

Pests or Treasures

Hauturu (Little Barrier Island) was New Zealand's first nature reserve and a jewel in the conservation crown, but it cannot achieve its full potential as a treasure house of biodiversity until it is free of all alien mammals. Following the eradication of feral cats from Hauturu in 1980, recovery of some native birdlife occurred, and translocation of kokako and saddleback to the island was made possible.

Further recovery of native ecosystems and wildlife is inhibited by the continued presence of kiore, which are now the only alien mammal remaining. The rats limit the recovery of vulnerable wildlife such as burrowing seabirds, tuatara, lizards and giant weta, and they inhibit the regeneration of native trees and rare plants such as the woodrose, whose flowers are browsed by kiore.

Complete eradication of kiore from Hauturu is the only way to ensure that biodiversity recovery can proceed unhindered. There have been great benefits of eradicating this and other invasive rats from many islands around the world. Localised control, harvesting or any approach that involved the retention of any kiore on Hauturu would pose an unacceptable risk of continued ecological damage, given the propensity of rats to disperse and increase rapidly in numbers.

The sooner that kiore are eradicated from Hauturu, the better. Only when that is done can this superb island reserve recover its full potential as a haven for native biodiversity.

— MICK CLOUT *Chair, IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group.*

Ngati Wai, who maintain mana whenua over the island, regard kiore as a tribal treasure.

Marine Issues

I have been a member of Forest and Bird for 30 years — holding the office of branch chair for

two separate periods and that of branch councillor on several occasions. I am beginning to wonder what I belong to and where the 'forest' and 'bird' segments are disappearing to. As an example take the November magazine — Sea Snakes and Turtles, pp.14-17, Sea Slugs pp.24-27 and Ocean Life Crisis, pp.28-31.

— PAT MENZIES *RD6, Dannevirke*

For a generation or so Forest and Bird has espoused the protection of all 'indigenous flora and fauna and natural features and landscapes of New Zealand' not just forests and birds. In the past year, the national executive has focussed campaigns on three major themes: restoring the dawn chorus, saving the high country, and marine conservation, including fisheries. The magazine has been required to reflect this.

New Zealand Icons

Icon, icon, icons, iconic and 10 more icons.

My *Oxford Concise Dictionary* tells me icon means an image or statue (Gk Orth. Church) or a painting/mosaic of a sacred person. But *Forest & Bird* has 'New Zealand's scenic icons' '10 icons of Southern New Zealand', 'iconic New Zealand landscapes' plus 'icon katipo' and 'our coastal icon'. Please *Forest & Bird* contributors, take a deep breath and vow never to use this recently surfaced, much overworked and wrongly used word ever again.

— PAT MENZIES *RD6, Dannevirke*

Overworked perhaps, but our Oxford Concise Dictionary also includes: 'an object of particular admiration, esp. as a representative symbol of something', in these cases our outstanding wildlife, natural features and landscapes.

Immigration

With all the rhetoric about immigrants it seems to me a major point is overlooked. Many come from over-populated areas of the world where the

conservation ethic has little or no meaning. Survival is probably more important.

We are already finding our beaches are being mined for any living organisms. Our rock pools are being denuded. In fact, the coastal ecology is at stake.

Part of the prime education activities of immigrants should be to understand this particular activity is neither necessary or acceptable in New Zealand. Perhaps we should be pressuring the ministers of Conservation and Immigration on these important points.

— LEN NEWMAN *Rotorua*

Take heart by observing the achievements of local shore protection groups, such as on the Auckland west coast, which run local education and publicity, for everyone, about their shorelines. The achievements of the Chinese Conservation Trust with some 2000 members in Auckland are

also a sign of changing times (See Forest & Bird, August 2001)

Bats in the Catlins

A correspondent in *Forest & Bird* May 2002, suggests the South Canterbury bats are the only known populations on the east coast of the South Island, I am pleased to report there is another in the Catlins where I've recently spent a wonderful evening watching bats hunting over a river valley which is dotted with patches of native bush. Despite claims by local hunters that bats (and kakariki parakeets) were wiped out by 1080 poison used against possums, it seems both have survived in the area — but for how much longer is anyone's guess as nearby virgin rimu forest is being logged at an alarming rate.

— DAVID HOLLAND, *Rotorua.*



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