

Kāpiti-Mana Forest and Bird

Newsletter April 2023

Editorial. ETS . Please tell me I'm wrong.

For a long time, I believed in the ETS (the Emissions Trading Scheme). The tradable commodity is a credit which allows a company to emit one tonne of carbon dioxide. Once you have emitted one tonne, you must surrender the credit to the government. The price would start off low. As the government pulled down the number of tonnes allowable (pulled down the cap), the price will go up. As the price goes up, it is more cost effective to innovate - change to a non-carbon fuel, or process, or if the company cannot or does not change, it goes out of business. The cap could simply be steadily reduced to zero by 2030 or whatever date government decided.

I particularly liked it because it allowed companies to reduce carbon any way they wanted to as the price went up. The ETS started in 2008.

I was naive.

1 Farming was not included. Farming is responsible for 48% of our emissions. That means that to reduce our total emissions by 50%, we would have to reduce all other emissions by almost 100%. The ETS is only influencing half of our emitted carbon.

2 Carbon credits have been able to be bought from overseas. This means the cap can get bigger than the government sets and enough OS credits have entered the NZ ETS for NZ to meet its UN targets while actually increasing the greenhouse gas we have emitted.

That is just wrong. The ETS was a tool to help reduce our emissions.

Some of those OS credits were dodgy – The credits were created, but no carbon was saved.

Buying international credits means that there is no NZ cap.

3 The government gives a few million credits to companies that emit a lot of carbon. This is to maintain their financial viability. The argument is that if the product is priced higher than countries that do not include the cost of carbon, then NZ will import the product rather than buy NZ made and NZ exports will not be competitive.

Highly intensive industries (the production of iron and steel, aluminum, burnt lime, urea, carton board, caustic soda, cement products, methanol, roses, hydrogen peroxide, pulp and paper) get 90% of their "allocated baseline" as free credits and moderately intensive industries (bricks and tiles, ethanol, some fresh vegetables, gelatin, glass containers, lactose, protein meal and whey powder) get 60%.

The problems are a) Carbon credits have been over allocated. b) Cheap international carbon credits have been bought and used instead of NZ credits, while NZ free credits have been kept until the ETS price is high. NZ credits have no use by date and because they can be traded at any time, companies have made a profit from carbon credit trading. c) There is far less pressure for our large users to innovate.

4 The ETS will soon start to decrease the allocations by 1% a year, so by 2030 when climate change starts to get rough, our most polluting industries will still get a free allocation of 90-6=84% carbon credits.

The longer-term problem with this is that it will take 90 years to stop giving them a free get-out-of-jail-free card.

We are supporting dying industrial methods. It would be like increasing a subsidy for petrol. Our innovation will be left behind. Other countries are driving innovation by the fast phasing out of free allocations.

The ETS should drive NZ to a low carbon economy. Instead, it is maintaining existing high carbon companies' profitability, not dealing with half our emissions, keeping us locked into the industrial past and allowing us to buy our way out of our responsibilities over climate change (Taxpayers will pay and effectively subsidize carbon industries). No wonder we are not making any headway with emissions.

This reminds me of George Orwell's book "1984" where the Ministry of Peace concerns itself with war, the Ministry of Truth with lies, the Ministry of Love with torture and the Ministry of Plenty with starvation.

5 MBCs: Five Minute Bird Counts

Want a good reason to sit still for five minutes and make a contribution to conservation? If so, a 5MBC might be just the thing you're looking for!

What is it? Well, it's a bit like the Garden Bird Survey (which is coming up in June: <https://gardenbirdsurvey.nz/>) but it takes five minutes rather than an hour. You can do it in your garden, from your office, on your lunch break, at the beach or in your favourite park. I find it a very centering exercise and feel much more with nature once I've done it - great stress reliever too. Staying in one

What would Orwell rename the ETS? The emissions target avoidance system, ETAS perhaps.

P.S. I have just seen an Al Jazeera program called Earthrise. The Dutch organisation, Friends of the Earth, legally challenged the Dutch Government because their decisions would not deliver the carbon reductions that were legislated. They won. The decision was appealed, but finally they won in the highest court in the land.

Perhaps we need an organisation in NZ to take our government to court over their performance.

It's very confusing to read stuff on this. It's quite smoke and mirrors, but it looks to me as if NZ intends not to meet its targets but to buy its way out. That way, we won't have to deal with fires, floods, access, dispossessed, homeless, sea walls, storm damage, crop failures, biodiversity loss, etc. because we will be in financial strife, and we won't be able to afford to.

I think it is time for me to plant some more trees.

Russell

place, you make a note of all the birds you see or hear (trying not to count a bird more than once). It's also helpful to note the date and time, weather conditions, and whether you managed to identify everything you saw/heard.

If you don't feel confident of your knowledge of birds to do this, why not hone your skills? Some good sources include the Garden Bird Survey website <https://gardenbirdsurvey.nz/> NZ Birds Online : <https://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz/> and Morning Report's Ngā Manu files:

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/collections/birds> (the latter two sources include bird song/call recordings too). You can even sign up to do free DOC training - more details on this page. <https://tinyurl.com/5t3dftz3>

You can keep your records on paper (we've used to use our F&B diary in the corner of the lounge where we often sit for a cuppa) but there is also a downloadable form from DOC: <https://tinyurl.com/5t3dftz3> or you can record it electronically.

I now use an App on my phone to do my 5MBCs. It's called eBird and is connected to The Cornell Lab of Ornithology in the USA and is used by birders around the world (this also means you can use it to identify and record sightings when you're on holiday). There are over 9000 eBirders in New Zealand, and more than 850,000 in the world. The advantage of using an App is that scientists around the world can use the data collected on the millions of counts to find out more about bird habitats and populations and to help conserve birds. Find out more here: ebird.org.

Five Minute Bird Counts originated from the DSIR (Department of Industry and Research) in the 1970s and has been widely used by

DOC and its predecessors. The database of more than 200,000 New Zealand 5MBCs provide excellent baseline and index data for analysis.

According to a 2012 article in the New Zealand Journal of Ecology (<https://newzealandecology.org/nzie/3041>) the New Zealand Government was persuaded to halt logging of native trees on public land in 2002 because of evidence provided from Five Minute Bird counts. This demonstrates the conservation value of doing these counts.

Finally, I started watching birds as a bored child in the back of the car on a trip to a game reserve. It has been a life-long joy for me, so it's something that can involve all ages. Why not give it a go? Perhaps with your whole family.

Pene

P.S.: From 28-30 April is the City Nature Challenge. Join the an annual international event that challenges people around the world to find and record wildlife in their cities, districts or regions. Find out more and how to get involved here: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2023-te-upoko-o-te-ika-wellington>

Consultations: You could write a submission on these

Protecting Seabirds from being Killed through Longline Fishing

NZ has the most diverse seabird community in the world. Below are the fatality figures of 3 of 12 species from NZ surface longlining. Gibson Albatross (Threatened - Critical) 140 annual fatalities . Black Petrel (Threatened - Vulnerable) 92 annual fatalities. Buller's albatross (At-risk) Declining 317 annual fatalities. The pattern has not changed over many years.

Hook shielding devices are effective. Fishermen can use it or two out of the following 3 methods. Weighing the line so it sinks below where seabirds can dive for it, adding streamers to the line and setting the line at night. These are 3 methods have been shown to reduce fatalities.

Fewer fatalities occur if the fish waste dumping takes place on the opposite side of the boat to where the line is released. Fisheries NZ is consulting on whether or not to change the methods . From their information review: <https://tinyurl.com/4jjedfj2>, it seems obvious to mandate "select hook shielding devices or 3 out of 3 methods" and mandatory disposal of fish waste on the opposite side. Other options make compliance initiatives optional.

NZ has signed up to Zero fishing related seabird mortality so it seems obvious which decision should prevail. Sign here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdhp359z> to support Option 4 as F&B suggests. Submissions close on 28 April 2023

Porirua City Council Annual Plan

I can see very little that applies to the issues F&B likes to promote. So perhaps that is an opportunity to comment:

<https://porirua.govt.nz/your-council/city-planning-and-reporting/annual-plan/>

Submissions close on 12 May 2023

Significant Natural Areas (SNAs)

SNAs are areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna, and as an idea and a reality are very important. The complex of natural lands surrounding Nga Manu is an SNA. So is the forested land in the Waikanae gorge (See photo). They have been selected because of their quality and representativeness of what that natural land in that area should look like. They receive funding from Greater Wellington who eliminate weeds and trap predators from time to time. But in general they are small and not connected.

While the Resource Management Act 1991 requires them to be protected, how well that protection is implemented, differs. Wellington

KCDC Coastal hazard and adaptation Consultation

These are public events taking sections of coast at a time. You can find out when KCDC will be consulting on the coast near you by following the link below:

<https://haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/coastal>

Branch of F&B produced an online talk on SNAs by Jen Miller. I watched it at 1.5x speed. The presentation starts 5 minutes in. Once connected you need to enter the passcode (#^W@b%3w). You'll find it here: <https://tinyurl.com/222sxcv5>



Centennial Celebration of Forest and Bird in Paekakariki

Join us this weekend when we celebrate Forest and Bird's centenary, and the life of Captain Val Sanderson who started it and who lived in Paekakariki.

From noon on Saturday 29 April there will be talks and the opening of an exhibition on Sanderson, and Forest and Bird, at St Peter's Hall (in the Paekakariki village). There will be guided walks to the newly opened Sanderson Way and Ngā Uruora's Waikakariki Wetland at 1:30pm and 3pm on Saturday, and 12pm and 2pm on Sunday. The restoration of the wetland and the Sanderson Plaque was one of the Inspired by Sanderson Projects. KCC will also have events for the kids from 2pm on Saturday

Russell and Pene

We welcome newsletter feedback and contributions

Editors: Russell Bell & Pene Burton Bell

until the hall closes at 4pm, and on Sunday the hall will be open 11am until 3pm. Parking is limited, so please consider public transport



Email: russelljamesbell@gmail.com

Phone: 021 22 66 047