

REPORT OF COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 1976

(Presented for adoption at the 24th Annual General Meeting).

MEMBERSHIP

During the past year the Society welcomed 37 new members and received 15 resignations. In addition, the memberships of 8 debtors of long standing were terminated. Membership now comprises 422 ordinary members, 16 joint members and 10 corporate members and there are 138 New Zealand and overseas subscribers to the Proceedings.

COUNCIL ACTIVITY

The Council met in Wellington nine times during the year. Increasing travel costs prevented regular attendance of South Island councillors.

Mr A. H. C. Christie was reappointed Editor, Mr M. Foggo representative to the Member Bodies Committee of the Royal Society, Dr M. R. Rudge administered the register of Ecological Consultants, Mr T. A. Caithness acted as conference co-ordinator and served as assistant secretary. Mrs J. Hickman compiled the newsletter. The Society was represented on the New Zealand Committee on Water Pollution Research by Mrs H. R. Hughes.

Council convened sub-committees for various activities—the Conservation sub-committee under Dr I. A. Atkinson, the Population sub-committee under Dr M. R. Rudge and, at the end of the year, a Nuclear Power sub-committee under Mr Batcheler and Mr Foggo. Mrs H. R. Hughes dealt with matters concerning water classification.

EDITOR'S REPORT (A. H. C. Christie)

Following the joint conference with the New Zealand Marine Sciences Society an invitation was extended to the marine scientists to publish papers read at Conference in the Proceedings of the Ecological Society. This resulted in a very considerable increase in submissions. Compounding this heavier than normal editing task is the continuing problem that some authors do not prepare manuscripts along the lines indicated in the "Notice to Contributors" appearing inside the back cover of each issue of the journal; this frequently results in increased delays in preparation and therefore may delay the appearance of the final copy.

WATER CLASSIFICATION (Mrs H. R. Hughes)

Concern expressed by Society members about water classification resulted in discussions between members of the Ecological, Limnological, Microbiological and Marine Sciences Societies and the Institute of Chemistry. The Chairman of the Water Resources Council agreed to meet with representatives of this group and hear their views. After this meeting several projects were initiated

by the societies including a review of water management policies of other countries, a summary of world-wide actual or potential marine pollutants and a review of freshwater problems chiefly relating to eutrophication. The group expects to meet again and will offer further documents to the Water Resources Council. It was felt that this personal contact with the Council was valuable and should be maintained.

ECOLOGICAL CONSULTANTS (M. R. Rudge)

Nineteen members are currently on the register, an increase of one during the year. A survey in July 1975 showed that no consultants had been approached as a direct result of being on the Society's register. In March 1976, all municipal bodies, regional bodies and appropriate Government departments were again sent an explanatory note on the existence and function of the register. At the same time, this Society in company with others was asked by the Commissioner for the Environment what role his office could play in bringing environmental consultants, approved by specialist societies into contact with users enquiring at his office. We replied giving suggestions on how this could be done and stating why this was a good idea. However, after appraising replies from other societies, the Commissioner decided to operate as at present by referring inquiries directly to the appropriate Society.

A further review of the register's operation will be made in July 1976 and a decision made on whether to continue the scheme.

ROYAL SOCIETY MEMBER BODIES REPRESENTATIVE

(M. N. Foggo)

Two meetings of the Member Bodies Committee were held during the year and among the more important topics discussed were:

- (a) Organisation of the Member Bodies Committee—there are now over 40 societies affiliated to the Royal Society and the size of the committee is now posing problems. In an effort to make the views of Member Bodies better known to the Royal Society it was decided that representatives of Member Bodies would meet only once each year but the Management Committee would meet more frequently than in the past. There will be more representation of Member Bodies on Royal Society committees. Finally, the newsletter will be expanded to give more information about Royal Society activities and will be published more frequently.
- (b) ANZAAS—after the cancellation of the Science Congress due to lack of patronage, the value of large multi-disciplinary conferences was debated at length. An investigating committee has been set up to consider the feasibility of holding the 1979 ANZAAS

meeting at Palmerston North in January of that year. One form of the meeting being considered is for Member Bodies to all hold their conferences there at that time. The Ecological Society has agreed in principle with this idea.

- (c) Science Centre—Plans for the new building to house the Royal Society offices, library, lecture room, etc. in central Wellington have been completed and are ready to go to tender. However, an appeal against a change in zoning to allow the erection of the building was delaying progress. At the time of this report, the appeal had been heard but no judgement yet made.
- (d) Club of Rome—a New Zealand branch of the Club of Rome is being formed by Dr J. Robinson, Applied Maths Div., DSIR. The Royal Society will appoint two representatives to this group.
- (e) School Centennial Award Scheme—this scheme is to be discontinued. A new scheme to encourage science in schools is being formulated which it is hoped will prove more attractive.
- (f) South Island Beech Utilisation Committee—this committee will be wound up as it does not seem to be serving any purpose. It was felt that the Government-appointed Scientific co-ordinating committee is sufficient.

POPULATION SUB-COMMITTEE

(M. R. Rudge, M. N. Foggo, Ann Bell)

The Society asked the Royal Society in May 1975, to sponsor the visit to New Zealand by Professor M. Mesarovic, co-author of the latest report to the Club of Rome. Partly through the good offices of the Royal Society President, Sir Malcolm Burns, the visit took place in November.

Sir Malcolm Burns was also asked to consider re-convening a Royal Society sub-committee to examine the latest report to the Club of Rome. The members of the previous sub-committee were divided on the merits of this suggestion and at this time, no new sub-committee has been formed.

In November 1975, the Council moved to have a paper prepared using "An Ecological Approach to New Zealand's Future" as its basis and subsequently read at the Science Congress symposium "New Zealand in the year 2000". When the Science Congress was cancelled, the prospects of updating "An Ecological Approach to New Zealand's Future" were discussed but decided against.

During the year, the Government released "New Zealand Population Policy Guidelines" prepared by the Inter-departmental committee on population matters. The Society contributed to this report and has since asked the Government what action is being taken on the report's recommendations. Only an interim reply has yet been received.

CONSERVATIVE SUB-COMMITTEE

(I. A. E. Atkinson, M. N. Foggo, J. Hickman,

P. N. Johnson, L. F. Molloy, M. R. Rudge).

1. Environmental Impact Report Procedures — the results of the Society's January 1976 submission to the Commission for the Environment concerning these procedures are not known. The Minister for the Environment is at present examining the impact reporting system.
2. South-East King Country State Forests—the Society commended the Forest Service for its outline of options in the environmental assessment and expressed the view that most members would probably favour the option of a land use which retained the closed canopy tawa as a managed forest rather than converting it to exotics.
3. Ultramafic Reserve, Red Mountain, South Westland —the Society wrote to the Commission for the Environment in January pointing out that the Government should take the initiative in ensuring that a multiple-use plan for the area is prepared before new "developments" are proposed. In the meantime, threats to this interesting region have not abated for there is still interest by mining companies in prospecting the area.
4. Sand Dune Reserve, Manawatu—nine months after submitting a case to Lands and Survey Department for a reserve near Pukepuke Lagoon, it came to our notice that the land in question is controlled by the Forest Service. In the meantime land-draining and plantings appear likely to have destroyed the scientific value of the proposed reserve. If this is so the only option left is to search for an unstable dune area of comparable scientific value on privately-owned land.
5. Upper Clutha Valley Development—a letter was sent to the Minister of the Environment asking him to what extent the Government was likely to follow the recommendations of the Commission for the Environment's audit of the scheme. In reply the Minister stated that Government would aim to meet the recommendations and that with respect to the large shallow lakes subject to frequent drawdowns, it was possible that these might be avoided.
6. Wairau Lagoons—these lagoons include an important wildlife refuge forming the breeding ground for a large number of waterbirds. Ministry of Works have made a preliminary investigation of the area to assess its potential for salt concentration ponds and subsequent piping of brine to Lake Grassmere for harvesting. The Society has drawn attention to the need for further investigation of several environmental aspects of this proposal.
7. Logging proposals, Okarito State Forest—the Society has written to the Minister of Forests expressing its concern about selective logging being allowed there before a regional management plan for the whole region has been completed.
8. Regional Forest Management Plans—as a result of a resolution passed at the last Annual General Meeting, the sub-committee sought information

on these plants and stressed the need for public comment before such plans are finalised. Discussions were held with both Forest Service and Commission for the environment. A letter was sent to the Minister for the Environment asking that the procedure to be used for the South Westland Management Plan, on which public comment will be possible, be adopted as a general principle for all regional management plans. The Society also requested that the Minister accelerate the preparation of all management plans, particularly that for South Westland.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

This was held in Wellington on 31 May 1976, and approximately 40 members attended. A resolution to increase the annual subscription to \$10.00 was passed. A second resolution which sought that the Society accept as a general principle that the removal of indigenous forests should cease and calling for environmental impact reports and assessments on the planned exploitation for wood of all indigenous forests was lost.

CONFERENCE 1975

The 24th annual conference was held at Nelson College, Nelson, on 27-29 August, 1975. This was held jointly with the New Zealand Marine Sciences Society, the two Societies sharing the symposium on the estuarine environment on the first day but later holding their own separate sessions for contributed papers. Total attendance was approximately 140 of which 90 were Ecological Society members.

Symposium papers read were:

1. V. J. Chapman: Chesapeake Bay and its estuaries.
2. R. M. McDowall: A calendar of fish migration through estuaries.
3. I. Estcourt: Pauatahanui Inlet—preliminary results of benthos survey.
4. B. Bell and M. Imber: Utilisation of New Zealand estuaries by birds.
5. T. Partridge: A description of a salt-marsh and associated plant communities at Aramoana, Otago Harbour.
6. P. Henriques: The effect of sewage oxidation pond effluent on some aspects of the ecology of the Manukau harbour.
7. W. B. Healy: Nature and origin of North Island estuaries.
8. R. Heath: Physical oceanographic classification of New Zealand estuaries.
9. L. Carter: Influence of estuaries on continental shelf sedimentation—an example from Pelorus Sound.
10. J. Robb: A nutrient budget of the Heathcote-Avon estuary.
11. B. Kirkwood: The Hobson Bay marine park controversy.

12. G. Hamel: Pre-historic Man and estuarine environments in South Otago.
13. P. J. McCoombs: Estuarine management.

On the second day, both societies combined for a field excursion around Waimea estuary and Nelson Haven where Man's impact on estuarine processes was vividly demonstrated. On the third day, the Society's contributed papers were read.

1. P. Wardle: Seasonal cycle of tolerance to low temperatures in three native woody plants in relation to their ecology.
2. G. Daly: A burning coal-mine injures West Coast Beech/Podocarp forest.
3. J. Skipworth: A sand-dune ecosystem.
4. D. Drummond: General concepts of system ecology.
5. A. Wright: Problems in system synthesis in agricultural grazing systems.
6. C. McLay: An example of the application of systems methods to an ecological problem.
7. M. Crawley: The natural history of the New Zealand Fur Seal.
8. R. Mattlin: Population structure of a breeding colony of New Zealand Fur Seals.
9. J. Jolly: Movements and social behaviour of possums.
10. D. Catt: Breeding biology of the red-necked wallaby.
11. C. R. Veitch: Wading birds of the Firth of Thames and Manukau Harbour.
12. E. C. Young: Overlapping territories of six bird species: Skua feeding behaviour on the Chatham Islands.

In the evening, a public meeting on the subject "Alternative Life Styles" was held and attended by approximately 300 people. The meeting heard addresses from four invited speakers, Dr W. L. Palmer, Mrs R. Goode, Mr J. Glasgow and Dr J. R. Bray and these were followed by discussion from the floor.

The Society was appreciative of the efforts of Dr R. H. Thornton and his committee for their organisation of a most successful conference.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 23rd Annual General Meeting was held at Nelson College on 27 August 1975, with 72 members attending. Most of the business of the evening centred around discussing the various topics covered in the annual report. Other subjects discussed included the possible conflict of interest for government employed scientists working on sensitive environmental issues, the threat to Wairau Lagoons and the continuing depletion of lowland forests and their conversion to *Pinus*. The meeting congratulated Professor A. Mark on his being awarded the Loder Cup. The meeting elected the following officers: President, Dr P. C. Bull; Vice-President, Mr C. L. Batcheler; Secretary, Dr M. J. Williams; Treasurer, Dr J. P. Skipworth.