

Forest and Bird believes that the intrusion of a huge port in the centre of Fiordland would destroy the integrity of one of the world's finest national parks. The natural values of the area, exemplified by this photo of sub-alpine beech forest, would be grossly undermined.

Photo: Brian Enting

assertion and counter-assertion from opposers and backers of the scheme.

One of the most vocal opponents is Les Hutchins, managing director of Fiordland Travel, and a member of the National Parks and Reserves Authority, the Guardians of Lakes Manapouri and Te Anau, and the Deep Cove Hostel Committee.

"I don't think anybody has said they don't want water exports. But surely there is an alternative to Deep Cove," he says.

In fact, there are a number of options which Hutchins believes should be investigated. There are an abundance of sites in the Fiordland region which would not pose the same threat to the integrity of the National Park that the Deep Cove proposal would. Furthermore, there are alternative sites elsewhere in New Zealand which could be considered.

At present the Ministry of Works is investigating a number of alternatives to the Deep Cove site; a report on this should be released shortly.

Hotly disputed by some Southlanders is "evidence" gathered by Triune that the people of Manapouri and Te Anau are in favour of the scheme. In fact, the Fiordland branch of the Travel Association has drawn attention to the dangers of a major port to the growing tourist industry in the region. At present it is estimated that tourists bring in approximately \$40 million annually to the region, with this rising to \$80 million by the year 2000. This represents about 900 new jobs in the tourist industry.

Meanwhile, Triune will have to overcome possibly its biggest public relations headache when and if it becomes known overseas that the power station workers' toilets discharge into the Deep Cove tailrace (as reported in the Commission for the Environment's audit). While the pollution is infinitesimal relative to the amount of water pouring out of the tailrace, Triune's advertising could well look over-inflated once the truth is out ("The last of the globe's uncontaminated snow and rain is caught by the Southern Alps, filtered through the many mountain tarns and waterfalls of Fiordland National Park, and decanted in the protected environs of Lakes Manapouri and Te Anau.")

At the time of writing, Triune were predicting that the first shipment would be heading for its destination in June of this year. Like many of its predictions, however, this is another which is certain to be over-optimistic.

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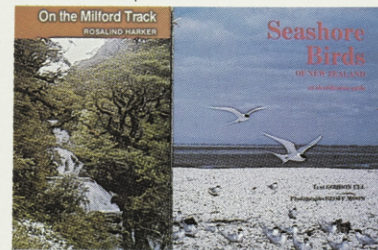
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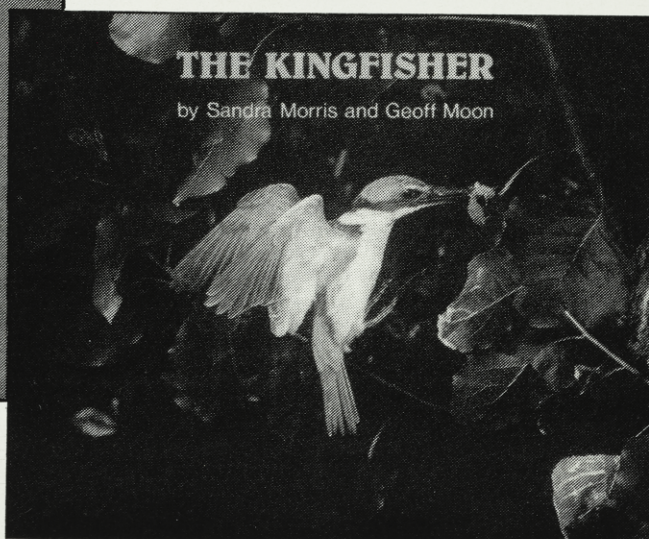
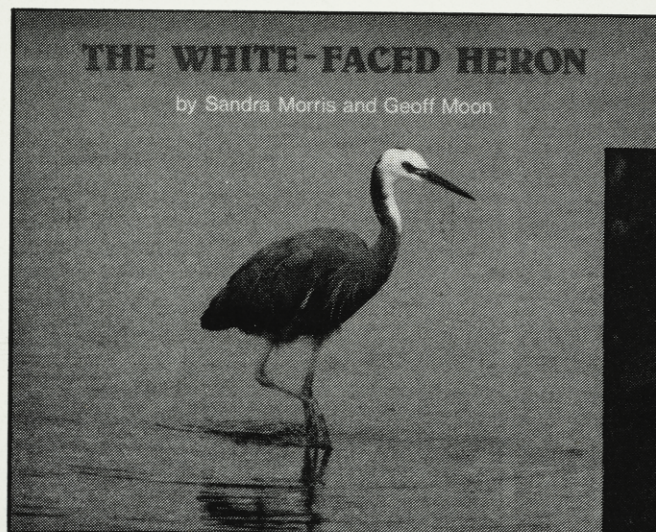
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