

The First Makarora Field Course (Jan 10 – 16 2021) – A Success!

A collaboration between Aspiring Biodiversity Trust and Operation Wallacea with support from Birds New Zealand, LINZ, Makarora Wonderland, local landowners and Wilkin River Jets.

The first Aspiring Biodiversity Trust Makarora Field Course was held on the 10 Jan – 16 January 2021. It was a huge success with excellent collaboration, perfect weather, the birds showed up and the students had an awesome and rewarding experience (testimonials below).



Makarora Field Course Base Camp



Students arrive at Makarora Field Course – yey!

Students from Wellington, Auckland and the Coromandel were met at Queenstown Airport then joined a scenic coach trip over the Crown Range via Wanaka and Lake Hawea to the Field Course Camp Base at Makarora. Here the students and teachers were met by the Aspiring Biodiversity Trust Science Team and a representative from Operation Wallacea. The event was opened with a welcoming karikia before entering the classroom learning facility. Students were then shown to their tents before the first group meal was served at the main Makarora Wonderland building. The week was divided into a series of learning activities focused on biological fauna and flora survey methods and monitoring with classroom sessions on data analysis, reporting and the use of the R Stats Application via an overseas connection with lecturers in the UK. Evenings were filled with lectures on geophisography, protected species dog aided surveys (whio), ABT's Ridge To River Conservation Programme, a forest by night walk and finished with a session on careers in conservation and wildlife management with an inspiring and motivational finish for the future from Aspiring Biodiversity Trusts patron - Lydia Bradey, recently awarded a New Zealand Order of Merit.



5-minute forest bird count survey, bird banding and mist netting



The week finished with a splendid Wonderland BBQ and a certificate presentation to students on their completion of the course, plus the awarding of prizes for various achievements over the week's activities (including a NZ bird guide). A final closing karikia completed a memorable week for all.



Forest vegetation plots



Braided river geophysics, aquatic inverts and avifauna



ABT's youngest volunteer and aspiring birder Lewis



Motivational talk with Lydia Bradey following careers panel.

Commentary from student, staff and parent post 2021 field course:

I would like to thank the team for providing an amazing experience for my son Aditya. He is very grateful to get this wonderful opportunity of working with the best in their fields at such a young age. The communication, management and service has been great from this trip.

Thank you again. Jyoti

Thanks for running such an awesome course here in such a beautiful place. You and your team have provided invaluable insight into the real world – science and ecology. Hope to be back in the future.
Dylon

By seeing the banded dotterel chick and other amazing sights, I felt like I was learning in a real meaningful way. Thanks. Fiver

Rachel, we did it! Congratulations on putting together such an amazing field course you should be very proud of what you have achieved. It has been a real pleasure working with you! Hopefully we can do it again. Jihan