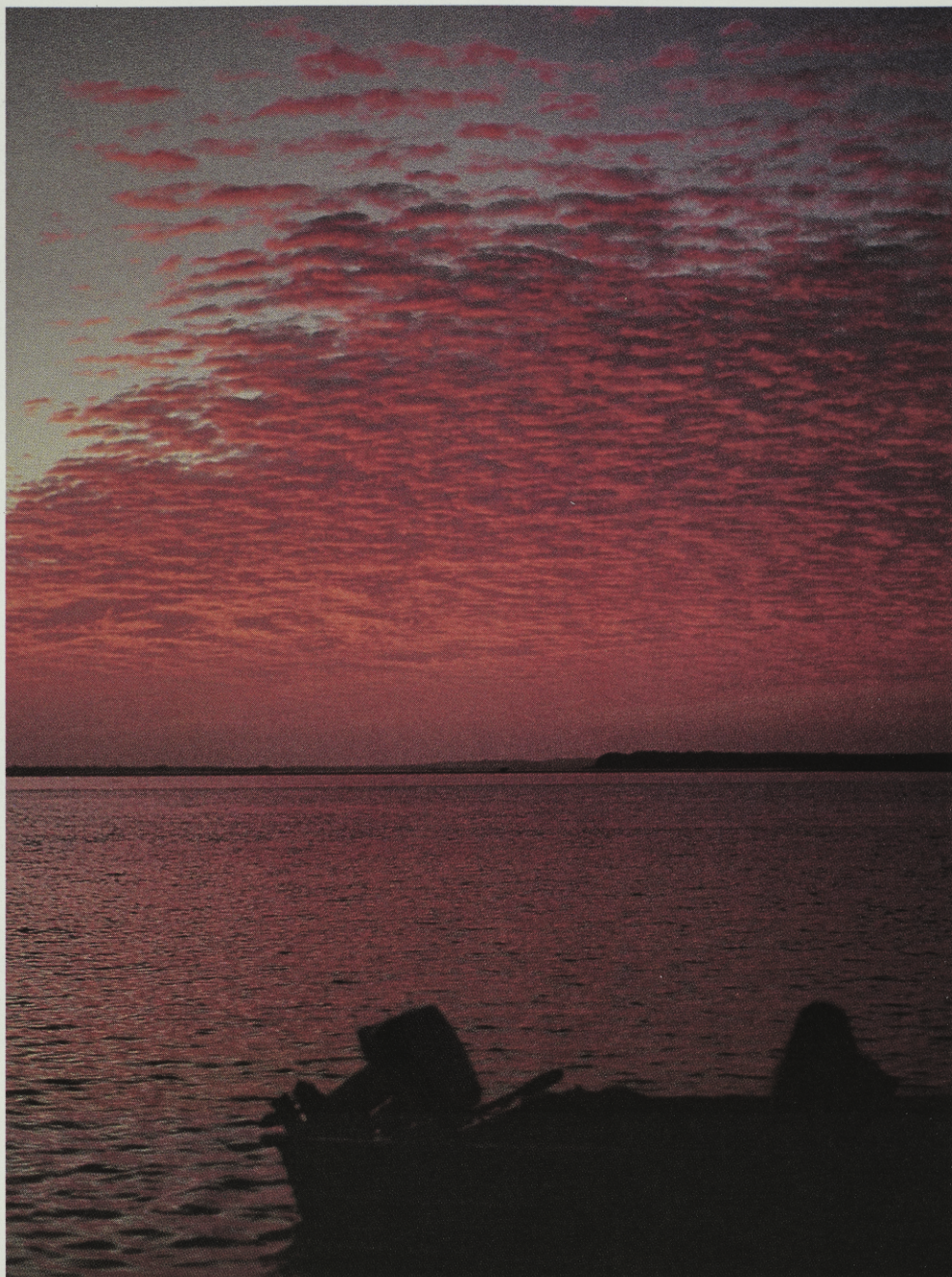


choice will have to be made by the Ministry of Commerce whether to cancel the lease or continue to take chances with the future of the harbour. It will not be an easy decision.

MORE THAN 20,000 wading birds live at Parengarenga in the summer. New Zealand dotterels, variable oyster catchers, Caspian terns and reef herons are some of the threatened species that use the harbour, but there are many other species there. The bulk of them are Arctic breeders such as godwits and knots, and these other birds, especially the godwits, have always been a part of the diet of the Aupouri people. Before the Maori had shotguns they made nets out of flax to capture the birds for food. Many species were taken but the impact was not great because there were so many birds and so few people.

Today there are fewer birds and more efficient hunters using shotguns. The guns target the godwits more effectively but are also more wasteful, wounding many birds that escape and die later. Between the dangers of their life in Asia and the hunting in the Parengarenga, the godwits are under considerable pressure. Wading birds that form dense roosting flocks have always been very vulnerable to shooting. Worldwide, similar migrating waders that were once abundant, such as the Eskimo curlew and slender-billed curlew, are on the verge of extinction because of overhunting.



MARK FELDMAN

Sunrise, and the Parengarenga appears a place of timeless tranquillity.



MARK FELDMAN

Another threat to the wild sanctity of the Parengarenga. Before and after. . . a barge which never made it over the dangerous Parengarenga bar and has been left as a local eye-sore.

THERE IS a huge demand for top quality oysters world-wide. The world's main producers are Korea, Japan, France, China and the United States, but the water quality in all these countries is suffering and so is their oyster crop.

Northland, with its clean-water image and abundant intertidal areas is in a position to expand its one-percent market share. But oyster farms, like every other form of aquaculture, are no "free lunch".

Oyster farms have some significant environmental impacts: they increase siltation, are unsightly, decrease available habitat for birds and can result in garbage piles of old wood and shell fragments. Some of these problems can be solved by better management techniques such as growing the oysters in netlon bags rather than on wood boards, and requiring the owners to put up a bond to ensure the area is cleaned up after the harvest.

Two oyster farms are operating at Parengarenga, and local people have plans