

## Pingao planting in Horowhenua



School children from Foxton School planting pingao in the sand dunes at Waikawa Beach.

OVER THE PAST few years there has been an effort by Maori, conservation and other interest groups to re-establish pingao plant communities on sand dunes around the country. Pingao, the golden sand sedge, has declined markedly as sand dunes have been modified and stabilised. As part of the replanting effort, the Horowhenua branch applied to the Lotteries Board for funding in 1990 to build a shadehouse to propagate 2,000 plants for use on the

local beaches.

Problems arose in finding a suitable place to construct the shadehouse and, frustrated by the long delays, the branch decided to purchase the plants instead from a DoC nursery in Turangi.

In mid-December branch members and children from Foxton School planted over 1,800 pingao plants into the sand dunes at Waikawa Beach. The pingao was planted in a rabbit proof enclosure to protect the plants from browsing animals.

## Rat eradication

THE RECENTLY formed Rotoroa Island section (see *Branching Out* in the last issue) has claimed victory in its war against Norway rats on the island. Staff and patients at the island's Salvation Army Rehabilitation Centre took little over a month to virtually exterminate the rat population using 300 bait stations.

The rats had been destroying vegetation and eating lizards and bird eggs. Now native parrots are being released into the predator-free environment and tree planting is underway.



The Rotoroa Island Salvation Army manager, Major Neville Stark, with two of the tubes used as bait stations against the rats.

## Quarantine Island benefits from KCC



From left: Ben Knight, Ian Goodwin and James Goodwin building a stile to give access to the western end of Quarantine Island that is being revegetated with natives.

SITUATED IN the middle of Otago Harbour, 19-ha Quarantine Island has been getting attention recently from young conservationists in the Otago Kiwi Conservation Club. Since the club started they have had four weekend visits to the island working on a variety of activities including removing broom seedlings, track cutting and pricking out seedlings in the shadehouse.

The island is half farmland and half regenerating bush so the KCC plan to gradually revegetate further parts of the island with native plants. They have been assisting the resident caretaker who looks after the DoC-owned island. Another regular part of the weekends are beach clean-ups. Because the island is at the head of the harbour it attracts a lot of floating pollution.

## Bird hide wins out

WHEN THE Coromandel branch decided to build a bird hide in the middle of Thames township it pitted them against miners and an unsympathetic council. Originally a "1990" project, a lengthy planning hearing saw the project delayed and costs mount up.

The proposal was for a hide to be built on the edge of Karaka Stream, 50 metres from a major new supermarket development, overlooking a shingle fan where hundreds of birds congregate. Three to four thousand South Island pied oyster catchers have been recorded at the site plus godwits, gulls, Caspian and white-fronted terns, shags and ducks.

However, when the branch applied for planning

permission, Heritage Mining Company opposed the application on the grounds that increased environmental interest in the area would prejudice their possible mining application over the adjacent sea bed. Branch committee member Keith Purnell had to present evidence at a council hearing and only recently was permission granted. The Thames/Coromandel District Council then billed the branch \$1,300 for their expenses but after pressure from Keith the bill was reduced to \$300.

Although some further funding is still needed the building has begun. Designed by DoC, it is big enough to hold a school class. The branch believes that this creative and positive project will be a great asset to the Thames district. ♦