

## Conservation holidays – any volunteers?

**F**OR A HOLIDAY with a difference, try the Department of Conservation's Conservation Volunteers working holiday projects. At present the working holidays scheme is operating in just three conservancies – Otago, Southland and the West Coast.

In Otago and Southland former Forest and Bird executive member Fergus Sutherland has been directing the scheme for the past two years. In that time more than 200 volunteers have taken part in live-in working holidays and the projects have run the gamut from yellow-eyed penguin surveying to historic back country hut restorations.

"The projects run for a week and are often in remote and interesting locations. One of the most popular has been the beach clean up at Mason's Bay on Stewart Island's remote west coast.

"The volunteers were landed on the beach by light plane and put up in the old run homestead at the bay. Here they spent six days collecting about 30 cubic metres of plastic debris off the beach, most of it from fishing boats. The volunteers were also able to join scientists monitoring the behaviour of Stewart Island brown kiwi – a bonus was seeing the Duke of Edinburgh on his flying visit to the island in February this year," Fergus says.

Another group spent a week surveying the native sand binding plant pingao along the Catlins coast in South Otago. They found the plant in extensive stands, but threatened by marram grass or stock grazing.

Two thirds of the volunteers were from Otago and Southland; however others came from as far away as Auckland and a significant number were overseas travellers.

More than 20 working holidays are planned




Surveying for pingao and plastic rubbish along the Catlins coast are, from left, Susan Carter (Palmerston North), Brian Murphy (DoC Otago), Philip Rhodes (Invercargill), Carlo Laing (Wellington) and Mark Crocker (Paeroa).

for the 1990-91 summer, including more beach clean ups on Stewart Island and in remotest Fiordland, blue duck surveys in Fiordland and seedling pine eradication in several high country locations.

If you are interested in the Otago, Southland and West Coast working holidays, write to the Co-ordinator, Conservation Volunteers, Department of Conservation, PO Box 5244,

Dunedin, or the Department of Conservation, Private Bag, Hokitika. A \$4 donation is asked to help cover the costs of sending the programme as well as regular newsletters.

Other conservancies are running volunteer programmes as well. Phone the co-ordinator for conservation volunteers at the DoC conservancy near you. 

## KNOW YOUR WEEDS

### Wandering Jew

**W**ANDERING JEW (*Tradescantia fluminensis*) is a ground covering plant which forms dense smothering carpets in damp shaded areas of native forest, inhibiting the germination of most other species. In the long term this could cause the demise of many forests due to canopy species not being able to regenerate, allowing other weeds to establish. It is ubiquitous in small lowland forests in warmer areas, but is sensitive to frosts.

The succulent nature of the plant's stem and its ability to grow from any fragment allows wandering Jew to be such a successful weed without setting seed. It is frequently dispersed along waterways.

#### Control

Attempts to control wandering Jew have had mixed success. In small areas such as home gardens, rolling up dense patches like a carpet, then hand weeding remaining fragments can be successful. The weed should be either



Wandering Jew

well composted or burnt. Hens are an effective non-chemical control. Field trials have shown that paraquat is effective, but the danger of using this herbicide is unacceptable. Roundup, with fewer side effects to humans, has been used at 2 percent concentration with a surfactant or glue such as Pulse, and applied with a knapsack in spring. This method has recently cleared the weed in a reserve in the Manawatu area.

If wandering Jew has been dispersed along a waterway, trace it to its source and eradicate it there.