

Don Binney, Nga Manu/Nga Motu — Birds/Islands

by **Damian Skinner**, 128pp
limpbound, Auckland University Press, Auckland 2003, RRP\$49.99.

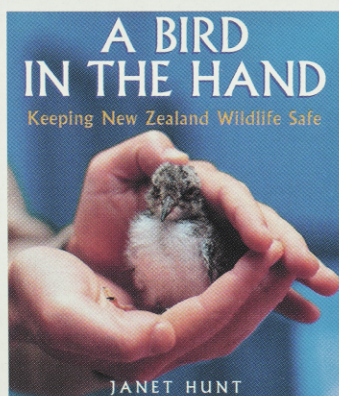
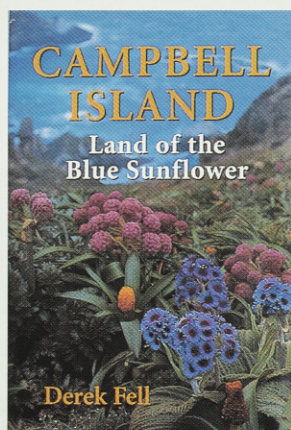
Don Binney quickly established himself in the 1960s as a painter, particularly of birds in the landscape . . . not realistic portraits but

paintings which caught the very essence of the bird and the land. In his recent paintings he's returned to similar themes. Don Binney has long been a conservationist, and is presently patron of the Friends of Hauturu/Little Barrier. Damian Skinner has gathered together 75 paintings from Don Binney's life work into a very attractive book focussed on 'birds/islands'. There is a brief critical survey of the artist's work, and an extended interview with him, to introduce the plates. Looking at Don Binney's paintings calls to mind the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins in his endeavours to capture what he called 'the inscape' of the natural world. Don Binney produces a similar but visual poetry.

Campbell Island, Land of the Blue Sunflower

by **Derek Fell**, 160pp hardbound, David Bateman, Auckland 2002, RRP\$29.95.

An American picks on a down-under icon to entitle this adventure-travel book; the blue sunflower is one of our subantarctic megaherbs, known scientifically — and not much more helpfully — as *Pleurophyllum speciosum*. A writer and photographer of more than 50 art, travel and garden books, Derek Fell twice visited Campbell Island and also called on other subantarctic islands. His book is largely an account of a subantarctic voyage with a tourist ship, the people aboard, what he saw, and some of the phenomenal survival tales retold from earlier times. There is a 16-page section of colour photographs of plants and places in the middle of the book, but the remainder of the (black-and-white) photographs are poorly reproduced, possibly because of the paper. This is a 'once-over-lightly' compared with other books on the region.



A Bird in the Hand, Keeping New Zealand's Wildlife Safe

by **Janet Hunt** 128pp *limpbound*, Random House, Auckland 2003, RRP\$29.95.

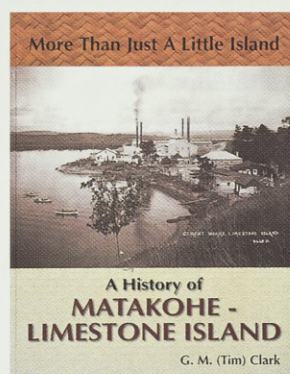
This large-format colour book tells the stories of 18 rare New Zealand animals and the conservation work

which is keeping them alive. It is very attractively presented, designed

by the author, with many colour photographs of the threatened species and the work of the Department of Conservation. Here are the familiar stories of the black robin and the takahe, along with less-expected short-tailed bats, tuatara and Mercury Island tusked weta. Each story begins with a conservator at work, then explores the nature of the animal, its environment and threats to it. Accompanying boxes detail historic incidents, early conservationists, peculiar behaviours, and a very odd joke.

Possibly intended for older children, it might be better read or explained to the younger ones or used as a 'research' resource: there's a lot of reading to do. The quite complex ideas are often expressed in contemporary slang, and anthropomorphic views from the creatures themselves can sit uneasily alongside words like 'endemic' and 'taxa'.

Apart from these affectations of language this book may well interest a broader audience. As a gathering together of field research and activities, it is a nice tribute to DoC workers and volunteers.



More Than Just a Little Island

By **G.M. (Tim) Clark**, 120pp
limpbound, Friends of Matakohē/Limestone Island Society, PO Box 10-206, Te Mai, Whangarei, RRP\$29.95.

Northern Forest and Bird has played a pivotal role in the establishment of 'Friends of Matakohē' and its restoration activities. Their inspirational work

features largely in this handsome local history of an island in Whangarei Harbour. During the nineteenth and early twentieth century Matakohē was the site of a great cement works, and the book records its development, and family life there. The later chapters recount how local conservationists began to restore the island as a 'scenic reserve'. More than 100 different species have been planted in an effort to establish a new coastal forest on the once-bare island. That includes 14,000 trees established in one day to mark the year 2000. This is a local book, but it's interesting to learn of Forest and Bird people so active in local conservation.

Keeping Faith with Fin and Feather

by **Roger Sutton**, 180pp *limpbound*, available from the author, 16 Vogel street, Invercargill, 2003, RRP\$35.00.

Roger Sutton subtitles his recollections as 'people and imperatives in wildlife management'. He's well-known in Southland for his work in conservation, originally as a game ranger, and later serving on the Southland Conservation Board, the Southland Catchment Board, and the old National Water and Soil Authority. He details the activities of these bodies and the battles to maintain river flows and retain habitat. It's very local stuff, with lots of local names and events; the stuff of local conservation.

