



Forest & Bird
GIVING NATURE A VOICE

May 2011

Forest & Bird

North Canterbury Branch

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The Mt Cass Saga Lecture

Godwits Fly Again

On Sunday February 20th several hundred people gathered at Southshore Spit to make their annual farewell to the departing bar tailed godwits [*limosa lapponica*]



These feathered travellers cover one of the longest migratory routes in the world-travelling each year from Alaska to Australia/NZ and back again. One female bird known as E7 from her leg band and coded transmitter even flew into the record books – covering 11,680 km in just eight days from the Yukon River Delta in Alaska to the mudflats near Piako, Forth of Thames, in the North Island. Those who arrive at Avon-Heathcote Estuary and points further south, of course, fly further.

The Godwits gather on sand bars and mudflats in September: from Paerengarenga Harbour in the far north, to Kiapara harbour; the Manukau and Waitemata harbours; the Firth of Thames at Miranda (which has the greatest numbers of summer visitors); Farewell Spit and further down in to Canterbury and Otago. They are exhausted when they touch down, having flown non-stop and lost up to 40 % of their bodyweight of an average 600gms. The rich feed of worms and other marine crustaceans available here provides the energy for them to put on weight for the return flight via the Yellow Sea and South Korea and for the necessary task of breeding in the

northern summer. The CCC Ranger at South Shore, Andrew Crosland notes the weekly changes in weight and condition of the birds. When the males change into the breeding plumage of crimson breast feathers, he then sets the date for farewelling the Godwits. Most godwits then depart in small groups over the next month. Some juveniles, who have already made the outward journey, will stay over winter.

Forest and Bird North Canterbury was part of the Godwit Farewell in February this year as part of its sponsorship of SEAWEEK events. Unfortunately the Tuesday after the Farewell saw the devastating 6.3 earthquake in Christchurch, and the remaining programme was cancelled. We hope that SEAWEEK will be up and running again next year in early March and the godwits will be here to greet us again.

Doug Craig

**Take nothing but pictures
Leave nothing but footprints
Kill nothing but time**

Leaving it to Nature — Forest restoration at Hinewai Reserve, Banks Peninsula

Hugh Wilson, the Manager of Hinewai Reserve will be speaking at the Branch AGM in June. The following is an abstract of the talk he will be giving at the meeting.



Two major waves of human colonisation, Polynesian and European, stripped Banks Peninsula of its ancient forests and savaged its wildlife. A thousand years ago, Banks Peninsula was forested from side to side and from top to bottom. By 1900, less than one percent of the old growth forest remained, and only about half of the terrestrial bird species survived.

Nevertheless, Nature is clearly eager to restore the native ecosystems, with or without human assistance. By 2000, some sixteen percent of the Peninsula's roughly 100,000ha was again under native forest canopy through natural regeneration, and many bird populations were thriving, against numerous odds. Many initiatives now are underway to foster this restoration.

In this lecture, Hugh will give a background to what has happened on Banks Peninsula over the last millennium, and what is happening now. He will refer to several restoration projects, with various management philosophies, but will focus on the project in which he is most intimately involved, Hinewai Reserve, in the southeast corner of the Peninsula, east of Akaroa.

Hinewai is now 1,230 ha of regenerating native forest and remnants of old-growth forest, owned and managed privately by the Maurice White Native Forest Trust. It is freely open to the public, as if were a mini-National Park on the doorstep of Akaroa, and in the backyard of Christchurch.

Hugh Wilson



KCC Report

Birdlings Flat and Kaitorete Spit - February

Thanks to all who helped. We visited Covenanted land carefully weeded and guarded by locals, visited the excellent Gemstone Museum and then hunted for Katipo spiders among wonderful specimens of Pingao. A special place all should visit.

Exploring the Rangitata River

We stayed overnight at the Staveley Campsite so we could explore and gain an insight into the river's uses [we watched kayakers enjoying themselves despite the rain] at the RDR. At Deep stream we looked for salmon, usually spawning at this time we saw only one very large fish. We caught sight of a few Upland bullies & admired the magnificent scenery and learned how it came to be. Some watched a NZ Falcon sitting at the roadside.

As well kids gazed at fossil remains millions of years old, created seed balls, enjoyed a candlelight dinner and watched critters feed at night. Our Saturday night games & Staveley Challenge were keenly contested. Beech forest exploration revealed many beautiful fungi, lichens, mosses, six and eight legged critters under rotting logs and stunning beech trees. Sunday rain only dampened our clothes!

Forest and Bird trip to the Rangitata

In warming sunshine we gazed at fossils [embedded in limestone] millions of years old. We viewed the Rangitata from the top of the old river terrace at the RDR, watched kayakers and rafters having a wonderful experience -- as far as the intake [they leave the river there.]

We spotted salmon [thanks Steve] and were reluctant to leave; held there by the scenery and sun. After our candlelight dinner at the Staveley campsite we enjoyed a cloudless sky to study the Milky Way at it's best under the expert guidance of astronomers Karen & Patrick. Thank you!

Staveley Challenge was keenly contested then off to see our High Country Galaxids & Upland Bullies habitat, yes we saw a bully [thanks Steve- again!] Deep Stream was a great sight to visit the headwaters of the Rangitata visible the river relatively unspoiled. We plan to run the trip for two nights 2012 as there is sooo much more to see and explore.

Eleanor Bissell

For more information about KCC meetings and outings contact Eleanor at email bissell@actrix.co.nz



The Hurunui-Waiau draft Zone Implementation Programme



Upper Hurunui

The Hurunui-Waiau ZIP is a step along the way to a new water management regime in Canterbury.

The Hurunui-Waiau Zone Committee is the first to reach the stage of releasing a draft ZIP; it is to be hoped that other zone committees will carefully consult it, to learn from it and avoid pitfalls.

The Overview of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy, after establishing its vision, first and second order priorities, principles, and targets, defined the function of the zone committees: *to develop strategies, tactics and activities (Implementation Programmes) to give effect to the CWMS fundamental principles and targets.* It is highly questionable whether the Hurunui-Waiau ZIP achieves this; indeed, the Zone Committee seems to have developed its own priorities, principles and targets that are quite at variance with those of the CWMS. The Committee has taken a local perspective that focuses on the development of irrigated agriculture in this part of Hurunui District. Regional, national and international interests receive much less emphasis.

The ZIP identifies the key water management challenge as *the need to ensure that economic development in the Hurunui Waiau zone is able to proceed at a speed that benefits both the community that lives there and the wider New Zealand economy while also protecting natural values that while shared by that local community may not be their primary priority.* The qualification relating to natural values is very significant, especially since this is the statement of the basic issue that the ZIP addresses. Several times, the ZIP states the target of irrigating all the potentially irrigable land in the catchments – a target achieved virtually nowhere else in the world except for limited areas such as the Mekong delta (where water is abundant). Inevitably, this mindset leads to “solutions” that involve finding “more water” – strictly speaking, not finding additional water (which is only possible by rainfall augmentation and snowpack management) but shifting existing water in time and space. The overall tenor of the ZIP, and the space it allocates to different topics, suggests an over-riding interest in promoting irrigated agriculture, unsurprisingly given the membership of the Committee.

Repeatedly, the ZIP remarks on the lack of baseline data, information, and understanding, but nevertheless advocates with remarkable confidence the inter-basin transfer of water from the Waiau to the Hurunui and from the Hurunui to the Waipara, and major storage. It opposes damming of the Waiau system (presumably the necessary diversion structures in the Waiau

are acceptable) and in the Hurunui below the South Branch confluence. This leaves open the opportunity for impoundments in the upper Hurunui and South Branch, and the ZIP explicitly advocates control of Lake Sumner. It is ironic that the Sumner Lakes wetland complex is identified as a prime biodiversity asset in the ZIP, but nevertheless presumably is regarded as dispensable if South Branch impoundment and/or Sumner control require it. The ZIP also canvasses the possibility of an impoundment in the Waitohi catchment, although this is more costly than other possibilities. This option is likely to be more acceptable to non-agricultural interests, as the Waitohi is already heavily modified.

The ZIP draws on the extensive knowledge base that has been developed in the Hurunui to make recommendations (which are not novel) on mainstem flow regimes. A feature is its emphasis on the health of the *hapua* (river mouth estuaries) as indicators of system health, although this is only one indicator that would not address other aspects of the river systems of interest to naturalists, anglers and recreationists. On the other hand, the ZIP appears ready to “strategically” sacrifice pristine wetlands, to be replaced presumably by artificial managed wetlands in order to maintain no net change. There seems to be little recognition that the few wetlands remaining in the Hurunui-Waiau are irreplaceable.

The CWMS places much emphasis on community involvement and dialogue, and the ZIP draws on such dialogue in the local catchments. However, to moderate the strongly local perspective of the draft, and ensure that regional, national and non-agricultural interests are considered, it is essential that other people make submissions on the draft ZIP. This is a draft, and so our input at this stage could have an influence on the final version. It can be read at and downloaded from www.canterburywater.org.nz/committees/hurunui-waiau.php#zip

This newsletter review is inevitably brief, and does not claim to be comprehensive. You are invited to download and study the ZIP, and are strongly encouraged to make a submission to admin@canterburywater.org.nz, by 3 June 2011. The Branch Committee will be making a submission also.

Paul Moseley



Lake Sumner



Water Management in Canterbury

Implementation of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy is gathering pace, and there is an urgent need for Forest and Birders to get involved! As the overview graphic shows, implementation is intended to be by a Regional Committee which looks after regional issues and principles, and by a number of appointed Zone Committees that have responsibility for identifying and prioritizing issues at the local level, and coming up with Zone Implementation Plans. Seven of the intended committees are established. The Hurunui-Waiiau Committee leads the pack, with a draft Implementation Plan just issued; two of the committees (Banks Peninsula, and Christchurch-West Melton) are on hold because of the earthquakes. The other six are at different stages of gearing up; for instance, Selwyn-Waihora is still at the stage of reviewing the types of water management activities and initiatives that are found in the district.

The Zone Water Management Committees

The Zone Committees are composed of people who have been selected for their supposed linkages with the community at large, and ability to communicate and network. The seven active committees have 79 members, of whom 25% are runanga representatives. Of the appointed members whose CVs are shown on the CWMS website, over 50% are engaged in the farming industry, 10% are in the electricity or forestry industries, 15% have management, law or political backgrounds, 10% are environmental or engineering science professionals, and 12% are principally engaged in environmental management and conservation. In practice, then, the committees are tending to pay particular attention to the perspective of interests that regard water as an economic good. This is why vigilant input of Forest and Bird members is crucially needed.

The Immediate Steps Biodiversity Programme

An important part of the Committees' discussions so far has been to consider how to allocate resources in the Immediate Steps Programme, which focuses on funding projects that will benefit biodiversity in the region. Three so-called "flagship" project areas have been selected – Waihora-Lake Ellesmere, high country braided rivers, and the Wainono Lagoon – with \$1.2 million per year allocated for five years. Other funds are also being allocated in each Zone for smaller projects that contribute to biodiversity protection and restoration. Some members of the committees seem to feel that decisions on the allocation of resources have been somewhat rushed, with insufficient knowledge on the part of the committees of all the options and priorities. However, the Immediate Steps Programme is an important element of the overall Strategy, to demonstrate to the public at large that "something is being done" to mitigate and reverse adverse effects on aquatic resources and ecosystems in the region.

Proposals for economic development of Canterbury's waters

The importance of the Zone Committees has been demonstrated by the way in which potential water users have presented their proposals to relevant committees: they evidently believe that the Zone Committees will play a key role in decision

making with regard to the management and exploitation of Canterbury's water (notwithstanding statutory processes under the Resources Management Act). Thus, for instance, proposals for development of Lake Coleridge, which at present is managed under provisions of the National Water Conservation Order for the Rakaia River and catchment, already have been presented to the Selwyn-Waihora Zone Committee. These proposals ostensibly would not require major changes to the management regime for Coleridge, but amendments to the NWCO nevertheless are mooted – a cause for serious concern, as a matter of principle, on the part of conservation interests.

Proposals are furthest advanced in the Hurunui River catchment, and the Zone Committee has been working hard, with frequent meetings, to consider opportunities to exploit the waters of the river for irrigation. It is no surprise, then, that the Hurunui-Waiiau Zone Committee is the first to have drafted its Zone Implementation Plan, which now is available for public comment (closing date 3 June).

Please **get involved** in the CWMS

Just as farming and hydropower industry representatives see the Zone Committees as important "gatekeepers", and the CWMS as the framework within which they must work to achieve their business objectives, it is essential that environmental and conservation interests also treat these committees with respect. Their meetings are open to the public, and public attendance is welcomed by committees and officials – and members of the public may be given opportunity to ask questions and speak, at the discretion of chairpersons. It is **essential** that people with conservation interests – Forest and Bird members in particular – should attend meetings of the Zone Committees, to "keep them honest", and feed back to branches and our Regional Office any concerns there might be about the directions in which the committees are moving.

Information on Zone committee meetings can be found on the CWMS website (canterburywater.org.nz), on the websites of the District Councils that host the particular committees, and in local free newspapers (*Selwyn Times* etc). The websites contain data on dates of meetings, the agendas, information papers, meeting minutes, etc. – a vast quantity of valuable information. It is possible to join email lists so that agendas of upcoming meetings can be received automatically, a few days before the meeting.

All members are encouraged – indeed, implored – to get involved. The CWMS is not a democratic process and there are limited opportunities to have a say in how Canterbury's water will be managed and exploited in the future – and in how aquatic ecosystems, birdlife, recreational opportunities, and scenic/amenity values will be sustained. Attending Zone Committee meetings is one of the ways that Forest and Bird members can monitor what is happening, and perhaps influence it.



An opportunity to get involved in local water management



Maori Gully, Hurunui

People with an interest in water management in Christchurch or Banks Peninsula will be invited soon to consider applying to join either the Christchurch-West Melton Zone Committee of the Banks Peninsula Zone Committee.

The Zone Committees use a collaborative process to identify water management solutions in particular zones. It is important that those who are concerned about the protection of freshwater ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity, along with the amenity values of our local waterways are well represented on these Committees.

We would urge you to consider getting involved. For more information or to register your interest please visit: www.canterburywater.org.nz or contact Jen Miller Canterbury-West Coast Field Officer for Forest and Bird. Contact details: j.miller@forestandbird.org.nz
Telephone: 365 9433, cell 021 651 778



View of Lake Coleridge from Peak Hill

Conservation in the Cross Hairs



Conservation will be the loser following the government's announcement that a statutory Game Animal Council will be set up to manage some herds of introduced pest animals on public conservation lands.

The responsibility for controlling these herds of pest animals – which include deer, thar, chamois and pigs – will be stripped from the Department of Conservation and handed to the new council.

“ Forest & Bird believes DOC is best placed to ensure that conservation values remain paramount while allowing hunters to continue playing a valuable role in controlling the numbers of these pests,” Advocacy Manager Kevin Hackwell said.

“ Giving priority to a narrow set of hunter interests will undermine the conservation of our forests, which have been devastated by these pest animals since their introduction to New Zealand.

“ Having two organisations – DOC and the game council – administering different pests on the same land is likely to lead to confusion and a poor outcome for conservation.

” The interests of elite trophy hunters are likely to dominate those of ordinary hunters on the new council, reflecting the fact they will be paying a large part of the council 's costs. But eventually local hunters are likely to find they too will be paying to hunt in their local forest.

“ The council will be an expensive operation requiring resources to do research, manage herds, and run and police a licensing system,” Kevin said.

“ So if the council is to be mainly self funded, it will be inevitable that a user pays regime will mean new costs to ordinary hunters ” The creation of the game council is contrary to New Zealand 's conservation laws and international commitments, which give priority to reducing the impact of introduced pests on our native ecology.

Source: Nature in Action



Conservationist's Loss Mourned

The death last month of Don Merton at the age of 72 was mourned throughout Forest & Bird and New Zealand.



Don Merton receiving the Old Blue award last year.

Photo: Jon Wenham.

Hundreds of people attended his funeral service in Tauranga on April 14, and those who delivered eulogies included Forest & Bird President Barry Wards, Department of Conservation head Al Morrison, and Environment Minister Nick Smith.

Don's casket was painted with pictures of the native birds he loved and at the end of the service his casket departed in a helicopter, accompanied by his wife Margaret.

Former president and executive member Peter Maddison said Forest & Bird was enormously thankful for the pioneering work Don did to save unique bird species.

"Without Don Merton, the kakapo, the Chatham Island black robin and other unique native New Zealand birds would probably have become extinct," Peter said.

"He was a guru of the conservation movement."

Don started his career in conservation with the Wildlife Service in the late 1950s, and quickly recognised the devastating impact rats and other introduced pests were having on many native birds. Ahead of his time, he worked to eradicate pests from New Zealand offshore islands.

In the 1970s Don began his groundbreaking work rescuing the Chatham Island black robin and kakapo from extinction. At one stage only five robins remained, including a single successful breeding pair. Forest & Bird's prestigious Old Blue award, which Don received late last year, is named after the last breeding female robin that saved her species from disappearing.

The kakapo population fell to about 50 in the mid-1990s but Don's creativity and tenacity contributed to the species recovering to more than 130 now. He also played a leading role in saving the South Island saddleback. In 1998 the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) elected Don to its Global 500 Roll of Honour for his "outstanding contributions to the protection and improvement of the environment."

Al Morrison said Don was a remarkable conservationist. "It's not many of us who play a pivotal role in pulling an entire species back from the brink – Don did three times. The techniques he developed became the blueprint for much of DOC's work with threatened species," he said.

In recent years Don and Margaret lived in Tauranga, and he was the patron of the Forest & Bird's Kaimai Mamaku campaign to restore the region's forests and native wildlife.

Source: Nature In Action

Public meetings on Trustpower's Lake Coleridge development proposal

Trustpower has developed a scheme proposal based on Lake Coleridge that could provide for reliable irrigation for up to 140,000 ha and 70 MW of new hydro generation capacity.

However, to achieve this Trustpower requires a variation to the existing Rakaia Water Conservation Order. To date, Trustpower has made presentations to some of the Zone Committees, but the potential implications of their proposals are not at all clear, either on the basic hydrology of the river or on instream and amenity values.

Trustpower is organising a series of public meetings, to be held at the following times and venues:

Monday 30 May - 7:00 pm at the Methven Heritage Centre

Tuesday 31 May - 1:00 pm at the Darfield Recreation Centre

Tuesday 31 May - 7:00 pm at the Rolleston School Hall

Wednesday 1 June - 1:00 pm at the Rakaia Community Centre

Wednesday 1 June - 7:00 pm at the Ashburton Masonic Lodge

Forest and Bird members are strongly encouraged to attend one of these meetings, so that they can be well informed of Trustpower's proposals and are in a position to make submissions etc.



Forthcoming Events



May/June

Monday 30th May - Wednesday 1st June

Public meetings on Trustpower's Lake Coleridge development proposal

Details of these meetings can be found on the previous page.



June

**Wednesday 8th June 2011
Branch AGM**

WEA, 59 Gloucester Street 7.30pm

Speaker: **Hugh Wilson**

Hugh, the Manager of Hinewai Reserve will be speaking at the Branch AGM about forest restoration at the Reserve.

**Saturday 18th June 2011
Public meeting**

**WEA, 59 Gloucester Street
11.00am—3.00pm**

Topic: **Marine Reserves**

Peter Young, Trustee and founder of The Last Ocean will come along and give us a presentation.

Everyone is welcome to the meeting.



July

**Saturday 4th July 2011
Public meeting**

WEA, 59 Gloucester Street 4.00pm

The Kea Conservation Trust are running an advocacy tour of the South Island and will make a presentation to our Branch.

If you would like to know more look up www.keaconservation.co.nz

Everyone is welcome to the meeting; tea and coffee will follow

Please help us to protect our native plants and animals

At this time, Forest and Bird is fighting conservation issues on many fronts. The RMA and similar legislation ensure these fights must take place in courtrooms with legal representation, and the costs are very high.

We would ask you to consider making a bequest to Forest and Bird in your will. Commonly, people make bequests to the Society at national level (see p. 49 of issue 340 of *Forest & Bird*). However, someone who wishes to support conservation activities at local level, e.g. by helping to fund local education, pest control, revegetation projects and particularly local conservation issues, may consider making a bequest to a branch. For correct wording we suggest you seek legal advice.

**Protecting our native plants, animals and wild places,
on land and in our oceans.
Help us to help nature**



Forest & Bird
GIVING NATURE A VOICE

North Canterbury Branch Public Meetings

Everyone is welcome to our monthly public meetings held on the second Wednesday of each month.

Guest speakers discuss various environmental topics and issues.

WANTED

Email Addresses

We are very happy to send a printed copy of the newsletter to our members, but if some of these could be sent electronically we will save time, money and trees!

You will then get the newsletter in **colour**, and if you need a paper copy you only need to press the PRINT button

If you have an email address and would like to receive your newsletter and meeting reminders by email, please send your name or address or phone number or F&B membership number to:

northcanterburyfb@gmail.com with 'F&B newsletter' in the subject line.

Nature is Cool

A poem by Barbara, age 10

Nature is cool in its own way,
Nature is cool in the day,
But if global warming happens,
It would not be good
For our earth and neighborhood.

Global warming would make the earth
hot,
Which would be like a boiling pot.
Global warming would harm the earth,

Mother nature could not give birth,
To animals and plants,
Earth would be under a trance.

Green plants would lose their fame,
Our waters would drain.
Our government will try to help,

But you and I need to save the kelp.
So start playing it smart,
And do your part.
Life might not end,
If you 're Earth 's friend!



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F & B Web Pages

Forest & Bird has a number of useful and interesting websites. Give them a try!

Our main site www.forestandbird.org.nz

KCC www.kcc.org.nz

Blog <http://blog.forestandbird.org.nz/>

Chat Room <http://forum.forestandbird.org.nz/>

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/forestandbird>

Twitter http://www.twitter.com/forest_and_bird

Youtube <http://youtube.com/forestandbird>

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, Nonprofit 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

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