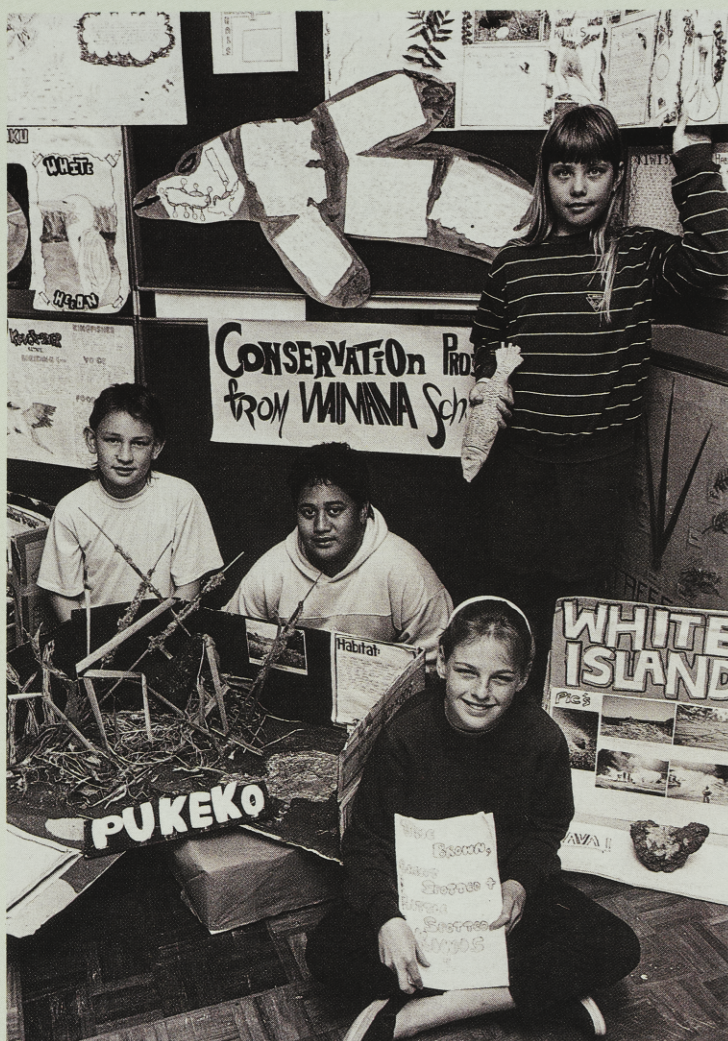




Conservation competition



Some of the winning entrants surrounded by their conservation projects in the Whakatane office of DoC.

YOUNG conservationists were keen to participate in this year's Brian Alexander Conservation Award run by the Eastern Bay of Plenty branch with schools submitting a record number of projects. These ranged from studies on driftnet fishing and Hector's dolphin to the pukeko, the white heron and kiwi conservation.

The entries were judged

by the branch and local headmasters and some of the winning projects were displayed in the Department of Conservation's Whakatane office. Branch chairperson, Helen Harrison, is pleased the local schools are becoming so interested in environmental and conservation issues and the branch hopes to allocate the prizes more widely next year.

Pencarrow Lakes protected

LOWER HUTT branch has had a successful end to a 12-year campaign to protect the Pencarrow Lakes and the best wetland in the Wellington region. The branch's continued advocacy led to a decision by the Wellington

Regional Council to buy 360 ha around the lakes to secure their preservation.

The branch gave a \$5,000 contribution towards the purchase and will be assisting the council with fencing and other work.

Cards for kakas

FOR THOSE lucky enough to see a kaka in the bush, the simple task of filling out a postcard will provide valuable information on the bird's distribution and numbers.

The Science and Research division of DoC has set up a database to store information on kaka sightings and to analyse trends (see *Forest & Bird*, November 1991). To encourage more people to help in this programme Omahanui Native Plants in Tauranga have sponsored a Kaka Sighting Record Card through the special sales promotion of native plants to attract birds.

The scheme relies on people recording sightings and posting them to DoC, so Forest and Bird bush walkers are the ideal volunteers. The kaka cards can be obtained from Forest and Bird head office, PO Box 631, Wellington.

Rotoroa Island section

WELCOME TO OUR newest and most unusual section recently formed on Rotoroa Island in the Hauraki Gulf. The section's committee is made up of the island's permanent residents – the Salvation Army officers and staff who administer the island and its alcoholic rehabilitation institution.

At its first meeting the new committee resolved to proceed with a rat eradication programme to be prepared with the help of DoC. Apart from Norway rats the island is pest-free and once the programme is completed the island will have considerable conservation value. Already Ducks Unlimited is investigating Rotoroa as a release site for brown teal. We wish the section well in its conservation activities.

Predation at Lake Clearwater

AT THE Forest and Bird Council meeting in November, councillors had a chance to see first hand some of the wildlife values of Lake Clearwater in the Ashburton Lakes district. The lakes are home to scaup, grey teal, grey ducks, mallard and southern crested grebes.

Unfortunately the area has a problem with a growing population of feral cats which

are preying on the birdlife. Jim Ackerley and the Ashburton branch decided to try and rid the lake surrounds of this pest and began a trapping and shooting programme.

Despite some early setbacks with cunning cats they did manage to eliminate some of them and reduce the number of nesting birds killed.



Feral cats are being found in increasing numbers near Lake Clearwater.