



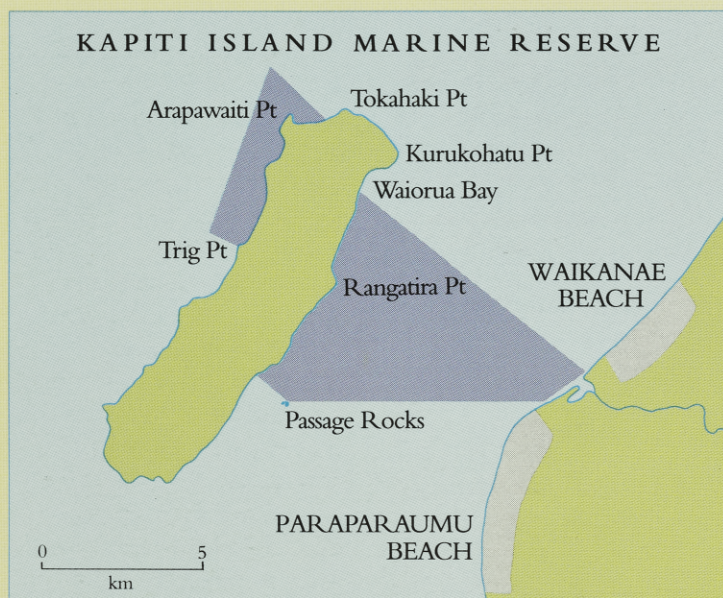
### Kapiti Marine Reserve approved

THE MINISTER of Conservation, Denis Marshall, announced the creation of the new Kapiti Island Marine Reserve in December. The reserve covers more than 20 square kilometres and includes the area between the Paraparaumu-Waikanae coast and the eastern side of Kapiti Island, and an area around the western side of the island. The reserve protects four distinct marine communities, including the spectacular boulder and reef communities on the exposed western coast

of Kapiti Island.

The reserve will benefit many fish species that have declined dramatically in recent years, and also the residents of the Kapiti coast and beyond. If the lessons from other marine reserves hold true, we can expect a dramatic recovery of marine life over the next five years and some unexpected changes in the depleted marine communities typical of the lower North Island.

Mark Bellingham



### Japan and Taiwan to quit drift netting

THE NOVEMBER announcements by Japan and Taiwan that they will cease all drift netting by the end of 1992 are a long awaited breakthrough for marine conservation. They are particularly important to New Zealand's seabirds. The announcements came after years of intense lobbying from the international community and recent threats of economic sanctions against drift netting nations. With its Asian fishing neighbours giving in to pressure, South Korea is also likely to stop drift netting.

Although all drift netting in the south Pacific and Tasman Sea was banned from July 1991 this further ban will be of immense benefit to New Zealand wildlife. Each year the Japanese squid fleet alone drowns hundreds of thousands of New Zealand-breeding seabirds, including up to 3,800 of our endemic Buller's shearwater, up to 14,000 flesh-footed shearwaters, and hundreds of thousands of sooty shearwaters (southern muttonbirds), when the birds are on their annual migration to the north Pacific. Other

drift net fleets worldwide are virtually unmonitored so their impacts cannot be quantified.

Despite the huge outcry about the use of the monofilament, 50-km long nets in the Pacific Ocean, the Asian fleets had expanded into the Atlantic and Indian oceans. Recently European countries, including France, Italy, Denmark, Ireland and Great Britain have also developed drift netting fleets, which now roam north Atlantic, Baltic and Mediterranean waters.

The announcements by Japan and Taiwan could be the nail in the coffin for this unsavoury fishing method as Japan has the largest drift-netting fleet in the world with about 600 vessels. However, New Zealanders should not forget that only the largest of the world's gill nets are affected by the bans. Inshore gill netting continues in many countries, including New Zealand which allows widespread set netting and drift nets under 1 km in length to be used. Gill nets are indiscriminate no matter what their length.

Alan Tennyson

### Alexandra chafer beetles

THE ENDANGERED Cromwell chafer of Central Otago (*Forest & Bird*, November 1991) has a number of relatives slightly to the south. Like the Cromwell chafer, the flightless Alexandra chafers *Prodontria modesta* (pictured) and *P. bicolorata*, have very limited distributions and so are vulnerable to human activity. The town of Alexandra is growing and natural chafer habitat is being converted into, among other things, orchards and airport runways.

Otago University PhD student Brent Emerson has

been studying the genetics, distribution and ecology of the two chafers since August. He has found that they continue to be abundant even in depleted and degraded areas. However, they are not uniformly present and local extinctions have occurred. Land modification continues around Alexandra, so there is certainly no room for complacency.

Brent Emerson recently received a research grant from the J. S. Watson Trust administered by Forest and Bird for his work on the chafers.

