

Volunteers needed for BW clean-up

AMONG the 11 van and trailer loads of camp equipment and accessories such as air mattresses, sleeping bags, towels and chilly bins abandoned by BW campers last summer were plenty of tents as seen in the photograph.

As soon as January 1 rolled around, upcyclable items were collected by volunteers from the Tairāwhiti Environment Centre (TEC) and seven other organisations, and sold.

All organisations (and the environment) benefited from the fundraiser.

Volunteers 18 years old and over are invited to join this season's BW clean-up fundraiser. Contact TEC, let them know if you want to work on behalf of TEC or another organisation, and leave contact details.

Proceeds from the garage sale will be split between TEC and organisations that help with the clean-up.

TEC gets 30 percent for co-ordinating the fundraiser and 70 percent is split between participating organisations.

After cleaning and sorting camping equipment collected last New Year's Day, the gear was sold at a garage sale. From a gross income of about \$9000, about \$3300 went back to TEC.

Each clean-up volunteer earned about \$30 an hour for their organisation.

"The more people we get to help us, the more stuff we can collect and the more funds we raise," says organiser Chris Lenth.

Helpers will need to be available for at least four



hours from late morning on January 1 and prepared to work in rain or sun.

"If you have a truck and or a trailer you can bring, tell us about that, too. That is a bonus that can earn extra volunteer credits."

A group of volunteers will be hand-picked to help with

preparing items between collection and the sale.

The BW garage sale will be held at the Showgrounds Events centre on January 10 at 8am.

Anyone interested in joining the upcycling fundraiser should register with TEC, 867 4708.

AFTER THE PARTY: Tents, camp chairs, towels, chilly bins and much more were collected by volunteers from the BW camp last New Year's Day, and sold. Tairāwhiti Environment Centre is calling out for volunteers to help out on January 1 — and make a little cash.

Picture supplied

'Particular enthusiasm' for islands led to expedition

by Mark Peters

AMONG scientists from biodiversity research centre Allan Wilson Centre (AWC) to join in a mini bioblitz at Tolaga Bay's Puketawai Marae this month was James Russell.

The marae-driven bioblitz was an Uawānui Sustainability Project governance group initiative. The Uawānui Project is part of an ongoing relationship between Uawa and AWC that includes building better understanding of how to manage land, water and coastal resources as part of wider economic and community prosperity.

Dr Russell's "particular enthusiasm for islands", and what makes species threatened or invasive, saw him make an expedition to Motueka and Pourewa islands off Uawa-Tolaga Bay.

Taken there by an IRB piloted by Tolaga Bay Surf Life Saving Club members, and accompanied by geneticist Hamish Spencer, and iwi marine and freshwater studies diploma graduate, Mere Tamanui, the scientists surveyed and inspected the condition of plants on the islands, and set rodent traps and tunnels.

Footprints on specially-treated cards placed in the tunnels indicate the presence of pests such as rats, mice, stoats and ferrets.

"We counted sea-bird species. A lot of common sea-birds are breeding well on the islands.

It was great to see these islands are not disturbed."

Among species inhabiting the two islands are gulls, oyster-catchers and penguins.

Gulls are a common sight in Gisborne and the East Coast but their numbers nationwide are in decline, said Dr



ONE LESS RODENT: Scientist James Russell shows off a dead mouse during his presentation at the bioblitz.

Picture by Mark Coote

Russell.

"The extinction of easy things have gone first. Now we are seeing the slow decline in other species such as gulls."

The presence of sparrows in great numbers was an encouraging sight, he said.

"Even before we landed, you could hear thousands of sparrows. Sparrows roosting in large numbers is indicative no pests are on the island."

"The traps on Pourewa indicated rodents were present," says Dr Russell.

"The level of monitoring we did cannot be used to infer abundance, but we



AND ANOTHER: The impact of rodents on native wildlife was the focus of James Russell's presentation at the bioblitz organised between the Allan Wilson Centre and the Uawānui Sustainability Project group.

Picture by Mark Coote

caught three rats from 12 traps. Two of them were large pregnant females as we enter the breeding season."

Because of the distance from the mainland, none of this is particularly surprising, says Dr Russell.

Vegetation from the top of the island to the marine environment is 'original' (native), he said.

It would be possible to remove the rodents and consider protecting the island from reinvasion. This would allow the island to become a sanctuary for birds and other animals.

"The next step is to work with the island owners to discuss their aspirations and commitment to conservation on the island."

Pleasing petrel sighting

PROJECTILE vomiting is not a self-defence technique likely to be found in any hand-book — but this is the smelly technique used by petrels, says Department of Conservation (DOC) ranger Jamie Quirk.

The trick did not make the sighting of a Southern Giant Petrel from the Antarctic Peninsula at Hicks Bay last month any less welcome.

The petrel was banded as a chick on Hermit Island near Palmer Station on the Antarctic Peninsula in February.

Two fishermen saw the seabird and recorded information from a leg band before releasing it.

The sea-bird's recovery and release is invaluable in terms of research for a long-term scientific study.

"We know these seabirds circumnavigate the Southern Ocean," says Mr Quirk.

"At 10 months old, this is an amazing journey."

The parents have bred annually since 2006.

They have successfully fledged their young in six of those eight years.

The mother was 16 years old during the breeding season this year.

The father was banded as an adult (age unknown) when the pair claimed breeding territory on Hermit Island in 2006.

Bird bands are a permanent marking technique used to identify individual birds.

Each metal band carries its own unique prefix and number.

By banding birds scientists can study the life cycle, behaviour, breeding activities and diet.

They can track also the movements of birds.

The public are reminded to report sightings of banded birds to the DOC Hotline 0800 362 468.

For further information visit the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz.

A LONG WAY FROM HOME: Southern Giant Petrels nest with a chick on Hermit Island off the Antarctic.

Picture by Donna Patterson-Fraser

