

# Branching out

Reports on some of the campaigns and conservation projects undertaken by Forest and Bird branches and field officers.

## Clucky bantam saves weka chicks

WITH FOREST and Bird's weka captive breeding programme well underway, breeding has begun at members' aviaries with at least one unexpected result.

King Country breeder June Lamont received two weka who weren't keen on the idea of parenthood. They ate their first two eggs and abandoned the second clutch. However, June saved the day by her quick thinking the third time round when it looked as if that batch were also at risk. She

whisked the eggs away from the weka and placed them under a clucky bantam hen.

The chicks hatched but it wasn't all plain sailing. Although bantams are exemplary mothers, they expect their chicks to peck from the ground, whereas weka chicks take food from their parents' beaks. June had to help feed the young weka with grubs and maggots until they learnt to take food from the ground.



NEW ZEALAND HERALD

Weka breeder June Lamont with the two weka chicks and their foster mum.

## New branch at Franklin

AT FOREST AND BIRD'S June Council meeting the Franklin section was upgraded to the status of a full branch. Established as a section of the South Auckland branch only three years ago, Franklin now has 168 members.

Chairperson Jan Butcher said that as a branch, Franklin will

be tackling urban environmental issues such as increasing coastal subdivision around the Manukau Harbour and establishing a full programme of field trips.

The new branch will be Forest and Bird's fifty-sixth, and all other branches wish it the best in its conservation activities.

## Native vegetation in Marlborough

THE MARLBOROUGH Branch recently helped finance the printing of a booklet identifying remnant native vegetation in the Wairau area. The 60-page booklet, *Characteristics, Condition and Conservation Needs of Indigenous Vegetation in the Lower Wairau Catchment*, was written by Dr Philip Simpson from the Department of Conservation. Branch secretary Barbara Jurgenson said the

branch felt the information was important in encouraging the community to take urgent action to protect remnant areas of native vegetation.

A number of species described are not found outside the Marlborough region. The booklet is illustrated with maps and colour photographs.

The branch contributed \$300 and a branch member put up the same amount. Members plan to use the booklet to find suitable areas to start replanting programmes.

The booklet is on sale for \$7 (including postage) from the Treasurer, Forest and Bird Marlborough Branch, 24 Gascoigne Street, Blenheim.

## Nelson bush protected



NELSON EVENING MAIL

Cable Bay farmer Ian Stuart, QEII representative Martin Conway and Nelson branch secretary Earle Norriss at the northern entrance to the new reserve.

AN IMPORTANT piece of coastal forest near Nelson has been saved because of a joint effort between Forest and Bird's Nelson branch, the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust and the landowners.

The 120-hectare block of native forest which stretches around the coast from the Boulder Bank to Cable Bay had been used as a walkway for many years, and the farmers who own the land, Ian and Barbara Stuart, wanted to protect it. Earle Norriss from the Nelson Branch had met Barbara the year before and they discussed the idea of placing a covenant on the land.

The new reserve hosts a range of plant communities including beech and kamahi forest on the drier slopes, and podocarp and tawa forest in the gullies. There is not much forest in Nelson along the coast and this block is easily accessible to Nelson residents.

The trust agreed to place a covenant against the title, thus protecting the bush in perpetuity. The major cost involved fencing three sides of the block. This is normally paid half by the trust and half by the landowner. In this case the Nelson Branch came to the party, providing \$7,000 to cover the Stuarts' share of the costs.

Compiled by Lisa Rae