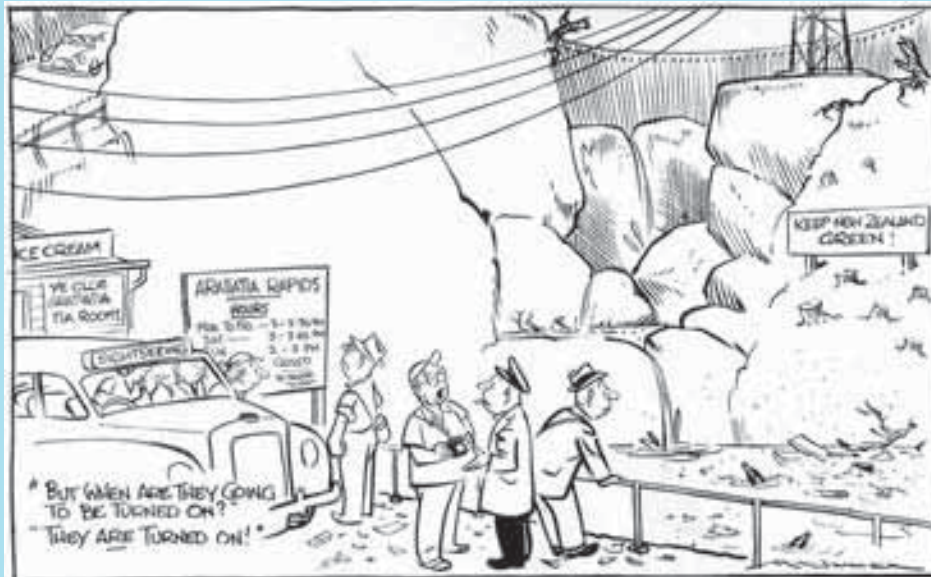


# Our beautiful environment: 1953 to the present



The Aratiatia Scenic reserve near Taupo was considerably altered in the building of the Aratiatia powerhouse. The scenic reserve was first established in 1906 and was widely regarded for its beauty. Gordon Minhinnick's cartoon captures some of the issues that arose in the 1950s debate. Auckland Regional Museum and *New Zealand Herald*; Gordon Minhinnick 'The March of Progress', *New Zealand Herald*, 22

August, 1958

The Reserves and Domains Act 1953 amalgamated the town domain and scenic reserve legislation. At the time of the Act there were more than 1300 reserves and domains nationwide. Reserves covered 947 000 acres (384 000 ha) and domains accounted for a further 83 000 acres (33 600 ha). The Act proved innovative despite being described as a consolidating measure at the time.

This reserves legislation was passed a year after the National Parks Act. Both Acts emphasised that reserved areas were to be protected, to be maintained in their natural state, that introduced plants and animals were to be eradicated where possible and that reserves were to be enjoyed by the public. Reserves were to be managed by a committee or the Department of Lands. A Scenic and Allied Reserves Committee was

established under the National Parks Authority to develop an overall picture of reserve administration and management.

Legislative change was overshadowed by a substantial shift in public opinion. In 1959 there was a conference on the 'Conservation of New Zealand Scenic Attractions' that facilitated the establishment of the Nature Conservation Council in 1962. Almost at the same time the government announced the Manapouri and Tongariro hydroelectric proposals. These had implications for the Aratiatia Rapids and Lake Manapouri—the former a high-profile scenic reserve, the latter a scenic wonder. A new Scenery Preservation Society was established to fight the proposals. J.T. Salmon published his influential book *Heritage Destroyed: the Crisis in Scenery Preservation in New Zealand* in 1960. This started a debate about scenery preservation but by 1972, when Manapouri was 'saved', the public were squarely concerned about protecting the 'environment'.

Following an initiative by Lance McCaskill of the National Parks Authority, articles on national parks and reserves (many written by



Aratiatia Rapids, Waikato River. AJHR: photographer unknown, AJHR, vol 1, 1915, C-6, opp. p. 16; ATL: C-26519-1/2

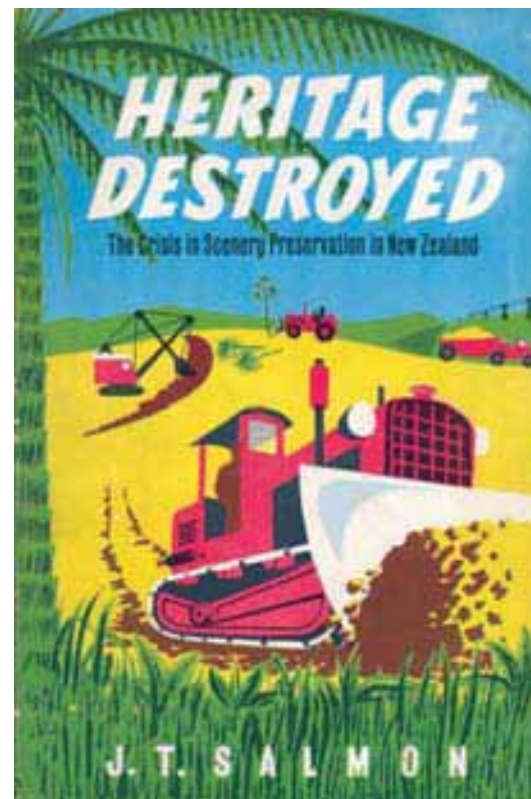
Bing Lucas, an official in the Department of Lands and Survey), appeared as a regular feature in the Automobile Association magazine *NZ Motor World* in the mid 1960s. This in turn led to production of a regional series of booklets on scenic reserves, authored by Lance McCaskill. These were an attempt at widely publicising the qualities of scenic reserves and their recreational value.

Lance McCaskill's review of scenic reserves in the 1960s and early 1970s also assessed the reserves in terms of how representative they were of ecology. His recommendations were for the creation of new types of reserves to include a wider variety of ecological habitats. This was one of the key drivers behind the passing of the Reserves Act 1977. The Reserves Act, while a child of the Scenery Preservation Act 1903, has led to a blossoming of the concept of protected areas and the number of reserves has grown considerably.

## CONCLUSION

From the late 19th Century New Zealanders developed aesthetic, iconic and emotional relationships toward their landscapes that were to be reflected in the scenic and historic reserve network. A great diversity of reserves was proclaimed that encompassed geothermal, natural curiosity, aesthetic, archaeological, historic, and scientific sites. This extensive network of reserves protected widely diverse scenery and indigenous biota and also provided the basis for some national parks.

Management of the large number of reserves was a considerable challenge that was not really addressed until after World War II. By the late 1950s New Zealanders were re-evaluating scenery. Development pressures and concerns about damage to the environment led to a re-examination of the reserve network. There was



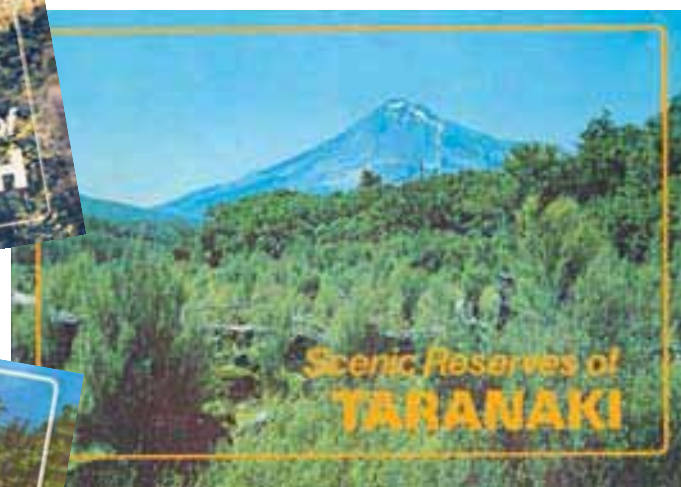
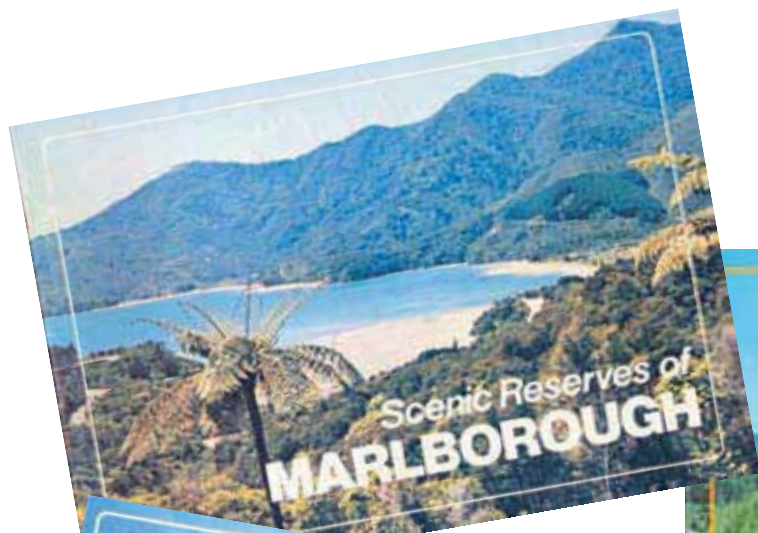
Salmon's book was influential in bringing the public's attention to the environmental impacts the large hydroelectricity developments were having on New Zealand scenery. Salmon, J.T. *Heritage Destroyed: the Crisis in Scenery Preservation in New Zealand* (Reed, Wellington, 1960)

an increased emphasis on protecting habitat and a wide variety of types of ecology. The network of scenic reserves provided a legacy for the objectives of biological conservation, albeit more by accident than by design. The 1000 or so scenic reserves included a reasonably diverse sample of natural biodiversity, which was a valuable tool to assist the ecological aims of the 1977 Reserves Act. 🌿



The establishment of scenic reserves along highways was to return great benefit for the travelling public once the motorcar became widely available in the 1950s and 60s. Morere Springs Scenic Reserve is a well-known example. Rakai Paaka, a hapu of Ngati Kahungunu, used these springs for many years before Europeans encountered them in 1884. In 1895 the Lands and Survey Department gazetted the Nuhaka Thermal Springs Reserve under the Land Act 1892. Since 1987, renamed Morere Springs Scenic Reserve, it has been administered by the Department of Conservation. ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY: photographer unknown, F-6790-1/1



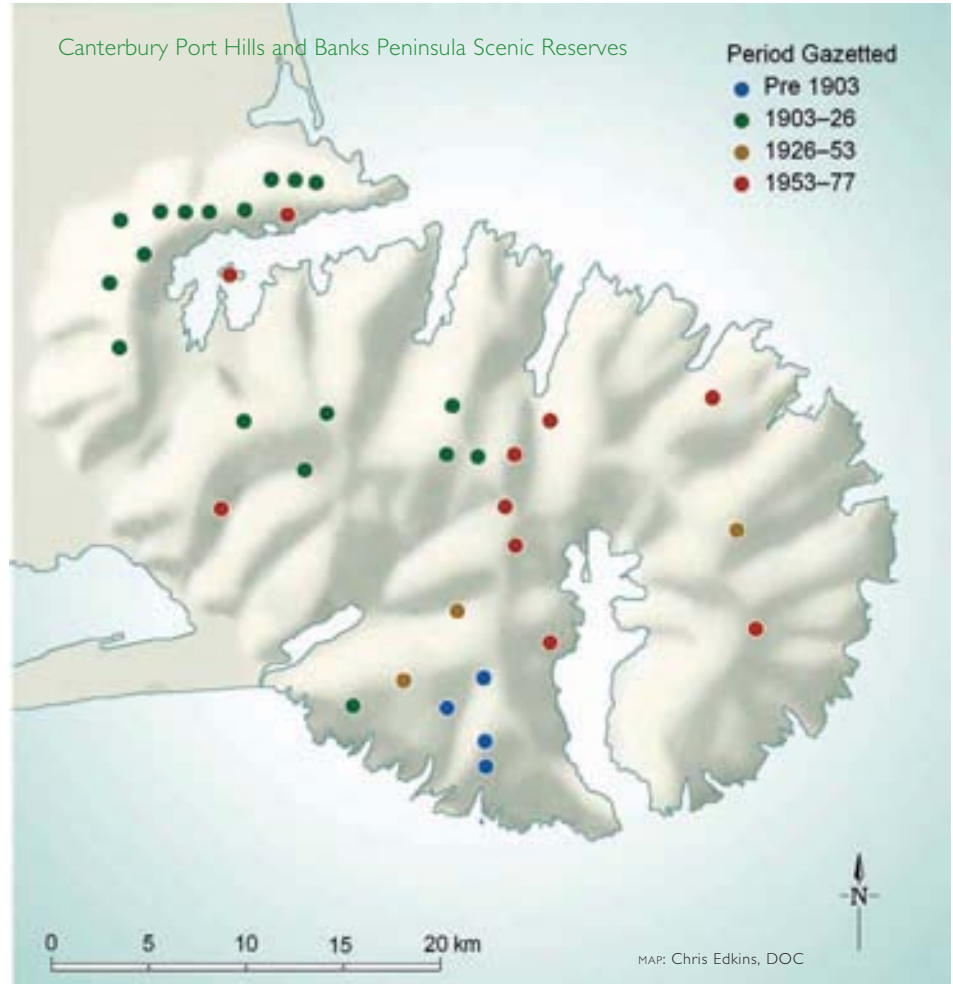


Lance McCaskill's review of Scenic Reserves was used as the basis for a series of books promoting the reserves to the public.



Politician Harry Ell and botanist Leonard Cockayne successfully worked together to create scenic reserves on the Canterbury Port Hills and Banks Peninsula. Together with Jane Dean they also campaigned to reserve Riccarton Bush in public ownership. Riccarton Bush was reserved under its own legislation in 1914.

CANTERBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY: *The Weekly Press*, 4 April 1904, p. 21.



## Perrine Moncrieff (1893–1979)



NELSON PROVINCIAL MUSEUM: Kingsford  
Collection I24247/6

Perrine Moncrieff was for nearly 50 years this country's foremost woman conservationist. Born into an upper class British family, she emigrated to New Zealand in 1921, settled in Nelson and bought land on the shores of Tasman Bay, which in the 1930s became a scenic reserve. In 1942, to celebrate the tercentenary of the discovery of New Zealand by Abel Tasman, the greatly extended reserve was designated Abel Tasman National Park—Perrine's greatest conservation achievement. She served on the park board until being required to stand down at age 81. A founding member of the Native Bird Protection Society (1923) and the New Zealand Ornithological Society (1940), she campaigned successfully for reservation of land at Lake Rotoroa and Maruia Springs, and for designation of Farewell Spit as a bird sanctuary. She also donated a large area of coastal bush at Okiwi to the Crown as a reserve. Her popular guide to the identification of New Zealand birds, published in 1929, was a standard reference for some 40 years. She was an honorary wildlife ranger for 15 years, she wrote many articles at home and abroad, and she tramped extensively in the Nelson region and elsewhere in the South Island.

Sea kayaking, Tonga Island, Abel Tasman National Park, 1992. DOC





## Lancelot William McCaskill (1900–85)



Molesworth, 1969, Reed Publishing (NZ) Ltd

Born in South Canterbury and trained at the Canterbury Agricultural College at Lincoln, McCaskill studied rural education and soil conservation in America in 1923. He returned to the staff of Lincoln College where, in 1961, he became Director of the Tussock Grasslands and Mountainlands Institute. He rose to national prominence by advocating improved catchment management to combat soil erosion, and was influential in the development of the country's first comprehensive soil conservation legislation in 1941. A keen interest in plants and natural history led to his membership, for almost 30 years, of the Arthur's Pass National Park Board and he was a founding member of the National Parks Authority (1953–68). He also initiated New Zealand's involvement in the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

His outstanding teaching, prolific writings and relentless energy in serving non-governmental organisations mark him as one of the country's most influential conservationists in the mid 20th Century.

Page Shelter, Temple Basin, Arthur's Pass National Park, 1986. Peter Simpson, DOC



## Percy Hylton Craig (Bing) Lucas (1925–2000)



Lucas Papers private collection

Lucas was universally known from his schooldays in Christchurch as Bing. He was a world leader in parks and reserves during the last quarter of the 20th Century. On joining the Department of Lands and Survey in Wellington, he turned his attention in the early 1960s to publicising the conservation values, scenic attractions and ready accessibility of national parks and scenic reserves as areas for public enjoyment. Following a study tour of North American parks in 1969, he wrote the blueprint for the professional development of New Zealand's parks and reserves system, which profoundly influenced the Reserves Act 1977 and National Parks Act 1980 that remain within the statutory foundation of today's conservation estate. In the course of an illustrious public service career, Bing rose through the ranks of the Lands Department to become its first Director of Parks and Reserves in 1969 and its final Director-General, before retiring in 1986. He was involved for almost 30 years in the international protected areas movement, the latter part devoted to extending the UNESCO World Heritage Area network. He and Lance McCaskill are New Zealand's only two conservationists to be enrolled as Members of Honour of the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

## OTHER SITES



Bryant Memorial Reserve, Waikato Conservancy, 1984. C. Rudge, DOC



Hokitika Gorge Scenic Reserve, West Coast—Tai Poutini Conservancy. K. Smith, DOC



The Otatara and Hikurangi Pa sites are close to the City of Napier. The Otatara Pa Historic Reserve was established in 1973. The site is associated with the arrival to Heretaunga of Taraia who brought with him the people who later became known as Ngati Kahungunu. It also has significant post-European contact history and an ongoing association with Ngati Paarau—the local hapu. Otatara Pa consists of 44 ha of distinctive archaeological features and is one of the most significant archaeological sites in New Zealand. Kevin Jones, DOC



Motuara is now an island bird sanctuary in the Marlborough Sounds and the cat sitting on the man's lap would certainly not be welcome. When Motuara was first established as a scenic and historic reserve in 1912 the island was almost devoid of any trees, having been farmed for two generations. It was the site of garden plantings by Captain Cook on his 1769 voyage to New Zealand. ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY: Russell James Duncan, 1902, F-31683-1/2



Motuara Island, Queen Charlotte Sound, looks very different today. DOC





Curio Bay, Southland. The area encompassing a petrified forest on the Catlin's coast and associated coastal land at Curio Bay are now scientific and recreation reserves under the Reserves Act. The fossilised forest dates back about 160 million years to the Jurassic period. This is a rare geological feature not found elsewhere in New Zealand. It was established as a scenic reserve in 1925. Dawn Patterson



Waiotapu Scenic Reserve, Bay of Plenty Conservancy. doc



Silica terraces, Waimangu Scenic Reserve, Bay of Plenty Conservancy. DOC



Moeraki Boulders Scenic Reserve, Otago Conservancy. Tony Perrett, DOC

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