

UNLIKE the common gecko and the Stephens Island gecko, the Marlborough green gecko is most active by day. The tail is also less frequently dropped, extremely prehensile and used as a "fifth leg" when climbing. This species belongs to the genus *Heteropholis* (different scales) which is endemic to New Zealand and represented by six species. The specific name *manukanus* suggests that it is commonly found on manuka in some parts of the Marlborough Sounds. However, manuka is not seen on Stephens Island and these vivid green geckos are usually found on the foliage of ngaio trees, *Muehlenbeckia* vines or New Zealand spinach. Needless to say, only their movement gives them away!

THE STEPHENS ISLAND TREE WETA, *Hemideina crassidens* (*Hemideina* – half huge or terrible, *crassidens* – thick tooth), is renowned for the enormously enlarged heads of the males. Each male defends a hole in a tree in which several females may live. Females in the "harem" are free to come and go, but if another male attempts to enter, a ritualized fight occurs. The males lunge at each other with their jaws extended, each trying to grab the other male above its jaws. Usually one male retreats after a single lunge. Details of the behavioural repertoire of the species have been aided by Project Weta, an ambitious and successful weta breeding campaign led by Paul Barrett at Wellington Zoo. The zoo obtained its first wild adults in 1987, and in 1988 produced 962 youngsters! These are now adult and young from them are eagerly awaited.



THE SO-CALLED "GIANT WETA" on Stephens Island is, surprisingly, smaller than the largest Stephens Island wetas and males do not have enlarged heads. Their scientific name, *Deinacrida rugosa*, honours their fierce appearance (*Deinacrida* – huge or terrible, and scaly; *rugosa* – wrinkled) but their archaic-looking armour conceals a placid and benign nature that is a delight to any wildlife photographer. Females are larger than males and are easily distinguished by their tail-like ovipositor. This species is also found on Mana and Middle Trio Islands, and was successfully introduced to Maud Island in 1977. Giant weta on Stephens Island occasionally fall victim to foraging tuatara, but are not endangered. They are particularly common in the *Muehlenbeckia* vinelands on the southern end of the island.