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Prime Minister John Key arrives at Bathurst Resources' new Wellington offices.

PM told to leave Denniston alone

The sign said it all: "NO MINING PURE NZ".

About 240 people gathered outside Bathurst Resources' new Wellington office last month, armed with placards, a megaphone and a deep-seated belief the Denniston Plateau is too precious to mine.

Forest & Bird and its supporters were in the thick of the protest, and joined forces with other environmental groups to let the company know its open-cast mine isn't wanted on the Denniston Plateau.

The message was loud and clear to Prime Minister John Key, who was quickly guided through the protest by police. Earlier he told Parliament he was proud to officiate at the opening of Bathurst's Wellington offices and

supported any mining proposal that balanced economic advantages and environmental responsibilities.

Conservation Advocate Nicola Toki said the Prime Minister's presence at the opening indicated political pressures were at play, given the Department of Conservation had yet to agree access arrangements with the mining company. "The Prime Minister turning up in an official capacity and endorsing the Bathurst office is a not-so-subtle way of

influencing where the Department of Conservation should go," she said.

Nicola also slammed John Key's suggestion that Bathurst activities would be environmentally responsible. "The Denniston Plateau is 92 per cent conservation land. It's the last remaining habitat that looks like that, and has wildlife like that. When we lose the Denniston Plateau we lose that kind of habitat forever."

The protest was a combined effort of Forest & Bird, WWF, Greenpeace, Environment and Conservation Organisations, 350 Aotearoa, Coal

Action Network Aotearoa, OraTaiao and Generation Zero.

The protest followed the BioBlitz on the plateau earlier in March when 150 scientists and volunteers spent a weekend studying the animal and plant life that would be destroyed by an open-cast mine.

So far the ongoing collation of results from the BioBlitz has highlighted the rich biodiversity of the plateau and its unique character. More than 200 species of plants, 14 bird species, and more than 40 different types of diatoms – a major group of algae - have been

identified.

More than 200 species of invertebrates have been collected, including what is likely to be a new species of moth and a new tiny jumping spider.

Natural history film-maker, author, and photographer Rod Morris was one of the experts who took part in the BioBlitz and he's been doing a series of talks around New Zealand about the plateau's rich biodiversity. Rod will be doing more talks around the country in June. For more information on the Denniston campaign and the BioBlitz go to <http://tinyurl.com/7xjnpcq>

From the President



Forest & Bird President Andrew Cutler

In the past few weeks I've visited branches in Dunedin, South Otago, Southland and Southern Lakes. It's been great meeting branch committees on their own ground, seeing their projects and talking about the future of Forest & Bird.

When talking to branch committees I've been explaining that 2011/12 is

going to be a testing year for us. I'm not thinking here about the conservation challenges, real as they are, but the financial and membership challenges we're addressing.

The bottom line for 2011 and 2012 is that nationally we're likely to run a larger than usual deficit in each of these years. The reason for the deficit is our ongoing investment in recruiting new members.

This is a calculated strategy to reverse the decline in membership that's occurred gradually over many years, and to create a new and reliable source of income for Forest & Bird.

The payoff can be seen in areas where recruitment of members has been taking place. Dunedin and Wellington have been particularly successful areas for recruiting, with many hundreds of new members in each region.

Our recruiters will soon move into other areas of the country and we can expect similar growth in membership as a result.

I'm convinced the plan to grow membership and income is a sound one, but it does mean some financial challenges in the short term. The

General Manager and his team are closely managing our finances and the Executive is monitoring progress toward our targets.

Not surprisingly the Executive spent considerable time discussing the budget and conservation plan at our first meeting of the year in mid-March. We also had reports about ongoing campaigns, the upcoming Conference and Council Meeting, and the review of the Constitution that Deputy President Mark Hangar is facilitating.

The programme for the conference is looking particularly good with some great speakers confirmed. We've also received some sponsorship for the event, which will help defray costs.

Last but not least I'd like to recognise the work that our staff are putting into campaigns, projects, publications, advocacy, recruitment, administration and the conference – to name but a few of the things that they do. Our staff make a huge contribution to achieving our conservation outcomes and are truly part of the one Forest & Bird team.

Ngā mihi nui
Andrew

Golden Spade and Pestbuster awards

Nominations for the Golden Spade and Pestbuster awards close on May 1 so time is running short to put forward any projects run by or associated with your branch or Forest & Bird group.

The awards are a significant way we can recognise the huge amount of work done by branches and Forest & Bird groups to restore nature through

planting and pest control work.

This year's award winners will be announced on World Environment Day on June 5 and trophies will be presented at the Forest & Bird conference in Wellington on June 15-17.

A small branch has just as much chance of winning as a larger one because

the size will be taken into account in choosing a winner.

Full details of the awards and how to send in nominations were included in the March edition of Nature in Action. If you have any inquiries about the awards or nominations please contact David Brooks at d.brooks@forestandbird.org.nz

You can help save Maui's dolphins

There is still time to tell the government that not enough is being done to reverse the slide towards extinction of our Maui's dolphins.

Submissions close on April 11 on the government's interim proposals to expand the gill net ban aimed at protecting the world's rarest and smallest species of dolphin. We have drawn up a guide for making submissions which will help you press the government to introduce measures to ensure Maui's dolphins are not lost forever.

It is important we get as many submissions as possible to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to ensure the voice of nature is heard.

The shocking news last month that the population of Maui's dolphins had sunk to just 55 – half the number surveyed seven years earlier – proved that present protection measures are simply not good enough.

The government recognised this by proposing to expand the ban on gill nets – the biggest threat to Maui's and the closely related Hector's dolphin – southwards to include the Taranaki coast. This would be imposed as an interim measure pending a review of the Threat Management Plan for Hector's and Maui's dolphins, which has been brought forward to this year from 2013.

While any measures to increase protection for Maui's dolphins are welcome, Marine Conservation

Advocate Katrina Subedar says the government's proposal falls well short of what is needed.

The ban on gill nets needs to be extended to all areas where Maui's and Hector's dolphins are found around the New Zealand coast. This would include all harbours and the coastal seas out to a depth of 100 metres in the regions the dolphins are known to inhabit.

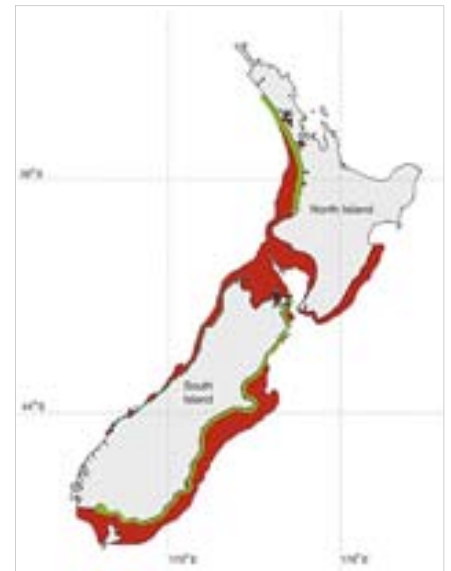
The map shows in red the areas where Maui's and Hector's dolphins may be found within waters up to 100 metres deep and the areas where gill net bans are currently in place are in green. The government's proposals will expand the ban to include the Taranaki coast but the bans do not cover enough areas and do not extend far enough out to sea.

Primary Industries Minister David Carter said at the time he announced the proposed interim measures that the government must balance protection measures against the impact on the fishing industry. But Katrina said this so-called balance had brought Maui's dolphins to the edge of extinction.

"The interests of this very special marine mammal have not figured in the balance up to now and we fear this misguided idea could lead to the extinction of Maui's dolphins."

Maui's dolphins are found along the west coast of the North Island from Taranaki to near Dargaville in Northland. They are believed to have become genetically distinct thousands of years ago after becoming separated from their close relatives Hector's dolphins, which inhabit coastal waters around much of the South Island.

To find out more about the issue, how to send a message to the ministers, and how to make a submission on the proposed interim protection measures visit: <http://tinyurl.com/c2aukwx>



The areas marked in red show where gill net bans are needed to protect Maui's and Hector's dolphins and the areas in green show where bans have been imposed.



North Canterbury members viewing kahikatea and other podocarps at Lords Bush near Springfield Forest at the foot of Mt Torlesse during a field trip guided by Department of Conservation botanist Nick Head.

Facing the future

Our Face Up to the Future annual conference in June will be an unmissable opportunity to be inspired by ideas about how New Zealand can invest in the nature of tomorrow.

Conference organiser and Conservation Advocate Claire Browning says the conference at Te Papa in Wellington on June 15-17 will be imagining, and taking steps to sustain and secure, the nature of tomorrow.

Reflecting this theme, up to six young conservationists will take centre stage on the Friday night, sharing their vision of the kind of New Zealand they want to inherit and protect in a session facilitated by comedian Te Radar.

Branches are encouraged to promote the session to young conservationists they know and who might be interested in taking part. Applicants are being asked to make a YouTube video no longer than five minutes that tells us about the New Zealand they want to see and the role they want to play in creating it.

The Saturday session is guaranteed to be stimulating and the keynote speech

by businessman and philanthropist Gareth Morgan will get the day off to a strong start.

In keeping with the intention to focus on a positive vision for the future, representatives of the farming industry – including Federated Farmers President Bruce Wills – will discuss their vision and share good news stories about efforts to protect the environment being made by some farmers. Biological dairy farmer Jeff Williams will explain the success he is having with managing his land naturally.

The environmental impact of farming is a controversial issue and another is the Department of Conservation's strategy of forging closer ties with business. Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment Jan Wright and DOC Director-General Al Morrison will tell us their ideas about how business can contribute to conservation.

Conservation Advocate Nicola Toki will talk about a vision for a predator-free New Zealand which was promoted by prominent scientist Sir Paul Callaghan in the months leading up to his recent death.

Collaboration between conservationists and Maori will be discussed by Tamati Kruger of Ngai Tuhoë, and other sessions during the day include caring for our biodiversity outside our protected lands, the future of our marine areas and collaborative management of our environment.

The conference will open on Friday with a session to discuss the contentious issue of biodiversity offsetting and the Sunday sessions will be devoted to our annual general meeting and workshops.

For information on the conference, accommodation and details on the programme, go to

<http://tinyurl.com/7ok2rtl>

Expats support New Zealand nature

BirdLife International and Forest & Bird joined forces for "A Celebration Of New Zealand Birds" in London late last month to raise money for projects that protect and restore nature in New Zealand.

Former All Black and conservationist Anton Oliver spoke at the March 26 event, which was attended by more than 80 invited guests.

Supporter Relations Manager Rebecca Scelly, who headed the event's organising committee, travelled to London for the gathering in New Zealand House in the heart of the city.

Forest & Bird's London-based members, conservationists and influential expats attended the evening, which aimed to secure donors for the BirdLife International Community Conservation Fund.

The fund is administered by Forest & Bird and each year distributes £50,000 (about \$100,000) to community-based conservation projects in New Zealand and the Pacific islands.

The fund was founded in 2007 and until now has been entirely financed by British conservationists David and Sarah

Gordon. BirdLife is now looking to secure other donors to ensure the future of the fund and hopefully expand it.

Rebecca said it is vital the fund continues to support conservation projects in New Zealand and the region and this will be achieved by attracting new supporters.

"The fund empowers local communities and there are some really important conservation projects being supported by it," she said.

New Zealand gift company Acquisitions donated kiwiana luggage labels to Forest & Bird to give to guests to remind them of home.



Forest & Bird took part in the Maui Dolphin Day at Raglan on March 10, with Marine Conservation Advocate Katrina Subedar speaking at the event and branch members ran a stall to gather support for our Maui's dolphin campaign and to highlight other marine issues.

Working for rowi

By Lana Rockliff, Supporter Relations Coordinator

In late February I was lucky to have an amazing experience volunteering for the Rowi Kiwi Project on Motuara Island in the Marlborough Sounds, helping give some of our rarest kiwi a fighting chance of survival.

I joined Department of Conservation ranger Iain Graham, trainee ranger Guy Brannigan and Iain's kiwi dog Rein. Iain explained rowi is one of the rarest of New Zealand's five kiwi species with only around 375 birds remaining.

They are unique because they often have white patches over the neck and head area and are the only kiwi to live in family groups for up to three years after hatching.

Rowi are found in an 11,000 hectare piece of bush nestled between Ōkārito and Franz Josef Glacier in an area of predominantly lowland podocarp forest, coastal scrub and wetland swamp.

BNZ Operation Nest Egg, which includes Forest & Bird amongst its partners, has been rebuilding the rowi population by rescuing eggs from the wild and hatching them at the West Coast Wildlife Centre in Franz Josef.

The chicks are held in a predator-proof enclosure for up to two months and then moved to predator-free Motuara Island, where they can spend the first year of their lives in safety. By the time they return to the West Coast, they are large enough to protect themselves against stoats.

Without Operation Nest Egg, only two out of 80 eggs would produce chicks that survive to a year old because of the impact of predators, but the programme has seen the number rise to around 34. The aim is to increase the

rowi population to 600 by 2018.

We arrived on Motuara with four young chicks that would be making the island their home for the next year or so. One of the first things I noticed after arriving was the brilliant birdsong - saddlebacks, South Island robins, fantails, bellbirds, and kereru are all found on the predator-free island.

We attached a transmitter tag to the leg of each kiwi and placed them in a temporary nest box until they were ready to move on and find their own home in the bush, usually a burrow under tree roots on a hill.

The other main job of our three-day stay on the island was checking on the health of around 30 other young rowi that had been placed on the island earlier. Rein proved her worth repeatedly, even finding a kiwi which had somehow lost its leg transmitter.

The quickly growing birds also needed to be fitted with new leg tags that fit more comfortably and my main job was to hold the kiwis securely while these tasks were done.

I am very happy to have helped in a small way to ensure that the little rowi kiwi has a chance at survival. Anyone who wants to support the rowi's recovery can visit Motuara Island or the West Coast Wildlife Centre in Franz Josef and more information about BNZ Operation Nest Egg can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/c2y4g6y>



KCC coordinators get stuck in – or just stuck – during their annual gathering at Miranda.

KCC coordinators get together at Miranda

By KCC National Coordinator Ann Graeme

Having fun is a guiding principle for KCC and 23 coordinators from around New Zealand followed this principle enthusiastically on their annual gathering at Miranda.

The second guiding principle is to find out about nature and we did this too on our field trip to the Firth of Thames where the mud is of unrivalled quantity and quality!

Having gained a first-hand insight into the vast food bowl of worms, cockles, crabs and more that the Firth provides for migrant shore birds, we washed our legs and went to the Miranda Shore Bird Centre. There we were enthralled with a talk about migrant birds, the problems they face and the journeys they make, particularly the legendary non-stop flight from Alaska of the satellite-tagged godwit called E7.

As high tide approached we returned to the shore to see the different flocks of local migrants like the South Island pied oyster catcher and banded dotterel and of the international visitors like the knots and godwits. The most memorable sight was seeing a flock of hundreds of wrybills in flight, swirling like smoke in the sky, and knowing that we were seeing a significant percentage of the world population of that threatened species.

The following day we walked in the Waharau Regional Park forest and learned to present conservation to children in ways that are fun, stimulating and memorable. By sharing our experience and know-how, we learned new skills and made new friends.



Lana with a young rowi kiwi on Motuara Island.

Nelson project hits top gear

The Nelson-Tasman branch's restoration project at Paremata Flats Reserve, near Nelson, has been turbo-charged this year with plans to plant 10,000 trees.

In recent years the branch has planted about 700 trees annually with support from the Nelson City Council, which owns the reserve. But fundraising in recent months has attracted nearly \$50,000 from donors, allowing the project to be done on a much bigger scale, according to project coordinator Ian Price.

Already 4,000 trees have been planted over two working days in March as part of the goal to restore the 30 hectare reserve, which is home to fernbirds and banded rails, he said.

The reserve includes river and estuary ecosystems, as well as a remnant of lowland podocarp forest, and the city council has given the reserve the highest ecological value of all the land it manages.

"We are thinking the replanting will take five to seven years and we aim to plant a total of 100,000 to 120,000 trees in that time and to raise \$180,000 to \$240,000 for the project," Ian said.

As well as replanting, Forest & Bird has

been trapping predators since 2007, halting the decline of populations of the rare banded rail and fernbird. Control of tall fescue grass will help the new native trees grow and encourage the regeneration of the forest remnant.

"This is a really good project that will restore a unique ecology that has been decimated in the Nelson-Tasman area and we hope to expand the restoration beyond the reserve," Ian said.

With the permission of local iwi, Ian also manages a weed and pest control

programme on nearby Uri O Te Wai (Bishops Peninsula), one of the least modified lowland forest areas in the Nelson area.

Through bird activity, the peninsula is expected to be a valuable seed source for Paremata Flats. Many other property owners in the area are also undertaking pest control work.

Ian is keen to develop the restoration as a community project and anyone wanting further information can contact him at ian.price@xtra.co.nz



Paremata Flats. Photo: Clint Fern

Heidi heads south

National Volunteer Coordinator Heidi Quinn will be visiting our South Island branches this month as part of her nationwide journey to gather information to help plan training and pool branch expertise and skills.

Heidi worked her way down the North Island, covering 4,500 km and visiting 33 branches in March. After seeing all the hard work being done in our communities in the North Island, Heidi is keen to see what the 12 branches are up to in the south.

"It has been fantastic to meet such a lot of passionate people committed to conservation, and I'm looking forward to more of the same in the South Island," she said.

"Meeting people face to face makes such a big difference and it is great to be building relationships."

She has spent a lot of time driving the van supplied for free through sponsorship by Escape Rentals but the

hours alone on the road have been compensated by the warm welcome from branch members.

Following the road trip, training sessions are scheduled to start from May, initially covering health and safety and volunteer management training.

There are plans to hold four half-day seminars around the country on health and safety.

Information gathered during the trip will be entered into a database and this will help identify experience and skills that can be shared with other branches.



Lynne McLellan of Upper Hutt branch and Heidi Quinn at the branch's plant nursery.

More rare native animals returning to Auckland

Tieke (saddlebacks) have returned to the Auckland mainland for the first time in around a century and a half.

Ninety of these rare and endangered birds were being released over a month starting in mid-March into the open sanctuary at Tawharanui Regional Park in the north of the Hauraki Gulf.

Sandra Coney, Chair of the Auckland Council's Parks, Recreation and Heritage Forum, said the saddlebacks were joining other species which had been reintroduced to the sanctuary – kiwi, pateke (brown teals), robins and whiteheads. Bellbirds and kaka have also returned to the park of their own accord.

Tieke disappeared from the mainland around Auckland in the mid to late 1800s, as a result of predators, especially rats.

Forest & Bird, along with the NZ Parks and Conservation Foundation, and BirdLife International Community Conservation Fund contributed to the project to bring saddlebacks back to Tawharanui.

Tawharanui Open Sanctuary is set on a peninsula with a predator proof fence running across the mainland end. The park totals 588ha, including high quality coastal forest, wetlands and east coast dunes, as well as 170ha which is farmed with sheep and cattle.

The return last month of 60 tuatara to

Motuihe Island close to the city was another milestone in restoring the native ecology in and around New Zealand's largest city.

Our Ark in the Park project in the Waitakere Ranges west of the city has had further success this summer with its programme to reintroduce kokako. Three chicks are known to have fledged this summer, following the first successful raising of chicks last summer, Project Manager Maj De Poorter said.



A young saddleback (tieke)

New fundraiser brings international experience



Our new Senior Fundraiser Dave Bellamy has brought nearly two decades of experience in the not-for-profit sector to Forest & Bird and is keen to help build a stronger financial base for our organisation.

Dave has broad experience in the sector, including working on areas such as urban regeneration, training and skills development, information technology and fundraising strategies in his native Britain. His work there was all-consuming and he chose to move to New Zealand for a more sane lifestyle.

Since making the move in 2003, Dave has worked for a number of Auckland-based not-for-profit organisations including Auckland Zoo, Red Cross, and the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind.

"I think I bring a broad range of skills which allow me to take a strategic view of fundraising, project development and other related fields using nearly 20 years of experience," Dave says.

The size of not-for-profit organisations in New Zealand is naturally much smaller than in Britain, despite there being a very large number of them for the size of our population.

"It's challenging because there is less money to do stuff here. There is not as much multi-year funding here and a lot of the funding is on a year-to-year basis. Overall, it is a very competitive sector that is under-resourced."

He adds it is important to be passionate about your work in the not-for-profit sector and joining Forest & Bird fits well with his love for the environment and conservation.

Since joining Forest & Bird earlier this year, Dave is quickly getting to grips with working as part of our fundraising team but is still adjusting to "wonderful, windy Wellington".

In his spare time he is helping write an e-book on trust and foundation fundraising for the consulting firm he worked with in Britain. The e-book, based on a book and resource manual he earlier wrote, is part of a planned series related to management and fundraising in the not-for-profit sector.

By Marketing and Promotions Project Manager Phil Bilbrough

A few branches have tried to use Forest & Bird's extranet website for branch committees and staff www.natureinaction.org.nz and were unable to gain access. I'm very sorry about this. Can I ask you nicely to try again?

To access this site,

- Go to www.natureinaction.org.nz
- Select "Windows Authentication" from the drop down menu.
- Your username, is "forestandbird\

The key point appears to be that it is important to use "\ " – a forward-slash. Most computer systems don't mind if it is a "/" – a back-slash – or a "\ ", but it appears that our system prefers the "\ ".

- Your password is the same as your branch's email address login password, the one your branch secretary may use to access your branch email.

I am very sorry about these teething problems. As I mentioned in the last Nature in Action newsletter, I hope to continue to build the content on this site to make it more useful to you. Currently there is a lot of information about the upcoming annual conference in June.

Please give the website another try.

Success grows for Kaikōura shearwater project

By Marieke Esveld

The Forest & Bird-backed Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust has taken another important step in the development of its Kaikōura Peninsula colony after the translocation of 102 more chicks to the site last month.



A Hutton's shearwater with a chick at the Kaikōura Peninsula colony. Photo: Lindsay Rowe

Volunteers braved wet and snowy conditions to move the shearwater chicks by helicopter from their mountainside nests to the colony on Kaikōura peninsula. There they are being monitored and hand-fed every morning on sardine smoothies until they learn to fly and become independent.

The shearwaters (titi) need to be moved to the peninsula before they learn to fly, so they imprint on the colony as their home and return there to breed after travelling to the ocean off northwest Australia for between two and four years. The birds usually imprint on the areas where they first learn to fly and will return there to breed.

Our Kaikōura branch has been involved

in the project to set up a third breeding site for the nationally endangered Hutton's shearwaters and it provided some funding to the trust to build a predator-proof fence which was completed in early 2010. Members have also been helping feed chicks moved to the 2.4 ha site.

The new colony was set up as an insurance policy in case a catastrophe wiped out the two remaining breeding colonies high in the Seaward Kaikōura Ranges.

Between 2005 and 2008 a total of 273 chicks were transferred to the new peninsula colony. It was set up on land owned by the Kaikōura Charitable Trust, as a community project involving the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust, Te Runanga O Kaikoura, Forest & Bird and DOC.

There were once eight breeding colonies in the Kaikōura region but since their rediscovery by ornithologist/mountaineer Geoff Harrow in the 1960s, the number of nesting sites has been reduced to two, due to the impact mainly of pigs.

During the summer of 2010/2011 roughly 24 birds returned to the new breeding site, proving its success. In the latest breeding season a total of four returning pairs laid eggs, one of which successfully hatched – the first ever at the new colony.

The trust has scheduled another relocation of 100 chicks to the new colony in March next year.

2012 ENVIRO EVENTS CALENDAR

APRIL

22 Earth Day

MAY

21 World Fisheries Day

JUNE

5 Arbor Day

5 World Environment Day

8 World Oceans Day

15-17 Forest & Bird annual conference

SEPTEMBER

9-16 Conservation Week

30 World Rivers Day