

Going Easy on the Earth

Suddenly politicians and business seem to be taking the environment seriously. Our concerns make headlines every day. There is a widespread feeling that the world won't last unless we treat it better.

This "environmental crisis" is popularly felt in the weather. No longer does the scenario for a damaged and dangerous world rely on academic theories. People can feel the climate changing. That is something which affects votes and influences customers.

There are many factors affecting climatic change and it is simplistic to suggest that the process is going to stop if we don't drive cars, nor use freons. But there are things people can do, choices people can make in everyday life, which may help in future.

During the sixties and early seventies some of us explored alternative lifestyles, or even voted Values, critical of galloping consumerism. The fuel shortage in 1972 gave a taste of life to be, when finite resources burn out. Yet that fuel crisis was born only of international politics and we soon recovered faith that everything lasts forever, that science will always find a new way. Now again, suddenly it seems, it's becoming clear to everyone that we have to go easy on the earth.

Those fashions of the sixties are becoming imperative for the nineties.

This issue of *Forest & Bird* looks at the broader environment and the choices we have to make. Additionally, the Society has just published a booklet *Go Easy on the Earth* about "green alternatives", simple choices people can make in daily living.

Some people ask why we are doing this, while others want the Society to act more globally. Local support for the international campaigns of Greenpeace is a measure of this popular concern about the world environment.

Forest and Bird cooperates and supports several international campaigns, within its present means, on issues such as global warming, ozone depletion, Antarctica, "wall of death" fishing and tropical rainforests. Yet there is always much to do at home. As a New Zealand-based organisation, strong in membership, branches and initiatives, we particularly speak for our own threatened animals, plants and places. While we are active in the Pacific rainforest campaigns, there are New Zealand forests being chipped for short-term advantage. While the farthest oceans of the world are stripped of mammals and fish, similar deserts are being created in our own seas. New Zealand, contrary to the surface impression of comparative cleanliness, lags behind some other parts of the progressive world in measures of environmental conscience. For example we produce more rubbish per head of population than most other people.

Politicians don't lead in a vacuum; an informed electorate creates the need and will for change. That is why Forest and Bird conducts its lobby.

There is presently a shift in focus among environmental groups towards survivalist issues. Branches and members of Forest and Bird should press their perspectives on the National Society to keep our policies taut and purposeful.

This issue of the journal is a gesture of concern for the whole earth. Our readers, however, through their lifestyles and actions, will decide the depth of that concern.

Gordon Ell
Acting National President



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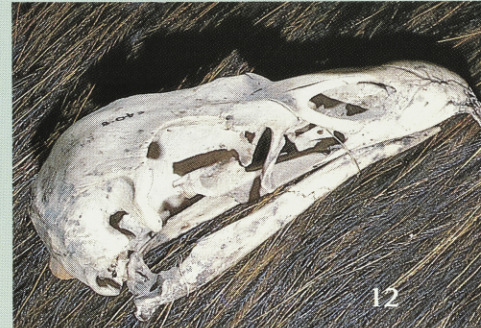
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Forest & Bird is published quarterly by the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Inc.

Society's aims: to protect New Zealand's native species, natural ecosystems and landscapes and promote an appreciation of these.

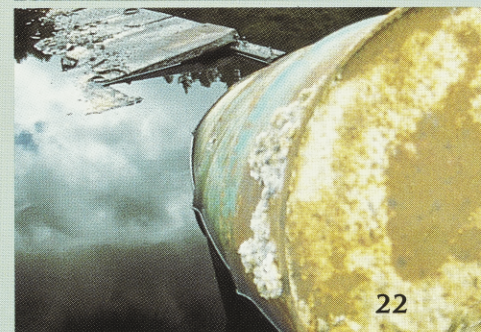
The Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society is a member of the International Union for the Protection of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP).



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Head Office: Seventh Floor,
Central House,
26 Brandon Street, Wellington.
Postal address: P.O. Box 631,
Wellington

Editor: Gerard Hutching.
Registered at P.O. Headquarters
Wellington as a magazine.

Design & Production: Creative Services Ltd
Typesetting: Computype Ltd
Photoprocess: Colourcraft Reprographics Ltd
Printing: Bascands, Christchurch

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ISSN 0015-7384