

PHILIP POINTING



Stonefly larva: a widespread invertebrate in New Zealand rivers and an important component of the diet of native fish. The adult insects live on land, so habitat changes within the catchment as well as in the river can affect these animals.

they are etched into the land and occupy more of a horizontal than a vertical plane, they often appear less impressive than mountains to the human eye. Their deg-

radation therefore seems less obvious, and an out-of-sight out-of-mind philosophy prevails. The same is true for many native aquatic plants and animals which are slimy, secretive or inconspicuous, and do not enjoy a high level of public interest. Nevertheless, they have the same right to survival as other more visible and appealing species. Greater protection needs to be given to our different types of river

systems and the aquatic life in them so that relatively unspoilt examples remain for the natural wonder of future generations. ♦



Kevin Collier is a freshwater ecologist with the Science and Research Division of the Department of Conservation.

## Charter for New Zealand's rivers – a plan of action

- At least 10% of rivers to be protected by water conservation orders.
- Priority given to protection of threatened native wildlife dependent on rivers.
- No further dams on wild rivers.
- Extension of Queen's Chain to the margins of all river courses to provide for unfettered public access and protection of riverside vegetation.
- Urgent development of a national policy statement on rivers under the Resource Management Act that ensures their ecological health and biological and genetic diversity from source to sea.
- Rivers not to be used for the discharge of industrial or agricultural waste, or sewage. Present unavoidable discharges treated to ensure no adverse environmental impacts.
- No new barriers to the upstream passage of migrating fish. Where feasible, removal of existing barriers or creation of fish passes.
- Priority given to the control of riverine weeds and the restoration of minimum flow levels, water quality and riverside vegetation of degraded waterways.
- Introduced freshwater species to be contained to present range. Liberation of new species prohibited.

Kevin Smith

## Go with the flow



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