



NEIL SILVERWOOD

*Above: Sunshine enters down one of many shafts which connect Mega Mania with the surface. It is these vertical entrances which have acted as natural traps for wandering birds and animals. The dry, unchanging cave passages at the bottom of shafts have become bird graveyards, which date back thousands of years. Discoveries include mummified kakapo, several complete moa skeletons and a nearly complete adzebill skeleton.*



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*Mid left: The skeleton of an unidentified bird lies partially hidden in mud and stones on the cave floor. On a recent trip to Mega Mania, Department of Conservation staff, using plastic tape, marked off areas which contained fragile bone deposits. It is very easy for the casual visitor to unwittingly damage bone deposits.*

*At left: The foot of a large moa rests on the floor in one of the numerous bird bone deposits. Mega Mania contains some of the best examples of articulated bird skeletons to be found underground in New Zealand.*



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*Above: Mega Mania contains some bizarre formations. These anthildites are the only example ever found in a limestone cave in New Zealand. The formations have already been damaged by carelessness. It is hard to provide adequate protection for areas such as this. Presently there are no access restrictions on this section of cave.*