

## 1. WHAT FUTURE FOR WAPITI, HIMALAYAN TAHR?

The Fiordland National Park Wild Animal Control Plan was approved by the Government in May. The plan allows wapiti to remain in the special area of the park for at least another five years during which time they will be controlled, primarily by recreational hunters, at levels which keep damage to the natural vegetation at an acceptable level. The plan has been widely recognised as a compromise between hunting and conservation interests. Unfortunately a group of Southland deerstalkers are now

opposing the plan and seeking to relax it to permit "enrichment" of the wild wapiti herd and to restrict all year round access by foot hunters so the herd can build up. Such proposals run counter not only to National Parks policy but, we believe, also to Deerstalkers Association national policy. Our Society is urging the Minister of Forests to affirm his support for the operative control plan.

Meanwhile, the Government is developing a policy on Himalayan tahr based on results from a preliminary Forest Service census which puts the population of these mountain goats at a mere 1-2,000 animals. Extermination, if feasible, is clearly an option favoured by our Society, and may well prove the most cost-effective option. Failing this we favour control which maintains tahr numbers at their present low levels to allow continued recovery of the magnificent alpine vegetation of the central Southern Alps.

## 4. PRIVATE FORESTS, MANGROVES AND ESTUARIES OF NORTHLAND

Our Central Auckland branch is hosting the Society's November Council meeting over the weekend 24-25 November. The meeting will consider threats to privately-owned forests, estuaries, mangroves and the coastal zone of Auckland and Northland.

## 5. KAINGAROA PLATEAU SHRUBLANDS — A UNIQUE RESERVE?

Kaingaroa, one of the world's largest man-made forests, was planted on land largely covered not by native forest, but by fire-dominated natural shrublands growing on Taupo pumice and volcanic ash. Virtually all these shrublands have now been lost to pines and pasture. The recently published register of Protected Natural Areas in New Zealand (available from Lands and Survey Head Office for \$25.00) identifies no natural reserves in the entire Kaingaroa ecological district. DSIR studies suggest that a mere 1 percent of the Volcanic Plateau shrublands of 1840 survive today. A 600-hectare natural shrubland block of monoao (*Dracophyllum subulatum*) — kanuka dominant shrubland has just been identified on Crown land near the Otamatea Stream adjoining the Kaingaroa forest.

DSIR Botany Division has recommended the entire area become a scientific reserve and that development of the area to farmland proposed for this summer not proceed. The Otamatea reserve would provide an invaluable baseline against which to compare changes in soils caused by exotic afforestation. This example highlights the urgent need to secure representative reserves in the face of widespread land development.

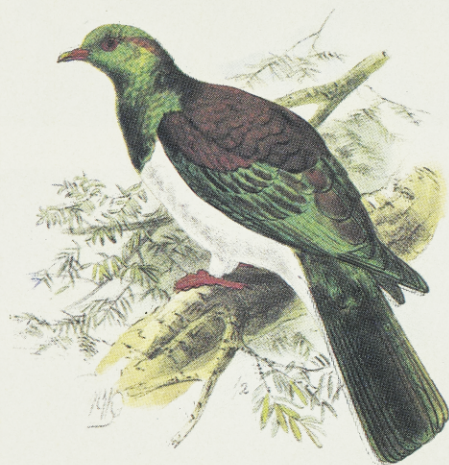
**Dr Gerry McSweeney**  
National Conservation Officer

## SUMMER CAMP AT COOPERS BEACH, NORTHLAND 26-31 January

Accommodation is still available. For details apply to John McBain, Te Ngaere Beach, RD, Kaeo.

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## 2. NEW ZEALAND RATIFIES WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

Ratification of this UNESCO Convention was approved by our Government on 1 October. New Zealand can now nominate its finest natural areas as World Heritage sites. Such areas would join a select group of the world's finest places including the Great Barrier Reef and Sagarmatha (Mt Everest) National Park in what botanist David Bellamy describes as the cheapest tourist promotion you could ever hope for! Two prime candidates (perhaps ideal to commemorate our 1987 National Park Centennial year?) are Fiordland National Park — Waitutu and Mt Cook — Westland National Parks (including the Okarito lagoon and Ohinetamatea kahikatea forest).

## 3. CLEMATIS VITALBA — CREEPING DEATH

A special booklet enclosed with this journal describes the threats Old Mans Beard poses to our native forests. A dramatic poster is also available free from the Noxious Plants Council, Private Bag, Wellington.