



**Forest & Bird**  
GIVING NATURE A VOICE

December 2009

# Forest & Bird

## North Canterbury Branch

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### From the Chair

#### News from the Branch

It's been a busy last couple of months; some good news, some mixed and some appalling:

- The fight to protect the **Hurunui** continues
- Canterbury Mayors decide on the **Water Management Strategy**
- **Tenure review** restarts after moratorium
- Slow progress on protecting **Mt Cass**
- Department of Conservation consults on the management of **St James Station**
- Symposium on the management of **Te Waihora, Lake Ellesmere**

#### Hurunui River

The special tribunal set up to consider a Water Conservation Order (WCO) for the Hurunui came up with a partial protection proposal.

Forest and Bird has appealed the decision arguing that the WCO should: recognise the river as a nationally outstanding habitat for braided river birds; include the south branch and its tributaries and establish minimum flow rates for the lower Hurunui for periods significant for braided river birds. The appeals have yet to be heard by the Environment Court

Meanwhile Hurunui Water Project Limited (HWP) had applied for resource consent to dam the south branch and put a weir on the main stem outlet. Forest and Bird is amongst the many groups who objected. The application is now on hold to see if HWP can get what they want through the Water Management Strategy process. It probably helped that their application was woefully inadequate and thousands turned out to show their support for the river at a protest march in Christchurch on the 16th October.

As part of the nationwide Wild Rivers campaign, Forest and Bird, along with Fish and Game and White Water NZ, recently organised a Fun Day on the Hurunui to highlight this cause (see pg 6).

#### Canterbury Water Management Strategy

This is an attempt to set overall goals for the management of Canterbury's surface and

ground water resources that will meet all needs; environmental, conservation, drinking and other domestic use, agricultural and recreational.

While Forest and Bird applauds the attempt to set aside the adversarial, court based, first in first served approach to water allocation the branch has serious concerns about how well the strategic framework deals with the legal basis for the strategy, funding for environmental and conservation work, and the governance and management of the proposed zone committees. Many issues we see as of national importance, such as the protection and enhancement on Canterbury's braided rivers, could be left to ten local committees, stretching available expertise way to thin to be effective.

We continue to take an active part in the process

#### Tenure Review

High country farmers with a current lease to graze sections of the Crown estate are again being given the opportunity to privatise part of their lease area in return for perhaps surrendering some of their leased area for permanent conservation protection. If this seems like déjà vu all over again, it's not. This time the Government has stated that it wants no further high country land to be added to the Department of Conservation-managed areas but would prefer to rely on covenants to protect conservation values. While many covenants are enthusiastically and competently managed by landowners, they give very poor protection if the landowner changes priorities, sells the land or circumstances otherwise change.

The North Canterbury branch of Forest and Bird has joined with the Central Otago and South Canterbury branches to review the proposals for the Glenrock, Holbrook and Rollesby stations. Collectively these are the stations on both sides of the road as you drive over Burkes Pass and down into the Mackenzie Basin. It's no exaggeration to say if the conservation values are not adequately protected here, then the whole northern gateway to the Mackenzie could be wrecked.

*(continued over page)*

## F&B 2010

Calendars available

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ph 379 0316 (leave message)

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(Chairman's report continued)

### Mt Cass

Members will recall that the hearing panel decision came out against the MainPower application to build a wind farm along the Mt Cass ridge, identifying the ridgeline as an outstanding natural feature of national importance. MainPower has since appealed the decision and attempted to enter into mediation with the parties. After initially being willing to try mediation, Forest and Bird has recently withdrawn. It is our view that MainPower has shown no willingness to compromise on its core proposal and without that willingness mediation is pointless.

### St James Station Management

DOC has asked for ideas on the future management of the St James Station. The North Canterbury branch submission supported both mountain biking and recreational horse trekking as legitimate recreational uses but asked that walking and tramping activities be kept separate in order to preserve the inherent nature of each activity. The branch presented detailed options for recreational bike routes that would allow the St James Walkway and other routes such as the Anne/Henry and Ada valleys to be kept for trampers.

### Te Waihora, Lake Ellesmere

Te Waihora or Lake Ellesmere is periodically opened to the sea to maintain the lake at levels that are considered optimum for its many uses: conservation, farming around the edges, fishing, hunting, water-based recreation and as a great place to live and visit. The current resource consent for the openings runs out in July 2011.

Recently the Waihora Ellesmere Trust (WET) and Environment Canterbury hosted a symposium to review the latest science to do with the lake and its inflows and review options for a new opening regime. I attended the symposium and was very impressed by the evidence-based approach adopted by all parties, the willingness of all parties to consider the needs of others and the energy and enthusiasm of heaps of people from different backgrounds to protect and enhance the lake and its environs.

**BRUCE COLEMAN**  
coleman.raymond@xtra.co.nz



John McLaughlin at Boyle Base Hut; 200 yards off the main Lewis Pass road, 1 km before Boyle village

## Volunteers Wanted!

Are you interested in helping with Forest & Bird activities? The North Canterbury branch is very busy with a whole range of different initiatives and would welcome help with:

- writing submissions on resource consent applications, management plans and proposals
- organising our monthly public meetings and quest speakers
- trapping and other practical work at Boyle Base
- organising field trips
- writing articles for the newsletter
- virtually anything else you can think of to do with conservation

Got some spare time? Contact **Bruce Coleman ph 376 4979**  
email [coleman.raymond@xtra.co.nz](mailto:coleman.raymond@xtra.co.nz)

## Waitaki Judgement

The Environment Court has made some excellent provisions for the protection of birds in a preliminary judgement on the North Bank Tunnel project on the Waitaki.

The Lower Waitaki River Management Society (LWRMS) appealed the Meridian consents, and although it was a long expensive battle, the Waitaki group wrung some important concessions. The moral could be that even when the odds are against the environmentalists, it is worth fighting for important concessions.

The judgement is valuable as it provides an objective summary of the birdlife and their habitat and acknowledges that while the Lower Waitaki is degraded it provides a nationally and internationally significant habitat for 27 braided river species as well as godwit, heron, and spoonbill.

The judgement lists numbers and status of the birds. For example, black stilts are 'nationally critical'; banded dotterels, caspian terns and wrybills, 'nationally vulnerable'; black-billed gulls, 'nationally endangered' and oyster catchers, pied stilt, and white-fronted tern numbers are declining.

The Court regarded red-billed, black-billed gulls and black-fronted terns as

significant because the Waitaki is a major breeding ground. About a third of all of NZ's white-fronted terns live on the river.

The Court believes the birds are under pressure. Their food supply may be adequate, but rearing chicks is fraught with danger from predators. Nesting habitats have been reduced by the encroachment of vegetation. Floods also exact a toll, as does disturbance (e.g. by 4 wheel drive vehicles).

The Preliminary judgement will require Meridian to maintain the braided river birds 'at not less than current levels, to commission research and to implement its recommendations (... including predation controls)... there might be a net gain for the birds.' [Source Para 518].

There are other concessions including providing at least 75 hectares of terrace wetland and 10 hectares for breeding birds and a one million dollar recreational plan.

The Lower Waitaki River Management Society deserves our thanks for its tremendous efforts.

**NEVILLE BENNETT**  
neville.bennett@canterbury.ac.nz

**A bird does not sing because it has an answer. It sings because it has a song.**

*Chinese Proverb*





# Dean Baigent-Mercer moving on

## Summary

A considerable contribution to my wages as the West Coast/Canterbury Conservation Officer came from the North Canterbury Forest and Bird Branch. It enabled a lot of work to be done which either wouldn't have happened or would have been inadequately squeezed into other already overflowing workloads.

Here is by no means a comprehensive list. In the past six months I have:

- written the F&B submission on DOC's Conservation Management Strategy for the Canterbury Conservancy (with the exception of the St James arm which Fred Murray took the lead on)
- been in negotiation with DOC about pest control in the internationally significant 'beech gap' forests of Hall's totara and kaikawaka forest which are collapsing because of lack of integrated pest control up the Wilberforce River
- wrote a submission on the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP)
- attended a Wild Rivers meeting in Murchison where diverse groups with interests in rivers came together to plan a campaign to save our Wild Rivers
- then drafted a Communications Strategy for this campaign
- researched Marine Protected Area (MPA) proposals on the West Coast. Attended eight community meetings, wrote the F&B national submission and presented this and more evidence at the Hokitika hearing
- encouraged CPIT students in their clean-up of the Heathcote River and media for it
- assisted with work on the Mackenzie Basin that Chris Todd and Anna Cameron are taking the lead on
- wrote a feature article on the Mackenzie Basin for the November F&B magazine
- attended a meeting with Tim Grossar Minister of Conservation about the creation of the Akaroa Marine Reserve

All this and more... every week unexpected issues pop up.

## Highlights

Two experiences stand-out for me. The first was in Akaroa at the well-organised meeting with the Conservation Minister concerning the creation of the **Akaroa Marine Reserve**.

Around twenty local people in attendance had three minutes to outline their relationship in the area and why they wanted the Akaroa Marine Reserve gazetted to the Minister. The diversity of perspectives combined made an inspiring and very strong case.

Another incredible moment was at the recent protest **march to save the Hurunui River**. There was a lively buzz as the numbers increased and the realisation that there's a sizable proportion of the population who care about our rivers and the Hurunui in particular. Police estimated 2000 people turned out! Such a public expression of concern is heart-warming for those of us who work in offices and attend meetings arguing for the care of our country and can often feel isolated.

## Movin' On

I am moving to the Far North of the North Island to base myself from my land and have more of an active role in the pest control to protect the native forest there. I also have an organic 'food forest' orchard that has been in progress for five years that needs more hands on attention.

Hopefully I will do some work at the top of the North Island for F&B in the new year, but before that I will do a short stint of media work with Greenpeace.

A lot has happened in the past six months. The political landscape has changed considerably. Government announcements have undermined what many of us had taken for granted and fought for as solid conservation wins.

I wish the next person who takes on this role the very best and hope that the North Canterbury Branch can see a valuable outcome of their contribution.

**DEAN BAIGENT-MERCER**

## Peacock Springs Field Trip

August 2009

A large group of 35 people had a fascinating 2 hour tour guided by the staff at Peacock Springs. We had a chance to hear about and see some of the endangered native birds that are kept there for captive breeding programmes. For many of us, it was the first time in our lives to see brown teal (chicks), blue duck/whio and orange-fronted parakeets. It was an extra special treat for us to see the aviaries containing the black stilt and shore plover. The day was capped off by admiring the very large tame eels that live near the salmon farm. (see below)

### STEVE PITMAN

email [s.pitman@xtra.co.nz](mailto:s.pitman@xtra.co.nz)



## Give the Gift of Nature

Forest & Bird and Kiwi Conservation Club memberships make great Christmas gifts. The recipient will receive quality magazines throughout 2010 and they will have the opportunity to get involved in local conservation activities.

A Forest & Bird standard membership is \$57 a year, Kiwi Conservation Club membership is \$19 a year.

Order online [www.forestandbird.org.nz](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz) or ph0800 200 064 during business hours.



# South Is. F&B Gathering, Omarama

October 16-18

“A Forest and Bird meeting in Omarama?” he said. “How dull could that be – a lot of badly dressed tree-huggers sitting around moaning about the farmers!”

“Well, a surprising number of the group were farmers, or people from farming backgrounds,” I said. “And they were ordinary people, nice people, very welcoming and friendly. And a lot of folks whose names I knew but had never met, and that was so interesting. And the F&B staff, young, bright, energised, knowledgeable, committed, every one. And the National President, he was there, and some of the Executive – and they sure know a thing or two!”

He had begun to glance around the room in a slightly anxious way. “I think I can see...,” he began, but I was just getting going.

“And the challenges, well, if it wasn’t for the company we kept, they would completely overwhelm you. There’s

the forest and the birds, of course, but what about everything else? Most rivers seem under threat these days, and so are the fisheries and the marine mammals. And just in the Mackenzie Country the conversion of an ancient and biodiverse inter-montane landscape into huge paddocks full of cows, and the wilding pines and the rabbits and the rabbits and the rabbits.”

I was running out of breath but there was one more thing to be said.

“And Philippa, that’s the wife, she’s got a keen eye for expensive clothing, and although a lot of it was outdoor style, she reckoned it was absolutely top shelf. And they throw a pretty decent BBQ, and the entertainment from Martin Curtis was just priceless...”, but by then he had broken my hold on his shirt front and disappeared into the crowd. So I looked about the room for someone else keen to hear about my weekend.

**JOHN MCLAUGHLIN**  
j.mclaughlin@xtra.co.nz



Field trip during F&B's South Island gathering at Omarama

# Hands off the Hurunui!

Over 1000 people attended the October 16th protest march held in Christchurch organised by Hurunui Dambusters



If a man walks in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer. But if he spends his days as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making the earth bald before her time, he is deemed an industrious and enterprising citizen

*Henry David Thoreau*



# Korowai-Torlesse/Castle Hill Field Trip

September 2009

A small group of enthusiastic Forest and Bird members spent an entertaining weekend in the Korowai-Torlesse and Castle Hill area. On Saturday we explored a variety of different vegetation types, starting with a short walk near Porters Pass through the tussock grassland-shrubland of the Korowai-Torlesse Park. It was a great opportunity to learn more about some of the special plants found in the area and to enjoy magnificent views of the surrounding snow-capped mountains.

After lunch, we wandered through mountain beech forest at the Craigieburn Environmental Education Centre and were impressed by the high density of healthy-looking red-flowered mistletoes on the beech trees. At the end of the day we made

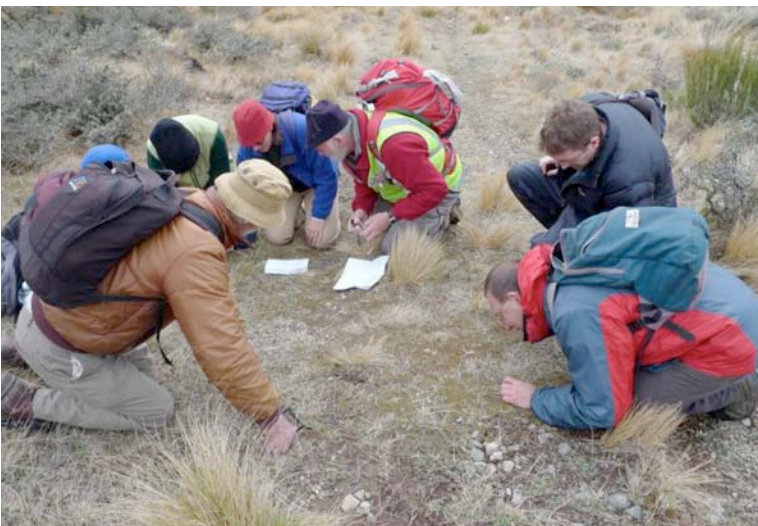
a brief stop at Cave Stream to look at some botanical oddities next to the Broken River (*Helichrysum dimorphum* and *H. intermedium*) before heading to our overnight accommodation at the spacious new St Andrews School Lodge (Castle Hill Outdoor Centre).

On Sunday, we turned our attention to some practical conservation by doing wilding pine control at Flock Hill. We worked together in a rolling front from Parapet Rock towards Craigieburn, and it was most satisfying to look back on our efforts at the end of the day. The scale of the wilding problem is daunting, but a concerted effort by agencies (DOC and ECan), in combination with volunteers, is sure to make a huge difference.

**MELISSA HUTCHISON**  
melissa@tenax.co.nz



Top: Steve and Zuni tackle a wilding pine at Flock Hill  
Above: Bethany with a felled lodgepole pine



Exploring the Korowai-Torlesse Park



Dr Colin Meurk leading a Meurky walk at Ferrymead in Sept



# Fun Day on the Hurunui, Wild Rivers Campaign

Forest and Bird, along with Fish and Game and White Water NZ, took part in the nationwide Wild Rivers campaign by organising a Fun Day on the Hurunui on Sunday 29th November.

The weather was perfect and a range of fun activities were on offer, including river rafting, a kayak slalom race, water-bugging, fly-casting lessons, bird-watching on the south branch, and a guided botanical walk.

The event was attended by a wide range of supporters of the river, including two MPs: Russell Norman (Green Party co-leader) and Brendon Burns (Labour MP for Christchurch Central).

More information and photos at

- <http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/saving-our-environment/freshwater-/wild-rivers-the-hurunui>
- <http://www.wildrivers.org.nz/river/hurunui-river>

**Top right:**

*F&B South Island Conservation Manager Chris Todd and group observing white-fronted terns on the south branch of the Hurunui River*

**Right:**

*Guided botanical walk*

**Below right:**

*Kayak slalom race on Hurunui River*

**Below:**

*Fun Day on the Hurunui River HQ*



# Forthcoming Events



## December

### Saturday 5th December

#### End of Year Picnic

**Orton Bradley Park**, Charteris Bay.

11 am - 3 pm

Join us for a picnic lunch, followed by an easy walk lead by John Thacker, Forest and Bird representative on the Orton Bradley Park Board. Meet at the old school in the park. BYO lunch. All Welcome  
Any queries? Contact Maria Stoker-Farrell ph 329 4333 email [stoker-farrell@clear.net.nz](mailto:stoker-farrell@clear.net.nz)

### Sunday 6th December

#### Quail Island Workday

(for details see Quail Island box below)

### Sunday 12th December

#### Meurky Walk with Dr Colin Meurk

#### Pleasant Pt Domain to Travis Wetland

Contact Anna-Marie Barnes ph 337 9593, cell 0211 093534

### Sunday 20th December

#### Quail Island Workday

(for details see Quail Island box left)

## Guide to Outings

### Please carry

day pack	parka/ warm jacket
hat	sturdy footwear
sunscreen	lunch
snacks	drink
small first aid kit	personal medication (if required)

### Safety

Your well-being is primarily your own responsibility, especially in mountainous and/or exposed areas. Carry own small First Aid kit, with any personal medication and written relevant personal information.

### Queries, cancellations, etc

Contact Event Leader

### Transport

We encourage the sharing of private cars

### North Canterbury Branch

**Public Meetings** 2nd Wed each month, 7.30pm, WEA Rooms, 59 Gloucester Street, Christchurch



## February 2010

### Sunday 7th February

#### Lake Ellesmere Wading Birds

A trip to see the many wading birds at Lake Ellesmere including Wrybills, Red-necked Stints, Banded Dotterels and hopefully many others. Meet at 9am at Shands Road, Hornby just past the Amyes Road traffic lights for car pooling. We will be going to an area where there is some smelly mud and water, so take gumboots or similar. The sun's ultraviolet rays are magnified by salt and water on Greenpark Sands, so slip, slop, slap in order not to end up looking like a prawn at the end of the day. Return to Christchurch will be after lunch.

Contact Nick Allen ph 358 5994, or email [nick\\_allen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:nick_allen@xtra.co.nz)

### Wednesday 10th February

#### WEA 7.30pm

Speaker: **Di Lucas**, Landscape Architect  
Topic: "Mackenzie Country"

### Saturday 13th or Sunday 14th Feb

(weather dependent)

#### Quailburn Wilding Tree Removal Day

Join Ohau Conservation Trust, DOC and F&B volunteers from Otago in a wilding tree removal day on conservation land at Quailburn. All welcome, hand tools only. BBQ lunch provided by DOC. Site is at 900-1000 m a.s.l. with great views over the Ohau basin. Contact Peter Willemse (DOC Twizel) email [pwillemse@doc.govt.nz](mailto:pwillemse@doc.govt.nz) or Anne Steven (Wanaka) email [a.steven@xtra.co.nz](mailto:a.steven@xtra.co.nz) ph 021 2939207

### Saturday 27th February

#### Meurky Walk with Dr Colin Meurk

#### Travis Wetland through to Bottle

**Lake Plantation** (assuming no previous postponements)

Contact Anna-Marie Barnes 337 9593 cell 021 1096 534

### Quail Island Work Days

Ferry leaves Lyttelton 9.20 am and returns 3.30. Booking essential  
Contact Ian McLennan ph 3845338 email [id.mclennan@xtra.co.nz](mailto:id.mclennan@xtra.co.nz)



## March

### Sat, Sun 13th & 14th March

#### Hinewai Reserve

Hinewai is a large (1000+ hectares) regenerating forest reserve on Banks Peninsula near Akaroa. It is owned by a private charitable trust whose aim is the protection and restoration of native vegetation and wildlife. The legendary **Hugh Wilson** (Botanist) is the manager.

**Option 1:** Stay overnight at Hinewai Lodge on Friday 12th and/or Saturday 13th. The lodge sleeps only 12, so numbers are limited. Cost: \$15 per person per night.

**Option 2:** Spend the day at Hinewai on Saturday 13th. Aim to arrive by 10 am for morning tea. There may be work we can help Hugh with on Saturday morning. This is definitely optional. Hugh will give us a talk after lunch and then we can explore the reserve, walk some of the newly opened tracks, and perhaps spot some of the 30 tui that were released at Hinewai in April 2009.

What to Bring? All the usual, plus food for lunch (and dinner on Saturday), camera, good walking footwear.

Contact Steve Pitman ph 383 5933 email [s.pitman@xtra.co.nz](mailto:s.pitman@xtra.co.nz)



## April & May

### St James Station Field Trip

Contact Fred Murray  
email [fmurray@xtra.co.nz](mailto:fmurray@xtra.co.nz)

### Saturday 1 May

#### Meurky Walk with Dr Colin Meurk

#### Bottle Lake to Spencer Park/

**Brooklands Lagoon** (assuming no

previous postponements)  
Contact Anna-Marie Barnes 337 9593 cell 021 1096 534

### Saturday 1 or Sunday 2 May

#### Okains Bay

#### Guided trip with John Thacker

Contact John Thacker ph 355 8191  
email [john.thacker@ecan.govt.nz](mailto:john.thacker@ecan.govt.nz)

## Best Fish Guide

Forest & Bird's new Best Fish Guide was launched in early November. The guide comes as a walletsized guide that summarises the fish species rankings, as a written report (download it from Forest & Bird's website), and an online summary for each fish species

More information at [www.bestfishguide.org.nz](http://www.bestfishguide.org.nz)  
Order wallet cards from Nicole Seminiuk at Central Office: 04 385 7374 or [n.seminiuk@forestandbird.org.nz](mailto:n.seminiuk@forestandbird.org.nz)

More information: Kirstie Knowles 04 801 2210 or [k.knowles@forestandbird.org.nz](mailto:k.knowles@forestandbird.org.nz)

# North Canterbury Branch Committee Members

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Lesley Shand  
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Forest and Bird  
aims to protect  
New Zealand's  
natural environment  
and give its members  
every opportunity  
to explore and  
appreciate this heritage

## Forest & Bird Membership

Single, Family, Non-Profit Group	\$57
Senior Citizen, Senior Family	\$45
Student, School Library	\$45
Overseas	NZ\$95

### Kiwi Conservation Club

Junior	\$19
Junior (overseas)	\$40
Family and school membership, please enquire ph 0800 200 064	

### We welcome new members

Applications for membership  
and / or payment of subs  
can be made to

Forest & Bird Central Office  
P O Box 631  
Wellington 6140

office@forestandbird.org.nz  
Enquiries ph 0800 200 064

[www.forestandbird.org.nz](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz)

## Forest and Bird

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