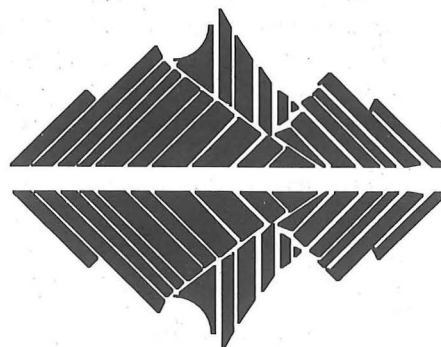


Ecological Society Newsletter

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REMINDER – 50th JUBILEE CONFERENCE

Don't forget the 50th Jubilee Conference of NZES is coming up on 27-30 August at the University of Canterbury. Full information about this was included in the last newsletter (issue 98), or can be accessed on the Society's web site (www.nzes.org.nz), or you can enquire to the conference email account (ecol_conference@botn.canterbury.ac.nz). If you haven't already registered, it's not too late!

Please note that there another extremely large conference in Christchurch at the same time (some physiology thing) so accommodation is expected to be tight. We recommend that you make arrangements soon for somewhere to stay if you haven't already!

NOTICE OF AGM

The AGM of the NZ Ecological Society will be held at 6pm on Monday 27 August 2001, in room C3, Central Lecture Block, University of Canterbury, Christchurch. All members and observers are welcome to attend. The annual reports to be presented at the AGM are also included in this newsletter.

Agenda items for the AGM: notices of motion

1. NZJ Ecology reference format

"That NZES review the reference list formatting for NZJ Ecol to make it consistent with another widely used format, aligning with a standard format available in bibliographic software." Moved Sandra Anderson. Explanation: there seems no particular reason why NZES should use an idiosyncratic format for the reference list, when standard formats come supplied in programs like Endnote.

2. Minor changes to the rules

2.1 Membership categories

Change rule 3(a) to read "there shall be five classes of members: (i) ordinary members, (ii) *joint members*, (iii) unwaged members, (iv) *overseas members*, (v) and honorary life members". Moved Dave Kelly. Explanation: This adds two new membership categories to the existing three (ordinary, unwaged, honorary) listed in the rules; both effectively already exist. Joint members are already defined further down in the rules in Rule 4(a) which says "... Partners may apply for joint membership whereby they pay one subscription and only one copy of each publication shall be supplied." This rule change would formalise that by nominating Joint as a class of members. Secondly, Council has been charging an extra amount for overseas members to cover the extra cost of air postage; this change would formalise such an arrangement in the Rules.

2.2 Payment of arrears

Change rule 3(f) to read "Any member whose annual subscription is more than two years in arrears shall

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be removed from membership of the Society and may be re-admitted by resolution of the Council.", deleting the words "*on payment of all arrears*". Moved Dave Kelly. Explanation: at present the rules require those who fell into arrears to pay all those arrears before being readmitted. In practice this is impossible to enforce, and is seen by some members as unfair. This change would bring the rules into line with reasonable current practice. A member who rejoined without paying arrears would not receive the intervening issues of the Journal.

2.3 Term of Councillors

Change rule 6(h) to read: "The President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer (or Secretary-Treasurer) and Councillors shall take office two *weeks* after the close of the Annual General Meeting at which they are elected." Moved Dave Kelly. Explanation: at present the Rules stipulate these people take office two MONTHS after the AGM, but in practice the new Council meets immediately to plan dates for meetings, and any urgent actions would be logically the responsibility of the incoming Council. A two-week delay should ensure that this can happen.

Please note that any alteration to the rules requires a two-thirds majority in favour at the AGM. The quorum for the AGM is 30 members.

Dave Kelly
Secretary

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT

Hello everybody, I have been editing the newsletter for the past couple of years and this is my seventh issue now. As mentioned in previous newsletters, I have found the role very rewarding and hope that everybody has enjoyed the articles that I have included. Of particular interest to me has been the recent debate on the future of the NZES journal and I welcome any more comments on this issue.

This issue is mainly concerned with the upcoming 50th Jubilee Conference and also contains the annual reports from Council members. Of particular interest, are the motions that will be brought up at the AGM, which will be conducted during the conference (see details above). Remember that all members are invited to the AGM and it is your chance to express your opinion and to nominate new people for positions on the NZES Council.

The article deadline for the next issue is 30 August 2001 and I invite all members (or non-members) to forward any interesting articles, graphics, book reviews, and upcoming conference details. I also would love to hear from any post-

graduate students who are interested in commenting on their research projects. I have previously published short project abstracts and would like to continue doing this.

James Ross
Newsletter Editor

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Council decided to celebrate 50 years of NZ Ecological Society this year (2001) because the inaugural meeting was held, in association with another conference, at Canterbury University on 24 May 1951. The first annual meeting was held in Wellington on 20 May 1952. Using this formula, the Society should be holding its 50th AGM this year, but this is officially the 49th AGM (some readers may have noticed that I got numbers of the AGMs completely wrong in last year's President's report). I don't know why the numbers are out of kilter—maybe there was one year in which a conference and AGM weren't held or maybe the numbers were duplicated at some point. A bit of historical research should sort that out. Regardless of this complication, we have a keen team organising this conference at Canterbury University and look forward to an excellent celebration.

At last year's AGM (the 48th) we farewelled Craig Miller as immediate past President and welcomed Susan Wiser onto Council. We were very fortunate to retain the services of Dave Kelly as Secretary and Ben Reddiex as Treasurer. Janet Wilmshurst remained as Vice-President. Bruce Burns was elected for another term whereas Jacqueline Beggs and Mark Sanders were rolled over to their second year. Thus, we've had a high degree of continuity, which makes my job so much easier.

The major items of business are reported on briefly below and in separate reports in this newsletter.

Council was delighted with the success of last year's conference in Hamilton and the substantial profit that will contribute to the financial goals discussed at recent AGMs. Grateful thanks were extended to the organising committee including Councillor Bruce Burns.

Conference 2001

As mentioned above this is the 50th Jubilee of the Society. Hazel Chapman and her team are developing a conference, which we hope will be long remembered. Naturally, there will be a focus on the past but there will also be a conscious effort to reduce the environmental footprint of the gathering. We're expecting a big attendance and lots of good science.

Conference 2002

Start planning now to attend the next conference to be held jointly with the Ecological Society of Australia. The venue in Cairns has been booked for the week beginning 2 December 2002. Council is investigating options to subsidise student travel so watch forthcoming issues of the newsletter for details.

Journal

David Wardle continues as Journal editor despite his recent shift to Sheffield, England. However, with his relocation imminent David requested the assistance of a technical editor to handle the copy editing and publication of the journals. We have been very fortunate in securing the services of Jenny Steven for this demanding role. Council has devoted a bit of time this year to discussion on the provision of PDF files of Journal articles on our website. The matter has not yet been resolved but could be within the year.

Newsletter

James Ross has ably edited the newsletter over the past year, and I offer thanks to him on behalf of all members. One of the unsung heroes of the newsletter production team is Jeremy Rolfe who has been doing the layout for longer than I can remember. We are very grateful to Jeremy for providing continuity in the fraught business of regular publication of the newsletter and for his services to the Society. The newsletter is printed by Madison Print in Wellington and is folded, addressed and posted by the IHC in Wellington.

Education subcommittee

Work has continued on the production of Tui Time, the interactive learning medium to demonstrate the principles of ecology to primary school children. This project has been made possible via \$30,000 from the Science and Technology Promotion Fund administered by the Royal Society of New Zealand. We are planning to launch Tui Time at the Jubilee Conference.

Code of ethics

Members voted to accept the Code of Ethics at last year's AGM. The final version of the Code was printed in Newsletter 98 (see p. 10). Members should read and abide by the principles in the Code.

Sustainability statement

As a consequence of the motion discussed at the 48th AGM, last year, it was agreed that Council would oversee a revision of the Society's Sustainability Statement of c. 1991. A number of members have volunteered to help with this project and, at this stage, Council is intending to hold a workshop in the first quarter of 2002 to discuss the issues. If you can contribute to this statement please contact Bruce Burns and/or attend the workshop. Notice will be given in the newsletter and on the website.

Society representation

During the course of the year Council was asked to nominate a member as a representative of the environmental sector for the NZ Biosecurity Council. Our nominees were accepted so we are now represented by Wren Green with Mick Clout as the alternate representative. Council was also invited to attend a meeting of member bodies of the Royal Society of New Zealand in mid July and Fran Kell agreed to represent the Society's views. We thank all of these members for taking on these key roles on our behalf.

Submissions

There have been no submissions made over the last year. That is not because of a lack of opportunity to submit on issues (although it has been a short year) but more because of an acute shortage of members willing to contribute to this time-consuming process.

Council

My term as President finishes this year and I'd like to thank all of the Councillors and other members who have supported the work and aims of the Society. It has been a busy but very satisfying two years as we have made substantial progress on many issues and I hope members are heartened by what they see and experience in our journal, newsletters and at conferences. The membership and conference attendance figures indicate that the Society is in a growth phase and Council is endeavouring to capitalise on that. You, as members, are well served by extremely capable and hard working Councillors, functional experts, representatives and secretariat staff. Long may it continue.

Kia kaha. Mā tini, mā mano, ka rapa te whai.

Be strong. By many, by thousands, the object will be attained.

JOURNAL EDITOR'S REPORT

The journal continues to serve as a popular outlet for work published by New Zealand ecologists. In 2000 we received 33 manuscripts, one down on the record set in 1999. We continue to be well supplied by manuscripts on most branches of New Zealand ecology, with the exception of aquatic ecology. Most of the manuscripts that we continue to attract are standard research reports, though there has been an encouraging increase in the numbers of ideas-rich Forum articles received over the past year. This is a trend that I would like to see continue; many ecologists out there have excellent ideas that I believe could be articulated into excellent Forum items, and it is significant that the most favourable responses that we receive from reviewers are usually for Forum items submitted to the journal. Over the past two

years we have only received two Review articles (despite about half a dozen enquiries by ecologists interested in writing one), and it would be great if more of these types of articles emerged.

The acceptance rate of the manuscript has now remained static at around 67% for the past two years. The most common reasons for decline of manuscripts are insufficient novelty of the work reported, and improper experimental design. In addition to manuscripts declined outright for these reasons, a number of manuscripts are declined but with the door left open for resubmission. In these cases the data itself is considered worthy of publication but either the manuscript itself is not well presented or the interpretations placed on the data require significant rethinking. About two thirds of manuscripts in this category are eventually published in some form.

Having taken up a position in the University of Sheffield in the UK earlier this year, it has been necessary to split the editorship of the journal into two. I will remain as Scientific Editor, and will see manuscripts through to final acceptance. The Technical Editor (a position that is most effectively based in New Zealand) will deal with all manuscripts once they are accepted and see them through to the publication process. Jenny Steven has kindly agreed to take on the task as Technical Editor. All enquiries about manuscripts prior to formal acceptance should be directed to me and questions regarding accepted manuscripts should be sent to Jenny (note our e-mail addresses in the inside back cover of this newsletter and note that I now have a new e-mail address).

It is significant that this report is written at exactly the half way point of my five-year term as Editor, and I hope that the second half of my term is as enjoyable as the first. The Journal continues to be served by an excellent Editorial Board. Over the past year Peter Jones, Ian McLean and Robert Poulin (Book Reviews Editor) have completed their terms on the board and are thanked for their considerable services to the Journal over the past few years. Doug Armstrong joined the board over this time, and Duane Peltzer will take over as Book Reviews Editor. The other members of the Editorial Board are Dave Choquenot, Kay Clapperton, David Coomes, Richard Duncan, Graham Hickling, Richard Holdaway, Gábor Lövei and Michael Winterbourn. I would like to express my thanks to the Technical Editor, Board Members and manuscript reviewers for their help to the Journal over the past year, and also to those authors who keep us supplied with enough interesting manuscripts to maintain the success of the journal.

David Wardle
Scientific Editor

TREASURER'S REPORT

1. The Society's financial year has changed from 1 April–31 March to 1 January–31 December so that journal costs and subscriptions coincide better. Shown below are the *unaudited* statements of financial performance and financial position for the New Zealand Ecological Society for the short 9-month financial "year" ended 31 December 2000. The audited accounts (with any changes necessary) will be available at the AGM.
2. The Society made a profit of c. \$9,700 in the 9 months ended 31 December 2000. Council anticipated a profit for this period in last years annual report of c. \$3,900 due to reduced expenditure on administration, secretariat and newsletter production. The profit was larger than anticipated due to a healthy conference profit from Hamilton (which made up 50% of the overall society profit), and useful increases in income from membership and journal subscriptions. It is pleasing to report that income from journal subscriptions was up c. \$1,500 from the 1999-2000 financial year and c. \$3,500 from the 1998-1999 financial year. This largely reflects changes to pricing for libraries outside of Australasia of the subscription rate, which was set in US\$ just before the NZ\$ underwent a major realignment.
3. The level of cash reserves at 31 December 2000 was up from the previous year to c. \$43,000 which means we have reached the desired level of reserves agreed to at the 1999 AGM at Blenheim (i.e., one year's expenditure equals approximately \$40,000). This should mean that in the next few years there would be a modest annual surplus, which could be spent on new initiatives to further the aims of the Society. Council would appreciate input from members on the general direction that they wish Council to take regarding new spending initiatives. This will be an agenda item at this year's AGM and if members cannot attend the AGM please send any comments directly to me.
4. Overall the society seems to be in good financial shape. Thanks are due to the secretariat, the volunteers who run the conferences with such great results, and to members for renewing their memberships promptly.

Ben Reddiex
Treasurer

NEW ZEALAND ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE
FOR THE 9 MONTHS ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2000**

EXPENDITURE	1/4/00-31/12/00	1/4/99-31/3/00
Journal production	23,674.15	28,711.05
Newsletters	3,714.61	3,915.11
Secretariat	5,101.00	6,801.35
Subscriptions	1,111.11	1,621.46
Council expenses	2,484.00	3,057.25
Administration	1,102.60	2,614.13
Audit	300.00	300.00
Awards	433.73	255.47
Web Site	344.00	601.00
Sundry costs	177.78	—
	38,442.98	47,876.82
Excess income over expenditure	9,712.68	—
	\$48,155.66	\$47,876.82
INCOME	1/4/00-31/12/00	1/4/99-31/3/00
Membership	25,504.69	24,190.71
Interest	545.81	729.56
Publications	167.11	393.44
Journal subscriptions	15,187.66	13,813.46
Reprints	1,965.66	3,452.49
Conference	4,784.73	3,214.78
Donations	—	20.00
Sundry	—	410.82
	48,155.66	46,225.26
Excess expenditure over income	—	1651.56
	\$48,155.66	\$47,876.82

NEW ZEALAND ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2000

LIABILITIES		31/12/00	31/3/00
Membership in advance		555.54	806.13
Journal in advance		1,625.25	7,575.45
Accounts payable		566.78	
Provisions (audit)		900.00	600.00
Educational CD fund:			
Royal Society grant	15,000.00		
less expenditure to date	133.33	14,866.67	
General fund:			
opening balance as at 1/4/00	33,333.49		34,985.05
less adjustment	(110.31)		
	33,223.18		
plus excess income			
for 9 months to 31/12/00	9,712.68		(1651.56)
		42,935.86	
TOTAL LIABILITIES		\$61,450.10	\$42,315.07
ASSETS			
Membership in arrears		400.00	500.00
Journal in arrears		143.33	0.00
Bank balance:			
Westpac	39,859.57		30,730.64
BNZ (term deposit)	7,000.00		7,000.00
Westpac (term deposit)	10,000.00		
		56,859.57	
Journal stock		150.00	150.00
Prepayments		—	1,217.78
GST refund		273.58	1,604.62
Sundry debtors:			
Reprints	310.89		
Conference 2000	3,312.73		
		3,623.62	1,112.03
TOTAL ASSETS		\$61,450.10	\$42,315.07

MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS REPORT

Membership

The table gives the total number of members in different categories as at 27 July 2001. Full and Joint members pay at full rate (one payment per couple in the case of joint membership), unwaged members get a discounted rate, and overseas members pay the full rate plus an overseas postage surcharge. Honorary members of course are not charged. To work out the totals I assume that all those 1 year in arrears will eventually pay but that none of those owing for two will do so. The totals show that membership is about the same as last year—a few more paid up and a bit of a drop in those in arrears. Also, the percentage of unwaged members is still quite low (21%) compared to a few years ago. Membership is therefore healthy. In addition, 11 people or places receive the newsletter.

Membership of NZ Ecol Soc as at 27/6/01 (data for 12/9/00)

Category	Paid	Arrears 1 yr	Total	Arrears 2 yr
Full	289 (278)	29 (33)	318 (311)	12 (3)
Joint	42 x 2 (39 x 2)	1 x 2 (2 x 2)	86 (82)	1 (0)
Unwaged	96 (109)	17 (19)	113 (128)	8 (13)
Overseas	16 (17)	2 (3)	18 (20)	0 (2)
Honorary	7 (7)	n/a	7 (7)	n/a
Total	492 (489)	50 (59)	542 (548)	21 (18)

Journal subscriptions

Last year I reported that library subscriptions to the NZJ Ecology were down compared to the early 1990s, but stable over the last few years. The totals are still quite stable with only a slight loss of NZ subs this year. We are broadly holding our own here, which in the face of widespread library cuts is a good sign.

Subscriptions to NZJ Ecology: No. institutions (No. copies)

Location	2001 Paid	2001 Arrears	2000 Paid	2000 Arrears
New Zealand	38 (40)	0	40 (43)	2 (2)
Australia	12 (15)	3	11 (14)	4 (4)
USA	32 (33)	5	34 (34)	3 (3)
Canada	1 (1)	0	1 (1)	0
United Kingdom	3 (3)	0	2 (2)	0
Rest of Europe	3 (3)	1	3 (3)	1 (1)
PAID TOTALS	89 (95)	9 (9)	91 (97)	10 (10)
Complimentary	18 (19)	n/a	18 (19)	n/a

Dave Kelly
Secretary

CONVENOR OF AWARDS REPORT

The 2000 New Zealand Ecological Society Award was awarded to **Dr Dave Kelly**, University of Canterbury. The inaugural Best Paper by a New Researcher Award was presented to **Dr Deborah Wilson**, Landcare Research. The annual award for best student oral presentation was awarded to **Wade Tozer**, Massey University. **Weihong Ji**, University of Auckland received a highly commended award for her student paper. **Ben Reddiex**, Lincoln University, received the award for best poster by a student. Further details on recipients were published in the May 2000 newsletter.

Council has initiated some changes to The New Zealand Ecological Society Award. Firstly, we have altered the definition of the award from considering an applicants last 2 years of research, to considering all their research. We felt this more accurately reflected how the award has been applied. We also decided to change the name of the award. We felt the original name was not particularly descriptive, and recipients were often asked what the award was for. We also wanted to have a name that had a New Zealand flavour. The new name is:

Te tohu taiao – award for ecological excellence

A minor modification has also been made to the Best Publication by a New Researcher award. Instead of considering more than one publication by a researcher, we will now restrict applicants to submitting just one paper. This means the applicant has to decide which is their best paper, and will reduce the load on judges.

Council extends its thanks to all those who have assisted in the judging of awards. Their task is not always an easy one. We are always on the lookout for members who are willing to assist in this capacity. We aim to spread the judging across a range of disciplines, and also to balance the representation from different agencies. Please contact Jacqueline Beggs if you can help.

Jacqueline Beggs
Awards Convenor

Landcare Research, Private Bag 6, Nelson
beggsj@landcare.cri.nz
Ph. 03 5457703

NZES EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Tui Time: Tiaki Tui's learning adventure with
New Zealand's biodiversity

June 2001

*Members: Carol West, Laura Sessions, Teri
McClelland, and Jacqueline Beggs*

The concept of Tui Time was described in last year's annual report. Initially, we intended to provide this interactive learning medium on CD-ROM but advice received from many sources since then has led us to establishing it on the Internet. The whole package can be downloaded onto CD and made available in that form, too, for those who want it. The Society has registered three domain names to support this package: www.ecological.co.nz, www.tuitime.com, and www.tuitime.co.nz.

Over the past year, a demonstration disk of part of the "Build a Bird" module has been evaluated by the subcommittee. Dunedin artist Sheryl McCammon has done all of the drawings and the main activity "A Day in the Life of Tiaki Tui" is under construction at the moment. A demonstration disk containing several of the levels is scheduled for evaluation by the subcommittee in early July. At the same time, the encyclopaedia section will be ready for review. The construction of Tui Time is being undertaken by Marc Cohen of Centre Bush, Southland.

We are planning to launch Tui Time at the Jubilee Conference in Christchurch and we would like to have a computer set up for people to view this activity. Any feedback will be gratefully received. Tui Time has benefited from the advice and assistance of many members. Thanks are extended to those who have helped with this education initiative.

ADVICE FOR A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE TALK, 2001

Here is the latest in a hardy annual series of hints for giving a good conference talk. Every year there are new good ideas to share and new traps to warn people away from, and of course some same old points to make again. So here is my collected prejudices. Of course, you don't have to slavishly follow these suggestions if you have an alternative approach that works for you. But if you follow the advice, your talk should work well.

In summary, the main points I would emphasise this year are as follows:

- Powerpoint is now pretty much the standard way of giving a talk, and works reasonably well.

- As we see more live Powerpoint talks, we see more badly scanned pictures inserted into Powerpoint. Either scan with high resolution and decent colour depth (please!) or use a real slide here.
- Use a simple colour scheme in Powerpoint: most people use white letters on plain blue background (a very good choice) or black text on a white background (simple and clear).
- Resist the temptation to use animation or cute, cluttered backgrounds in Powerpoint.
- New technology is allowing people to produce full-colour OHPs, sometimes including printing colour photos onto OHP. In general, I don't think this works as well as slides or Powerpoint.
- OHPs can be a good way to give a talk, but they are slow to change compared to slides or Powerpoint. Enlist a helper to change them for you if possible.

Note for 2001 NZES Conference

Please note that Powerpoint is now the official medium recommended at the NZEcol Soc conference this year. It will be possible to use all slides, or all OHPs, or a mixture of the above. However, mixing slides and Powerpoint may require a bit of fiddling during the talk as the Powerpoint screen takes up most of the front of the room. Note also that there is a deadline for Powerpoint talks at this year's conference—the file must be sent to the conference organisers by Monday 20 August, so it can be loaded on the server. Please send on CD or email—or if you have no pictures and the file will fit, you could send a floppy disk.

Now for some explanation of the above points.

Using Powerpoint

It has the advantages that it is colourful, cheap to produce, and the projectors to be used at Canterbury give a lovely big bright picture. Resolution is XGA or 1024 x 768 pixels, which is far below a true 35 mm slide (>3000 x 2000), but is good enough to use. If you scan your pictures in, do it at 1024 x 768 resolution or better at high colour depth (true colour), and fill the entire screen for the picture—leaving a coloured border around the photo usually wastes over half, and sometimes two-thirds, of the available resolution. If the key part of the photo is only part of the whole frame, enlarge just that part to put into Powerpoint. Small pictures inserted into the corner of a slide usually end up showing very little due to poor resolution, so make it big or leave it out.

Powerpoint offers various animation features, such as building a slide in sections, sliding new text in, dissolving from one to the next. Building can be used to good effect, but keep it to a minimum, as you

have to keep clicking the mouse each time. But it's best to have text just appear fast, rather than slide in, which looks disturbing. Also change immediately from one slide to the next rather than using dissolves, which are more distraction. Genuine animation (movies, simulations, etc.) inserted into Powerpoint are a VERY good idea for getting audience attention, if you can get them to run!

Using slides

Slides have several advantages: they are usually sharp, especially since you can use original photos of sites, organisms, etc. They are fast to change, they can't get out of order (unless you leave the cover off the carousel, then drop it); and the projectors are 98% reliable.

Disadvantages: they are costly to make from Powerpoint, though you can do acceptable cheap slides of text and graphs by printing the page out and photographing it onto slide film. You may need to keep adjusting the focus as you change slides. If the slide projector jams, you have no talk; luckily this is rare. If your slides are underexposed they will look murky—try them out in a lecture room beforehand. Note that sometimes, the screen is set up for landscape slides, and if you show a portrait slide the top will be chopped off. Either avoid portrait slides, or make sure that the top part only carries non-essential information like a title.

Using OHPs

Most important point: NEVER part-cover the OHP and reveal bits at a time, this annoys the audience greatly. Second most important: make text large (18 point Times Roman or greater) and don't go right to the edge of the A4 page.

OHPs have two advantages: (1) they are cheap (about \$1) and fast to make; and (2) they are bright, so they work well in rooms with poor blackout. Neither of these advantages applies to the recent trend for full colour OHPs, sometimes including photos. In general I find these have murky colours and are not that easy to read, and no doubt they are expensive too. I don't think these are a good idea.

OHPs have a number of disadvantages. They encourage presenters to stand next to the overhead projector, which blocks the view of half the audience. It is much better to stand by the screen and point to things on it, rather than pointing on the OHP itself. The problem with this is that you then need to move over to the projector to change the next one; best way around this is enlisting a helper to change them for you.

OHPs are slow to change, since you have to move the last one out of the way, get the backing paper off the next one, put it on the OHP and check it is lined up well. This takes significantly longer

than Powerpoint or slides. This is less of a problem if you have a helper who changes them for you.

OHPs are often set up so the projected image is bigger than the screen, so you need to check that important text is not hidden off the top or to one side. If the OHP is tilted back to point up at an elevated screen, acetates have a disturbing habit of sliding off backwards. Images are often somewhat distorted as the screen is usually not square-on to the projector. They can get out of order, especially if you drop the pile, and are very hard to get back into order in the middle of a talk. Writing a big sequence number in one corner helps.

Graphic design

The main message here is, keep it simple. You should only present the essential message. In particular, nearly all the following are counterproductive and should be avoided:

- **corporate logos:** restrict these to only the first slide (and the conclusions one, if you must).
- **borders:** they reduce space available for real information.
- **fancy backgrounds**
- **gradient fills**
- **Clip art**
- **False 3-D** on graphs.

Luckily, nearly all the above except corporate logos are getting quite rare.

Good things to do with an image include:

- **High contrast** between background and message. This is easiest with a relatively plain background, such as a uniform deep blue (better than black, which makes the room very dark). Then use a bright colour or colours for the text and graphs (white, yellow, and red are best). Alternatively use a white or very light coloured background and black or dark blue text—this works better in live PPT than in 35 mm slides, which show dirt more easily. Don't use red on green (bad for colour-blind people).
- **Get the message as big as possible.** This is where borders, logos, etc. waste room. Get the table or graph almost out to the edge of the screen. Make the font as big as possible. Keep the text short to facilitate this. Text can never be too big. If you are scanning a picture or graph into Powerpoint, use the whole frame for the picture.
- **Use a clear font.** The most readable font is a serif font (Times Roman is a good example) in mixed upper and lower case. Don't use all-caps, or small-caps, as the letters are more similar to each other. Don't use a sans-serif font like Helvetica or Arial.

Scientific content and presentation skills

Below is an abbreviated version of previous articles I have published on how to plan and present a talk. If you want full details see back issues of the NZES newsletter (most university libraries probably hold it). The articles are in Newsletter issue 81 (pages 7–8) and issue 77 (pages 8–10). Alternatively e-mail me on d.kelly@botn.canterbury.ac.nz and I'll send the long version to you.

A. PLANNING THE TALK.

1. Using only Powerpoint or only slides is better than a mixture of Powerpoint and slides, or slides and OHPs, etc.
2. Aim at about 1.1 slides per minute.
3. Try to get *all* information onto its own slide, including simple things like a title, and a list of your species names.
4. Put your acknowledgements slide second (after the title) so you can end the talk on a bang, with your conclusions.
5. Do use simple tables with a few to 10 numbers on them. Don't use big messy ones.
6. Prepare a one-page prompt sheet, with one line per slide, in order, saying what each is, and listing any data you need to say which is not on the slide (so you don't forget it).
7. Make a couple of reminders to yourself on the top of your prompt sheet of things to say before turning on the first slide (acknowledgements, etc.).

B. BEFORE THE TALK.

1. Make sure you know how to work the lights, Powerpoint/slide projector, remote control, OHP, board, etc. beforehand.
2. If using Powerpoint, run your file on the host computer to be sure it all is translated fine. If using slides, put the slides in the projector and *run them all through* to make sure they are right way around and in the correct order (as on your prompt sheet).
3. Arrange the furniture so you have a place to stand where you can point to the screen without blocking anyone's view, and where you must face the audience rather than the screen (especially important if using OHPs).
4. Check out how the lights dim but not completely blacked out.

C. DURING THE TALK.

1. Give your talk a definite start and finish with "good morning" and "thank you, that's all" or similar.
2. NEVER read a prepared speech—it bores the audience stupid.
3. Slow down, nerves will make you want to talk too fast.
4. Explain every slide when it first appears.
5. Don't worry about timing unless your chairperson announces that you have used up all your time; in this case, go *very* fast over the rest.
6. Don't apologise for ANYTHING.
7. Don't part-cover OHPs and only reveal them one line at a time.
8. Don't worry about turning a slide off (or inserting a black one) just because you have finished mentioning the main points on it.

D. AFTER THE TALK.

1. Write on your prompt sheet how long it actually took to give the talk.
2. Keep the prompt sheet for planning other talks.

Dave Kelly
Plant and Microbial Sciences,
University of Canterbury, Christchurch.

OTHER UPCOMING CONFERENCES

August 27–30, 2001

New Zealand Ecological Society Conference

Christchurch, New Zealand. Contact: n.judson@botn.canterbury.ac.nz for more details.

September 9–14, 2001

3rd European Vertebrate Pest Management Conference

Kibbutz Ma'ale Hachamisha.
Contact: vert@ortra.co.il for more details.

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For information on the listserver contact the newsletter editor (rossj1@lincoln.ac.nz) or myself at d.kelly@botn.canterbury.ac.nz. For information on the Australian listserver contact Dave Kelly.

Web page

To obtain additional conference details contact the NZ Ecological Society website: www.nzes.org.nz. This site also has membership details, information on awards and prizes, information on submitting papers to the journal and links to overseas ecological organisations.

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Contributions for the newsletter – news, views, letters, cartoons, etc. – are welcomed. If possible, please send articles for the newsletter both on disk and in hard copy. 3.5" disks are preferred; MS Word, Word Perfect or ASCII file text, formatted for Macintosh or MS-DOS. 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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