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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

JENNIFER ROBIN HODGE
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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the question of P  rri  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, now 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, formerly TPNZI, Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute</i>

1. Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Papers, MS Papers 0444, Folders 192-197, P  rri  ne Moncrieff, WTU.
- 1a. Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Papers, MS Papers 4723, Folders 1-4.
2. P  rri  ne 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, P  rri  ne 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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Perrine Moncrieff and pets, including Miss Micawber,
her macaw parrot, 1930s.

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Aotearoa

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