

Campaigning for Life in the Sea

Sea lions in New Zealand's subantarctic recently won a reprieve when the fishing industry lost a High Court case against the Minister of Fisheries, Hon. Pete Hodgson. The fishing industry had challenged Government efforts to limit the industry's killing of sea lions. The Court didn't agree and so limits remain in place.

This is a really good example of a conservation decision that has benefited from the pressure Forest and Bird members have put on the Government over many years of campaigning. The Government was prepared to stand up in the courts because they know New Zealanders care about protecting sea lions.

Whoever we are, wherever we are from, either ourselves or our ancestors came across the sea. We live on islands and the sea is a big part of our lives.

My work takes me onto the water to study dolphins and whales. This summer I joined a team of other scientists, from the Department of Conservation and the University of Otago, in surveys of Hector's dolphins off Banks Peninsula and along the North Island west coast. And last winter, with an international team of researchers, I sailed to Tonga to study sperm whales.

It has been a privilege to see most of the New Zealand coast from the water and to explore the open ocean. But it's been a real worry to see the pressures on the marine environment increasing steadily.

Ever-larger areas of our oceans are being explored and exploited, around New

Zealand and elsewhere. The sea floor is affected by trawling, at times destroying corals older than rimu and kauri trees. Many of our fish species are declining, including those under the Quota Management System such as hoki and orange roughy. Many seabird and marine mammal populations are declining because of inappropriate fishing. And large inshore areas are taken up with existing or planned aquaculture activity.

Following the success of last year's 'High Country Roadshow', Forest and Bird will be

pollution. An important part of the 'roadshow' is to engage people in discussion about solutions to the current problems of managing our oceans.

Science is on our side and we need to make sure that this science becomes better-known and understood.

The 'roadshow' will focus on 'what you can do' as a consumer, member of Forest and Bird and member of the public. One of the simple things you can do, for example, is when you next buy fish — ask how it was caught and what the bycatch was? The

shopkeeper may not know the answer, but it is important that the shopkeeper knows that you care.

By working together we can make a huge difference. Our campaigning on behalf of the high country has made significant gains over the last year. The high country treasure of Molesworth Station was agreed to be transferred to the Department of Conservation last year — the largest extension to public conservation land since the protection of South Westland rainforests.

More recently, the Government purchased Birchwood Station, (featured in this issue of *Forest & Bird*). Birchwood is an important mountain area south of Aoraki/Mt Cook and home of the endangered black stilt or kaki.

We can do it again to save our seas.

Dr LIZ SLOOTEN
National Executive



TONY AND JENNY ENDREY

Forest and Bird is campaigning to save the variety of life in the sea.

taking a 'Marine Roadshow' to communities around New Zealand. We will use the roadshow to promote a new initiative for the public to directly influence the impact of commercial fishing on the marine environment.

In each town visited we will discuss marine issues relevant to the local area whether over-fishing, impacts on seabirds and marine mammals, aquaculture or

Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Inc. (Founded 1923)

Registered Office at 172 Taranaki Street, Wellington.

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