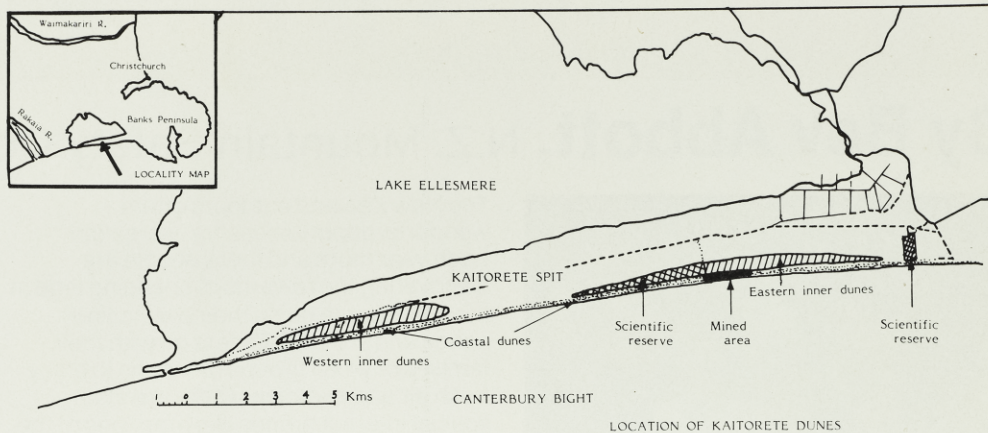


eastern dunes has been undertaken by a contracting company, originally without any agreement or payment, but since 1964 under a renewable licence from the Lands and Survey Department. Currently a total of 11 hectares of pingao covered dunes have been removed along a 1050 metre stretch, a total of about 274,384 cubic metres of sand. Removal of sand from this dune system is quite unjustifiable. The natural process of dune rebuilding at this end of the Spit is minimal, the ecological damage is immense and alternative sources of sand do exist for the company's operations.

On 8 March 1984 the mining company, Habgoods Ltd, were given three months to apply for a licence under the Mining Act, which would give the public opportunity to object.

On 26 June 1984 Habgoods posted an application for a mining licence over a further 23.4 hectares of the Kaitorete pingao-covered dunes. Our Society is objecting to this application and we hope that the Department of Lands and Survey will also object.

A special study written by a Lands and Survey planning officer, J. D. Palmer in 1980 and made public by the Department concludes that "in view of the Kaitorete dunes natural, cultural, archeological and recreational values ... the present extent of reserve land is inadequate. The whole Crown land dune complex is worthy of reserve status".



## Natural Sand Dunes Need Help

It is time to stop further damage and destruction of our remaining natural sand dunes.

We now recognise that these dunes and their special plants and animals are just as distinctive and important as our great kauri forests. We also know where our remaining natural sand dunes are and that few of them are adequately protected. The DSIR's Biological Resources Centre will document this information more fully as it works through New Zealand identifying opportunities for a representative reserve network. Unfortunately this work could take ten years or more and meanwhile modification and destruction of natural dunes will continue.

Fortunately many of our remaining natural dunelands are on Crown owned land. Their future lies in the hands of the Minister of Lands and his Land Settlement Board. If the dunes are given reserve status, their further destruction for forestry, farming, mining, urban and recreational developments will be stopped. Further grazing damage should also stop provided the reserves are properly managed.

The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society is already active in advocating better protection for natural dunelands throughout the country, including:

- ☐ Pressing for removal of stock from the natural dunes of the Te Pahi Farm Park in the far north.
- ☐ Seeking a western extension of the Waipoua Forest Sanctuary to include kauri forest on dunes around the Wairau River.
- ☐ Seeking a halt to sand mining of the Crown owned pingao dunes of the Kaitorete Spit as well as control of stock.
- ☐ Seeking to prevent the construction of the Feltex logging road around the pingao covered dunes of Sand Hill Point, Waitutu.
- ☐ Advocating reservation of the podocarp dune forests of the Haast lowlands and for better controls on beach mining in South Westland.
- ☐ Appealing to the Land Settlement Board to give reserve status to the nationally important Crown owned dunes at Mason Bay, western Stewart Island currently under a pastoral lease.

Reserve status for natural dunes will not remove the threat of invasion by weeds such as marram, gorse and lupin. A programme of control, where feasible, by hand and through careful spraying will be needed. It is encouraging to see this work already underway to protect natural dune vegetation in Fiordland National Park and on Stewart Island.

Cultural use of pingao may become increasingly important to the Maori people. Provision must be made for a sustained supply of pingao for weaving and other cultural purposes. Obviously such a supply should not rely heavily on the vulnerable surviving pingao populations. Instead a programme of pingao revegetation should be encouraged to bring pingao back to marram blanketed beaches such as Brighton, Dunedin; Waimairi, Christchurch; Waikanae; Wellington and Muriwai, Auckland. Already some Maori groups have started growing pingao for cultural purposes.

For 140 years our natural dunelands have been disappearing from the landscape. We can't afford to lose any more of them. We need your support for our national campaign to protect our finest dunelands. You should also consider walking your local beach and if you find pingao plants, weed out any encroaching marram grass.

**Dr Gerry McSweeney**  
National Conservation Officer

