-long challenge, two students were selected to travel with the Department of Conservation to spend a week on Waikawa (Portland Island).

Jack Delaney in Year 7 and D'Magio Karangaroa in Year 5, Department of Conservation's Helen Jonas, Eru Karangaroa and Joan Ropiha took part in the exercise.

On the island, conservation work such as trapping for rats and stoats was undertaken.

Tracking tunnels had peanut butter placed inside to entice pests to walk over the ink. This was used to determine which animals were on the island.

Small Darwin ants are on the island and a survey was conducted to find how widespread they are. A green paste was used to lure them to eat in small containers. If there were ants in the containers, lids were placed on them. The Darwin ant is bad news for native wildlife.

The NZ shore plover, a critically endangered bird, is on the island and a goal is to increase the population of the shore plover and also the NZ dotterel. One NZ shore plover chick was caught, weighed and banded.

Staying at the woolshed during the week was a comfortable base for the group. Everyone mucked in to have a very enjoyable week.

This really was the opportunity of a lifetime for the students as many Mahia locals have never been to the island. They were very grateful for the opportunity and learned so much.

The Bronze Enviroschool is also involved



□ Young Te Mahia School conservationists Jack Delaney and D'Magio Karangaroa rolled up their sleeves on Portland Island helping to trap pests and working with endangered bird populations alongside Department of Conservation staff.

with the Whangawehi Catchmen Management Group and during the year it hosted workshops at school and in the local community. These workshops have focused on sharing the knowledge and skills of local kaumatua and kuia in the Mahia community. Te Mahia children act as kaitiaki by acting locally and thinking globally.



↑ WHANGAWEHI ENVIRO WORK RECOGNISED: Kathleen Mato of Mahia won the Pride of New Zealand Environmental Award for her work as the Whangawehi Catchment Management Group Leader.

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