

BOOK WATCH

The Call of the Kokako

By Maria Gill. Illustrated by Heather Arnold. (New Holland, \$29.99)

A real beauty, written by teacher and environmentalist Maria Gill. The book is carefully crafted, with its cover made to look like an old, worn leather photograph album and a stunning photo of the kokako centre-stage. There is an abundance of information and watercolour and pencil illustrations are blended with photographs throughout. The content is comprehensive with maps, the bird's life cycle, predators, its conservation groups and the process of tagging and releasing outlined. It also contains the story of one man, Geordie Murman, who was determined to do what he could to stop the logging of the Matahina Forest (near Whakatane) before the native birds were lost forever. Maria also has teaching resources and much more at www.mariagill.co.nz

New Zealand Hall of Fame: 50 Remarkable Kiwis

By Maria Gill. Illustrated by Bruce Potter. (New Holland, \$34.99)

This second book from Gill is illustrated by one of our most published illustrators, Bruce Potter. His usual realistic style seen in numerous picture books is replaced here by caricatures.

Adults will recognise the faces on the cover (although poor Helen Clark is looking very grumpy) and children will soon learn about them through the accessible content.

Each person has a double-page spread devoted to them, which includes a passport listing, comic strips, a trophy board, diary entries and general biographical information.

They're a diverse bunch, divided into categories of adventurers, leaders, pioneers, scientists, inventors, artists (from film, art, literature, music and drama) and of course, sportspeople. Many will already be famous such as Sir Peter Blake and Willie Apiata, others are less so. There's someone to inspire every kid, whether they're crazy about sports, or into science or music.



Reviewed by Crissi Blair, publisher of the annual guide *New Zealand Children's Books in Print*. To order the 2010-2011 edition (\$20), email books@silvertone.co.nz

