

DoC's issues and options report on the lagoons was to have been available for public comment last September but has been delayed. DoC has consulted with Marlborough Forest and Bird and it is expected that the report will be available for public comment in April. However, it is not expected to make specific recommendations about protective status or management regimes. The next step will be a period of public comment and consideration of the report by the Marlborough Conservation Board. Many other claims for use of the area will certainly be promoted by Maori and recreational and tourism interests. *Conservation News* will keep members informed about when and where to send submissions.

Marlborough/Nelson Fish and Game Council (successor to the Acclimatisation Society) requesting the lifting of refuge status from Big Lagoon to enable shooting over it the following winter.

Opposition to this came to a head at a well-attended public meeting. The proposal was resisted by Forest and Bird


members on the grounds that the disturbance caused by people, dogs and boats through the area would be very disruptive to birdlife. Some non-game birds would be killed or wounded by hunters and an accumulation of lead shot in the bed of the lagoons would pose an unacceptable threat to all wildlife. Local Maori also opposed any opening of Big Lagoon to shooters because of the area's many ancient burial grounds.

The strength of the opposition led to continuation of the current status while DoC agreed to prepare an "issues and options" report for the lagoons. My view is that the whole wetland and its immediate environs should be formally protected to provide optimum habitat for the indigenous plants and wildlife. Any management plan should exclude stock from access to the lagoons, extend the sewage outfall beyond the Boulder Bank, and exclude hunters.

For the time being at least Big Lagoon remains undisturbed. ♦



Margaret Peace has been actively involved in this conservation issue since first coming to live in Marlborough sixteen years ago.



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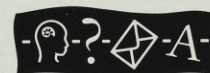
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