Obituary

Gordon Hosking ((Retired)), Lindsay Bulman & Stephanie Sopow

To cite this article: Gordon Hosking ((Retired)), Lindsay Bulman & Stephanie Sopow (2018) Obituary, New Zealand Entomologist, 41:1, 34-36, DOI: 10.1080/00779962.2018.1503773

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00779962.2018.1503773
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JOHN BAIN (1946–2018)

John arrived at the Forest Research Institute in Rotorua in the late 1960s after a brief stint with the Marine Department and settled into the Entomology Section joining Bob Milligan, Rudy Zondag, and Bill Faulds amongst others down under the poplars at the far end of the campus. His primary focus was on quarantine border interceptions, particularly wood boring insects, which was the catalyst for him becoming an expert in the identification of cerambycid larvae and their parasitoids, particularly ichneumonidae, for which he developed a keen interest. John also made major contributions to quarantine risk management and was directly involved with the Forest Service timber inspection team, and later the MAF Quarantine Service. He was heavily involved in the risk management of Asian gypsy moth, making many pilot launch trips at various ports around the country, often in rough seas, to inspect vessels before they were allowed to berth. He also supported colleagues in a wide range of projects (even swimming the Buller River to help Gordon Hosking collect increment cores from a particularly desirable stand of red beech), but it is perhaps the white spotted tussock moth eradication project which is his lasting legacy. His untiring efforts in the field, designing and supervising population monitoring using caged female insects, a seven day a week operation, was critical to the success of the project. This was an achievement unique to the international entomological community but hardly celebrated in his own country.

Following on from the successful white spotted tussock moth eradication, John was involved in the painted apple moth and Dutch elm disease eradication campaigns. The latter was not successful, but not through lack of John’s efforts. He spent over 15 years advising on the entomological aspects...
of Dutch elm disease and working in the field in charge of the pheromone trapping programme. The latter part of John’s career was spent on pest risk analyses and diagnostics. It was in diagnostics where John excelled, especially by imparting his considerable knowledge on identification of forest insects to his younger less experienced colleagues. That mentoring and training also included biological control, general entomology, taxonomy and science in general. John took great pride in writing well and that rigour helped improve many papers and reports coming from the Forest Protection team and from further afield while he served on the refereeing committee.

John was recognised as having a quick wit, a vast armoury of hilarious stories and a personality that drew people to him. He was considered one of the leaders of the group in many ways, even after he stepped down from his official leadership roles. Such was the standing and respect that his colleagues and industry had for him. He will be sadly missed by many. The tributes received have had the common themes of John being great to work with, having made a considerable contribution to forest entomology and biosecurity, and being extremely knowledgeable and helpful to all. We couldn’t agree more.

References


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