

Then, in February 1984, a routine monitoring team was jubilant to find conclusive proof of breeding. As a consequence, a second release of 30 birds was quickly planned and put into action by the Wildlife Service.

Bad luck dogged the second capture programme: first rough seas delayed the start, and then rain set in. Two weeks later a disappointed team left the island with a saddleback catch which barely made double figures. A redeeming feature of an uncomfortable but memorable trip were the seven female birds caught. These would help the initial imbalance of sexes resulting from the first transfer.

### Calculated risks

Island reserves and their wildlife are preserved in perpetuity for all New Zealanders and other peoples. Usually entry permits are required if you want to visit an island where at risk species live. Often this means that the very people the land was reserved for are denied access because they directly or indirectly constitute the greatest threat to the endangered species.

For this reason, an important part of New Zealand's heritage has been locked away, and often the only chance the public has had to view an endangered species was in a museum or zoo. Even so, this protective attitude still has not stopped the introduction of predators — a Norway rat was caught on Codfish Island recently. Reservation and management alone are not sufficient if they lack the support of well informed users.

A time of changing departmental attitudes was signalled by the quiet beginnings of two projects: Motukawanui and Tiritiri Matangi. Both islands are essentially calculated risks. They harbour endangered species which are vulnerable to predators and yet they remain open to the public. People might also, accidentally or otherwise, set fire to the regenerating forests. The open sanctuary

Today, at the beginning of the 1985 breeding season, the number of saddleback on Motukawanui are estimated at 20. As yet the reasons for the low population are not apparent, especially since the birds have established well on Tiritiri Matangi in the Hauraki Gulf, an island similar in many respects to Motukawanui. It is managed by the Hauraki Gulf Maritime Park.

The co-operation and goodwill of all those involved in the project has been its single most impressive feature. Were it not for the two Government departments, numerous individuals and private organisations assisting the park, saddleback would not be on Motukawanui.

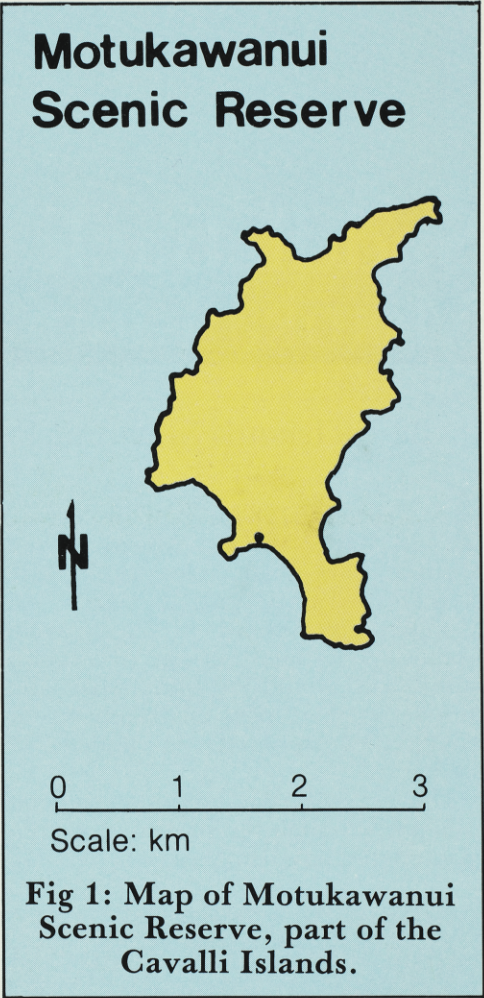
concept is on trial in the hope that the privilege will not be abused.

Our unthinking forbears left us with a legacy of endangered wildlife. Will the new generation be responsible for the loss of this new opportunity? Education is the important factor, and with this in mind both parks have started raising public awareness by involving the public with such activities as tree planting on Tiritiri and bird surveys on Motukawanui.

Another way of minimising risks is through the use of by-laws, such as bans on open fires.

Take advantage of the opportunity provided by these parks, but before you depart obtain all the information warning visitors of what might be a risk to the reserve. A miscalculation on your or any visitor's part would most likely be permanent. The release of a single rodent or mustelid could be as irreversible as extinction, and the visiting privilege extended to all New Zealanders would be unalterably retracted by nature.

Those who go to Motukawanui or Tiritiri Matangi expecting a mantle of climax forest will be heartily disappointed. Yet those with a sense of discovery and a little knowledge will be rewarded by a memorable experience which will broaden their appreciation of offshore islands and the role they play in protecting New Zealand's endangered plants and animals.



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