

Connections Flowing at Manawatu Estuary

New Catchment Group Planned for Foxton

Jacob Brookie

The Manawatu River Catchments Collective (MRCC) is inviting Foxton locals to join a new Catchment Group.

The farmer-led MRCC has 490 members covering 265,962 hectares of land, and its 'catchment groups' monitor the quality of streams and groundwater, hold planting days, establish wetlands and survey native species like fish and bats.

"We don't tell you what you need to be doing, the catchment groups tell us," MRCC's Western coordinator Fiona Burke said.

"Farmers know their land more than anyone....but even they are surprised at the biodiversity in their streams."

In partnership with Massey University, MRCC projects are revealing how to manage nitrogen in peat soils, and have shone new light on the origins and age of the region's groundwater.

MRCC also plan community events where children and parents can learn how to trap pests.

Foxton does not currently have a catchment group but Burke wants to change that, inviting landowners and interested locals to visit www.manawatu-river-catchments-collective.co.nz to find out more, including details of upcoming events like planting days.

The Manawatu Estuary Management Team has since invited the MRCC to join their regular meetings.

Updates from Friday's Manawatu Estuary Management Meeting

The Manawatu Estuary Management Team (MEMT) is an alliance of local and central government agencies, community groups and local iwi who work together to protect and enhance Papangato Te Wharangi/Manawatu Estuary.

Slow Start to Whitebait Season

Department of Conservation ranger Dan Tuohy said that when it comes to whitebaiting compliance ("Foxton Beach's) Whitebait Creek is where our issues usually lie."

Tuohy said there has been greater DOC presence this year, which has generally been well received, and police are playing an active role in monitoring the Creek, however, "nobody is catching much" at Foxton Beach.

Community on the Tracks of Dangerous Beach Driving

In July a car-transporter full of off-road vehicles in the dunes caused community concern, but due to lack of solid evidence Horowhenua District Council was unable to prosecute.

New Zealand Off-Road Association's Grant Purdie said work is underway to update signage at the estuary, educate vehicle owners on responsible beach driving and work with Council to define 'no-go' areas for vehicles.

Purdie believes police are keen to work more closely with local government en-



Keen young birdwatchers Saul Ward, Archer Lamastion & Alfie Benbow were farewelling the Godwits in March - now the famous birds have returned.

forcement officers on beach driving, and MEMT is liaising with the Foxton Community Patrol ahead of summer.

Wildlife Foxton Trust Trapping

Wildlife Foxton Trust member Dave Coles confirmed volunteers now have 300 rat traps ready to set, with around 130 already deployed around the estuary.

An Early Welcome for Godwits

After completing their 11,000km non-stop flight from Alaska, the longest in the world of any bird, the first group of godwits touched down in mid-September, a few weeks earlier than usual.

The Manawatu Estuary Trust is holding their 'Welcome to the Godwits' this Saturday at 12:30pm, at the Dawick Street viewing platform.