

# GOING FOR GOLD

by Gerard Hutching



**F**OR THE MOMENT, Opito Bay on the Coromandel Peninsula near Whitianga is a typically peaceful coastal Coromandel hamlet.

For the moment, the threatened New Zealand dotterel nests among the pingao-covered sand dunes. Each year birds return to nest, sign that they continue to find this patch of coastline sufficiently tranquil to raise their young, which cannot be said for many other northern coastlines.

For the moment, pohutukawa, still relatively untroubled by possums in this part of the world, line the coast. Green pasture gently rolls to the sea, past ponds where the rare brown teal has recently made a home.

For the moment, for the moment. But soon the lives of the wildlife, the plants and the people who live at Opito Bay could be changed, perhaps forever.

Australian company Barrack Mining is pushing for a prospecting licence over 127 ha