



Above: "Jaws" in close up, showing the remarkable 2.5 cm long tusks of the male. The ridges at the top of the tusks grate against each other so the animals are able to "stridulate" by moving their jaws.

Both males have engaged horns, and much of the fight progresses like this, becoming an exercise in pushing and stamina. The wetas continue to push, endeavouring to throw their opponent over on his back. After five or so minutes both animals disengage, with the loser rapidly retreating, leaving the winner prancing around in a highly excitable state.

1983-84. However, three specimens being held at Victoria University taken during a March 1989 joint Victoria University/Department of Conservation/World Wide Fund for Nature expedition, are providing some Victoria University scientists with clues as to exactly what sort of weta it is.

Most speculation about the weta has centred on the unusual tusk. It is remarkably stout and very effective in defense but this is mainly by bluff! Most other wetas defend themselves by kicking with well-armoured



The beginning of a fight between the male on the right who has just emerged from his burrow under a fallen log and is threatening an intruding male which is coming in from the left.



The two animals squaring up for a face-off. The tusks are opened so they resemble bulls' horns, and the wetas' hind legs are widely splayed so the animals are braced for the impact of butting movements.

