



## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Welcome to our newsletter and programme for the second half of 2019.

A huge thank you to our members, volunteers, and financial supporters whose various contributions enable the good work of Forest & Bird, both locally and nationally. A big thanks also to our Dunedin committee and Otago projects officer, who work tirelessly for nature in Otago, via the local branch, its reserves and projects.

I once enjoyed the experience of a Hector's dolphin and her calf swimming between my son and I as we surfed at a local beach just minutes from Dunedin. So I was particularly sad to read that the recently proposed Hector's and Māui Dolphins Threat Management Plan offers no protection for the small Hector's dolphin population on the Otago coast.

You can make a submission to help save these wonderful (and endangered) marine mammals, either online, by post, or by email before 5pm on 4 August 2019. Further details (including where to send your submission) can be found at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/dolphintmp](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/dolphintmp).

Recently, I have been watching developments on the proposed Falls Dam irrigation project. Irrigators want to build a new, 6-metre-high dam, directly in front of the existing dam on the Manuherekia River. News coverage so far has failed to mention the raft of environmental issues associated with the proposal.

The Manuherekia is the only habitat on the planet for the Manuherekia alpine galaxiid. These non-migratory fish are eaten by trout, which live in the lake above the dam. Currently, the waterfall presents a natural barrier to trout, but the proposal to raise the height of the dam

could see them get over and into the same waterways as the galaxiids, which would be a disaster.

Immediately below the dam is the Fiddler's Flat Conservation Reserve, which receives just 25 mm of rainfall per year. This area is home to an assortment of rare dryland species that would be at increased risk by dam construction and expansion of the roadway leading up to it. Some of the plant species in this reserve are critically endangered, including *Lepidium sisymbrioides* – one of only three dioecious members of the cress plant family.



In other news, this year our forests are facing a mega-mast where seeds litter the ground after a warm summer and autumn. This boosts rodent numbers, which in turn boosts populations of other introduced predators. When the food runs out, they turn their attention to our native wildlife.

Our July meeting will focus on what that means for our native forests, with a presentation from Kevin Hackwell, Forest & Bird's Chief Conservation Advisor. Read on for further details and we hope to see you there.

**Paul Smale**

## TRIP REPORT: A WINTER WALK AT SUTTON SALT LAKE

A handful of hardy souls braved the cold to enjoy the early winter colours at New Zealand's only inland salt lake. Ungrazed browntop grass appears to be crowding out much of the native vegetation. Amongst it all, however, an endemic broom (*Carmichaelia petriei*) seemed to be thriving, most bushes a tangle of new growth.

Clouds were not overly cooperative for pictures. There was no sign of the Taieri Pet, a lenticular cloud which often forms to the east of the nearby Rock and Pillar Range when a nor-westerly is blowing. After recent rainfall, the lake was full, and the halophytes (salt-tolerant plants) which grow around its shores were mainly under water.

However a wide selection of lichens were available for our inspection, with different species growing in abundance on the sunlit faces of schist outcrops, on the shady sides of these tors, and on the sodium-rich alkaline slopes on the lake shore itself.

Sutton Salt Lake changes rapidly, often drying out in a single day in the summertime. Just four days after our Forest & Bird trip, a southerly snowstorm had blown through, and the water surface was almost completely covered in a sheet of ice.

**Paul Smale**



*Carmichaelia petriei*. Photo by Paul Smale.



*A lichen growing on the schist rock*. Photo by Paul Smale.



*Another lichen, from the salty shore of Sutton Salt Lake, in high magnification*. Photo by Paul Smale.

## CONSERVATION CALENDARS & DIARIES NOW AVAILABLE

These beautiful calendars and diaries feature photographs of our extraordinary wildlife and wild places, taken by some of New Zealand's leading nature photographers.



They make a wonderful gift for friends and family and are easy to send in the post.

Calendars are \$15, while diaries are \$20, with all proceeds supporting the Dunedin branch.

To purchase a calendar or diary, please email Francie Beggs ([fbeggs3@gmail.com](mailto:fbeggs3@gmail.com)). They will also be available for purchase at our monthly indoor meetings.

For more information, including pictures, visit [www.forestandbird.org.nz/dunedin/fundraising](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/dunedin/fundraising)

**Francie Beggs**

## TRIP REPORT: KCC VISIT SINCLAIR WETLANDS

On a cold morning that reminded us all that winter was actually coming, after all the warm and dry days of summer and autumn, a bunch of us pulled on woolly hats and windbreaker coats to have a guided tour of the Sinclair Wetlands.

The Wetlands are a reserve that was once farmed. Horrie Sinclair and his predecessors drained and cleared and planted the area in pasture grasses, as all the farmers around about did, until one day Horrie decided he wanted to enhance some of his farm for the benefit of ducks and other waterfowl. He let the drainage ditches fill in and water inundate the low-lying ground once more.

The land was gifted as a reserve and eventually came back to Ngāi Tahu management. Glen Riley is a full-time employee of the Wetlands Trust and gave us an informative tour of the area.

The succession from farmland to native wetland ecosystem has a distinct pattern – from *Glyceria*, a grass that blocks the drains and allows soil to accumulate, followed by *Carex secta*, a kind of big bunch grass a bit like tussocks which never quite got wiped out by farming, then harakeke (flax) whose seeds fly in on the wind and then mingimingi (a divaricating shrub with the botanical name of *Coprosma propinqua*). After that a variety of species that tolerate wet feet can establish, as wind, birds and humans introduce them back.

Glen showed us the traps he catches animal pests in (with a BANG that gave us all a group fright!), the spider nests high in the mingimingi so the babies don't get flooded out, and the berries of the mingimingi which some of us loved eating.

And if you had sharp eyes, he even spotted a fernbird – it blended in too much for me, but others were luckier.

After a warming up spell and some lunch we then helped plant a riparian strip near the buildings. We had lots of really enthusiastic



planters – it made me think Dunedin KCC could be very helpful if other planting tasks cropped up around Dunedin area!

I was super impressed with our group's attitude despite the cold and the wind – you were really helpful and interested. Maybe that good karma will help the weather gods be kind to us on our next adventure.

**Beatrice Lee**

## MARINE PROTECTION A STEP TOWARDS THRIVING SEAS

It is great news that the Government has decided to progress with the largest network of marine reserves and protected areas proposed by the South East Marine Protection Forum. Officials will now prepare applications for the marine reserves and progress the marine protected areas under fisheries legislation.

Thank you to everyone (including more than 1,400 submitters) who wrote a submission supporting marine reserves. Together, we sent a strong signal that the public wants to see Otago's marine ecosystems protected.

This will be the third time we have tried to get a marine reserve in Otago and it's critical that nothing stops it from going ahead. We need to be ready to make submissions when consultation opens later this year.

This proposal will see New Zealand gain its largest inshore marine reserves to date. Network 1 proposes six marine reserves (4.5% or 404 km<sup>2</sup> of the total area) and five other areas of partial protection (9.7% or 862 km<sup>2</sup> of the area). The Bobby's Head reserve covers 9,600 hectares and would protect rare examples of volcanic rocky reefs, sea caves and seaweed gardens.

Overall, the proposed package of protection gets us about halfway to what we need in the region. It is disappointing that there are no

marine reserve proposals in the Catlins, and that the smallest canyon was selected, and places with the highest productivity were excluded. But given the fraught and compromised marine forum process, this is a very significant and positive outcome.



## SIGN THE ZERO BYCATCH PLEDGE TO PROTECT OUR MARINE WILDLIFE

We hope you have already signed Forest & Bird's pledge to stop the deaths of hundreds of marine mammals and thousands of seabirds that are killed in the fishing industry every year.

Forest & Bird wants a new way of thinking about the bycatch of endangered species based on the principle that we only catch what we eat.

Commercial fishing is responsible for the deaths of thousands of seabirds every year, more than 10,500 seabirds since 2013, as well as whales, orca, and dolphins. At least 21 species of seabirds in trouble are directly impacted by fishing and fishing directly threatens populations of six species which are in very serious trouble. Sea lions, Māui's and Hector's

dolphins are also in serious trouble. Māui's dolphin is almost extinct.

Forest & Bird is asking for zero bycatch goals for seabirds, sharks, dolphins and sea lions and for New Zealand fisheries to meet the world's best practice standards for avoiding bycatch. We're also asking for human or electronic observers on all fishing boats so we know who is respecting the rules, and who isn't.

You can support this vision by signing the Zero Bycatch Pledge at [www.zerobycatch.org.nz](http://www.zerobycatch.org.nz) to send an unequivocal message to politicians, policy-makers, and the fishing industry that there is a better way of thinking about our oceans.

## FOULDEN MAAR: PROTECTING THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

Until a few weeks ago, you may not have heard of Foulden Maar. But then news broke that Plaman Resources planned to mine the area for diatomite as a stock food supplement and as fertiliser on palm plantations. Scientists, locals and members of the public leaped into action and launched a campaign calling for its protection.

Foulden Maar, near Middlemarch, was formed 23-million-years ago by a volcanic eruption that created a crater lake. Layers of fine sediment containing microscopic algae settled on the lake bed to create a diatomite deposit.

It now contains the Southern Hemisphere's most pre-eminent fossil record, spanning over 100,000 years. Scientists have already discovered hundreds of undescribed species, including flowers, fruits, seeds, pollen, and bark from plants, fungi, galaxiids, eels, spiders, stoneflies, dragonflies and other insects.

Foulden Maar also includes the most important climate record anywhere in the world for a time when the planet was warmer than it is at the moment. This is critical for helping future generations to understand and cope with the impacts of climate change.

Plaman Resources already own 42 ha of Foulden Maar, but applied to the Overseas Investment Office (OIO) to purchase 432 ha of surrounding land. to make their operation commercially viable.

In May, a confidential report by Goldman Sachs, which lent Plaman almost \$30 million, was leaked to the Otago Daily Times.

The report said Dunedin City Council was pro-mining and had written a letter of support to the OIO. But public outrage led DCC to change their stance when Cr. Aaron Hawkins raised and passed a motion for Council to recognise the scientific value of Foulden Maar and support its preservation. Mayor Dave Cull has since written to the OIO with this news and asked them to set aside DCC's original letter of support.



*This extinct species, Galaxias effusus, was identified from a fossil extracted from Foulden Maar and is the earliest known record of the Galaxias (whitebait) genus. Photo by Stella McQueen.*

The leaked report also prompted us to launch a petition calling for the OIO to immediately decline Plaman's application. To date, we have gathered more than 10,000 signatures, which will be submitted to the OIO as proof of the overwhelming public opposition to the mine.

Just last week, Plaman Resources went into receivership and liquidation. Their application with the OIO has been put "on hold" and our focus has now switched towards getting Foulden Maar into public ownership.

We are calling on central and local government to step in and purchase Foulden Maar so it can be protected as a scientific reserve in perpetuity for research and the good of humanity.

The campaign has been compared to the iconic efforts in the 1970s to Save Manapouri and Aramoana. It has captured the public's attention and imagination as we consider the exciting future of Foulden Maar as a potential world heritage site and geo park.

For more information, or to make a donation to support the campaign to Save Foulden Maar, please visit [www.savefouldenmaar.co.nz](http://www.savefouldenmaar.co.nz)

**Kimberley Collins**



*A pīwakawaka (fantail) at Moore's Bush. Photo by Kimberley Collins.*

## MOORE'S BUSH

We have had two working bees at Moore's Bush, with members of Students for Environmental Action (SEA). They took on the tasks of weeding around the base of plants and dealing to blackberry, broom and Himalayan honeysuckle. They also cleared the loop track and put up markers for visitors to find their way around. After each working bee, we enjoyed a stroll through the reserve where we were treated to sightings of brown creepers and pīwakawaka/fantails.

Pat and I have continued to chip away at the rest of the blackberry and hope to have it cleared before the planting day on Sunday 4 August. This will be held in conjunction with KCC and students from SEA, as well as anyone else who wants to come and help.

Other working bees have been hampered by the closure of Leith Valley Road. The reserve is still accessible by going up SH1 and coming down from Pigeon Flat Road.

Since the students from SEA cleared the loop track, Bruce Lambie has been keeping it clear in his own time. This is a great help as it means we can be sure that visitors will be able to enjoy the bush reserve and the wonderful wildlife it contains.

**Francie Beggs**

We have created a project on iNaturalist NZ to record wildlife at Moore's Bush. Already, there are 31 different species listed, including koura (freshwater crayfish), kererū, huripo and fungi. To see the project, visit [www.bit.ly/mooresbush](http://www.bit.ly/mooresbush)

**Kimberley Collins**



*Entoloma canoconicum at the Lenz Reserve. Photo by Paul Smale.*

## TAUTUKU RESTORATION

A successful working bee was held by the branch in late May. The weather was perfect as eight of us clipped the sides of the track, with a group going in from each end. Paul and Mark had a chainsaw each and were able to deal to all the windfall on the track.

Later, we did a little sight-seeing for the newcomers. Gavin White, who maintains the extended trap lines, gave us a good run-down of his trapping and also explained the pig and deer traps. Trap lines in the Lenz Reserve continue to be maintained and checked by the South Otago Branch.

Recently, herpetologist discovered two Tautuku forest geckos after Gavin had heard and seen them in the area last winter. These are classified as threatened and this is the first site they have found deep in a forest since the historical records during the logging days.



*One of two Tautuku forest geckos found in the Tautuku in the project area. Photo by Carey Knox.*

This year marks 50 years of restoration at the Lenz reserve with a celebration on Saturday 21 September. More information in the attached programme.

**Francie Beggs**

## PROJECT KERERŪ

We have had a lot more kererū than usual this year. This is mostly thanks to our work with the Wildlife Hospital who triage the birds and fix them up before sending them to us for rehabilitation and release. Together, we are able to save more kererū than ever before.

The most birds we have had in the aviaries at any one time has been 15 and in the last 12 months we have had birds from 4 different conservancies around the lower South Island. The third aviary, which was bought by Forest & Bird last year, has been a great help in ensuring that we have enough space for everyone!

I have also been involved with filming Wildlife Rescue, a new TV series about the Wildlife Hospital that is being produced by NHNZ. We have done a few days of filming and they came along to some releases. It will be on Choice TV (Freeview Channel 12 or Sky Channel 24) later this year, so keep an eye out!

We were very excited to receive funding from the Otago Regional Council's Eco-Fund. This has allowed us to establish a network of 50 multi-species traps around the aviaries. Since March, we have caught 36 mice, 20 rats, 19 possums, 12 hedgehogs, and 3 stoats.

### “TOMATO” THE KERERŪ

One of our success stories from this year has been the release of “tomato” the kererū. He landed on someone's fence in the middle of farmland on the outskirts of Timaru where he started eating tomatoes from the garden and out of the owner's hand!

Tomato seemed to have no fear of people, cats or dogs at the property and his behaviour was so strange for a young kererū that DOC Geraldine allowed him to be caught and brought down to Dunedin.

After arriving at the aviary, he had no problem devouring the mixed vegetables placed in his cage. Usually, kererū have to be taught to eat human food, and so his behaviour makes us



*“Tomato” the kererū landed on a fence in the middle of farmland near Timaru where he proceeded to eat tomatoes from the garden.*



*Tomato in the aviaries learning how to eat wild kererū food. Photo by Nik Hurring.*



*Tomato is released at Forest & Bird's Lenz reserve in the Catlins. Photo by Paul Smale.*

think someone had been caring for him before letting him go.

Tomato spent around a month in the aviaries where he learned to feed like a wild kererū.

Our goal is usually to release kererū back to where they came from, but in this case there was no good habitat where Tomato was originally found. Instead, we got permission to relocate him and he was released at Forest & Bird's Lenz reserve in the Catlins. We're sure he will be very happy here, living in lush native forest and flocks of other kererū and (hopefully) no access to tomatoes.

**Nik Hurring**

## BRING BACK THE SEABIRDS

It has been a quiet time for seabirds at all of our project sites. The sooty shearwater/tītī breeding season is over and the birds have migrated to the far north of the Pacific Ocean where they will feed at sea for several months before returning.

### SANDYMOUNT

Following the failure to protect tītī chicks from predation, plans are now underway to establish different types of live capture traps around the colony to intercept predators before they reach the colony.

It is hoped that by increasing the trap network, situations such as a single ferret killing all remaining tītī chicks just prior to fledging. In April 2019, a single ferret entered six different burrows killing the tītī chicks. Since the ferret was recorded, no live tītī chicks were detected and some dead tītī chicks with neck wounds were recovered from burrows (see photos).

### ST CLAIR CLIFFS

After three years of successful breeding, no tītī chicks survived to adulthood from inside the predator-proof fence in 2019. It appears that chicks died due to starvation and a lack of visits from their parents. Prions did visit the speaker and nest boxes but failed to lay an egg for another year. We have set up new bait stations inside the fence and maintained ink tunnels and traps. This has cured the rat problem and audio attraction equipment is playing fairy prion calls.

### LAWYER'S HEAD

Rat captures dropped off until the end of May when the highest captures in a single week were recorded (3 rats, 1 hedgehog). Plans to relocate traps that had not caught anything were postponed due to these traps having caught for the first time.

No tracking tunnels have been vandalised since some were replaced in January, though some tunnels were run over one night in June. Ten tunnels tracked 70% mouse and 30% rat.

*Francesca Cunninghame & Graeme Loh*



MOULTRE 11°C 30.06inHg SM2----- 22 APR 2019 03:02 am



MOULTRE 11°C 30.03inHg SM2----- 22 APR 2019 05:46 am



## WILDING PINE CONTROL

In late Autumn, we did experimental small-scale poisoning of local pine and douglas fir wildings, using a herbicide that hinders cell division in the tree. Suggested application is from November through to March, since good sap flow is required for poison dispersal throughout the tree. But the 2019 autumn was warmer than usual, resulting in a longer growth season for conifers and increased sap flow. We will monitor the results of our late autumn poisoning operation.

*Paul Smale*

## FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Forest & Bird's Dunedin Branch now has its very own Facebook page. This is a great way to keep up-to-date with what's happening in between newsletters.

Already, we have more than 200 followers who enjoy seeing photos, videos and stories about nature in Dunedin and Otago.

To follow our page, please visit [www.facebook.com/forestandbirddunedin](http://www.facebook.com/forestandbirddunedin)



*Some featured fungi from our Facebook page. Photo by Paul Smale.*



*A tūī at Orokonui Ecosanctuary. Photo by Craig McKenzie.*

## SOW THE SEEDS OF CONSERVATION

Help protect and restore the wildlife and wild places you love by encouraging your friends and family to join Forest & Bird and become another voice for nature.

To say thanks, Forest & Bird national office will send you a pack of native plant seeds for every new member you sign up. And they will receive some seeds too.



Ask your friend to include your name and supporter I.D. number when they join.

Call 0800 200 064 or visit Forest & Bird's website at [www.bit.ly/joinforestandbird](http://www.bit.ly/joinforestandbird)

## STAY IN TOUCH

PO Box 6230, Dunedin North, Dunedin 9059  
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## FIND US ONLINE

[www.forestandbird.org.nz/dunedin](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/dunedin)  
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**Forest & Bird**  
*Dunedin/Ōtepoti*  
TE REO O TE TAIAO | *Giving Nature a Voice*

Compiled by Janet Ledingham.  
Edited and designed by Kimberley Collins.

# EVENTS PROGRAMME

## JUNE - NOVEMBER 2019



### INDOOR MEETINGS

Indoor meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month at 5:30 pm in Room 215, 2nd floor Zoology Benham Building, 346 Great King St, Dunedin (unless otherwise stated). Please be on time as we have to hold the door open to let people in.

For more information about upcoming events, please visit [www.forestandbird.org.nz/dunedin/events](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/dunedin/events)

#### **What does the Mega-mast Mean for our Wildlife?**

*Tuesday 16 July 2019, 7pm, Alexander McMillan Room, Dunedin Community House, 301 Moray Place*

This year our native forests are faced with a mega-mast. But what does that mean for our native wildlife? Kevin Hackwell, Forest & Bird's Chief Conservation Advisor, will be speaking about the 2019 mega-mast and what can be done to reduce its impact on our native wildlife and wild places.

#### **Saving the Southern Ocean**

*Tuesday 20 August 2019, 5:30pm*

The Southern Ocean surrounding Antarctica is the last wilderness on earth. Home to nearly 10,000, it makes up 10% of the world's ocean. Kimberley Collins, who works for the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition, will talk about the campaign for increased marine protection in the area and her work with the international Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources.

#### **A New Species of Wingless Stonefly for Dunedin**

*Tuesday 17 September 2019, 5:30pm*

Earlier this year, scientists discovered a new species of stonefly in the Maungatua Ranges near Dunedin. Brodie Foster, a PhD candidate at the University of Otago, will talk about this exciting find and how it fits into his Marsden-funded research exploring the evolution of wing loss in New Zealand's alpine stoneflies.

#### **Mammals in the Mackenzie Basin**

*Tuesday 15 October 2019, 5:30pm*

Nick Foster is a PhD student undertaking research in the Mackenzie Basin as a part of the Te Manahuna Aoraki project. He is exploring the distribution of invasive small mammal species across an altitudinal gradient to gain a better understanding of where to proportion control efforts, and to begin exploring the utility of high elevation landscapes as barriers to invasive small mammal species.

#### **Spotting Otago Skinks with Citizen Science**

*Tuesday 19 November 2019, 5:30pm*

Many people won't ever see an Otago Skink in the wild, but a new global citizen science project aims to change that by asking people to identify the threatened lizards from 750,000 time-lapse photos. Jo Virens, a PhD candidate at the University of Otago, will talk about his research on the thermal ecology of skinks in Otago, how they might be affected by climate change, and how members of the public can contribute to the conservation of skinks from home.

### FIELD TRIPS

#### **Waikouaiti Wildlings Working Bee**

*Sunday 14 July, 2019 10:30am, Inverary St side of lagoon in Waikouaiti.*

After liaising with the Hawkesbury Lagoon Society and with permission now obtained from DOC, we are in a position to attack the boxthorn weeds (*Lycium ferocissimum*) on the northern boundary of the Hawkesbury Lagoon. We will chop down boxthorn and pack cut pieces into wool fadges, for removal from the site. Please bring leather gloves, loppers, safety glasses or goggles, tough clothing, a wide brimmed hat, a grubber for pulling plants out by the roots. Enquiries to Paul Smale (txt 027 384 5738).

## **Prion Fence Maintenance**

*Saturday 27 July 2019, 10am, Fairy Prion Fence.*

We will do maintenance on the ground and surroundings of the fairy prion fence at St Clair Cliffs. Meet on site, but transport can be provided. RSVP to Graeme Loh (021 132 2436).

## **Moore's Bush Planting Day**

*Sunday 4 August 2019, 1pm - 3pm, Moore's Bush Reserve.*

We have been working hard to remove blackberry, broom and Himalayan honeysuckle. It is now time to re-plant the area, in conjunction with KCC, Students for Environmental Action, and anyone else who wants to help. Postponement day is Sunday 11 August. Transport can be provided. Enquiries to Francie Beggs ([fbeggs3@gmail.com](mailto:fbeggs3@gmail.com) or 03 453 6188).

## **Pelagic Seabird Trip**

*Sunday 18 August 2019, 9am, meet at the Botany Department carpark.*

Cost will be a share of the boat charter, price to be confirmed. RSVP to Graeme Loh (021 132 2436)

## **Manuherikia Headwaters Pine Hunt**

*Saturday 14 September 2019, 8am, meet at the Botany Department carpark.*

We will roam around the tussock reserves, up-rooting and cutting wildings before they seed. Option to stay overnight and check for the return of river bed wading birds such as dotterel and South Island pied oystercatchers. Transport can be provided. RSVP to Graeme Loh (021 132 2436).

## **Lenz 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

*Saturday 21 September, 1pm - 4pm, Catlins Forest Cabins Tautuku.*

Celebrate 50 years of restoration at the Lenz reserve with walks, talks, and films about the reserve and its conservation projects. Afternoon tea included. RSVP to [catlinsyep@yrless.co.nz](mailto:catlinsyep@yrless.co.nz).

## **Rock Pool Exploration and Marine Reserves**

*Sunday 29 September, 9am, meet at the Botany Department carpark.*

Explore the life living in rock pools during the big low tide at one of the sites proposed for marine protection. RSVP to Graeme Loh (021 132 2436).

## **STAY IN TOUCH...**

### **FOREST & BIRD DUNEDIN**

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