



Just one of the many projects designed to engender enthusiasm for the protection of the forests was a run to the top of the Kaimais.  
Photo: Reg Janes

experiences in the natural environment. Use of the Park is available to a large population (1.5 million people live within 150km of the Kaimai-Mamaku range). The Park provides a wide variety of activities from short walks to demanding 2-3 day trips.

As development intensifies, the recreational importance of these forests becomes more valuable.

In the 1960s, when huge areas of central North Island forests were lost to forestry companies for conversion to pines, the then Conservator of Forests, Rotorua, promised permanent protection of Mangatotara and Aongatete forests.

However, management plans drafted in 1972 and 1982 each zoned about half the park for conversion to exotics (1972) or indigenous management (1982). Public op-

The Kaimai-Mamaku forests provide some of New Zealand's finest habitat for the endangered kokako. Photo: Hugh Best



position to such schemes has been strong and effective. It would be hard to assess the number of people involved in the campaign to have the Kaimai-Mamaku forests permanently protected. There have been public walks, a fun-run to the summit, displays, talks, newspaper articles, meetings, a petition, endless letter and submission writing, and presentation of the case for protection to committee after committee.

The 1972 Kaimai Action Group, widened in 1982 to the Kaimai National Park Promotion Council (KNPPC) now encompasses more than 30 conservation and user groups. The sheer physical effort and the hours of time and mental energy devoted to this campaign are impossible to measure, and it says much for the conviction of the Bay of Plenty public that there is no slackening of enthusiasm.

Within the week of 4 to 11 March 1987 a KNPPC deputation visited Wellington to express dissatisfaction with the lack of protection offered by the draft Conservation Bill, and the Planning Tribunal heard over 100 objectors to an application for mining exploration in the Park.

## Requirements of the campaign are:

### No logging — salvage or otherwise.

There is a population boom in the Bay and the more pressured life becomes in urban areas, the more need there is for places of tranquility. A feature of the dead and dying trees, particularly tawa, is the abundance of beautiful fungi and perching plants which grow on them. Old trees are also vital for birds.

**No "enhancement" with exotics such as blackwoods.** Plantings of kauri already exist in the Aongatete area, and V-blading was done in Whakamarama for plantings of eucalypts and Tasmanian blackwoods. A decision last year by the Advisory Committee to remove the blackwoods is being carried out by Forest Service staff this month. Local conservationists offered to do this work, but the growth of pampas grass and bush lawyer in the V-bladed tracks made the job extremely difficult.

The range is remarkable for its ability to regenerate native forest and the KNPPC meetings left no doubt that Park users were keen to have only native vegetation remain. **No mining.** BHP is the latest mining company to apply for gold exploration rights in the Park. Once again the Planning Tribunal will be called to hear local people with widely differing backgrounds plead their case for the principle that the Kaimai-Mamakus be treated as a National Park and all mining activities kept outside Park boundaries.

Botanically, the Kaimai-Mamakus are important for the unique combinations of plants that come together at this point. For example, silver beech reaches its northern limit here and kauri its southern limit. The photo shows regenerating kauri in the eastern Kaimais. Photo: Reg Janes