

Bird Watering Stations

Innovation and Conservation by students



Five Whangarei Boys High School students undertook a challenge by entering the BP Community Enterprise Project (BP CEP) competition in 2008. The students were Jonty Hatch, Calum Dundas, Kane Arden, Kevin Lloyd and Anau Hazeldine, all Carruth House boarders along with supervising teacher Paula Horsley.

With a choice of several topics, they settled on building bird watering stations for Matakohē-Limestone Island, after having assessed their own capabilities, discussing it with the Island Ranger, investigating resourcing requirements and setting realistic time frames.



▲ Watering station before installation

Digging in the water pipe to the bird watering station ►



▲ The students stand behind their newly installed bird watering station

Presentation of the Excellence Award ▼

The need to supplement water for birds in dry summer months had been identified in the Matakohē-Limestone Island Scenic Reserve Restoration Plan, written by Jo Ritchie in 2000, which serves as the Island's guiding document for re-establishing a coastal forest habitat and the re-introduction of native invertebrates, lizards and birds.

Goals were set to design two bird watering stations for the island. Scoping included a visit to the island with the Ranger to ascertain water supply, suitable siting and that the stations needed to be self-cleaning and low maintenance.



Important project milestones were design, funding, fabrication and finally, installation on the island. After discussion with experts, the students decided to build using a circular stainless steel trough with a sloping bottom, making it easy to drain, clean and refill for the birds. This was to be mounted up off the ground to make it more attractive to birds and more secure from possible predators such as stoats, which do make it onto the island from time to time.

With much experience in stainless steel fabrication, Martin Wallace were contracted to make the two troughs and kindly gave a discount, while Arnold Franks generously donated valves and pipework. Many thanks go to both companies who supported the students work and helped keep the project within budget.

Various funding scenarios were envisaged by the students but at the end of the day their diligence was rewarded when they entered the BP CEP competition in December 2008 and gained an Excellence Award, the \$1000 going toward the cost of the project. One of the photographs shows Education 4 Enterprise Regional Coordinator, David Templeton, presenting the award to the students teacher, Paula Horsley.

One bird watering station was installed in December by the students and passerine birds in increasing numbers were observed using it over the summer. The second station was installed on the island in February 2009. The initiative shown by the Whangarei Boys High School students not only honed their entrepreneurial skills but also resulted in a valuable contribution to the conservation effort on Matakohē-Limestone Island.

