

Habitat Treasures

In 2021, COP26 on the horizon, international writers' organisation 26 teamed up with Forest & Bird to raise awareness of Aotearoa's threatened native habitats.

In this creative project, 17 writers from 26's New Zealand chapter chose an artist partner then a location from Forest & Bird's list, divided by habitat - Freshwater, Islands, Estuaries, Marine, Alpine, Wetlands and Forests.

The brief? A centena (a poem of exactly 100 words, starting and ending with the same three words), a 400-word short essay and an artwork.

The writers and artists travelled from the Hauraki gulf to the Waitakeres, the Kāpiti Coast to te awa Whanganui, breathing in the peace of ancient forests, jumping icy mountain pools, seeking out lost wetlands, spotting geckos, whales, dolphins, tīeke and wētā along the way. But personal experience, conversations with volunteers and further research revealed unsettling insights into the ongoing fragility of the reserves and hard facts about the mahi still to be done. Each story of beauty and wonder is shot through with stark figures and predictions, a duality reflected in the words and imagery created.

This was a sister project to 26 Habitats UK in partnership with the Wildlife Trusts. Poetry and art from the global project were released daily in the run-up to COP26 and published in the Forest & Bird magazine.

Here, in Forest & Bird's centennial year, eight of our 17 pairs and their unique habitats are featured as part of the Whanganui Literary Festival 2023. To see the full collection, visit www.26project.org.uk/26habitats

Please consider supporting Forest & Bird with a donation or by volunteering at your local reserve. In Whanganui, you'll find it at Bushy Park Tarapuruhi.

www.26.org.uk

www.forestandbird.org.nz