

# Local work in awards

THE Genesis Energy National Whio Recovery Programme has won the Biodiversity Award at the Ministry for the Environment's Green Ribbons Awards.

The programme is a partnership between the Department of Conservation, Genesis Energy, Forest and Bird and the Central North Island Blue Duck Trust and is focused on the protection and recovery of blue duck (whio), a threatened native bird. The programme supports 14 whio protection sites across New Zealand, one of which is at Te Urewera Mainland Island Te Waiiti and another is at the Maungaharuru-Tutira catchment.

The Green Ribbon Awards recognise the outstanding contributions of individuals, organisations, businesses and communities to protecting and enhancing New Zealand's environment.

The Biodiversity award recognises practical actions to protect and preserve New Zealand's unique species and enhance our biodiversity.

Genesis Energy's five years of sponsorship will enable the 10-year whio recovery plan to be delivered three years ahead of schedule.

With fewer than 3000 birds left, whio are rarer than some other New Zealand iconic species. One of the aims of the programme is to grow the population

so that it is no longer classified as 'under threat'.

In 2007 there were 25 pairs at Te Urewera Mainland Island Te Waiiti and DoC hopes to achieve 50 target pairs.

The national target of 400 protected Whio pairs will be reached by 2016 with the number at recovery sites having increased from 100 to 200 pairs.

The Whangawehi Catchment Management Group was a finalist at the Ministry for the Environment's Green Ribbon Awards for its work in protecting and enhancing 13km of stream and its inhabitants — the long fin eel, red fin bully, giant kokopu, inanga and fresh water crayfish. The Whangawehi catchment is the largest of the Mahia Peninsula and encompasses a number of rare and endangered habitats and species.

Practical action includes the planting of 22,000 native trees, the retirement of 30 hectares of nationally significant wetlands, native bush on farmland, and the retirement of 10 hectares of riparian margins.

The Whangawehi Catchment Management Group has engaged the community in initiatives such as the development of a community-based water monitoring programme, a comprehensive pest control strategy, and a school programme that transfers local knowledge of Mātauranga Māori.