

Forest and Bird's RMA Workshops

Forest and Bird has been running a series of full-day workshops on the Resource Management Act, with funding from the Ministry for the Environment. The workshops were launched in Wellington and held in 14 centres from Whangarei to Invercargill.

The purpose of the Resource Management Act is to promote the sustainable management of the environment. It protects the elements of the environment and diminishing natural areas that provide habitat for New Zealand's native species. The Resource Management Act sets up processes to give the community a chance to comment on activities that may have significant environmental impacts. These

public processes ensure that decisions are fair, balanced and sustainable.

The RMA workshops, and the free 70-page booklet given to all participants, explained the process for environmental decision-making under the RMA and gave people the skills and confidence to participate through persuasive, focused submissions.

Kate Mitcalfe, the Society's Resource Management lawyer, led the workshops, with assistance from Emma Williams, the workshop coordinator, regional field officers and Forest and Bird members. Guest speakers included representatives from regional and district councils, the Department of Conservation and local environment centres.

The RMA workshops attracted groups of up to 55, with a diverse range of participants including Federated Farmers, New Zealand Salmon Anglers, iwi, residents and ratepayer organisations, Property Rights NZ and many more. The feedback from participants was very positive; one participant commented: 'I've attended several workshops on RMA matters and this rates the best. Council speakers brought their own local but complementary experience.'

Forest and Bird also welcomes a number of new members as a result of the RMA workshops.

— **KATE MITCALFE**, *resource management lawyer, Forest and Bird.*

Plucking Pines

Waikato Branch welcomes fit members and friends to its annual camp (22-23 February 2003) to help remove wilding pines, *Pinus contorta*, from Ruapehu. Free accommodation is available in Ohakune ski lodges, and petrol costs are met. Please book early with Philip Hart: on email at prhart@waikato.ac.nz or 129 Cambridge Road, Hamilton, or 07 856 7992.

New NZCA

Two well-known Forest and Bird members have been appointed as members of the New Zealand Conservation Authority which advises the Minister and Department of Conservation on policy.

Professor Alan Mark of Dunedin, a member of the national executive and distinguished life member, has been appointed as the statutory nominee of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society. A botanist, he has been closely involved in the affairs of the Otago Conservation Board for the past 10 years, spending some time as chairman. He had previously been Forest and Bird's nominee on the National Parks Authority which was blended into the NZCA when it was established in 1990.

Linda Conning of Te Teko was a member of the Forest and Bird executive 1997-2001, and has been appointed to the Authority as a nominee of the Minister of Conservation. She is an environmental consultant and horticulturalist. Formerly involved with the Far North branch of which she was chair in the mid 1990s, Linda Conning now lives in the Eastern Bay of Plenty where she has been a Forest and Bird committee member and branch councillor.

Branch Groups Visit Limestone Island

Northern branch hosted the September northern regional meeting, attended by Forest and Bird members from the Bombay Hills to the Far North. Among field trips was a visit to Limestone Island in the Whangarei Harbour.

Northern branch has been involved in restoring Limestone Island since the first plantings took place almost 10 years ago.

Right: Limestone Island's ranger, Colin Bishop, transports Forest and Bird members from the island. Forest and Bird's northern field officer, Sarah Gibbs, at left.

Historically, the island was an important Maori pa site and later the site of limestone mining and a fertiliser plant. The island is now managed as a 'kiwi nursery'. Kiwi chicks are taken to the island to live until

they are large enough to defend themselves against stoats and then released back into mainland 'kiwi zones', such as the one at nearby Whangarei Heads. — **SARAH GIBBS**, *northern field officer, Forest and Bird.*



Left: Forest and Bird members (from left, Neil Sutherland, Sheryl Corbett, Chris Bindon, Jan Butcher and Claire Stevens) standing in the Molly Stevens memorial kowhai grove, with Whangarei Heads 'kiwi zone' in the distance. The grove was planted in memory of a former Northern branch Forest and Bird member.