

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

BIRDS AND BEECH FORESTS

Considerable interest and concern is being shown by conservation groups in the proposal to utilise the beech forests of the South Island, following the report by the Director-General of Forests, and many members of the OSNZ are directly involved in forwarding submissions or examining the proposals in various ways. According to one of the submissions on which the Nature Conservation Council has based its recommendations in a report to the Minister of Lands (Mr D. MacIntyre), the presence or absence of birds could determine the nature of a forest and could be regarded as a convenient indicator of environmental quality. The Council's report included this statement: "The biology, movements, food requirements and population dynamics of most native birds are to all intents and purposes unknown, hence it is impossible confidently to predict the consequences of the Forest Service plans on bird populations." The distribution maps from the OSNZ mapping scheme show clearly a lack of knowledge of bird distributions, in the first instance, in the areas likely to be affected and this seems one way in which OSNZ members can contribute directly to what needs to be known about birds in beech forests. Members are reminded that the Forest Service report is for sale at 25 cents at Government Bookshops: "Report by the Director-General of Forests on Utilisation of South Island Beech Forests October 1971" 39 pp., Government Printer, Wellington.

Source: "Many oppose milling beech forest in S.I. says council." *Evening Post* [Wellington], 26 April 1972, p. 15.

BIRDS OR MEN ?

Members, particularly those who expressed their concern at this year's Annual General Meeting, who have their doubts or worries about how much the OSNZ should involve itself, and its members, on matters of the Environment as opposed to the strictly delimited study of birds, may be interested, amazed, encouraged, or moved in a way appropriate to their beliefs, in a Resolution adopted at the 89th Annual Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union, 2 September 1971, reported in the latest issue of the *Auk*.

Discussing the limitations of natural populations and the illusion that Man, alone, is exempt from allowing his population to exceed the carrying capacity of the environment, it was agreed that "...the American Ornithologists' Union firmly resolves to express its most serious concern to the political leaders of the United States and Canada and to the citizens of our countries, in the hope that, without prejudice toward any group, they will immediately accelerate their efforts to promote reduction of population growth everywhere, by the encouragement of all humane measures such as birth control, the legalization of abortion, and governmental incentives that encourage small families. We urge the stabilization of the human population as essential to the attainment of whatever system will ultimately offer the best possibility of a viable and meaningful human civilization in future centuries."

Source: Proceedings of the Eighty-ninth stated meeting of the American Ornithologists Union. *Auk* 89 (1): 166; January 1972.