

## New Directions, Old Concerns

**O**UR CAMPAIGNS on conserving energy and fisheries may seem some distance from our original concerns with forests and birds. Yet this extension of our effort flows directly from our basic concern for the natural environment.

Saving energy may help reduce the greenhouse effect and damage to the ozone layer, factors which threaten our delicate world through climate and physical change. Using energy more efficiently, however, also reduces the demands for more power stations with their deleterious effect on the natural environment of water birds, for example.

Moderating the harvest of our fisheries, for its part, protects the natural systems of our seas. In a place where food chains are long and complex, overfishing soon places in jeopardy other links in the chain of survival. Again our fundamental concerns are affected as seabird populations and marine mammals suffer.

Presently, there is much talk of "sustainability" - definable, perhaps, as taking no more than nature replenishes. Actions which cannot be defended in this way are, by that definition, actions which contain the seeds of our own destruction. In the sustainable lifestyle, people use but respect the natural environment for what it is: a fragile place which needs to be nurtured not abused if we are to survive as a species.

Going easy on energy does not mean going without. In New Zealand it simply means avoiding waste to get better use from what we have already got. There are comforting scenarios which suggest that, by using common sense and a new technology, our power consumption could be radically reduced, making existing power plants sufficient for our long-term needs. New Zealand is fortunate in not having to face the option of nuclear energy. Yet, we have already gone some way to using gas, coal and oil in a wasteful and earth-damaging way. The Society's "Go Easy on Energy" thrust - shared with other concerned groups - should help protect the broader health of the environment. By avoiding the need to build more dams on our wild rivers it will also save the habitat of wildlife and plants.

Our interests in the management of fisheries reflect a broader concern for the marine environment. While other groups shoulder international concerns about depleted seas and their threatened species, Forest and Bird is campaigning locally to sustain our own fisheries for the feeding of future generations and the protection of our wildlife.

Environmental campaigns occur along an ever-moving frontier, as we encounter a rapidly changing world. Yet, our informing philosophy remains the protection of natural values. Increasingly, this has meant fighting for the very habitat which sustains natural life, rather than keeping a narrow focus on specific forests and bird species.

While campaigns for the conservation of energy and fisheries may look at first like new departures they are, in fact, simply the contemporary faces of our continuing concerns for nature and, perhaps, our own survival.

**Gordon Ell**  
President



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