



Get In there: Renier Nel, 12, right, imitates a stoat walking into a new trap he helped design with fellow Twyford School students, from left, Georgia Boyes, 13, Georgia Wilde, 12, Mackenzie Gibson, 12, Helena Nash, 12 and Darnah Chenery.

Clever students win top prize for ingenious trap

The brainchild of six students calling themselves the Kiwi Keepers will hopefully make a serious dent in the mustelid population in a Hawke's Bay kiwi creche, on top of giving the makers valuable experience in enterprise.

Three hundred of the stoat and ferret traps, designed by Twyford School year 8 pupils, will be deployed near Lake Opouahi in the Kaweka Forest Park, about 50 kilometres north of Napier, early next year.

They will be set up next to traditional traps so their success can be measured.

The T-shaped traps had been designed to be less obtrusive in the bush environment, with two entrances allowing light into the trap and access from both ends. The DOC 250 steel trap and the bait station had been installed in the leg of the T to ensure kiwi could not get their beaks caught.

To make it even more attractive the children had made the floor of the traps as "bush-like" as possible, and cut out the floor under the metal trap so the mustelid did not have to step up or down to reach the bait.

Now that the prototype had been built, the business plan completed and \$6700 successfully applied for from Kids Restore New Zealand Trust, the building of the traps was being outsourced to a company.

The work had scored the children the supreme prize in this year's Young Enterprise Trust Community Enterprise Programme and Competition, their teacher Judy Mathews said.

The trust ran the nationwide competition annually for intermediate aged students. Pupils had to plan and

implement a project for a not-for-profit or charitable organisation.

The kiwi creche benefiting from the children's initiative is managed by the Environment, Conservation and Outdoor Education Trust. The trust was established in 2002 to marry outdoor education with kiwi conservation in Hawke's Bay.

The fenced creche covers 40 hectares, within which kiwi chicks had been raised to a size at which they could defend themselves and then released into the wild – 100 chicks so far.