

Welcome to the seventeenth edition of Hancock Forest Views, a newsletter prepared by Hancock Forest Management New Zealand Limited (HFM) to keep our stakeholders informed of what is happening in our forests. We hope you find the newsletter interesting and welcome your feedback.



*From the team at Hancock Forest Management (NZ) Ltd we wish all of our stakeholders, contractors and staff a very Merry Christmas, and a safe and happy holiday season. We look forward to working with you in 2018.*

## Waituhi Forest Whio Recovery Project

In earlier issues of Hancock Forest Views we have included updates about the Whio (NZ Blue Duck) protection project HFM initiated in 2011 along the Pungapunga Stream in Waituhi Forest, near Taumarunui.

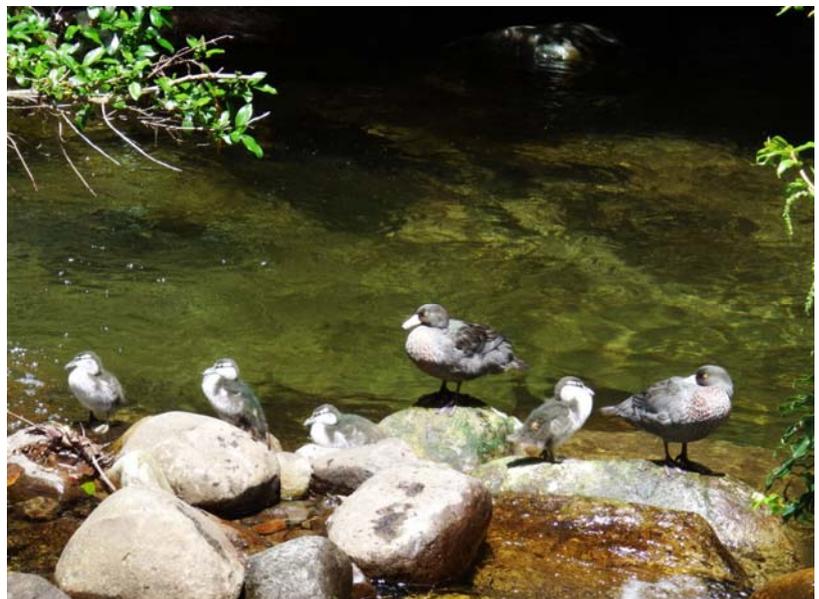
Initial funding assistance from Department of Conservation, Horizons Regional Council and Genesis Energy assisted HFM to establish a network of approximately 200 traps along a 5km stretch of the river. The project goal is to control predator numbers to assist the breeding success of a resident population of five to six Whio pairs to protect their vulnerable chicks from predation.

Trapping is concentrated over the breeding season from September through to February. Trap servicing is carried out by local farmer Geoff Marshall, who uses his trained Whio dog to carry out our annual population survey.

The trapping operations are a combination of manual and self-setting traps. To date the manual trapping operation alone has caught over 1900 predator species, including 172 weasels, 102 stoats and 1430

rats! Population surveys have confirmed good chick survival most years, with 2014 still being our best year yet with 12 chicks successfully reared.

It is hoped that improved breeding success in our project area will help boost the population, to repopulate surrounding habitat in Waituhi Forest and the DoC estate, and link in with other Blue Duck projects in the region to assist in the long term survival of this unique species.



Adult Whio pair with chicks on the Pungapunga Stream, Waituhi Forest



## Forestry Contractor Profile—Kohurau Contracting



Hamish Owen

Hamish Owen is a well-known personality in the forestry industry, especially in Northland. Hamish’s early roles in the industry were in Tairua in silvicultural supervision, harvest planning and roading supervision before he moved north in 2000.

When HFM NZ client Taumata Plantations purchased the Northland forests from Carter

Holt Harvey in 2006, Hamish was working in Panguru, a small rural community based in the north Hokianga in the Far North. Then trading as Montana Logging, Kohurau Contracting started in Panguru road line salvaging, roading and then progressing to logging the block with two crews. They based themselves out of Panguru for nearly five years where they employed approximately 28 people - all local and a lot of them trained from scratch.

Hamish is supported by his wife Rachel who is no stranger to forestry with family links to Newton Logging in Rotorua. They believe their ethos of employing local and supporting local contributes to the success of their business. Rachel and Hamish moved to Panguru while working there - a very isolated spot even by Northland standards.

When Kohurau Contracting finished harvesting in Panguru and moved to harvest other Taumata

forests within Northland they relocated to Kaikohe. Of the original staff, eight are still in employment with Hamish and Rachel, and they comment that former employees who are not still with them have continued their careers in forestry in the Hokianga.



Shayne Maxwell, Northland Forestry Skilled Professional of the Year, with the Hon Louise Upston, Associate Minister for Primary Industries

Hamish has adhered to his philosophy of employing local people and in fact generally only takes on people that are referred to him by his crew members. Most of the Kohurau employees have whakapapa connections to Northland Iwi and are related to one another. These relationships help to build a strong team culture. Hamish describes the team’s culture as self-managing - “the guys set their own kaupapa and once that is agreed they effectively manage those that are not toeing the line”.



The Kohurau Logging crew (left to right): Rowan Macindoe, Rehia Nikora-Rameka, Willie Vakatini, Gary Ross, Phillip Williams, Bryon Proctor, Jim Brown, Witi TeMoni, Cain Te Paa, Rahiri Jason Pomana, Sam Keefe, Shane Maxwell, Andrew Barnes, and Quintana Akuhata.



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Hamish believes that the way to keep the team motivated is to provide them with a variety of opportunities to ensure they stay fresh and to improve their skills. It is in this environment that Shayne Maxwell, winner of the 2017 Northland Forestry Awards 'Best Skilled Professional of the Year 2017', thrives. Shayne likes to keep his hand in operationally and at times fills in as foreman and machine operator, but spends just as much time training the other crew members, carrying out safe behaviour observations and mentoring the younger guys. Shayne was also a joint winner in the Northland Forestry Awards of the 'Outstanding Health and Safety Management Award'.

Shayne wasn't the only one from Kohurau Contracting to feature in the Northland Forestry awards with Buck Reihana receiving the 'Faller Excellence Award'. Hamish believes that his biggest asset is his people and that their distinctive culture supports their performance.



Wiremu and Marcella Edmonds, and Ray Hook (right) from HFM NZ presenting Buck Reihana from Kohurau Contracting with the Faller Excellence Award.

## National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry

In July of this year a significant milestone was achieved with the publishing of the regulations establishing a National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry. The regulations which come into force in May 2018 will bring about a significant change for the forest industry.

Prior to the National Environmental Standard (NES) each region and district had developed a range of different rules covering forestry activities. This situation created considerable variation and complexity for forest owners and woodlot contractors operating in multiple regions and districts. In a number of instances large forests span council boundaries, meaning under the old system foresters had to operate to different rule sets in different parts of the same forest.

The NES significantly simplifies this by creating one consistent set of rules across the country for 8 core forestry activities. Variations in operating conditions are managed by the rule set being underpinned by Erosion Susceptibility Mapping.

The mapping system developed by University of Canterbury and Landcare Research divides NZ into four erosion risk categories, which then underpin the activity status and rule sets for activities such as

harvesting, road construction and planting.

To achieve consistency at a national level has inevitably resulted in an increase in the level of regulation across the board, with forest managers in many regions now facing rules for activities that were previously fully permitted. By way of example the NES for the first time introduces rules to manage biodiversity impacts such as restrictions on activities impacting fish spawning and native bird nesting.

It is hoped that the new regulations will result in better environmental outcomes in the field and less time and resources wasted in bureaucratic RMA processes - debating the same issues with regional and district councils around the country.

HFM acknowledges the many parties who committed time and resource to the process including the Ministry of Primary Industries, Ministry for the Environment, Department of Conservation, Forest and Bird, Fish and Game and numerous regional and district council staff along with forestry representatives.

You can find out more about the NES on the MPI website <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/growing-and-harvesting/forestry/national-environmental-standards-for-plantation-forestry>.



## Tree Faller Certification Programme

As has been widely reported, 2013 was a terrible year for safety in the NZ forestry industry. For HFM and our clients this resulted in a significant rethink of how we manage and carry out our activities. While health and safety had always been our number one priority, the high number of fatalities in the industry that year pushed everyone that much harder to leave no stone unturned to find new and innovative ways to keep people safe at work.

The focus in particular has been on the highest risk activities, which includes manual tree falling. The first plank of the HFM strategy was mechanising out high risk tasks, by placing people in machines and out of harm's way. This has resulted in world leading innovations in the New Zealand forest industry to mechanise tree falling on steep slopes. In HFM operations mechanisation has reduced manual tree falling by 80% over a four year period.

However, the nature of the topography in New Zealand is such that in some areas it is just not possible to get a machine to every tree, meaning some manual falling is still required.

A second plank of HFM's strategy has been on training and assessment to ensure our fallers are trained to the absolute highest level to undertake the task safely. While all fallers operating in our forests were fully trained to the NZ Qualifications Training Authority standards, it was felt that an ongoing advanced refresher training and assessment programme was required. To achieve this purpose an internal tree faller certification

programme was introduced in 2014. HFM adopted the faller certification system that had been developed by Nelson Forests Ltd. Tree faller trainer Ian Jamieson was engaged in 2014 as our first trainer to deliver the programme and has been working fulltime in our operations since that time.

Ian's job is to work one on one with fallers in the field, spending time observing their falling techniques and talking with them about the finer points of tree falling. Key focus areas are the identification and management of falling hazards and their processes for planning ahead.



*HFM's tree falling trainer Ian Jamieson (left) on the job, with faller Deane Muraahi from Olsen Cable Harvesting Ltd Crew 64*

Despite the fallers all being fully qualified by industry standards, it typically takes Ian three to four full days on the ground with each faller before he is satisfied they are of a standard to achieve full certification.

Ian comments that the highlight of the job for him is "seeing the look on the person's face

when they succeed, knowing that they have achieved the highest standards of tree falling to earn certification".

HFM now has 4 trained assessors undertaking faller certification and 60 fully certified fallers working in its operations. It is HFM's goal that all fallers in our operations will become certified and maintain that status through annual recertification. Working alongside the mechanisation initiative, faller certification is seen as a key programme to achieve our goal of zero harm in tree falling.



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