

Mailbag

Forest & Bird welcomes brief comments or criticisms about items or issues in the magazine. We reserve the right to edit letters for length. The deadline for our November issue is August 31, 2004.

Kaitorete Spit

The article on Kaitorete Spit (*Forest & Bird* November 2003) describes it as a 'forgotten corner of Canterbury'. It reflects badly on land management authorities in Canterbury that one of the most significant dune areas in New Zealand has been allowed to go unprotected for so long.

During 1972 and 1973 I spent many hundreds of hours studying the plant ecology of the Spit for my MSc thesis, in which I pointed out the uniqueness of the area — its extreme aridity, unusually coarse sand, and the special nature of its indigenous flora, including species endemic to Kaitorete, and emphasised the vulnerability of this vegetation to the impact of grazing and vehicles. I tried many times to persuade the Department of Lands and Survey and subsequently the Department of Conservation to protect this dune area. Although two small

scientific reserves were eventually gazetted, even these areas have continued to suffer damage.

Having been resident in Marlborough since 1975, I had hoped that others would continue the battle for protection of the natural values of Kaitorete Spit. Now in my 81st year, I am wondering whether I will live to see this area receive the conservation it deserves.

— MARGARET PEACE
Distinguished Life Member

Eeling Contests

I was surprised that no mention was made of children's eeling competitions in the article 'The Disappearing of Eels', *Forest & Bird*, May 2004. It saddens me how often one reads that there is an eeling competition for children running alongside fishing competitions for their elders. Later, a picture might appear in the local paper of rows of eels caught, and apparently

wasted, by the children. I have written letters of protest several times to organisers of these events, but, not surprisingly, have never received a reply.

Surely it is time that the eel became a fully protected species, along with other native animals. They are no less precious than other freshwater fish, and should be given protection.

— TINA MORGAN
Upper Coromandel

Silly Mistake

I always look forward to *Forest & Bird* magazine because I like the articles and the photographs and it's always interesting. However, in the May 2004 issue, on page 6, there is an error in the caption of the photo of Archey's frog which is an amphibian NOT a reptile. I guess someone had some momentary confusion!

— DR JOAN SUCKLING
North Shore

RON D AND E.A. GREENWOOD ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

The trust provides financial support for projects advancing the conservation and protection of New Zealand's natural resources, particularly flora & fauna, marine life, geology, atmosphere & waters.

More information is available from the Trust, at:
PO Box 10-359, Wellington

Lilian Valder Awards 2004

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