

## **EDITORIAL**

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Welcome to this edition of the WETA under a new editor. The WETA is a bi-annual journal offering an opportunity for the dissemination of observations, news and views, and the outcomes of small research projects, related to entomology and arachnology in an Australasian context. In particular it is an important outlet for amateur, in the sense of unpaid, students as well as professional scientists. For many years entomology has been underrepresented in university courses in New Zealand, perhaps reflecting the fact that there are few employment opportunities in this country for trained entomologists. It has always seemed peculiar to me that a country which is so dependent on exports of primary produce, is a small country specialising in monocultures, Kiwifruit, grapes, pine trees for example, and which invests a large amount of money and effort in expanding the tourist trade, and which is therefore so vulnerable to introduction of pests, should expend such small effort in training professional entomologists. In addition, there is proper concern about this country's conservation estate, yet apart from birds and a few larger insects, we have remarkably limited knowledge of the diversity of the animals which exists there, and still less about how to maintain them. It is certain that numerous species of insects and other invertebrates, many of particular interest, remain to be discovered in this country. As many people have pointed out, the current pace of change means that many species of animal will become extinct before they are discovered. We owe it to future generations to ensure that the rich diversity and uniqueness of the New Zealand fauna is fully documented and its interrelationships understood as far as possible. This small journal makes an important contribution to this aim.

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Your editor is something of an anomaly. I started collecting caddis fly larvae in the streams and ditches of the Somerset levels when I was about five years old. At school I was eager to get to University where I fondly imagined that I would meet many other people as fascinated by Trichoptera as I was. When I got there it was a cold shock of reality to discover that the Trichoptera merited just a small part of a third-year specialist course. I had hoped to work with H.H.Ross on American caddis flies as a postgraduate, but funds were lacking. Instead I became a demonstrator in Zoology at Bristol where I did research for my PhD with Professor Howard Hinton, FRS. He had just discovered the remarkable larva of the chironomid *Polypedilum vanderplanki*, and was lyrical about its ability to withstand complete dehydration, a clue he thought, to perpetual life! It was a short step for me from there to the study of water and ion balance in insects and later in the mammalian kidney. Now in retirement I can indulge my youthful enthusiasms and return to my entomological roots. I look forward to a steady flow of interesting manuscripts.