



## **Report 01.185**

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Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee  
from Wayne O'Donnell, Manager, Biosecurity

### **Biodiversity – Teacher Fellowship Report**

#### **1. Purpose**

To report on biodiversity work recently completed under a Royal Society of New Zealand Teacher Fellowship Scheme.

#### **2. Background**

In late 1999, the Council was contacted by Hertha James, a senior science teacher from Kuranui College, regarding possible ecology-based subjects for a Fellowship application.

The NZ Science, Mathematics & Technology Teacher Fellowship Scheme was established in 1994 by the then Minister of Research, Science and Technology. The objective of the Scheme is to contribute to the Government's goal of promoting science, mathematics and technology in NZ and to enhance the delivery of these subjects in schools. The Fellowship provides a years funding to allow a teacher to study a relevant subject approved by the Royal Society. The research must be able to be incorporated into the school curriculum with a mix of practical and theoretical application.

At the time it was considered that a study investigating all ecological projects underway in the Region during 2000 would be beneficial. This study would enable all organisations involved in environmental protection/enhancement projects to be identified, common goals and objectives scoped, and opportunities for co-operation between the agencies determined. Additional benefits included raising awareness of environmental issues in the wider community, identifying key contacts for networking and providing options for collective inputs on specific future projects.

The application was accepted by the Royal Society. The Wairarapa Division agreed to host Hertha during her year long study. This involved administrative support, provision of workspace, assistance with establishing contacts, and monitoring/commenting on draft reports.

The Fellowship also required two field studies to be identified for inclusion in the school curriculum at the conclusion of the year's research. Topics chosen included –

- Revegetation/foilage density recovery – using standard foliar browse and ground plots in a KNE site to determine recovery rates following possum control;
- Wetland restoration project – students would be involved in propagating locally sourced plant material and replanting in a wetland area that had been subject to significant human influence.

In both field studies, students would acquire a range of new skills, learn more about the effects of man on the environment and be involved in making a positive change to their surroundings.

### **3. Research Completed**

The Fellowship study commenced in January 2000 with a final report required in November 2000. Incorporation of the field studies into the school curriculum is scheduled for the 2001 school year.

During the study period, Hertha contacted and visited over 45 organisations involved in ecological projects in the Wellington region. A master list of all contacts has been received. Twenty-three separate reports have been completed, covering each organisation that is actively involved in ecological work. The reports cover the following subjects:

- Contact details
- Background information on the organisation
- Organisations objectives
- The organisations contact network
- Public education work underway or completed
- Future education work
- Resources/expertise available for use with other groups

The reports provide an excellent knowledge base for enhancing interaction with like-minded organisations, particular for implementation of Council's biodiversity objectives and environmental education initiatives.

### **4. Communication**

A summary report highlighting the main outcomes of the research will be prepared for a future edition of Elements.

### **5. Recommendation**

*That the report be received and its contents noted.*

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission by:

Wayne O'Donnell  
Manager, Biosecurity

Colin Wright  
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa