

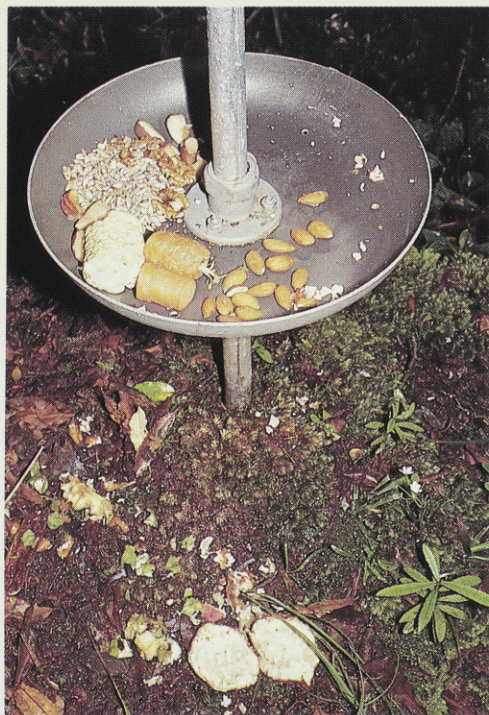
Threatened Species Trust: Conservation

A COMALCO KAKAPO! A Tasman Forestry kokako! What's happening? Has big industry highjacked New Zealand's threatened wildlife to serve its own ends?

Well, yes it has, but it is good news for the kakapo and kokako which will benefit from commercial sponsorship of the Department of Conservation's recovery programmes. The sponsorship is all part of Forest and Bird's new Threatened Species Trust Fund.

Commercialisation of New Zealand's threatened species is not new. The poor old flightless kiwi has been shamelessly exploited for years to help sell a multitude of goods from boot polish to sausages. This curious ancient bird, at its happiest when hunting for grubs in dank rainforest litter, has also been hijacked by sports promoters whose jingoistic chants urge our sports heroes to give the Aussies "A taste of Kiwi".

Needless to say, all this commercial and nationalistic obsession has never benefited the kiwi, whose range and numbers have declined dramatically this century. A recovery programme for all three kiwi species is long overdue as predation by pigs and dogs, along with habitat loss, contribute to its decline.



One of the kakapo feeding stations set up on Little Barrier. The native rat kiore has been attracted to the feeding stations, hence the need to elevate them. At the bottom of the picture is a chewed kumara; it appears male kakapo prefer kumara and brazil nuts, while females have a taste for almonds, peanuts and apples. Photo: Brian Lloyd



Big business and central government at the Threatened Species Trust launch: Comalco chief executive Kerry McDonald (left) speaking to Conservation Minister Philip Woollaston. Photo: Bruce Connew



Tasman Forestry have donated this 4 wheel drive vehicle as part of their sponsorship of the kokako. Left to right: Alan Saunders (Department of Conservation), Basil Graeme (Forest and Bird), Bryce Heard (Tasman Forestry) and Hazel Speed (Department of Conservation).