

# Ecological Society

# Newsletter

No. 109, June 2004

Published by the New Zealand Ecological Society (Inc.),  
P.O. Box 25-178, Christchurch



## FROM THE EDITOR

At the risk of being rather University-centric in this newsletter, Dave Kelly and I have a tag-team entry in this newsletter on the PBRF (Performance-Based Research Fund). This exercise, that concluded with the release of a report in April this year, sought to rank all tertiary sector academic staff on their research performance in three differentially weighted criteria (research, peer esteem, and contributions to the research environment, weighted 70:15:15 respectively). Everyone was given scores out of 7 for each of these criteria and then the scores used to place people into four bands—A (internationally recognised scholars), B (nationally recognised), C (emerging), and R (“research inactive”). This recent rankings of tertiary education providers will be used by the government to allocate a gradually increasing proportion of their block grants (see newsletter 106 <http://www.nzes.org.nz/newsletter/no106.html> for our preview). The full report can viewed at <http://www.tec.govt.nz/>.

Now that the report is out, Dave offers a report card on it on page 7 of this newsletter, here I am simply going to report on some of the findings that relate to ecology. I am not going to talk about the validity of this process—see Dave’s article for a very interesting and frank discussion of this.

Overall, 5.7% of academics were ranked A, 23.2% B, 31.2% C, and 39.9% R. Each provider and subject area was then given an overall quality score based on a formula that awarded 10 to all A’s, 4 to B’s, 2 to C’s and 0 to R’s, the total combined score was divided by the number of researchers ranked to give an overall score out of 10. Of course, no provider or subject area scored anywhere near 10 (everyone would have to be senior academics performing at the very top of their academic subjects to achieve this), and a score of 3 or 4 was about tops.

How did the ecologists in New Zealand do? Ecologists fell into the subject area “Ecology, Evolution, and Behaviour” (EEB) were scored by the Biological

Sciences Panel, which also oversaw two other subject areas—“Agriculture and other applied biological sciences” and “Molecular, cellular, and whole-organism biology”. In all, the various panels including biological sciences, considered 41 subject areas. In the table below, I have summarised the three biological sciences subject areas.

	overall quality score and rank (out of 41)
Agriculture and other applied biological sciences	2.91 (21 <sup>st</sup> )
Ecology, evolution and behaviour	4.18 (4 <sup>th</sup> )
Molecular, cellular and whole organism biology	3.55 (13 <sup>th</sup> )
Average for all 41 areas	2.59

## INSIDE:

From the editor .....	1
Conference 2004: 29 August – 2 September, invercargill .....	2
52nd annual general meeting of the new Zealand ecological society .....	3
Change of editor for NZJE .....	5
Council profiles .....	5
From the Awards Convenor .....	6
David Given on IUCN membership .....	6
Dave Kelly on the PBRF .....	7
Scientist declines purchase of kakapo in Prague ....	9
Hotscience .....	10
Upcoming meetings .....	11
Meetings diary .....	13
Scholarships and jobs .....	14
News from Council .....	15
EcolSoc e-mail list server and web page .....	18

It is interesting to note that as a group, EEB's did very well in this exercise reaching 4th overall, and doing a lot better than the other areas of biological sciences. The country is well-served by this group—ecologists, evolutionists, and behaviourists are clearly a well-respected bunch internationally in terms of their research.

The breakdown of scores shows that nearly half (45.9%) of the EEB's were ranked A or B, compared to less than a third of academics overall (28.9%).

	A	B	C	R
Agriculture and other applied biological sciences	8 (4.8%)	42 (25.3%)	75 (45.2%)	41 (24.7%)
Ecology, evolution and behaviour	23 (12.7%)	60 (33.2%)	79 (43.7%)	19 (10.5%)
Molecular, cellular and whole organism biology	23 (5.8%)	144 (36.3%)	150 (37.8%)	20.2% (80)
Over All Subject Areas	444 (5.7%)	1810 (23.2%)	2486 (31.2%)	3278 (39.9%)

Where are the 23 internationally recognised EEB academics (the A's)? Well according to TEC, they are located as follows: Univ of Auckland 7, Otago 5, Lincoln 3, Massey 3, Canterbury 3, Waikato 2.

If you are one of those, (Whoever you are), when you read this, stand up and take a bow!

Alastair Robertson

*Ecology Group, Institute of Natural Resources  
Massey University  
Private Bag 11222  
Palmerston North*

*Ph: 06 350 5799 ext 7965*

*E-mail: [newsletter@nzec.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@nzec.org.nz)*

## CONFERENCE 2004: 29 AUGUST – 2 SEPTEMBER, INVERCARGILL



### Registration and call for papers now open

You will find a registration form for the Invercargill conference inserted as a pull-out section in this newsletter. Alternatively, you can find the form on the NZES website at <http://www.nzec.org.nz/conf2004/index.html>. The website also has instructions and an online form for submitting abstracts. Early bird registration and abstract deadline is 25 June, so you will need to be quick.

### Field Trips

Wednesday 1 September has been set aside for day trips and should be a highlight (bring your winter woollies though!)

1. Waituna/ Awarua Bay
2. Forest Hill Scenic Reserve/Turnbull's
3. Waipapa/ Slope Point/ Curio Bay/ Waipohatu

In addition, there is a 3-day limited entry post-conference field trip from the 3–5<sup>th</sup> September to Stewart Island that is strictly limited to 18 people—be extra quick if you want to register for that.

### Programme

This conference looks to be as exciting as ever. There will be symposium on the following themes

- Monitoring as a tool to inform national and international agreements and policies
- Human dimensions of ecology—working with indigenous peoples
- Disturbance ecology
- Peatland ecology
- Subantarctic ecology

Several invited international speakers will give keynote addresses, and contributed papers around these themes are now invited. There will be also be open sessions with the usual contributed papers.

Student day will be held as usual on the Sunday, 29 August.

Kate has planned a series of social functions, including a conference banquet with band, a wine-and-cheese and so there will be plenty of opportunity for fun!

## Workshop on Assessing Significant Natural Areas

As part of the conference, Judith Roper-Lindsay is planning to run a workshop on assessing significant natural areas. At this stage, we aren't sure exactly what day the workshop will be held on, but are including information now so that you can see what is planned and indicate interest by ticking the box on the registration forms included in this newsletter.

### *Purpose*

To draw up a list of methods/ criteria /standards for assessing the ability of an area of indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna to persist/ survive/ thrive in the long term.

### *Background*

Section 6(c) of the RMA sets out just one of a local authority's responsibilities for managing biodiversity—however it is the one that gets considerable focus because the RMA raises the issue to one of national importance. In implementing Section 6(c) local authorities have tended to identify and map “sites” (SNAs), and to do this have used criteria (and a wide range of ecologists!). Other values besides ecological can raise a site to the level of SNA, but these tend to be given lesser prominence.

The criteria used have been many and varied, but almost all lists of criteria include some term such as “long-term viability” or “sustainability” to encompass the idea that a site must have a long-term future under the prevailing conditions, if it is truly “significant”. (This does not mean that other areas are not worthy of restoration, rehabilitation or management for biodiversity values, just that only the best should really fit into the SNA category)

“Sustainability” was proposed by MFE following the Sustainable Management Fund project on the West Coast and by a paper in press by David Norton and Judith Roper-Lindsay. It is now being used by a number of ecologists working for local authorities. BUT “sustainability” is not easy to interpret in the field—it is not easy to define under any circumstances! It means different things to different ecologists, and maybe something else again to planners and the community.

This workshop will bring together ecologists from throughout NZ with experience in a wide range of ecosystems and planning environments to discuss the practical aspects of using the “sustainability” criterion in the field. It is hoped that by focusing on one criterion we will be able to achieve a manageable outcome, rather than getting into the wider issue of how local authorities manage biodiversity and Section 6(c) generally.

## 52ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE NEW ZEALAND ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

As usual, the AGM of NZES will be held during the annual conference on Tuesday 31 August 5.30–7.00 pm in the Waiiau Room, Ascot Park Hotel

All members are urged to attend. The minutes of the 51st AGM can be found in issue 108 of the newsletter which is now online at the NZES page at <http://nzes.org.nz/newsletter/no108.html>. Members are reminded that notices of significant motions that are to be put by members need to be submitted to council at least 28 days prior to the AGM, and preferably in time to be included in the newsletter that precedes the AGM (issue no 110 due out in July). After that time, following the society rules, no new motion may be proposed, discussed, or put to the vote except by consent of more than two-thirds of the members present. Normally these meetings take around 1–1½ hours, so you won't be made to starve for too long!

### Motions for NZES AGM August 2004

#### *1. IUCN*

Motion: that NZES resign its membership of IUCN.

Moved: Dave Kelly, Seconded: Duane Peltzer

I am moving this motion so that the matter can be discussed and settled by members at the AGM. Moving the motion ahead of time also ensures that there is plenty of warning that it will be discussed. The issues have already been canvassed in recent issues of the Newsletter.

*See also page 6 for a comment by David Given.*

#### *2. Change to Rules regarding types of members*

These proposed changes will modify the rules to give Council the power to set up, modify or drop membership categories as they see fit. NZES recently received a request for a new type of membership, overseas-unwaged. Council was inclined to grant this request, but under the current Rules, Council does not have the power to create or modify membership categories. The Rules list the current types of member, and changes to the rules require assent at an AGM followed by sending of some rather tedious paperwork to the Registrar of Incorporated Societies. This seems unduly restrictive for what is essentially a minor administrative matter.

It may be argued that this change gives more power to Council—perhaps too much. Obviously that is for members to decide at the AGM, but I would argue firstly that this is not a crucial area: if Council creates, or deletes, various membership categories the society will not go bust immediately. All Council decisions are open to review at the next AGM (where members could put motions asking for any previous Council decision

to be reversed, and in fact the whole Council can be voted out) or in extremis at a Special General Meeting. Moreover, the Rules already (and in my view properly) give Council the unfettered right to set the membership fees for all categories of membership. The question of how many types of member to have seems rather less important to most members than how much they should pay for them. And of course, by and large, Council is run efficiently and for the good of the Society. I argue that this change to the rules will make the job of running the Society easier.

I therefore propose the following changes to the Rules (moved Dave Kelly, seconded Alastair Robertson).

Some members may be worried that these changes remove any reference in the Rules to the categories of Unwaged and Joint. I stress that there is no intention to change either of these: both are successful in keeping people as members, and Council would annoy members at its peril. But for the deeply distrustful, I would point out that under the current rules, Council cannot drop either of these membership categories, but it would be within its power to set the fees for Unwaged the same as Full membership, and to set the fees for Joint members to double the Full rate, effectively deleting them. In other words, I think Council can be trusted to oversee the number of categories as well as the fees set for each.

Existing clause	New wording of clause	Notes
3(a) There shall be five classes of members: (i) Ordinary members, (ii) Joint members, (iii) Unwaged members, (iv) Overseas members, (v) Honorary life members.	3(a) There shall be various classes of members as the Council shall from time to time decide.	
3(b) The Council may elect any person as an ordinary member of the Society on application.	3(b) The Council may elect any person as a member of the Society on application.	Delete "ordinary"
3(c) The Council may elect any student, unwaged or retired person as an unwaged member on application. Unwaged members may receive the journal on application to Council.	Delete clause	No intention to drop category, but inappropriate to give this detail in Rules.
3(d) Any member who has given outstanding service to the Society may, on the recommendation of the Council, be elected as an Honorary Life member at any Annual or Special General Meeting.	Renumber to 3(c), no other change	Rule is principally concerned with process for electing an Honorary Life member, which seems appropriate to be in Rules.
3(e)	Renumber to 3(d)	
3(f)	Renumber to 3(e)	
4(a) The annual subscription shall be such sum or sums as the Council shall from time to time decide. Partners may apply for joint membership whereby they pay one subscription and only one copy of each publication shall be supplied.	4(a) The annual subscription shall be such sum or sums as the Council shall from time to time decide.	Again, no intention to change the categories, but inappropriate to specify details in Rules.

## CHANGE OF EDITOR FOR NZJE

Some of you may know that our journal editor, **Richard Duncan** has had to step down for the time-being as editor of the *New Zealand Journal of Ecology*, due to the ill health of his wife Sue. Richard has been doing an excellent job on the journal since taking over the role from David Wardle last year. We can expect issue 28(1) soon, and Richard has finished editing 28(2) and it is currently being typeset so we can also expect that one on time later this year. Already 29(1) is starting to fill, and will now be edited by **Peter Bellingham** and **Duane Peltzer**, both of Landcare Research. Thanks to Peter and Duane for so readily filling the breach and assuming this very important role for the society.

I am sure that all members of NZES will join with me in extending our best wishes to Richard, Sue and family in this difficult time.

## COUNCIL PROFILES

With several new councillors on the 2004 NZES, I thought it would be good to ask them for a profile to introduce them to members. A warm welcome to them all and thanks for doing their bit to support NZES!

### Kate McNutt – councillor

My interests are wide and broad and seem to principally relate to forest ecosystems and their protection. After spending three years on the mainland studying and gaining a Bachelor of Parks and Recreation Management degree at Lincoln, I went on to complete a Masters of Science at Massey University. From here I continued my drift north and spent four years working for the Department of Conservation initially based in Whangarei for Northland Conservancy. Eighteen months ago I joined Southland Conservancy Technical Support Unit team based in Invercargill where I am involved in monitoring the health of our forest ecosystems. I am also the principal organiser of the 2004 NZES conference in Invercargill.

### Rachel Keedwell – treasurer

Hi! I'm Rachel Keedwell and I took on the job of Treasurer at the AGM last year. I finished my PhD at Massey in 2002, where I had been studying the ecology, biology and predation of black-fronted terns and banded dotterels in the braided rivers of the Mackenzie Basin. Since finishing, I have been working from home in Palmerston North as an ecological consultant, and have had a range of contracts with DoC and various universities. Currently, I work part-time on my ecological work which includes contracts for DoC and some teaching at Massey and at the International Pacific College. The rest of the time I run a building company with my partner, where I am responsible for all the book work, accounts and invoicing. This work has given me some accountancy experience and I look forward to applying my newly gained knowledge to the Ecological Society accounts!

### Shona Myers – secretary

I am currently team leader of the Natural Heritage Section at the Auckland Regional Council. The natural heritage section advocates ecological restoration and biodiversity protection throughout the Auckland region and undertakes conservation programmes (including mainland island restoration) on an extensive network of regional parks. I have previously worked at Biological Resources Centre (DSIR) and DOC in Wellington. My interests lie in lowland ecosystems (forests and wetlands) and working with communities and landowners to encourage protection of biodiversity on private land. I have four children who also keep me busy and happy.

### John Sawyer – Vice President

I am a plant ecologist with the Department of Conservation at Wellington Conservancy where I started work as a volunteer in 1993. I provide advice to field staff, planners, community groups, private landowners and territorial authorities in Wellington. I co-ordinate threatened plant recovery programmes, weed control



**Manaaki  
Whenua  
P R E S S**

Manaaki Whenua Press offers a wide range of quality New Zealand natural history and science titles. Some, like the *Flora of New Zealand* series, are published by Manaaki Whenua Press, while many others are sourced from other publishers in order to expand and enhance our range. Manaaki Whenua Press also acts as exclusive distributor for CSIRO publishing, the New Zealand Plant Protection Society, and the Entomological Society of New Zealand. For more information, visit the website at [www.mwpress.co.nz](http://www.mwpress.co.nz) NZ Ecological Society members enjoy a 20% discount off the RRP of all titles (excluding already reduced special offers)—please advise us of your membership status when placing your order.

programmes and ecological restoration initiatives. I also have responsibilities for a review of the Department's monitoring programmes (especially threatened plant and weed population monitoring). My particular interests are biogeography, achieving protection for NZ native plant life and making better use of existing biological information. I am secretary of the newly formed New Zealand Plant Conservation Network and editor of the Wellington Botanical Society Journal.

## FROM THE AWARDS CONVENOR

### NZES Awards – Reminder Notice

Members are reminded that nominations for the **Te Tohu Taiao** and **Best Publication by a New Researcher** awards close on the 30 June, 2004. Please contact Alison Evans for further details ([awards@nzes.org.nz](mailto:awards@nzes.org.nz)).

### Student Travel Grants

Students wishing to present a paper or poster at the NZES conference in Invercargill (29 August – 2 September, 2004) are eligible to apply for a grant to assist with transport costs. Please contact the awards convener Alison Evans for more details ([awards@nzes.org.nz](mailto:awards@nzes.org.nz)).

## DAVID GIVEN ON IUCN MEMBERSHIP

The debate on NZES membership of IUCN is an interesting one and parallels discussions at the time when I was on the Society's Council regarding membership of the Royal Society of NZ. There will always be controversy over membership of umbrella organizations. At the time of writing this (April 2004) it is exactly 30 years since I started my personal association with IUCN. As background, my interests have largely revolved around the Species Survival Commission for which I am currently an executive and steering group member, as well as chairing the SSC global plant conservation programme. I am also a member of the Commission on Ecological Management and have attended three World Conservation Congresses as a member of the New Zealand delegation.

Before saying anything else, has my personal association been worth it? The unequivocal answer must be "Yes". Apart from fares, travel expenses, some defraying of costs of chair expenses and two small IUCN consultancies I have not financially benefited directly. But the professional networking that resulted from being involved in IUCN has subsequently taken me to many parts of the world, assisted with UN and industry consultancy selection, led to the authorship of two international books, and involved me closely in the last five years with development of one of the most comprehensive of programmes undertaken under the UN's Biodiversity Convention—the Global Plant

Conservation Strategy. But let's get it straight—IUCN is NOT a funding organization or employment agency. An estimate of my time and resources involvement suggests a personal cost of at least \$120,000 during that period which I regard as a worthwhile part of my donation to the conservation of biodiversity. So NZES should not look to IUCN as a cash cow.

As a professional scientific society are the aims of NZES relevant to IUCN and vice versa? IUCN is a peculiar beast insofar as it is the only global organisation to which governments, management agencies, NGOs, scientific authorities and academic institutions can belong to as equal partners. It is therefore the a global and regional forum that is uniquely placed to integrate views from a wide range of sources and to try and achieve consensus that will ensure survival of the very species and habitats that are the bread and butter of NZES members. IUCN's ranks include a very large number of highly respected conservation biologists and ecologists both at individual and institutional level which is also reflected in activities and networks of Commissions. Within New Zealand I would estimate that something like 150 individuals are currently involved in IUCN activities (at least 100 are members of SSC) many of whom are themselves leaders in the New Zealand ecological research and conservation scene. There is no inherent incompatibility between IUCN and NZES in this regard.

IUCN does sometimes give the impression of talking to itself and of being a bureaucracy. First to defend this—the very nature of international conservation politics, whether IUCN, UNEP, UNDP, CBD or large global NGOs virtually dictates this, something that comes as a surprise to academics who get propelled into international debate. Yet, a lot of the apparent bureaucracy is part of a political process that is necessary to achieve outcomes that will both make a difference at government policy level and in unlocking major funding such as the GEF. But second, IUCN can do better and it knows this. The current Director-General has been very active in developing better communication channels and in getting the messages that IUCN needs to impart out to the people who need to hear them. Bear with IUCN, it needs the comment and criticism to increase the effectiveness of its outcomes. And it is often easier to criticize within the organization than from outside. It should be mentioned that under the current chair, David Brackett of Canada, SSC has spent considerable time and resources addressing the issues of volunteerism and how SSC can provide incentives and rewards for work well done.

At a regional level New Zealand is hampered by Oceania not being formally recognized as a distinct region and by not yet having a regional office. However, as pointed out by Wren Green there is current and ongo-

ing work going into an Oceania programme. Much of this programme development needs rigorous ecological input such as NZES can provide and this will be much easier to achieve if NZES is on the 'inside' and involved in relevant workshops and meetings.

I, and many others working with IUCN in New Zealand, would welcome greater NZES involvement in our endeavours. Although it might be said that, "the important work done by NZES members on IUCN subgroups does not seem to depend on NZES being a member" greater interaction would make the job of those members who are involved far more complete and would facilitate results that would be of benefit to New Zealand as a whole. Specific actions that would help would be more interactive meetings of New Zealand members of IUCN (currently often poorly attended) using e-mail and list server facilities to 'members of members' and build the kind of bridges that Nick Smith talked about in 1997, biennial IUCN national meetings after the style of that held at Lincoln University in 1997, and greater national canvassing of IUCN policy issues and Commission issues and activities through a recognized IUCN New Zealand network.

David R. Given

## DAVE KELLY ON THE PBRF

### **PBRF: TEC makes a sow's ear out of a silk purse**

*Note: these views are those of the author only and should not be taken to represent those of his department, the University of Canterbury, or anyone else.*

With a fanfare in April the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) released the final Performance Based Research Funding (PBRF) scores to tertiary institutions (principally universities) and to the individuals within them. Astute readers may recall that the NZES newsletter issue 106 in September 2003 carried some views from me about the process, based on being a member of one of the internal self-review teams (which did a "play"-rating of all eligible staff before the documentation was sent to Wellington). I was not on the national review teams which did the "real" ratings which have now been released. Therefore my views below are based on observation of the results, not participation in the final process. However, from the released results it is clear that some of what I optimistically said in my last article was wrong. Here I argue that the TEC have managed to take a somewhat reasonable process and apply it in a perverse and counter-productive fashion, with a range of totally predictable negative outcomes. At the bottom, I append information about how you can get full details of your own rating, if you were in the PBRF.

### *1. Young staff got clobbered*

This is the biggest stuff-up, and also leads to a number of consequential problems (see below). Basically the way TEC applied the criteria, everyone was apparently assessed to see if they looked like a professor (ie had many publications, high citation rate, lots of invitations to overseas conferences, etc). Young staff (post-docs, new lecturers etc) have not had time to do these things so it seems almost without exception they got R (research inactive) or C, the lowest two grades. There was no allowance for "pro rata", ie stage in their career, including how much of the 5 years the person was actually employed as a full time scientist. So if you only started work one year before the cutoff date, but had produced a couple of papers in that time (arguably as good as one could expect of a new staff member) you still got clobbered for not having done more over the full 5 years (during much of which you perhaps weren't even being paid as a scientist!).

This is NOT what I said in my last article was going to happen. I said it would not happen because on the internal review panel, that is what we believed, based on our understanding of what we were told by a TEC staffer who came specifically to answer questions on the whole process before we started. So the internal panel (at Canterbury and I think also other universities) made our ratings on a pro-rata basis, and as a result came up with more generous ratings than were finally delivered from Wellington. Many staff got a lower rating in the "real" rankings than in the "play" one across all institutions and I suspect this was one of the main reasons.

The first negative consequence of this is, naturally, seriously disgruntled young staff. They are probably mostly working their guts out (especially the new lecturers) and to be told that—despite having managed to squeeze out a paper or two as well as keep the research etc going—they were "research inactive" or "C grade" is discouraging and insulting. Is this the way to encourage more people to take up careers in science? In fact it would have been more honest if the grades had been called "professorial" and various shades of "not yet professorial" because that seems to be what it was. It is not that the new staff are "inactive", only that they have not yet reached the pinnacle of their careers. Gee whiz, did we need to spend \$17 million (see below) to find that out?

Of course, it did not have to be like this. If each person had been assessed RELATIVE TO WHAT COULD BE EXPECTED FOR THE RESPECTIVE STAGE OF THEIR CAREER, we would have had a true measure of the quality of all staff, rather than a measure of their seniority. We were led to believe that this was what TEC wanted, but it does not seem to be what TEC have finally done.

2. *Departmental comparisons are obscured by research success and age-structure*

This is bad enough for morale, but it then produces truly perverse outcomes when average departmental or university wide averages are taken. If all post docs and new lecturers score badly, then firstly departments with a lot of success in getting research grants will have more post docs and this will lower their average score (by bringing in more C and R people). This will make such a department seem to be “worse” than a department with a bunch of middle level (say B grade) academics who never get grants and hence have no post docs. Jim Coxon in Chemistry at Canterbury has pointed out that a top institution like Harvard with say 30 top flight academics per department all scoring A, and say 120 post docs with half scoring C and half scoring R, would only have an average score of C overall—below the average for a mediocre department with only B staff and no postdocs. Such a result seems utterly at odds with what TEC were trying to do.

Moreover, even excluding the unfortunate post docs, it means a department’s ranking is to a large extent a measure of their demographics (age structure). At times some departments have a wave of retirements and appoint a lot of new staff. Other departments can have a lot of senior academics due to retire in the next 5–10 years. Anyone who has experienced various departments like this will know that a department full of clever, eager young staff can be the most exciting place, where lots of innovative research is done, students get inspired, etc. Not according to TEC—the department with more young staff will get a low score, because fewer of the academics look like professors. The department with lots of older staff will have a higher rating—until the staff retire, when its rating will plummet even if the new replacement staff are equally clever and innovative.

Neither of these perverse outcomes would have happened if individual assessments were pro-rata for career stage.

3. *“Export education” market undermined by unrealistic yardstick*

The next problem partly stems from the above and constitutes a massive “own goal” by TEC, given that the export education sector (international students) is meant to be an important and growing part of the NZ economy. For some reason TEC announced that the mean university scores were “out of 10” and the best university in NZ scored about 4—on the face of it a failing grade. And the other universities scored even lower! If I saw this from overseas, I would think NZ had a mickey mouse tertiary sector and look to study elsewhere. Of course, if your assessment of quality is “looks like a professor” it will be impossible to get a score of 10, because you can’t arrange to have all staff in a university all be old enough to be professors (and

if you could they would soon retire on you and mess it up), especially since the post docs that come with a vigorous research environment are inconvenient enough to not be professors yet. In fact I heard a TEC person say on the radio that the best universities overseas like Harvard and Cambridge “might score a 6”. So perhaps the top score was actually 6, and the best in NZ got 2/3 of this? Actually, the long version of the TEC report itself says “no sizeable academic unit.. could reasonably be expected to secure a quality even close to 10” (pp 3–4), but did anyone see that qualifier mentioned in a newspaper or on the TV? Of course not. D’oh!

Again, none of this had to be. Either pro rata assessments could have more fairly measured the quality of staff; or at the very least, TEC could have said the maximum possible score was “around 6” rather than 10. Were people paid to mess this up so badly, and if so what were they thinking?

4. *Falling between the date-gaps*

A more technical one here, but one which disadvantaged new staff even more. The last date for including outputs to show your quality was 31 December 2002, but the date for which staff on the payroll had to be included was 30 June 2003. There were new staff (postdocs or lecturers) who were on the job in June and had outputs they had just created after December but weren’t allowed to count. Why were these dates different? Again, perverse outcomes which could have easily been avoided.

5. *True cost of the exercise not measured*

This is my biggest gripe. Did the PBRF have to be done in such a detailed, micro-managed way? Was it worth the cost in time and resources to get so much detail? Could it have been done more cheaply? Of course the true cost does not even seem to be tallied as far as I know; most of the costs were imposed on universities, without any recompense. Let’s have a stab at this. TEC had a budget of \$20 million for the 6 months to June 2003 and spent \$5 million of this on “developing instruments for the tertiary sector”, most of which is probably PBRF. If we assume that half of this was devoted to PBRF, and spending at a similar rate on PBRF over the July 2003 – June 2004 period (perhaps an underestimate as this was when the panels met and report was drawn up), that makes circa \$7.5 million. Now have a stab at the costs not reimbursed. There were just over 8000 academics rated, each had to fill in an EP, which required dealing with new custom software, and probably attending one or more meetings to explain what was needed, plus time to collate publication lists into the required format etc. Let’s say 3 days per person, that gives 24,000 days or 104 person-years. At an average academic salary of say \$65,000 that cost nearly \$7 million. Each university had to have dedicated administrative staff dealing with the paperwork, say 6 per institution x 8 universities x 1 year’s work = 48 person-years at \$45,000 = \$2.2 million. Other



participating institutions (teachers colleges, wananga etc) also had to have staff, say 2 per institution x 14 institutions x 6 months = 14 person/years = \$0.7 M. There were also software costs (for some reason each university was expected to write its own) but I don't know how to estimate that. Even without costs for software etc we have TEC costs of maybe \$7.5 million, and compliance costs in the universities and other institutions of perhaps \$10 million for a total around \$17 million. Recall that in the first year, the total amount of money to be distributed as a result of this exercise is only \$18 million, though it does increase in later years. Of course my estimates above are extremely crude; I would welcome any more accurate figures, or even an indication that someone somewhere (TEC perhaps?) is going to calculate more accurate cost estimates for the whole process.

It didn't have to be like this—excruciatingly detailed and based on individual staff ratings. In the NZ Education Review of 10 March 2004, before the TEC results were released, John Gerritson did a scoping exercise, collating generally available public data from Calendars etc about the universities (largely tallying lists of publications, staff numbers, PhD completions, Marsden grants, and external research income) and in less than a week came up with some general rankings which were remarkably close to the final TEC ones. In the UK, two psychologists (Andy Smith and Mike Eysenck of the University of London) showed in the very similar UK exercise (called the RAE) that there was a high correlation (r values of between +0.85 and +0.91) between the final RAE departmental scores based on averaging detailed person-by-person assessments, and a very simple tally of the total citations accrued by all staff in each department over one calendar year (1998). They argued that in the UK doing the latter would have been just as effective and far cheaper. (Their full report is available at [www.pc.rhbc.ac.uk/citations.pdf](http://www.pc.rhbc.ac.uk/citations.pdf).) Did anyone in NZ consider such a move? Would TEC have stuck with the current methodology if they had had to reimburse universities for the compliance costs (and hence approach parliament for a proper funding allocation, with justification for why it was worth getting all the detail)? I suspect not.

#### 6. Conclusions

I would have to say TEC would score a D for this process. It could easily have been much better but several key decisions have resulted in widely publicised “league tables” which can be shown to correlate badly or even inversely with research quality. Meantime the exercise has been very expensive and has managed to piss off nearly every young researcher. All of which could, and should, have been foreseen and avoided. Let us hope 2006 is better run, and more transparently costed and funded.

#### 7. Coda: finding out more about your own score.

It turned out that the three components of the overall rating for each staff member (research outputs, peer esteem, and contribution to research environment) all were important in determining the final score. In order to score better next time, it can be helpful for staff to know how well they did on different parts and therefore whether they were close to a grade boundary, and which part of their Evidence Portfolio (EP) would need a boost to go up a grade. Individuals who were rated by the PBRF can get information from TEC about what these individual component scores were (and thus, whether you were high or low within a category band). What you need to do is send an email like this:

To: [pbrfinfo@tec.govt.nz](mailto:pbrfinfo@tec.govt.nz)

Subject: PBRF Gradings

Under the provision of the Privacy Act, I request the individual scores (i.e. for research outputs, peer esteem and contribution to the research environment) that made up the quality score I have received in the recent PBRF evaluation, to be forwarded to me.

Full name: Josephine Mary Bloggs

Host Institution: University of Nowhere

### SCIENTIST DECLINES PURCHASE OF KAKAPO IN PRAGUE

I was recently in Prague and much to my surprise saw a large sign apparently advertising kakapo. I went in and it turns out that in this case a kakapo is a very exotic looking ice cream. The weather as it was, even in the interests of science, wasn't really ice cream weather; so I turned down the chance to buy a kakapo for a few dollars. I am unclear if it is a Czech product or imported. However, it makes the point about relying on common names when travelling internationally! No doubt there are other linguistic gems and crossovers out there.

Neil Mitchell,  
Auckland University

## HOTSCIENCE

Here is the latest instalment of international papers, books and book chapters from New Zealand researchers. We want to have this list as complete as possible for items published internationally after 2000 so don't be shy—if your paper has not yet been listed let me know about it—the rules for submission are at the end of the listing and are on the website—<http://www.nzes.org.nz/hotscience/rules.html>. The list on the website is now fully searchable and is now easier to navigate around thanks to our wonderful Webmaster. This will make the list, a valuable place to search for New Zealand ecological papers, chapters and books—but will be stronger if it is complete. So, please send your summaries to me. Send them in anytime, I will accumulate them for the next listing.

**Anderson, M.J.; Willis, T.J. 2003. Canonical analysis of principal coordinates: a useful method of constrained ordination for ecology. *Ecology* 84: 511–525.**

We describe a new method for constrained ordination (with reference to an *a priori* specified hypothesis) of multivariate ecological data. Called CAP (for Canonical Analysis of Principal Coordinates), the method can use any distance or dissimilarity measure, and uses canonical tests using permutations to address hypotheses concerning correlations or differences among groups. Using reef fish data from northern New Zealand, we show how it can uncover patterns that are masked in an unconstrained ordination (such multidimensional scaling). We suggest that a CAP ordination together with an unconstrained ordination provide important information with reference to explicit *a priori* hypotheses concerning multivariate data.

**Barker, G.M. 2001. Gastropods on land: phylogeny, diversity and adaptive morphology. Pp. 1–146 In: Barker, G.M. (ed.) *Biology of Terrestrial Molluscs*. CAB International, Wallingford.**

This chapter provides a review of the evolutionary history of gastropods, with emphasis on terrestriality achieved independently in a number of lineages and the associated morphological and ecological radiations.

**Barker, G.M. 2002. Phylogenetic diversity: a quantitative framework for measurement of priority and achievement in biodiversity conservation. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society* 76: 165–194.**

Biodiversity option value can be equated with richness of features expressed by species. Feature diversity of communities can be predicted by the phylogenetic relationships among species. The 'Phylogenetic Diversity' measure (PD) estimates the relative feature diversity of any nominated set of species by the patristic or path-length distances. This study reviews and expands on some of the properties of PD, and develops simple modifications of the measure to enable capture of both the phylogenetic relatedness of species and their abundances. The application of PD concepts to a range of conservation and resource management issues is demonstrated using New Zealand avian case studies.

**Barker, G.M. 2002. Gastropods as pests in New Zealand pastoral agriculture, with emphasis on Agriolimacidae, Arionidae and Milacidae. Pp. 361–423 In: Barker, G.M. (ed.) *Molluscs as Crop Pests*. CAB International, Wallingford.**

This chapter reviews the development of agriculture in New Zealand and the emergence of introduced herbivorous gastropods as pastoral pests. In the context of an agroclimatic classification, the link is made between environment, land use, and ecology of the gastropod communities. The pest status of Agriolimacidae, Arionidae and Milacidae is then addressed in the context of (i) established pastures, (ii) pasture establishment, (iii) forage-seed crops, and (iv) transmission of plant pathogens.

**Russell, J. C.; Clout, M. N.; McArdle, B. H. 2004. Island biogeography and the species richness of introduced mammals on New Zealand offshore islands. *Journal of Biogeography* 31: 653–664.**

Invasion of offshore islands by mammals is a constant threat to conservation in New Zealand. However the factors that correlate with the species richness of introduced mammals on New Zealand offshore islands have never been fully investigated. Using a widespread dataset these factors (geographical, ecological and anthropological) are examined. Distance appears to have become trivial in preventing invasion except for the smallest of mammals. Most high species richness appears related to human activity. Some evidence of a 'small island' effect is found.

**Willis, T.J.; Anderson, M.J. 2003. Structure of cryptic reef fish assemblages: relationships with habitat characteristics and predator density. *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 257: 209–221.**

The effects of reef structural complexity, kelp density, and the density of predators on assemblages of small, cryptic reef fishes were examined in northeastern New Zealand. Sampling was conducted inside and outside of a marine reserve, which acted as a high predator density treatment. There were lower densities of cryptic fishes inside the reserve, which might be explained by effects of predators. The effect of the marine reserve was strongest in the kelp forest habitat, relative to unvegetated habitats. These results imply that removal of predators by fishing may have large-scale positive effects on assemblages of small cryptic reef fishes.

**Willis, T.J.; Millar, R.B.; Babcock, R.C. 2000. Detection of spatial variability in relative density of fishes: comparison of visual census, angling, and baited underwater video. *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 198: 249–260.**

The ability to make accurate estimates of fish relative abundance is the basis of both ecological and environmental effects studies. This paper compares surveys of snapper and blue cod conducted using three methods (underwater visual census, experimental angling, and baited underwater video). Angling and baited video gave consistent estimates of snapper density, whereas visual surveys provided the least reliable measure, with adults only detected at locations where fish have been habituated to divers by hand feeding. Blue cod, however, were well estimated using visual census. The study indicates that methodological standardisation across all species is not always appropriate for environmental effects studies.

**Willis, T.J.; Millar, R.B.; Babcock, R.C. 2003. Protection of exploited fishes in temperate regions: high density and biomass of snapper *Pagrus auratus* (Sparidae) in northern New Zealand marine reserves. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 40: 214–227.**

Rigorous empirical evidence for the recovery of exploited species within 'no-take' marine reserves is limited, especially in temperate regions. The relative density and size structure of snapper *Pagrus auratus*: Sparidae, were measured inside and outside three northern New Zealand marine reserves using baited underwater video every six months from October 1997 to April 1999. Snapper that were larger than the minimum legal size were estimated to be 14 times denser in protected areas than in fished areas, and the relative egg production was estimated to be 18 times higher. This species was thought to be too mobile to respond to area-based protection.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### Dave Kelly to present the 2004 Cockayne Memorial lecture

The Cockayne Memorial Fund was established by public subscription to commemorate the life and work of Leonard Cockayne by the encouragement of botanical research in New Zealand. In 1964 the council of the Royal Society of New Zealand resolved to institute a triennial Cockayne Memorial Lecture, to be supported by the trust fund.

The 2004 Lecturer is our very own Dave Kelly (ex-secretary, and long-time NZES stalwart) who will make appearances all around the country.

*“Plant reproductive biology in New Zealand: masting, mutualisms and mistletoes”*, Associate Professor Dave Kelly FRSNZ from the University of Canterbury

Recent years have seen major advances in understanding the complexities of native plant reproduction in New Zealand. In his talk entitled “Plant reproductive biology in New Zealand: masting, mutualisms and mistletoes” Professor Kelly will survey two important and interacting areas: variable seed production (“mast seeding”), and bird/plant mutualisms.

#### Lecture timetable

**Auckland:** Wednesday, 7 July, 7.30 pm for an 8 pm start, APEC Room, Auckland Museum. Entry via East door. Supper will be served. This is a joint Botanical Society and Institute meeting.

**Nelson:** Tuesday, 20 July, at 7.30 pm, A211 Lecture Theatre, Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology

**Canterbury:** Wednesday, 21 July, at 8 pm, Lecture Room C3 (in the central lecture block), University of Canterbury

**Hawke's Bay:** Tuesday, 27 July at 7.30 pm, Faraday Centre, Faraday Street, Napier

**Rotorua:** Wednesday, 28 July at 7.30 pm, District Council Chamber, Rotorua District Council

**Hamilton:** Thursday, 29 July at 7:30 pm, University of Waikato, Room SG03, Block S, via Gate 8, Hillcrest Road, Hamilton

**Wellington:** Monday, 16 August at 7:30 pm, Science House, 11 Halswell Street, Thorndon, Wellington

**Manawatu:** Tuesday, 17 August at 7:30 pm, Te Manawa (formerly known as The Museum and Science Centre), 396 Main Street, Palmerston North

**Otago:** Wednesday, 8 September at 12 noon, Hutton Theatre, Otago Museum, 419 Great King St, Dunedin

Looking over the previous lecturers reveals a veritable who's who in New Zealand Botany—Dave is joining very illustrious company and deservedly so.

1965 Lucy Beatrice Moore

1968 John Thorpe Holloway

1971 Geoffrey Thomas Sandford Baylis

1974 Eric John Godley

1977 Alick Lindsay Poole

1980 Alan Francis Mark

1983 Reinhart Hugo Michael Langer

1986 Peter Wardle

1989 Kevin F. O'Connor

1992 David Graham Lloyd

1995 Alan Ross Ferguson

1998 No lecture

2001 Matt McGlone

### Nigel Barlow Memorial Symposium: Practical applications of ecological theory and modelling

15–17 September 2004, Queenstown NZ

Landcare Research and AgResearch are pleased to announce a symposium in memory of Dr Nigel Barlow, to be held in Queenstown, New Zealand, in mid-September, 2004.

Nigel was an internationally respected population ecologist, and made significant contributions to a wide range of ecological fields. He was Editor of the *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* from 1985 to 1991, and of the *Journal of Applied Ecology* from 2000 to just prior to his death last year. The Australasian Wildlife Management Society posthumously awarded him the prestigious Caughley Medal for a lifetime contribution to wildlife management and ecology.

The symposium will cover subject areas in which Nigel was active, and will be published in the *New Zealand Journal of Ecology*. Papers on areas in which Nigel was active have been invited (see below), but there is room for some submitted papers. It is intended that papers will be published. There is also room for people who wish to attend the symposium without presenting papers. The list of speakers is top-notch and this looks as though it will be a very exciting meeting.

<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Title</b>
Mandy Barron et al.	AgResearch, NZ	Native insects as targets and casualties of bio-control
Mark Bulling et al.	Uni of York, UK	The importance of spatial heterogeneity in the transmission of Tb in wildlife
Peter Caley	CSIRO, Australia	Tb transmission among possums—dogma, data and models
David Choquenot	Landcare Research, NZ	Reconciling single-species and trophic interactive models for herbivores
Mick Clout	Uni Auckland, NZ	Biological invasions
Tony Dixon	Uni. E. Anglia, UK	Body size and resource partitioning in ladybirds
Richard Duncan	Lincoln Uni. NZ	Modelling biological invasions
Murray Efford	Landcare Research NZ	Developments in density estimation
Jim Hone	Uni Canberra, Australia	Linking population dynamics to management
John Kean	AgResearch NZ	The population dynamics of rarity
Charley Krebs	UBC, Canada	Ecology after 100 years: Is Nero fiddling?
Dave Leathwick	AgResearch, NZ	Wasp dynamics—a colony model
Steve McLeod	NSW Dept. Ag., Australia	Viral vectored immunocontraception OR consumer-resource dynamics and harvesting
Nick Mills	UC Berkeley, USA	Ecological theory and the practice of classical biological control
John Mumford	Imperial College, UK	Predicting impacts of biosecurity change
Dave Ramsay et al.	Landcare Research, NZ	Persistence of Tb in possums: insights from a spatially explicit stochastic model
Tony Sinclair & John Innes	UBC, Canada / Landcare Research NZ	Predator-secondary prey model for kokako
Graham Smith	CSL, York, UK	Persistence of disease in territorial animals: insights from a model of Tb control in badgers
Charles Todd	Arthur Rylah Inst., Australia	The interactive forest-koala-management game
Kumar Vetharanim	AgResearch NZ	Biocontrol of varroa using a benign strain as an antagonist
Graeme Wake	Massey Uni. NZ	Population dynamics of size-structured populations
Steve Wratten	Lincoln Uni. NZ	Modelling the effects of resource subsidies in biocontrol

## Estimating Animal Abundance

19–22 July 2004, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.

Due to heavy demand, we have moved to a larger venue, and have some additional places at \$NZ1250 for this course, available on a first in basis. For more information and registration go to the webpage: <http://www.creem.st-and.ac.uk/conferences.php>

### Presenters

*Dr. David Borchers* is head of the Research Unit for Wildlife Population Assessment. He has 15 years experience in animal abundance estimation, 10 years experience teaching and is the lead author of the main course text.

*Prof. Walter Zucchini* is director of the Institute of Statistics and Econometrics at the University of Göttingen. He is a co-author of the main course text and of the associated software library WiSP. He has 30 years of teaching and consulting experience.

This four-day workshop will introduce participants to the most important methods of estimating animal abundance, including recently developed methods. We will explain the common key statistical concepts underlying the methods, and build on these to create an understanding of advanced and recently developed methods. The workshop will combine lectures with hands-on computer sessions aimed to give participants experience in using the methods

The course will teach the concepts underlying abundance estimation methods in a rigorous but accessible way. Roughly half the course will involve participants using the methods in computer simulations, to build understanding by experience. We cover all the main methods of estimating closed population abundance as well as more advanced methods that integrate various of these. The way these methods are extended to open populations is covered, but open population methods themselves are covered only in brief outline. The material is designed primarily for life- and environmental scientists, wildlife managers and conservation workers, but it may also be of interest to applied statisticians working in these fields. Participants will need to have some numerical training (an undergraduate-level course in statistics, for example) although the key statistical concepts required will be developed in the early part of the course. A maximum of 30 participants can be accommodated.

Some knowledge of Microsoft Windows will be assumed. We will use custom-written software that runs in the free statistical package R. No prior knowledge of R is assumed. Participants may bring their own portable computers.

The following publications and software will be provided to participants at no additional cost:

Estimating Animal Abundance: Closed Populations, D.L. Borchers, S.T. Buckland and W. Zucchini, Springer Verlag, 2002. Lecture notes containing all of the overheads and slides shown during the workshop. The free statistical software R and the wildlife simulation program used on the course. Webpage with registration information: <http://www.creem.st-and.ac.uk/conferences.php>

This workshop will follow on from the International Biometrics Conference in Cairns (11–16 July 2004 <http://www.ozaccom.com.au/cairns2004/>), which features an invited session on “New developments in wildlife population assessment”, with Byron Morgan and Steve Buckland (United Kingdom).

## Critical issues in the agro-ecology of insects workshop

23–25 August 2004, ICE Satellite Meeting, Lincoln University.

This workshop is being organised at Lincoln University, New Zealand, as part of the International Congress of Entomology (ICE) in August. Agroecology of insects is a very topical aspect of entomology. It includes such themes as dispersal and migration of natural enemies, conservation biological control, population recovery of natural enemies following pesticide use, ecosystem function / diversity relationships, insect conservation ecology etc.

The workshop will have informal sessions led by world specialists in the above and other areas. It will have a strong emphasis on “tools and techniques”, including marking and tracking beneficial insects, digital video analysis of natural enemy behaviour, third and fourth trophic level interactions etc.

A registration form and full details are available from our website: <http://events.lincoln.ac.nz/ent04>

## MEETINGS DIARY

New entries are marked with an asterisk.

### \* 24–25 June, 2004

*Building partnerships for pesticide risk reduction: a symposium for future action*  
Wellington. <http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/news-events/focus/pesticide-symposium.asp>

### \* 2–11 July, 2004

*2004 New Zealand International Science Festival*  
Dunedin. Contact Michelle McCormack, [projects@scifest.org.nz](mailto:projects@scifest.org.nz), <http://www.scifest.org.nz>.

### 6–9 July, 2004

*International Conference on Sustainability Engineering and Science*  
Auckland. Contact Vicky Adin, [vickya@kiwilink.co.nz](mailto:vickya@kiwilink.co.nz), <http://nzsses.org.nz>

**19–22 July 2004***Estimating Animal Abundance*

University of Canterbury, Christchurch. <http://www.creem.st-and.ac.uk/conferences.php> or contact Ian Westbrooke [iwestbrooke@doc.govt.nz](mailto:iwestbrooke@doc.govt.nz)

**\* 10–11 August, 2004***6th New Zealand Natural Hazards Management Conference*

Taupo. Contact Diane Tilyard, [d.tilyard@gns.cri.nz](mailto:d.tilyard@gns.cri.nz), <http://www.gns.cri.nz/news/conferences>

**10–13 August 2004***Forest diversity and resistance to native and exotic pest insects*

The International Union of Forestry Research Organisations (IUFRO) Conference, Hanmer Springs, Canterbury. <http://iufro.boku.ac.at/iufro/iufro.net/d7/wu70307/nz/>

**\* 23–25 August, 2004***Critical issues in the agro-ecology of insects workshop*

ICE Satellite Meeting, Lincoln University <http://events.lincoln.ac.nz/ent04> or contact [shrewsbh@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:shrewsbh@lincoln.ac.nz)

**\* 29 August– 2 September, 2004***NZES Annual Conference*  
Invercargill.**\* 31 August–3 September, 2004***7th International River Management Symposium*

Brisbane. Contact Glenn MacRae, [glenn@riverfestival.com.au](mailto:glenn@riverfestival.com.au), <http://www.riverfestival.com.au>

**\* 5–8 September, 2004***International Conference On Bioinformatics*  
Auckland. See <http://www.incob.org>.**\* 15–18 September, 2004***Practical Applications of Ecological Theory and Modelling*

Dr Nigel Barlow Symposium, Queenstown. Contact John Parkes, [Parkesj@landcareresearch.co.nz](mailto:Parkesj@landcareresearch.co.nz), <http://www.improvedbiosecurity.org/BarlowSymp/Welcome.htm>

**\* 30 September –6 October, 2004***NZ Water and Wastes Assn 46th Annual Conference & Expo*

Wellington. Contact [events@nzwwa.org.nz](mailto:events@nzwwa.org.nz), <http://www.nzwwa.org.nz>

**\* 19–21 October, 2004***New Zealand Grassland Association Annual Conference*

Methven. Contact [mail@grassland.org.nz](mailto:mail@grassland.org.nz), <http://www.grassland.org.nz>

**\* 14–19 November, 2004***11th International Conference on Harmful Algae*

Cape Town, South Africa. <http://www.botany.uwc.ac.za/pssa/hab2004>

**\* 22–26 November, 2004***DNA Technology Workshop*

Palmerston North. <http://imbs.massey.ac.nz/workshop.htm>

**\* 28 November–1 December, 2004***14th annual Queenstown Molecular Biology meeting, Molecular Mechanisms in Cell Biology*

Queenstown. Contact [julian.eaton-rye@stonebow.otago.ac.nz](mailto:julian.eaton-rye@stonebow.otago.ac.nz), <http://www.qmb.org.nz>

**SCHOLARSHIPS AND JOBS****Goat diet and demography—possible Masters project**

Wanganui Conservancy, Department of Conservation, is looking for a suitable person to undertake a demographic and diet study of goats in Whanganui National Park. These goats have not been hunted intensively in the past and are described as small animals compared to other goat populations.

We want to establish baseline data on demography (number of animals, sex ratios, breeding age, breeding success, size of animals) and diet, so that in the future we can describe how the goat population changed over time when hunted.

For instance, we expect to find changes in diet as palatable species become more common, larger goats and increased fecundity as food becomes more plentiful.

Goat control will start in July 2004. We will be asking the hunters to collect data on age, sex, condition, breeding condition, etc and they will also collect stomachs for diet analysis and jaws for aging. The person would analyse the stomach contents and age the jaw bones, and would also analyse all the other demographic data and produce a report for publication in the DOC science series.

The project would be similar to that undertaken by John Mitchell on Egmont (1985, The Diet of feral goats (*Capra hircus* L.) in the rimu-rata-kamahahi forest of Mount Egmont, MSc Thesis, Zoology Department, University of Massey) but could also include aspects from the study by JM Clark (1974, Ecology of feral goats (*Capra hircus* L.) in the southern King Country, New Zealand, MSc Thesis, University of Canterbury).

We haven't finalised any details yet but we are looking at putting up our hunters time to collect the autopsy data and about \$4000 to \$5,000 for the person doing the analysis. We are pretty flexible in what this person can do, provided we get the baseline information we are after. This study could be the basis of a Masters project.

*Additional options*

None of these options are costed or budgeted for yet, but if there are students interested in this topic but they need additional material for their thesis we may be able to arrange something.

The thesis could be expanded (perhaps to PhD size) to include any of the following

- A comparison of Whanganui National Park with Egmont National Park. Goat hunting has been very intense in Egmont NP over the last 20 years. We know that the understorey vegetation has changed significantly and that diet is likely to be very different to what John Mitchell found in 1985. Similar data can be collected by the goat hunters there. (We would like a repeat of the Egmont study in the near future even if not part of this initial study)
- Parasite loading of the goats (along the lines of what J. Clark did)
- Vegetation condition versus goat density—we are likely to have teams out monitoring the condition of the vegetation—there are some 20 by 20 plots established already and we are looking to implement a version of the Sweetapple seedling ratio method. The student could have access to these data for their own analyses, provided a version of the report is published in the DOC internal series. Sweetapple, P.J.; Burns, B.J. 2002. Assessing the response of forest understoreys to feral goat control with and without possum control. *Science for Conservation* 201. Department of Conservation, Wellington; Sweetapple, P.; Nugent, G. In prep. Seedling ratio index method for assessing the impact of browsing animals on forest understoreys. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*

We are also interested (at some future date) in goats on the forest/pasture margin. Where and what do the goats forage on most. Do they have an impact on the productivity of the pasture (reduce availability of grass to stock). Do they carry parasites that are transmitted to stock (generally sheep in these forest/pasture areas).

If you know of any potential candidates ask them to reply to Dean Stronge as per contact details below.

Dean Stronge  
*Technical Support Supervisor  
 (Wild Animal Management)  
 Department of Conservation,  
 Wanganui Conservancy  
 Private Bag 3016, Wanganui  
 Ph: 06 345 2402,  
 E-mail: [dstronge@doc.govt.nz](mailto:dstronge@doc.govt.nz)*

**NEWS FROM COUNCIL**

*Editor's Note (Edited and abridged minutes)*

**Minutes of NZES council meeting, 13 February 2004.***Correspondence*

1. Membership changes: 10 new, 9 resignations. Three new unwaged members: Ms Jan Weaver, Mr Barry Hartley, Ms Ellen Cieraad. Seven new full members: Jeanie Byers, Mr Iain Rayner, Miss Gaylynne Carter, Ms Christine Lee, Mr Hamish Dean, Mr John Sawyer, Dr Joanna McQueen.
2. 4 New Subscribers; China Nat'l Publ Import, Australia; TD Kinokuniya Co Ltd, Japan; Ohio University Library, USA; Department of Conservation, Turangi
3. Letter from ERMA calling for submissions on release of a new organism. It was agreed that this was not a priority issue for the Council to respond to. Likewise a questionnaire from ECO would not be responded to.
4. John Gibbs Obituary. Discussion about the death of NZ Ecological Society life member John Gibbs. Murray described to the Council how influential John Gibbs (ex Director Ecology Division, DSIR) had been to NZ Ecology and that an obituary should be written for the journal.
5. Alison described an email she had received from a Malaysian student requesting research funding assistance. Mark pointed out that the Society does not have funds available for this. Alison will respond to the student by email to explain. Other sources of funding that could be suggested to people were discussed, e.g. Envirofunz website.
6. RSNZ Fellowship Nominations – 2004. Possible nominations for fellowships were discussed. Dave suggested that ideas for woman ecologists be considered and sought in the future. Alison suggested that Council maintain a list of possible nominees on the Council members websites. It was suggested that we could possibly collaborate with other organisations e.g. Bot. Soc.
7. Meeting of constituent members of RSNZ on 11 June 2004. There was some discussion over attendance at these meetings. Usually a Wellington council member attends on behalf of the Council. It was discussed that the Royal Society is currently reviewing NZ journals and there is a need for NZES to take part in these discussions. It was agreed that Rachel will attend on behalf of council. Murray will also attend if there is discussion on journals.
8. RSNZ Annual Conference, 18 Nov 2004. Invitation to run other conferences at similar time. Mark has already responded to say that NZES conference has already been set for August.

9. Ecology, Evolution and Behaviour Panel – Marsden Fund. Janet and Duane pointed out that this panel is comprised of mostly molecular biologists with no plant ecologists on the panel. Ecological issues are not being represented because of the make up of the panel. Janet and Duane to draft a letter to express concern that ecology is not well represented and that NZES would be happy to nominate panellists. (*Bill Lee was subsequently appointed to the panel–Ed*)
10. 2004 Academy Medals and Awards. Alison explained that the most relevant award is the Charles Fleming award. Applications close 2 August 2004. It was suggested that Council view the RSNZ web page for more information. Alison will write a section for the newsletter alerting NZES members to the awards. Dave suggested that information on past winners be included

#### *Treasurer's report*

Rachel reported that the Societies current account balance is \$62,000, with an additional \$20,000 on term deposit. The need for a proposed annual budget for 2004 to be prepared was discussed. Dave to provide guidance to Rachel after the meeting and look for information to prepare annual budget for 2004. Rachel to develop 2004 annual budget with guidance from Ben and Dave. Dave also to pass on secretarial information to Shona after meeting. The new signatories on the Societies account are Rachel and Shona. Janet and Dave are emergency signatories.

#### *Journal editor's report*

Richard Duncan sent a report via Shona.

*"In mid-December 2003 I took over editorship of the journal. The transition has gone smoothly due mostly to the excellent systems that David had in place, which I've carried on with. David had completed putting together Vol. 28(1) which has 14 papers and is currently in Jenny's hands. Vol. 28(2) is already approaching half full (5 papers).*

*2003 finished with a record 55 submissions to the journal and 2004 has kept pace to date—4 submissions in January. I have had one enquiry from John Parkes about a special issue in commemoration of Nigel Barlow. John is organising a symposium scheduled for September 2004 and at this stage thinks he has sufficient funding to produce a single issue of the journal with papers from that symposium. These would go through the normal review and editing process.*

*There are two issues regarding the editorial board that I'd appreciate Council feedback on:*

*1. I gather that editorial board members are appointed on a five-year term. Currently one of the board member's terms is up but I'd like to keep them on and they have agreed to stay on in principal with Council's OK.*

*David has indicated that attracting good editorial board members can be difficult given the demands on people's time, and that it's worth retaining good board members if they are prepared to stay on and do the job. So, I'd like to get Council's OK that board members can stay on for a second term.*

*2. If the high submission rate for 2003 is maintained then we will have to increase the size of the editorial board to cope. In particular, there has been an increase in submissions of plant ecology papers and with my move to editor we will have to appoint one and possibly two new board members in this area, which I'd like to go ahead and do."*

Janet pointed out that the membership of the editorial board is the editor's prerogative and that we are happy to say yes.

There was some discussion on the proposed special issue of the journal. It was suggested that the special issue be produced as a supplement. The journal editor would have the final say. It was agreed that the production of a third supplementary issue is acceptable but Mark pointed out that the Council needs to be confident that it has sufficient funds. In the discussion that followed it was felt, however, that the Society should be able to provide partial financial support if necessary. Janet to respond encouragingly to John Parkes and Richard regarding the proposed supplementary issue and explain that the Society may be prepared to fund partly.

Murray questioned where the review of journal costs is at. Jon explained that Richard is following this up. The printing of the journal is relatively expensive. For example Murray pointed out the costs for producing *Notornis* = \$20,000 – 260 pages 900 copies. In comparison *NZ J Ecology* = \$25,000 – 200 pages – 700 copies.

The need for an annual budget for the journal was discussed. The possibility of changing printers was discussed. Jon to remind Richard to keep the review moving. John Sullivan offered to assist with finding a cheaper printer. John to be kept in the loop on journal cost review.

Alastair requested a balance for where we are at with submitted papers. There is a need to know if there is a backlog of submitted papers. Jon to ask Richard for report showing manuscript backlog.

#### *Kauri Fund*

Murray reported on progress with the establishment of the Kauri Fund and tabled the final documentation. Sign off is now required in order to apply for charitable status through the IRD.

Murray proposed that the name be changed to: "Kauri Fund for Ecological Science and Education" adding the words "and education" to reflect the intention of the fund to promote excellence in both ecological science and education.



**Moved** that the “Kauri Fund for Ecological Science and Education” be approved as tabled by Murray Williams by Dave, **seconded** John, **passed**. The Kauri Fund document was signed by all council members present.

Alison to formally write to Bruce Burns to thank him for his excellent work on the development of the Kauri trust.

#### *Webmaster's report*

Through TFBS the Government has funded the scanning of all back issues of the journal for placement on the Ecological Society website. To date all journals back to 1985 have been scanned and computer read. Proceedings before that will be done next. The project is on track to be completed by June 2004 (\$18,000 in total). The first 15 years will be up in next few weeks. Website use is up 50% from last year. Copyright issues were discussed. Murray suggested that copyright be placed on front of each scanned journal/article with wording to the effect—“use for school and non commercial uses, for all other uses contact the society”. Jon will express thanks to student (Shaun) who has done the scanning. It was suggested that a poster be produced to publicise the launch of the web based journals. Alison to check on costs. Council members to email Jon with any useful links to other websites, e.g. Envirofunz.

The issue of publicising the Journal was discussed. Dave suggested that the journal needs to be publicised to libraries—as many libraries in the world be contacted. The issue of charging for journal content was discussed. Murray suggested that the journal information needs to get out freely. Jon requested that someone else on council needs to take on the role of publicising the journal. This role could cover other Society publicity issues.

There was discussion on other items that could be put on either the Council member's website or the Ecological Society website. Dave will email Jon his spreadsheet of council history to place on website. Shona to keep updating this. Special Ecological Society publications plus statements on sustainability, population, beech forests etc. need to be scanned in and put on the Society website.

#### *Newsletter editor's report*

Alastair pointed out that a replacement for him will need to be found at the AGM.

It was agreed that three newsletters will be produced before the Conference (March, May and July). Notice of the AGM will be placed in March newsletter. This will include a call for motions for AGM. May newsletter will contain registration forms for Conference, June newsletter will include Council annual reports (treasurer and president). Annual reports will need to be completed by early June in order to make newsletter deadline. Deadlines for Conference abstracts and early bird registration will be 25 June 2004.

Electronic distribution of newsletter (by email) was discussed—possibly give people the option.

#### *Conference 2004 Invercargill*

Kate reported on organisation of the 2004 Conference. Andrea Goodman, Kate and Carol West are organising the conference. To be held at Ascot and Working Man's Club (Thurs). The budget for the Conference was discussed. Planning on 200 people attending at cost of approx. \$180 per person. Need to cater for non members and student registration fees. Non member fee usually includes membership costs + conference fee. Society will need to provide an advance to the conference organisers to cover immediate costs. Kate to organise cash flow and Rachel to organise advance and request secretariat to advance required amount. It was discussed that Society would cover any loss at conferences.

Society usually subsidises travel costs for students (\$1000–\$2000). Amount of subsidy is decided once know how much discretionary \$ is distributed according to travel costs. Ecological Impact of people going to conferences was brought up by Dave—keep a check on catering, disposable cups etc., use calico bags. Extra support for Kate was discussed. Dave and Diane Brunton as possible email contacts. Murray suggested other contacts in Invercargill.

The need for a Conference Pack (how to run a conference) was discussed. Mark to follow up with Diane Brunton and Sandra Anderson (organisers of Auckland Conference) who have offered to prepare a conference pack based on experience from Auckland.

#### *Awards*

Alison to update Alastair for newsletter. No nominations yet received for Te Tohu Taiao award. There is a need to promote the award. Richard was to put registration form on website. Council to email comments on awards to Alison. It was suggested that the awards need to be publicised in the newsletter.

#### *Education Subcommittee*

Kate passed on reminder from Carol West that Tui Time needs to be promoted—is available on CD as well.

#### *Submissions*

Thank to Murray for preparing Submission Policy and co-ordinating Societies submission on DoC General Policy. Submissions policy is now available on web site.

John brought up issue of Czech botanists who were arrested for taking native orchids out of the country. This is a serious national issue—lack of national legislation, no protection provided for native flora and invertebrates. Should Ecological Society be lobbying for better legislative protection? It was agreed that this issue be parked until next meeting. John to draft letter on the issue.

*Membership of IUCN*

Dave circulated history of issue at meeting. Wren Greens comments had been circulated to members by email before the meeting. Dave suggested that the issues be presented in the March newsletter and that it be put up at next AGM.

Discussion on the pros and cons of membership followed. Murray pointed out that members can have speaking rights at IUCN assemblies. Rachel asked about the content of the paperwork being sent to the Society from IUCN. Dave explained that through the correspondence he had not received anything very useful. Murray raised the issue that specialist groups often have more input into the nuts and bolts of IUCN work. Other members of the Society have input into IUCN through other ways which do not require membership. John gave the example of the Plant Conservation Network being asked to co-ordinate threatened plant reporting and activities in NZ for IUCN. These specialist groups receive no funding support from IUCN. John pointed out that the status of the Society belonging to the IUCN (profile on a world scale) could be seen as a benefit to members. It was decided that we pay the subscription for this year and that the pros and cons of membership would be presented at AGM, to allow members to vote on it.

*Council Planning for 2004*

Mark briefly presented his ideas on what the council should try and achieve this year:

- Journal – printing elsewhere
- Conference
- Promotions
- Annual budget
- Promoting kauri trust

Dave reported that membership of the society has doubled but subscriptions lessened over the years. Murray pointed out that declining subscriptions to journals is worldwide issue due to electronic publishing. Many are looking at other ways of charging. RSNZ also have a promotion role. Shona suggested that the council needs to look at the mechanisms for the transfer of science information to a wider audience. Mark suggested that a running issues register be set up. This issue will be parked until next meeting.

*Dates for next meeting – Friday 21 May*

## ECOLSOC E-MAIL LIST SERVER AND WEB PAGE

**Ecolsoc E-mail**

To subscribe to this server, send a message to the automatic Mailserv processor at:

[nzecosoc-request@its.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:nzecosoc-request@its.canterbury.ac.nz)

The recommended way to subscribe is to send a message with two lines:

SUBSCRIBE NZECOSOC

END

The command line to stop receiving mail from this list is:

UNSUBSCRIBE NZECOSOC

Once subscribed, you will receive instructions on how to send messages, unsubscribe etc.

PLEASE KEEP THESE INSTRUCTIONS AND FOLLOW THEM.

To send a message to anybody on the list, even if you are not a subscriber, use the address:

[nzecosoc@its.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:nzecosoc@its.canterbury.ac.nz)

To reply you have two options. You can either hit reply and this will reply to **everybody**, or you can reply to the author only (e.g., a new e-mail with the author's personal e-mail address).

For information on the listserv contact the newsletter editor ([A.W.Robertson@massey.ac.nz](mailto:A.W.Robertson@massey.ac.nz)) or me at [d.kelly@botn.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:d.kelly@botn.canterbury.ac.nz). For information on the Australian listserv contact Dave Kelly.

**Web page**

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

## Office Holders of the New Zealand Ecological Society 2003/2004

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

**Secretariat (society office – Noreen Rhodes and Sue Sheppard)**  
NZ Ecological Society  
PO Box 25-178, Christchurch  
Tel./Fax: 03 960 2432  
Email: [nzecosoc@paradise.net.nz](mailto:nzecosoc@paradise.net.nz)

**President**  
**Mark Sanders**  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag Twizel  
Tel: 03 435 0256  
Fax: 03 435 0852  
Email: [president@nzes.org.nz](mailto:president@nzes.org.nz)

**Vice President**  
**John Sawyer**  
Department of Conservation  
P.O. Box 5086  
Wellington  
Tel: 04 472 5821  
Fax: 04 499 0077  
Email: [jsawyer@doc.govt.nz](mailto:jsawyer@doc.govt.nz)

**Immediate Past President (for 2004 only)**  
**Janet Wilmshurst**  
Landcare Research  
PO Box 69  
Lincoln 8152  
Tel: 03 325 6700  
Fax: 03 325 2418  
Email:  
[WilmshurstJ@landcareresearch.co.nz](mailto:WilmshurstJ@landcareresearch.co.nz)

**Secretary**  
**Shona Myers**  
Auckland Regional Council  
Private Bag 92012  
Auckland  
Tel: 09 366 2000 ex 8233  
Fax: 09 366 2155  
Email: [secretary@nzes.org.nz](mailto:secretary@nzes.org.nz)

**Treasurer**  
**Rachel Keedwell**  
24 Buick Crescent  
PO Box 5539  
Palmerston North  
Tel: 06 356 5519  
Fax: 06 356 4723  
Email: [treasurer@nzes.org.nz](mailto:treasurer@nzes.org.nz)

**Councillors**  
**Alison Evans (2002-04)**  
DOC Canterbury, Private Bag 4715  
Christchurch.  
Tel: 03 3799 758  
Email: [amevans@doc.govt.nz](mailto:amevans@doc.govt.nz)

**Duane Peltzer (2002-04)**  
Landcare Research, PO Box 69, Lincoln  
Tel: 03 325 6701 ext 2252  
Fax: 325 2418  
Email: [peltzerd@landcareresearch.co.nz](mailto:peltzerd@landcareresearch.co.nz)

**Murray Williams (2002-04)**  
Science and Research, DOC  
PO Box 10-420, Wellington  
Tel: 04 471 3286  
Fax: 4713 279  
Email: [mwilliams@doc.govt.nz](mailto:mwilliams@doc.govt.nz)

**Kate McNutt (2003-05)**  
Southland Conservancy  
Department of Conservation  
PO Box 743 Invercargill  
Tel: 03 214 7524  
Fax: 03 214 4486  
Email: [kmcnutt@doc.govt.nz](mailto:kmcnutt@doc.govt.nz)

**Journal scientific editor**  
**Peter Bellingham & Duane Peltzer**  
Landcare Research  
PO Box 69, Lincoln  
Tel 03 325 6701  
Fax 03 325 2418

**Journal technical editor**  
**Jenny Steven**  
2664 Carrington Rd  
RD4 New Plymouth  
Tel./Fax: 06 752 4478  
Email: [techeditor@nzes.org.nz](mailto:techeditor@nzes.org.nz)

**Newsletter editor**  
**Alastair Robertson**  
Ecology, Massey University  
Private Bag 11222  
Palmerston North  
Tel: 06 350 5799 ext 7965  
Fax: 06 350 5623  
Email: [newsletter@nzes.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@nzes.org.nz)

**Webmaster**  
**Jon Sullivan**  
Ecology, Lincoln University  
PO Box 84, Lincoln  
Tel: 03 325 2811  
Fax: 03 325 3844  
Email: [webmaster@nzes.org.nz](mailto:webmaster@nzes.org.nz)

**Submissions convenor**  
**Murray Williams, see above**  
*Co-opted onto council for 2004 as past secretary*  
**Dave Kelly**  
Biological Sciences, University of Canterbury  
Private Bag 4800, Christchurch  
Tel: 03 3642 782  
Fax: 3642 530  
Email: [dave.kelly@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:dave.kelly@canterbury.ac.nz)

This Newsletter was produced by Alastair Robertson and Jeremy Rolfe.

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:

*Alastair Robertson*  
*Ecology, Institute of Natural Resources*  
*Private Bag 11222*  
*Massey University*

*Ph: 06-350-5799 extn 7965*  
*Fax: 06-350-5623*  
*E-mail: [A.W.Robertson@massey.ac.nz](mailto:A.W.Robertson@massey.ac.nz)*

**Next deadline for the newsletter is 9 July 2004.**

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

**This issue is printed on 100% recycled paper**

