

Illegal hunters target of police operation

LABOUR weekend saw a police crackdown on poaching.

Kotemaori community constable Chad Prentice said unlawful hunting operation in the Kotemaori area was due to the number of pighunting competitions happening in Waikaremoana, Napier and Whakatane.

Because of the problems, which included poaching in forestry, and the number of competitions, Mr Prentice conducted an operation which included patrols in the area.

As a result, four arrests were made for unlawful hunting and firearm charges, one vehicle and 12 dogs were seized and impounded.

Mr Prentice said most of the offenders came from outside Hawke's Bay and would appear in court this week.

"I'm hoping this prevents future offending because its becoming quite an expensive exercise for local businesses."

Wairoa District Council bylaw/rural fire officer Paul Dorrestein said whenever there was a big hunting competition poaching was an issue.

Wairoa police requested the duty council dog patrol officer to collect the dogs which were found in the Willowflat Road area and on the Napier side of Mohaka Hill.

Mr Dorrestein said the dogs would be impounded until they were given the go-ahead to release them — or in rare cases, have them put down.

"The cost of impounding the dog has to be paid and we can not legally release the dog until it is registered and microchipped.

"Or there maybe infringements to pay and the cost of sustenance and impounding fees are also included."

He said the flat microchipping rate for a dog was \$25, which was done by the Wairoa District Council.

The cost of registering depends on the breed of the dog — most pighunting dogs would cost \$67 as most did not come under the dangerous dog category for which the fee was \$110, he said.

"Each case depends on its own merit, the attitude of the owner, whether there are infringements and if the dog needs to be microchipped and registered."

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