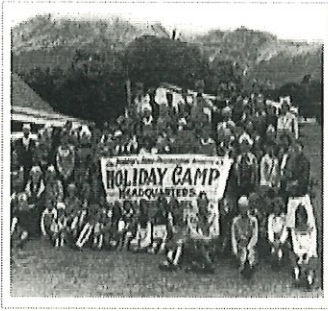


Forest & Bird, n.d.[a]

The History of Forest & Bird



Outrage at an outrage

Location: Kapiti Island
Date: 1923

It all started with that emotion the conservationists around the world into action - outrage.

On returning from the First World War, Captain Val Sanderson visited Kapiti Island, to find the forest playground of his youth bereft of bird life and overrun with more than 5000 cattle, goats and sheep. The native plant and animal that had once thrived on the island had been decimated.

Kapiti was a microcosm of the wider devastation of New Zealand's forests and native birds, largely wrought by the plague of introduced mammals, such as stoats, rats and possums that had come care of new settlers.

The huia and the piopio were freshly extinct and many more native bird species looked set to follow if action was not taken to protect them.

It was against this backdrop that Sanderson began a campaign to see Kapiti restored to its former glory and its status as a wildlife reserve upheld.

Encouraged by friends, supporters and the success of his campaign, Sanderson sought to widen his activism and the Native Bird Protection Society was established at a public meeting in March 1923. It later became the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, known more simply as Forest & Bird.

Number and focus of issues Forest & Bird has tackled has increased and broadened over time, yet the same motivation - to protect New Zealand's native flora, fauna, habitats and natural scenic values - is still central to Forest & Bird today.

The story of Kapiti is a fine example of what has been achieved through the work of Sanderson and other dedicated conservationists. It now is home to a host of native species, and the island resounds to a full chorus of native birds.

Since its establishment, Forest & Bird has grown to comprise 50 branches with thousands of members around New Zealand working on hands-on restoration projects and serving as a voice for the protection of our environment.

Forest & Bird's achievements

Since Forest & Bird was established, public parks and reserves have increased to where they now cover a third of our country, logging of native forests has virtually stopped and several species have been brought back from the brink of extinction. Forest & Bird has been at the forefront of virtually all of the major conservation campaigns of the last eight decades, such as the fight to save Lake Manapouri and the battle to stop logging of native trees in our North Island forests and on the West Coast.

Forest & Bird, founded to protect New Zealand's native forests and birds, today covers a wider brief: the preservation of all our native species, habitats and wild places.

Our advocacy now also covers protection of the marine environment throughout New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone, protection of the high country and of our lakes, wetlands and rivers. We are also an active voice in ensuring that New Zealand meets its international obligations on environmental issues such as climate change.

Take Action!

What You Can Do In 5 minutes

- [Join Forest & Bird](#)
- [Donate to Forest & Bird](#)

More Information

Internal Links

- [Who we are](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

1923
First conservation organisation established

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1923

3rd