



## FLEMING CONSERVATION AWARDS

This year the Queen Elizabeth II Scholarships were re-named in honour of the memory of Sir Charles Fleming who gave so much of his life to conservation. A total of \$10,000 was awarded, \$3,000 of this being a new award, the Reader Award for research into endangered birds.

The following people received Fleming Scholarships:

**Russell Death** from Canterbury University for his study of the effect of disturbance on stream ecosystems of human activities.

**Christopher Jowett** who will study predation of the Mahoeui giant weta, to complement other work currently being done. He is working towards his MSc in Environmental Science.

**John Rich** at Lincoln College is studying management strategies for the Manganui-a-te-Ao River ecosystem.

**Julienne Alley** is hoping her studies will be of use in tackling the serious goat problem.

**Wayne Linklater**, working towards an MSc at Canterbury University, will study the forest-stream relationship.

**Andrew Kliskey**, studying for a PhD at Otago University, will look at the management of wilderness areas, and the pressures put on them by recreation and tourism.

**Fran Hyland** is studying for a PhD at Victoria University. She will look at regeneration of miro trees, investigating possible reasons for their scarcity.

**Angus McIntosh** from Otago University will study the effects of introduced species of fish on the native fish populations in streams in Otago.

**Shelley Dean** will study the behavioural factors which affect the reproductive rate of red-billed gulls, especially at Kaikoura Peninsula.

These people have received help from the Reader Award:

**Dale Towers** will gauge the success of artificial nesting sites for breeding grey teal ducks, working for an MSc at Waikato University.

**Alan Cooper**, studying for a PhD at Victoria University, will make DNA studies of moa bones and apply the knowledge to the conservation of kiwis.

**Ron Moorhouse** will study the ecology of the North Island kaka on Kapiti Island for a PhD at Victoria University.

## John Lees – Friend of the Forest



John Lees loved nature and was passionate about its protection. His recent death is keenly felt by conservationists and particularly the Eastern Bay of Plenty Forest and Bird branch, of which he has been chairman and national councillor for the past 10 years.

John was a leader in conservation long before it became respectable. In the '60s he organised a major though unsuccessful petition against logging in the river catchments of the Urewera, which subsequently led to major flooding in Whakatane. Then he directed his energies to the protection of Whirinaki forest, a bitter campaign that was not for the fainthearted.

Charlie Llewellyn, a long time F&B member and friend of John's, recalled how John was black-listed from entering the forest by permit.

"One day John and I were approaching Rogers Hut (in Whirinaki) at dusk. There was a big dog barking and a voice from inside the closed hut door shouted 'If you're a greenie ---- off!'"

"I would have gone away," admits Charlie, "but John just walked in saying, 'I'm a tramper'."

By morning they were on the best of terms with the hostile helicopter pilot who later visited John in Whakatane!

Whirinaki became a Conservation Park and John worked on the Park Advisory Committee from its inception until his death.

More recently he persistently and successfully opposed the building of a seawall at the Whakatane Heads, considering it an unnecessary and potentially disastrous ecological blunder.

John never lost his cool, nor hassled anyone, but his enormous enthusiasm and curiosity and love of nature were irresistible and won him many friends.

His legacy is in the Whirinaki Conservation Park and the many people he introduced to conservation. These include his daughter Annette, a noted conservationist who is working on South Pacific rainforest conservation.

Ann Graeme

## Letters

Dear Sir

I was interested to read the paragraph on page 6 of the August issue concerning events in the United Kingdom. I am glad to tell you the report was a little premature. It is true that former Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley had asked the Nature Conservancy Council to look at the possibility of "selling off" nature reserves currently in the ownership of the NCC. There does not appear to be any enthusiasm for this course of action from any quarter and no actual proposals have been brought forward by the Government. Consequently the "sell off" proposals, if there were any, have been shelved. I must also take you up on the comment in the magazine suggesting that the role of the RSPB may change from being nature advocates to reserve managers. The RSPB has no intention of allowing that to happen. Far from damaging the RSPB's role as nature advocate, the ownership of land supports it. One is able to speak with the experience of managing land for birds, while the existence of nature reserves provides a presence from which to generate increased support for

RSPB. Finally, may I compliment you on the outstanding quality of your magazine, which I find both interesting and stimulating reading.

Yours etc

David Gordon, Director of Finance, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, United Kingdom.

Dear Sir,

Coming from a farming background I found your article on the ferret and the poor controls placed on their farming enlightening and rather concerning. For my part, I had always thought that this animal was classed as "noxious" in New Zealand and treated accordingly. J.W. Parsons, Auckland.

## VACANCY – NATIONAL SECRETARY

Joan Leckie is retiring at June 30 and the Executive is seeking applications for the position of national secretary of Forest and Bird. The position is at Head Office, Wellington. Applicants for this fulltime senior staff position should have relevant administration and financial management experience and an enthusiastic commitment to conservation. If you are interested, please write to or phone the Secretary, Forest and Bird Society, PO Box 631, Wellington (04) 728-154.

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