

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Vegetation map of Tongariro National Park.** I. A. E. Atkinson, 1981, Government Printer, Wellington. 1 map + notes (27 p). Price \$4.50.

This map and the accompanying booklet comprise a compact yet precise and authoritative summary of one of New Zealand's most botanically interesting and widely varying regions, Tongariro National Park. A careful presentation, it is the result primarily of a great deal of arduous footwork plus a deep insight into the multiplicity of plant communities involved.

The text includes a brief but informative introduction to climate, geological history, soils and introduced plants and animals and there are descriptions together with profile diagrams of each of 40-odd vegetation types. The method, a particularly succinct one for presenting this type of information, was devised by Dr Atkinson in 1962 and in the intervening period has probably received rather less attention than it deserves.

It is not of course a flora and makes no pretence at dealing with other than prominent canopy species but it does convey a wealth of factual information which should be as meaningful to the natural historian and plant ecologist as it will be enlightening to the layman. There is an acknowledgement, not always recognised by botanists of animals "sometimes having profound effects on the plants" and mention of bird species associated with each vegetation type.

On the map itself the vegetation types give every impression of having been delineated with meticulous accuracy, the one quibble being that in the twenty-odd years since the information was evidently collected, *Calluna* has almost certainly come to be more strongly represented in the north-west of the park than the map would indicate. A minor irritation is that some of the place names mentioned in the text (e.g. Rangataua, Bald Knob) do not occur on the map and it is a pity that the magnificent forest of the Pihanga saddle which was added to the Park in 1975 has not been included. Yet such petty criticisms can scarcely detract from the excellence of the publication which should become a scientific and interpretive milestone for New Zealand National Parks.

J. P. Skipworth

**The Duckshooter's Bag. Fish and Fowl Series No.1.** Murray Williams, 1981. The Wetland Press, Wellington. 124 pp. Price \$7.95.

In his 1981 Presidential Address to the British

Ecological Society (*Journal of Animal Ecology* (1982) 51: 1-14), Professor G. M. Dunnet highlighted the relationship between ecologists and "Everyman", stressing the need for ecologists to translate their often complex findings into the language of "Everyman" and to ensure that, despite the reservations inherent in confidence limits and the like, such contributions should appear to be positive.

This message is equally appropriate to New Zealand ecologists for there is a widespread reticence, it seems, to convey to the New Zealand public, an audience highly receptive to natural history topics, the results of detailed scientific investigation. This is why the publication of *The Duckshooter's Bag*, apparently the first of a series on gamebirds and freshwater sporting fish, is to be welcomed, and it could well serve as a model for other ecologists to follow.

Dr Williams has written this book primarily for waterfowl hunters, although I suspect that in the absence of any definitive work on New Zealand's waterfowl, this book is going to have a wider appeal. In it he has summarised the current state of knowledge of the seven exploited species-black swan, Canada goose, paradise shelduck, grey duck, mallard, shoveler and pukeko. Each of these chapters, written in an easy and informative style, is illustrated with maps and black and white photographs (62 in the whole book). The format of having an illustration visible on each double page should increase its appeal to the layman.

To my mind, the more valuable contribution is made in the other three chapters-"What's involved in waterfowl management", "Biology and the game season regulations" and "Wetlands, they don't last forever". Here the author has done the hunters the courtesy of explaining why and how the various regulatory decisions which affect their sport are arrived at, and something about the temporary nature of the wetland habitat. It is not easy to explain game management principles in 25 pages and inevitably, the approach over-simplifies. Perhaps it tries to cover too much ground. But the attempt is to be applauded and it may provide a helpful framework within which the laymen who comprise Acclimatisation Society Councils, could operate.

Ecologists will be a little annoyed at the total lack of referencing in the book. The source of detail is not indicated in the text nor is there a reference list or bibliography at the end. The more interested layman could well have appreciated a guide to further reading.

That criticism aside, this book should satisfy a wide audience, and at a price which is very reasonable indeed. Ecologists would do well to buy it, and

then consider whether they could not do similar in their field of expertise.

Editor