

# Annual Report

For the year to 28 February 2014

## Forest & Bird highlights

2013 was a landmark year as Forest & Bird members celebrated the 90th birthday with events around the country, focusing on local milestones and the work done by long-standing volunteers. It was an opportunity to reflect on an extraordinary range of achievements during the nine decades since Captain Val Sanderson and a former prime minister, Sir Thomas Mackenzie, launched the Society at a public meeting in Wellington in 1923.

On the national stage, our successes during the past 90 years have included several new national parks and marine reserves, saving Lake Manapōuri, protecting West Coast and central North Island native forests from logging, the purchase of Maud Island in the Marlborough Sounds and Mangere Island in the Chathams as wildlife sanctuaries, the creation of the Department of Conservation and the protection of many precious rivers.

Captain Sanderson's daughter, Nancy Jordan, attended the 90th birthday dinner in Wellington in June along with his grandsons, Justin Jordan and Guido Panduri. They link us with Forest & Bird's founder and his vision, just as today's supporters have followed the earliest members who laid the foundations of an enduring Society. Since 1923, Forest & Bird has influenced hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders, acting on the pressing environmental issues of the day, changing the course of history and fostering new generations of conservationists.

As we approach our centenary, Forest & Bird continues to play a key role as a kaitiaki for nature. Forest & Bird

has a unique blend of national and local focus, doing on-the-ground conservation work and speaking up for nature in our cities and rural communities, and engaging whānau from children to grandparents. Our diversity is our strength.

We are looking to the future, identifying the most critical threats to nature of invasive pests, climate change and unsustainable development, and working on meaningful solutions in which all New Zealanders can play a part. Our vision is for a predator-free New Zealand, landscape-scale conservation and an ecologically sustainable economy, engaging in partnerships with iwi and others who share our values.

The Society's guiding principles and structure are under review and we are reshaping the organisation so it has the strength to meet the societal, scientific, commercial and technological demands of coming years.

We are proud of Forest & Bird's legacy of conservation achievements for Aotearoa New Zealand, and we look forward to the challenges of the next 90 years.





Ruataniwha dam site

## Forest & Bird's conservation directions

### SECURING NATURE BEYOND PROTECTED AREAS

The government failed to get support among its coalition partners for its plan to downgrade the environmental protections of the Resource Management Act (RMA), due in large part to lobbying by Forest & Bird and other environmental organisations.

In Hawke's Bay, Forest & Bird branch members worked with staff to ensure water quality and wildlife would not be sacrificed for the proposed Ruataniwha irrigation scheme. They appeared before the Board of Inquiry appointed to consider the project.

In Canterbury, Forest & Bird's years of work to protect the Upper Hurunui River from irrigation dams succeeded when independent commissioners released their decision in April. Forest & Bird was involved in the High Court proceedings that eventually confirmed the commissioners' decision. In Otago, Forest & Bird lodged an appeal on a plan change to Otago Regional Council's Otago Water Plan, focusing on impacts on coastal areas.

The Mackenzie Country continued to be a focus, with Forest & Bird playing an important role in the Mackenzie Sustainable Futures Trust, which in May announced an agreement recommending protecting part of the region and fostering a more balanced approach in the rest. Forest & Bird was also involved in legal action to protect the Mackenzie's drylands from two major dairy developments.

Pressure is increasing on the South Island's high country, and Forest & Bird submitted on tenure review proposals and successfully submitted on an irrigation proposal in the Craigieburn Basin and adjoining Lake Pearson, which was declined by an independent commissioner.

Forest & Bird was involved in other legal appeals for better environmental protection, including district plans for Ashburton, Kawarau and New Plymouth.

A 15-hectare site on Kaipara Harbour was identified as a potential new nesting site for critically endangered fairy terns, and Forest & Bird cleared the site of weeds, stoats and rabbits.



Love DOC Day

Forest & Bird's work to protect our marine environment included submissions on new regulations for deep sea activities such as seabed mining and oil drilling in New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone. Forest & Bird played a significant part in developing a Kaikōura marine reserve.

A Forest & Bird representative was appointed to the working group developing the Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan.

Forest & Bird staff and members served on several collaborative forums – including the Kaimai Mamaku Catchment Project and the Waikato Healthy Rivers: Plan for Change – that are advancing conservation in many areas. The Land and Water Forum, of which Forest & Bird is an active member, continued to monitor and critique the implementation of its recommendations by government and councils.

Conservation partnerships with several organisations, including the Kākāpō Recovery Programme and the Kiwi Recovery Group, contributed to a better future for iconic native species.

### SUPPORTING AND EXPANDING PROTECTED AREAS

The major campaign to save the West Coast's Denniston Plateau from an open-cast coal mine ended after three years as Forest & Bird exhausted its legal options. The Environment Court decision to grant Bathurst Resources its consents could have been appealed on points of law but a win would have delayed, not stopped, the mine. Forest & Bird chose not to appeal after the company agreed to permanently protect 745 hectares of the plateau.

A heavy flowering of beech trees in spring 2013 activated a crisis response from the Department of Conservation (DOC). Forest & Bird publicly supported DOC's Battle for our Birds campaign to increase aerial 1080 operations in the South Island to combat the explosion of predator numbers that follows a mast year's bumper crop of seeds.

Forest & Bird's Love DOC Day on April 11 celebrated the department's value to New Zealand and our concern at plans to axe 140 DOC positions on top of a \$54 million funding cut from



Auckland's Pollen Island

2009-2013. Forest & Bird members held cake stalls and took messages of support to DOC offices around New Zealand. Conservation Minister Nick Smith subsequently announced an extra \$20 million for DOC, saving about 60 positions.

Forest & Bird supported a report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment that recommended reclassifying the third of the conservation estate that is stewardship land – in limbo and waiting for its natural values to be reflected by a protective classification.

Forest & Bird backed the successful campaign against plans to build a tunnel through Fiordland and Mt Aspiring national parks and a monorail through Southland's Snowdon Forest.

Work on expanding New Zealand's marine reserves continued, including the campaign to create a major Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary, in association with Pew and WWF-NZ.

As kauri dieback swept through Northland and Auckland forests, Forest & Bird actively protected kauri in reserves and shared the messages about stopping the spread of the disease.

### CONSERVATION IN URBAN AREAS

Forest & Bird's Auckland region branches worked with staff to make a significant submission on the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan, which will become the most important resource management document for the Auckland region.

Many other branches highlighted conservation issues in their cities and continued their restoration projects bringing nature back to towns.

The mōhua, or yellowhead, won Forest & Bird's ninth Bird of the Year poll. Nearly 13,000 votes were cast in the online poll, which reaches a young, mainly urban audience. Forest & Bird's Kiwi Conservation Club for children ran a second Kereru Count, attracting most of the 1073 observations from city dwellers.

Forest & Bird supported for the seventh year the annual Garden Bird Survey, a nationwide citizen science project monitoring long-term trends in garden bird populations.





Denniston Plateau

### CLIMATE CHANGE

Forest & Bird joined with other environmental groups to advocate against deep sea oil drilling, providing expert advice on the potential impacts on wildlife of spills from deep sea oil blowouts.

Staff and many members publicly backed the need to move beyond fossil fuels and towards alternative energy sources, including wind, tidal, solar, biomass, geothermal and hydro.

Forest & Bird joined an unsuccessful legal appeal arguing that the effects of climate change should be considered in granting resource consents to mine coal on the Denniston and Stockton plateaus.

Forest & Bird promoted the New Zealand tour in April by United States climate change campaigner Bill McKibben, who asked people to lobby organisations with shares in oil or coal companies to get rid of their shares.

Submissions were made on regional and district plans to consider climate change impacts, particularly of sea level rise on coastal and intertidal habitats.

Our community and advocacy work for pest control was another contribution towards the carbon sequestration of our forests.

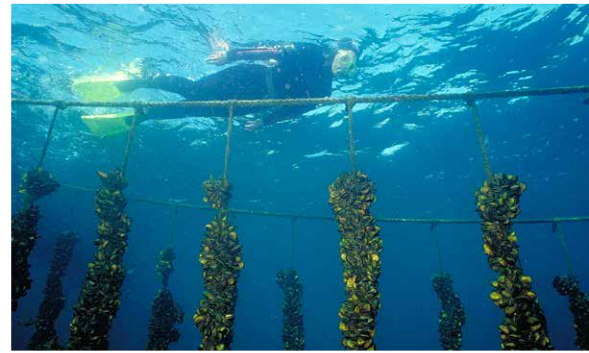
### AN ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

The New Zealand Shark Alliance, of which Forest & Bird was a significant player, achieved a ban on shark finning, with the ministers of primary industries and conservation in January agreeing to make the killing, finning and dumping of shark bodies illegal.

Forest & Bird helped formulate the new National Plan of Action for Seabirds, which is a step towards saving seabirds being killed in commercial and non-commercial fishing.

The popular Best Fish Guide was updated to include farmed seafood, such as mussels, pāua and salmon.

Through our work in the courts and at planning forums around New Zealand, we reduced the impacts on biodiversity of inappropriate expansion of dairy farming.



Mussel farming

With only an estimated 55 Māui's dolphins aged more than a year, Forest & Bird advocated for greater protection of the sub-species, including an extension of the area where gill nets are banned, essentially along the west coast of the northern North Island, and a marine mammal sanctuary.

## Forest & Bird's organisational directions

### STRONG BRANCHES AND ACTIVE MEMBERS

The rejuvenation of Forest & Bird's Waitaki branch in March 2013 brought the number of branches to 50. The branch, centred in Oamaru, was reactivated after 17 years of hibernation.

Most branches continued to actively control pests in Forest & Bird and other local reserves and to play a part in the movement towards a predator-free New Zealand. Most branches also led projects to restore the native habitats that would once have been so important for wildlife in their regions.

In February, Forest & Bird and Auckland Council renewed the agreement to run the Ark in the Park project in the Waitākere Ranges for a further 10 years. It marked the end of another successful year, with the fifth whitehead (pōpokotea) translocation of 100 birds to the Ark. A total of 660 volunteers put in about 9000 hours to keep the wildlife safe from predators outside the Ark. Three kākako chicks fledged and North Island robins are breeding in the Ark and beyond its boundaries.

The Bay of Plenty's Aongatete Forest Restoration Project pest control area expanded to 500 hectares, resulting in more sightings of rifleman.

The Kiwi Conservation Club (KCC) for children marked its 25th year with changes in staff, with the departure of much-loved veteran *Wild Things* editor Ann Graeme and illustrator Tim Galloway. The magazine was revamped, and new KCC manager Tiff Stewart led the consultation and preparation of a strategic vision for youth. A total of 63 volunteer KCC co-ordinators from 36 groups ran fun, educational events for KCC members around New Zealand.



Dunedin branch pest control

Members of Forest & Bird's Far North branch protested against mining exploration in Russell State Forest in Northland.

At Pelorus Bridge in Marlborough, members continued their pest control work to protect a colony of long-tailed bats, or pekapeka. And on D'Urville Island in the Marlborough Sounds staff discovered a large colony of long-tailed bats.

### FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT

More than 67,700 people gave generously to support conservation, ranging from one-off donations to regular giving. Thousands more gave gifts of time and expertise. Without the commitment of so many people passionate about the environment, Forest & Bird couldn't fulfill its mission to be the voice for nature in communities throughout New Zealand.

We are very thankful, too, for the support of grant funders, who are critical to Forest & Bird's work.

More than 40 leading New Zealand artists donated generously to the Wild Perspective art auction held in the Auckland Museum in October 2013, raising record-breaking funds for Forest & Bird.

Fundraising appeals continued to be an important source of income. The campaign on RMA changes raised \$116,036, the highest level of donations in the year.

Forest & Bird has a family of sponsors and partners who share our passion for conservation. We were delighted to welcome new sponsors on board in the past year, including Kiwi Camping as the exclusive sponsor of KCC and Simply Pure, whose premium vodka and gin are made using local ingredients. Thank you to each and every one of our supporters.

### 100,000 VOICES FOR NATURE

Support for Forest & Bird continued to increase, with more than 2700 new members adding their voice for nature during the past year. Increasing the number of regular giving supporters is a key focus for the Society, and face to face recruitment plays a vital role in building this group.





Wild Perspective art auction



North Canterbury KCC event



Northland mining protest

## EFFECTIVE AND UNITED

After eight years as General Manager, Mike Britton resigned in July. He was succeeded by Hōne McGregor, who was appointed Chief Executive in November.

Forest & Bird's Executive initiated a Future Society Design Review, focusing on the staff structure, and accepted in principle the final report from external consultants in June. The Future Society Design Review will be implemented in the 2014-15 financial year.

The Executive's review of the Society's Constitution was a focus of the mid-year Council meeting of branch representatives, and work continued on reshaping it to underpin the Society's future.



Hōne McGregor and Andrew Cutler

## President's report

Tēnā koutou

This was an important year for the Society, and marks a turning point in our work to prepare the Society for the future.

Over the last three years the Executive has directed the national organisation toward a more sustainable and professional approach to its work. Among other decisions, we introduced the Society's first strategic plan, initiated an external review of the professional organisation, and worked to modernise the Constitution.

The benefits of this focus are beginning to be seen. Membership numbers are stabilising after many years of gradual decline and this year National Office achieved a small operating surplus on its budget. Our goal is to lift investment in conservation activity by achieving a sustainable and growing financial position backed by a highly professional organisation.

The year saw several important advances for conservation. The government's decision to direct the Department of Conservation to increase use of 1080 was long-overdue and will result in landscape-scale protection for many threatened native species.

The Society's long battle to protect the Denniston Plateau from coal mining concluded. Although we eventually lost the legal battle we managed to achieve protection for some smaller areas of the plateau, and economic forces have since undermined the viability of the mine. We will continue to address the risks that climate change poses to nature in New Zealand.

I would like to thank the Executive for their hard work and determination over the past year, and thank our new Chief Executive, Hōne McGregor, and all the Society's staff for their work.

Photos: Craig McKenzie, Kent Xie, Steve Attwood, Philip Moll, Craig Potton, Holly Willing, Photography by Woolf, Waikato Regional Council

Across New Zealand, our members and branches undertook many projects and fought battles to protect nature. Your persistence and passion is appreciated. It continues to make a big difference and carries nature's voice into communities across New Zealand.

Nāku noa, nā

Andrew Cutler,  
Forest & Bird President



Mōhua