

## A pair of Kaka on Pongaroa Station

Pongaroa Station seems to be retaining a pair of Kaka since the early spring. This sighting was a good enough incentive to intensify the farms' pest control programme. Thanks to Rod Dickson from HBRC, BJ Parker, Farm Manager is expanding the network of traps on the property. The farm hopes that the pair of Kaka will settle permanently. The station is also investigating retiring and fencing off 40 hectares of native bush blocks around the farm with the assistance of QE2.



## Covenant agreements signed

In February 2018, several landowners decided to sign the Whangawehi Catchment Conservation Agreement. This agreement is an important way of protecting funders' investment for a 25 year period. It also gives us more credibility for future funding applications.

## New Zealander of the Year awards

On 22nd February, Pat, Arthur & Nic all flew to Auckland to represent the group at the prestigious New Zealander of the Year awards. The Whangawehi group had progressed as a finalist in the 'community' category.

Unfortunately, the W.C.M.G were not winners this time round. Pat O'Brien stated that "it was an honor to be the only environmental group at these awards this year". These awards help raise the profile of the group-especially when working in such an isolated part of the country.



## Coops nominated at the Ballance Environmental Awards

Richard and Hanna Coops from Okepuha Station have been nominated as a finalist for the East Coast section of the Ballance Farm Environmental awards in the Beef and Lamb category. Last year the Coops committed to an extensive planting programme which involved retiring and fencing off 15 ha of their land. Both of them have indicated that they are keen to undertake further environmental work in the near future. Congratulations!



## Students help little blue penguins



A little blue penguin colony has inhabited one of the penguin boxes built by Te Mahia school students on Waikawa (Portland Island). Local D.O.C ranger Helen Jonas took 5 of the surplus nesting boxes built by the students and installed them on the island. Due to their small size the Little blue penguin species are vulnerable to predation and respond well to off shore islands like Waikawa where they are predator free. Thank you Te Mahia school students for fixing the housing problem faced by our Blue Penguin on Waikawa !

## School hike up to Whangawehi shelter



In late February 2018, the senior class at Te Mahia School went up to the Whangawehi shelter for the first time. The weather was perfect for an hour's hike over O'Brien's farm. At the shelter the older children were split into two groups. The boys headed down to test the stream where the water was clear. Meanwhile the girls were investigating the difference in the 8 cultivars of harakeke growing around the shelter. The hike back was a challenge for some, but the students all arrived back at school cheerful and with a great experience to share.

## Walkway update

In 2018, efforts will focus on working with landowners and the New Zealand Access Commission to push for a permanent walkway through the catchment area. We are hoping to make good progress this year.



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