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**NATURE'S TRUSTEE:
PÉRRINE MONCRIEFF
AND
NATURE CONSERVATION
IN NEW ZEALAND
1920-1950**

Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in History
at Massey University

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the question of P  r  ne Moncrieff's significance within the movement for nature conservation in New Zealand between 1920 and 1950. Although it is an examination of her beliefs and ideas about the natural world and activities towards indigenous wild fauna and flora, it also shows how her contemporaries viewed nature and acted towards it. Thus it places Moncrieff into a conservationist setting in which there were many, often conflicting, viewpoints.

Moncrieff's vitalist, holistic world-view, and her science and aesthetics as the most important elements of her conservation, are charted historically against what was then, and remains, the orthodox, scientific, materialist world-view. Within this contextualisation, her participation in the ornithological discourse is examined first as birds were her entry to the natural world. The study then investigates the ways in which she achieved her successes of nature reserves, the opposition she encountered, and the assistance she obtained. It looks at the ways in which she sought to promote a conservation perspective amongst New Zealanders, and at reasons for her failure. Her position within the land degradation debates is analysed. Lastly the question of her sex on her work is examined; the extent of her agency in the face of gendered expectations. Arguments were achieved by the close examination of her extant correspondence and published writings, and by the interpretation of her beliefs, ideas and activities within the body of existing historical scholarship.

Threading through all chapters is the question of why she "disappeared" from the historical record of conservation, given the contemporary status she achieved for her work. The analysis suggests that the answer is not simply the conventional "because she was a woman"; that other factors operated, including the assumption by today's Green movement, that it has no history.

For my grandmother, Honorah Heerdegen
who was the first to show me the fascination of history

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP&G Act	1921-22 Animals Protection and Game Act
Bush and Bird	Nelson Bush and Bird Society
DOC	Department of Conservation
IA	Department of Internal Affairs
Forest and Bird	Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Inc.
MONZ	Museum of New Zealand Archives, Wellington
NA	National Archives, Wellington
NAS	Nelson Acclimatization/Acclimatisation Society
NI	Nelson Institute and Museum
NPS	Nelson Philosophical Society
NZI	New Zealand Institute
OSNZ	Ornithological Society of New Zealand
RAOU	Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union
RSNZ	Royal Society of New Zealand
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SPFE	Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
WTU	Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
<i>AJHR</i>	<i>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives</i>
<i>DNZB</i>	<i>Dictionary of New Zealand Biography</i>
<i>JSPFE</i>	<i>Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire</i>
<i>NEM</i>	<i>Nelson Evening Mail</i> , now <i>Nelson Mail</i>
<i>NZJS&T</i>	<i>New Zealand Journal of Science and Technology</i>

<i>NZPD</i>	<i>New Zealand Parliamentary Debates</i>
<i>Statutes</i>	<i>New Zealand Statutes</i>
<i>TPRSNZ</i>	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand</i> , formerly <i>TPNZI, Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute</i>

1. Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Papers, MS Papers 0444, Folders 192-197, Pérrine Moncrieff, WTU.
- 1a. Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Papers, MS Papers 4723, Folders 1-4.
2. Pérrine Moncrieff's letters to various correspondents, of which I hold copies; my taped or written interviews and correspondence with her friends and colleagues.
3. Falla Papers, MS Papers 2366, Folder 67, Pérrine Moncrieff, WTU.
4. Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union Papers, MS 11437, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Australia.
5. Ornithological Society of New Zealand Archive, Auckland Institute and Museum, Auckland.

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Pérrine Moncrieff and pets, including Miss Micawber,
her macaw parrot, 1930s.

Alexander Turnbull Library
National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o
Aotearoa

Reference Number: P - AC 5527-01

INTRODUCTION

...Farewell Spit is a wildlife area where the welfare of the waders should receive prior consideration....

With the pressure of [human] population it is imperative that the coming generation should be educated to the fact that where certain species must be preserved and the area where they dwell protected the conservation aspect must take priority to Man's amusement.¹

Perrine Moncrieff's exhortation on Farewell Spit, one of New Zealand's most important nature reserves, signals her unorthodox world-view that on occasion the needs of non-humans must take precedence over the wishes of human beings. On the tidal flats and sand dunes creeping out across Tasman Bay, she argued, the godwit should have higher status than the "kiwi". The predominant theme of this thesis, which is an investigation of Moncrieff's significance in nature conservation between 1920 and 1950, is that her unconventional world-view informed and motivated her work.

Etymologically, "conservation" is problematic because of its two clusters of meanings. I shall use the word in the way that Moncrieff did, and with the meaning it is given in the 1987 Conservation Act; that is, in the sense of permanent preservation and protection.²

This study conforms to the genre of environmental history which, in merging cultural and natural history, allows autonomous agency to the natural

¹ Perrine Moncrieff, Report, undated, her emphasis, enclosed with letter E.N. Young, Commissioner Crown Lands Nelson, to Chairman National Parks Association, 7 July 1969, Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, DOC HO Wellington.

² 1987 New Zealand Conservation Act, *Statutes*, 1(1987), p.260. Paul Star, in his thesis on T.H.Potts, defined "conservation" as "the wise use of resources" but acknowledged that today the meaning has moved away from "an emphasis on use"; "T.H.Potts and the origins of conservation in New Zealand (1850-1890)", MA thesis in History (University of Otago, 1992), p.5.

"Wise use" can also be referred to as "sustainable management" or "progressive conservation". These terms are synonymous. Contemporary New Zealand environmental law refers to sustainability; for example, 1986 Environment Act, *Statutes* 3(1986), p.1380; and 1991 Resource Management Act, *Statutes*, 2(1991), p.615. But some American histories like Samuel P.Hays, *Conservation and the gospel of efficiency* (Cambridge Massachusetts, 1959), talk of "progressive conservation".

world or nature. The natural world is no longer "the passive background in historical narratives"³; it contributes another dimension to historical understanding. In Simon Schama's description, environmental historians restore "to the land and climate the kind of creative unpredictability conventionally reserved for human actors" so that "man is not the be-all and end-all of the story".⁴ Thus environmental history is the ecological study of interrelationships between humanity and other living organisms in a particular habitat. The field has acquired protean dimensions with the inclusion of studies from academic disciplines other than history but the individual schools within environmental history do interact in a "pick and mix" fashion in each other's research.⁵ Discussion on its methodology continues, often but not exclusively by its American practitioners⁶, while both its origins and age are contested. Was it born in the USA in the 1970s as Roderick Nash suggested⁷ or is it much older, its parents "the early academics of the European empires",

³ Tom Griffiths, "Ecology and empire: towards an Australian history of the world" in *Ecology and empire*, (eds) Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin (Carlton South, 1997), p.2.

⁴ Simon Schama, *Landscape and memory* (London, 1995), p.13. Although this book ranges widely through the territory of western thought about the natural world, Schama does not consider himself an environmental historian.

⁵ For example, the geographer Clarence J. Glacken's *Traces on the Rhodian shore* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967) is considered a classic, while more recent examples include *Earth's insights* (Berkeley, 1994) by the philosopher J. Baird Callicott and *The future eaters* (Port Melbourne, 1995, orig.pub. 1994) by the zoologist Tim Flannery.

In his influential book, *Nature's economy* (New York, 1977), and in a more recent article, "The two cultures revisited: environmental history and the environmental sciences", *Environment and History*, 2(1996), pp.3-14, Donald Worster argues for more understanding between the sciences and the humanities for the mutual informing of both.

⁶ For example, in a suite of articles in *The Journal of American History*, 76(1989-1990) Donald Worster, "Transformations of the earth: toward an agroecological perspective in history", pp.1087-1106; Alfred W. Crosby, "An enthusiastic second", pp.1107-1110; Richard White, "Ecology and meaning", pp.1111-1116; Carolyn Merchant, "Gender and environmental history", pp.1117-1121; William Cronon, "Modes of prophecy and production: placing nature in history", pp.1122-1131.

In a more recently established British journal there have been reviews and proposals by S.Ravi Rajan, "The ends of environmental history: some questions", *Environment and History*, 3(1997), pp.245-252 and Frank Uekoetter, "Confronting the pitfalls of current environmental history: an argument for an organisational approach", *Environment and History*, 4(1998), pp.31-52.

⁷ Roderick Nash, "American environmental history: a new teaching frontier", *Pacific Historical Review*, 41(1972), pp.362-369.

as Richard Grove argues.⁸ Whatever its past, environmental history in America appears a more coherent body, which William Cronon believes divides into three clusters⁹, than its counterpart in Britain where it is diffuse and less recognised as a discreet entity.¹⁰ From the New Zealand perspective, as a former colony of the British Empire, there has developed from both sides of the Atlantic a series of ecological studies under the umbrella of imperialism which considers such topics as the transfer of plants and animals, forest conservation and hunting. Also discussed is the dissemination of ideas through imperial institutes in relation to the metropolis and the periphery, the colonisers and the colonised.¹¹

Environmental history, as yet, has had little impact in New Zealand historiography where even recent general works assume that history is the "development" of the natural world into human-made farms, forests, towns or landscapes. Analysis of ecological interaction or discussion of alternative uses, like wilderness preservation, are as rare as the kakapo. The 1992 edition of the *Oxford history of New Zealand* has no index reference to key words like environment, conservation or ecology but Laurie Barber gives conservation half a page in his 1989 *New Zealand: a short history*. Implying some past activity, he summarises the 1960 Save Manapouri campaign as "Conservation opposition on an unprecedented scale..." and lists several 1970s government

⁸ Richard Grove, "Paradise invented and lost", *Times Higher*, 2 May 1997, p.27. This is a review of *The problem of nature: environment, culture and European expansion* by David Arnold.

⁹ Cronon, "Modes", p.1122. The groups are: ecological which explains interrelationships and change between humans and ecosystems; changing ideas of the nature of the natural world over time and place; and the history of political movements and policy with regard to conservation (in both senses) and environmentalism.

¹⁰ Linda Merricks, "Environmental history", *Rural History*, 7:1(1996), pp.97-109.

¹¹ Imperialist studies were originated by the American, Alfred W.Crosby, *Ecological imperialism. The biological expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge New York, 1986); J.M.MacKenzie, *The empire of nature.Hunting, conservation and British imperialism* (Manchester and New York, 1988) and (ed), *Imperialism and the natural world* (Manchester, 1990); Richard H.Grove, *Green imperialism* (Cambridge, 1995); Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and collectors. The antiquarian imagination in Australia* (Cambridge, 1996); Griffiths and Robin (eds), *Ecology*.

initiatives.¹² The *New Zealand historical atlas* provides rather more on the natural world, human transformations of it, and a brief resumé of nature protection initiatives¹³ while volumes of the *Dictionary of New Zealand biography* and *The book of New Zealand women* narrate the lives of many who looked at nature with other than a development eye.

One of the earliest, if not the first New Zealand historian to discuss environmental issues from a conservationist rather than a development perspective was J.O.C.Phillips. In 1982, a year after historians in the first edition of the *Oxford history of New Zealand* could refer to early European industries like sealing, whaling and pastoralism only in terms of culture contact or international economics¹⁴, Phillips reflected on the endurance of that "temporary exploitative attitude towards the land". It remained the dominant Pakeha mindset, he believed, despite new legal processes for environmental protection, because "in New Zealand we still believe that we have no history or mythology and therefore no memories to protect." If the Pakeha was to become the land's people, the Pakeha required a change of mind and habit. These could be accomplished, Phillips suggested, by a process of public consciousness-raising about the New Zealand environment, which included the creation of "far more holy ground", so that "this knowledge and love of the land" would inform and inspire the initiators of economic development.¹⁵

But environmental historians from various disciplines reveal that there have been individuals and groups in New Zealand from its European settlement days, who transferred to their new land heritage as well as materialist values.

¹² Laurie Barber, *New Zealand: a short history* (Auckland, 1989), p.179.

¹³ Malcolm McKinnon (ed), *New Zealand historical atlas* (Auckland, 1997), Plates 8,12,42,62, 98.

¹⁴ See J.M.R.Owens, "New Zealand before annexation", pp.30-34, although he owns that whaling and sealing inevitably destroyed their own livelihoods; and W.J.Gardner, "A colonial economy", pp.64, 73 in *The Oxford history of New Zealand*, (ed) W.H.Oliver with B.R.Williams (Wellington, 1981).

¹⁵ J.O.C.Phillips, "Paradise lost...again", Waikato Environment 4,5 [1982], pp.16-22; quotes on pp.18,17,21,21. Also, J.O.C.Phillips, "Fear and loathing in the New Zealand landscape", a paper presented to the conference of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, 20-21 February 1981.

In saying that Pakeha New Zealanders believed they had neither natural history mythology nor memory to protect, Phillips critiqued other historians who failed to incorporate into their histories of land use the alternative attitudes of those conservationists. If the conservationist ideas, recommendations, activities and outcomes of T.H.Potts, Harry Ell and Richard Henry, which are to be found in environmental histories and biographies¹⁶, had been incorporated into the general history of land development, Phillips may still have deplored attitudes of the 1980s but at least he would have been aware of the contributions of past conservationists to the creation of a permanent natural heritage and its accompanying memory and myth.

Perhaps because of the combination of New Zealand's long isolation without human beings, its high proportion of endemic species, and extensive transformations by human settlers and their floral and faunal "baggage", acclimatisation of introduced species has been an enduring subject for writers on our environment. One of the earliest was the Honourable G.M.Thomson, whose book *The naturalisation of animals & plants in New Zealand*¹⁷ was published in 1922. It provided an account of what species had been introduced and with what results, and argued that any future importations be scientifically researched before their transferral to New Zealand. Thomson's interest in the ideas and the results of acclimatisation has been continued to the present day but has been extended to examination of the change in public attitudes towards conservation (in both senses) of the indigenous.¹⁸ Within the sustainable

¹⁶ For Potts, see below; Susanne and John Hill, *Richard Henry of Resolution Island* (Dunedin, 1987); Robin Ormerod, "Henry, Richard Treacy", *DNZB* 2(1870-1900), (Wellington, 1993), p.210; Eric Pawson, "Ell, Henry George", *DNZB* 3(1901-1920), (Auckland, Wellington, 1996), p.149.

¹⁷ George Malcolm Thomson (1848-1933) was a Member of the Legislative Council when he published his book, *The naturalisation of animals & plants in New Zealand* (Cambridge, 1922) but had been involved in science as a teacher, researcher and advocate with his son J.Allan Thomson; E.Yvonne Spiers, "George Malcolm Thomson", Postgraduate Diploma dissertation in History (University of Otago, 1983); E.Yvonne Spiers, "Thomson, George Malcolm", *DNZB* 2, p.537.

¹⁸ On acclimatisation, Andrew Hill Clark, *The invasion of New Zealand by people, plants and animals: the South Island* (New Brunswick, 1949); Janet Fay Swann, "A short history of the Acclimatisation Society of Otago", MA thesis in History (University of Otago, 1962); Crosby used New Zealand examples in his *Ecological imperialism*; as did Thomas

conservation model, the Canadian historical geographer Graeme Wynn provided an early study of forest conservation.¹⁹ Michael Roche employed both meanings of conservation in his *History of New Zealand forestry* as did ecologist Geoff Park in *Ngā uruora*, although the latter's blending of the personal with the historical and ecological makes his study unique in New Zealand environmental history.²⁰ The preservationist model, into which my thesis fits, is expanding.²¹

My study of Périnne Moncrieff has been informed by a number of overseas histories. One group, which includes Anna Bramwell's *Ecology in the 20th century*, Peter J. Bowler's *The Norton History of the environmental sciences*, and David Pepper's *Modern environmentalism* and *The roots of*

R.Dunlap, "Remaking the land: the Acclimatization movement and Anglo ideas of nature", *Journal of World History*, 8:2(1997), pp.303-319.

On the evolution from acclimatisation of the introduced to indigenous conservation, Ross Galbreath, "Colonisation, science and conservation: the development of colonial attitudes toward the native life of New Zealand with particular reference to the career of the colonial scientist Walter Lawry Buller (1838-1906)", PhD thesis in History (University of Waikato, 1989); Paul Star "From acclimatisation to preservation: colonists and the natural world in southern New Zealand 1860-1894", PhD thesis in History (University of Otago, 1997). Pakeha ideas on this change are also found in P. Hamer, "Nature and natives. Settler attitudes to the indigenous in New Zealand and Australia", MA thesis in History (University of Victoria, 1992) although Hamer excludes his thesis from the genre of environmental history; p.1.

¹⁹ Graeme Wynn, "Conservation and society in late nineteenth-century New Zealand", *New Zealand Journal of History*, 11:2(October 1977), pp.124-136. Also, Graeme Wynn, "Pioneers, politicians and the conservation of forests in early New Zealand", *Journal of Historical Geography* 5:2(1979), pp.171-188. Peter Allen's study "The conservation movement in New Zealand", BA Honours thesis in Geography (University of Waikato, 1967) covered natural resources in general.

²⁰ Michael Roche, *History of New Zealand forestry* (Wellington, 1990); Geoff Park, *Ngā uruora* (Wellington, 1995).

²¹ M.M.Roche, "The origins and evolution of scenic reserves", MA thesis in Geography (University of Canterbury, 1979); M.Stopdijk, "Between two acts. An investigation into attitudes and lobbying in New Zealand's national parks movement", MA thesis in History (University of Canterbury, 1988); L.E.Lochhead, "Preserving the brownies' portion: a history of voluntary nature conservation organisations in New Zealand 1888-1935", PhD thesis in Parks, Recreation and Tourism [now Human and Leisure Sciences], (Lincoln University, 1994); Maree Baker, "Périnne's park. An environmental, ecofeminist history of the creation of the Abel Tasman National Park", BA Honours dissertation in History (University of Otago, 1996).

*modern environmentalism*²², has proved useful in positioning Moncrieff's unorthodox vitalist metaphysic and her consequent understanding of science and aesthetics within an historical context. Bramwell has been criticised for triteness, misrepresentation and inadequate research, especially in her later and complementary book *The fading of the greens*²³, but her information on vitalist thought and its links to organic agriculture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in her earlier book is corroborated in other studies like Bowler's and by contemporary accounts like Moncrieff's. John Sheail's *Nature in trust*²⁴ proved informative about conservationist groups and their activities in Britain from the middle of the nineteenth century while Stephen Fox's *John Muir and his legacy*²⁵ offered similar information on American conservationists. Since Fox also recorded Muir's holistic values and feelings of being "at one" with other living things, Fox's book added depth to Moncrieff's vitalism. Another book to contextualise her was J.M. McKenzie's *The empire of nature*²⁶ for its discussion of African big game hunting in which her uncle and first mentor, John Guille Millais, was involved. David Elliston Allen's *The naturalist in Britain*²⁷ provided a comprehensive history of natural history. But because of Allen's lack of gender awareness, his book needed to be read in conjunction with Carolyn Merchant's feminist study *The death of nature*²⁸ to refine appreciation of women's participation in the thought and activity of natural history.

²² Anna Bramwell, *Ecology in the 20th century* (New Haven, London, 1989); Peter J. Bowler, *The Norton history of the environmental sciences* (New York, London, 1993 orig.pub.1992); David Pepper, *Modern environmentalism* (London, 1996); David Pepper, *The roots of modern environmentalism* (London, 1984).

²³ Merrick, pp.103,104; Anna Bramwell, *The fading of the greens* (New Haven, London, 1994).

²⁴ John Sheail, *Nature in trust* (Glasgow, London, 1976).

²⁵ Stephen Fox, *John Muir and his legacy* (Boston, Toronto, 1981).

²⁶ Op.cit.

²⁷ David Elliston Allen, *The naturalist in Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1976).

²⁸ Carolyn Merchant, *The death of nature* (San Francisco, 1983, orig.pub.1980).

My investigation of Moncrieff also owes much to original research and writing by the New Zealand journalist and amateur ornithologist, Janet McCallum. In three major articles McCallum placed Moncrieff within the historical record after Moncrieff's work had been virtually ignored for decades in texts about birds or conservation.²⁹

As a methodology I took as a starting point Donald Worster's three-level structure, enhanced by Merchant's recommendation of a gender perspective.³⁰ The levels were the natural world, the cultural world of production or land use, and cultural mentality or the level of the mind. While the word "level" suggests a stack, Worster envisaged a dialectic "sideways" interaction. I have adopted this framework but altered the productive aspect from Worster's agricultural definition to include leisure activities.

A short factual biography of Moncrieff allows a comparison with the two conservationists whose studies have preceded hers; Ross Galbreath on Sir Walter Buller and Paul Star on T.H.Potts. Pérrine³¹ Moncrieff was born in London on 8 February 1893, the second daughter of Everett Millais and his wife Mary Hope-Vere. Her paternal grandparents were the British painter John Millais and his wife Euphemia Gray whose first husband was John Ruskin. In London on 3 June 1914 Pérrine married Malcolm Matthew Moncrieff, a retired British Army officer. They had two sons Alexander or Alec and Colin. The family left Britain in 1921 intending to live in British Columbia, Canada but in the course of a world trip liked New Zealand and decided to remain here. They settled in Nelson where Alec died on 25 January

²⁹ Janet McCallum, "Pérrine Moncrieff: champion of birds and bush", in *Wilderness women*, (eds) Christine Dann and Pip Lynch (New Zealand, 1989), pp.48-65; "Pérrine Moncrieff", in *The book of New Zealand women*, (eds) Charlotte Macdonald, Merimeri Penfold and Bridget Williams (Wellington, 1991), pp.447-450; "Pérrine Moncrieff: conservationist and trail-blazer of Nelson", in *Womens Studies Association (NZ) Conference papers*, Nelson, (August 1988), (ed) Pat Rosier (n.p.,1989), pp.117-125.

³⁰ Merchant, "Gender", p.1121; Worster, "Transformations", pp.1090,1091 respectively.

³¹ In her correspondence and her book *New Zealand birds and how to identify them* Moncrieff signed her name, Pérrine, with an acute accent. Until very recently articles about her and many of her own published writings omitted the acute, as did her birth certificate. For consistency I have included the accent on all "Pérrines".

1925 during a poliomyelitis epidemic. In the 1940s Colin and his wife Bridget effected his parents' plan by settling in British Columbia where he died in 1987. Malcolm died on 13 October 1968 and Perrine on 16 December 1979.

Moncrieff makes a piquant contrast to Buller and Potts. In some ways she is a mirror image of Buller. Inherited wealth and status from Britain allowed her to "exploit" her peripheral setting while the New Zealand-born and self-made Buller constructed an image for himself of the English gentleman and "exploited" opportunities at the centre of British science. But, unlike Buller, there were no disjunctions between Moncrieff's words and actions. In her integrity she had more in common with Potts who also came from a leisured, wealthy English background. Both Moncrieff and Potts were self-assured in their identities although both were naturalists whose views were dismissed by the scientists of their day. My study of Moncrieff, as an individual with significance for conservation, therefore builds on those of Buller and Potts but is located in the next "conservation episode".³² Consequently it adds depth and complexity to existing studies that focus or impinge on the decades between 1920 and 1950.

My thesis examines not only Moncrieff's efforts in regard to Phillips' recommendations of the creation of "holy grounds" and the fostering of a "knowledge and love of the land" but sets her into a complex and sometimes contradictory conservation movement. Her metaphysic of vitalism, as her motivating force, is established and contextualised in Chapter One, together with the way it informed her science and aesthetics as the main components of her conservation. Chapter Two examines her family milieu and the origins of bird conservation in Britain and the United States. It shows the ways she applied her British heritage to New Zealand and specifically Nelson province with whose natural and cultural worlds she formed an instant identification.

³² New Zealand roughly fits into the episodic development of political consciousness in western countries that has been analysed by Philip Lowe and Jane Goyder. They have determined three "peaks"; 1896-1905, 1926-1935, 1966-1975; Philip Lowe and Jane Goyder, *Environmental groups in politics* (London, 1983), p.17.

Since birds were her entry to the natural world and the starting point for her conservation, Chapter Three investigates her ornithology as science and Chapter Four her ornithology as trusteeship whose principal purpose was conservation. The ways in which she gained and defended nature sanctuaries - Phillips' "holy grounds" - are analysed in Chapter Five, while Chapter Six discusses her fostering of conservation ideals. Chapter Seven analyses her position within the debate on soil conservation. In the final Chapter Eight her work will be examined in light of her sex, the discussion informed by the feminist analytical framework of separated spheres, the public and private, for men and women respectively. Threading through these chapters is the question of her "disappearance" from the public record from about 1950. Reasons for her eclipse and re-emergence in the 1970s are discussed in the Conclusion.

Thus, despite the destruction of most of her own papers, I have tried to convey from her published writing and from the record that remains of her in government, organisational and personal archives, and from oral sources, the complexity of Pérrine Moncrieff's character, the singlemindedness with which she pursued her goals, and therefore her significance for nature conservation in New Zealand.



CHAPTER 1

"SEEING THE WHOLE AS A WHOLE"

For nearly sixty years Pérrine Moncrieff toiled in the field of nature conservation, dedicated to what she called "the importance of my mission...to save the wonderful forest and birds of New Zealand."¹ What beliefs sustained her conservation advocacy and practice for this length of time? What values inspired her devotion? There are few references to explain those intangibles despite a substantial extant archive of published and unpublished writing. Yet her long labour, through the lean as well as the years of achievement, suggests she was sustained by sturdy inner convictions. This chapter contends that Moncrieff was influenced by vitalist ideas and ethics which became the underlying principles of her conservation activism. Vitalism has been both normative and marginalised as a western world-view, and its components amended over time, but two tenets have endured. These are firstly, the idea that a life-force or vital spirit, conferred by a creator, inhabits and links together all living beings in an animate universe. Secondly, that such a spirit demands from humans a respect for all life and its environments. This holistic metaphysic weaves through the main constituents of Moncrieff's conservation, science and aesthetics.

Although Moncrieff made no direct mention of vitalism the concept is inherent in her attitudes to and experiences of the natural world, and repeatedly expressed in her behaviour. It is implied in her passionate portrayal of plants and animals as "beautiful, alive and pulsating".² It can be inferred from the intrinsic value, equal rights and equal consideration she openly accorded other

¹ Moncrieff to Sanderson, [July 1928], MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

² Moncrieff to Sanderson, 7 September 1945, MS Papers 0444:197, 1.

species which was unusual for her day.³ An example of this is her defence of the kea which, until 1986 when it became formally protected, was killed in large numbers because it was thought to attack sheep for the fat enclosing the kidney, if not the kidney itself. Moncrieff believed that if an individual bird was caught on a sheep's back in the Canterbury high country, it could be slaughtered but that the government should protect the species as a whole and not permit bounties to be paid universally. Before condemning the kea, she urged, it should be investigated in a fair and scientific manner "even as we would wish to be judged ourselves."⁴

Very occasionally Moncrieff digressed from her intrinsic values to expound anthropocentric judgements. She accepted the culling of black-backed gulls, but not bounties on hawks, even though on Stephens Island they both fed on the young of petrels, because the "ghoulish" gulls killed their prey by drowning or smashing while the hawks "always plucked their petrel chicks".⁵ Like other New Zealand conservationists, she considered introduced species such as goats, cats, deer, mustelids, possums and rats to be pests, and therefore less than equal because they threatened the indigenous. Generally though, she enjoyed the company of animals as friends and equals, nursing injured birds with the same care as she treated herself and her family and often with the same herbal remedies and sea bathing.⁶ "I have just killed a woodhen

³ A number of studies reveal a gradual extension of the ethical pale to include animals and plants; Keith Thomas, *Man and the natural world* (London, 1983); Roderick Frazier Nash, *The rights of nature* (Madison, 1989) foreshadowed in his article, "American environmental history: a new teaching frontier", *Pacific Historical Review*, 41(1972), p.366; and J.Baird Callicott, *Earth's insights* (Berkeley, 1994). It was not until the worldwide environmental movement of the 1970s that inclusive values and beliefs towards other species became more widely accepted.

⁴ Pérrine Moncrieff, "The kea", *NEM*, 18 April 1929, p.5; Moncrieff to Sanderson, [February 1929], MS Papers 0444:193, 1. A photograph, claimed to be the "first photo of kea predation of sheep" appeared in Neville Peat, "Fat rules, okay?", *Forest and Bird*, 274(November 1994), p.38.

⁵ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 29 January 1933, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

⁶ Moncrieff to Falla, 16 January [1932], MS Papers 2366:67, 3; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 19 April 1931, MS Papers 0444:193, 1; Interview with Nelson conservationist Henk Heinekamp, 2.

this morning. It was passed on to me....It had been run over and I nursed it until I was sure it could never stand upright again then it had to go poor beast".⁷

Friendship with nature with all living things as one's partner, she believed, was the key to living harmoniously in the material world. Instead of seeing a tree as only fuel or furniture for human beings she enlarged on other qualities; shelter and food for other life, as a controller of rain and soil, and as aesthetically pleasing in its colouring and wind song. "[T]he tree encourages a whole world of life to riot at its feet; mosses, small shrubs, flowering orchids, fat little toad-stools of all colours and thick beds of leaf mould in which birds find insects, their daily food".⁸

The vitalist concept is also implicit in her question, "By what means can New Zealand be educated...to a sense of the responsibility this country owes to the rest of the world for the unique flora and fauna with which she has been entrusted."⁹ A trusteeship must necessarily be conferred by someone or something. Further examples of vitalist influence on Moncrieff will become apparent as the study proceeds but from this sample it is clear that she envisaged the living inhabitants of the material world as equally valued creations, with human beings given responsibility by a creator for the well-being of other species.

What sort of creator did Moncrieff contemplate? She wrote of Nature (with a capital N, sometimes unsexed, sometimes feminine) as a thoughtful, harmonising creator who institutes convenient material arrangements for the lives of non-human species.¹⁰ A school class was told of Nature's "most

⁷ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 9 February 1932, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

⁸ "Bush and Bird notes", *NEM*, 19 July 1934, p.9. Although this nature column, which appeared periodically, is unsigned and written as Nelson Bush and Bird Society notes, she, as Secretary of the Society, wrote them.

⁹ Pérrine Moncrieff, "The destruction of an avian paradise", *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, June(1944), p.23.

¹⁰ Ecofeminism, which argues an essential affinity between women and a female creative Nature as the ancient Great Goddess, will be discussed as it relates to Moncrieff at the beginning of Chapter 8.

convenient method" of reproduction in birds; "a nest which acts like a womb". "Imagine", Moncrieff said, "what would happen if birds had to carry within them all their chicks until they were born."¹¹ She was pragmatic about the ending of life. "Nature has no hospitals for the sick or aged so writes an end to such creatures under the law 'kill or be killed'".¹² In an article on Stephens Island she wrote of the benefits to both tuatara and petrel in sharing a burrow - their "combined establishment" - so that the tuatara could feed on flies attracted by the remains of the petrel's meal.¹³ She also depicted Nature as a supplier of spiritual or mental refreshment for human beings. "If only we grown-ups could recapture our youth and see things as children do in their true value, instead of through a mist of world-problems and mental difficulties which prevent our beholding the treasures Nature still lavishes all around us...".¹⁴

But on occasion she presented Nature as lawmaker and chastiser, angry at the uncaring behaviour of the human trustees towards other species and the physical environment. In an article on soil erosion she described a Nature who would make us "pay for past follies" of wasteful bush clearance on the hills "which Nature planted to keep the atmosphere moist." She warned that this was the treatment Nature meted out to those who violate her laws intentionally or otherwise. Examples were to be seen, Moncrieff continued, in the once-timbered but now arid regions around the Mediterranean.¹⁵ Nature was thus presented by Moncrieff with two aspects: an insightful creator of harmony

¹¹ "Waders" (undated) MS Papers 4723:1, 1a.

¹² 1953 "Nature Diary" review compiled by Moncrieff and published in *NEM* (undated). Cutting enclosed in her letter to A.G.Harper, 12 February 1954, Fifeshire Rock file IA 1/52/237, NA.

¹³ Pérrine Moncrieff, "An island - yesterday and today", *Weekly News*, 23 March 1938, p.42. It has now been found that the tuatara eats petrel eggs and chicks as well as flies; Gerard Hutching, *The natural world of New Zealand* (Albany, 1998), p.343.

¹⁴ "Bush and Bird competition", *NEM*, 8 March 1933, p.10.

¹⁵ "Bush and Bird notes", *NEM*, 12 December 1931, p.5.

where all species could coexist "in intimate association"¹⁶ if they obeyed the laws but a corrective creator who would punish the trustees for lawbreaking.

Beyond these two aspects of Nature Moncrieff's metaphysical understanding is elusive. Her casual remarks, occasional comments published by her husband Malcolm, and the reminiscences of their friends suggest pantheism, mysticism and spiritualism which, like vitalism, flourished in the decades around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁷ A pantheism can be inferred from one of her remarks in which she separated herself from the Christian church and its creative God. "I gather that the Church people are doing their best to att[a]ck one end of the evil [of public non-compliance with conservation laws] and we who have the interest of the land at heart desire to do the same".¹⁸ Yet she remained friendly with those in the church who supported conservation.¹⁹ That Moncrieff was aware of pantheism is evident in her summary of one of her papers: "Review of oriental art. In the greatest period of Chinese and Japanese [art] the pantheistic outlook of the remarkable priest-artists led them to study birds as outward expressions of the Divine."²⁰ Malcolm had spent a year in Japan in the early twentieth century and, in a speech on that country to Nelson Rotary when World War Two appeared imminent, he ascribed the Japanese "love of the beauties of

¹⁶ Moncrieff, "Destruction", p.7.

¹⁷ Kathryn West, "Mysticism", *The 1890s. An encyclopedia of British literature, art, and culture*, (ed) G.A.Cevasco (New York, London, 1993), pp.415,416.

¹⁸ Moncrieff to Heenan, 10 September 1942, Heenan Papers, MS Papers 1132:272, WTU. Another comment indicated her disapproval of the church when a clergyman refused to support her campaign for the Abel Tasman National Park; Robin Hodge, "Creating a park: Pérrine Moncrieff and the Abel Tasman National Park", Diploma of Humanities Research essay in History (Massey University, 1993), p.30.

¹⁹ See for example, remarks by Elsie Haggitt, wife of the Dean of Nelson, in Moncrieff to Sanderson, 27 May 1942, MS Papers 0444:195, 1.

²⁰ Pérrine Moncrieff, "Bird illustrators, past and present, with reference to New Zealand", Report of the Sixth Science Congress 1947, *TRSNZ*, 77:5, p.259. The actual paper does not appear to be extant.

nature" to an ancient Nature-worship.²¹ Pérrine was also aware of mysticism because Malcolm acknowledged several such experiences and quoted Evelyn Underhill's classic text *Mysticism*.²² Both she and Malcolm shared a belief in spiritualism²³ but beyond their personal intercommunication after his death, she wrote of her expectation that "super-normal happenings" could occur on the Astrolabe coast of Nelson's Tasman Bay because of its primitive bush and streams. She recounted her annual attempts to "visualise" the landing of the explorer Dumont d'Urville there on his anniversary but she "encountered" instead a little Maori girl with something red around her neck, "peering in terror through the bushes at scenes which to my blind eyes were not visible."²⁴ Like other contemporary conservationists²⁵, she was interested in Maori artifacts, proverbs and customs relating to the natural world and believed that Maori had become conservationists "because they obeyed rules framed by their

²¹ Captain Moncrieff, "The enigma of Japan", Pt.2, *NEM*, 9 September 1938, p.3; Pts 1,3 appeared 8,10 September while all three were reprinted in a booklet, M.M.Moncrieff, *The enigma of Japan; a study in national psychology* (Nelson, 1938). He described his term in Japan as "an official mission"; he may have been an official observer for the British government about the time of the 1905 Japanese-Russian war when Britain and Japan were allied.

²² M.M.Moncrieff, *A critical examination of the extreme forms of modern art* (Nelson, 1960), p.8. In his booklet *The infinitely great, the infinitely small and man* (Nelson, 1926), which I discuss shortly, he quoted from Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (Oxford, 1993, orig. pub.1911), p.62.

²³ In my interviews with them, June Carson and Lou Gurr related examples of the Moncrieffs' belief in spiritualism. Gurr suggested that Malcolm's beliefs arose during his recuperation from his Boer War injury when Shetland Islanders, reputed to have "second sight", crewed his yacht on a sailing holiday; 2.

Louis (known as Lou) Gurr obtained an MSc in Zoology from Otago University with a thesis on the blackbird. In the 1950s he worked in Nelson where he became friendly with the Moncrieffs after they had seen him ringing gulls on the Boulder Bank. He left Nelson in 1955 to become Reader in Zoology at the Agricultural College which became Massey University in 1963.

²⁴ Pérrine Moncrieff, *People came later* [Nelson, 1965], p.38. This is likely to refer to the raids by allies of the Ngati Toa chief Te Rauparaha in 1828; Jim McAloon, *Nelson* (Whatamango Bay, 1997), p.6. The Astrolabe coast was named for the vessel of Captain J.S.C.Dumont d'Urville, when he and his crew camped there for a week in January of the previous year 1827.

²⁵ For example, see the journal of the Native Bird Protection Society (later the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society and now Forest and Bird), *Birds*, 12[1926], pp.7,8; 16[1928], p.9.

leaders to conserve wild life".²⁶ But whether she understood the mauri, the "sacred, indwelling spirit" of any place responsible for its fruitfulness²⁷ as the metaphysical basis of Maori conservation law, I have found no trace.

A similar elusiveness of metaphysical understanding can be seen in two internationally-recognised conservationists before Moncrieff, who were both inspired by mystical or animist beliefs and reticent to discuss them in public. The conservation practices of W.H.Hudson in Britain, which Moncrieff had read, and of John Muir in America were engendered by a metaphysic of the essential unity or "one-ness" of the universe, which they derived from mystical experiences.²⁸ As a child in Argentina, Hudson's encounters with a black snake and a small, white-flowered plant produced in him an animism which he defined as "the tendency...to *animate* all things;...the sense and apprehension of an intelligence like our own but more powerful in all visible things."²⁹ In distinguishing his animism from other belief Hudson viewed it as "essentially religious in character" but specifically contrasted it with anthropocentric Christianity although he believed that animism was not necessarily incompatible with orthodox Christianity.³⁰ Hudson wrote many conservation

²⁶ Moncrieff, "Destruction", p.8. For her use of Maori proverbs, see for example, "Bush and Bird notes", *NEM*, 29 April 1933, p.3.

²⁷ Geoff Park, *Ngā uruora* (Wellington, 1995), p.319.

²⁸ William Henry Hudson (1841-1922) was born in Argentina, of North American parents and brought up on their cattle ranch. Always interested in the natural world and especially birds, he explored large areas of his country and, at first, made a living by collecting bird specimens for private collectors and museums including those in Washington and London. In 1874 he moved to England and gradually gained a reputation as a naturalist, ornithologist, writer and bird protectionist; Ruth Tomalin, *W.H.Hudson* (London, 1982).

John Muir (1838-1914) was born in Scotland and emigrated with his family in 1849 to America. A mountaineer, odd-job-man, farmer and writer, he spent most of his adult life in California in campaigns to protect the Sierra mountains which included Yosemite National Park in 1890; Stephen Fox, *John Muir and his legacy* (Boston, Toronto, 1981). Muir spent nearly two months in New Zealand in 1904; Colin Michael Hall, "John Muir in New Zealand", *New Zealand Geographer*, 43:2(1987), pp.99-103.

Moncrieff noted Hudson's work in her speech, "Birds in relation to women", *Emu*, 33(1933-34), p.216.

²⁹ W.H.Hudson, *Far away and long ago* (Britain, 1939 orig.pub.1918), p.190. In Chapter 17 "A boy's animism", pp.194-204, he discusses the genesis of his beliefs.

³⁰ ibid., pp.201,202.

books but only in his autobiography published four years before he died did he acknowledge the source of his inspiration.

Muir also, through direct experience of the wild, devised a pantheistic philosophy of the interconnectedness of animate and inanimate matter and the intrinsic worth of other species. An orchid blooming in a distant Canadian swamp persuaded Muir that it bloomed only for its own purpose. Climbing a tree in the Sierras and swaying with it during a storm suggested to Muir the equality of species. This belief was reinforced when he and Stickeen, his dog, shared both a glacial adventure and the accompanying emotional extremes of palpable terror and joyous relief. These experiences lead Muir to intuit a divine force he called Beauty or Nature as the animating power within the material world. Because Muir knew he lived and worked in a largely Christian community he kept his beliefs to himself and close friends, according to his biographer.³¹

So, in the lack of public evidence relating to the intangibles of her life, Moncrieff parallels Hudson and Muir whose conservation work is well-known but whose beliefs which inspired that work are not. In summing up Moncrieff's metaphysics, they indicate that she perceived the material world as a created, animate, orderly, interconnected entity in which its creatures held equal status; a material world entrusted to human beings by a creative divine she called Nature which intervened when the trustees were found wanting.

The idea of a vital spirit or life-force that animates, organises and links all living species can be traced from the Judaic scriptures and from philosophers in ancient Greece.³² In the fifth century BC Heraclitus posited the

³¹ Fox, p.80.

³² I have found only one history of vitalism, by one of its early twentieth century proponents Hans Driesch, *The history and theory of vitalism* (London, 1914), but have been unable to obtain a copy in New Zealand through the Massey library. Much of the information on vitalism in this section is from Anna Bramwell, *Ecology in the 20th century* (New Haven, London, 1989); Peter J.Bowler, *The Norton history of the environmental sciences* (New York, London, 1993 orig.pub.1992); David Pepper, *Modern environmentalism* (London, 1996); Rupert Sheldrake, *The rebirth of nature* (Britain, 1990). In R.G.Collingwood, *The idea of nature* (London, 1945), vitalism *per se* is not mentioned but such words as life-process, soul

idea of a divine intelligence, which he called the Logos and associated with fire, as the organising principle in the world and manifest in human reason.³³ Underhill described the Logos as "but another symbol for that free and living Spirit of Becoming, that indwelling creative power, which Vitalism acknowledges as the very soul or immanent reality of things".³⁴ A century after Heraclitus Plato's ontology postulated two worlds; our material "model" world as the realm of Becoming and its "pattern", the spiritual, superior, "real" realm of Being of unchanging Forms. In creating this model, the maker or Demiurge fashioned

reason within soul and soul within body, to the end that the work he accomplished might be by nature as excellent and perfect as possible. This, then, is how we must say, according to the likely account, that this world came to be, by the god's providence, in very truth a living creature with soul and reason.

....For the god, wishing to make this world most nearly like that intelligible thing which is best and in every way complete [the world of Forms], fashioned it as a single visible living creature, containing within itself all living things whose nature is of the same order.³⁵

Several centuries later the Neo-Platonists, Plotinus and Macrobius, combined Plato's principles with Aristotle's idea of a scale of nature, to devise for Christianity the hierarchical metaphysic of the Great Chain of Being in which Plato's Demiurge was replaced by the Christian God as creator and life-giver. In this construction, which was to last for over a thousand years, the idea was continued that some spark of the creator's life-force inhabited even the

and life-force are used. Derek Wall, in suggesting that "green" philosophy always embraces holism and sometimes vitalism, gives the examples of Taoists, pietist Christians, Muslim sufis, Romantic poets and nature mystics as holding these concepts; *Green history* (London, 1994) p.90.

³³ Richard Tarnas, *Passion of the western mind* (London, 1996), pp.45,46.

³⁴ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p.28.

³⁵ Plato, *Timaeus* 30B,C,D,31, quoted by Francis Macdonald Cornford, *Plato's cosmology* (London, 1937), pp. 33,34,40.

"lowest" form of life "[s]ince from the Supreme God Mind arises, and from Mind, Soul, and since this in turn creates all subsequent things and fills them all with life".³⁶ Soul was the animating principle of the material world. All parts of all living creatures were permeated by their individual souls which caused each to grow and develop into its particular form attracted by the soul of its "parent". Thus human beings, having the soul of intellect or mind in addition to the sensory soul of animals and the growth soul of plants and "lower" animals, could see themselves, body, mind and soul, as part of a living, teleological, self-organising world. All were interconnected through God's immanent power, "the fiery life of divine wisdom...[that] nurtures all things green", as Hildegard of Bingen, abbess, philosopher and mystic, envisioned this vital spirit in the twelfth century.³⁷

In the seventeenth century, with the expansion of scientific enquiry into the universe, the idea of organismism as a world-view declined and was replaced by the metaphor of mechanism, in which the world was considered to have been activated by God the engineer and then to function as an automaton. While the absurdity of such a conception for animals was acknowledged³⁸, the mechanistic metaphor was adopted because it suited changing economic, social, political and technological circumstances so that all were wound together into a new paradigm.³⁹

The mechanistic paradigm developed from three clusters of integrative ideas. The first was that "true" or "real" knowledge could be measured mathematically and therefore was rational, objective, materialist, universally

³⁶ Macrobius, quoted by Arthur Lovejoy, *The great chain of being* (Cambridge Massachusetts, 1936), p.63. Plotinus (3rd century AD); Macrobius (5th century AD).

³⁷ Quoted by Sheldrake, p.154.

³⁸ Thomas suggests that in England animals were denied souls to preserve man's distinctiveness but "beast-machines" were thought contrary to commonsense; p.35.

³⁹ This paradigmatic change in the perception of the world from living organism to dead mechanism has been well explored in Donald Worster, *Nature's economy* (New York, 1977), Chapter 2; Carolyn Merchant, *The death of nature* (San Francisco, 1983, orig. pub.1980), Chapters 7,8,9; David Pepper, *The roots of modern environmentalism* (London, 1984), Chapter 2 and Pepper, *Modern*, pp.135-148; Thomas, *Man*, pp.33-35.

ascertainable, mechanically caused, and predictable from predetermined laws. Thus only primary qualities like shape, size, motion or quantity were considered; qualities like colour, touch or taste, whose description was dependent on the observer, were subjective and secondary and therefore not "real". The second cluster was the extension of measurability to living things and the separation of humans from other life forms. The French philosopher René Descartes conceptualised living things as automata, comprised of substances, which could be reduced to measurable quantities in chemistry and physics. The idea of an indwelling, God-given life-force, vital spirit or soul in all living things was discarded; living or dead, organisms were essentially the same material collections of chemicals differing only in their response to outside stimuli. Humanity was distinguished from other "living" automata, in Cartesian dualistic philosophy, by mind or soul which existed independently from the material and reducible body. "I think, therefore I am", reasoned Descartes.⁴⁰ The third cluster in the mechanistic paradigm was Francis Bacon's promotion of empiric, inductive methodology and hypothesis-verification in the investigation of the natural world. Bacon believed this epistemology to be a more practical means of research than Cartesian deduction; it could lead to the collection of a progressive body of natural and physical laws. The combining of these three clusters of ideas in what became known as classical science, especially through the mechanics of Isaac Newton, imposed on western society the mechanistic, materialist paradigm which has been so useful that it endures today. Modern life sciences continue to behave, methodologically, "as if all vital activities [can] be adequately explained in terms of material composition and physico-chemical performance."⁴¹

As the mechanistic metaphor became established, its implications for religion, God, and the living spirit within the world became problematic for many thinkers. Robert Boyle, one of the seventeenth century designers of the

⁴⁰ Quoted by Pepper, *Roots*, p.51.

⁴¹ Alan Bullock and Stephen Trombley (eds), *The Fontana dictionary of modern thought* (London, 1988), p.898, their italics.

new world-view and, paradoxically an ancestor whom Moncrieff was proud to claim⁴², appreciated its latent meaning for the position of God.

The world is like a rare clock...where all things are so skillfully contrived that the engine once being set going - all things proceed according to the artificer's first design, and the motions...do not require the peculiar interposing of the artificer...".⁴³

If God was not required to have a continuing presence in this world, might he have no role at all? In Britain, mechanistic philosophers established various associations both to promote the new world-view and to uphold religious belief. Bacon recommended the establishment of research institutions to promote his inductive method of scientific enquiry which resulted in the formation of Royal Societies, with their journals the *Philosophical Transactions*, in London and other British cities in the early 1660s. Boyle established a fund for annual Boyle lectures to defend Christianity.⁴⁴ However, with the development of geological and evolutionary science during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the consequent discrediting of biblical and Christian authority in relation to the natural world, God became unnecessary for mechanists.⁴⁵ Non-believing vitalists would replace creative God with Nature or Mother Nature while believing vitalists could continue to see God's hand in the living world.

Amongst the latter in the seventeenth century, as the mechanistic world-view was being promoted, was a group of scholars, including Henry More and Ralph Cudmore, who became known as the Cambridge Platonists. Allowing

⁴² "Friend of bird and bush - and much else", Interview with P  rline Moncrieff, NEM, 30 May 1959, p.10. Robert Boyle (1627-1691) was a founder of the Royal Society.

⁴³ Quoted by Merchant, *Death*, p.226.

⁴⁴ Bowler, *Environmental*, p.96.

⁴⁵ See Introduction, Charles Darwin, *The origin of species*, (ed) J.W. Burrow (London, 1968, orig.pub.1859), p.24, in which Burrow notes that by the time he wrote *Origin*, Darwin "had lost all orthodox belief and came to the conclusion, which he retained to the end of his life, that questions of ultimate causes and purposes were an insoluble mystery. He disclaimed any competence in metaphysics and never entered, as [T.H.] Huxley did, into non-scientific controversy."

the Cartesian dualism of the separation of matter and mind or spirit, they concurred with the idea that matter was inanimate but rejected an entirely mechanical world. They wished to restore life to the cosmos and did so by proposing that matter, while insensate and without volition, was enlivened and ordered by God's power through a plastic spirit of nature.⁴⁶ Another member of this circle, the philosopher Anne Finch Viscountess of Conway⁴⁷, rejected the Cartesian dualism. In her monist view of vitalism there was no essential difference between body and spirit. She argued that since the soul or spirit felt pain and grief when the body was cut or wounded, soul and body must be united and of one substance otherwise the soul, if independent as More asserted, could move away and be insensitive to bodily suffering. To her, nature was not a machine but a living body. "But yet in nature, and her operations, they [natural operations] are far more than merely mechanical...like a clock, wherein there is not vital principle of motion; but a living body, having life and sense, which body is far more sublime than a mere mechanism or mechanical motion." Animals too had internal spirits, "having knowledge, sense, and love, and divers other faculties and properties of a spirit."⁴⁸ Conway's ideas were respected and influential in her own day⁴⁹ and edited and published by her friend, the philosopher Francis Mercury Van Helmont. But because her name was withheld from the original Latin translation in 1690 her ideas were attributed to Van Helmont by later scholars.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries vitalism formed one strand in the romantic movement whose complexities will be examined in a later section on aesthetics. But, as another reaction to mechanistic philosophy as expressed in industrialism and human control of nature, romanticism viewed the

⁴⁶ Merchant, *Death*, pp.242-246.

⁴⁷ As a young woman Finch had been a disciple of More's through his pupil and her brother, John Finch. After she married her home became a centre for philosophical debate in which More and Cudworth participated. This account of Conway (1631-1679) summarises Merchant, *Death*, Chapter 11.

⁴⁸ Quoted by Merchant, *Death*, pp.258,260.

⁴⁹ ibid., pp.254, 257.

uncontrolled and wild as uncontaminated manifestations of God the creator. To romantics like the poet William Wordsworth or the naturalist Henry David Thoreau, areas like England's Lake District and New England's Walden were living, organic "worlds" in which humans were interwoven into the whole. As Wordsworth wrote,

...the one interior life
That lives in all things...
In which all beings live with God, themselves
Are God, existing in one mighty whole,
As undistinguishable as the cloudless east
At noon is from the cloudless west, when all
The hemisphere is one cerulean blue.⁵⁰

The art historian and social commentator John Ruskin held a similar opinion.

But when the active life is nobly fulfilled, and the mind is then raised beyond it into clear and calm beholding of the world around us,...the simplest forms of nature are strangely animated by the sense of the Divine presence; the trees and flowers seem all, in a sort, children of God; and we ourselves, made out of the same dust, and greater than they only in having a greater portion of the Divine power exerted on our frame...⁵¹.

Thoreau, "experiencing" the springtime life of Walden's forests and waterways, was overwhelmed as he waded in a mud pool by a sense of a "one life" force or energy that pervaded the animate earth and was capable of welding all things into an animated cosmos.⁵² Wordsworth's nature poetry,

⁵⁰ Written in 1799 as a "fragment" and quoted by Nicholas V.Riasanovsky, *The emergence of romanticism* (New York, Oxford, 1992), p.72. The romantic poets, who included Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), largely derived their conception of the world as an organic whole from Charles Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, who wrote of "the unity of all living things in one life-principle"; A.S.Byatt, *Unruly times* (London, 1997, orig.pub. 1970), p.92.

⁵¹ John Ruskin, *Modern painters*, 3 (London, 1906), pp.41,42.

⁵² Thoreau (1817-1962) was a naturalist in Concord and a member of the Transcendentalist group around the philosopher and writer Ralph Waldo Emerson. He publicly advocated forest and agricultural management regimes in which human beings accommodated themselves to nature, rather than trying to dominate and overwhelm it. He also advocated the preservation of "primitive forest" as a common possession for human instruction and

Ruskin's exposition, and Thoreau's ecological and preservationist writings, as exemplifiers of Anglo-American romanticism, were thus imbued with the idea of a vitalist life-force as the crux of the material world.

Romantic vitalism was integral to the cosmology of German natural philosophers who included the poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. They understood the cosmos as a living, invisible power, which had produced the kingdoms of minerals, plants, animals and humans from its original unity but they believed humans to be estranged from nature. From this philosophical foundation Goethe, through his scientific morphological leaf and vertebra studies into primordial or ideal types from which this diversity was derived, sought reunification between humans and nature by his nature poetry.⁵³

Around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries vitalism flourished among a group of scientists and philosophers in Germany, France and Austria. It was to influence both laypeople and academics in the Anglo-American world, including Moncrieff. The first of these was the German biologist Ernst Haeckel. Although Haeckel did not directly postulate vitalism some of his beliefs provided a platform for his students, colleagues and followers who did. As a monist he rejected the ontological split between matter and mind, believing for much of his life that the universe existed only at the material level. This led him to argue that humans and animals had the same moral and natural status and that Nature was the source of truth and wise

recreation, which was encapsulated in his best known saying "in wildness lies the preservation of the world"; Worster, *Economy*, Chapters 3 and 4; Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American mind* (New Haven, London, 1973 rev.ed.), pp.86-93.

Interestingly, the conservationists Hudson and Muir were somewhat ambivalent about the romantics. Hudson considered Wordsworth lacked "the sense of mystery, or of the supernatural, in nature" and produced an aesthetic feeling for nature that was far from Hudson's own assurance of interconnectedness; Hudson, *Long ago*, pp.203,204. Muir appreciated and recommended Thoreau's insights at Walden but disapproved the Transcendentalist influence on Thoreau with its assignment of humans to a higher plane; Fox, *Muir*, p.83. Muir approved of Ruskin's criticism of economic policies that resulted in environmental destruction but he thought that Ruskin lacked wildness and a true unity with the natural world; Fox, *Muir*, pp.85,86.

⁵³ Nicholas Jardine, "Naturphilosophie and the kingdoms of nature", in *Cultures of natural history*, (eds) N.Jardine, J.A.Secord and E.C.Spary (Cambridge, 1996), pp.231-234, 237.

guidance for humans.⁵⁴ While the "new pantheism had a somewhat dominating Nature as its centre, a Nature expected to educate and guide humanity", to quote Bramwell⁵⁵, Haeckel also saw the earth as an inexhaustible "fountain of beauty" where human beings could "trace out the marvellous play of its forces".⁵⁶ Haeckel's world-view, with Nature as creator and guide to the "right" way of living in a place of beauty and wonder, was to be echoed by Moncrieff.

Towards the end of his life Haeckel revised his ideas on cosmic unity and concluded that the "one" could equally be spirit as matter. By this time in the first two decades of the twentieth century, Haeckel's former pupil, Hans Driesch, a biologist and Professor of Philosophy at Heidelberg, was postulating the vitalist position that the "one" was spirit. Driesch argued that a life-force was evident in the marvels of the world because its living beings exhibited an inherent purposefulness. To the French philosopher Henri Bergson the life force was the *élan vital*. The Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner, influenced by Goethe and acknowledging that allegiance in the name of his research building, believed the earth to be alive; the soil for example, was "an actual organ" like the eye or ear of a body, which should be nourished with living humus rather than dead chemical manures.⁵⁷ This form of vitalism sustained organic and biodynamic agriculture in the twentieth century while vitalist characteristics of holism, "aliveness" and purposefulness underlie the theories of Gaia⁵⁸ and morphic resonance⁵⁹ of the later twentieth century.

⁵⁴ Bramwell, pp.43,44; Pepper, *Modern*, pp.184-187. Haeckel (1834-1919) was a Professor at Jena University where his subject was embryology.

⁵⁵ Bramwell, p.47.

⁵⁶ Bramwell, p.49, quoting E.Haeckel, *Monism as connecting religion and science* (London, Edinburgh, 1894), p.82 and E.Haeckel, *The riddle of the universe* (London, 1900), p.352.

⁵⁷ Bramwell, pp.44,53-55,200; Steiner's building was called the Goethenaeum.

⁵⁸ James Lovelock, *Gaia* (Oxford, 1991).

⁵⁹ Sheldrake, *Rebirth*, pp.88-98.

The vitalist ideas of Haeckel, Driesch, Bergson and Steiner could have influenced Moncrieff through a number of channels. One was the print medium. Haeckel's many books were translated, published, and widely distributed and read in English-speaking countries. As his ideas were disseminated in "natural science notes" in popular German magazines⁶⁰, it is possible they also made the pages of similar English periodicals.⁶¹ The writings of Bergson and Driesch were also translated into English and, like those of Haeckel and Steiner, influenced the founders of the British Soil Association⁶² whose writings were quoted by Moncrieff. Although I will discuss this Association in more detail in Chapter Seven, it was the vitalist philosophy and consequent agricultural practice advocated by one of the founders, Lord Lymington in his book *Famine in England*, which attracted Moncrieff.

The soil should be a living thing which breathes and pulsates with life. It is not a lifeless container of minerals. If we treat it as being alive we shall not only grow good crops and stock, but produce nourishing food for men which feeds them well and gives them health. All life is interconnected...⁶³.

A second possibility was the spoken word. In Britain Moncrieff attended popular scientific public lectures at the time when Driesch was lecturing⁶⁴, even if she did not belong to the Aristotelian Society where Bergson and scholars like Bertrand Russell and G.B.Shaw, who popularised

⁶⁰ Bramwell, pp.41,51.

⁶¹ Jim Secord, "How not to go bald", a review of Peter Broks' *Media science before the great war*, *Times Literary Supplement*, 21 November 1997, p.30. Secord records the names of several such magazines and the type of material they presented.

⁶² Bramwell, pp.42,54,55. Driesch's *The philosophy of the organic* was published in London in 1909 and *The history and theory of vitalism* in 1914.

⁶³ Lord Lymington, *Famine in England* (London, 1938), p.156, quoted in Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 28 July 1942, p.3.

⁶⁴ She mentioned attending a lecture on radium in Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 13 May 1925, p.4. Driesch gave lectures in Britain up to 1913; Bramwell, p.54.

Bergson's *élan vital*, debated philosophical papers. Their audience included interested laypeople like the soldier, administrator and explorer of both terrain and ideas, Francis Younghusband.⁶⁵

Younghusband leads into a third medium of likely vitalist influence on Moncrieff, that of her husband Malcolm, since it has been suggested that Malcolm was on Younghusband's expedition to Tibet in 1903. While this is unlikely, both men did share not only a career in soldiery, but also the experience of mysticism, an interest in metaphysics, and in writing about these beliefs.⁶⁶ They used the same sources; Malcolm's bibliographies included Russell, Bergson and Underhill. The most pertinent of Malcolm's books for vitalist ideas was *The infinitely great, the infinitely small and man*.⁶⁷ In this book Malcolm argued that the significance of man, as "the culmination of conscious organic life", "consists in being endowed with mental powers capable of comprehending in a 'togetherness' the whole vast scale of things" from the infinity of the solar system to the minutest particle in the atom. But this togetherness could not be envisaged as "a huge machine without design or purpose" because the properties of a machine could not apply to "the organic world of living things". The flight of a bullet and the flight of a bird, for example, could not both be explained on mechanical lines, as if the bird had no freedom or choice of self-direction; the bird [presented] "an organised whole which is capable of manifesting life and self direction". Speaking of man, but with the implication for all life given his later comments on other

⁶⁵ Patrick French, *Younghusband* (London, 1994), p.286; Bullock and Trombley (eds), p.898.

⁶⁶ Gurr suggested that Malcolm Moncrieff was part of the Tibet invasion; 2. Certainly both Moncrieff and Younghusband were officers in Dragoon Guards regiments, respectively the 6th and the King's, but Moncrieff was severely wounded in the Boer War (1899-1903) and subsequently resigned from his regiment; Moncrieff Obituary, *NEM*, 15 October 1968, p.5. In a letter, Younghusband's biographer French told me Moncrieff's name rang "no bells at all"; Personal communication from Patrick French, 5 November 1997, 2.

For Younghusband's mysticism and metaphysics, see French, *Younghusband*, p.252 and following chapters.

⁶⁷ Apart from Bergson's *Matter and memory* and Russell's *The ABC of atoms*, Malcolm's Bibliography also cited leading scientists and other philosophers, including F.Soddy *Interpretation of radium*, E.Rutherford *Radio active transformation*, W.Carr *The Philosophy of relativity* and *The scientific approach to philosophy* and Underhill's *Mysticism*.

living creatures, he argued, "we can conceive the possibility of the existence of a psychic or directive force...within the extremely minute fertilised germ cell, which can build up from a single cell in the process of time that wonderful and complicated and infinitely complex system known as the human body." He proposed that through the mystical experience, "it may be possible to conceive a Super Being as the active Centre of the Universe."⁶⁸

Malcolm justified his belief with an argument used by today's environmentalists that the theory of relativity developed in the early twentieth century undermined the "truth" and "certainty" claimed by Western classical science.⁶⁹

... should the Theory of Relativity completely establish its credentials, Natural Science will have to revise its present purely objective outlook and admit into its calculations the subjective aspect; thereby, much against its inclinations, it will have to acknowledge the increasing importance of metaphysics.

According to this new and revolutionary theory, there would appear to be no absolute space and time, we are each the measurer of our own space and time, there is no standard footrule or clock.⁷⁰

While these are Malcolm's beliefs and theories, and Pérrine did not directly express them herself, they provide a likely clue to her sense of "mission" and to her vitalist perspective. At the very least she must have been aware of them

⁶⁸ Moncrieff, *Infinitely*, pp.7, 50-62.

⁶⁹ For example, Peter Marshall, *Nature's web* (London, 1992), pp.376-379; Klaus Bosselmann, *When two worlds collide* (Auckland, 1995), p.182; Pepper, *Modern*, pp.246-259; Wall, *Green*, Chap.11.

The new physics involved a cumulative series of experimental and mathematical constructions involving the phenomena of electricity, magnetism, gravitation, light, energy and atomic structure. In Albert Einstein's Special and General Theories of Relativity, published in 1905 and 1915 respectively, he investigated and reinterpreted the theory of the constancy of the velocity of light, and ideas surrounding the dualities of movement and non-movement, space and time, and energy and mass. In quantum theory from 1900 the main ideas to emerge were that energy is absorbed and emitted discontinuously in packets or quanta; that nature's building blocks were not solid atoms but subatomic particles which are viewed as either particle or wave depending on the experiment being conducted. Experiments cannot be determined accurately but only in terms of statistical probability. Gary Zukav, *The dancing Wu Li masters* (New York, 1979) and Stephen Hawking, *A brief history of time* (London, 1988) have written accounts of these theories and experiments for the general public. "Wu Li" are patterns of organic energy, the Chinese for physics; Zukav, p.31.

⁷⁰ Moncrieff, *Infinitely*, p.8.

through proof reading the manuscripts.⁷¹ But the Moncrieffs also discussed these ideas with friends like E.V. Sanderson, the first Secretary of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, and another early member of the Society, the ecologist J.G. Myers.⁷² Sanderson remarked of Myers that, "He sees the whole as a whole (in the words of your hubby)."⁷³ This remark concisely states Pérrine's ecological position as it was demonstrated in her conservation activities; that she perceived the whole as a whole and responded holistically. Therefore, while the metaphysic may have been Malcolm's since Pérrine's bibliographies reveal no similar reading, it is almost certain that she concurred with the outcome of his thought and experience. Given this cumulative evidence - her own comments, the channels of vitalist thought available to her, and Sanderson's remark - it is reasonable to conclude that a vitalist metaphysic inspired her "mission". It was buttressed by Malcolm's additional insight from contemporary physics which empowered her to challenge orthodox science's claim to "truth" and gave her confidence in her holistic conservation advocacy.

Einstein's Theory of Relativity and quantum theory associated with Max Planck, Niels Bohr, Werner Heisenberg and Einstein, did indeed become established among some physicists. In their discoveries that Newtonian laws and underlying assumptions were inadequate to explain phenomena at the subatomic level, there was the potential to reinvent the western world-view, as Malcolm Moncrieff recognised at the time. As the philosopher and psychologist Richard Tarnas has written,

⁷¹ Moncrieff to Cunningham, 2 February 1950, 2.

⁷² John Golding Myers was an entomologist in the Biological Division of the Department of Agriculture. His section worked on the biological control of "pests" in agriculture; "Entomology", Annual Report, Department of Agriculture, *AJHR*, 1923, H.29, p.15. In 1924 he moved to the Imperial Bureau of Entomology in London then transferred in 1928 to Trinidad for the Empire Marketing Board. Myers represented New Zealand and spoke on its protection of birds at the 1928 Geneva conference of the International Committee for Bird Protection (later the International Council for Bird Preservation); *NEM*, 15 August 1928, p.8, 28 August 1928, p.4. Moncrieff and Sanderson were very disappointed when Myers left New Zealand and saddened when he was killed in an accident in the Sudan in 1942; *Forest and Bird*, 65(August 1942), p.8.

Sanderson, who was to play a large role in Moncrieff's conservation work, will be discussed in Chapter 5.

⁷³ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 9 March 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

Human consciousness, or at least human observation and interpretation, seemed to be given a more central role in the larger scheme of things with the new understanding of the subject's influence on the observed object. The deep interconnectedness of phenomena encouraged a new holistic thinking about the world with many social, moral, and religious implications.⁷⁴

Yet the insights offered by the "new physics" failed to impinge on the experience or alter the perceptions of many other physicists, other scientific disciplines, and the general public although a group of scientists and philosophers, known as the "Vienna Circle", felt concerned enough in the 1930s to reaffirm the classical science position. "This held that intuitively, spiritually or emotionally derived knowledge was less valid and meaningful than knowledge verifiable by observation and experiment."⁷⁵ Physicists could not develop a coherent conception of the world that integrated their new data, nor could some accept its implications. Einstein opposed the findings of quantum mechanics despite his participation in its formulation.⁷⁶ Without such coherence, other sciences were reluctant to abandon the authority and status conferred by the "old physics", given scientific success in materialist programmes from genetics to space travel. For the general public the concepts may have been incomprehensible with seemingly few attempts to explain them. Malcolm Moncrieff's interest was stimulated by the visit "home" of the Nelson-born scientist Ernest Rutherford who was also in the forefront of the new physics and colloquially known for "splitting the atom".⁷⁷ By contrast, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, proponents of mechanism actively published its doctrines by lectures and books. These included Francesco Algarotti's *Newtonianism for ladies*, translated into English by Elizabeth

⁷⁴ Tarnas, p.357.

⁷⁵ Pepper, *Modern*, p.269.

⁷⁶ Zukav, pp.62,63.

⁷⁷ Moncrieff, *Infinitely*, p.5. During his visit in 1925 Rutherford gave the annual Cawthron lecture, "Matter and electricity", *NEM*, 31 October 1925, p.4. For an account of Rutherford's life, scientific research record and achievements, see John Campbell, "Ernest Rutherford 1871-1937", *DNZB* 3(Auckland, Wellington, 1996), pp.452,455.

Carter, and fourteen books by Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, on such subjects as atoms, matter and motion.⁷⁸

If Moncrieff's holistic values and beliefs at the spiritual level are hard to document her approach to conservation at the material level is certainly apparent. A vitalist metaphysic did not prevent her from participation in western natural science nor from advocating its usefulness when it was conducted empathically. Indeed she believed that scientific research into the interconnections between species and their environment would benefit the conservation cause she promoted.⁷⁹ While her researches will be discussed in Chapter Three, this next section analyses her science and contextualises her position within western natural science.

Not surprisingly Moncrieff's science was ecology. As an amateur, she conformed to Worster's opinion that the study of ecology has never been absolutely professionally scientific in that it has always involved lay people like birdwatchers⁸⁰, as she herself was; birds were her entry to the web of the natural world. Although the word ecology was in use among scientists she rarely used it; one of the few occasions was in the Preface to her book *New Zealand birds and how to identify them*.⁸¹ Perhaps, as an astute publicist, she thought both the science and the word to be insufficiently understood by the general public. She usually wrote of the "inter-relation", "inter-acting" or

⁷⁸ Merchant, *Death*, pp.270-274.

⁷⁹ In her correspondence referring to her promotional activities for conservation, Moncrieff usually used the word "propaganda" in its religious or missionary sense as the dissemination of information and practice and the conversion of others to conservation ideals. Today the term has invidious connotations often associated with World War Two "Nazi propaganda" or the dubious persuasion of people to a particular argument. Whilst Moncrieff was vigorous in trying to persuade people to conservation and in her lobbying of public figures, her activities lacked the guile or deception associated today with "propaganda". Therefore I have used the terms "promotion", "advocacy" and "publicise" to describe her work, although I have, of course, retained her use of "propaganda" when directly quoting her.

⁸⁰ Worster, *Economy*, p.335.

⁸¹ Pérrine Moncrieff, *New Zealand birds and how to identify them* (Auckland, 1925 and subsequent editions in 1936, 1948, 1952 and 1957-61), p.x.

"intimate association" of climate, plants and animals including humans⁸² before detailing their broad interconnections through her own observations and the research of others. Her first published speech noted the high percentage of indigenous New Zealand trees which are dependent on birds for propagation and the implications for human beings of less bush if indigenous birds became extinct.⁸³ In both private and public writing she supported her arguments with professional opinion. For example she quoted J. Arthur Thomson, Professor of Natural History at Aberdeen University, on the need to study the Web of Life⁸⁴ as a metaphor for ecological research into the relationships between shags, trout and eels when shags were shot by the Acclimatisation Societies to protect their introduced trout from depredation. She described the connections between bush clearance, climate change, soil erosion and flooding, and followed this up by publicising the ecological research of soil scientists G.V.Jacks and R.O.Whyte.⁸⁵ She discussed plant successions; how gorse and broom, if they were not annually burnt, would act as nurse plants "harbouring seeds which go through the next stage of tutu, five finger, coprosma and eventually to forest trees."⁸⁶ Shortly after World War Two she warned of the ecological disaster inherent in the use of chemical pesticides, those "elixirs of

⁸² For example, in "Nature Diaries review", *NEM*, 11 March 1939, p.10 and "Destruction", p.7.

⁸³ [Perrine] Moncrieff, "New Zealand birds", *NEM*, 28 June 1924, p.2.

⁸⁴ Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 31 March 1931, p.4.

⁸⁵ "Bush and Bird notes", *NEM*, 12 December 1931, p.5; G.V.Jacks and R.O.Whyte, *The rape of the earth* (London, 1939) quoted in Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 28 July 1942, p.3.

⁸⁶ Moncrieff to Sanderson, [September 1944], MS Papers 0444:196; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 26 January 1942, MS Papers 0444:195, 1. In the latter, she was alarmed that Nelson's forests were being destroyed by the combination of an increase in both insects and grazing animals and a decrease in kakas. To counteract this situation, "for once in my life", she suggested the importation of woodpeckers as she had not heard of them being a nuisance in any way. "I know the theory - and a correct one too - that every introduced bird takes from those that are here, but either we have to find a way of increasing the kakas...or resort to woodpeckers." When Sanderson firmly dismissed her proposal, she too dropped it: Sanderson to Moncrieff, 2 February 1942, MS Papers 0444:195, 1.

death", as Rachel Carson later branded them.⁸⁷ Moncrieff also suited her ecological message to her audience. In speaking to students at Nelson Girls' College she told them that New Zealand was like a cake which required certain ingredients in certain proportions; soil, trees, insects with birds like the baking powder.⁸⁸ All of Moncrieff's major conservation articles presented some of the interconnections and reactions between living species and their habitats.

Interwoven with her ecological belief was her practice and promotion of field science which, in turn, was linked to her advocacy of habitat conservation.⁸⁹ By field science, especially as it related to ornithology, she meant the study of living birds and their interactions with other species in their wild environments, less for human utilisation and exploitation of that knowledge, but more from fascination with birds as intrinsically-valued creatures. Such questions as the change of diet by some keas, details of bird migration, or the cuckoo's parasitism, as well as more general questions of colouration, song and nesting, could most appropriately be explained, she considered, through research of the living. But the experimental testing of any hypothesis should be carried out, she believed, with the least possible interference to the subjects' lives.⁹⁰ As a conservationist she also approved of scientific studies which became known as economic ornithology.

She established her support for field science in her *New Zealand birds*⁹¹, by clearly contrasting this form of ornithology with that of ornithological taxonomy, the science of systematic classification of birds into evolutionary order, family, genus, species and subspecies. Taxonomy was necessarily an indoors science, usually undertaken by professional scientists, and carried out

⁸⁷ Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 3 September 1947, p.8. Rachel Carson, *Silent spring* (London, 1965, orig.pub.1962), p.31.

⁸⁸ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 5 July 1939, MS Papers 0444:194, 1.

⁸⁹ For example, one of her reasons for the reservation of Abel Tasman National Park was that "its unspoilt nature could provide an open-air museum, allowing the study of primitive forms of life"; Hodge, "Creating", p.24.

⁹⁰ See Chapter 3.

⁹¹ Moncrieff, *NZ Birds*, pp.viii-x.

on dead animals since decisions were often based on the structure of internal organs. Although Moncrieff recognised that the "patient work done by ornithologists in classification is, of course, absolutely necessary", she wrote dismissively of it. "To some few people it is given to be interested in classification for its own sake".⁹² She believed that too many birds continued to be sacrificed for taxonomy; that museums already possessed in most cases enough "skins", as stuffed specimens are called, to facilitate classification.⁹³ She envisaged the museum, with its representative collection of skins, as "a reference bureau where any genuine student can look up information at will. The stuffed cases of birds are merely educational for the general public and should be arranged (like the Munich Museum) leading up from the primitive to the highest. The other skins should be available in drawers for the student."⁹⁴ Although she did not discuss morphological studies carried out by universities and research centres, presumably her attitude to that discipline would have paralleled her opinion on museum specimens. True to a vitalist metaphysic, she always tried to convey the pleasure of studying the living in their natural environments rather than the dead. How then, did Moncrieff's amateur ecological field science fit into western scientific enquiry into the natural world?

In western tradition the scholars of ancient Greece are acknowledged as the founders of western science, that is, the explanation of natural phenomena in terms of natural causes rather than divine intervention. Aristotle is the best-known exemplar of science's principal epistemology based on rationality and empiricism.⁹⁵ However Plato's demiurge and Aristotle's understanding of the

⁹² Moncrieff, *NZ birds*, p.ix.

⁹³ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 28 July 1927, MS Papers 0444: 192, 1.

⁹⁴ Moncrieff to Thomson, 22 July 1927, Bird file general 9/0/0, MONZ; Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 30 March 1926, p.6.

⁹⁵ The conception of science as a professional discipline and the word "scientist" came into being in the nineteenth century; Bowler, *Environmental*, p.195. Prior to that, investigators of the natural world were called natural philosophers and their discipline natural

cosmos as eternal, indicate that both these leading scholars of Hellenist Greece accepted a divine intervention as the originating cause of natural phenomena.

Aristotle considered "the prime mover to be beyond the scope of reasoned investigation."⁹⁶ Aristotle's reputation rests, firstly, on the accurate biological information he gathered and published about a wide range of marine and terrestrial animals including humans, and secondly, on his classificatory conception of living things in a scale of nature. Having left Plato's Academy because he believed that factual information obtained through empirical investigation was the fundamental requirement of zoology⁹⁷, he used both field science to observe and record the activities of animals in the wild and laboratory science to dissect and describe in order to test hypotheses.

Aristotle's purpose in obtaining this information was to explain change in the formation of living things from the "potentiality" of a seed or embryo into the "actuality" of a plant or animal. He understood change in terms of four "causes", the fourth of which was teleological by which he meant the perpetuation of the species. Aristotle's methodology was to analyse differences between living things, by grouping them in genera into a scale of nature, to ascertain which characteristics were the more basic.⁹⁸ In time this scale was not only transformed into the Great Chain of Being, as I have mentioned, but also became the basis for the idea of classificatory systems of flora and fauna which began to appear in the seventeenth century. In Athens Aristotle too established a school, the Lyceum, in which both Platonic deductive teaching methods were employed and inductive science for the investigation of the natural world. Aristotle was succeeded as head of the Lyceum by one of his

history.

⁹⁶ Colin A.Ronan, *The Cambridge illustrated history of the world's science* (Cambridge, 1983), p.103.

⁹⁷ Aristotle, *Historia animalium*, Vol.2, (trans) A.L.Peck (London, 1970), p.v.

⁹⁸ Aristotle propounded his methodology and classifications in *De partibus animalium* and *De generatione animalium*, which are discussed in detail by Peck, pp.xi-xxxii; and in summary by Bowler, pp.50-53.

students, Theophratus, who specialised in botanical observation, description and investigation.

Within ancient Rome, the best-known investigation of the natural world was published by Gaius Plinius Secundus, Pliny the Elder, who compiled his multi-volumed *Natural history* from Greek science, folk stories and his own field investigations.⁹⁹

When Christianity became established, with its emphasis on the next world, scientific research into this world seems to have declined although herbals provided practical information on plants for medicine and food from "field research". The ancient classics, after the sacking of their repository at Alexandra at the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries, survived this period in the Islamic world. They were translated into Arabic languages, utilised and augmented by Islamic scholars in the period of Islamic expansion, and became available to the western world when Christian forces recaptured centres of learning like Toledo in the eleventh century. Translated into Latin and reconciled with Christian theology by scholars like St Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, Aristotle's writings lost much of their former repugnance for the Christian church. One reason was that Aristotle's teleology could be grafted into Christian doctrine; the purposiveness of the orderly natural world could be explained as demonstrating God's existence, a living "Book", in which God's care for his creation could be "read".¹⁰⁰

In the late medieval and Renaissance periods natural history occurred in a variety of forms. One was an extension of the idea of God's care in the popular stories of St Francis of Assisi and his concern for the natural world. A second was a Neoplatonist study of underlying spiritual and symbolic relationships thought to link everything in the world together. In the secretive Hermetic tradition, animals, plants and minerals were believed to have spiritual significance to parts of the human body as the centrepiece of the world. The mysteries of creation would be revealed to the initiated by the study of these

⁹⁹ Pliny, *Natural history*, (ed) H.Rackham (London, 1943). (Pliny 23-79 AD).

¹⁰⁰ Ronan, pp.258-260; St Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274).

symbolisms.¹⁰¹ A third aspect, with more significance for scientific natural history, was the revival of the Aristotelian methods of close observation and description of the natural world. About the time of St Thomas Aquinas' theological reconciliations, the monk and scholar Albertus Magnus wrote a number of books on minerals, plants and animals which both synthesised Aristotle's description of species with Albertus' own field observations and incorporated information on "new" species unavailable to Aristotle.¹⁰² This trend continued into the sixteenth century under the impetus of New World exploration by scholars like the Swiss academic and naturalist Conrad Gesner.¹⁰³ However field science became less the observation of the wild and more the study of the captured in botanical gardens, herbariums, museums and laboratories at European universities. These scholars continued to incorporate information of myth and symbolism so that they have sometimes been dismissed as "unscientific" but Bowler argued that they saw themselves as reformers, not revolutionaries of science, evaluating knowledge from the past in order to include the new knowledge of nature then arriving in Europe.¹⁰⁴ Renaissance astronomers and physicists, however, in employing the ancient knowledge of mathematics in their investigations of the universe's physical laws, were revolutionaries. Their establishment of a sun-centred universe also allowed a reassessment of the human position *vis-a-vis* God. Whereas man, while top of the "natural scale" had held a humble position in relation to God, the achievements of Renaissance astronomy and the consolidation of human

¹⁰¹ Bowler, pp.70-73. The Hermetic tradition was based on writings attributed to an Egyptian wise man, Hermes Trismegitus, and believed to date from before the time of Moses. Its symbolisms were incorporated into such works as Sandro Botticelli's painting "Primavera" but its authenticity was challenged by Isaac Causubon in 1610; Ronan, p.269. Henry More and Anne Conway were among scholars who discussed these symbolisms and significance; Merchant, *Death*, pp. 255-257.

¹⁰² Bowler, pp.61-64; Albertus Magnus or Albert the Great (c.1200-1280).

¹⁰³ Gesner's (1516-1565) chapter on the fox from his *Historia animalium*, published in four volumes in the 1550s, is examined by William B.Ashworth, "Emblematic natural history of the Renaissance", in *Cultures*, pp.17-29.

¹⁰⁴ Bowler, pp.73-84.

achievements in geographical, physical and technological enterprises, permitted man through his reason to see himself as God's equivalent on earth.

The mechanist, materialist paradigm which this scientific revolution helped to impose, is problematic for scientists who cannot accept that there is essentially no difference between living and dead organisms; who believe that issues like life itself and the purposeness displayed by seeds or embryos in developing into the "correct" adult forms cannot be ontologically detached in scientific research that permits only a materialist causation of phenomena. In the eighteenth century, J.B.Lamarck believed that electricity had the power to vivify matter to produce the most primitive forms of life; progressive evolution then produced more complex organisms adapted to an ever-changing environment. He explained this adaptation in the theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics under which characters acquired during an organism's lifetime were transmitted to its offspring. While his theory was accepted by scientists in his lifetime but criticised as atheistic by the church, it was abandoned once the Darwinian theory of natural selection and struggle offered a "non-spiritual" solution to evolution.¹⁰⁵

Lamarckian teleology was revived in the later nineteenth century by Haeckel, Dreisch and other biologists, partly as a reaction to the lottery-like nature of Darwinian evolutionary theory. In Lamarckism, they saw a purposive evolution driven by a life-spirit, planned by God or Nature to produce a holistic, cooperative world. Like Haeckel, Dreisch was an embryologist as well as a philosopher and like Aristotle, Dreisch called the purposive vital spirit, the "entelechy" or "soul". He argued that genes produce chemicals which make up the organism but that the way in which chemicals are ordered in cells, tissues and organs, depended on entelechies.¹⁰⁶ With the "discovery" of hitherto unseen microbes, these biologists expected to find a

¹⁰⁵ Bowler, pp.189-192; J.B.Lamarck (1744-1829). In contrast to field naturalist, Charles Darwin, Lamarck was a museum naturalist and taxonomist of invertebrates at the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle (the former Jardin du Roi) in Paris.

¹⁰⁶ Sheldrake, pp.82-84; Bramwell, pp.46-48, 54,55.

material vital spirit¹⁰⁷ but because this has not occurred, vitalist scientists have been marginalised by the orthodox scientific community. The biologist Rupert Sheldrake has argued that mechanistic scientists, aware of their own failure to offer material proof to explain the purposeness of organisms, as their position requires, resort to vitalist guises like "selfish genes" and "genetic programmes".¹⁰⁸

If physics was the search for God's geometrical plan for the universe, the equivalent for the living world was taxonomies devised by naturalists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By this time the idea of God's symbolic presence in particular plants and animals had been abandoned and the concept of a continuous Chain of Being, with its accompanying tenets of fixed species and biblical time scale, was becoming less credible. Mining, earthworks for canals and roads, and natural forces were revealing fossil forms in shapes and numbers that could no longer be accommodated by a biblically-bound chain, although the image of loss in a broken chain, depicted by the poet Alexander Pope, would be used by twentieth century conservationists as a spur to action.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, the necessity for a commonly-accepted method of naming and describing plants and animals became more obvious. On the one hand the complexity of nature was constantly demonstrated by the arrival in Europe of "new" species and, on the other, European species themselves had different names in different localities. There was also an enormous social interest in the natural world amongst the educated as revealed by the private collections of people like the Duchess of Bedford, the establishment of

¹⁰⁷ Bramwell, p.56.

¹⁰⁸ Sheldrake, pp.84,85.

¹⁰⁹ Vast chain of Being! which from God began,
Natures aetherial, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,...
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broke, the great scale's destroy'd:
From Nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.

Alexander Pope, *An essay on man* (London, 1752), quoted Bowler, p.157.

Moncrieff, for example, used the image in her "Destruction" article, p.8, and in a lecture, "Bird Life in New Zealand", *NEM*, 28 November 1939, p.6.

institutions like Kew and the Jardin du Roi by British and French royalty, the formation of natural history clubs, the numbers of books published and hobbyist participation in various aspects of natural history.¹¹⁰

In the seventeenth century naturalists like John Ray were intent on seeking the natural system of classification they believed was imposed on the pattern of creation by God. Like More and Cudworth, Ray accepted the mechanistic metaphor but not its atheistic implications and consequently adopted More's concept of a plastic organising power in the natural world. Ray's method of classification of plants, animals, insects and marine life took cognisance of several characteristics which he believed to be more natural than that of selecting one characteristic, for example reproduction in plants, as the classifier.¹¹¹ The latter proved to be more practical so that eventually the artificial system of botanist Carl von Linne, Linnaeus, was adopted. He too believed that he was discovering God's natural order, as reflected in the title of his book, *Systema naturae*. First published in 1735, subsequent editions provided a complete classification for plants and animals. Linnaeus' system imposed a structure which grouped species into genera and genera into orders, based on the reproductive organs of plants and varying external organs in animals. Each species was founded upon a single "type specimen", with which "variations" were compared, and identified in Latin by binominal nomenclature, that is, by its genus and its species. While Linnaeus believed in the fixity of species so that his original system was a rigid plan, it was modified in time as the idea of creation's evolution became acceptable to scientists and much of the wider public a century later.¹¹²

As taxonomy developed into a discipline it split into two parts of unequal status: a field component for the supply of specimens, in which non-professionals like the young Hudson participated, and a professional science

¹¹⁰ David Elliston Allen, *The naturalist in Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1976), Chapters 1 and 2.

¹¹¹ Bowler, pp.96, 151-151; (John Ray 1627-1705).

¹¹² Bowler, pp.162-166; Linnaeus (1707-1778).

component. In the latter, authority to identify, name and locate species within an evolutionary sequence was vested in the professional scientist who necessarily worked within a laboratory once internal organs became the basis for animal classification. Extinct creatures were also brought into the Linnaean system through the discipline of evolutionary morphology. Both taxonomy and comparative morphology became part of a campaign in the later nineteenth century by scientists like T.H.Huxley to increase the status of the professional biologist. The controlled conditions of a laboratory within a museum, university or research institution, using specialised equipment and technology, allowed the inductive methodology utilised by the physical sciences which gave them superior scientific status, to be employed by the natural sciences. As separate disciplines like biology and zoology emerged from academic natural history departments, as botany had in the seventeenth century¹¹³, the laboratory became the centre for diverse types of life science. One was the enquiry into the learned behaviour of animals, of which Ivan Pavlov's training of dogs is a well-known example, as a branch of ethology. Another was genetics. A third was the development of a synthetic chemical industry for agriculture.

Field studies, which eventually became known by Haeckel's epithet of ecology¹¹⁴, continued in a variety of practices and by a variety of practitioners. In the eighteenth century Gilbert White, clergyman and naturalist, observed and described the natural world within his parish with a reverence for God's providence and an eye for its human improvement. In his *Natural history and antiquities of Selborne*, published in 1789, but based on correspondence from the preceding twenty years, White observed changes and differences and was able to compare and speculate on the interconnectedness of species and

¹¹³ Bowler, p.148.

¹¹⁴ He coined the term in 1866. He defined it as the science of relations between organisms and their environment in his *Generelle morphologie*; Bramwell, pp.39,40. This is very close to the modern definition as "the science that deals with the ways in which living things interact with one another and with their environment"; Bowler, p.309.

climate.¹¹⁵ White's style of observation and commentary, that of an educated but non-professional scientist working in a circumscribed area, was to become a popular genre for those interested in the natural world. It was a niche available to women¹¹⁶ as well as men like New Zealand's Herbert Guthrie-Smith whose forty-year ecological description of his sheep station, Tutira, is a classic.¹¹⁷

If White studied the micro-world of Selborne parish, the Prussian, Alexander von Humboldt, took a macro-approach in his five-volume study of the earth's physical, organic and human interconnections, *Kosmos*, published between 1845 and 1859. Influenced by Goethe's romantic view of wild nature as sublime, Humboldt nevertheless grounded his theories in empiricism after his explorations of Central and South America.¹¹⁸ His accounts sparked Charles Darwin's desires to travel and to contribute to science¹¹⁹, ambitions which were fully met in his H.M.S. *Beagle* voyage, as naturalist, between 1831 and 1836, and in the general international acceptance of his theory of biological evolution through natural selection which derived from his voyage observations. Darwin's theory did not require a life force; he assumed life as a given and postulated species' adaptation and evolution by chance and the struggle for existence.

While *The origin of species* "gives a sense of nature in the open air rather than in the museum or on the dissecting table", as Burrow describes the book's tenor¹²⁰, and Darwin offers ecological analyses of particular

¹¹⁵ Bowler, pp.168,169; Worster, *Economy*, Chapter 1.; Gilbert White (1720-1793). His *Natural history* has been reissued several times but an authoritative and attractive volume is Gilbert White, *The illustrated natural history of Selborne* (Exeter, 1981).

¹¹⁶ For example, see Marcia Myers Bonta, *Women in the field* (College Station, 1991) and *American women afield* (College Station, 1995).

¹¹⁷ H.Guthrie-Smith, *Tutira* (Edinburgh, London, 1953, orig.pub.1921).

¹¹⁸ Bowler, especially pp.205-209.

¹¹⁹ Burrow, "Introduction", *Origin*, p.25. For other influences on Humboldt and for the diffusion of his ideas amongst naturalists of the British empire, see Richard Grove, *Green imperialism* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.364-379.

¹²⁰ Burrow, "Introduction", *Origin*, p.14.

environments which show, in his words, "how plants and animals, most remote in the scale of nature, are bound together by a web of complex relations"¹²¹, ecology as a self-conscious discipline was developed by others in varying ways. From the 1880s a few scientists researched the functioning of whole communities¹²² but plant and animal ecologies were discreet for some decades. The growth patterns and successive types of vegetation in particular environments were studied, notably by Eugenius Warming and Arthur Tansley in Europe and Frederic Clements in the United States. Clements, who helped develop quantification measures through the demarcation of small squares from which to identify and count each plant to obtain accurate figures of growth and change, also proposed the theory of a naturally superior vegetational "climax" formation. Tansley used these methods in Britain although he was later to challenge Clements' "climax" theory because of Britain's largely "man-made" environment. Tansley was instrumental in establishing the British Ecological Society in 1913.¹²³

Animal ecology developed in Europe and the United States via several routes, some of which were to include the participation of amateurs under professional scientific direction. In the later nineteenth century Alfred Newton, professor of zoology at Cambridge, instituted a programme of ornithological research which used a network of amateur birdwatchers to provide systematic data about bird distribution patterns and migration. This was then analysed by professional scientists.¹²⁴ This type of methodology was again employed in the early twentieth century under scientists at the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology at Oxford. Also at Oxford, at its Bureau of Animal Population, was the ecologist Charles Elton, another scientist to acknowledge the usefulness of local information from fishermen, gamekeepers

¹²¹ Darwin, *Origin*, pp.124,125.

¹²² For example, the lake and marine studies of Stephen A. Forbes and Victor Hensen respectively; Bowler, pp.368,369.

¹²³ Bowler, pp.370-377, 507,508.

¹²⁴ Bowler, p.317. Newton was a founder member in 1868 of the British Ornithologists' Union and Editor of its journal, *Ibis*.

and naturalists. Elton published the first textbook in his field in 1927, *Animal ecology*. In it he developed a number of concepts around food, "the burning question in animal society"; food chains, food cycles and the biotic community or niche.¹²⁵

A second route was via ethology, in which scientists like Julian Huxley, the Austrian Konrad Lorenz and the Dutchman Nikolaas Tinbergen experimented with new techniques to analyse animal instinct and behaviour in the field and so to develop new hypotheses. Huxley's 1912 study of courtship rituals of the great crested grebe permitted him to link the evolution of instinctive behaviour and physical structure into Darwin's theory of sexual selection as a driving force for natural selection.¹²⁶ For Huxley, though, life was not merely chance; Bowler relates that Huxley "tried to retain a sense of cosmic purpose"¹²⁷, which could help to explain his advocacy of conservation and his "use" by Moncrieff as one of her "authorities".¹²⁸

A third route was via the scientific management of nature. In the United States for several decades from the 1890s the federal Bureau of Biological Survey and associated state agencies had a policy of exterminating "pests" which fed on agricultural crops or on game protected for hunting. Among managers of the latter was Aldo Leopold who reversed the policy after ecological studies had shown that predators like wolves and coyotes were a necessary part of the ecosystem.¹²⁹ Leopold was to become internationally influential for his Land Ethic which posited that human beings were part of an

¹²⁵ Charles Elton, *Animal ecology* (London, 1935 orig.pub.1927), p.56.

¹²⁶ Bowler, p.486; Darwin, *Origin*, pp.136-138.

¹²⁷ Bowler, p.473.

¹²⁸ She quoted his ideas on colour protection in birds in the *NEM*, 30 July 1927, p.9 and his warning "Once a species is gone, it is gone forever" in the *Weekly News*, 23 March 1938, p.42.

Julian Huxley (1887-1975), like his grandfather Thomas, popularised science through his writing. He was also a leading English conservationist helping to establish the International Union for the Conservation of Nature in 1948 and the World Wildlife Fund in 1961; *Concise dictionary of national biography* 2(Oxford, 1992), pp.1534-35.

¹²⁹ Susan Flader, *Thinking like a mountain* (Columbia, 1974), Chapter 5.

ecological community and, as such, should respect its integrity rather than, as a separated species, exploit its components.

In Britain another type of scientific management of crops, orchards and fisheries, known as economic ornithology, operated from the second half of the nineteenth century after it was suggested that birds could play a useful role.¹³⁰ Scientists like Walter E.Collinge of the University of St Andrews conducted tests over several years to determine ecological benefit and harm conferred by various species of British wild birds. These tests included field observations of birds' food and analyses of stomach and faecal contents to determine the benefits of insect destruction by birds against their consumption of crops and dispersal of weed seeds. This sort of investigation was approved by conservationists since it could both prevent wholesale bird destruction and be presented as a national necessity. "If a particular species confers greater benefits than injuries, and we are not affording it all the protection possible, we are pursuing a down-grade and very dangerous course, which cannot fail but produce direct injury to the State", wrote Collinge.¹³¹ Economic ornithology was of interest to the British Ministry of Agriculture whose *Journal*, which Moncrieff read, published some of the studies. In 1930 the Ministry and the Empire Marketing Board, which employed Myers, provided funding for the Oxford University Research in Economic Ornithology, the forerunner of the Edward Grey Institute and its associated British Trust for Ornithology.¹³²

During the twentieth century ecology continued to diversify. With the introduction of computer simulation of ecological processes, one grouping developed mathematical models particularly in relation to population densities,

¹³⁰ John McCormick, *Reclaiming paradise* (Bloomington, Indianapolis, 1989), p.17.

¹³¹ Walter E.Collinge, "The food of British wild birds", reprinted in *The New Zealand Journal of Science and Technology* 1(1918), p.67, part of an article published in *Nature*, 7 January 1915, pp.509-12; John Sheail, *Nature in trust* (Glasgow, London, 1976), p.51.

¹³² E.M.Nicholson, "Origins and early days", in *Enjoying ornithology*, (ed) Ronald Hickling (Calton, 1983), p.17. For the relevance of the Institute to Moncrieff, see Chapters 3 and 4.

predator-prey relationships, and energy flows in systems ecology. Other groupings, from the perspective of field ecology, offered insights both to the environmental movement from the 1960s and to utilitarian development.¹³³

The idea of ecology was adopted in New Zealand by both professional and amateur scientists simultaneously with its beginnings in the northern hemisphere. In the 1890s the leading botanist of the era, Leonard Cockayne¹³⁴, studied plant succession and climax formations in their natural habitats. His theory of deer-vegetative interaction, which was influential for several decades, posited that since New Zealand's vegetation had evolved on steep terrain without browsing animals, introduced browsers like wild deer should be eradicated to protect vegetation and consequently the terrain from excessive erosion.¹³⁵ Myers promoted the same economic ornithology which Collinge advocated in Britain.¹³⁶ The naturalist Guthrie-Smith began to note changes to the indigenous flora and fauna on his East Coast sheep station, which resulted in the publication of *Tutira*. In 1925 the New Zealand Institute granted its Auckland constituent, the Auckland Institute, £65 for an ongoing ecological survey of Waitemata Harbour. This continued for at least ten years

¹³³ Bowler, pp.537-546.

¹³⁴ A.D.Thomson, "Leonard Cockayne (1855-1934)", *DNZB* 3(1901-1920), pp.107-109; Linden Gillbank, "The life sciences: collections to conservation", in *The commonwealth of science*, (ed) Ray Macleod (Melbourne, 1988), pp.109-111.

¹³⁵ For the perspective of a deer hunter and scientist on Cockayne's theory, see Graeme Caughley, *The deer wars* (Auckland, 1983), Chapter 6. Caughley argued that Cockayne had "a psychological quirk" in wanting to protect plants and that Cockayne's theory was challenged by Thane Riney's research in the 1950s, which showed that an equilibrium would be achieved between deer and vegetation, although deer would modify the vegetation in the short term.

The debate is also described by Ross Galbreath in *Working for wildlife* (Wellington, 1993), Chapter 2.

In comparison to his conclusions on deer, Cockayne considered the possum harmless but the possum is another introduced animal which has devastated indigenous vegetation; Galbreath, *Wildlife*, p.40.

¹³⁶ Myers and fellow scientist Esmond Atkinson published a series of ten articles, "The relation of birds to agriculture in New Zealand", in the *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture*, 26-28(1923-24). Editorials in *NEM*, 1 and 8 September 1923, p.4, referred to the first of these articles which publicised the value of native birds in checking insect numbers and spreading the seeds of indigenous trees.

and involved scientists like Robert Falla and Lucy Cranwell who were to become well-known as an ornithologist and botanist respectively.¹³⁷

While there are few historical studies of science in New Zealand¹³⁸, the early ecological inquiries can be seen as a development of the interest in natural science, which had been displayed by European settlers, both for science itself and for its application to agriculture, mining and industry. In the 1860s the New Zealand Institute, incorporating its associated local societies, was New Zealand science with its Wellington-based museum, laboratory, geological survey and forum for the publication of research papers in its *Transactions and Proceedings*. As the title of its history implies - *Science, settlers and scholars* - amateur naturalists were also active members; indeed they were in the majority until the 1920s when science became an integral part of government policy, more organised and more self-consciously professional. This had begun in the 1890s with professional scientists employed in government departments like the Department of Agriculture, research establishments like Dunedin's Portobello Marine and Nelson's Cawthron

¹³⁷ "Report Waitemata harbour survey committee", *TPRSNZ* 64(1935), p.xvii.

¹³⁸ Scientists have written much that is available. These include Ross Galbreath, *DSIR* (Wellington, 1998); C.A. Fleming, *Science, settlers and scholars* (Wellington, 1987); R.K.Dell, *The first hundred years of the Dominion Museum* (n.p.,[1965]) and Park, *Ngā uruora*.

Ross Galbreath, "Colonisation, science and conservation: the development of colonial attitudes toward the native life of New Zealand with particular reference to the career of the colonial scientist Walter Lawry Buller (1838-1906)", PhD thesis in History (University of Waikato, 1989); Sections 1.2, 1.4 describe New Zealand's role in taxonomy and evolutionary studies by British scientists in the nineteenth century; also his *Walter Buller* (Wellington, 1989).

General histories include S.H.Jenkinson, *New Zealanders and science* (Wellington, 1940), an overview commissioned for New Zealand's centennial surveys; Michael E.Hoare, *Reform in New Zealand science* (Melbourne, 1977) postulates the bifurcation of scientific administration between the 1860s to the 1920s; Ray Macleod (ed), *The commonwealth of science* (Melbourne, 1988) is a history firstly, of the formation of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science based on its British predecessor founded in 1831, and secondly on the development of the natural and physical sciences in both countries. Indicative of the lack of New Zealand science historians is a Preface comment that a New Zealand contributor could not be found; p.xiii.

Histories of government departments like Michael Roche, *History of New Zealand forestry* (Wellington, 1990) and Galbreath, *Wildlife*, contain scientific sections.

More information can be found about individual scientists in *DNZB*; Charlotte Macdonald, Merimeri Penfold and Bridget Williams (eds), *The book of New Zealand women* (Wellington, 1991); Christine Dann and Pip Lynch (eds), *Wilderness women* (Auckland, 1989).

Institute, and the universities. The establishment of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research in 1926 generated further theoretical and practical research. Expanding work opportunities widened the tertiary education base and were encouraged by increased government funding and international contacts.¹³⁹ Museum scientists appear to have focused on taxonomy and their "type" collections of New Zealand species, although ornithologists W.B.Oliver and Falla were also field scientists. The NZI, known as the Royal Society of New Zealand from 1933, linked this diversity of research and acted as a lobby group for science and scientists.

Thus the field science which Moncrieff participated in and advocated had a long history although its ecological element was relatively new. Moncrieff, in quoting Julian Huxley and Collinge, fits into the specific areas of field ethology, ecology and economic ornithology which arose in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century although she is a successor to White, Albertus Magnus, Pliny and Aristotle. As a conservationist and as a member of the Nelson Philosophical Society she was also aware of ecological research in New Zealand. On her doorstep, so to speak, was W.C.Davies, Curator of the Cawthron and a member of the British Ecological Society, who gave occasional lectures like that on the plant ecology of the mudflat in 1926.¹⁴⁰ Moncrieff was perhaps unfortunate in the timing of her life, scientifically speaking. When she arrived in New Zealand, science was becoming self-consciously professional and would remain mechanistic and materialist in its principles. As an educated amateur with a vitalist ethic she had little opportunity to participate, either as an individual in science like Guthrie-Smith or in professionally-organised field research offered by Cambridge and Oxford universities. When a similar programme to the latter developed under the Ornithological Society of New Zealand in the 1940s, Chapter Three will show

¹³⁹ Galbreath, *DSIR*; Hoare, pp.18-29.

¹⁴⁰ W.C.Davies, "The Mudflat, its plant ecology", *NEM*, 2 December 1926, p.4.

that her holistic conservation took precedence over field ornithological research.

In her conservation advocacy Moncrieff adopted a rounded approach by not only extolling the usefulness of science but also by illustrating the beauties of wild nature. This final section analyses her sense of the beautiful in the natural world and contextualises it within western art.

Moncrieff's aesthetic feel for wild nature¹⁴¹ comprised two forms: the realistic and the romantic.¹⁴² The realistic or empiric can be seen in her desire to have natural forms depicted as accurately as possible to convey factual information. This is exemplified, firstly, by her *New Zealand birds and how to identify them*, in which the purpose of the book required factual text and precise illustration. Her concise description of the morepork's colouring - "Head dark umber brown....Upper part dark umber obscurely spotted tawny white. Lower parts tawny, triangular spots of brown" - was consistent with the photograph of the morepork, even though the illustration was printed in black and white.¹⁴³ Secondly, it was exemplified in her delight that accurate historic paintings could be the means of identifying several small beaches on Tasman Bay one hundred years later. Of Louis de Sainson, the artist on Dumont d'Urville's first voyage to New Zealand in 1826-27, Moncrieff wrote,

So faithfully was the lively scene [at Watering Cove and Observation Beach] depicted that, today, it is possible to recognise the huge rock in the centre of the beach and the creek flowing over the sand....

¹⁴¹ For example in "Nelson woman's 'bait' caught park for nation", *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, 3 November 1975, p.18; an interview with Moncrieff in which she spoke of her memories of the natural beauty of Scotland's Perthshire as a catalyst for her protection of the natural beauty of Abel Tasman National Park.

¹⁴² This discussion is informed by the ideas in H.W.Jansen, *History of art* (New York, 1969, orig.pub.1962); Oswald Hanfling (ed), *Philosophical aesthetics* (Oxford, 1992); Monroe C.Beardsley, *Aesthetics from classical Greece to the present* (New York, 1966); Bernard Smith, *European vision and the South Pacific* (Sydney, 1984, orig.pub.1959).

¹⁴³ Moncrieff, *NZ birds* (1925), pp.42,13.

Maybe these illustrations would be dubbed "photographic" by modern standards but it is due to the accurate detail that it is possible to...say without hesitation what they are intended to represent. This is most fortunate in view of the fact that, owing to later surveys and local misnaming, the bays became known by the wrong names.¹⁴⁴

While she praised realism, the romantic tenets of sublimity, ecstasy, the gothic and the magical are also apparent in much of her writing on New Zealand mountain, coastal and forest scenery. Near Maruia she alluded to the sublime in glimpsed "gigantic snowclad peaks through dense bush".¹⁴⁵ Walking through the Buller Gorge, she and Malcolm revelled in the experience of vibrant life that surrounded them; "the roaring river to our left, with thickly-clad hills all around and wonderful growth wherever we looked...and [bellbirds, tuis and shining cuckoos] raising their voices rejoicing at the cessation of the rain."¹⁴⁶ The colouration of the Tasman Bay sea could induce in her, not only empiric precision, but also poetical allusion; "green-blue beneath the launch....In the centre of the bay the water had a tinge of rose-red which made one think of the wine-red seas of Greece". Its coastline could reveal the gothic; "fantastic rocks which assumed many forms....One particular rock was known to us as the 'Stone Maiden'. She was granite-grey with a yellowish stone hat and she stood upon reddish-coloured rocks. Other rocks were like crouching beasts".¹⁴⁷ In Moncrieff's romanticism, natural beauty engaged the whole person; trickling creeks within a quiet bush soothed ear and nerves while forest possessed thrilling magical properties. Within its shade bright-coloured birds like the red- and yellow-fronted parakeets would appear as dark silhouettes but, when transformed by the sun's rays, "they resemble

¹⁴⁴ Moncrieff, *People*, p.101.

¹⁴⁵ Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 31 October 1927, p.2.

¹⁴⁶ Pérrine Moncrieff, "Birds seen along the West Coast to the Franz Josef glacier, New Zealand", *Emu*, 24(1924-25), p.61.

¹⁴⁷ Moncrieff, *People*, pp.10,101.

gorgeous jewels passing through mid-air."¹⁴⁸ Beyond the forest's boundaries even broken logs possessed hidden magic. In testing a beached tree trunk for its potential as a natural dye, Moncrieff discovered "that the inner heart of this red or silver beech gave a marvellous golden yellow which, locked up beneath the bark, had never been detected."¹⁴⁹

Just as she supported her field science with evidence from professionals so too did she employ experts in romantic imagery. Phrases from "The passing of the forest" by the New Zealand politician, diplomat and poet William Pember Reeves¹⁵⁰ appear, as do familiar lines from British romantic poets. Wordsworth's cuckoo, Shelley's skylark, Coleridge's wandering albatross and Blake's robin,

A robin redbreast in a cage
Puts all Heaven in a rage.¹⁵¹

augment her rationales, polemics and pleas for the conservation of their New Zealand cousins. In addition to western aesthetics of natural beauty, Moncrieff occasionally referred to Asian art and its philosophy, as I have already stated. As she was aware of ancient Chinese and Japanese bird paintings as representations of the divine, she would also have appreciated Chinese attitudes to nature in art. These are represented by images of mountain and water, in which the viewer is assumed to be *in* the landscape and not looking *at* it from

¹⁴⁸ Moncrieff, *NZ Birds*, 2nd ed., p.30. Now known as red- or yellow-crowned or headed parakeets.

¹⁴⁹ P. Moncrieff, "Plant-dyes - address to Philosophical Society", *NEM*, 22 September 1942, p.2. However she warned that native trees and plants, which were food for birds, should be used with discretion and more common plants substituted whenever possible.

¹⁵⁰ For example in Moncrieff, "Destruction", pp.22,23. William Pember Reeves, "The passing of the forest" in *A treasury of New Zealand verse*, (eds) W.F.Alexander and A.E.Currie ([Christchurch],1926, orig.pub.1906), pp.56-58.

¹⁵¹ William Blake, "Auguries of innocence", for example in Moncrieff to Heenan, 10 September 1942, MS 1132:272, WTU.

William Wordsworth, "To the cuckoo" in "Nature Diaries", *NEM*, 11 March 1939, p.10; Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ode to a skylark"; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The rime of the ancient mariner" in, "New Zealand birds - lecture to Philosophical Society", *NEM*, 28 June 1924, p.2 and 19 July 1924, p.10.

outside, and in which was contrasted nature's grandeur and human insignificance.¹⁵²

In the history of western taste, the two strands in Moncrieff's aesthetics relating to wild nature emerged in different eras, the realistic in the fifteenth century and the romantic in the eighteenth, and developed two separate forms of the aesthetic. In earlier centuries Plato and Aristotle had conceptualised a number of theories on the constituents of aesthetics but chief amongst them was the superior and eternal quality of the transcendent Form most pleasingly exhibited in this world by mathematical relationships especially in architecture and in the physique of the young, human male. Seemingly they found no aesthetic experience in wild nature. But the natural world was vividly depicted in Roman landscape wall murals and in illustrated manuscripts of the later classical period.¹⁵³ While Celtic interlacing and colouring, of faunal, floral and geometric patterns, enhanced the illuminated gospels of the early Middle Ages, aesthetics in Christianity until the Renaissance were largely concerned with biblical images and iconography.

The Renaissance not only reintroduced and refined classical mathematics in science but, through the adoption of perspective, it also brought Aristotelian notions of precision and accuracy to aesthetics. As an aid to correct identification in botany and zoology, artists like Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries produced drawings and woodcuts which were based on careful observation and naturalistic depiction. Their immediate successors like Gesner, Pierre Belon and Guillaume Rondelet stressed the fact that their books on natural history were illustrated by images "drawn from life", to distinguish them from medieval bestiaries which often included mythic and fabled animals.¹⁵⁴ Dürer and other artists of northern Europe like Albrecht Altdorfer

¹⁵² Jansen, pp.569,570; his italics.

¹⁵³ Jansen, pp.152,153; Ashworth, "Emblematic", p.26.

¹⁵⁴ Ashworth, "Emblematic", p.30.

and Pieter Bruegel the Elder also began to paint landscapes as accurate representations of the wild for itself, rather than as a stage for human activity. These landscapes contrasted with contemporary southern European and later English landscapes in which nature was seen to be controlled and "civilised" or made picturesque by human artifice. Claude Lorraine's landscape paintings in the seventeenth century, while based on sketches drawn outdoors, were contrived to evoke an idyllic, Arcadian golden age as were the English landscape gardens themselves a century later in the designs of Lancelot "Capability" Brown.

By the later decades of the eighteenth century when the Americas, Asia and the Pacific began to be more thoroughly explored by Europeans, aesthetic realism melded with Linnaean classification as "new" species were described, illustrated and slotted into European knowledge. Bernard Smith, the art historian, in noting de Sainson's "careful representations", which Moncrieff also appreciated, described this movement as the "triumph of science" over the alternative theory of nature representation as neo-classical idyllic Arcadianism. Smith argued that this occurred as realistic ecological landscapes evolved when the individual "specimen" was increasingly pictured in its natural environment.¹⁵⁵ Out of publications on exploratory voyages and land expeditions which encompassed all natural features, grew the single species folio volume like Walter Buller's *A history of New Zealand birds*¹⁵⁶ and then pocket field guides like Moncrieff's. Their illustrations demanded precision in the representation of the natural world but they also were aesthetically pleasing, or in the case of Moncrieff's first edition, attempted to be within the constraint of finance.

The second theme in Moncrieff's aesthetics, romanticism, developed in the late eighteenth century. A complex movement of social, political, spiritual,

¹⁵⁵ Smith, *European vision*, pp.333,1-3.

¹⁵⁶ Galbreath, *Buller*, pp.99-109.

philosophical and artistic attitudes in western society¹⁵⁷, its application to the natural world involved the rejection of the lifelessness of the mechanistic paradigm as I have shown, and a reappraisal of humanity's relationship with wild nature. The latter was achieved, partly through actual experience in mountaineering, walking and exploration, and partly through an inspirational depiction of the wild in art, literature and music. Both actuality and image sought to provoke an emotional response; not of admiration for human works or elegies for Golden Ages but of a range of sometimes conflicting qualities perceived in nature itself. Thus animism, holism, terror, beauty, simplicity and sublimity were to be sought, bringing pleasure or pain in the pursuit and perusal. The wild could be small-scaled as in Wordsworth's grove and primrose or it could be vast in the sweeping skies of John Constable, the wide Missouri of the American George Caleb Bingham or swirling seas of William Turner.¹⁵⁸ Man-made artifices were considered contrived. As Joseph Banks wrote of a natural rocky arch at Tolaga Bay in comparison to the rocky grottos built in Italianate gardens, "It was certainly the most magnificent surprise I have ever met with; so much is pure nature superior to art in these cases."¹⁵⁹ However Smith revealed a tension between nineteenth century landscape realism and romanticism in commenting that Banks' words were "composed" to evoke the appeal of the picturesque, as was the published engraving embellished in comparison to the original careful sketch.

In Moncrieff's aesthetics another type of tension, between the precision required of realism and the more fluid nature of romanticism, could not always

¹⁵⁷ For a brief overview of romanticism, see Tarnas, *Passion*, pp.366-387; Pepper, *Modern*, pp.188-205, but for the way in which the social, economic, political, philosophical and spiritual worlds impinged on the founders of English romanticism, see Byatt.

¹⁵⁸ W. Wordsworth, "Written in early spring", Francis Turner Palgrave (ed), *The golden treasury* (London, 1928 orig. pub.1861), p.282. Hanfling suggested that Edmund Burke in his 1757 *A philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and the beautiful* separated the small, which he (Burke) associated the beautiful and the vast, which he considered sublime; p.44.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted from Smith, *Vision*, pp.28,29, from Sir Joseph Banks, *Journal of the Right Hon. Sir Joseph Banks during Captain Cook's first voyage*.

be reconciled for some of her readers. A recent critique of her bird book by E.G. Turbott, a scientific ornithologist, revolved around an exasperation with "her somewhat quirky combination of impressionistic notes and factual material."¹⁶⁰ There is also an irony between the "realistic" illustrations, which are actually depictions of dead birds, and the illustrative purpose of the book in the identification of the living. This, however, can be resolved through her vitalist tenet. Even though the photographs, and Lily Daff's paintings in subsequent editions, were images of museum skins, Moncrieff thought that Daff's pictures "are really worth having as she now understands the anatomy and position of birds better than she did and makes them more life-like."¹⁶¹ Apart from anatomy and posture, Moncrieff believed that the representation of birds' eyes was vital to their lifelike portrayal. She recommended a technique which she had observed in the paintings of the prestigious British bird painter, Archibald Thorburn; the placing of a spot of white at the top of the eye. "He is particularly good at making the birds look alive."¹⁶² It was the quality of aliveness, whether as realism or romanticism, that Moncrieff sought to convey in her conservation advocacy. Aliveness, for her, linked the individual bird or plant to its human viewer within a wild nature that was spiritually and physically refreshing but not terrifying. For Moncrieff herself an aesthetic appreciation of wild nature was inherent; she strove to convey its pleasures, both as realism and romanticism, in her quest for conservation empathy and action.

This chapter has argued that the intangible support which sustained Moncrieff's conservation activism was a metaphysic of vitalism. Although she herself did not use the word, vitalist tenets of an animate, equal,

¹⁶⁰ Personal communication from E.G.Turbott, 10 July 1995, 2.

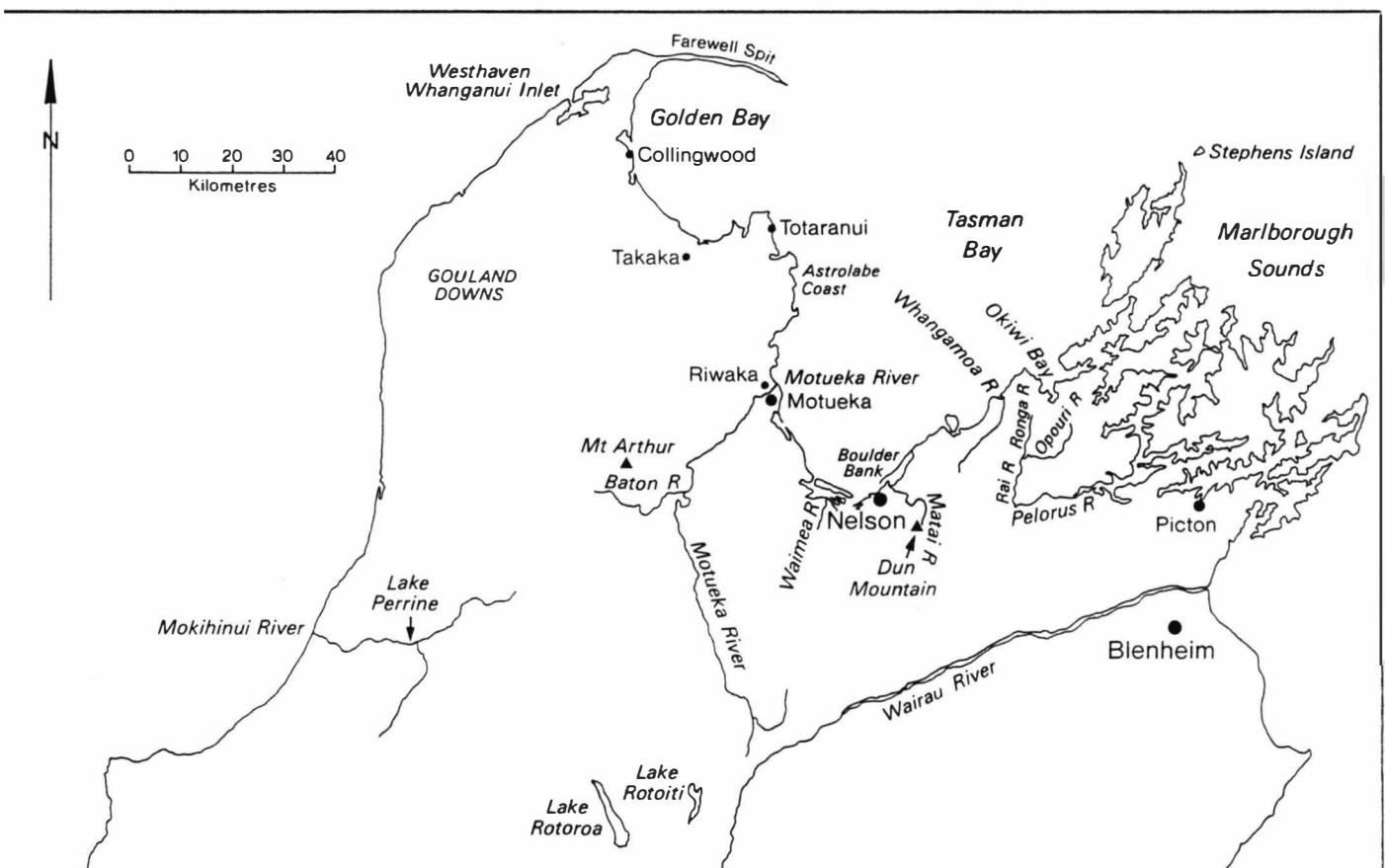
¹⁶¹ Moncrieff to Bryant, 27 September [1935], In the possession of Tess Kloot, former archivist Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, 2.

¹⁶² Moncrieff to Sanderson, 16 January 1931, MS Papers 0444:193, 1. Daff may have been aware of this because her birds in Moncrieff's book all have a white spot at the top of their eyes.

interconnected, material world linked by a transcendent life-force or vital spirit of Nature, are apparent in her extant writings and throughout the main constituents of her conservation, science and aesthetics. Vitalism was the normative metaphysic for much of western history. When it was superseded by mechanism and materialism it was marginalised as a world-view but endured through periodic reassessments of its principles by philosophers and scientists and in the arts. One such reassertion occurred in Moncrieff's early years. Its philosophy and practice was available to her through several possible channels.

The main constituents of Moncrieff's conservation, her science and aesthetics, provided a rounded approach to nature and, as such, exemplified her holism. In her ecological field science and in her aesthetic portrayal of wild nature in both realist and romantic images, Moncrieff truly embodied the vitalist metaphysic which saw "the whole as a whole".





Map of Nelson and Marlborough Provinces showing places of relevance to Pérrine Moncrieff

Drawn by Karen Puklowski

CHAPTER 2

CONNECTIONS

"I am a niece of J.G. Millais the well known British ornithologist", Moncrieff wrote to the New Zealand naturalist and writer James Drummond in 1925, "which may explain to you my love of birds".¹ This chapter firstly examines the family milieu in Britain, which shaped Moncrieff, and wider society influences there on her life. Secondly, it examines the impact made upon her by New Zealand and specifically Nelson, as the focus of her conservation, and the way in which she applied her British heritage to her new surroundings. Her vision for nature and culture conservation can be seen as problematic when interpreted in light of her political and economic conservatism.

As Moncrieff's explanation above makes clear, she was aware of family influence on her. Writing in connection with a commemoration of her grandfather, the painter John Everett Millais, she observed,

Neither I or (sic) my sister were any good at painting. I merely enjoy doing thoroughly amateur water colours but I followed my uncle J.G.Millais...whilst my sister followed my father who was a great judge of dogs and she revived the King Charles spaniel breed....².

Moncrieff, whose father died when she was four, also took an interest in rhododendron cultivation because this uncle grew and hybridised them.

¹ Moncrieff to Drummond, 5 September 1925, James Drummond Papers, Canterbury Museum Archives, Christchurch. John Guille Millais (1865-1931) was the seventh child of John Everett (1829-1896) and Euphemia Millais (1828-1897) who was known as Effie. Moncrieff's father, Everett (1856-1879), was the eldest of their children. Because the members of the family often had the same name I will refer to them by their first names.

² Moncrieff to Hudson, 8 March 1979, 2.

Douglas Cook also brought out rhododendrons to the North Island at Eastwood Hill which famous estate is magnificent with all its plant life. But he also started a rhododendron park near New Plymouth called Pukeiti estate... (I am a member and recently went up there to see the improvements.) [The hybrid] J.G. Millais was still to be seen but Lady Stuart of Wortley [another hybrid named for J.G.'s sister, Moncrieff's aunt] had disappeared.³

Thus science and aesthetics, as the main constituents in Moncrieff's conservation, can be seen to emanate from her male relatives, especially her mentor uncle John Guille Millais in whom a rudimentary idea of nature protection is also to be found.

From age eight, John Guille "had always longed to be an artist and naturalist and to hunt and explore in new lands."⁴ His fulfilment of his ambitions is apparent in his sixteen illustrated books on these occupations, including five on game birds, six on hunting and travel, and two on rhododendrons. He also wrote a biography of his father. While John Guille spent much time in the field observing the habits and habitats of birds, he believed he contributed to ornithological science by taxonomical study. He saw himself as a naturalist who could fill in gaps in knowledge of certain birds.⁵ But, compared to professional biologists of his day like T.H. Huxley, he fits more readily into that group of upper-class amateur collectors and naturalists which had developed from the eighteenth century. For John Guille had a cavalier attitude to bird protection laws; he believed that professional naturalists should be permitted to kill specimens to complete scientific studies. He admitted taking pains to evade notice and capture and even to hunting rare birds for the collections of others. "In the course of twenty-five years I killed every British bird that it is possible to obtain in our islands, beyond rare

³ Moncrieff to [Millais], 2 April 1979, 2.

⁴ J.G. Millais, *Wanderings and memories* (London, 1919), p.45.

⁵ Millais, *Wanderings*, pp.11,27,28. Examples he gave of "gaps" included his *The natural history of British surface-feeding ducks* (1902) and *British diving ducks* (1913); p.129.

visitors, with the exception of the Curlew Sandpiper in full breeding plumage.⁶

In addition to shooting birds for science, and leisure activities like hunting, shooting and fishing in Britain with his relatives⁷, John Guille also hunted big game in the Arctic and Africa. It was in connection with big-game hunting that he became involved with conservation, when the adoption of a sporting code of practice, interwoven with weaponry changes in the later decades of the nineteenth century, eventually lead to preservation advocacy among European and American big-game hunters.⁸ Until about 1880, the use of muskets and early rifles, which were slow to load and of limited range and animal penetration, meant that hunting was a dangerous pursuit for the human hunter. Consequently few quibbled about the methods used to gain a kill; the initial disabling of the quarry and its subsequent dispatch from multiple shots at close range while dogs distracted it from the hunter, or the shooting of females, animals at waterholes, or into herds. Nevertheless the hunter saw himself as brave, fit and skilled with a knowledge of the quarry's habits and anatomy. Armed with this education, many like John Guille saw themselves as multifaceted - natural historians, scientists, artists and collectors - as well as hunters. As J.N.P. Watson wrote of such sportsmen in his book, *Millais. Three generations in nature, art and sport*, "The paradox is that the more the true and devoted hunter pursues, the more his knowledge grows and the more he loves that which he kills".⁹ Despite the limitations of their weapons, vast numbers of animals were destroyed; and some, like the African quagga and the American bison, made extinct or nearly so, for food, commerce, collections

⁶ Millais, *Wanderings*, pp.27-30.

⁷ Moncrieff believed the cause of her father's death was a chill caught while hunting; Moncrieff to [Millais], 2 April 1979, 2.

⁸ The changes in weapon technology and the adoption of a code of practice in hunting are described in John M. MacKenzie, *The empire of nature* (Manchester, New York, 1988), pp.302-304. MacKenzie's overall theme argues that nineteenth century European imperialists followed historical precedent in giving status to their own recreational hunting while downgrading indigenous practical hunting, as one method of asserting empire.

⁹ J.N.P. Watson, *Millais* (London, 1988), p.8.

and trophies.¹⁰ By the 1880s, improvements to the range, velocity and penetration of rifles and bullets allowed hunting to become a more one-to-one encounter between animal and human. Amongst those who hunted for sport, a code was acknowledged, which augmented the requisite ancient skills with a number of specifics. The code demanded the need for a single, mortal shot; the preservation of females and young; the pursuit and death of an injured animal; and a quarry whose constitution gave it a sporting chance of escape. But as weapon technology continued to improve, with concomitant animal disappearance, some hunters perceived the odds to increasingly favour the human. Hunting by the older methods but with modern rifles came to be viewed as "unsporting". In 1903, a group of these "penitent butchers", as they were called, formed the first international conservation organisation, then known as the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire, following the world's first international conservation agreement, the Convention for the Preservation of Animals, Birds and Fish in Africa in 1900. Its early membership comprised hunters, scientists and preservationists largely from the British upper classes, including John Guille Millais. Acknowledged as a powerful pressure group¹¹, it advocated animal protection legislation and the expansion of policed game reserves to preserve animals from the depredations of the "unsporting" hunter.¹² Later it had a world-wide membership including H.Guthrie-Smith, for whom an Obituary was published in the *Journal* of December 1940.¹³

¹⁰ MacKenzie, *Empire*, Chapter 2.

¹¹ MacKenzie, *Empire*, particularly pp.212,213.

¹² John McCormick, *Reclaiming paradise*(Bloomington, Indianapolis, 1989), pp.17-20; and J.M.MacKenzie (ed), *Imperialism and the natural world*, (Manchester, 1990), p.194. The phrase "penitent butchers" was the title of their history; Richard S.R.Fitter, *The penitent butchers* (London, 1978).

¹³ "A New Zealand Farmer Naturalist. Obituary for H.Guthrie-Smith", *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, December(1940), pp.10,11.

Both the Society and its journal have had several name changes. Today it is Fauna & Flora International and publishes *Oryx*.

Moncrieff did not hold the same views as her uncle on bird protection laws and hunting. As later chapters will show, she strongly censured these behaviours in others. Loathing cruelty to animals and what she saw as the urge to destroy, she had many battles with collectors over protected birds, and with the Nelson Acclimatization Society¹⁴ and private shooters over birds listed under the Animal Protection Acts as game species or vermin. "It makes my blood boil and I hate the average sportsman more than ever", she wrote in 1928.¹⁵ But she may have pragmatically accepted her relations' hunting as having occurred in a different era.

As pursuits, John Guille's hybridisation of rhododendrons and her father's dog breeding are less equivocal. On Moncrieff's birth certificate, her father's occupation was noted as "medical student" and, in *Who was who 1897-1915*, his interest in natural history was listed. But he is remembered in the family as a skilled breeder of dogs who researched rabies and genetics at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, published papers on dog breeding, and introduced the basset hound breed to England.¹⁶ Although the term "genetics" was not established until after Everett's death, these experiments in plant and animal breeding by scientists and amateurs were part of the late nineteenth century interest in the transmission of characteristics between generations.¹⁷ They are part of a scientific culture which Moncrieff inherited.

¹⁴ The Minutes of the Nelson Acclimatization Society spell its name with a "z" but its historian, W.R.C.Sowman, and the historian of the amalgamated societies, R.M.McDowell, spell acclimatisation with an "s".

¹⁵ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 14 December, 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

¹⁶ Personal communication from Moncrieff's niece, Jane Bowdler, 18 February 1994, 2; *Who was who 1897-1915*, 1(London, 1967), p.491.

Everett Millais, "The theory and practice of rational breeding", *Fanciers' Gazette*, (London, 1889) and "Two problems of reproduction", Lecture reproduced in *Our dogs*, (Manchester, 1895). Both held at the British Library; BM 7294 ccc4 and BM 7206 dg1-4 respectively. This section was not available for reading when I was in London May 1994.

¹⁷ Peter J.Bowler, *The Norton history of the environmental sciences* (New York, London, 1993, orig.pub.1992), p.360. Darwin also studied breeding of domestic stock for *The origin of the species*, (ed) J.W.Burrow (London, 1968, orig.pub.1859), Chapter 1.

Moncrieff's younger sister Amice Pitt and Amice's daughter, Jane Bowdler, continued the family interest in dog breeding and judging.

Moncrieff's grandfather, the painter John Everett Millais, represents professional aesthetics in her heritage. Moncrieff was "tremendously proud of Sir John" and owned an oil painting of her father which Millais had done as a trial for his picture "The boyhood of Sir Walter Raleigh".¹⁸ In 1848 with two other artists, William Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, he formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood whose founding creed was to paint with realism and moral purpose. They were also influenced by John Ruskin's plea, in *Modern painters*, for a return in art to the truth and beauty to be found in nature¹⁹, so that their style was a fusion of realism and gothic romanticism. Many of the early Millais paintings had backgrounds which depicted the natural world in minute and realistic detail, including that of Ruskin's portrait, in which he was posed romantically on the rocks of a turbulent Scottish stream. Millais also painted a much smaller and lesser-known picture of Effie Millais, then Ruskin's wife, seated beside same stream during the 1853 holiday in Scotland when Effie and Millais fell in love. Although the Pre-Raphaelite style and membership continued to evolve throughout the Victorian and Edwardian periods, by about 1860 Millais was no longer associated with the group. While he still painted landscapes, much of his huge income derived from portraits of the rich or famous and sentimental scenes like "Bubbles", for which one of Moncrieff's cousins modelled as a small boy. Millais frequently used his wife, children and grandchildren as models but, by the time of Moncrieff's birth, he had throat cancer and although he continued to paint, did none of her. The year before he died in 1896 he became President of the Royal Academy, having helped establish the National Portrait and the Tate Galleries and been awarded a baronetcy in 1885. Moncrieff's father and brother both held the title but when her brother died without an heir, it went to another of her uncles.

¹⁸ Moncrieff to Hudson, 8 March 1979, 2. In this letter Moncrieff also described another picture she had bought which she believed to be a Millais - "it has the correct signature"; but it proved to be a fake.

¹⁹ Geoffroy Millais, *Sir John Everett Millais* (London, 1979), p.31.

While Moncrieff acknowledged her heritage from her male relatives, she can be seen to have also received an endowment from female ancestors who provided models of strong women, unwilling to remain only in the private sphere. Moncrieff inherited their strength of character which enabled her to cross the private-public barrier in New Zealand and participate on equal terms with men in the conservation debate.

Moncrieff's grandmother, Effie Millais, known to history more as a pawn between her famous first and second husbands, Ruskin and Millais²⁰, nevertheless negotiated her position with skill, resourcefulness and strength when the need arose. Ruskin may have become publicly and historically significant in his critiques of art and social life, and Millais for his art, but Effie too has significance for her courage.²¹ Her letters show her careful and detailed planning to leave Ruskin before he and his parents departed for Switzerland in May 1854. As her father was a lawyer, she relied on him to act for her in the first instance and provide for her escape from London to the family home in Scotland. She was also assiduous in gaining information from trusted friends about divorce and annulment procedures, which at that date, were rare. That she was prepared to undergo the immediate unpleasantness of a legal cross-examination and a physical examination by two doctors, and the long-term exclusion from official Victorian Society for no fault of hers, shows considerable resilience of character. She also endured a certain amount of public ridicule as model for the wife in Millais' painting, "The order of release". Praised lavishly when it was first shown in 1853, once her annulment application became known a few months later, the picture attracted knowing winks and jokes. Women of lesser fortitude may well have resigned themselves to such a marriage as her first, rather than publicly oppose an influential figure like Ruskin and society's inflexible conventions.

²⁰ Even Simon Schama could not resist a repetition of her predicament in an unconsummated marriage, as a foil to a witticism; *Landscape and memory* (London, 1995), p.508.

²¹ This is displayed in her correspondence, published in Mary Lutyens, *Millais and the Ruskins* (London, 1967).

Effie's mother, Sophia Gray (nee Jameson), strongly supported her with advice and encouragement, travelling south to accompany Effie on her "flight" home, and maintaining a third-party contact with Millais until the annulment was procured. Much of this was when she herself was pregnant, at 46, with her fifteenth and last child who was christened on the day of Effie and Millais' wedding in July 1855.²² Effie died in 1897, a year after Millais, and a few months after Moncrieff's father.

It is a family belief that Moncrieff's mother, Mary Millais (nee Hope-Vere), was a Justice of the Peace in England and that Moncrieff inherited her mother's strong character and sought to emulate her.²³ Therefore it is likely Mary Millais provided a model for Moncrieff's public role in both conservation and voluntary community work in Nelson.

Thus Moncrieff's background included elements of science, aesthetics, nature protection and female emancipation. In addition she absorbed a social confidence from the milieu of a wealthy, upper-class extended family. Although there is little extant public documentation on Moncrieff's life in Britain, she did recall events in one newspaper interview in 1959.²⁴ It shows a privileged life of fine arts, classical music, travel, elegant houses and furnishings, and influential people. Several of her Millais aunts held London salons where Moncrieff met musicians and authors like Edward Elgar, Jan Paderewski, John Buchan and Joseph Conrad. Another relative, as Master of the Horse in charge of the Royal Stables, allowed her rides in the royal coaches. Such a family background gave her self-possession so that, as a child, she could pick herself up when she tripped and "fell flat on her face"

²² Lutyens, pp.168,218,219.

²³ Interview Moncrieff's niece, Jane Bowdler, May 1994, 2.

²⁴ "Friend of bird and bush - and much else", Interview with Pérrine Moncrieff, *NEM*, 30 May 1959, p.10, in which she spoke about her family, childhood, education, marriage and interests. The interview was repeated in Emily Host, *The enchanted coast* (Dunedin, 1976), Chapter 2.

She also recounted aspects of her social life to ecologists Dr Gwen Struik and Dr Roger Bray; Interview with Struik and Bray, 2.

before receiving a prize from the Archbishop of Canterbury for a natural history project.

Her family also imbued her with a concept of heritage. She was proud to be named for a Jersey ancestor of the sixteenth century, the name Pérrine meaning, she said, a peasant name for 'little Peter', while her sister was named for a seventeenth century ancestor.²⁵ She was fascinated by the history of the houses she lived in and their past occupants, as well as events, legends or stories associated with places nearby. Her parents' house, Littleten Hall, "was a lovely old red brick mansion but had a curse of monks upon it", which curse she believed responsible for the early deaths of her sister and father. Her brother's house, Leacon Hall, at Warehorn in Kent, where she lived until her marriage, "was famous for the Ingoldsby Legends. For the pond was the one in which Lady Jane's husband was drowned, hence the taste of the eels."²⁶ Her interest in the preservation of cultural heritage would be transferred to New Zealand. Just as her sense of trusteeship for the natural world impelled her to work for its preservation, so too did she wish to preserve Nelson's cultural heritage for future generations.

Although Moncrieff was not educated in the classics-based university system, her formal education appears typical of the curriculum for upper- and middle-class girls of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. It began at home where she was taught by French and German governesses. She then attended Graham Street High School in London where, in 1903, she won the prize for her nature project.²⁷ Her participation may have been stimulated by the Bird and Tree competition begun that year by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; or by the nature writings of Lord Avebury who described

²⁵ Moncrieff to [Millais], 2 April 1979, 2.

²⁶ Moncrieff to Hudson, 8 March 1979, 2. The Ingoldsby Legends were old tales written in comic verse or prose by Richard Harris Barham, under the pseudonym Thomas Ingoldsby, who had been curate of Warehorn between 1817 and 1821. Moncrieff alludes to "The knight and the lady", in which the naturalist Sir Thomas drowns in a pool but provides such tasty food for its eels, eaten by Lady Jane, that she has his corpse returned there after it is found. Richard Harris Barham, *The Ingoldsby legends*, (ed) D.C.Browning (London, 1960), pp.228-236.

²⁷ Host, p.139.

for children the revelations of the microscope and the interdependence of insects and flowers. Or it may have been stimulated by the compulsory addition of Nature Study to the English primary school curriculum in 1900, a subsequent programme of conferences and exhibitions in London in 1902, and the establishment soon afterwards of the School Nature Study Union. David Allen was ambivalent about the success of these school programmes, arguing that imprecise objectives in the school nature study programme allowed the sentimentalisation and trivialisation of traditional natural history.²⁸ While he does not elaborate, these programmes may have allowed children to identify with the natural world rather than merely observing it, which was the attitude Moncrieff was to encourage.

From age 12 to 16 Moncrieff boarded at London's Lexham Gardens School, established by two university women, Misses Crease and Kennedy, where the curriculum included visits to concerts and art galleries. To finish her education she studied music and languages in Brussels.²⁹ Apart from her natural history project, Moncrieff made no mention of science subjects; her education seemed to concentrate on art, music and languages which concurs with findings by historians of girls' education. In the mid-nineteenth century, university-educated women teachers had prescribed an equality of time and attention between the three compulsory sections of the curriculum: English which included scripture, literature, history and geography; languages; and sciences including mathematics and natural science. A fourth section of the aesthetic subjects of music and drawing, derived from the old idea of accomplishments, was not considered compulsory. But a lack of resources limited the teaching of science and maths, ensuring that in practice, girls'

²⁸ David Elliston Allen, *The naturalist in Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1976), pp.202-206.

²⁹ Pérrine Moncrieff autobiographical details, Auckland Institute and Museum, 2. A Mary Kennedy is mentioned as one of the first students at what was to become Newnham College in 1871; Perry Williams, "Pioneer women students at Cambridge", in *Lessons for life*, (ed) Felicity Hunt (Oxford, 1987), p.173.

education for those not going to university centred on English, languages and the aesthetic subjects.³⁰

Nevertheless, the natural history project when she was ten indicates a youthful curiosity in the natural world, engendered by her uncle's example or by those programmes mentioned above. In the family she was known for her interest in birds³¹, perhaps provoked as she collected swan down for her dolls' bonnets after the annual fights at nesting time³², or after her visit to an exhibition of "the fearful kea, which my childish mind depicted as a fierce-looking white cockatoo who would not hesitate to tear my eyes out if the number of its victims did not tally with its huge appetite."³³ Whatever the genesis of her natural history education, it stimulated in Moncrieff a lifelong desire for knowledge, gained firsthand from observation, and expanded by reading. Friends in later life remarked on her extensive library which included an early edition of *The dictionary of birds* by Alfred Newton, Walter Buller's *A history of the birds of New Zealand*, many other ornithological books, collections on art, poetry, natural medicines, psychic phenomena, and early editions of classic fiction.³⁴ Her bibliographies and correspondence refer to works by significant figures in the past like Gilbert White and George Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, as well as contemporary ornithologists and naturalists.

In Britain, Moncrieff enjoyed outdoor activities as she moved seasonally between England and Scotland; playing tennis, walking and cycling. There is

³⁰ In relating developments in girls' secondary education between 1850 and 1950 in response to change in social aspirations and movements, Felicity Hunt and Carol Dyhouse allude to curriculum subjects but not in detail; Felicity Hunt, "Introduction" (pp. xi-xxv) and "Divided aims: the educational implications of opposing ideologies in girls' secondary schooling, 1850-1940" (pp.3-21), and Carol Dyhouse, "Miss Buss and Miss Beale: gender and authority in the history of education" (pp.22-38), in *Lessons*.

³¹ Extracts from "British birds", Pérrine Moncrieff's talk to the Nelson Philosophical Society, *NEM*, 6 June 1930, p.4.

³² "Bush and Bird notes", *NEM*, 28 September 1931, p.7.

³³ Pérrine Moncrieff, "The kea", *NEM*, 18 April 1929, p.5.

³⁴ Interviews with Jenny Hawkins, Henk Heinekamp and Steve Anderson of the Nelson district Public Trust which organised the sale of the Moncrieff estate in June 1980; *NEM*, 5, 23 June 1980; 2.

no evidence that she belonged to any of the outdoor clubs which increased in numbers from the 1890s as rural rambling and cycling excursions became popular, nor to any naturalist field club. She seems to have taken part in outdoor activities like walking with parties of family members and friends, for as Ann Holt remarked, "not everyone who thought of themselves as serious ramblers were members of rambling organizations."³⁵ The Moncrieffs repeated this pattern in Nelson for they do not appear to have joined the Nelson Tramping Club when it was founded in 1934, preferring to tramp with groups of friends.

Nor did she belong to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds³⁶, the foremost bird protection group in Britain, or the SPFE to which her uncle belonged. She certainly knew of the aims of protection societies and the reasons behind their work.³⁷ Formed during the nineteenth century, the prime motivation for much of their early protection effort was a horror of people's unrestrained cruelty towards birds. The event which sparked the first protective legislation, the 1869 Sea Birds Protection Act, was the annual shooting party to Flamborough Head in Yorkshire. Thousands of birds were slaughtered or maimed during the breeding season in what were seen as cruel circumstances because both adult birds and their chicks died. The campaign, prior to the passing of this act, was promoted by Newton and other members of the British Ornithologists' Union, the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the Royal Society for Protection against Cruelty to Animals³⁸ and local

³⁵ Ann Holt, "Hikers and ramblers: surviving a thirties' fashion", *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 4:1(1987), p.63.

³⁶ Personal communication from Stuart Geeves (Wildlife Adviser RSPB), 18 April 1995; 2.

³⁷ P  r  ne Moncrieff, "Birds in relation to women", *Emu*, 33(1933-34), pp.213,218.

³⁸ Formed in 1824 after one of its organisers, Richard Martin, was successful in getting a law passed in Parliament in 1822 to protect cattle from wanton cruelty, the RSPCA was active not only in policing this Act and its amendments but in publicising other cruelties towards animals; Roderick Frazier Nash, *The rights of nature* (Madison, 1989), pp.25,26; John Sheail, *Nature in trust* (Glasgow, London, 1976), pp.10,11.

As she belonged to the SPCA in Nelson, Moncrieff may also have belonged to a branch in England.

Yorkshire people. Apart from deplored cruelty, it set a precedent for conservation in Britain and America as well as New Zealand in proposing economic ornithology as a utilitarian reason for bird protection. Protectionists argued that gulls assisted farmers by eating grubs on ploughed fields, and fishermen by their warning cries near dangerous cliffs. The 1869 Act, policed by the RSPCA, provided for a closed season over the summer and fines for those who broke it.³⁹ There is thus a link between the movements for bird and big-game protection in that the shooting was considered "unsporting" and "unfair", different in ferocity and surrounding mythology though the targets were.

Another target of the bird protection societies was the plumage trade. In *Man's dominion*, Frank Graham gives a vivid description of the industry in America in which millions of birds like herons were destroyed as they gathered for the breeding season and displayed their decorative breeding plumes. The plume hunters were the first link in a line of wholesalers, milliners, retailers, exporters and importers in the fashion industry, which encouraged women to wear hats that Graham described as "grisly *nature mort*, chiffon, lace, and taffeta ribbons mingled with plumes, wings, and indeed the entire bodies of birds".⁴⁰ In America, ornithologists and bird lovers responded by forming the American Ornithologists' Union in 1883 and the Audubon Society in 1886 to lobby and educate against the industry's practices. In Britain, women who had initially formed the RSPB and its predecessors, pledged to refrain from wearing such plumage and persuaded other women to follow their example. They contacted shops which displayed or used this plumage, held demonstrations and rallies, wrote pamphlets, and lobbied against the cruelty of the trade.⁴¹

From the turn of the century the RSPB gradually widened its targets. Firstly, as the result of changing technology, it promoted legislation against oil

³⁹ Sheail, pp.23,24.

⁴⁰ Frank Graham Jr, *Man's dominion* (New York, 1971), p.46.

⁴¹ Sheail, pp.12-14; Allen, p.198.

pollution as ships became oil-powered; and cooperated with other organisations to investigate problems for birds caused by the increasingly powerful beams of lighthouses. Secondly, with the development of animal ecology, the Society acquired nature reserves, staffed by wardens and watchers' committees, to ensure bird protection. Thirdly, the Society targeted those who captured and sold wild birds as caged pets.⁴²

Moncrieff agreed with the RSPB's policy on the plumage trade which was to re-emerge occasionally as an issue for her in later decades. As an example that women could be fashionably dressed without further endangering rare birds, her photograph, as President of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, shows her in a hat of dyed hens' feathers to which she alluded in her Presidential Address.⁴³ She was to use some of the Society's methods in furthering public education about conservation. Its rejection of the market for wild birds as caged pets also concurred with her beliefs and was one of her reasons for opposing the breeding of New Zealand's rare birds in captivity. These issues will be discussed in later chapters.

All these elements - science, aesthetics, nature protection, cultural interest and female emancipation - were part of Moncrieff's character when she arrived in Nelson in 1921. Intending to emigrate to the Canadian province of British Columbia, the Moncrieffs came to New Zealand as tourists, but alarmed by deteriorating currency exchange rates between Britain and Canada⁴⁴, and enchanted by the city and province of Nelson, they opted to settle there. The next section examines the ways in which Moncrieff, through her heritage, connected to Nelson as a "site" which held both cultural and natural resonance for her. The connection itself was simple enough since her entrancement was immediate, but her involvement in Nelsonian economics was

⁴² Sheail, pp.14-16.

⁴³ Plate 43 with Moncrieff, "Birds...women", p.213.

⁴⁴ Pérrine Moncrieff, Radio NZ interview 1978; Radio NZ archive. At that time the exchange rate between London and New Zealand "was fixed by custom and convention within narrow limits near parity"; G.R.Hawke, *The making of New Zealand* (Cambridge, 1985), p.65.

more complex. Her conservation advocacy for Nelson's natural and cultural heritage and her placement of other species on a par with human beings were problematic, given the Moncrieff's wealth and status.

Nelson in 1921 was a small city of some 10,500 people in a total New Zealand population of just over 1,200,000 people.⁴⁵ It derived its city status from its creation as an Anglican bishop's seat in 1858 and its subsequent Royal Charter.⁴⁶ Aerial photographs of Nelson city taken in the 1930s reveal a rectangular street layout accommodated to both the curving Maitai River on the eastern side and a topography of hummocky hills. The streets frame blocks of single-storey dwellings, double-storey commercial buildings and the occasional factory. Trees are prominent in private and public gardens and enclose the two most conspicuous structures, the cathedral of Christ Church, and the Provincial Council building with its gables, towers and cupolas. Surrounding the urban blocks, grassy hills are smock-dotted by patches of new plantation forestry. Just visible in the distant southern hinterland are jagged peaks of a mountain range but because of the viewing angle, Nelson's harbour and its protective Boulder Bank, are omitted.⁴⁷

In old age Moncrieff recounted her first vivid impression of the city.

...the first time I came to Nelson, I came via Blenheim....when we arrived at Nelson, I found the most beautiful sight, a quiet cathedral city with narrow streets and many homes with very large gardens. And dominating it all, was this beautiful rose red wooden cathedral with a spire. It was just like a fairy story....We decided then and there, that we thought Nelson so lovely that we'd stay here. And we've never regretted it. We thought it was absolutely beautiful.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Total population: Nelson, 10,632, New Zealand, 1,218,913; *New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings*, 1921, pp.16,2.

⁴⁶ Jim McAloon, *Nelson*(Whatamango Bay,1997), p.54.

⁴⁷ Nelson Museum Kingsford Collection, Reference 161177/6, 163499/6.

⁴⁸ Moncrieff, Radio NZ tape.

In a letter to a cousin she reiterated these impressions, again describing the cityscape but also the beauty of Nelson's more distant landscapes, its sunny climate and an historic home which fortuitously was for sale when the Moncrieffs decided to settle in Nelson.

...we ourselves lived in a marv[e]llous home overlooking the sea called The Cliffs. One of the earliest residences....

We had the remains of a sheep station about forty acres but the city crept up and it was obvious that when Hubby died the place would have to be sold.⁴⁹

"The Cliffs" was a two-storied, gabled house with wide verandahs, above the harbour on the western side of the city some three kilometres from the cathedral centre and consequently excluded from the photographs of Nelson city described above.⁵⁰ It had been built between 1842-45 by Major Matthew Richmond, a pioneering pastoralist, who was Superintendent of the "Southern Division", Resident Magistrate, and Commissioner Crown Lands in Nelson. The house was occupied by Richmond descendants until 1921.⁵¹ The house was an indirect link between Moncrieff and her uncle John Guille Millais and the SPFE. In 1943 she was asked to write for its journal by its then President, Lord Onslow, whose father had been New Zealand's Governor between 1889 and 1892. During his father's term of office he had contracted typhoid fever and the family leased "The Cliffs" as a convalescent home. Writing to her in connection with her article, he mentioned this and included some photos his father had taken of Nelson.⁵²

⁴⁹ Moncrieff to [Millais], 2 April 1979, 2.

⁵⁰ In a 1920s photo of Nelson's electricity generator on the harbour's edge, "The Cliffs" is visible in the distance; McAloon, p.164.

⁵¹ A description of the house in the Moncrieffs' day is in Host, p.141. When its sale was imminent the *Nelson Evening Mail* published an illustrated article on it as part of a series, "Historic homes. No 16. The Cliffs", a copy of which was sent to me by G.A.Bell of Nelson, but without a publishing date. It is likely to be 1969 since Malcolm Moncrieff died on 13 October 1968. The area, now known as Britannia Heights, has street names of "The Cliffs" and "Malcolm Moncrieff" which commemorate both Richmonds and Moncrieffs.

⁵² Onslow to Moncrieff, 22 July 1943; letter and photographs in Jane Bowdler's possession. For his brother's New Zealand name of Huia and its links to Buller and New Zealand conservation in the 1890s, see Ross Galbreath, *Walter Buller*(Wellington, 1989),

At different times the Moncrieffs also owned cottages on the Astrolabe coast of Tasman Bay, in the Maitai Valley out of Nelson city, and the more rugged Baton Valley in the Arthur Range south-west of Motueka. Just as she had moved between London and Scotland as a girl, so too did the Moncrieffs visit these properties regularly, using them as bases to explore surrounding country. She also made less frequent visits to the Rai Valley area, the islands of the Marlborough Sounds, Farewell Spit, Westhaven-Whanganui Inlet, Maruia, and what are now the National Parks of Nelson Lakes, Abel Tasman and Kahurangi. But a favourite tramping route was the Dun Mountain track, south of Nelson city, which followed part of the route of an early New Zealand railway built in 1862 to copper and chrome mines on the mountain.

Botanically and zoologically Moncrieff found the province a naturalist's haven. "In coming to Nelson I automatically discovered that I was in a very fortunate position because I was watching the North Island birds, the South Island birds, the North Island tropical forest and the rain forest. It was all in Nelson for me to study."⁵³ The botanical comments refer to the western part of Nelson province where the warm, wet climate allows low altitude forests to include northern New Zealand tree species like nikau, pukatea and northern rata, while a diversity of canopy and understorey species gives the forests a lush, tropical appearance.⁵⁴ This area lies at the same latitude, between 40 and 42 degrees south, as the lower North Island to which it was linked in the region of Taranaki during the last ice age which began to end some 14,000 years ago. Today's lowland Nelson forests, and also the beech species which occupy higher altitudes and the cooler eastern part of the province, survived the glaciation as small pockets in sheltered valleys.⁵⁵ The

pp.176-186. Moncrieff mentioned these links in her article, "The destruction of an avian paradise", *Journal of the SPFE*, June(1944), p.12.

⁵³ Moncrieff, Radio NZ tape. Earlier she had made a similar observation in her article, "Birdlife", *Abel Tasman National Park: a handbook for visitors*, (ed) E.Host (Nelson, 1967 2nd ed.), p.78.

⁵⁴ Kath Walker, *Wildlife in the Nelson region* (Wellington, 1987), pp.21,28,34.

⁵⁵ Graeme Stevens, Matt McGlone, Beverley McCulloch, *Prehistoric New Zealand* (Auckland, 1988), pp.90-94.

meaning of Moncrieff's remark on birds is less clear. Did she mean that she could see both North Island and South Island subspecies of a bird like the kaka which is strong enough to cross Cook Strait? This is unlikely since Walker lists only the South Island kaka in her summary of birds which use Nelson "for part or all of their life's activities".⁵⁶ Or did Moncrieff mean that she could see South Island dwellers and birds like the tui which inhabit both islands, or South Island dwellers and New Zealand migrants like the banded dotterel which breed in other areas and migrate to Tasman and Golden Bay for the rest of the year? She may have meant both of these interpretations. As she wrote of Abel Tasman National Park, "Any visitor to the Park can, with a little time and trouble, observe quite a comprehensive list of native and introduced birds."⁵⁷

Moncrieff was also interested in the dynamic nature of Nelson's geology and sought to explain its consequences for fauna and flora. In 1929 Nelson experienced two major earthquakes, the Arthur's Pass on 11 March and the Buller on 17 June, and many lesser shakes.⁵⁸ After the Buller quake she appealed for any information that people could give of domestic and wild animal behaviour preceding and following the main earthquake in June. Despite the considerable loss of life, massive damage, and topographical change, the eleven people from rural and urban Nelson who responded to her request all seemed interested in the behaviour of their animals, had noted it, and tried to interpret it.⁵⁹ Moncrieff collated the responses in a paper to *Emu*, the journal of the RAOU. She began by describing the earthquake's manifestations of subterranean booming, explosive noises, sharp jolts and wave-like tremors, but on the pertinent question of animals' prior knowledge

⁵⁶ Walker, pp.125,148.

⁵⁷ Moncrieff, "Birdlife", *Handbook*, p.78.

⁵⁸ While the Buller (or Murchison) and the Hawkes Bay (3 February 1931) are considered as magnitude 7½ earthquakes, the Arthurs Pass was also over 7; Ian Wards (ed), *New Zealand atlas* (Wellington, 1976), pp.77,78.

⁵⁹ One of Moncrieff's informants was Alice McWha of Murchison. She ran a field kitchen there for repair workers; McAloon, pp.170,171. Many of the responses are in Pérrine Moncrieff, Correspondence, MS Papers 5642: 01-05, WTU.

of earthquakes and whether their behaviour could be used to predict future shocks, the responses were contradictory. One observer noted that with each tremor both native and introduced birds shot into the air, while another noticed that just prior to a quake the birds would huddle up silently on branches close to the tree trunk. Moncrieff came to no final conclusion although she recorded that her pet macaw, "Miss Micawber", could predict the after-shocks.⁶⁰ Thus, from her observation and deepening knowledge of Nelson province's natural world, her belief in Nature's duality of care and chastisement, which I examined in Chapter One, may have been reinforced. Seeing for herself both the munificence of life in the remains of luxurious lowland forest and the upheaval and destruction caused by earth movements exacerbated by man-made accelerated erosion, may have spurred on her conservation effort.

Moncrieff also "explored" Nelson's cultural institutions. She was particularly involved in the Nelson Institute and Museum which claimed to be New Zealand's oldest learned society as it was founded in 1841 by intending Nelson colonists on their New Zealand Company ship the *Whitby*.⁶¹ The Institute had three branches; the library, the museum and the Philosophical Society which was based on eighteenth century British groups whose members met to discuss natural phenomena.⁶² In 1921, with the injection of new life from scientists working at the newly established Cawthron Institute⁶³, the

⁶⁰ Périnne Moncrieff, "The behaviour of birds and other animals during earthquake", *Emu*, 30(1930-31), pp.51-58.

⁶¹ Discussion became reality when a library and reading room were opened in September 1842; C.B.Brereton, *History of the Nelson Institute* (Wellington, 1948), p.23. The foundation stone for a new building, and for that of the Provincial Government Building were laid on 26 August 1859. That year was auspicious for Nelson because its first Bishop also arrived; Brereton, p.36, Lowther Broad, *The jubilee history of Nelson* (Christchurch, 1976, orig.pub.1892), pp.123,124. Articles and editorials about the Institute were printed occasionally in the *NEM*; see issues of 9 June 1928, p.6;14 February 1938, p.6.

⁶² The philosophical societies were one of two trends which grew out of the formalised study of natural history in Britain after the founding of the Royal Society in London in 1663. Philosophical societies discussed natural phenomena of all kinds and evolved in the nineteenth century into natural history clubs while the second trend was the establishment of specific organisations like the 1745 entomological Aurelian Club; Sheail, p.2.

⁶³ Under his will in 1915, Thomas Cawthron endowed a scientific research institution which opened in 1921 under Professor Thomas Easterfield. Its staff, including Drs Kathleen Curtis, Theodore Rigg and R.J.Tillyard, developed research projects of benefit to Nelson's

Nelson Institute rearranged itself into two; the Philosophical Society, and the Institute comprising the museum and the library.⁶⁴ At different times either the Institute or the Philosophical Society was the affiliated member of the New Zealand Institute, a position unresolved until 1957 when the Institute resigned its affiliation and the Philosophical Society changed its name to the Nelson branch of Royal Society of New Zealand.⁶⁵ The Nelson Philosophical Society held monthly meetings in the second half of the year at which members or guests read research papers, but it also contributed to national decisions and activities of the NZI or RSNZ as it was known from 1933.

Moncrieff also belonged to Nelson's music group focused around the Nelson School of Music, which had been founded in 1893 and directed by the Bavarian conductor, Michael Balling. Its programme included instrumental and singing instruction, concerts and recitals, the sponsorship of visiting musicians and singers, and general assistance to music in Nelson. In 1901 a permanent building opened, whose auditorium was also used for public lectures and other functions.⁶⁶

She was also active in the arts and crafts in Nelson. She contributed paintings, "those thoroughly amateur watercolours" as she called them, to the autumn exhibitions of the Nelson Art Society.⁶⁷ Through what became the Nelson branch of the New Zealand Spinning Weaving and Woolcrafts Society, she enjoyed working with wool and was particularly interested in experimenting with natural dyes.⁶⁸

agricultural and horticultural industries. For a history, see that by its third director David Miller, *Thomas Cawthon and the Cawthon Institute* (Nelson, 1963); Ross Galbreath, DSIR, Chapter 4; McAloon, pp.157,158.

⁶⁴ NEM, 9 May 1922, p.4.

⁶⁵ C.A.Fleming, *Science settlers and scholars* (Wellington, 1987), pp.75-77.

⁶⁶ Shirley Tunnicliff, *Response to a vision* ([Nelson], 1994).

⁶⁷ Her first contribution appears to have been in 1937; "Review of the Suter Art Gallery Autumn collection", NEM, 15 March 1937, p.2.

⁶⁸ Moncrieff had begun using dyes obtained from indigenous plants from about 1934; Moncrieff to Falla, 16 April 1934, MS Papers 2366:67, 3. In an address to the Philosophical Society, she credited B.C.Aston, the soil chemist and conservationist, with original work in

As a community Nelson was periodically shaken, not only by earthquakes, but also by debates on the direction of its economy for it faced two ways. It was not only proud of its past, which it wished to preserve, but it also wished to "progress" and "modernise".⁶⁹ McAlloon has elaborated on the debates which "raged" from the 1960s on "development versus heritage, expansion versus conservation".⁷⁰ The same debates occurred in the decades of my research, and even earlier a campaign for the conservation of nature had operated in the late nineteenth century. In 1894 the Nelson Scenery Preservation Society was formed by several leading citizens including Frederick Gibbs, who had, in addition to a general interest in nature conservation, a particular liking for alpine flora. He was later to supply them for the first of Moncrieff's preservation groups, the Nelson Rock Garden Society.⁷¹ In the 1890s and early 1900s a number of scenery preservation societies were formed as part of a changing response by European settlers to

this field; "Plant-dyes", *NEM*, 22 September 1942, p.2. Moncrieff also enjoyed spinning, knitting from the fleece, and weaving; *NEM*, 24 March 1938, p.8 for a photograph and story of her involvement with Shetland Island craftswomen in Nelson; Iris Hughes-Sparrow, "Mrs Pérrine Moncrieff, J.P., C.B.E.", *The Web*, 9 (1978), p.8; and Jean Abbott and Shirley Bourke, *Spin a yarn weave a dream* (North Shore City, 1994), p.95.

⁶⁹ For example, any development in Nelson, such as the installation of electric light in 1923, was celebrated by the *Nelson Evening Mail* with the inclusion of references to Nelson's natural and cultural pasts; *NEM*, Special Edition, 17 October 1923.

⁷⁰ McAlloon, p.206. From the 1890s Nelson had a number of agriculturally-based factories supported by engineering works; McAlloon, pp.138,139. Plantation forestry began in the Nelson region in 1927; John Ward and Don Cooper, *Seventy years of forestry* (Nelson, 1997).

⁷¹ Lochhead, L.E., "Preserving the brownies' portion: a history of voluntary nature conservation organisations in New Zealand 1888-1935", PhD thesis in Parks, Recreation and Tourism [now Human and Leisure Sciences], (Lincoln University, 1994), pp.138,156,157.

Gibbs (1866-1953) was involved with many Nelson societies and institutes during and following his career as Headmaster of the Boys' Central School. For an account of his life, see Shonagh Mann, *F.G. Gibbs* (Nelson, 1977), which was originally submitted as a thesis in History, Victoria University in 1960; Shirley Tunnicliff, "Gibbs, Frederick Giles", *DNZB*, 3(1901-1920), (Auckland, Wellington, 1996), p.172. He was a keen trumper and collector of alpine flora, which he supplied to botanists T.Kirk, T.F.Cheeseman and Leonard Cockayne. Other areas which he was interested in preserving included Lake Rotoiti, which eventually was included in Nelson Lakes National Park with Rotoroa, and the Mount Arthur area in what is now Kahurangi National Park.

The biography of Gibbs' mother, Mary, who brought the family to New Zealand after her husband's death, is in Max D.Lash, "Gibbs, Mary Elizabeth", *DNZB*, 2(1870-1900), (Wellington, 1993), p.167. For the Nelson Rock Garden Society, see Chapter 6.

the indigenous wild⁷², but few had plans as bold as Nelson's in its 1898 petition for national park status for the rich lowland bush valleys of western Marlborough. Although this was not granted and the bush was eventually felled, the proposal gained considerable support and recommendation from the *Nelson Evening Mail* and Wellington's *Evening Post*.⁷³ Moncrieff may have been aware of the Rai "battle" as the forest at Okiwi Bay, which she donated as a reserve, is in the vicinity of the Rai, although she does not refer to the Society in her various campaigns for reserves and national parks. But its formation and the presence of at least two of its members, Gibbs and Percy B. Adams⁷⁴, was a precedent for her to build on.

While her nature conservation campaigns will be discussed in later chapters, she was also involved in the debates on the preservation of Nelson's European cultural heritage. When she arrived in Nelson she believed that,

people had no love of historical buildings. The pioneer age was something to shuffle under the mat and forget about. They all wanted to be modern; modern shops, modern clothes, modern everything. And as a result several lovely cob houses which could have been saved and ...[a] number of historic buildings...have been pulled down unnecessarily....

[Un]fortunately, even the cathedral changed. And I must say I loved that rose-coloured building.⁷⁵

⁷² Lochhead's thesis, but also Ross Galbreath, "Colonisation, science and conservation: the development of colonial attitudes toward the native life of New Zealand with particular reference to the career of the colonial scientist Walter Lawry Buller (1838-1906)", PhD thesis in History (University of Waikato, 1989); P. Hamer, "Nature and natives. Settler attitudes to the indigenous in New Zealand and Australia", MA thesis in History (University of Victoria, 1992); Star, "Potts"; Paul Star, "From acclimatisation to preservation: colonists and the natural world in southern New Zealand 1860-1894", PhD thesis in History (University of Otago, 1997).

⁷³ See Lochhead, Chapter 6 "The Nelson Scenery Preservation Society and the battle for the Rai". New Zealand's first national park, Tongariro, had been created through the gift of Ngati Tuwharetoa and by Act of Parliament in 1894; Craig Potton, *Tongariro a sacred gift* (Nelson, 1987).

⁷⁴ Adams was a leading advocate for the national park; Lochhead, Chapter 6. He wrote to *Nelson Evening Mail* in 1928 recalling the "magnificent forests of the Ronga and Opouri valleys", the petition and an interview with the then Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Richard Seddon, who rejected the proposal; *NEM*, 23 February 1928, p.4.

⁷⁵ Moncrieff, Radio NZ tape. Extant evidence suggests that Moncrieff was not a member of the Anglican congregation even though she was friendly with the Dean of Nelson,

Her reference to historic buildings undoubtedly included the Nelson Provincial Council building for which there was a preservation campaign during the 1930s. This was sponsored by the Early Settlers' Memorial Association as a project for Nelson's centenary in 1942, and the Progress League as an "Advance Nelson" plan. Representing the Nelson Institute, of which she was a Vice-President at the time, Moncrieff suggested to a public meeting that the building and its surrounding garden could be added to the neighbouring Queen's Gardens to become a cultural centre with gardens, an Art Gallery, and museum. She evoked Nelson's history in explaining that people of the past had congregated there for important events; "who would not thrill when he enters these precincts".⁷⁶ However its fate was the same as the cathedral's; it was eventually demolished in 1966.⁷⁷

As a contribution to the 1936 debate on how to "Advance Nelson", Moncrieff articulated her vision of Nelson as a garden city, which built on a similar appeal forty years earlier⁷⁸, and in which she specifically contrasted the aesthetics of such an environment with those of an industrial city. She established her preference for the former but suggested the population must consciously choose their future and plan for it on the assets available to them. Hitherto, she wrote, Nelson has advertised itself as "Sunny Nelson", the garden city of New Zealand, where people could retire or bring families for a seaside holiday, where everyone could escape the problems of large cities, and

the Very Reverend Percy Haggitt, and his wife Elsie, and had been married within the Church of England; Interview with Henk Heinekamp and Moncrieff to John [Evans], 16 January 1957, 2. Therefore she would have been in no position to influence its synod's decision on the cathedral's demolition.

⁷⁶ Report of Moncrieff's speech at Early Settlers' Memorial Association meeting; *NEM*, 2 September 1938, p.9. Earlier meetings of the "Advance Nelson" group had been held 9 April and 20 October 1936; see *NEM* of those dates.

As well as the heritage campaigns I have already outlined, both Moncrieffs were briefly on the Tahuna Sands Association committee to improve Tahuna beach as a resort; *NEM*, 16 March 1926, p.4; McAloon, pp.168,169. Pérrine's campaign for the preservation of forest on the Maruia road, which will be discussed in Chapter 5, was partly to aid Nelson's economy through tourism.

⁷⁷ McAloon, pp.215-217.

⁷⁸ McAloon, pp.140-142.

where amusements and sport were cheap. Is that what we want to retain, she asked. If so, she continued, we need more parks, gardens, open spaces and municipal playing grounds, providing "room for tired folk to bask in the sun" and "bright flowers" by which women with prams could wheel their children. If such a city was not wanted, an industrial city would need sites for factories and ample provision for the streets of houses needed to accommodate the factory workers. She herself, she said, wanted a garden city and suggested that Nelsonians look to Holland as an example. People there did not have a meeting and decide to have windmills, tulips, fine brick houses and picture galleries to attract tourists. "They [first] surrounded themselves with beauty and eventually their taste became world famous and tourists flocked there."⁷⁹ This was not the first time she had disparaged an industrial scenario for Nelson. Several years earlier, she told Sanderson that she and Malcolm had tried to dissuade the community from erecting a tobacco factory on reclaimed land "always thought to be for public parks".⁸⁰

The "heritage-conservation" grouping registered some successes because Nelson's tourist brochures today list a number of historic buildings and gardens, the preservation of which two at least involved Moncrieff.⁸¹ McAloon concluded that the outcome of the "development-heritage, expansion-conservation" debates, was that "[f]rom the early 1970s Nelson became known as one of the centres of the nation's conservation movement, and as a haven for artists and craftspeople".⁸² Moncrieff, in her advocacy for the preservation of nature and European culture, can be seen to have championed that image throughout her life in Nelson.

⁷⁹ *NEM*, 6 June 1936, p.8.

⁸⁰ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 11 July 1932, MS Papers 0444:193, 1. I found no public confirmation of this remark.

⁸¹ She was involved in campaigns to preserve Anzac Memorial Park (Moncrieff to Cunningham, 14 July 1948) and Isel House (Moncrieff to Cunningham, 12 June 1960); 2.

⁸² McAloon, p.206.

In the 1950s and 1960s the Nelson Institute became controversial through its policies relating to the library and its determination to preserve historic lending procedures. Moncrieff also played an outspoken defence role in this controversy which is used, in the next section, as a window into discussion of her politics, economics, and beliefs on class division. These issues of ideology and power are pertinent to expanding knowledge of her and the way she operated, and to the wider discussion of nature conservation.

By the 1950s the Institute offered a free reference library and reading room for newspapers and periodicals but a rental fiction section.⁸³ Opponents of this system, who included Sonja Davies, then a Nelson City Councillor⁸⁴, proposed that the City Council should take over the library and provide an entirely free service. Davies, who made no secret of her Labour Party allegiance within local body politics, explained her position in the first volume of her autobiography, *Bread and roses*, writing that, "To me, a free library in a community is as essential as free hospitalisation and education", without allowing that the reference section and reading room were already free. She then gave an account of Moncrieff's defence of the status-quo.

A well-known and colourful older citizen, Perrine Moncrieff, opposed it on the grounds that a free library would be a breeding ground for Communism. She did so on the somewhat shaky premise that the National Librarian Geoffrey Alley, was the brother of Rewi Alley who lived in Communist China.⁸⁵

⁸³ Letter to Editor from G.L.Page, the Council Representative on the Institute committee, *NEM*, 30 June 1939, p.9.

⁸⁴ Sonja Davies (1923-), *Bread and roses* (Masterton, 1984), p.129. Davies became a City Councillor in 1961 but was also a member of the Nelson Hospital Board, a member of the Nelson Labour Party Executive and involved in the 1955 "sit-in" to save Nelson's railway. She later became a Vice-President of the Federation of Labour (1983-1986) and then Member of Parliament for Pencarrow (1987-1993); Janet McCallum, "Sonja Davies", in *Women in the house* ([Picton], 1993), pp.214-223; Sonja Davies, *Marching on* (Auckland, 1997).

⁸⁵ Davies, pp.134-136.

In his account of the conflict McAloon adds that Moncrieff also raised the spectre of bureaucratic control and higher rates⁸⁶, which is possibly true given Moncrieff's ideology outlined below, although Davies does not attribute these arguments to Moncrieff. Moncrieff's view of the library controversy can be found in a few paragraphs in letters on mostly ornithological matters to W.R.B.Oliver, whose second wife Helen was a librarian.

Tell Mrs Oliver we had a great go at the meeting of subscribers of the Nelson Institute when they put the motion that we ask the Council to approach the National Library and go Free.

The motion was defeated....I was delighted to find for once real opposition to the left-wing gang[.]⁸⁷

Three months later she wrote, "Tell Mrs Oliver the battle of the library is not yet over but we have shaken them very badly....However as the other side are pretty equal we are having an anxious time[.]"⁸⁸ The controversy continued until 1973.⁸⁹

While these fragments do not disclose exactly why Moncrieff preferred to retain the existing payment system for the rental library, they reveal her aversion to the left wing of the political spectrum. Was this aversion also a heritage from her family in Britain? This is possible, given her knowledge of the "High Tory" ecologists.⁹⁰ But it may have been acquired, or strengthened, during the New Zealand Labour Party's first term in government between 1935 and 1949. What were the reasons for her left-wing antipathy? Several of them can be seen to be encapsulated in the following paragraph entitled "Labour's Purpose".

⁸⁶ McAloon, p.198.

⁸⁷ Moncrieff to Oliver, 9 June 1953, Box WRB Oliver Correspondence and Notes, MONZ. Oliver was an ornithologist, Director of the Dominion Museum and friend of Moncrieff's whose working relationship with her will be examined in later chapters.

⁸⁸ Moncrieff to Oliver, 2 September 1953, Box WRB Oliver Correspondence and Notes, MONZ.

⁸⁹ McAloon, p.198.

⁹⁰ See Chapter 7.

The purpose of the Labour Party is to educate the public in the principles of Co-operation and Socialism, and to elect competent men and women to Parliament and Local Governing Bodies who will pass and administer laws that will ensure the scientific development of the natural resources of New Zealand, and the just distribution of the products among those who render social service.⁹¹

I have no proof that Moncrieff was aware of this summary of Labour Party intentions. But since it headed a letter to the Minister of Lands requesting forestry on Farewell Spit at a time when she was campaigning for the Spit's reservation and was friendly with A.F.Waters, the Nelson Commissioner Crown Lands who shared her views on the Spit's conservation, her knowledge of it is probable. Two principles in the statement, the idea of collectivism embodied in the phrase "Co-operation and Socialism" and the scientific development of natural resources, run counter to Moncrieff's known tenets. Other inherent principles, like the redistribution of wealth, status and power, can be seen to vitiate her interests. As possible reasons for her left-wing antipathy they will be outlined and then analysed.

Moncrieff made plain her individualistic ideology when she spoke against the compulsory fluoridation of Nelson's water supply. "Our fight is not against fluoridation of civic waters alone, but for the freedom of the individual to speak out if he wants to. Otherwise Democracy in New Zealand has given way to a dictatorship of Bureaucracy."⁹² While this public expression of Moncrieff's individualistic ideology occurred only in the late 1950s, perhaps coincidentally during the term of the second Labour government between 1957 and 1960, it was presumably an enduring belief

⁹¹ Heading on letter from Mrs M. Taylor, Secretary, Collingwood Branch of Labour Party to Minister of Lands, 13 May 1936, Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, DOC HO Wellington. The Labour Party naturally wanted work schemes in the Golden Bay area but since the Spit had been investigated in the 1920s for forestry and found unsuitable, the Minister refused the request; report and correspondence, same file.

⁹² She argued that, in Switzerland, no canton had adopted fluoridation but allowed the sale of fluoride tablets and toothpaste for those who wanted to buy them; *NEM*, 4 March 1958, p.4.

related to her romanticism, a doctrine which emphasised the freedom of the individual and championed individual difference.⁹³

In contrast, her views on the development of New Zealand's natural resources had often been publicly expressed. As we know from the previous chapter, she had no faith in scientific orthodoxy. Nor did she perceive economic development in terms of the industrial policies promoted by the first Labour government⁹⁴; rather she saw economic development as promoting heritage and aesthetics to attract tourists and the retired.

The financial restructuring of the first Labour government, as it sought to redistribute New Zealand's wealth, can be seen to have detrimentally affected the Moncrieffs. In the 1935 election campaign, Malcolm Moncrieff expressed concern at what he saw as the consequences of inflation in the policies of Labour and Social Credit. Harry Atmore, Nelson's Independent but Labour-supporting Member of Parliament⁹⁵, offered Malcolm the chance to debate monetary policy at a public meeting the night before the election. In declining, Malcolm wrote that he was not associated with any political party and was not criticising Atmore's aims and ideals, only his method, which appeared to be the inflationary printing of bank notes.⁹⁶ Malcolm re-emphasised his concern in another letter prior to the 1938 election; a vote for Atmore, he said, is a vote for the unsound policy of the New Zealand Labour Party.⁹⁷ Périnne may have been uncomfortable with this judgement on Atmore, whom she had described ten years previously as "a real Nature lover"⁹⁸, and

⁹³ David Pepper, *Modern environmentalism* (London, 1996), p.190.

⁹⁴ G.R.Hawke, "The growth of the economy", in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, (ed) Geoffrey W. Rice (Auckland, 1992 2nd ed), pp.421-423. These policies were also continued by governments under the National Party.

⁹⁵ McAloon, p.177; Shirley Tunnicliff, "Atmore, Harry", *DNZB* 4(1921-1940), p.22.

⁹⁶ *NEM* 1935, 7 November, p.9; 15 November, p.2; 25 November, p.4; 26 November, p.6.

⁹⁷ M.Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 12 October 1938, p.11.

⁹⁸ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 27 July 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1. Atmore supported conservationists' objectives in Parliament; for example, his speech on bush destruction by possum and deer in the 1926 Scenery Preservation Amendment Act, *NZPD*, 210(1926),

who supported her conservation campaigns. Several years later, when the Labour government had implemented its social security programme, under which the "middle-aged [were] expected to act as the major financiers of the increased income pooling"⁹⁹, Pérrine told Sanderson that, "the income-tax people are fairly chewing people like us up and it is hard to know how we shall live at all."¹⁰⁰ While the Moncrieffs' plight could bear little relationship to the suffering of many in the depression, her remark confirms the adverse effect they perceived in Labour's taxation policies on people like themselves whose income was from investments.

The redistribution of status, as it affected her under the Labour government, is less clear cut. She certainly held a wider variety of public positions in the 1920s and 1930s than in later decades. For example, she was asked to form a division of the Girl Guides in Nelson in 1924. She was its Commissioner for three years and during that time was photographed with the Duchess of York (now Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother) when the Guides formed a Guard of Honour for the Yorks' visit to Nelson in 1927.¹⁰¹ In 1935 Pérrine was on the official platform for Nelson's civic welcome to the Duke of Gloucester.¹⁰² She was President of the School Committee of Auckland Point primary school for two years from its opening in 1927, and during her term helped persuade Atmore, as Minister of Education, to sanction extra funding for its grounds.¹⁰³ In the 1930s depression she was on the Ladies Committee

p.348.

⁹⁹ David Thomson, *Selfish generations?* (Wellington, 1991), p.34.

¹⁰⁰ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 14 November 1942, MS Papers 0444:196, 1.

¹⁰¹ The *Nelson Evening Mail* printed few photographs until 1930 when it began to illustrate features like that of Nelson's industry in *NEM*, 4 October 1930. Photographs of the Yorks' visit, including that of Pérrine, were published *NEM*, 15 December 1936.

¹⁰² *NEM*, 7 January 1935, p.5.

¹⁰³ *NEM*, 8 February 1927, p.5; 1 May 1928, p.6; 19 February 1929, p.4; 3 April 1929, p.2.

of the Nelson Relief Committee to Aid Unemployment.¹⁰⁴ Her work was of the long-established kind of charitable aid in which she visited homes to assess the need for food and provisions but, while she classified families into the traditional deserving and undeserving categories, she recognised the humiliation involved for many in such visiting.¹⁰⁵ The variety of these public positions decreased during the 1930s. Although she became a Justice of the Peace in 1943, most of her public positions involved conservation organisations like her Wildlife Ranger appointment in 1947 and her membership of the Board of the Abel Tasman National Park from its founding in 1942 until 1974.¹⁰⁶

Moncrieff was clearly aware of how power operated in policy making at the various levels of political life, and she did not eschew its use at the literal ground level. She exercised the power of "land marking"¹⁰⁷ in buying two areas of land and naming them as Moncrieff Reserves while a small lake, probably formed by the 1929 earthquake, near the Mokihinui River is called Lake Pérrine.¹⁰⁸ At the national political level, Moncrieff was clearly less successful in conservation matters under expansionist Labour and its successors than previous regimes. Although there were several reasons for her tangible

¹⁰⁴ For the genesis and workings of the Relief Committees, which were established locally, to cooperate with central government in providing relief work for the unemployed see, John E. Martin, *Holding the balance* (Christchurch, 1996), pp.167-196.

¹⁰⁵ Moncrieff to Sanderson, [July] 1931, MS Papers 0444:193, 1; *NEM*, 23 December 1931, p.8; Margaret McClure, *A civilised community* (Auckland, 1998), p.6. Moncrieff's comments to Sanderson confirm other stories; see, Tony Simpson, *The sugarbag years* (Auckland, 1984, orig.pub.1974), p.106.

¹⁰⁶ Janet McCallum, "Pérrine Moncrieff", in *Wilderness women*, (eds) Christine Dann and Pip Lynch (Auckland, 1989), p.62. These positions will be discussed in later chapters.

¹⁰⁷ Paul Carter's *The road to Botany Bay* (London, 1987) is an example of this kind of sophisticated analysis of power. Whoever has power can "name" or "land mark", and delineate the use of the "space".

¹⁰⁸ Janet McCallum, "Pérrine Moncrieff: conservationist and trail-blazer on Nelson", *Womens Studies Association (NZ) Conference Papers*, Nelson, August 1988, (ed) Pat Rosier (1989), p.122. Lake Pérrine: latitude 41°33, longitude 172°10; *Gazetteer of New Zealand place names* (Wellington, 1968), p.339. She was tramping in the area in 1934-35 but whether she "named" the lake herself is unknown.

conservation achievements in the gazetting of reserves and national parks¹⁰⁹, a crucial factor was her ability, by personal meetings and correspondence, to persuade senior public servants, local bodies and politicians to her protectionist point of view. By the early 1940s with World War Two in progress, and as the public service and local bodies began to expand to administer an increasingly complex, interventionist, and development-minded era, Moncrieff's personalised, individual form of lobbying was no longer successful. She despaired of further protectionist gains and of uncaring public attitudes exhibited towards other species and nature protection legislation which she believed the government did nothing to modulate, control or uphold.

Moncrieff's recognition of her loss of power and influence, especially since she had been unsuccessful in gathering a large group for the conservation cause, may have provoked her vehement stand for the Institute library which was published by Davies. Did Moncrieff fear that if Davies' "left-wing gang" gained control of the library and consequently the power of choosing what information should be freely available to the public, they would offer left-wing and communist material? Did Moncrieff desire to retain some small influence over its purchases? As a Life Member of the Institute she would have had more prestige with its current administrative Committee than if it had been under City Council aegis.

All these may have contributed to her position in the library debate but she would have also been influenced by Cold-War rhetoric and the anti-communist mood encouraged during the Korean War from 1950 and exacerbated by the 1951 waterfront strike. This conflict, emerging from the efforts of both Labour and National governments to curb militant unionism, not only split the union movement but provoked legislation from National which withdrew many rights normally held by citizens in a democracy. The strike lasted for five months but its atmosphere of fear, suspicion and hatred continued for decades as the "reds under the beds" dogma was invoked by

¹⁰⁹ They will be investigated in Chapter 5.

National in each electioneering campaign.¹¹⁰ Apart from triennial electioneering, a fear of communism could be summoned to help deter change or the introduction of new policies. Davies recorded Moncrieff's use of it in the library debate. Austin Mitchell alluded to it in his analysis of Dunedin's anti-fluoridation campaign, one of many throughout New Zealand in the late 1950s, including Nelson to which I have already referred. Although the bogey of communism was not as profitable in New Zealand as in McCarthyite America, Mitchell suggested, nevertheless it was used. Fluoridation was denounced as "a Communistic Plot to Destroy Christianity" or as a means to "keep the general public docile during a steady encroachment of Communism".¹¹¹ In her speech in the Nelson campaign Moncrieff did not use this scare-tactic. Nor did the organisation to which she belonged, the Organic Compost Society. Founded by a dentist, Guy Chapman, the Society considered fluoridation unnecessary if food was grown organically¹¹², or even dangerous if compulsorily ingested.¹¹³ D.M.Robinson, President of both the Organic Compost Society and of the Anti-Fluoridation Association, (and Mayor of Auckland), specifically dissociated himself from the communism-fluoridation link. However the fear of communism was a current in New Zealand society which perhaps harmonised with Moncrieff's political conservatism, a current she utilised in the library controversy.

She may also have objected to the outspokenness of that particular Nelson left-wing group; to the vigour and confidence displayed by Davies and her associates. Robust argument was nothing new to Moncrieff but in the past it had usually been with her social equals like members of the Nelson Acclimatization Society, some of whom in the 1920s and 1930s were also

¹¹⁰ Robert Chapman, "From Labour to National", in *Oxford History of New Zealand*, (ed) Geoffrey W.Rice, (Auckland, 1992 2nd ed), p.374.

¹¹¹ Austin Mitchell, "Fluoridation in Dunedin: a study of pressure groups and public opinion", *Political Science*, 12:1 March(1960), pp.81,82,72.

¹¹² Jack Meechin, *Healthy soil healthy food healthy people* (Auckland, 1993), p.64. For Moncrieff's association with the Organic Compost Society see Chapter 7.

¹¹³ Mitchell, p.72.

retired British or Indian Army officers. One remark indicates that she was used to deference in her relationships with members of the working class. Recalling her time on the Auckland Point School Committee, she said, "And there I was amongst workmen, the most delightful lot I've ever met....They were most cooperative and I enjoyed my position."¹¹⁴ Perhaps to Moncrieff's mind, Davies and her group failed to show deferential "cooperation". But Moncrieff's ideas on social class were more complex than that one illustration allows for she also wrote, "I have always held that the real divisions of society are not those of money or rank, rather what interests people have in common."¹¹⁵ Categorising people on the basis of their attitudes to the natural world, she could praise working men who protected birds as "big-hearted kind men"¹¹⁶ and condemn a manager for being amused by his dog's frequent slaughter of blue penguins.¹¹⁷ Such re-classification is, like "land-marking", the privilege of the upper class.

Given this outline of possible reasons for her left-wing antipathy, it is not surprising that an examination of her advocacy exposes anomalies, both in her arguments against the bureaucracy and between her nature conservation and her conservatism in political and economic life. As a wealthy, self-assured individualist seeking to influence public policy in the 1920s and 1930s, she had good access to those in power. But there is an anomaly between her condemnation of bureaucratic dictatorship regarding fluoridation and her own use of the bureaucracy to obtain public reserves in the conservation estate. She obtained reservations of land, partly by arguing that these were for the public "good", in providing permanent areas for physical and spiritual refreshment. Like fluoridation, which was also viewed by a later bureaucracy as a public "good", the reservations were funded from public money. Moncrieff ignored the anomaly that, in both cases, bureaucratic "dictatorship"

¹¹⁴ Moncrieff, Radio NZ tape.

¹¹⁵ Périnne Moncrieff, *People came later* [Nelson, 1965], p.104.

¹¹⁶ Moncrieff to Sanderson, [January] 1933, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

¹¹⁷ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 27 May 1942, MS Papers 0444:195, 1.

was being imposed upon the majority after lobbying by a minority, whether herself for reserves or dentists for fluoridation. However there is one crucial difference between reserves and fluoridation; ingestion of the latter was compulsory. As she had strong views on health and "natural" food, there is some mitigation for her blindness to her own use of the bureaucracy.

Then there is the question of Moncrieff's finances. Firstly, under governments prior to Labour, the family directly benefitted from a milder income tax policy.¹¹⁸ Secondly, as she employed domestic staff for most of her life in Nelson, her denigration of industrial cities can be seen to have other motives. Many female workers preferred factory work to domestic or other service-related employment because it gave them independence.¹¹⁹ The availability of alternative employment would make it more difficult and more expensive to employ domestic staff. In addition, Moncrieff associated factories with the growth of material wealth which she also deplored. "The greed for material wealth is too much. [Nelson] cannot look ahead and see the troubles factories bring in their wake."¹²⁰ Her condemnation of other people's desire for independent employment to achieve material comfort seems especially hypocritical given the Moncrieffs' wealth, although at the time of her comment they too were struggling financially. Malcolm was seriously ill and because of this, a business venture collapsed.¹²¹ Nevertheless, as an employer of labour and an advocate for aesthetic surroundings, she would want to minimise factory developments with their "troubles" of smoke pollution and waste disposal.

¹¹⁸ Tom Brooking, "Economic transformation", in *Oxford History*, (ed) Rice, p.246.

¹¹⁹ Eric Olssen, "Women, work and family: 1880-1926", in *Women in New Zealand society*, (eds) Phillida Bunkle and Beryl Hughes (Sydney, 1980), p.162.

Photographs of Riwaka's tobacco factory and Kirkpatrick's jam factory show the numbers of female staff they employed; McAloon, pp.160,165.

¹²⁰ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 11 July 1932, MS Papers 0444:193,1.

¹²¹ Personal communication from Bridget Moncrieff, Périnne's daughter-in-law; [February 1994], 2. Périnne's letters to Sanderson between 1928 and 1932 also confirm Malcolm's ongoing illness and their straitened finances.

Moncrieff's conservation advocacy can thus be seen to have selfish conservative motives, driven by the desire to retain a comfortable lifestyle at the direct economic expense and indirect well-being of others. She did not require employment; she could afford to employ others to work in more arduous, less independent ways; she could afford to pay for her own books (as knowledge) and take part in gate-keeping processes of what books to buy, what public policies to implement. Wealth, education and status gave her the ability to exercise her individualistic ideology and power to impose some decisions on others. She clearly benefitted from such a regime but would possibly lose these powers under a regime at local or national level which was driven by alternative social policies.

Moncrieff conforms to the pattern of many nature conservationists who are from the higher classes or from developed nations. Wealth, power or the knowledge to influence those in power, allow them to advocate the protection of wild nature, which in the past they may have exploited, to attain or display their privileged position. When wild nature is protected by law, the working class or under-developed countries are deprived of sources of income or restricted in the means by which they can improve their own living standards. Many examples of the ambivalence of this conservationist position have been identified. British laws to protect sea birds in the nineteenth century restricted the incomes of those who gathered and sold the eggs for a living.¹²² The declaration of game reserves in Africa for European sport or protection ideals, especially since Europeans had been improvident with the game, prevented traditional hunting for food by Africans.¹²³ The Nazi regime in Germany protected forest and established nature reserves on land from which Jews and Poles had been removed to concentration camps.¹²⁴ Exhortations by late twentieth century environmentalists for all peoples to live "greener" lives have

¹²² Sheail, pp.23,24.

¹²³ MacKenzie, *Empire*, Chapters 9 and 10.

¹²⁴ Anna Bramwell, *Ecology in the 20th century* (New Haven, London, 1989), p.199; Peter J.Bowler, *The Norton history of the environmental sciences* (New York, 1993, orig. pub.1992), p.513.

been criticised by socialists and humanists because the poor of industrialised nations and most people in under-developed countries can remain deprived under these "green" futures.¹²⁵ In contrast, in his examination of environmentalism's origins, Richard Grove points out the numbers of seventeenth and eighteenth century forest conservationists who also articulated social concerns.¹²⁶

However the conservationist position can also be seen as a radical extension of rights. Moncrieff's British heritage documents a history of the efforts of, initially, small bands of people to achieve political, religious, economic and social reform for members of their own or another race, class, age or sex. These bands were necessarily members of the upper classes because they had the leisure and income to permit involvement. The work of the various animal protection societies can be seen as an extension of this movement on behalf of species other than humans. Of course that expansion was qualified; firstly because only some animals were accepted within the ethical pale, and secondly, because the upper classes attacked lower-class pursuits like cock fighting while ignoring their own fox hunting.¹²⁷ But the latter criticism is not that straightforward. Members of the shooting parties at Flamborough Head and hunters in other areas of Britain and overseas were, like John Guille Millais, members of the upper classes. The RSPCA may have ignored upper-class fox hunting but certainly attacked upper-class bird shooting parties. So, while the advocacy of nature conservationists could threaten the traditional livings of those less privileged than themselves, conservationists are redeemed by their extension of intrinsic value to other species. Moncrieff was motivated by her belief that human beings were custodians for other species of the living world. To be true to that trust, she spoke out on behalf of other

¹²⁵ Mary Mellor, *Breaking the boundaries* (London, 1992); Pepper, *Modern*, pp.29,30.

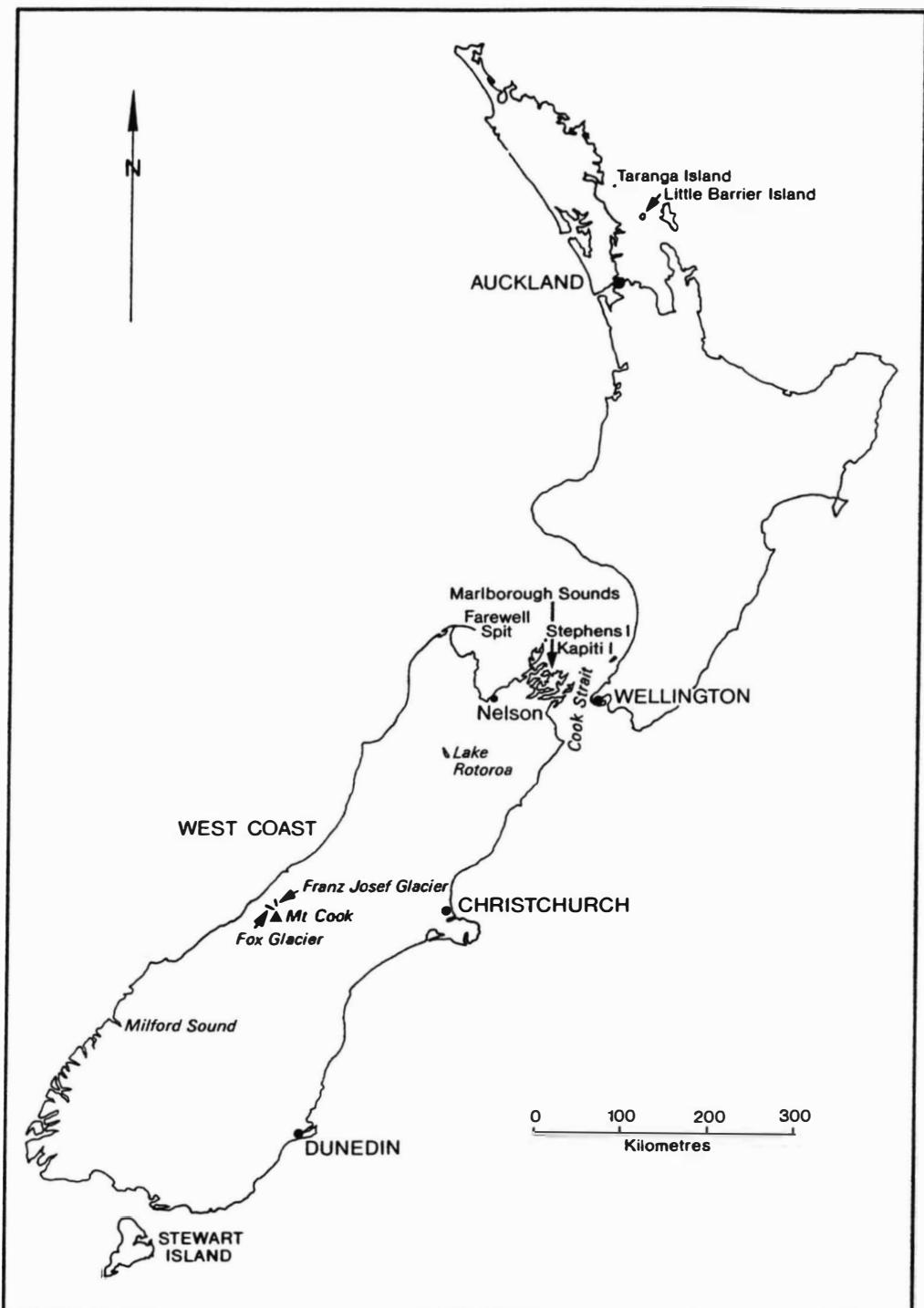
¹²⁶ Richard H.Grove, *Green imperialism* (Cambridge, 1995). Examples of early conservationists working within the European colonial services are found in most chapters.

¹²⁷ Nash, *Rights*, pp.25,26.

species; particularly the birds and trees of New Zealand, which were links back to a long, isolated, pre-human past.

This chapter has explored the family, personal and social streams in Britain which contributed to Pérrine Moncrieff's development as a conservationist. From her Millais family she drew the aesthetic, scientific and preservationist constituents of conservation, financial independence and a confidence in her social status. From her female relatives she gained models who ignored the socially-prescriptive barrier to women's rights and participation in public life. Bringing these characteristics with her to Nelson, she linked into its natural and cultural worlds to provide leadership in the preservation of both types of heritage, even though in Britain she may not have belonged to any conservation society. While there are anomalies between this advocacy and her personal circumstances of wealth, status, influence and the freedom to espouse an individualist code, her inclusive beliefs towards other species can also be interpreted as the further extension of ethics to incorporate species other than humans.





Map of New Zealand showing places of birdwatching interest to P  rline Moncrieff

Drawn by Karen Puklowski

CHAPTER 3

AN AMATEUR SCIENTIST IN THE FIELD

Since birds were Moncrieff's entry to the natural world and the starting point for her conservation, this chapter and the next will examine her involvement with ornithology or the study of birds. Two distinct themes emerge: ornithology as science, whose intention was the extension of knowledge about birds; and ornithology as trusteeship, whose principal purpose was conservation. While the former is more discernible in the 1920s, and the latter in the 1930s and beyond, this apparent progression is modified by elements of trusteeship in the 1920s and of science in the 1930s. Indeed, because of Moncrieff's vitalist ethic, conservation was integral to her science; as she wrote approvingly of a scientifically-conducted bird census in England, "we shall know what birds are rare and protect them more."¹ This chapter investigates Moncrieff's role in field ornithology and more specifically ethology.² Her studies and publications gave her some status in ornithology in the 1920s and 1930s³ but her participation in the scientific discourse became impossible, and was subsequently ignored in ornithological publications, when her vitalist values turned her to ornithology as trusteeship, and as scientific ornithology became professionalised.

¹ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 13 March 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

² In Chapter 1, I established Moncrieff's preference for field study of living birds as opposed to taxonomic ornithology which concentrated on the collection and systematic classification of dead birds.

³ Moncrieff's elevated status in ornithology partly derived from her field guide, *New Zealand birds and how to identify them* and from her leadership role in the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, but since I consider these to be more appropriately "ornithology as trusteeship", they are discussed in Chapter 4.

Moncrieff began to study birds in Britain where she both kept pet birds like budgerigars and observed birds in the wild.⁴ No autobiographical writing survives of the development of her interest in ornithology but Julian Huxley, the field ethologist and conservationist, whose work was known to Moncrieff, provides a likely prototype. Huxley suggested that the first phase is a pleasure in watching living birds for their own sake. Then comes a desire for experiences with birds, in which the birdwatcher is impelled to observe objectively and accurately and record those observations. From the birdwatcher pure and simple, Huxley says, "it is but a step to the bird-watcher naturalist", who is concerned thoroughly and systematically with nature, and is in the habit of questioning and looking for answers about what is seen. Then the next step is the birdwatcher ornithologist who must introduce scientific ideas and method into birdwatching. These include having a theory or idea to test by systematically collecting facts which have a bearing on the theory, reading about it, writing and publishing evidence and conclusions in an orderly arrangement. Finally there is the good scientist who "is rarer, largely because the whole apparatus of scientific research is so elaborate".⁵ Moncrieff did not attain, and probably did not aspire to, the final fifth step. She achieved only a toe print on the fourth but she seems to have developed the first two, and possibly the third, in Britain for in 1925 she described herself as a "naturalist from the Old Country".⁶ After almost twenty years of bird study in New Zealand, she considered herself an ornithologist.⁷

Her methods for recording bird information, which she gives in her book *New Zealand birds and how to identify them*, are likely to be those she

⁴ Moncrieff to Cunningham, 14 July 1948, 2; Interview with Nelson conservationist Henk Heinekamp, 2; Moncrieff to Falla, 2 March [1924], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

⁵ Julian Huxley, "The pleasures of bird-watching", in *Bird-watching and bird behaviour* (London, 1930), pp.4,13-17.

⁶ Périnne Moncrieff, "Yellowheads and other birds at Lake Rotor[oa]", *Emu*, 25(1925-26), p.21.

⁷ In her *Weekly News* article, based on her observations during a trip to Stephens Island in 1933, she wrote, "The ornithologist screened her eyes from the dazzling sunlight...".

followed herself. On birdwatching expeditions, she first recorded the time of day and the weather, then listed the birds seen, their locations, food, activities, numbers and seasonal movements. In spring she made a list of every bird in the neighbourhood, tried to locate each nest and then entered its position on a chart. After choosing a spot to watch a nest unobserved, she made a detailed account of everything seen: time of arrival for both sexes, nest material, feeding, egg incubation, and the behaviour of the young birds. For daily birdwatching she kept a note of the kinds, numbers and, if it was possible, the sex and age of birds seen. At the end of the year, she compiled a record of those notes, classifying each species as rare, common, stationary, migratory or seasonal. By keeping such records, she believed, they could be compared each year, and a district's birdlife history ascertained.⁸

Moncrieff built up her personal knowledge of New Zealand birds in this way, keeping her own records and other information she was given in a filing system very similar to that of her friend and advisor, the scientist W.B.Oliver.⁹ "I have got a case for every bird in N.Z. and as soon as I hear any news I index it so that [I] can put my hand on any bird almost at once."¹⁰ Heinekamp recalled that, whenever she saw a newspaper clipping or article or was given information, she would put it in an envelope with the bird's name on it. The envelopes were stored in boxes.¹¹ In a diary she correlated information about

⁸ Périnne Moncrieff, "Hints on bird observation", *New Zealand birds and how to identify them* (New Zealand, 1936 2nd ed.), pp.29-38.

⁹ Walter Reginald Brook Oliver (1883-1957) was born in Tasmania and came to New Zealand in 1896. An officer in the Customs Department, he was an amateur ornithologist until 1920, when he became the scientific assistant at the Dominion Museum and its Director in 1928. During the 1920s he gained a Master of Science in Botany and a Doctorate in 1934. His book, *New Zealand birds* (Wellington, 1930, 1955), became the standard ornithological reference text; R.K.Dell, "Oliver, Walter Reginald Brook", *DNZB* 4(1921-1940), (Auckland, Wellington, 1998), p.389.

Oliver assembled folders for every group of plants and animals, in which he accumulated all the information he acquired. The folders were then stored systematically in boxes; R.K.Dell, *The first hundred years of the Dominion Museum* (n.p., [1965]), p.160. Among the Oliver Papers at MONZ are lists of birds seen throughout New Zealand including one from P.Moncrieff, "Birds SW Nelson", 21 January 1952.

¹⁰ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 17 November 1925, MS Papers 0444;192, 1.

¹¹ Interview with Henk Heinekamp, 2.

regular events like nesting and migration arrivals and departures so she could compare them from year to year.¹² In the early 1950s, when a large bird of prey which she thought may have been a sea-eagle, was seen throughout Nelson, "I actually worked out a sort of map of its movements for a while which it appeared to use regul[l]arly."¹³

Nelson province was for Moncrieff what Selborne was to Gilbert White, whose writings were familiar to her.¹⁴ Although she visited and observed birds in other places in New Zealand¹⁵, it was with Nelson province, and especially locations like the Maitai valley, Astrolabe in Abel Tasman, the Dun Mountain and later the Baton Valley, that she became intimately familiar. While she did not publish a *Natural history* like White's, and her filing system is not extant, summaries of change can be found, like that for the little blue penguin at Astrolabe, in her book *People came later*.

Those were the early days [late 1920s] "down the Bay" when there were plenty of penguins....Stoats appeared in the vicinity and from then on the penguin population steadily declined. First the concert parties on the beach in the light of the moon were heard no more; then, yearly their burrows ceased to have occupants. One peered into holes in the cliffs where once stood moulting penguins with what looked like quilts of down on the floor and found nothing....[There was] the daily appearance of trim, podgy little corpses afloat on the waves....with the telltale red spots below the throat...¹⁶.

¹² For example, in an article on terns, *NEM*, 14 February 1928, p.7, she compares the arrival of Fairy and Caspian terns in that year with the previous three.

¹³ Moncrieff to Grooby, 1 August [1953], 2.

¹⁴ Pérrine Moncrieff, "Birds in relation to women", *Emu*, 33(1933-34), p.204.

¹⁵ Her papers for *Emu*, the journal of the RAOU, and her autobiographical material record birdwatching trips to the West Coast, Mount Cook, Taranga or Hen Island, the Marlborough Sounds, Milford Sound and Stewart Island.

¹⁶ Pérrine Moncrieff, *People came later* [Nelson, 1965], p.47.

The equipment and research techniques she recommended were the same as those advised by professional ornithologists¹⁷; a notebook, pencil, and a centimetre measure. She also suggested binoculars, a camera to complement written or drawn data, a watch or stopwatch, and possibly a ground sheet and appropriately-painted tent for a "hide". Other research techniques she advocated included reading bird books and the inspection of living and dead birds in zoos, aviaries and museums.

She also gathered information through conversations and correspondence with anyone interested in birds, whether they were members of the public like those who contributed to her "earthquake" survey, other amateur ornithologists or professional scientists. In a letter to Sanderson she described some of her correspondents and how she liked to encourage people to pass on information as the general public did "at home....[T]hey are encouraged to tell all they see and some of it may be very useful".¹⁸ Through her membership of the RAOU and the Ornithological Society of New Zealand, she exchanged information with amateur ornithologists like R.H.D.Stidolph in the 1920s and J.M.Cunningham and J.M.Hawkins in later decades.¹⁹ She looked to professional ornithologists like Oliver and Robert Falla²⁰ for the

¹⁷ For example, James Fisher, *Watching birds* (Harmondsworth, 1946, orig.pub.1941), Chapter 3.

¹⁸ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 7 October 1925, MS Papers 0444:192, 1. "At home" referred to Britain.

¹⁹ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 14 February 1930, MS Papers 0444:193, 1; correspondence between Moncrieff and Cunningham 1940s-1960s, 2; Interview with Jenny Hawkins 1994, 2.

Stidolph, a member of RAOU, contributed many papers to *Emu* and wrote *The birds around us* (Masterton, 1971) about his birdwatching experiences, which was illustrated by his wife Nora, the daughter of Alexander Wilkinson, Caretaker of Kapiti Island sanctuary, and his wife Amy.

John Cunningham was Secretary-Treasurer of OSNZ; Jenny Hawkins was an OSNZ Councillor and Nelson Regional Representative.

²⁰ Robert Alexander Falla (1901-1979), later Sir Robert, was an amateur ornithologist and teacher until he became scientific assistant on the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Expedition under the Australian geologist Sir Douglas Mawson in 1929. Falla's ornithological field work and taxonomy on this expedition gained him a Doctorate in 1937. In 1931 he joined the Auckland War Memorial Museum, became Director of the Canterbury Museum in 1937 and Director of the Dominion Museum in 1947, succeeding Oliver. He wrote many ornithological papers and collaborated with R.B.Sibson and E.G.Turbott on *A*

latest taxonomy and identification of unusual birds. With all of these people she revelled in discussion of birds and birdwatching, although with scientists like Oliver, her enthusiasm was tempered by her realisation that her vitalist perspective differed from their world-view. In her opinion, they were not "bird lovers" or "real lovers of Nature" because they could allow birds to be killed for classification and "type" collections, possibly harmed in ethological experiments, or not given full protection. Although Moncrieff believed Oliver's *New Zealand birds* to be "on the whole very good", she was dismayed that he judged the native pigeon or kereru as "good food" when it was legally protected, and failed to give the skylark any benefit in economic ornithology. "I pointed out to him that both English and American Journals of Agriculture had not condemned the skylark....Why condemn it sweepingly without scientific proof and yet he says he is a scientist."²¹ Her attitude to Falla waxed and waned. Until he became a professional scientist, she appears to have been open and frank with him as if he shared her holistic world-view. But this changed in the 1930s when Falla became a museum scientist; she became cautious in passing on to him any information on endangered birds which she acquired. In the 1940s, this suspicious attitude moderated, perhaps because she again recognised in Falla beliefs akin to her own; for as Charles Fleming described him,

his work for conservation had an even stronger motivation than science. He called himself a 'sentimental scientist', recognizing the role of personalized attitudes as well as scientific methods and approaches and, above all, the need to communicate....In his views on particular conservation issues, he sometimes held stubbornly to unpopular opinions; for instance, he believed mankind was poisoning the land with weedkillers and by the

field guide to the birds of New Zealand (London, Auckland, 1966); C.A.Fleming, "Obituary: Sir Robert Falla", *Emu*, 80(1980-81), pp.41-44; R.K.Dell, "Falla, Robert Alexander", *DNZB* 4, p.166.

²¹ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 24 October 1930, MS Papers 0444:193, 1. These comments were on Oliver's first edition. In the second, he placed the kereru as good food in the past tense, and noted Collinge's research on the beneficial aspects of the skylark's eating habits; pp.440,621. Kereru continue to be hunted for food; *Forest and Bird*, 267(February 1993), pp.18-23.

'blind crazy use of pesticides' for control of introduced animals.²²

In contrast to both Oliver and Falla, Moncrieff believed John Myers, the ecologist, "was a real lover of birds whilst having the scientific knowledge to back up his statements".²³ Moncrieff's research techniques, therefore, included her own field observations, photography and sketches, reading bird books and gathering a range of information from contemporaries.

Evidence that she had passed through Huxley's first two phases of birdwatching is contained in her *Emu* paper, "Fantails in Nelson Province, New Zealand". In it she described the different locations in her garden where both black and pied fantails had nested during the years of the Moncrieffs' residence, with descriptions of nests, food, behaviour, feather colouring and enemies. But a considerable part of the paper is a minute-by-minute description of nest building by a pair of pied fantails between 11.07 am and 2.30 pm (approximately for she did not give her exact departure time) on the windy and cold day of 20 September 1929. She noted what materials each brought, the way they worked them into the shape, how long they remained, their movements and chirps.²⁴

Other writing, on the saddleback, reveals her attainment of Huxley's third stage of "birdwatcher naturalist". She asked questions of what she saw, read widely about its mainland survival and contributed to an ongoing debate about its young. Her interest in the species increased after saddlebacks from

²² Fleming, Obit.; Moncrieff to Falla, 23 May [1924], MS Papers 2366:67, 3; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 16 April 1939, MS Papers 0444:194, 1; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 23 August 1944, MS Papers 0444:196, 1.

Charles Fleming (1916-1987), later Sir Charles, worked for the New Zealand Geological Survey, becoming Chief Paleontologist after being awarded a doctorate. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, an Honorary Fellow of the RAOU, and served as President of the Royal Society of New Zealand and the OSNZ; C.A.Fleming, *Science, settlers and scholars* (Wellington, 1987), p.158.

²³ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 23 August 1944, MS Papers 0444:196, 1. For Myers, see Chapter 1.

²⁴ Pérrine Moncrieff, "Fantails in Nelson Province, New Zealand", *Emu*, 31(1931-32), pp.111-117.

Taranga Island were caught and transferred to Kapiti by Sanderson, Harold Hamilton from the Dominion Museum and A.S. Wilkinson, Kapiti's curator, in 1925.²⁵ That year she speculated on the species' survival in the South Island, despite the assumption of its extinction there, because of several field observations. The first was her finding a relatively-recent nest similar to a saddleback's in a deep, isolated valley near Whangamoa between Blenheim and Nelson. After comparing it to an illustration of a saddleback's nest in Walter Buller's *A History of the birds of New Zealand*²⁶, she sent it to Oliver at the Dominion Museum, who seemingly confirmed it and labelled it as such.²⁷ Her second observation concerned large flocks of yellowheads she saw around Lake Rotoroa and their relationship with saddlebacks, because the two species were known in the past to have associated in the search for insects. Putting together the nest, the plentiful yellowheads, the remoteness of both the Whangamoa valley and Lake Rotoroa, she speculated on whether the saddleback could still exist in inaccessible forested areas of the Marlborough-Nelson region. She argued that it could, given remoteness, the birds' own protection of dark colouration, and few opportunities for human identification. "We can say that a bird is extinct, but until we have searched the whole Island with a small-tooth comb, we cannot prove [it]."²⁸ A year or so later, she was told by a gold prospector that he had twice seen saddlebacks in a gorge of the Wairau

²⁵ By coincidence Moncrieff travelled on the train from Auckland to Wellington with the saddlebacks; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 2 November 1925, MS Papers 0444:192, 1. For the transferral, see also, A.S. and Amy Wilkinson, *Kapiti bird sanctuary* (Masterton, 1952), pp.82-86; Ross Galbreath, *Working for wildlife* (Wellington, 1993), p.89.

²⁶ Walter Lawry Buller (1838-1906), later Sir Walter, was born in New Zealand and became a wealthy lawyer. As a boy he collected New Zealand birds. In contributing to the taxonomic process of nomenclature and classification, to collections in Europe, and in publishing the two editions of *A history of the birds of New Zealand* (London, 1873 and 1887-1888), he became pre-eminent in New Zealand ornithology. He also wrote a *Supplement to "The birds of New Zealand"* in 1905-06; Ross Galbreath, *Walter Buller* (Wellington, 1989), and "Colonisation, science and conservation: the development of colonial attitudes toward the native life of New Zealand with particular reference to the career of the colonial scientist Walter Lawry Buller (1838-1906)", PhD thesis in History (University of Waikato, 1989).

²⁷ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 16 September [1925], MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

²⁸ Moncrieff, "Yellowheads", p.26.

River. Because she thought that he "would make no mistake", she believed "they are still about."²⁹

Moncrieff's hypothesis about saddleback young, or jackbird, was more substantial. It occurred in the context of a debate on Buller's change of mind between the first and second editions of his *History*, as to whether the brown-coloured, unsaddled jackbird was a saddleback in an immature state of plumage, or a distinct species. Moncrieff began her research by reading recent conclusions by H. Guthrie-Smith³⁰, Oliver, Wilkinson and Stidolph and older accounts like those of T.H.Potts³¹ and Andreas Reischek.³² She summarised the contemporary situation as a need to reconcile evidence that the jackbird state did not occur in the north of New Zealand, was present for a short time in the centre of New Zealand but for a much longer time in the south of the country. Her hypothesis was,

²⁹ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 7 December 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1. Forty years later she evidently sent this material to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research who asked for any further information; Ian Atkinson (Botany Division) to Moncrieff, 5 January 1970, MS Papers 5642:01, WTU. South Island saddlebacks may still have lived on the mainland in the 1920s but both species are found today only on offshore islands; Barrie Heather and Hugh Robertson, *Field guide to the birds of New Zealand* (Auckland, 1996), pp.418,419.

³⁰ William Herbert Guthrie-Smith (1862-1940). Born in Scotland, he came to New Zealand in 1880 and farmed the Hawkes Bay sheep station Tutira. As well as *Tutira*, he also published his observations and photographs of birds in *Mutton Birds and other birds* (Christchurch, 1914); *Bird life on island and shore* (Edinburgh, 1925); *Birds of the water wood & waste* (Wellington, 1927 2nd ed); and his reminiscences in *Sorrows and joys of a New Zealand naturalist* (Dunedin, 1936); Ronda Cooper, "William Herbert Guthrie-Smith", *DNZB* 3(1901-1920), (Auckland, Wellington, 1996), p.192.

³¹ Thomas Henry Potts (1824-1888). Potts, who came to New Zealand in 1854, was a wealthy Canterbury runholder with an interest in watching indigenous birdlife and flora in the wild. His articles were collected and published in *Out in the open* (Christchurch, 1882 Reprint 1976). See Paul Star, "T.H.Potts and the origins of conservation in New Zealand (1850-1890)", MA thesis in History (University of Otago, 1992); Paul Star, "Potts, Thomas Henry", *DNZB* 2(Wellington, 1993), p.396.

³² Andreas Reischek (1845-1902) collected for museums and published his bird observations in *TPNZI* in the 1880s. After he returned home to Austria (with Maori artifacts as well as wildlife), he wrote a book on his New Zealand experiences which was published in English in 1930 as, *Yesterdays in Maoriland*, (trans) H.E.L.Priday (London, 1930); Michael King, *The collector* (Auckland, 1981).

that climate is the main factor which determines whether the young saddleback dons the adult plumage straight off or passes into a brownish plumage for a short or long period....[and therefore] it cannot be argued that these birds were a subspecies....Either climate or difference in food - possibly both - has wrought the change and the writer is inclined to believe that the former will be found mainly responsible. Warmth favours the direct change from nestling to adult plumage, and cold prolongs the jack-bird phase.³³

The crucial role of climate could have been suggested by her knowledge of European birds; "low temperature having the effect of increasing the size of birds of prey."³⁴ She then tested her theory by trying to obtain further data from birds on Taranga Island.³⁵ But, "[a]lthough not much fresh information was obtained bearing on the all-important question, it will be seen that the data collected corroborates those scientists who state that the jack-bird is not to be found in the North Island."³⁶ Therefore a reader would have to conclude that her hypothesis remained unproved.

The debate was continued by Oliver in his first edition of *New Zealand birds*. He agreed with Moncrieff to the extent that latitude change might be responsible but "it is inconceivable that [the brown stage] could have been acquired as a result of transferring the birds the season before".³⁷ Another amateur ornithologist, Edgar Stead³⁸, appeared to settle the problem of the

³³ Périnne Moncrieff, "New Zealand saddlebacks (*Creiodion carunculatus*)", *NZJS&T*, 10(1928-29), pp.338,339.

³⁴ Périnne Moncrieff, "A review of the Genus *Nesierax*", *Emu*, 26(1926-27), p.277.

³⁵ She visited Taranga or Hen Island in December 1927, describing the birds, vegetation and topography in another paper entitled "A visit to Taranga, Hen and Chickens Group (N.Z.)", *Emu*, 28(1928-29), pp.100-110. Following her belief in not disclosing the whereabouts of rare birds, she made no mention of the saddleback in her list of birds seen; Moncrieff to Sanderson, [March 1928], MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

³⁶ Moncrieff, "Saddlebacks", p.339. In this article she did not disclose the name of the island sanctuary, identifying it only as an island visited by Reischek.

³⁷ Oliver, *Birds* (1930), pp.498,499.

³⁸ Edgar Stead (1881-1949) was a New Zealand ornithologist in the mould of Buller and Moncrieff's uncle, J.G.Millais, whom Stead knew in Britain. He was the last notable private collector, donating his collection to the Canterbury museum. Among professional scientists like Falla he had an unparalleled reputation as a field observer, his experiences being

length of the immature brown stage after he spent five weeks on islands off Stewart Island where the saddleback still existed, as well as observing birds on Taranga. In the south the young had brown plumage but one such bird herself had a chick. In the north the young were coloured like their parents but, he suggested, were somewhat duller and lived as single birds in the breeding season. He argued that the central New Zealand short stage could not be accepted because Buller had seen a "saddled" juvenile on Stephens Island in Cook Strait and suggested that Oliver had been misled by Wilkinson's faulty observation. Apart from quoting Oliver's quote of 'Mrs M.M.Moncrieff', he ignored, as Oliver had also, her theory of climate.³⁹ In his second edition in 1955 Oliver omits her theory on the juvenile plumage but reports her findings of saddleback nest and her descriptions of the bird's calls.

With studies on the hawk and falcon and on migration Moncrieff moved into Huxley's fourth category, that of birdwatcher ornithologist. For these she employed a cooperative methodology; a simpler version for her research on the hawk and the falcon, but a more complex method for her study of bird migration. For the former she wrote four articles in 1925 for the *Nelson Evening Mail*, in which she holistically combined ornithological information with folk sayings and descriptions taken from literature and paintings. She then appealed to readers to send her any information they might have on hawks and falcons.⁴⁰ This method of research was not new to New Zealand as both James Drummond⁴¹ and G.M.Thomson⁴² had used similar techniques but

recorded in several papers and his book *The life histories of New Zealand birds* (London, 1932). See E.G.Turbott, "Stead, Edgar Fraser", *DNZB* 4, p.491.

³⁹ E.F.Stead, "The New Zealand saddlebacks", *TPRSNZ*, 6(1936), pp.185-187.

⁴⁰ Moncrieff, "Hawks", *NEM*, 1925 19 September, p.13, 26 September, p.3, 3 October, p.4, 10 October, p.4.

⁴¹ James Drummond (1869-1940) collaborated with F.W.Hutton on *The animals of New Zealand* (Wellington, 1904). Drummond was a journalist on several New Zealand newspapers including The *Christchurch Star* although his natural history columns were syndicated throughout New Zealand. He also appealed in his columns for information, and in 1908, had sent out a nationwide questionnaire to collect data on wildlife; L.E. Lochhead, "Preserving the brownies' portion: a history of voluntary nature conservation organisations in New Zealand 1888-1935", PhD thesis in Parks, Recreation and Tourism [now Human and Leisure Sciences], (Lincoln University, 1994), pp.224,225; R.K.Dell, "Drummond, James

Moncrieff's was the first such effort for nearly twenty years. She was particularly interested in information on the falcon because she wanted to check an earlier theory that two species of falcon existed in New Zealand. She told Falla that the information she was getting led her to believe that the locality theory, (that is, smaller birds in the warmer North Island, larger ones in the colder South), could not be held. Otago, for example, she wrote, had small birds as well as large.⁴³ Her conclusions were that New Zealand has two sizes but one species of falcon. The larger size was diminishing in numbers because the species was adjusting itself to new conditions as human settlement proceeded, by becoming smaller, faster, and requiring less food. Consequently it was less competitive with humans.

Gradually the larger bird which sought the plains is becoming rarer and rarer, because the polymorphic species capable of producing either large or small birds is gradually conforming to the smaller type, which is more likely to survive - it can seek its food most of the year round, in the wooded country, where man, who every day makes the plains more untenable, has not as yet penetrated in large numbers.⁴⁴

Falla and Oliver had critiqued earlier drafts. Both urged caution in the advancement of theories. Falla concluded that publication was a good idea but suggested she "make it clear that your paper is only clearing the ground."⁴⁵ Oliver considered that making theories was "rather dangerous". He asked for her evidence and whether she had considered that the smaller form was the

Mackay", *DNZB* 3, p.142.

⁴² Thomson devised a newspaper questionnaire on the evolution of introduced species in 1890; Paul Star, "From acclimatisation to preservation: colonists and the natural world in southern New Zealand 1860-1894", PhD thesis in History (University of Otago, 1997), pp.277,278.

⁴³ Moncrieff to Falla, 6 May [1926], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

⁴⁴ Moncrieff, "Nesierax", pp.273-281. The classification *Nesierax*, under which there were thought to be two species of falcon, the larger quail hawk and the smaller bush or sparrow hawk, has been replaced by *Falco*. There is one species, *Falco novaeseelandiae*, or karearea, bush hawk or sparrow hawk. The bird commonly called a hawk is the Australasian harrier, *Circus approximans*, or kahu; Heather and Robertson, pp.274-278.

⁴⁵ Falla to Moncrieff, 6 July 1926, MS Papers 5642:18, WTU.

only one "that is surviving in the struggle for existence. It is such criticisms as these that will be directed against your theories if you publish them."⁴⁶ However he thought the final version, with its conclusion of only one species, was "a very good review of the position and should certainly be published."⁴⁷ Her theory of adaptive size in the falcon, like her hypothesis of the role of climate in saddleback development, was ignored in subsequent research although Oliver mentioned her paper in both his editions.⁴⁸ Today climate is believed to affect size and colour of warm-blooded animals. Smaller species with increased melanin pigments are found in warmer regions and larger species in colder areas⁴⁹ so the "locality theory" still stands, while her theory of adaptive size also remains unproved.

About the same time she organised a larger enquiry into bird migration, then a subject of international interest and conservation concern. Wishing "people would keep records of the different birds they see at different times of the year"⁵⁰, she devised and sent out a questionnaire dated 1 March 1926. In her accompanying letter of explanation, she remarked on the interest in migration studies overseas and on long-distance migration in New Zealand, and suggested that knowledge of partial migration would also be valuable. Respondents were asked to make lists of resident birds, but to note the dates of any disappearances and returns; lists of rare birds, and regular, irregular and accidental visitors; geographical directions of migrating birds, whether singly or in flocks and flock size; and irregularly-marked birds. They were also asked to send feathers of birds found dead. Moncrieff asked them to keep these lists between March and the end of November of that same year, 1926; that is, between the autumn migration and the spring inward flow, as well as

⁴⁶ Oliver to Moncrieff, 28 June 1926, MS Papers 5642:08, and 7 June 1926, MS Papers 5642:18, WTU.

⁴⁷ Oliver to Moncrieff, 11 January 1927, MS Papers 5642:18, WTU.

⁴⁸ Oliver, *Birds* (1930), p.388; (1955), p.424.

⁴⁹ C.A. Fleming, *George Edward Lodge* (Wellington, 1982), p.21.

⁵⁰ Moncrieff, "New Zealand Birds" lecture, NEM, 5 July 1924, p.3.

partial migration in winter. All the information was to be "collected for scientific purposes" and would be distributed amongst ornithologists.⁵¹

She received approximately sixty replies, counting those she thanked especially and those named in the text. Some were fellow members of the RAOU and of Forest and Bird like Falla, Oliver, Sanderson and Stidolph. Thomson also took part.⁵² But there were notable absences including Guthrie-Smith and Drummond. Nevertheless it seems an adequate response for a task which required ongoing care over nine months, requested by someone new to New Zealand, in a country with no widespread, sustained history of naturalist or ornithological field study.⁵³ Moncrieff acknowledged that the ratio of responses to distribution was small although she does not specify the number nor exactly to whom she sent them. A likely list would include the New Zealand Institute and its constituent Philosophical Societies since she was a member⁵⁴, members of the RAOU and Forest and Bird. She also sent it to the manned lighthouses, since she regretted that no lighthouse keepers had replied as their data, from isolated or migration-gathering areas, would have been valuable.⁵⁵ She may also have contacted shipping companies since she

⁵¹ Moncrieff, Questionnaire, 1 March 1926, MS Papers 0444:192, 1. The results were published in three papers in *Emu*, "Bird migration in New Zealand", 28(1928-29), pp.138-149, pp.215-225, pp.301-313. Moncrieff appeared to be pleased with her migration study because she listed it first under her "Principal Papers" in her Autobiographical details, 2.

⁵² Moncrieff's questionnaire stimulated Thomson to look up his Southland and Dunedin diaries from 1868 on bird disappearance from those settlements; Thomson, "Disappearance of birds from settled districts", *NZJS&T*, 9(1927-28), p.42.

⁵³ Lochhead has described the activities of a number of nineteenth and early twentieth century conservationist groups but they were short-lived and focused more on scenic and forest preservation than birds.

As a rough comparison, a survey of the shining cuckoo, conducted by H. Barraclough Fell of Victoria University in 1945-46 using the same method, distributed 5000 questionnaires of which 223 were returned by participants including Moncrieff; H. Barraclough Fell, "The migration of the New Zealand bronze cuckoo, *Chalcites lucidus lucidus* (Gmelin)", *TPRSNZ*, 76(1947), pp.504-515.

⁵⁴ The Institute was based in Wellington and in 1925 had constituent members in Auckland, Canterbury, Otago, Hawke's Bay, Manawatu, Wanganui and Nelson; *TPNZI*, 1926, p.788.

⁵⁵ R. Stuart-Sutherland, a keeper at Puysegur Point in 1919 and Cuvier Island in 1923 who was a member of RAOU, wrote articles for *Emu*, 19(1919-20), pp.133-135 and 23(1923-24), pp.34-42. He may have left the Service or have chosen not to respond. New Zealand had

received a report from one Chief Engineer. "If all coastal boats had keen observers like Mr Balthrop, we should know more about ocean birds than at present."⁵⁶ She regretted that some areas were covered more fully than others but regarded the venture as but a beginning to migration study.

It is therefore dangerous to draw too certain conclusions from the information received, but this paper is the frame-work whereon to build further observations on migration. Like a scaffolding, it is of necessity very rough, and in time can be pulled down for something better, but without a beginning there can be no finished work.⁵⁷

Moncrieff compiled all the observations into three categories; type of migration, geographical areas, colouration or albinism, and a map with numbered locations for her respondents. The body of the paper reviewed the reports and summarised the type of migration for each species including historical information. The birds were arranged in a scientific classification, a suggestion she may have received from Oliver to whom she first submitted the manuscript. Originally she had listed the birds alphabetically, "to assist the general public", apparently with the intention of publishing it. But as that proved too expensive - she said it would cost £30 to print and send a copy to all her respondents - Oliver may have suggested RAOU publication with a slightly increased scientific input.⁵⁸

She developed several theories from the sightings including a possible Tasman migration by pied oystercatchers. She speculated that a flock which had assembled with godwits at Tahuna Beach, Nelson, in March, had flown up from the south. They spent a few days there before flying north but not towards Farewell Spit. Because they were not seen at Kapiti Island she suggested they were either going to the north of the North Island or to Tasmania and the Australian mainland. Oliver confirms the northerly

⁵⁶ 43 lighthouses in 1926; *New Zealand Official Year Book* (1926), p.361.

⁵⁷ Moncrieff, "Migration", p.147.

⁵⁸ Moncrieff, "Migration", p.138.

⁵⁸ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 13 March 1928, MS Papers 0444:192,1.

migration within New Zealand in his second edition⁵⁹ but does not mention the birds' migration in his first. She also speculated that the pied stilt might likewise migrate, not only to the north of the North Island but also to Australia; but again only the former was confirmed by Oliver.

The information gained in the survey could have been used in subsequent research but, apart from Oliver's acknowledgment of her paper in 1955, there is no evidence that ornithologists did so. Fell used the same scheme to check migration of the shining cuckoo but did not include her paper in the references although she was one of the observers.⁶⁰ However, her research demonstrates that she had achieved the status of "birdwatcher ornithologist": that she was asking questions of what she saw, proposing answers and looking for evidence, and publishing conclusions in an orderly manner. She moved a step further into this category when she participated in a scheme to ring or band⁶¹ keas, a bird she was vitally interested in because she considered the whole species to be unjustifiably classed as vermin when perhaps only the occasional bird attacked sheep. The kea's rehabilitation was begun by her and Myers in 1924. "It is time we engendered a little healthy scepticism about the wickedness of the kea", he wrote to her. "If you publish your West Coast notes I will follow them up with a note in the Journal of Science (sic) - is that a bargain?"⁶²

⁵⁹ Oliver, *Birds*, (1955), p.247.

⁶⁰ Fell, "Migration".

⁶¹ Although Galbreath in *Wildlife* (pp.59-60) highlights the early use of the English term "ring" in contrast to the Wildlife Service use of the American "band", both terms were employed in New Zealand when the technique began here. Moncrieff used both.

⁶² [Myers] to Moncrieff, 10 January 1924, MS Papers 5642:06, WTU. The kea had been presented as a sheep killer by Potts; "Kia, kea, or sheep-killer", in *Out and about*, pp.184-193, and by George R.Marriner, *The kea: a New Zealand problem* (Christchurch, 1908). See, J.G.Myers, "The present position of the endemic birds of New Zealand", *NZJS&T*, 6:2(1923), pp.65-99 and J.G.Myers, "The relation of birds to agriculture", *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture*, 29 (1924), pp.25-35; Perrine Moncrieff, "Birds seen along the West Coast to the Franz Josef glacier, New Zealand", *Emu*, 24(1924-25), p.63.

She had evidently begun to gather first-hand information the previous year; see, Browning to Moncrieff, 28 February 1923, 5 March 1924, MS Papers 5642:01, WTU.

From her first public speech on birds she had advocated ringing⁶³, in which aluminium rings were placed on the legs of birds. The rings were numbered for identification and engraved with an address for their return when birds were found dead or were killed. The information gained helped map migration routes, and determine the correlation of weather and bird movements, the regularity of movement patterns and birds' ages. In her migration paper Moncrieff twice mentioned the necessity for ringing here, suggesting that such a tame bird as the kererū would lend itself to the practice.⁶⁴ In 1930 she advocated a ringing scheme to ascertain whether keas moved between Canterbury's sheep country where they were shot as vermin, and Westland's glaciers where they were considered an asset to the tourist industry. She believed that the West Coast keas could be easily identified because of a deeper colouring but that ringing would prove their residence so they could then be protected.⁶⁵ In 1935 Moncrieff was involved in two international queries involving ringing; one from Germany about ringed "stragglers" at Farewell Spit and the other from the United States requesting details of New Zealand banding schemes.⁶⁶ In this reply to J.W.A. Heenan⁶⁷, the newly appointed Under-Secretary of Internal Affairs, she commended the scheme, perhaps because she knew the Department of Agriculture intended to

⁶³ Mrs M.M. Moncrieff, "New Zealand Birds" lecture, *NEM*, 5 July 1924, p.3.

⁶⁴ Moncrieff, "Migration", p.145.

⁶⁵ Pérrine Moncrieff, "Certain introduced birds of New Zealand", *Emu*, 30(1930-31), p.224.

⁶⁶ Moncrieff to Heenan, 15 May 1935, Birds - German Research Station file, IA 1/47/31, NA.

⁶⁷ Joseph William Allan Heenan (1888-1951), Under-Secretary for Internal Affairs from 1935 until 1949, has been described as "one of a small group of very talented and influential public administrators of this era"; Rachel Barrowman, "'Culture-organising'. Joe Heenan and the beginnings of state patronage of the arts", *New Zealand studies. A publication of the Stout Centre*, 6:2(1996), p.3. Heenan trained as a lawyer. He worked in the Crown Law Office and Internal Affairs where the wide range of responsibilities matched Heenan's own inclinations in literature, sports administration, racehorse breeding and racing, as well as conservation; Rachel Barrowman, "Heenan, Joseph William Allan", *DNZB* 4, pp.230-232.

announce a two shilling and sixpence bounty on kea beaks.⁶⁸ Heenan passed Moncrieff's request to the Department of Agriculture⁶⁹ and she herself wrote to the Minister of Agriculture but to no avail.⁷⁰

However Moncrieff accomplished her plan in 1937 after she had gained the assistance of Peter and Alex Graham, the former mountaineers and guides but then proprietors of the Glacier Hotel at Franz Josef⁷¹, and rings from the United States.⁷² The *Nelson Evening Mail* reported that the Nelson branch of the Forest and Bird Society, in conjunction with guides at Franz Josef, was to ring keas at the glacier to obtain definite information about their habits, haunts and movements; whether they travelled "North or South, across the dividing range of mountains, or spend their life around the Glacier."⁷³ Readers were asked to report any details of dead, ringed birds found to the address on the ring. The report added that this sort of scientific work was carried out in Britain, Europe and the United States but this was the first time it had been attempted in New Zealand. Moncrieff may have been unaware that game birds were ringed in 1911 and black swans from 1935 by Acclimatisation Societies but she would probably have known of L.E.Richdale's ringing of yellow-eyed

⁶⁸ "Destruction of keas", *NEM*, 7 December 1935, p.6. Four years later the Department again increased the bounty, urging the "extermination" of keas; *NEM*, 20 April 1939, p.7.

⁶⁹ Moncrieff to Heenan, 15 May 1935, op.cit.; Note Heenan to Director General, Agriculture, 24 May 1935.

⁷⁰ Moncrieff to Min. Agriculture, [undated]; Min. Agriculture to Moncrieff, 7 January 1936, MS Papers 5642:07, WTU.

⁷¹ "Our guides will be glad to do what they can to have a number of kea ringed"; Alex Graham to Moncrieff, 12 November 1936, MS Papers 5642:07, WTU. Moncrieff had mentioned Peter Graham's interest in keas in her *Emu* paper, "West Coast". In Peter Graham's autobiography there is a photograph of him holding a kea but no ring can be seen; H.B.Hewitt (ed), *Peter Graham, mountain guide* (Wellington, 1965), between pp.2 and 3. Jim Wilson, "Graham, Alexander Carter (1881-1957) and Peter (1878-1961)", *DNZB* 3, pp.184,185.

⁷² Moncrieff to Min. Agriculture [undated], op.cit.

⁷³ *NEM*, 12 June 1937, p.2.

penguins in 1936.⁷⁴ She may have meant that ringing as a migration study was innovative in New Zealand.

This newspaper announcement raises more questions than it answers. Did she help ring the birds? How long was the scheme pursued? Were any records kept? But the most tantalising aspect of this experiment is that its results are unknown. The fact that the birds had been banded was mentioned during the formation of the OSNZ in 1939-40 with the suggestion that further banding could be among the Society's activities⁷⁵, but whether any banded birds were ever found or any information gained is not known.

Moncrieff's earlier cooperative studies were originally designed to provide new information for her most ambitious proposal, the publication of a modern reference book on birds similar to Buller's second edition of *New Zealand birds*. Although it was jointly planned with Falla, and he was as enthusiastic as she⁷⁶, the idea is likely to have been hers for two reasons. She had just published her first edition of *New Zealand birds and how to identify them* and would have had experience of book publishing which Falla at that time lacked, and she had the example of her uncle's folio volumes. The book was to be a cooperative undertaking, modelled on *The British bird book* of 1910-1913, which had been edited by F.B.Kirkman with contributions by leading British ornithologists, to provide knowledge of field studies.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Roderick O.Cossee, "Bird banding", *A flying start*, (eds) B.J.Gill and B.D.Heather (Albany, 1990), p.11.

⁷⁵ Press statement by Professor B.J.Marples, *Otago Daily Times*, 16 March 1939, enclosed in Birds German Research Station file, IA 1/47/31, NA.

Marples, the catalyst in the formation of the OSNZ, which will be discussed below, was Professor of Zoology at Otago University. In 1937 he came to New Zealand from Britain where his parents had been keen amateur ornithologists, while he himself had been involved with field work for the British Trust for Ornithology and its precursors; "B.J.Marples", *Flying*, pp.64,65.

⁷⁶ After visiting a number of ornithologists in 1925 he said, "The whole prospect seems to me very hopeful." Falla to Moncrieff, 29 May 1925, MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

⁷⁷ Prospectus to New Zealand ornithologists, as possible contributors, from Falla and Moncrieff, [1925], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

Moncrieff and Falla considered that, "it is no longer possible for one person, no matter how gifted, to treat the subject adequately....It is therefore proposed that...each order of birds be...treated by a specialist on these birds". The text was to include a taxonomical description, field studies of such aspects as distribution and migration, the bird's life history and habits, "and any interesting information ...such as Maori legends and folk lore."⁷⁸

They also hoped to include an entirely new series of coloured plates. Moncrieff was about to make enquiries for an artist in Britain when she heard that there were already in New Zealand ninety paintings by the English artist, George Lodge, who had helped illustrate *The British bird book*.⁷⁹ Drummond had commissioned them in 1912 for a proposed book but the New Zealand government had paid for them and therefore owned them. Charles Fleming, who was eventually to produce *George Edward Lodge. The unpublished bird paintings* after various proposals collapsed, relates in his Introduction the story of their preparation.⁸⁰ Moncrieff enquired from Drummond whether she and Falla could use them but Drummond would not relinquish them as he still intended to write his book.⁸¹ In 1928 he submitted part of the manuscript but Oliver, as Director of the Dominion Museum, when asked to comment on its publication value thought it inadequate for a modern text.⁸² Oliver, simultaneously engaged in the preparation for his own book which appeared in 1930, could thus be seen to exclude a rival, and moreover an amateur

The German ornithologist Erwin Stresemann believed Kirkman's book "led to the tremendous increase in field ornithology in England."; Erwin Stresemann, *Ornithology* (London, 1975), p.344.

⁷⁸ Prospectus.

⁷⁹ Moncrieff to Drummond, 5 September [1925], Item 209, Drummond Papers, Canterbury Museum Archives, Christchurch.

⁸⁰ Fleming, *Lodge*, pp.5-8.

⁸¹ Drummond to Moncrieff, 13 October 1925, Item 221, Drummond Papers, Canterbury Museum Archives, Christchurch.

⁸² Oliver to Under-Sec. IA, 3 September 1928, Bird File 9/0/0, MONZ.

ornithologist. Nevertheless he asked for price estimates from the Government Printer for Drummond's proposal but Cabinet declined the publication.⁸³

Moncrieff and Falla had considerable support for their project. Surprisingly, given their strong statement about single authorship, Oliver expressed enthusiasm. So too did J.A.Thomson, then the Director of the Dominion Museum⁸⁴, ornithologists like Stidolph, and conservationists like A.H.Messenger and Johannes Andersen.⁸⁵ Guthrie-Smith offered photographs.⁸⁶ They devised specimen pages, obtained estimates of costs ("rather a shock")⁸⁷, and twice discussed the possibility of a government grant with the Minister of Internal Affairs in 1927 and 1928.⁸⁸ But the government agreement with Drummond and his procrastination through illness delayed the project. Falla was committed to study, then to Sir Douglas Mawson's Antarctic expedition in 1929. Moncrieff was still keen to proceed with Andersen as a second editor⁸⁹ but her husband became seriously ill and required her attention. When his health improved, ornithology as trusteeship increasingly took up her time and interest so that the grand project never eventuated.

⁸³ Oliver to Govt. Printer, 12 February 1929; Govt Pr. to Oliver, 7 March 1929; Under-Sec. IA to Oliver, 9 April 1929, Bird File 9/0/0, MONZ.

⁸⁴ James Allan Thomson (1881-1928) was the son of George Malcolm. New Zealand's first Rhodes Scholar, he was a geologist and was accepted for Robert Falcon Scott's 1912 Antarctic expedition. Ill health caused him to withdraw and he became Director of the Dominion Museum in 1914. With his father, he was an advocate for science; N.De B.Hornibrook, "Thomson, James Allan", *DNZB* 3, p.530.

⁸⁵ Falla to Moncrieff, 29 May 1925, MS Papers 2366:67, 3. Messenger and Andersen were founding members of Forest and Bird. In 1926 Andersen published his observations and transcriptions of bird song in *Bird-song and New Zealand Song birds* (Auckland, 1926). For the many interests in Andersen's life, see P.J.Gibbons, "Johannes Carl Andersen", *DNZB* 3, pp.14,15.

⁸⁶ Moncrieff to Falla [November 1925], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

⁸⁷ Moncrieff to Falla, 15 April [1927], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

⁸⁸ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 4 May 1927, MS Papers 0444:192, 1; Moncrieff to Falla, [19 May 1928], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

⁸⁹ Moncrieff to Falla, [19 May 1928], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

In her research papers and publishing proposals, Moncrieff can be seen not only as a "birdwatcher ornithologist" but also as a catalyst for change in field ornithology; an introducer of international ideas. Cooperative ringing schemes had existed for several decades in Europe and America where the method was also used to study migration. The practice of consistent ringing to determine bird movements had begun in the later nineteenth century on offshore islands of Germany, Britain and Denmark.⁹⁰ In America volunteers of the American Bird-Banding Association, who had worked since 1909, joined forces with the Bureau of Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture after the passing of the Migratory Bird Treaty in 1918. These two organisations also cooperated with the United States National Parks branch and the Canadian Department for the Interior.⁹¹ Some ringing was carried out by RAOU members in Australia.⁹²

Cooperative methods of gaining other types of information, like bird numbers and distribution, had also been used in Britain by H.F. Witherby before World War One and by the ornithological group in Oxford in the 1920s with which he was also connected. This group began as the Oxford Ornithological Society in 1921 and transformed itself in the 1930s into the British Trust for Ornithology and the Edward Grey Institute for Field Ornithology.⁹³ In Britain Moncrieff may have subscribed to Witherby's journal *British Birds* which he began to publish in 1907 and through which he

⁹⁰ Identification methods had been used from the eighteenth century when silver wire, parchment, bells and metal discs were tied or glued on to legs or wings; James J. McDarra, "Bird-banding", *Emu*, 40 (1940-41), pp.290,291; David Elliston Allen, *The naturalist in Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1976), Chaps.11-12; Stresemann, pp.332-338.

⁹¹ McDarra, p.292; Stephen Fox relates activities by the American Audubon Society to establish legal protection for migratory species under the 1900 Lacey Act which prohibited inter-state shipments of protected species, *John Muir and his legacy* (Boston, Toronto, 1981), pp.151-179. The Audubon Society also suggested the creation of an international committee in 1922, the International Council for Bird Protection, comprising America, Britain, France and Holland, for the increased protection of migrating birds, John Sheail, *Nature in trust*, (Glasgow, London, 1976), p.19.

⁹² H. Stuart Dove, "Migration of swifts", *Emu*, 19(1919-20), p.236; n.a., "Report on the ringing of wild birds", *Emu*, 19(1919-20), p.236.

⁹³ E.M. Nicholson, "Origins and early days", in *Enjoying ornithology*, (ed) Ronald Hickling (Calton, 1983), pp.16-24.

coordinated the field research. She was certainly aware of the Oxford bird census, begun in 1926 by E.M.Nicholson⁹⁴, at much the same time as her own studies. In the Oxford research, professional and amateur ornithologists cooperated, as they had under Alfred Newton at Cambridge the previous century.⁹⁵ Coordination widened the geographical area covered and deepened the data base, and so provided more accurate national figures than could be achieved by individuals working alone.

Migration was not the only topic investigated with the aid of ringing; details of the daily lives of "stationary" birds were also investigated. The most influential study of the 1930s, to which Moncrieff, Marples, Fleming and Lou Gurr all referred⁹⁶, was undertaken by Margaret Morse Nice, an amateur American ornithologist. For eight years she trapped, banded and studied song sparrows in an area of scrubby trees near her home in Columbus. The results of her research, given as text, graphs, tables, maps and photographs, provided an immensely detailed, ecological survey of the birds' lives, supplemented by her answers to questions suggested from her extensive American and European bibliographical reading. Nice had begun keeping these types of records from 1923. When she began the song sparrow study in 1929 she had had experience enough to frame her questions, experiment with different types of traps, and devise and record procedures in a professional, scientific manner. Nice's book became a lodestar because she demonstrated what could be achieved with intelligence, skill and patience in a suburban situation.⁹⁷ In New Zealand her

⁹⁴ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 13 March 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

⁹⁵ Allen, pp.215,216.

⁹⁶ Moncrieff's "Bush and bird notes", *NEM*, 26 September 1935, p.9; Fleming to Marples, 25 November 1940, "Correspondence and all papers prior to July 1950", OSNZ Archive, 5; Interview with Lou Gurr, 2.

⁹⁷ Margaret Morse Nice, *Studies in the life history of the song sparrow* (New York, 1964) but originally published as *Transactions of the Linnaean Society of New York*, 4(1937) and 2(1943). From 1930 she published aspects of her research as separate papers in various journals; pp.233,234.

Marcia Myers Bonta, "Margaret Morse Nice. Ethologist of the song sparrow", in *Women in the field* (College Station, 1991), pp.222-231.

methods were first used in a domestic project by Fleming in his study of silver-eyes in his parents' garden in Auckland.⁹⁸ Begun in 1939, he cut his own bird bands from film containers and constructed his traps but, in the other respects of recording and disseminating his observations, he used her techniques. "My 'bible' has been Mrs Nice," he observed.⁹⁹

Moncrieff's ringing study of the kea appears to be the only such exercise she was involved in. Yet, with her large garden, she would have been in a perfect position to study birds in Morse's manner if she had wanted to; her 1931 fantail study, for example, could have been supplemented by ringing research. Moncrieff must have been aware of Nice's protective attitude to her subjects. Nice had not killed birds, nor taken eggs. She had procured a commission as a Special Game Protector to give her authority to stop boys shooting the song sparrows. Although Nice had not interfered with the sparrows' natural predators and parasiters, she had tried to protect them from dogs and human activities.¹⁰⁰ But Moncrieff does not appear to have adopted Nice's methods and studied birds in the same systematic way.

Moncrieff may have lacked the discipline or motivation or ability in the face of other commitments to carry out a daily project over the long term. For all her keeping of regular records, it does not necessarily imply a consistent approach day after day at the same time. Secondly, with some small experience of ringing, she may have discovered in herself a psychological distaste for the procedure or a dislike for the methods used, either of ringing nestlings or first trapping and then ringing adult birds. In later letters she said that ringing should only be done by experts in case the bird suffered from rough handling or rings which were too tight.¹⁰¹ However she herself was

⁹⁸ C.A.Fleming, "Notes on the life history of the silver-eye based on colour-banding", *Emu*, 42(1942-43), pp.193-217.

⁹⁹ Fleming to Marples, 25 October 1940, "Correspondence...July 1950", OSNZ Archive, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Nice, *Studies*, pp.16,209.

¹⁰¹ Moncrieff to Cunningham, 30 August 1946, 2; Moncrieff to R.C.Nelson (Pres. Forest and Bird), 29 April 1966, MS Papers 5642:03, WTU.

hardly inexpert in bird handling because she was used to tending sick and injured birds. The most likely reason was the evolution in her study of birds from "ornithology as science" to "ornithology as trusteeship", a process in which several elements were involved. Firstly was her belief that conservation was becoming ever more necessary¹⁰² so that she reordered her priorities. In 1937 she explained her changing role to D.Dickison, the Secretary of RAOU, in reply to his questioning her silence. It was partly because, she answered, "instead of writing for you people I have thrown every ounce of energy into propaganda", and explained her campaigns for Farewell Spit, the Abel Tasman National Park area and Maruia.¹⁰³ Secondly, was the professional scientisation of field ornithology which included increasing amounts of ringing, more invasive research techniques in both ethology and conservation, and the presentation of results in mathematical form. These impinged on Moncrieff through the OSNZ.

The OSNZ represented both the apex and nadir of Moncrieff's ornithology as science. At the former, she was recognised as one of New Zealand's leading ornithologists when she was one of the fifteen approached to form the new Society in 1939. Her plan for ringing keas was given as an example of the work that was to be undertaken.¹⁰⁴ In a private letter written several decades later, Fleming was to describe her as recognised in the 1930s "locally as an ornithologist of stature".¹⁰⁵ The nadir was the growing gulf between her observational field ornithology, sited in her vitalist ethic, and the theory-driven techniques increasingly employed by professional ornithologists and their amateur companions within the orthodox scientific paradigm.

¹⁰² The reasons will be addressed in Chapters 4,5 and 6.

¹⁰³ Moncrieff to Dickison, 2 October 1937, MS 11437:Box 8a, 4.

¹⁰⁴ Marples 1939 press statement, op.cit.

¹⁰⁵ Notes for Falla obit, p.3; held by E.M.Harcourt, 2.

The OSNZ was formally established in May 1940, kindled by Marples after his arrival from Britain.¹⁰⁶ He began by discussing the project with Falla, who sent an initial letter to fifteen people, recommending Marples "who has given much time and thought to the matter of preliminary organisation....He feels he has not been long enough in New Zealand nor met enough of the local workers to make a direct approach without some form of introduction".¹⁰⁷ Marples, in suggesting a New Zealand society similar to the BTO, envisaged the national collection, coordination, and publication of data relating to birdlife through accurate observation and modern methods like bird ringing.

Encouraged by a likeminded member of the Union, D.L.Serventy, Marples also envisaged the New Zealand society as an affiliate of RAOU through which cooperative projects on birds of both countries could occur.¹⁰⁸ Neither of these concepts eventuated. The RAOU constitution did not allow for affiliates so Marples recommended RAOU membership to individual members of OSNZ¹⁰⁹. Admiration in Australia for Richdale's work did not lead to joint projects.¹¹⁰ H.L. Secker, who was New Zealand Secretary and Regional Representative of the Union in the 1960s and 1970s attributed the formation of OSNZ, whose creation could be seen as criticism of the Union, to several factors. These included a sense of isolation, the success of RAOU's earlier stimulus, and an organisation in New Zealand largely in the hands of Museum Directors [Oliver and Falla] which, Secker thought, led to feelings of inadequacy amongst members.¹¹¹ Certainly the Union failed to organise

¹⁰⁶ Gurr interview, 2; D.L.Serventy, "R.A.O.U. proposals for stimulating field ornithology on modern lines", September 1939, MS Papers 11437:Box 8a, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Falla to Turbott, 5 January 1938, Folder "Correspondence... July 1950, OSNZ Archive, 5.

¹⁰⁸ Marples to Dickison, 29 June 1939, 25 July 1939 and 31 December 1940; Serventy, "Proposals", MS 11437:Box 8a, 4.

¹⁰⁹ Report, 30 June 1944, "Papers", OSNZ Archive, 5.

¹¹⁰ S.J.J.F.Davies, "An Australian perspective on New Zealand ornithology", *Flying*, pp.146,147.

¹¹¹ Report on the differences between OSNZ and RAOU in McEvey to Secker, 16 April 1968, MS 9247, "NZ Collection", RAOU Archive, State Library of Victoria,

cooperative bird censuses and distribution studies as Witherby and the BTO were doing in Britain. Cooperative studies were either like Moncrieff's migration research in 1926 and confined to each country, or done by small groups of friends privately and again restricted to separate sides of the Tasman. The next chapter will show that the Union was occupied by an older tension, that between supporters of taxonomy and field research. But Marples did not criticise the Union. His idea for a New Zealand ornithological society seems to have originated in his own fieldwork in Britain and from a desire to begin similar large-scale cooperative projects with likeminded people in his adopted country.

Moncrieff became a foundation member when the OSNZ was formed at a meeting chaired by Falla in Christchurch in May 1940. She did not attend the founding meeting and, in fact, had advised against starting a new society at the beginning of the war, especially when the RAOU already existed. "War upsets societies, members move away and other business absorbs them," she told Dickison.¹¹² But when Marples decided to found it despite the obvious problems of war, she joined, believing she "might assist in genuine study and further the case of our native birds."¹¹³ She contributed observations to its early *Reports* and *Bulletins*¹¹⁴ and, significantly, proposed that the Society also be actively conservationist. She suggested it work through schools to stimulate children's interest, as she had done with the Nature Diary competition in Nelson, and requested its support in her campaign for Abel Tasman National Park.¹¹⁵ Despite its Constitution, which denied an active conservation concern,

Melbourne, Australia.

¹¹² Moncrieff to Dickinson (sic), 27 October 1941, MS 11437:Box 8a, 4.

¹¹³ Moncrieff to Heenan, 10 September 1942, Heenan Papers, MS 1132:272, WTU.

¹¹⁴ Moncrieff, "The tui", *2nd Annual Report of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand*, 1941, pp.26,27 and contributions to "Summarized classified reports" pp.4,5; Moncrieff, "Notes on fantails at Nelson", *Bulletin of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand*, 1(1941-42), pp.7,8.

¹¹⁵ OSNZ Committee meeting Minutes, 23 June 1941, "Papers", OSNZ Archive, 5.

the Society supported her campaign for the Park¹¹⁶, another indication of her significance. From this it seems clear that Moncrieff envisaged the OSNZ as another RAOU, that is, an organisation with both scientific and conservation objectives. By "genuine study" she presumably meant L.E.Richdale's ringing study of the yellow-eyed penguin, of which she approved, contrasting the Union's approval of taxonomical study unfavourably with the newer field research techniques. "It is an excellent article - very thorough....It shows conclusively that this mania for collecting skins and material is not necessary. It is the field work that counts most as I have always maintained".¹¹⁷ She must also have welcomed the Society's intention to investigate economic ornithology.¹¹⁸

However the OSNZ formed itself differently from her expectation as it began to adopt what she considered invasive research techniques in science and conservation. Most of its leaders were university life sciences graduates. Although their initial communications stressed that no special qualifications were necessary and that anyone who was interested in birds was welcome¹¹⁹, there was nevertheless a certain academic rigour and exclusiveness about their thinking. In 1940 Marples wrote to Falla suggesting that Fisher's *Birds as animals* should be required reading as a condition of membership, even though he thought Fisher's information on New Zealand "very inaccurate".¹²⁰ Fleming argued,

¹¹⁶ OSNZ Committee meeting 23 June 1941; Folder "Correspondence... to July 1950", OSNZ Archive, 5.

¹¹⁷ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 3 March 1941, MS Papers 0444:195, 1. Richdale's study continued for 18 years from 1936; C.J.R.Robertson, "Launcelot Eric Richdale 1900-1983", *Flying*, p.194.

¹¹⁸ Report from B.J.Marples, 10 July 1940, "Correspondence...July 1950, OSNZ Archive, 5.

¹¹⁹ "Report" [undated], "Correspondence...to July 1950", OSNZ Archive, 5.

¹²⁰ Marples to Falla, 27 November 1940, "Correspondence...to July 1950", OSNZ Archive, 5.

I am definitely opposed to the production of a semipopular magazine with a wide appeal if that involves sacrificing "short notes" in favour of "semipopular articles". As I understood your motives when founding the Society, the scientific accumulation of data and cooperative studies on scientific lines were your idea. We must stick to that & let those who want attractive bird stories go elsewhere or, as they probably will, lump it & continue to belong to us.

I have confidence that we will survive best by sticking to original plans; apparently we are attracting members, & it is our business to raise their standard, not lower ours.¹²¹

The "cooperative studies" included research at gannet colonies and the Snares Islands in the later 1940s which were completely opposed to Moncrieff's belief that field enquiries should not interfere with the birds' good. She told John Cunningham, the Secretary-Treasurer of OSNZ,

As regards the counting of the gannetry I thought it a good visit but when it came to the silly experiments they did keeping the birds off their eggs for some hours to prove [desertion] theories I thought it was the type of shallow 'Playing at being scientific' which I consider should not be permitted. Now the Snares have had the fierce light of publicity on them and poor birds[.] [I]mmediately one expedition leaves another rushes off....Whilst some expeditions may be fruitful I think not all and always the danger of cats and rats getting ashore. The truth is that amongst scientists there are very few who really love birds, most of them look on them as mathematical figures to p[lay] around with and - I hope I dont (sic) sound nasty - to enable them to write a paper to gain publicity.¹²²

This strong statement clearly differentiates Moncrieff's vitalist science, in which birds and their well-being were paramount, and the theory-driven research of professional scientists. These scientists were not "bird lovers" in

¹²¹ Fleming to Marples, 10 December 1943, "Formation of OSNZ", OSNZ Archive, 5.

¹²² Moncrieff to Cunningham, 14 July 1948, 2. The gannet census was reported by K.A.Wodzicki and C.P.McMeekan, "The gannet on Cape Kidnappers", *TPRSNZ*, 76(1947), pp.429-452, the section on desertion on pp.449-450. Also, C.J.R. Robertson, "The gannets of Cape Kidnappers", *Flying*, pp.152,153. In his book, *Bird islands of New Zealand* (Christchurch, 1959), Robert Wilson describes the first of the Snares Islands expeditions which included an American ornithologist, Dr Robert Murphy, of the American Museum of Natural History, Falla and Fleming; Chapter 31.

the Moncrieffian sense although, as with Oliver and Falla, she apparently kept in touch with Fleming and K.A. Wodzicki.¹²³ While her comments to Cunningham were written after she had resigned from the OSNZ, her reason for resignation was similar; scientists were not thinking holistically, nor was the bird's welfare paramount.

The catalyst for her resignation in November or December 1942¹²⁴ was a paper called "Notes on the southern robin", again by Richdale, in which he described and advocated a captive breeding programme to help increase numbers of the protected South Island robin. In a Foreword, Marples also recommended the experiment and agreed with Richdale's criticism of the Department of Internal Affairs for its uncompromising attitude towards captive breeding. An approving Review of Richdale's paper was published in the OSNZ *Bulletin*.¹²⁵ In the 1940-41 breeding season W.D.F.King, a Gore aviarist, bred a clutch of robins from a pair he had captured in the wild.¹²⁶ He was prosecuted by the Department of Internal Affairs because the acquisition of indigenous birds without a permit was illegal under the 1921 Animals Protection and Game Act. The birds were released. In his paper, Richdale, who was a practitioner of proactive measures to preserve endangered bird

¹²³ Wodzicki sent her a copy of his gannet paper, with his compliments; MS Papers 5642:23, WTU. In 1973 Fleming also sent her a paper, "Birdlife at Waikanae estuary"; MS Papers 5642:23, and thanked her for a copy of her book, *People came later*; Fleming to Moncrieff, 13 November 1973, MS Papers 5642:02, WTU.

¹²⁴ Minutes of committee meeting 9 December 1942, "Formation of OSNZ", OSNZ Archive, 5.

¹²⁵ L.E.Richdale, "Notes on the southern robin" (Dunedin, 1942); [n.a.], "Review of Notes on the southern robin", *Bulletin of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand*, 2(1941-42), p.5.

¹²⁶ Twenty years later in 1961, King helped form and was the first chairman of the Southland section of Forest and Bird. He is remembered for his work on a lodge in the Society's Lenz Reserve in the Catlin hills and as a Society representative on two conservation bodies; N.E.Dalmer, *Birds, forests and natural features of New Zealand* (Levin, 1983), p.156.

species¹²⁷, praised King for his initiative and criticised the Department's *laissez-faire* attitude and lack of action to control feral cats.

In a series of newspaper letters Sanderson supported the Department, pursuing what Galbreath describes as "a more idealised vision"¹²⁸ for the protection of native birds. Although Galbreath does not define that "more idealised vision", we know that Sanderson and Moncrieff had holistic beliefs, "seeing the whole as a whole". They saw beyond a mere increase in the numbers of endangered species to the habitat the birds would occupy. As Moncrieff wrote, "most of our native birds start to multiply the moment they are left alone. It is the constant interference with themselves their homes and food that play havoc with them."¹²⁹ She reiterated this point in her international article, "The destruction of an avian paradise"; "it is useless to increase bird-life by breeding unless the native food is correspondingly increased".¹³⁰ And in another letter,

One cannot help birds better than a lively crusade against their enemies. I w[o]uld like to see far greater attacks on vermin which account for so many deaths. I would like to see men paid the whole year round to move from place to place steadily killing them down.¹³¹

Another problem, she considered, was the possibility of an international commercial trade developing between breeders and collectors "under the cover of 're-establishing' native birds....I am of the opinion that giving a permit to one or two good fanciers would merely encourage the trade in cage-birds and that once the preced[en]t was established there would be many [an]other asking

¹²⁷ As we have seen Moncrieff supported his yellow-eyed penguin research. In 1938 Sanderson had also praised Richdale's efforts to protect royal albatross chicks at Tairoa Head, Dunedin, and asked Forest and Bird members to contribute towards the cost of a fence for their nesting area; *Forest and Bird*, 50(November 1938), pp.2,3.

¹²⁸ Galbreath, *Wildlife*, p.82.

¹²⁹ Moncrieff to Heenan, 10 September 1942, MS 1132:272, WTU.

¹³⁰ Pérrine Moncrieff, "The destruction of an avian paradise", *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, June(1944), p.22.

¹³¹ Moncrieff to Falla, 17 November 1942, MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

why they were not allowed a permit if Mr X has been given one."¹³² But Moncrieff did not rule out captive breeding entirely, in effect predicting the Wildlife Service's breeding programme for takahe at the Mount Bruce National Wildlife Centre in the Wairarapa, which began in 1957.¹³³ "In the future we may have a wise department who undertakes the breeding of native birds by experts...and who never sell a bird."¹³⁴

Moncrieff also firmly believed that the current law should be obeyed whereas Richdale and Marples had been prepared to overlook King's breach for what, in their opinion, was a beneficial result. Moncrieff congratulated Internal Affairs on their firm stand¹³⁵, telling Heenan as she had told Falla previously, "With reference to altering the present policy I would not like to see the Dept slacken their present rigid rules".¹³⁶

Captive breeding, as a means of preventing the extinction of endangered species, had been considered for a decade or more. Sanderson had observed its difficulties in the 1920s when tuis were bred in captivity "by Natives interested in bird preservation in the Wellington district". The experiment was to prove such breeding possible but it was described as "difficult" and the birds were released.¹³⁷ No mention was made of its illegality, although Sanderson was careful to state in an earlier article that he had obtained a permit to hold three wekas in captivity.¹³⁸ In 1934 the Auckland Zoological Board agreed to

¹³² ibid.

¹³³ Galbreath gives a detailed account of the establishment of the Centre, firstly on a private farm and then on neighbouring land; *Wildlife*, pp.95-98.

¹³⁴ Moncrieff to Falla, 17 November 1942, MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

¹³⁵ Moncrieff to Heenan, 10 September 1942, MS 1132:272, WTU.

¹³⁶ Moncrieff to Falla, 17 November 1942, MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

¹³⁷ "Tuis", *Birds*, 12[1926], p.8. The "Natives" may have been the Webber family who farmed the Maori-owned land at the north end of Kapiti Island. Photographs of the Webbers with indigenous birds sometimes appeared in *Birds*. In addition, Forest and Bird made a conservation film, "Glimpses of wildlife" in the late 1920s in which there are scenes "from a Native garden" showing some of the photographs from *Birds*. The film is held by the Film Archive of National Archives, Wellington.

¹³⁸ *Birds*, 10[1926] p.16. Sanderson used the wekas to eat insects and snails among indigenous seedlings he had planted in his Paekakariki garden.

seek authority to breed kereru and weka after they heard that the South Australian Avicultural Society had successfully bred Australian birds.¹³⁹ However Australian conservationists were also doubtful about its wisdom. A.H.Chisholm, a conservationist and leading member of the RAOU, told Moncrieff that "he had always been dubious about keeping native birds in captivity with the idea of breeding them up. We had a half idea of attempting something of the kind with the rare Paradise Parrot in Queensland, but did not go on with it.... [A]ll 'natural' means for increasing a species should first be explored."¹⁴⁰ Moncrieff also obtained support from Nice.

How strange to want to raise native birds in captivity instead of preserving their habitats and protecting them from imported enemies! I entirely agree with your point of view. But wouldn't it be better to stay with your bird organization and do missionary work?¹⁴¹

Scientific ornithologists rejected the conservationist position of protection through increased reservations, destruction of predators and a strictly enforced law. Fleming believed that scientists "could complain with some justification that their work was handicapped by protection measures unable to prevent deterioration of bird populations through ecological causes."¹⁴² By this he presumably meant that while the Department of Internal Affairs enforced the clauses which prevented rare birds from being held privately for breeding, it failed to establish measures to kill predators or prevent habitat destruction. The Wildlife Service Director and scientist Gordon Williams considered the protectionist position "sentimental....

¹³⁹ NEM, 21 August 1934, p.4.

¹⁴⁰ Chisholm to Moncrieff, 9 December 1942, MS Papers 4723:2, 1a.

¹⁴¹ Nice to Moncrieff, 18 January 1943, MS Papers 5642-04, WTU.

¹⁴² Fleming, *Lodge*, p.27.

ineffective...[and] unventuresome".¹⁴³ But his captive breeding programme at Mount Bruce was unsuccessful for many years. Given the sheer numbers of predators - mustelids, rats, feral cats and possums - Moncrieff's and Sanderson's option for the mainland survival of endangered species would have been impractical. Battalions of rangers would not have been able to eliminate all the predators. Even within their own Reserve at Astrolabe, where predators were killed, Moncrieff's account of the little blue penguins and the stoats demonstrates how vulnerable the birds were. Today, free-living populations are encouraged in predator-free reserves, a pragmatic compromise of both approaches to the prevention of rare species' extinction.

So Moncrieff's ornithology moved from science to trusteeship. Her final participation in New Zealand science was to present a paper at the Sixth Royal Society of New Zealand Science Congress in 1947 in her position as Vice-Chairman of the Ornithological Division of the Zoological Sciences. Completely different from her papers on the saddleback or migration of twenty years earlier, this paper was vitalist and aesthetic, not scientific. Entitled "Bird illustrators, past and present, with reference to New Zealand", in text and film it contrasted bird representation in the western world with that in China and Japan. "My paper was of great interest to myself when writing it as it showed how very little the western world had bothered with birds as principal subjects for a picture. Whilst the oriental world because of their belief that they could best study The Divine by studying nature made full use of birds".¹⁴⁴ Not surprisingly it caused raised eyebrows among the professional ornithologists present at the Congress. "I think they tut-tutted," said Gurr, who with other scientists like Marples, also gave papers.¹⁴⁵ An abstract only was published in the Society's *Transactions*¹⁴⁶ but photographs of

¹⁴³ Galbreath, *Wildlife*, p.172.

¹⁴⁴ Moncrieff to Dickison, 4 June 1947, MS 11437:Box 8c, 4.

¹⁴⁵ Gurr interview, 2.

¹⁴⁶ Report of the Sixth Science Congress 1947, *TPRSNZ*, 77:5, p.259.

conference participants, including Moncrieff, were published in the *New Zealand Free Lance*.¹⁴⁷

The experiments conducted on the gannets, captive breeding programmes, and the emphasis on scientific procedures in OSNZ field research, link into the increasing professionalisation of science in New Zealand which had gathered momentum in the 1920s. Within field ornithology there remained a place for the amateur, as Stidolph, Cunningham and Hawkins demonstrate, but they needed to accept the prevailing scientific paradigm of the separation of human and bird, as well as scientific leadership and methodology. Their role was more that of assistant, analogous to the network of birdwatchers organised by Newton and Nicholson into cadres to accumulate data, which would then be analysed by scientists within their experimental conceptualisations.¹⁴⁸ This was well removed from Guthrie-Smith's amateur ornithology; birdwatching trips which were written up in his idiosyncratic style. But it was not so far removed from Moncrieff's amateur ornithology in which she integrated her own observations with those of others through a cooperative survey which she controlled. Did she resent that loss of control to the professional scientist? That is possible although it seems unlikely since she did not pursue her scientific ringing project even when the opportunity existed. Was that loss of control a reason for her antagonism towards scientifically-managed ornithological programmes? That too seems unlikely in view of her vitalist and holistic ethics.

The OSNZ is thus significant in Moncrieff's ornithology. Her research, especially her migration study and her early effort to ascertain information from ringing, contributed to her considerable status as an ornithologist by 1940. But, both as investigative field science and conservation

¹⁴⁷ *New Zealand Free Lance*, 28 May 1947, p.29. These are in MS Papers 5642:19, WTU.

¹⁴⁸ Nicholson, "Origins", p.21. The role of "assistant" could not describe R.B.Sibson, a teacher and amateur ornithologist, who had participated in the Oxford surveys and who was a co-author with Falla and Turbott of the 1966 *Field guide*; R.B.Sibson, *From penguins to parakeets* (Auckland, 1990).

of endangered birds, Moncrieff's vitalist, holistic philosophy increasingly conflicted with scientific values which, she believed, considered birds only as objects. Since publication became the province of professional scientists, as the next chapter will show, Moncrieff's contribution to ornithology as science has virtually been excluded from the historical scientific record.



CHAPTER 4

A VOICE FOR BIRDS

"It is to be hoped," wrote E.V.Sanderson to Moncrieff of a lobby group for birds she was attempting to convene, "they will not get mixed up with conservation and ornithology as so many do. Ornithology is merely a necessary adjunct to conservation."¹ In discussing Moncrieff's ornithology as trusteeship, this chapter demonstrates that though she saw ornithology also as science in the 1920s, by the early 1940s she and Sanderson were completely in accord. Moncrieff's ornithology as science had transformed itself into ornithology as trusteeship whose principal purpose was conservation. This chapter examines the many-faceted approach by which Moncrieff fulfilled her trusteeship, but concentrates on her field guide and on her participation in the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union. These activities, which helped to give her considerable status by 1940 as an ornithologist, were her more enduring contributions to New Zealand ornithology.

In her uncle, J.G.Millais, Moncrieff had a role model for writing about birds. She was obviously keen to show him her apprenticeship because she apparently requested the RAOU to send him her first *Emu*-published article.² While she envisaged, but did not accomplish, large folio volumes like his, her pocket field guide, *New Zealand birds and how to identify them* was, for its time in New Zealand, original, influential and popular. For several reasons it is the most significant exemplar of the trusteeship theme in her ornithology. Firstly, while she wanted her book to be accurate in its science, incorporating

¹ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 3 August 1927, MS Papers, 0444:192, 1.

² RAOU Council Minutes for 11 February 1925 show the receipt of a letter from J.G.Millais thanking the Union for the edition of *Emu* which contained her "Birds seen along the West Coast to Franz Josef glacier, New Zealand"; MS 11437:Box 12b, 4.

the most modern taxonomy and field research, she strongly promoted a conservationist perspective.

...the day has come when the old saying "A bird in the hand is worth two in a bush" is no longer true. The study of birds in their natural surroundings should be the aim of every naturalist, and how can we attain this better than by seeing first and foremost that our birds, those unrivalled denizens of New Zealand, are well protected.³

In subsequent editions she also issued warnings to keep secret the whereabouts and nests of endangered birds to prevent collectors from locating them, and to try to prevent their destruction by cats or other predators.⁴ Secondly, she promoted an ecological message, for which she particularly acknowledged the invaluable help and encouragement of her friend the ecologist, John Myers, in which the continued physical well-being of humans, forests, birds and insects were interconnected. She emphasised the role of native birds in the regeneration of native forest. "New Zealand is probably more dependent than any other country in the world on the propagation of her forest plants by means of birds."⁵ Thirdly, she promoted a vitalist appeal on behalf of the birds.

A rule which must be most strictly adhered to is that no bird observation or photography should be carried out at the expense of the bird. Excellent photographs are marred too often by signs that the picture has been obtained by means of interfering with the bird's home....

It is sufficient to cause a bird to desert its nest if a naked hand enters to feel if there are eggs or young. Some types, the Grey Warbler for instance, destroy their nest which they have been at pains to complete, if they think they are being watched.⁶

³ Perrine Moncrieff, *New Zealand birds and how to identify them* (Auckland, 1925), p.21. The second edition was also published in Auckland, 1936, but subsequent editions were published in Christchurch in 1948, 1952 and 1957-61.

⁴ Moncrieff, *NZ birds* (2nd ed., 1936), p.35 or (5th ed., 1957-61), p.23.

⁵ Moncrieff, *NZ Birds* (1st ed., 1925), pp.9,10.

⁶ Moncrieff, *NZ birds* (2nd ed., 1936), p.34.

She also addressed a vitalist appeal to human spiritual well-being.

Truly these [ecological] facts in themselves are sufficient to make us wish to protect our feathered friends, which in addition to their usefulness, gladden us with their playful ways, glorious song, and marvellous plumage.⁷

Lastly, her conservationist, ecological and vitalist message intensified over the five editions of her book which was the only pocket field guide to New Zealand birds for forty years.

Just when she got the idea for it is unknown. Given her uncle's example and her cuttings data base, it may have been premeditated. But her primary reason for writing was because she found "the majority of people" had difficulty in naming "a strange bird" using available texts in which birds were listed by taxonomical classification.⁸ While Moncrieff was familiar with scientific classification and nomenclature, she realised that a book like B.A.Carter's *Ready guide to British birds*, with its primary identification based on the size of the bird, would be helpful to adult beginners and children, as Carter's had been to herself in Britain.⁹

Then, as was to happen with most of her enterprises, once she had identified an opportunity, she proceeded to fulfil it. Her research comprised existing bird books¹⁰ and the confirmation of published bird measurements and plumage, but she included new material on petrels from R.A.Falla, birdsong from Johannes Andersen and more general information from several others including W.B.Oliver. For taxonomy she used the most modern Australasian nomenclature by G.M.Mathews and T.Iredale and an arrangement of the

⁷ Moncrieff, *NZ Birds* (1st ed.,1925), p.10.

⁸ Moncrieff, *NZ birds*, p.vii. This and quotes in the following paragraphs are taken from the first edition.

⁹ Moncrieff cites *The ready guide to British birds* by B.A. Carter but I have been unsuccessful in locating a copy of it. It may have been one of many published around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries according to David Elliston Allen, *The naturalist in Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1976), p.238.

¹⁰ See below.

species' order by the British ornithologist W.T.Pycraft.¹¹ By June 1923 she had written the manuscript, obtained permission to incorporate some of Carter's material on British birds, investigated possible publishers and sent it to both Gordon and Gotch, who had been suggested by Sanderson¹², and Whitcombe and Tombs, a firm which had published books on the natural world for four decades as part of a comprehensive educational programme.¹³

The core of her book was her arrangement of indigenous and introduced birds by size, from the three inch [15 centimetre] rifleman to the 44 inch [1 metre] royal albatross, the measurements being those of male birds from tail tip to bill tip. With four or five birds to a page, she gave brief notes on colouring, flight, habitat, ground movement, voice and any distinguishing characteristics, plus its binomial name (genus and species) and its order. She also provided briefer cross-referencing lists in which the birds were arranged in their classificatory orders for those "well-acquainted with New Zealand birds"¹⁴; by their usual haunts or habitats; by nesting habits; by their English and Maori names; and alphabetically by their scientific names. In addition Moncrieff wrote an introductory essay on birds in general and on the necessity for their conservation. About one third of the species were illustrated by black and white photographs of museum specimens while the cover was her own ink sketch. In red, black and white, it shows a huia on a tree branch, with a river, mountains and bush in the background.

¹¹ G.M.Mathews and T.Iredale, "A reference list of the birds of New Zealand" Parts 1,2, *Ibis* (April, July,1913), pp.201-263, 402-452; Pycraft's order was used in *The British bird book*, (ed) F.B.Kirkman (London, 1910-1913).

¹² Moncrieff to Sanderson, 2 June [1923], MS Papers 0444:192, 1. There is no further mention of Gordon and Gotch.

¹³ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 26 June [1923], MS Papers 0444:192, 1.
Whitcombe and Tombs has no archive (telephone conversation with its Head Office, Auckland) apart from two holdings at WTU; Whitcombe and Tombs Compositors' Chapel Records 1917-1967 MS Papers 1677 and Whitcombe and Tombs Records of printing histories, primers, story books MS Papers 2093.

Dennis McEldowney, "Bertie Ernest Hawkes Whitcombe", *DNZB* 3(1901-1920), (Auckland, Wellington, 1996), p.560.

¹⁴ Moncrieff, *NZ birds*, p.viii.

It took two years from the manuscript's submission to Whitcombe and Tombs to its publication. During that time Moncrieff had to rearrange what she called "a good bit of the work" and which is likely to have been its core list. She had devised it in columns, which she maintained were clearer than the paragraphs as printed, but Whitcombe and Tombs insisted on the change. She told Falla on 27 April [1924] that she had just finished retyping it.¹⁵ A second problem was the book's retail cost. Moncrieff wanted it to be inexpensive and therefore accessible to many people, but negotiations between her and Whitcombe and Tombs took some time. In the same letter to Falla she said that they will "do it for 4/6....I have no say over the illustrations as they have to be begged borrowed or stolen so as to make the book cheap".¹⁶

The illustrations themselves caused a delay of nearly a year for the galley proofs were finished in June 1924 and corrected by August that year.¹⁷ Though she found the delay frustrating, it was beneficial in allowing her to incorporate Falla's field research into the seabirds of northern New Zealand. Falla had discovered the only known breeding place, in the Poor Knights Islands, of the rare Buller's shearwater.¹⁸ In April 1924 Moncrieff thanked him for his photographs and information; "...it was so nice to be able to alter my book from 'breeding place unknown' to 'nesting off the coast of Auckland in the islands nearby.'¹⁹

Initial planning for the illustrations is unclear but at the end of 1923 Moncrieff asked for some photographs from John Leach, a Melbourne member of RAOU and the author of the popular *An Australian bird book*, which was

¹⁵ Moncrieff to Falla, 27 April [1924], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

¹⁶ Moncrieff to Falla, *ibid.*

¹⁷ Moncrieff to Falla, 20 June 1924 and 23 August 1924, MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

¹⁸ R.A. Falla, "Discovery of a breeding place of Buller's shearwater, Poor Knights Is, N.Z.", *Emu*, 24(1924-25), pp.37-43.

¹⁹ Moncrieff to Falla, 27 April [1924], MS Papers 2366:67, 3. Buller's shearwater is listed as Long-tailed or Ashy-backed Shearwater (*Thyelodroma* or *Puffinus bulleri*), Moncrieff, *NZ birds*, p.48. Oliver in his first edition listed it as Bullers Shearwater *Puffinus bulleri*, which name has endured. Moncrieff revised the nomenclature in her second edition, 1936, p.65.

also published by Whitcombe and Tombs.²⁰ He supplied photographic blocks for a number of seabirds and Australian birds which are grouped in the second part of the book. In August 1924 she was still "stuck", presumably for New Zealand birds, because Buller's illustrations were contemplated. She told Sanderson in October 1924 that she had written to the Buller trustees over the copyright²¹ and Sanderson too enquired, for in December she thanked him for his interest.²² But Buller's plates were not used and in early 1925 Moncrieff wrote again to Leach for additional pictures.²³ Though he agreed, they were not used because the page and half-page photographs in the first part of the book mostly came from Canterbury Museum with three attributed to its taxidermist E.J.Haynes. The other illustrations came from H.Drake of the Department of Agriculture and a grouping that was "recycled" - a not uncommon practice - from the 1904 *Animals of New Zealand* by F.W. Hutton and James Drummond whose New Zealand publisher had also been Whitcombe and Tombs. There were further negotiations over price and illustrations in the early months of 1925 because she told Falla in April that it took a lawyer's letter for work to resume, the agreement giving the publisher two months to produce the book.²⁴ In April Sanderson also asked about the publication date since the book had been announced in Forest and Bird's journal *Birds* and was being sought.²⁵ But in July 1925 four thousand copies of *New Zealand birds and how to identify them* came out. Moncrieff thought "it looks awfully well

²⁰ Moncrieff to Falla, 10 January [1924], MS Papers 2366:67, 3. RAOU Council Minutes December 1930, MS 11437:Box 12b, 4.

²¹ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 29 October 1924, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

²² Moncrieff to Sanderson, 18 December 1924, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

²³ RAOU Council Minutes, June 1925, MS 11437:Box 12b, 4.

²⁴ Moncrieff to Falla, 12 April [1925] and 4 July [1925], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

²⁵ Sanderson to Whitcombe and Tombs, 3 April 1925, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

from the outside [;] bright and cheerful" and was "so pleased it is better than I anticipated."²⁶

Whether Moncrieff or Whitcombe and Tombs initiated the four subsequent editions in 1936, 1948, 1952 and 1957-58-61 is not apparent. But by July 1935 Moncrieff was considering the changes she would need to make. "W and T are quite agreeable, although the type is set up, for me to alter anything I wish and there will be a lot of alterations in view of the fact that we have learnt a lot since my work was first published."²⁷ Some of the necessary changes are noted in her handwriting, often with question marks and deletions, presumably when she had ascertained the answer, inside the cover of a 1925 edition now in the library of Forest and Bird in Wellington. They include "?Woodhens...Size of Kiwis...?Little Brown? Owl...Falcon...addition to Woodhen Kiwis & albatross names still likely nowadays?...Preface Thanks to Miss Daff".

The changes fall into three categories; overall classifications, taxonomical changes for particular species and advice on bird watching. The first two troubled her because she wanted to harmonise with Oliver's 1930 *New Zealand birds* since his book had become the reference text for all ornithological students. She asked his advice.²⁸ His reply is not extant but a later reply is, to her request for the correct total of New Zealand birds²⁹, with which she begins the Preface to her second edition. She also asked Falla's advice, telling him that she wanted "to conform to Oliver whenever possible

²⁶ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 23 July 1925, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

A.G.Bagnall (ed), *New Zealand national bibliography* 3(1890-1960), (Wellington, 1972), p.231. Bagnall does not give numbers for subsequent editions in 1936, 1948, 1952 and 1957-61.

Whitcombe and Tombs' Records of printing histories, primers, story books, includes details of Moncrieff's 4th edition in 1952 when 7,500 copies were printed to be sold at a price of nine shillings and sixpence; MS Papers 2093, WTU.

²⁷ Moncrieff to Falla, 21 September [1935], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

²⁸ Moncrieff to Oliver, 8 July 1935, Bird File 9/0/0 1908-36, MONZ.

²⁹ Moncrieff to Oliver, 14 October 1935; Oliver to Moncrieff, 21 October 1935, Bird File 9/0/0 1908-36, MONZ.

because if a person passes from my small hand book to Olivers (sic) work I don't want there to be any discrepancy which may lead to confusion."³⁰ By this time Falla had taken part in four major expeditions to the southern islands, had published many papers on seabird research and was soon to become Assistant Director of the Auckland War Memorial Museum. He had become an authority on seabird taxonomy and field observation, and evidently supplied her with the most modern information on classification for her particular requests regarding woodhens (wekas), penguins, shags and mollymawks.³¹ She seems to have accepted his decisions for she omits Oliver's Buff woodhen and Victoria penguin but her confusion over the mollymawks remained. Only five of Oliver's eight are in the "size" list but all eight are in the "Classification by Orders" section, for which Moncrieff continued with Pycraft, although she employed the more recent nomenclature of *The official checklist of the birds of Australia*³² instead of Mathews and Iredale. For the second edition she wrote another Preface and a short essay, "Hints for bird observation", in which she commented on the need for ringing birds to assist with field research.

Moncrieff's second edition included coloured paintings by Lily Daff of Otago Museum.³³ Daff had also illustrated Oliver's book but her paintings are much less attractive than in Moncrieff's book because the birds are smaller and grouped on the page and the printing process appears inferior. Moncrieff herself was very pleased with Daff's paintings for her, commenting on the birds' quality of vitality.

³⁰ Moncrieff to Falla, 21 September [1935], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

³¹ Moncrieff to Falla, 21 September [1935] and 5 October 1935, MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

³² *Official checklist of the birds of Australia*, 1926, Checklist Committee of the RAOU; S.Marchant, "Checklist", MS 11437:Box 30, 4.

³³ Lily Atty Daff (1880-1945) was born in Britain and came to New Zealand in 1926. Straitened circumstances prevented her from full-time art study but she was trained in lettering and draughtsmanship at London Polytechnic and in commercial art at several correspondence schools. In New Zealand she became known for her studies of New Zealand birds and flowers. In 1933 she was employed as Officer in charge of exhibitions at Otago Museum; H.D.Skinner for catalogue, "Hocken Library. Exhibition of drawings and paintings by George O'Brien and Lily Atty Daff"; MS Papers 0444:924, 1.

These pictures of hers are far better than those she first produced which used to upset me when I looked at them. One or two I consider are not quite life-like in their position but...her colouring is lovely....I wrote to [her] for an illustration for the jacket and then found she had a whole set of pictures ready and naturally jumped at them."³⁴

To another correspondent she wrote that Daff "is awfully good these days....her pictures....are really worth having as she now understands the anatomy and position of birds better than she did and makes them more life-like. She charges two guineas for small pictures and four for the larger ones."³⁵

In 1944 Moncrieff was told by a bookseller that her second edition had gone out of print.³⁶ This may have been the catalyst for a third revision because in 1945 she again asked Oliver for help with taxonomic changes; Falla too, may have supplied information as Moncrieff's description of the 18 inch Pied Oystercatcher indicates.³⁷ By this time a synthesis of mathematical genetic population studies and field research in Europe and America offered material for new taxonomic interpretations.³⁸ One of the field researchers who, with others like Julian Huxley, was instrumental in promoting these new insights, was Ernst Mayr whose field guide, *Birds of the Southwest Pacific*, Moncrieff had hoped to use as a guide for her classifications. New Zealand's restrictions on foreign currency purchases apparently prevented her from obtaining the book so she again decided to use Oliver's. "I agree that mine is quite out of date and was thinking that it were best if I were to take your

³⁴ Moncrieff to Falla, 21 September [1935], MS Papers 2366:67, 3. For a similar comment on Daff's work by a fellow artist, see D.H.Binney, "Bird art in New Zealand", in "A flying start, (eds) B.J.Gill and B.D.Heather (Albany, 1990), p.107. Binney calls her Lillian.

³⁵ Moncrieff to Bryant, 27 September [1935], in possession of Tess Kloot RAOU former archivist, 2.

³⁶ Moncrieff to Dickison, 12 December 1944, MS 11437:Box 8c, 4.

³⁷ Moncrieff, *NZ birds* (3rd ed.), p.61.

³⁸ Peter J.Bowler, *The Norton history of the environmental sciences* (New York, London, 1993, orig.pub.1992), pp.467-473; Fleming, C.A., *George Edward Lodge* (Wellington, 1982), pp.19-21.

classification. Chiefly because I am sure it is sound and secondly because seeing that the reader passes from my book to yours".³⁹

This letter was in reply to Oliver's lengthy and detailed suggestions, most of which she accepted, including his arrangement of orders. But Oliver also proposed that she radically amend her framework and text. As a professional ornithologist, he suggested she give primacy to the scientific systematic portion in which she was to incorporate bird haunts and nesting activities, thereby reducing and de-emphasising her core list by size. Oliver also suggested she substitute her article *The destruction of an avian paradise* for her essay on "The importance of New Zealand birds". But her only alteration to her framework in this and subsequent editions, was to eliminate the list of birds by their haunts or habitats. In copying a paragraph on "bird-banding" from the second edition, she made an error when she stated that, "So far no attempt has been made to obtain data by means of bird-banding" and went on to advocate the technique for the kea.⁴⁰ Given her own efforts in 1937⁴¹, and the many other initiatives she knew about, the mistake was considerable. It was amended in subsequent editions. This third edition appeared in 1948 with additional paintings by Daff.

The 1952 fourth edition incorporated Lou Gurr's photograph of the takahe, which Moncrieff spelt "takahea", and which had been "rediscovered" in Fiordland in 1948. She wrote new Prefaces for the fourth and fifth editions (1957-61), which incorporated the latest counts of species, while nomenclature in the various lists was occasionally amended.⁴² Oliver may have supplied this before he died in 1957.

³⁹ Moncrieff to Oliver, 3 November 1945, Box WRB Oliver Correspondence and Notes, MONZ. Ernst Mayr, *Birds of the Southwest Pacific* (New York, 1945). With J. Delacour, Mayr published another influential text "The family Anatidae" in the same year, to which Moncrieff also refers in the same letter.

⁴⁰ Moncrieff, *NZ birds* (3rd ed.), p.36.

⁴¹ See Chapter 3.

⁴² For example, the 22 inch Blue Duck (*Hymenolaimus malacorhynchus*) in the third edition (p.97) and (*Dendrocygna eytoni*) in the fourth (p.99).

All these editions reveal her desire to include the latest scientific systematic interpretations but they also reveal her increasing concern with conservation. While the tenor of her Preface in the second edition in 1936 was hopeful of public interest in conservation, that of the third edition in 1948 was despondent, as Moncrieff presented a creative Nature angry and vengeful towards the human trustees.

Despite that fact that Man cannot replace them the appalling destruction of our unique native birds and forest continues to this day. Birds as vital to this country as the Pigeon continue to be molested, their home and food, the forest, destroyed.

The author desires to issue a final warning to all New Zealanders as to the consequences attending such actions. To quote Louis Bromfield the famous writer:- "You cannot do violence to Nature without paying for it as an individual and as a nation".⁴³

She continued this apocalyptic theme in the fourth edition but included soil as another ecological element.

In this chemical and mechanical age the majority of New Zealanders are obsessed with immediate material gain at the expense of the vital functions of the soil. They appear ignorant of the importance of the latter....

The life of the city is bound up with the country. The well-being of the country depends upon the soil from which we obtain our food. History is full of examples of nations who ruined their soil and thereby perished.

The best method of conserving our soil is to maintain the native forest and birds evolved by Nature as being most suitable for New Zealand.⁴⁴

However by the fifth edition, five years later, she could also report some hopeful signs for conservation; growing numbers of bird lovers, additional

⁴³ Moncrieff, *NZ birds* (3rd ed.1948), p.xiv. Louis Bromfield (1896-1956) was an American novelist and soil conservationist; James D.Hart, *The Oxford companion to American literature* (New York, Oxford, 1983, 5th ed.), p.100.

⁴⁴ Moncrieff, *NZ birds* (4th ed.1952), pp.xv,xvi. The conservation of soil became an international issue from the 1920s. It will be examined in Chapter 7.

wildlife refuges and more national parks.⁴⁵ Given this increasing emphasis on conservation, it is strange that she did not accede to Oliver's suggestion for her third edition to include her "Destruction" article, or at least a part of it. The article outlined the reasons for the conservationist cause and had more relevance to New Zealand than information about overseas birds which she had incorporated in each edition from the first. Perhaps she considered it too conservationist for what was after all a bird book. Or perhaps Whitcombe and Tombs would not agree to such a major change for a book that was already in its third edition. They may have expected that it would soon be superseded by a text from a scientific ornithologist.

In its day *New Zealand birds and how to identify them* received a positive though muted response in reviews. Not surprisingly, Forest and Bird was enthusiastic; "An interesting illustrated and instructive work describing birds found in New Zealand. Will be a boon to school teachers and others."⁴⁶ The *Nelson Evening Mail* thought it "should be of great assistance to those who take an interest in New Zealand's wonderful bird life"⁴⁷ and that she was "entitled to great credit" for her revised and enlarged second edition with its conservationist message.⁴⁸ The naturalist A.T.Pycroft in his newspaper column, "Ways of the wild", called it a "very useful little book".⁴⁹ It appealed to Drummond, "as being very bright and interesting."⁵⁰ Leo Fanning, a journalist in the 1930s who wrote a syndicated newspaper column on conservation, thought the second edition a "very helpful handbook."⁵¹ An

⁴⁵ Moncrieff, *NZ birds* (5th ed.1957-61), p.xvi.

⁴⁶ *Birds*, 9[1925], p.18.

⁴⁷ *NEM*, 28 July 1925, p.4.

⁴⁸ *NEM*, 18 August 1936, p.8.

⁴⁹ A.T.Pycroft, "Ways of the wild", *Auckland Star*, 12 November 1927; from box of cuttings, "Ways of the wild" 1927-1936, MS 10204, Auckland Museum and Institute Archive.

⁵⁰ Drummond to Moncrieff, 13 October 1925, Item 221, Drummond Papers, Canterbury Museum Archives, Christchurch.

⁵¹ Leo Fanning, "Nature - and man", *NEM*, 7 May 1938, p.12.

anonymous reviewer in *Emu*, the RAOU journal, also recommended the second edition for its improvements in illustrations and text revisions; "Notes on the species are models of compactness and completeness."⁵²

Professional ornithological judgement of Moncrieff's book has varied over time. When Moncrieff's book was current, scientific ornithologists were either non-committal or negative. Oliver, in his RAOU Report as New Zealand Secretary, commented neutrally on the first edition that it was "designed to assist amateurs in naming the species usually met with".⁵³ Falla "was delighted" with the third edition revision⁵⁴ but by the fourth, he replied to an enquiry for information on bird books, that it "is not an attractive volume, but is the best available."⁵⁵ Scientists today have elaborated on this brief judgement. E.G.Turbott, who with Falla and R.B.Sibson co-edited New Zealand's next field guide⁵⁶, considered that Falla was exasperated by Moncrieff's "quirky combination of impressionistic notes and factual material".

An example is under Long-tailed..(sic) Shearwater (*P.bulleri*) (p.48) where "Distinguishing feature black marking like W when wings extended" is recognisably Falla's. But then she adds "Flight powerful, usually in semicircular sweeps..." as if this were a special characteristic of *P.bulleri*, whereas it would describe any large shearwater....

The illustrations are, of course, a weird mixture...yet they were doubtless all that were available at the time and many do succeed in accentuating identification points mentioned in the text. Falla may have felt that more effort to obtain more effective illustrations could have been made....⁵⁷.

⁵² "Review of *New Zealand birds and how to identify them*", *Emu*, 36(1936-37), p.147.

⁵³ *Emu*, 25(1925-26), p.157.

⁵⁴ Falla to Moncrieff, 24 May 1948, MS Papers 5642:02, WTU.

⁵⁵ Falla to Matheson, 7 October 1955, Birds File 9/0/0 1949-62, MONZ.

⁵⁶ R.A.Falla, R.B.Sibson and E.G.Turbott, *A field guide to the birds of New Zealand* (London, Auckland, 1966).

⁵⁷ Personal communication from E.G.Turbott, 10 July 1995, 2.

Lou Gurr, another professional ornithologist, "as a damn knowall, a young fellow you know" thought her editions "a bit piddling", when compared to the extensive and detailed knowledge in "his bible", as he described Fisher's *Watching birds*.⁵⁸

But other scientists paid more regard to its objectives of encouraging conservation and an interest in birds among children. Bob Mann, an environmental scientist at Auckland university, was inspired by her books in his love of birds. He said that was also true of many others he knew and that for children interested in nature in New Zealand, it was the book.⁵⁹ The zoologist Bob Brockie considered it "poetic rather than scientific, with an emotional attachment to birds. It was sentimental. That's why scientists wouldn't have liked it."⁶⁰ But it made an impression on him. Remembering it as handy and that it had helped his career choice, Brockie chose it for an exhibition, "Working titles. Books that shaped New Zealand" in 1993-94, in which well-known New Zealanders were asked for their choice of books that had shaped their lives. In the section, "The nature of things", it was among those by Walter Buller, Oliver and H.Guthrie-Smith.⁶¹ Don Merton, a Field Officer with New Zealand's Wildlife Service who is internationally recognised for his "recovery" work with endangered species, described Moncrieff's book as "the big influence on him initially."⁶² Even Turbott allowed that,

she is very good at drawing a word picture in many of these identification notes eg.Bittern (p.57): "Flight slow and steady, head drawn up to shoulders." The image is sometimes very striking: Pied Shag (p.57) "Bellows like a frog".

⁵⁸ Interview with Lou Gurr, 2. James Fisher, *Watching birds* (Harmondsworth, 1946, orig.pub.1941). Fisher worked with Julian Huxley and E.M.Nicholson at The Edward Grey Institute for Field Ornithology where Gurr also studied; see Chapters 1 and 3.

⁵⁹ Interview with Gwen Struik and Roger Bray, 2. Dr Mann attended a meeting in Nelson in the 1970s of the Friends of Nelson Haven, and was "honoured" to meet Moncrieff at it. Moncrieff, Struik and Bray were members of the Friends.

⁶⁰ Phone conversation with Dr Robert Brockie, June 1995.

⁶¹ "Working titles" exhibition, National Library gallery, November 1993-March 1994.

⁶² Note from Geoff Park, 17 November 1994.

What I remember is how these identification notes...seemed to bring the birds to life (in contrast to the earlier works like Hutton and Drummond).⁶³

In summing up, Turbott considered,

...there is no doubt that her popular "New Zealand Birds..." took general bird study out of the Hutton and Drummond era: I well remember my father who was a primary school teacher getting the copy I now have and saying how good it was to have a usable bird book for school nature study (in the 1920s).⁶⁴

Books about New Zealand birds began with the accounts of naturalists on European voyages of exploration of the Pacific ocean in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries⁶⁵ but the pre-eminent book of these centuries was Walter Buller's *A history of the birds of New Zealand*. Although its first edition was published in 1873, the expanded second edition in 1887-88 became the foundation text of New Zealand ornithology. Buller scientifically described all known species, for which the Dutch artist Johannes Keulemans provided definitive images in the lavishly illustrated folio volumes.⁶⁶ Buller's request for financial support from the government was to set a precedent for similar bird books, first by Drummond and then by Moncrieff and Falla for their proposed joint book which was discussed in the previous chapter. Another influential nineteenth century book was *Out in the open* by T.H.Potts, whose observations were frequently quoted by his contemporaries and successors, for

⁶³ Personal communication from E.G.Turbott, 17 June 1995, 2.

⁶⁴ ibid.

⁶⁵ Oliver gives an historical outline of bird books in both his volumes.

⁶⁶ *A history of the birds of New Zealand* (London, 1873 and 1887-1888). Buller also wrote a *Supplement to "The birds of New Zealand"* in 1905-06. Ross Galbreath's biography provides a detailed account of the production of Buller's books; *Walter Buller* (Wellington, 1989), Chapter 7 and pp.258-269, while there are references throughout his thesis, "Colonisation, science and conservation: the development of colonial attitudes toward the native life of New Zealand with particular reference to the career of the colonial scientist Walter Lawry Buller (1838-1906)", PhD thesis in History (University of Waikato, 1989).

As an ornithologist at the Auckland Institute and Museum, E.G.Turbott published a revised edition of *Buller's birds of New Zealand* in 1967.

their accuracy and insights.⁶⁷ F.W.Hutton⁶⁸ and Drummond made considerable use of Potts' observations for sections on land and coastal birds in their *Animals of New Zealand*, published in 1904.⁶⁹ Their book combined the scientific classification layout of Hutton's earlier *Catalogue* with engaging stories and field observations. Also writing about this time was the Austrian collector, Andreas Reischek. Next to Buller, the observations and writings of Herbert Guthrie-Smith form a parallel foundation text for students of New Zealand's natural environment. His photographs, in their clarity, pleasing composition and detailed sequences of a bird's development⁷⁰, rival Keulemans' illustrations for Buller. Information on introduced birds was available in G.M.Thomson's book *The naturalisation of animals & plants in New Zealand*.

As Turbott indicated, Moncrieff's book was a new initiative in New Zealand, the beginning of the diversification of bird books, as knowledge of birds expanded.⁷¹ It offered easily accessible information for a novice birdwatcher on bird identification in concise language and a compact format. In contrast, the information in Buller and Hutton and Drummond required some knowledge of taxonomy and, in any case, Buller's folio volumes were far too large and valuable for outdoor use. Even Hutton and Drummond's smaller book is surprisingly heavy. While Potts' and Guthrie-Smith's books were

⁶⁷ T.H.Potts, *Out in the open* (Christchurch, 1882 Reprint 1976).

⁶⁸ Frederick Hutton (1836-1905) was a geologist and zoologist at the Colonial and Canterbury museums and later Professor of Biology at Canterbury University. For his *Catalogue of the birds of New Zealand* (Wellington, 1871), see Oliver, NZ birds, p.5; Galbreath, Buller, p.99; H.N.Parton, "Hutton, Frederick Wollaston", DNZB 2(1870-1900), (Wellington,1993), p.238.

⁶⁹ F.W.Hutton and James Drummond, *The animals of New Zealand* (Wellington, 1904), with later editions in 1905, 1909 and 1923.

⁷⁰ For example, "The Pigeon", H.Guthrie-Smith, *Birds of the water wood & waste*, (Wellington, 1927 2nd ed.), pp.174-206.

⁷¹ Instead of the single comprehensive publication on a nation's birds of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ornithological books in the twentieth century have diversified to include a *Handbook* as an illustrated comprehensive reference work; a *Checklist* as a taxonomical list without illustrations; an *Atlas* to provide distribution data; and a *Field guide* for outdoor identification.

physically lighter in weight, their authors' discursive and speculative writing styles, interspersed with classical quotations, make them more suitable for leisure reading than for speedy bird identification.

The tenor of Moncrieff's book was also novel. She wrote in the belief that indigenous birds could and should be conserved. Buller wrote at a time when there was a general expectation that the indigenous native, whether plant, animal or human, was inferior and would be displaced by the superior coloniser.⁷² His tone is regretful but philosophical for the interesting, ancient birds destined soon for extinction; only near the end of his life did he become a "reluctant conservationist".⁷³ Potts, writing at the same time as Buller, was much more proactive towards conservation and hopeful for the survival of New Zealand birds. Yet Potts could advocate "the destruction, not to say extermination" of the kea, a bird "unable to restrain its mischievous propensities, when tempted by peaceful flocks of defenceless animals [sheep] introduced by the pakeha into the wild rugged country of its own range."⁷⁴ So much for displacement theory. Hutton and Drummond, while praising the reservation of island sanctuaries and hoping for an increase in numbers, were pessimistic. "It cannot be doubted, however, that the ancient Fauna, as a whole, and as it existed in its original state is fast departing."⁷⁵ Guthrie-Smith, who was a founder member of the first, short-lived Forest and Bird Protection Society in 1914, as well as its enduring successor⁷⁶, remained ambivalent over his "substitution of domestic breeds of animals for native lizards and birds".⁷⁷

⁷² For an exposition of displacement theory, Galbreath, "Colonisation", Chapter 2; Paul Star, "From acclimatisation to preservation: colonists and the natural world in southern New Zealand 1860-1894", PhD thesis in History (University of Otago, 1997), pp.115-119.

⁷³ Galbreath, *Buller*, p.260.

⁷⁴ Potts, pp.185,184.

⁷⁵ Hutton and Drummond, p.24.

⁷⁶ L.E.Lochhead, "Preserving the Brownies' portion. A history of voluntary nature conservation organisations in New Zealand 1888-1935", PhD thesis in Parks, Recreation and Tourism, [now Human and Leisure Sciences], (Lincoln University, 1994), Chapter 8.

⁷⁷ H.Guthrie-Smith, "Preface to the third edition of *Tutira* (Edinburgh and London, 1953 3rd ed, orig.pub.1921), p.xiii.

Despite his unwholesome reputation as a collector of rare birds and thief of Maori relics, Reischek's advocacy of Little Barrier as an island bird sanctuary, and his world-view of interconnectedness, link him to Moncrieff's vitalism. "I realised the spiritual kinship between all living things....that civilised man can be the worst vermin....[destroying] the wonderful equipoise of Nature", he wrote.⁷⁸

But in another respect Moncrieff continued a pattern; the publishing of bird books by amateur ornithologists. Of those authors who preceded her in New Zealand, only Hutton was a professional. Buller, Potts and Moncrieff all approached their subjects from differing perspectives. Potts' interest lay in studying indigenous bird and botanical life in the wild, unlike Buller, whose principal objective was to collect, scientifically describe and display dead specimens, a distinction, Star observes, which made Potts at that time "less respected as a scientist."⁷⁹ If Star's assessment is correct, it was because field science in their day had less status than laboratory taxonomic science.⁸⁰ By Moncrieff's time, field science epistemology had begun to challenge taxonomic supremacy.

Overseas, many field guides were also compiled by amateur ornithologists including an influential book by the American, Roger Tory Peterson.⁸¹ His *Field guides* to birds in North America in 1934 and Britain and Europe in 1954 were enormously popular for decades, partly due to his visual system of identification.⁸² His bird illustrations had pointers (a small, straight line) to distinguishing features; a white "collar", the arrangement of tail feathers or the shape of a foot. In other respects Peterson conformed to

⁷⁸ Andreas Reischek, *Yesterdays in Maoriland*, (trans) H.E.L.Priday (London, 1930), pp.86,86,92.

⁷⁹ Star, "Potts", p.48.

⁸⁰ See Chapter 1.

⁸¹ Peterson's doctorates were honorary according to Frank Graham, *Man's dominion* (New York, 1971), p.280.

⁸² Julian Huxley, "Preface to first edition", *A field guide to the birds of Britain and Europe*, (eds) Roger Peterson, Guy Mountfort and P.A.D.Hollom (London, 1983, orig. pub. 1954), p.9.

scientific arrangement by classification order and did not, like Moncrieff, combine ornithology with conservation advocacy.

Moncrieff, however, was at the cusp of change. Although several amateur ornithologists published after her⁸³, most bird books in New Zealand, beginning with Oliver's *New Zealand birds* in 1930, were written by professional scientists. The distinction between her amateur status and their professional position, with the implication for their adherence to the conventional scientific paradigm, is one reason⁸⁴ for the virtual exclusion of her bird book, her field researches and herself, from the ornithological record. The latest example of this, notwithstanding his revisionist opinion of her book, was Turbott's statement in the Foreword to the recent *Field guide to the birds of New Zealand*, that, "Our first New Zealand bird guide - with which my own association...began - appeared in 1966"⁸⁵. Her book is cited only in the Bibliography to the Falla, Sibson and Turbott field guide in 1966 and 1978. In his history of the Lodge paintings and the Moncrieff-Falla joint book proposal, Fleming refers to her having just published her pocket field guide but positions her more as "a niece of J.G.Millais" than as an ornithologist herself.⁸⁶ Fleming certainly made no mention in public of the remark he made privately, that Moncrieff was recognised locally "as an ornithologist of stature".⁸⁷ Other books, like *Thirty New Zealand birds* by Gordon R. Williams and *Know your*

⁸³ For example, Johannes Andersen, *Bird-song and New Zealand song birds* (Auckland, 1926); Edgar Stead, *The life histories of New Zealand birds* (London, 1932); R.A.Wilson, *Bird islands of New Zealand* (Christchurch, 1959); R.H.D.Stidolph, *The birds around us* (Masterton, 1971).

⁸⁴ Others will be discussed in succeeding chapters.

⁸⁵ E.G.Turbott, "Foreword", in *Field guide to the birds of New Zealand*, (eds) Barrie Heather and Hugh Robertson (Auckland, 1996), p.7.

⁸⁶ C.A.Fleming, *George Edward Lodge* (Wellington, 1982), p.8.

⁸⁷ See Chapter 3.

New Zealand birds by K.E.Westerkov, refer to Stead but not Moncrieff.⁸⁸

Why has she virtually disappeared from the record?

Several reasons have been advanced. Turbott implies an imprecision in her descriptions instead of scientific rigour. It is true that she generalises on occasion; and that her prose can be sometimes be fulsome and awkward as in the following example. "The name of a bird to a beginner, nay to any student, is the golden key which alone can unlock for his use all which has been recorded of that bird."⁸⁹ Brockie suggested that scientists would not have liked her poetics and sentimentality. Moncrieff certainly conveys her emotional response to birds, but so too did Stead;

[The male wry-billed plover] turned the eggs again with his bill, yet made no movement to sit on them, but stood on the side of the nest with a most dejected expression. I do not know why he did this, but perhaps he was only a young bird, and, all unversed in family affairs, and with no previous experience to guide him, his sensations were much the same as those of a bachelor, left for the first time all alone with a crying baby....I am afraid he was in for a wigging when his mate returned!⁹⁰

Since Falla commented in his Review that, "The vein of personal reminiscence and experiences throughout the book make easy and often amusing reading"⁹¹, this sexist form of emotion was acceptable to scientists apparently, but not Moncrieff's vitalist sentiment.⁹² Stead, however, conformed to the prevailing scientific paradigm. His extensive collection of mounted birds, which he

⁸⁸ Gordon R.Williams, *Thirty New Zealand birds* (Wellington, 1959); Williams was Director of the Wildlife Service, see Chapter 3. K.E.Westerkov, *Know your New Zealand birds* (Christchurch, 1967); Westerkov was Associate Professor of Zoology at Otago University.

⁸⁹ Moncrieff, *NZ birds* (1st ed.), p.x.

⁹⁰ E.F.Stead, *The life histories of New Zealand birds* (London, 1932), p.96.

⁹¹ R.A.Falla, "Review of *The life histories of New Zealand birds*", *Emu*, 34(1934-35), pp.73,74.

⁹² Gender issues, including the "boys' own games" inherent in Stead's reminiscence, will be examined in Chapter 8.

donated to the Canterbury museum, and his interest in captive breeding of endangered species secured him a place among the professionals, a route Moncrieff ridiculed;

You may retire with a dead bird to your room and laboriously learn the irregular verbs of ornithology, or you may betake yourself to the bush and get to know the birds themselves. Mark Twain must have had the former procedure in his mind when he defined an ornithologist as a man who, on seeing a bird sitting in a tree, got his gun and shot it.⁹³

Her inability to conform to the prevailing scientific paradigm because of her vitalist ethic is a substantial reason for her exclusion from the ornithological record. Nevertheless *New Zealand birds and how to identify them* sold thousands of copies in five editions over four decades. Conservationists encouraged teachers to foster in their students a love and knowledge of indigenous birds, an inspiration which teachers like Turbott's father heeded, thus helping to create a demand for the book. That children responded to and remembered it, is evidenced by today's professional scientists like Brockie, Merton, Mann and amateur ornithologists like Janet McCallum⁹⁴. Moncrieff's *New Zealand birds and how to identify them* was, therefore, the most significant exemplar of her ornithology as trusteeship.

As another representation of Moncrieff's trusteeship the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union may appear improbable but, unlike the OSNZ, bird protection was one of its founding objectives. Moncrieff used her prominence in the Union not only to publish amateur scientific papers but also to champion the cause of conservation both among its members and to New Zealanders. Joining in 1923, the same year she became a founding member of Forest and Bird, she was proposed by Oliver and seconded by Leach, who was

⁹³ Moncrieff, *NZ birds* (1st ed.), p.ix.

⁹⁴ See Introduction.

the President of the Union that year and who provided photographs for her field guide.⁹⁵

The RAOU, originally without its royal charter, was founded in 1901 by a group of bird lovers, scientific ornithologists and oologists to further knowledge of birdlife, classify new species and preserve those that were threatened. This was a similar programme to its fellow organisations in Britain and America, founded respectively in 1868 and 1883⁹⁶, with whom it was linked through an exchange of journals. In 1922 these international links were strengthened through membership of the International Council for Bird Preservation then called the International Committee for Bird Protection. With headquarters in Melbourne, the Union attracted members from other Australian states and New Zealand, who elected a council of president, vice-presidents and representatives from all regions by postal ballot. Election results were announced at the annual meeting or congress which included a birdwatching camp, held in various states in October or November. The management of such a dispersed membership, however, was conducted at a monthly meeting by the secretary and members resident in Melbourne where *Emu* was also edited and published. Extra-Victorian council members attended if they were in Melbourne, as Falla did in September 1929⁹⁷ in his position as New Zealand Representative, when enroute to join Douglas Mawson's 1929-30 Antarctic expedition. Otherwise they received copies of the minutes by mail and their comments or votes would be recorded the following month. The system worked smoothly enough, perhaps because few of the issues needed immediate attention.

⁹⁵ Her membership of the Union dated from 27 September 1923; "Old memberships", MS 11437:Box 15b, 4. The Union is now called Birds Australia.

⁹⁶ Stephen Fox, *John Muir and his legacy*, (Boston, Toronto, 1981), p.152. Geoffrey Bolton ascribes the inspiration for the RAOU to the Tasmanian Ornithological Society, founded in 1888; Geoffrey Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers* (Sydney, 2nd imp. 1984, orig.pub.1981), p.99. As the RAOU had Tasmanian members, perhaps the island society merged. The RAOU journal, *Emu*, ascribes its origins to the Victorian Field Naturalists Club and the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science; *Emu*, 1(1901), p.4.

⁹⁷ Minutes of Council Meetings, 10 September 1929, MS 11437:Box 12b, 4.

New Zealanders have always been members of the Union. In Moncrieff's active years in the 1920s to 1940s they numbered about twenty. Volume One of *Emu* contained a paper on the pukeko by J.C.McLean, a founding New Zealand member. He was also a member of the British Ornithologists' Union and helped Guthrie-Smith with his bird photography.⁹⁸ Professional scientists like Myers, Oliver, Falla, L.E.Richdale, Charles Fleming and B.J.Marples, amateur ornithologists like Stidolph, A.S. and Amy Wilkinson, W.W.Smith⁹⁹, Guthrie-Smith and Pycroft, and conservationists like Sanderson were all members at different times.

The Union's principal aims, of increasing knowledge of birds and encouraging their preservation, are reflected in its publications. It has been associated with two multi-volume handbooks; that of G.M.Mathews' *Birds of Australia* published between 1910 and 1927 and the *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic birds* due for completion in 2001, the Union's centennial year. Between each collection of volumes the Union had a Checklist committee which, using the researches of its taxonomically-minded members, continued to amend the status of Australian birds in line with contemporary international standards. During the 1960s Australian scientific members, reflecting the attitude of counterparts in the Ornithological Society of New Zealand and of scientific professionalisation, achieved a change in the editorial policy of *Emu*. From 1969 *Emu* became a purely scientific journal while articles perceived to be of broad general interest are published in the newsletter *Wingspan*.¹⁰⁰ Prior to that Charles Bryant, who was editor from 1929 to 1960, had included papers by amateur and professional scientists.

⁹⁸ J.C.McLean, "Porphyrio melanotus in New Zealand", *Emu*, 1(1901-02), pp.52-56. See also, E.G.Turbott and R. Galbreath, "John Chambers McLean (1871-1918)", *Flying*, p.184.

⁹⁹ William Walter Smith (1852-1942) emigrated to New Zealand in the 1870s and became known for his interest in natural history and as a collector. As a conservationist he was a Scenery Preservation Commissioner and also a member of Forest and Bird; Ross Galbreath, "Smith, William Walter", *DNZB* 3(1901-1920), (Wellington, Auckland), p.482.

¹⁰⁰ An analysis of the scientific-amateur split is given by Ray Wallace in "A body in twain. The R A O U and the events of 1969", MA thesis in History and Philosophy of Science (University of Melbourne, 1990).

From its first volume of *Emu*, the RAOU also encouraged its other aim of bird preservation when it published two articles, one on the protection of the eggs and young of mutton birds and another deplored the slaughter of birds for decoration.¹⁰¹ As another facet of conservation, it lobbied Australian state and federal governments on behalf of bird protection. For example, in 1927 it requested that Queensland's Prickly-Pear Land Commission and Minister of Agriculture, as the State's Chief Custodian of birds, change their policy which permitted the Commission to kill emus in pear-infested districts. Using the economic ornithology argument, the Union suggested that emus did more good by eating caterpillars that damaged crops than harm by spreading cactus seeds. However the Commission replied that, "If the large excess in numbers of these birds constitute a menace to the settlers then the birds, rather than the settlers, must be removed."¹⁰² By 1936 the Union's influence must have been effective as its opinion on protection for several bird species was sought and accepted by Victoria's Chief Inspector of Fisheries and Game.¹⁰³ The Union does not appear to have directly lobbied the New Zealand government, perhaps because its New Zealand Secretary and Representatives in these decades between 1920 and 1950, had good access to Ministers and public servants. Earlier, in 1909, the Union had enquired about mustelids in New Zealand from the Otago Acclimatisation Society.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ *Emu*, 1(1901-02), "Should mutton birds be protected?" (n.a.), (p.69); "My tame wild birds" by Mrs K.Langloh Parker (pp.112-118).

¹⁰² Office of Prickly-Pear Land Commission to Hon.Sec., 17 January 1927, MS 11437:Box 8b, 4; Hon.Sec. to Forgan Smith, 19 March 1927, MS 11437:Box 6f, 4. Prickly-pear was an introduced noxious weed to farmers who thought emus and some flying birds spread its seeds through their droppings. Bonuses were paid for emu destruction.

Rachel Carson used entomological research on predators of the prickly-pear as an example of the cost-effectiveness and environmental awareness of biological, rather than chemical, control of "pests"; Rachel Carson, *Silent spring* (London, 1965, orig.pub.1962), pp.85,86. This success was announced in Nelson when C.Mundell, an Australian entomologist, visited the Cawthron which was involved in similar research; *NEM*, 28 August 1937, p.2; Ross Galbreath, *DSIR* (Wellington, 1998), Chapter 4.

¹⁰³ See correspondence 22 September 1936 and 18 April 1939, MS 11437:Box 8a,4.

¹⁰⁴ Janet Swann, "A short history of the Acclimatisation Society of Otago", MA thesis in History (University of Otago, 1962), p.149.

While the discord between amateur and professional scientists developed in the 1960s, the potential for division, which lay in the twin aims of the Union, came to a head in Moncrieff's active years. This dispute concerned ornithological epistemology; whether knowledge of birds should principally proceed through research into living bird behaviour in the wild, which was allied to the conservation movement, or by studies of the dead as taxonomy or embryology.¹⁰⁵ While field studies are partly taxonomic, the conservationists were opposed to the continuation of killing birds and collecting eggs for the purpose of merely setting birds into a human-devised framework. As Moncrieff believed, museums already had enough "skins" to facilitate classification.¹⁰⁶ Although collectors and protectors seem to have agreed to coexist for much of the Union's first thirty-odd years, increasing advocacy from the 1920s of conservationists in both New Zealand and Australia brought about a change as bird species acquired legal protection and preservationists sought to ensure the laws were obeyed. Both in New Zealand and Australia some members of the RAOU were also preservationists and members of conservation societies. Moncrieff and Sanderson had their counterparts in Alexander Chisholm and Neville Cayley, who were activists in both the RAOU and the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia which was founded in 1909.¹⁰⁷

Moncrieff contributed to the protection-collection debate in several ways. She tried to create a platform to promote conservation both within the Union and among the wider New Zealand public by attempting to organise the annual congress in New Zealand in 1928. "I am downright keen on having this because the stir and interest it is bound to cause, having these people over

¹⁰⁵ If collecting *per se* was the aim of some members, they disguised it as the need for knowledge in the 1920s and 1930s. Earlier, the collection cabinet was sufficient reason. Tom Griffiths evokes that earlier time when, at sunset "continuous gurgling noises emanated from rows of tents as eggs of waterfowl were blown"; Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and collectors* (Cambridge, 1996), p.131.

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter 1.

¹⁰⁷ Annual Report of Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia 1923-24, MS 11437: Box 8b, 4.

here, will do [Forest and Bird] a great deal of good."¹⁰⁸ Oliver, as New Zealand Secretary, having investigated various locations, eventually suggested Invercargill for the meeting and Stewart Island for the camp as "one of the most beautiful of our tourist resorts and nearer the primeval condition as regards forests and birds than any other easily accessible place", where members might see "thirty species of bird in ten days stay".¹⁰⁹ He pointedly told the RAOU Council that, "It should be clearly understood that in New Zealand no birds nor their eggs can be taken, except in the case of a few species which have not the protection of law."¹¹⁰ However the economic depression of the time prevented most members from attending so that the 1928 congress was held in Brisbane instead. The RAOU did not hold its congress in New Zealand until 1962, by which time Moncrieff was no longer active in, though still a member of, the Union.¹¹¹

Moncrieff also persuaded the Union to lobby the Australian government over the collection and exportation of Australian finches which the state of Western Australia permitted in the 1930s and 1940s for four months of the year.¹¹² This was partly her vitalist concern for the finches' welfare but was also an expression of concern for the well-being of New Zealand birds. She believed the finches were smuggled illegally into New Zealand and thus could introduce disease into the New Zealand bird population.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 23 August 1927, MS Papers, 0444:192, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Oliver to Hon.Sec. RAOU, 29 September 1927, MS 11437, Box 6e, and 27 December [1927], Box 6f, 4. At that time, the Union Steamship Company had a regular service between Melbourne and Bluff so that Stewart Island was less off the beaten track than it seems today.

¹¹⁰ Oliver to Hon.Sec., 29 September 1927, MS 11437:Box 6e, 4.

¹¹¹ Secker to McCallum, 11 July 1988, "Biographical note" and "Notes for Obituary - *Emu*", held by Alma Secker, Featherston.

¹¹² E.Abbot, Comptroller-General Trade to Chisholm, 28 February 1935, MS 11437:Box 8a, 4; Minutes of Council, 20 April 1948 - 15 March 1960, RAOU File 6/9/4, MONZ. Today exportation of Australian native birds is a Federal matter and very strictly controlled; telephone conversation with Hugo Phillips, Birds Australia, 9 December 1998.

¹¹³ Moncrieff to Hon. Sec., 8 July [1934], Moncrieff to Dickison, 11 July 1949, MS 11437:Box 6e, 8c, 4.

Lastly, Moncrieff advocated protection in most of the papers she contributed to *Emu*, but two articles demonstrate alternative treatments of her theme as a voice for birds within a field science context. In the first, "Certain introduced birds of New Zealand", she explained the benefits of conservation on the utilitarian grounds of economic ornithology which was promoted by the British Ministry of Agriculture. In New Zealand the Moncrieffs subscribed to the Ministry's *Journal* and so had knowledge of research like that of Walter Collinge in Britain.¹¹⁴ Moncrieff's 1930 paper was written, partly in response to the destruction of eggs and birds considered harmful to fruit and crops in an agricultural and orchard district like Nelson, and partly to challenge Oliver's comments on the skylark in his *New Zealand birds*.¹¹⁵ She quoted summaries from Collinge's investigations of the contents of skylarks' stomachs; "Neutral, 50.5%, beneficial, 36.5%, injurious 13%". These foods indicated that, "The injuries it does by damaging seed-corn and other crops are far outweighed by the benefits it confers in destroying injurious insects." Of the greenfinch she quoted the summary of another survey: "Though undesirable in arable country, it is harmless if not beneficial amongst orchards." Moncrieff believed, she said, "that a farmer has every right to destroy any individual bird doing harm to his crops" but she was against the wholesale slaughter of these birds because in some areas they were beneficial in destroying insects. As she had with the kea, she brought these birds nearer the ethical pale. "The chief trouble in judging the value of a bird lies in a too hasty summing up of the evidence. In most cases every evidence of guilt is noted and remembered, whilst good deeds get overlooked or forgotten." As a rebuke to Oliver she added, "it behoves those looked up to...to be most careful never to print any definite statement of a bird's guilt, unless backed by absolute scientific proof."¹¹⁶ He took her

¹¹⁴ See Chapter 1. In 1921 the RAOU published a paper on the starling, reprinted from *The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*; Walter Collinge, "The starling: is it injurious to agriculture?", *Emu*, 21(1921-22), pp.152-157.

¹¹⁵ See Chapter 3.

¹¹⁶ Pérrine Moncrieff, "Certain introduced birds of New Zealand", *Emu*, 30(1930-31), pp.219-224. She included economic ornithology in other writing; *NEM*, 28 June 1924, p.2; "Bush and Bird Society notes", *NEM*, 21 March 1931, p.15.

point, for in his second edition he noted Collinge's findings and the "good work" done for most of the year by skylarks and greenfinches.¹¹⁷

Her second treatment, in a paper which was her swansong for *Emu*, highlighted conservation within a list of bird species recorded as permanent or temporary residents of Nelson province. These "locality lists", as they were known, not only provided a data base of birds likely to be seen by birdwatchers wishing to "tick off" a particular species, but could be used to indicate the distribution and status of species. The locality list was the forerunner of the more scientifically-determined "bird atlas" of the later twentieth century.¹¹⁸

Moncrieff's paper, "Birds of Nelson province, New Zealand", which she read at the 1937 Auckland conference of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science¹¹⁹, integrated her own birdwatching observations with research from published sources. After cross-checking her references, she calculated that 135 species were to be seen; three, including the takahe or Notornis, were doubtful; and eight were known to be extinct.¹²⁰ Beginning with an ornithological history, she then outlined the causes of the disappearance of native birds but forecast a future for them in Nelson if these causes were alleviated and if two types of habitat could be reserved. These were a sea-littoral sanctuary at Farewell Spit and what are known today as mainland "islands" of lowland podocarp forest.

Unfortunately, in the past the different value of forest areas has not been taken sufficiently into consideration - especially when making bird sanctuaries. A small area of coastal forest, with its rich supply of berry-bearing trees and shrubs, capable of supporting not only resident but visiting species, is worth

¹¹⁷ W.R.B.Oliver, *New Zealand birds* (Wellington, 1955), pp.621,631.

¹¹⁸ P.C.Bull, "Atlas scheme", *Flying*, p.24; J.Ferguson-Lees, "Distribution maps and bird atlases", in *Enjoying ornithology*, (ed) Ronald Hickling (Calton, 1983), p.74.

¹¹⁹ *Report of the twenty-third meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science*, Auckland meeting January 1937, (Wellington, 1937), p.139; Moncrieff, Autobiographical details, 2.

¹²⁰ The 1996 *Field guide* gives a total of 328 species recorded in the New Zealand region up till 1995; p.8.

infinitely more than poor beech forest of the type that clothes the mountain-tops, now generally preserved as protection belts to control the water supply. Very little is left, except in remote districts, of the rich berry-bearing forest....Therefore every section left of this type of timber requires to be guarded jealously if we are to keep sufficient bird "larders" for those native species which cannot change their food habits.

....An unfortunate feature of the position is that if the tracts of forest left standing were adjacent to each other they would form a marvellous asset.¹²¹

By these three means did Moncrieff contribute a conservation perspective to the protection-collection debate within the Union. Sanderson also entered the debate but ended up by resigning his membership after four years. He joined in January 1924¹²², but by the following year evidently had reservations about its effectiveness as an agent of protection. In 1925 and 1926, after Oliver had asked the Union to assist Forest and Bird in its efforts to have the Auckland Islands permanently reserved as sanctuaries, and congress passed a resolution referring to all islands, Sanderson responded by saying all suitable islands were sanctuaries but lacked efficient conservation; it would be more helpful if the Union advocated increased efficiency.¹²³ A year later he suggested *Emu* should publish more articles on economic ornithology; that the economic value of birds to man did not receive much attention from ornithologists since scientists focused on individual peculiarities of birds "while failing to see the whole as a whole."¹²⁴ Sanderson was also alarmed that collecting occurred during congresses. When the possibility existed of its being held in New Zealand, he advised the Secretary of Internal Affairs to

¹²¹ Périnne Moncrieff, "Birds of Nelson province, New Zealand", *Emu*, 37(1937-38), pp.229,230.

¹²² Minutes of Council Meetings, MS 11437:Box 12b,4.

¹²³ Minutes of Council Meetings, 9 September 1925 and 10 November 1926, MS 11437:Box 12b; Sanderson to Hon.Sec., 22 October 1926, MS 11437:Box 8b, 4.

"Efficient conservation" related to the "unity of control" issue, by which Sanderson meant that conservation should come under a single statute and administration and be rigorously enforced; see Ross Galbreath, *Working for wildlife* (Wellington, 1993), Chapter 3.

¹²⁴ Sanderson to Dickison, 10 September 1927, MS 11437:Box 6e, 4.

watch the Union's activities because of its attitude to collecting.¹²⁵ Sanderson resigned in 1928 because the RAOU, wishing to retain all its members, continued to permit limited amounts of bird collecting at its camps.¹²⁶

Nevertheless the Union was concerned enough about collecting to appoint a three-member committee in 1927 to report on it. Their conclusions recommended field glasses and camera rather than gun and knife; and that collecting should occur only by trained zoologists for scientific taxonomy. The committee reasoned that collecting for itself could lead to a species' decimation, especially if trading or exchange took place, and that the general public would be suspicious of an organisation that proclaimed bird protection yet countenanced collecting.¹²⁷ However the retiring president in 1928, E.A.D'Ombrain, himself a collector, used his Presidential Address to argue the case for modified and regulated collecting to ensure wider knowledge and scientific accuracy.¹²⁸ The issue became more urgent at the camp in 1933 when Moncrieff was the retiring President¹²⁹ although she was not present. Several members were seen to collect eggs from a protected bird. This action brought many condemnatory letters to the Council which ineffectively debated its response for several months until the President, F.L.Berney, sent a motion censuring the guilty members. This was passed by three-quarters of the Council.¹³⁰ Yet another subcommittee was established and reported in 1936. Collecting was to be restricted to supposedly "new" birds or eggs. However collectors continued to strongly defend their case, epitomised by the arguments of Hugh Milne. Milne regretted the unpleasant atmosphere developing and hoped RAOU members would again unite since all had the study of birds at

¹²⁵ Sanderson to Under-Sec.IA, 29 March 1928, MS 0444:314, 1.

¹²⁶ Sanderson to Dickison, 8 June 1928, MS 0444:314, 1.

¹²⁷ "Report of R.A.O.U. Committee appointed at Perth, 1927", *Emu*, 28(1928-29), pp.285,286.

¹²⁸ E.A.D'Ombrain, "Collecting and non-collecting", *Emu*, 28(1928-29), pp.255-263.

¹²⁹ Her attainment of this position will be discussed in Chapter 8.

¹³⁰ Minutes of Council Meetings, MS 11437:Box 12b;Miscellaneous Correspondence, MS 11437:Box 8a, 4.

heart. He considered that oologists with illegal collections of prohibited species had valuable information to contribute. He also argued that, "The photographer who tethers a nestling to a convenient position for a picture, or leaves a camera focused for many hrs (sic) on a nest with young, without the return of the brooding bird, is just as harmful as the Oologist who takes a second clutch of eggs from the one bird during the same season"¹³¹

Just how widespread these photographic methods were is unclear; Moncrieff certainly censured them. But Milne's accusation is proved by Guthrie-Smith's own account of a photographic session, one of those which produced his greatly admired studies. In photographing a baby kereru he had found it necessary to tie back branches which shaded its nest from the sun. Consequently at midday the baby "began to feel the heat very much". It was also deprived of food since its parents, though waiting a short distance away, were apparently suspicious of Guthrie-Smith's preparations and refused to alight on the nest. After waiting twelve hours without result to see the parents feeding their only chick, Guthrie-Smith took the baby home with him to hand rear. This seems to have been his common practice in 1908-09 and he makes no explanatory comment on it in 1927 in the second edition of *Birds of the water, wood & waste*.¹³²

Collecting, as an activity within the Union, died out in the following decades but, allied to the international smuggling of live protected bird species for aviaries, continues as an international problem. While the aims of the RAOU remain today as both ornithological study and bird protection, knowledge is gained by field study methods.¹³³

Since Sanderson's conservation principles motivated him to resign from the RAOU over the issue of collecting, why did not Moncrieff follow his example? Myers, Guthrie-Smith, Amy Wilkinson and Smith also resigned

¹³¹ Milne to Hon. Sec., 10 July 1936, MS 11437:Box 8a, 4.

¹³² Guthrie-Smith, *Water*, pp.180-182.

¹³³ See, for example *Emu*, 96;1(1996), in which all of the eight papers rely on field study of their subjects although, in one case, eggs were collected, incubated and the juveniles then released into the field.

between 1926 and 1932 but there is nothing to suggest they were motivated by the issue of collecting.¹³⁴ Like Sanderson, Moncrieff was thoroughly opposed to private collectors of indigenous birds and their eggs, whether they collected to study birds themselves or to sell them alive or dead to aviarists or museums. She made diligent efforts to ensure their activities ceased.¹³⁵ As she told Falla in 1924, "Nothing but the greed of possession eggs them on and not because they love birds at all."¹³⁶ Consequently it is anomalous that no extant evidence reveals Moncrieff's attitude to the RAOU collectors, given that the controversy flared again in the year of her Presidential Address. She certainly did not hesitate to resign from the OSNZ when she disagreed with its policy. But in view of her sex, lack of tertiary education and of a profession, the benefits and status to be derived from remaining within the Union were significant and irreplaceable.

One benefit derived from its journal. Through *Emu* she could learn of contemporary international ornithology and could contribute papers in the knowledge that they were available to Union members in Europe and other parts of the world.¹³⁷ Despite her assertion that the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* could publish her writing¹³⁸, it is unlikely given the difference between her papers and the nature of the *Transactions'* papers by the 1920s. Almost all of these were written by professional scientists; brief, precise descriptions of New Zealand's fauna and flora. An exception was Majorie Mestayer, an amateur scientist who published papers on her work on the mollusc collection at the Dominion Museum. According to R.K.Dell, a former

¹³⁴ Myers, 24 August 1926, MS 11437:Box 8a; Guthrie-Smith, 21 November 1930, Smith, 8 January 1932, Amy Wilkinson, 1 August 1932, MS 11437:Box 15b, 4. Only Smith's reason - financial - is apparent.

¹³⁵ See Chapters 5 and 6.

¹³⁶ Moncrieff to Falla, 23 August 1924, MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

¹³⁷ Enrolment forms from 1921 to 1946 list members in Japan, Germany, United States, Siam, Britain, Falkland Islands and in France, Jean Delacour, President of the International Council for Bird Protection. The RAOU also had a publications exchange system with ornithological societies overseas; MS 11437:Box 4d, 4.

¹³⁸ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 19 April 1931, MS 0444:193, 1.

Director of the museum and its historian, some of Mestayer's published work was a "target for criticism and as a result she finally withdrew from the scientific field."¹³⁹ Thus the RAOU's *Emu* was the only specialist publication in the South Pacific region in which an amateur like Moncrieff could address fellow ornithologists.

Another benefit was the opportunity it gave for personal acquaintance and correspondence with international ornithologists who visited New Zealand. In 1926 she met Wilfred Alexander, an Australian entomologist and field ornithologist member of the Union, whose research and ecological appreciation attracted her. On a birdwatching trip in the South Island they saw keas feeding on a deer carcase, in the manner that keas were alleged to eat the kidney fat of sheep. Moncrieff and Alexander looked more closely and found that the keas were actually eating larvae swarming over the carcase, not the deer itself. Moncrieff was to use this example in the kea's defence¹⁴⁰, but the trip was also the foundation for an intermittent correspondence over many years.¹⁴¹ About 1930 Alexander moved to Britain and became the first Director of the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology and a foundation member of the British Trust for Ornithology. He worked with scientists like Nicholson and Fisher and in 1955 published *Birds of the ocean*. In 1940 the RAOU made Alexander a Fellow, and in his response he alluded to the collection-protection tension; "I can only suppose the Union wished to show that it honoured field observers as much as systematic ornithologists."¹⁴² The Union's only other Fellow at the time was the taxonomist Mathews, whose work Moncrieff had used in the first edition of her *New Zealand birds and how to identify them*.

A third benefit was, that in holding an elected presidential office in the Union, she acquired a status which she seemingly believed gave authority to

¹³⁹ R.K.Dell, *The first hundred years of the Dominion Museum* (n.p., [1965]), p.147.

¹⁴⁰ Moncrieff, "The Kea", *NEM*, 18 April 1929, p.5.

¹⁴¹ See Moncrieff, Pérrière, Correspondence W.B.Alexander, MS Papers 5642:09, WTU.

¹⁴² Alexander to Dickison, 11 March 1940, MS 11437:Box 8a, 4.

her ornithological and conservation writing. In letters to the *Nelson Evening Mail* or to politicians and cabinet ministers and in subsequent editions of her book, she signed herself as VP. or P. (later ex-P) RAOU. Perhaps her belief in this was correct since Oliver described the position of President as an "honour which seems to be the blue ribbon of ornithological science in this part of the world."¹⁴³ Although this may appear unctuous since he was accepting the Presidency himself, and the only other ornithological society was just starting, it was a period when honours and attainments were emphasised. Galbreath has remarked on the peacetime use of army rank.¹⁴⁴ In their books, Potts, Hutton and Oliver all noted their Fellowships of scientific societies on the title pages; more recently Fleming did so in *George Edward Lodge. The unpublished bird paintings*. So, even though resignation would not have precluded her use of the appellation, continuing membership would uphold her credibility. In addition, her personal attribute of loyalty to an organisation which gave all these benefits can be seen to outweigh the problematic collecting, which in any case diminished as an issue.

Moncrieff's ornithology as trusteeship extended well beyond her bird book and her participation in the RAOU. Some of her proposals as a voice for birds did not eventuate, like her book with Falla within her ornithology as science, but even as unfulfilled projects they demonstrate her expansive vision and energy in the conservation cause. These schemes included her novel about birds which she wrote in 1924. Its plot concerned a poor but respectable young man who was hired by a collector of rare birds in London to travel to New Zealand, locate the huia and steal some huia eggs. Attempting to prevent this was a young New Zealand woman. Romance between them eventually ensued after the huia was found but not harmed by the young wouldbe collector. Although Sanderson and A.H.Messenger, another founding Forest and Bird member, critiqued the novel which gave Moncrieff confidence to

¹⁴³ Oliver to Hon.Sec., 14 December 1943, MS 11437:Box 8c, 4.

¹⁴⁴ Galbreath, *Wildlife*, p.22. He mentions Captains Yerex, Sanderson and Ellis. Moncrieff's husband was another. In Nelson he was known as The Captain.

submit it to an overseas publisher and to the Society for the Protection of Birds in Britain, it was not published.¹⁴⁵ Moncrieff wanted to incorporate as many birds as possible so people would remember them¹⁴⁶ but this impedes the plot and makes the novel somewhat didactic. The book was probably suggested by Myers' huia-hunt in 1924 but the overall idea, as McCallum remarked, came from Gene Porter Stratton, an American novelist who incorporated birds and wildlife into her fiction. Moncrieff believed that Stratton had the gift of so endearing birds to the American public that their conservation was assured.¹⁴⁷ Another unsuccessful venture was an article, with photographs by Falla, which she submitted to the *National Geographic* in America to coincide with the 1925 visit to New Zealand by United States warships.¹⁴⁸

Moncrieff's ornithology as trusteeship also encompassed music in forms that involved both birds and human beings. Alive to the musicality of birdsong because of her education, she speculated that birds like the tui and bellbird were losing their repertoire because their decreasing numbers meant they had fewer to emulate.¹⁴⁹ She therefore devised music lessons for them in the bush. She would ask visitors, who had portable instruments like violins or flutes, to play scales and tunes each day to stimulate the birds. She believed that at least one of these music lessons was effective when she heard bellbirds trying to repeat a scale. "They would strike the lowest note, miss a fe[w] and then finish off with a run up to the tonic."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 16 September 1924, 25 May 1927 and 9 August 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1. "The huia" is in MS Papers 5642:13,14, WTU.

¹⁴⁶ Moncrieff to Falla, 23 August [1924], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

¹⁴⁷ Myers' expedition is mentioned in Moncrieff to Falla, 10 January [1924], MS Papers 2366:67, 3. Janet McCallum, "Perrine Moncrieff. Champion of birds and bush", in *Wilderness women*, (eds) Christine Dann and Pip Lynch (Auckland, 1989), p.59. Perrine Moncrieff, "Birds in relation to women", *Emu*, 33(1933-34), p.216.

¹⁴⁸ Moncrieff to Falla, 12 April, 4 July [1925] and 15 September [1926], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

¹⁴⁹ Moncrieff to Cunningham, 14 July 1948, 2.

¹⁵⁰ Moncrieff to Cunningham, 14 July 1948, 2. Moncrieff to Falla, 1 October [1934], MS Papers 2366:67, 3. Moncrieff often wrote of the tui's ability to learn; for example, "The tui as mimic", *Emu*, 30(1930-31), p.193.

She also believed that the same species varied their song in different localities.¹⁵¹ She incorporated this assessment into her New Zealand bird symphony, which she wrote in the early 1930s and which, like her bird novel, had both musical and conservationist motivations. Its principal theme was a bellbird refrain running through the four movements which represented different times of the day. She described these as: dawn when the birds awake and "sing their first song of praise"; morning with the "first rapture past", the tui, bellbird and shining cuckoo are heard; midday when the theme was of the cries of birds passing overhead, in which she took "the kea as representing birds persecuted by the advance of civilization"; and sunset which,

starts with early afternoon when the bellbirds chime over the water and the cicadas are buzzing in the heat and ends with the call of the woodhen and a final burst of song from the birds, who die away leaving merely the tui clucking.¹⁵²

Moncrieff composed her symphony on the piano and had it orchestrated by Claud Haydon, a Wellington musician, after she had played the piano score to the Wellington conductor, Leon de Mauny. He had founded the Wellington Symphony Orchestra and conducted small, semi-professional orchestras of mostly part-time musicians in public concerts and programmes on radio station 2YA Wellington between the 1920s and 1940s.¹⁵³ De Mauny apparently intended to broadcast the bird symphony with a small group for a concert on station 2YA¹⁵⁴ but I have been unable to establish any performance.¹⁵⁵

Richard Henry, the caretaker of New Zealand's first island sanctuary, Resolution Island in Southland, also gave concerts on his tin whistle to kakas; Susanne and John Hill, *Richard Henry of Resolution Island* (Dunedin, 1987), p.245.

¹⁵¹ The tui's song is known to vary from district to district; Heather and Robertson (eds), *Field guide*, p.405.

¹⁵² Moncrieff to Falla, 1 October [1934], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

¹⁵³ John Mansfield Thomson, *The Oxford history of New Zealand music* (Auckland, 1991), pp.117,172, 225; Peter Downes and Peter Harcourt, *Voices in the air* (Wellington, 1976), pp.134,135.

¹⁵⁴ Moncrieff to Bryant, 27 September [1935], Tess Kloot RAOU former archivist, 2.

However Moncrieff's less original promotions on behalf of birds were certainly published. In the section on "Birdlife" in the 1967 edition of *Abel Tasman National Park: a handbook for visitors*, she listed the birds to be seen in their seasonal locations but she also attached an ecological and protectionist note,

The shags which once sat in the trees overhanging the beaches are also depleted in numbers [from pioneering days]. Persecution drove them away, and with them went the shoals of young herrings - themselves the prey of shags - which were nourished by the food dropped into the water from the shaggeries.¹⁵⁶

In her article for *The New Zealand League for the Hard of Hearing Journal* birds were vividly described for those who could identify them only by sight¹⁵⁷ but again she expressed the concept of trusteeship. "Grow redhot pokers and single camellias and Tuis will find them out. Put a small spoonful of honey in plenty of water in a jar (with a stick to enable small birds to get out if they fall in) and Tuis and Bellbirds will be your guests".¹⁵⁸

These were national publications but her major output was in her local newspaper, the *Nelson Evening Mail*. She wrote dozens of letters to the Editor about birds and their need for protection, often seizing on an unusual event, like the appearance of an Australian white ibis in Nelson, to emphasize her belief in its ethical right to life as well as its usefulness, rarity or legal

¹⁵⁵ A "descriptive pianoforte composition" by Moncrieff was played at a concert in Nelson but whether this was the bird symphony is also unknown; *NEM*, 22 June 1937, p.4. According to her Radio NZ interview, Moncrieff belonged to a music group in Nelson but there is no mention of her compositions in Shirley Tunnicliff's history of the Nelson School of Music, *Response to a vision* ([Nelson], 1994).

¹⁵⁶ Pérrine Moncrieff, "Birdlife", in *Abel Tasman National Park: a handbook for visitors*, (ed) E.Host (Nelson, 1967 orig.ed.1962), p.81.

¹⁵⁷ Moncrieff to Cunningham, 12 June 1960, 2.

¹⁵⁸ Pérrine Moncrieff, "The function of native birds", *The New Zealand League for the Hard of Hearing Journal*, p.4,5. This is undated as it was given to me.

protection.¹⁵⁹ She also wrote articles on birds, again often prompted by a topical event. The arrival of a white swan at Nelson's Queen's Gardens in 1931 generated an article on swans which was characteristic of many such writings in that she presented a holistic image of her subject to engage a reader's romanticism and factual interest. She began by saying that Nelson's visitor was descended from a race of swans originally introduced to Britain from Cyprus. She elaborated on the royal protection given to swans and how "quaintly-worded documents can still be seen in the British Museum" which publicised laws and customs related to ownership of the swans. She revisited her own experiences as a child with swans on Scottish lakes, recalling the soft musical notes at courting time and the thrill of seeing them fly. "Having attained a great height above the loch it invariably circles round slowly three times, by way of saying good-bye, or getting its bearings. Then it heads straight off". After outlining the swan's characteristics and habits, she described other European swans, the wild Berwick and the whooping swan, which breed in Europe and migrate south to India. "Migrating across Germany on a cold starry night, it is likely they inspired Hans Andersen to write the story of the two princes transformed into swans." Perhaps she spoke from personal experience when she wrote that the swans' wedge-shaped flying pattern was "one of the sights which repay the camper for leaving the fleshpots of Egypt and makes him glad to be communing with Nature." More prosaically, she then described North American swans, Australia's black swans, and the latter's introduction to New Zealand and Nelson. She concluded by mentioning how the remains of New Zealand's fossil swan were first found in a cave at Sumner in 1890.¹⁶⁰

Moncrieff also gave lectures to schools, clubs and societies, radio talks, and contributed to the 1940 Centennial Exhibition lecture programme when she

¹⁵⁹ Moncrieff to Editor, "The ibis", *NEM*, 17 March 1925, p.6. The 1996 *Field guide* notes that this was the first recorded sighting in New Zealand of the species but without mentioning Moncrieff or the naturalist, Marmaduke Rogers of Richmond, who saw the bird and who also wrote articles on birds for the *NEM*; p.257.

¹⁶⁰ *NEM*, 28 September 1931, p.7.

spoke on "Birds seen by the early pioneers". Researched in letters and diaries as well as published accounts, she spoke of the usefulness of wild duck as food to European settlers. But she also spoke of trusteeship themes. The pioneers, she said, regretting their loss of the red-breasted robin, compensated by naming a similar New Zealand bird as a robin. But "this delightful bird" was rapidly disappearing because its life was not held "sacred" here as was the robin's in Britain. Emphasising her vitalist ethic by quoting Blake's line, 'A robin in a cage puts Heaven in a rage', she implied that New Zealanders should assimilate and adopt the protective values behind that quotation.¹⁶¹

However, there was a situation when Moncrieff advised that trusteeship could best be exercised by public silence. This was the occasional possible sighting of a rare indigenous bird like the takahe or the New Zealand thrush, the pio pio. From 1932 she heard reports from hunters, trampers or mountaineers of takahe being heard or seen in Fiordland valleys and was fearful that these reports would also reach bird collectors and the museum scientists. "We want the bird alive not a fresh skin for the museum."¹⁶² She therefore believed in keeping these sighting reports to herself and, as I noted about the saddleback and Taranga Island in Chapter Three, keeping secret the locality.¹⁶³ She had begun this practice in Britain, where it was the policy of the National Trust in relation to the reserves it created.¹⁶⁴

In all these ways Moncrieff can be seen to have implemented Sanderson's dictum that ornithology was merely a necessary adjunct to conservation. Indeed, even in her ornithology as science, she would not have

¹⁶¹ "Bird life of New Zealand", *NEM*, 28 November 1939, p.6.

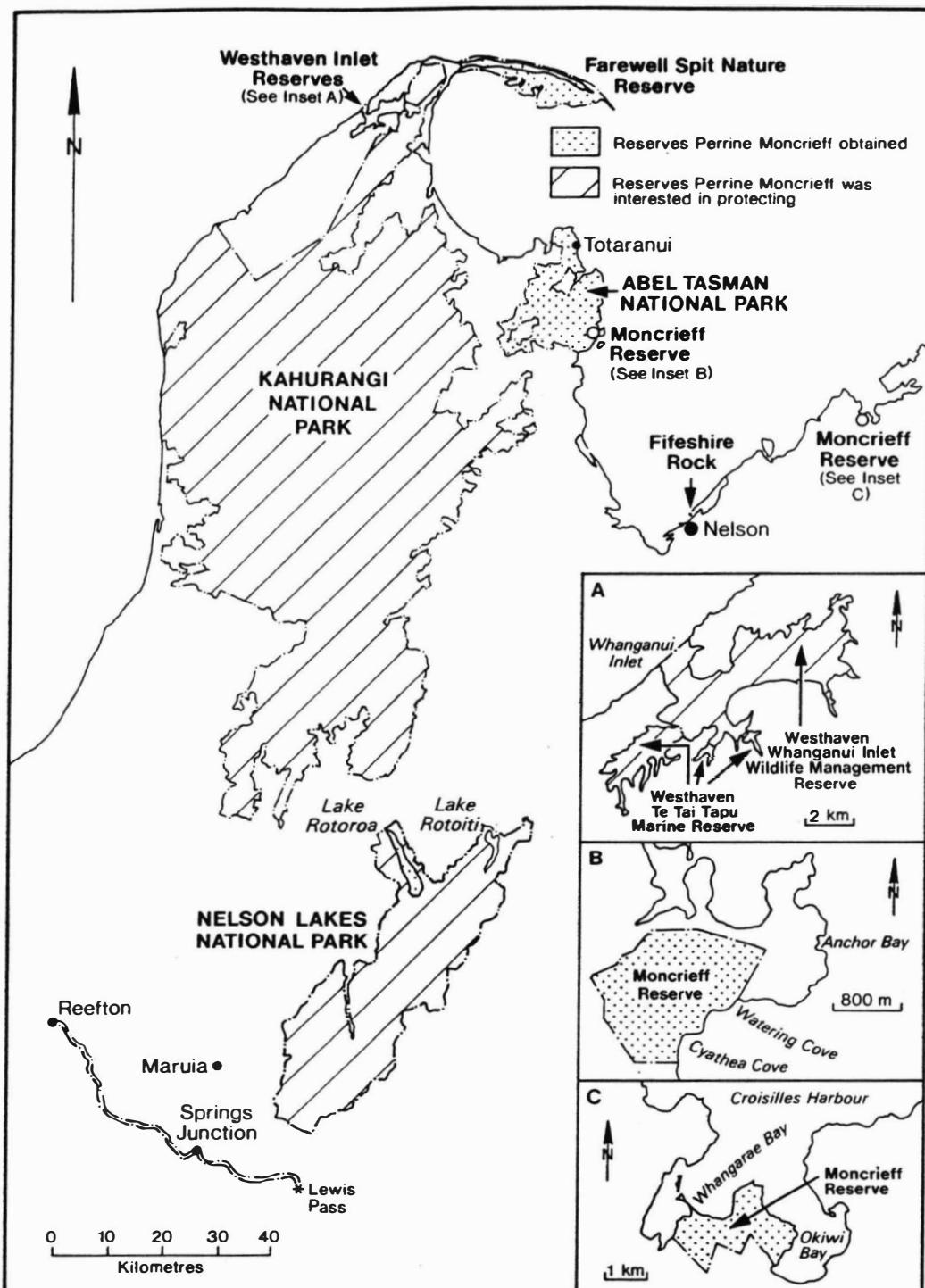
¹⁶² Moncrieff to Sanderson, 11 December 1938, MS 0444:194; also Moncrieff to Sanderson, 26 April 1932, MS 0444:193, 1.

¹⁶³ See also, Moncrieff to Sanderson, 9 March 1945 on a possible sighting of the pio pio, Moncrieff to Carter, 24 November 1948, Moncrieff to Carter, 14 March 1955; MS Papers 0444:197, 1.

¹⁶⁴ Moncrieff to Cunningham, 11 July 1949, 2; John Sheail, *Nature in trust* (Glasgow, London, 1976), p.55.

disagreed with such an observation. By her promotion of the conservationist message in her book *New Zealand birds and how to identify them*, her advocacy of bird protection within the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, and by the conservationist theme which underlay her writing about birds for generalist audiences, Moncrieff made manifest her ornithology as trusteeship.





Map of Reserves Pérrine Moncrieff obtained or was interested in protecting

Drawn by Karen Puklowski

CHAPTER 5

SEEKING SANCTUARIES

The creation and effective conservation management of sanctuaries as one means of protection of the indigenous was a primary objective of conservationists. As the leading conservation society, Forest and Bird, expressed it in its journal, *Birds*, "The foundation of true conservation is in the setting aside of sanctuaries efficiently and rigidly controlled by men who know how."¹ Indeed the neglected state of Kapiti Island sanctuary was a main reason for the founding of the Society in 1923.² The concept of a nature sanctuary, both with its resonance of the divine and as an area defined and reserved in law as a permanent place of refuge for fauna and flora, made their creation a particularly appropriate vehicle for Moncrieff's conservation. The nature reserves and national parks, which she was instrumental in achieving, are enduring and "grounded" expressions of her vitalist metaphysic and "mission to save" New Zealand's forests and birds. As with her ornithology, Moncrieff faced problems inserting an intrinsic perspective into a culture which, normatively, held utilitarian attitudes toward the natural world. This chapter contextualises her work for reserves within international endeavours

¹ One of three "Objects" printed on the cover of, for example, *Birds*, 7[1925].

² For an account of the Society's beginnings, see Ross Galbreath, "Where we came from", *Forest and Bird*, 268(May 1993), pp.23-26; L.E.Lochhead, "Preserving the brownies' portion: a history of voluntary nature conservation organisations in New Zealand 1888-1935", PhD thesis in Parks, Recreation and Tourism [now Human and Leisure Sciences], (Lincoln University, 1994), pp.268,269.

For a history of the Society see N.E.Dalmer, *Birds, forest and natural features of New Zealand* (Levin, 1983). Until 1934 it was called the Native Bird Protection Society, and until 1933 its journal was called *Birds*, then *Forest and Bird*. It then became the Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand (Royal in 1963). Today it is Forest and Bird.

The Society's first president, the former Prime Minister Sir Thomas Mackenzie (see Tom Brooking, "Mackenzie,Thomas Noble , DNZB 3(1901-1920), (Auckland, Wellington, 1996), p.303), also pressed for sanctuary status for Stewart Island, which had been advocated by another "giant" of the Society, the botanist Leonard Cockayne; Dalmer, p.69; *Birds*, 7[1925], pp.3-5. Cockayne spent two months there in 1907, writing a botanical report for the Department of Lands and Survey; A.D.Thomson, "Cockayne, Leonard ", *DNZB* 3, p.108.

and within the philosophy of Forest and Bird as represented by its leading contemporary spokesman, E.V.Sanderson, a firm supporter of her initiatives. Using her first successful campaign between 1926 and 1928 for Lake Rotoroa as an exemplar, the chapter then investigates the challenges she faced to create and sustain the sanctuaries.

The concept of nature sanctuaries is an extension of the Judeo-Christian idea of refuge in a temple or church's sanctuary - a place recognised as consecrated or holy and therefore a place of safety for human fugitives from secular law or persecution. Applied to fauna and flora, sanctuaries have been created in Europe since medieval times when areas of forests, fields or waterways, or periods of time, were decreed by the sovereign or private owner as "closed". But this was only a temporary reservation to allow numbers to increase and be preserved for annual or future use. This type of sanctuary continued to be established into the twentieth century to preserve animals for hunting, through the declaration of reserves and the issuing of hunting licences. They were seen as necessary, especially in the African and Indian territories of European empires, where professional and recreational hunting by visitors and empire builders, and to a lesser extent practical hunting by indigenous people, had greatly diminished animal numbers.³ While some were to remain game reserves, from the 1920s others became sanctuaries for the permanent protection of species within them.⁴ Game sanctuaries were also developed in the United States to maximise deer numbers for hunting.⁵

Nature sanctuaries, as places of permanent protection, developed from the later nineteenth century when preservation groups like the British Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the American Sierra Club identified

³ John M.MacKenzie, *The empire of nature* (Manchester, New York, 1988), Chapters 9 and 10; also above Chapter 2 with reference to John Guille Millais.

⁴ MacKenzie, pp.214,215,229; John McCormick, *Reclaiming paradise* (Bloomington, Indianapolis, 1989), pp.18,19.

⁵ For example, Susan Flader, *Thinking like a mountain* (Columbia,1974). Chapter 3 details Aldo Leopold's game management ideas on the Gila National Forest Reserve.

natural areas which were significant as habitat for particular species. In Britain, given the prevailing system of private land ownership, trust schemes were established to acquire these sanctuaries. Under the 1907 National Trust Act, the National Trust was empowered to purchase and manage sites of historic and natural interest.⁶ But naturalists were not satisfied with its perceived arbitrary acquisitions and established county Naturalist Trusts to preserve important nature habitats.⁷ Nor were naturalists content to rely on individuals to finance the sanctuaries. Two stories which appeared in the *Nelson Evening Mail*, and which Moncrieff would have read after her arrival here, illustrate the financial problems of reservation which could arise when private land ownership was involved. The first was the Isle of St Kilda in the Outer Hebrides, which had been excluded from the 1869 Sea Birds' Protection Act because its residents were heavily dependent on its bird colonies for their sustenance, and because it was too distant for shooting parties. By 1927, when the residents had left, its owner offered it for sale for £3000. Neither the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves nor the National Trust could afford the price even though the island had outstanding natural qualities.⁸ In 1931 the Earl of Dumfries, an amateur ornithologist, bought it and managed it as a bird sanctuary. The second concerned an area in Staffordshire, for which the conservationist, J.R.B. Masefield, raised funds after the SPNR had declined to purchase it in 1925 for £1000. Named Hawksmoor Nature Reserve, it was

⁶ n.a., *The National Trust handbook* (London, 1990), p.5. Octavia Hill and Robert Hunter, the solicitor to the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society formed in 1865, set up the National Trust in 1885 but the 1907 statute enhanced its powers and status; John Sheail, *Nature in trust* (Glasgow, London, 1976), pp.59,60; McCormick, p.6.

Prior to these trust schemes, an occasional individual like Charles Waterton in the early nineteenth century had created a sanctuary on his estate; Sheail, pp.171,172; M.Blackmore, "The nature conservancy:its history and role", in *Conservation in practice*, (eds) A.Warren and F.B.Goldsmith (London, 1974), pp.423,424; David Elliston Allen, *The naturalist in Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1976), p.143.

⁷ Other groups involved included the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves founded in 1912 by the entomologist N.C.Rothschild and county trusts like the Norfolk Naturalists Trust from 1926 as well as the scientific British Ecological Society from 1913; Sheail, pp.60-67.

⁸ *NEM*, 23 September 1931, p.2; Sheail, p.63.

opened by Masefield's cousin, the Poet Laureate John Masefield, in 1933.⁹ So although in Britain conservationists actively sought to acquire sanctuaries, and policed them through a "watchers" system, sanctuaries were less secure because much of the relevant land was in private ownership. The concept of publicly-owned or state-entrusted nature sanctuaries, such as those proclaimed in New Zealand and which had greater security, took longer to establish. It was not until 1949 that a Nature Conservancy was created, under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, to coordinate what had previously been specialised initiatives.¹⁰

In "new world" countries like the United States, Australia and New Zealand, an alternative method of sanctuary creation existed because large areas of land were in public ownership, although only in western America by this time in the later nineteenth century.¹¹ Conservationists in America, like John Muir and Rosalie Edge, were able to achieve sanctuaries through

⁹ NEM, 21 December 1933, p.9; Sheail, p.173.

¹⁰ Sheail, Chapter 8. During World War Two, Sheail wrote, conservationist groups worked together to press for state action, citing America, advanced European countries and "our Dominions" as precedents to be followed; p.94.

¹¹ Today, government acquisition of these lands from their indigenous owners, whether by treaty, purchase, warfare or exile policy, is problematic. Descendants of indigenous owners pursue claims to restitution or compensation through whatever methods are available to them in each country, supported by some, but not all, descendants of the colonisers. The latter continue to accept the nineteenth century justification of land acquisition by colonisers that indigenous races did not make profitable use of all their lands. The political theory of liberalism held that the individual (and the individual nation) must improve both himself and his natural environment to the fullest extent. Indigenous races, who were perceived to have little improved their environment by cultivation, and who lived peripatetically upon it, had no right to its continued ownership; Bhikhu Parekh, "Superior people", *Times Literary Supplement*, 25 February 1994, pp.11-13.

In New Zealand's South Island large blocks were "purchased" from their Maori owners in the 1840s and 1850s. The sales were facilitated by wars a decade or two earlier between invading Ngati Toa from the lower North Island and resident tribes whose numbers were depleted; Atholl Anderson, *The welcome of strangers* (Dunedin, 1998), Chapter 5.

In the Nelson area Ngati Toa, having defended their recently-gained territory at Wairau in 1843 in what is now Marlborough, when Nelson settlers laid claim to a rural interior, relinquished much of it after Governor George Grey dismissed or arrested Ngati Toa chiefs in the Wellington district. By the 1920s over half of the land area of the two northerly provinces of the South Island, Nelson and Marlborough was owned by the government, most of it as permanent or provisional state forest and forest reserves; *New Zealand Official Year Book 1928* (Wellington, 1927), map facing p.480.

government statute¹², although often only after lengthy disputes with other users. These included private companies, recreational hunters, local and state governments, and the Progressive conservationists of whom Gifford Pinchot of the Division of Forestry, United States Department of Agriculture, is the best known.¹³ In areas of private ownership, habitat for sanctuaries had to be gifted or purchased as in Britain. Edge's purchase of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania is an example.¹⁴ In Australia, too, federal- and state-owned territory allowed conservationists to request sanctuary status for significant areas as the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union did over Wyperfield and Sherbrooke Forest National Parks.¹⁵

In New Zealand from the 1890s, through the advocacy over several decades of individuals like T.H.Potts and groups like the Philosophical Societies, sanctuaries were also created under the 1892 Land Act administered by the Department of Lands and Survey. These included the offshore islands of Resolution, Little Barrier and Kapiti as refuges for indigenous species. Under the 1903 Scenery Preservation Act, remnants of mainland forest areas were reserved, while the increasing number of national parks in mountainous terrain also acquired sanctuary status under their own acts.¹⁶ In conjunction with bird protection legislation, these mainland "islands" offered seasonal food and shelter for indigenous birds. Since many of the areas were isolated, or of

¹² Stephen Fox, *John Muir and his legacy* (Boston, Toronto, 1981), Chapter 4, for Muir and the Sierra Club's campaign for Yosemite National Park in 1889-90; Chapter 6 for Kings Canyon National Park between 1875 and 1939; pp.180-181 for Edge's sugar-pine grove near Yosemite.

¹³ A history of the rise and decline in influence between 1890 and 1920 of the Progressive Conservationists on the planning and use of water, forest and grasslands in the United States is given by Samuel P. Hays in *Conservation and the gospel of efficiency* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1959).

¹⁴ Fox, *Muir*, pp.181,182.

¹⁵ Minutes of Council meetings June 1930, July 1932, MS 11437:Box 12b, 4.

¹⁶ M.M.Roche provides a history of New Zealand scenic preservation legislation, its workings, achievements and limitations in his "The origins and evolution of scenic reserves", MA thesis in Geography (Canterbury, 1979); L.W.McCaskill, *Scenic reserves of Nelson* (Wellington, 1975), p.3.

little use for contemporary agriculture and pastoral farming because of altitude or gradient and were usually in public ownership, they could remain as reserves. A parallel system of sanctuaries, specifically for fauna, was created in 1914 when the Minister of Internal Affairs, who was responsible for animal protection, amended the 1908 Animals Protection Act to include indigenous birds as well as game species.¹⁷ Gouland Downs, in what is now the Kahurangi National Park in north-west Nelson, became the first Internal Affairs-administered wildlife sanctuary, with a salaried caretaker, in 1915. This action deepened the divisions within bodies governing New Zealand wildlife and wild places especially, since from 1904, the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts had been responsible for Resolution and Little Barrier. It was the basis of the conservationists' catchphrase on the lack of "unity of control". Sanctuaries on privately-owned land could also be preserved in perpetuity under the 1933 Scenery Preservation Amendment Act¹⁸ and under the 1977 Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust Act.

The sanctuary envisaged the permanent protection of nonhuman species within it and the exclusion of exotic species. In addition, while earlier and partial preservation usually focused on an individual species, the later definition of sanctuary was ecological. Not only were the "ground" and species "sacred" but so were ongoing interactions within and between species. Complete sanctity, however, has been an absolutist theory never actually realised, for humans have always allowed themselves, indeed have often encouraged, access to sanctuaries. At the heart of the sanctuary concept there is the anomaly that, while they may have been created out of an intrinsic ethic, they also have a utilitarian value. Scientific ecologists need to study interactions; conservationists encourage people to have access, albeit controlled, to allow them to experience their natural heritage. Ultimately, the sanctuary can be threatened by human numbers. Even the founding ideals of minimal interference have clouded since owners and managers dislike some of

¹⁷ Ross Galbreath, *Working for wildlife* (Wellington, 1993), pp.12,13.

¹⁸ These were called Protected Private Land Agreements under the 1977 Reserves Act.

the "natural" outcomes. They have introduced the indigenous and not necessarily local, enhanced facilities for the occupants, and destroyed animals classified as vermin. The managers also privilege the rare over the "opportunist".¹⁹ These issues were not problematic in Moncrieff's day; the problem for conservationists then appeared to be only the creation of sanctuaries to allow the survival of threatened species. Since degrees of protection exist even within a sanctuary, I am using the term "sanctuary" as it applies in the New Zealand context, to include national parks and lands reserved in perpetuity, in which introduced "game" animals like deer can be hunted and "vermin" like possums destroyed.

After Moncrieff had joined Forest and Bird shortly after it was formed²⁰, she established a long-lasting friendship and working relationship with Sanderson. Even more than her ornithological friends, W.B.Oliver and R.A.Falla, Sanderson was both mentor and soulmate since their vitalist beliefs and activism matched. Ernest Valentine Sanderson, known as Val, was born in Dunedin in 1866 and educated at Wellington College. He had various occupations, including insurance, car sales and farming, before serving as a quarter-master in the Boer War and at Gallipoli in World War One.²¹ From his early teenage years Sanderson had a wide experience of the natural world through tramping and hunting, the latter a major occupation in his life prior to his Forest and Bird days. In their biographies neither Galbreath nor Dalmer mention Sanderson's hunting.²² The change in hunting's weaponry and in its

¹⁹ Mana Island in Cook Strait is an example where the latter management practice has occurred. Black-backed gull numbers are culled to encourage an increase in numbers of the rarer shore plover. As strong fliers the gulls have taken advantage of increased food sources at a nearby landfill on the mainland, thus increasing their reproductive rate.

²⁰ She paid the subscription, including those for sons Alex and Colin on 2 June [1923], and the life membership subscription of £5 on 8 December 1938, MS Papers 0444:192, 194, 1.

²¹ Ross Galbreath, "Sanderson, Ernest Valentine", *DNZB* 4(1921-1940), (Auckland, Wellington, 1998), p.450; Dalmer, p.162.

²² Neither does Lochhead although she notes that W.W.Smith, another prominent conservationist in the 1920s and 1930s, had in his youth collected the now extinct laughing owl for Buller; p.282. It therefore seems that Sanderson's hunting was unknown rather than concealed because it was considered disreputable.

ethic amongst some hunters were both the reasons for Sanderson's involvement with Forest and Bird and an explanation of his zeal in bird protection. He described himself as "an old sinner", who had had considerable experience in shotgun and rifle shooting over forty years, in pursuit of legal game in several countries. "Only when I realised the onesidedness of the 'sport' and the rapid decrease of the prey, did I and my companion decide to hang up our weapons for good and get on the side of the birds."²³ In his swerve from hunter to protector, Sanderson is a New Zealand exemplar of the international trend, which interwove changes in weaponry with the adoption of a sporting code of practice, and led to preservation advocacy through the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire. In various issues of *Birds* and *Forest and Bird*, Sanderson denounced unsporting hunting.²⁴ The size and tameness of New Zealand birds, compared to an elephant's bulk or a lion's ferocity, only served to emphasise the disparity between hunter and hunted.

From about 1925 Sanderson became a practical conservationist when he began planting and nurturing a small area of indigenous trees at his home, "Te Kohanga (The Nest)", at Paekakariki near Wellington. He experimented with different species, methods of growing, and pest control to ascertain the fastest-growing and healthiest trees, in order to combat the universally-held belief that native trees were too slow-growing for suburban gardens. Using broom and tree lucerne as nurse species, Sanderson's forest reached a general height of fifteen to twenty feet (five to six metres) in ten years and was a larder for native birds. His experiments, and similar projects by other conservationists, were published and recommended in *Forest and Bird* and in daily newspapers.²⁵ Sanderson married for the second time in 1934 and had two

²³ Sanderson to Air Vice Marshall R.V.Goddard, 25 May 1943, MS Papers 0444:196, 1.

²⁴ *Birds*, 7[1925], pp.10,11; *Forest and Bird*, 33(June 1934), p.16; *Forest and Bird*, 57(August 1940), p.5.

²⁵ *Forest and Bird*, 39(February 1936), pp.5,6; *NEM*, 1 August 1939, p.15, "Quick success with native trees" by Leo Fanning.

The experiments of Lance McCaskill, then a lecturer at Christchurch Teachers Training College and later of Lincoln College, in the cultivation of indigenous seedlings from the droppings of indigenous birds were also promoted in conservation material. McCaskill,

daughters. The whole family cared for birds in their garden, where his wife was photographed with birds.²⁶ Sanderson was proud of his daughters' love of nature which he attributed to their education. They "would never think of hurting a poor bird as they call it, and choose bird subjects for their essays. The eldest can identify local birds and plants better than I can."²⁷

Moncrieff and Sanderson shared holistic, ecological beliefs²⁸ but, like her, he rarely made overt references to them although one appeared in the issue of *Forest and Bird* in which John Myers' death was announced. This was perhaps a conscious linkage since Sanderson (and Moncrieff) appreciated the manner in which Myers' holistic world-view informed his scientific practice. In his editorial on a wildlife management scheme Sanderson wrote, "As nature is one unified whole it follows that its management should be based on the same foundation, and the setting up a Department of Conservation is therefore suggested".²⁹

During the first two decades of *Forest and Bird*, while Sanderson was variously its Organising Secretary, President and Editor of its journal - that is, its most audible and sustained national voice - numerous articles appeared on sanctuaries. One was in 1940 at about the time he and Moncrieff were challenging captive breeding initiatives³⁰, when he specifically described a sanctuary "as a sacred place, a place of refuge". He not only reiterated the appeals for administrative unification and enhanced protection from earlier articles but also provided a philosophical justification for the natural mainland

who was to become well-known as a soil conservationist and advocate for nature reserves, was keen to publicise the interconnections between birds and trees and the ease with which indigenous plants grew; *NEM*, 26 March 1938, p.8, 1 August 1939, p.3; M.M.Roche, *Land and water*, (Wellington, 1994), pp.11,39,40,157.

²⁶ *Forest and Bird*, 37(August 1935), p.8 and 38(November 1935), p.8.

²⁷ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 30 November 1943, MS Papers 0444:196, 1.

²⁸ See Chapter 1, in that they saw "the whole as a whole".

²⁹ *Forest and Bird*, 65(August 1942), p.1; Myers' Obituary pp.6-8. A Department of Conservation was not to be realised until 1987.

³⁰ See Chapter 3.

sanctuary as opposed to the artificial island refuge. Sanctuaries should be made he wrote,

where any threatened species is attempting its final stand rather than risk its existence by transporting it to a foreign environment....Any successful introduction of a species foreign to the area must inevitably be to the detriment of the existing chain of life and cause it to be violently disorganised and compel nature to re-establish perhaps the whole chain.³¹

This was another occasion when a conservationist employed Alexander Pope's association of loss with the broken Chain of Being. The Society, following efforts by individuals, eventually sought to acquire, entrust and administer its own sanctuaries, perhaps to demonstrate Sanderson's belief that indigenous birds would flourish in a sanctuary without the need for captive breeding programmes and to avoid the problems of governmental "disunity of control".³² Sanderson of course supported island sanctuaries but believed that problems were created for animals when humans made introductions even for benign reasons. This is likely to have stemmed from his own experience. The saddlebacks which he and A.S. Wilkinson, Kapiti's Caretaker, had transferred from Little Barrier to Kapiti in 1925 had disappeared in a few years, not only attacked by rats but, as Lochhead commented, harried by the existing tui population.³³ This experience provides one reason for Sanderson's support of Moncrieff's campaigns for mainland sanctuaries.

For all these reasons, therefore, Sanderson was both mentor and soulmate for Moncrieff. As a former hunter turned protectionist, he was linked to her earlier mentor, her uncle John Guille Millais, while Sanderson's

³¹ E.V. Sanderson, "Management of sanctuaries", *Forest and Bird*, 55(February 1940), p.3.

³² *Forest and Bird*, 65(August 1942), pp.8,11. An article stated the Society planned to acquire an area as a model sanctuary and had set aside £1,350 as a nucleus for its purchase and upkeep. Dalmer lists the numbers, types and donors of its sanctuaries but none appear to be the designated "model" sanctuary of the 1942 article; pp.69-75.

³³ Lochhead, p.290. In his annual Reports to Lands and Survey Wilkinson commented on the saddlebacks' presence but in 1933 acknowledged they had not been seen for nine months; Scenery Preservation Annual Report, Department of Lands and Survey *AJHR*, 1933, C.6, p.8.

military career and vitalist philosophy linked him with her husband Malcolm. Sanderson gave her advice on legislation and regulations and encouraged all her campaigns while she felt she could rely on his status to fortify her own.³⁴ As a partnership they exchanged information and ideas and cooperated on particular issues. After his death she wrote,

It was the quality of single-mindedness that was so admirable in Captain Sanderson. In an age where compromise is the breath of weak characters who desire good but who are not sufficiently brave to pursue it through thick and thin, he stood out....not unlike the heroes of old....For myself I have lost a very real friend who whilst we seldom met was always there to exchange letters and be in the back-ground to assist if he could.³⁵

Being strong-willed people they had the occasional scrimmage like that over stomach surveys on indigenous birds.³⁶ Moncrieff was conciliatory but Sanderson's admonition may have been one of the factors in her move from ornithology as science to ornithology as trusteeship which I explained in the preceding chapters. Sanderson recognised her enthusiasm, energy and

³⁴ In 1927 Sanderson was involved in a controversy in Nelson about the suitability of particular guns for deer hunting. Moncrieff felt the controversy to be "absolutely damaging" to his authority. "...[A]nd if I cant (sic) quote you well the [Bird Protection Society] is done....I am worried about it for of course I want to see you proved right."; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 4 July 1927, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

³⁵ Moncrieff to Henderson, 5 January 1946, MS Papers 0444:197, 1. Her tribute comprising similar sentiments, together with appreciations from the Minister of Internal Affairs W.E.Parry, R.A.Falla and other notable conservationists, was in an obituary issue to Sanderson, *Forest and Bird*, 79(February 1946), p.5.

³⁶ This concerned a proposal by David Miller, President of the Nelson Bush and Bird Society and chief entomologist of Nelson's Cawthron Institute, that it conduct a survey of the contents of indigenous birds' stomachs to determine how much agricultural produce was consumed. At that time such surveys were agreeable to conservationists overseas and in New Zealand as demonstrations that unprotected birds were more useful than detrimental to humans and should not be "persecuted" by farmers and others. Moncrieff consented to a pukeko investigation, but when Miller suggested that Forest and Bird was also agreeable, Sanderson was stern in his response. He argued that it would destroy large numbers of birds and was unnecessary when the Department of Agriculture was already performing such a survey for Internal Affairs at Forest and Bird's request. Sanderson to Moncrieff, 14 April and 2 November 1929, Moncrieff to Sanderson, 14 April 1929, MS Papers 0444:193, 1. Forest and Bird published the results in *Birds*, 22(1930), pp.6,7, which showed that the birds consumed mostly grass and very little agricultural seed.

organising ability by asking her to be the Society's regional Representative in 1924 and a Vice-President in 1927, despite others in Nelson of greater status or longer residence.³⁷ She confirmed his confidence in the short-term by actively seeking members and organising a well-attended lecture about New Zealand birds by Falla³⁸ to publicise both Forest and Bird and the Nelson Philosophical Society which wanted to increase its membership. In the long-term she justified it by a lifetime of conservation enterprise which included her campaigns for the reservation of particular locations as sanctuaries for the indigenous.

Moncrieff used three different methods to secure areas as sanctuaries; personal purchase, purchase by public donation, and government declaration under appropriate legislation. The procedure over which she had most control was that of personal purchase followed by placement under the 1933 Act. She used this method for the two Moncrieff Reserves on each side of Tasman Bay.³⁹ Her least successful method was to seek public donations to buy

³⁷ Correspondence between Sanderson and Moncrieff, 7 and 29 October 1925 and 28 July 1927, MS Papers 0444: 192,1; Moncrieff to Falla, 10 January [1924], MS Papers 2366:67, 3. Representatives were selected by a small subcommittee from 1924, (see Dalmer, p.14), although there is a discrepancy in the date of appointment of the first representative, J.B.Speed of Auckland, between 1924 (p.14) and 1936 (p.5). Moncrieff held both positions until an official section of the Society was formed in 1958 (p.16). She was also elected to the Executive Council in 1932 but as she was unable to attend its monthly meetings, this position lapsed. Moncrieff to Sanderson and Andersen between 26 April and 19 July 1932, MS Papers 0444:192,193, 1.

An example of a more "senior" Nelson resident was Alfred Philpott, an entomologist with the Cawthron Institute, who spoke to the Nelson Philosophical Society about the formation of Forest and Bird, *NEM*, 29 May 1923, pp.5,6; and exhibited its advertising posters, *NEM*, 20 September 1923, p.4. Brian H. Patrick, "Philpott, Alfred", *DNZB* 4, p.406.

³⁸ This was a public lecture on 18 May 1925. Moncrieff arranged several pieces of publicity before and after the lecture in the *Nelson Evening Mail* whose Editor supported it with an editorial about birds in international and New Zealand literature; *NEM* 1925, 7 May, p.4; 13 May, p.4; 16 May, p.4; 19 May, pp.2,4.

³⁹ She donated funds to a wetland project at Bushy Park, a Forest and Bird Reserve near Wanganui; Dalmer, p.70. The Moncrieffs also donated as a reserve their portion of Nelson harbour's Haulashore Island which had formed part of the Richmond property, in memory of their son Alexander; Shirley Horrocks, *Historic Nelson* (Wellington, 1971), p.6. Horrocks, in describing its only beach as "sacred, belonging to the children of Nelson....to enjoy and preserve from commercialism" continues the traditional concept of sanctuary.

suitable areas. From 1927 she organised two campaigns after several areas had been recommended in response to her requests.⁴⁰ They included the coastal bush of Elisabeth Gully, the most likely area for her saddleback nest discovery⁴¹, Ngatimoti's "fine bit of 15 acres of rimu"⁴², and Drummonds Bush. When the latter was criticised as having only one or two fine rimus but otherwise stunted bush, Moncrieff defended the purchase in ecological terms and heritage values. Admitting the bush was not then in good order, she explained that if it was protected, the blackberry undergrowth would protect young saplings which, as they grew would deny the blackberry its necessary sunlight and cause it to die so that the forest trees would again flourish. "We must think for the future, not only for the present."⁴³ Although she did not mention birds in this letter, the saving of bird life was another reason given to the City Council when its support was sought.⁴⁴ In the uncertain economic climate she failed to raise sufficient money, as did her campaign for 900 acres of forest threatened by milling at Totaranui. This area, for which her campaign began in 1935, was eventually "saved" by incorporation into the Abel Tasman National Park seven years later.⁴⁵

Her third method was the declaration by the Departments of Lands and Survey or Internal Affairs of land in Crown ownership. This approach, through which Lake Rotoroa, the Maruia roadsides, Farewell Spit and Abel Tasman National Park were gazetted as reserves, with Fifeshire Rock a

⁴⁰ Each piece was inspected and its legal status investigated prior to asking for public donations; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 17 April 1929, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

⁴¹ See Chapter 3, and *NEM*, 1927, 27 September p.6 and 27 November p.4.

⁴² Moncrieff to Sanderson, 17 April 1929, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

⁴³ Letters to Editor, *NEM*; from "Localus", 18 August 1930, p.7 and from Moncrieff, 19 August 1930, p.2. She cited the example from the State Forest Service's Ranger, A.W.Wastney. Other correspondence was printed between 18 and 27 August 1930.

⁴⁴ Report of Council, *NEM*, 22 August 1930, p.6.

⁴⁵ *NEM*, November-December 1935, Totaranui Bush campaign.

The Bruce Trust, established under the will of R.C.Bruce from the sale of his property near Wanganui after his death in 1917, provided funds for the creation of reserves and afforestation. Moncrieff applied for a grant for Totaranui but the earlier campaigns were either too short in time or too expensive for the Bruce Trust; *NEM*, 5 April 1930, p.11.

minuscule equivalent, achieved sanctuary status for more than 50,000 hectares of Nelson province.⁴⁶ She was alert to threats to the Gouland Downs sanctuary, which was incorporated into the Kahurangi National Park in 1996, and kept an eye out for other possible reserves.⁴⁷ The Rotoroa campaign will be described in detail and then analysed in conjunction with the others. This will establish firstly, differences in interpretations of conservation; secondly, the problems encountered by Moncrieff in inserting her vitalist world-view and intrinsic values into the prevailing "separated" and developmental paradigm; and thirdly, the reasons for her achievements.

When Moncrieff began to visit Rotoroa from 1924 she was entranced by the beauty of its surrounding bush, reed-fringed shore and the numbers and diversity of indigenous birds she saw.⁴⁸ Remoter than its twin Rotoiti, its romantic appearance of forest, mountains and water "spoke" to Moncrieff of an ancient fastness where indigenous nature still reigned. But this reign was threatened by interlopers. Firstly, in 1923 the Nelson Acclimatization Society had begun to release trout ova into its tributary rivers. To protect their investment in the trout, members were accustomed to shoot the lake's colonies of black shags in their nesting season because shags were known to eat the

⁴⁶ This is over one-third of the area in the Nelson Land District, administered by Lands and Survey in 1975, of scenic reserves (65,953 h.) and national parks (76,427 h.); McCaskill, *Reserves Nelson*, p.5.

⁴⁷ For example, she told Sanderson of her concern about proposals for grazing leases and the possibility of a road to connect Golden Bay and the West Coast through the Gouland Downs sanctuary in 1938. This was to follow the route of the Heaphy track but did not eventuate. Moncrieff to Sanderson, [April] 1938, MS Papers 0444:194, 1.

Ten years earlier she had told Sanderson that she and a Forest Service official had camped at Westhaven inlet "so that he could see the type of bush it was, in case we want to get some of it reserved."; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 1 December 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1. Although she did not campaign publicly for it, but perhaps supported it as an Automobile Association project (*NEM*, 24 October 1940, p.4), the inlet of Westhaven Whanganui is now a marine and wildlife management reserve. Its ecology and history are depicted by Geoff Park in his chapter, "The head of the inlet", *Ngā uruora* (Wellington, 1995), pp.227-264.

⁴⁸ "Yellowheads and other birds at Lake Rotor[o]ja", *Emu*, 25(1925-26), pp.21-27 and Moncrieff to Falla, 10 January [1925], MS Papers 2366:67, 3. She told Falla of "the ripping time" she had had amongst the kaka and yellowheads but she also described many other species and expressed her hope for the saddleback's continued existence. She also took the ornithologist, W.B.Alexander, there on his 1926 New Zealand visit; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 10 April 1926, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

trout.⁴⁹ Secondly, a railway line from Nelson to Westport was heading towards Gowanbridge, the road turnoff to Rotoroa.⁵⁰ The railway workers, who lived at a construction camp nearby, were said to shoot Rotoroa's birds on their weekly day off. Neither the area's status as a Scenic Reserve, gazetted in 1912 under the 1908 Scenery Preservation Act⁵¹, nor Alfred Flower's appointment there as an Honorary Inspector of Scenic Reserves, provided protection.⁵² Flower was appointed because he managed the hotel at the lake and therefore lived on the spot but was thought unable to prevent the poaching. Either the poachers in their boats would avoid him, so that an examination of their boats revealed only a few feathers, or one poacher would hold him in conversation while the others got away with "the spoil" of swans, ducks and rarer birds.⁵³ For Moncrieff, this threatened area, speaking of an ancient regime where rare birds like the saddleback might still live, was a prime target for her "mission".

In March 1926, she received a letter from W.P.Simmonds, one of the railway construction crew who described himself as "a Native" who has "a great Reverence for my Native Birds", telling her of numerous carloads of poachers shooting at the lake. Simmonds thought it was time he did something otherwise it "will soon be the stone end of the aquatic birds, as they breed in

⁴⁹ The black shag or cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, (known as kawau in Maori), appears in English literature as greedy when Shakespeare refers to it as "devouring Time" in the opening lines of "Love's labours lost" while John Milton literally demonises it in Book four of "Paradise lost". For nineteenth century views on trout and black shags, see Swann, pp.27, 64,65 and Sowman, p.171. An Acclimatisation Society member and keen angler, H.G.Williams, in *The shag menace* (Dunedin, 1945) detailed his researches into the black shag's appetite and, unsurprisingly, found "proof of the reality of the Shag menace."; p.70.

⁵⁰ This line, planned to link Nelson with both the West Coast coalfields and Christchurch, was begun under Sir Julius Vogel's public works schemes in the 1870s. Progressive stages were completed until the section between Glenhope and Gowanbridge and onto Murchison was begun in 1926. The plan was finally abandoned in 1954 but became a *cause celebre* when "sit-ins" were organised before the line was demolished in 1955; David Leitch and Brian Scott, *Exploring New Zealand's ghost railways* (Wellington, 1955), pp.44-48.

⁵¹ *New Zealand Gazette*, 52(13 June 1912), p.1891, but only the surrounding land, not the waters, were gazetted.

⁵² Flower's appointment, *Gazette*, 68(13 September 1923), p.2424.

⁵³ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 10 April 1926, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

the rushes all round these lakes.⁵⁴ She sent Simmonds' letter to Sanderson, advising that she could corroborate the statement of poaching and suggesting Sanderson tell the police.⁵⁵ Sanderson informed the Lands Department. He confirmed the police as the only resort but, as he had a ranger's warrant, he offered to go to Rotoroa himself on condition that if he secured a conviction Lands would cover his expenses.⁵⁶ Seemingly the department did not take up his offer but during the next eighteen months until the lake was gazetted as a Scenic Reserve on 1 October 1928 under the 1908 Scenery Preservation Act⁵⁷, Lands Department officials in Wellington and Nelson investigated various ways in which the lake water itself could be reserved.

Moncrieff kept the issue alive through meetings and correspondence with A.F. Waters, Commissioner, Crown Lands Nelson and through correspondence with the Minister in charge of Scenery Preservation, a section of the Department of Lands and Survey.⁵⁸ Her letters made several main points apart from reiterating the lake's beauty and Flower's inadequacy as a ranger. Firstly, to counter the NAS's proposals for trout-fishing and tourism, she argued that the wealth and rarity of New Zealand native birds were

⁵⁴ W.P.Simmonds to Society for the Protection NZ Birds, 28 March 1926, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

⁵⁵ Under the 1921-22 Animals Protection and Game Act, honorary rangers were appointed by Internal Affairs but local Acclimatisation Societies had responsibility for wildlife protection. Since NAS members were part of the threat to Rotoroa's birds, in Moncrieff's view, she clearly felt it useless to approach them and so suggested the police, who also held ranger powers, as the alternative.

⁵⁶ Sanderson to Under-Sec. Lands, 17 April 1926, Rotoroa file LS 4/283, DOC HO Wgton. Sanderson had applied for an honorary ranger's licence in 1923 from the NAS when he was living in Motueka; Minutes, NAS 1915-1929, Council meetings 9 July and 13 August 1923, pp.189,191, Nelson Museum.

⁵⁷ *Gazette*, 72(4 October 1928), p.2914. The process included an inspection by Lands Department field staff, a recommendation to the Scenery Preservation Board, which met in Wellington and which included the relevant provincial Commissioner Crown Lands, the Board's approval and the Governor General's signature. Lake Rotoroa sanctuary was agreed by the Board, 27 June 1928; Scenery Preservation Board Reports, LS 70/14, N.A.

⁵⁸ Waters was also a Vice-President of the Nelson Bush and Bird Society which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Moncrieff to Sanderson, 28 July and 29 October 1927, MS Papers 0444:192, 1; Moncrieff to McLeod, Minister LS, 20 July 1927, 26 April 1928; Moncrieff to Waters, 7 December 1928, Rotoroa file LS 4/283 1907-1930, 1931-1957, DOC HO, Wgton.

internationally interesting and that the birds were easily accessible to tourists at Rotoroa. Unlike most other areas, visitors could see rare land and water birds without having to climb and there was convenient accommodation. Trout, on the other hand, could be found in many New Zealand waterways as well as overseas. Secondly, she argued, the Nelson Acclimatization Society, while claiming to protect wildlife, failed to do so as the poaching proved. Also, they represented only the interests of sportsmen and not those who wanted the protection of their native fauna and flora. Thirdly, she suggested that sanctuary status for all birds at Rotoroa would allow an increase in game birds which could be shot elsewhere. That would directly benefit other members of the public. Since she was later to write that she loathed the duck-shooting season⁵⁹, this particular justification for a sanctuary rests uneasily with her intrinsic values but it was realistic given the interest in legitimate hunting and shooting.

Lands Department correspondence⁶⁰ shows that officials agreed with the idea of a sanctuary and, recognising potential conflicts of interest, sought to reconcile them. While they wanted to curtail shooting on the lake they also wanted to allow hunters access into its headwaters. Since the use of guns and dogs was proscribed within a sanctuary they discussed the legislation which would best accommodate the conflict.⁶¹ They were aware that Internal Affairs and the NAS would be critical of the proposed reservation. To forestall criticism they requested a report from the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, A.E. Hefford⁶², who concurred with their decision that, in the case of Lake Rotoroa, there was no justification to permit the destruction of shags. In the annual Scenery Preservation Report they were conciliatory. If a thorough scientific investigation could prove the alleged menace of shags, the

⁵⁹ Moncrieff to her niece Jane Bowdler, 19 June [1970s], 2.

⁶⁰ In the Rotoroa file LS 4/283, DOC HO Wgton, between 1926 and 1928.

⁶¹ Waters to Under-Sec. Lands, 3 August 1927, Rotoroa file LS 4/283, DOC HO Wgton.

⁶² Since 1907 the Marine Department had been responsible for both sea and freshwater fish; Galbreath, *Wildlife*, p.8.

Department would review its position, "but on the evidence now available the proper course is to refuse any applications for permission to destroy shags."⁶³

Over the next decade the NAS would repeatedly test this resolve by the Lands Department and Moncrieff's tenacity. But the first putsch came a few weeks after the sanctuary's declaration when Moncrieff heard by accident that W.A. Andrews, its Secretary, was to request permission from Internal Affairs to carry out its customary shag destruction.⁶⁴ First she phoned Andrews to throw down the gauntlet, saying Forest and Bird would stop the Society's shooting. Then she telegraphed Sanderson and together they planned their tactics. Moncrieff would write an official letter to Waters in her capacity as the Secretary of the Nelson Bush and Bird Society, would call a special meeting of the Society to discuss the "violation of a sanctuary", and possibly approach Nelson's Member of Parliament, the supportive H. Atmore.⁶⁵ She would also ask David Miller, Chairman of the Society, to visit the Lands Department while he was in Wellington, to demonstrate that Bush and Bird represented a diverse group of people.⁶⁶ This entailed telegraphing Miller asking him to phone her, posting him a copy of her letter to Waters and giving him the Wellington address of George Fache, a friend and assistant of Sanderson's in Forest and Bird, in case Miller needed further information. Miller was also authorised by Bush and Bird to interview Andrews, but Andrews was away from Nelson either, Moncrieff thought, in Wellington

⁶³ Annual Report, Department of Lands and Survey, Scenery Preservation, *AJHR*, 1929, C.6, p.3.

⁶⁴ Andrews to Under-Sec. IA, 22 November 1928, Rotoroa file LS 4/283, DOC HO Wgtn. Moncrieff to Sanderson, 22 November and 14 December 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

⁶⁵ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 14 November 1928 and [November 1928], MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

⁶⁶ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 8 December 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

David Miller (1890-1973) held several government positions as an entomologist before becoming chief entomologist at the Cawthron Institute in 1928 and Director between 1956 and 1959; C.A. Fleming, *Science, settlers and scholars* (Wellington, 1987), pp.155,156. Miller wrote its history, *Thomas Cawthron and the Cawthron Institute* (Nelson, 1963).

seeing Internal Affairs or at Rotoroa shooting. "If so he will land plump in the soup - Waters will have no compunction in having him up".⁶⁷

Sanderson outlined further tactics. Internal Affairs would refer the application to Lands who in turn would refer it to their Nelson Commissioner, Waters. Sanderson cautioned Moncrieff, "You and your society must not know anything about the arrival...and the way it's being handled as this has come to my knowledge confidentially but you can rely on the information being absolutely correct." Sanderson would approach Lands officially from Forest and Bird and would send Moncrieff a copy of the submission, "but I am not sending it now in order that you may write your appeal in your own way and thus avoid any appearance at collusion." Sanderson suggested her best course was to "prime" Waters that the reserve should be kept in its natural state but if shag shooting was permitted it should be undertaken by a government representative not the Acclimatization Society.⁶⁸

In "priming" Waters, Moncrieff, as Secretary of Bush and Bird, repeated her points from earlier letters but because the entire lake was then a sanctuary she was able to support them with legal and nationalistic arguments. Many countries had set aside areas to preserve them in their natural state, she wrote, without the intrusion of exotic species. As trout were not indigenous to New Zealand, to shoot New Zealand birds to protect an introduced species "is against the best interests of the country." Even if trout were indigenous, she continued, it would still be a mistake to kill shags because "[i]n a sanctuary the balance of Nature should not be disturbed." She gave the example of East African sanctuaries where lions "are allowed to remain unmolested though they attack other species of game."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 1 December 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

⁶⁸ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 5 December 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1. In his letter, Sanderson incorrectly wrote "Rogers" for Waters and seems to have ignored Waters' leadership in the sanctuary campaign.

⁶⁹ Moncrieff to Commissioner Crown Lands, Nelson, 7 December 1928, Rotoroa file LS 4/283, DOC HO Wgtn.

Sanderson's submission to Lands reiterated the illegality of shooting in a sanctuary and added further ecological arguments. In citing E.F.Stead's belief that shags primarily ate eels and so were helpful to trout, Sanderson counselled caution until a survey of the contents of shag stomachs could be carried out by disinterested scientists, with which both Forest and Bird and the Acclimatisation Societies could agree. To show this was not impossible he gave an example mentioned to him by H.Guthrie-Smith of a dispute in England between "fisher folk" and ornithologists over flatfish and terns, which was eventually settled by evidence to the satisfaction of both groups.⁷⁰

In March 1929 when permission for the shoot was refused⁷¹, Sanderson and Moncrieff were pleased with their efforts. "You have scored a notable victory....It behoves us to stand by Lands if any remarks are made in the Press", he told her.⁷² She felt it "is very satisfactory for it creates such a delightful precedent in case you require it elsewhere." She thought the NAS might fight at their next annual meeting but was pleased to have Cawthon staff behind them, "as what they say sounds impressive and the general public thinks it must be right if they say so."⁷³ Sanderson concluded, "There is no doubt that between us we worked the Rotorua (sic) shag matter in good style".⁷⁴ Lakes Rotoroa and Rotoiti were incorporated into the Nelson Lakes National Park in 1956. In preliminary discussions, J.A.Peterson then Commissioner Crown Lands in Nelson, recommended that Moncrieff represent Forest and Bird on the park board⁷⁵ but this did not eventuate.⁷⁶ Whether she

⁷⁰ Sanderson to Under-Sec. Lands, 5 December 1928, Rotoroa file LS 4/283, DOC HO Wgtn. This English example occurred at the National Trust's Blakeney Point reserve and was investigated by W.E.Collinge; Sheail, p.191.

⁷¹ Under-Sec. Lands to Waters, 27 February 1929, Rotoroa file LS 4/283, DOC HO Wgtn.

⁷² Sanderson to Moncrieff, 23 March 1929, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

⁷³ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 26 March 1929, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

⁷⁴ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 22 February 1929, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

⁷⁵ Peterson to Dir. Gen. Lands, 21 December 1951 and 31 March 1953, Nelson Lakes National Park file LS 4/1081, DOC HO Wgtn. The impetus for the park derived from the "unsightly" huts erected near the Mt Robert skifield above Rotoiti. Moncrieff was

refused or was not formally asked is not known. Today black shags and trout both inhabit Rotoroa.⁷⁷

Moncrieff's campaign for Maruia in the Nelson-Westland hinterland began in October 1927. Partly focused around improvements to facilities at its hot springs, the campaign's main point was the reservation of indigenous bush on the road between Lewis Pass and Reefton on which the springs were situated.⁷⁸ Although the campaign was less successful than Moncrieff anticipated, a reserve, comprising strips of bush 20 chains (0.4 kilometres) wide on each side of the road, was declared in 1937.⁷⁹ The name Maruia has, since 1975, become a symbol of conservation effort to preserve remaining indigenous forest.⁸⁰

In 1927 Moncrieff became concerned about shooting parties illegally taking godwits and black swans at Farewell Spit. "[I]f I can do anything to fight the poaching I will but whilst Godwits may be shot I don't see unless the place is made a sanctuary I can do much."⁸¹ But her campaign for its sanctuary status began in earnest six years later⁸² possibly as the result of an

suggested in the later letter.

⁷⁶ *Gazette*, 71(13 December 1956), p.1774.

⁷⁷ Craig Potton, *The story of Nelson Lakes National Park* (Auckland, 1984), p.50.

⁷⁸ Moncrieff to Atmore, 11 April 1929, Maruia Scenic Reserve file, State Forest Service file 32/4/14, NA.

⁷⁹ Annual Report, Department of Lands and Survey, Scenery Preservation Report, *AJHR*, 1937, C.6, pp.2,6; Scenery Preservation Board Report, meetings 11 December 1929 and 22 July 1930, LS 70/14, NA.

Moncrieff's interest in its reservation may have originated in a report in the *Nelson Evening Mail*, 8 December 1923, p.5, which described the Maruia Valley's hot springs and very attractive scenery but also suggested that its timber resources could be tapped if road access was improved.

⁸⁰ See Roger Wilson, *From Manapouri to Aramoana* (Auckland, 1982), pp.114,115, for the origin of the Maruia Declaration on the banks of the Maruia River by the Native Forests Action Council in 1975 and the petition of some 340,000 signatures, the largest presented to Parliament up until 1977.

⁸¹ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 29 October 1927, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

⁸² Moncrieff to Minister IA, 1 March 1933, Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, NA.

appeal for the godwit's absolute protection by J.R.Kirk, another conservationist and ornithologist.⁸³ As a sand dune peninsula at the mouth of Golden Bay in the north of Nelson Province, the Spit is renowned for its flocks of godwit and other migratory birds which feed on its landward mudflats in summer. A lighthouse occupied a marine reserve at its tip while the rest was leased for grazing to local farmers.⁸⁴ In a series of reservations until 1987, when the process for the whole area was concluded, birds were exempted from the full shooting season from 1936-37, the tidal flats were declared a sanctuary in 1938, godwits were fully protected in 1941, grazing leases were withdrawn in 1946, and unregulated access was withdrawn in 1970.⁸⁵

Moncrieff campaigned for the Abel Tasman National Park, located between Tasman and Golden Bays, during 1941-42 when she petitioned the government to gazette an area of provisional state forest and scenic reserves already owned by the Crown, as a commemoration of Nelson's centenary and New Zealand's tercentennial "discovery" by Abel Tasman.⁸⁶ But the Park's genesis was in her appeal in 1935 to the newly-elected Labour government to purchase an area of private land known as Totaranui Bush. Although her proposal gained support from the Minister of Crown Lands, the Honourable F. Langstone⁸⁷, the Lands Department Head Office refused to buy it. Eventually in 1948 Totaranui Bush was included within the national park boundaries after it was purchased by the government.⁸⁸

⁸³ Kirk wrote several letters to Wellington's *Evening Post* which came to the notice of Internal Affairs; Godwits shooting season 1932-38 file IA 1/47/6 Pt 1, NA.

⁸⁴ Memo Sec. Marine to Under-Sec. Lands, 12 August 1938, Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, DOC HO Wgton.

⁸⁵ Farewell Spit file, LS 6/10/2, DOC HO, Wgton.

⁸⁶ Robin Hodge, "Creating a park: Pérrine Moncrieff and the Abel Tasman National Park", Diploma of Humanities Research essay in History, (Massey University, 1993).

⁸⁷ NEM, 18 March 1936, p.4.

⁸⁸ NEM, 7 May 1948. The second campaign for the purchase of the Totaranui block ran between December 1947 and May 1948.

Fifeshire Rock, an outcrop in Nelson harbour, is the breeding place of several species of sea and wading birds. Moncrieff applied for sanctuary status in 1952. While Internal Affairs thought gazettal as a sanctuary was unnecessary since the Rock was within city boundaries and therefore firearms could not be discharged there, the Department was agreeable to other forms of protection. These were arranged in 1952-53.⁸⁹

These sanctuary campaigns show firstly, and as an overarching theme, that the insertion of an indigenous, intrinsic, conservation perspective into the prevailing utilitarian paradigm required sustained effort. The Rotoroa and Abel Tasman National Park campaigns continued for two years, Farewell Spit for five and Maruia for eight. But in a guardian sense, they are perpetual because other groups, accustomed to subsume the natural world in their own interests, refused to recognise the permanency of sanctuary status. Moncrieff had to be aware of threats to and breaches of the sanctuaries' security and be prepared to reactivate the lobbyist protective process against three particular groups; the NAS, poachers or shooters, and development-minded government departments and local bodies.

The NAS, representing legitimate sporting interests, continued to assume its right to the wild public domain and strongly resisted challenges from the protectionists to its hegemony.⁹⁰ Although charged with the protection of the indigenous wild as well as the introduced, it lived up to its original function described by the title of the Societies' history, *Gamekeepers for the nation*.⁹¹ The NAS privileged the introduced over the indigenous. Like the scientific ornithologists in Chapter Three, the NAS represented the

⁸⁹ Fifeshire Rock Sanctuary file IA 1/52/237, NA.

⁹⁰ In 1930 the national body felt sufficiently threatened by Forest and Bird proposals, that an appointed board should administer wildlife affairs in place of the current regime, to send a confidential letter to its constituent provincial societies requesting them to make representations to their Members of Parliament; Minutes, NAS, 1929-1941, Council meeting 9 June 1930, p.44, Nelson Museum; Galbreath, *Wildlife*, pp.31-40.

⁹¹ R.M.McDowell, *Gamekeepers for the nation* (Christchurch, 1994). The Acclimatisation Society is now known as Fish and Game New Zealand.

normative values of the separatedness of species in contrast to Moncrieff's holistic world-view. They contended fiercely for Rotoroa and more mutedly for Farewell Spit in which they had stronger interests, than for Maruia and Abel Tasman.

Moncrieff saw them as "a determined hostile minority" who needed careful handling⁹²; "a lot of worthy narrow-minded fishermen who cannot see further than their sport" but whose president and secretary "were not to be despised" as they "enjoy going against us just to be annoying".⁹³ She noted that the NAS was trying to improve its public image by publicising its actions for indigenous bird protection as two boys were fined for killing a blue heron.⁹⁴ They were also "making a great fuss about the trout they are putting in....how somebody caught a fine 10lb trout. I suppose with a view to impressing Internal Affairs."⁹⁵ In 1930 she was given, to her mind, further proof for her adverse opinion of them. She was told that, during the application process for shag destruction in 1928-29, a member had "slipped away and shot the shags....I feel I cannot trust [the NAS] but I cannot spare time or money to go down to Rotoroa or would stop there during the breeding season." In the same letter, she said she had suspected that event and had warned Waters who had not believed it. "But it happened all the same."⁹⁶ Waters evidently was unable to prosecute through lack of evidence despite Moncrieff's earlier confidence.

Sanderson suggested two means by which she could undermine the NAS from within. She could try to influence the NAS's policy by having bird

⁹² Moncrieff to Sanderson, 26 December 1937, MS Papers 0444:194, 1.

⁹³ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 14 December 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

⁹⁴ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 5 February 1929, MS Papers 0444:193,1; Minutes, NAS, 1929-1941, Council meeting 14 May 1929, p.1, Nelson Museum. This case was reported in *NEM*, 4 February 1929, p.4. The accused defended themselves by saying they thought it was a shag but were fined respectively £3 and costs of 13 shillings and £2 with 10 shillings costs.

⁹⁵ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 24 October 1930, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

⁹⁶ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 24 October 1930, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

protection supporters elected to the Committee.⁹⁷ She thought that would take some doing without arousing their suspicions. "Unfortunately the majority of the members are not our type at all [that is, protectionists]." She was equally hesitant when he asked her to send him a copy of the Society's Rules. After she "had a bit of a job to get [its Constitution]", he suggested that the Society's Council was likely to be illegally elected because members would not have adhered to the financial and enrolment Rules. There is nothing extant to suggest that she tried either to "stack" the NAS with protectionists or to legally challenge its authority. Her husband was a keen fisherman and would have bought his licence through the Society while the Moncrieffs were obviously friendly with a few of the members. Although she had policy differences with most members, she tried to stay true to her inclusive beliefs by maintaining amicable relationships. As she was to write in the subsequent "newspaper war" in the *Nelson Evening Mail*, "It has always been my belief that I should be able to correspond with two or more persons in the paper, holding opposite views on a subject".⁹⁸

This "war", which clearly demonstrates the rivalry over the "use" of the wild, began in early 1931 after Andrews was again refused an application to shoot the shags.⁹⁹ Shortly afterwards NAS members began a two month campaign, conducted through the Letters to the Editor column, to explain their case publicly. As Andrews put it in the opening salvo, "Whether the action of making that lake a scenic reserve was a wise measure in view of the work of national importance being carried out by the [Acclimatization] Society, must be

⁹⁷ The following narrative is from correspondence between Moncrieff and Sanderson, between 5 February and 14 March 1929, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

⁹⁸ Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 31 March 1931, p.4. In 1945 she told Sanderson the new NAS Secretary was a friend whom she felt she could ring if she needed assistance. "But of course they are more keen on trout than birds."; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 18 October 1945, MS Papers 0444:197, 1.

⁹⁹ Andrews to Under-Sec. IA, 18 January 1931; Asst Under-Sec. IA to Andrews, 10 March 1931, Rotoroa file LS 4/283, DOC HO Wgtn.

left to the public generally to decide."¹⁰⁰ In their letters the NAS represented themselves as responsible Nelsonians who, like the pioneers, continued to promote Nelson's best interests, not by carving "our beautiful city" out of "forest and fern", but by creating a recreational fishing industry which would bring tourists and money to the district. Only the black shag and the "sheer cussedness" of "self-styled naturalists and amateur ornithologists" prevented the realisation of this asset to Nelson province. They portrayed all the "menacing" images of the black shag - "black devils found choked with trout", "the greediest and ugliest bird in nature next to vultures", and by association linked the conservationists to the "Indian lower classes" who "eat them for rank oil flesh in winter for heat". "I trust," continued this correspondent, "that modern democracy will never allow faddists to trespass on the rational freedom of fish preservation".¹⁰¹

Moncrieff and Sanderson replied in equally spirited style. They presented themselves as true patriots with a protective interest in New Zealand's unique species, including its many shags, and a desire to maintain the ecological balance of those species. They also showed a determination to uphold the law on sanctuaries for the benefit of all rather than let it be diminished in the interests of a sectional group. Moncrieff gave several examples of ecological thinking and research from New Zealand and overseas on the complexities of the relationships between shags, fish and crustaceans.¹⁰² She implied that human beings, in disturbing the balance in their own preoccupation with one species, were actually hurting their own interests because they did not understand the ecological consequences. She supported her argument by quoting J.Arthur Thomson, Professor of Natural History at Aberdeen University; "before we seek to control nature by drastic measures we

¹⁰⁰ Andrews to Editor, *NEM*, 28 March 1931, p.7. The correspondence ran between 20 March and 19 May 1931.

¹⁰¹ *NEM*, 20 April 1931, p.3.

¹⁰² For example, Oliver's opinion that shags ate other trout predators like eels and usefully thinned out overstocked trout streams; Guthrie-Smith and an Australian, A.H.P.Mattingley, on trout and fish reductions despite the shooting of shags.

should...get a grip of the facts and that demands a study...of the Web of Life." She also quoted Hefford's opinion that shooting was unnecessary.¹⁰³ Sanderson argued that any successful acclimatisations tended to alter pre-existing conditions "at the expense of existing species" and therefore sanctuaries "should be kept as near as possible in the condition Nature designed them." Nelson was ideal for fish and game but not in sanctuaries, he said, and again advocated a large-scale survey on the black shag's food.¹⁰⁴

The Editor contributed to the debate by publishing part of a later statement by Hefford which revised his earlier opinion, although that had been specific to Rotoroa. By 1930 Hefford considered there was a strong case against the black shag but no systematic record to prove it. Data "systematically obtained and scientifically considered" was required, not the surmise or the "exiguous" material given as evidence by ornithologists. Despite his references to the impartial scientific mind and the need for unbiased research, he concluded, prior to the research, "that the black shag and the large pied shag are objects against which war should be waged for the benefit of the fisheries".¹⁰⁵ For an age when a belief in scientific objectivity was the norm, Hefford's opinion can be seen to support the NAS; it gave some weight to their argument which otherwise rested on lightweight, emotional references to the black shag. On the other hand, the pragmatic arguments of Moncrieff and Sanderson, based on ecological research and law, avoided emotional reasons from heritage, spiritual or aesthetic values, which were considered unquantifiable and therefore unscientific. There is no evidence that this was a planned outcome from the sanctuary-creation objective but the strategy certainly allowed pragmatic reasoning.

Perhaps the Editor, F.J.Earle, realised that the NAS's argument lacked substance and, in publishing Hefford's report, sought to bolster it. He may

¹⁰³ Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 31 March 1931, p.4.

¹⁰⁴ Sanderson to Editor, *NEM*, 11 April 1931, p.5.

¹⁰⁵ "Shags and the fisheries", A.H.Hefford, Chief Inspector of Fisheries, Annual Report, Marine Department, *AJHR*, 1929-30, H.15, pp.23-26, quoted *NEM*, 1 April 1931, p.3.

have been a trout fisherman, or perhaps he believed Nelson's best interests lay in fishing. Certainly Sanderson was concerned by the Editor's attitude. The *Nelson Evening Mail* was normally supportive of conservation effort, reprinting many articles from Forest and Bird's journal and publishing a considerable amount of material from New Zealand and overseas. But in this instance the paper both failed to send Sanderson copies of the correspondence as he had requested, and also published his name rather than the *nom-de-plume*.¹⁰⁶ Sanderson asked Moncrieff if the paper was "on the other side".¹⁰⁷ She replied that "the Press is not anti-ourselves" but "like everybody else in the town take the [NAS] at their own value and merely think I am being sentimental."¹⁰⁸ But in this case, on the published evidence, the NAS showed themselves to be sentimental not Moncrieff or Sanderson.

The NAS persisted with its applications to destroy shags at Rotoroa. To accompany that of 1936 Andrews explained the problem to the Honourable W.E. Parry, the Minister of Internal Affairs, who was a keen angler and hunter.¹⁰⁹ Andrews presumably thought Parry would react sympathetically. A year later Andrews, presumably because of Hefford's opinion, asked the Minister of Marine to use his influence to have the shag destruction ban removed.¹¹⁰ Each was refused.¹¹¹ But in other areas of New Zealand black shags continued to be destroyed in the interests of trout fishing while Forest and Bird continued to advocate their protection. Forest and Bird also

¹⁰⁶ Sanderson's technique of using *nom-de-plumes* to imply a considerable depth of membership in Forest and Bird is explained by Lochhead, p.277. Sanderson did not want a letter to be dismissed as yet another comment from him when his views were already well known.

¹⁰⁷ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 22 April 1931, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

¹⁰⁸ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 19 April 1931, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Galbreath, *Wildlife*, p.33.

¹¹⁰ Andrews to Parry, [December 1936]; Andrews to Minister Marine, 18 August 1937; Hefford's views in his Report, already cited and in letter Sec. Marine to Under-Sec. Lands, 5 February 1931, Rotoroa file LS 4/283, DOC HO Wgtn.

¹¹¹ See correspondence between Andrews and Depts. IA, Lands, Marine between 5 July and 18 August 1937, Rotoroa file LS 4/283, DOC HO Wgtn.

continued to insist that the natural balance of a sanctuary should be maintained and to condemn shooting in sanctuaries.¹¹²

Moncrieff's strategy proved effective at Rotoroa and could have been a model for the successful Whangarei Harbour Sanctuary campaign in 1940, Like the Abel Tasman National Park, this was a centennial project. It was organised by W.M.Fraser, the Engineer of the Whangarei Harbour Board, who had met Moncrieff when she visited Taranga Island sanctuary in 1927. They may have corresponded since then because she urged Parry to support Fraser's project.¹¹³ During the proposal's investigation, which the Whangarei Acclimatisation Society opposed, Hefford pointed out that a sanctuary would prevent shag destruction programmes in the future, citing the Lake Rotoroa example, but he indicated that no conclusive research had yet been done on marine ecology.¹¹⁴ But whether members of Forest and Bird adopted Moncrieff's precedent of obtaining a sanctuary as the means to protect birds and indigenous ecological relationships is difficult to determine. Neither of the journals, *Birds* and *Forest and Bird*, published much about local activities so that more research is needed to determine the amount and type of protectionist activity outside Sanderson's centralised efforts.

The NAS also opposed the withdrawal of godwits from the shooting schedule and Farewell Spit's declaration as a sanctuary.¹¹⁵ Their opposition, consisting of letters to Internal Affairs, was more token than proactive as it

¹¹² See Internal Affairs files Shags, destruction of 1937-59 IA 1/47/51 Pts 1-4, NA. In 1930 students at the Otago Medical School surveyed shag stomach contents for the Otago Acclimatisation Society; Janet Fay Swann, "A short history of the Acclimatisation Society of Otago", MA thesis in History (University of Otago, 1962), p.65. But no independent, comprehensive survey requested by Sanderson, Hefford and others appears to have been undertaken.

¹¹³ Hefford to Sec. Marine, 2 April 1940, Moncrieff to Parry, 17 July 1940, Sanctuary Application for Whangarei Harbour file IA 1/52/79 Pt 1, NA.

¹¹⁴ Moncrieff must have considered Hefford to be "persuadable" to her viewpoint because the Hefford family stayed at Astrolabe with the Moncrieffs in the summer of 1940-41 or 1941-42; Interview with Jim Hefford, 2.

¹¹⁵ Minutes, NAS, 1915-1953, for example, Council meetings 14 November 1932, 10 April 1933, 12 February 1946, Nelson Museum.

was over the black shag at Rotoroa, because of their adherence to the hunters' code. As their historian W.R.C.Sowman acknowledged, there was nothing noble, honest or sporting about killing godwits as they were such easy shots. He admitted that Forest and Bird's campaign for godwits was therefore "probably justified".¹¹⁶ Despite the criticism and contempt for godwit shooters implied in this comment, the NAS, in their failure to pursue the annual reports of poaching and illegal shooting while knowing they occurred¹¹⁷, can be seen to justify Moncrieff's belief that they went against the protectionists "just to be annoying."

At Farewell Spit poaching continued into the 1970s. Its file contains many accounts like the following by E.N. Young, Chairman of the Abel Tasman National Park Board, which was then responsible for the Spit. Heavy poaching continued, he wrote in 1967, in part because surveillance by the Park Board Ranger was inadequate.¹¹⁸ Frank Boyce, the Nelson representative of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand in the 1970s, saw how easily and openly poaching occurred. On an organised trip to the lighthouse, he said, three men with sacks containing what looked like dismembered rods, got off the bus to go fishing as recreational fishing was then permitted on the Spit. Full sacks on the return journey indicated a successful day but Boyce later found out that the sacks had contained rifles not rods, and birds not fish. "They weren't dependent on that type of food; they weren't starving - not by any means. This was to them sport".¹¹⁹ Lou Gurr also spoke of the openness of poaching. In the 1950s in a Nelson boarding house, he was given a meal of godwits at which the diners joked about "Pérrine's pigeons".¹²⁰ Both Boyce

¹¹⁶ W.R.C.Sowman, *Meadow, mountain, forest and stream* (Nelson, 1981), pp.101,102.

¹¹⁷ Mr Zumbach, NAS, quoted in Report by B.D.Bell, Field Officer, 29 November 1962, Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, DOC HO Wgton.

¹¹⁸ Young to Chairman National Parks Authority, 16 January 1967, Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, DOC HO Wgton.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Frank Boyce, 2.

¹²⁰ Interview with Lou Gurr, 2.

and Gurr described the Golden Bay pakeha poachers as "laws unto themselves" who had eaten godwits for generations and were not about to cease because birds were protected and Farewell Spit made a sanctuary.

This defiance the law, the lack of recognition for protectionist values and the personal disparagement of Moncrieff, although paradoxically a recognition of her achievement, demonstrate again that perseverance and self-assurance were required to guard against this second threat - poachers and illegal shooters - to the sanctuaries.

Moncrieff's view of such people was contained in a newspaper cutting she sent Sanderson which, she said, "expresses my opinion exactly."

There is a type of person who believes real manliness is shown by "sporting" tastes - which are generally cultivated at the expense of some defenceless creature. Why must love of destruction be regarded as more manly than a sense of chivalrous protection for bird and beast? In these days, with so many pursuits and enjoyments, it is (sic) absolutely necessary that to be a "he" man one should occupy weeks every year in the wholesale destruction of many beautiful creatures, at great unnecessary suffering to them....¹²¹

The Farewell Spit file reveals her periodic lobbyist letters to Internal Affairs and Lands¹²² but in the 1930s she adopted a hands-on role to combat the poachers. What can be called "the Great Game" subtext of the Rotoroa campaign - the secrecy, urgent telegrams, and covert gathering of information about remote locations - applied also to Farewell Spit. Moncrieff believed that launch parties departed from Riwaka wharf each November to kill swans for the Christmas trade and godwits out of season. Moncrieff made friends with a local fishermen who agreed to notify her the next time in November or December 1930 a particular group hired his boat.¹²³ Sanderson arranged for a

¹²¹ Cutting unidentified but enclosed with Moncrieff to Sanderson, 9 February 1932, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

¹²² For example, Moncrieff to Minister IA, 1 March 1933, Under-Sec.IA to Under-Sec.Lands, 7 January 1936 and 7 October 1937, Wakelin to Under-Sec.Lands, 11 July 1946, Arres to Dir.Gen .Lands, 16 June 1964, Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, DOC HO Wgtn.

¹²³ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 14 November 1930, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

ranger to visit the Spit as soon as Moncrieff notified Sanderson that the group was on its way.¹²⁴ But their plan was foiled. The poaching party did not hire the fisherman but he was able to tell the Moncrieffs that the group had left when the Moncrieffs arrived at Riwaka wharf to go to Astrolabe. Moncrieff "did not know what to do as dared not send a wire from Riwaka direct....it's a small community, everybody knows everybody's business" so she sent Sanderson a telegram from Motueka.¹²⁵ He thanked her for her efforts "to outwit the swan hunters....I purposely did not wire you until the game was up as one never knows what information leaks out. I acted promptly on receipt of your first wire and was tempted even to make a swift secret visit myself."¹²⁶

Perhaps Sanderson and Moncrieff enjoyed the covert nature of these operations. Perhaps they enjoyed the thought of real action - she wanting to remain at Rotoroa, he patrolling Riwaka wharf - even if this was precluded by their domestic situations.¹²⁷ The NAS were equally adept as their secret shooting of black shags at Rotoroa demonstrated, while the poachers were careful to evade prosecution.¹²⁸ Moncrieff and Sanderson could be ridiculed except that they demonstrated a seriousness of purpose for conservation which mitigates any absurdity. Imbued with a vitalist metaphysic, his background as a "reformed" hunter and her "missionary" zeal to save birds and forests, make the secretive dramas understandable. It was more than a fight for the black shag or the godwit, more even than protecting the "sanctity of a sanctuary". It was the insertion of ecological thinking and protectionist values into the way in

¹²⁴ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 24 November 1930, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

¹²⁵ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 26 December 1930, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

¹²⁶ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 3 January 1931, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

¹²⁷ Earlier he had told her of his Boer War "luck in dodging the enemy when apparently cornered."; Sanderson to Moncrieff, 27 May 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

¹²⁸ The Nelson Lands Department was unsuccessful in appointing a local ranger because most residents although sympathetic, did not want "to be mixed up in prosecution, fearing reprisals."; Wilkinson to Under-Sec. Lands, 29 December 1938, Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, DOC HO Wgtn.

which New Zealanders, and in this case Nelsonians, experience the natural world.

Poachers were also the principal reason for Moncrieff's application in 1952 to Internal Affairs for Fifeshire Rock to be declared a sanctuary.¹²⁹ This large outcrop in Nelson harbour was directly in front of the Moncrieff home, "The Cliffs". She was concerned that despite her "continually" advising the police, people robbed nesting seabirds and molested others which landed there throughout the year. That birds were nesting at all in such a public locality may well have been due to her efforts for nearly thirty years to prevent some locals from shooting birds like the heron species which occasionally landed in Nelson's estuaries. But it also confirms that conservation protective values required continuous defence.

In correspondence between Internal Affairs, the NAS and the Nelson Harbour Board, it was decided that since the Rock was within Nelson City boundaries in which firearms could not be discharged, sanctuary status was unnecessary. The birds could be protected by increased visits by honorary rangers, newspaper publicity and a notice on the Rock advising of the birds' protected status. The suggested wording echoed Moncrieff's protection and heritage values that she had long disseminated and indicate some conservation success at the insertion of those values into public activity. "These graceful sea birds are part of our heritage: play your part in preserving them."¹³⁰ Several months went by without any action until she had the notice made up, erected and the account sent to Internal Affairs. She was told, "it is not usual for private persons to have them made. It would be appreciated if you would bear this in mind."¹³¹ But she was unrepentant. She had wanted it in place before another nesting season and thought the various authorities involved were

¹²⁹ All correspondence between Moncrieff and Under-Sec., IA 30 October 1952 and 12 February 1954, in Fifeshire Rock sanctuary file IA 1/52/237, NA.

The Wildlife Branch of Internal Affairs, established in 1945 (see Galbreath, *Wildlife*, pp.34-42), was by then officially responsible for native bird protection. Since Fifeshire Rock concerned birds, Moncrieff applied to Internal Affairs rather than Lands.

¹³⁰ Harper to Moncrieff, 22 June 1953, Fifeshire Rock file IA 1/52/237, NA.

¹³¹ Harper to Moncrieff, 8 February 1954, IA 1/52/237 Fifeshire Rock, NA.

procrastinating. "To me the amazing part is that whilst badly required no 'body' was prepared to take upon themselves the erection thereof."¹³²

The third group to threaten the sanctuaries included government departments, local bodies and developers who continued to work under the development paradigm, oblivious to intrinsic values and unaware or unsympathetic to the conservationist purpose of reserves. In 1941 Moncrieff was concerned about the revival of an old paper scheme for a town at Rotoroa, her anxiety prompted by a fire which had got out of control at the neighbouring Lake Rotoiti and burnt hundreds of acres of regenerating bush.¹³³ In the 1940s and 1950s the Abel Tasman National Park Board, despite protests from a minority of members including Moncrieff, discussed leasing sites for baches, allowed the leasing of some park land for grazing, and permitted beehives on park land. She opposed these uses because they were exotic introductions

within an area set aside for the retention of native flora and fauna....[but] most members are not versed in conservation and have the usual laymans (sic) ignorance. They view parks as something to be exploited not conserved. 'You cant lock it up' is their perpetual cry....Of course I am not really for 'locking up the park' but view it like a museum where people can enter and see everything but under control....I thought that a selected number of camping sites with tracks through which people could walk under the supervision of rangers would be more the idea.¹³⁴

Moncrieff's vision for the areas she recommended as sanctuaries was inclusive and not elitist for the enjoyment of a small, wealthy, or physically-active minority. She wanted all New Zealanders to have the opportunity of

¹³² Moncrieff to Harper, 12 February 1954, IA 1/52/237 Fifeshire Rock, NA.

¹³³ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 23 March and 20 May 1942, MS Papers 0444:195, 1; W.G.Gibbs to Wilkinson, 30 March 1940, Rotoiti file LS 4/352, DOC HO Wgton.

¹³⁴ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 23 August 1944, MS Papers 0444:196, 1.

In 1940 she had expressed concern to Parry that wild bees competed with birds like tuis for nectar. She suggested that if shooters wanted to kill something, they kill wild bees, weasels and stoats; Moncrieff to Parry, 2 December 1940, A P & G Act Birds file IA 1/47/8 Pt 2, NA.

becoming acquainted with their natural heritage as a counter to the urge to destroy and change. She wanted also to promote an engagement between New Zealanders and their past through experience and non-harmful ways of recording that experience. She believed that if the sanctuaries were frequented by those who, through a love of the natural world, were there to experience it, the reserves would gain greater protection from fire or poachers. Sanctuaries could also provide work for rangers and caretakers, a suggestion she frequently made to help justify their creation. During the 1930s depression she told the Governor-General, Lord Bledisloe, that many men had sought her help to get them work as rangers. "They have to be bush-wise, strong, honest and true lovers of birds and trees." She regretted that this form of employment was not attempted by the government and that these men drifted into employment camps "where they are useless compared with the value they could have at the job they love."¹³⁵ Of necessity the reserves were not close to Nelson city or its provincial towns - those areas had long been converted to agriculture and horticulture and, as she had discovered, any remaining bush was too expensive to protect. But the sanctuaries were not excessively distant, especially when private cars became more readily available after World War Two. She had every reason to feel indignant when she was accused of a modern form of enclosure. "He had the cheek to say to me that we were on the wrong track trying to tie up everything; that we must not take that outlook".¹³⁶ Moncrieff believed that, far from tying things up, she was opening them to those who, like herself, held an alternative view of the natural world or could be

¹³⁵ Moncrieff to Bledisloe, 14 July 1934, Pigeons file IA 1/46/12, NA.

Moncrieff believed the government would be better to give work to rangers and foresters rather to the Department of Public Works for road work schemes; Moncrieff to Dickison, 2 October 1937, MS 11437:Box 8, 4.

¹³⁶ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 4 September 1943, MS Papers 0444:196, 1. Moncrieff had heard that a power line and road was planned across a more direct route - the Maungatapu saddle - between Nelson and Marlborough as a rehabilitation scheme after the war. She was concerned that it would expose "a lovely bit of forest" to main highway traffic. She was not against the power poles but the road itself as there was no new country to be opened up and therefore no benefit to the returned soldier. Her interview with the Conservator of Forests, who accused her of "tying things up", was to ask for a green belt on either side of the power line as a form of forest protection from accidental fire.

persuaded to such a view, so that future generations would be able to witness "old New Zealand".

But Farewell Spit was an exception. Her motivation for its reservation and continuing protection from various forms of commercial and recreational use was primarily the well-being of its seabirds. For over forty years she argued on the birds' behalf when its sanctuary status was threatened by airforce target-shooting at the birds from planes, mining licence applications, recreational proposals and an airstrip plan.¹³⁷ For the latter, the Commissioner of Works argued that an airstrip to service the lighthouse "would not materially affect the environment" and rare floral species could be transplanted "if considered essential."¹³⁸ She constantly stressed the importance of the Spit for migratory and other birds as an exceptional local, national and international feeding and resting area. Despite her reservations about contemporary field research discussed in Chapter Three, she suggested the employment of a resident ornithologist as it offered "wonderful opportunities" for bird study.¹³⁹ In a report she prepared in 1969 for an interdepartmental committee investigating a new era of conflict among Spit users, she wrote that while national parks were created to encourage the public to visit them,

Farewell Spit is a wildlife area where the welfare of the waders should receive prior consideration....With the pressure of population it is imperative that the coming generation should be educated to the fact that where certain species must be

¹³⁷ See Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, DOC HO Wgton, including Moncrieff to Minister IA, 1 March 1933, to Minister Lands, 16 July 1938 and Report, [1969]; Under-Sec. IA to Under-Sec. Lands, 7 January 1936 and 7 October 1937 which summarise letters to him from Moncrieff. She also wrote articles and gave talks about the birds and the Spit's international significance; See MS Papers 4723, 1a.

The airforce target shooting is in Sanderson to Goddard, 25 May 1943, MS Papers 0444:196, 1.

¹³⁸ McLeod to Dir.Gen. Lands, 5 November 1973. The earlier examples are dated respectively 11 March 1945, 18 November 1964, 11 February 1972 in Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, DOC HO Wgton.

¹³⁹ Proposal in Arres to Dir.Gen. Lands, 16 June 1964, Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, DOC HO Wgton.

preserved and the area where they dwell protected the conservation aspect must take priority to Man's amusement.¹⁴⁰

Though this statement came near the end of her life it only affirmed the beliefs she had long held; that there were occasions when, looking at the world as a whole, the interests of another species had a greater value than those of humans. Today, while supervised tourism is popular and in accordance with her overall desire for accessibility, Farewell Spit is recognised as a wetland of international importance¹⁴¹ and is as fully protected as possible. That both bird and human interests, respectively to a greater and lesser degree, are now accommodated was largely due to Moncrieff's assiduous work. In 1938 Sanderson had praised her for "the long battle...now well on the road....much credit is due to you for the persistent manner in which you have advocated it. In fact, I think you originated the notion."¹⁴² Because of her vitalist "bird first" advocacy, Farewell Spit could be a more appropriate memorial to her than Abel Tasman National Park.

The other main reason for the successful establishment of the reserves was the attitude of public servants, especially those in the Lands Department in its Wellington Head Office and in Nelson. Although much of the Department's work concerned the allocation of land for settlement and development, historically it had also encompassed reservations for sanctuaries, forest and scenic reserves. Some of its officials had been privately involved with conservation groups.¹⁴³ By the 1920s the section responsible for scenic

¹⁴⁰ Moncrieff, Report, undated, enclosed with letter E.N. Young to Chairman National Park Association, 7 July 1969, Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, DOC HO Wgtn; her emphasis.

¹⁴¹ Brian Bell, "The birds of Farewell Spit", in *A flying start*, (eds) B.J.Gill and B.D.Heather (Albany, 1990), p.156. Bell acknowledges Moncrieff's role in seeking "to reserve the area for posterity" and relates a story from a 1963 ATNP Board visit to the Spit, which included Bell, and which clearly shows her preference for birdwatching over Board discussions.

¹⁴² Sanderson to Moncrieff, 25 November 1938, MS Papers 0444:194, 1.

¹⁴³ For example William Skinner and Sidney Weetman of the Lands and Survey Department in New Plymouth were members of the Taranaki Scenery Preservation Society founded in 1891; Lochhead, pp.100, 272.

Edward Phillips Turner (1865-1937) belonged to both Forest and Bird and the New Zealand Forestry League; Lochhead, p.242. He was a surveyor but spent much of his career

reservation had been reduced¹⁴⁴ but some officials remained committed to the protection of indigenous birds. They were acknowledged by Sanderson as liking "to be as sympathetic as possible."¹⁴⁵

This can be seen firstly, in their willingness to accommodate a Rotoroa sanctuary within the constraints imposed by legislation and other users. Also it is apparent in their continuing efforts to secure sanctuary status for Farewell Spit. The Under-Secretary of Lands, W.Robertson, when asking Waters for his opinion on Farewell Spit and on the status of its leases and ownership after Moncrieff's first approach, commented,

I should add that this office is strongly in favour of the conservation of bird-life, and if it is at all practicable to take any protective action in this case, I think the Department should assist by all means in its power.

I am afraid that in the past the Department has, on occasions, allowed consideration of revenue derived from grazing rights to overshadow other and more important interests. There is no reason why, in suitable cases, areas of Crown land should not be reserved as bird sanctuaries....¹⁴⁶

Secondly, it can be seen in the Lands Department's continued refusals to allow the black shag to be shot at Rotoroa despite pressure from the NAS, especially

in scenery preservation and forestry, becoming the Chief Inspector of Scenic Reserves in 1907, Head of the Forests Branch of the Lands Department in 1918, and Director of the State Forest Service between 1929-1932; Michael Roche, *History of New Zealand forestry* (Wellington, 1990), pp.175,199,247.

¹⁴⁴ The Scenery Preservation Commission was disbanded in 1908 and replaced by the Scenery Preservation Board, comprising officials of several government departments, in conjunction with the position of Inspector of Scenic Reserves. The Inspectorate position had been vacant since 1918 when Phillips Turner transferred to the Forestry Branch. In 1921 this became a separate department, the State Forest Service; Roche, *Forestry*, pp.163-183.

¹⁴⁵ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 5 December 1928, MS Papers 0444: 192, 1.

¹⁴⁶ Robertson to CCL Nelson, 17 March 1933, Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, DOC HO Wgtn. There are many letters between Lands and Internal Affairs during the 1930s with suggestions on how to reconcile conflicts caused by Lands' existing grazing lease over the Spit and Internal Affairs' statutory inability to declare a sanctuary in which cattle and dogs lived. The lessee, whose lease ran until 1945, did not want to relinquish it before due date but welcomed a sanctuary because illegal shooting and poaching disturbed his cattle.

William Robertson joined the Department of Lands and Survey in 1892 and held various departmental positions throughout New Zealand; [A.G.Bagnall], *Who's who in New Zealand and the western Pacific* (Wellington, [c.1932] 3rd ed), p.299.

since, as Sanderson expressed it, "Shags are...outlawed generally".¹⁴⁷ Robertson considered that it was yet to be established whether,

the shag's reputation [was] as black as its plumage. From the point of view of the Acclimatisation Society, the bird should of course be treated as an outlaw but there are other views on the subject. Afterall the shag is a native of New Zealand and I do not see why it should be utterly destroyed in the interests of a small section of the community and of a few visitors from overseas, especially as expert opinion [on its ecological value] is not unanimous....I hope strongly that the shag is entitled, trout or no trout, to protection in sanctuary areas....¹⁴⁸

Because of interdepartmental friction over control of wildlife¹⁴⁹, the opinions of Lands Department officials could be seen as spoiling tactics or robust debate with the statutory protectors of indigenous fauna. But similar opinions were also expressed by J.W.A.Heenan, Secretary of Internal Affairs, the department under whose aegis the Acclimatisation Societies operated. It is likely that Heenan's opinion was the cause of Andrews' application for support to the Minister of Marine, quoted above. Heenan wrote,

The view held by this department, and it is one that finds considerable support, is that there is no justification for the destruction of shags on (sic) sanctuary areas such as scenic reserves....It is not a question of what is best for the Acclimatisation Society. It is a question of what is best for the scenic reserve, and the killing of any bird is of course utterly

¹⁴⁷ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 5 December 1928, MS Papers 0444: 192, 1.

¹⁴⁸ Robertson to Minister Scenery Protection, 17 September 1937, Rotoroa file LS 4/283, DOC HO Wgtn.

¹⁴⁹ Galbreath, *Wildlife* pp.18-22. He gives an account, from the successful perspective of Internal Affairs, of departmental competition between Internal Affairs and the Forest Service to manage the deer destruction programme from 1930. In passing, he mentions an unfulfilled plan in 1931 by the government's Economy Committee that Lands and Survey reabsorb the Forest Service.

The early archives of Forest and Bird show that the Society was much exercised by the question of wildlife's ultimate control. In the 1920s it preferred the Forest Service to Internal Affairs but lobbied all three departments; Galbreath, *Wildlife*, p.19; Roche, *Forestry* pp.414-416; correspondence between Sanderson and Moncrieff, for example, 31 July 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

repugnant to the general principles of the administration of scenic reserves. One of the principal functions of a scenic reserve is to serve as a sanctuary for birds, and notwithstanding arguments advanced by bodies whose main interest after all lies in the destruction of life in the name of sport, I think the shag, in common with other New Zealand native birds, is entitled to full protection on sanctuary areas.¹⁵⁰

Moncrieff thus had plenty of support within the upper echelons of the relevant government departments for conservation and for the sanctity of sanctuaries. As I have shown she also had support from senior officials in Lands and Forests in Nelson province. Two Commissioners of Lands, Waters and his successor P.R. Wilkinson, were particularly helpful in advocating the sanctuaries to their Head Office, in researching appropriate legislative frameworks, and advising Moncrieff on the progress of her applications. But without Moncrieff's originating requests and sustained lobbying they might not have acted publicly, thereby allowing the status quo of Acclimatisation hegemony over wildlife and wild areas to continue.

Of the five sanctuaries only Maruia was something of a disappointment to Moncrieff. Requested in 1929, it was recommended for reservation the following year, but this was not effected until 1937.¹⁵¹ The delay was caused by the Forest Service's refusal to allow the bush road strips to come under Scenic preservation legislation and Lands Department administration.¹⁵² Interdepartmental rivalry may have been the "first cause" because the proposal came at the time of government restructuring¹⁵³ when the Forest Service would have been sensitive about its future and individuals concerned for their employment during the Depression. Despite Phillips Turner having been the Inspector of Scenic Reserves in the Lands Department, as Director of Forests

¹⁵⁰ Heenan to Minister Scenery Preservation, 16 July 1937, Rotoroa file LS 4/283, DOC HO Wgtn.

¹⁵¹ Scenery Preservation Board Reports LS 70/14; Minute Books Scenery Preservation Board, LS 70/4, NA.

¹⁵² Phillips Turner to Under-Sec. Lands, 20 January 1931, Lewis Pass Road Maruia Valley file F 32/4/14, NA.

¹⁵³ See Footnote 149 above.

he was loyal to the latter, at least on this occasion. In addition, the Nelson Conservator of Forests, C.M.Smith, who was also on the committee of the Nelson Bush and Bird Society, also remained loyal to his department. He was not unsympathetic to Moncrieff's vision for he wrote,

While it is true that [Provisional State Forest] unless and until required for settlement, is virtually State Forest, I am certain that Mrs. Moncrieff for one, who was the prime mover in the representations to have the P.S.F. from Lewis Saddle to Reefton made Scenic Reserve, does not like the word "Provisional", because it implies a less secure title than "State Forest".¹⁵⁴

But Smith believed the Service was better qualified to protect and manage the area especially since the Lands Department, which had no fire-fighting capability, had recently requested the Forest Service to extinguish two fires in scenic reserves. More generally he argued that the Forest Service administered the forests for their recreational, amenity, commercial and scenic values, with well-trained and experienced staff.¹⁵⁵ The Maruia road strips were reserved when the State Forest Service decided to change the status of the forest from provisional to permanent. Robertson revived the reserve application with Wilkinson who again recommended it.¹⁵⁶ Moncrieff felt the delay had allowed the destruction of many indigenous birds by roadmen which was, of course, one of the reasons for her Rotoroa campaign. "The announcement [of Maruia] was sent me privately and I am afraid I was so bitter that I wrote across it 'an excellent example of shutting the stabledoor after the steed has gone'".¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Smith to Dir. Forests, 9 January 1931, Maruia file F 32/4/14, NA.

¹⁵⁵ Undated Note quoted by Phillips Turner to Under.Sec. Lands, 20 January 1931, Maruia file F 32/4/14, NA.

¹⁵⁶ Robertson to Wilkinson, 24 February 1937, Wilkinson to Under-Sec.Lands, 30 April 1939, Maruia file LS 4/580 now Reserves-Scenic-Maruia River Preservation Res 0922, DOC HO Wgtn.

¹⁵⁷ Moncrieff to Dickison, 2 October 1937, MS 11437:Box 8a, 4.

Despite her bitterness on that occasion, she was responsible for the creation of sanctuaries which have become increasingly valuable to their "wild" residents, and to New Zealand and overseas visitors. But just as she disappeared from ornithology, so too was she disconnected from her creations, apart from the two Moncrieff scenic reserves. Sanderson printed little localised material in *Forest and Bird*. He made no mention of the Lake Rotoroa and Maruia sanctuaries or Abel Tasman National Park although he congratulated her privately. Neither was she mentioned in the two articles published on Farewell Spit.¹⁵⁸ By 1950 the Under-Secretary of Internal Affairs, A.G.Harper, associated only J.R.Kirk with godwit protection.¹⁵⁹ Her name was omitted from national park publications and from information boards so that a younger generation of conservationists had no idea of her significance in the attaining of these sanctuaries.¹⁶⁰ While the question of her disappearance from the public record will be considered in the Conclusion, this chapter has shown that Moncrieff was one immigrant from Europe who transferred to New Zealand the Europeans' "rich sense of their natural and historical heritage" and was instrumental in the creation of considerable areas of "holy ground", to repeat J.O.C. Phillips' phrases.¹⁶¹ As a member of the Forest and Bird delegation in 1947 to the Commissioner of Forests on the reservation of Waipoua kauri forest, she used specific images of the sacred to stress heritage values. Quoting William Pember Reeves' line, "the sylvan temples which God builds but builds not twice", she said that in every country there was a page of history which belonged to the world, not only to that particular country. As Westminster Abbey belonged to the world as well as England, so too did the kauris belong to the world as well as New Zealand. To leave a chapel or two,

¹⁵⁸ *Forest and Bird*, J.R.Kirk, "God save the godwit", 41(August 1936) p.6; n.a, "Peace for godwits at last", 60(May 1941), p.3.

¹⁵⁹ Harper to Falla, 24 July 1950, Falla Papers 210B, MONZ.

¹⁶⁰ Hodge, *Park*, p.2; interviews with Craig Potton, Guy Salmon, Gwen Struik, Roger Bray, Frank Boyce and other Nelson conservationists, 2.

¹⁶¹ See Introduction.

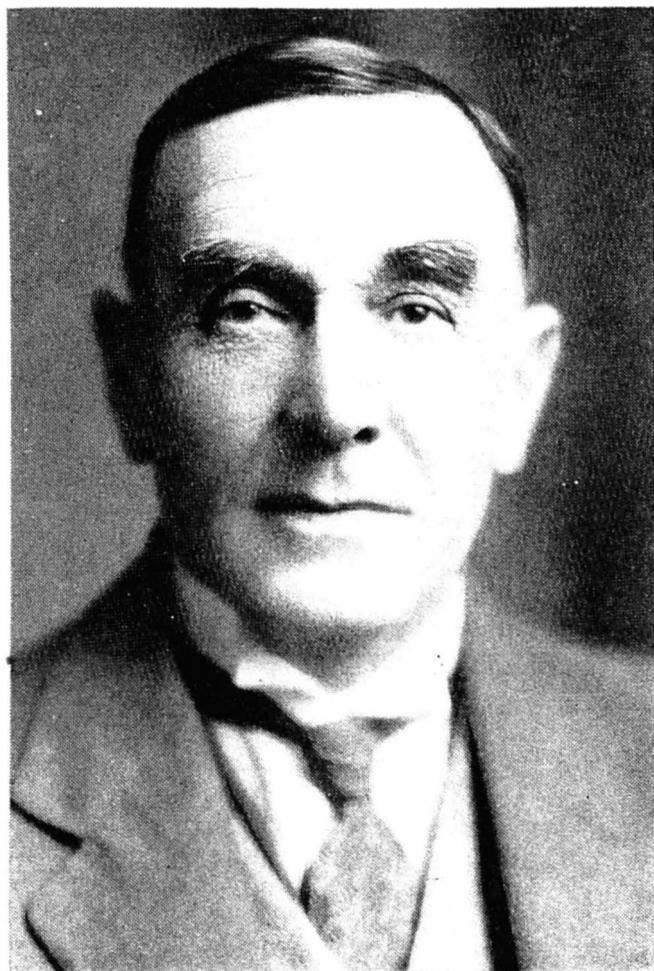
her metaphor for the small area originally proposed by the State Forest Service as a permanent reserve, of what was once a large cathedral, would be looked upon most unfavourably by the world.¹⁶²

Sharing an ethic of vitalism as well as links to her first mentor, J.G.Millais, with Sanderson who actively supported her campaigns, Moncrieff used the Forest and Bird objective of sanctuary creation in two ways. Sanctuaries were a means of protecting the indigenous but they also enabled her to insert vitalist, heritage and protection values into a society that normatively operated through values of the separation of species and the development of the natural world rather than its protection. Her campaigns and ongoing guardianship for the sanctuaries of Lake Rotoroa, Maruia, Farewell Spit, Abel Tasman National Park and Fifeshire Rock, in which she was assisted by some public servants, have shown that vigilance and perseverance were required to combat resistance from groups like the Nelson Acclimatization Society, poachers and shooters, local body politicians and other public servants who were accustomed to consider and use the wild as their own.

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¹⁶² Roche gives a detailed account of the Waipoua forest purchase and protection campaign, *Forestry*, pp.405-414. It was finally gazetted as a forest sanctuary in 1952. Reeve's poem "The passing of the forest", from which the sylvan temples line comes, became a motif for the campaign. It was used in one petition and in several issues of *Forest and Bird*, including the special issue on Waipoua, 84(May 1947).

Moncrieff to Dickison, 4 June 1947, MS 11437:Box 8c, 4. Moncrieff said she stayed behind after the delegation had gone to speak to the Commissioner because she felt the "historic attitude had not been stressed" by the delegation.



E.V. (Val) Sanderson.

The history of the Loder Cup; a review of the first twenty-five years (ed) G.A.R. Phillips
(n.p., 1960)

CHAPTER 6

A VOICE FOR NATURE; FOSTERING AN ETHIC OF TRUSTEESHIP

In the previous chapter we saw that Moncrieff's creation and guardianship of sanctuaries gained the permanent protection of particular places. However she was aware that protective legislation and sanctuary declarations were insufficient by themselves to insert conservation attitudes into mainstream life. This chapter will show her attempts to foster J.O.C.Phillips' complementary "knowledge and love of the land" to ensure a wider and more enduring sense of trusteeship, not only for the sanctuaries but for all the natural world. It looks at her involvement with both national and Nelson groups and her promotion of conservation education and ideals amongst the wider population. Her fostering of an ethic of trusteeship towards the indigenous, however, was much less successful than her creation of sanctuaries.

By the late 1920s in New Zealand, attitudes towards the indigenous ranged along a spectrum. In respect of birds, at one end of the spectrum collectors afforded species no protection; at the other Forest and Bird, as represented by E.V.Sanderson, offered absolute protection. In between were the Acclimatisation Societies' limited protection when the indigenous was not in conflict with the introduced; the discretionary protection of the Philosophical Societies and public museums; and a virtual absolute protection sought by Moncrieff and R.A.Falla, who was then still an amateur ornithologist lecturing at Auckland Teachers' Training College. In 1927, when Moncrieff was still orientated towards the field study of birds as well as their protection, she saw herself not quite aligned with Sanderson but,

speaking from a disinterested point of view, being neither a collector or desirous of obtaining any post and well off enough not to have to worry about money. Being above all things,

though a lover of N.Z, one who has seen something of bird life in other countries and therefore not belonging to any particular camp.¹

She very deliberately distanced herself from Sanderson's absolutism.

...our secretary is a bit too tactless in his ways. He seems to think all scientists are feckless and all politicians double dyed.

That was the reason why Falla and I went to the Govt with our suggestion and we very candidly confessed that we were not entirely in favour of our secretarys (sic) movements as we could see things from the eyes of the scientist as well as the general public.²

Their "suggestion" was the establishment of a national committee, representative of the different groups, which could give the government advice on indigenous birds.

There is of course the permanent staff of all the large museums, together with the Acclimatisation Socty, the R.A.O.U members, and the B.P.S. To all of which may be added some scattered bird lovers who want to assist to preserve their native birds....

Were we able to form a strong committee composed of representatives of all these societies, it would surely be a beneficial body to advance the interests of all bird matters in this country.

At present there appears to be a good deal of overlapping. For instance, the Acclimatisation Socty does not see eye to eye with the B.P.S, neither does the latters (sic) with the R.AO.U members, who are interested but not an organised society in N.Z.

If however all these societies could be linked up by having representatives on a central committee which would of course have representatives from the museums, I believe that the Govt would turn gladly to this committee for assistance. Instead of having one policy suggested by the B.P.S, another from the Acclimatisation Socty all of which may be denounced by a third party.

¹ Moncrieff to [J.A.] Thomson, 27 June 1927, Bird file general 9/0/0, MONZ.

² Moncrieff to [J.A.] Thomson, 22 July 1927, Bird file general 9/0/0, MONZ.

It seems to me a case of little birds in their nest must agree, otherwise when they fall out, the birds are not protected as they should be, and the govt feel they are badgered....³

These ideas grew out of a Forest and Bird proposal for an advisory committee, which Sanderson had advocated in an early issue of *Birds*, to unite disparate groups and government departments, each of which had responsibility for or an interest in some aspect of wildlife.⁴ Sanderson wanted to approach the Honourable R.F. Bolland, Minister of Internal Affairs, which administered the 1921-22 Animals Protection and Game Act. But when Bolland rejected Sanderson both as a member of the committee and of the delegation to propose it, Moncrieff and Falla broached the idea during a deputation.⁵ Their advisory committee was to include Forest and Bird and the museum ornithological scientists represented by her fellow RAOU member W.B.Oliver, because, Moncrieff wrote,

I consider that all N.Z.Museums should have as good a representative collection of skins as they can get. For besides other purposes a Museum should be a reference bureau where any genuine student can look up information at will....Once the museums have what they want (sic) no permits for private collectors.⁶

As for the Acclimatisation Society, the other body proposed for the committee, she must have supposed it could be restrained by the protection policies of the other three since this committee proposal occurred during her successful campaign for the Lake Rotoroa sanctuary. She had considered the New

³ Moncrieff to Thomson, 27 June 1927, Bird File General 9/0/0, MONZ. All abbreviations are hers; B.P.S. was the Bird Protection Society or Forest and Bird; the R.A.O.U. was the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union.

⁴ "Sanctuaries are the foundation of conservation", *Birds*, 8[1925], pp.11,12.

⁵ A report of the deputation on 18 May 1927, in which Falla was referred to as "Fowler", is in AP&G Act - Native birds file IA 1/47/25, NA.

For Bolland's rejection of Sanderson, see Sanderson to MacKenzie, 24 May [1927], Moncrieff to Sanderson, undated, MS Papers 0444:425, 1.

⁶ Moncrieff to Thomson, 22 July 1927, Bird file general 9/0/0, MONZ. This was also the gist of her letter to the Editor, *NEM*, 30 March 1926, p.6.

Zealand Institute, she told Thomson, because she approved of its conservation advocacy⁷ but in the end she excluded it. This may have been the result of a discussion she had with fellow members of the Nelson Philosophical Society, one of the constituent members of the Institute. She concluded that most of the scientists among them placed scientific experiment ahead of the welfare of the birds themselves⁸, a position at odds with her vitalist world-view. In addition, the NZI appears to have rejected an earlier proposal by Sanderson for a joint advisory group.⁹

Moncrieff's attempt to mediate the diverse viewpoints on indigenous birds through the mechanism of a national committee, was a failure; "the little birds in their nest", to use her metaphor, continued to disagree.¹⁰ The following year in 1928 both she and Falla attended a meeting, at which representatives of the New Zealand Forestry League¹¹, the Wellington

⁷ "...they are a splendid Socty (to which I belong.)"; Moncrieff to Thomson, 22 July 1927, ibid. Her reading of the Institute's *Transactions and Proceedings* and of writers like T.H.Potts and H.Guthrie-Smith would have informed her of the Institute's long involvement in conservation advocacy.

⁸ This related to the transfer of South Island species to the North Island sanctuary of Kapiti with consequences for possible hybridisation; (see below). "Most of [the scientists] think it would be such a jolly experiment"; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 14 June 1927, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

⁹ Asst. Sec.NZI to Sanderson, 29 May 1926, MS Papers 0444:425, 1.

¹⁰ Correspondence shows that Moncrieff also tried to mediate at a personal level between Sanderson and Falla; Moncrieff to Falla, 12 April [1926], MS Papers 2366:67, 3; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 15 March 1926, MS Papers 0444:192, 1. Her other interventions involved Sanderson and Thomson; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 2,9 August 1927, MS Papers 0444:192, 1; and Sanderson and L.O.H.Tripp, National President of the Acclimatisation Societies; Moncrieff-Sanderson correspondence between July 1929 and February 1930, MS Papers 0444:193, 1. Moncrieff tried, without success, to persuade Tripp to agree to a united control of wildlife, under the State Forest Service, to benefit indigenous forests; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 4 July 1929, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

In her desire for unity, Moncrieff was not above relating confidential information, with the request "tell no one"; Moncrieff to Falla, 12 April [1926], MS Papers 2366:67, 3; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 2 August [1927], MS Papers 0444:192, 1. This accords with "the Great Game" aspects of conservation control related in the previous chapter.

¹¹ The New Zealand Forestry League was founded in 1916 to advocate the preservation of indigenous forest both for permanent protection and sustained use. Some conservationists, like Sanderson and E.Phillips Turner, were members of both the Forestry League and Forest and Bird. The League continued until about 1950 although its heyday was the 1920s; L.E.Lochhead, "Preserving the brownies' portion: a history of voluntary nature

Acclimatisation Society and Forest and Bird, attempted to produce a cohesive wildlife policy.¹² That too, failed and it marked the end of Moncrieff's attempts to unify the disparate conservation voices at a national level.

Several events in the mid-1920s led her to participate in these discussions for a cooperative advisory group. The first involved the Whitney Expedition of the American Museum of Natural History which came to New Zealand in the summer of 1925-26 as part of a Pacific Ocean study of bird migration. The Department of Internal Affairs granted a permit to the Expedition's leader, Rollo Beck, to collect what Forest and Bird believed to be an excessive number of seabirds, including a number known to be very rare, from New Zealand's outlying islands. Moncrieff and Sanderson were incensed at the permitted quantity, by the possible violation of sanctuaries, and by the lack of a New Zealand official on board to prevent any illegal collection. They lobbied Bolland, who agreed that Oliver should accompany the expedition, but bad weather prevented his embarkation from Stewart Island. Therefore Moncrieff and Sanderson had no faith that the expedition would comply with the permit numbers. In addition, although Bolland agreed to stricter conditions and limited bird numbers for future international and New Zealand expeditions, they believed abuses would continue because evidence would be virtually impossible to procure when collecting occurred in remote places. Collecting, especially by an overseas museum, was quite unacceptable to them since they believed it could quickly lead to the extinction of rare species.¹³ However Oliver, in his Report as New Zealand Secretary of RAOU, described the Whitney expedition as the event of the year. While he related Forest and Bird's position, Oliver argued that the gaps in knowledge of New

conservation organisations in New Zealand 1888-1935", PhD thesis in Parks, Recreation and Tourism [now Human and Leisure Sciences], (Lincoln University, 1994), Chapter 9.

¹² Moncrieff reported the views of several participants in the Nelson Bush and Bird Society notes; *NEM*, 9 September 1929, p.7.

¹³ Copies of the correspondence between Sanderson and the Minister of Internal Affairs over the 1925-26 Whitney Expedition were published in *Birds*, 10[1926], pp.1-8; *NEM*, 1926, 6 January, p.3 and 29 March, p.2 for news reports of the expedition's activities; *NEM*, 1926, 24 March, p.6 for report of Johannes Andersen's condemnation and Moncrieff to Editor, 30 March, p.6.

Zealand seabirds required the collection of "skins" from each breeding colony. He suggested that "some quarters" (presumably he meant Sanderson and Moncrieff) failed to appreciate the aims of museums and the necessity of a good series of specimens for scientific research.¹⁴ At this time Moncrieff was not totally opposed to museums obtaining more for taxonomy but disputed their collection for international museums. She also disagreed with Oliver that the Whitney expedition was the event of the year "whether scientific or not". She thought the increase in saddlebacks and wekas should be celebrated.¹⁵

The second controversy was Thomson's scheme in 1927 to transfer South Island birds to the North Island sanctuary of Kapiti as a protectionist measure.¹⁶ While this had been done in 1915, John Myers, as a scientist and ecologist, criticised the repeat transfer because of the possibility of hybridisation, which could occur between the distinct species of each main island when they were brought together on Kapiti and before their evolutionary history and geographical distribution had been determined.¹⁷ Myers' opinion was accepted by Moncrieff¹⁸, Sanderson, Falla and Oliver. Bolland was asked to cancel the transfer. Although he refused and Kapiti's caretaker, A.S. Wilkinson, went to the Goulard Downs sanctuary in north-west Nelson to capture birds¹⁹, bad weather prevented it. Sanderson and Moncrieff also disapproved of Oliver's decision in 1929 to allow the transfer of bellbirds from

¹⁴ "New Zealand report", *Emu*, 26(1926-27), pp.182,183.

¹⁵ Moncrieff to Falla, 15 April [1927], MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

¹⁶ Memo for Minister Internal Affairs, 24 May 1927, AP&G Act - Native birds file IA 1/47/25, NA; Ross Galbreath, *Working for wildlife* (Wellington, 1993), p.15.

¹⁷ John G.Myers, "Amateur acclimatising", *Birds*, 9[1926], pp.9,10.

¹⁸ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 4 May 1927, MS Papers 0444:192, 1. "We should have a South Island sanctuary like Kapiti, say Resolution Island and put SI birds on that. But once we start mixing the birds up well it is rather hopeless." This is one of her few references to this South Island sanctuary; nor does she mention the conservation work undertaken by its first caretaker, Richard Henry (1845-1929), although she must have been aware of his activities through his writings for *TPNZI*; Susanne and John Hill, *Richard Henry of Resolution Island* (Dunedin, 1987); Robin Ormerod, "Henry, Richard Treacy", *DNZB* 2(1870-1900), (Wellington, 1993), p.210.

¹⁹ *NEM*, 1 April 1927, p.4.

Little Barrier to the Waipoua kauri forest. Even though this involved the same species, they believed it violated the status of a sanctuary and were critical when the transfer occurred in 1932 and the birds died.²⁰

Apart from the Whitney collecting expedition, Moncrieff and Sanderson were also exercised by the quantity of birds acquired for museum and private collections in New Zealand. They were particularly concerned about the influence E.F.Stead wielded with Internal Affairs' personnel and the ease with which he and other collectors were able to obtain permits for rare or common birds. "Mr Newton", wrote Moncrieff, "is openly in favour of Stead thinks him too wonderful (sic) and also most naively said that Mr O Connor [another collector] was an admirable young man as he not only collected for himself but for the govt."²¹ An Internal Affairs' file²² confirms her belief that in the 1920s and early 1930s Stead applied for and received many permits to take birds "for scientific purposes" and his own collection. He was also requested by Internal Affairs to supply birds for the Dominion Museum's collection. In a 1935 letter Stead also confirmed the conservationists' belief that he took eggs beyond the permit limit. Stead justified his actions by explaining that the eggs had fallen from nests and therefore were unlikely to hatch; and that he consistently advocated bird protection and public education about birds through enlarged collections at public museums.²³ When J.W.A.Heenan became the Under-Secretary in 1935, Stead's applications were declined. Although Sanderson's letters confirm Forest and Bird lobbying, Heenan denied any pressure.

²⁰ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 11 July 1932, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

Oliver to Under-Sec. IA, 25 June 1929, AP&G Act - Native birds file IA 1/47/25, NA. The transfer was the idea of the Auckland naturalist, A.T.Pycroft; correspondence Pycroft, Dom.Museum and IA, between 23 September 1927 and 27 August 1931, Falla Papers 210B, MONZ.

²¹ Moncrieff to Thomson, 22 July 1927, Bird file general 9/0/0, MONZ. G.P.Newton was then Assistant Under-Secretary to the Minister of Internal Affairs.

²² Petrels, permit to take E.F.Stead file IA 1/47/1, NA.

²³ Stead to Heenan, 10 December 1935, Petrels file IA 1/47/1, NA. For Moncrieff's suspicion that Stead took more eggs and birds than permitted, see for example, Moncrieff to Sanderson, 11 July 1932, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

It is due to my own conviction that one live bird in the bush is worth two in the Museum. There is a limit to collecting particularly when it runs to every living variation from the normal. Mr Stead himself seems to me to be himself in danger of becoming purely a collector with all the collector's guile and casuistry in crowning himself with a halo of scientific interest.²⁴

Given these disputes and those involved, there are ironies in later decades when a second Whitney expedition was proposed, and in the creation of unified advisory bodies. In 1939 Falla defended another proposed Whitney expedition, of which Sanderson was again suspicious despite the checks established after the 1926 expedition.²⁵ Falla was also involved in the establishment of the 1948 Native Bird Preservation Committee, a unified body similar to the proposal he and Moncrieff made twenty years earlier.²⁶ By then Director of the Dominion Museum and a friend of Stead's since 1937 when he transferred to the Canterbury Museum, Falla suggested Stead as a member whose advice "would be extremely useful on the practical side of conservation".²⁷ Both Stead and R.H.D.Stidolph, who was also on the 1948 Committee, in expressing concern that R.H.Carter, the Secretary of Forest and Bird, was also to be a member, recounted tales of when its previous Secretary, Sanderson, had successfully thwarted their proposals. Stidolph's tone was somewhat bitter. "I might add that I, too, have had the unfortunate experience in the past of having my efforts nullified by [Sanderson] and it would be pertinent to the whole question to know what attitude the [Forest and Bird]

²⁴ Heenan's note on memorandum Bennett to Heenan, 12 January 1937, Petrels file IA 1/47/1, NA.

²⁵ For Falla's position, *NEM*, 13 January 1939, p.8; for Sanderson's response, 17 January 1939, p.4.

²⁶ This was renamed the Fauna Protection Advisory Council in 1955 by the Wildlife Service; Galbreath, *Wildlife*, pp.84,86. See Galbreath, pp.31-34 for other initiatives including the Forestry League proposal for a Wild Life Council in November 1930 and RSNZ Standing Committee on Wild Life Control in 1934; pp.137-141 for initiatives between 1940 and 1960.

²⁷ Falla to Under-Sec. IA, 9 June 1948, AP&G Act - Birds (Protected) file IA 1/47/91/1/Pt 1, NA.

Society now adopts".²⁸ While Forest and Bird proved less absolutist under Carter than under Sanderson, Moncrieff herself gradually abandoned her virtual protection position for Sanderson's outright protectionism as previous chapters have shown.

The other groups Moncrieff founded or supported were located in Nelson province.²⁹ Her first venture in 1924 was the Nelson Rock Garden Society, which sought to combine conservation objectives with the development of a community amenity, by establishing a public rock garden in Nelson. Within a year, under the direction of Alfred Wilkinson, the Society established the rocks and their covering alpine plants on a Church Hill site donated by the Nelson City Council. The Nelson Progress League's booklet in 1925, *Sunny Nelson*, published a photograph of it when newly completed.³⁰ The Rock Garden Society was formed at the same time as Moncrieff was organising Nelson's Girl Guides. In the publicity she generated for each group, she demonstrated her flair for creating public interest; the *Nelson Evening Mail* in the latter half of 1924 published numerous items about the progress of both. Moncrieff must also have worked hard in other cities to gather support for the Rock Garden Society as it had about one hundred members throughout New Zealand. Its Patron, Lady Alice Ferguson, wife of the Governor-General, visited it in 1928 as did Dr A.W.Hill, Director of the Royal Botanic Garden at

²⁸ Stidolph to Under-Sec. IA, 8 October 1948; Stead to Harper, 13 September 1948, AP&G Act - Birds (Protected) file IA 1/47/91/1 Pt 1, NA.

²⁹ She supported and encouraged the formation of a Forest and Bird branch in Takaka in Golden Bay in 1935 (*NEM*, 5 July 1935, p.8) but this had ceased functioning by 1939; Sanderson to Oliver, 13 July 1937, F&B Prot.Socot.Dominion Museum file 6/7/0, MONZ; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 16 April 1939, MS Papers 0444:194, 1.

Dalmer does not mention it but would have been Forest and Bird's second or third branch, after Dunedin in May 1930 and Southland "shortly after"; N.E.Dalmer, *Birds, forests and natural features of New Zealand* (Levin, 1983), p.14.

³⁰ *Sunny Nelson* 3rd ed.(Nelson, 1925), p.34. Wilkinson (1862-1938) was a retailer from Melbourne who had retired to Nelson; Obituary, *NEM*, 17 May 1938, p.6.

Kew³¹, who was accompanied by members Leonard Cockayne and E. Phillips Turner.

Apart from community amenity aims, the Society was motivated by the conservation of alpine plants. For some years this had been a concern of F.G.Gibbs and he collected and supplied the Society with specimens.³² There is a paradox in such collecting. If it was practised on a large scale it could have provoked Forest and Bird criticism, as did the collecting of tree ferns for gala decorations³³, although perhaps a distinction can be made between mere decoration and useful conservation. Theoretically there was a fine line between allowing plants to remain in their natural habitat and perhaps be destroyed, or removing and "saving" them when they might still die through transportation or neglect. It paralleled later arguments on captive breeding, a procedure which, as we know, Moncrieff opposed. With the rock garden alpines, Moncrieff evidently approved of their collection because she publicised Gibbs' work, but in reality most of the plants were bought or donated. The Society's other conservation effort involved the attempted purchase of Elisabeth Gully bush. Not only was this campaign unsuccessful but the Rock Garden itself fell into disrepair after a succession of events from the end of 1928.³⁴

³¹ Hill had been invited to New Zealand by the Royal Institute of Horticulture to discuss the establishment of a National Botanic Garden. See M. Stopdijk, "Between two acts. An investigation into attitudes and lobbying in New Zealand's national parks movement", MA thesis in History (University of Canterbury, 1988), p.28.

³² NEM, 1 December 1924, p.3. Gibbs, worried that New Zealand native alpine plants would disappear through fire, sheep and rabbit grazing, had collected and distributed specimens to horticulturalists throughout the country.

³³ For example, Leo Fanning, "Nature - and man" NEM, 20 May 1933, p.10. Also, Lochhead, pp.91,100 for criticism of fern use in Dunedin between the 1880s and 1915; David Allen, "Tastes and crazes", in *Cultures of natural history*, (eds) N.Jardine, J.A.Secord and E.C.Spary (Cambridge, 1996), pp.400-404.

³⁴ See NEM, especially 17 June 1924, p.3; 5 September 1925, p.4; 27 January 1928, p.4; 31 May 1928, p.4. Wilkinson fell ill and later moved to Wellington where he established the New Zealand Alpine and Rock Garden Society with a National Rock Garden in Lower Hutt in 1929. In 1937 some members split off to form the Native Plant Preservation Society. In Nelson, neither the City Council nor the Society, which had ceased to function, were able to devise a maintenance programme and it gradually became overgrown; NEM, 12 January 1929, p.5; 4 April 1930, pp.7,5; 11 September 1931, p.8; and 22 August 1938, p.3.

The Nelson Rock Garden Society, in combining the goals of conservation and the establishment or enhancement of a public amenity, continued the work of the earliest nature conservation group, the Dunedin and Suburban Reserves Conservation Society. It too, combined both goals. But whereas the Dunedin group may have successfully combined its objectives in the 1890s as L.E. Lochhead concludes³⁵, the Rock Garden Society failed to flourish, hardly getting off the ground as it were before it was abandoned. Nevertheless as a means of incorporating within the conservation fold local body councillors and businesspeople who might otherwise be uninterested in forest or bird protection, it demonstrated Moncrieff's fostering of a trustee ethic amongst the wider community.

The failure of the Rock Garden Society to achieve conservation outcomes may have been one factor in her initiative to form the Nelson Bush and Bird Society in 1928 but this also derived from a reorganisation within Forest and Bird itself. Although it did not have branches in 1927, its executive decided that regional representatives, like Moncrieff, could form committees to help them.³⁶ But the implication in the original name of the society, "The Native Bird Protection Society", that members were interested only in birds, gave Moncrieff pause for thought. Several people had suggested to her, she told Sanderson, that trees or forest should be added in the title to include those interested in bush preservation. While he and she knew "the two go hand in hand", others argued that it did not appear so.³⁷ She thought that if "you enrolled say 100 members in each town", a name change would be worthwhile.³⁸ This was another occasion when Sanderson gave a sharp rejoinder, implying that the Society's name was linked to its finances. "When you make such suggestions as altering a name it is feared you have scarcely

³⁵ Lochhead, p.100.

³⁶ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 13 August 1927, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

³⁷ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 27 December 1927, MS Papers 0444:192, 1. Evidently Moncrieff had discussed the name and its implications with Pycroft and W.M.Fraser during their visit to Taranga Island in early December that year.

³⁸ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 22 February 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

given the matter a thorough threshing out. There are questions of bequests involved...£10,000 promised....We refused to change our name for that of another Society sometime back for £100 promised". He added that the Society intended to advocate forest preservation as far as it was allied to birds when they received the balance of funds donated by "the defunct New Zealand Flora and Fauna Society."³⁹ The profits from an Art Union in 1931 provided Forest and Bird with a trust fund of over £13,000 and perhaps permitted it to better reflect its beliefs in its name.⁴⁰ But in the meantime, instead of a Bird Protection Committee, Moncrieff publicised her holistic attitude in the formation of the Nelson Bush and Bird Society.⁴¹

There is much extant material about its formation and first few months of operation for Moncrieff was again assiduous in generating publicity for the society and its objectives.⁴² She first organised a public meeting through the Nelson Women's Club to explain her objectives and discuss its formation. Then two months later, in a parallel to her early publicity for Forest and Bird in 1925, she organised a lecture and lantern slides by Oliver, which was chaired by Nelson's Member of Parliament H. Atmore, to inaugurate Bush and

³⁹ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 17 February 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1. Lochhead correctly speculates that the Flora and Fauna Society was the first Forest and Bird Protection Society since she could find no record of a group by this name. Lochhead, pp. 273,274. A newspaper item in 1939 records the transfer of funds of about £100, from the original New Zealand Forest and Bird Protection Society "whose active life ended about twenty years ago" to Forest and Bird, through a member of both; *NEM*, 22 December 1939, p.4.

⁴⁰ The sum of £13,514 was invested as the Art Union profit with the Public Trust. It provided an initial income of about £400 in interest but this was reduced in 1933 in the depression by the compulsory conversion of Government securities in which trust funds were invested. By 1938, the investment gave the Society an income of about £600 per year; *NEM*, 11 November 1931, p.4; 2 November 1933, p.2; 18 June 1938, p.15. Its government grant of £50 was withdrawn in 1931; *NEM*, 13 July 1931, p.4; Lochhead, Footnote 81, p.281.

⁴¹ Moncrieff's letters and newspaper reports refer to either the "Nelson Bush and Bird Society" or the "Nelson Bush and Bird Preservation Society". While the latter is more appropriate given Moncrieff's beliefs, I have used the former since this is its name in the two earliest newspaper reports; *NEM*, 23 April 1928, p.2 and 26 May 1928, p.2. An official Nelson branch of Forest and Bird was formed in 1958; Dalmer, p.16.

⁴² Primary sources include the Moncrieff-Sanderson correspondence in Forest and Bird Archives MS Papers 0444:192 and the *Nelson Evening Mail* between April and December 1928.

Bird and gather more support.⁴³ Although Moncrieff fostered conservation attitudes under the Bush and Bird banner until 1959 through a Nature Diary competition, there is nothing to suggest it continued to function as a formal group after 1939. Evidence for this is contained in a letter in 1946, after Sanderson's death, when Forest and Bird sought to establish regional "vigilance committees". Although Moncrieff's wording is slightly ambiguous, by "usual bush and bird committee" she probably meant the informal group of conservationists she gathered together to judge the Nature Diaries.

...[I] would gladly form a vigilance committee if only there were enough public spirited folks to set about it. But we seem to be here just dead. They simply dont take any interest....I am going to set up my usual bush and bird committee this year, but between you and me I was glad to close the last one I had as they really did not take a genuine interest (sic) merely let me run things....⁴⁴

When the Bush and Bird Society was first formed Moncrieff had great hopes for its success because of the enthusiasm and diversity of its members. David Miller, the Cawthron Institute chief entomologist, became its President, while its committee included A.F.Waters and C.M.Smith from Lands and the Forest Service respectively, W.Locke a former Mayor of Nelson, F.V.Knapp an educationalist, a local bank manager, and Atmore.⁴⁵ The committee of the Women's Section, whose work will be further discussed in Chapter Eight, included Clara Mills, Principal of Nelson Girls' College, Emily Earle whose husband edited the *Nelson Evening Mail*, and Emily Milner whose husband managed Nelson's leading factory, Kirkpatrick's jams and jellies. Moncrieff perceived it as a local society, affiliated to both Forest and Bird and the New

⁴³ *NEM*, 1928, 9 June p.12 for publicity; an account of Oliver's lecture and photographs on the flora, fauna and scenery of New Zealand's sub-antarctic islands, 18 June p.3.

⁴⁴ Moncrieff to Henderson, 8 March 1946, MS Papers 0444:197, 1. The diaries are discussed below.

⁴⁵ Moncrieff gave Sanderson a short summary of the strengths, as she saw them, of each of these committee members; 27 July 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

Zealand Forestry League, and composed of activists in a range of Nelson city and provincial affairs, as well as those with conservation ideals.

By that time, as Lochhead, Stopdijk and others have shown, there were numbers of New Zealanders who supported the conservation of endangered species, island sanctuaries, and forest remnants. There were also others who promoted the development of natural areas into parks and the beautification of public open spaces. But Moncrieff attempted the next step. The diversity of her committees shows her awareness that, unless conservation philosophy was embedded permanently into planning policies and into the public mind, any conservation "gains" in terms of areas reserved or species protected could be lost. Even then, as the demise of the Rock Garden Society demonstrated, conservation outcomes did not necessarily prevail. Moncrieff devised wider-ranging strategies for Bush and Bird, hoping "to make the society work harmoniously"⁴⁶ to insert conservation practice into public policy.

Sanderson was supportive and offered assistance. He thought a local society might produce more interest in bird matters since he believed people to be very parochial in New Zealand but warned, "If I may offer you advice after my own experience it is that progress step by step is the game. Do not try to do too much or you will defeat yourself."⁴⁷ As she was to find with Abel Tasman National Park, the incorporation of local businessmen and politicians could be problematic. While they were useful in supporting the formation of the Park, in its subsequent administration they were more enthusiastic over its revenue potential than conservation. But her inclusive approach in 1928 was far-sighted for, as Phillips was to argue some fifty years later, "Those people who initiate economic growth in this country must not only take it for granted that certain elements of the environment have to be protected; their very knowledge and love of the land should inspire their development ideas in the first place."⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 11 April 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

⁴⁷ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 14 April and 3 May 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

⁴⁸ J.O.C. Phillips, "Paradise lost...again", *Waikato Environment*, 4,5[1982], p.21.

Such objectives were among those Moncrieff enumerated at the founding public meeting of Bush and Bird in her speech fashioned around forest conservation.⁴⁹ After opening with a summary of conservation efforts in the past by the New Zealand Institute, the first Forest and Bird Society and its successor, she gave reasons to illustrate why conservation of remaining forested areas had become necessary, examples of current development practice which continued to threaten it, and an outline of Bush and Bird's programme. One issue was soil erosion, a subject of growing concern to conservationists and within government, if not yet a public concern.⁵⁰ Because the "best land in the Dominion" was by then cultivated, she said, forest was better left on poor hillside land which would never yield good returns, than burnt and felled. Once such land was cleared it no longer absorbed the rainfall, which then, as wild torrents, created fissures in the hillsides leading to slips and flooding. These created costs, not only by carrying away good soil, but in the expense for repairs to bridges and roads. Yet lessees of Crown Land were required to "improve" their land, usually by burning and felling timber, each year. She supported these statements with extracts from reports by the Conservator of State Forests and the Engineer-in-chief of the Department of Public Works. Forested areas also had aesthetic and recreational-tourism values as national parks and reserves, as well as being a habitat for indigenous birds. They had great beauty, were satisfying to the eye, and an antidote to tired nerves. Yet the reserved areas were not "safe". They could be "transferred" to another land classification by proclamation or subverted by the release of introduced species.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Printed as "A tale of woe", *NEM*, 23 April 1928, p.2.

⁵⁰ The topic of soil erosion and conservation will form part of the next chapter which discusses Moncrieff's concern and advocacy for the "good health" of the wider environment. Erosion was an issue central to government and people because the "opening up of new lands" for family farms was an approved historic ideology. Any change to such an ideology inevitably lead to questions of national identity, population, and how scientific and technological endeavour might overcome perceived problems and deficiencies in the natural world, which hindered New Zealand's "progress and development".

⁵¹ Reversions could occur when gold was found in a reserve or because budgets were inadequate to sustain maintenance and new creations; M.M.Roche, "The origins and evolution of scenic reserves", MA thesis in Geography (University of Canterbury, 1979), pp.96,105.

At a national level, Moncrieff declared, the solution lay in a central committee to amalgamate the many departments involved with their management. At the local Nelson level the Bush and Bird committee intended to work in two ways. The first was to prevent such occurrences as the loss of Elisabeth Gully coastal bush which, she said in missionary mode, was lost "owing to its being nobody's business to save it." The second was to insert a conservation consciousness, through both the negative form of public censure - "People who left broken bottles and paper about should be treated like persons who cheated at cards" - and the positive, by encouraging women to train their children to respect and study nature.

Apart from the climatic and sustainable use benefits of forest retention, Moncrieff's aesthetic appreciation of the forest contrasts starkly with the "sinister quality" which M.H.Holcroft, a leading New Zealand writer, encountered in Westland's rain forest at much the same time.

It can be beautiful from a distance, when the sun comes flashing down a wall of green and the river voices break through the stillness. But if you stand alone in a trackless glen, hearing no sound save the wood pigeons high up on the limestone bluffs, or a tui picking out his notes from an unseen branch, the twilight seems to creep almost audibly among the thickets....Perhaps it is merely an emptiness....But even that is something to be feared.⁵²

Upon further reflection Holcroft considered that the root of evil lay in the forest's "wild profusion" and "green chaos". "Disorder is an attribute of evil. In the presence of life which spills over in precocious and uncontrolled growth the mind feels alien and confusing pressures."⁵³ This is the antithesis of Moncrieff's delight in the lowland forest, comprising trees of "lovely liquid

At this time, paralleling the shags and trout at Lake Rotoroa, the continued introduction of heather and grouse to make Tongariro National Park a "gamesman's paradise" and the deliberate clearance of native tussock there, was an issue for conservationists, which Moncrieff used as an example in her speech; Stopdijk, pp.25-28.

⁵² M.H.Holcroft, *Discovered isles - a trilogy* (Christchurch, 1950), pp.25,26.

⁵³ Holcroft, p.26.

names: mairi, matai, rimu, totara and kahikatea" as she called them elsewhere⁵⁴, but it partly explains the problems of securing an ethic of trusteeship towards the natural world. Another part-explanation can be found in the writing of Robin Hyde, a leading New Zealand novelist of the 1930s. In *The godwits fly*, a semi-autobiographical novel to which Moncrieff alluded in a talk⁵⁵, Hyde wrote of the Arbor Day native tree planting and of singing about the tui as unreal and long-gone for city children.

It was a lie to say that bird-of-my-native-land and the thin trees stuck in holes in the playground were sacred and beautiful, half as sacred and beautiful as the thin, clear flame of the English trees....

Something there had been, something delicate, wild and far away. But it was shut out behind the doors of yesterday, lost beyond the hills, and sticking a dead twig of it into a hole in the playground, or a rotten poem in the school journal, only made it sickly and unreal....

You were English and not English....⁵⁶

What was more real was the godwits' northerly migration, a metaphor for the flight of young New Zealanders to England whose nature and culture had more reality for them, Hyde is suggesting, than the land of their birth. This split-identification between New Zealand and England was also likely to have made the intangible, unquantifiable amelioration of public attitudes unsuccessful, at least in the decades of this thesis, 1920 to 1950. Despite the longevity of one of the programmes, the children's Nature Diary competition, its influence on the participants is uncertain. Nor does the Bush and Bird Society appear to have influenced commercial and industrial planning in Nelson to any degree. Perhaps Holcroft's perception prevailed, an attitude which would then permit the forests' destruction and conversion to "goodly order". The psychological

⁵⁴ P  r  ne Moncrieff, *People came later* [Nelson, 1965], p.126.

⁵⁵ "The role of birds in nature", (undated), p.3 although Moncrieff called the book *Where godwits fly*. Moncrieff's point was the importance of nature study in schools. Hyde (*a nom de plume* for Iris Wilkinson) had not seen godwits but had heard about them at school; MS Papers 5642:12, WTU.

⁵⁶ Robin Hyde, *The godwits fly* (Auckland, 1993, orig.pub.1938), pp.32-34.

distance, in sylvan terms, between his "evil" and Moncrieff's "Eden" may have been too great to be reduced at that time, especially if self-identification lay partly with English woods and birds. Certainly Moncrieff's own words at the time attest her failure to insert conservationist values.

The way in which this second aim, the amelioration of attitudes, was tackled in Nelson was partly by working on specific conservation projects with local body leaders. Bush and Bird was successful in obtaining minor victories, for example, the City Council's consent to prevent the use of fronds of nikau palms and tree ferns for street decorations on civic occasions. The Society believed that indiscriminate cutting would prevent regeneration as well as destroying the plants and others nearby in the process.⁵⁷

Another partnership concerned Arbor Day. The planting of trees on Arbor Day had been instituted in New Zealand through the advocacy of Alexander Bathgate in 1892⁵⁸, but gradually ceased to be practised until Elizabeth May Gilmer⁵⁹ revived it in 1934. It was gazetted for the first Wednesday of August each year.⁶⁰ An article in *Forest and Bird* recommended planting native trees obtained either from a reliable nursery or hardened off seedlings. Sanderson is likely to have written it for, in giving planting instructions, he alluded to the essential similarity of plants and people. "Plants are not to be likened to fencing posts....Plants are live things like ourselves,

⁵⁷ NEM, 10 July 1931, p.7. Presumably in Nelson, Denis Glover's line from his poem "Centennial" did not apply: "And pungas drooping from the verandahs". Moncrieff would have considered that in itself a "failure"; *Penguin book of New Zealand verse*, (ed) Allen Curnow (Auckland, 1966, orig. ed.1960), p.222.

⁵⁸ Lochhead, p.94. Bathgate, a barrister and solicitor and company director, was the founder of the Dunedin and Suburban Reserves Conservation Society. However Galbreath notes that it was first copied in New Zealand in Greymouth in 1890 after it began in the American state of Nebraska in 1872, when children in particular, were encouraged to plant trees for their aesthetic value; Ross Galbreath, "Colonisation, science and conservation: the development of colonial attitudes toward the native life of New Zealand with particular reference to the career of the colonial scientist Walter Lawry Buller (1838-1906)", PhD thesis in History (University of Waikato,1989), p.383.

⁵⁹ See Chapter 8.

⁶⁰ *New Zealand Gazette*, 2(7 June 1934), p.1717. Local bodies were requested by Internal Affairs to organise suitable celebrations because of the national importance of tree planting.

and when planted they have undergone a very severe operation. Therefore for a fortnight or so they will require nursing care."⁶¹ For many years Moncrieff was on the Nelson Arbor Day committee which included a city councillor, city council officers, teachers and several other conservationists. They organised annual educational programmes for school children and plantings of both indigenous and introduced trees throughout the city and within school grounds. In 1939-40 they participated in a large planting programme to celebrate New Zealand's centenary.⁶² The *Nelson Evening Mail* supported this with an editorial and a supplement on trees on Arbor Day 1939. The supplement, well illustrated with photographs, included a diverse range of articles about trees including Sanderson's Te Kohanga plantings, tree paintings, exotics and possum damage in New Zealand and thoughts by the American transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson. Both the editorial and the supplement praised the conservation work of Gibbs; "he will receive the thanks of the community."⁶³ But once again Moncrieff was disconnected from public recognition of her involvement in conservation activities. Despite her articles, practical work and advocacy for forest as well as bird and soil conservation, which were publicised under her own name, neither the editorial nor the

⁶¹ "Arbor or Tree day", *Forest and Bird*, 33(June 1934), p.3. However Sanderson seems to have disapproved of both its nomenclature and conceptualisation. A Forest and Bird newspaper comment noted that it was "a thoughtless adoption" of a foreign American word instead of an English one; that it should be Tree Day in which people were encouraged to "grow" not merely "plant" a tree, as "Tree mindedness must be for more than a day"; *NEM*, 13 August 1935, p.12.

⁶² Apart from Arbor Day and continuing indigenous forest conservation measures related to the extermination of deer and possums, the government promoted tree planting in 1936-37. At the suggestion of the Governor-General, the Right Honourable Viscount Galway, who was particularly interested in the beautification of highways, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Honourable W.E.Parry, hosted the Dominion Bush Preservation and Amenity Planting Conference in April 1937. It was attended by 68 organisations including Forest and Bird, and individuals like H.Guthrie-Smith and L.W.McCaskill; Roche, "Origins", p.115. Although its agenda included damage-limitation in scenic reserves, Roche believed its main effect was improvements to roadside planting (p.116) as Galway had desired. The proceedings of the conference are in Native Bush Preservation Conference file IA 165/2 Pts 1-3, NA. Moncrieff was not invited.

⁶³ *NEM*, 1 August 1939, p.6 for the editorial, pp.12-15 for the supplement; 20 July 1939, p.12 for a report on Nelson's Arbor Day committee meeting and its planned activities that year. For the national programme see Leo Fanning's column "Nature - and Man", *NEM*, 29 July 1939, p.15.

supplement mentioned her. Nor had she been mentioned in a supplement on Nelson a decade earlier, although the "very good work" of the Bush and Bird Society was acknowledged.⁶⁴

Like other conservation societies in New Zealand and overseas, Bush and Bird prepared Nature Notes for the local paper. Although they were usually unattributed their style points to Moncrieff, as Secretary, as the author and she spoke of writing for the *Nelson Evening Mail* in her 1978 radio interview.⁶⁵ In the Notes, she provided information about protected birds, general information about the natural world, conservation news from New Zealand and overseas, and current books and ideas. Columns could be diverse or specific. The Notes on 13 July 1931 contained items on *The timber trees of New Zealand* by Cockayne and Phillips Turner as a guide to identification; recent additions to the Nelson Institute library including *Penguin island* by Cherry Kearton and *Yesterdays in Maoriland* by Andreas Reischek; replacements to the Society's committee for members who had died or retired; Richard St Barbe Baker's organisation Men of the Trees; and a recommendation to plant native trees in home gardens as bird food since exotics were to be planted commercially.⁶⁶ In contrast, the Bush and Bird Notes on 30 May 1934 compared bird protection by the Audubon Society in

⁶⁴ NEM, 4 October 1930, p.17.

⁶⁵ "I also wrote regular notes for the *Evening Mail* (sic)"; Moncrieff, Radio NZ tape. One column, on 25 August 1928, p.2, had a different, less personal style, and perhaps was written by Miller as President or Smith, the Conservator of Forests, since it concerned forest ecology.

⁶⁶ NEM, 13 July 1931, p.8.

Moncrieff must have meant *The trees of New Zealand* by L.Cockayne and E.Phillips Turner (Wellington, 1928), a manual with descriptive notes and photographs designed for delegates to the Third British Empire Forestry conference held in New Zealand in 1928. A.G.Bagnall (ed), wrote that it "proved immensely popular with the general public"; *New Zealand national bibliography to year 1960*, 3(1890-1960), (Wellington, 1972), p.265.

Cherry and Richard Kearton were pioneering nature photographers; their 1895 *British birds' nests* was the first bird book illustrated with photographs all taken in the wild; Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and collectors* (Cambridge, 1996), p.130. Moncrieff described Kearton's penguin photographs as "delightful".

The Men of the Trees organisation was founded in 1922 to encourage the British to plant trees but later it encouraged reafforestation in desert areas of the world.

America with that of Forest and Bird in New Zealand.⁶⁷ Often the Notes contained answers to nature questions received. So while the Bush and Bird Notes were similar to other nature columns, in their combination of national and international conservation issues⁶⁸, they also provided a local focus and feedback. They were a mechanism both for the Society to foster conservation in Nelson and for local people to participate in its practice. Moncrieff also developed informal networks among those interested in birds and conservation and gained a reputation as a healer of wounded birds.⁶⁹

It would be tempting to imagine that Moncrieff's childhood natural history prize derived from the essay competition organised by Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and that, in initiating the Nature Diary, she was passing on something from her own childhood. But she herself said that the idea first occurred to her when she read of such a competition in an English newspaper.⁷⁰ Moncrieff extended the idea from simply a competition to stimulate children's interest in the natural world to one which she hoped would have wider appeal. By annually reviewing all the children's entries in a newspaper article she intended to interest parents and the general public, not only in the children's work, but also in the ethic and purpose behind it. Her

⁶⁷ NEM, 30 May 1934, p.7. She described its namesake, the eighteenth century ornithologist and painter John Audubon, and its conservation work in Oregon from which, she said, she had received a newsletter.

⁶⁸ For example, James Drummond's and Fanning's nationally syndicated columns, Pycroft in *The Auckland Star* in the 1920s and 1930s; Stidolph in Wellington's *Evening Post* from the 1920s.

⁶⁹ For example, Haggitt to Moncrieff, 20 January 1940, MS Papers 0444:194, 1; Moncrieff to Grooby, 19 March [1950s], 2; and many letters in Moncrieff, Pérrine, Correspondence, MS Papers 5642:01-05, WTU.

⁷⁰ All information on the establishment of what became known as the Nature Diary competition is found in the following correspondence: Moncrieff to Sanderson, 9 August 1927, MS Papers 0444:192; Moncrieff to Carter, 15 November 1948, MS Papers 0444:197, 1; Moncrieff to Harper, 12 February 1954, Fifeshire rock sanctuary file IA 1/52/237, NA; Moncrieff to Falla, [19 May 1928], MS Papers 2366:67, 3. Her annual reviews were published between January and March in the *Nelson Evening Mail*.

idea went through several transformations before it settled into a diary form, which continued from 1928 until 1958.⁷¹

The competition began when Moncrieff offered to organise for Forest and Bird a national competition like that in England. When Sanderson agreed, she arranged for the essay competition to be publicised through schools and for conservation-minded individuals and women's clubs to provide prizes and certificates, while Forest and Bird donated the national prize. Sanderson asked her to judge them. In this form, she organised it for two years in 1928 and 1929. But, excluding Nelson province, it drew only 15 entries the second year. The Forest and Bird executive considered it too expensive and decided to withdraw nationally, suggesting that Moncrieff "see what can be done in your district."⁷² Few other conservationists, women's clubs or Education Boards organised it in their provinces.⁷³ Moncrieff later suggested that the nature of the competition may not have appealed to most educational authorities, for it was "no ordinary competition as judged by school-teachers for neatness, spelling and style. We look for the best observation and love of Nature. This competition heightens the senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, smell and touch.

⁷¹ The Diary competition appears to have concluded in 1958. There was no review of 1959 diaries in January or February of 1960 in the *NEM*, although there was no review in 1958 either, indicating that the diaries had not been organised in 1957. In 1955 she told Carter that the diaries were not plentiful; Moncrieff to Carter, 14 March 1955, MS Papers 0444:197, 1. That is evidenced from 1956 by shorter reviews which contained more of Moncrieff's own comments than previously and far fewer observations from individual children; *NEM* 1958, 11,12 February, pp.5,10; 1959, 17 February, p.4. However Dalmer notes an item in *Forest and Bird* (November 1970) which announced that the Rockville School in Golden Bay won the 40th competition for the Moncrieff Shield for Nature Study; p.130. Perhaps that school had continued the competition internally or perhaps a special commemorative competition was organised.

⁷² Sanderson to Moncrieff, 2 November 1929, MS Papers 0444:193, 1. Sanderson wrote that the committee was looking into other ways of reaching individual children. He may have meant the *Three Castles book of New Zealand birds* which was published in January 1930. An advertisement for Three Castles cigarettes asked readers to send in 175 cigarette cards to receive this book of coloured pictures approved of by Forest and Bird. *NEM*, 15 January 1930, p.16.

The prize-winning essay, "Redbills", was published in *Birds*, 15(July 1928), pp.22,23.

⁷³ In her letter to Carter, Moncrieff mentioned a competition in Hawkes Bay, and that "a fine young enthusiast started something similar at the Training College before the War"; Moncrieff to Carter, 24 November 1948, MS Papers 0444:197, 1. This may have been Lance McCaskill's "bush and bird" lectures and excursions, mentioned by Lochhead, p.283.

We are out to make the children love their natural beauty". A "high-up educational authority", she continued, had been so scandalised at finding the word "catt" spelt wrongly he could see no good in anything else.⁷⁴ She also suggested another reason for its failure may have been public confusion caused by similar essays organised by the New Zealand Forest League⁷⁵ but, given the desire of conservationists for publicity, several essay competitions would seem to be better than one.

In Nelson, under the Bush and Bird Society auspices and Moncrieff's energetic and persuasive leadership, the competition was adopted by the Education Board who accepted its philosophy, schoolteachers who organised it, children who participated in it and local people who assisted in various ways.⁷⁶ Since it was an optional programme in the education syllabus, Moncrieff was concerned to maintain teachers' goodwill in administering it. Especially in the early years, she admiringly alluded to their efforts.⁷⁷ Originally the competition comprised an essay on either an indigenous bird or tree but by 1931 had evolved into a collection of identified, pressed leaves mounted on ordinary brown paper since that was the cheapest and most available paper in the depression. A year later it attained its final form as a Nature Diary, a

⁷⁴ Moncrieff to Carter, 15,24 November, MS Papers 0444:197, 1.

⁷⁵ For example, see the announcement of the Forestry League's school competition for a native plant collection which attracted 58 entries, four times that of the previous year, *NEM*, 3 August 1932, p.10. Moncrieff evidently asked the League to combine with Forest and Bird in one competition, but she thought the League did not understand her role in organising it because she was told the League thought she was trying to start "a rival show" and "preferred to leave it in the capable hands of Captain Sanderson."; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 14 January 1929, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

⁷⁶ Moncrieff to Sanderson, [July 1928], MS Papers 0444:192, 1. She wrote that an announcement was inserted in the *Teachers' Journal*, while the Secretary of the Nelson Education Board circularised all schools and a bookseller donated a book prize for the winner. She may have meant the *New Zealand Education Gazette* which was the "only publication that went out regularly to teachers" (C.E.Beeby, *The biography of an idea* (Wellington, 1992), p.146) although there was no mention of the competition in the 1931 and 1932 *Education Gazettes*. As she was friendly with Arnold Cork, the Agricultural Advisor to the Nelson Education Board, she may have enlisted his help.

⁷⁷ For example, "While no marks were awarded for spelling, handwriting or composition, the entries 'were beautifully written,...displaying great credit on their teachers.'", *NEM*, 11 March 1929, p.7.

concept obviously more in accordance with Moncrieff's ecological and holistic values. Children were asked to keep a daily diary during October and record in it the changes they observed in the natural world around them. They could focus on the particular or the more general but they were asked to observe and comment on, using all their senses, the interrelatedness of animal and plant life within their surroundings and climate. Good observation from day to day earned the highest mark.⁷⁸ The children were also encouraged to quote poetry or literature, to incorporate Maori and European myths or folk sayings and to illustrate their work. Illness did not preclude them from participation; Moncrieff commended a sick child who watched out a window and recorded daily occurrences.⁷⁹

Its organisation began each year in July when the Nelson Education Board notified schools. Early in November Moncrieff received all the entries and passed them around for assessment to "real nature lovers", who in 1948 included a farmer, a scientist, a trumper and "elderly women".⁸⁰ The winner from each school received a book prize while other entrants received a certificate. The winning school was awarded the Bush and Bird Society shield, which had been donated by the Moncrieffs, "a lovely piece of totara... decorated with silver replicas of native trees and birds."⁸¹ Moncrieff then compiled a review of the entries which appeared in the new year in the *Nelson Evening Mail*.

In each review, between 1929 and 1959, Moncrieff fostered a holistic approach to the natural world which accorded with her vitalist, ecological and

⁷⁸ Moncrieff to Carter, 15 November 1948, MS Papers 0444:197, 1.

⁷⁹ *NEM*, 8 March 1939, p.5. Before antibiotic treatment became available, epidemics and outbreaks of diseases like poliomyelitis, scarlet fever and measles were frequent, and caused sick children to spend weeks in isolation indoors. Moncrieff would have been aware that illness could impede children's normal outdoor lives through ill health in her own family.

Stephen Fox remarks upon the numbers of Americans active in conservation as adults, who gained their interest in the natural world during periods of childhood illness; eg, Irving Brandt who was on Rosalie Edge's Emergency Conservation Committee and Robert Marshall of the Wilderness Society; *John Muir and his legacy* (Boston, Toronto, 1981), pp.175, 206.

⁸⁰ Moncrieff to Carter, 15 November 1948, MS Papers 0444:197, 1.

⁸¹ *NEM*, 13 December 1928, p.6.

aesthetic beliefs. She praised the children's powers of factual observation and subsequent description and their efforts to illuminate their facts with a picturesque illustration, poem or folk saying. While she encouraged a scientific testing of the latter by further field observation and a reasoning related to their experiences, she discouraged invasive methods of investigation. She emphasised the message of conservation and encouraged them to see themselves as part of the natural world. "What we observe is largely according to the position we are in. To lie on one's back implies whole unfamiliar views of the trees and sky. So it is when we stoop down. A world of minute creatures reveals itself."⁸²

In 1933, after the first Nature Diary competition, Moncrieff outlined the winning entry by five-year old Penelope, which recorded the daily life of a fantail from when Penelope had first seen the bird building the nest to after the eggs had hatched. Moncrieff commended her for comments on the bird's activities, food, moods, eggs, nestlings; for her observation that the bird had seemed alarmed to see the girl when the eggs had first hatched but not before or afterward; and for her needle-worked fantail. Moncrieff also commented on how much the diaries had contributed to field knowledge of birds and the ways in which birds had altered their diets "to conform with changed conditions", since native pigeons and tuis had been observed to consume nectar from introduced trees. "It is a pleasure to record," she wrote, "all observation was carried out without the birds being frightened - the real naturalist touch."⁸³ However by 1949, while she commended a family for obtaining treatment for a kiwi whose leg had been caught in a possum trap, she was saddened that "one or two diaries revealed a spirit of destruction, conscious or otherwise".⁸⁴

In most write-ups Moncrieff passed on the folk sayings contributed by the children. "Last night around the moon there was a ring. Grandad says this is a sign of good weather but if there are stars in the ring it will rain in that

⁸² *NEM*, 11 March 1939, p.10.

⁸³ *NEM*, 8 March 1933, p.10.

⁸⁴ *NEM*, 25 January 1949, p.6.

many days." But she encouraged her audience, rather than merely recording such sayings, to adopt a scientific approach for even greater interest and test their truth by observing and noting down the following weather.⁸⁵ In 1939 she praised an entrant who mentioned that the cry of a shag implied rain and then observed that rain really did fall the following day.⁸⁶ Her write-up of the 1944 Diaries emphasised the scientific; an experiment to count the number of weeds in a square foot of ground, the taste of different plants, and trials using lichens as natural dyes. The latter would have appealed to Moncrieff and she quoted it in full.

I found a lot of plain lichen on a fence and as I read that it would dye wool I picked some and boiled it for about three-quarters of an hour. When I took the wool out I found it had turned an orangy colour and when I repeated the experiment with some orange lichen it was coloured light yellow.⁸⁷

In some of her reviews Moncrieff alluded to the value of children's studying nature as the basis for a future scientific career. In 1932 she compared the winner of the leaf competition, "who had no interest in botany according to his headmaster but is now working on a small native shrubbery and reading the simpler botany text books", with Jean Jones, one of the judges that year. Jones had made a leaf collection as a girl, discovered her life interest in botany, obtained a degree and was then working at the Cawthron Institute.⁸⁸

Moncrieff also praised the aesthetic in the diaries. Of a boy's description of hundreds of great tall kahikatea with ferns hiding the pools of water at their feet, she wrote, "Does not this picture of the white pine advertise New Zealand scenery better than any poster?"⁸⁹ Occasionally she quoted quite lengthy passages on the beauties of nature, which described, for

⁸⁵ NEM, 8 March 1933, p.10.

⁸⁶ NEM, 11 March 1939, p.10.

⁸⁷ NEM, 13 January 1945, p.7.

⁸⁸ NEM, 22 February 1932, p.2.

⁸⁹ NEM, 11 March 1929, p.7.

example, the changing colours of a sunset reflected on the hills or the colours and textures of weeds on a piece of waste ground.⁹⁰ She mentioned musical comments - "The thrush thronged out his thrilling note", poetry quotations and the aptness of some descriptions - "our cool noiseless forest", while her summary of the aesthetic clearly mirrored her own belief;

It is the children's appreciation of the beauties of nature which impresses readers of their diaries more than anything else. One feels that if only they could retain this gift through life it must affect their outlook.⁹¹

Every write-up contained children's references to conservation. In the first she commented that the boy's essay on the kahikatea ended on a note of sadness: "It will sooner or later get cut out."⁹² But she also noted children's positive observances on evolving conservation issues as a way of publicising them. "We should do all in our power to save [birds] from becoming extinct for they do much in the way of killing insects and grub pests." "The bush clematis looks frail and fades when pulled. It is a pity to pick the flowers though their beauty is hard to resist." When willow trees were washed up on a beach, "it is surmised they have been growing on river banks and washed away in a flood. This leads to a description of suitable plants to bind loose soil such as marram grass, lupins and gorse".⁹³ However in the final review, on quoting a daily account of the nesting activities of the "now somewhat uncommon" bittern, she offered a lesson which was both another example of the equality with which she regarded other species, and further proof to her that society's attitudes had moved little towards conservation.

This pleasant account compares well with the murder of the family of bitterns, whose photographs appeared in the *Auckland Weekly*....Why are children allowed to bring death

⁹⁰ *NEM*, 25 January 1949, p.6; 3 March 1934, p.8.

⁹¹ *NEM*, 3 March 1934, p.8.

⁹² *NEM*, 11 March 1929, p.7.

⁹³ *NEM*, 11 March 1929, p.7; 8 March 1933, p.10; 12 January 1945, p.6.

and destruction to birds and plants every year. I wonder if they realise birds' babies are as precious to them as our babies are to us?⁹⁴

Moncrieff was proud of the Nature Diary competition because she sometimes urged others to adopt it.⁹⁵ But the diaries served another purpose for she considered them a useful source of information. "The children act as excellent observers and one can keep a check on the increase of plants, birds pests etc and any innovation is immediately noticed."⁹⁶ As the actual diaries were returned to their authors and so were scattered, Moncrieff must have either noted the details in her filing system or kept her reviews as a reference.

It is possible that she obtained more from the diaries in information than did their authors in trusteeship values. Although she hoped to instill a love a nature into children and adults, and in thirty years many would have been involved, from the 1930s she often lamented the destructive urge in human beings. Her comment on the bittern was merely one example. Despite all the conservation work and education of the Nelson Bush and Bird Society, and of Moncrieff as its driving force - the Nature Diaries, newspaper nature notes, cooperation with the City Council and lobbying for reserves and sanctuaries⁹⁷ - her letters often describe injury and destruction to other species. From feeling sure in 1929 that "children are far less cruel than they were"⁹⁸, by 1944 she was horrified by "a very bad case of vandalism where three boys

⁹⁴ *NEM*, 17 February 1959, p.4.

⁹⁵ She recommended it again to Forest and Bird in 1932 and 1948; Moncrieff to Andersen, 19 July 1932, MS Papers 0444:193, Moncrieff to Carter, op.cit.,1; to the OSNZ, 9 July 1941, "Correspondence and all papers prior to July 1950", OSNZ Archive, 5.

⁹⁶ Moncrieff to Oliver, 2 September 1953, Box WRB Oliver Correspondence and Notes, MONZ. Also Moncrieff to Cunningham, 2 February 1950, 2, when she told him how children had noticed an increase in stoats. Another had confirmed Moncrieff's conclusion that a thrush's call could be mistaken for that of a shining cuckoo. Moncrieff believed that some of the "early" records published of the shining cuckoo's arrival were actually thrush notes.

⁹⁷ As mentioned above, in the supplement on Nelson the Society was praised for its "very good work"; *NEM*, 4 October 1930, p.17. The Acclimatization Society secretary, W.A. Andrews, also credited the Society for its protection work; *NEM*, 11 July 1933, p.7.

⁹⁸ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 14 January 1929, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

destroyed hundreds of eggs and killed a number of adult terns for the sheer fun of it." She was particularly appalled because she thought one of the boys may have been among those for whom she had paid a subscription to Forest and Bird.⁹⁹ Such cruelty, she believed, beginning in childhood when children collected eggs or were encouraged to smash them and kill birds which ate agricultural crops, sowed the seeds of future wars. With her vitalist ethic of species equality, she suggested an analogy between capital punishment and bird killing. "If [government officials] can hold the contention that capital punishment is wrong because it hurts the executioner to have to carry out the sentence...I think that taking life in childhood must raise some desperately serious complexes."¹⁰⁰

Between the letters of 1929 and 1944 were others in which Moncrieff deplored attacks on birds and the removal of plants from reserves and sanctuaries, sometimes with the blessing of teachers.¹⁰¹ By 1955 school nature study caused her some disquiet because, she understood, the emphasis in the curriculum was placed on specimen collecting when she believed that, "Every child should be educated as far as possible to act as a 'preserver'....the idea is to look, observe, and describe not produce exhibits."¹⁰² Perhaps she saw in this type of school nature study an emphasis on the dead, separated individual - the equivalent of science only as taxonomy - when she would have preferred ecological field study of the living. She appears to have had no input into the primary school nature study programme, which was revised from 1950 as part of earlier philosophical, policy and curriculum changes by the then Minister of

⁹⁹ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 5 December 1944, MS Papers 0444:196, 1.

¹⁰⁰ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 20 November 1943, MS Papers 0444:196, 1. She suggested that Sanderson write to the Director of Education but does not seem to have lobbied C.E.Beeby herself.

¹⁰¹ For example, Moncrieff to Falla, 1 October [1934], MS Papers 2366:67, 3. According to her, the Headmaster of the Boys College planned to take plants from the Dun Mountain Reserve for his students to plant in the school grounds on Arbor Day. As the removal of plants and animals was illegal she believed he should not set an example of law-breaking to his students. Also on cruelty, Moncrieff to Sanderson, 8 October 1937, [June 1943], MS Papers 0444:194,196; Moncrieff to Carter, 8 October 1949, MS Papers 0444:197, 1.

¹⁰² Moncrieff to Carter, 14 March 1955, MS Papers 0444:197, 1.

Education and Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Peter Fraser, and the Director of Education, C.E.Beeby.¹⁰³ When all these incidents are added to those of illegal poaching of swans and godwits at Farewell Spit, and the poaching of kereru and other birds, Moncrieff's deepening concern is understandable.

Sanderson was perceptive when he told her in 1928, "I think you are over optimistic about doing things quickly....Bird protection is only obtained by plugging away".¹⁰⁴ Moncrieff certainly "plugged away" to protect her sanctuaries and to foster an ethic of trusteeship in Nelson. From the mid 1930s she also sought to extend her appeals to a widening audience who might help influence New Zealand minds to the conservationist message. Apart from the increasingly conservationist theme in *New Zealand birds and how to identify them*, Moncrieff engaged the wider New Zealand public in an article in a national journal, the *Weekly News*. Based on her 1933 trip to Stephens Island¹⁰⁵, the study was entitled "An island - yesterday and today", while its subtitle - Huxley's aphorism, "Once a species is gone, it is gone forever" - announced its protection message. Essentially the article is a compressed ecological history. She described the pre-human relationships between the forested island and visiting and resident bush birds, the interrelationships between its surrounding seas and seabirds, and that between the tuatara and petrels who share burrows.

When night has fallen, from every hole proceed the moans and wails of ecstasy, as fluffy petrel-chicks, like large smoke-grey powder-puffs, are fed upon [an] oily substance disgorged from the parents. Next day flies alighting upon remains of the evening meal, will be greedily consumed by tuataras. Hence

¹⁰³ Beeby, p.139.

¹⁰⁴ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 31 July 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

¹⁰⁵ She went with a group from the Cawthron Institute; Moncrieff to Falla, 8 December [1932], MS Papers 2366:67, 3; and prepared a report on her findings for Forest and Bird, report dated 29 January 1933, Moncrieff to Sanderson, 11 February 1933, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

Stephens Island was gazetted as a reserve for tuatara in 1895; Galbreath, "Colonisation", p.297.

the reason for the combined establishment of petrel and lizard.¹⁰⁶

Even with the coming of the Maori these relationships did not change, Moncrieff suggested, because they had a strong aversion to the tuatara and refused to live there, while their rat, she believed, was a vegetarian. But with the coming of the European the steep rocky sides of the island and its outlying rocks and tidal rips, far from protecting its original inhabitants, caused their demise or decrease. A lighthouse was built to warn sailors of the rocks and rips, the keeper felled much of the bush to accommodate introduced domestic stock which consolidated the soil, and his cat killed off an entire species of indigenous bird. With little bush left, few forest birds remained or visited. The consolidated ground was hard for the birds to tunnel. Without the shelter of the trees, ocean-going petrels had difficulty getting to sea in strong winds. They and therefore their chicks, often died in large numbers during gales. She indicated that the black-backed gull, seemingly the only bird she found repellent, was the only feathered species to benefit from human changes to the landscape.

In some ways her article echoes Guthrie-Smith's description of Stephens Island published two years' earlier in his *Sorrows and joys of a New Zealand naturalist*.¹⁰⁷ Neither found another ancient resident, the native frog *Leiopelma*; both were dismayed by the changes to what had been a primeval setting only forty years previously. But in her fictionalised, romantic even flowery style, Moncrieff differed from his regretful matter-of-factness and also in her underlying message. He saw these islands of the Marlborough Sounds in transition to a "fairer" destiny, as the "inevitable" settlement proceeded;

¹⁰⁶ Périnne Moncrieff, "An island - yesterday and today", *Weekly News*, 23 March (1938), p.42.

¹⁰⁷ H.Guthrie-Smith, *Sorrows and joys of a New Zealand naturalist* (Dunedin, 1936), pp.96-99. His description dated from a visit in 1924-25. He extended the petrel-tuatara relationship by speculating on the benefits derived by both. "I should imagine that the obligation lies on the side of the lizard; it gains a pleasant if oleaginous warmth and gives nothing in return, unless indeed it can be supposed capable of guarding its ally's nest against any intruding outlander of similar breed."; p.99.

...it is the part of a wise man to recall the fact that doubtless Britain, too, has suffered the same sad process of spoliation. New Zealand in fact centuries hence will be a fairer land than now. It has not yet been long enough in Anglo-Saxon hands to have lavished on it the adornment that has made England what she is.

...No longer vexed by reminiscences of beauties that have passed away we shall view only green swelling hills and verdant slopes.¹⁰⁸

She desired the opposite. The Stephens Island wren had gone forever, much of the forest had been destroyed and the tuatara-petrel symbiosis was threatened but her expectation was that human beings would reverse these changes where possible. When New Zealanders were made aware of the possibility of further extinctions, she implied, they would promote the island's return to a near-primeval state.

The second of these appeals was to Viscount Bledisloe, Governor-General of New Zealand between 1930 and 1935 and Patron of Forest and Bird during his tenure here. Before coming to New Zealand Bledisloe had established conservation credentials in advocating the creation of national parks in Britain. He believed they would not only assist wildlife preservation, but would help develop in visitors "a sense of duty to protect all that is beautiful in nature".¹⁰⁹ During his term in New Zealand he gave a number of speeches urging New Zealanders to take an interest in their "unique indigenous flora and fauna"¹¹⁰, which perhaps encouraged Moncrieff to relay her concerns to him in

¹⁰⁸ Guthrie-Smith, *Sorrows*, pp.94,95.

¹⁰⁹ John Sheail, *Nature in trust* (Glasgow, London, 1976), p.71. In 1928, having visited national parks in North America, Bledisloe suggested the Forest of Dean as a suitable site for a national park in Britain and offered to donate that part of his estate within the forest. National parks were not established in Britain until 1949.

¹¹⁰ See *NEM*, 18 July 1930, p.9, 9 July 1932, p.6. Some of these speeches were published in *Ideals of nationhood*, arr.T.Lindsay Buick (New Plymouth, 1940). Bledisloe thanked Moncrieff, Phillips Turner and Cockayne for their help with the Wellington 1934 Arbor Day address, "The glories and the peculiarities of New Zealand forest vegetation", p.11.

In Britain, Bledisloe had been Parliamentary Secretary to the British Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. In 1932 he gave the annual Cawthon lecture, in which he discussed recent agricultural research, parts of which were reprinted in the scientific periodical *Nature*; *NEM*, 4 October 1932, p.5 and 31 March 1933, p.3. His linkage of soil research to food and the Plunket Society's role in baby and child care, may indicate a connection with Lord Lymington, whose ideas on soil conservation influenced Moncrieff; see Chapter 7. It

1934 just before his term ended. In asking Bledisloe to use his tact and influence to encourage protection of "our unique prehistoric avifauna", she expanded on those issues of particular relevance to her; particularly the need for unity in wildlife management and the enforcement of bird protection laws. She emphasised Bledisloe's own viewpoints, the aesthetic, the economic and New Zealand's unique ecology. As this was in the year following her RAOU Presidency she enclosed her Presidential speech, "which may perhaps amuse you", but which also would have underlined her status in the Australasian ornithological world and by extension, in conservation issues.¹¹¹ Although Bledisloe passed her letter to Internal Affairs without obvious comment on it, he must have remembered her as a possible author for an international article on New Zealand conservation, several years later.¹¹²

During the 1930s Moncrieff appealed many times to Internal Affairs on behalf of kereru, godwits and sanctuaries. These pleas culminated in her 1942 letter to J.W.A.Heenan, the Under-Secretary of the department, in which she reiterated her position on the adequacy of the bird protection laws but their inadequate enforcement. She expressed her deep concern that laws were flouted, while children, without adequate nature education at school, imitated the destructive behaviour of adults. She gave several recent Nelson examples including a farmer whose reserved bush had been cut and of children stoning a bird. As much as a legal and education problem, she saw the underlying cause as a moral degeneracy for,

could have been another reason for her appeal to Bledisloe.

¹¹¹ Moncrieff to Bledisloe, 14 July 1934, Pigeons file IA 1/46/12, NA. I have not found any correspondence to suggest that the Moncrieffs were on the same friendly terms with either the Bledisloes or their immediate predecessors in New Zealand, Sir Charles and Lady Ferguson, as they were with Earl Jellicoe who was Governor-General between 1920 and 1924. Jellicoe had attended the Moncrieffs' wedding after her brother had served under him in the Royal Navy; Moncrieff to [Millais], 2 April 1979, 2; "Friend of bird and bush - and much else", Interview with Moncrieff, *NEM*, 30 May 1959, p.10. However, Moncrieff undoubtedly would have met Bledisloe when he visited Nelson.

¹¹² This is discussed below. He also wrote to her from Pitcairn Island on way back to Britain, "urging me to try and help [conservation] in every way"; Moncrieff to Dickison, 4 June 1947, MS 11437:Box 8c, 4.

we cannot have our children growing up untaught and our adults treating the law as so much moonshine. One realises that the whole moral fibre of the race has slipped badly and needs pulling up. I gather that the Church people are doing their best to att[a]ck one end of the evil and we who have the interest of the land at heart desire to do the same with our end of the stick.¹¹³

While Moncrieff's linkage of moral and racial degeneracy with land or environmental issues will be discussed in the next chapter, she also gave a vitalist perspective to her pleas for enhanced law enforcement and education. In writing that the parts of "Nature...be it insect, trees birds or humans....must work together in harmony or the whole machine creaks and breaks-down"¹¹⁴, she implied it was breaking down in New Zealand because people were disobeying civil laws and not respecting the laws of Nature as creator. "One or two stiff convictions and it would show people that they must behave decently or suffer the consequences. No-one wants to be over-harsh but there is nothing so cruel as being over-indulgent for it encourages the public to get laxer and laxer." She appealed to Heenan to implement the Protection Act more vigorously and to encourage the Education Department to institute more active nature study that focused on the protection of other creatures for the well-being of the whole.

I have realised for a long time that things are slipping and have at intervals warned persons of your Dept and other Depts that the public has come to look upon the administration of wild-life as not to be taken seriously....I find that people know that they are transgressing but know that they are pretty safe in doing so.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Moncrieff to Heenan, 10 September 1942, Heenan Papers, MS 1132:272, WTU.

¹¹⁴ Although she uses the metaphor of the machine, it is in the sense that each species has a function within the operation of the whole. Her vitalist belief precluded the Cartesian philosophy that species were inanimate matter, reacting mechanically after they had been set in motion by a creator.

¹¹⁵ Guthrie-Smith was even more censorious in his condemnation of those shooters who broke protection laws. "By a few score persons careless or cruel a source of intelligent pleasure is denied to a thousand times that number - I have and always shall maintain that if thirteen percent. of the people of New Zealand, and elsewhere too, were sterilised it would

Heenan's reply, in being both hopeful but resigned even though he was a conservationist, could hardly inspire confidence in someone with Moncrieff's sense of mission. While he agreed that children would become "lovers of our bush and birds" when school teachers set an example, and offered to show her ideas to Beeby, on the general question of conservation respect he wrote,

I am sorely afraid with the limited means at our disposal in these present times, that it is a long, long road of education and propaganda.... Personally, I feel, from my own experience, that grown-ups are, after all, the greatest vandals....Now that the Conservation Act of some two years ago is being actively administered, I think we can all look forward to some considerable improvement in the general outlook of our people.¹¹⁶

His suggestion that penal provisions could be efficacious was a platitude given that much of her letter, and previous letters, explained just why the penal provisions were not effective. Since poaching, shooting and vandalism continue to occur even when protection of indigenous fauna and flora has a high public profile and is enforced by professional conservationists under a "united" Department of Conservation, perhaps, as Heenan intimated, Moncrieff's demands were unattainable in the wartime 1940s. But his reply would have added to Moncrieff's concern. It may have been the final factor to cause the despondency which permeates her major conservation article, "The destruction of an avian paradise", published in the *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire* in June 1944.¹¹⁷

From its original focus on Africa and large game animals, the SPFE had broadened its preservation interest to other areas of the British Empire and

improve matters."; *Sorrows*, p.95.

¹¹⁶ Heenan to Moncrieff, 22 September 1942, Heenan Papers, MS 1132:272, WTU.

By "Conservation Act" Heenan must have meant the 1941 Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act, through which the major environmental problem of erosion was to be arrested, although the Act was barely operational by 1942; Michael Roche, *Land and water* (Wellington, 1994), p.46.

¹¹⁷ Perrine Moncrieff, "The destruction of an avian paradise", *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, June(1944), pp.7-23.

other species. At the time of Moncrieff's article its objectives included the preservation of wild animals within the British Empire through public education, the creation of national parks and reserves, and the enforcement of game laws¹¹⁸, while its Executive Committee included scientists like Julian Huxley. Its President Lord Onslow¹¹⁹, on the recommendation of Bledisloe who was also a member, requested Moncrieff to write an article similar to one published on Australian fauna.¹²⁰ From his time in New Zealand, Bledisloe would have been aware of other suitable authors with perhaps stronger qualifications, for example Sanderson or a scientist like Oliver. However Sanderson held an unfavourable view of the SPFE.

I am afraid we British people are terrible exploiters generally speaking so much so that the setting up of "The Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire" seems to me to verge on impertinence because they do not practise what they preach in Britain....Their list of supporters denotes that there are big and wealthy men behind the effort yet they complain about the difficulty in getting out a bit of a magazine dealing mostly with African game, annual meetings and obituary notices.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ The August 1938 edition of the SPFE's *Journal* contained articles on India, Cyprus, Malaya, the Falkland Islands, Britain and New Zealand, as well as a report on the International Whaling conference of that year in which New Zealand participated.

¹¹⁹ See Chapter 2. Like Bledisloe, Onslow had extensive conservation connections. He belonged to the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves and the Zoological Society of London. He also chaired the 1933 International Conference for the Protection of Fauna and Flora which updated the 1900 Convention but which was to have equivocal outcomes for conservation in independent Africa because animals were seen to be protected for no practical reasons and without regard for traditional hunting rights; John McCormick, *Reclaiming paradise* (Bloomington, Indianapolis, 1989), p.20.

¹²⁰ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 19 July 1943, MS Papers 0444:196, 1.

The Australian article was: Colin Matheson, "The passing of a fauna", *JSPFE*, 46(December 1942), pp.12-23. It was an account of European destruction of Australian mammals through the introduction of exotic animals, for sport or pelts, and as vermin. Moncrieff thought it "excellent"; Moncrieff to Dickison, undated, MS 11437:Box 8c, 4.

¹²¹ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 9 August 1943, MS Papers 0444: 196, 1. Sanderson, as a reformed sportsman, may have perceived hypocrisy in the SPFE's preservation of some "colonial" species and destruction of "home" species for hunting. His comment on the *Journal*'s content is unfair. While it did contain those categories, which appeared in a greater proportion because of wartime reductions, its range of articles was much greater than he implied.

Perhaps Bledisloe was aware of his view, or perhaps he simply thought Moncrieff was the right person to ask, given her relationship to J.G.Millais, her links to Onslow through residency at "The Cliffs", her status in Australasian ornithology and her work for conservation in New Zealand.

She herself was pleased to accept for two reasons. The first was the preservationist perspective of her article, which she believed, would counter a scientific conservation paper recently published in America and secondly, the *Journal's* influential audience.

I feel in writing it that I am doing so on behalf of all the bird lovers of this Dominion and am therefore delighted to get the chance to do it and say what we think. It might have been a museum authority who was asked....The article is bound to be read in U S A and therefore will undo what the polish (sic) consul gave as the state of affairs.¹²²

In a subsequent letter she added,

The point about taking the trouble to write such an article for the journal of the fauna of the Empire is that whilst we may not think much of it the committee represent some very weighty personalities which loom large in the eyes of the world.

It is for this reason that I disliked so much the Polish article to the American Ornithologists Union because I realise they dont know the polish consul and will believe him to be an authority....We say he is of no account but the Americans will think he is. [H]ence the danger and any literature - like my article - which can (sic) give a different picture is worth while writing.¹²³

It is possible that, as a scientist, a member of OSNZ and colleague of L.E.Richdale, Charles Fleming and B.J.Marples, Wodzicki advocated the

¹²² Moncrieff to Sanderson, 19 July 1943, MS Papers 0444:196, 1. The Polish consul was Dr K.A.Wodzicki, a former biologist in Warsaw, who had come to New Zealand as Consul-General for the Polish government-in-exile after Poland had been invaded by Germany in World War Two. For a brief account of his subsequent career in New Zealand as head of the animal ecology section of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, see Galbreath, *Wildlife*, pp.51-55. Wodzicki joined the OSNZ and contributed to its magazine, as well as the article Moncrieff mentions, published by the American Ornithologists Union. He was involved with the gannet census which Moncrieff deplored; see above Chapter 3.

¹²³ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 4 September 1943, MS Papers 0444:196, 1.

captive breeding of endangered species which Moncrieff and Sanderson opposed. Galbreath writes that Wodzicki consistently praised the New Zealand government's great interest in wildlife preservation. Though Moncrieff and Sanderson also praised any Government conservation initiative, they believed that politicians and public servants should provide more effective conservation leadership and law enforcement. Her remarks about Wodzicki's status as an authority and "the weighty personalities which loom large in the eyes of the world" are indications that she remained anxious about the status of preservationist conservation, and aware of the necessity to persist in the publication of their viewpoint.

Although her title revealed Moncrieff's primary focus on birds, her article, like that on Stephens Island, was an ecological history of the interactions between New Zealand's principal biological classes; forests, birds, insects and humans. Her theme conjoined a forthright condemnation of human attitudes of waste and cruelty towards other species, and a despair that such attitudes continued when their harmful consequences of loss for all species, including humans, were apparent. Although a desolate tone of impending calamity permeated the article - a vengeful Nature bent on punishing the trustees - a conservationist hope glimmered to validate Moncrieff's purpose: that overseas conservationists might influence the New Zealand government to intensify their efforts. Beginning with a description of the "intimate association" between forests, insects and birds generated during the country's long isolation from other lands, she chronicled changes to this association caused by human activities - deliberate fire, agricultural and pastoral use, sawmilling, hunting for collections and the introduction of exotic species. She noted Maori and European reactions when decline or extinction of species became obvious; Maori procedures for sustainable use and European protection laws, societies and sanctuary declarations. She explained the manner in which birds had responded to protection, and how some had successfully adapted themselves to their changed environment and how forest could regenerate if protected.

The article reiterated of all her recent and longstanding concerns; the breeder who planned to increase birdlife through captive breeding when only "diminished larders" remained; the individual who abandoned cats in lonely places to fend for themselves on endangered birds; the hunter who smoked out his quarry, or shooter who used unsporting methods. "Indifferent to the example of other countries, they continue to shoot native birds which are, with few exceptions, on the protected list; fire natural cover, hack down trees from mountain-sides and hill-tops, and ruin natural beauty". Although she praised soil conservation legislation and deer eradication, she demonstrated the government's wider ambivalence towards indigenous species protection; division in wildlife administration, bounty payments on indigenous birds, and the ironies of the possum industry.¹²⁴

While most of her article comprised a narrative of cause and effect¹²⁵, it was also a morality tale through which her metaphysic and values were articulated. New Zealand as paradise - this space enclosed by sea¹²⁶ - was, prior to human occupation, largely forested "in a rich mantle right to the water's edge" of varying forest types. Its flora and fauna "existed in intimate association...the one inter-acting upon the other so delicately that, without each other neither could flourish." It was, Moncrieff concluded, a "perfect example of the harmony of Nature" but a harmony, she implied, which prevailed because the inhabitants acted in the interests of the whole. She depicted this interaction as a defensive "chain-armour", a metaphor with its image of

¹²⁴ She illustrated the latter with figures from 1942, when the government received nearly seven times the revenue from skins that it allocated for bird protection, despite proved possum predation of forests and birds; Moncrieff, "Destruction", quotes from pp.7,22,22,15,16.

¹²⁵ To support her arguments, Moncrieff cited a number of past and contemporary naturalists and conservationists likely to be known to her international audience. These included Walter Buller, Oliver, Guthrie-Smith, Joseph Banks and the nineteenth century anatomist Richard Owen. She also quoted from *Forest and Bird*.

¹²⁶ Paradise is an Old Persian term for an enclosed park or garden; Andrew Cunningham, "The culture of gardens", in *Cultures*, op.cit., p.39.

Islands have long been constructed as paradises or "Edens" (see Richard Grove, *Green imperialism* (Cambridge, 1995, especially Chapter 1) and New Zealand in the nineteenth century was seen as a variety of human paradises (James Belich, *Making peoples* (Auckland, 1996), pp.293,294) but Moncrieff cast humans as snakes in her avian paradise.

encircling linkages that is appropriate both to her vitalist metaphysic and her preference for a cooperative morality. But Man "gate-crashed" into this avian paradise, destroying "whole links in the chain-armour". Though a trustee, Man shattered its self-regulation and harmony through wastefulness, carelessness and ill discipline.¹²⁷

Implicit in the article is her perception of human beings as guardians for the entrusted floral and faunal species with conservationists as a "ginger group": a more nuanced interpretation than overseas conservationists who saw themselves as the guardians. The principle of guardianship is implicit in the title of Sheail's book *Nature in trust*; and explicit in a statement from an early conservation history, "The conservationist sees his role as the custodian of natural resources where these are interpreted in the broadest sense to mean the whole of the non-cultural world."¹²⁸ It is fundamental to Christopher Stone's argument that guardians or trustees could legally represent the trees and lakes of a Californian valley, as trustees could represent the interests of children.¹²⁹ In Moncrieff's interpretation, human beings had a duty to promote a conservation ethic and practice through education, example, and the establishment and application of law - a self-disciplining mechanism parallel to Nature's - so that the country could pass on its inheritance. Her concluding paragraph at once affirmed her belief that all species are interconnected through space and time, acknowledged New Zealand's responsibility to the wider world¹³⁰, and appealed to other conservationists to assist those in New Zealand. "By what means can New Zealand be awakened from the sleep of ignorance and apathy to a sense of the responsibility this country owes to the

¹²⁷ Moncrieff, "Destruction", quotes from pp.7,8.

¹²⁸ A.Warren and F.B.Goldsmith, "An introduction to the conservation of the natural environment", in *Conservation in practice*, (eds) A.Warren and F.B.Goldsmith (London, 1974), p.1.

¹²⁹ Roderick Frazier Nash, *The rights of nature* (Madison, 1989), pp.129-135.

¹³⁰ As she had asserted for the Waipoua Kauri sanctuary; see Chapter 5.

rest of the world for the unique flora and fauna with which she has been entrusted."¹³¹

The response appears to have been meagre. Onslow was "very pleased" with the article¹³², while a former New Zealander wrote to Prime Minister Fraser, to support Moncrieff's request for preservation.¹³³ Moncrieff may have received other responses which are now destroyed. This is possible as her overseas correspondents have become known only by chance. For example, wishing to ascertain J.G.Millais' membership of the SPFE, and before I read J.M.MacKenzie's book, I wrote to Richard Fitter, author of *The penitent butchers*. As Secretary of the SPFE in the 1960s, Fitter remembered receiving "communications from Mrs Moncrieff from time to time".¹³⁴ Moncrieff had also lobbied Colonel C.L.Boyle, Fitter's predecessor as Secretary of the SPFE, and a member of the International Council for the Preservation of Birds. In one letter on Farewell Spit she must have suggested using the contemporary International Convention for the Protection of Birds. Since this was several years after he had relinquished the secretaryship to Fitter, Boyle replied, "This is clearly a matter for ICBP. My personal letters could accomplish nothing. So I have sent your letter to Miss Barclay-Smith [the Secretary]....She has promised to take the matter up."¹³⁵ The result was that the President of ICBP, Professor S.Dillon Ripley of the United States' Smithsonian Institution, wrote twice in 1969 to the Chairman of New Zealand's National Parks Authority to urge the birds' protection from human interference when there was strong pressure from commercial and recreational

¹³¹ Moncrieff, "Destruction", p.23.

¹³² Moncrieff to Sanderson, 23 August 1944, MS Papers 0444:196, 1.

¹³³ Hardwicke to Fraser, 19 August [1944], Native birds protection file IA 1/47/8 Pt 2, NA. Ellen, Countess Hardwicke, was the former Ellen Russell of Auckland, then living in Britain; NEM, 24 November 1926, p.3. She evidently knew Fraser and suggested "in a world where there is nothing but deathe (sic) and destruction...it seems our duty to preserve what we can of such a perfectly beautiful thing as the New Zealand 'Bush'".

¹³⁴ Personal communication from Richard Fitter, 15 January [1997], 2.

¹³⁵ Boyle to Moncrieff, 9 July 1969, Farewell Spit file LS 6/10/2, DOC HO Wgton. Boyle met Moncrieff, as well as Lands' officials, during a visit to New Zealand in 196[8].

The Convention was signed in 1950; McCormick, *Paradise*, p.178.

interests.¹³⁶ Henk Heinekamp remembered correspondence with Barclay-Smith, the ornithologist Peter Scott over the kokako, and others in Britain. "She was always focused on Britain, never on other parts of the world. I asked her once or twice, why don't we write to people say, in Germany, the Netherlands....she said I don't know these people."¹³⁷ Even if "The destruction of an avian paradise" had few immediate benefits its longer-term outcomes, by extending the range of Moncrieff's advocacy to "the weighty personalities which loom large in the eyes of the world", procured an international recommendation for conservation. This may have mitigated any residual despair she harboured from the decades of less productive advocacy.

This chapter has examined the efforts Moncrieff made to foster an ethic of trusteeship and insert a conservation perspective towards the indigenous among New Zealanders, especially those in Nelson province. Her recognition that the divisions amongst conservationists were unhelpful led her to a national mediation for a united voice on bird matters. In Nelson, under the auspices of the Nelson Bush and Bird Society, she promoted a trustee perspective through the Nature Diaries, information for adults, and practical conservation through the Arbor Day plantings. But Moncrieff's belief that she had not been successful, evidenced by her own examples of uncaring destruction, prompted her to address an international audience. Although her article, "The destruction of an avian paradise", may not have drawn immediate and widespread support, it gave Moncrieff a voice for Nature in the wider world as a means of fostering her ethic of trusteeship.

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¹³⁶ Dillon Ripley to Chairman NPANZ, 2 September and 27 October 1969, Farewell Spit file LS 4/10/2, DOC HO Wgtn.

She wrote again to ICPB in the 1970s about the effect of forest destruction on the kokako; Moncrieff to Bowdler, 8 November [1973], 2.

¹³⁷ Interview with Henk Heinekamp, 2. Perhaps as she got older Moncrieff focused on Britain but in the 1920s and 1930s, she corresponded with Dr Casey Wood, an American scientist researching birds' vision, and with Major van der Byl of New York's Humane Fur Campaign over the importation of humane traps; Moncrieff to Falla, 27 April [1924], MS Papers 2366:67, 3; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 27 September 1938, 5 July 1939, MS Papers 0444:194,1.

CHAPTER 7

NATURE'S WARNING; THE TRUSTEES' PERfidY AND LAND DEGRADATION

From the 1920s the erosion and infertility of soil became issues of major concern to the western world as land degradation was perceived to threaten food production and consequently the progress of western civilisation. This chapter will explore Moncrieff's position within what is now called an apocalyptic stream of imperial environmental history.¹ It is the area of her nature conservation which is least known. Moncrieff's advocacy of soil conservation falls into two parts although both must be considered within her vitalist metaphysic, her trusteeship ethic and her ecology. In the 1920s and 1930s her agitation for changes to land use policy and to agricultural practice was not beyond the mainstream of soil conservation advocacy. But from the early 1940s her recommendation of organic gardening and agriculture as a solution to soil degradation was marginal to orthodox precept and practice. It was, however, true to her vision of western "progress" and "civilisation".

In the 1920s and 1930s Moncrieff's warnings about soil erosion were, in part, allied to Forest and Bird campaigns which centered on the preservation of native forest. Her first public foray into the issue occurred, as we have seen in Chapter Six, at the establishment of the Nelson Bush and Bird Society in 1928 when she used the existence of soil erosion to advocate bush preservation as one of the reasons for its foundation. She explained Nelson's accelerated or anthropoic erosion, which resulted from the conversion of steep bushclad slopes to pasture, and outlined the ecological sequence of events that eventually resulted in topsoil loss and the expense of repairs, to both the public

¹ John M.MacKenzie, "Empire and the ecological apocalypse: the historiography of the imperial environment", in *Ecology and empire*, (eds) Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin (Carlton South, 1997), p.215.

and private sectors, in buildings and other structures. As the best land was now cultivated, she said, it was "suicidal" to fell and burn "areas which would never yield good returns" because of the effect on rainfall. Without the bush to absorb it on higher steeper country, the rain created fissures in the slopes, leading to slips of rocks, soil and vegetation which could block waterways. When these burst, flooding carried this material on to the plains to build up river beds, damage bridges and roads, and despoil fields while carrying away downriver their fertile topsoils.²

Moncrieff reiterated these points again in 1937 in a wider-ranging review prepared as the basis for a submission to the government. Entitled "A review of the causes which have led to the present problems of erosion in New Zealand", it addressed soil erosion and soil fertility not only in the steeper ranges but also in the South Island tussock country. She outlined a sequence of over-stocking, indiscriminate firing and the introduction of the rabbit which had almost eliminated new growth so that rain flowed straight into the rivers instead of gradually. She was not sanguine for the tussock country's recovery but she urged that the higher hills be reafforested to make them once again a community asset and, in the short-term, a means of reducing unemployment.³ Another concern related to the milling of native timber, in which she argued that lease conditions for sawmillers should be tightened to enable all New Zealanders to benefit from the forests. She suggested that, following Japan's example, the industry should be obliged to plant two exotic trees for every native they felled. She believed the New Zealand system "of cutting out great areas" was not conducive to the regeneration of natives for future timber supplies, nor for the preservation of native birds. New Zealand forests should be cut in sections "so that there are always young trees coming on", a system of "sound forestry" practised overseas. Lastly she argued that, instead of wastefully burning "everything not suitable for building timber", such

² "A tale of woe", *NEM*, 23 April 1928, p.2.

³ Just as she believed reserves and national parks could provide more appropriate work for rangers than roadmaking and goldmining, so could reafforestation and deer corralling for forest rangers, bushmen and deerstalkers.

remaining "detritus" should be gathered and used for firewood.⁴ She also promoted a novel scheme to eliminate deer. Because of Leonard Cockayne's theory⁵, Forest and Bird believed that browsing animals destroyed the bush and consequently were a cause of erosion. Moncrieff explained a scheme devised by Robert Sadd, a former Commissioner of Crown Lands in Nelson, Hawkes Bay and Otago. Sadd advocated the use of corrals built at the edge of the bush, into which wild animals could be lured through the use of tame deer, food and food trails laid some distance back into the vegetation. He believed this would be more effective in reducing numbers than the shooters employed by Internal Affairs, whose actions, he thought, caused the deer to scatter further into the hinterland. Moncrieff, having discussed the merits of Sadd's scheme⁶, suggested the government should authorise Sadd to cost and construct a demonstration corral, and to experiment with its use in conjunction with bushmen and deerstalkers. Sadd did not have the opportunity to test his idea as he died two months later.⁷

These are examples of Moncrieff's thought on the physical sequence in the erosionary process and of the need for soil conservation measures but more

⁴ Today it is the practice to leave the "detritus" to rot and provide nutrients and shelter for seedlings which can be seen as more holistically ideal than Moncrieff's advice.

⁵ See Chapter 1.

⁶ For example, she spoke to Ranger Snow, the Nelson City Council ranger whose opinions on the natural world she had long valued; Moncrieff to Sanderson, [18 July 1937], MS Papers 0444:194, 1.

⁷ "A review of the causes which have led to the present problems of soil erosion in New Zealand", [July 1937], MS Papers 0444;194, 1. Although undated, the Review is pertinent to July 1937 letters between Moncrieff and Sanderson in which Moncrieff asked Sanderson to arrange a meeting with the Minister of Lands and Commissioner of State Forests, the Honourable F.Langstone, to discuss Sadd's proposition. Her Review may also have been provoked by the 1937 Bush Preservation Conference three months earlier.

The correspondence does not indicate whether the meeting occurred but her second suggested meeting between Sadd and G.F.Yerex (mistyped as Yarax), did not. Yerex was the Director of Internal Affairs' deer culling operations (see Ross Galbreath, *Working for wildlife* (Wellington, 1993), pp.22-30, established after the 1930 Deer Menace conference. Yerex told Sanderson that he had no time to see Sadd; Sanderson to Moncrieff, 19 July 1937, MS Papers 0444:194, 1.

Moncrieff was evidently aware of the hardship involved for cullers in collecting the deer skins for sale (*Wildlife*, pp.23,25), because she argued that the "great advantage" of Sadd's scheme was the proximity of the corrals to the main roads so that trucks could carry away the carcasses.

significant in terms of her vitalist metaphysic were comments she made in December 1931. Relating erosion to the contemporary events of depression and drought, she argued that the world depression created the need for "bumper crops" (presumably to offset falling overseas prices) at a time when these would be difficult to achieve because of the lack of water partly caused by bush clearance in the past. While her explanation of the conjuncture of events was ecological, her message was strongly moralistic; a warning to the earth's human trustees. Nature, she wrote, had originally planted the bush to keep the atmosphere moist, with trees acting like sponges to absorb the rainfall and to feed rivers with a constant but gradual supply. Bush clearance and burns on plains and hills resulted in difficulties in river control and water retention. Without any bush on the Waimea plain to retain moisture, normal rain clouds passed overhead and were caught by forest-clad hills in the back country, but their "life-giving showers" were lost to the plains so that droughts resulted in the cultivated areas. However, occasional cloudbursts were not beneficial to agriculture either, because of the rapid run-off, and in fact were harmful by causing slips, floods, damage, and silt in rivers and harbours. The lessened flow of the Motueka River was a result of the latter. With less rainfall a large reservoir was required to supply water needs but its construction was impossible because of the financial situation. In such dry conditions the fire danger worsened. "This...[is] the treatment meted out by Nature to those who violate her laws, either intentionally or otherwise."⁸

Throughout the article she highlighted the wastefulness and irresponsibility of the trustees towards Nature's creation, and Nature's consequent anger. "Sometimes Nature sends us a warning in the shape of a cloudburst, causing rain to stream down the hillside and sweep homesteads and all before it. One would think that would teach a lesson...". She gave the cautionary tale of the once fertile but now arid Mediterranean as an example of

⁸ "Bush and Bird notes", *NEM*, 12 December 1931, p.5. As with her ideas on the use of forest detritus, today's thinking on the associations of forest and rainfall, and of erosion and river flows has changed. The positive correlation between forest and rainfall is thought to be less strong, while deposition of soil in river beds alters the nature of the flow rather than the amount.

how a region could become impoverished if the trustees did not mend their ways. She offered redemptive solutions. Firstly, reafforestation was necessary, perhaps with exotics but preferably with natives "as each country is given the type of tree best suited to its requirements". Secondly, government policy for settlement farms should no longer equate burning and felling trees with "improvements" like fencing. Thirdly, individuals should control fires to prevent outbreaks on regenerating or milled land. These solutions, stemming from an ethic of trusteeship, would protect "our chief assets - a good climate and a well watered (sic), well-timbered land".

Other writing indicates that she did not accuse either pre-European Maori or early European settlers of being carelessly wasteful. "[A]lthough Maoris burnt the forest...their destruction was not unduly severe because they obeyed rules framed by their leaders to conserve wild life."⁹ The early settlers had to establish new livings and homes but they were ignorant of the consequences. "Whilst the dictates of civilization demanded the sacrifice of the New Zealand forest, it is now apparent that, in the light of modern knowledge, many bush areas were unwisely cleared."¹⁰ Having observed erosion on neighbouring properties at both their Nelson home, The Cliffs, and at Astrolabe¹¹, her warnings on behalf of Nature were for the present generation.

If we carry on as we are doing burning away all our bush, we are heading for certain ruin. It may not come all at once but come it will. Nelson district will eventually be an arid, burnt-up place, suffering from alternate drought and floods. The present season is merely a fore-taste of the future...¹².

⁹ Pérrine Moncrieff, "The destruction of an avian paradise", *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, June(1944), p.8.

¹⁰ ibid, p.11.

¹¹ In a letter to Falla, she related the sequences of events at both places; Moncrieff to Falla, 5 October 1941, MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

¹² "Bush and Bird notes", *NEM*, 12 December 1931, p.5.

While her language and predictions of ruin may seem sensationalist - "apocalyptic" environmental history in the making - they matched those of her contemporaries at home and abroad where land degradation was also perceived to threaten western societies.

For New Zealand was not alone in its anxiety about soil degradation. While John Steinbeck's *The grapes of wrath* poignantly exposed the predicament of American Dust Bowl families in fiction, two non-fiction books, published in 1939, detailed the results of erosion in those states and in many other parts of the world. The first was by Hugh Bennett, the Head of the American Soil Conservation Service¹³, and was mainly focused on America. The other, "a widely-read book" and quoted by Moncrieff in the 1940s, was *The rape of the earth* by G.V.Jacks and R.O.Whyte¹⁴ of the Imperial Bureau of Soil Science in Britain. This was a world survey¹⁵ of soil erosion and descriptions of methods being used to arrest or prevent it, largely compiled from information supplied by government officers in each country, official publications and research material. Jacks and Whyte and another English soil

¹³ Hugh Hammond Bennett, *Soil conservation* (New York, London, 1939). This Service, a branch of the United States Department of Agriculture, had begun in 1933 as the Soil Erosion Service but officers of the Department including Bennett, had been educating farmers from the early 1920s on soil conservation.

¹⁴ G.V.Jacks and R.O.Whyte, *The rape of the earth* (London, 1939). Most of the small amount of information on New Zealand is on pp.82-84. It was supplied by Dr Ernest Marsden, Secretary of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research which included soil conservationists in its Soil Survey and Botany Divisions.

The opinion was L.W.McCaskill's. He believed that the book "helped considerably in giving the advocates of a soil conservation policy in New Zealand confidence that they were on the right lines"; *Hold this land* (Wellington, 1973), pp.17,18. Richard Grove in his review, "Paradise invented and lost", the *Times Higher*, 2 May 1997, p.27, notes Jacks and Whyte's "most influential" environmental history as "single-handedly set[ting] the scene for the postwar British colonial obsession with climate change and soil erosion".

McCaskill had been interested in soil, as well as flora and fauna conservation from the 1920s. In 1939, as a Lecturer in Agriculture at Christchurch Teachers' College, he had been awarded a Carnegie Fellowship to examine methods in America of teaching soil conservation. There he met Bennett and investigated American methods, to which Jacks and Whyte also refer. Subsequently in New Zealand, McCaskill was involved in lobbying for the 1941 Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act and with its administration and practice. He taught soil conservation courses at Lincoln College.

¹⁵ Continents covered included North and South America, Africa, Australia and Asia, as well as New Zealand.

conservationist, Viscount Lymington, whose book *Famine in England*¹⁶ Moncrieff also quoted, link her into the imperial stream of environmental history.

In Europe Jacks and Whyte found little soil erosion because, they believed, users and owners had developed their lands "as a gradual evolutionary process dictated by natural environmental factors".¹⁷ In other areas of the world, especially in British colonies and dominions, they illustrated how European methods of cultivation and deforestation, and their grazing animals, had caused accelerated soil erosion and a loss in soil fertility. Apart from the soil slips and silt accumulations, examples were given of the formation of gullies and chasms on agricultural land when the topsoil had been left unprotected and was wasted away by wind and water. The "deserts" thus produced, whether by unsuitable ploughing, deforestation of hills and river headwaters, over-grazing, or annual burns to maintain pasture fertility, meant a loss for agriculture of much land.

Bennett, Jacks and Whyte considered that the immediate cause of erosion lay in the international trading exchange that developed between the "old world" and the "new". In exchange for old world finance, technology, and research to populate and develop the American West, Australia, New Zealand and other European colonies, new settlers in those lands supplied the

¹⁶ Viscount Lymington, *Famine in England* (London, 1938). This book will be discussed later in the chapter.

¹⁷ Jacks and Whyte, p.27. Fernand Braudel who was researching *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world of the sixteenth century in the age of Philip II* (London, 1992, orig.pub.1949) at much the same time, held a similar opinion. He wrote of how the various Mediterranean civilisations had adapted their agriculture and food production to its uncertain climate, lack of forest and thin topsoils. He maintained that Mediterranean drought was a better soil guardian than the rains of the northern countries; see especially pp.129, 179-180. Bennett's opinion differed somewhat. Although he acknowledged soil conservation methods practised in Europe, he concluded that "Erosion in the United States and Canada differs from that in the Old World chiefly in its magnitude and the rapidity with which it developed"; p.54. George Perkins Marsh, the nineteenth century American diplomat and conservationist (in its wise-use sense) had also observed evidence of erosion in Europe; *Man and nature*, (ed) David Lowenthal (Cambridge Massachusetts, 1965 orig.pub. 1864).

Since Jacks and Whyte, as well as Bennett, later used evidence of land degradation around ancient Mesopotamian and European cities to argue that civilisations can decline (see below), there is an inconsistency in the Jacks and Whyte argument. Both the "old" and "new worlds" experienced land degradation.

old world with food and other primary products. In the transformation of the original grass, tussock or forested lands to pasture or crops (often grown annually as a single type), the fertility of the original soil was eventually depleted. While the "open frontier" existed and the idea of natural resource abundance remained influential, fertility loss in one area was unimportant; settlement moved on. When it "closed" and abundance proved mythical, soil fertility and productivity were restored by the use of manufactured artificial fertilisers. Derived under the new discipline of soil science based on soil and plant chemistry, their use became orthodox farming practice.¹⁸ But the intensification of agriculture during World War One led again, these soil scientists believed, to soil exhaustion and eventually in some areas to its erosion.¹⁹

Beyond the immediate problem of soil degradation, Bennett, Jacks and Whyte portrayed an anxiety about the meta-idea of progress. A relatively new concept, "progress" is the west's belief in its ability to continuously improve the social, moral and material lot of the individual, nation and race, and thereby to advance its civilisation through an increasing knowledge and exploitation of the environment. In his history of the idea of progress, J.D.Bury argued that such an optimistic concept for the future could not emerge within the classical or medieval eras, largely because their prevailing metaphysics were pessimistic; respectively, of decline from a golden age, and of an earthly finality. He placed its growth within the development of science in the early modern age of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²⁰ After the development of the scientific revolution in Britain from the eighteenth century, the idea of progress particularly as it related to material progress, took on a British tinge. Material progress, or the colloquial "getting on",

¹⁸ See below.

¹⁹ Jacks and Whyte, p.27; Bennett, *Soil*, pp.vi, 3. For a modern summary of the interconnections between New World ecology, agriculture and international capitalism, see Donald Worster, "Transformations of the earth: toward an agroecological perspective in history", *Journal of American history*, 76:3,4(1989-90), pp.1087-1106, based on his book *Dust bowl: the southern plains in the 1930s* (New York, 1979).

²⁰ J.D.Bury, *The idea of progress* (London, 1920), pp.9,21,4.

supported by scientific achievements in the development and "conquering" of the natural world, was seen by most people to be attainable. If this could not be accomplished in Britain itself, the new territories of America and the British empire offered ample scope for everyone to participate in what James Belich has called "the progress industry".²¹ But lurking within progress's optimism were the older classical and medieval fears of decline and finality. Marsh observed that nature, when used recklessly did not necessarily self-heal, and therefore regression rather than progress could occur. However with Victorian optimism, he also believed that man could learn from these experiences and use science and technology to restore and maintain the earth, thus suppressing the fears of regression.²² Those fears resurfaced in the uncertain decades of war and depression in the 1920s and 1930s. If individuals and nations could progress, individuals and nations could also decline. As Jacks and Whyte put it,

To gain control over the soil is the greatest achievement of which mankind is capable. The organization of civilized societies is founded upon the measures taken to wrest control of the soil from wild Nature, and not until complete control has passed into human hands can a stable superstructure of what we call civilization be erected on the land....

All seemed well with civilization in the century of expansion that followed the Industrial Revolution. It was a beneficent growth destined to take possession of the world, and to receive a new lease of life in the countries of the New World....

[But], as the result solely of human mismanagement, the soils upon which men have attempted to found new civilizations are disappearing, washed away by water and blown away by wind.²³

²¹ James Belich, *Making peoples* (New Zealand, 1996), p.349.

²² L.E. Lochhead, "Preserving the brownies' portion: a history of voluntary nature conservation organisations in New Zealand 1888-1935", PhD thesis in Parks, Recreation and Tourism [now Human and Leisure Sciences], (Lincoln University, 1994), pp.33-39. Lochhead has shown how the idea of decline pervaded Marsh's thought, both in his book *Man and nature* and in an earlier article, "The study of nature, *Christian Examiner*, 68(1860).

²³ Jacks and Whyte, pp.17,18.

Bennett, Jacks and Whyte, like Moncrieff, instanced the ruin of ancient cities as a warning to their own times. They gave detailed descriptions of how soil degradation had overwhelmed the agricultural systems of ancient civilisations including Mesopotamia, Greece and Rome; mismanagement had resulted in ruin. The clear implication was that if progress had declined in these different eras, contemporary progress could fail also.

Soil erosion, both natural and accelerated, had long been recognised as problematic for settlement in New Zealand; current and former geographers have listed a number of early commentators.²⁴ Accelerated erosion occurred for three reasons. European settlers did not appreciate New Zealand's unstable geology with its steep slopes, high rates of natural erosion and new, thin soils. H.Guthrie-Smith explained in *Tutira* that, although he knew major seismic disturbances occurred in New Zealand, he had not fully appreciated the actuality of instant land movements until he experienced the 1931 Napier earthquake. He had always believed that "Granted unlimited time, the normal course of nature had seemed adequate, slowly to depress, slowly to raise, slowly to encroach."²⁵ Consequently the methods they used to develop and manage their farms, by felling and burning the original bush cover and repeated burnings to encourage new pasture or tussock growth²⁶, exacerbated

²⁴ Histories of different aspects of soil erosion have been written by K.B.Cumberland, *Soil erosion in New Zealand* (Wellington, 1944) and *Landmarks* (Surry Hills, 1981) which was based on the television documentary of the same name; Michael Roche, *Land and water* (Wellington, 1994) as well as that of McCaskill.

Cumberland quoted, amongst others, J.Buchanan's "Sketch of the botany of Otago" in *TNZI*, 1(1869). Julius Vogel in his Introduction to the 1874 Forests Act, J.P.Grossman's 1909 "The evils of deforestation", and a New Zealand Geological Report of 1920. Roche quoted A.D.Dobson's "On the destruction of land by shingle-bearing rivers, and suggestions for protection and prevention", *TNZI*, 4(1871), W.T.L.Travers' "Notes upon the great floods of February, 1868," *TNZI*, 14(1881) and Alfred Cockayne's research into criticism of annual burns published in the first volume of the *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture* in 1910; *Land*, pp.20,25-27.

Commentators on soil erosion are scattered throughout Alan Grey's *Aotearoa and New Zealand* (Christchurch, 1994).

²⁵ H.Guthrie-Smith, *Tutira* (Edinburgh, London, 1953, 3rd ed., orig.pub.1921), p.42.

²⁶ J.D.Gould, *The grass roots of New Zealand history*, Massey Memorial Lecture 1974 (Palmerston North, 1974), pp.18,19. Rollo Arnold, in the first part of *New Zealand's burning* (Wellington, 1994), portrays the equivocal role of fire in the lives of rural and small-town New Zealanders. Through contemporary newspaper accounts of 1885-86, a year the

natural erosion. Secondly was the ideology of "closer settlement" or "settling the small man on the land" held by successive governments under the meta-idea of progress. Lacking the commercial and industrial opportunities of America and Australia, New Zealand provincial and central governments needed to attract settlers with the lure of cheap land and assisted development costs. From Governor George Grey to Julius Vogel to John McKenzie and on into the years of the Reform government, which made finance available to ex-servicemen under the 1915 Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act, New Zealand presented itself as a land of smallholding farmers.²⁷ The third factor in the erosion process was the *quid pro quo* required by the government in exchange for land and loans. Settlers were required to "improve" their land by felling the bush and transforming it into productive pasture. Because many small farmers had little money, the cheapest form of fertilisation was through the burn²⁸ but eventually soil fertility, and consequently production, declined as steeper hillsides were eroded.

At the national level, declining production was disguised as "the frontier" was expanded by the smallholding farmers and by refrigeration which

annual summer burn got out of control, he shows why fire was required as a management tool but also its short-term costs to all human residents, if not its longer-term costs in soil erosion, and its destruction of other species.

²⁷ Tom Brooking, "Use it or lose it", *New Zealand Journal of History*, 30:2(1996), p.145.

Grey in the 1850s halved or quartered the price of rural land; W.J.Gardner, "A colonial economy", in *The Oxford history of New Zealand*, (ed) Geoffrey W.Rice (Auckland, 1992), pp.63,64. Grey also supported Joseph Master's Wairarapa Small Settlers' Association; J.Rutherford, *Sir George Grey* (London, [1961]), p.198. Vogel's government of the 1870s provided for deferred payments on immigration and land costs; Grey, *Aotearoa*, pp.270-272. McKenzie introduced the 1894 Advances to Settlers Act. Under this Act and later amendments, governments advanced large loans at low interest for long terms on the land and its improvement costs; Gardner, p.81 and Grey, pp.306-309. For William Massey's Reform government and the 1915 Act, Ashley Nevil Gould, "Proof of gratitude? Soldier land settlement in New Zealand after World War 1", PhD thesis in History (Massey University, 1992).

²⁸ Gladys Bisley, Moncrieff's friend and fellow conservationist from the Nelson Bush and Bird Society, recalled Nelson's fires and the reason for them. "When the autumn came those awful fires started. The sun and moon and everything was red, and the smoke was so awful....It was a dreadful thing to take all that bush and burn it, yet you can't blame them. They were trying to get into the country and they had no money."; *NEM*, 29 July 1978, [n.p. The cutting was given to me].

allowed the export of frozen carcases from 1882 and later of dairy products.²⁹ The development of a guaranteed market in Britain permitted the use of increasingly marginal lands; small farmer "frontier" settlement rose up steeper hinterlands. But the contraction of the international market in depressions of the 1920s and increasing concern at erosion meant that expansion into marginal country was temporarily abandoned. Some action was taken to help the new settlers. It was mainly financial; the reduction or remittance of repayments and the revaluation of properties as a recognition of their degraded conditions.³⁰ The Annual Report of the Department of Lands and Survey of 1925 admitted, "It was not foreseen either by the Department or the settlers themselves that the long-established methods of breaking in bush country that have proved successful in other districts could not safely be applied to the areas in question."³¹ That same year the Department's Minister, the Honourable A.D.McLeod, in postponing any settlement of the Urewera, acknowledged that, "It would have been better for New Zealand as a whole, if hundreds of thousands of acres felled and burnt had been allowed to remain virgin bush."³² The timing of this admission, although its sentiments were not acceptable to many farmers³³, can be seen in retrospect as the start of an intensified campaign to promote soil conservation.

Nelson province was not immune from either accelerated or natural soil erosion. In 1927, in an "open letter" to the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Gordon Coates, James Pagan related the "ghastly failure" of

²⁹ W.S.Davidson, of the New Zealand and Australian Land Company, fitted out a ship as a freezing works and exported New Zealand's first frozen meat shipment in 1882 from Dunedin; Gardner, pp.79,80.

³⁰ A special committee's report, "Deterioration of Crown Lands", led to the 1925 Deteriorated Lands Act, through which these reliefs were obtained; Roche, *Land*, pp.27,28.

³¹ Annual Report, Department of Lands and Survey, *AJHR*, 1925, C1, p.3.

³² *NEM*, 4 April 1925, p.4.

³³ Roche, *Land*, pp.37,38.

World War One soldier settlement in Nelson.³⁴ The earthquakes of 1929 eroded rocks and plant material into waterways³⁵, thus adding to the material brought down by forest clearance and agricultural burns. In 1939, settled lowlands experienced major floods which damaged crops, bridges, roads, and stopbanks.³⁶

Land degradation, because it was a problem with seemingly diverse causes and manifestations, attracted diverse solutions. Forest and Bird, represented by Sanderson, argued for soil conservation partly in relation to the retention of indigenous forest to help indigenous birds³⁷ but also in a vitalist, holistic sense when he wrote that, "Soil is the foundation of all living things and that it is itself a living thing, not merely an inert mass".³⁸ Sanderson's articles also sought to draw a parallel between once-prosperous ancient regimes whose lands had become desert through deforestation and soil erosion, and contemporary Western nations who took no measures to control their own erosion.³⁹ It has been said that Forest and Bird's statements on erosion, while helping to raise public and government consciousness, were often

³⁴ *NEM*, 27 May 1927, p.7. Pagan's letter may have been contingent upon the announcement ten days earlier that the State Forest Service would shortly begin planting Nelson's Golden Downs forest; *NEM*, 14 May 1927, p.5. Pagan, whose land was planted, disputed the financial compensation he received; John Ward and Don Cooper, *Seventy years of forestry* (Nelson, 1997), p.16.

Ashley Gould's thesis challenges earlier assessments that ex-soldiers were poorly treated in their land and financial arrangements by the Reform government.

³⁵ Several years later Moncrieff described the changes wrought by the earthquakes in the remote Mokihinui River area; "Two trips into the hinterland of Nelson Province, New Zealand", *Emu*, 35(1935-36), p.143.

³⁶ *NEM*, 1, 4, 5 December 1939, pp.6,6,4.

³⁷ "There is no doubt that our agitation about erosion will have the effect of saving some native bush for the birds. This was, of course, the original object. We were criticised in the early stages about interfering with what was not really our job, but you will notice that we are winning out."; Sanderson to Moncrieff, 14 December 1938, MS Papers 0444:194, 1. His articles on soil erosion appeared regularly in *Birds and Forest and Bird* from the later 1920s until his death.

³⁸ E.V.Sanderson, "The proposed river control bill and the problem - soil erosion", *Forest and Bird*, 61(August 1941), p.10.

³⁹ For example, "A peep into the future - the apex of our prosperity", *Birds*, 11[1926], pp.1-4; "Back to the rocks", *Birds*, 22(October 1930), pp.2,3.

sensationalist; that they drew images of New Zealand as another Sahara or of its mountainsides sliding into the sea.⁴⁰ Certainly these images are paramount in Sanderson's writings but he and Moncrieff were no more "apocalyptic" than international and some other New Zealand researchers. F.W.Furkert, Engineer-in-Chief and Under-Secretary of the Public Works Department, another speaker quoted by Moncrieff in her 1928 "Tale of Woe" speech, wrote in similar vein; "In view of increasing population, it is unthinkable that [we should abandon flooded country as unsuitable for settlement], implying, as this would, a retreat of civilization before the forces of nature."⁴¹ His Department saw the cause in terms of increasing floods and concomitant damage to life and property, while believing the solution lay in the collection of more detailed data on water flows and stronger control of rivers by a diversity of engineering structures.⁴²

The Lands Department, after the 1925 Deteriorated Lands Act, suspended the settlement of marginal areas, if not the ideologies of progress and small farm settlement.

Pressure is often brought to bear for the opening up of large areas of undeveloped lands, but under present conditions there is no doubt that the proper course is to make haste slowly. The science of farming must improve as time goes on and new methods of handling certain classes of land be thoroughly tried and tested....For some years to come it will probably be found that settlement will consist of the natural subdivision of occupied lands, rather than of a rapid and somewhat problematical settlement of blocks that are at present unoccupied through reasons of disabilities of access and quality.⁴³

⁴⁰ Lochhead, pp.292,293.

⁴¹ Quoted by Roche, *Land*, p.24 from F.W.Furkert, "The control of rivers", *New Zealand Journal of Science and Technology*, 10:1(1928), pp.33-47.

⁴² McCaskill, *Hold*, pp.12,13; Roche, *Land*, p.24.

⁴³ Annual Report, Department of Lands and Survey, *AJHR*, 1926, C1, p.3.

The State Forest Service utilised some of the "deteriorated" lands for plantation forest.⁴⁴ Scientists in the Departments of Agriculture and Scientific and Industrial Research, in the belief that it was necessary to maintain primary production on as much land as possible, increased research into soil characteristics and chemistry which was originally initiated by B.C.Aston, the soil chemist and conservationist.⁴⁵ The 1930s soil surveys were organised by Theodore Rigg⁴⁶ of the Cawthron Institute while other scientists from the DSIR and academics like McCaskill reviewed and recommended changes to land management techniques.⁴⁷ Organisations like the Royal Society of New Zealand, which had long promoted conservation of the indigenous and considered itself a scientific advisor to government, organised a scientifically-qualified Committee of Inquiry in 1938.

What is surprising is that Jacks, Whyte and Furkert, as scientists and engineers who could be expected to talk in terms of science battling nature to save civilisation, should make common cause with holistic conservationists like Sanderson and Moncrieff. But all three, even though they used the language of defeat and control, advocated working with rather than against the natural world to restrain further erosion and restore soil fertility. The message propounded by Jacks and Whyte was that new societies should adapt to their

⁴⁴ Sustainable forestry, although investigated by Vogel in the 1870s and 1880s, did not begin until 1921 with the establishment of the State Forest Service; Michael Roche, *History of New Zealand forestry* (Wellington, 1990).

⁴⁵ Bernard Aston (1871-1951) was born in England and joined New Zealand's Department of Agriculture in 1899 as a soil chemist. He is remembered for his investigation of "bush sickness" in the central North Island; Ross Galbreath, *DSIR* (Wellington, 1998), pp.27-32. Aston also contributed to farmer education through the Department's *Journal* and to the gaining of Pacific Island phosphates for New Zealand's artificial fertiliser industry; Barrie Macdonald, *Massey's imperialism and the politics of phosphate* Massey Memorial Lecture 1982 (Palmerston North, 1982), pp.3,4. He was also interested in botany and was a leading member of Forest and Bird; R.W.Bailey, "Aston, Bernard Cracroft", *DNZB* 3(1901-1920), (Auckland, Wellington, 1996), p.22. Moncrieff asked his advice in her work on plant dyes.

⁴⁶ Theodore Rigg (1888-1972), gained university qualifications in chemistry, agricultural research and soil surveying before joining the foundation staff of the Cawthron. He became its Director in 1933 and was a leading figure in New Zealand agricultural research. He was awarded a knighthood in 1938; Graeme Robertson, "Rigg, Theodore", *DNZB* 4(1921-1940), (Auckland, Wellington, 1998), p.433; Galbreath, *DSIR*, pp.27-32.

⁴⁷ Roche, *Land*, pp.32-42.

environments and govern their cultivation by "the underlying principle of human ecology - the art of living together with animals, insects, and plants".⁴⁸ In advancing various measures⁴⁹ they suggested the West could learn from Asia. In Japan, for example, legislation and agricultural techniques had long conserved forest, soil and soil fertility on islands of steep valleys and loose volcanic soils which were subject to storms and inhabited by a large population.⁵⁰ Such an ecological adaptation by a "civilized society" to achieve soil conservation and fertility was quite different to the soil fertility achieved by nomadic "primitive communities". Jacks and Whyte had no praise for the "shifting cultivation" practised by these communities as "unimportant servants of wild Nature", even though they acknowledged that such cultivation maintained soil fertility indefinitely.⁵¹ Furkert, who, like Sanderson, was a member of the New Zealand Forestry League, quoted an anonymous writer on the need to work with the natural world, "As one writer puts it, 'A way can always be found to satisfy the requirements of nature without defeating the legitimate purpose of civilization'."⁵² These particular scientists and engineers can therefore be seen to accord with Moncrieff and Sanderson in the search for ecological ways to reduce and reverse accelerated erosion which, they all believed, threatened western progress and civilisation. While they could all subscribe to the words, Moncrieff's definition will be shown to challenge the conventional understanding.

But whatever the proposed solutions in New Zealand, since many government scientists were also members of the RSNZ and, like McCaskill and

⁴⁸ Jacks and Whyte, p.38.

⁴⁹ In New Zealand, they promoted research into suitable vegetation for the tussock lands, greater use of top dressing instead of burning, and flood control through forest retention. McCaskill's history shows that recommended soil conservation methods, and others, were successfully applied in later decades.

⁵⁰ Jacks and Whyte, pp.91,92.

⁵¹ Jacks and Whyte, p.23. At the first sign of soil exhaustion, the group moved on to another area, leaving the first to regenerate.

⁵² Furkert, Report, p.33. Lochhead mentions Furkert's membership of the New Zealand Forestry League; p.243.

Aston, belonged to Forest and Bird or the NZFL, the various groups presented a solid phalanx to government on the need for conservation action. After the Kopuawhara disaster in 1938, when twenty-one men were drowned in a flash flood⁵³, farmers urged the government and the public to take action on erosion.⁵⁴ In addition to all these organisations which had a direct interest in land problems, members of the Associated Chambers of Commerce at their conference in 1938 passed a remit urging the government to prevent further destruction by a systematic policy of reafforestation on steep country and the clearing of streams.⁵⁵ To satisfy these urgent and concerted demands, the Minister of Works, the Honourable Robert Semple, initiated a Rivers Bill in 1937-38, which was eventually discussed, reviewed and expanded by a Parliamentary Select Committee in 1941 to become the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act of that year.⁵⁶ After World War Two diverse measures were undertaken to limit soil degradation. The imperative of the small man on the land also became less important in reality, if not myth, as both Labour and National governments established mechanisms for increased urban employment, while the plantation forest industry took over large areas unsuitable for agriculture.

⁵³ McCaskill, *Hold*, pp.15,16; *NEM*, 21, 24 February 1938, pp.8,13. Photographs of Kopuawhara camp taken two days before and after the flood show the havoc; Rosslyn J.Noonan, *By design* (Wellington,1975), p.140. Slips and washouts occurred to farms, roads and bridges throughout the area. In April further torrential rain in Hawkes Bay led to what became known as the Esk Valley flood, which not only caused slips and washouts but uprooted trees and buried many farms under meters of silt, sand and gravel.

⁵⁴ A.P.O'Shea, Dominion Secretary of the New Zealand Farmers' Union, admitted that a large amount of hill country should have been left in "scrub" [that is, manuka or kanuka] or standing bush; *NEM*, 2 June 1938, p.6. Also partly quoted by Roche, *Land*, p.38, from the *Dominion* of the same date.

⁵⁵ Statement Associated Chambers of Commerce, *NEM*, 4 November 1938, p.8.

⁵⁶ Roche, *Land*, pp.42-45. The objectives of the Act were the promotion of soil conservation, the mitigation and prevention of soil erosion and flood damage, and appropriate land utilisation. It established a national Council with representation from the Public Works and Lands Departments, River, Drainage and Catchment Boards, and the farming sector, and made provision for regional Boards to implement local surveys, remedial works and education programmes.

The fact that Moncrieff was part of such a wide cross-section of advocates for soil conservation, of whom some of the most influential were ecologists, demonstrates her participation in the mainstream of conservation advocacy. But the second phase of her soil conservation, her promotion of organic agriculture, was marginal to orthodox farming practice and its materialist scientific support. If her ecology allowed her to make common cause with some scientists in the first phase, it was in the second phase that the rift became apparent between her vitalist world-view and the scientific paradigm which cannot accept the non-material and unquantifiable. Her advocacy of organics and, as previous chapters have shown, her campaigns for the preservation of the wild, articulate the meaning she gave to "progress" and "civilisation".

Moncrieff's ideas on soil erosion, which have been revealed so far, derived from her own observation, discussion with public servants, reading scientific material like the *Journal of Science and Technology* and the *Transactions* of the Royal Society of New Zealand and from Sanderson's articles in *Forest and Bird*. She must also have read Jacks and Whyte's *Rape of the earth* but did not publicly evidence this source until 1942. Then, as a contributor to a newspaper debate originally on nutrition, she linked her ideas on soil conservation to health and holism through Viscount Lymington's book *Famine in England* which, according to the historian Anna Bramwell, "aroused considerable interest" when it was published in 1938, a year earlier than Jacks and Whyte.⁵⁷ Since some of Lymington's ideas were the basis of an editorial in *Forest and Bird* in 1940, and since Moncrieff belonged to an organic food-growing association from 1941, it is likely she had read his book earlier than

⁵⁷ Anna Bramwell, *Ecology in the twentieth century* (New Haven, London, 1989), p.118. Gerard Lymington was the elder son of the Earl of Portsmouth. His mother, Mary Lawrence, was an American and he was born in Wyoming in 1898. He was a Conservative Party Member of the British Parliament between 1929 and 1934. Described by Bramwell as an "Anglo-Saxon nationalist" (p.117), one of many at this time discussed in her Chapter 6 "Back to the northland", Lymington formed several groups in the 1930s to revive English customs as well as his association with soil conservation initiatives. He emigrated to Kenya in 1950 where, as Earl of Portsmouth, he wrote his autobiography, *A knot of roots* (London, 1965).

1942. This link with Lymington, whom Moncrieff described enthusiastically as "the man who has done more than anyone else to prevent Britain from starvation during the war"⁵⁸, connects her to the vitalist thought of Rudolf Steiner and again into the imperial stream of environmental history through British medical and dietary researchers in India.

Moncrieff, perhaps because of the early deaths of members of her immediate family, her husband's recurrent illness and her own less than "robust" health⁵⁹, had long held an interest in the diverse components of good human health. Her prescription for good health included wholesome food and boiled drinking water if the water supply was "poisonous", plenty of sleep, cold baths, and sea bathing in summer.⁶⁰ She also believed in sun-bathing after her brother had benefitted from "exposure to the sun" during his illness. She recommended it to J.Allan Thomson as a treatment. "Here in New Zealand they are beginning to wake up to that treatment, but up to now I am sure they have not realised the value of the sun, for if they have put patients out they have never done so fully exposed but always with clothes on, which ruins the treatment because the sun cannot get at the skin."⁶¹ Although exercise is not mentioned in these examples, other letters mention tennis, while their tramping and sailing activities are well documented. Moncrieff also rode

⁵⁸ Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 28 July 1942, p.3. She may not have known that Lymington believed that the unchecked numbers of small birds in Britain were a "complete plague" to farms and gardens and should not be fed in the winter; James Fisher, "The food of wild birds", *JSPFE*, 34(April 1940), p.30, quoting a letter from Lymington to *The Times*, 10 February 1940. Moncrieff's belief in the economic value of wild birds, as explained in Chapter 3 and her practice of feeding them, was clearly at odds with Lymington's. But if she had read his letter in *The Times* herself, she is likely to have condoned his views on wild birds for the wider question of organic agriculture, another example of the same pragmatic attitude she displayed to R.A.Falla and W.B.Oliver.

⁵⁹ In a letter to James Drummond, she wrote, "I am indeed sorry that your health has suffered of late years. Not being very robust myself I can fully sympathise."; Moncrieff to Drummond, 5 September [1925], Drummond Papers, Item 209, Canterbury Museum Archives, Christchurch. Her correspondence in the 1920s and 1930s with Sanderson and others has references to her own and Malcolm's recurrent health problems.

⁶⁰ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 13 March 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

⁶¹ Moncrieff to Thomson, 22 July 1927, Bird File general 9/0/0, MONZ.

a bike around Nelson.⁶² In these health matters, as in her forest and bird conservation, Sanderson again provided sympathetic and holistic advice, some of which referred to his army experiences. Like her he was a believer in sunshine, fresh air and sea water for a healthy lifestyle. In the eugenics-conscious 1920s he linked these to a national virility and, with conscious or unconscious humour, to an earlier lifestyle. "The nearer we live to our ancestors the cave men the healthier and more virile will we be. You could scarcely kill them with an axe."⁶³

Moncrieff's public holistic linkage of human health, soil erosion, soil fertility and organic farming began in July 1942 when she wrote to the *Nelson Evening Mail* to confirm the view of another correspondent that deficiency diseases in human beings were indeed connected to soil infertility.⁶⁴ She began her exposition by first recounting the recent problems of soil erosion and land deterioration in New Zealand and extending this evidence with overseas examples selected from Jacks and Whyte. But the theme of her letter, mostly acknowledged quotes from Lymington which is another example of her use of corroborating expert opinion, was a plea for farmers and gardeners to consider the soil as a living organism interacting with the other living organisms of plants, animals and people. "The processes of life depend as much on decay as on growth. Healthy growth can only take place where there has been proper decay of organic matter which becomes humus. This can only be brought about by the working of the soil bacteria. Reckless use of sulphate of

⁶² Périnne Moncrieff, Radio NZ interview 1978: Radio NZ Archive.

⁶³ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 9 March 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

Margaret Tennant remarked on how contemporary attitudes to sunshine exposure, fresh air and wholesome nutrition flowed into children's health camps which began in New Zealand in 1919; Margaret Tennant, *Children's health, the nation's wealth* (Wellington, 1994), pp.57,66,67. What was called "Sunlight Treatment" although undefined, was recommended for sickly primary school children; Sunlight treatment of schoolchildren 1928-1937 file, Health Department file 35/86 , N.A. This was prior to warnings about skin cancer and Antarctica's "hole in the ozone layer".

⁶⁴ Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 28 July 1942, p.3.

ammonia, nitro chalk, potash and salts kills these bacteria".⁶⁵ The effects of "this murder of the soil" led to disease in plants, beasts and man, so that

[p]eople think it quite normal to have flu every year, incessant colds, false teeth, spectacles, constipation, headaches, catarrh, gastric ulcers, low spirits....The healthiest people are those who take most care of their agriculture, which return to the land its own waste products and which look upon land not as means of exploitation, but as the centre of their own life.⁶⁶

She suggested several means by which New Zealanders could improve their soil and therefore their health. One was the Asian examples, from Jacks and Whyte, of Japanese forest preservation and soil conservation in Chinese agriculture. Another was the reduction in the use of artificial manures, which could be useful to stimulate production in exceptional cases, but was unhealthy when used excessively. A third was that people could learn about compost farming from pamphlets distributed by the Nelson Compost Club.⁶⁷

Rigg, as Director of the Cawthron and advocate of agricultural orthodoxy using artificial fertilisers, must have felt obliged to reply to her letter.⁶⁸ Overall, he said, she painted "an unduly pessimistic picture of New Zealand farming". New Zealand showed less erosion than countries like the United States and Australia because its agriculture relied on pasture and dairy farming rather than cash crops like wheat. He argued that, because of the use of artificial fertilisers, suitable strains of grass and clover, and the right pasture management, "production in New Zealand does not appear to be falling." On the specific point of the value of artificial fertilisers, he suggested the statements Moncrieff quoted on their detrimental effect, were misleading. Chemical deficiencies in New Zealand soils - lime and phosphate and, in Nelson, cobalt, boron and magnesium - were not the result of man's mismanagement but inherent, due to the low content of these minerals in the

⁶⁵ From Lymington, p.95.

⁶⁶ From Lymington, p.78.

⁶⁷ The Compost Club will be discussed shortly.

⁶⁸ "Soil treatment - an unduly pessimistic picture", Comment by Sir Theodore Rigg, *NEM*, 1 August 1942, p.4. The quotes in this paragraph are from this letter.

parent material and the leaching effect of rain. "The best way to get them back is to apply the particular element...more advantageously by the direct use of the chemical compound...[because there is] little difference between artificial and organic fertilisers for plant nutrition....The use of organic matter alone will not cure these deficiency problems". Finally Rigg suggested that there was insufficient data in New Zealand to allow any definite conclusion to be drawn about the relationship of soil and health. But he conceded a number of her points, especially that relating to the benefit of organic matter on soil. It was important, he agreed, for intensively-cultivated soils, such as China's terraced rice lands, where soil exhaustion proceeded only slowly through the use of compost material, ash from the crops grown and human excreta, as well as crop rotation with leguminous crops. He suggested that land and home gardens in Nelson could benefit from organic manure, because "insufficient attention is being paid to this matter", and because the manure maintained the supply of humus thereby improving the soil's aeration and moisture-holding capacity.

Moncrieff responded robustly to some of Rigg's points.⁶⁹ Erosion was less in New Zealand, she contended, because it had had less time to develop since New Zealand was the latest country to be opened up for sheep pasture. She defended Lymington's position on artificial fertilisers, again stating that he did not deny their value but warned against their excessive use. "Like drugs used in a proper way they have their value." On the correlation of soil and health Moncrieff quoted an experiment related by Lymington, which indicated that rats fed on whole wheat grown with dung were more lively and vigorous than rats fed on artificially-manured wheat, despite doses of cod-liver oil.⁷⁰ This experiment was "some positive proof of the dangers of treating plant

⁶⁹ Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 5 August 1942, p.6. The quotes in this paragraph are from this letter. Their debate drew several responses, one supporting the use of Steiner methods, the others supporting both organic and chemical fertilisers; 30 July, 4 August 1942, p.3.

⁷⁰ From Lymington, p.158. This was one of the Indian experiments mentioned above. It is described in detail in E.B.Balfour, *The living soil and the Haughley experiment* (London, 1975), pp.34,35. *The living soil* was originally published in 1943.

growth as a chemical mixture that can be corrected at will by placing certain chemical necessities of plant composition in the soil." Another proof lay, she argued, in the fact that medical science "now realizes that to use continuously strong antiseptics retards the cure of a wound, since it destroys the bacteria which heal as well as those which poison". She concluded by emphasising Rigg's support for the importance of organic compost.

In relating this exchange with Rigg to Sanderson, her tone was one of dismay and anger, "Our chief need is to make the public realise the difference between pseudo-scientists in charge of our laboratories and people who can genuinely assistBut as long as the public think [Rigg] is the goods so they will submit to his experimenting with their life.... It wants another scientist to expose [Rigg];....If only we had Dr Myers back here."⁷¹ This opinion, written at the same time as her reproof to the OSNZ scientists for their approval of captive breeding, again reflects the difference which she perceived between her vitalist and their materialist world-views. But it also indicates her recognition that, without scientific education or even the acknowledged conservation status of Sanderson, her holistic world-view was not accepted by the wider public. Rigg, with his soil analysis, research and educational work among Nelson agriculturalists for twenty years, his place on the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research⁷², his position as Director of the Cawthron and his knighthood, in itself a recognition of his authority, held most of the aces in any debate with her on agricultural procedures. The debate and the realisation of her lack of influence undoubtedly contributed to her dismay which eventuated in "The destruction of an avian paradise", and in the increasing pessimism of subsequent editions of *New Zealand birds*.

Lymington belonged to a group whom Bramwell has called the High Tory ecologists. As the name indicates they were political Conservatives, who nevertheless opposed Conservative tenets of free enterprise and capitalism in

⁷¹ Moncrieff to Sanderson, [August 1942], MS Papers 0444:195, 1. By this time John Myers, the ecologist whom both Moncrieff and Sanderson admired, was dead.

⁷² Annual Report, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, *AJHR*, 1936, H.34, p.34.

agricultural policy, while supporting private ownership of land for smallholding farmers. They were nationally and socially conservative in advocating the revival of English customs and the regeneration of rural "Old England", in which former factory-workers - "pioneers" as Lymington called them - would join farmers to become "yeomen" smallholders and farm organically in the "old ways".⁷³

Lymington, impelled by the possibility of war and therefore of food shortages given that much of England's food was imported from the soil-eroding Empire⁷⁴, articulated these ideas in *Famine in Britain* to urge England to become self-sufficient. While he proposed an integrated agricultural, import and financial policy⁷⁵, it was his ecological arguments which Moncrieff absorbed and promoted. Central to these was his belief that the fertility of England's soil had greatly deteriorated largely because of the decline in the use of organic manures and fertilisers and their replacement by inorganic substances. "These last, whatever their virtues, are effective generally in destroying the soil bacteria, which keeps land healthy and provides it with humus." As land health deteriorated, so too did human physical and mental health. He offered a number of ways in which the soil could be reconstituted organically, like Jacks and Whyte suggesting the example of Japan. But beyond these material interconnections Lymington's polemic was infused by a

⁷³ Bramwell, pp.104, 105, 119, 120, 122.

⁷⁴ In his Chapter 6 Lymington traversed the same territories as Jacks and Whyte. Like them he obtained his information on New Zealand from Marsden; p.11.

⁷⁵ Lymington expanded Jacks and Whyte's censure of the exchange of European capital for Empire soil fertility. He criticised British government financial policies which, he said, supported the market for British capital through offering tariff-free entry to Britain for overseas food products rather than British agriculture. The British farmer, he argued, having exploited his land during World War One was further hampered in the restoration of its fertility by high production costs through heavy death duties, excessive government regulation, high interest costs and wage rates. In the cities, despite industrialisation and socialist policies, many were unemployed. His solution was to redirect British capital to agriculture to reduce farmers' costs so more people could be employed on smallholdings and receive the benefit of higher prices; Chapters 4 and 7.

However Lymington did not abandon the temperate-climate Dominions once their agricultural market in Britain was banned. Their empty lands were to be further occupied by "the white northern races of Europe" who, by living in "self-supporting mixed-farming" communities of the same type that he proposed for Britain, would counter soil erosion; pp.202, 204.

sense of vitalism. "The soil should be a living thing which breathes and pulsates with life. It is not a lifeless container of minerals. If we treat it as being alive we shall not only grow good crops for men which feeds them well and gives them health. All life is interconnected...".⁷⁶

High Tory soil conservation had two sources, the first of which was research into the links between nutrition, health and food carried out from the 1910s by a group of doctors and scientists in Britain and India. Their work was predicated on observations of the good health, physique and longevity of such northern Indian peoples as the Hunza in relation to their diet of fresh vegetables and fruit and whole wheat. The High Tories believed that the physical and mental health of British people, which they viewed as poor due to inadequate diet, could be improved by a similar diet grown on organically-composted land. The latter proposal resulted from Sir Albert Howard's Indore method of composting both vegetable and animal material into humus.⁷⁷

The second source was the biodynamic agricultural method of philosopher and educationalist Rudolf Steiner⁷⁸, who instituted a system of small-scale or peasant farming in Germany after World War One. Steiner envisaged the earth as alive and soil as a living organ of earth. He rejected the

⁷⁶ Lymington, pp.127,128,138,139,156.

⁷⁷ Balfour; Chapter 2 gives a "Medical Testament" detailing ill health in British people in the 1930s and diet studies in India; pp.67-70 for Howard's research.

⁷⁸ Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) devised his doctrine Anthroposophy (wisdom about man) to distinguish it from theosophy (wisdom about God) preached by his former associates, Madame H.P.Blavatsky and Annie Besant. His insight established practical ventures in medicine, the arts, farming and education. Steiner schools, first founded in 1919, are now worldwide; Alan Bullock and Stephen Trombley (eds), *Fontana dictionary of modern thought* (London, 1988), pp.39,812.

Steiner was inspired by the poet Johann von Goethe's spiritual conception of nature as "God's living garment"; Colin Wilson, *Rudolf Steiner* (Wellingborough, 1985) pp.37,51. Steiner's biodynamic method of agriculture also influenced the New Zealand agriculturalist, Charles Alma Baker. In the 1930s Baker wrote books about the Steiner methods, having used them on his New Zealand farms and Malayan rubber estates; Barrie Macdonald, *Imperial patriot* (Wellington, 1993), Chapter 11. Steiner's philosophy and biodynamics are pursued in New Zealand today by the Bio-dynamic Farming and Gardening Association formed in 1939; see its book, *Biodynamics* (Auckland, 1989), p.202.

In the Steiner context the words "biodynamic" and "organic" are not synonymous. Biodynamics requires the growth and use of herbal preparations and particular planting regimes, as well as organic composting methods.

use of "dead" artificial fertilisers and sought soil preservation through the use of the older fertilisation methods of compost from living matter, mulching, non-ploughing and multi-cropping. He believed these methods preserved the soil's living spirit in accordance with his vision of the life-forces and magnetic influences of the cosmos.⁷⁹ Biodynamic and organic agricultural methods were accepted and encouraged by several leading members of the Nazi government including Rudolf Hess and Walter Darré, the Minister of Agriculture until 1942. After Hess's departure to Britain, it was discouraged by Hermann Goering who had always believed it less productive than methods using chemical fertilisers and mechanisation.⁸⁰

The manufacture of artificial fertilisers began in Britain, Germany and France about the 1840s when it was decided to experiment with the replacement of fertility in soil by the chemical production of nitrogen, phosphates and potash.⁸¹ Industries quickly developed to produce superphosphate, sulphate of ammonia and sulphate of potash which were exported world wide. In New Zealand artificial fertiliser imports were imported from 1867⁸² but their use was not widespread until after World War One.⁸³ The first artificial fertiliser was produced in Britain by John Lawes, an industrialist, who then founded Rothamsted Experimental Station in 1843 to study the relationship between soil fertility and crop growth. Rothamsted became Britain's principal research establishment for arable crops.⁸⁴ It had a

⁷⁹ Bramwell, p.200.

⁸⁰ Bramwell describes competition within the Nazi hierarchy and the Ministry of Agriculture between proponents of the two types of farming; pp.201,202. She notes the possible use in Germany of "dirty tricks" by the chemical industry against organic farmers; p.204. For a history of similar counter-attacks against later twentieth century conservationists, see Andrew Rowell, *Green backlash* (London,New York, 1996).

⁸¹ J.Fritsch, *The manufacture of chemical manures*, (trans) H.B.Stocks (London, 1920).

⁸² P.W.Smallfield, "Soil management", in *Farming in New Zealand* (Wellington, 1956), p.79.

⁸³ J.D.Gould, p.19.

⁸⁴ Colin Tudge, *The future with Rothamsted* (Harpenden, [1986]).

number of links with Nelson's Cawthon Institute as Rigg and other Cawthon scientists studied there while Sir John Russell, its Director in the 1920s, gave the Cawthon Lecture in 1928. He was in New Zealand to gather data for the proposed Imperial Soil Bureau which was to employ Jacks and Whyte.⁸⁵

Steiner's vitalist ideas spread to England where Lymington and other High Tory ecologists, having visited biodynamic farms in Europe, farmed their land on organic principles. They also promoted the health benefits of organic agriculture using Howard's Indore composting method, through a group called Kinship in Husbandry and its journal *The New Pioneer*, as well as pamphlets and Lymington's book.⁸⁶

In 1939 one of their members, Lady Eve Balfour, established the Haughley farms experiment to scientifically test the efficacy of organic, as opposed to inorganic methods of farming, and to complement research by the Rothamsted Station.⁸⁷ Rothamsted experimentation with organic methods in the 1930s, in conjunction with nutrition studies, could detect no difference in quality between crops grown with organic manure and those with inorganic fertilisers, which Rigg had noted and which is believed by orthodox agriculture today. Balfour questioned Rothamsted's methodology, arguing that only long-term tests would show the difference since humus in the soil "softens the effects of inorganic chemicals" which eventually would destroy soil fertility and lead to soil erosion.⁸⁸ However by the late 1960s there was an apparent decline in the fertility of the solely organic section of the Haughley farms. In

⁸⁵ NEM, 8 August 1928, pp.4,5.

⁸⁶ Bramwell, pp.120-122.

⁸⁷ Balfour (1899-1990), the niece of British Prime Minister Arthur Balfour and a farmer herself, and Alice Debenham, donated land for organic research in 1939 but the experiment did not begin until after the war. Balfour wrote many pamphlets on organic farming as well as the book *The living soil* (op.cit.) which was revised and enlarged at the end of the research project in the late 1960s to include results; Bramwell, pp.216,217.

Balfour visited New Zealand in 1959 during a world trip; Jack Meechin, *Healthy soil healthy food healthy people* (Auckland, 1993), p.68.

⁸⁸ Balfour, pp.134,135,56,57. In using the term "artificial", they did not include "such organic products as chalk, pure bone or fish meal, etc. Obviously the addition to the soil of animal residues such as these cannot detract from its vital quality, which is the point at issue."; p.18.

1974, with many original supporters dead and finance a problem, the focus of the farms shifted from pure to applied research to demonstrate organic productivity and commercial objectives.⁸⁹ The Haughley experiment was administered by the Soil Association formed in 1947, of which Lymington and Balfour were both members, and was advised by a scientific research committee of botanists, biologists and medical researchers. Its ideals and practices were to spread across the western world.⁹⁰ In the late 1960s and early 1970s two well-known international conservationists, Barry Commoner and Fritz Schumacher, were Vice-President and Chairman respectively.⁹¹

It was a short step from Moncrieff's warnings of the problems of chemical fertilisers to her cautions on the use of chemical pesticides like DDT, Dichloro diphenyl trichloroethane. Almost twenty years before Rachel Carson's book *Silent spring* aroused worldwide concern⁹², Sanderson and Moncrieff had written on the dangers of these pesticides. True to his belief that the world must be regarded as a whole, Sanderson criticised the

⁸⁹ Balfour, pp.258,259.

⁹⁰ Bramwell, pp.121,217-219. Moncrieff was aware of the movement in America for she mentioned it to Heenan in her letter of 10 September 1942, Heenan Papers, MS Papers 1132:272, NA. Her knowledge may have come from the work of the journalist and novelist Louis Bromfield, whom she quoted in the third edition of *New Zealand birds* (p.xiv): "You cannot do violence to Nature without paying for it as an individual and as a nation." Bromfield (1896-1956) was born in Ohio, and after a career as a foreign correspondent and novelist, returned there in 1939 to farm organically. He wrote about this experience in *Malabar farm*; James D.Hart, *Oxford companion to American literature* (New York, Oxford, 1983 5th ed), p.100.

⁹¹ Bramwell, pp.213,217.

⁹² Rachel Carson, *Silent spring* (London,1965, orig. pub.1962). Carson's book detailed the composition and manufacture of synthetic pesticides beginning with DDT, making the point that because they are built on a base of carbon atoms, as is the living world, they are classed as organic; p.33. Using evidence from the United States and other countries, she explained their use and their cumulative, ecological damage in *Silent spring* although like Moncrieff, Carson had been aware of the harmful effects of DDT since World War Two; Linda Lear, *Rachel Carson* (New York, 1997), pp.118-120 and Chapter 14.

Rachel Louise Carson (1907-1964) graduated an MA in Zoology and worked as a marine biologist and editor for the United States government. In the 1940s and 1950s she published three books on the sea; *Under the sea wind*, *The sea around us* and *The edge of the sea*. A birdwatcher, she was alerted in 1957 to the unexplained deaths of numerous birds which led to her ecological study of chemical pesticides.

unselective character of DDT in killing all insects when most were not harmful, and some beneficial, to humans. He was concerned that, as the human population grew and food plants were grown in larger stands of a single crop, DDT would be used to control the inevitable insect plagues. But it would also kill bees, insectivorous birds, predator insects and "possibly micro-organisms in the soil...leading to a condition worse than any plague experienced by man owing to the complete upsetting of Nature's biotic scheme."⁹³ In 1947 Moncrieff wrote to the *Nelson Evening Mail* on the dangers of the use of DDT because of its cumulative properties, her opening sentence prefiguring the seasonal intent in Carson's title:

With the advance of spring, activities in garden and home increase and, with it, the use of many chemicals the natures of which are barely understood by the general public....Of late new preparations have appeared on the market as insect destroyers, which the public should treat with great care. DDT for instance may not injure human beings, but the writer gathers that it can harm animals. Not from one dose perhaps but if taken more frequently. Because the poison will have an accumulative effect.⁹⁴

She also cited ant and rat poisons, arsenic and red lead used in sowing grass seed as "certain death to birds" and other animals which "might lick the

⁹³ E.V.Sanderson, "DDT", *Forest and Bird*, 77(August, 1945), p.6.

The insecticide properties of DDT had been discovered in 1939. As a powder not readily absorbed through the skin, it was used during World War Two to combat lice. But as a liquid, the toxic properties of DDT and its successors dieldrin and aldrin, and equally toxic herbicides, were used to combat insect and weed pests in agriculture and horticulture worldwide; Carson, pp.35,36. New Zealand entomologists also issued early warnings of the indiscriminate nature of DDT; Galbreath, *DSIR*, p.94.

Earlier pesticides, based on arsenic or solutions of copper salts, could also kill indiscriminately; Thomas R.Dunlap, *DDT* (Princeton, 1981), Chapter 1. This book discusses the use of these pesticides and DDT in the United States. In England the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds mounted a display at the 1912 International Horticultural Exhibition at Chelsea to warn gardeners of the danger to birds of the earlier pesticides; John Sheail, *Nature in trust* (Glasgow, London, 1976), p.47. Lymington, too, warned of their dangers; p.159.

⁹⁴ Moncrieff to Editor, *NEM*, 3 September 1947, p.8.

corpses", describing all of these insecticides as "pungent, unpleasant and dangerous deterrents".⁹⁵

In 1949 she lobbied R.H.Carter, Secretary of Forest and Bird, as DDT's dangerous effects became increasingly apparent to her.

The vet tells me the number of dogs and cats poisoned by DDT is increasing yet every gardening book tells one to use it. I suppose you know that the USA has had hundreds of cases of Urax X which is nothing more than DDT in human beings. But I have not seen it mentioned in N.Z. and people are using it like pepper.⁹⁶

Moncrieff believed the Health Department should prevent the manufacture of DDT.⁹⁷ She does not appear to have lobbied the Department but it is likely that any lobbying would have been unsuccessful. As late as 1983 the Department downplayed the fears of Mapua residents, just across Tasman Bay from Nelson city, who were concerned by residues on the site of a local chemical factory. This plant had manufactured DDT and other pesticides from the mid 1940s. Although I have not found a Moncrieff reference to this factory, it is ironic that the site "described as one of the worst contaminated sites in the country" should have existed so near her.⁹⁸

Moncrieff herself used herbal remedies and took note of new preparations, as she explained to a correspondent.

⁹⁵ ibid. She wrote again in 1950 after another correspondent sought answers to an unexplained illness in and the disappearance of local birds. "The authoritative answer was so poor that I replied to it myself with fuller details..."; Moncrieff to Cunningham, 23 September 1950, 2. In an undated talk on wading birds she deplored the use of herbicides on the greens of Nelson golf courses because that also killed large numbers of banded dotterels; "Waders", MS Papers 4723:1, 1a.

⁹⁶ Moncrieff to Carter, 8 October 1949, MS Papers 0444:197, 1.

⁹⁷ Moncrieff to Cunningham, 23 September 1950, 2.

⁹⁸ Margot Butcher, "Noxious neighbours. The battle of Mapua", *North and South*, September(1993), p.81. The Minister for the Environment called Mapua "one of the worst" contaminated sites in the country; Butcher, p.84. Although the factory closed in 1988, either decontaminating or capping the residues will cost Nelson local bodies millions of dollars: "Pesticide site can be sealed", *Dominion*, 15 May 1997, p.9.

For a history of New Zealand conservationist response to synthetic pesticides from the 1970s, see Roger Wilson, *From Manapouri to Aramoana* (Auckland, 1982), pp.133-143.

I was reading recently in a book on the New Forest where the gipsies are no longer allowed to roam and live on the natural food provided by herbs and berries and a kind of mad improvement has [a]ffected some of the forest so much that the p[o]nies no longer have sufficient herbs to keep them healthy. Watercress beds have been drained; oil drilling has been carried on [in] the midst of the forest and ruined everything around and so forth.

We seem to be pestered by experts who are not real experts at all just shallow thinkers with a degree throwing their weight about. We are appalled at this 1080 programme which is to be stepped up and is bound to kill so many birds to say nothing of dogs and even human beings in danger. I was recently given an article by two American professors and they instanced even children who had died. [Y]et we in New Zealand have to accept it because the Departments say it is alright.

The woman who wrote the book on the New Forest has invented a wonderful anti-insect preparation entirely of herbs which is most effective and can have no dangerous effect on the human beings.

Also another one for spraying fruit-trees so that the birds do not touch the fruit but that is still to be improved slightly before going on the market. This is the type of thing we need. Lady Eve Balfour said when here that in Canada they spray the fruit-trees with another plant juice and none of the dangerous poisons.

This era appears to be a poison age with its faith in poisons and drugs. Personally I know we have everything at our door in the shape of plants but the moment a certain species is known to cure some ailment they make it synthetically and away goes all the benefit.⁹⁹

I have quoted the whole passage on chemical insecticides, part of a letter which mostly related to a large unidentified bird in Nelson province, for four reasons. Firstly, it indicates that Moncrieff may have used her replies to correspondents with bird queries to present information about wider conservation issues since the era of the Bush and Bird Nature Diary competition and the publication of her lectures was ending. Secondly, because there are so few other references to her knowledge of synthetic pesticides, it demonstrates both her efforts to warn others of their potential hazards, and her

⁹⁹ Moncrieff to Grooby, 1 August [1953], 2.

promotion of alternate organic preparations like the anti-insect and Canadian fruit-tree sprays. Moncrieff herself used Dr Edward Bach's homeopathic medicines and flower remedies for both humans and birds.¹⁰⁰ Thirdly, it again evidences her criticism of orthodox science and "experts" whose world-view she considered unecological and non-vitalist. Fourthly, it positions her in the forefront of this conservation issue which remains significant today. Previous publications have given that role to R.A.Falla. John Salmon wrote of Falla's 1963 correlation of the disappearance of birds and the widespread use of DDT, dieldrin and aldrin after he and Falla had corresponded on insecticides in 1957.¹⁰¹ Fleming wrote of Falla's belief that mankind was poisoning the land with weedkillers and by the 'blind crazy use of pesticides'.¹⁰² While Moncrieff and Falla may well have discussed the role of DDT in the disappearance of birds in the 1940s, her position, and indeed Sanderson's, in the early exposure of the dangers of chemical pesticides, must be acknowledged.

The reduction of her public activism did not mean that Moncrieff herself ceased to use organic methods. Just as her personal ornithology and conservation projects continued, so too did her organic gardening. Her allusion to the Compost Club¹⁰³ in the newspaper debate with Rigg indicates her membership of a group with connections to the High Tory ecologists. As

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Henk Heinekamp, 2. Bach (1886-1936) was a former Harley St doctor and bacteriologist. He gave up his practice in 1929 to search out wild plants whose distilled properties he believed could heal physical disease, which he defined as "the result of the disharmony between soul and mind"; Judy Howard and John Ramsell, *The original writings of Edward Bach* (Saffron Waldon, 1990), p.50.

¹⁰¹ J.T.Salmon, "Nature conservation", in *The natural history of New Zealand*, (ed) Gordon R.Williams (Wellington, 1973), p.396; Salmon (as Convenor of Conservation Committee RSNZ) to Falla, 22 October 1957, Falla Papers 210B, MONZ. The Committee had been requested by the Entomological Society of New Zealand to investigate the use and effects of modern insecticides following the deaths of bees by aerial crop spraying. The Committee recommended compulsory registration of all insecticides and control if necessary, further research and a public education programme on their handling and use.

¹⁰² See Chapter 3.

¹⁰³ The group had several name changes from the Humic Compost Club to its present name of the Soil and Health Association of New Zealand; Meechin, pp.27-34.

in Britain, New Zealand's organic agriculture movement was motivated by a concern for health within the atmosphere of eugenics-consciousness and war in the early decades of the twentieth century. Lymington, in comparing Britain's and Germany's rates of "fitness"¹⁰⁴, was critical of "modern education and the twentieth-century fashion of feminism" which, he said, had deprived women of housewifely food preparation skills and instilled a desire to work outside the home, to consider childbirth as a dread disease and to glory in "the mere acquisition of book-knowledge on subjects often unrelated to life."¹⁰⁵ As the next chapter will show, it is unlikely that Moncrieff agreed with his views on feminism; she certainly spent much time as a voluntary worker "outside the home". Neither have I seen any remarks in her extant correspondence to suggest she agreed with his eugenicist opinions.¹⁰⁶ While she accepted death when it was inevitable she made every effort to keep the sick alive, whether her husband or a bird. Overall she was more concerned to improve human well-being, together with that of other species, than to remove the "unfit". As Chapter Six showed, Moncrieff certainly feared a moral degeneracy as it

¹⁰⁴ Lymington, p.75. He noted that, whereas 47% of recruits to the British army were rejected as unfit, 78% of conscripts in Germany were passed fully fit.

¹⁰⁵ Lymington, pp.76,77,81. As Lymington blamed the system rather than women themselves, his judgement applied to all classes. "Therefore it is small blame to her today if she is both incapable of choosing (among rich and poor alike), the wholesome food and of cooking it properly, when she has chosen it"; p.82. He suggested that German Labour camps had inculcated a desire to serve Germany amongst all classes while women were enthusiastically learning their job as housewives and guardians of health; pp.79,80.

His argument was also eugenic, since he disagreed with what he described as the policy of keeping alive children who normally would have died, and women "not fit to be mothers"; p.77. Eugenics, or the "science" of improving humankind through selective breeding, was of considerable social concern throughout the western world from the 1880s. For New Zealand's involvement in the movement, see Philip J. Fleming, "Eugenics in New Zealand 1900-1940", MA thesis in History (Massey University, 1981).

¹⁰⁶ Blanche Baughan (1870-1958), a founding member and councillor of the first Forest and Bird Society, whose writings like *Studies in New Zealand scenery* (Christchurch, 1916) promoted a conservationist perspective, held eugenic views; Fleming, p.36. This is not mentioned in, Nancy Harris, "Baughan, Blanche Edith", *DNZB* 3, p.38. Baughan, who was born in Britain, gained a BA in Classics with first class honours from the University of London in 1891 before emigrating to New Zealand in 1900. She had been attracted to the scenery, botany and climbing in the European Alps. She continued to pursue these interests in New Zealand which put her in touch with other conservationists of her day including H.G.Ell and Leonard Cockayne.

related to conservation law-breaking and cruelty to birds. This chapter has revealed her moral concern that human wastefulness of Nature's "bounty" could lead to land degradation and the decline of western civilisation. For her, the solutions to the former were education and tougher penalties and to the latter, the hard work but good health of organic gardening and farming.

In New Zealand the organics movement began when Dr Guy Chapman, an Auckland dentist, founded the Food Reform Society in the 1920s to advocate whole, in place of, refined foods. Obtaining information on the Indore composting method from Howard in England, he and other club members then promoted composting and the use of organic produce. One of their successes, the replacement of "chemically grown" fruit and vegetables by organic methods in the diet of students at an Auckland boarding school and follow-up research into the incidence of illness (which declined) in the students, was quoted by Balfour.¹⁰⁷ The first Humic Compost Club was formed by Chapman in Auckland in 1941. By 1948, when articles appeared about the organisation in *Forest and Bird*, there were fourteen branches.¹⁰⁸

There are occasional references in Moncrieff's letters to her Nelson Compost Club activities in which she was acknowledged as "a very active member".¹⁰⁹

We are having a most interesting time in our Compost Circle....[T]here are not enough to form a branch so we keep it small and our members are enthusiasts. The other day we fixed it between us and got four tons of seaweed from the Kaikoura coast brought by lorry. The enthusiasts went at three in the morning and were back by early evening. Then the mass of bull-kelp was attacked by our members all with

¹⁰⁷ Balfour, pp.145-148. The information was supplied by Ysobel Daldy, founder of the Physical and Mental Welfare Society of New Zealand to which Chapman also belonged. Balfour wrote that Daldy had first published the experiment in *Nature*, (8 June 1940); p.146. Accounts are also on the Nutrition-diet 1936-38 file, Health 35/70/1, NA. While this society seems to have been based in Auckland, it lobbied elsewhere because a letter signed by the society linking soil erosion and soil infertility appeared in *NEM*, 6 December 1938, p.8. There is no evidence that Moncrieff belonged to it.

¹⁰⁸ *Forest and Bird*, 88(May 1948), p.10; 89(August 1948), p.6.

¹⁰⁹ Meechin, p.88.

different weapons. Scissors, knives, shearing tools and spades. The sharp knives were the best. Now the stuff is already rotting in the soil so we expect to have wonderful gardens this year.¹¹⁰

Her references to "wonderful gardens" and "enthusiasts" dominate the paragraph and downplay the effort that must have gone into the venture - the early start, the driving, loading and unloading, the scission and division. The paragraph's subtext indicates that organic gardening and agriculture was sheer hard work and required strength and persistence, but that this was accepted by the participants because it manifested their ecological values and nourished them with healthy food. For Moncrieff the link between healthy bodies and healthy food from healthy soil was paramount;

We should be very healthy because we have vegetables off land that has never had artificial manure except lime. So our butter milk and eggs are alright. But as I pointed out to my husband our bread and meat are all grown on fields reeking with sulphates for the farmers in this district have learnt the lesson thoroughly of easy farming versus using animal manures....[I would] like to see a firm sell flour grown on composted soil without the use of chemicals, when it would be possible to make one's own bread.¹¹¹

When the subtext of strength and persistence in the previous quote is aligned with her opinion that the farmers of Nelson had learnt the lesson thoroughly of "easy farming", by which she meant the use of manufactured artificial fertilisers¹¹², she appears to be staking a claim to the high moral

¹¹⁰ Moncrieff to Cunningham, 18 July 1955, 2.

Two years later she told Oliver that, "At the present moment 'compost' and the treatment of the soil is my work". She mentioned an "interesting" pamphlet she had received from America on a health food made from composted grass; Moncrieff to Oliver, 2 September 1953, Box WRB Oliver Correspondence and notes, MONZ.

By 1957 there must have been enough members in Nelson to form a branch; Moncrieff, Autobiographical paper, 2.

¹¹¹ Moncrieff to Aston, 22 October 1946, MS Papers 0444:197, 1. Organically grown wheat was first sold commercially in 1958; Meechin, p.28.

¹¹² Smallfield confirmed her assessment of the widespread use of artificial fertilisers. "The use of fertilisers [particularly superphosphate] and lime is an important feature of the Dominion's crop and pasture practices....As livestock is not housed, the utilisation of farmyard manure is not an important feature of New Zealand farming"; Smallfield, pp.79,82.

ground which, in the nineteenth century, had been claimed by the European settlers as they made the "waste" lands productive under the banner of progress. Then prevailing liberal values had associated barbarism with the easy life and "waste lands", and civilised progress with hard work and productive lands¹¹³, but Moncrieff adjusted that theory. For her, agriculture achieved through the "new but deadening" artificial fertilisers and pesticides was synonymous with the easy life, while civilised progress was equated to the hard work of older methods to conserve the living soil.¹¹⁴ In addition, as earlier chapters showed, "progress" included the protection of remaining "waste" forests as the wild with spiritual and aesthetic regenerative values for humans but also as habitats for other species. For Moncrieff, both aspects of "progress" were moral imperatives, which Nature, the creator of all species, had placed upon the human trustees. She had not abandoned the idea of progress and civilisation allied to science but had reconceptualised them. She desired to reform the scientific world-view to a vitalist and ecological paradigm and to redefine "progress" in its attempts to better the human condition, to accept the rights of other species and the preservation of their lives.

During World War Two, Moncrieff saw in Japanese forest preservation and German organic agriculture the effectiveness of their trusteeship. "It is an appalling thought that with either Japanese or Germans in control, much as one dislikes the idea - they would be doing more for [conservation] than we."¹¹⁵ Given our knowledge today of Nazi and Japanese ideologies and acts towards other human races, which Moncrieff may have been ignorant of or ignored, conservationists are equivocal in acknowledging the role of those regimes in

¹¹³ Productive in the sense of yielding a useful or saleable harvest, rather than an aesthetic or psychological utility.

¹¹⁴ This definition of "progress" was confirmed by Smallfield; "Some accumulations of manure occur at cowsheds and in recent years *progressive* farmers have made provision to save all the manure and washings from the sheds and spread it on the pastures as liquid manure"; pp.79,82 (my italics). Today, however, these "washings" are sometimes considered pollutants in drainage systems.

¹¹⁵ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 26 January 1942, MS Papers 0444:195, 1.

conservation history.¹¹⁶ But what was obvious to Moncrieff was German and Japanese superiority in their trusteeship for Nature. For her a superior race was a people, aware of the obligations entrusted to it for the care of all species, who fulfilled its trusteeship by conserving those species and the vital spirit which was shared by all life. That was civilised "progress".

This chapter has examined Moncrieff's position within the worldwide "apocalyptic" conservation debate that arose from the 1920s with the realisation that accelerated soil erosion and infertility were creating major problems for agriculture. Impelled by her vitalist metaphysic, ethic of trusteeship and ecological understanding, Moncrieff advocated firstly, soil conservation by indigenous forest protection and regeneration on land unsuited by its topography to pastoral farming. Secondly, she promoted soil conservation through organic gardening and agriculture. In the former she was part of mainstream advocacy but her belief in the latter marginalised her. The continuing progress of western civilisation was redefined by Moncrieff to depend, not on orthodox, scientific "development of the waste" but on the retention of vitalist links between all species, in both organic agriculture and the preservation of the wild.



¹¹⁶ Peter J. Bowler, *The Norton history of the environmental sciences* (New York, 1993, orig.pub.1992), p.513; the "right wing ecologists" of the Soil Association receive only the briefest mention in Derek Wall, *Green history* (London, 1994), p.229.

CHAPTER 8

"IN I GO...A WOMAN IN THE CHAIR..."¹

Moncrieff worked in a world of men. Whether as companions like E.V.Sanderson, ornithologists like W.B.Oliver, opponents like W.A.Andrews of the Nelson Acclimatization Society, or public servants like J.W.A.Heenan, her friends, foes, authorities and potential allies were mostly men. This final chapter, in synthesising the previously separated components of her conservation, will examine the effect of her sex on her work.

This discussion is informed by a feminist analytical framework in which western society is organised into separate spheres of the public and private. These correspond respectively to men and women with the concomitant privileging of the former. The origins of this dualism are located in the thought and practice of classical Greece, later reinforced by teachings of the Christian church, particularly those of St Paul.² Feminist thinking on the

¹ Quote from Pérrine Moncrieff in n.a., *Quotable New Zealand women* (Auckland, 1994), p.[33], from Moncrieff to Sanderson, 24 April 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

² Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public man, private woman* (Oxford, 1981); Shelagh Cox and Bev James, "The theoretical background", in *Public and private worlds*, (ed) Shelagh Cox (Wellington, 1987), pp.3-6; Glenna Mathews, *The rise of private woman* (New York, 1992), pp.4,5. Gerda Lerner distinguishes an earlier division in Mesopotamian society in which women were classified into the "respectable" and "not respectable". The respectable woman was attached sexually to one man, confined to his domestic realm under his protection and veiled in public to demonstrate her status, while "the other woman" was designated sexually as "a public woman" and unveiled in public; Gerda Lerner, *The creation of patriarchy* (New York, 1986), p.135.

Although feminists recognise that for much of the past 2,500 years the private-public dualism represented an ideal rather than a reality, they suggest that not only did the dualism become more real for middle-class women with the strengthening of the capitalist system by the nineteenth century, but that these women accepted the dualism. Within the gendered cult of domesticity, women's private sphere position enabled them to publicly claim a role as protectors of the individual, familial and national morality. See Raewyn Dalziel, "The colonial helpmeet: women's role and the vote in nineteenth-century New Zealand", *New Zealand Journal of History*, October(1977), pp.112-123; Phillida Bunkle, "The origins of the women's movement in New Zealand: the Women's Christian Temperance Union 1885-1895", in *Women*

dualism is helpful for three reasons. Firstly, it offers a convincing analysis of the omission of women from public life and from the historical record. Secondly, it suggests reasons for the ambiguous reception Moncrieff was to encounter in crossing the boundary between the private and public worlds as a trustee for Nature. Thirdly, Moncrieff herself imposed a similar although less extensive framework in her discussion of the relationship of birds to women through the ages in a major speech, her Presidential address to the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union.³

It was in pagan times especially in classical literature, she wrote in this speech, that the association of birds and women "was very marked". In literature, history and mythology goddesses either appeared with birds, like Athena with her owl, or were depicted as birds, like the Valkyries as swans. "With the passing of pagan times, away from Nature, the association of women and birds drops into the background, and from then onwards we have to guess at their relations from indirect references." So from rhymes, folklore, recipe books and paintings, Moncrieff concluded that "except for utilitarian purposes, they had very little to do with each other." She regretted there was no female Gilbert White, Linnaeus or John Audubon and so few women poets and writers whose compositions denoted "a genuine knowledge of birds". But, she said, echoing the words if not the mood of Omar Khayyam, "times have changed, and 'Lo, the bird is on the wing,' with woman in pursuit, armed with field-glasses. From her pen now flow beautiful descriptions and poems about birds, revealing an intimate knowledge of their habits." She gave examples of the naturalist Miss Williams, the novelist Gene Porter Stratton, the Duchess of Portland as a conservationist and Emma Turner as a professional ornithologist.⁴

in New Zealand society, (eds) Phillida Bunkle and Beryl Hughes (Sydney, 1980), pp.52-76; Clair Toynbee, *Her work and his* (Wellington, 1995).

³ Pérrine Moncrieff, "Birds in relation to women", *Emu*, 33(1933-34), pp.204-218.

⁴ Moncrieff, "Birds", pp.204-206. The articles by Miss Williams in a Hampshire newspaper inspired Moncrieff's Nature Diary competition while Porter's writing was a model

Two issues arise from this speech. The first is the nature of the relationship between birds and women. Did Moncrieff see in the association of birds and pagan goddesses an "essential affinity" through reproduction and nurturing between the ancient Great Mother Goddess and women, which made women particularly appropriate nature conservationists? This is the purport of Maree Baker's ecofeminist study of Moncrieff.⁵ Certainly Moncrieff exhibited many characteristics of ecofeminist theory, as Baker has elucidated: working with and speaking for nature, an ecological sense and egalitarian values towards other species, a nurturing attitude towards human beings and cooperation with other women.⁶ Moncrieff also desired women to educate their children to respect and protect other species.⁷ But Moncrieff's inclusion of male pagan gods, who were also associated with birds, qualifies her attribution of a special relationship between goddesses and birds, and by extension between women and nature. While, for Moncrieff, the creator

for her bird novel; Chapters 6 and 4.

Emma L. Turner was among the first ten women Fellows of the Linnean Society and the first Honorary woman member of the British Ornithologists' Union. She contributed to *The British bird-book*, (ed) F.B.Kirkman, as well as other publications; *Who was who, 1929-1940* 3(London, 1941), p.1371. Turner used photography in her field study of birds, contributing an article, "Bird photography for women", to *Bird-Lore*, 17(May-June)1915; Vera Norwood, *Made from this earth* (Chapel Hill, London, 1993), p.72. She helped establish the British Trust for Ornithology in the 1930s; E.M.Nicholson, *Enjoying ornithology*, (ed) Ronald Hickling (Calton, 1983), p.19. Moncrieff praised her aesthetic sense as well as her accurate observation.

⁵ Maree Baker, "Perrine's park. An environmental, ecofeminist history of the creation of the Abel Tasman National Park", BA Honours dissertation in History (University of Otago, 1996), Chapters 3 and 4.

For ecofeminism, see Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein (eds), *Reweaving the world* (San Francisco, 1990), especially Carolyn Merchant, "Ecofeminism and feminist theory", pp.100-105; Ynestra King, "Healing the wounds: feminism, ecology and the nature/culture dualism", pp.106-121; and Michael E.Zimmerman, "Deep ecology and ecofeminism: the emerging dialogue", pp.142-146.

The closest Moncrieff came to an essentialist position was her remark on weather problems; "Oh dear, how tiresome Father Neptune could be. If it had been Mother Neptune she would have understood and helped us..."; *People came later* [Nelson, 1965], p.20. However as Baker suggests, Moncrieff's comments of this kind could be tongue-in-cheek (Baker, p.61), so that the remark could equally be a joke.

⁶ Baker, pp.59,62,63,72,66,77.

⁷ Perrine Moncrieff, "A tale of woe", *NEM*, 23 April 1928, p.2.

Nature was female she urged all people, men as well as women, to be Nature's trustees and fulfil their trusteeship by the conservation of the natural world.

The second issue is that of women's subordination under western patriarchy and confinement to the private sphere which was not for Moncrieff unconnected with the women-birds issue. She implied that the public relationship between birds and pagan goddesses signified an era when women occupied both public and private spheres and could have more than a utilitarian, domestic relationship with the natural world. In contrast to feminists of the later twentieth century, Moncrieff located women's subjection, and by implication a circumscribed relationship with nature, in the Christian era.

[W]ith the advent of Christianity, women and girls were separated by the attitude adopted by the Church....when Christianity swept across Europe, bearing in its wake the anti-feminine fulminations of the Apostle Paul. In due consideration of the fact that the Holy Spirit was represented in Scriptures as a Dove, birds were not considered suitable emblems for female saints.⁸

Thereafter women's association with birds, and again by extension with nature, became largely domestic and utilitarian in "woman's somewhat narrow existence". Christian prescription was reinforced in later centuries by social injunctions. For Moncrieff these were represented by the guidelines in the 1829 *Young lady's book* which disapproved of ornithology as "unwomanly".⁹ Presumably these were upper- and middle-class prescriptions because Moncrieff made an interesting class differentiation when she contrasted the observations of two travellers, the "highly-educated" Lady Barker and the "unfortunate" convict, Margaret Catchpole. Whereas Moncrieff felt that "no true bird-lover would have mentioned [birds'] beauty in the same breath as their value for the pot as had Barker, Moncrieff had nothing but praise for Catchpole whom she described as a "born naturalist". Catchpole, transported

⁸ Moncrieff, "Birds", p.206.

⁹ ibid., pp.210,204.

to Australia in the early nineteenth century for stealing a horse, collected, preserved and sent bird skins to her former employers in Britain. Moncrieff quoted some of her observations of lyrebirds.¹⁰

Moncrieff does not explain why she believed that the public sphere was again open to women so that they could enjoy more than a domestic utilitarian relationship with birds. But she clearly believed she had every right to pursue her "mission" on behalf of the natural world within the public sphere of governance and ideas. Historians in the later twentieth century have confirmed that Moncrieff's general conclusion was correct; times had changed. Women were seriously involved with various aspects of the natural world and could take a leadership role in the public sphere in these activities although, as this chapter will show, success was not assured and gendered relationships could be equivocal since western society continued to operate under patriarchal prescriptions. Historians also reveal that women had been similarly involved with the natural world for centuries but had been excluded from or marginalised in the public record which had been produced by men, the reason why Moncrieff could find only "indirect references" to women's association with birds.¹¹ The implications for Moncrieff in her engagement with the public

¹⁰ ibid., pp.214,215. Catchpole's English may have been "tidied up", possibly by the Ipswich Museum which eventually received the collection, because her grammar and styling were quite different in another letter which recounted other employment opportunities. This is printed in *Uphill all the way*, (comps) Kay Daniels and Mary Murnane (St Lucia, 1980), p.164.

Moncrieff quoted from Letter 21 "Wild cattle hunting (sic) in the kowai bush", *Station life in New Zealand* by Lady Barker (Christchurch, 1951, orig.pub.1870), p.180. Moncrieff mitigated her overall judgement by allowing that Barker wrote more about natural history than did another well-known nineteenth century traveller, Lady Hester Stanhope.

¹¹ There is an expanding body of writing, especially in America, on women's involvement with the natural world between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries. Some are feminist like Carolyn Merchant, *The death of nature* (San Francisco, 1983, orig.pub.1980), Chapter 11 and her paper, "Women of the Progressive Conservation Movement: 1900-1916", *Environmental Review*, 8 Spring(1984), pp.57-85; and Norwood. Others are gender-aware like Marcia Myers Bonta, *Women in the field* (College Station, 1991) and *American women afield* (College Station, 1995); Stephen Fox, *John Muir and his legacy* (Boston, Toronto, 1981), pp.341-345; Christine Dann and Pip Lynch, *Wilderness women* (Auckland, 1989). Others, like David Elliston Allen, *The naturalist in Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1976), especially pp.28,29,164-169; and Keith Thomas, *Man and the natural world* (London, 1983), pp.128,283,284, have recovered many women involved in the study, thought, writing, painting and exploration of the natural world. As Moncrieff showed, the writings of women travellers can be read for their authors' engagement with the wild and the cultivated. A considerable

sphere and her ways of working in a gendered environment, will be considered after a description of her four major forms of crossing the private-public boundary.

Moncrieff first crossed this boundary with her published writings. Of these the most significant was her book, *New Zealand birds and how to identify them*, for which another woman, B.A.Carter, provided the model. Subsequently Moncrieff published two more books. In *People came later* she related her family's experience of the Astrolabe coast of Tasman Bay and explained its fascinations as the genesis for its conservation as a national park. *The rise and fall of David Riccio* was an historical novel on the life of the Secretary to Mary, Queen of Scots. Moncrieff's papers to *Emu* and other journals, and her many public lectures and letters to the *Nelson Evening Mail* continued her penetration of the public sphere. Moncrieff also crossed the boundary by lobbying cabinet ministers and senior public servants through personal interviews and correspondence. Her leadership role in a number of organisations involved with the natural world was a third form. These were of several kinds; groups like the Nelson Rock Garden and Nelson Bush and Bird Societies which she initiated; appointed positions like her Vice-Presidency and Nelson Representative status for Forest and Bird and her membership of the Abel Tasman National Park Board; and elected positions to the Nelson Institute and Museum, the Nelson Philosophical Society and the RAOU. The first two kinds of leadership were positions over which she had some control through her inaugural ability, energy and constancy of purpose. Over the last group she would have had no influence if its mostly male membership had believed her candidacy unacceptable on gender grounds. Her leadership in these societies was unusual although not unique, both in New Zealand and overseas. As her writings, lobbying and establishment of conservation societies have been discussed in previous chapters, this chapter examines in detail these elected positions and then the fourth way in which Moncrieff participated in public life, as an Honorary Ranger and Justice of the Peace.

number of nineteenth century women, for example Isabella Bird and the entomologist Margaret Fountaine, wrote of the natural as well as the cultural worlds they encountered.

Of the Institute, the Philosophical Society and the RAOU, the latter was the most prestigious, given its links to ornithological societies in Europe and America. The RAOU had a Melbourne-based governing structure of president, two or three vice-presidents and regional representatives elected by postal ballot and announced at the annual meeting or congress in October or November. In the 1920s and 1930s, while W.B.Oliver held the non-elected New Zealand Secretary position, the elected officers were R.H.D.Stidolph, A.S.Wilkinson, W.W.Smith and R.A.Falla. Because *Emu* accounts of the elections are inconsistent, RAOU correspondence files incomplete and extant Moncrieff letters cryptic, the way in which she broke into this group must be surmised. She was not elected when she first stood in 1927. There may have been a problem among the New Zealand members over nominations because she hinted that some members suggested unfairness in the system which, she hoped, would be revised in future. "I think that I have ensured that in the future a census of the N.Z. votes will be taken, which is what I wanted so that no-one should be able to think they were unfairly treated".¹² She was elected Vice-President in 1929 on Falla's nomination. He may have given or supported this in person because he attended the Council meeting, which received the nominations, on his way to join the Mawson Antarctic Expedition.¹³ The Council requested her to stand for Vice-President in the two subsequent elections of 1930 and 1931. She agreed and was re-elected.¹⁴ In 1932, with three terms as a Vice-President behind her, her seniority automatically qualified her for the Presidency if she was agreeable.¹⁵ She

¹² Moncrieff to Dickison, 27 December [1927], MS 11437:Box 6f, 4. In Council Minutes, 8 December 1926 and 12 January 1927, letters were received from Sanderson and Moncrieff respectively questioning nomination procedures; MS 11437:Box 12b, 4.

¹³ She thanked him for proposing her; Moncrieff to Falla, undated, MS Papers 2366:67, 3; Council Minutes, 10 September 1929, MS 11437:Box 12b, 4.

¹⁴ Moncrieff to Hon.Gen.Sec., 12 August [1930], to Dickison, 29 September [1930], MS 11437:Box 6e, 4.

¹⁵ I am grateful to H.L.Secker for alerting me to this rule in the RAOU's original Articles of Association; personal communication from H.L.Secker, 6 May 1995, 2.

accepted and was elected at the 1932 Congress in Hobart¹⁶, where its chairman "referred briefly to history's being made in the election of Mrs Perrine Moncrieff as the first lady President of the RAOU."¹⁷

Moncrieff's correspondence reveals an ambivalence in her attainment of public leadership, a position that for her, required simultaneous modesty and self-confidence. The reasons for her balancing act will be discussed later. On the one hand, she did not want to be seen as thrusting herself forward. "I am afraid that my failure to obtain a seat on the R.A.O.U. does not upset me very much....as I explained to Dr Leach my name was sent amongst others without my knowledge as I had refused to stand two or three times, for fear it might be thought I was working for myself," she told Dickison when she lost in 1927.¹⁸ She emphasised the point to Sanderson.

Please note that I have not moved a finger to be made Vice President (sic) of the R.A.O.U. The first I knew of it was a letter from the Australian Press asking whether I intended to go to the Conference as V.P. and asking for particulars. I replied that my name was Perrine practically the same as the lady in the fables of La Fontaine who counted her chickens before they were hatched, and that as I did not I drew their attention to the fact that there were five nominations and only three vacancies.¹⁹

Once she was a Vice-President, she told D.J.Dickison, the Secretary,

What however I would like to say is that I do not know how you stand with regard (sic) the elections. Are you short of officers or on the contrary would you wish to see some of the present members retire from their office? If the latter is the

¹⁶ Moncrieff to Bryant, 20 March [1932], MS 11437:Box 6e, 4.

¹⁷ *Emu*, 32(1932-33), p.149.

¹⁸ Moncrieff to Dickison, 27 December [1927], MS 11437:Box 6f, 4.

¹⁹ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 14 November [1927 or 1929], MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

case kindly eliminate my name for re-election; but if I can still be of use to you let it stand.²⁰

And on her nomination as President,

It is very nice of you to say I should allow myself to be nominated for that position this year. As you know I am intensely keen on my work and I am willing for you to suggest my nomination provided you feel satisfied that I could do justice to the position. For instance there is the question of my not being present in Australia. Would my absence be detrimental to the work of the society? I presume you have considered this when you write you would like me to stand.²¹

So, while she wanted to appear modest, on the other hand she seemed more than willing to participate in the electioneering process, as her remark about the census of New Zealand votes indicates. She nominated Falla as a New Zealand Representative on at least two occasions at the end of the 1920s.²² In addition, she had at least one paper in *Emu* each year between 1927 and 1933 and related her conservation activities in letters to the Secretary.²³ Moncrieff can therefore be seen to have participated in the wider process of keeping her name before the RAOU "public".

Moncrieff's nomination provoked no objections within the RAOU which, like other contemporary nature-based societies²⁴, had included women among its founder members, one of whom became its first life member. From its first volume, women had contributed papers to *Emu* and attended the annual congresses including the ten-day camp.²⁵ Traditionally they had little

²⁰ Moncrieff to Hon.Gen.Sec., 12 August [1930], MS 11437:Box 6e, 4.

²¹ Moncrieff to Bryant, 20 March [1932], MS 11437:Box 6e, 4.

²² Moncrieff to Hon.Gen.Sec., 12 August [1930], MS 11437:Box 6e, 4.

²³ For example, Moncrieff to Hon.Gen.Sec., 12 August [1930]; Moncrieff to Bryant, 20 March [1932], Box 6e, MS 11437, 4.

²⁴ That is, about the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; in Britain, see Allan, pp.165-169 and in America, see Fox, Chapters 4 and 5.

²⁵ *Emu*, 1(1901-02), Amelia Pike was its first life member, p.32; "My tame wild birds", by Mrs K.Langloh Parker, contained an appeal to women to refrain from using wild

involvement in the RAOU's central organisation but about the time of Moncrieff's Council membership, at least one other woman, Lila Mayo, was suggested. She served as a Queensland Representative between 1936 and 1939, taking much the same approach as Moncrieff both to leadership and to ornithology. Of her Council election Mayo wrote that she did not expect a nomination and would be surprised if she got in.²⁶ She also advocated the field study of birds, writing that her twenty-one years as an RAOU member was "not a bad record for a woman who has never been at all interested in the science of ornithology", by which she meant taxonomic studies of dead birds in museums or private collections.²⁷ But neither Moncrieff nor Mayo appear to have influenced the Council more than it was already inclined towards their concept of ornithology as the field study of living birds. Moncrieff's suggestion, in her Presidential speech, that the Union recommend to the League of Nations that member countries outlaw the use of feathers for ornamentation, does not seem to have been implemented.²⁸

Moncrieff was first elected to the Committee of the Nelson Philosophical Society in 1923. In 1928 the Committee elected her as President to complete the remainder of R.J.Tillyard's term. She was re-elected for the year 1928-29.²⁹ The following year she became Vice-President and remained

birds for decoration, pp.112-118; original members' list, pp.157-160.

Tom Griffiths has included three photographs in *Hunters and collectors* (Cambridge, 1996) of RAOU camps and outdoor activities which show women and men egg hunting, sitting around the camp-fire, and painting; pp.132,136,141.

²⁶ Mayo to Dickison, 26 October 1936, MS 11437:Box 8a, 4.

²⁷ ibid.; Mayo to Dickison, 23 May 1939, MS 11437:Box 8a, 4.

²⁸ Moncrieff, "Birds", p.213. She exempted ostriches, emus, certain ducks and game birds.

²⁹ Robin John Tillyard (1881-1937) was entomologist at the Cawthon Institute from its foundation in 1921 until 1929, but during 1928 travelled overseas before moving to Australia to work for the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research; J.W.Evans, *The life and work of Robin John Tillyard 1881-1937* The John Murtagh Macrossan Lectures 1962 (St Lucia, 1963).

NEM, 11 October 1923, p.7; 31 May 1928, p.9; 22 November 1928, p.9. Presidents served a one year term.

on the Committee at least until 1938.³⁰ Within the Nelson Institute, she was first elected to the Committee in 1924, as Vice-President in 1930 and again from 1937 to 1939, as President from 1933 to 1936, and again on the Committee until 1942 when she received a Life Membership.³¹

Existing evidence on reactions to her elections is inconsistent. In old age in her radio interview, she recalled an antipathy to women in public life in the 1920s.

...there was a very strong feeling against women taking any effort in public life. It just wasn't done. For instance, when I joined the Philosophical Society of Nelson, which is the Royal Society, I don't know how I got in because they were all men and they were shocked to have a woman in their midst....The same thing when I went to the Nelson Institute and Museum in 1925. I found myself in a Committee of men and they showed their resentment very much at having women.³²

Her recollection is partly supported by a remark she made to Sanderson at the time of her Presidential election to the NPS, when she thought the members "rather fear a woman in the chair"³³, but it is contradicted by other contemporary evidence. F.G.Gibbs, who should have completed Tillyard's term³⁴, in moving her election, supported his motion by commenting that they all knew Mrs Moncrieff's enthusiasm in everything she took in hand and he had no doubt she would prove a very satisfactory official.³⁵ Also, neither body

³⁰ Although summaries of addresses to the NPS were occasionally printed throughout the 1940s, the practice of publishing full reports of meetings and addresses, which had occurred in the 1920s and 1930s, ceased. The Society's Minutes, unlike those of the Nelson Institute, are not extant.

³¹ Minutes of Nelson Institute 1924-1942, Nelson Museum.

³² Périnne Moncrieff, Radio NZ interview; Radio NZ Archive, 2.

³³ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 24 April 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

³⁴ ibid. Gibbs may have been Vice-President that year but Moncrieff thought that as President of the Cawthron, he had his hands full.

³⁵ NEM, 31 May 1928, p.9.

in the 1920s was "all men". The NPS was unusual in the composition of both its Committee and its total membership when compared to other constituent bodies of the New Zealand Institute at that time. The Secretary was a woman, Margaret Graham, its Committee included three women and its membership contained a much larger proportion of women than its partners.³⁶ The NI Committee, which was open to women from 1901³⁷, also included Graham although between 1926 and 1930 Moncrieff was its sole woman member. So clearly, Moncrieff's memory of women's participation in public life as it involved her own areas, was inaccurate. Was her perception that the men were "shocked", resentful, or fearful of her participation also inaccurate? That she held that perception for forty years requires explanation.

From Gibbs' statement it could appear that her perception was invalid. However perhaps his comment was merely public courtesy. After all "very satisfactory" is meagre recommendation and she believed the presidential suggestion had been a joke. "I was told half laughingly that they thought of making me President", she wrote to Sanderson when Tillyard's resignation was known.³⁸ Perhaps the men resented so many women in their midst. Perhaps they could have accepted women in the audience at lectures, or lectures by a woman scientist with a doctorate or even a woman secretary. But when these were combined with another woman who may have lobbied for the president's

³⁶ For example, in 1928-29, Nelson had 46 members of whom eight were women, or 12.5%; Hawkes Bay had 97 members including eight women, 8.25%; and Wellington 206 members including ten women, 4.8%; *TPNZI*, 59(1928-29), pp.983,984,966-969. In 1921-22 the Nelson Committee included Kathleen Curtis, of whom more information is given later; *NEM*, 20 October 1921, p.4. No other constituent body had a woman secretary. McCallum records that Patricia Tillyard, wife of R.J.Tillyard, was on the Committee; Janet McCallum, "Pérrine Moncrieff: conservationist and trail-blazer of Nelson", in *Womens Studies Association (NZ) Conference papers*, Nelson, (August 1988), (ed) Pat Rosier (n.p.,1989), p.123. Patricia Tillyard was involved with Moncrieff in establishing the Nelson Girl Guides, in which she was the Association's President; *NEM*, 7 June 1927, p.4. Although she had four daughters, she was briefly the first woman on Nelson College's Board of Governors; *NEM*, 2 August and 27 September 1928, p.4. Like her husband, Patricia was born in England and was a Cambridge graduate. She shared his nature-based interests and illustrated his articles and his book, *The insects of Australia and New Zealand* (Sydney, 1926); Evans, pp.13,32.

³⁷ C.B.Brereton, *History of the Nelson Institute* (Wellington, 1948), p.55.

³⁸ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 20 January 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

role once the possibility was mentioned, perhaps men felt that women's numbers were overwhelming, given Allen's comment that science was thought to be "a man's business and the club a kind of intellectual stag-party where a male rattled his antlers".³⁹

Allen's account of women's connection with scientifically-focused societies provides a possible explanation for Moncrieff's perception. "When some societies specially removed the barriers in a consciously liberal effort to attract women members, the response was generally feeble", Allen deplored, oblivious to the irony in a story he had previously related about Charles Kingsley and an excursion by Kingsley's Chester Society of Natural Science, Literature and Art. Allen quoted Kingsley as complaining, "Those good ladies quite spoilt my day - but what *can* you do? When they get to a certain age you must either treat them like duchesses or sh-sh-shoot them!"⁴⁰ Allen's history, though it brings to light many women who were involved with the natural world, has considerable anti-woman overtones. He remarked that nineteenth century women were partly to blame for their exclusion from natural history outings because "they turned out in impossible clothing" but a photograph of an excursion by the Liverpool Field Naturalists' Club in 1860 shows women as sensibly clad as men. He also treated differently two famous collectors. While he admired the extensive natural history collections of the eighteenth century Duchess of Portland, he then dismissed them (and her) as "the unintentional outgrowth of a purely private passion fed by a distinctly bower-bird mentality", a comment he did not use of another famous collector Sir Hans Sloane.⁴¹

If Kingsley's resentment or Allen's ambivalence hovered in the air of outings or meetings, it was little wonder that women stayed away. A similar atmosphere could account for Moncrieff's belief that women were "out of place" as leaders of these types of organisations. Possibly unconscious, it

³⁹ Allen, p.167.

⁴⁰ Allen, p.168.

⁴¹ Allen, p.168 and photograph (Number 7), p.29.

could have pervaded the Nelson Institute and the Philosophical Society, been caught by Moncrieff with her feminist sensibilities and translated by her into male anger or pique. Comments about "petticoat government" or "women taking over" might have been sufficient in a climate in which Jock Phillips identified among men a bitter resentment of women.⁴² While there are a lot of "perhaps" in this analysis, reading the "silences" is necessary in much history, particularly to interpret women's experience of the public world.

Another possible scenario is that Moncrieff was "feared" for her crusading sense of mission on bird conservation for she may have made no secret of an intention to try to give birds a higher priority on the Society's agenda.⁴³ She had begun her association with the NPS by acting within the private sphere in providing hospitality to scientists from the 1923 Wellington Science Congress, who visited Nelson at the invitation of the Cawthron and the Society.⁴⁴ But within two years she had moved into the public sphere with bird lectures, her book and the lobbying of cabinet ministers and senior public servants, while she and the Society's scientist members had been at odds over the transfer of South Island birds to Kapiti Island.⁴⁵ She organised Falla's lecture in 1925, partly as publicity for the NPS as well as Forest and Bird⁴⁶, and may have been responsible for several conservation initiatives by the NPS in the mid 1920s. In 1924 the Society approached the City Council for better protection of bird life in the Council's 7,500 acres of reserved lands, including the appointment of six honorary rangers from the Society, one of whom may

⁴² Jock Phillips, *A man's country?* (Auckland, 1987), especially Chapter 5 "The family man 1920-1950".

⁴³ She hoped she might become President, she told Sanderson, "because I can then insist on bird matters being taken seriously instead of skimped over as they usually are with me protesting"; Moncrieff to Sanderson, 20 January 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

⁴⁴ *NEM*, 19 January 1923, p.4.

⁴⁵ See Chapter 6.

⁴⁶ See Chapter 5; *NEM*, 19 May 1925, p.2.

have been Curtis.⁴⁷ Although their names were not published, Moncrieff is unlikely to have been included because she would have told Sanderson, but the appointments may have prompted her to apply as an honorary ranger to Internal Affairs, an action which will be discussed shortly. In 1926 the Society was reported as both supporting its parent body's resolution to ban introduced flora and fauna from Tongariro National Park and endeavouring to protect native flora in Nelson.⁴⁸ While the Royal Society of New Zealand had had a long involvement with conservation, which continued throughout this period as M. Stopdijk has demonstrated⁴⁹, most of the scientists subscribed to the orthodox paradigm that was opposed to Moncrieff's vitalist and holistic belief. The South Island bird transfer to Kapiti was one illustration; others have been given in the ornithological chapters. The NPS scientists may have feared her activism *per se* or being drawn into campaigns from a world-view position they devalued, by a woman without tertiary qualifications.

These speculations cannot be confirmed. But since, in Gibbs' word, "enthusiasm" is a quality necessary for the continuing existence of any voluntary organisation, the Society must have been welcomed her energy which she demonstrated with her Nelson Bush and Bird Society launch and her campaigns for Rotoroa and Maruia about the same time. Moncrieff's re-election in her own right later in 1928 suggests that the Society approved her chairmanship of Committee and public meetings and her organisation skills. It may also indicate that she was astute enough to minimise her "missionary" conservation zeal in the interests of re-election. It was not until the 1930s that her initiatives within the Society became publicly apparent, on both occasions

⁴⁷ *NEM*, 31 July 1924, p.3; 15 November 1924, p.5. Moncrieff apparently mentioned Curtis as a woman Ranger in a later meeting with Internal Affairs; Bennett to Under-Sec.IA, 29 May 1934, Pigeons file IA 1/46/12, NA.

⁴⁸ *NEM*, 26 August 1926, p.6.

⁴⁹ M. Stopdijk, "Between two acts. An investigation into attitudes and lobbying in New Zealand's national parks movement", MA thesis in History (University of Canterbury, 1988), especially pp.32-34, 90-93.

involving Kathleen Curtis.⁵⁰ The first was the Society's forest conservation proposal to its governing body⁵¹; there is no anomaly here since Moncrieff believed that conserving forest also protected birds. The second was her nomination of Curtis as the first woman Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand, which Moncrieff remembered as another battle for women.⁵²

Moncrieff's own expressed memories of "anti-womanness" within the NI focused on cleaning duties which she organised when the Institute could not afford a caretaker, possibly after it had been badly damaged by the 1929 earthquakes. She recalled the resentment with which male Committee members took up cleaning equipment.⁵³ Presumably the men would have felt more comfortable with two other issues which occurred during her time as President and Vice-President. The first of these was the sale of a farm at Golden Downs which endowed the Institute⁵⁴, and a proposed joint project with the Cawthon to build a new museum within the Cawthon grounds with funds from the Carnegie Trust, an American institution which, in the 1930s, provided funds worldwide to assist educational work in museums and art

⁵⁰ Kathleen Maisey Curtis (1892-1994) was born in Foxton and graduated DSc in 1920 from London University. She was a Fellow of the Linnaen Society and the first woman Fellow of RSNZ. Appointed as mycologist when the Cawthon Institute opened in 1921, she became chief mycologist in 1927 and was instrumental in the control or cure of diseases in Nelson's horticultural, agricultural and silvicultural industries. She retired in 1952 and later married Theodore Rigg as his second wife. When she died in 1994, aged 102, she was the oldest surviving Fellow of RSNZ. She was on the Committee of the NPS from 1921 and its President in 1933; various editions of the *NEM*; Lesley L.Rhodes, "Curtis, Kathleen Maisey", *DNZB* 4(1921-1940), (Auckland, Wellington, 1998), p.124.

⁵¹ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 11 July [1932], MS Papers 0444:193, 1.; C.A.Fleming, *Science, settlers and scholars* (Wellington, 1987), p.234.

⁵² Moncrieff, Radio NZ interview, 2. She described Curtis as "a celebrated authority on potatoes" because Curtis's doctoral thesis was "The life history and cytology of *synchytrium endobioticum*: the cause of wart disease in potato"; Lorraine MacIntosh, "The role of women at Cawthon 1920-1996", *Science - women and our future. Proceedings of the 29-31 May 1996 Conference organised by the New Zealand Association for Women in the Sciences*, (ed) Mary Cresswell (Wellington, 1996), p.103.

⁵³ Moncrieff, Radio NZ interview, 2. This *ad hoc* arrangement ceased in 1936 when C.B.Brereton was appointed Curator; Moncrieff to Falla, 24 May 1936, MS Papers 2366:67, 3.

⁵⁴ NI Minutes, various dates from April 1931 until it was sold to the government partly for forestry in March 1932; Nelson Museum.

galleries.⁵⁵ The new museum did not eventuate because the Trust no longer funded buildings⁵⁶. That must have pleased Moncrieff as she was against the proposal⁵⁷ but the Nelson Museum did participate in the museum exhibit exchange sponsored by the Trust.⁵⁸

In summary then, Moncrieff's perception of an anti-woman feeling among the men of the NPS and NI can be substantiated. She was prepared to challenge orthodoxies, of which the nomination of Curtis and the cleaning episode are pointed examples. That no woman had been admitted to a Fellowship, or that respectable men did not usually clean the interiors of public buildings were immaterial to Moncrieff. These examples represented new, and perhaps to the men, undesirable reversals of society's prescription for participation within the private and public spheres for women and men.

The fourth way in which Moncrieff crossed the private-public boundary was at the coercive end of wildlife trusteeship. Earlier chapters have elucidated her role in public education, which could be described as the "soft" end of a continuum of guardianship, and her frustration when the authorities either turned a blind eye to illegal behaviour or lacked resources to enforce the law. As poaching, specimen collection, and vandalism continued, Moncrieff felt compelled, as she told Sanderson in 1927, to seek a coercive role. "I think I must bestir myself and get myself made a general ranger."⁵⁹ This move may have been suggested by the ranger appointments from the NPS but she also realised that they were not "proper rangers merely Rangers for the City

⁵⁵ NI Minutes, April 1934 to September 1935, Nelson Museum; R.K.Dell, *The first hundred years of the Dominion Museum* (n.p.,[1965]), pp.180,253.

⁵⁶ NI Minutes, 13 February 1935, Nelson Museum. This contradicts McCallum's statement that "Under [Moncrieff's] presidency the new museum was built"; McCallum, "Perrine Moncrieff: conservationist and trail-blazer...", p.123.

⁵⁷ Moncrieff to Falla, 1 October [1934], MS Papers 2366:67, 3. She, rightly as it emerged, believed it contravened Carnegie regulations. She also thought that if the Cawthron required money in the future for its laboratories, the joint management would "starve the museum".

⁵⁸ Dell, p.180; Brereton, pp.78-81.

⁵⁹ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 27 March 1927, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

Council reserve and thus not lawfully entitled to look [at the taxidermist's register]."⁶⁰ Hence her decision to apply to Internal Affairs which administered the 1921-22 Animals Protection and Game Act through the Acclimatisation Societies. Rangers were to protect the "absolutely protected" and game species in the closed season as listed in its three schedules. Their powers were considerable. They included authority to seize all protected animals and any game taken out of season, their skins, feathers and eggs; to seize any equipment, including firearms and boats, which were being used or were intended for use in illegal operations; to stop in transit any package or luggage which was suspected of containing any illegally-taken wildlife; and, with a Magistrate's warrant, to enter private land if illegal activity was suspected.

For reasons unknown, seven years elapsed before Moncrieff actually applied to Internal Affairs. In 1934 she wrote to the Minister, the Honourable J.A. Young, to request "you make me a ranger for Nelson Province so that I can, in future, co-operate with the Nelson City Council in endeavouring to...stop...poaching. We are doing all we can to protect our birds and are being defeated owing to the fact nobody makes it their business to make any convictions."⁶¹ She gave several reasons. Poaching continued despite the information she had supplied to Internal Affairs in the past and the reassurances of action she had received. Since the poachers were "highly respected citizens", the police and other rangers did not want to annoy them and would not act without great pressure. Moncrieff continued to suspect the local taxidermist, not only of preparing illegal skins, but also of selling native pigeons dressed "for table" which he had shot in forests beyond the City Council reserves. Lastly, Internal Affairs had no rangers in the Nelson area

⁶⁰ ibid. Moncrieff suspected the Nelson taxidermist of preparing display specimens of protected birds killed illegally.

⁶¹ Moncrieff to Minister IA, 20 April 1934, Pigeons file IA 1/46/12, NA. Moncrieff did not apply to the Nelson Acclimatization Society for a ranger's warrant as had Sanderson; Minutes NAS, 9 July, 13 August 1923, Nelson Museum. Presumably this was because of her ongoing dispute with the Society over the shags at Lake Rotoroa and the godwits at Farewell Spit.

and the City Council rangers were not numerous enough to guard all the entrances to the Council reserves. "I am...determined this winter to attempt on a bigger scale to suppress these systematic bird-killers....It requires an independent person who is not afraid of the consequences to act and that is why I am asking you to make me a ranger."⁶² Her request stemmed directly from the previous year when she had supplied Internal Affairs with a detailed account of the people, their methods and associates, whom she suspected of poaching in the Marlborough Sounds. In a series of letters in the winter of 1933, she and Sanderson offered advice on how the poachers might be caught but even though Internal Affairs agreed that a poaching problem existed, nothing was done until September, by which time the Department was told that the pigeons had already made their seasonal migration from the Sounds to their nesting places in the hinterland.⁶³ This action was one of Moncrieff's main conservation efforts in the year of her RAOU Presidency.

Her request put the cat among the pigeons, as it were. In a briefing to the Minister, Malcolm Fraser the Under-Secretary for Internal Affairs, acknowledged that her concern was at times justified.⁶⁴ Few poachers had been convicted⁶⁵; Yerex on his sporadic visits was unlikely to catch offenders; individual policemen had themselves been convicted and other policemen did not concern themselves unduly with wildlife matters. Fraser recognised her "very keen interest in bird-life" but suggested that "if she held a Ranger's

⁶² Her reference to the lack of IA rangers in Nelson suggests she either meant national figures like G.F.Yerex, or that the previous ranger had moved. Two more Nelson rangers were appointed shortly after her application was refused; Fraser to Minister IA, 8 August 1934, Pigeons file IA 1/46/12, NA.

⁶³ Letters between Moncrieff, Sanderson and Internal Affairs; August-September 1933, Pigeons file IA 1/46/12, NA.

⁶⁴ Fraser to Minister IA, 15 May 1934, Pigeons file IA 1/46/12, NA.

⁶⁵ In ten years between 1929 and 1939, the *NEM* published six prosecutions for poaching, two of them in 1933 and 1934 when poachers were caught in the Marlborough Sounds' Pelorous Reserve and Tennyson Inlet Reserve, respectively. Moncrieff believed the two caught in 1933 were not the usual party, who were absent that weekend, but two relief workers "merely new chums at it"; Moncrieff to Sanderson, [1933], Pigeons file IA 1/46/12, NA. Prosecutions in *NEM*, 4 February 1929, p.4; 18 March 1929, p.4; 6 July 1933, p.6; 2 August 1934, p.2; 5 April 1939, p.9; 13 November 1939, p.4.

warrant, her zeal might land her in serious trouble." A Ranger had wide powers "and I am not prepared to recommend the granting of a Ranger's warrant to a woman." He added that this was government policy in view of representations for the appointment of women police.⁶⁶ Fraser advised Young to decline on several grounds, the first of which was consistent with his previous statement, that it was not practice to appoint women as rangers. But others, that the Department had information on poachers and would act on suitable occasions and that she should take the police into her confidence, conflict with his previous opinions. In explanation, he argued that she had cast suspicion on practically all the police and, illogically, that Internal Affairs had always found the police willing to cooperate in detection of breaches of the Act.

Young did not reply to Moncrieff for several months. In the meantime she wrote again⁶⁷, and with Sanderson, pursued the idea during an interview with Internal Affairs' clerk, J. Bennett. Although she told Bennett she would be willing to do the "light work", he apparently became suspicious of her intentions because "immediately [she] asked my advice as to the legal powers of a ranger to search a person....Needless to say I did not give any such advice. I advised her that there had been no record of any previous case where a woman had been appointed as a Ranger. She said that Mrs.Dr.Curtis (sic) had been appointed, but there is no trace of such an appointment in the last 30 years."⁶⁸ Whether Bennett and Moncrieff misunderstood one another about women rangers, or whether Moncrieff deliberately obscured the difference between the two types of rangers, is unknown. But she must have still had hopes because she wrote to Bennett shortly after their meeting to counter his point about her sex. "I move about in the mountains a good bit usually with a party of men and therefore am quite capable of looking after myself." She

⁶⁶ Suggestions to appoint women to the police force were made from 1914 but not effected until 1941; Murray Hill, *In the live of duty* (Auckland, 1986), pp.66,67.

⁶⁷ Moncrieff to Minister IA, 29 May 1934, Pigeons file IA 1/46/12, NA.

⁶⁸ Bennett to Minister IA, 29 May 1934, Pigeons file IA 1/46/12, NA.

offered to use the ranger warrant only if conditions were favourable and suggested she could be useful patrolling the Dun Mountain Reserve on Sundays when shooting parties were usually out.⁶⁹

Two days later Young advised her that he could not agree to her request although he did not give any of Fraser's reasons. However in reply she focused on the correct reason. "I presume this is owing to my being a woman. As one who has had the experience of being thrown over the heads of the police by an East end (sic) crowd in London I am not likely to underestimate the violence of the poacher."⁷⁰ She certainly did not accept the decision. Advising Bennett that she would "take up the question of rangers from another angle"⁷¹, she approached the Nelson City Council because the Town Clerk wrote to Fraser recommending her appointment, together with that of the Caretaker of the Council's Waterworks Reserve.⁷² While the Caretaker was warranted she was not, but the following year the City Council appointed her one of its honorary rangers for the Cawthron Park and Waterworks Reserve⁷³, which was an unofficial position and not gazetted. There is nothing extant to suggest that she got into "serious trouble" in pursuit of poachers either then or when she was eventually appointed as a ranger by the Wildlife Department. This occurred in 1947, twenty years after her original decision.

When the government passed the 1946 Statutes Amendment Act No.40, which cancelled all existing rangers' warrants and instituted a triennial licensing system, Forest and Bird announced that the Society would support any "fit and proper person" who wanted to apply for an honorary ranger's

⁶⁹ Moncrieff to Bennett, 4 July 1934, Pigeons file IA 1/46/12, NA.

⁷⁰ Moncrieff to Minister IA, 14 July 1934, Pigeons file IA 1/46/12, NA.

⁷¹ Moncrieff to Bennett, 16 July 1934, Pigeons file IA 1/46/12, NA.

⁷² Mitchell to Under-Sec. IA, 4 August 1934, Pigeons file 1/46/12, NA.

⁷³ NEM, 1 March 1935, p.4.

warrant.⁷⁴ While the Society recommended Moncrieff she was actually appointed through the Nelson Acclimatization Society⁷⁵, rather ironic in light of her battles with its members in the 1920s and 1930s. But people had moved on, and by 1947 Moncrieff was working cooperatively with the NAS ranger whom she described as "the first decent straight ranger we have had and most energetic".⁷⁶ As Under-Secretary of Internal Affairs, A.G.Harper commended her working methods to other Forest and Bird honorary rangers. "From discussions with her it was quite obvious she worked in close touch with the Nelson [Acclimatization] Society and its Ranger and that she found that contact very useful in furthering the protection of native birds in the Nelson district."⁷⁷ This is another example of her practical inclusivist approach, paralleling her holistic beliefs, which she employed whenever possible. Moncrieff was appointed in 1947 and reconfirmed until the 1960s.⁷⁸ She was described by Frank Newcombe, a Controller of Wildlife, as "a keen honorary ranger"⁷⁹, an indication that Fraser's forebodings relating to her original application - that her zeal might lead her into trouble - were not realised. Moncrieff herself believed that she had been effective. "Despite the fact that I have not had the luck to run any persons into court I have been known to be on the watch and

⁷⁴ "Honorary rangers", *Forest and Bird*, 84(May 1947), p.15. Internal Affairs had written to Forest and Bird suggesting that the Society might like to recommend suitable people as rangers, in addition to those nominated by the Acclimatisation Societies; Harper to Carter, 10 March 1947, MS Papers 0444:719, 1. Under the 1953 Wildlife Act, which replaced the 1921-22 AP&G Act, the powers of an honorary ranger remained the same.

⁷⁵ R.H.Carter, Secretary of Forest and Bird, wrote of her, "She is considered by this Society to be eminently suitable for the position."; Carter to Under-Sec.IA, 28 May 1947, MS Papers 0444:719, 1. Handwritten on this letter is the note, "Mrs Moncrieff was subsequently appointed through the Acclimatization Society."

⁷⁶ Moncrieff to Carter, 20 December 1951, MS Papers 0444:720, 1.

⁷⁷ Harper to Carter, 22 May 1953, MS Papers 0444:721, 1.

⁷⁸ See warrants, Rangers file IA 1/47/19/9, NA; Moncrieff to Nelson, 19 July 1962, Birds, native protection of file IA 1/46/52, NA.

⁷⁹ Newcombe to the Accountant, 22 December 1953, Fifeshire Rock file IA 1/52/237, NA.

taken action from time to time.⁸⁰ In this report she went on to describe her ranger's activities in the Maitai Valley, Farewell Spit and Fifeshire Rock, in enterprises which recall her "spying" days with Sanderson twenty years earlier. Another time, at Nelson Airways when she noticed a "bird-shaped" parcel addressed to Falla at the Dominion Museum, she considered her options. "As an Internal Affairs Ranger I should not allow anything in the shape of a bird or skin to go through the post. Should I have asked that the parcel be opened for my inspection. I played safe and let it go through without comment."⁸¹

The second coercive role Moncrieff acquired was that of a Justice of the Peace in 1943.⁸² Unlike Wildlife rangers, women had been appointed Justices in New Zealand under the Justices of the Peace Amendment Act of 1926, so that there was no question of gender rejection. However this additional authority would have been useless to her in breaches of wildlife legislation since Justices were disqualified from taking part in any matter in which they were individually interested. But through her membership of the Justices' Federation⁸³, the position may have given her more authority in laying information before the police and provided another avenue for possible conservation influence. At the 1945 Justices' Conference, when she was concerned at the amount of casual shooting, she put forward a remit to curtail the sale of .22 ammunition and was disappointed there was little time for its

⁸⁰ Moncrieff, "Honorary Rangers' Reports 1953", MS Papers 0444:721, 1.

⁸¹ Moncrieff to Oliver, 21 July 1954, Box WRB Oliver Correspondence and Notes, MONZ.

⁸² Moncrieff to Sanderson, 4 September 1943, MS Papers 0444:196, 1; *New Zealand Gazette*, 2(1943), p.958. Of the 401 appointed 2 August 1943, 33, including Moncrieff, were women.

In England, Conservators, later Justices, of the Peace were originally elected by county freeholders but during the fourteenth century Edward the Third changed their manner of appointment to that of a commission; William Reeve Haselden, *The New Zealand Justice of the Peace* (Wellington, 1985), p.1.

⁸³ Moncrieff belonged to and served as a Council Member of the Nelson Association which was a member of the Royal Federation of New Zealand Justices' Associations; Warren to McCallum, 18 October 1989; in McCallum's possession. For information on the Federation see, John Lyle Noakes, *Federation 1924-1973* (n.p., 1973).

discussion. Her remit may not have passed but a successful remit on unguarded, loaded small firearms addressed her broader concerns.⁸⁴

While Moncrieff believed that these leadership positions within the public sphere should be open to women, and had family role models of women's agency, analysis shows her position to be problematic. Given her "mission" to save New Zealand's indigenous birds and forests, she was caught in the dilemma of needing public positions to enhance her credibility at a time when women's public participation was not universally accepted. Her need for increased status can be inferred from a comment she made on becoming President of the Philosophical Society. "It means I may be in a better position to pull strings and of course it is a certain distinction and bears weight to say that you have been that. Always useful to impress recalcitrant ministers."⁸⁵ It can also be inferred from the fact that she virtually always supported her public statements with quotations from recognised authorities, whether it was H.Guthrie-Smith, G.V.Jacks and R.O.Whyte, or R.A.Falla. She believed that as a "stranger to Nelson", she was not listened to and therefore lacked influence⁸⁶, a position which would be exacerbated by her sex. While that comment was made in the 1930s, it was echoed in her radio interview forty years later. "Then when my home was settled and I'd been absorbed into Nelson society, that is to say...not accepted because, although I joined society after society and groups after groups, I was always never a Nelsonian".⁸⁷ Yet, while her own status and that of preservation within conservation advocacy were clearly significant to her in her "mission", she did not want to appear

⁸⁴ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 7 September 1945, MS Papers 0444:197, 1; Noakes, p.30.

⁸⁵ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 24 April 1928, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

⁸⁶ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 3 September 1937, MS Papers 0444:194, 1. She was contrasting her status in Nelson with that of Robert Sadd. Her exact remark was "As an early settler Mr Sadd commanded their respect and they would listen to him where they would not to a stranger like myself, not born in Nelson."

⁸⁷ Moncrieff, Radio NZ interview, 2.

forward or immodest in her pursuit of them. This is evidenced by her remarks, which I quoted earlier, on her nominations for RAOU leadership. Twenty years later when she was nominated for the Loder Cup⁸⁸, the first of her several awards, though her need for status had evaporated, her concern for the appearances of self-promotion remained.

I must tell you that I refused the Loder Cup nomination once before....

I enclose details which seem to me a lot of bragging about myself....Actually there are a hundred and one little things not worth mentioning in themselves but which taken as a whole one feels may have done good....

I have also given quotations from the newspaper. I do not expect you to include these unless you wish but it struck me that somebody might comment that I was making a grand case for myself and maybe exaggerated as for instance in the case of Maruia Springs which would not be here now had I not happened to go up there.⁸⁹

Moncrieff's modesty grew out of the effect of gendered expectations of the public-private spheres, for within the wider context of New Zealand society there seems to have been an ambivalence to accept women into the public sphere. This ambivalence reveals itself in several ways, the first of which is seen in the debate over the admittance of women JPs, for which the National Council of Women organised a petition. While the mover of the Bill, the Honourable T.M. Wilford, argued that "Some [women] are just as capable, with as good judgement as men", and another supporter agreed that, "The days when men looked upon women as something inferior,...have long since

⁸⁸ In 1929 Gerald Loder, later Lord Wakehurst, a member of the British Royal Horticultural Society and an enthusiastic cultivator of New Zealand plants, after a visit here in the 1890s donated a trophy to encourage an interest among New Zealanders in their cultivation. Vested in the Minister of Agriculture, the cup has had different conditions of competition and administration but the latter usually included representation from the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture, the RSNZ and Forest and Bird. Moncrieff won it in 1953 when it was awarded to recognise the preservation or establishment of native bush. At that time Oliver represented the RSNZ and Olga Du Pont Forest and Bird; G.A.R.Phillips, *The history of the Loder Cup* (n.p.,1960).

⁸⁹ Moncrieff to Oliver, 2 September 1953, Box WRB Oliver Correspondence and Notes, MONZ.

passed"⁹⁰, a Legislative Councillor, the Honourable W.Earnshaw, stated that he had no time for women's meddlesome interference in the functions of men.⁹¹ A second ambivalence is seen in the inequality of employment opportunity for women in science, a profession which in itself remains problematic for women.⁹² Whereas the Cawthron employed many women and sent them overseas for education and research⁹³, women scientific researchers at the Dominion Museum were permitted only temporary employment status.⁹⁴ A third ambivalence is the anomaly between Galbreath's comment that field work by its first biologist, A.L.K.(Nan) Welch in 1939, was hampered because "male staff (and their wives) felt uncomfortable at the thought of accompanying her on field trips"⁹⁵, and evidence from contemporary tramping trips. By this time, tramping clubs with both men and women participants were staying out in huts together at weekends and holidays.⁹⁶ Moncrieff

⁹⁰ NZPD, 203(1924), p.577 and 204(1924), p.278.

⁹¹ NZPD, 209(1926), p.1175. The first eighteen women JPs were announced in December; *Gazette*, 3(1926), p.3527.

⁹² Jan Harding (ed), *Perspectives on gender and science* (London, New York, Philadelphia, 1986); Kathleen Lennon, "Rethinking women and science", *Science - women*, (ed) Cresswell, pp.1-9.

⁹³ Besides Curtis, others included B.J.Murray, NEM, 28 August 1924, p.4; the botanist, Jean Jones, referred to by Moncrieff in Chapter 6; the soil scientist Elsa Kidson who studied at Rothamsted in 1937-38, NEM, 2 November 1937, p.8 and who was employed on DSIR soil surveys in the central North Island in the 1930s; Charlotte Macdonald, Merimeri Penfold and Bridget Williams (eds), *The book of New Zealand women* (Wellington, 1991), p.352; Carol Markwell, "Kidson, Elsa Beatrice", DNZB 4, p.273; MacIntosh, *Science - women*, p.103.

The DSIR also employed the botanist, Ruth Mason, in the 1940s; Ross Galbreath, *Working for wildlife* (Wellington, 1993), p.52. The State Forest Service employed the forest scientist, Mary Sutherland, from 1925; *Book..NZ women*, p.641; Michael Roche, "Sutherland, Mary", DNZB 4, p.507; NEM, 30 August 1924, p.7.

⁹⁴ Under Directors J.Allan Thomson and Oliver, E.A.Plank, an MSc in Entomology and E.M.Heine with a BSc, "fought a continuous battle to achieve permanent staff status" but failed because the Public Service restricted permanent appointments; Dell, pp.147,163. Both Heine and Sutherland gave "lecturettes", as radio talks were called, on their respective disciplines on Radio Station 2YA in 1934; NEM, 18 April 1934, p.8 and 26 April 1934, p.9.

⁹⁵ Galbreath, *Wildlife*, pp.49.

⁹⁶ Chris Maclean, *Tararua the story of a mountain range* (Wellington, 1994), pp.129-137, 155-161.

alluded to these ambivalences in her unpublished bird novel, "The huia", which is more interesting for its feminism than its bird conservation since its women characters reflect her feminism and her scientific activities.⁹⁷ The proactive heroine was knowledgeable about birds and science and joined in camping trips of both sexes. Moncrieff described one woman character as "the refutation of the assertion that women graduates made poor wives and mothers" while the hero realised that "lady scientists had not the appearance supposed to go with learning, being young and attractive".⁹⁸

Less extreme than Earnshaw but none the less discriminatory was the overall position displayed by the *Nelson Evening Mail* to women's achievements in public life. As previous chapters have shown, the Editor, F.J.Earle⁹⁹, specifically supported Moncrieff's projects like the Abel Tasman National Park and by implication, others like the Nelson Bush and Bird Society to which he allotted considerable space. But in any general discussion on conservation, his editorials and supplements omitted her name, while her achievement of the RAOU Presidency received only a few lines under the heading "Nelson honoured". She was, the item stated, the first woman to occupy the position; she had always displayed a deep interest in the bush and bird life of New Zealand; it was a well-merited honour for which there would be hearty endorsement throughout the Dominion.¹⁰⁰ This meagre interest could be read as a personal antipathy towards her but four years later Curtis received an equally sparse acknowledgement of her RSNZ Fellowship. In two small paragraphs, her degrees and Cawthron position were noted and her distinction in being the first woman Fellow.¹⁰¹ The amount of space and range of information provided about Moncrieff and Curtis are in sharp contrast to the

⁹⁷ See Chapter 4.

⁹⁸ P.Moncrieff, "The huia", pp.47,60; MS Papers 5642:13, WTU.

⁹⁹ Earle had been a Wellington journalist who became Managing Editor in 1926; *NEM*, 24 July 1926, p.7.

¹⁰⁰ *NEM*, 1 November 1932, p.4.

¹⁰¹ *NEM*, 30 May 1936, p.6; 8 June 1936, p.2, which also published her photograph.

lengthy, laudatory biographies of A.C.Aitken, the son-in-law of Nelsonian A.G.Betts, and of J.E.Holloway, a Nelson College Old Boy, when they became Fellows of the Royal Society at about the same time.¹⁰² Women were not excluded from the pages; there was a "Woman's Page" with fashion news, recipes and information on health, beauty and family welfare, while sport and events like Jean Batten's flights were covered. But compared to male achievements, and especially those in natural history, science and related subjects, there was a noticeable lack of praise, comment, and description of women's attainments in the public world.

An explanation for this could lie in the suggestion I offered as an interpretation of Moncrieff's anti-woman perception; that "too many" women were achieving positions in the public sphere. Given women's overall advances¹⁰³, men, still dominant in the public sphere, may have sought to close ranks against women challengers. This may have been approved by other women, who perceived their interests and well-being threatened by gender adjustments to the public and private spheres. Toynbee's study on male and female work places and patterns between 1900 and 1930 reveals a highly differentiated working life especially for married women, while in public leadership, wives appeared as helpmeets rather than achievers of public office. Another speaker in the women JP debate, the Honourable H.L.Michel, may have been at least partly right in believing "that 80 percent. of the women of New Zealand are opposed to their sex being dragged into the Courts to do judicial work or to serve on juries."¹⁰⁴

A form of "closing ranks" was the exclusivity of the "old-boy network". In her thesis on the strengthening of national park legislation, Stopdijk identified, as an important characteristic for success, the links among

¹⁰² Aitken, *NEM*, 18 May 1936, p.2; Holloway, 17 March 1937, p.4.

¹⁰³ For example, women Members of Parliament from 1933 after the passing of the 1919 Women's Rights Act, women JPs and police, and women jurors after the passing of the 1942 Women Jurors Act.

¹⁰⁴ *NZPD*, 204(1924), p.280.

the leaders of the organisations lobbying for change.¹⁰⁵ Within ornithological conservation, a similar old-boys club formed of professional scientific and amateur members, the nucleus of which included Falla, Charles Fleming and E.F.Stead, who were mutually supportive in their public careers. The network seemed to have been formed and cemented in the confines of birdwatching trips, especially those to New Zealand's outlying islands. In his Obituary for Falla, Fleming recounted a number of trips, including the secret "Cape Expedition" during World War Two, in which Falla arranged for "several young naturalists" to join Army parties which spent a year in the Auckland and Campbell Islands keeping watch for German vessels. In another memory, Fleming wrote of how he had become friendly with Falla. "Only in February 1934, when I joined the Auckland Institute and Museum's Will Watch Expedition to the Three King's (sic) Islands, did I get to know him well as one does get to know a companion in the field."¹⁰⁶ A book which chattily reminisces on such birdwatching trips is R.A.Wilson's *Bird islands of New Zealand*.¹⁰⁷ Both Fleming and Wilson comment on the companionship, humour and solidarity that bonded this network during various excursions. These bonds were later reflected by the scientists' mutual support of careers and ornithological activities. "It was a great adventure, with many a tale to tell at mid-winter reunions in later years," wrote Fleming of the Cape Expedition.¹⁰⁸ One of the "young naturalists" was R.W.Balham who later briefly worked for the Wildlife Service and who, Galbreath noted, "was able to make use of his contacts with scientists involved in the 'Cape Expedition'".¹⁰⁹ Stead was made a Fellow of the RSNZ near the end of his life, and both he and Stidolph were appointed to the first advisory committee to government on native bird

¹⁰⁵ Stopdijk, pp.136,137.

¹⁰⁶ C.A.Fleming, "Obituary Sir Robert Falla", *Emu*, 80(1980-81), pp.41,42; [Charles Fleming], Notes for Falla Obit., p.1; held by E.M.Harcourt, 2.

¹⁰⁷ R.A.Wilson, *Bird islands of New Zealand* (Christchurch, 1959).

¹⁰⁸ Fleming, Falla Obit., p.43.

¹⁰⁹ Galbreath, *Wildlife*, p.60.

preservation in 1948.¹¹⁰ When Stidolph wrote his birdwatching memoirs in 1971, the book was recommended by Falla, who was then an ornithologist of international stature. "At intervals it has been my privilege to share an occasional field experience with Bob Stidolph....Reading this book has filled in a whole lot more for me, as it is sure to do for any reader responsive to its authentic note."¹¹¹ From these examples of shared hardships and research, in which ornithologists reinforced male bonding, benefits can be seen to have flowed on to members.

Women appear only on the periphery of these ventures. While Guthrie-Smith acknowledged the integral role of his daughter, Barbara, as "the very best of mates" on some of his trips¹¹², women, if they appear at all, are either noted as passengers¹¹³ or restricted to unequal assistant. Mrs Murphy, wife of Robert Murphy for whom the 1947 Snares expedition was organised¹¹⁴, was commended for making sandwiches and helping to prepare bird specimens.¹¹⁵ Margaret (Peg) Fleming, Charles' wife, described herself as a "survey wife" and as such, "fed the team and helped with the [geological] mapping and was everybody's dogsbody!".¹¹⁶ None of these women was accorded by the male writers of the accounts, or by Fleming herself, the equal status as an ornithologist or naturalist that Moncrieff adopted in her descriptions of her

¹¹⁰ See Chapter 6.

¹¹¹ Foreword, R.H.D.Stidolph, *The birds around us* (Masterton, 1971), n.p.

¹¹² H.Guthrie-Smith, *Sorrows and joys of a New Zealand naturalist* (Dunedin, 1936), p.9. He praised her energy and intrepidity for every photograph taken on a 1929 trip to the Kermadecs, and for many at the Snares and Auckland Island groups.

¹¹³ For example, Mrs Irene May Stead in Wilson's *Bird islands*, pp.66,78 and a photograph No.26, "Mrs Stead and Roland inside eating tent on the Hen".

¹¹⁴ See Chapter 3.

¹¹⁵ Wilson, pp.157,160.

¹¹⁶ Paula Martin, quoting Peg Fleming, "Lady Margaret (Peg) Alison Fleming (nee Chambers)", in *Lives with science* (Wellington, 1993), p.16.

birdwatching trips to Taranga and Stephens Islands.¹¹⁷ In the 1920s and early 1930s Moncrieff tried to be part of the ornithological "in-group" with the Taranga expedition and a planned Karamea tramp with Falla.¹¹⁸ Unlike the tramping clubs, no similar ornithological group of both sexes coalesced. Moncrieff's vitalist attitude to birds would have been a hindrance. But as Wilson's narrative shows, in relating classification disagreements between Falla and Fleming¹¹⁹, disputes could be contained in protagonists so desired. Her lack of scientific qualifications would also have been problematic, yet this too, as Stead's popularity shows, could have been disregarded. Her sex, however, was an insuperable barrier in a pursuit, for which there was developing in New Zealand, a history of male-only participation, or certainly one in which only men had equal status as ornithologists. When approached by a woman of amateur status, who held a vitalist world-view discredited by scientists, male ornithologists closed ranks.

Male bonding seems to have been assisted by the application of sexist humour. One scientist told me that they joked about Moncrieff in terms of "Come up and see my tits".¹²⁰ Since Moncrieff believed in sunbathing and swimming in the nude for good health¹²¹, the pun must have been irresistible. She used strong terms in referring to Rigg as a pseudo-scientist or Oliver as not a true bird-lover, but her criticisms were of an intellectual position, not

¹¹⁷ The only exception, which does not provide an exact comparison, was the marital and conservationist partnership of Alexander (1860-1963) and Amy (1877-1950) Wilkinson on Kapiti Island, when he was Caretaker from 1924. Their book shows Amy to have been intimately involved with its conservation and ornithology; *Kapiti bird sanctuary* (Masterton, 1952). Her *Kapiti diary* (Masterton, 1957) was edited by her son-in-law R.H.D.Stidolph.

¹¹⁸ Moncrieff to Falla, 12 September [1932], MS Papers 2366:67, 3. This trip never eventuated. Instead Moncrieff went to Stephens Island in January 1933 with several people from the Cawthron.

¹¹⁹ Wilson, p.107.

¹²⁰ Told to me, February 1996.

¹²¹ See Chapter 7; and my interview with Jim Hefford who, as a boy, stayed at Astrolabe with the Moncrieffs, 2. "It was segregated but swimming was always in the nude. The women went to the beach and had their swim and the men went to the beach and had their swim and nobody wore togs."

ridicule grounded in sexual and personal identity. It is difficult to believe that men who put puns in sexual terms were anything but derisory of Moncrieff, both as an ornithologist and as a woman; a harder-edged debasement than the scorn to be read in "Pérrine's pigeons". Other ornithologists also made sexist jokes in otherwise serious publications. One of Stead's anecdotes in his *Life histories of New Zealand birds* has already been quoted in Chapter Three. Falla concluded a discussion of the kiwi, after noting the female's larger size, the male's incubation and kiwi polyandry, with the remark that "[s]uch extreme emancipation of the female in New Zealand's national bird must provoke sobering reflection."¹²² Although the inter-war period jokes which Phillips relates in *A man's country?* refer less to biological difference than female spending and housewifery, they served to enhance male bonding. "In laughing at women," Phillips wrote, "men gave themselves a sense of superiority, reassured themselves that as males they were different."¹²³

Within this climate of gendered ambivalence, how did Moncrieff work? One way was to establish supportive networks amongst women conservationists. McCallum and Baker have recounted Moncrieff's wilderness expeditions with Gladys Bisley, her promotion of nature and bird studies in Girl Guide activities, her formation of the Bush and Bird Society through the Nelson Women's Club and her women's committee of the Society.¹²⁴ In Chapter Six I wrote of Moncrieff's efforts to involve other women's clubs in a national bird-essay competition. Moncrieff also supported Elizabeth Lorimer, the secretary of the Golden Bay branch of Forest and Bird, in its formation.¹²⁵ While Moncrieff accepted the CBE in 1975 "on behalf of all the women who [have] worked with [me] over the years, but [have] never received any

¹²² R.A.Falla, "Fauna", in *New Zealand atlas*, (ed) Ian Wards (Wellington, 1976), p.115.

¹²³ Jock Phillips, *Man's*, pp.244-252.

¹²⁴ Janet McCallum, "Pérrine Moncrieff: champion of birds and bush", in *Wilderness women*, (eds) Christine Dann and Pip Lynch (Auckland, 1989), pp.48-51,53; Baker, pp.60,61.

¹²⁵ Lorimer to Minister IA, 4 July 1935, MS Papers 0444:43, 1; *NEM*, 5 July 1935, p.8.

recognition for their efforts"¹²⁶, closer examination reveals holes in those networks. There is no apparent evidence of the same strength that bonded the ornithological old-boys.

Firstly, no other women's clubs supported Moncrieff in organising provincial bird-essay competitions. Secondly, she considered her own committee "very feeble" over the Lake Rotoroa shag debates; they were a "lazy crowd", who would not work on controversial subjects like shags. "The women are better than the men but it is hopeless to try and get them enthused if they have to write letters or do any personal work."¹²⁷ Apart from one letter which Moncrieff signed as President of the Women's Section¹²⁸, there is no evidence to support L.E.Lochhead's statement that the women's committee was an active environmental lobby or that Moncrieff found it useful when public servants on the general committee were constrained in their conservation advocacy by their employment.¹²⁹ On the contrary, the Nelson Crown Commissioner of Lands, A.F.Waters, was proactive in searching legislation to secure protection for areas like Lake Rotoroa.¹³⁰ Thirdly, Moncrieff herself did not publicly acknowledge contemporary women New Zealand naturalists in her Presidential RAOU speech, although she gave many examples of British and Australian women. While she had originally hoped to "give the paper special references with regard to Australasian women"¹³¹, very few were mentioned and none who might be expected like Amy Wilkinson and Lily Daff.

¹²⁶ Emily Host, *The enchanted coast* (Dunedin, 1976), p.143.

¹²⁷ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 7 April 1931, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

¹²⁸ Moncrieff to Minister in charge of Scenery Preservation, 26 April 1928, Rotoroa file LS 4/283, DOC HO Wgton.

¹²⁹ L.E.Lochhead, "Preserving the brownies' portion: a history of voluntary nature conservation organisations in New Zealand 1888-1935", PhD thesis in Parks, Recreation and Tourism [now Human and Leisure Sciences], (Lincoln University, 1994), pp.284,285. She offered no other evidence other than a general reference to McCallum's writings and Folder 192 of Forest and Bird Papers, MS Papers 0444.

¹³⁰ See Chapter 5.

¹³¹ Moncrieff to Dickison, 18 September [1932], MS 11437:Box 6d, 4.

Moncrieff's omission of these women is difficult to explain. A possible interpretation lies in the fact that she wrote her speech hurriedly, having been given the impression that it was required for the 1932 congress¹³², and therefore she used, as examples, women or situations she either knew about from Britain or could readily research. Perhaps she ignored them from personal prejudice, or merely overlooked them in the rush to finish her speech. A possible explanation, that the "oppressed" absorb the attitudes of the "oppressor", cannot apply since Moncrieff gave many examples of British and Australian women. While most of her other writing, especially about New Zealand birds of necessity referenced her comments in the authority of male ornithologists, it seems inexplicable that, in a paper emphasising women and gender issues, two such obvious women as Wilkinson and Daff were omitted.

Nor have I found any evidence to indicate that Moncrieff was personally in touch with, or supported, other contemporary notable women members of Forest and Bird like Elizabeth May Gilmer¹³³ and Olga Du Pont¹³⁴, the plant conservationist Noeline Baker¹³⁵, the naturalist Isabella Tilly¹³⁶ or

¹³² Moncrieff to Falla, 11 October [1932], MS Papers 2366:67, 3. The presidential address was given at the conclusion of the presidency. Therefore Moncrieff's was not required until 1933.

¹³³ Gilmer (1880-1960, later Dame Elizabeth), a daughter of Richard and Louisa Seddon, was a Wellington local body politician and social work volunteer. Her nature conservation work included the establishment of an award-winning garden of native plants, service on the Executive of both Forest and Bird and the New Zealand Institute of Horticulture; *Book...NZ women*, p.241; Bronwyn Labrum, "Gilmer, Elizabeth May", *DNZB* 4, p.195. She was awarded the Loder Cup in 1938; Phillips, *Loder*, pp.19,20.

¹³⁴ Olga Doris Du Pont served on the Forest and Bird Executive and Council from 1937 until her death in 1977 and was "virtual editor" of *Forest and Bird* "for many years"; N.E.Dalmer, *Birds, forests and natural features of New Zealand* (Levin, 1983), pp.151,152.

Another prominent woman was Florence Maclean, wife of Forest and Bird's President Sir Douglas Maclean, who became a Vice-President after his death in 1929; See Florence Maclean-Sanderson correspondence, May 1929, MS Papers 0444:204, 1.

¹³⁵ Isabel Noeline Baker (1878-1958) was born in Christchurch but spent much of her life in Britain working for women's suffrage and for women's employment as farm workers. She returned to New Zealand in the 1930s and established a renowned botanical garden on Stewart Island of plants native to the island. She was invited to the 1937 Bush Preservation and Amenity Conference. She donated her garden to the New Zealand public in 1948 and a year later was awarded the Loder Cup; *Book...NZ women*, pp.37-39; Leah Taylor, "Baker, Isabel Noeline", *DNZB* 4, p.27; Phillips, *Loder*, p.37.

Blanche Baughan whose mysticism and metaphysical belief in unity had parallels in Moncrieff's life.¹³⁷ I have already noted in Chapter Six Gilmer's achievement in reviving Arbor Day, but she also successfully lobbied for the 1934 Native Plant Protection Act, which banned the picking, destruction or removal of native plants from publicly-owned land including roadsides. The Act corresponded to the AP&G Act, by classifying most indigenous plants as requiring protection, thereby covering flora as well as fauna with conservation law.¹³⁸ Moncrieff's attitude to this Act was ambiguous. On the one hand, she supported it publicly when a newspaper correspondent advocated the planting of natives by taking seedlings from the bush. Moncrieff praised the idea of native plantings but explained that it was an offence, under the Act, to take seedlings from public areas.¹³⁹ On the other hand, she had previously told Falla that she was opposed to the Act because it would be useless without a method to secure compliance.¹⁴⁰ If women's solidarity had been important to Moncrieff, it would be reasonable to assume some public evidence of support for Gilmer's initiatives in the *Nelson Evening Mail* or in *Forest and Bird*, yet what little evidence I have found does not suggest it. It is possible that

¹³⁶ Tilly was a member of the Dunedin Naturalists' Field Club, its bird recorder in the 1950s and a regular columnist for Dunedin's *Evening Star*. She corresponded with Oliver about Moncrieff's latest edition of *New Zealand birds* and her own bird observations; Tilly to Oliver, 16 March, 13 April 1953, Box WRB Oliver Correspondence and Notes, MONZ.

¹³⁷ See Chapter 7. Like Malcolm Moncrieff, Baughan had mystical experiences; Folder 6, B.E.Baughan, Miscellaneous Papers 1908-1958, MS Papers 0198, WTU. Baughan also held a metaphysical belief in the "oneness" of the universe, and was influenced by the "Earth-Soul" conception of the German philosopher Gustav Fechner. She believed wild areas could best reveal to human beings that they shared the planet with another soul she called "Nature", which had intrinsic value, and that both "Man" and "Nature" together comprised the "Earth-Soul"; Lochhead, p.228.

¹³⁸ Exemptions could be granted by the Lands Department which administered the Act, for medicinal purposes, scientific research, nature study or garden propagation, provided no area was depleted of a species. The Act was based on the 1930 Victorian Wild Flowers and Native Plants Act; NZPD, 239(1934), pp.286-301.

¹³⁹ NEM, S.B.Canavan to Editor, 11 August 1939, p.4; Moncrieff to Editor, 14 August 1939, p.6.

¹⁴⁰ Moncrieff to Falla, 1 October [1934], MS Papers 2366:67, 3. As this observation coincided with her anger over poaching and her ranger application, compliance would have been an immediate issue for her.

Moncrieff was disappointed that Gilmer had not promoted the Nature Diary competition in 1928.¹⁴¹ The same applies to Du Pont. Like Moncrieff, Du Pont gave an address at the Centennial Exhibition¹⁴² and was active in Forest and Bird for a lengthy period. Yet the only comment I have found in which Moncrieff acknowledged Du Pont was a suggestion that Du Pont, too, might organise a Nature Diary competition through Forest and Bird.¹⁴³

Moncrieff herself was also ignored in books by other women writers on the natural world. She was not mentioned by Wilkinson in the book on Kapiti Island, and the only reference to her by Moana Gordon, in her book *Children of Tane*, was to note that Daff's illustrations, which Gordon used, were from Moncrieff's book.¹⁴⁴

Finance, wartime exigencies, and society's prescriptions are likely reasons for the apparent lack of solidarity between women conservationists which prevented them from meeting up to begin the formation of close bonds. Even though the Moncrieffs were wealthy, their resources were strained during the late 1920s and 1930s, which Moncrieff acknowledged was the reason for her non-attendance at her RAOU Presidential election. Lack of money also prevented her from birdwatching expeditions.¹⁴⁵ While trips within Nelson province were possible, more distant excursions were curtailed. Similar problems, and additional factors in wartime, like petrol rationing and paid employment, would have hindered participation in trips for most women. Whereas wartime proved a bonus for some male ornithologists to study birds for prolonged periods in the far reaches of New Zealand, it is likely to have further restricted women's excursions. Throughout the three decades, despite

¹⁴¹ Moncrieff to Carter, 24 November 1948, MS Papers 0444:197, 1.

¹⁴² Dalmer, p.152.

¹⁴³ Moncrieff to Carter, 24 November 1948, MS Papers 0444:197, 1.

¹⁴⁴ Moana Clifton Gordon, *Children of Tane* (London, Christchurch, 1938), Gordon (189[9]-1977) was a New Zealand writer of mostly non-fiction. *Children of Tane* combines natural history, Maori legends, proverbs, uses of indigenous birds, and changes since European settlement; NZ Biographies, 3(1977), National Library, Wellington.

¹⁴⁵ Moncrieff to Dickison, 20 March [1932], MS 11437:Box 6e, 4.

women's increasing penetration of the public sphere, society's expectation of married women's responsibility for home and family would have created more difficulties for women who wanted to go birdwatching than for men.

Another reason is that, in New Zealand, there was no history of women's conservation involvement, as there was in Britain and America. In the 1880s British and American women inaugurated bird protection societies to campaign against the collection of breeding plumes and feathers for hat decorations. Octavia Hill helped found the National Trust in England in the 1890s to protect significant buildings and landscapes.¹⁴⁶ At much the same time, American women were active in the progressive conservation movement to protect water, forest and grasslands.¹⁴⁷ In contrast, few New Zealand women belonged to early nature conservation organisations.¹⁴⁸ Vine and Lochhead both comment that women joined the Horticultural or Beautifying Societies in greater numbers than nature conservation groups¹⁴⁹, which could indicate that New Zealand women's involvement with the natural world was characterised by cultivation rather than wildness.¹⁵⁰ In this period of my research, 1920-1950, more women became involved with the wild through

¹⁴⁶ John Sheail, *Nature in trust* (Glasgow, London, 1976), pp.59,60.,

¹⁴⁷ Carolyn Merchant, "Women of the Progressive Conservation Movement: 1900-1916", *Environmental Review*, 8 Spring(1984), pp.57-85.

¹⁴⁸ Louise Oliver was the only woman foundation member of the Dunedin and Suburban Reserves Conservation Society in 1888, although ten had joined by 1892; Geoffrey F. Vine, "Doing a good work. The origins and history of the Dunedin and Suburban Reserves Conservation Society 1888-1915", BA Hons thesis in History (University of Otago, 1983), pp.48,60,61. Lochhead also found few women, the most in the Rangitikei Society for the Preservation and Growth of New Zealand Flora, which operated in 1914-15, and had eighteen women and seventeen men; Lochhead, p.157.

¹⁴⁹ Vine, p.60; Lochhead, p.139.

¹⁵⁰ Women's involvement with the wild in nineteenth century New Zealand is mentioned by several writers. [Rachel] Stone collected birds for the British Museum in the 1840s; W.R.B.Oliver, *New Zealand birds* (Wellington, 1955, 2nd ed), p.20. Otago women introduced British birds to New Zealand and fished for recreation; Janet Fay Swann, "A short history of the Acclimatisation Society of Otago", MA thesis in History (University of Otago, 1962), pp.9,25,76; Jane Deans was involved with the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society in releasing birds, and preserved a remnant of native bush on the Deans' property; Paul Star, "T.H.Potts and the origins of conservation in New Zealand (1850-1890)", MA thesis in History (University of Otago, 1992), pp.72,73.

Forest and Bird while others, like Gilmer, were involved with both.¹⁵¹ It is a theme for further research. Another research project is suggested by the intriguing parallels in women's political activism between the suffrage movement and nature conservation. While British and American women sought wild bird protection in the late nineteenth century, New Zealand women obtained women's suffrage, which was not universal for their northern hemisphere counterparts until the 1920s. Baker worked for both. It is possible that Moncrieff's remark about being thrown over the heads of the police by an East End crowd, referred to a suffrage demonstration.

However a history of women's conservation activism did not necessarily translate into ongoing group action. Vera Norwood has argued that in the United States the rigid application of the ideological separation of men's and women's roles into public and private in the decades between the wars, virtually silenced women from participation in conservation debates.¹⁵² One of the few to speak out was Rosalie Edge, whose ecological philosophy, activism and life style were similar to Moncrieff's.¹⁵³ Edge campaigned to save hawks from sportsmen who regarded them as a threat to poultry and wildfowl, because, she said, "Man hates any creature that kills and eats what he wishes to kill and eat. He does not take into account the millions of rodents and

¹⁵¹ In 1933 *Forest and Bird* listed 19 women among 107 Endowment Members; 25 women on a Life Membership list of 71. Members also included the Girl Guides Association; *Forest and Bird*, 31(October 1933) and Girl Guides, MS Papers 0444:462, 1. Regional federations of the Women's Institute and Nelson Girls' College also became Endowment Members in the 1930s; *Forest and Bird*, 39(February 1936), 51,53(February and August 1939).

Several women wrote letters in support of ideas proposed at the 1937 Bush Preservation and Amenity Conference; see its file, IA Series 165, NA.

¹⁵² Norwood, pp.144,145.

¹⁵³ There is considerable information on Edge (187[7]-1962) in Fox, *Muir*, pp.174-182,265,266,344. Edge came from a wealthy New York family, married a British engineer and lived overseas for some years before returning to America in 1913 where she became a suffragist. She also joined the Audubon Society. Edge's papers are held in the Denver Public Library but, despite requests, I have not been able to gather information from them. This is tantalising as a Mrs C.N.Edge is listed among early members of OSNZ, so it is possible she and Moncrieff were in contact. A poem by Edge, "The quality of mercy", demonstrating the inconsistency between animal charity and the wearing of mink, was published in *Forest and Bird*, 66(November 1942), p.8.

insect pests that hawks consume." Finding that advocacy alone was insufficient, Edge bought an area in Pennsylvania, known as Hawk Mountain, from where sportsmen shot migrating hawks, had it designated a sanctuary, and employed an ornithologist as a resident curator. From 1929 Edge campaigned to reform the Audubon Society because, she believed, it was no longer working for bird preservation. Forming the Emergency Conservation Committee with two other members, her ginger group succeeded in replacing Audubon's president in 1934. She wrote pamphlets, gave speeches, arranged for EEC candidates to contest Audubon leadership positions, lobbied politicians, and presented evidence at Congressional hearings to support bird preservation. Edge also became aware of both the problematic of gender and of the potential of women, in working in the public sphere. "[A]s a woman, I do not command the attention that you would get," she told one of her Committee men. But women who were "not working" and independent of business and commercial interests, she thought, could be natural conservationists because they put loyalty to causes before friends. Perhaps this belief derived from her suffragism. She wished more women would work for conservation.¹⁵⁴ Another woman who could not be silenced was the scientist, writer and conservationist, Rachel Carson.

In Britain between 1920-50 women continued to occupy public positions in the conservation movement, especially in bird protection. There were women leaders in the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, one of whom, Phyllis Barclay-Smith, later became Secretary of the International Council for Bird Preservation. But they are portrayed as quarrelling amongst themselves over the positions.¹⁵⁵ In Scotland, two women ornithologists, L.J.Rintoul and E.V.Baxter, became joint Presidents of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club when it formed in 1936, four years after Moncrieff's RAOU Presidency.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Edge quoted by Fox, pp.181,177,344.

¹⁵⁵ Sheail, pp.9-14; Nicholas Hammond, "The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds", in *Enjoying ornithology*, (ed) Ronald Hickling (Calton, 1983), pp.159,160.

¹⁵⁶ They had begun field ornithology in the early twentieth century and formulated the theory of wind-influenced migration routes; Allen, pp.222,223. In the 1920s they organised

These examples of women's leadership within the public sphere support Moncrieff's contention that "times had changed" and that women could have more than a domestic, utilitarian relationship with birds, and by extension, with the natural world. But they also demonstrate that few women were active in the public sphere in nature conservation and that they were not always mutually supportive. They operated as individuals. How then, did Moncrieff approach her "mission" within the male world?

Earlier chapters have shown that she believed in the personal approach; that she spent time developing relationships with those whom she believed useful or who could provide information. When meetings were impossible or infrequent, she relied on letters. Her writings show her to have been forthright and generally open in her requests for information, in defence of her conservation beliefs, and in her right to argue for them. But she also tried to be conciliatory when she thought cooperation mattered. She appears to have operated in much the same way as her male allies and opponents, but Sanderson once noted a gendered difference. After one ministerial meeting he told her,

There is no doubt you ladies can handle the men better than us other men as our cave instinct persists in rising and we always want to fight the other fellow be he Minister or anyone else. A man that does not want to fight is not a man. It is therefore pleasing to note that even the under-secretary for Lands who is not a conservationist went down before your whiles (sic).¹⁵⁷

What exactly Sanderson meant by Moncrieff's wiles is unclear. The dictionary meaning of the word, as "trick", "cunning procedure" or "artifice", is inappropriate to her because, although she carefully planned the strategies and tactics of her campaigns, they were conducted openly and within the law or an organisation's regulations. For Sanderson, it may have been a convenient

bird censuses in Scotland for the Oxford group of ornithologists; *Enjoying*, p.186. In his Obituary for Moncrieff, H.L.Secker questioned her exclusion of them in the Presidential Address; *Emu*, 80(1980-81), p.171.

¹⁵⁷ Sanderson to Moncrieff, 28 July 1927, MS Papers 0444:192, 1.

word, used without thought for its true meaning. Baker has argued that this passage represents Sanderson's realisation of Moncrieff's "feminine" approach, which Baker equated with today's ecofeminists' promotion of systems that are interdependent, mutually supportive and cooperative. "Far from joining into (sic) the competitive nature of the male world that [Moncrieff] inhabited and rivalling other women for attention and status, she instead encouraged other women to join her."¹⁵⁸ Moncrieff certainly tried to promote a cooperative approach and did involve other women but it is insufficient to leave the analysis there. At that time, cooperation could not be achieved because each conservationist wanted their model of conservation accepted by others, argued strongly for it, and refused to allow room for compromise. To express her point of view, Moncrieff was sometimes obliged to join "the competitive male world". If she wanted to insert a protectionist standpoint into public policies, she needed to promote her opinions in the same manner as the men, who were in the majority; that is, by supporting her case with evidence and exposing weaknesses in the plans of competing voices. She was not afraid of adverse opinions, she said, for they could be challenged.¹⁵⁹

Moncrieff's methods of working with men under what is called today a liberal feminist framework¹⁶⁰ were often successful; she achieved some status for herself and the implementation of some of her projects. But after Sanderson's death she practised her conservation more within the private sphere of organic gardening and holistic medicine although, as a member of the Abel Tasman National Park Board, as a ranger and JP, and as a contributor to the public debate on fluoridation¹⁶¹, she maintained a public presence in Nelson. However her antifluoridation argument meant that this entry into the public sphere again became equivocal for her, transforming her reputation from conservationist to crank, while at the same time, her earlier achievements

¹⁵⁸ Baker, p.77.

¹⁵⁹ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 14 December 1928, MS 0444:192, 1.

¹⁶⁰ Merchant, "Ecofeminism" in *Reweaving*, pp.100-105.

¹⁶¹ See Chapter 2.

at the national level were erased in the public record. The final chapter, in summarising the thesis, will discuss these positions and her re-emergence into the public record of nature conservation.

This chapter has examined the effect of Moncrieff's sex on her work within a culture that, for millennia, sought to exclude women from the sphere of public life and devalued their contribution to society. Moncrieff believed that women should no longer be confined to the private sphere and separated from the natural world by gendered cultural prescriptions. Her belief was confirmed by women's increasing membership of and leadership in nature conservation organisations. But although Moncrieff successfully crossed the private-public boundary in several ways to insert her plans for the use of the wild into public policy, her victories were ambivalently celebrated in a society that remained fundamentally patriarchal.



CONCLUSION; LOST AND FOUND

The seeds of Moncrieff's disappearance from the public record of nature conservation were sown even before her activism began. Paradoxically, her metaphysic of vitalism, which prompted and sustained her work, can be seen as one of the principal causes. This summary examines the reasons for her disappearance, which have been alluded to throughout the thesis, and her recovery within the environment and women's movements from the 1960s.

This study, in discussing Moncrieff's role as a trustee for Nature, has revealed the extent of her participation in field research as an amateur ornithologist, her achievements for nature conservation, her participation in land degradation debates and the considerable status she acquired through her penetration of the public sphere. All these were reasons for her significance in nature conservation in New Zealand. In her "ornithology as science" she participated in ethology studies in bird migration and the ringing of keas, and contributed to the ornithological discourse through her papers to *Emu*. In her "ornithology as trusteeship" she compiled a pocket field guide to birds, *New Zealand birds and how to identify them*, which was not only an original concept in New Zealand for its format and for its conservation tenor but also sold thousands of copies in five editions over thirty-five years. These activities advanced her status within ornithology so that she was asked to assist in the formation of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand. As a conservationist Moncrieff attained, and as an honorary ranger she guarded, nearly 50,000 hectares as sanctuaries at Farewell Spit, Abel Tasman National Park, Lake Rotoroa and Maruia for the protection of indigenous fauna and flora and for the physical and spiritual refreshment of human beings in the natural world of "ancient" New Zealand. She tried to foster an ethic of trusteeship towards the indigenous wild through her membership of the Forest and Bird Society and of the Nelson Bush and Bird Society, and especially amongst children through the

durable "Nature Diary" competition. She promoted an ecological vision in her warnings about land degradation and artificial pesticides, and in her advocacy of organic agriculture as a way of ensuring soil conservation and the good health of all life. In her attainment of the Presidency of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union and in her article for the *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire* she achieved international status and became a voice for conservation. At home in Nelson she attained leadership roles in several respected institutions.

But even as these achievements were realised, Moncrieff began to disappear from the public record. Neither her ethology researches into the saddleback and bird migration, nor her field guide, were incorporated into the written ornithological record. She was severed from her sanctuary creations as her role in their formation was gradually minimised in national park handbooks and public noticeboards. Sanderson had not announced their creation in *Forest and Bird*; writers on national parks, like John Pascoe, failed to mention Moncrieff's initiatives.¹ Her early roles in securing the habitat for godwits and in warning of the dangers of chemical pesticides were ignored and the credit for these far-sighted actions given to others. Therefore, as a national figure Moncrieff "disappeared". In Nelson, comments in the *Nelson Evening Mail* accorded her meagre recognition for her achievements while editorials and supplements on Nelson's natural world failed to mention her work for conservation so that she became increasingly marginalised. From the 1950s, as her conservation achievements were forgotten², she was ridiculed for her advocacy of the unorthodox - organic agriculture and an anti-fluoridation position. When ecologists Gwen Struik and Roger Bray arrived in Nelson in the 1960s, they discovered her public reputation.

¹ John Pascoe, "A new national park", *The Canterbury Mountaineer*, 14(1945), pp.45-49; John Pascoe, (ed) *National parks of New Zealand* (Wellington, 1974).

² The *NEM* published two articles on Moncrieff in the 1950s; a summary of her conservation activities when she was presented with the Loder Cup, *NEM*, 17 July 1954 and a short biography including aspects of her early life in Britain, *NEM*, 30 May 1959.

Struik: At that time the only thing I knew about Pérrine Moncrieff was what I'd read in the newspaper. And she was very much painted...as being this crazy lady who was against fluoridation....And the fact that she had such a long and distinguished history before that, I was totally unaware of.

Bray: In Nelson, certain members of the medical profession and the general professions...carried on a persistent campaign of denigration against her, and openly referred to her in denigrating terms....It wasn't just that we heard her being denigrated through the newspaper but personally. People would make statements in our presence....[B]efore we met her we heard people make statements "Oh that's that crazy Moncrieff lady. She's against fluoridation."³

While this was the estimation of those who did not then know her personally, Craig Potton referred to a more nuanced reputation amongst those who did.

It was quite obvious when we had a public meeting and we put Pérrine Moncrieff down as a speaker, we got a lot of people there and she was respected by Nelson people. They knew her. It was a name that was known and that counted a lot for us - a name not only known but had a respectability amongst city fathers and that clique that tends to organise what we do in Nelson.⁴

Ridicule or respect, marginalisation and disappearance - what were the reasons for Moncrieff's public fate? One of the most important was her vitalist metaphysic, derived perhaps from Ernst Haeckel's book, lectures by Hans Driesch or through Malcolm Moncrieff's conception of a "Super Being as the active Centre of the Universe" and his insight that relativity theory undermined classical scientific certainty. Pérrine believed in a universe of spiritual and material interconnections. If she had accepted only the material inter-relationship of species, an ecological perspective could have been accommodated within her ornithology and conservation because ecology was already a recognised discipline. To go beyond the observable material links

³ Interview with Dr Gwen Struik and Dr Roger Bray, 2.

⁴ Interview with Craig Potton, 2. Potton, in contrast to Struik and Bray, was brought up in Nelson where his father was in business.

between species and their environments, to insist that human beings, as trustees for an immaterial creator, should respect the "aliveness" of other living creatures and value them intrinsically, was to court rejection by the scientific establishment. This dichotomy deepened with developments within the profession. These included the Vienna Circle's restatement in the 1930s of the classical science tenet, that intuitively, spiritually or emotionally derived knowledge was less valid than knowledge which was verifiable by observation and experiment. The second development was the professionalisation of science in New Zealand, under which New Zealand scientists prosecuted the Vienna Circle's dictum by rejecting knowledge derived from mysticism, like Malcolm's, and subjectivity in science under relativity and quantum theories. Together, these developments excluded the vitalist, amateur Pérrine. Additionally, with the expanding role of scientists in central and local government and the semi-autonomous Cawthron, a new generation of academically-trained young scientists sought to establish itself. In Moncrieff's area of field ornithology they set the tone and established the standards and criteria for participation in the discourse, while in indigenous bird conservation they censured her protectionist position against captive breeding as reactionary. In agriculture, the use of manufactured fertilisers and chemical pesticides was orthodox practice. Soil scientists like Theodore Rigg, although he recommended composting, nevertheless saw it only as a supplement to the former. Moncrieff may have slated these scientists as no "bird lovers" or as "pseudo-scientists" but they were the orthodox and she was accordingly marginalised as the "other".

Another mark against Moncrieff was her sex. The ambivalence of gendered relationships in daily life, which was especially noticeable in ornithology, isolated her from equal opportunity in the male ornithologists' network. Without those bonds, she was also precluded from participation in advisory committees on bird conservation. Even though she had been instrumental in the 1920s in trying to arrange cooperative committees to represent the competing voices in conservation to government, the combination

of her sex and vitalism prevented her from consideration for the 1948 Native Bird Preservation Committee or its successors.

There may also have been personal reasons for Nelsonian derision. People may have considered her imperious, a characteristic resented in egalitarian-minded New Zealand, for as conservationist Henk Heinekamp observed,

After [my] picture appeared in the paper, I got a phone call. 'This is Périnne Moncrieff. I think we had better have a talk and get to know each other. Come up tomorrow morning about ten'. This was how she was - it was a kind of order - it was never 'Will this be alright'?⁵

Or they may have resented her appeals to heritage, given her newcomer status. She herself never felt completely accepted as a Nelsonian, a city where the Editor of the local paper, F.J.Earle, emphasised the preservation of the past by requesting and publishing accounts by actual pioneers.⁶

A third reason for her disappearance can be seen in the argument made by Derek Wall, that today's Green movement likes to present itself as "new", without a history or "roots" in the past.⁷ In New Zealand an example of this occurred very early in the environment movement of the later twentieth century in J.T Salmon's 1960 *Heritage destroyed*. This book is a powerful polemic which chronicled the aesthetic and ecological disasters that resulted from nature "development" by government departments like Public Works and Electricity since World War Two. Salmon, a zoologist and forthright conservationist, argued that the Ministry of Works and the Department of Electricity despoiled the environment in the interests of national development and the perpetuation of their own existence, and that they used various techniques to stymie and deflect debate over the real environmental costs of their projects. Despite his

⁵ Interview with Henk Heinekamp, 2.

⁶ For example, the stories of floods and soil erosion by the eighty-year old Robert Pattie; *NEM*, 24 August 1933, p.9; 15 December 1934, p.9; 20 December 1939, p.9.

⁷ Derek Wall, *Green history* (London, 1994), pp.2,21; Richard Grove, *Green imperialism* (Cambridge, 1995), p.1.

leading role from the 1950s in Forest and Bird⁸, Salmon scarcely mentioned the Society. The work of Moncrieff, Sanderson and other early conservationists in the 1920-1950 period was ignored as if it had never occurred.⁹

The downplaying of history within today's conservation movement continued in subsequent publications, which took as their starting point environmental action from the early 1970s. Roger Wilson's *From Manapouri to Aramoana*¹⁰ has little about earlier groups and issues while Neville Peat's *Manapouri saved! New Zealand's first great conservation success story* is patronising, and in light of academic historical research, wrong in some assessments.

[In the 1950s] scenery preservationists were yet to coalesce into a lobby that had any sway with the public let alone the government. The term, conservation, was little used, and tended to be associated with a narrow non-progressive outlook. It would be some years before the principles of conservation and sound environmental practice found public acceptance.¹¹

As this and other theses have demonstrated, the word "conservation", albeit as both "protection" and "wise-use", had been increasingly used from the nineteenth century. In the 1920s Moncrieff and Sanderson identified their activity as advocates for conservation, while scientists like R.A.Falla, W.B.Oliver and L.W.McCaskill considered themselves conservationists. Moncrieff and Sanderson were certainly more than "scenery preservationists" in advocating the ecological perspective of "seeing the whole as a whole". While their sway with the public was indeed limited, as lobbyists to government they had considerable influence on politicians and especially public

⁸ N.E.Dalmer, *Birds, forests and natural features of New Zealand* (Levin, 1983), pp.161,162.

⁹ J.T.Salmon, *Heritage destroyed* (Wellington, 1960). However in a later conservation overview, Salmon acknowledged the historicity of the conservation movement; J.T.Salmon, "Nature conservation", in *The natural history of New Zealand*, (ed) Gordon R.Williams (Wellington, 1973), pp.393-410, especially pp.400-405.

¹⁰ Roger Wilson, *From Manapouri to Aramoana* (Auckland, 1982).

¹¹ Neville Peat, *Manapouri saved!* (Dunedin, 1994), pp.2,3.

servants in the 1920s and 1930s. The 1960s campaigners for saving Manapouri were only building on the links created and maintained from a century or so earlier.

Moncrieff herself contributed to the downplaying of her historical experience when she became involved with the new generation of environmentalists about 1970. Did she too want to appear new-minted? She appeared to John Salmon's son, Guy Salmon, who knew her in her old age, as being "for the present. Quite different from a lot of other old people who would reminisce a lot about what they had done."¹² While he and most of the other conservationists I interviewed knew that Abel Tasman National Park was her initiative they were ignorant of the extent of her work for conservation.¹³

These, then, are all possible reasons for her marginalisation and disappearance from the public record of conservation between 1920 and 1950 and for her equivocal reputation in Nelson. Moncrieff was aware of the latter. Even in the 1930s she had thought she was the butt of a joke when the Acclimatization Society gave her an injured weka, "Out of devilment, I suspect."¹⁴ Forty years later she was certain of her reputation. "They thought I was a crank".¹⁵ But by then she had involved herself with the new generations of amateur ornithologists like Frank Boyce and Jenny Hawkins and of the nature conservationists. The latter included Struik and Bray's coastal conservation campaign which resulted in the formation of Friends of Nelson Haven and Tasman Bay. Moncrieff was involved with Potton, Salmon and Gwenny Davis of the Native Forest Action Council to save indigenous forest. Moncrieff described them as "a crowd of wonderful young people, utterly

¹² Interview with Guy Salmon, 2.

¹³ For example, Henk Heinekamp, Jenny Hawkins, Frank Boyce, Patrick McGrath and Craig Potton, as well as Salmon, Struik and Bray knew little of her past work.

¹⁴ Moncrieff to Sanderson, 9 February 1932, MS Papers 0444:193, 1.

¹⁵ "They're two women with a common purpose", Interview with P  r  ne Moncrieff and Gladys Bisley, *NEM*, 29 July 1978.

unselfish in their fight".¹⁶ Her public lobbying and fund-raising for their campaigns transformed her reputation in an environment more responsive to conservation issues than in her earlier period of activism and more generous in rewarding her publicly for her work. In her final years she received several New Zealand and international honours: in 1974 she was made an Officer of the Order of Orange-Nassau, in 1975 a Commander of the British Empire, and in 1978 received an International Wildlife citation and recognition from New Zealand's Nature Conservation Council.¹⁷

Like other women lost to history, Moncrieff was recovered not only amongst conservationists but also under the aegis of the women's movement. David Thom gave her work for the Abel Tasman National Park a generous space in his *Heritage. The parks of the people*¹⁸, while Janet McCallum's research and articles on her have generated academic studies such Maree Baker's and this one. Noticeboards at entrances to Abel Tasman National Park emphasise her role. Moncrieff has even returned to ornithological history with a mention, albeit a negative one, in Sandy Bartle's review of the latest New Zealand field guide, although her book was omitted from the field guide itself.¹⁹ However *New Zealand birds and how to identify them* has been publicly identified by other scientists as having shaped their careers. Even more insightful is the elision between Charles Fleming's published and unpublished comments on Moncrieff in his book on the Lodge paintings. Whereas publicly Fleming intimated that Moncrieff's ornithological reputation

¹⁶ Moncrieff to Hudson, 8 March 1979, 2.

¹⁷ Moncrieff to Hudson, 8 March 1979, 2.

¹⁸ David Thom, *Heritage* (Auckland, 1987), pp.147,148.

¹⁹ Sandy Bartle, "Watch the birdy", Reviews of *The field guide to the birds of New Zealand* by Barrie Heather and Hugh Robertson and *New Zealand's native birds of shore and wetland* by R. Powlesland, *New Zealand Education Review*, 14(May 1997), p.31.

Bartle wrote, "The illustrations in our earlier field guides (Perrine Moncrieff in 1925, Chloe Talbot Kelly in 1966, Elaine Power in 1978) were often not much use in the field and contained many inaccuracies" but he did not substantiate his claims except with a generalised statement that the guides were "virtually useless" for the identification of albatrosses, petrels and shorebirds.

lay in her relationship to J.G. Millais²⁰, in his unpublished notes Fleming acknowledges her "successful popular guide in 1925" and "her recognition locally as an ornithologist of stature (say in 1925)".²¹ This assessment, never confirmed publicly by scientific ornithologists, indicates that Moncrieff should not have been eliminated from the public record.

This thesis has presented a study of Moncrieff's involvement in nature conservation in the early to middle decades of the twentieth century and from the middle years of her life. In her eighties, as an activist amongst younger activists, she appeared to the teenaged Potton as a conservationist, who

was not up to date in [the ecological] respect at all....she didn't keep up with all the scientific research....

[S]he did emphasis...the aesthetic quality. It was the beauty of the bush...

[S]he was a lady that (sic) cared about the beautiful. You could see that in her music, the way she dressed, almost the flamboyance of her. Even up to the end she'd put on a big long scarf...Isadora Duncan type scarf, throw it round her and come storming into the meeting with a certain aplomb....

All the besuited Forest Service people and the Mayor and the City Fathers would be sitting there in the meetings. She would just slam into them. She didn't mince words at all. She was very stroppy the way she spoke in public....'You people are wrecking our heritage....'

Perrine Moncrieff is (sic) a person who actually, physically, on the ground saved things. You can go to Abel Tasman, you can say, well, from there to there is only there because she did it....She was an activist. That's how I remember her.²²

In this portrayal we can see the younger Moncrieff from the 1920s. Her ecological science might have been out-of-date but her appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of the wild remained as firm as in the past. Even stronger was her public advocacy for the conservation of natural heritage. There are

²⁰ C.A.Fleming, *George Edward Lodge* (Wellington, 1982), p.8.

²¹ [Charles Fleming], Notes for Falla Obit., p.3; held by E.M.Harcourt, 2.

²² Potton interview, 2.

echoes of her 1928 "Tale of woe" speech but the language is more direct, urgent and polemical.

It is an epitaph which confirms her effectiveness as an advocate for conservation of the indigenous wild in her adopted country, New Zealand. She was significant, not only in the years investigated in this thesis between 1920 and 1950, but also in the resurgence of the conservation movement from the 1960s. In pursuing her "mission...to save the wonderful forest and birds of New Zealand" throughout her life here, she was indeed a faithful trustee for Nature.





Pérrine Moncrieff receives the Order of Orange-Nassau
from the Netherlands Ambassador to New Zealand,
H.C. Jorissen.

Nelson Mail, 27 July 1974

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