The New Zealand Ecological Society was formed in 1951 and promotes the study of all aspects of ecology. Membership is open to any person interested in ecology. There are four classes of members who pay:

1. $25 for ordinary members,
2. $15 for student members,
3. $5 for introductory members, and
4. $5 for retired members.

Ordinary and student members receive the N.Z. Journal of Ecology plus the quarterly newsletter. Introductory and retired members receive only the newsletter.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

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NEWSLETTER: The editors welcome correspondence, interim reports of current research, news items, and other articles. Unless specifically indicated otherwise, views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Ecological Society or its Council.

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(Items marked with * may require some action on your part)
EDITORIAL

THE SCIENTIFIC PUBLISHING CRISIS

There is much to be said to 'user-pays' policies, and the experience of government departments has not been all negative. But science publishing is one field where far-reaching and largely unpleasant consequences are likely to result.

The Scientific Information Publishing Centre (SIPC) of the DSIR is now expected not only to cover costs - which it has never even approached doing in the past - but also to make a profit. It is also under instructions to expand more vigorously into the publishing of profitable books. The aim of the journals at one time was to make easily and cheaply available the results of scientific research. They too now are to recover costs and also make profits. No extra staff have been allocated to help with this drive to profitability, and the already over-full range of activities is maintained.

One predictable result is that the SIPC journals, never models of punctuality, have been seriously delayed this year. At the time of writing none appear to have got past their second issue with over five-sixths of the year gone. And we can't blame the editors: some have been diverted to other work; others are doing work in their own time merely to keep the journals ticking over.

SIPC has some solutions to the problem. Cheaper, more efficient printing are being looked at. They have started a subscription drive aimed at overseas institutions and raised the prices of the journals sharply to help with profitability. Besides attempting to raise income they are exploring means of cutting costs. Options being considered are to cut the size of the journal by limiting article size, to increase the rejection rate, and to try and cut down the amount of editing by insuring that insufficiently prepared manuscripts are returned at once to the authors. Current thinking thus tends towards smaller, more selective and more expensive journals.

Is this what we want? The presumption is that material not suitable for the SIPC journals will be published elsewhere. But for many articles there simply is no other place; they are of such local interest, and include so much detail, they would not be acceptable to an international audience, and anyway would then be relatively inaccessible to many New Zealand-based researchers. Bulletins or books are an alternative for monographic studies, but once again profitability is to become a key factor with these publications as well.

It is difficult to predict the future impact of these new policies, but if they are adhered to we can expect a sharp rise in the number of unpublished reports of scientific work. The advent of 'desk-top' publishing could lead to a proliferation of in-house publications. What
ever its shortcomings may be, scientific research in New Zealand has benefited by having cheaply sold, freely available and well-edited accounts of its progress. The stack of unpublished, often poorly-edited material which has proliferated within some government departments has been both a scandal and waste of public funds.

The idea that scientific publishing in New Zealand should be a paying proposition, rather than a Government subsidized one, seems misplaced. A very small New Zealand scientific market makes the economics of any journal dubious. Should New Zealand journals have to rely on overseas subscribers when the primary audience is internal? Should a short payback period of a few years be demanded of technical books and journals whose value is often spread over decades?

At present the cost of the SIPC to the DSIR is close to 1% of its budget. What the DSIR is clearly telling the scientific community is that it is no longer prepared to carry these costs. If the users cannot pay, the result will be less scientific publishing within this country.

One of the benefits of many new government policies is that attention is directed at functions and institutions which had been taken for granted. It is so with scientific publishing.

Matt McGlone

SOCIETY NEWS

MARGARET LESLIE: AN APPRECIATION

Councillors come and go. To varying degrees and in various ways they contribute to the welfare and progress of the Society. Their satisfaction comes from doing their bit and receiving a vote of thanks from an AGM and incoming Council. Every so often a wee bit more is called for. So this is a special mention for Mrs Margaret Leslie who joined the Council in 1981 and has retired this year. Margaret is extremely rare amongst Councillors in being a private citizen, not supported by a Government Department or University. She has travelled from Patea, Taranaki, to about 30 Council meetings and missed very few. Two years ago I set her the job producing a book of practices and precedents of previous Councils; and an index of the Conservation issues which the Society has been involved in over the years. We now have an extensive card index referenced to the contents of the Society’s stored files. And in a month or so, the Council will have a handbook showing just how our rules have been interpreted over the years. Not only this Council but many in the future will appreciate Margaret Leslie’s efforts.

Mike Rudge
AGM PRESS RELEASE: SCIENTISTS SUPPORT NUCLEAR STUDY 5 SEPT. 1986

The New Zealand Ecological Society has come out in favour of the Government's decision to fund a study of the effects nuclear war could have on New Zealand.

"The AGM at our annual conference was very supportive", said the Society's President, Dr Ian Atkinson.

This is an important initiative, said Dr Atkinson, and the few critics have taken too narrow a view.

One critic suggested the Government should start making contingency plans right away, he said.

"That puts the cart before the horse."

"Until we have identified the major impacts across the whole economy and society, as well as possible climate changes, then contingency planning is likely to be piece-meal and ineffective."

The Ecological Society identified the need for a study of this kind back in 1984, said Dr Atkinson.

"We recommended to the Government that a task force be set up to investigate the broad impacts nuclear war might have on New Zealand. So this study is good news."

Dr Atkinson predicted it will have wide support from the scientific community in New Zealand. "There was a lot of support for our proposal in 1984 and I suspect there is more now."

"In fact, the impetus for this study has come from New Zealand's scientific community", said Dr Atkinson. The Royal Society, the Environmental Council, and other professionals such as veterinarians had requested funding for studies of this kind.

The Government has responded positively and responsibly to their requests, he said.

Results of the poll conducted for the recent Defence Review also suggest there is widespread public support for this study.

Eight-two percent of those polled felt that there should be some preparation or plans made for coping with the aftermath of a major nuclear war in the North Hemisphere. The Defence Review Committee supported the study that the Planning Council will be doing, he said.

However, Dr Atkinson did caution that six months was a very short time for such a complex task. "Just gathering the information could take months."
"I hope the politicians will be realistic enough to recognise that studies like this cannot be done well in a few months. The Government's decision to allow for further second-stage research is very sensible and the amount of money involved is modest."

ENVIRONMENT/CONSERVATION NEWS

THE NEW ZEALAND NUCLEAR IMPACTS STUDY

This six-month preliminary study will investigate the major consequences to New Zealand of a large-scale nuclear war in the Northern Hemisphere.

The study will be the first of its kind, since it will examine likely changes not only to the environment, but also to the economy and society of a country in the light of "nuclear winter" research. The results should be useful to other South Pacific countries. The study will assume that New Zealand will not be a nuclear target.

The purpose of this study is two-fold: to develop an overview of what nuclear war would mean for New Zealand and to identify and recommend additional research on important uncertainties that remain. When the major consequences have been described the merits of working to prevent nuclear war and of planning to reduce its impacts on New Zealand should be much clearer.

Rationale

Public perceptions of the impacts of nuclear war on New Zealand have been shaped, and distorted, by images of what would probably happen to Northern Hemisphere countries. Those images - of bomb blasts, massive deaths from radiation, of a freezing "nuclear winter" - are not realistic for New Zealand if the war is fought in the north. Scientists have shown that disruptions to climate and radiation levels would be less in the Southern Hemisphere. The disruptions to societies have yet to be studied in a rigorous, systematic manner by any nation.

In New Zealand it is social and economic disruptions that are likely to have the greatest impacts. What would happen to our trade if Northern Hemisphere markets were lost? What would happen to jobs, to industries cut off from normal supplies of raw materials? How would people respond? How many nuclear refugees might arrive? Would medical services be able to adapt to the loss of drugs?

These are issues that concern New Zealanders. The Defence Committee of Inquiry (1986) acknowledged the need for "a realistic assessment of the risks, consequences and measures required in the event of a nuclear conflict". It supported the nuclear impacts study in principle. The annex of the report found that 82% of New Zealanders were "strongly of the opinion that there should be some preparation or plans being made for coping with the aftermath of a nuclear war in the Northern Hemisphere".
A responsible Government should work to prevent nuclear war and recognise that it must know how to respond in the best interests of the country in the event that nuclear war occurs. At present, Government has little New Zealand-based research from which it could develop realistic policies.

Background to the study

The background work that shaped this independent study was done over several months in 1986. The study was developed by an informal grouping of people from scientific and planning groups: the Environmental Council, the Royal Society of NZ, the NZ Planning Council, the Commission for the Environment, the Health Department, the NZ Ecological Society, and the NZ Meteorological Service.

The study proposal was given Government funding on 28 August 1986. The Prime Minister announced that $125 000 from the Rainbow Warrior settlement would be used to fund the six-month preliminary study into the impacts of a major nuclear war in the Northern Hemisphere could have on the environment, economy and society of New Zealand. The Ministry for the Environment has contracted the NZ Planning Council to do the research.

Nature of the study

Given the broad terms of reference (see below) and a scant six months, the study team have the challenging task of gathering and evaluating information across many disciplines. The team will draw on existing information and expert opinions. New research may well be appropriate for subsequent studies. The study team will be asking for the co-operation of people in public and private sectors; their assistance will be essential if the study is to succeed.

The study team was chosen during October. A task for early November is project design and deciding on the methods which are most appropriate to such a complex multi-disciplinary study.

The study team

The study team consists of five full-time staff - three principal investigators and two research assistants.

**Project Leader:** Dr Wren Green, B.Sc(Hons) Ph.D.
(Environmental science), (Scientist, Forest Research Institute, Christchurch)

**Investigators:**
Dr John Mitchell, B.A. M.Sc.(Hons) Ph.D.
(Social sciences), (Consultant, Mitchell Associates, Nelson)

Mr Paul Tomkinson, B.A.(Hons) M.A. (Economics)
(Senior lecturer, Victoria University, Wellington)
Outcomes

1) Improved public understanding. The general report of the study will include and go well beyond "nuclear winter" effects. The public should have more realistic information about the major consequences to New Zealand of a northern nuclear war.

2) A basis for planning. The results should provide a sound basis for developing policies which would reduce the disruptions to New Zealand that would follow a northern nuclear war. They should also help identify strategic problems that could follow a major disruption to global trade or economic systems.

3) Identification of research priorities. All the important issues will not be fully answered in six months. However, they should be identified in the report so that important outstanding issues can be subsequently studied.

Terms of Reference

1) To identify the conditions likely to face New Zealand following large-scale nuclear war in the Northern Hemisphere and to investigate the impacts of those conditions on the environment, society and economy, giving special attention to the interactions likely to occur between different impacts.

2) To consider the regional implications of New Zealand's linkages with South Pacific countries.

3) To identify important issues of uncertainty and particular impacts which would merit further study.

4) To prepare a report after six months and to effectively convey the results to the public.

5) To report to the Government with proposals for more detailed second-phase studies to resolve important issues of uncertainty or lack of knowledge.

Compiled by: Nuclear Impacts Study Team
NZ Planning Council
PO Box 5066
Wellington
NEW ZEALAND

Telephone: (04) 724-250 Telegrams: Te Kaupapa
Dr Gerry McSweeney (Director of Conservation, R.F. & B.P.S.) has been invited to be a consultant to DoC on a part-time basis, to represent the interests of environmental/conservation groups in the Establishment Unit. He is thus representing E.C.O. and all groups allied to that, not just 'Forest & Bird'.

He will give advice on:

i) issues where the environmental movement has carried out detailed investigations in support of its campaigns;

ii) issues where it is important for us to prepare recommendations and policy guidelines which take into account the views of ECO and its membership;

iii) areas, such as tourism and recreation, where the environmental movement may be able to promote public discussion (before the Department's establishment on 1 April 1987).

His immediate priorities include:

* Crown land and native forest responsibilities and jurisdiction
* Coastal zone considerations
* Conservation Corps
* Conservation Bill
* Quangos

Now, the inevitable backlash, in which they postulate that our powers of logical thought and comprehensive awareness are quantitatively underestimated.
UPDATE ON GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION CHANGES
(from "New Directions" - State Services Commission, September 1986)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Set-up</th>
<th>Proposed Set-up</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dept. of Lands and Survey</td>
<td>Dept. of Conservation (DoC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ Forest Service</td>
<td>Ministry for the Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ Historic Places Trust &amp; Wildlife Division of</td>
<td>Crown Estates Commission (CEC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Affairs Dept.</td>
<td>Forestry Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission for the Environment</td>
<td>Land Development and Management Corporation (LDMC)</td>
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FUNCTIONS OF THE NEW AGENCIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forestry Corporation</td>
<td>Commercial forestry and wood processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Estates Commission</td>
<td>Allocation of Crown Land not allocated by 1.4.87. This body will be disbanded when its functions complete (about 5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept. of Conservation</td>
<td>To be constituted under Conservation Act and charged with promoting conservation values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDNC</td>
<td>Expected to protect, preserve and provide stewardship of the nation’s heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will operate the commercial functions of Crown-owned land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoSLI</td>
<td>Will provide a survey and land information service to Government and public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Forestry</td>
<td>Will perform residual functions of Forest Service, including forest research with emphasis on production forestry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FUNCTIONS OF THE NEW AGENCIES CONT'D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry for the Environment</td>
<td>Environmental concerns, including policy advice and ensuring a balance between conservation and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Commissioner</td>
<td>Independent assessor of environmental agencies who will have power to conduct investigations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STATE OWNED ENTERPRISES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Set-up</th>
<th>Proposed Set-up</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post Office - a State trading organisation</td>
<td>Three corporations - Banking, Postal, Telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Coal Mines - a division of Ministry of Energy</td>
<td>Coal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity Division - a division of Ministry of Energy</td>
<td>Electricity Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of Civil Aviation - a division of the Ministry of Transport</td>
<td>Airways Corporation</td>
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MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT ON WEST COAST FORESTS

The Government has decided to extend legal protection to large areas of lowland native forests on the West Coast.

The decisions culminate more than a decade of effort by dedicated scientists and conservationists, and the writing of thousands of supporting submissions by Forest and Bird members.
Key features of the decisions are:

* Creation of the Paparoa National Park, stretching from the snowy peaks of the Paparoa Range down to the spectacular seacoast at Punakaiki.

* Permanent legal protection for virtually the complete system of 59 ecological and scenic reserves throughout the West Coast forests that was requested by conservationists. Protection now embraces such vital areas as the Oparara, Marua and Tawha.</p>

* Reserve protection for the North Westland Wildlife Corridor. This is a huge belt of lowland forest 3 km wide and 50 km long which joins many of the key reserves one to another, and greatly increases the total area of protected wildlife habitat. Together with the other reserves and the national park, the total newly protected area is 140 000 ha.

* The total area of State forest zoned for production purposes to support the West Coast timber industry has been reduced from 292 000 ha to only 98 000 ha of native forest (plus 23 000 ha of exotic plantations).

* Some new reserve proposals from the Wildlife Service, which have not previously been made public, will be advertised for public comment shortly and their status will be decided by 31 March. There are 20 new proposed reserve areas of forests and wetland comprising 45 000 ha altogether.

The Government's decision arises from months of negotiations involving conservation interest, sawmillers, the Forestry Corporation and the West Coast United Council. The negotiations were chaired by Dr Roger Blakeley, Secretary for the Environment. The Forest and Bird Society was represented by Dr Gerry McSweeney and Mr Guy Salmon.

About 2 400 people are dependent on the West Coast timber industry. The Government's decision largely protects availability of timber for the industry, but aims to progressively re-orient sawmilling away from the increasingly rare podocarp forests toward exotic plantations where these are available. It also provides for investment in new areas such as tourism.

Beech production

The use of beech forests for production has been a controversial element in the decisions announced by the Government. Publicity about this issue has been rather confused, and not factual.

It is important to realize that beech forests are already being logged by a large number of sawmills which smash down the forests to extract the rimu trees which are scattered through them. As a result, about half of the beech forest area zoned for production is already in a heavily logged condition. This logged area will get steadily larger under existing
contracts. In addition, a woodchip mill has cutting rights in the beech forests. The latest government decision paves the way for a better situation in several ways:

* Tenders for beech will be re-opened and there will be no subsidies allowed. This will allow the existing tenders and contract for woodchipping the forests to be replaced by a smaller-scale project aimed at producing high quality furniture and wood panelling from the reduced area of production forest.

* All tenders must be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Report, and if any is successful it will have to prepare a full Environmental Impact Report which will be subject to public comment and audit.

* Use of a portion of the relatively plentiful beech forest will also take logging pressure off the last remnants of podocarp-rich forest in North Westland. As a result, most of these areas will gain legal protection.

* In the beech production forests, sustained yield practices will be introduced. Existing mills will be rationalised, the area of beech forest logged each year will be reduced from about 1,600 ha to about 1,200 ha, and replanting will commence.

* A small area comprising 4 percent of the South Island's lowland native forest will thus be managed in perpetuity, so that native woods can continue to be available to those New Zealanders who want them. This in itself is an important long term safeguard against pressures which might otherwise develop in future to log trees from reserve areas.

* Most importantly, large areas of beech forest, including all of the areas sought for reserve protection by the Forest and Bird Society will now be safe at least - after 15 years of effort.

* Unresolved as yet is the future of the South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area, which includes the southern part of South Westland under moratorium (see map). Public comment is to be invited on the moratorium area and a decision is to be made by 30 June next year. Your help and support will be needed on the future of these magnificent lowland kahikatea, beech and rimu forests.

A.F. Mark
President
Royal Forest &
Bird Protection Society
WEST COAST STATE FORESTS
Lands for conservation and production with the North Island to show scale

- Department of Conservation lands (national parks, reserves, wildlife corridors and protection forest).
- Forestry Corporation lands (for production, including exotic plantations and the beech scheme).

Area south of the Cook River - for decisions by June 1987

- New Plymouth
- Auckland
- Buller
- North Westland
- South Westland
- Wellington
- Napier
- Haast
ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE 1986 REPORT

LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE REPORT

Formal Proceedings

The symposium attracted the most interest with 210+ registrations for this programme. The number of conference participants reduced to about 140 for the final two days, which covered the contributed paper programme.

The high level of interest in the symposium was, in my opinion, due to the integration of diverse scientific fields. This meant that contemporary thinking on the subject of the symposium was summarised in a thought-provoking two day programme.

The large numbers attending did, however, create problems. Government department administration staff were the main 'headache' (hardly an earth-shattering revelation!). Four days prior to the Conference starting, one administration officer rang through a list of 55 names of departmental staff approved to attend. Fortunately 20 of them had already registered. The large contingent of 'locals' that just 'turned up on the day' also created a few problems - we ran out of folders and programme booklets (210 printed).

There was a good response to all workshops but the nature of participant's work resulted in the Logan and Leathwick workshops receiving greatest support. We could probably have spent a day on each of these alone! The posters were of high quality and well presented. We had a record offer I think, about 15 posters. Two people did not supply posters in the end but the gap was not noticeable.

The trip to Canterbury Museum did suffer from a large influx of people who had not indicated an intent to attend that function. Consequently, the museum staff were 'swamped' and facilities could not cope. However, restructuring the programme with zero notice was impracticable and informal discussion with Michael Trotter and Beverly McCulloch meant those interested received personal attention. I am pleased to note that Council have approved $150 of conference 'excess' to be donated to the Museum.

This type of 'field trip' was received as a relaxing change to a race-around bus tour.

We were fortunate in that the number of offers of contributed papers equalled the number of 'alota' available. Some others were received but well after the programme was finalised so they were declined. In all, a good balance of subjects was covered in the contributed papers and interest maintained to the last.
Social Proceedings

The wine and cheese evening which encompassed an Oxford Union Style debate was a success. Again the late or on-the-day registrations caused problems, 120 turned up - we almost ran out of wine and punch. The debate saved us. After the thrust and parry of verbal battle most wanted a cup of tea or coffee!

The debate itself should have been televised instead of the NZ debate. It was far more witty and less grossly abusive than the 'real? surreal?' thing. Definitely, something to be retained in future years. The annual dinner and social time went well. We did have several 'special' meals left over that people had indicated they needed, maybe they indulged themselves that meal. Again about 127 people came. Although the bar closed at midnight, I understand some people were still there past 2 am. - an enjoyable evening.

The social time after the AGM was somewhat more subdued than the previous night - maybe too much of a good thing?

Reflections

Looking back I feel Conference '86 was successful. It was successful because there was 'sufficient meat' on the 'programme bones'; to generate and maintain interest. Had the symposium been 'weaker' then numbers would have been fewer; for this success we have Mike Rudge to thank.

Organisationally, the local group did well, even if I do say so myself, and assistance of Lincoln College's RDEC office was instrumental in that organisation. The personalised registration acknowledgements was well received with many favourable comments, as were the tickets and name tags. I will forward the logo and ticket masters to Council along with comments on the 'How to run a Conference' booklet later. To produce blank name tags and the social/field trip tickets all that will be required is a photocopier capable of accepting thin coloured card.

My thanks to Council for the opportunity to organise the Conference - but I'm glad it's over!

M.R. Butcher
for Local Organizing Committee

CONTRIBUTED PAPERS

As is usual, contributed papers varied widely in their subjects. Their presenters included a pleasing number of current or recent student researchers who, as a group, were not over-shadowed by their more mature (and sometimes eminent) colleagues, in the materials presented nor the presentations themselves. Wayne Fraser's paper on rabbits in Central Otago was awarded the students' prize.
This was our first conference since the implications of "user-pays"
research had begun to bite. Since the entire week was permeated by rumour,
speculation, and hard-luck stories, it was appropriate that two contributed
papers gave overseas' perspectives on research funding: one example was of
state-funding aided by hunters' contributions in Poland, and the other
totally privately-funded studies of black swan ecology in sewage farms near
Melbourne (Intermittent funding certainly didn't stifle Tom Montague's
pennant for practical experimentation, nor his sense of humour).

Sometimes it was possible to tell one was attending a contributed
paper, and not part of the symposium, only by the calendar, so similar were
the contents of certain papers. How much more appropriate would Jim
Mills's paper on takahe/deer competition for tussocks have been if
timetabled against Rose et al.'s symposium paper on degradation of alpine
vegetation by deer and its recent recovery? Surely, too, the first three
papers on Thursday, which made so many references to possible impacts of the
moa on our vegetation or land surface, could have replaced some of the
symposium papers? Although the large number of papers submitted and the
Symposium's broad scope probably made ideal timetabling impossible, authors
are also responsible for ensuring that their submitted abstracts clearly
identify the nature and range of the paper, perhaps even with extra notes,
in order to allow the conference organisers to create the best possible
sequence of papers.

Nearly all contributed papers provoked discussion, probably none more
than Peter Horm's proposals that tracks worn by moas can still be seen
across our landscape - who among his audience will view pastoral hill
country in quite the same way again?

Colin Ogle

MOAS, MAMMALS OR CLIMATE - AN AFTERTHOUGHT FROM THIS YEAR'S
ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY SYMPOSIUM

What do you write about a symposium in which you were one of the
participants? An attempt at a serious analysis with all the attendant
problems of bias? Or a light-hearted commentary on the event, with the
distinct possibility that you will end up denigrating yourself as well as
others? Perhaps one should try and steer a middle course.

Prehistory has always been a curious mixture of fact and supposition in
which the conclusions arrived at are often determined by the relative
proportions of the two ingredients. So it was with those beautiful
reconstructions of predatory eagles and the seemingly vast array of species
they had to prey upon. If, with a few exceptions, the NZ flora isn't very
showy, the same couldn't be said for much of our now extinct avian fauna.

And then came the time-honoured arguments, or should I call them
debates? Climate, animals or natural processes - to what do we attribute
the 'nasty' things happening to our 'beautiful' mountains and forests.
Some day Mike Rudge, the instigator of this debate, may tell me whether he
thinks there was a meeting and a melding of the various divergent stands.
Certainly no-one convinced me of the need to invoke climate change to
explain what is currently happening in the N.Z. vegetation. Perhaps, however, I didn't persuade too many to my views concerning rata-kamahi dieback.

Having begun with one of the expatriate heavyweights of the ecological world, the symposium organisers thought we should conclude in somewhat more philosophical vein. Kevin, it was late in the afternoon: I had been sitting in that lecture theatre for most of the previous two days, so much of what you probably said was lost on me. Two salient points remain however. You reduced us all (and quite rightly so) to the level of story tellers, and then went on to insist that we would all, in time, be proved wrong. Has my whole working life been relegated to the realms of myths and fairy tales?

And talking of stories, perhaps I should end with what for me was the story of the symposium. As one of Alan Mark's students of yesteryear, I well remember a field trip to the Maungatua, just west of the Taieri plain in Otago. Here among the peat we were told, and accepted as gospel, that the little rounded pebbles (quartz I think) were moa gizzard stones. Who knows, I may even have regurgitated the fact in some long-lost exam script. Some years later in Camp Creek in Westland, finding the same type of worn quartz pebbles up in the subalpine scrub, I commented to a soil scientist with me than ungulates weren't the only browsers these scrub communities had had to contend with. He promptly dissolved into fits of laughter and gave me the real story. I was standing on an old marine terrace. The idea of invoking moas for those water-worn pebbles was the stuff myths and legends are made of. Given that the vegetation suggested this was an old surface, and that geologists tell us there is a lot of uplift going on in Westland that didn't seem unreasonable, and I resolved to have Alan Mark on about his gizzard stones, next time we met. Now we come to the symposium and what appeared to me to be a general acceptance that these gastroliths really were the gizzard stones of moas. Now I really was confused. Fortunately I have since been given a 'definitive' answer on the origin of these little rounded pebbles. They may have had their edges knocked off by salt water (i.e., old marine terraces), fresh water (perhaps in the Cropp) or a combination of friction and perhaps gastric juices (in a crop). You take your pick, I'll take mine.

Ian Payton

THE ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY FIELD TRIP THAT REPLACED THE GREEN BLUR

It was like a roll-call of who's who in ecology as we gathered around Colin Meurk at the beginning of the day as he read out the names of the field trip participants and to which field team they were assigned. There had been an overwhelming response (40+) to Colin's invitation to attend an "ecological society field trip you've always wanted, but were too shy to ask for".
You may recall that Colin had long argued that we try something different and that a day's bus trip was conducive to somnolence and even boredom with one's seating partner rather that a good mix around with friends and an overview of the district. He suggested that a project-oriented field trip could allow for a more satisfying, multi-disciplinary and leisurely look at one particular area in the district. The ecologists involved could have a "real ecological experience" and some useful data could result form the day's endeavours.

Well, there's the criteria, from Colin's own pen. How did he fare?

But first, thank you very much Colin for all the hours of hard work that went into organising the event (and weren't those stop-you-in-your-tracks biscuits nice?!). Congratulations for breaking from tradition, daring to be different and offering us an alternative.

Irrespective of what different people thought of the field trip, all would have to agree that it was a worthwhile experiment. But I thought it was more than that. I enjoyed trying out 3 different methods of vegetation assessment (and learn't why I have always favoured the descriptive, subjective approach!). Our group was able to lunch with an adjacent team and argue the toss over the methods we were using between bits of our sambobs.

Despite last minute cancellations and additions I think most groups comprised a range of disciplines. It was very interesting to work alongside people from different backgrounds or at the very least different institutions.

Yes, there was too much to do in the time allowed. So, if you were in a team that went all out to achieve your quota of plots then it could hardly be described as a "leisurely look". I was lucky to be in a group who decided from the beginning that we couldn't do all that the master had given us. We discussed our plan of attack which included that we wanted to get out of the day. Making this balance between completing the set task and achieving personally set goals worked well for us.

Even though we didn't do all the plots that Colin had planned for the day we still produced a mountain of useful data which can be worked up to provide a detailed description of Kowai Bush. And hopefully a few keen types were able to quickly knock off the last remaining plots and complete the job.

For future occasions I would suggest a less ambitious project with consequent more relaxed approach to the work and more time for talking, both about the task in hand and socialising. I would have like more opportunity to discuss with others the various merits/disadvantages of the methods we were using, when they are useful and when not so applicable.

All in all a successful field trip with some lessons learnt for next time. I look forward to next years project-oriented field trip on rat-trapping/bird counts/snail hunting with baited (sic) breath.

Susan Timmins
THE SOCIALIZING

Put a conference of ecologists together socially and you're sure of success. The usual wine and cheese evening, the first of the organized social events, ensured we were all sufficiently relaxed and lubricated to appreciate the inaugural Annual (?) Great Debate. Two apparently evenly-matched teams contested "That the study of ecology is a state-funded trivial pursuit". The affirmative was taken by the 3Ms (who actually bore little resemblance to a lettering machine of the same name) and the negative by three whose initials fortuitously happened to spell WIT. Oxford Union rules were applied by chairman Rod Hay, acting with his usual aplomb and decorum. Those who performed so actively and ably from the floor of the debating chamber did not go unnoticed, and will no doubt be "up front" next year. Adjudicator Judith Roper-Lindsay declared the affirmative the winners by a large bow-tie.

The annual dinner was appreciated by all, and while not perhaps as "lively" as some remembered from the past, the same could not be said for the rest of that evening. With music supplied by 3 or 4 penny whistles, and with much cajoling, instructing and finally shouting from Jake, we whirled, twirled, skipped and frolicked our way through Scottish country dances. By the time the willow was declared well and truly stripped, both dancers and whistlers were right out of puff. To John, Rod, Ian and Colin, who kept up with us so well - thanks for a great evening.

Jocelyn Tilling

PROCEEDINGS OF CONFERENCE SYMPOSIUM

The Council has reaffirmed the intention to publish a special proceedings volume based on contributions to the Conference Symposium "Moa, mammals and climate in the ecological history of New Zealand". The topic generated a lot of interest, and the proceedings may well include relevant papers which were not given at the Conference.

Our intention is to publish by the middle of 1987. This will require a lot of cooperation from all contributors and referees.

The Society has been granted $5 000 by the Kiwi Lottery Board for this project, so we should be able to produce a worthwhile volume.

Thanks to the contributors to this Conference report, who responded quickly to the editorial request to write something.
NOTICES

GORDON WILLIAMS POST GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP IN BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Applications are invited from suitably qualified people for an award of the Gordon Williams Postgraduate Fellowship in Biological Sciences.

The Fellowship is available to a student engaged in or planning to be engaged in a Masters or PhD programme at Lincoln College, Canterbury, in the biological sciences with preference to those studying Wildlife Management. It is awarded on an annual basis and is estimated to be $4 000 per annum in the first year. An extension of a second year is a possibility.

The College Council recently awarded the first Fellowship to James David Holloway who is currently completing a M Agr Sc degree in Agronomy at Lincoln. His study will be on the integration of wildlife and agriculture. The grant is $3 600.

Application forms are available from the Registrar, Lincoln College, Canterbury, with whom applications close in 1 October for the following year.

The Registrar
Lincoln College
CANTERBURY
WELLINGTON BOTANICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

Copies of the September 1985 (issue no. 42) bulletin are still available for $7.00 (+ $1 p & p) from: Susan Timmins
152 Barnard St
Wadestown
WELLINGTON 6001

There are both articles of regional and national interest.

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NUCLEAR ISSUES PROGRAMME FOR 56TH ANZAAS CONGRESS 26-30 JAN 1987,
PALMERSTON NORTH

The Nuclear Issues programme (see below) for ANZAAS addresses, on two successive days, two broad themes - "Arms Control and Security", and "Nuclear Winter". Contributions come from people well placed to comment on
their subjects. Ecologists who would like to attend should contact promptly:

Administrative Secretary
56th ANZAAS Congress
PO Box 5158
PALMERSTON NORTH

Reduced rates of registration apply until December 15.

The "nuclear issues" programme comprises three sessions: two morning sessions for Congress registrants, and an evening session which will take the form of a public lecture.

SESSION 1 Wednesday morning 28 January

Leading issues in arms control agreements and perception of security.

Participants

1) Dr Richard A. Scribner, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)
   "Technology and politics of strategic arms control, verification and compliance".

2) Professor Tony Taylor, Victoria University of Wellington, N.Z.
   "Psychological aspects of potential nuclear disasters".

3) Dr Rod Alley, Victoria University of Wellington, N.Z.
   "Unilateral Disarmament: A Severe Case of Semantic Apartheid".

This session is being promoted as a joint ANZAAS-AAAS venture.

SESSION 2 Thursday morning 29 January

Nuclear winter session to be chaired by Dr Ian Prior, N.Z.
Secretary for IPPNW.

Participants

1) Dr Barrie Pittock, CSIRO, Australia
   "Atmospheric and climatic consequences of nuclear war".

2) Prof. Mark Harwell, Cornell University, U.S.A.
   "Ecological, agricultural, and human consequences of nuclear war:.

3) Dr Jim Falk, University of Wollongong, Australia
   "Nuclear winter: implication for strategies for war and peace.

Both Pittock and Harwell are lead authors of the recent SCOPE report "Environmental Consequences of Nuclear War".
SESSION 3 Thursday evening 8.00 p.m. Opera House

- a public lecture Prof. Mark Harwell, Cornell University, U.S.A.

"Scientific Inputs to Nuclear Policy: A History of Asynchrony".
Neil MacGregor and Robin Fordham

AUCKLAND HERITAGE TRUST

The Auckland Heritage Trust was founded in 1984. It is a federation of organisations concerned with heritage in the Auckland Region. This encompasses the full range of environmental and historical features including buildings, works, relics or places of historic, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic significance; and features distinguishing a culture. The Ecological Society recently decided not to become an Associate member of the Trust. Individuals however may wish to contact the Trust for information about becoming a supporter. The address is:

Auckland Heritage Trust
PO Box 5930
(Wellesley St)
AUCKLAND 1

The World Congress of Herpetology announces the

FIRST WORLD CONGRESS OF HERPETOLOGY

11-19 September 1989
at the University of Kent, Canterbury (U.K.)

This international congress will be the first of a series occurring at regular intervals at venues around the world. Such a meeting will enable all persons interested in herpetology to meet and exchange information to promote the advance of knowledge and the conservation of the world's amphibians and reptiles. The congress will consist of topical symposia, poster sessions, plenary speakers, workshops, displays, excursions, and meetings of ancillary groups. Subjects and moderators of symposia will be announced well in advance so that potential participants can volunteer. The meeting will be open to all persons. Registration will begin 1 January 1988.

For further details and mail listing, write: Dr. Ian R. Swingland, World Congress of Herpetology, Rutherford College, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NX, United Kingdom.

Sponsoring organizations and individuals are welcome. For further details write: Dr. Marinus S. Hoogmoed, Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Postbus 9517, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands.
NEWS FROM ALL OVER

AN APOLOGY

A news item in Newsletter No. 45 implied that a newly established position of Director of Natural Science in the Department of Lands and Survey was connected to staff restructuring associated with the Department of Conservation. There is in fact no connection whatsoever. Council has written to Mr P.R. Dingwall apologizing for this error and any embarrassment it caused.

OUR PROUD INTERNATIONAL IMAGE

While flipping idly through an international abstracting journal I ran my beady eye, as is my wont, over the Conservation and Management Regimes section. Among potential gems such as "Land restoration: Now and in the future", "Ancient woodland conservation policies in the East Midlands" and "Conservation priorities in Burma", nestled a New Zealand contribution. Its title piqued my interest, "Indigenous scrubweed conversion methods for Westland plantation establishment: Past, present, and future". What could a "Scrubweed" be? Reference to the paper in N.Z. J. For. 38: 194-202 provided a partial list of scrubweeds: Kamahi, Quintinia, wineberry, Fuchsia excorticata, mahoe, five-finger, tree fern, hutu and pigeonwood.

If any of you are troubled by these peaky scrubweeds, the authors recommend:

1) Hand-fell or crush if possible
2) Desiccate spray (2,4,5-T/2,4-D in water with 10% diesel)
3) Burn.

THOSE ELUSIVE FOREST GIANTS

A Forestry School lecturer was heard to remark at the beginning of the pre-conference field trip: "I can see all the rimu trees in my forest, but none of my samples include any. I'm hoping that some of the techniques demonstrated today will help me find them". We suggest he clears the scrubweed.

JUMPING THE GUN AWARD

This prestigious award for premature back-slapping goes to the Conservation New Zealand Subcommittee of the Nature Conservation Council. A conservation citation for almost exterminating possums on Kapiti Island??
THE ROYAL SOCIETY TELLS IT LIKE IT IS

Extracts from a submission by The Royal Society of New Zealand to the Ministerial Working Party on Science and Technology:

a) The Role of Government

"Man seeketh in society, comfort, ease and protection", wrote Francis Bacon in *Advancement of Learning*. Two centuries later Edmund Burke, after reflecting on the revolution in France defined government as "a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants". In our lifetime Lord Beveridge in his treatise on Social Insurance stated simply that "the object of government is ... the happiness of the common man".

Silly old me! I thought the role of Government was to be re-elected every three years. But let the revolution in France be an awful warning to Treasury!

CLOSE-TO-HOME FOR USER PAYS

Unsubstantiated rumour has it that fresh depths of "user-pays" policy are being plumbed. It seems that FRU administration was asked if one of the IFM group could be given permission to be local conference organizer for the next Ecological Society Meeting. "Fine", came the reply, "but it'll cost you". Price tag estimated: $10 000. That's close to $100 per participant before anything else is added in. Just as well they haven't been corporatized - probably be closer to $100 000 if that was the case.

THE SALMON-UPTON BLUEPRINT

In the Nov. 14 1986 issue of the *National Business Review*, Simon Upton (opposition spokesman on conservation and environment) discusses Guy Salmon's case for privatising the management of environmental assets. Key principle: place the control and management of the conservation department in the hands of a duly constituted conservation society (guess which) and let it get on with the business of trade-offs between, for instance, ecology and tourism.

Simon likes the idea a lot. It would depoliticise environmental matters; allow a whole lot of wheeling-dealing trade-offs (such as the recent West Coast trade-off); allow local environment management without countrywide uniformity of approach; instil realism into rampant greenies
who would now "own" it all; give lots of jobs to keen young environmentalists; be more efficient/lean/hungry (choose own epithet here) than a fat, swollen, tired, unimaginative conservation department bureaucracy.

   Well, that's the blueprint. Don't laugh. Who would have put their money on the conservationists when they took on the Forest Service a decade or so ago?

   But what is most charming about the scheme is the fresh, bold, implications built into it. Bureaucracies are seen as peculiarly governmental institutions of which private concerns are free. And the assumption is that young, keen, environmentalists won't become old, very attached to their jobs, and defensive about rank and privileges. Could the heady taste of wheeler-dealerism have led to a craving for more?

   And a final thought from Simon Upton for those of you transferring to DoC:

   "Reduce the conservation department to a small research and advisory unit, and give New Zealand's thousands of conservationists a go. They would do the job effectively, imaginatively and with real elan".

A SONG FOR OUR TIMES

During the Annual Ecological Society Dinner, Paul Blaschke and friends composed a topical version of "The twelve days of Christmas". Entitled the "Twelve days of Doccing", it goes on and on, and during its first performance was greeted with a hail of sodden table napkins from fed-up music lovers. Highlights include:

   "On the first day of Doccing my Cabinet gave to me:
      A puddington in a puriri tree"

   "2 ministers marshalling"

   "12 directors infighting"

   The full version can be obtained from Paul at a merely nominal cost.

WE ARE PLAGIARIZED

The BNZ Festival Debate series this year is entitled "That Politics is a Trivial Pursuit". Originality is beyond some people.
"SIX MONTHS AGO I COULDN'T EVEN SPELL ECOLOGIST AND NOW I AM ONE":
A FEW DELIGHTS FORM A PLANT ECOLOGY FINAL EXAM

"Consider a barren rock surface. The only things growing there tend to
be lichens. They absorb nutrients from the rock. Try and get a beech
tree to do that."

"Plants evolve secondary compounds with a fowl smell to avoid being
eaten." (Is that where chicken-flavoured potato ships come from?)

"The N.Z. pepper tree has a hot bitter taste to detour grazing."

"With increasing altitude, the temperature decreases 6° for every
10 m above sea level."

RESTRUCTURING BLUES

Worried about your job? Write to Aunty "New Directions" of the State
Options clearly set out. We give an example. The letter asked

"Spouses Career

Sir, -- What consideration, if any, has been given to people like
myself whose wife will be forced to give up her career if the department
decides that I need to be redeployed.

One company I worked for offered to pay a spouse's salary for three
months to give them time in which to look for alternative employment".

And the reply stated:

"This question was considered by the Staff Deployment Unit set up by
the SSC. The conclusion reached was that the employment prospects of an
employee's spouse would be one factor to be taken into account by the
employee in considering whether to seek redeployment of another location
rather than other options available."

Fantastic options available include early retirement and unemployment.

A TRUE STORY

It's getting near the end of the year, and a tough year it's been for a
lot of people, no thanks to the financial wizards of Treasury. So, may we
be permitted the luxury of an anti-economist story.

A colleague was being shown over a large physiological institute. He
was intrigued to see cage after cage of business-suited humans. Upon
inquiring who and what they were for, he was told that they were for
studies of extremely stereotypic behaviour patterns and that they were
economists. Somewhat shocked, he asked why they used economists.
"Ah well" came the answer "there are so many of them around these days, and
you don't get as attached to them as you do with rats".

Viridis MacUla