From the Editor

Kia ora koutou,

Welcome to the new-look newsletter! Same great content with a slightly different style. We’re transitioning to a new system with the ultimate goal of making the newsletters searchable so all the interesting articles from previous issues can explored and enjoyed. A huge thank you to Jeremy Rolfe for his work on layout and design of the newsletter for so many years.

This will be my last newsletter. I am stepping aside after two years to allow someone else to bring a fresh perspective to our society’s regular communication. If you are interested in giving it a go, please get in touch. I will be providing full training to the next editor with an extended transition period if desired. I’ve really enjoyed putting the newsletters together and communicating with ecologists from across the country. Thank you to all the contributors – there would be no newsletter without input from our members.
We have some fascinating reads in this edition. Chrissie Painting shares her enthusiasm for museums, there are some suggestions for conservation donations and we have a nice book review from Leilani Walker. There are a couple of student profiles and we catch up with some kauri seed scholars. Check out the details for the ERA conference towards the end of the newsletter.

Want more news from the NZES between newsletters? Keep an eye on the website and follow us on twitter (@nzecology) and Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/nzecology/).

Ngā mihi,
Cate Macinnis-Ng

**Illustrate Ecology**

![Illustration of mammals]

**From the archives:** John Flux writes: 'When giving talks to students I arranged all the introduced mammals in this diagram as an aide memoir for them (or quiz). Some ecologists may like it as a wall chart, and cross out each one as they are exterminated in the future.

The species have enough detail to be identified, with some marked to recall their names (e.g. black-tailed, red-necked, white-throated wallabies). To get "6 odds" required the addition of Homo sapiens, and the mythical otter.

For non-mammalogists, the full list, generally top to bottom and left to right, is: 1 European hedgehog; 2 European rabbit, Brown hare; 3 Common weasel, Stoat, Ferret; 4 House mouse, Kiori, Ship rat, Norway rat; 5 Alpine chamois, Himalayan thar, Goat, Sheep, Cattle; 6 Human, "Otter", Horse, Cat, Dog, Pig; 7 Red-necked (Bennett's) wallaby, White-throated (Parma) wallaby, Brushtail possum, Black-striped wallaby (probably extinct), Black-tailed (Swamp) wallaby, Dama wallaby, Brushtailed rock wallaby; 8 Red deer, Wapiti, Rusa deer, Sambar deer, White-tailed deer, Axis deer, Fallow deer and Moose (both probably extinct).’
Feature Article

Beyond museum displays: Making use of natural history collections

Dr Chrissie Painting, Research Fellow, University of Auckland

I recently spent a week in the Otago Museum arthropod collection in Dunedin where I had a wonderful time picking through the myriad of harvestmen. The sheer abundance and diversity of harvestmen in the collection, and the joy I get from being among all this history made me think – not for the first time – just how important biological collections are.

In my short career I have made use of numerous natural history collections around the world, from my academic roots at the impressive Lincoln University Entomology Research Collection, the secret corridors and quirky displays at the Museo di Storia Naturale in Florence, to the great halls of the British Natural History Museum.

While taking a break to look through the public displays is great fun, the main point of these missions is to delve into the arthropod collections kept behind the scenes. Phenomenal amounts of information are stored in never-ending stacks of drawers, filled with insects, bird skins, jars of pickled snakes...pretty much anything you can imagine! If you want to get an idea of the immense amount of objects stored in a museum’s collection, check out this amazing photo essay from the National Museum of Natural History in Washington DC.

One highlight for me was coming across some of Alfred Wallace’s 19th century collection when I was sorting through some brentine weevils in the British Natural History Museum. I’ll never forget that feeling of wonder that I was (carefully) holding the very specimens that Wallace mentions in his famous book The Malay Archipelago:

“I once saw two males fighting together; each had a fore-leg laid across the neck of the other, and the rostrum bent quite in an attitude of defiance, and looking most ridiculous” (p276-277)

These collections represent a snapshot in time and can tell a story about the community of organisms that were present at the place they were found. The possible contributions that collections can make to society are countless. This paper by Andrew Suarez and Neil Tsutsui describes some of the scientific applications from biological collections housed in museums. Museum collections have been used to understand the spread of Argentine ants across the USA, track the effect of climate change on species distributions, and even learn about the transmission of infectious diseases like influenza. What’s apparent from my own experience using collections, and those studies mentioned in the Suarez and Tsutsui paper, is that being able to use museums saves researchers an enormous amount of time and money. Imagine the cost involved in personally...
travelling to all of the places around the world to try to find the specimens you are interested in, and this would be impossible anyway if you want to look at historic patterns.

Visiting the natural history museums where the best collections are kept can also allow you to get to know the experts who also work on your study organisms. Natural history museums often hire scientists who as well as maintaining the collections usually have their own research specialty. These are the people who painstakingly describe new species and who build our understanding of the relationships between groups of species. Given the importance of describing the diversity of species we have in the world, taxonomists are an incredibly valuable group of scientists. If you are lucky, your new taxonomist friends might even invite you to stay at their Tuscan villa where you spend your evenings entertaining puppies and watching the sunset over the olive orchards.

During my latest visit at the Otago Museum I had a couple of goals. Firstly I wanted to get my head around the taxonomy of the long-legged harvestmen (Opiliones: Neopilionidae) in New Zealand. Otago Museum was a perfect place to do this because it houses an enormous number of harvestmen that were largely collected by the Dunedin-based arachnologist Raymond Forster, who was director of the museum from 1957 to 1987. Forster and others deposited specimens into the Otago Museum from all over New Zealand, with a particular focus on the South Island. The collection is therefore very useful when trying to figure out what species are where, and at what time of the year I should be looking. This will help me plan subsequent field trips around New Zealand to observe the mating and fighting behaviour of various long-legged harvestmen species, with the larger goal to try to figure out why males have such varying jaw shape and size.

Examining specimens at Otago Museum
While I was there I also started collecting data on the morphology of as many specimens as I could get through (which was probably 0.0001% of the available collection). As I’m interested in jaw shape and size and how this relates to body size and the sex of the harvestmen, I took lots of photos that I will later use to take various measurements.

So once again I’ve been thankful that natural history museums exist and hope that we can continue funding these valuable institutions. Scientific progress would be greatly hindered if we lost museums and the experts who continue the tradition of describing and understanding our natural world.

If you are interested you can listen to this Our Changing World podcast by Alison Ballance which was made after the recent Royal Society report on National Taxonomic Collections in New Zealand. You can also learn more about the importance of taxonomy and biological collections in New Zealand here.

This piece originally appeared on Chrissie’s blog, https://chrissiepainting.com/. Reproduced here with permission. See the web version for photographs and more links.

**Conservation giving**

Conservation in New Zealand has always relied on volunteer efforts and donations from the public. There are plenty of ways you can make a get involved or make do something to make a difference. Here are some active projects you may be interested in contributing to.

**Matuku Link** is a conservation project run by the Matuku Link Trust. The organisation is raising funds to purchase a significant parcel of land that includes part of Te Henga wetland one of the largest remaining wetlands in the country. The space is adjacent to Ark in the Park and existing buildings on the land will be converted into teaching space for school students and accommodation for postgraduate students and other researchers. Much of the land will be revegetated to improve habitat for many species of rare and threatened birds. [https://givealittle.co.nz/project/matukulink](https://givealittle.co.nz/project/matukulink)

**Kea conservation in Arthur’s Pass.** There is growing concern that kea numbers are in decline across Te Wai Pounamu. Arthur’s Pass attracts thousands keen kea spotters each year. This exciting project will build on existing education and outreach, carry out a banding programme to increase the number of banded birds and establish a citizen science monitoring programme. The overall aim is to enhance positive interactions with one of our most charismatic endangered birds. [https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/keacitizenscience](https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/keacitizenscience)

And if you need any more encouragement to give, here’s a nice piece from the Wall Street Journal on the benefits of generosity. Every little bit counts! [http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324009304579041231971683854](http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324009304579041231971683854)
Book review


Review by Leilani Walker

A sequel to the critically praised The Owl that Fell from the Sky, The Unburnt Egg gives terrestrial vertebrate curator Brian Gill the opportunity to showcase another handful of natural history specimens from the Auckland Museum. In each chapter, Gill considers one such specimen and uses it as a jumping-off point to discuss not only the natural history of specimen but to touch on historical curatorial and naturalist practice. His subjects include the titular moa egg which survived a house fire in 1961, a recording of humans imitating huia calls, and even a diary kept by a taxidermist employed at the museum in the 1880s.

The topics covered in each chapter are varied and, coupled with Gill’s substantial experience as a natural historian and museum curator, this book could have been beyond the reach of non-experts. While those unfamiliar with New Zealand natural history or with some basic concepts in biology may find the text dense to read, scientific expertise is not necessary to access this work and Gill explains most techniques and concepts as he goes. With museums at the meeting point between science and history, I can think of very few people who would not learn something interesting from this book.

However for me, the delight of The unburnt egg is how Gill leads readers through the process in piecing together each object’s history. We accompany him on trips to other institutions, into the field and even to the doorsteps of a confused vicar in Ham Common, London. Each object begins a mystery and these brief narratives are resolved through Gill’s own dogged pursuit of answers, collaboration between institutions and occasionally through sheer serendipity. Gill writes with humour and clear affection for not only the objects themselves but for the hands and places they pass through en route to his care.

The direction of the text takes a slight turn in the closing chapter which reflects on the state of natural history with one section focusing on interactions with individuals from humanities and liberal arts backgrounds. Gill relates encountering a “subtle opposition” to science which I certainly do not doubt.
However, his written rebuttal relies too heavily on straw-man portrayals of liberal arts academia and consequently is a poor affirmation for the value of science particularly in contrast to the main text.

However this short section does not diminish the value of what goes before. Through his stories, Gill demonstrates the value of the scientific method which, with careful curation and the ready flow of information between institutions, facilitates the accumulation of knowledge over time. This book is a pleasure to read and provides a valuable insight into our natural and scientific history and into the pioneering scientists who people that history.

**Student profiles**

**Anna Kokeny** – University of Auckland

I’m a Masters student at the University of Auckland studying the factors that affect the nest-site selection, abundance and species richness of native ground nesting bees in New Zealand.

Biodiversity loss has been heavily driven by the expansion and intensification of agriculture. Biodiversity is critical for the functioning of ecosystems and the provision of ecosystem services, such as pollination. Globally, bees are important pollinators in both natural and production systems. Over 85% of the world’s estimated 20,000 bees species are solitary, most of which nest in the ground. However, little is known about the basic biology of many ground-nesting bee species or how they are effected by landscape scale factors. I aim to investigate how local and landscape scale variables influence the abundance, diversity and nest-site selection of solitary ground-nesting native bees in the Northland and Waikato regions of New Zealand. I plan to 1) characterise the substrate of native ground-nesting bee nest sites and 2) assess the effect of landscape-scale variables and farm management practices on native ground-nesting bee communities. Understanding the basic biology of ground-nesting bees as well and their response to local and landscape scale variables is important for informing land management practices to conserve and restore pollinator biodiversity in the face of environmental change.
Native ground-nesting bee laden with pōhutukawa pollen (background yellow colour).

**Tom Saunders** MSc Student at The University of Auckland, supervised by Darren Ward from Landcare Research.

Parasitoid wasps are diverse, keystone species that have proven economic applications in pest management - but our knowledge of native species is poor. How many species do we have in NZ, where are they found, and in what numbers? And how do they interact with other species? These are basic questions that are yet to be answered.

Recent estimates place our parasitoid wasp fauna in the region of 3,000 species, accounting for the vast majority of NZ Hymenoptera as our bees and ants are species-poor. To understand our parasitoid wasps we must first catch them, and this is where my research comes in. I sampled two sites in the Waitakere Ranges with 20 Malaise traps, three times over the summer. I focused on the two most speciose families, Ichneumonidae and Braconidae, using molecular methods to match the males and females.

I’m exploring the relationship between sampling effort and the proportion of diversity captured using 'rarefaction' techniques. By comparing catches within and between sites, and across different periods, I’m aiming to develop flexible methods that promote the capture of as many species, as quickly as possible, with the fewest number of traps. Invertebrate surveys are increasingly subject to funding and time constraints, so further study of parasitoid wasps must be economical.
Additionally, I'm describing a native species of parasitoid wasp from the genus Lusius. Only 80 specimens of this species have been collected, and very little is known about its behaviour or ecology. I'm measuring and comparing the body parts of my specimens to produce a species description to be published at the conclusion of the study in late 2016.

Tom setting up a malaise trap at one of his field sites.

**Kauri Seed Scholars**

The Kauri Seed Scholar programme was established in 2010 to give promising undergraduate students the opportunity to attend the annual conference, network and learn more about ecological research happening across the country. A total of 48 scholarships have been awarded across the six years of the scheme. We are tracking down past recipients to find out where they are now. If you were a scholar, please get in touch with Society Councillor Tim Curran (Timothy.Curran@lincoln.ac.nz) and let us know how you are doing.

Here, two of our scholars reflect on their experiences and share their current activities. Thanks for putting these words together Ann-Kathrin and Olivia!

'I was a Kauri Seed Scholar in 2011 and was able to attend the NZ Ecological Society conference in Rotorua. This opportunity was hugely motivating for me as not only was I able to listen to talks from all aspects of ecology - which allowed me to explore more of my own interests into different topics and stretch my mind, but also meet a range of inspiring people. During my undergraduate, I was mostly interested in plant ecology and restoration ecology. I am currently working more in the field of wildlife conservation and molecular ecology, which I back then never imagined. Since completing my undergraduate studies at the University of Auckland (BSc Biological Sciences), I worked for one year for a nature conservation NGO in Germany as a research assistant, completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Wildlife Management (with distinction) at the Otago...
University and have been involved in various practical conservation projects with
the Department of Conservation. I am currently undertaking a PhD with the

"Conservation management of black-fronted terns" using conservation
genetic and habitat management tools to improve the effectiveness of black-

fronted tern conservation in New Zealand's braided rivers. I would like to
especially thank Bruce Burns and George Perry who were incredibly encouraging
and inspiring to me.’

Ann-Kathrin Schlesselmann

‘I was lucky enough to attend the 2015 NZES conference in Christchurch in the
second year of my degree, and was the first student from the S.I.T
environmental management degree to do so. One of the highlights was the day
trip I attended which showcased some of the restoration projects going on in the
city’s abandoned spaces. This got me really interested in urban ecology and
specifically restoring biodiversity in urban landscapes, and also led to the idea
behind my third year research project.

I’m now at the tail end of my study, which is investigating ways to improve
native biodiversity in the cityscape of Invercargill, through the theoretical
integration of greenways into existing urban green spaces. I wanted to take a
dualistic approach to it because urban biodiversity is both a social and ecological
issue so it involved a public survey, interviews and biodiversity assessments
(and lots of stressing!).

I’ll be graduating my degree this December, and am hoping to secure a summer
position with Environment Southland helping out in biosecurity with regional
weed surveys. My plans for the future include a nice long break from studying
and getting involved with more biodiversity initiatives with my free time, and
hopefully finding a job along the same lines! I’d like to see myself making a
difference in how we represent native biodiversity in our urban landscapes in the
future.

I’ve also got my eye on the Masters in Science Communication at Otago
university (think environmental filmmaking), because I’m still working on
combining my communication skills (I’ve got a diploma in Journalism) and my
enthusiasm for our indigenous species, and I think storytelling might be the way
to go.’

Olivia Taylor-Peebles

News from council

The position of Vice President will become vacant at the annual conference. An
election will be held at our Annual General Meeting at 12.30 pm on Monday 21st
November at Claudelands Events Centre, Hamilton. Nominations can be made
from the floor at the AGM, but the council would appreciate potential
nominations to be discussed with the President prior to the AGM. We thank
Laura Young for her outstanding service to the society over a number of years,
most recently in the role of VP. Laura’s contributions to website development
and maintenance, not to mention the organisation of the Christchurch
conference have been exceptional. We acknowledge the huge amount of time and effort Laura has put into these activities. Ka pai Laura!

**Annual conference student day, 19 November**

On behalf of the 2016 Ecological Restoration Association Conference Student Day Organizing committee, I am writing to warmly invite you to the official student day. This will be held at the University of Waikato on Saturday November 19 from 9:00 am till 5:00 pm.

We're expecting it to be a great day with a mixture of student presentations as well as two discussion panels ("Ecology in a multi-disciplinary environment" and "Effective science communication") with food and refreshments provided throughout the day. Transport to and from the venue will be arranged. This is completely free to attend as well.

We're aware that many of you will be needing to arrange travel plans ASAP, so please do try to organize your plans so that you can attend the student day. More information will come in the coming weeks so please check out the website: [http://www.era2016.com/programme/student-day-sat-19-nov.html](http://www.era2016.com/programme/student-day-sat-19-nov.html) or facebook page for more information: [https://www.facebook.com/ERA2016Students/](https://www.facebook.com/ERA2016Students/)

We really look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Hamilton on the 19th. Please do get in touch if you have any questions, via either our facebook page or erastudents2016@gmail.com.

Simon Stewart (on behalf of the 2016 ERA organizing committee)
RESTORING RESILIENCE ACROSS ALL ENVIRONMENTS

19 - 23 NOVEMBER 2016
CLAUDENS, HAMILTON, NEW ZEALAND

Joint conference of the Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia (SERA) & the New Zealand Ecological Society (NZES), which is being held in Hamilton from 19 - 23 November 2016.

Our conference headline signifies our aspirational goal to restore resilience to all environments (land and sea, urban and rural), upscaling our efforts from local to regional and national scales.

The conference is structured around the following themes, which are designed to illustrate the broad framework:
- Ecosystem Function
- Marine, Reef and Estuarine Ecosystems
- Freshwater and Floodplains
- Forests and Grasslands
- Restoration Genetics
- Mining Restoration
- Species Focus
- Invasive and Pest Species Management
- Indigenous Restoration and Co-Management
- Working Outside the Box
- Society and Politics
- Frameworks
- Standards and Planning
- Methods and Technologies

The conference programme also includes a fantastic range of Symposium Sessions, from Ecological Holes - A Pathway to Predator Free New Zealand, to Innovations for Mine Site Restoration. For further information, please see the website www.era2016.com/programme/symposium.

This conference promises to be an unforgettable event that will bring together over 500 delegates who represent all levels of government, universities, students, researchers, contractors, suppliers, volunteers and consultants.

KEYNOTE & GUEST SPEAKERS

We have an exciting line-up of plenary speakers covering a wide range of topics, from:

Margaret Lowman, Director of Global Initiatives, Lindsay
Chair of Botany Institute for Biodiversity Science and
Sustainability California Academy of Sciences
Talk time: Sunday 20 November at 9:30 AM

Wendy Henwood, Whakarongo Research group, Massey University
Talk time: Sunday 20 November at 1:20 PM

Alain Watson Fothomase, Conservation Charity Trust for
Life
Talk time: Monday 21 November at 8:16 AM

Kinglsey Ouch, Chairman SERA Australia and Professor
and Director, SREC Centre for Mine Restoration, Depart-
ment of Environment and Agriculture, Curtin University
Talk time: Monday 21 November at 8:50 AM

Sir Rob Finlayson, Executive Director and Environmental
Talk time: Tuesday 22 November at 8:10 AM

Myla Anton, Department of Ecology, Evolution and Natural
Resources at Rutgers University
Talk time: Tuesday 22 November at 8:50 AM

Seali Cunningham, Fenner School of Environment and Society,
Australian National University
Talk time: Monday 21 November at 4:16 PM

Ross Thompson, University of Canberra
Talk time: Tuesday 22 November at 3:10 PM

Jacqueline Beppu, University of Auckland
Talk time: Tuesday 22 November at 2:50 PM

Baihania Waddy, Executive Director, Society for Ecological
Restoration
Talk time: Monday 21 November at 4:50 PM

FIELD TRIPS

Friday 18th - Saturday 19th November
Pureora Forest Park

This trip provides an opportunity to see short and
long-tailed bats, including the communal roost trees
that can contain hundreds of individuals.

Saturday 19th November
Bai Field Trip - Pakemokemoke
The Pakemokemoke Reserve covers 40 ha and
enjoys a rich diversity of native plant species, bird
life and our native long-tailed bats.

Sunday 20th November
Hammond Park Field Trip
Come and hang out with Hamilton’s bats and bat
lovers. Join the Project Echidna team for an evening
excursion to explore one of the city’s most
biodiverse gardens.

Wednesday 23rd November Field Trips Options Include:
- Mangatawhiri, Kindly Sponsored by Waipa District Council
- Urban Restoration
- Puhoi River Mirrors
- Whatawhata Sustainable Hill Land Management
- Hobbiton Tour
- Ice Age Parit Lake, Kindly Sponsored by Waipa District Council
- Torehia restored bog restoration
- Waitakere Big Foot, Mostly Section
## Programme at a Glance

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<td><strong>Friday, November 18, 2016</strong></td>
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<td>All field trips, leave from Claudelands</td>
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<td><strong>Saturday, November 19, 2016</strong></td>
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## Other Highlights - See Website for More Info

**Student Day - Saturday 19 November (University of Waikato)**
ERA 2016 encourages students to participate in the annual conference. A special student day will provide an opportunity for up-and-coming young ecologists to showcase their research through oral presentations and learn from panels of experts what it means to navigate the field of ecology.

**Science Open Day - Sunday 20 November (Claudelands)**
This special Science Open Day is designed for scientists, students, educators, not-for-profits, community environmental groups and members of the wider community who are engaged in, or wish to learn more about cutting-edge restoration science. An introduction to the Waikato region’s innovative landscape change, ecology and indigenous culture will start the day.

**Bat Symposium - Sunday 20 November (Claudelands)**
Bat enthusiasts are invited to the ERA conference to take part in what will be yet another fabulous gathering of bat enthusiasts. This is an opportunity to profile sterling bat conservation work happening throughout the country at the prestigious ERA Conference. The symposium will provide an opportunity for scientists and community to engage on this topic.

## Accommodation
Hamilton offers a wide range of accommodation options to suit all budgets. Get in quick to book your accommodation before it’s too late. Accommodation options can be found on the conference website, www.era2016.com
Noticeboard and upcoming conferences

Calling all published ecologists! Stephane Boyer is conducting a survey on co-authorship. [http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3024711/New-Survey](http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3024711/New-Survey) Any questions about the survey should be directed to s.boyer@unitec.ac.nz

The 12th International Congress of Ecology (INTECOL 2017 Beijing)

will be held in Beijing, China, August 21-25, 2017. As the host of the congress, the Ecological Society of China (ESC) warmly welcomes ecologists, environmental policy makers and practitioners to join this Congress from all over the globe.

The theme of the congress is “Ecology and Civilization in a changing World,” which will focus on harmonious and sustainable development among people, nature, and society in the context of global change.

Thematic topics of the congress:
- Ecosystem services and management
- Global climate change and ecosystem adaptation
- Urbanization and regional environmental change
- Biogeochemical cycling and ecosystem health
- Ecological degradation and ecosystem restoration
- Environmental stress and biodiversity conservation
- Industrial ecology and green economy
- Molecular ecology and evolution
- Landscape pattern, process and sustainability
- Ecohydrology and watershed management
- Paleoecology, ecological dynamics and environmental assessment
- Agroecology, sustainable agriculture and rural development

For more information about the 12th INTECOL International Congress of Ecology, please visit the website: [www.intecol2017.org](http://www.intecol2017.org).

Combined Australian Entomological Society 47th AGM and Entomological Society of New Zealand Conference


Ecological Society of Australia Annual Conference

28 November – 3 December 2016
Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle, Western Australia,
2016 New Zealand Molecular Ecology Conference

5pm Friday 2nd December - approx. 2pm Sunday 4th December

and introducing MOLECOLBIO a pre-conference workshop, 2nd December

Join us in Shakespeare Regional Park, Auckland!

Registration  Including accommodation and food, cost to be advised
Accommodation YMCA Shakespeare Lodge
Schedule  Friday workshop: featuring BEAST2 (separate registration)
          Friday evening: welcome, dinner, & evening activities
          Saturday and Sunday: presentations, outdoor, & evening activities

Free time will be scheduled for enjoying the Park (a fenced wildlife sanctuary), and participating in outdoor activities such as canoeing, sailing, climbing and archery.

Please indicate by Sept 20 your interest in attending the conference and workshop here:

Questions contact Libby, Stephane, Richard, or Shane: NZMolEcol@gmail.com
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(Effective from November 2015)

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