

Learning about native plants

BRUCE TREEBY at The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand has developed an innovative course on New Zealand native plants. Its aim is to encourage and enable people to be active in restoring and protecting areas of native vegetation and to manage them sustainably.

The course which is the most comprehensive of its kind ever put together covers: the importance of native plants, their ecology, protection and propagation; planting and revegetation; cultural landscapes and economic aspects. The resource material for the course contains 570 pages of text, 540 photographs and numerous graphics and woodcuts (by John Moore).

You can start the course at any time of year and work at your own pace. Fees are currently being finalised.

For more information contact Bruce Treeby on 0800-650-200 or write to TOPNZ, PB 31-914, Lower Hutt.

Waderbirds

EACH YEAR, over two million wading birds attempt a journey of over 13,000 kilometres from New Zealand and Australia to Siberia and Alaska. There they breed before returning to their feeding grounds in the southern hemisphere.

Northern New Zealand is the most south-eastern point of this East Asian Australasian Flyway.

And each year in February, flocks of far-eastern curlew – the largest of the world's wading birds to make this trip – hover in the skies above Manukau Harbour, getting ready to join the flight path.

Waderbirds – Odyssey of the Wetlands is an Australian-initiated environmental arts project which will tell the migration story, using the far-eastern curlew and its wetland habitat as its focus, to encourage a greater awareness of the crucial importance of preserving the world's remaining wetlands.

Forest and Bird, the Ornithological Society of New Zealand and the Department of Conservation are among the official supporters of the project which

will include education and scientific components.

The odyssey begins with an outdoor theatre performance using fire sculptures and giant puppetry in Mangere Bridge Reserve adjacent to Manukau Harbour on 13 February before heading on to Melbourne, Western Australia, Hong Kong and Japan. The timing of each performance is scheduled to coincide as much as possible with the flight of the birds.

Communities along the flyway route from Manukau Harbour, Port Phillip Bay (Victoria), Broome (Western Australia), Mia Po marshes (Hong Kong) and Kushiro (Japan) are being invited to take part. At each lo-

coast. Specialists will discuss the features of Fiordland's wildlife, forests and fiords.

The main focus will be the fascinating but little-known 40-metre band of underwater life on the fiord walls. There will be opportunities to see bottle-nosed dolphins, blue penguins, Fiordland crested penguins, seal colonies and the rare Fiordland skink. You will also see video footage of the new marine reserve in the sound.

The trips are on 6 to 8 January and 6 to 8 February. Spaces are limited. For more information contact: "Mirror World", Summer Visitor Programme, Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre, PO Box 29, Te Anau.



Local children launch the Waderbirds project under Melbourne's Westgate bridge earlier this year.

cation, the story of the vast flight will start with a torchlit procession at dusk and it is expected the performances will attract audiences of up to 10,000 at each place.

The final event will be staged in Japan at the international wetlands convention (Ramsar) in June next year.

For more information about *Waderbirds* contact Sandi Morrison or Joy Foote on (09) 307-7640 or (09) 520-1921.

Doubtful Sound by boat

THE DEPARTMENT of Conservation is running boat trips in the summer on Doubtful Sound. Based at the Deep Cove education centre, participants will be taken to remote parts of the sound as well as the open

Seaweed 92

THE MARINE Education Society of Australasia (MESA), a professional body of marine educators, wants to increase New Zealanders' awareness and knowledge of the marine environment. They have organised Seaweed 92, a week of activities from 16 to 22 November focussing on schools. They want people to get their toes wet and explore their local seashore. For more information contact Sally Carson, PO Box 8, Portobello, Dunedin.

More on summer camps

TE PUKE branch will be holding a camp at Tongariro National Park from 21 to 25 January. Contact Dawn Sutton, 6A Bishoprick Cres, Te Puke.

And Ann Graeme is looking for more takers for her seashore study camp at **Waihi Beach** in the Bay of Plenty from 16 to 20 January. Learn about reef life, mangroves, sea birds, sand dunes and coastal forest. Walking, swimming and snorkelling (optional). For details write to Ann Graeme, 53 Princess Rd, Tauranga.

Please include a stamped addressed envelope with all inquiries.

National kea and kaka databases

THE KEA and kaka sighting schemes have been running now for three years and consist of over 900 records. These records hold much information on bird sightings, which over many years can give some indication as to changes in populations and reveal basic behavioural information.

Should you see kaka or kea, or have old records in notebooks etc, please send them to Michael Wakelin, Science and Research Division, Department of Conservation, PO Box 10-420, Wellington. List the region, precise location, date, number of birds, time of day and map reference and altitude if possible.

70th anniversary

NEXT YEAR Forest and Bird will be celebrating its 70th birthday. We plan to run a number of special features in the journal during the year focussing on this milestone and the achievements of the society.

In preparing some of this material we would be interested to hear from any long-serving members with particular reminiscences or stories of the early years, particularly going back to the 1940s and earlier. Please write to Ian Close, PO Box 631, Wellington.

Correction

THE PHOTO of the red-crowned parakeet on the title page of our 1993 diary should have been attributed to Don Hadden.