

Ecological Society Newsletter



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ROTORUA

PAID TO MARCH 92 / 0

CONSERVATION CORPS - WORKING FOR CONSERVATION SCIENCE

Trapping rodents in Nelson Lakes National Park and transferring native weevils to Breaksea Island are two of the projects enthusiastic Conservation Corps members in Nelson have been involved in this season.

The eight young people (16 - 24 years) on the Corps have been assisting DSIR Land Resources in Nelson and Fiordland since October last year. Their programme includes conservation work, education and recreation activities.

The wasp project (which is investigating the impact of wasps on native invertebrates) has benefitted most from the Corps' people power. Through summer members found, recorded and poisoned nests in a 20 ha study site at Nelson Lakes, they also set out and cleared over 1000 sticky, malaise, pitfall and Department of Conservation traps to check insect numbers in seven sites. To evaluate the effectiveness of introduced parasites in controlling wasps, the Corps helped dig over 400 live nests, dissect, measure and record them.

The highlight of the programme for many members was a trip to Breaksea Island in Fiordland where they assisted with the transfer and monitoring of weevils, night observations of invertebrates, Fiordland skink monitoring, robin banding and other biological studies.

Also in Fiordland, the Corps has helped with the Department of Conservation's parakeet study in the Eglington Valley. Study sites were gridded and members swung from ropes to investigate nests.

Other conservation projects completed by the team include assistance with the kaka breeding programme, sampling hatea stands, trapping rodents, and collecting and analysing beech seed as part of a long term study to predict the effects of

beech seed quantities on predator build-up and kaka breeding.

The Corps programme ends in July with members going on to further training and jobs, but for some their interest in science and conservation work will continue through voluntary work such as co-ordinating a Kiwi Conservation Club and continuing a study of giant wetas.

Peter Williams

SUSTAINABLE LAND USE AND RABBIT CONTROL

In March the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment presented a report entitled "Sustainable Land Use for the Dry Tussock Grasslands in the South Island". This was a review of the Rabbit and Land Management Programme approved by Government in May 1989 and of the other recommendations made in the Commissioner's 1987 Audit of the Environmental Impact Report on the proposal to introduce myxomatosis as another means of rabbit control. The review concluded that

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 39th Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Ecological Society (Inc.) will be held at Nelson Boys College, Nelson. The conference programme will confirm final date and time, but the meeting will be on Wednesday 28 August 1991. Further details may be obtained from conference organisers.

The agenda for this meeting is as follows:

- 1) Apologies
- 2) Confirmation of minutes of the 38th Annual General Meeting
- 3) Matters arising from the minutes
- 4) Receive Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts
- 5) Receive Annual Report
- 6) Notice of Motion; (text of motion and explanation to follow)
Motion 1 relating to Council Structure
Motion 2 changes to Rule 3 Membership
Motion 3 miscellaneous updates to Rules
- 7) Election of Council
- 8) General Business

NOTICE OF MOTION

Proposed Judith Roper-Lindsay, seconded Caroline Mason.

"That the Society become Class B members of ECO"

The issue of the Society's membership of ECO has been raised once again, and Council has decided to put it before an AGM for resolution by members. The Society has repeatedly joined and resigned from ECO -- the last time a motion was put to an AGM (in 1977) it was lost. The Society currently exchanges newsletters with ECO. The cost of becoming a Class B member is \$60 per annum.

Agenda Item 6) NOTICE OF MOTION

MOTION 1: proposed Judith Roper-Lindsay, seconded Caroline Mason

"That the following changes to Rule 6

COUNCIL be adopted;

- (a) (i) Delete and replace with 'President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary'
- (iii) Delete and replace with 'Four Councillors elected by the Annual General Meeting PROVIDED THAT Councillors are financial members of the Society'"

The structure of the Society's Council has been discussed at recent meetings. There are several reasons why Council feels that a change in structure is now required. One major consideration is the cost incurred in gathering Council members together for full Council meetings, particularly when these meetings are largely spent discussing routine business matters. It was felt that these matters would be dealt with more efficiently by a smaller group. Council also felt that a smaller, more 'focused' Council would allow roles to be more clearly defined. Many of the functions carried out by present Council members, do not necessarily require members to attend every Council meeting. Some of the major 'ecological statements' have been co-ordinated by non-Council members (although there has been considerable liaison with Council), for example, the Sustainability statement. Council therefore recommends a 'two-tiered' system be adopted: (1) a smaller elected Council consisting of the office-holders and 4 Councillors and (2) a larger number of 'Working Group Convenors' who will be responsible for certain areas of activity.

The Working Group Convenors will be appointed by Council and will be responsible to Council. Convenors may be asked to attend Council meetings where necessary. The role of Working Groups will be to perform some of the current function of Council as well as develop policy and/or statements on behalf of the Society. Some Working Groups will be considered to be 'permanent' (e.g. Education, Awards, Newsletter, Conference, Membership Directory) while others will be formed to perform a specific task and will disband when that task is completed (e.g. the ad hoc group that formed to prepare the Sustainability statement). Council believes that such a structure will enable the Society's affairs to be administered more efficiently and will therefore allow resources to be directed towards a more 'pro-active' role on the real ecological issues.

MOTION 2 : proposed Judith Roper-Lindsay, seconded Caroline Mason

"That the following changes to the Society's rules be adopted.

Rule 3 MEMBERSHIP

- (a) There shall be three classes of members;
 - (i) Ordinary members
 - (ii) Unwaged members
 - (iii) Honourary life members
- (b) The Council may elect any person as an ordinary or unwaged member of the Society on application.

(c) Council may elect any student, unwaged or retired person as an unwaged member on application. Unwaged members may receive the journal in application to Council.

- (e) delete
- (f) delete
- (g) renumber (e)
- (h) renumber (f)"

These changes are required as a result of a motion passed at the 38th AGM.

MOTION 3: proposed Judith Roper-Lindsay, seconded Caroline Mason.

"That the following changes to wording of the Society's rules be adopted;

Rule 4 SUBSCRIPTION (a) Delete the sentence 'When both husband and wife join the Society, where requested, one subscription shall be remitted and only one copy of each publication be supplied.' and replace with 'Partners may apply for joint membership whereby they pay one subscription and only one copy of each publication shall be supplied.'

Rule 7 FINANCES (a)

Delete reference to the Post Office Savings Bank.

Rule 8 MEETINGS (g) and Rule 10

INTERPRETATION

Change 'chairman' to 'chair'"

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 1991

Overview

The 1990-1991 year has been one of building on some of the changes started earlier, and of working to consolidate the administrative position of the Society. Money is almost always a problem for voluntary societies; just when it is most needed for improving the service to members, it is likely that those members are least able to bear increases in subscriptions. This year we have tried to clarify accounting.

At the end of last year we awaited the arrival of a new DSIR Land Resources Division and its effect on ecologists and ecological science. It is too early to judge success or failure at this point, yet we are now faced with the Government's complete re-organisation of science research, and the impending formation of Crown Research Institutes. The Society has made some general input to this process -- however until more specific proposals become available it is difficult to respond in a way which would reflect the views of all, or even the majority,

of our members.

Similarly, we continue to watch the progress of Royal Society re-organisation. The most significant step was the formation of a Council for a Federation of Scientific and Technological Societies (FOSTS). We were particularly pleased that Murray Williams was asked to be a member of that Council (although he had to resign due to other commitments). Again, at the time of writing, this body has not had time to establish itself.

A major task for a group of members based in Wellington has been the preparation of a Society statement on "Sustainability". The timing for this was felt to be appropriate, given the progress of the Resource Management legislation changes, and its completion at the end of the year was indeed timely. This should be one of the Society's most enduring "statements". It will be sent to a range of people -- Members of Parliament, local authorities, schools, private businesses -- so that an ecological view of growth can be placed alongside the economic one.

Due to membership dropping below the 500 mark, we had a reduced number of Councillors this year. Council held 6 meetings and we tried to find a formula which allows the regular, stimulating contact between councillors to promote and discuss ideas, without the heavy burden of expensive travel. The solution has not been found, and changes to the existing structure of Council will continue to be discussed in 1991-92. This year we held two full Council meetings in Wellington, one in Christchurch, and one in Hamilton (at conference); in addition there was one teleconference and one core group meeting.

Councillors' working group responsibilities were:

Education	Mary McIntyre, Gavin Daly
Journal	Nigel Barlow, Jill Rapson
Conference 1991	Peter Williams
Legislation	Vicky Froude
Newsletter	Alison Ballance
Royal Society	Kath Dickinson
Awards	Graham Hickling
Membership	Murray Potter
Conference 1990 liaison	Vicky Froude

At the end of the year Nigel Barlow retired from the position of Journal Editor after six years. We are very appreciative of the hard work Nigel put into this position. It is not an easy one, requiring the ability to deal with a range of authors, referees and editorial board members, as well as editorial skills. Nigel always received good support from all these groups, for which the Society is very grateful.

It is possible to predict "changes" once again for the coming year. Government has already

indicated that it sees professional bodies taking on responsibility for promoting their disciplines. We should be working with the Royal Society towards that end. Within the Society, some structural changes may be made to increase efficient use of subscriptions. We are also looking at a new process to enable us to call upon a wider range of expertise in preparing submissions, and to become proactive in ecological policy discussion. We have gained confidence in promotion of ecological ideas through our involvement in the resource law reform process this year. We must now build on this experience in the coming year.

Judith Roper-Lindsay
President

Education

The Ecological Society has had a higher profile in education than previously over the past year. The production of an 8-page A4 size colour booklet entitled "What is Ecology?" was made possible with a \$3500 grant from the Royal Society of New Zealand. This is written to provide a perspective for practical and career applications of ecological knowledge for students in Forms 6 & 7. It accompanies a colour poster with the same title which was completed in early 1990. The booklet proof was prepared with income from poster sales. The poster and booklet are now available: details elsewhere in this newsletter.

The Ecological Society was represented at SCICON90 (the biennial conference of the NZ Science Teachers Association) with a poster display. The conference was held at Canterbury University and attended by approximately 240 teachers and educationalists.

A well-attended Education Workshop at the 1990 conference at Waikato University was evidence of the growing interest in (and urgency for) environmental education. Highlighted were various educational concerns and the numerous ways in which many people are currently involved as professionals and volunteers. The session was chaired by Mavis Haigh from the Auckland College of Education, and a detailed record kept by Janice Miller.

Fran Hyland, now based at MAFTech, Levin (good to see an ecologist appointed!), has produced further Ecological Society items for the NZ Science Teacher magazine. These draw attention to relevant recent New Zealand ecological research which could be used as teaching material.

A grant of \$500 was received from the Ministry for the Environment to assist with the production of

educational material to illustrate the concept of "Sustainability".

Mary McIntyre

Royal Society

Kath Dickinson replaced Murray Williams as our representative on the Society's Member Bodies group towards the end of the year. Murray has been a strong advocate on the Member Bodies Committee for ecology and for efficient resource management, and we are grateful to him for his efforts.

We have worked more closely with the Royal Society this year. We have responded to requests for comments on its process of restructuring, and Kath and Murray have both attended meetings on this. Since the formation of the Federation of Scientific and Technological Societies (FOSTS) Council, which seems to be carrying out much of the work towards restructuring, we have been in regular correspondence with its Executive Officer and President. Peter Wardle was elected to the Fellows' Council, allowing us to have a further perspective of the Royal Society.

The Royal Society gave a \$3500 grant towards the production of a poster and booklet on "Sustainability" which will be produced by our education group later this year.

Kath Dickenson

Journal

Authors should soon appreciate the faster turn-around of papers submitted to the journal, as for the first time in 1990, two issues of the journal were produced in a year. Because circumstances dictated that we change the journal's size during the year, the two issues were given separate volume numbers, 13 and 14. Volume 13 had nine papers and 100 pages; volume 14, nine papers and 87 pages. Four papers in volume 14 arose from the 1989 Symposium on Historical Changes in New Zealand Ecosystems and were grouped as such.

Jill Rapson took over from Nigel as Editor-in-Chief, but the Editorial Board remained the same. It comprised Ralph Allen, Bill Lee, John Parkes, Mike Fitzgerald and Eric Spurr. Nigel has kindly consented to continue editing some papers, and to act as the Editor's special advisor. The Editorial Board's services in the last year are gratefully acknowledged, more especially as most authors seem unaware of, or unconcerned about, the level of input Board members have to their papers. Because of the increased work-load associated with two issues a year, it is desirable to expand the Board by two members. Preferred areas would be birds and

insects. Suggestions are invited.

Electronic processing of journal papers has been introduced with the advent of satisfactory software for translating language packages through Massey University, and the production of bromide outputs from diskettes. This should drastically simplify the handling of most submitted papers, allowing the manuscripts to be corrected on disk, rather than at the proof stage. Authors should notice a significantly improved product coming from the journal prior to publication.

Currently there are 27 papers in the journal's editorial processes. Rejection rate is not formally calculated, but appears to be about 15%, mostly because papers are deemed inappropriate to the journal. Most papers require some revision prior to acceptance. Two papers are accepted and have been electronically processed for the first number of 1991, and four others are close to acceptance. The first number should be of normal size, and is expected at the presses in July 1991.

A bid was submitted to the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology to cover some of the production costs of the journal, and to date we await its outcome.

The support of the authors, Editorial Board members, and numerous scientists who have acted as referees for the journal in the past year is gratefully acknowledged. It seems appropriate to record here the efforts of past referees from time to time.

Nigel Barlow, Jill Rapson

Newsletter

The newsletter has been very much a team effort this year. DSIR Land Resources has continued its involvement in newsletter production, by allowing Allison Ballance, Tony Pritchard and, more recently, Kim Pritchard to work on the newsletter. DOC has allowed Duncan Cunningham to develop a speedy and painless distribution system to get the newsletter out to readers.

The newsletter is meant to appear 4 times a year, in March, June, September and December, and this was nearly always managed on time in the last year. As educational groups, such as schools, can now subscribe we are hoping to include an education "thread" in the newsletter to strengthen our links with them. We are keen to continue developing the newsletter as an interesting, informative forum for ecological news and, as always, we would enthusiastically encourage members to contribute material.

Allison Ballance

Legislation

Debate continued on the Resource Management Bill, with the Select Committee hearings being held in late 1990. The Society's presentation to the Select Committee focussed on the sustainability provisions (purposes), the principles section, coastal administration, and national policy statements.

After the change in government in November 1990, the new National government appointed a Review Group to assess a number of aspects in the Draft Bill. The Society was invited to meet the Group and on our behalf, Paul Blaschke and Caroline Mason made a presentation to the Group in Christchurch. This focussed on purposes and principles, and coastal administration. The Society expects to comment on the Supplementary Order Paper which will contain the recommended changes to the Resource Management Bill, in the near future.

Vicky Froude

Membership Directory

The membership directory has grown this year to hold information on 305 Society members. This increase is due mainly to the addition of entries on new members. There is still a considerable number of long-standing members who are not yet listed. While entry onto the database is a matter of personal choice, members are reminded that the database is of great value to Councillors in judging the changing composition and interests of the Society, and in knowing to whom to turn when specific problems or issues arise.

Murray Potter

Conference 1990

This year, the conference was held at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, from Sunday 19 to Friday 24 August inclusive. A highly successful student session was held on Sunday, prior to the registration of the majority of participants. Most of the papers were given by Victoria University students, and all were of high quality.

Monday was devoted to field excursions to Waikato wetlands, limestone country around Waitomo and the Thames Estuary. Starting the week with field trips was somewhat experimental, but proved successful -- it provides a good means of breaking the ice which encourages good debate in the later formal sessions, while allowing those with less time available to reduce the time spent away from home without missing papers.

Tuesday and Wednesday comprised the symposium on "Where Land Meets Water". We

are very pleased that this was recognised by UNESCO as a regional symposium in its "Ecotones" programme, so demonstrating the significance of the papers in both a New Zealand and global context. 23 papers were given, and seven evening workshops were held on Tuesday night. Keynote addresses were given by Peter Johnson, Peter Wardle, Clive Howard-Williams, Geoff Park and Brian Springett.

On Thursday morning, there was a joint session with the New Zealand Marine Sciences Society, covering estuaries. The keynote address here was given by Prof. George Knox, a prominent member of both Societies. Thursday afternoon was given over to contributed papers, and to receiving a report from the student session.

On Friday a series of "Special sessions" were held. These were organised by interested individuals on specialist topics and covered the "Botany of the Waikato" and "Long-term Ecological Monitoring".

Informal social sessions were held in Bryant Hall at the start of the conference. On Wednesday, the conference dinner followed the Society's Annual General Meeting (ensuring efficient use of words at the latter).

We do not have many members in the Hamilton area, but Cathy Jones and Keith Thompson were ably helped by staff and students from the School of Biological Sciences, Waikato Fish and Game Council, DSIR, DoC (Hamilton and Rotorua) and MAF. The conference and symposium were extremely well organised by the local committee; Vicky Froude provided liaison with Council. It is also pleasing to note that there was a large profit for the conference account.

Judith Roper-Lindsay

Awards

The Society inaugurated a new award, "The New Zealand Ecological Society Award", which is to be conferred annually to recognise excellence and outstanding achievement in the study and application of ecology in New Zealand. The first recipient of the award was Dr Henrik Moller, formerly of DSIR Ecology Division, Nelson and now Director of the Diploma of Wildlife Management at Otago University, for his research on the invasion, impacts and control of introduced wasps.

The award for best student paper at the Annual Conference was presented to Fran Hyland, for her paper on "A geographical study of extant populations of miro". Eleven student travel awards

were also made during the conference.

The Society nominated Dr John Ogden for the Fellowship of the Royal Society of New Zealand, and Dr Steven Dawson, Zoology Department, Otago University, for the Royal Society's Hamilton Award for Young Scientists.

In general, members seem reluctant to put in nominations for the Society's awards. Awards are a valued addition to any ecologist's curriculum vitae, and might just make the difference at a critical job interview! Members are urged to make use of the Society's awards system.

Graham Hickling.

TREASURER'S REPORT: ANNUAL REPORT, NZ ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY, 1990-91

1. Which account is what?

The three main accounts are a bit hard to follow. The RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS account lists all the money that came in and went out last year, including late bills for the 1989-90 year, early payment of subs for 1991-92, etc. The BALANCE SHEET shows debts and assets at 31 March 1991. Neither of these is overly interesting. The INCOME AND EXPENDITURE account with its associated JOURNAL and CONFERENCE accounts shows how much income and expenditure was actually for activities last year, i.e. whether we collected enough subs for last year to cover the expenses (two journals, four newsletters, etc). That is much more important to the average member. So the I & E accounts include all subs paid for 1990-91, whether paid in advance in 1989-90, on time in 1990-91, or (estimated) in arrears in 1991-92, etc. There's only one exception here; we paid for five newsletters this year (numbers 56 to 60). Number 56 should have been a charge on last year's I & E account, but it wasn't included there, so we've had to include it this year. The actual cost of the four issues that we should have had to pay for this year was \$3307.75. Finally, my little summaries (the BUDGETS and GRAPHS) both follow the I & E format of only counting expenditure relevant to the particular year.

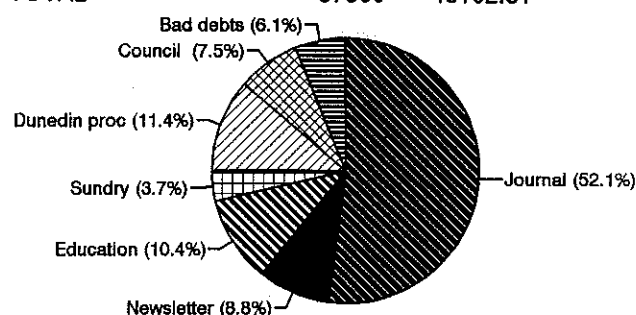
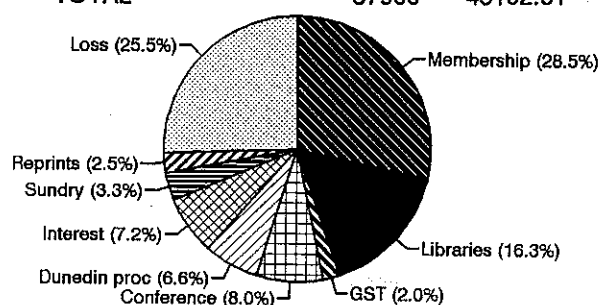
2. The financial state of the society

Last year's budget predictions proved distressingly accurate: the expected loss of over \$10,000 occurred despite a marvellous \$3600 profit on the Hamilton conference. While expected, this loss is serious. In one year we have blown almost a third of the accumulated capital of the Society, which will reduce our investment income in every

come. The reason for the loss, of course, was that we started producing two journals a year before we had any plan in place to cover the cost.

PROPOSED AND ACTUAL BUDGET FOR 1990-91

INCOME	Budgeted	Actual	EXPENDITURE	Budgeted	Actual
Membership	13500	12869.95	Journals incl post	20000	23503.98
Journal subs	9000	7338.69	Newsletter incl post	2400	3952.59
GST net	1000	884.94	Education (net of sales)	5500	4700.36
Interest	3000	3257.19	Postage (miscell.)	1000	263.80
Dunedin proceedings	1000	2988.61	Dunedin proceedings	4500	5146.88
Conference profit	0	3624.30	Council expenses	2000	3373.92
Sundry & donations	0	1503.20	Business manager	1000	0
Reprint sales	0	1146.00	Bad debt	0	2770.00
Loss	10400	11489.63	Sundries, depreciation	1500	1390.98
TOTAL	37900	45102.51	TOTAL	37900	45102.51



From the current (91-92) year, subs have gone up to cover the extra costs, so we should not lose so much again. However we cannot afford to be complacent. Note that most of our costs for last year exceeded the estimates in the budget; in particular, the journal, newsletter, and council expenses all increased a lot. Part of this is due to higher postage rates, etc. For example, each copy of the journal sent overseas now costs around \$7.50 in postage alone. To reduce council expenses, a proposal on reducing the size of council will be discussed at the AGM, but the other costs are probably as low as we can get them.

Last year, averaged over the current number of members (460), newsletters cost \$7.19 per head and the marginal costs of the journal were \$36.08 each, meaning that the 1991-92 full subscription rate of \$45 only just covers these two activities (\$43.27) and the 1990-91 rate of \$30 was a steal. The 70 or so unwaged members get a substantial subsidy overall, and other society spending (education, etc.) is funded from interest, back issues, donations and so on.

If we can't reduce costs, how about increasing income? We have already increased rates for both membership and libraries, and increased efforts to sell back issues of the journal, etc. Unfortunately the number of members has decreased gradually, and more members have gone from full to unwaged rates, reflecting the hard economic times as ecologists are laid off or fail to find work.

Clearly the best way to get a bit more money is to increase the circulation of the journal. It actually goes to surprisingly few overseas libraries (about 80 paid copies in total). This has been suggested every year, but nothing much ever gets done. From my own experience this is likely to continue to be the case until someone other than the treasurer takes responsibility for pushing the journal. The treasurer is too busy running hard to stay in the same place. Maybe it's time we stopped talking about this and did it.

3. Budget for 1991-92

A draft budget for the current year was approved last November by the Council. Here I offer a revised version for consideration and approval at the AGM. This is only the second year of doing advance budgeting, and we're gradually getting more accurate at it. The budget has been modified in light of costs last year and membership changes since November. Note that the income from members is revised downwards, and several costs upwards. To avoid another loss (the third in a row), I have proposed scrapping the Special Publications item. I think this would be a good year to sit tight and try to make a small profit. We should aim to gradually rebuild the \$14,000 in capital lost over the last two years with a series of modest profits. Sorry if that sounds like Ruth Richardson.

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We welcome any contributions for the newsletter – news, views, letters, cartoons, etc. If possible, please send articles for the newsletter on disk – any size, IBM or Macintosh; MS Word or plain ASCII file texts are best but we can also manage Word Perfect. Send your disk and hard copy to:

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The deadline for the September issue of the newsletter is 15 August 1991.

Unless indicated otherwise, the views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the New Zealand Ecological Society or its Council.