

Filling the gap for community groups

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¹ Photographing Nature

97% of the diversity of life is invertebrates. Community conservation groups and citizen scientists have an increasingly important role in managing and protecting our biodiversity. There are 420 groups registered on NatureSpace (as of 30 March 2017). There is currently a limited variety and depth of readily-available resources to assist these groups in identifying live invertebrates or managing invertebrates in their reserves. Consequently, these groups often tend to neglect the importance of invertebrates, or invite specialists to help them understand this group of animals. Benefiting on the night of the event, these groups are then left to figure more out by themselves. There is a gap of resources for them to use, and then our specialists are bombarded by endless low-quality photographs or descriptions of common species. In many cases this leads back to the community group neglecting invertebrates. I will talk about my current project through which I am to improve enable community groups to gain more confidence and efficiency in identifying invertebrates, and therefore make a more meaningful contribution to the science of entomology. Using examples from groups such as slugs and spiders, I will show how I am creating a useful and relevant resource for community conservation groups such as Aongatete Forest Project. This resource will have clear, photographs of each species on a white background. The individuals will be photographed alive, in natural positions on a white background to make them easily identifiable. The photographs will be supported by interesting facts about the general group or family, and comparisons between these groups. The emphasis of the resource will be on identifying a subject to a general level (e.g. "longhorn beetle", rather than "beetle") before identifying to species level because this often requires experience with the group.

