❑ Installing the hub which receives the signals sent by the traps are — from left — Grandy Lake Forest forest manager Graham Douglas, HBRC pest control officer Shane Diphoorn, and at Encounter Solutions developer Simon Croft.

High-tech targets pests

THE Whangawehi Catchment Group has been selected as a pilot project to trial 25 new state-of-the-art, high-tech traps.

With assistance from the Hawke's Bay Regional Council, the initiative is set to increase the scope of the group's pest control programme.

Whangawehi Catchment Management Group project co-ordinator Nicolas Caviale-Delzescaux said the new technology had the potential to change the face of pest control in the future by significantly reducing maintenance costs, especially in very difficult and rugged terrain.

The pest control traps are designed to send a signal to a hub located on a high point in the catchment every time a pest is caught.

This data is then sent to the landowners via an application on their mobile phones, which alerts them to when and where the traps have been triggered.

Contractors would need to be sent in on targeted trap lines only when a set percentage of traps had been set off.

This differs from the traditional maintenance techniques which consist of checking and maintaining the traps on a monthly basis, whether the traps had been sprung or not.

❑ Simon Croft, left, and Graham Douglas installing the long-life lure and setting up the new high-tech trap.

"This new wireless leading-edge technology added to the new, long-lasting baits or lures, which last up to 12 months, makes this trial relevant to our steep and remote Mahia hill country."

Mr Caviale-Delzescaux said if successful, the traps would play a key role in pest control challenges ahead.

Over the past two years the group had established 70,000 trees and noticed a steep increase in bird life.

Mr Caviale-Delzescaux said this pest control programme would play an instrumental role in protecting the ever-increasing wildlife that is coming back to the area at a significantly lower cost.