

they are less than 5cm long. Also, Maud Island has no tuataras and no burrowing petrels, so the forest there is probably safe for frogs.

There are now estimated to be about 200 frogs living in Frog Bank, and a further 1000 or so on Maud Island. It is thought that they are the last survivors of a frog population that also existed on the mainland until destroyed by the activities of man and the predators he brought with him. Maud Island and Stephens Island are still free of rats, and there is hope that on these offshore islands Hamilton's frog can be sufficiently protected.

Perhaps frogs are not your favourite creatures, but they have just as much right to survive as kokako or kauri, or even you and I.

(Information about Hamilton's Frog was provided by Dr Brian Gill of Auckland Museum).

Offshore Islands are of great value to conservation in New Zealand. They can provide naturally isolated and protected homes for many of our endangered species.

Some of these islands even have their own plants and animals that are found nowhere else. The Poor Knights Lily (above left) was discovered in 1924 by a scientific party visiting the Poor Knights Islands, 25km off the east coast of Northland.

It was a certain Mr H. Hamilton of the Dominion Museum who brought the plant back to camp — perhaps he had been out looking for



frogs?

When not in flower, this plant looks very much like New Zealand flax, which is possibly why it had not been noticed by previous expeditions. It also grows on another island close by, but apart from that the only other plants remotely related to it are found in the mountains of New Caledonia.

The Auckland Islands lie 320km south of Stewart Island. Long ago these islands were settled by brown teal, and the birds have lived for so long in this different environment, separated from their mainland relatives, that they have



developed their own individual characteristics.

Auckland Island teal (above right) are smaller, and there are subtle differences in the colour and pattern of their feathers. Their life on the islands has not required them to fly about, for everything they need has been within walking or swimming distance. More important, there were no predators from which they had to escape, so Auckland Island teal have lost the ability to fly. Introduced rats and cats have, of course, completely altered the situation, and there are now thought to be only about 600 of these birds left.

## Frank Alack Award winners.

**F**irst prize of \$90 goes to 15-year-old **Karen Johnston** from Wanganui. Her entry entitled 'The Parson Bird' was judged "quite outstanding" and will appear in a future issue of Quest. Second prize of \$30 goes to 10-year-old **Sarah Markham** from Waverley, Dunedin for another original piece of colourful writing, and the third prize of \$10 is also for a 10-year-old, **Alison Robinson** from Manaia, South Taranaki.

A special mention, too, for 15-year-old **Dean Starnes** from Bombay, Auckland, for some excellent drawings.

All the entries were of a high standard, and some of them were exceptionally well presented, but in the end it was the originality and style that counted.

You will no doubt be all agog to know

the answers to the questions in our other competitions. We asked you what is so unusual about a male *Acanthoxyla* stick insect. Well, it is unusual in that no-one has been able to find one! The females are able to produce baby stick insects without the assistance of a male, if indeed there are any males at all. Which means that the female stick insects are pretty unusual as well.

We had a lot more trouble with the number of individual tuis you can band with four different coloured bands, using no more than two bands per leg. We are reliably informed that the answer should be 440, which seems like an awful lot of tuis. We must confess that we have not tested this answer out on the birds, but our experts and their computers assure

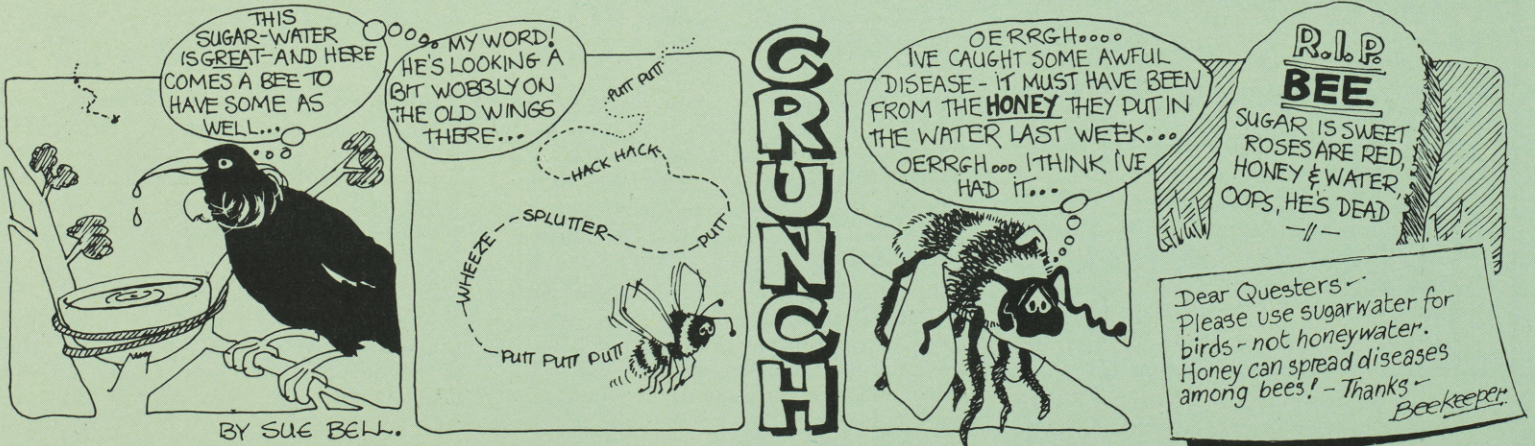
us they are never wrong!

A \$30 book token this time for the first correct answer we receive to these two cryptic clues:

1. Rearrange a scientific hedgehog to save a Scotsman. (The answer is two words, the first with 6 letters, the second with 3 letters.)

2. Captain Cook's dumplings? (Two word answer again here, the first with 4 letters, the second with 7 letters.)

There is no closing date for this competition. As soon as you have worked out the answers send them to Quest Clues, PO Box 33220, Takapuna, Auckland 9. The first one right is the winner, so hurry!



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