MANGROVES ARE COMING!

By Clive Monds
ECO

Mangroves are making headlines again much as immigration does. Immigration and mangroves? Well, both are emotive issues – "the Asians/mangroves are coming". Both rely on fears and prejudices often based on ignorance. The response is to stop, get rid of, and reduce, with little analysis of cause and effects.

So why are we experiencing the mangrove issue again? Two levels of answers:

1. Mangroves are spreading in some harbours and estuaries.

2. There is increasing pressure for coastal development and to remove planning obstacles to this.

Feelings against mangroves go right back to when mud was the bane of the early settlers – in the bush, on what passed for roads, around homesteads. Boats often provided the cleanest, simplest access to many parts of the north but often at the end of the creek was "that black stinking mangrove mud". There was considerable reclaiming and clearance of mangrove habitat. Mangroves got rehabilitated in the NZ psyche from the 1970's as their important role in coastal and estuarine ecosystems was recognised.

Today, in response to pressure from small but vocal groups in some communities concerned with mangrove spread or reestablishment, the responsible regional or local authorities set up a "Mangrove Steering Group" in a classic case of reactive management without consulting with the wider community. Despite a somewhat flawed start the group is now more representative of wider community interests and is moving forward on its objective of promoting the provision of appropriate information to support sustainable management of coastal ecosystems. It is not a management group but is meant to provide a forum, raise awareness and understanding, and improve the information base by identifying gaps in knowledge and promoting and commissioning scientific research. ECO and F&B are now represented on the group which includes four regional councils, local authorities, Ministry for the Environment (chair), MFish, DOC, Iwi, science advisors such as NIWA and universities, NZ Land Care Trust, conservation people and two "community group or 'harbour care group'" representatives.

The above objectives do not necessarily coincide with those of groups who want to know how to remove a protected species from their backyard in the shortest possible time. It is fair to say there are some dynamic tensions within the steering group. Hopefully some of this will dissipate as the steering group collates and disseminates available information and collects new knowledge.

While it is not clear why mangroves are increasing in some areas and not others, research is being done on the role of sediments and nutrients which relate back to land use in catchments. The role of man-made structural change such as infilling, stop banks and causeways may also play a part in altering tidal flushing.

Getting regional authorities to exercise their responsibilities for controlling catchment input into estuarine environments is going to be a long term process.

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Environmentalists need to be aware when such ‘harbour care’ groups are active in their community and ensure the arguments are not one-sided by default. It is disturbing when conservation group members of such ‘harbour care’ groups are heard describing mangroves as weeds.

The possibility of such harbour care groups being used, innocently or otherwise, as Trojan horses for a development lobby to achieve removal of ecological protections under the coastal planning processes is even more alarming. This pressure is not new but finds a convenient stable-mate in the anti-mangrove movement.

ECO will be working with Forest & Bird and other groups to raise awareness and ensure information is available, not only from material the steering group will be providing but we will also ensure other material, such as Wade Doak’s superb upcoming multi-media work on mangroves, is made widely accessible.

ECO is represented on the steering group by Clive Monds emonds@wave.co.nz and Forest & Bird by Sarah Gibbs, Northern regional office, office@ak.forest-bird.org.nz.

Climate Change Policy

By Robbie Kelman
Climate Campaigner Greenpeace New Zealand.

The Government’s policy package on climate change is a far cry from the Energy Minister’s vision of “putting this nation in a position to make a measured transition to a carbon-constrained economy.”

Noticeably absent is an immediate carbon charge, delayed until 2007 – that is, at least two elections away. A change in Government could result in it being abandoned entirely? In addition, companies can negotiate their way out of a carbon charge through Negotiated Greenhouse Agreements.

At the same time the Government’s renewable energy initiatives lack substance, offering no instruments to support the renewable energy industry aside from possible access to a ‘projects’ fund. Much has to be done. For example; transmission line charges, in most regions, still preclude distributed renewable energy generation.

An absence of supportive policy measures for renewable energy does nothing to attract the kind of renewable energy developments needed and already occurring elsewhere in the world.

Rampant scare-mongering by the Greenhouse Policy Coalition and other industry groupings was broadcast with impunity during the development of the policy and decision to ratify Kyoto. Unfortunately the Government’s climate change policy bears testimony to a desire to appease these interests.

Unless something changes, the opportunity to develop more comprehensive climate change mitigation and sustainable energy policies are years away.

New Zealand faces both climate change obligations and an impending energy crisis. Maui gas is expected to run out earlier than expected, as soon as 2007. Maui has supplied around three quarters of New Zealand’s gas fired electricity and its replacement from a large number of smaller fields is one of the most contentious suppositions in the energy industry.

What will New Zealand use as a replacement for Maui gas? Coal? Coal emits more CO₂ per unit of energy than any other fossil fuel in New Zealand. An energy strategy aimed at climate change mitigation must see coal staying in the ground.

How does the Energy Minister intend activating his vision for a low carbon economy? Where is the strategy that embraces the need for the large-scale development of renewable energy? How will New Zealand avoid an increased use of coal and the very real prospect of constructing further coal fired power stations in the next five to ten years? At the moment there is no strategy!

This Government has the potential to make a significant long-term difference to the way energy is generated in New Zealand. It has a clear second term, i.e. stable governance (there is no sensible opposition); the numbers in parliament through the support of the Greens and the Progressive Alliance (United Future revealed their climate change credentials in voting against Kyoto ratification); and given the impending departure of Maui gas, a macro commercial requirement to determine an energy strategy for New Zealand, now.

What would such an energy strategy be based on? It’s clear the greatest driver for determining New Zealand’s energy future is climate change mitigation. Acknowledging the need to avoid dangerous climate change requires setting substantive policy prescriptions to avoid expanding fossil fuel consumption and a strategy to phase it out. It cannot simply be left to ‘the market’ to drive this agenda.

New Zealand has enough energy visionaries to determine a sustainable energy strategy. Amory Lovins (a US based energy futures guru) recently
suggested New Zealand could lead the emergence of the hydrogen fuel age. Clearly for New Zealand, with one of the best wind resources in the world, wind energy will play a significant role in generating large chunks of electricity. (A single 4.5MW wind turbine is now being erected in Germany, to provide enough energy for around 1800 homes.)

With Government nurturing, New Zealand could build a wind energy industry. Why not couple Jim Anderton’s regional development plans and build wind energy manufacturing in the regions? This would be a true example of sustainable development.

If wind farms are to be significantly expanded in New Zealand’ Government agencies, NGO’s and industry must work together to try and avoid battles over the siting of such developments. Issues of visual intrusion, amongst other things, do concern some sections of the community and electricity utilities must not be complacent about these concerns.

The Kyoto Protocol, as everyone acknowledges, is simply the beginning of an action framework to mitigate climate change. Countries must move beyond Kyoto obligations if they are serious about making a difference on this issue.

The impacts of climate change are already manifest. Coal is being touted as an energy source to replace Maui gas. The time for the Government to develop a sustainable energy strategy has arrived.

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**Fishing – City Style**

*By Jo Mackay*

*Auckland Regional Council*

Fishing out of stormwater drains – well, why not? Anything that goes down the drain ends up untreated in the sea.

The Auckland Regional Council’s The Big Clean Up environmental education campaign is focusing on stormwater pollution over the summer with a catch-cry, “Save the drains for rain!”

The campaign explains that stormwater systems send materials untreated to local streams and beaches. Paints, detergents, food fat, swimming pool water, chemicals – in fact, anything other than rainwater – can harm stream and harbour life.

The campaign promotes better ways for householders to rinse their paint brushes, wash their cars (if they really must), and dispose of other liquid wastes.

People are also urged to report pollution when they see or smell it immediately to the ARC’s water pollution hotline. Check out ARC’s environmental tips on [www.arc.govt.nz](http://www.arc.govt.nz)

ARC’s The Big Clean Up has signed up 45,000 people to the household programme in 2002, aimed at changing household behaviour to act in a more environmentally sustainable manner.

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**Path to Sustainable School Community**

*By Jo Mackay*

*Auckland Regional Council*

Parents, teachers and boards of trustees – encourage your school to register their interest in the Enviroschools Awards scheme.

Launched in November, this nationwide scheme rewards school communities for their sustainable environmental actions and encourages them to continue improving sustainable practices. The scheme was launched at Verran Primary, a school where the children are involved in making decisions about how to create and run worm farms, composting, large vege gardens and native tree plantings. better environmental practices and protecting and enhancing native biodiversity.

Schools will be supported by dedicated environmental educators from local and regional councils and the Education Advisory Service for schools, funded by the Ministry of Education.

The scheme is for all schools at all levels, and involves the whole school community.

The awards scheme was developed by environmental educator Hilary Chadlow at the Auckland Regional Council, working with leading environmental educators, including Heidi Mardon from Enviroschools and Barry Law from the Christchurch College of Education.

Find out more from [www.enviroschools.org.nz](http://www.enviroschools.org.nz) or [www.arc.govt.nz](http://www.arc.govt.nz) in the Auckland region.
How to Have a Green Christmas

By Rachel Smith

ECO

For the realists amongst you that title probably sounded a tad oxymoronic given that any trace of green at Christmas time is quickly covered in sparkling gold and silver shades of consumerism. To make matters worse this madness has long since out-grown the two week over-indulgence period and expanded to be a year long marketing frenzy. No longer do we settle for a few bits of tinsel to adorn our dead juvenile radiata pine but Christmas mega-stores are opening nationwide to gut the local small retailers and meet with corporate delight our relentless materialistic desires. The lights on the Norfolk pines in Wellington’s Oriental Bay are now powered 365 days a year instead of the acceptable week or two. People are even covering the exterior of their houses with myriads of lights as we lamely ape the conspicuous consumption of the US of A. A sustainable energy future anyone? We buy snow in cans and sing corny jingles about a dreaming of a white Christmas whilst sweltering in the South Pacific under an ozone-depleted atmosphere. Oxymoronic indeed but here are some tips to add a tinge of green to your Christmas:

Make your own

Make your own cards, presents, food and fun! Get creative, you’ll save money, reduce your consumption and that extra effort will be greatly appreciated by your loved ones.

Avoid over-packaged goods

I know it’s hard, since brown paper packages tied up with string have turned into imported goods with four layers of un-recyclable plastic but it is possible.

Give the gift of a no junk mail sticker to five of your neighbours

This way you can visibly see the difference you are making and you may find some conservation allies in the process. Nobody enjoys that tree worth of unwanted advertising that is crammed into the letterbox leading up to the big day.

Choose NZ fruit and veges that are in plentiful supply for that Christmas fare

Gone are the days when only the super rich could afford out-of-season produce. Unfortunately the cost of supplying exotic fruit and vege across the world is now absorbed by the environment through the burning of fossil fuels for transportation and breaches of biosecurity. Buy as local as you can.

Give material shopping bags to your friends

Introduce your friends to life before cupboards of overflowing plastic bags.

And for the ultimate green gift: A Christmas Gift Exemption Certificate

Make a statement against the relentless demands of our consumer culture with the help of the Buy Nothing Day folks in Auckland. They are offering a free service on their website where you can print out a certificate or give a customised one by email. www.hybridweb.co.nz/buynothing/exempt.asp

So, claim back your Christmas from the knee-deep-in-wrapping-paper wallow that the marketing industry has inflicted upon you and spend it with friends and family enjoying the flowering pohutukawa, the beach and a new snorkel and facemask as you couldn’t resist just one plastic gift (and of all the gifts you could give perhaps this one can best inspire wonder in the young and old about life and all its beauty).

Willi Fels

By Elizabeth Lee

ECO

ECO has benefited considerably in the past from grants given by the Willi Fels Trust, and we have just made another application for a grant, but who was Willi Fels? I assumed that he was a mid-twentieth century character who had a strong interest in the environment or in conservation, but I was out by a century and my understanding of conservation was narrow in comparison with his.

Willi Fels was born of Jewish parents in the mid-nineteenth century in Germany, and came to New Zealand as a young married man, to join his wife’s father (his maternal uncle) in his business in Dunedin, Hallenstein Brothers Ltd. Willi eventually became managing director of both Hallensteinsteins and the D.I.C. and travelled widely throughout New Zealand and overseas on business. He was interested in all kinds of things, and a great collector of artefacts - stamps, coins, medals, ceramics, Maori and Pacific Island ethnographic material, and soon. Gardening was an interest and he brought back from overseas trips European and Asian plants to add to the collection of New Zealand native plants that inhabited his garden. When he visited Europe he regularly did the rounds of museums, art galleries and dealers, buying paintings and other things that took his fancy.

Fels’ only son was killed in the First World War, probably fighting against his German cousins, and he subsequently decided to present his collections to the community, as there was now no son to inherit them. One wonders why he bypassed his several daughters. The Otago Museum was an immediate beneficiary, as Fels gave money for the establishment of its Department of Anthropology, and paid half the salary of the keeper for a number of years. Systematically he transferred all his collections to the Museum, and gave it a great deal of money, so that at the time of his death in 1946 he had given it about 80,000 pieces of all kinds and more than twenty-five thousand pounds. The University of Otago benefited from a gift of some 400 of his most valuable books, and other organisations of which he was a member or in which he was interested were also remembered. Luckily for the modern environmental movement which currently benefits from money left in trusts, Fels was an enthusiastic naturalist, and he enjoyed walking during holidays, especially in the lake district of West Otago. Indeed, the Helena Falls in Doubtful Sound are named after one of his daughters, who was the first woman to see them, and the Emily Pass after another daughter, a member of the party of trampers who discovered and first crossed it. Fels died in 1946 at the ripe old age of 88, having during his lifetime made a great deal of money as a canny businessman. He also left large sums to a multitude of good causes in whole New Zealand.
All Aboard for Oceans Policy

By Cath Wallace

The core elements of the Oceans Policy work are to be done from now to the end of June 2003 according to the Oceans Minister, Pete Hodgson and his officials. After a hiatus while the Oceans Policy secretariat moved to the Ministry for the Environment as an interdepartmental team headed by Lisa Sheppard, the Oceans Policy team is commissioning papers, setting up task forces and expert and stakeholder panels. The team expects to have the main options for the Oceans Policy defined by the end of June 2003. Consultation on these options will take place in August 2003 – probably after the Cabinet has formed its views on the options. Stage Three is implementation of the options decided and is scheduled for 2004.

The Oceans Policy “Vision” was defined by Cabinet as “Healthy Oceans: New Zealanders understand marine life and marine processes, and accordingly take responsibility for wisely managing the health of the ocean and its contribution to the present and future social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing of New Zealand”.

Beware the language of “taking responsibility for wisely managing.” It seems innocuous, but it was probably designed to allow devolution of fisheries management to fishers.

The Stage One Goals include:

1. New Zealanders having confidence in, supporting and participating in the wise management, stewardship and sustainability of New Zealand’s oceans.
2. Ecological integrity and abundant biodiversity within New Zealand’s oceans.
3. NZ’s oceans providing the best value for NZ society now and in the future.

The geography of how officials, Ministers, experts and stakeholders are to be involved in a new Ocean’s policy development structure is as in the accompanying diagram. The team plans to get several papers on aspects of the problems done by 20 December and then to develop ideas after Christmas, taking these to workshops and hui with a deadline of 23rd April 2003 for a discussion document of options followed by a paper to Cabinet by 30 June 2003.

Papers to be done before Christmas include one on existing relevant legislation; another on existing relevant government and other strategies and policies (such as the Biodiversity Strategy and the Growth and Innovation Strategy); a third on relevant international conventions and a final paper on international policy approaches.

Papers under development include one on the current management situation, another assessing the state of the marine environment, and one on entitlements, obligations and expectations. The Treaty; environmental “bottom lines” and future scenarios are others.

The team has decided that outcomes to be aimed for in the Oceans Policy include: ensuring ecological integrity; appropriate consideration of Treaty responsibilities; protecting public good uses and encouraging innovation and investment. Outcomes also include enabling participation in decision making and management [note the absence of the word “public” there], improving collection and coordination of information, and having an appropriate governance regime. What the criteria for “appropriate” are is unstated.

Those who wish to get involved should make themselves known to Lisa Sheppard or Rachel Wilson at the Ministry for the Environment. Look too at the Oceans Policy website www.oceans.govt.nz. You could wait for the formal consultation in August, but you could also ask to be sent papers that you are interested in as they come out. If the Ministry can cope with numbers they will accept your comment. There will be workshops for those “stakeholders” who register an interest (and possibly others) in April 2003 to review papers and give feedback. There is also a provision for some to review papers as they emerge – ask for the registration form if you are interested.

The Oceans Policy team, each member’s background and what subjects each person is dealing with is outlined in a presentation which has been put on the Oceans Policy website.

ECO is interested in your views too and in hearing who wants to be part of an Oceans working group for developing ECO’s responses. Send expressions of interest to eco@redfish.co.nz and Cath.Wallace@wvn.ac.nz or ECO, PO Box 11-057, Wellington or call the ECO office at 04-385-7545 and leave details of your name, member group or Friend status, contact details and your areas of interest.
Create a Fiordland Marine Park

By Barry Weeber

ECO

The Guardians of Fiordland Fisheries and Marine Environment (GOFF) have produced a proposal for management changes in Fiordland (see www.fiordland-guardians.org.nz or from Private Bag 90116, Invercargill).

The management package they present represents an agreement between commercial and recreational fishers, Ngai Tahu and charter operators in Fiordland. Broadly, the Guardians strategy favours creating an overarching taipure over the fiords, embracing a package of management measures including:

- bans on all commercial fishing and the use of cod pots and scallop dredges in the inner fiords;
- reductions in daily bag limits, (including a two year temporary closure for blue cod in Milford and Doubtful sounds);
- and restriction on numbers of recreational cray pots.

They have proposed seven “representative areas” and an area in Doubtful Sound for which they consider marine reserve status may be appropriate, but contingent upon the establishment of taipure and retention of local management. They have also identified 22 small discrete areas, described as “China Shops” for which they propose various codes of practice largely to control divers and anchoring.

While Forest and Bird welcomes these proposals as they are a significant advance on current practices in Fiordland, and go some way towards providing the protection; Fiordland deserves. It is especially significant that the Guardians have agreed to ban all commercial fishing from the inner fiords, and suggested much lower bag limits for crayfish, groper and blue cod, based on a philosophy of “fish for a feed – no catch accumulation.”

Fishing measures need improvement

The Guardians have proposed different bag limits for the inner and outer fiords and open coast, which will make them difficult to enforce as it will be impossible to verify from which side of the boundary the fish were taken. The decision to ban commercial fishing in the inner fiords is partly based on the recognition that cray pots can significantly damage black coral and other marine organisms. It is surprising and disappointing that the Strategy organisms found no where else in New Zealand or on the planet. They deserve protection, yet they remain outside Fiordland National Park and the South West New Zealand Te Wahipounamu World Heritage Area. The IUCN, which approved the World Heritage Area in 1986, recommended then that the fiords be included in the National Park.

Designing a Marine Park

Forest and Bird believes that Fiordland justifies its own special legislation which would create a Fiordland Marine Park, encompassing a network of marine reserves, taipure, scientific reserves and national park extensions. Creation of a national park will require minor changes to the National Parks Act to enable parks to cover marine areas.

An ideal marine park should contain adequate representation and replication of the full range of marine communities found in Fiordland, as described above. Marine scientists recommend that these should be replicated as an insurance against disaster, whether it be human induced e.g. pollution, or the result of nature. There are also many special features in Fiordland that deserve protection.

Forest and Bird have proposed two options, both of which embrace the Guardians’ recommended representative areas and their fisheries management measures (amended as we suggest above to exclude cray pots and apply the same bag limits to inner and outer fiords). Only the first option is presented here but see www.forestandbird.org.nz for more details.

—Continued over page
Sue Maturin, Forest and Bird Southern Conservation Officer

This option aims to protect the special features of Fiordland; including significant areas of the 40m band habitat and to ensure that the full range of inner, mid, outer and productive entrance fiord habitats, plus exposed coast habitats that represent the north/south environments are protected and replicated. It embraces; national park status for Milford, extending north along the coast to Yates Point and Preservation Inlet, a series of marine reserves for three whole representative small fiords in the north, plus the unique Sutherland Sound and Dagg Sounds, one whole fiord in the south, as well as a reserve on the southern outer coast, and a number of smaller reserves in Doubtful sound. We envisage a number of taipure also being established, either adjacent to or beyond the suggested marine reserve and national park areas. However the location of these should be determined by local iwi.

We have selected Breaksea Sound as the second southern whole fiord. It is one of the oldest fiords with the greatest marine biodiversity, and the highest density of black corals. It also has it's own resident population of bottlenose dolphins. Breaksea Island is a Specially Protected Area in Fiordland National Park. However Dusky and Chalky also have their own special values and could equally well be chosen to represent the southern fiord habitats. Acheron Passage has been selected to represent the oceanic fiord environment.

This option provides for less fragmentation of management areas with extensive and connected areas proposed as marine reserves.

Submissions have been invited by 20th December 2002. Submissions will be analysed by Southland Regional Council Environment Southland, Private Bag 90116, Invercargill or janelle.mcdonald@envirosouth.govt.nz. Please also send a copy to Sue Maturin at Forest and Bird, Box 6230, Dunedin or email: suem@earthlight.co.nz. For more information please visit the Forest and Bird website (www.forestandbird.org.nz).

Parliamentary Watch

BILLS BEFORE PARLIAMENT:

Resource Management Amendment - Local Government and Environment Select Committee: The RM Amendment Bill was reported back to Parliament in April 2001 and a debate on the Bill is yet to take place. Labour announced last December it would renege on previous commitments and introduce amendments which will undermine public involvement by removing the appeal on non-notification of resources consents and introducing a provision for limited notification. United has indicated it will support Labour and ask for further amendments to reduce public participation.

The Resource Management (Costs) Amendment Bill was not reported back with the Resource Management Amendment Bill and is still before the Local Government and Environment Select Committee. This has a report back deadline of 29 November 2002.

International Treaties Bill: The majority of members of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Select Committee have recommended that the bill not proceed any further. The Greens and Progressive Coalition members have presented separate minority reports which argued for a greater role of Parliament in assessing treaties. The Greens wish to see the Bill proceed and the Progressive Coalition recommended the establishment of a special select committee to look at Treaties. Other parties took a conservative position on the role of Parliament in reviewing and endorsing international treaties. They promoted the current criteria which means that not all treaties are subject to Parliamentary scrutiny.

Biosecurity Amendment Bill: The Biosecurity Amendment Bill was reported back by the Primary Production Select Committee in November 2001 and still awaits a debate.

Local Government Bill: This Bill has been reported back to Parliament by the Local Government and Environment Select Committee. This Bill is due to be passed by Government in urgency before the end of the year.

Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (Stockholm Convention) Amendment Bill: This Bill is awaiting its first reading prior to referral to a Select Committee. This Bill will enable the Government to ratify the Stockholm Convention which deals with the management and control of Persistent Organic Pollutants which includes dioxins, furans and PCBs. The objective of the convention is to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants.

BILLS BEFORE SELECT COMMITTEES:

Forests Amendment Bill - Local Government and Environment Select Committee: The Select Committee is yet to progress this Bill despite submissions closing in 1999. It is understood they are awaiting a Government decision on South Island Landless Natives Act (SILNA) land.

Crown Minerals Amendment Bill 2001 – This Bill has been introduced to make two key changes so as to correct an important error in the transitional provisions of the Crown Minerals Act, and secondly to remove the requirement to advise the district land registrar that a mineral permit has been granted. The first change is supported the second is strongly opposed. This Bill is before the Commerce Select Committee and is due to be reported back to Parliament by the end of February 2003.

PRIVATE MEMBER BILLS:

Private Members’ Bills which have been debated are:

Road Traffic Reduction Bill: This bill is based on similar UK legislation and has been introduced by the Green’s Jeanette Fitzsimons. This is No. 14 on the private members’ bill order paper. This Bill, which will be welcomed by groups and communities campaigning for more rational transport policies, has two parts:
• the first part would require both national and regional governments to set binding targets for the reduction of motorised road traffic and thereby enhance environmental quality and the health and safety and well-being of people and communities.

• The second part amends the principal objective of Transfund to provide a safe and sustainable land transport system.

The Bill has been referred to the Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee and submissions close on 28 February 2003. This Bill will be discussed at the same time as the Government Transport Law Reform Bill.

For further information on the progress of legislation check out the Parliamentary website: www.parliament.govt.nz. For further guidance on making a submission on the Bill check the publication Making a Submission to a Parliamentary Select Committee which can be found on this website.

The Local Government and Environment Select Committee is chaired by Jeanette Fitzsimons (Green) and consists of David Cunliffe (Deputy Chair), Rick Barber, Ann Hartley, Nanaia Mahuta, Dover Samuels (all Labour), Shane Ardern, John Carter, Nick Smith (all National), Larry Baldock (United), Jim Peters (NZ First) and Ken Shirley (ACT).

### Biodiversity Programme Reviewed

**By Barry Weeber**
**ECO**

The Minister has released the second annual review of the implementation of the Biosecurity Strategy and the funding package.

The review notes some of the major successes of the last 2 years including the eradication of rats from Campbell Island and Kakapo breeding successes but notes the loss of mohua (yellowhead) populations and the continuing decline of blue duck.

The results of funding expenditure indicates that Departments are still gearing up to use the new money derived from the strategy. In the marine area there was significant under-expenditure in marine biodiversity research.

Despite the strategy and increased funding their has been little progress in marine reserves. The Government is promoting the release of a Marine Protected Areas Strategy later this year or early next year, but this may result in further delays of marine reserves as ordinary fisheries rules may end up being promoted as marine protected areas.

For further information on the strategy and funding see www.biodiversity.govt.nz.

### MAF Biosecurity Reviewed

**By Barry Weeber**
**ECO**

The Office of the Controller and Auditor-General has reviewed New Zealand's border control and has made a number of recommendations for change. The review looks at the risk posed by a range of issues including the increasing number of visitors to New Zealand, importation of table grapes from California, the arrival of southern saltmarsh mosquito and the painted apple moth.

While the review considers New Zealand has a world class biosecurity system it notes:

1. There is no clear accountability for the biosecurity programme as a whole;

2. There is an absence of agreed goals and outcomes for biosecurity;

3. Much work needs to be carried out on improving assessment of risks to New Zealand.

The report notes some of the problem pathways for biosecurity risks. These include:

• Around 22 million bulk and direct entry mail items are not screened by MAF;

• Sea containers are a significant potential pathway for pests that need further evaluation.

For further information see the OAG website www.oag.govt.nz.

### World Wetlands Day

**February 2nd** is World Wetlands Day. It commemorates the signing of the International Convention on Wetlands in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, now known as the Ramsar Convention.

The Convention world-wide has some 123 Contracting Parties, with 1050 sites, totalling 78.7 million hectares, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.

New Zealand became a party to the Convention on 13th December 1976 and now has 5 sites, covering almost 40,000 hectares, designated under the Convention as Wetlands of International Importance. They are:

- Waituna Lagoon, Southland
- Farewell Spit, Nelson
- Whangamarino, Waikato
- Koputai Per Dome, Waikato
- Firth of Thames, Waikato (www.miranda-shorebird.org.nz)

The Department of Conservation is the administrative authority for the Convention in New Zealand and also the manager of most of the Ramsar wetlands of international importance in this country. The provisions of the Resource Management Act 1991 generally govern the management of wetlands.

In New Zealand, the Fish and Game Council coordinates World Wetlands Day, which is a natural focus for wetlands events. The following link takes you to a list of wetland events for that day: [http://www.doc.govt.nz/Community/002-Events/World-Wetlands-Day/2002/index.asp](http://www.doc.govt.nz/Community/002-Events/World-Wetlands-Day/2002/index.asp)
Marine Reserves Bill

By Barry Weeber
ECO

Submissions close on the Marine Reserves Bill on 31 January with the Local Government and Environment Select Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

Marine Reserves have a range of benefits including:

- conservation of biodiversity (especially in critical habitats like seamounts);
- increased knowledge of the marine environment;
- refuge for intensely exploited species eg rock lobster and paua;
- protection of genetic diversity for heavily exploited species;
- protection of attractive habitats and species.

The Marine Reserves Act also enables restrictions on discharges and tourism activity which is not possible through the Fisheries Act. Current marine reserve legislation limits reserves to within 12 nautical miles of land and has tortuous procedures which means that no marine reserves have been created in 3 years.

Issues to Support:

The Marine Reserves Bill rewrites the current Marine Reserves Act and includes a number of changes which assist in establishing marine reserves. Changes that should be supported in the Bill include:

1. The ability to create Marine Reserves out to the 200 nautical mile limit of the EEZ (clause 5) – currently marine reserves can only be created within the Territorial Sea, which is out to 12 nautical miles offshore. This provision should be extended to include the continental shelf which New Zealand has sovereignty over.

2. Clear ban on fishing or taking marine life within the marine reserve apart from the research or biosecurity management (clause 13(1)) – the current legislation can allow recreational fishing, although in currently gazetted marine reserves fishing is prohibited.

3. Removing the requirement to have the concurrence of the Minister of Fisheries and the Minister of Transport, after the Minister of Conservation approves the marine reserve. This provision is replaced with a requirement to consult relevant Ministers (clause 63). These Ministers are the Ministers of Transport (navigation and safety issues), Fisheries (effects on fisheries), Energy (submarine cables and mining), Foreign Affairs (international obligations) and Defence (defence training and operations). Hopefully this new process will speed up the processing of marine reserves and prevent relitigation of issues by opponents of marine reserves. There are currently five marine reserve applications in front of the Minister of Fisheries. The fishing industry opposes this change.

4. Expanding the purpose for which marine reserves can be created to focus on conservation of indigenous biodiversity (clause 7). The current legislation focuses on scientific research only. Sadly, the proposed provision does not include the protection of areas for their aesthetic, amenity or intrinsic value which are gine as reasons to create reserves on land.

5. Setting time limits for the different stages of the marine reserve process (clause 51, and 56 to 66). Hopefully this will prevent delays in processing applications. The Kaikoura and the Nuggets Marine Reserve applications have still not been processed 10 years after they were applied for. It is unclear what happens if the time limits in the Bill are not met. Please suggest that if the limits are not met then the proposal should be automatically approved.

6. Under the Bill anyone can apply for a marine reserve (clause 47(2)) in addition to the Department of Conservation. This widens the provisions in the current Bill and avoids potential questions of who can be an applicant.

Issues to oppose

A retrograde step is the provision to allow mining in a marine reserve (clauses 12(3)(d), 128 and 129). This provision must be strongly opposed, for it fails to recognise that Parliament had intended that a 1996 amendment to the Crown Minerals Act would prohibit all mineral activity in marine reserves. It is ridiculous that someone who wants to undertake scientific research in a marine reserve needs a concession, but a miner does not. This proposal also goes against Labour's election policy to protect "areas of significant conservation value".

Issues needing amendment

The Bill amends the provisions to better control discharges into marine reserves, including toxic substances, untreated human sewage etc (clauses 12-17). These provisions need reworking to create a hierarchy of activities based on their impacts on the marine environment and to clearly indicate those activities which would be prohibited. Currently the Bill treats marine research in the same way as dumping toxic substances. The provisions also need to be made more consistent between those inside and outside 12 nautical miles. You can remind the Select Committee that New Zealand-flagged vessels can be controlled in the same way inside and outside 12 nautical miles.

There is no role for the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) or conservation boards in creating marine reserves in the Bill. For example, there is no equivalent of section 8 of the National Parks Act which allows the NZCA to initiate proposals to add or establish new national parks. As marine reserves are the equivalent of national parks in the sea this is an oversight.

The provisions also allow boundaries or the status of a marine reserve to be reviewed (clause 72 to 75). Surprisingly there is no requirement to consult the original applicant, NZCA or conservation boards before commencing a review. Unlike national parks, this provision allows a marine reserve to be disestablished without an Act of Parliament.

Continued over page
The Bill does not include clear provisions for multiple applications for marine reserves or multiple marine reserves management plans (eg clauses 36, 37 46, or 47). It is important that the Bill is amended so that multiple applications can be prepared and processed. The Bill could also include provisions which allow fast-track approval of multiple marine reserves where there is no fishing or mineral activity taking place eg 12 nautical miles around Campbell Island or Antipodes Island.

Additional issues

The Bill adds a Treaty provision to the Marine Reserves Act to “give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi”. It has already been acknowledged by the Courts that the Treaty provision in the Conservation Act (section 4) is relevant to the Marine Reserves Bill.

The Bill also includes many of the pre-application consultation processes which are not in the current Act. The Bill enables the Director-General to ask for further information from the applicant and only when the Director-General is satisfied is the application notified (clause 51).

Further information

The Marine Reserves Bill and background information can be found on the Department of Conservation website at:


Volkner Rocks Marine Reserve Application

DoC and the Whakaari Marine Protection Steering Committee have applied for a marine reserve around Te Paeae Aotea (or Volkner Rocks). The application is for just over 1,400 ha and covers the area out to one nautical mile from the Volkner Rocks, near White Island. The marine reserve is proposed to be known as Te Paeae Aotea (Volkner Rocks) Marine Reserve.

Submissions close on 14 January 2003 with Office of the Conservator, Department of Conservation, Bay of Plenty Conservancy, PO Box 1146, Rotorua.

A copy of the application can be viewed at:


HEEP report – Year 6 report

By Clive Monds
ECO

The year 6 report of the BRANZ Household Energy End-use project (HEEP) – www.branz.co.nz - looks at where we could achieve large reductions in household energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as changes in types of heating used, comfort and energy benefits of insulation and our energy use levels in New Zealand relative to other countries.

Released at the same time as New Zealand signs the Kyoto protocol, the report is part of an in-depth 10-year profile of home energy use. Wrapping NZ’s ancient hot water cylinders can reduce up to 40% of hot water energy costs with a 1 year cost recovery. With hot water accounting for 30% of household energy that’s a good first step.

Currently NZ’s energy use per household is increasing @ 2% per annum while remaining below many other developed countries such as Australia.

The report also highlights the explosive growth in the use of unflued portable LPG heaters – 2% of households in 1984 to 33% now. The benchmark 1984 date is not insignificant as socio-economic factors are often drivers in our use of energy. Low-income families often opt for the $10 fill of a gas cylinder rather than the rapacious and open-ended power account that can turn next month’s bill payments into a misery. When the heat runs out at least that’s it till the next fill-up.

The report does not dwell on the other socio-economic aspect of energy use – that is the health factor. Unflued gas heaters pump moisture into already damp, cold houses exacerbating condensation and mouldy conditions that underpin respiratory health problems such as asthma and bronchitis. The health costs thus generated for our health system ultimately affect the resources we have to put into improving energy efficiency measures.

Retrofitting houses with insulation, under-floor moisture barriers, power and draught reducing measures not only improves energy efficiency but general well being and health.

Programs such as the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, EECA , www.eeca.govt.nz – “energy-wise homes” program delivered by community and energy trusts are driving recognition of these linkages between socio-economic and environmental factors and helping break down the cross-discipline barriers that blind us to wider benefits.

Review by Elizabeth Lee

ECO

Tim Low is a biologist, writer and photographer, and this is his fifth book on the theme of nature. He admits that when he began writing it, he did not expect to come to the conclusions he did finally reach.

The question is, what is natural? Ever since human beings have been around, it seems that they have made changes to their environment to benefit themselves, and sometimes these changes disadvantage other species, but, it may come as a surprise, opportunistic species also benefit. Is it then “natural” for non-human species to hang around their potential benefactors when they find that there are gains to be made by so doing? Tim Low cites the bower bird as an example of a wild creature that is, in its terms, far better off when it associates with human beings. The male bower bird constructs its bower of leaves and grasses, and decorates it with colourful things to attract a mate. It seems that the colour blue is particularly alluring to female bower birds, but it is a colour that does not occur very frequently in the natural world, and when the more enterprising males pick up bits of blue paper, plastic and so on to decorate their nests, they are rendered far more likely to mate successfully. In this case, a successful natural habit is enhanced by the use of unnatural materials.

Australian swallows, like swallows in other parts of the world, like to nest under the eaves of buildings exactly the right situation exists, and since the arrival of European settlers with their style of building, Australian swallows hardly ever bother to nest in any other place than under eaves. Moreover, where there are human activities, there are usually insects, and this also suits the swallows admirably, so there is no doubt that human intervention in their landscape has been of great benefit to them.

Perhaps one of the most surprising conclusions reached is that our concern for our effect on the natural world can lead us to perform disastrous actions when we are attempting to put things right. Wildlife gardening is undertaken by the well-meaning, but it can promote the strong and competitive amongst native species at the expense of the weaker ones, so, for example, you might end up with a garden full of crows which have come for the bread and other scraps you put out “to encourage the birds which are good for the garden”, and once the crows have finished all the scraps, they’ll start on the smaller birds which had been pursuing their innocent activities un molested until you interfered.

The concept of “wilderness” is explained from a historical perspective. It is interesting to follow the change in understanding of what wilderness is. Early settlers in Australia and New Zealand regarded any area that could not be tamed and rendered suitable for farming as a wilderness and therefore of no value whatsoever, but gradually a more romantic notion has become associated with untamed areas, whereby they have spiritual or cultural value, and help us to connect with a more natural way of life. Ironically, we now are in the situation of “managing” our wild places.

Conservation in itself is intervention, but in order to ensure the survival of other species that have suffered as a result of our past interventions, it must be proceeded with. It must also be recognised that the clock cannot be put back, but in the future as little damage as possible should be allowed. Individuals must learn to tread the earth lightly in their journey through life, treating all other creatures with respect, and being willing to share their space with the humbler creation, even if the latter seems unattractive. Tim Low concludes the book with these words, “At home I’m doing my bit: I share my space with a deadly snake. It’s been very easy to do. To experience wilderness so close to home is to live more fully and to understand more deeply. The wilderness, after all, begins here.”
ATTENTION WELLINGTON FRIENDS!

STREET APPEAL

Please, please, please volunteer for an hour on the street on the date we have been assigned for a street appeal in January next year! Wellington City Council has let us know that only six months after our last day, they have kindly given us another one, so we must take advantage of it, and be out in force, collection boxes at the ready! Numbers count - the more collectors, the more money taken. We need you, on Friday 24 January 2003, sometime between the hours of 7am to 7pm, in the CBD.

Please ring Kate at the ECO office, 385 7545, or Elizabeth, 476 9809, to volunteer your services. Only an hour, remember, and it will be Summer!

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