

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 1985

(presented for adoption at the 33rd Annual General Meeting)

Overview

This 'annual' report differs from all previous ones in that it spans a period from the end of June 1984 to the end of March 1985. This arises from the decision taken at the 1983 AGM to make the period of our financial year accord with general practice.

It has long been my wish to free up the finances of the Society to permit greater participation in the wider affairs of the scientific community. The main move in this respect was to reduce the proportion of our subscribed revenue (over 80%) that was spent on the Journal. This was accomplished, while maintaining quality, by using modern phototypesetting methods. Further savings are possible if we use (or one day invest in) a word processor, but that would impose more work on Society officers who are already very busy people. The Journal is now produced for about 2/3 of previous rates. This has enabled the Society to make donations in support of worthwhile activities (awards, action funds), to produce the nuclear warfare statement, and reimburse travel expenses for special purposes.

A second measure was to separate off from our subscribed revenue the trading balance from Conferences. This, I hope, will provide a special purpose fund to promote a wider array of seminars/workshops, to bring prestige speakers from overseas from time to time, and to contemplate special symposium publications.

The Council also discussed sponsorship (which we have tried before) and special revenue earning activities (cards, calendars, posters) which other societies have adopted. These are very time consuming, and a last resort we don't yet need.

The year's highlight has been the production of the statement on nuclear warfare. It was not easy for the Council to enter the world of politics while remaining true to its scientific mandate. I believe it was achieved very creditably, and that view is supported by the many commendations flowing to the Society from other member bodies, and from the Royal Society.

Ever since its beginnings the Ecological Society has commented on matters of the day, mostly on Nature Conservation. Older members can recall previous

issues and comments but it has become increasingly hard to retrieve the relevant documents from our records. I am very pleased therefore that a start has been made on an index of our records. This will be useful for many purposes. One thing we still lack is a biographical and pictorial record of the Society's past officers.

It has been a busy year for your Council and I would like to express great thanks to all of your officers and Councillors for this conscientious work.

Mike Rudge
President

Membership

The Society membership at 31 March 1985 was 449. There were 18 new members (13 full, 4 student, 1 introductory), and 12 resignations during the year. There were 163 subscribers to the Journal (70 in New Zealand, 93 overseas).

Council Activity

Council met five times during the year from end of June 1984 to end of March 1985. All meetings were held in Wellington except the AGM which was held in Nelson. The following appointments were made by Council. Dr Nigel Barlow succeeded Dr Murray Williams as Editor; Dr Mike Rudge as representative to the Member Bodies' Committee of the Royal Society; Mrs Helen Hughes and Dr Penelope Luckens as representatives to the New Zealand Committee for Water Pollution Research; Dr Matt McGlone and Dr Judith Roper-Lindsay as Newsletter Compilers. Convenors of subcommittees were: AGM and Conference Organiser Dr Mick Clout; Awards Dr Mick Clout; Conservation Mr Kevin Hackwell, Dr Ian Atkinson; Education Mrs Pam Williams; Consequences of Nuclear Warfare Dr Wren Green; Society Records Mrs Margaret Leslie.

Editor's Report (Nigel Barlow)

I succeeded Dr Murray Williams as editor in November 1984 and three sub-editors were appointed: Dr John Gibb; Dr Peter Johnson; and Dr David Towns.

The flow of papers was slow, and by the end of December there were insufficient to fill the Journal. The majority were submitted in March and virtually all required extensive revision, often because of problems with jumbled or unnecessarily long and discursive presentation.

As of mid-April, 16 papers were received and 9 accepted for Vol. 8 all with revision. There were three book reviews, and a new Short Communications section was included.

Bryce Francis Ltd was chosen to print the Journal again. I thank Dr Murray Williams for his help, and the sub-editors and referees for their vital contributions. Some extremely thorough referees' reports were received, which do a good deal to maintain and enhance the Journal's quality.

Newsletter Compiler's Report (Matt McGlone)

After an all-time low in 1983 when only two Newsletters were produced, we bounced back in 1984 with four Ecological issues covered have included the threat to Henderson Island, environmental consequences of nuclear war, introduction of chinchillas to New Zealand, and the saga of meat-eating possums.

Participation of Society members in the form of reports of work in progress, ecological issues, requests for information, letters to the editor, etc. has remained small. Unlike some Societies, we have no real tradition of writing for the Society Newsletter.

The Newsletter editorial team has decided to introduce some changes in order to increase both the usefulness of the Newsletter and participation from members. As a first step, a questionnaire was distributed to all members with Newsletter 40 (March 1985).

The response to the questionnaire (150 so far) has been gratifyingly large. Many have found the time to make detailed suggestions and comments. It is abundantly clear that members wish the Newsletter to be 1) informative; 2) brief; 3) not too flash. It is also apparent that members wish to hear more about what others are doing.

There will be no great changes in production or layout of the Newsletter, but we hope that there will be substantial changes in content in the coming year.

Report of the Member Bodies' Committee Representative (Mike Rudge)

There are now 55 Member Bodies of the Royal Society. The Member Bodies Committee (MBC) met on 12 March 1985, and the Management Committee met 3 times during the year.

The MBC decided to retain the management committee as it was a useful second forum alongside the Royal Society Council.

The Federation of Biological Societies, set up in 1983, maintained a liaison function through its Newsletter. It also undertook to canvass views on the support given for basic science, as a contribution to an NRAC strategic review.

The Ecological Society gave financial support to the Prince and Princess of Wales Award. So far 22 awards have been made for a total disbursement of \$76,000.

The MBC meeting passed motions of support for the Ecological Society's statement "The Environmental Consequences to New Zealand of Nuclear Warfare in the Northern Hemisphere".

Conservation Report (Kevin Hackwell, Ian Atkinson)

The main conservation issue of the year for the Society dealt with the importation of new exotic breeds of animals into New Zealand. This issue was launched at the August conference when it was heard that chinchilla had been imported into New Zealand. Investigations soon revealed that little in-depth study on the possible impact of these animals on the New Zealand environment had preceded the approval for importation by both MAF and the Wildlife Service. The animals had been in the country for over 6 months before their presence was made public.

The Society was not only concerned about the possible impact on the native flora and fauna of this herbivorous rodent, but also with the animal importation procedures, which contain no legislative requirement for considering the possible environmental impact of a new animal should it become feral.

The Society organised a very successful dialogue between Federated Farmers, the Agricultural Pests Destruction Council, the New Zealand Acclimatisation Societies and the Royal Forest and Bird Society. As a result of the pressure brought to bear by this group on MAF and the Caucus Committee on Primary Production and Marketing, the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Moyle, imposed a

moratorium on the further importation of chinchilla. He also called for an environmental impact assessment on chinchilla farming in New Zealand, and for a review of the legislative and administrative procedures associated with exotic animal importations.

With moves to diversify farming the pressure is going to continue to mount to introduce more potentially damaging exotic animals. Since August there have been enquiries about Asian water buffalo, musk deer and alpacas. Improved methods of vetting and approving these proposals can not come soon enough.

Probably the other most important issue of the year has been the proposal to establish a new Ministry of the Environment and a Nature Conservancy Department. The Society made a submission on the paper prepared for the Environmental Summit in which it argued for the separation of the development and conservation functions of departments such as the Forest Service and Lands and Survey. The Summit also supported this view and a post-summit working party was given the job of coming up with the basic outline for both a new Ministry for the Environment and a department which would conserve and manage the natural lands owned by the State.

Other issues covered by the Conservation Subcommittee have been strategies for the management of mangroves in New Zealand, the threat to Antarctic wildlife of the building of a French airstrip in Adelie Land, Antarctica, the purchase of the Plimmerton Swamp north of Wellington, and the future of Himalayan tahr in the southern alps.

Education Report (Pam Williams)

A total of eight ecological slide-tape packages for sixth and seventh form biology courses have now been completed. The latest contributions are Stoats and Offshore Islands (Rowley Taylor) and Rocky Shore Ecology (Margaret Leslie). Two further packages are in draft form but beyond that no new drafts or proposals have been received, despite many initial offers. A companion package may be produced to illustrate the Society's nuclear warfare statement.

Financial assistance for costs and an honorarium are available, so we hope Society members and readers of this Journal may make the effort to contribute to the important task of assisting with ecological education.

Consequences of Nuclear War Subcommittee Report (Wren Green)

This subcommittee was formed in June 1984 and its main activity has been to produce a statement for the Council entitled "The Environmental Consequences to New Zealand of Nuclear Warfare in the Northern Hemisphere". The 24-page document was endorsed by all Councillors and released as "A Statement of Concern by the Council of the New Zealand Ecological Society" on 5 December 1984 at a press conference in the Parliamentary Theatre. The Statement was accepted on behalf of the Government and all MPs by the Minister for the Environment, Hon. Russell Marshall. As the Statement was produced after the last AGM, the Society as a whole has not yet had the opportunity to pass formal comment on it.

Free copies of the Statement were sent to all members of the Ecological Society, all Members of Parliament, media outlets, and interested people in New Zealand and overseas. The initial print run was exhausted early in 1985 and Council approved a further print run of 5000. Copies will now be sold for \$1 each (schools 50c each). Council continues to receive favourable comment from within and outside the Society, and a continuing demand for copies.

This was the first substantive statement on the possible environmental consequences to New Zealand of a major nuclear war waged elsewhere and the major points in the document were given good press coverage. As many uncertainties exist about some of the projections, the Council felt it was appropriate to request Government to "support and finance the direct participation of New Zealand scientists in regional and global efforts to develop a better understanding of the environmental consequences of nuclear war".

The subcommittee will continue to monitor scientific developments on this subject and to liaise with other scientific societies. It may also develop an audiovisual package in conjunction with the Education Subcommittee.

Awards Report (Mick Clout)

At the 1984 AGM Dr K. A. Wodzicki was made an Honorary Life Member of this Society (see note at end of this report).

Alison Cree, Waikato University, became the first recipient of the Student Award for her paper given at the 1984 Conference in Nelson, "Habitat requirement of native frogs (*Leiopelma archeyi* and *L. hochstetteri*) in the Coromandel Peninsula". The

prize is awarded to the student whose Conference paper is judged to be the best in terms of both subject matter and presentation.

Criteria have been formalised by the Council governing nomination to honorary life membership:

(a) Service to the Society

- * generally: as a conference organiser, speaker, writer of comments/ reports/ submissions
- * council: terms of service, subcommittee, contributions
- * officer: editor, honorary secretary, treasurer, vice president

(b) Contribution to Ecology

Making a distinguished and significant contribution to the discipline (and its application) whether in research, teaching, or administration.

Nominations have to be made to the Council and be accompanied by a case for the candidate. The Council then takes the nomination to the AGM.

New Zealand Committee for Water Pollution Research (NZCWPRC) (Helen Hughes, Penelope Luckens)

The Committee comprises 22 member bodies and two government department observers. The Executive for the Committee is now based in Christchurch with Professor A. P. Mulcock, Chairman and Dr M. Noonan, Secretary.

A successful seminar on Ocean Outfalls in 1984 contributed to our growing list of sponsored conferences. Planning has begun for an fA WPRC Specialised Conference on Waste Stabilisation Ponds to be held in Auckland in 1987. As long as this steady effort continues the Committee will be achieving its main goal of encouraging information transfer in the field of water pollution.

The Committee gave its support to a number of findings and recommendations of the 1982 Water Conference and in particular has pursued the question of the need for a centralised water treatment research organisation. Following representation from member bodies and further discussion we agreed that such a research institution is not feasible at present. However a mechanism for coordinating this type of research is most necessary and we have stated this to the National Research Advisory Council. Until the Government recognises that need we believe this Committee should continue to promote liaison between waste treatment research, water quality research, engineers, scientists and water managers.

The Chairman attended the 12th International Biennial Conference held in Amsterdam (report in the 1984 NZCWPRC Newsletter). It was significant that 75% of the New Zealand delegation were consulting engineers.

Society Records (Margaret Leslie)

A start has been made putting all the relevant Society records onto a card index system. Information from Annual Reports has now been indexed and work is progressing on the AGM and Council Minutes. Other records will be filed in due course and as they come to hand. This system of indexing records will give easy access to past pronouncements, decisions, and submissions of the Society and will be especially valuable for conservation matters.

Manawatu Group Report (David Kelly)

The last annual report described the first six meetings held in 1984. The last two meetings, both in September, were:

- (1) Keith McNaughton "The effects of widescale deforestation on climate and hydrology"; and
- (2) Peter Newsome "The Vegetative Cover Map of New Zealand"

The latter meeting was also the AGM and the following committee was elected for 1985: David Kelly (Chairman), Kathryn Rankin (Treasurer), David Drummond, Michael Greenwood, Heather Outred and Ray Zander.

For 1985 a reduced programme is being arranged with a less technical emphasis to try and appeal to a wider range of members. Proposed activities include talks on African locust control and American birdlife, and a field trip to look at management of Keeble's Bush (a local forest remnant).

Honorary Life Member:

Dr K. A. Wodzicki

At the Annual General Meeting in 1984, Honorary Life Membership of the Society was conferred on Dr K. A. Wodzicki. This was to mark his many years of contribution to New Zealand ecology, to the nation's scientific life, and to the Ecological Society of which he was a founder member.

Kazimierz Wodzicki was born in Poland into a farming family, and his first degree was in agriculture. His early research was on anatomy and reproduction in domestic fowl and horses, but a strong interest in natural history began to prevail. This was the beginning of a lifelong interest in the ecology of mammals and birds.

After working in Britain with Sir John Hammond' from 1936, Kazimierz Wodzicki was appointed Consul-General of Poland in New Zealand in 1941. Despite a busy diplomatic life he continued his research on birds. This included the important survey of birds on the Waikanae estuary. In this period Dr Wodzicki was also responsible for settling many Polish refugees in New Zealand.

When the Consulate-General closed at the end of the war Dr Wodzicki was asked by the then head of the DSIR to prepare a report on the introduced mammals. This emerged in 1950 as "Introduced Mammals of New Zealand" and remains today as the definitive work.

This early work with DSIR led to the founding of the Animal Ecology Section, later to become the Ecology Division. Dr Wodzicki remained as Director until 1965. During that time he began the 35-year series of quantitative surveys of the gannets of Cape Kidnappers in which a whole generation of Ecology Division staff participated. While with the Ecology Division he wrote 26 research papers.

After "retirement" Dr Wodzicki worked at DSIR Applied Mathematics Division, the National Museum, and then for the past 12 years as an Honorary Lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington. Over that time he has produced a further 57 publications and reports, mostly on rodents, but also on birds and bats.

During his long and productive life Dr Wodzicki has been colleague and mentor to several generations of younger ecologists. It is very appropriate for this esteem to be marked by the collective wish of this Society to make him an Honorary Member.



Kazimierz Wodzicki

Appendix to Annual Report 1985

The following statement was first published by the 1983/84 Council of the Society, to bring to the attention of the New Zealand public an environmental issue about which it was concerned. It

is neither a scientific paper nor a complete review. However, to further increase awareness, and because it represents a major contribution of the Society to a particularly important debate, it is reproduced in the Journal as an Appendix to the year's Annual Report.