

WILDLIFE RANGER — MY LIFE IN THE NEW ZEALAND OUTDOORS

by Ken Francis

Here is an important book by New Zealand's first Wildlife Ranger, which covers a span of 54 years, by anecdote and description of times and troubles in the world of the backblocks and departmental life, as New Zealand grew to nationhood.

Knowing the author as I do, I am pleased to be able to review this book. His marvellous descriptions of happenings in the dim past; the "roughing it" that exemplified his duties, whether on animal control or survey; the almost unbelievable hardships; the loneliness, miles from help, before the days of helicopter rescue and before the hordes of trampers and climbers invaded the back country.

Recruited to kill deer, then later to become a Government Ranger in Taupo and then Bay of Plenty — the prevention of trout poaching and illegal shooting — capturing of escaped prisoners — adventure all the way. His fascinating working life culminated in his becoming a world authority on kiwis when he was appointed Chief Ranger for Hawkes Bay and manager of the famous Green Meadows Game Farm.

An eminently readable book, amusing and adventurous, and with an admixture of pathos, a reminder of times past. Well done, Ken Francis, your book deserves to be read.

DAVID COLLINGWOOD

Whitcoulls Ltd Publishers,

\$15.95.

FIFTY YEARS OF MOUNTAIN FEDERATION

Compiled by Roy Burrell

The formation, tramping and climbing, mountain safety, wilderness, access to mountain land, conservation of the mountain environment — such are some of the twenty two chapters of this informative book to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (Inc). A sister organisation to our own Society, it was formed on the initiative of that grand old man, A.P. Harper, who served the Federation as it's president from 1933–1934 and much later became our own president in 1948.

The association between F.M.C. and R.F. & B. is much deeper than the Acts governing National Parks, Forest Service, Reserves and the host of other enactments which touch on New Zealand's naturalness. Today we share membership on the Joint Campaign on Forests and behind the scenes our members continue to earn their spurs in F.M.C. and on the high mountain zones as they have done down the years.

This book is brimming with interest to Forest & Birders. It has historic photos and throws light on much of the work of F.M.C. which has previously been largely unsung and now can be appreciated.

What I welcome is the accurate dating of events and what transpired, the reasoning behind the policies of F.M.C., and the way one can recognise why F.M.C. has become the prestigious body of today. All of this is most readable in this 182 page book with 44 black and white photos and two colour photos.

An important book recommended for all who love New Zealand's naturalness.

DAVID COLLINGWOOD

Available from: Federated Mountain Clubs, P.O. Box 1604, Wellington. \$10.00

COLLINS GUIDE TO NEW ZEALAND SEASHORE

by Dave Gunson

The natural history of our sea shore is celebrated in this timely and compendious guide book. It satisfies a long felt need, and gives the New Zealander an insight into, and appreciation of the zone, so important to us all, which girds us about, and which has been so little comprehended in the past.

The author says in his foreword that the intention was quite simply to describe and illustrate those items, animal vegetable and mineral, that the casual observer may expect to encounter on a visit to the New Zealand beach. He has divided the book into two parts separated in the middle by sections on marine and coastal plants. The first part deals with sedentary creatures and those that slither, crawl, and scuttle around the lower shore and shallow waters. The second part deals with the more developed and freer-ranging animals such as insects, lizards, birds, fish, seals and dolphins and whales.

While the subjects do not follow a strict taxonomic sequence in the text, being arranged rather by association and lifestyle, nevertheless the proper order is shown in a taxonomic guide at the end of the book.

There are 240 pages which include over 600 illustrations of species. Sixty-four are in colour. The illustrations are all beautiful drawings by the author, and display with clear and generous definition high artistic craftsmanship.

The book is a companion to the other guides, so much a feature of Collins publications. Most useable, easily brought to the site of observation and bound in a robust plasticised cover; a must for those with an interest in the seashore.

Highly recommended, a work of excellence.

DAVID COLLINGWOOD

Collins Publishers, \$24.95.

Book Reviews