

# RANGITIKEI ENVIRONMENT

*Treasured Natural Environment Group*

## Bush Falcon/Kārearea nesting successfully in Memorial Park Reserves, Taihape

*By Angus Gordon*

The 2016–17 summer heralded an event not seen in the urban area of Taihape for many years. Following successful possum control operations on surrounding farmland during previous years and follow up control in the crown reserve areas administered by the Rangitikei District Council, almost all ground living mammalian predators have been removed.

Many of the indigenous tree species are responding with successful flowering and fruiting. Most note-worthy is the return of a pair of bush falcon/kārearea to the reserve area to set up home, nest and fledge a chick.

During January and February 2017 the falcon adults could be seen protecting the area behind the Memorial Park sports fields from aerial encroachment from other bird species. In late March a chick finally ventured from the nest area to perch on trees and fences in the lower Huia and Hautapu Street areas whilst waiting for its parents to come and feed it.

The chick seems to have taken up residence in the Mt Stewart Reserve and is most easily heard in the morning and evening. It can sometimes be seen flying from Mt Stewart to surrounding woodland areas.

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In the previous year, two pairs of falcon/ kārearea nested separately south of Utiku and east of Winiata on river cliffs adjacent to the Hautapu River.

The nesting activity is a clear indication that the possum control operations by Horizons Regional Council and associated groups is paying off. The local bush falcon/ kārearea population is certainly making the most of the opportunity provided and steadily growing.



*Bush Falcon*

## Nga Tawa's Enviroschools Projects

*By Nga Tawa School*

Nga Tawa is delighted to have met the criteria to become an Enviroschool. Students now work on hands on projects to better their environment and increase the sustainability of our practise.

Two working bees were held to restore the bush remnant on the Nga Tawa grounds. A group of willing parents and volunteers set about chain sawing, lopping and weed-eating through way through the invasive or over dominant species.



*Bush restoration project*

Many thanks to all the volunteers but in particular to Jim Howard, Ian Wallace and Jenny & Chris Price for the use of the Price Plumbing truck. Both afternoons students helped clear the cut trees and branches and load the truck, making a real impact. In 2017 we hope for more settled weather to allow spraying to continue to control ground level weeds and in the future we hope to plant Tawa trees, plus develop more paths and have botanical labels and seating available.

The Envirogroup has also launched a new Recycling Scheme, with specialised bins and clear signage. This action was taken following the

Envirogroup conducting a waste audit and finding that 50% of the waste produced around school could be recycled. Currently these new bins are in the classroom blocks but we hope to extend the scheme in 2017.



*New recycling scheme*

The Envirogroup also made worm farms in two baths and started to feed them food waste collected at lunchtime.

We have offered a Level 2 course on sustainability and we plan to offer this again in 2018 and make it available to Level 3 as well.



*Worm farm*

# Epic adventures for kiwi families, right on your doorstep!

By The Department of Conservation

Toyota Kiwi Guardians is an activity programme helping kids connect with nature by encouraging them to go on epic guided adventures and earn rewards.

DOC & Toyota are turning Kiwi kids into kaitiaki of the land and sea. We're helping parents get their tamariki out into nature and participating in conservation. While kids are outside enjoying fresh air, having fun and creating memories, they're also building good conservation habits.

New Zealand has plenty of beautiful places. Toyota Kiwi Guardians showcases local spaces and places, and reminds us we're lucky we don't have to go far to wiggle our bare toes in the grass or hear a native birdcall. New Zealanders are increasingly living sedentary lives and spending more time in front of screens – so our future generations' connection to nature is under threat. The programme focuses on large urban centres.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of April three new adventure sites in the Manawatu region went live online:

- Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge, Apiti;
- Papaitonga Scenic Reserve, Levin; and
- Manawatu Estuary, Foxton



Bruce Park, Hunterville

This is an addition to the two current sites located at Bruce Park, Hunterville and the Manawatu Gorge.

How the Toyota Kiwi Guardians programme works:

There are three options:

**Adventures:** go on epic guided adventures at local parks or reserves and track down a Guardians Post to locate a secret code word. Each site has its own adventure map to guide your journey.

**Actions:** complete tasks in your own backyard, eg: build a Wētā Motel or track your cat.

**Explore** certain events, like Seaweed or Conservation Week.

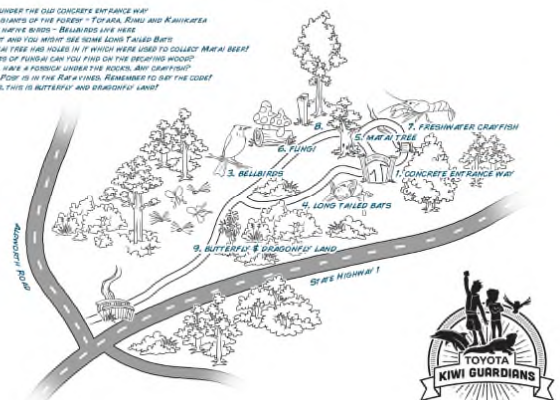
When kids have completed a task, they can visit [www.kiwiguardians.co.nz](http://www.kiwiguardians.co.nz) and claim a medal online, which will be posted at no cost.

There's a list of Actions to do and a map of Adventure sites at [www.kiwiguardians.co.nz](http://www.kiwiguardians.co.nz)

Share your snaps on social media using #kiwiguardians or by visiting [the Kiwi Guardians Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/kiwiguardians).

## BRUCE PARK - BATLAND

1. GRAB A PHOTO UNDER THE OLD CONCRETE ENTRANCE WAY
2. CHECK OUT THE BRANDS OF THE FOREST - TORI, SIAL, KING AND KAHIKURA
3. LISTEN FOR THE NAIVE BIRDS - BELLAIRDS LIVE HERE
4. ARRIVE AT NIGHT AND YOU MIGHT SEE SOME LONG TAILED BATS
5. THE LARGE MERRY TREE HAS HOLES IN IT WHICH WERE USED TO COLLECT MĀRAI BEER!
6. HOW MANY TYPES OF FUNGI CAN YOU FIND ON THE DECAYING WOOD?
7. AT THE STREAM, HAVE A FORBIDEN UNDER THE ROCKS. ANY CHIFFIN?
8. THE GUARDIAN POST IS IN THE RAFA VINES. REMEMBER TO GET THE CODE!
9. IN THE SUMMER, THIS IS BUTTERFLY AND DRAGONFLY LAND!



Bruce Park Kiwi Guardians adventure

## Parks Highlights

*By Athol Sanson, Rangitikei District Council, Parks and Reserves Team Leader*

### Inorganic Litter Collection Bulls: Rangitikei River

Following concerns from the local community the Parks and Reserves team have started a weekly inorganic litter collection in the Bulls Bridge area.

This area has seen significant fly tipping in the past which has resulted in continued calls to manage and resolve this growing issue.

On the first collection we removed a truckload of rubbish ranging from car tyre's to decomposing animal carcasses. In my view, the worst offence was seeing a large ute load of items thrown onto the riprap embankment of the river near the raised picnic area. In the next flood this toxic rubbish would have ended up in the Rangitikei River. This River is so important to our region we need to take better care of it.



*Rubbish collection at the Bulls bridge area*

It is an area that is regularly used by visitors to our region and the local community for recreational activities. Seeing dumped rubbish and rotting carcasses is something and we do not want to portray.

If you see anyone dumping rubbish in this area please report it to the Rangitikei District Council without delay on (06) 327 0099.

### Native Plant Seed Collection

March is the peak time for seed collection of native plants. As a part of our future land management we now look at planting Eco-sourced plants in areas of environmental significance.

Last March we highlighted Koitiata sand dune movement as part of this practice. I am pleased to report that the seeds have germinated well and we currently have 1800-2000 small plants for planting this year. We are hoping to get the local community with some local schools to plant them around the beginning of June this year to mark Arbor Day. We have also undertaken further seed collection in March for further plantings in 2018.

We also have plants for Taihape from seed sourced in Memorial Park. Again we are hoping to work with a school to plant these in early June.

Collection of seeds during March also focused on Marton B and C dams. With the pending removal of the pines it is becoming increasingly evident that future management of this area will require planting in some form.

By selecting naturally occurring plants from this area will ensure a good survival rate as the plants have adapted to local site conditions.

At this stage we are unsure of numbers that will be used and in what area. We have focused the seed collection on the plants that are appropriate to the Riparian Margins, these being: Toe Toe, Whiteywood, Coprosma, Carex species, Juncus, Cabbage trees, rushes, Pittosporum etc.

## Rangitikei Enviro-school teachers try their hand at eco-building

*By Ron Fisher, Enviro-schools Facilitator, Whanganui and Rangitikei*

On March 29th, local Enviro-school teachers were invited to Marton Childcare to learn about Eco-building techniques in the form of up-cycling old pallets.

Since mid 2015, Rangitikei has five Enviro-schools signed up to a national programme that has been designed to foster a generation who instinctively think and act sustainably. There are over 1000 Enviro-schools nationwide.

In order to make the programme possible in our region, both Horizons Regional Council and the Rangitikei District Council provide financial support and Horizons manage the programme across the wider region.



*Eco-building Workshop*

Practical support is available to Enviro-schools through the work of local facilitator Ron Fisher. Each term workshops are provided for teachers to further their skills and knowledge in an area of education for sustainability as well as having the opportunity to network out in the community with

people and organisations that can provide further support for their classroom initiatives.

According to the BRANZ website, 50% of New Zealand's landfill waste is from the construction industry. That is 1.7 million tonnes per year going to our landfills from building waste.

The intention behind the workshop was to show the next generation that it is possible to work with 'throw away' materials to produce great results, thus saving unnecessary waste from our landfills. This was done by providing teachers with a chance to give it a go with hands on experience; they then have the option to run something like this for their students back at school.



*Eco-building workshop*

On the day there were thirteen teachers in attendance representing four Enviro-schools and two Enviro Kindergartens including Bulls School, Nga Tawa Diocesan School, South Makirikiri School, Marton Childcare, Bulls Kindergarten and Feilding Kindergarten

It didn't take long before they were getting stuck in, taking the pallets apart and preparing the timber to transform into something completely different. Teachers could choose from a number of simple objects to construct in a short time. They

even had to remove, straighten and reuse the nails. They were only allowed to use basic hand tools so they could practice the skills they could transfer when working with children.



*Eco-building workshop*

Working in pairs or groups, most opted to make a bug hotel, a small house that is then filled with natural materials that act as a habitat for native wildlife. One couple from Bulls Kindergarten made a bench seat they could take back for the kids to use in the playground and Marton Childcare staff put legs on a pallet and just like that they have a new table.

Although some attendees were seasoned veterans of eco-building, many were giving it a go for the first time, coming away with the confidence to support their own students to do the same. This was one of many actions our local Enviroschools are taking towards creating a more sustainable future for future generations.

## Community Contacts

Treasured Natural Environment Group Meeting

June 2017 – Marton Council Chambers

Contact Katrina Gray

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Bulls River Users Group

Contact Jan Harris – [bulls.community@xtra.co.nz](mailto:bulls.community@xtra.co.nz)

Tutaenui Stream Restoration Group

Contact Greg Carlyon – 021 327 774

Paengaroa Road Environment Group

Contact Phyllis Leigh – 06 388 016

Hautapu Catchment Care Group

Contact Angus Gordon – [angusg@xtra.co.nz](mailto:angusg@xtra.co.nz)

Enviroschools

Contact Ron Fisher – Ron Fisher

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If you have any contributions to the newsletter, any questions, or wish to subscribe please contact

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