

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING**30 JUNE 1977**

(Presented for adoption at the 25th Annual General Meeting)

Membership of the Society has remained almost static during the year. During the year, 13 resignations were received; 15 new members were accepted. Membership now comprises 450 members and 113 subscribers to the Proceedings.

Council recorded with regret the deaths of Dr J. T. Holloway and V. D. Zotov during the year.

COUNCIL ACTIVITY

The Council met once in Wellington (with the outgoing Council) and seven times in Christchurch at the Forest Research Institute, Ilam.

Mr A. H. C. Christie was reappointed Editor. Conveners of Sub-committees appointed by Council were: Register of Ecological Consultants and N.Z. Council on water pollution research, Mrs H. R. Hughes; Nuclear energy and Population, Dr W. Q. Green; Annual General Meeting, Dr J. D. Coleman; Conservation, Dr P. R. Wilson; Member Bodies Council, R.S.N.Z., Dr M. R. Rudge; Newsletter Compiler, Dr E. B. Spurr.

EDITOR'S REPORT (A. H. C. Christie)

Every effort has been made each year to have the "Proceedings" appear on time (*viz.* at the Annual Conference). This year, this report is necessarily written in advance of the appearance of the "Proceedings" but it does appear that the deadline will be reached (or at least not too far out). For this to occur the co-operation of authors and referees is essential and I am grateful to all concerned for not stretching deadlines infinitely. It is worth noting however, that the period of "author/referee/editor" activity coincides with the Christmas holiday period and prime field time and, as a result quite considerable delays can accrue; in some ways the date of the Journal's appearance (August) is the worst possible time.

The "Proceedings" continue to be beset by rapidly increasing costs; this aspect is elaborated on in the Editorial.

Each Editor will necessarily bring his own individuality to the task and initiate changes. Some of these changes will be small and hopefully, all are helpful,

e.g., including the title on the spine. A more substantial change is the inclusion of an Editorial. It is hoped that this will take the form of stimulating comment covering the ecological spectrum, either specific or general and be contributed to by a wide range of persons. As emphasized in the Editorial the comment does not necessarily represent the opinion of the Society as a whole.

ECOLOGICAL CONSULTANTS REGISTER 1976/77 (H. R. Hughes)

Resignations:	4
New registrants:	1
Applications pending:	2
Jobs commissioned:	2

Up to the beginning of 1977 the Consultants Register did not appear to serve a useful function and the disbanding of the register was seriously considered. However, Council agreed to persevere and establish more direct contacts with organisations able to employ consultants. An upsurge of interest in the register at the beginning of 1977 appeared to justify this action.

NEW ZEALAND COMMITTEE FOR WATER POLLUTION RESEARCH (H. R. Hughes)

The Ecological Society is represented on this Committee which provides a useful forum for the exchange of ideas between scientists and engineers. In May 1979 the Committee, together with the Royal Society of New Zealand is planning an International Conference on "The Agricultural Industry and its effect on Water Quality". As a forerunner to this Conference a one-day seminar will be held at the Agricultural Science Convention in Dunedin on 18 August this year. The range of papers offered covering Industrial Waste Disposal, Dairy Shed and Animal Wastes and Land Use and Water Quality was most encouraging and augurs well for the 1979 Conference.

REPORT FROM NUCLEAR POWER SUB-COMMITTEE (W. Q. Green)

This has been a busy year for the sub-committee

culminating in the presentation of the Society's submission to the Royal Commission by W. Q. Green and C. L. Batcheler in Christchurch on 15 June.

A few people helped in the preparation of the submission; to them goes my sincere thanks. In its form the submission ran to 22 pages and made the point strongly that ever-increasing growth in energy generation and consumption is both ecologically naive and environmentally disastrous. Other sections dealt with the low resilience and stability of nuclear energy systems, the concept of net energy benefits, and the environmental threats from routine thermal discharges and radioactive contamination of natural systems. The submission urged stronger policies on energy conservation, increased efficiency of energy use, and the need to diversify our energy resources.

We felt that the submission was well received by the Commissioners and that the Society fulfilled a necessary obligation in making a submission on the topic from an ecological perspective.

REPORT FROM POPULATION SUB-COMMITTEE ACTIVITY (W. Q. Green)

Activity has been well correlated with New Zealand's falling birth rate. Many of the interations the Society used to have with Government have now been taken up by the Demographic Society. Liaison is good on a personal level with the Demographic Society and any sudden needs for activity by the Society can easily be initiated.

CONSERVATION (P. R. Wilson, D. J. Campbell, M. R. Rudge)

The Reserves Bill 1977: The Council commended this Bill in principle and made written and oral criticism of 12 of its 123 clauses. Our main point concerned application of the Mining Act to reserves. We asked that all matters pertaining to prospecting or mining in any reserve be subject to processes of environmental impact assessment.

Arapawa Goats: In response to reports that N.Z. Forest Service intended to exterminate goats and, possibly, the sheep from Arapawa Island, the Council sent a letter to the Director-General of Forests pointing out the animals' intrinsic values. The letter emphasised that it was not a plea for preserving unlimited feral sheep and goats on Arapawa Island or anywhere else, but an attempt to show that some discrimination could and should be exercised in mammal control.

Submission on the Forest Amendment Bill 1976: The Council submitted (10 August 1976) that a clause be included in the Bill allowing the public to make

submissions not only on management plans of state forest parks, but also on regional plans of forested Crown Lands outside forest parks. In a further letter (18 February 1977) we expressed concern that "any part of any plan may be made public by the Minister for a period of 30 days". Such provision for public examination should be mandatory rather than at a Minister's discretion.

Environmental Impact Reports: The Minister for the Environment is currently reviewing the EIR system. The Council wrote to the Minister (11 May 1977) supporting the concepts of EIR's by reiterating points expressed to him in 1975, adding others gained from recent experience.

Thar Petition (by the Ashburton, South Canterbury and North Otago branches of New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association): The Council drew the attention of the Parliamentary Select Committee to points of fact and interpretation which the petitioners should clarify.

Pinus contorta: In June 1977 the Council decided to send a letter to the Nature Conservation Council expressing concern over the use and control of *Pinus contorta* in the central North Island, and requesting the Nature Conservation Council to undertake a survey of its use and its ecological implications.

Antarctic Treaty: The Council has written to the Minister of Foreign Affairs expressing concern about recent reports on the future of the Antarctic Treaty. Mr Talboys replied that the Government is in broad sympathy with the points we raised.

REPORT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY MEMBER BODIES REPRESENTATIVE (M. R. Rudge)

Beginning with 1976/77 the Member Bodies Committee now meets only once each year and its current business is handled by its elected management committee. There are now 41 members, the latest being the N.Z. Biochemical Society.

During the year, new rules were drawn up, and approved by the Fellows, governing representation on the Council of the Royal Society. The Member Bodies can now elect four Councilors, two of whom must be Fellows of the Royal Society.

The Member Bodies Committee has recommended to the Royal Society Council "that the Conservation Committee be disbanded and its functions transferred to the Member Boards Committee".

At the time of last year's report Palmerston North was being invited to act as host for the 1979 ANZAAS Conference. This was declined and Auckland has now agreed to be host. Member bodies are

being asked to hold their annual conferences as an ANZAAS participation in conjunction with their equivalent Australian Society.

New Zealand is also being considered as host for the 1983 Pacific Science Congress, and the Member Bodies Committees approved of this in principle.

Stage one of the Royal Society "Science Centre" has been built next to the existing offices in Thorndon. It houses the administrative staff of the Royal Society, a lecture theatre, and small committee rooms.

The Ecological Society submitted a statement to the Member Bodies Committee concerning the cost of publishing the "Proceedings". It was fully discussed and other member bodies described similar financial problems. The meeting did not recommend that the Royal Society Council provide a subsidy for the Ecological Society; but it did agree to ask the Council to convene a meeting of science editors and UNESCO representatives to discuss ways of assisting smaller scientific societies with publishing.

This year has seen a re-modelling of the Member Bodies Committee. It is now more of a functional part of the Royal Society, and its importance is recognised by the increased representation on the Royal Society Council.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1976 —

The 25th Annual Conference was held in Auckland on 24-26 August. The first day was devoted to a Symposium on coastal ecology, in which the following papers were delivered.

1. J. Warham, The incidence, functions and ecological significance of stomach oil production in petrels.
2. M. F. Larcombe, The fate of harbours in the urban environment.
3. J. Dart, The environmental management of coastal resources.
4. M. R. Gregory, Accumulation of plastic pellets on New Zealand beaches.
5. R. Veitch, Composition and distribution of wintering wading birds in New Zealand.
6. P. R. Henriques, Species diversity in different habitats of the Manukau Harbour.
7. A. C. Kibblewhite, The Gulf of Mexico exploitation and environmental concern.
8. G. R. Cochrane, Regional and seasonal patterns of stream sediment discharges along New Zealand coasts from SKYLAB and LANDSAT satellite imagery.
9. K. R. Grange, A method of identifying areas under ecological stress in the coastal environment.

10. B. Hicks, W. B. Silvester and J. R. Taylor, Nitrogen fixation in Mangroves.
11. G. Rennison, Coastal ecology of the Abel Tasman National Park.
12. W. J. Ballantine, Preliminary survey of New Zealand's first marine reserve.

On the second day approximately 60 members participated in an excursion to the North Shore to hear of the work of the Hauraki Gulf Maritime Park, to Albany, thence to Riverhead State Forest and through the Waitakere Ranges. The third day was devoted to contributed papers:

13. P. C. Bull, Presidential address.
14. J. A. Mills and A. F. Mark, The diet of takahe with particular reference to food selection in relation to nutrient content.
15. D. G. Newman, Some evidence of predation of the frog (*Leiopelma hamiltoni*) by tuatara on Stephens Island.
16. A. F. Mark and P. N. Johnson, Factors involved in the recent mortality of plants from forest and scrub along the Lake Te Anau shoreline.
17. R. M. Greenwood and I. A. E. Atkinson, Moa browsing as a possible cause of the development of the divaricating growth form and other morphological peculiarities in the New Zealand flora.
18. H. Moller and J. L. Craig, Aspects of the ecology of opossums in pine plantations.
20. R. Lane, Aspects of the ecology of Rock Wallabies of Motutapu Island.
21. B. M. Fitzgerald and B. J. Karl, Rodent populations in the Orongorongo Valley, Wellington 1971-1976.
22. J. M. Williams, Economic rabbit control—factors and fallacies.
23. K. R. Allen, Past Presidential Address.

24th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 24th Annual General Meeting was held in the Zoology Department Lecture Theatre, Auckland, on 24 August. Thirty-nine members attended.

Minutes of the 23rd A.G.M. were approved, and the Annual Report for 1975/76 was accepted as printed in "Proceedings" No. 23. Reports were received from the Treasurer, Editor, and the Conveners of sub-committees.

A motion in three parts (moved T. A. Caithness, seconded M. J. Williams): "that the incoming Council consider changing the operation of the Society by (a) approaching DSIR to publish a journal of ecology which would incorporate the Society's Proceedings, (b) holding two Conferences each year, and,

(c) confining its public involvement to ecological issues clearly of national importance" was discussed at length and *CARRIED*.

The President reminded members that this was the 25th Anniversary of the Society's formation, and that this occasion had caused Council to invite Dr K. R. Allen, the first President, to address the meeting. He also recalled that the inaugural meeting of the Society had been chaired by Prof. B. J. Marples.

Dr Skipworth moved a vote of thanks to Mr A. Esler for his work in organising the Conference, and Miss Mason moved a vote of thanks to the retiring President, Dr Bull.

The meeting elected the following Officers and Councillors:

President:	Mr C. L. Batcheler
Vice-President:	Dr J. Warham
Secretary:	Mr D. C. Catt
Treasurer:	Dr J. M. Williams
Council:	Dr J. A. Mills, Dr P. R. Wilson, Mrs H. R. Hughes, Mr D. J. Campbell, Dr W. Q. Green, Miss R. Mason, Dr P. N. Johnson, Dr J. D. Coleman, Mrs M. Austin.

Mr B. Hassal, Rangiora, was elected Honorary Auditor.