

## Labour weekend in South Westland

FOREST AND BIRD'S conservation gatherings have become a much enjoyed and valued tradition.

The Harihari gathering over the October Labour weekend was no exception and focused attention on the disgraceful decision of the government to extend the clearfelling of South Westland's rimu forests. In sunny spring weather members visited some of New Zealand's most splendid natural surroundings including Okarito forest and lagoon, Saltwater forest, kahikatea forests alongside the Harihari coastal walkway, the threatened rimu stands of Poerua forest and the devastation of Ianthe forest (see *Conservation Update* in this issue).

Other conservation issues raised during the weekend were the alarming spread of willow into the Coast's wetlands and swamp forests, and the impact on ground birds of uncontrolled dogs.

Members returned from the gathering inspired by the beauty of the Coast and keen to write a brace of letters to politicians and others to persuade them of the urgent need for the protection of its forests and wildlife.

## Executive and Council go to Rotorua

THE LAKES, native forests and thermal areas of Rotorua were the setting for the November meetings of the society's national executive and council.

The executive discussed the government's extension of clearfelling on the West Coast and, given the absurdly low royalties being paid by West Coast Timberlands, authorised the society to offer to purchase the clearfelling rights to Poerua forest so that it could be declared an ecological area.

The executive also rejected DoC's Himalayan thar control plan, and urged a major commercial or departmental offensive against thar throughout their range.

Councillors were addressed on the Saturday evening by Bryce Heard, chief executive of Tasman Forestry on the alliance



Members in Ianthe Forest during Labour weekend.

between conservationists, led by Forest and Bird, and enlightened sections of the forestry industry to preserve native forests and promote plantation forestry on non-conservation land.

John Blincoe, Labour's spokesperson on conservation issues, spoke frankly to councillors on his party's conservation programme for the coming election.

Field trips for council members were organised by Ann and Basil Graeme to the geysers, mudpools and geothermal vegetation of the area, and to the wallaby exclosures on the shores of Lake Okataina, the latter particularly highlighting the destruction caused by introduced animals.

## Stephensons take Loder Cup

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Gordon Stephenson and his wife Celia are the latest of a long list of Forest and Bird luminaries to be awarded the Loder Cup,



Celia and Gordon Stephenson receive the Loder Cup from Denis Marshall at Waotu.

New Zealand's premier conservation award. The Cup was presented by Conservation Minister Denis Marshall in October at a gathering in Waotu, the farming community in the South Waikato where the Stephensons live.

In outlining the couple's impressive list of conservation achievements, Mr Marshall said that as immigrants from England in 1958, Gordon and Celia had brought a vision of farmers husbanding the land and resources they worked. They saw the values of the natural environment of the country they had arrived in, often in a clearer way than many locals, and they set out to farm with respect for the environment.

Gordon developed the concept of protecting private land through covenants, served as Deputy Chairman of the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust, and was the first to covenant bush under the trust. He has been active on many public bodies, often bridging the gap between farmers and conservationists and is currently chairperson of the Waikato Conservation Board. His interest in the protection of New Zealand's neglected wetlands led to his writing an important guide to these "shy places".

## Handbook of Environmental Law sets sail

THE SOCIETY'S long-awaited citizen's guide to the mysteries of the Resource Management Act and other environmental legislation was successfully launched last November. Over 80 people packed Bennetts Bookshop beside the Beehive to hear David Lange give the book its much deserved sendoff into the world.

Mr Lange praised the book for being "a good one-stop shop", its readability, its clear layout, charts and diagrams, and pointed out that, at the equivalent price

of five minutes of a QC's time, it was excellent value. He ended by noting that if we had been one of Geoffrey Palmer's students we would have scored an "A", something not many of his colleagues could claim.

The book is available from Forest and Bird Mail Order (at a discount price of \$26.95), and all bookshops.

## New bequests

THE SOCIETY continues to reap the benefits of the loyalty and generosity of some of our older members, and received two major bequests late last year.

One, from the estate of M.M. and W.J. Cole, was for over \$150,000 for conservation work in Auckland, including development of the Matuku reserve in west Auckland.

We were also the sole beneficiary of the estate of the late John Ford, formerly of Tauranga, killed four years ago on a cycling trip around Europe. To the surprise and delight of treasurer David Underwood, a cheque for \$500,000 was handed over by Mr Ford's brother, Ken, at a small ceremony at head office in November.

These bequests will contribute significantly to the society's conservation work in the coming years.

## Ron D. and E.A. Greenwood Environmental Trust

THIS TRUST provides financial support for projects advancing the conservation and protection of New Zealand's natural resources, particularly flora and fauna, marine life, geology, atmosphere, and waters including the promotion of a wider care and understanding of such resources. More information is available from the trust at PO Box 10-359, Wellington.

## Volunteers needed

OUR AUCKLAND office is looking for a stalls organiser, a shop manager, a public speaking coordinator and a displays designer. Preferably people who can give a regular 4 to 8 hours a week. Please contact Tania Dewitt, phone (09) 303-3079.