

Shore plover hatchings

THE CAPTIVE shore plover at the National Wildlife Centre at Mt Bruce (see last issue of *Forest & Bird*) have produced six chicks this season (five surviving) with another two eggs still under incubation.

The chicks are the only shore plover so far bred in captivity. The parent birds were transferred to the centre as eggs in 1991 from the bird's only remaining stronghold of Rangatira (South East) Island in the Chathams. Once widespread around New Zealand, only about 100 birds now survive in the wild and they are at constant risk from any predators which may reach the island.

DoC staff at Mt Bruce are particularly pleased for two reasons. Having assured food supplies, the plover have bred in their first rather than in their second or third year as they do in the wild, and secondly they are laying larger clutches of four eggs rather than the normal two or three.



GARRY NORMAN

One of the new shore plover chicks at Mt Bruce. It is hoped that captive breeding will eventually provide sufficient birds to establish a second population on a suitable predator-free island.

New home for BoP marine life

THE PORT of Tauranga Ltd has turned a channel enlargement exercise into a novel opportunity to maintain an important habitat for marine wildlife.

At Forest and Bird's suggestion a reef, which was to be dynamited to increase the size

of the harbour entrance for container vessels, was shifted to a nearby location inside the harbour. Rocky habitat is uncommon in the Bay of Plenty, with boulder habitat particularly scarce.

Shifting of the Tanea reef began early last year and has almost been completed. Over 100,000 cubic metres of boulders will be moved and the

new reef will occupy over a hectare of the harbour floor. Other parties involved in the project are the district and regional councils and the Department of Conservation.

The University of Waikato is surveying the effects of the overall port dredging programme while Forest and Bird field officers Ann and Basil Graeme have a contract with the port authority to monitor the recolonisation of the reef. Already schools of small fish and plant life have moved in and signs have been installed nearby asking people not to interfere with the new marine ecosystem.

"This is the first time in New Zealand in the development of an industrial port that a reef has been shifted," says Ann Graeme. "We see it becoming an oasis of life in the harbour and the nucleus of a future marine reserve."



BASIL GRAEME

Moving a reef isn't easy. The boulders of Tanea reef were lifted by crane onto a barge before being placed at the new site.

Kaikoura purse seine ban

FOREST AND BIRD has been successful in helping to obtain restrictions at Kaikoura on the use of purse seine nets for the 1992-93 fishing year. These large nets are used by commercial operators to target schools of surface fish such as kahawai.

Conservationists and recreational fishers have long been concerned about the effects of the nets on the availability of fish for the marine mammals and birdlife for which Kaikoura is so well known, and the danger to the abundant marine mammal life inshore. The issue came to a head last February when five Hector's dolphins were accidentally caught by a Sealord vessel in full view of the beach.

Although Forest and Bird's proposal for inshore restrictions on purse-seining in the area were initially dismissed by Sealord chief executive Brian Rhoades "as the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard in my life", the company has now joined with other commercial operators in an agreement to keep their nets at least one nautical mile from the Kaikoura coast. Hopefully, the agreement will become permanent.