

Branching out

Reports on some of the campaigns and conservation projects undertaken by Forest and Bird branches and field officers.

A better life for Oamaru penguins

SINCE 1985 the Waitaki branch of Forest and Bird has been helping to improve the habitat of the Oamaru blue penguin colony by planting native vegetation and providing nest boxes.

The birds have been particularly at risk from dogs and cars. In July this year a 30-metre fence funded by Canon was put up to keep dogs away from the area and nest boxes were installed with the help of

finance from Hastings/Havelock North Forest and Bird.

Waitaki District Council will now develop part of the council quarry (which has many nesting penguins) into a reserve area. Forest and Bird and the Department of Conservation are on the planning committee and many groups have rallied in support. Waitaki Forest and Bird has provided nest boxes,

the council has supplied plants and removed industrial rubbish, the Oamaru Licensing Trust has provided finance and Waitaki Power has volunteered to assist with lighting.

There are plans to create some no-go areas at sensitive parts of the quarry colony, for lighting in the area to be better controlled and for special viewing areas to be set up so

that the penguins have more security and protection but are still visible to visitors.

While most mainland blue penguins colonies are under severe threat from predators, habitat loss, set nets and human persecution (see *Forest and Bird* February 1992) there is growing cause for optimism at Oamaru where the colony still has about 1,200 birds with numbers possibly increasing.



LORRAINE ADAMS

Oamaru penguins killed by dogs in July last year.



Penguin habitat restoration on the Oamaru foreshore. The quarry being restored as a reserve is in the background. Fencing, planting, and nesting boxes will help secure the future of the colony.

Tip no waste!

THIS WAS the message that Tauranga school students left around the intakes to the stormwater drains of the city during Conservation Week in August.

Forest and Bird field officer Ann Graeme who organised the stencilled warnings said that many people were unaware that stormwater drains in the area led directly into the harbour and they continued to tip pollutants such as paint solvents and sump oil down them.

Ann has organised other school groups, local KCC members and the Conservation Corps to continue the sidewalk spraying as an ongoing project. Students will also organise a survey among fellow students to gauge the effectiveness of the signs.



BAY OF PLENTY TIMES

Ann Graeme and students leave their mark on Tauranga footpaths.

Trees at Cape Kidnappers

YOU MAY remember the story of young Hastings/Havelock North member Tim Hay who last year organised a fun run around Cape Kidnappers to raise money for a revegetation project on the cape (*Branching Out* August 1991). Well this year Tim repeated the exercise and raised another \$600 which was again matched by his branch.



Recently retired branch chairperson Ruth Dinnan during the planting out. Cape Kidnappers is in the background.

Cuttings taken from the cape have been grown at the Department of Conservation's Taupo nursery over the past year. This winter, branch members planted out over 750 ngaio, taupata and karaka trees on the cape with the help of DoC and Conservation Corps staff.