

Figures doubted

The opinion piece by Jo O'Connell ["Gareth's right, so Puss will be my last cat", *Saturday Express*, May 3] quoted the figure of 25 million birds being killed each year by "rats, stoats and possums".

Firstly I doubt the 25 million figure. Is it the same arithmetic that DOC used to say there were 70 million possums? A figure a senior Landcare Research scientist dismissed as "a back of a napkin calculation".

Jo has been bedazzled by DOC propaganda: Possums are vegetarian, not meat eaters.

Jo referred to the Government's coming 1080 drops. This is an assumption that a super beech mast seeding this year will cause rodents to explode in numbers.

It will be interesting to see how DOC spin doctors will cope with the non-existent mouse plague that is already evident.

But when the 1080 is dropped, the surviving rats - with up to four litters of 10 each per year - will explode in numbers to likely three times their pre-1080 number, within three years.

Ponder on: (a) beech mast years have been happening for millions of years; (b) Polynesian rats have been here for 800 years, Norwegian rats for 200 years; (c) possums for 180 years. Bird life was abundant 30 years ago.

When DOC drops 1080 it kills not only birds, but insects and all the other creatures because 1080 is a broad spectrum poison that kills anything living that it comes into contact with.

A naturalist, I researched it and put it into a book *The Third Wave* (Tross Publishing). I invite Jo to read it.

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Irishman Creek

Matthew Littlewood's article (May 6) on 5800 hectares of Mackenzie Basin's iconic station Irishman Creek up for private sale is of deep concern. What is at stake here is New Zealand's traditional egalitarian heritage where the recreational outdoor public can, with permission and no charges, have access for legitimate outdoor recreation, be it hiking, fishing, hunting, four-wheel driving, mountain biking or whatever.

Would-be foreign buyers come from a different society, often of private estates and incredible access fees, so high that the outdoor recreation becomes the preserve of the very wealthy upper class. New Zealand on the other hand, quite deliberately, established an egalitarian society where the charging for fishing and shooting is prohibited under New Zealand laws.

It is too easy for foreign buyers to come in, buy at will, bar access and even under guise of luxury

Lack of wisdom

The item on the likelihood of Irishman Creek Station being freeholded and sold raises the spectre once again of a foreign buyer fronting up and paying an inflated market price for a slice of New Zealand.

The high prices paid by outsiders inflates market values, putting the dreams of young Kiwis wanting to get their own farm out of reach. Where is Federated Farmers on this? Similarly, within high country stations there are outstanding scenic and outdoor recreation values, the latter embracing tramping, trout fishing and hunting. Invariably foreigners

facilities charge the public.

The Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations of NZ (CORANZ) is about to release an election charter. One of the basic needs is to "impose stricter controls on foreign ownership of New Zealand land - Foreigners can lease land long-term with the mandatory proviso that any lessee purchaser must become a registered New Zealand citizen and reside in New Zealand for nine months of every year. Public access be not undermined by foreign leases".

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"THE PRESS"
Christchurch
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put up locked gates to public access requests. Where is Fish and Game, Federated Mountain Clubs, on this?

While pretending control, the reality is the Overseas Investment Office is simply a rubber-stamp for government's obsession with selling public property.

Pastoral lease land is

essentially public land leased out. It throws into focus the lack of foresight and wisdom behind tenure review, where previously public land is hocked off to the highest bidder.

Xenophobic? Not in my book. Instead call it patriotic.

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