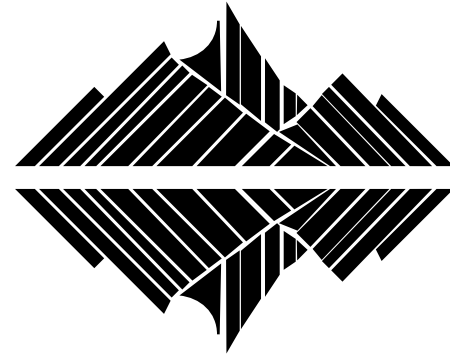


Ecological Society Newsletter

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P.O. Box 25-178, Christchurch



FROM THE EDITORS

Once again the annual conference is drawing near—I think we can all agree that August will be here before we know it! A date looming even sooner is the deadline for abstract submissions! At the last conference we noted many attendees complaining of not enough applied papers being presented, whilst others complained of a dearth of theoretical ecology presentations. Avoid disappointment this conference—present a paper or submit a poster!

Thank you to all who have given us feedback regarding the new-look newsletter, your suggestions have been noted. Due to the cost to society members of producing a print version of the newsletter, a motion has been put to the AGM that the newsletter is made completely electronic (except for members without access to the internet). We hope that moving completely into an electronic format will reduce costs to society members, and improve the timeliness of information getting to members. It is also appropriate that as an ecological society we look to being more sustainable in our methods of communication. This will be open for discussion at the AGM.

Discussions in council meetings recently have been around the role of the society, particularly in the promotion of ecological knowledge in all its aspects. One facet of this discussion has been the NZES logo and whether it is a recognisable 'brand' associated with our society (representing professional, unbiased information, and expert opinions). Consequently the council is looking to change the logo to something that will be instantly recognisable as 'New Zealand Ecology'. If you have some great ideas about what you think should be on the logo or what it should portray we encourage you to submit your ideas. There will be opportunity to submit your idea (either in words, or drawings) at the conference.

Hope to see you (and your research) at the conference!

The deadlines for submissions for the upcoming issues of this newsletter in 2006 will be: 7 August, and 13 November.

If you have any questions or comments about the newsletter, we encourage you to put it in the form of a letter to the editors.

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ECOLOGY ACROSS THE TASMAN 2006

Dates: Sunday 27 August – Friday 1 September 2006

Venue: Victoria University of Wellington

Conference web site: www.vuw.ac.nz/ecology06.



Ecology Across the Tasman 2006, a joint conference of the Ecological Society of Australia and the New Zealand Ecological Society, will be held at Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, 28 August – 1 September 2006 (student day on 27 August).

This is the third joint conference of the New Zealand and Australian Ecological Societies. It will enable people from all sectors of ecology to interact and exchange information, and to discuss current and envisioned developments in ecology.

You asked for a conference that featured breaking-edge science: here's your chance to make it happen! A four-day scientific programme is planned, with ample opportunity for participants to offer papers or symposia on topics of their choice. Online submission of abstracts and symposia topics **close on 5 June**. There is still room for more papers and symposia so get those abstracts and symposia topic proposals rolling in. Or test the waters by posting your symposia topic idea on the conference website. See the conference web site for how to do this.

Registration is now available on the conference web site. Standard registrations **close on 14 July**, so get in early to avoid the late registration fee.

To complement the formal conference, there is a varied and vibrant social programme that promises to impress. The welcome function on Sunday will include a traditional kapa haka (Maori song and dance), on Monday there will be Posters and Pizza, Tuesday a Maori feast, and Wednesday fine wining, dining and an excellent band (Uncle Monkey) at the conference dinner which will be held at the Westpac Trust Stadium.

Conference field trips offer a great chance to break up the conference and understand local ecology. Fieldtrips include Wellington City and Sea: Ecological restoration in an urban setting, Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, Saving Wellington's threatened plants, Belmont Regional Park, Matiu Somes Island, Kapiti Island, and Wainuiomata catchment and mainland Island.

The traditional Student Day, when students have the opportunity to present to their peers, will be on Sunday 27 August at the conference venue. Register for the student day on the conference web site. Student Travel Grants are offered by both the New Zealand Ecological Society and the Ecological Society of Australia, to encourage student participation at the societies' annual conferences.

The conference organisers would like to thank the following organisations for their support of the conference via sponsorship; Landcare Research (major sponsor), Department of Conservation (major sponsor), Victoria University of Wellington (major sponsor), Wildland Consultants Ltd, Sirtrack Ltd, and Blackwell Publishing.

Further information on the submission of abstract and symposia topics, registration, social programme, field trips, and student day are available on the conference web site: www.vuw.ac.nz/ecology06.

CALL FOR PAPERS—ECOLOGY ACROSS THE TASMAN 2006

Ecology Across the Tasman 2006, a joint conference of the Ecological Society of Australia (ESA) and the New Zealand Ecological Society (NZES), will be held at Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, 27 August - 1 September 2006.

A four-day scientific programme is planned plus exhibitions, social events and field trips to some of Wellington's major ecological attractions.

You are invited to offer a paper or symposium topic to *Ecology Across the Tasman 2006*.

Online submission of abstracts and symposia topics, and registration is now available.

See conference web site:
www.vuw.ac.nz/ecology06
for all of the details.

54TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE NEW ZEALAND ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

As usual, the AGM of NZES will be held during the annual conference on Thursday 31 August 5 – 6.30 p.m., room to be advised. All members are urged to attend. The minutes of the 53rd AGM can be found in the December 2005 issue of the newsletter www.nzes.org.nz/newsletter/no115.html. Members are reminded that notices of significant motions that are to be put by members need to be submitted to council at least 28 days prior to the AGM. After that time, following the society rules, no new motions may be proposed, discussed, or put to vote except by consent of more than two-thirds of the members present. There are two council positions up for election and a vacancy for Vice President as our current VP, Susan Timmons moves into the role of President following the end of John Sawyers term. If you would like to contribute to the NZ Ecological Society at a council level please consider standing for one of these positions.

Motions for NZES AGM August 2006

1. NZES Newsletter

Motion: That the NZES newsletter move to a completely electronic publication; except for those members who do not have access to the internet.

Moved: Peter Bellingham, Seconded: John Sawyer.

2. Society subscription rates increase

Motion: That Waged society subscription rate increases by \$5.00, and the Overseas Waged subscription rate increase by \$10.00. Local unwaged rates will remain the same. The Society rules state that the council has the power to set the membership fees, but the council felt it prudent to put this to the society for qualification.

Moved: John Sawyer, Seconded: Rachel Keedwell.

AWARDS REMINDER

Nominations are required for three NZES awards that are presented annually at the NZES conference. These are as follows:

Te Tohu Taiao – Award for Ecological Excellence

Te tohu taiao – award for ecological excellence (formerly New Zealand Ecological Society Award) is made annually to recognise a person who has made an outstanding contribution to the study and application of ecological science. The award is presented to the person(s) who have published the best original research into the ecology of New Zealand, and its dependences (including the Ross Dependency) or the person(s) who have made the most outstanding contribution to applied ecology, particularly conservation and management, in New Zealand and its dependencies. Nominations for this award close on 30th June, 2006.

Ecology in Action Award

This new award presented annually is intended to recognise individuals or organisations that promote the application of ecology. In particular we hope to encourage communication of ecological principles and to foster conservation and restoration in the community.

The award includes a \$500 donation to a restoration organisation of the recipients choice as well as a \$500 travel grant to cover travel costs to the next ecological society conference. Nominations for this award can be sent to the awards convenor (awards@nzes.org.nz) no later than 30th June, 2006.

Honorary Life Membership

Nominations should be sent to the awards convenor (awards@nzes.org.nz) no later than 30 June, 2006.

Nominations are requested for life membership to the NZ Ecological Society. Nominations should be seconded by a member of the society and must include statements of support. A list of criteria for nomination and a list of past recipients is available on the NZES web page (www.nzes.org.nz/awards.html).

NZES Conference Student Prizes include:

Best Student NZES Conference Paper

The society makes an annual award to the student who is judged to have presented the best oral paper at the society's annual conference. The award comprises one year's free membership of the society, a certificate, and a prize of NZ \$400.

All papers (including joint papers) presented by currently enrolled students at the main conference are eligible for consideration. Note that this award does not consider papers presented at the student session of the conference.

Best Student NZES Conference Poster

The society makes an annual award to a currently enrolled student (senior author) who is judged to have presented the best poster at the society's annual conference. The award comprises one year's free membership of the society, a certificate, and a prize of NZ\$200.

Applications are required to be eligible for the following awards:

Best Paper by a New Researcher

Please send applications to the awards convenor (awards@nzes.org.nz) by 1 June 2006.

The New Zealand Ecological Society awards an annual prize of NZ \$500 for the best published paper of an ecological nature, by a new researcher. This award is targeted at people at the start of their research career. The award will be presented at the NZ Ecological Society's annual conference in Wellington, and reported in the NZ Ecological Society's Newsletter. For more details on eligibility criteria, see the society's web page www.nzes.org.nz/awards.html.

Student Travel Awards

Please complete the form provided on the conference website www.vuw.ac.nz/ecology06/Student.html and send to the awards convenor (awards@nzes.org.nz) by 5 June 2006.

Travel grants are awarded to encourage student participation at the society's annual conference. All students enrolled at a tertiary institution are eligible. Society membership is not required but a statement of support by the student's supervisor is required. Only those students who are presenting oral or poster papers are eligible for an award and preference will be given to students presenting in the at the main conference (28 August – 1 September 2006). Four grants will be awarded to a maximum value of \$250.00 per student.

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

'Speak softly and carry a big stick' Theodore Roosevelt.

Before I explain the relevance of this statement to the Society, I must acknowledge that it has been a busy year for the New Zealand Ecological Society. It would be hard for such a large organisation to function without a huge time commitment from Council members. My thanks go to each member of the team. Shona Myers (Secretary), Rachel Keedwell (Treasurer), Ruth Guthrie and Hannah Buckley (Newsletter editors) and Jon Sullivan (Webmaster) have continued to put considerable amounts of energy into their respective roles. Peter Bellingham, Roger Dungan and Duane Peltzer have continued their excellent work editing the Society journal. Council member Alison Evans has done a superb job running the annual awards programme for the past few years. Mel Galbraith, Kate McNutt and Ingrid Gruner have also provided valuable support to the workings of council.

Ingrid Gruner has taken on the role of media liaison—reviewing our ability to achieve greater media coverage for ecological science stories and issues. This is a key development for the Society especially in light of research that has shown environmental issues appear for only 3.7% of all TV news items in New Zealand. Ingrid has also become our correspondent with the Ecological Society of Australia. Another initiative of the Society has been the appointment of Karen Denyer (inaugural recipient of the Society's Ecology in Action award in 2005) as an ex-officio member of council to prepare a strategy for communicating ecological science. Karen has now drafted a strategy which will be available for comment in the coming months.

Susan Timmins (Vice President) has been leading a large team of Wellington-based volunteers with the huge task of organising this year's 'Ecology Across the Tasman' conference to be held jointly with the Ecological Society of Australia. This will be an exciting time to meet, exchange ideas and forge stronger links with other ecologists and our Australian counterparts. My thanks go to all members of that team for the work they have done. At the same time the Society (led by Kate McNutt) has been gearing up to assist the Australians with organising INTECOL 2009 to be held in Brisbane—another important event for your calendar.

All in all working with such a conscientious, focussed and fun team has been a great experience and I trust you will continue to support the national council members and thank them for their work.

So returning to my opening quote, big stick diplomacy may be required sooner than we think if the intolerable degradation of New Zealand's unique plant and animal communities is to be avoided. If you were to build a cathedral in New Zealand it would take a lot of planning to ensure the foundations are strong, to ensure you are building it in the right place and using the right materials. So what planning is underway to protect New Zealand ecology using ecological science as the basis for decision making? Where is the future thinking in New Zealand (well beyond the 3-year political cycle) and why does New Zealand not have a Ministry for Sustainable Development (why just Economic Development)? New Zealand has a detailed biodiversity strategy and we have some legislation designed to protect some aspects of indigenous biological diversity in New Zealand but where is the vision of a sustainable, clean air and water, oil-independent New Zealand? As 'peak oil' approaches (the point at which world oil production peaks) New Zealand has many opportunities to position itself at the heart of the global sustainable Venn diagram, but will we?

I mentioned the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment last year. It stated that sixty percent of the ecosystem services that support life on Earth, such as fresh water, capture fisheries, air and water regulation, and the regulation of regional climate are being degraded or used unsustainably. This affects us all. With current agricultural and economic activity in New Zealand how are we not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs? Are we

John Sawyer
President

taking more resources from New Zealand than its natural systems can replenish? Think here about ecological sources and ecological sinks—can we continue to use nature's sinks as we are now? This would be a major failure if we really are to live in a sustainable world. We need to frame the sustainability debate in a way that ensures that everyone cares and is interested.

Is the New Zealand Ecological Society sustainable for a start? Is the conference sustainable? With that in mind we are moving towards an electronic newsletter to avoid wastage in postage and paper. I trust you will support this initiative.

As Aldo Leopold said "One of the penalties of an ecological education is living alone in a world of wounds". What society member cannot say that they have been witness in the past twelve months to some environmentally damaging activities? The tyranny of ecological impoverishment is becoming cosmopolitan. New Zealand is a globally important biodiversity sanctuary and, therefore, it requires management of the highest quality. The Society must influence that management.

The Society must open debates about New Zealand ecology based on its quality science. I suggest the Society prepares a calendar of events that includes such debates. It is simply not enough to meet up once a year for a conference and to publish a journal. As a start I propose that an annual and prestigious NZES address or lecture be established aimed at the business world, perhaps at the time of the annual budget. There should also be a special issue of the Journal for comment and discussion about the UN Millennium Ecosystems Assessment. Such an issue should be sent to businesses and ministers to encourage debate and action.

Some good news is that use of the New Zealand Ecological Society website continues to increase steadily and we can hope that this means a greater uptake of ecological science as the basis for decision making.

However, are New Zealand markets encouraging ecological degradation? What economic signals are there for those who farm in a sustainable way? Landowners have a duty of care to protect the environment but who pays for that especially when benefits accrue to others? Do we have sufficient knowledge to set a course that will provide security for future generations?

The New Zealand Ecological Society should, in conjunction with the Royal Society, WWF and anyone else that is interested, establish a national advisory council or commission that sets targets for water quality, soil, climate and biodiversity. This council should prepare a blue print for sustainable use of the natural resources of Aotearoa. This would fit well with the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014).

In Australia, the Wentworth Group was convened by WWF in 2003 to develop practical scientific and economic solutions for the better management of Australia's precious landscapes and fresh water resources. They prepared a 'Blueprint for a living continent'. I recommend their report as required reading (see www.wwf.org.au/about/wentworthgroup/). Some of their recommendations may transfer directly to us here in New Zealand especially those that embrace a partnership with ecological science. For example, I suggest that we would benefit from preparation of:

- • A national annual natural resource audit. Not the kind produced by MfE but one that really sums up the changes in our natural resource budget. One that receives as much media attention as the annual financial budget? The Isaac Centre for Nature Conservation has tried to prompt this with its Lincoln University Annual 'State of the Nature's Environment' Address which has been run for 8 years.
- • A national water plan covering issues of water rights, allocation and conservation.
- • Clear policy and incentives for prevention of land clearance in upper catchments and subsequent re-vegetation of areas already cleared?

Other key issues include ensuring environmental services are paid for and the development of pest-based industries (possum wool, passion vine liqueur, heli-hunting, trout fishing are some examples). Has New Zealand society tended away from caring about the unique New Zealand ecology and environment? How can people and the media be uninterested when environmental issues affect us all?

Vital is the fostering of a stronger emotional understanding of nature and our role as part, not apart from it. Vital also is the task of breaking down the dichotomous New Zealand view of environmental management as one of conservation versus production.

I suggest that the next conference devote at least half, if not an entire, day to the topic of 'Can the NZES afford not to take a central role in advancing ecology in policy decision making'.

The role of the Ecological Society has never been more important—a pivotal generation of ecologists perhaps? We may give the impression that we know what we are doing? The truth is we probably do not, or our members would provide conflicting opinions on many issues. I feel that we must take more risks. How does the society want to be remembered? In fifty years will we be thought of as an academic society only—one that kept publishing an excellent science journal, organising a conference while New Zealand ecology was excommunicated? We must do more than publish the paper but we must repeat, repeat and repeat our results to every audience possible.

I thank you for your continued support of the Society and hope that you will enjoy this year's conference and be willing to stand up and talk about your work and research. You are the best advocate for your work. But please be prepared for some big stick diplomacy over the coming years, it is the Society's and your duty to act.

MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTION ANNUAL REPORT

Membership of the Society has stayed fairly static over the last year. As at 2 May 2006 total membership is 579. This is a drop of 20 members from 2005. The total count of members includes those in arrears for this year but not those owing from last year. 76% of members have paid their subs for this year. Please continue to pay your subs – it is wonderful value for your money - particularly the social and ecological delights of our annual conference! The unwaged fraction of membership has stayed at a similar rate as 2005 (20%). Overseas subscriptions have dropped by 40% from 26 to 16. NB: Full and joint members pay at a full rate, unwaged members get a discounted rate, overseas members pay the full rate plus an overseas postage surcharge, and honorary members are not charged.

Shona Myers
Secretary

Membership of NZ Ecol Soc as at 2 May 2006 (with data for 28/4/06 as comparison)

Category	Paid	Arrears this year	Total	Arrears last year
Full	297 (284)	77 (84)	374 (368)	15 (12)
Joint	41 x 2 (41)	8 x 2 (8)	49 (49)	2 (1)
Unwaged	76 (77)	43 (59)	119 (136)	12 (23)
Overseas	10 (20)	6 (6)	16 (26)	1 (1)
Honorary	12 (11)		12 (11)	
Total	439 (442)	140 (157)	579* (599)	45 (37)

**includes 9 newsletter only subscribers*

Journal subscriptions totaled 110 (as at 2 May 2006). This includes 89 paid up subscribers and 16 complimentary subscribers. This compares with 117 journal subscribers in 2005 and 120 in 2004. There continues to be a slight drop in journal subscriptions.

Significant changes this year have included most members receiving their newsletter by email. The council is currently establishing on-line credit card payment for subscriptions. Restricted access to current issues of the Journal of Ecology as well as the 2006 joint Australian and New Zealand Ecological Societies Conference in Wellington should lead to a boost in membership numbers.

TREASURERS REPORT 2005

Rachel Keedwell
Treasurer

Shown below are the audited statements of financial performance and financial position for the New Zealand Ecological Society for the 12 month financial year ended 31 December 2005 (values in this report are GST exclusive). Also included is the financial statement for the Kauri Fund for Ecological Science and Research, which is a trust fund of the NZES.

Financial performance

The Society made an apparent loss of \$22,359 in the 12 months ended 31 December 2005. However, much of this 'loss' is the transfer of \$13,070 in funds to the Kauri Fund to a separate bank account with separate accounting systems during 2005. Usually the conference profit each year helps NZES to make an overall profit, but the joint conference in Nelson 2005 had very little profit. In addition, much of the expense for the journal online project came in during 2005 while the grant for income was received in the 2004 financial year.

Financial position

The level of cash reserves at 31 December 2005 was down from the previous year at \$58,509 but is still above the desired minimum level of reserves (i.e., one year's expenditure). Based on input from society members at last year's conference, Council has transferred some of the cash reserves to the Kauri Fund, as explained above, and bank accounts have been transferred from Westpac to National to maximise the interest earned.

Overall the society is still in a sound financial position. Some costs have increased, such as journal production, council travel, secretariat and administration costs, and the council is investigating cost-cutting measures to keep these prices down.

NEW ZEALAND ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY (Inc) Statement of Financial Performance For the Twelve Months ended 31 December 2005

	12 Months Dec 2005	12 Months Dec 2004	
	\$	\$	\$
INCOME			
Members Subscriptions	28,596		29,208
Interest	3,949		1,648
Publications	-		168
Journal Subscriptions	11,050		12,949
Reprints and page charges	4,861		3,006
Conference	1,446		9,342
Sundry Income	507		263
Journal online			8,667
	50,409		65,251
EXPENDITURE			
Journal Production	30,006		27,496
Newsletters	3,232		3,552
Secretariat	8,474		8,453
Subscriptions	1,718		2,742
Council Expenses	4,716		3,059
Administration	2,257		3,055
Audit Fee	500		700
Awards	1,655		-
Web Site	485		505
Tui time	60		845
Journal Online	5,100		1,332
Kauri Fund	13,070		
Conference	1,495		532
	72,768		52,271
NET SURPLUS	-22,359		12,980

NEW ZEALAND ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY (Inc)**Statement of Financial Position
As at 31 December 2005**

	Dec 2005	Dec 2004
	\$	\$
FUNDS & LIABILITIES		
ACCUMULATED FUNDS		
Balance 31 December 2004	80,867	67,888
Add Net Surplus	-22,359	12,980
	58,509	80,867
LIABILITIES		
Advance – membership	–	–
Advance – journal subscriptions	–	556
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	17,689	18,715
Kauri Fund	–	3,597
	17,689	22,868
	76,198	103,735
ASSETS		
Westpac Cheque Account	47,197	29,335
Westpac Term Deposit	23,805	55,000
Kauri Fund	–	3,597
	71,002	87,932
Arrears – membership	241	1,686
GST Receivable	4,095	3,079
Sundry Debtors	710	10,888
Stock – Journals	150	150
	5,196	15,803
	76,198	103,735

**Kauri Fund for Ecological Science and Research
(Trust fund for the NZ Ecological Society Inc.)****Receipts and payments for the year ending 31 December 2005****RECEIPTS**

Account balance 1 January 2005	3,596.83
Interest	187.39
From NZ Ecological Society	13,280.31
	17,064.53

PAYMENTS

Account balance 31 December 2005	17,063.83
Bank charges	0.70
	17,064.53

<i>Income</i>	13,467.70
<i>Expenditure</i>	0.70
<i>Profit/Loss</i>	\$13,467.00

NZES WEBSITE ANNUAL REPORT, 2006

Jon Sullivan
Lincoln University,
webmaster@nzes.org.nz

The numbers

The society website (www.nzes.org.nz) continues to be well used. Those of you who collect miscellaneous large numbers may be interested to note that in the calendar year of 2005, there were 125,961 visits to the site, viewing 268,436 pages. These numbers are bigger than previous years in part because I've switched to using a server-side website stats system that gives more accurate (or at least much larger) numbers than the old off-server webstats.com system I was using. I realised that the old system wasn't counting pdf downloads and was merging all contents pages and all abstract pages for *NZJ Ecol*. Luckily, the server-side system (called AwStats) had been operating on the server the whole time.

The figure shows the growth in use of the NZES website using the AwStats figures, beginning when we moved to the Royal Society servers in March 2003. You can see the massive increase in use at the launch of *NZJ Ecol* online. (This was immediately preceded by the first use of the website for conference abstract submissions, which is why the graph starts to spike upwards two months prior to the *NZJ Ecol* launch).

A rummage through all the AwStats numbers allows me to present the ten most popular *NZJ Ecol* articles downloaded in the 2005 calendar year. They're listed below with the number of views in square brackets. I'm please to see a mix of new and old articles in this list, good evidence that making back-issues available online has increased the usefulness and exposure of the journal.

[1947] Peter M. Vitousek, Carla M. D'antonio, Lloyd L. Loope, Marcel Rejmanek, and Randy Westbrooks. 1997. Introduced species: A significant component of human-caused global change. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 21: 1–16.

[1324] Janet M. Wilmshurst, Thomas F. G. Higham, Harry Allen, Dilys Johns, and Caroline Phillips. 2004. Early Maori settlement impacts in northern coastal Taranaki, *New Zealand*. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 28: 167–180.

[1007] J. Bastow Wilson. 1994. The Intermediate Disturbance Hypothesis of Species Coexistence Is Based on Patch Dynamics. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 18: 176–181.

[931] D. A. Robertson. 1992. Diet of the Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator* (Gr Gray) around New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 16: 77–81.

[793] J. Bastow Wilson. 1990. Mechanisms of Species Coexistence - 12 Explanations for Hutchinson Paradox of the Plankton—Evidence from New Zealand Plant-Communities. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 13: 17–42.

[713] Gabor L. Lovei, Ian A. N. Stringer, Chris D. Devine, and Marc Cartellieri. 1997. Harmonic radar—A method using inexpensive tags to study invertebrate movement on land. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 21: 187–193.

[701] [Darren F. Ward and Marie-Claude Larivière. 2004. Terrestrial invertebrate surveys and rapid biodiversity assessment in New Zealand: lessons from Australia. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 28: 151–159.

[648] Bruce D. Clarkson. 1990. A Review of Vegetation Development Following Recent (Less-Than 450 Years) Volcanic Disturbance in North Island, New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 14: 59–71.

[630] M. N. Clout and J. R. Hay. 1989. The Importance of Birds as Browsers, Pollinators and Seed Dispersers in New Zealand Forests. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 12: 27–33.

[609] R. E. Beever, R. L. S. Forster, J. Rees-George, G. I. Robertson, G. A. Wood, and C. J. Winks. 1996. Sudden decline of cabbage tree (*Cordyline australis*): Search for the cause. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 20: 53–68.

Updates and changes

Only one new feature was added to the website this past year. I added abstracts of past conferences onto the website, including placing pdf files of conference talks on the website for a limited time following our successful Nelson conference.

The two core areas of the website, the *NZ Journal of Ecology* and the society's newsletter, continue to be popular and have been kept current. This has included all "in press" *NZJ Ecol* articles being made available as soon as the proofs have been typeset.

The transition to a new council and other commitments on my part have meant that other parts of the website have remained largely static over the past year. The meetings webpage has been updated infrequently and HotScience not at all. Long planned initiatives like a postgraduate student area and webpages for joining and renewing membership online are still in the works, progressing slowly but surely towards reality.

Priorities for the next year

- General swishing up of the website to make it easier to use and more classy
- Recruitment of volunteers to help maintain and expand the content of the website (thanks)
- Implementation of an online membership system with credit card capabilities and individual passwords for member-online site features. Credit card capabilities will be handled by a contracted company with secure web capabilities (a company has been recommended to us by the National Bank and Noreen, our secretariat, and our treasurer, Rachel Keedwell, have started this process)
- Resurrection of HotScience as a Blog with an ability for members to comment on submitted articles (abstracts from *NZJ Ecol* and newsletter articles could easily be included in the same system allowing members to comment and discuss the contents—any feedback on this idea would be welcome).
- Creation of a student area of the website (the structure for which was planned out earlier this year by University of Canterbury students Debra Wotton and Melissa Hutchinson and awaits implementation).

INVITED ARTICLES

Ecology and the media

Precis of Restore: Christchurch-based Restore New Zealand is a consultancy offering strategic communication and media services with a specialisation in sustainability and sustainable development. With extensive networks and knowledge of environment and sustainability issues, Restore works with clients to maintain effective communication with key audiences.

One of my most vivid memories from studying ecology, about six years ago, was the findings of a survey about how ecology was perceived by "the general public." My lecturer at Lincoln University showed a TV clip in which people were approached in a shopping mall and asked to define an ecologist. The responses were similar in that they were all short on specifics, but the one that sticks in the mind is "a bearded guy who talks on the telly." From that moment, I suspected ecology was badly misunderstood.

Since then I've become increasingly involved in the portrayal of ecological and environmental matters in the media and I feel confident to state that ecology is understood a little better than the TV clip suggested. Admittedly that understanding is coming from a fairly low base, but there is progress, and there is cause of optimism.

My interest in ecology is difficult to pinpoint. I can recall the 1978 General Elections and telling my parents that if I was allowed to vote I would vote for the Values Party. I was 14 and they laughed at me. But when I look back it seems my

By Nick Early
Director,
Restore New Zealand Ltd

voting preference was the earliest indication about how my world view would develop.

During high school my strongest subject was English, so when I started to develop a keen interest in current events it seemed reasonable to aim for a career in journalism. I trained at Auckland Technical Institute (now Auckland University of Technology) and was immediately deployed into a provincial newspaper to do my porridge – a mandatory immersion in court reporting, local squabbles over the rates, A&P shows, and the occasional battering by a storm.

After 18 months in the basics of reporting, ambition demanded a move to the bright lights of the big city, and a reporting position on the Christchurch Star. It was 1985 and the Star was breaking strong stories each day, but to no avail. Nothing could halt the decline of the metropolitan afternoon dailies – as they were steadily displaced by the 6pm television news – and after nearly four years of the cut and thrust of daily news it seemed time for a change. After an OE I worked in radio, a fascinating media, but I felt the need to turn my communication skills and experience to other purposes, in a way which would allow me to participate in events of the day, rather than just observing the reporting on them.

In 1992, after eight years in journalism, I switched to what journalists call “the dark side,” the mercurial world of public relations. Often referred to as “spin doctors”, or even “paid liars”, public relations people are not unlike ecologists in that they struggle to be understood.

What is Public Relations?

Public relations is defined as the “planned, deliberated and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual communication with multiple publics.” This may seem quite a mouthful, but this definition, based on about 50 years of debate within the industry, is dense with meaning about the intent of organizational and media communications.

In New Zealand there are around 800 PR people who are members of a professional body, the Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (PRINZ), of which around 110 are accredited by examination. However PR is an unregulated industry, and there are many more who, with some relevant experience, can hang out their shingle and offer services. PR people include sole trader consultants and account directors in swanky agencies, and people in in-house positions with various titles, including Public Affairs Manager, Director of External Relations, Community Relations Officer, Marketing and Communications Manager, or similar. All of these titles include, to some extent, the responsibility for “establishing and maintaining mutual communication with multiple publics.” Many PR professionals chose to simply avoid the debate about what PR is and get on with the job under the more palatable title of “strategic communications.”

What do Public Relations people actually do?

Roles vary considerably, depending on the type of organisation—business, government department, NGO, not-for-profit—and the types of stakeholders or “publics” which have an interest in the organisation’s activities. A government-run transport safety authority, for example, will have important connections with policy makers, auditors and industry representatives. All of these relationships have to be maintained with effective two-way communication. On the other hand an NGO provider of health services will have a crucial relationship with one or two funders, various health professionals who refer patients and clients between services and a network of donors and volunteers. And so the shape and extent of communication varies widely.

My own background is reasonably broad. As the employee of a medium sized consultancy, after the stint in radio, I worked with all sorts of businesses and organisations—in tourism, manufacturing, hospitality, professional services, agriculture, local government and so on. We were a generalist consultancy providing just about anything within the bailiwick of the PR man—producing

newsletters, corporate profiles, issuing media releases, preparing annual reports, providing advice when media people ask curly questions, organising promotional activities, writing speeches for the chairman of the board, and so on.

In 1995 the firm's principal retreated to Akaroa to write novels (successfully, as it turns out) and I had the opportunity to acquire the firm's client list. A couple of years later I was interviewing people at Lincoln University for a publication on outstanding research projects, and one of the subjects was doing a PhD in forest ecology. I was fascinated. It was a defining point, an "ah-ha" moment that left me in no doubt that I would study ecology and make ecology "part of what I do." I joined the PhD student on a voluntary project, clearing gorse and willows from a corner of a local wetland and establishing a scientific trial, growing kahikatea. Two years later I enrolled at Lincoln for a Post Graduate Diploma in Resource Studies, which included papers in ecology, environmental toxicology, environmental management, policy and planning, and impact assessment. Once completed it was time to create a fresh new entity for the delivery a specialist communication service—and *Restore* was born. Same guy, and initially the same clients, but a good basic understanding of ecological principles and a commitment to work alongside businesses and organisations with shared values and philosophy.

People often ask me how I spend my day. A typical day will include a mix of strategic work (planning, reviewing outcomes, preparing advice for clients) and the implementation of a specific programme of activities. This might include, for example, researching information and interviewing over the phone for a press release or an article in a specialist publication. I plan and prepare the content for industry newsletters (an "external" audience), write submissions, co-ordinate the design-print-production process for printed material and prepare the content for annual reports. From time to time I prepare crisis communication plans and arrange formal research through a market research agency.

Over the past five years I have become increasingly tuned in to the way environmental issues, including ecology, are portrayed in the media. And while the ecologist now is probably something more specific than "a bearded guy on the telly" there is still some way to go before concepts such as the "ecological footprint" or "functional biodiversity" become common parlance. Two years I put this idea the test, with some Lincoln colleagues, in a study of environmental coverage on network television. In an evaluation of two months of content on TV1 and TV3, we found that less than three percent television news is about the environment. Even more disturbing is that much of the environmental news relates to conservation work involving popular species, often dolphins or bears, and that the notion of sustainability is rarely addressed. The results of this study will be published in *Pacific Journalism Review* later this year.

There is, as I mentioned earlier, some cause for optimism. In the scramble for 7 p.m. viewers, TV3's *Campbell Live* has recognised that there is an audience for environment and sustainability issues. It's not perfect, and often the choice of experts is questionable, but it shows a determination to tackle issues which don't make it into the locally-made documentaries (of which there is now a real paucity) but need more than a six minute "package" between ad-breaks.

It's interesting to note, also, how environment news stories are starting to receive more attention in the print media. In the same way that a PR person has to "pitch" a story idea to a reporter on behalf of a client, reporters have to convince their bureau chief that an idea for a news story is worth pursuing. Several years ago, it was difficult for a reporter to get the go-ahead to invest time in investigating a story idea. Nowadays, according to news people I work with, the real gatekeepers in the newsroom are more interested in these ideas and angles. This was confirmed recently when I organised, again with some Lincoln colleagues, an "environmental reporting forum" for *The Press*. The concept was enthusiastically received by management and well attended. For the first time, the key people involved in gathering and selecting the news were able to meet

with environment experts of all persuasions—scientists, policy makers, regulators etc—to critique current practice and explore fresh approaches to reporting the environment.

These trends will continue. Environment and sustainability issues will, I believe, gather such a momentum that a new paradigm emerges to replace the dominate mindset based on property rights and the liberal political-economy. And as that happens, ecologists, beards or not, will be seen in an entirely different light.

NEWS FROM THE ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

Robyn Sinclair

Robyn is a New Zealander currently living across the Tasman. She is completing her Masters with Lesley Hughes at Macquarie University in Sydney, working on the evolutionary ecology of leaf mining insects
www.ecolsoc.org.au/What%20we%20do/Prizes/documents/RobynSinclairPoster.pdf

Ecological Society of Australia's report to the New Zealand Ecological Society, April/May 2006

Counting down til Wellington....

Calling potential PhD students... Yvonne Buckley and the team at the University of Queensland's School of Integrative Biology have two positions available at present. The first is a PhD or 12–18 month post-doc looking at modelling unpalatable grass weeds. There is already a considerable amount of data on the populations of serrated tussock and Chilean needle grass under different management regimes and so the aim of this PhD (or post-doc) would be to develop models of population growth/spread and to develop further models to develop control strategies. There is also a PhD opportunity in community ecology of weed complexes. You'd join a dynamic group whose current projects include students working on population genetics of pest whitefly, regeneration and management of brigalow (*Acacia herpophylla*), lantana multi-trophic interactions, and a large scale disturbance and management experiment on weed complexes and their regeneration. Email y.buckley@uq.edu.au for all the details.

The Ecology Centre at University of Queensland have developed software that delivered decision support for reserve system design. Called MARXAN, it finds reasonably efficient solutions to the problem of selecting a system of spatially cohesive sites that meet a suite of biodiversity targets. It has already been used for important reserve decision making (e.g. the recent rezoning of the Great Barrier Reef) and is being used by NZ agencies including DoC, MAF, NIWA and the Western Institute of Technology. You can download MARXAN FREE from the Ecology Centre website at www.ecology.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=27710.

Further north Sean Bellairs from Charles Darwin University, Darwin, has a three year seed biology research position available (start immediately). The research, based in Kakadu National Park, will look at revegetation of native plants, their seed viability, germination, dormancy and longevity in relation to establishing on mine sites. Strong seed biology experience is preferred, and the position may be up for renewal for a 5 year period. Email sean.bellairs@cdu.edu.au for all the details.

More details of the ESA, its journals and its members can be found on our website, www.ecolsoc.org.au or by emailing me on rsinclair@bio.mq.edu.au. Or you can ask us in person in Wellington in August. See you there!

ECOLOGY STUCK ON THE WEB

6: Keeping up with science discoveries using the web

How many ecologists are there in the world today? How about all scientists? A quick Google search didn't give me an answer. An estimate of "a lot" should be precise enough for now. A lot of scientists means a lot of science, much more than mighty mere mortals like we members of NZES can keep up with. For this newsletter, I offer links to a few of my favourite websites for keeping up with science discoveries outside of my area of expertise (if I can claim to have such an area).

Before we start list-making, a quick aside, if I may. Thinking about all those many wonderful ecologists out there reminded me of an excellent seminar I once went to by Peter Raven in Philadelphia. In it, Peter noted that the total global human population at the time when agriculture was invented was approximately the same as the current population of the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area (roughly the population of New Zealand). That analogy has stuck with me as a great way of driving home how successful people have been at breeding. So, when in the history of the world do you think the total human population equaled the number of today's ecologists? I don't know the answer but from a few back of the envelope calculations, which I won't embarrass myself by revealing here, I expect we can safely say that there are at least as many ecologists in the world today as there were people in existence only a hundred thousand years ago. There's a wild thought!

Back to our list making. Lots of ecologists and lots of scientists means lots of science discoveries. I would hazard a guess that the main ways people find out about new science is in journals, in popular science magazines, and via the newspaper and TV media. The web makes all these things easy to do (you can even watch Campbell Live on the web these days). Aside from all the journals now online, I find several websites worth keeping an eye on for keeping up with science discoveries outside of my corner of ecology.

www.eurekalert.org/

This site provides science press releases and articles from and compiled by the American Academy of Sciences. Where else will you find among the headlines of breaking news "The secret lives of sea slugs"?

www.newscientist.com/

You don't need to be a magazine subscriber to keep up with this perennial favourite of popular science reporting. The New Scientist website contains free-to-access stories on all the latest important and quirky scientific discoveries. As an example of this week's stories is "Early worms leave the birds behind". The story summarises an article in the journal Nature showing that European caterpillar populations are now peaking before migratory bird populations do, perhaps explaining the range contraction of at least one bird species.

www.nature.com/news/ <http://sciencenow.sciencemag.org/>

The above pair of sites contain science stories written for a general audience from the publishing houses of the journals Nature and Science. They cover major discoveries throughout science, not just in their respective journals. I have Nature News set as the homepage on my browser. This week I learned through Science Now about a study reported in the journal PLOS Biology that shows that the garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), an invasive species in North America, reduces the number of micorrhizal connections to maple and ash trees causing slower tree growth in invaded forests.

www.mediaresource.org/sitn/

This is an excellent service of Sigma Xi, the self-proclaimed "scientific research society", based in the US (www.sigmaxi.org). This website summarises what

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they regard as the top science stories in the day's newspapers, and includes a link to each article. Usually <10 articles are here each day so you won't get swamped. If your e-mail in box isn't already overflowing, you can also sign up on this website to get these stories emailed to you each day (for free). For those you who can wait, there is also Science in the News Weekly, which is archived at www.americanscientist.org/template/ScienceNewsArchive/.

www.science.org.au/nova/

This website is published by the Australian Academy of Science. It is not really a news site but instead is a reliable source of carefully considered fact sheets on controversial and popular topics in science. As such, it is a great resource for education.

Have I missed your favourite site? Please let me know.

If you'd prefer audio rather than staring at the screen, there are also a number of excellent podcasts popping up that summarise science news.

Pod what? Podcasts are audio files (e.g., mp3 files), and now sometimes video files, that can be downloaded from the web. What makes a podcast different from other legally downloaded files is that you can subscribe to a podcast and your computer will then automatically download new shows as soon as they become available. A lot of radio programmes are now available as podcasts, allowing you to listen to them whenever you're ready. The free iTunes software from Apple (available for Windows and Mac, available at www.itunes.com) makes the process seamless—you can browse through available podcasts, subscribe to shows, and either listen to them on your computer or have them automatically downloaded to your iPod when it is connected to your computer.

My favourite science podcast is the irreverent "This Week in Science" (www.twis.org) from UC Davis public radio station KDVS, hosted by Kirsten Sanford and Justin Jackson. Their weekly hour-long show includes a usually hilarious account of the weeks news stories and often has a half hour interview with a high profile scientist. For example, Tim Flannery was a recent guest on the show. I listen to TWIS on my iPod when I bike home from Lincoln University.

Another science podcast I listen to regularly is Science Friday (www.sciencefriday.com), hosted by Ira Flatow and broadcast by the US National Public Radio. Topics from the past month included new fossil fish and humanoid finds, mercury in fish, coral bleaching, possible nanotech risks, and the methanol economy. Each show consists entirely of interviews with scientists and is a great opportunity to hear the experts explain their latest science to a lay audience. This past month, I learned from Seth Lloyd, researcher at MIT in quantum computing, that if every elementary particle in the universe was a monkey that had been randomly typing since the universe began at the maximum possible rate allowed by the laws of physics, the closest any one monkey would likely have come to typing out Hamlet would have been "To be or not to be that is the...". In other words, the universe is very, very big and very, very old but not nearly as big or as old as needed to do ridiculously improbable things. Now there's a useless piece of information for an ecologist!

You may have noticed a lack of local focus in the above sites. I know DOC staff have access to an excellent news clipping service via their intranet. For the rest of us, keeping up with local science news stories comes back to reading journals and newspapers. Alastair Robertson at Massey started up the HotScience service on our NZES website to address this issue and I have been too busy to keep it updated or build a more user-friendly web home for it. Perhaps it is time for HotScience and other ecological news from NZES and our members to become a blog! A what? That sounds like a topic for next issues column.

RECCE AND PERMANENT PLOT MANUAL REVISIONS

Seeking input on RECCE and Permanent 20 x 20 m plot manual revisions

Landcare Research has been contracted by the Department of Conservation to undertake a revision of the RECCE and Permanent 20 x 20m plot manuals. These methods are used by DOC, local government, scientists, students and others to describe and monitor changes in indigenous vegetation in New Zealand. The existing plot manuals can be obtained from the National Vegetation Survey (NVS) Databank website at <http://nvs.landcareresearch.co.nz>.

Whilst the two methods are widely used and are largely standardised, the revision of the plot manuals will provide clarity on aspects of the protocols that have resulted in confusion in the past, and will ensure that the methods continue to meet the needs of end-users. Protocols for both methods will also be available in one comprehensive manual, accompanied by a shorter field version.

What we are asking of you:

We wish to hear your views if you have ever collected or used RECCE or Permanent 20 x 20m plot data. A questionnaire, focussed on some specific methodological issues has been posted on the NVS Databank website at <http://nvs.landcareresearch.co.nz/html/PlotManualRevision.aspx> and takes about 30 minutes to complete. This will help to inform the manual revision. Other comments or ideas regarding the content of the revised plot manual are very welcome.

Modelling Patterns and Dynamics of Species Occurrence Workshop

Hamilton NZ: 13–15 September 2006

Instructor: Darryl MacKenzie, Proteus Wildlife Research Consultants

The presence or absence of a species across a set of landscape units is a fundamental concept used widely in ecology. An important sampling issue, however, is that a species may not always be detected when present at a landscape unit. This will result in "false absences" causing parameter estimates to be biased if unaccounted for, possibly leading to misleading results and conclusions, even with moderate levels of imperfect detection.

This workshop will cover many of the latest methods for modelling patterns and dynamics of species occurrence in a landscape while accounting for the imperfect detection of the species. Participants will be introduced to available software through worked examples, and there will be special emphasis on aspects of study design. While primarily aimed at the beginner and intermediate level, more experienced researchers will also benefit from attending.

Participants will receive a complimentary copy of the recently published book, 'Occupancy estimation and modeling: inferring patterns and dynamics of species occurrence.'

The Hamilton workshop is being hosted by NZ Department of Conservation, and there are limited places available for outside participants for \$NZ 700 plus GST.

Please return the completed questionnaire or any comments to Jenny Hurst (HurstJ@landcareresearch.co.nz; or Ph. 03 325 6700 ext. 3740) at Landcare Research by 31 May 2006.

CONTACT: Ian Westbrooke
iwestbrooke@doc.govt.nz
to enrol or for more information

HOTSCIENCE

Duthie, C., Gibbs, G. & Burns, K.C. 2006. Seed Dispersal by Weta.

Science: 311, pg 1575

Weta are giant, flightless grasshoppers that are endemic to New Zealand. In the absence of native mammals, weta are thought to perform similar ecological functions. As such, they might be expected to be important seed dispersers. However, insects are not known to consume fleshy fruits and to disperse seeds after gut passage. We conducted a series of observations and experiments to test

whether weta form mutualistic partnerships with fleshy-fruited plants as seed dispersers, similar to small mammals elsewhere in the world. Results showed that weta are indeed effective seeds dispersers, providing an example of ecological convergence between unrelated organisms.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Research Assistant in Plant Ecology

The Bio-Protection and Ecology Division at Lincoln University is looking for a Research Assistant to provide support to researchers within the Plant Ecology Group.

The successful candidate will have a complex range of duties in: project management, including liaison with stakeholders (industry, funders, collaborators), project logistics, including timely and efficient provision of consumables and equipment and oversight of experimental protocols, project support, including field and laboratory assistance, equipment maintenance, assistance with data collection and management, creation of publications, and summer scholar management.

Experience in plant identification skills would be an advantage.

Computer literacy, the ability to work both independently and as part of a team, and careful, tidy work practices are essential. An undergraduate degree in science or a related discipline is also essential.

For an Information Pack for vacancy 06/35 refer directly to our website or contact the Human Resources Section on phone: (03) 325-3613, fax: (03) 325-3870, email: sprattc@lincoln.ac.nz
Applications close at 4 pm on Friday, 26 May 2006.

PH.D. AND POST DOC POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Several Ph.D. and/or post doctoral positions are available in Australia; see "News from the Ecological Society of Australia" this newsletter.

Postdoc in Canopy Arthropod Ecology for 3 years available at University of Rennes 1, France (highly qualified MScs are invited to send a statement of interest)

Arthropods in the canopy represent one of the highly diverse, most widespread, and least studied communities in temperate regions. In the present project we will study the role of atmospheric stress (desiccation, NH₃ emissions) and island biogeographic processes (colonization, extinction) on arthropod biodiversity. We thus envision the canopy as an archipelago of tree crown islands in a sea or air. We will study diversity at species level, but also at a historical, i.e. phylogenetic level. We will also explore consequences of the diversity of arthropods for their functional role, particularly as grazers and dispersers of cryptogams. Approaches include detailed observational studies, as well as transplant and exclusion experiments with arthropod communities in cryptogams. Canopy access will be ensured flexibly by cherry pickers and climbers. Up to date spatial statistical procedures will be applied. The external and internal collaboration may permit possible additional sideline studies on geno- or phenotypic differentiation of populations, tritrophic interactions, arthropod / cryptogam interactions, or habitat-use behavior.

The host institution is the Research Unit "Ecosystems, Biodiversity, Evolution", co-funded by University of Rennes 1 and Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, harboring 58 researchers and docents. Several further research institutions in ecology and evolutionary biology exist at Rennes. Rennes has approximately 200 000 inhabitants and is the capitol of the Bretagne region with exceptional coastal and mainland landscapes, and a french-celtic heritage. English is spoken everywhere in Academia, but not necessarily outside.

The project is for 35 months, pending approval of the intermediate report after 1.5 years. Salary is approximately 1450-1500 Euros / month net (1 Euro = 1.23 Dollars, many 2 bedroom apartments are available at 400 - 500 Euros / month,

Please rapidly send applications, including CV, publication list, and major publications (if available also addresses of referees and statement of research interests) by email to Andreas Prinzing: andreas.prinzing@univ-rennes1.fr

all inclusive), additional funds might become available. For an entire family this salary is at the limit, but families of foreign scientists receive full family aids by the state (around 200 Euros per month) and child care is extremely well organized and cheap in France. Moreover spouses of scientists receive a special visa and a work permit (if the scientist is member of the European Union, a non-European spouse can even work without further visa, permit etc.)

The candidate should ideally contribute (1) Taxonomic expert knowledge on a major group of mesofauna (Collembola, oribat mites, Psocoptera) or of phytophages (aphids, Heteroptera, Curculionids, Lepidoptera etc.). Lack in determination knowledge is however not prohibitive, as parts of the determination work will be delegated and others can be learned. (2) A certain robustness for fieldwork, and a driving license. Climbing capabilities would be an important plus. (3) Methodological experience in designing both complex observational studies, as well as field experiments. (4) Experience in the appropriate statistics to analyze the results (spatially explicit, multivariate ..). (5) Experience in communicating research to the scientific public, focusing on conceptual advance rather than accumulation of details. Documented by a strong publication list. (6) A PhD or equivalent.

NEWS FROM COUNCIL

Minutes of NZ Ecological Society Council Meeting 9.30am 17 February 2006, Department of Conservation, Christchurch

Present: John Sawyer (Chair), Susan Timmins, Shona Myers (minutes), Mel Galbraith, Rachel Keedwell, Ingrid Gruner, Kate McNutt, Peter Bellingham, Jon Sullivan, Karen Denyer, Ruth Guthrie, Alison Evans

Treasurer's report

Rachel reported on society profit and loss statement. The net loss to end of December 2005 is \$12,500. Expenses have included \$10,500 transferred to the Kauri Fund. The level of spending will be assessed again when Rachel presents the budget at the next meeting. The importance of the annual conference in raising income for the society was discussed. Increased council travel costs (with more council members travelling from different parts of the country) were noted. The need to choose the cheapest flights was emphasised. Christchurch is the cheapest venue for council meetings.

Rachel reported that the Society's bank accounts have been switched to National Bank to gain higher interest rates. The Kauri Fund is still with Westpac.

The email from Noreen regarding establishment of on line credit card payment for society fee payment was discussed. It was noted that web based payments will cost the society less than the paper form currently used.

Moved (Rachel) that Jon set up electronic credit card payment, as long as set up costs are less than \$500, and ongoing costs are less than paper form used at present, seconded Susan Timmins.

Moved (Peter Bellingham) that the secretariat send out subscription notices by email, including a link to the website, seconded (Rachel).

Journal editor's report

Peter Bellingham presented his report. Key points are:

- Issue 29(2) published December 2005.
- 48 papers submitted in 2005 of which 17 declined (35%), 8 are accepted (17%) and will appear in volume 30 (one appeared in 29(2)) and the remainder are either in review or are back with authors for revision.
- Issue 30(1) on track for publication April 2006: this is the special issue arising from the symposium in honour of Nigel Barlow. At least 11 papers are in the issue; 4 papers appearing in that volume are available online.

Editors note: Edited and abridged minutes

- Issue 30 (2) is a normal issue for which 10 papers have been accepted (including 3 Short Communications and 1 Review [on non-target effects of brodifacoum]). 3 of these papers are available online. Expect that volume to be filled by April and to appear in print c. July or August.
- A slow start for submissions in 2006: only 2 so far cf. 6 by this stage last year.
- Urge conference organisers to lean on keynote speakers for this year's joint conference to publish in the journal, as with student award recipients.

It was suggested that a letter be sent to award recipients to encourage them to publish in the journal.

Media Liaison

Ingrid reported on her investigations into gaining quotes from different media providers who could provide media coverage for the society. She has gained quotes from two media liaison people. The purpose of media coverage was discussed including the possibility of press releases around journal articles and conferences were discussed. John reported that the freshwater ecology press release at the 2005 Nelson Conference was successful in getting keynote speakers on RNZ Morning Report.

Webmasters report

Jon reported that website use continues to grow. Website hits have increased by 400% over the last 5 years (in January 2002 less than 500 hits were recorded compared with 2005 hits in January 2006). 60,000 people have visited the site since 2002. International interest is growing with less than 50% of website visitors now from NZ.

Jon is now spending a lot of time on routine upgrading of the website and has limited time for developing new aspects. Discussion followed on employing a student to help Jon with routine upgrading. The ongoing maintenance costs of the website were discussed. The possibility of applying for funding and sponsorship for website maintenance was also discussed.

Jon and Ruth circulated drafts of the posters they have developed to advertise the journal and the website. Other ideas for using the images included banners and T-shirts.

Following discussion at the last meeting and email correspondence Jon reported that the NZES website address will now be www.NewZealandEcology.org.

The website name will be launched at the next conference.

INTECOL Conference 2009

Kate McNutt reported on progress with conference organisation.

INTECOL will attract 2500-3500 delegates to Australia and will offer enormous opportunities to promote NZ ecology to international ecologists and to the general public.

Scientific Committee: there will be 5 in the core committee (3 Australian, 2 NZ). Australia is currently confirming their representatives. John suggested NZ reps should come from a mix of agencies.

NZES Conference Company has been listed with two directors (Kate and John). All financial dealings with INTECOL will be channelled through this company. It was suggested that one of the directors should always be the current president of the Society.

Field Trips: Mel Galbraith and Ingrid Gruner have offered to assist with organisation of NZ field trips. The nature and magnitude of field trips needs to be decided. Options could include North and South Island trips. Kate suggests that a variety of options be offered and that a central travel consultant be used.

A smaller workshop may need to be organised for NZ ecologists instead of a conference.

Awards

Alison reported that the award information on the website has been updated. Alison will organise student travel form on 2006 Conference website.

Bruce Burns has enquired about progress with the Kauri Trust Fund. Alison has found a website that lists all trusts and charity organisations that money can be left to. Alison has emailed the contact. There is a need for a good summary description of the purpose of the Kauri Fund to be put on the website.

John reported on progress with Nigel Barlow's bequest of \$50,000. Mick Clout is taking suggested options to Barlow family. John also reported on the development of a David Given threatened plant research scholarship. NZES may want to contribute.

Education role

Karen led a discussion/brainstorm on the education role of NZES.

NZES aims are to promote the application of ecological knowledge. Karen asked what is it we need to promote, to whom and why? for example:

- Do we want more people to study ecology?
- Do we want ecology used more in decision-making?
- Do we want a more literate society in terms of ecology?
- Do we want more funding for ecological research?

The following ideas were discussed:

- There is the need for technology transfer – taking science to a broader audience
- It is not about marketing.
- Identify and predict national issues and policies requiring ecological input.
- What is the problem? Bad environmental decisions being made.
- Need to find gaps in knowledge and answers we need in the future.
- An ecological blue print for Aotearoa (cf. Australian Wentworth group – group of climate change experts convened to develop blueprint for Australia).

Karen will draft a strategy (what are key issues, how do we prioritise). It may make a good topic for a workshop at the next conference.

ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY E-MAIL LIST SERVER: DID YOU KNOW YOU AREN'T ON IT ANY MORE?

Well that got you reading. You may have been subscribed to the NZES listserv, but I have to do a lot of housekeeping on the list and have to remove about 2–3 addresses a month because they are generating error messages. These errors could be because people have moved and not changed their address; sometimes because they are over quota and the inbox is full (especially on hotmail-type accounts), and so forth.

So if you haven't had the odd email now and again (there is not a lot of traffic, about 1–2 messages a month perhaps) it might be worth checking if you are still on. You can do this by sending a new "subscribe" command, and if you are already on the list it will tell you so and do nothing else.

Also please note that if you send a message to the list itself for circulation, as sender you will get back in response the current list of error messages for all dead addresses I have not yet tidied up. Sorry these will come to you, but you can just delete them.

About the List Server

Now some background on the listserv (this summary below is also on the web pages)

What is a listserv?

A listserv (short for List Server) is a centralised list of e-mail addresses of subscribers. Anyone who is subscribed to the listserv will automatically receive all emails sent to the listserv, and can send e-mails to all subscribers via the listserv. You can subscribe and unsubscribe from a listserv at any time.

The NZ Ecological Society listserv

By subscribing to the NZ ecosoc listserv, you will receive emails about meetings, seminars, jobs, and issues in New Zealand ecology. You will also be able to post emails that will be received by most practising ecologists in New Zealand.

Subscribing to the NZ EcoSoc listserv

To subscribe to this server, e-mail a message to the automatic

Mailserv processor at: nzecosoc-request@it.canterbury.ac.nz

Include nothing in the e-mail except the following text in the body of the e-mail:

```
SUBSCRIBE NZECOSOC
END
```

To unsubscribe from the listserv, send another email to the above address, but this time use the following text:

```
UNSUBSCRIBE NZECOSOC
```

Once subscribed, you will receive instructions on how to send messages, unsubscribe etc. PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS AND FOLLOW THEM.

Sending list messages

To send a message to everybody on the list, use the address, nzecosoc@it.canterbury.ac.nz. Only people subscribed to the list are able to post messages on the list. If you are not on the list and don't want to subscribe, but want to send a message, send it to Dave Kelly (Dave.Kelly@canterbury.ac.nz) to forward on.

Messages on the list should follow these simple rules:

- • NO ATTACHMENTS!!!
- • Put the info in plain text in the message
- • If there is bulky or graphic material some people may want, put a web address in the message that people can click on if they want, or give a contact email address where people can ask for it
- • Only send stuff that is likely to be of general interest to NZ ecologists

Replying to list messages

To reply to a list email, you have two options. You can either hit reply and this will reply to everybody, or you can reply to the author only (e.g., a new e-mail with the author's personal e-mail address). If you want to reply to the person who sent it, please be careful that your reply goes to the person, and not to the list (to be bounced out to everyone!). In other words, double-check what "To:" field your reply has picked up before you press "send".

If you change your email address

If you change your email address, you have to unsubscribe from the old one, and subscribe from the new one. If you changed address but forgot to tell the server, we start getting error messages from your old address and have to unsubscribe you manually, so make my life easier and do this yourself. If your email address has problems (e.g., messages rejected because your inbox is full) for more than a few weeks we will also unsubscribe you. If you are not getting any messages and wonder if you are still on the list, just send another subscribe command. The easiest way to unsubscribe your old email address is to send a message while you are logged on as that user; if the old email address is dead you may not be able to unsubscribe it because the system sees you as someone else, if you see what I mean. In this case send the details to me and I can delete the old address.

For information on the listserv contact me, Dave Kelly (Dave.Kelly@canterbury.ac.nz).

Office Holders of the New Zealand Ecological Society 2005/2006

(Effective from September 2005)

In the first instance, please send postal or email correspondence to:

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Contributions for the newsletter – news, views, letters, cartoons, etc. – are welcomed. Please e-mail to editors (newsletter@nzes.org.nz) with document attached (Word formatted for Windows) or post. If posting, if possible, please send articles for the newsletter both on disk and in hard copy. Please do not use complex formatting; capital letters, italics, bold, and hard returns only, no spacing between paragraphs. Send disk and hard copy to:

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Membership of the society is open to any person interested in ecology and includes botanists, zoologists, teachers, students, soil scientists, conservation managers, amateurs and professionals.

Types of Membership and Subscription Rates (2005)

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- Overseas Full \$95* per annum
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For more details on membership please write to:

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or e-mail: info@nzes.org.nz

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