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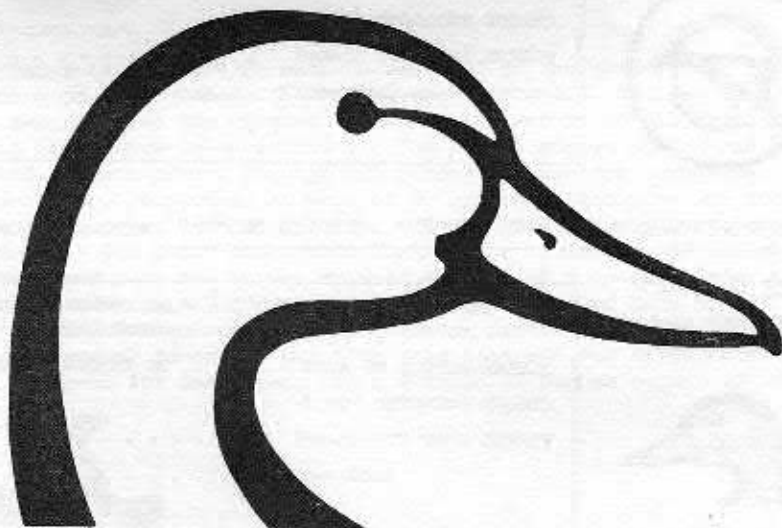
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FLIGHT 1/81 ISSUE 27

MARCH 1981

“FLIGHT”



"FLIGHT"

 * NO 1/81 ISSUE 27 MARCH 1981 *
 * THIS ISSUE CONTAINS..... *
 * PHOTOGRAPHS BROWN TEAL AT MATAKANA ISLAND *
 * GUEST AUTHOR JULIAN NELSON PARKER *
 * BLUE DUCK FRANK MCKINNEY REPORTS *
 * STUDY *
 * PROJECT REPORTS...PLUS MORE NEWS... EVENTS! *



NEW MEMBERS =====

Ducks Unlimited extends a warm welcome to the following new members:

H.J. Chapman	(S)	B.W. Glentworth	(S)	Andrew Martin	(J)
D.S. Champtaloup	(F)	Richard Hannibal	(S)	Mrs Pam Moran	(F)
Mike Cox	(F)	J.L. Harper	(F)	Frank A. Mortensen	(F)
D.D. Chrichton	(S)	Miss Robin Healey	(S)	I.H. Phillips	(F)
Mrs P. Finlay	(S)	Miss Trina King	(J)	Rod & Rifle Magazine	(S)
Miss Sandra Gibbard	(S)	D.H. & J. Lushington	(S)	Philip Smith	(S)
				G.T. Stanford	(F)

Note: (S) Supporter membership
 (F) Full member
 (J) Junior membership

MEMBERS.... ORDER YOUR LAPEL BADGE NOW - PROCEEDS BENEFIT DU PROJECTS

PRICE \$ 5 EACH
 (size 5/8" diameter)



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 P.O. Box 74 Hamilton

PLEASE SUPPLY ME WITH LAPEL BADGE(s)
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 PLEASE POST TO: (name)
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DU INTERNATIONAL PINS AVAILABLE - LIMITED SUPPLY! Editor's note: 1 pin only remains at 31 March

PRICE \$ 5 EACH
 (approx. same size as
 DU lapel badge)



To: Ducks Unlimited (NZ) Inc - DU INTERNATIONAL PIN ORDER FORM
 P.O. Box 74 Hamilton

PLEASE SUPPLY ME WITH DU INTERNATIONAL PIN(s)
 CHEQUE ENCLOSED FOR \$
 PLEASE POST TO: (name)
 (address)

Note: Ducks Unlimited Inc, U.S.A. generously donated a supply of DU International duck head pins for our 1980 annual conference. A very small number remains for members interested in acquiring this handsome memento - depicting a polished mallard profile, offset by a clean black border - may be used as a lapel pin, hat pin or tie tack. They also make perfect gifts.

DU News

DU ON DISPLAY AT MYSTERY CREEK, WAIKATO

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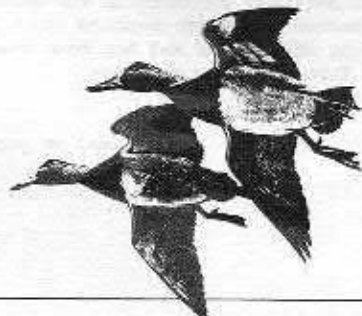
D.U. members from the Waikato participated in a Sport and Recreation Field Day at Mystery Creek on 22/23 November last. The photographs below show David McNeil making certain the pair of Canada Geese and goslings (three) are settling in. A second pen housed Brown Teal, Scaup, Grey Teal and a Carolina wood duck male. The area of waterfowl created much interest and was ideally situated in the showgrounds. The other photograph features the tent in which the static posters and displays were mounted (and where DU participants sat on Sunday when it poured with rain!) (D.G. Bell)



TAURANGA MEMBERS GET TOGETHER

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An informal gathering of Tauranga district DU members was held at the home of Pat and Julian Nelson Parker on the morning of 11 December. A dozen members attended, besides June Bronger our membership secretary who arranged the ringed round of invitations to all members in the district; Dawn Pirani and Sig Bronger also attended. The ladies put on coffee and biscuits which were much appreciated. Talk ranged through all manner of waterfowl subjects, from rearing under bantams, pinioning, releasing, as well as DU projects, shooting and even water weeds, and fish. Two grey teal boxes were on display, made by Sig Bronger, and a sitting box for incubation under a bantam. The party had a good look at the collection of native and exotic ducks - geese on the pond near the house, as well as eggs of 6 species under bantams. Unfortunately, the flock of Canada geese did not give a "flypast" as had been hoped! There was no formal agenda and no minutes recorded. Whether other districts would like to arrange similar meetings depends on several factors - but that some interest was stimulated was shown in the following week by requests for duck weed, and a sitting of bantam eggs. (J. Nelson Parker)



BLUE DUCK BEHAVIOUR STUDY

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An American scientist, Dr Frank McKinney, is spending a year in New Zealand on sabbatical leave from the University of Minnesota during which he is undertaking a study on New Zealand's blue duck. As DU members are aware, the Blue Duck is among the most remarkable of New Zealand's native bird species in that it has no known relatives in other duck families and chooses to live in the extremely harsh environment of mountain streams. Much of the information gathered by Dr McKinney could be of great value to the understanding of Blue Ducks needed for efforts in their future conservation and management. Dr McKinney's key objective is to study the social system of the species in an attempt to confirm theories formed while studying other river-dwelling ducks.

New Zealand's Blue Duck (*Hymenolaimus malacorynchos*) is of particular interest to waterfowl biologists because it lives only on rivers. Only four species of ducks, found in far distant parts of the world, live year-round on rivers: the South American Torrent Duck (*Merganetta armata*), Salvadori's Duck (*Anas waigiensis*) in New Guinea, the African Black Duck (*Anas sparsa*), and the Blue Duck. Since all four are highly sedentary and they differ greatly in shape and plumage patterns it seems certain that each had a separate ancestry.

In spite of these diverse origins, the river ducks are similar in various ways. For example, in comparison with other ducks they lay quite small clutches of eggs. Also, pairs are intensely territorial and both sexes have bony spurs on their wings which draw blood when rivals fight. These features are thought to be adaptations for river-life and they have fascinated researchers for years. What are the advantages of small clutches? Why are territories essential? Why are damaging weapons used in fighting? Such questions are not only of theoretical interest. They could be of basic importance to the understanding of these species needed for future efforts to conserve and manage them.

Janet Kear, from the Wildfowl Trust in England, made an important contribution to knowledge about river ducks when she visited New Zealand in 1971 to study the Blue Duck. Her publications on structure, behaviour and development of this species brought together all that was known at that time and drew attention to many of the interesting problems in need of detailed study. Her findings on social behaviour have since been followed by two researchers from the U.S.A. With support from DU New Zealand, Jan Eldridge made an intensive study of three pairs of Blue Ducks on the Manganui-a-te-ao in January/February 1978. Her results have been written and will be published shortly. Frank McKinney, who is associated with the N.Z. Wildlife Service while on sabbatical leave from the University of Minnesota, is studying another group of pairs on the Manganui-a-te-ao. This project which began in August 1980 and will continue until June 1981 is supported by a grant from the National Geographic Society.

The main focus of Dr McKinney's study is on the social behaviour of this species in relation to the needs and demands of river life. This entails a comparison with the social system of the African Black Duck studied in South Africa in 1973/74 by McKinney in collaboration with Roy Siegfried, Joe Ball and Peter Frost. Colour-ringed birds are being watched intensively to find out how they interact at different stages in the annual cycle. Competition for mates and territories is likely to be very important in this species and a special effort is being made to ring juveniles during the current breeding season. The behaviour of these birds in 1981, when they start to compete with establish adults, is likely to be particularly instructive.

Dr McKinney comments....."The study area is a 7.5km stretch of the Manganui-a-te-ao near the confluence with the Orautoha stream. Four pairs of Blue Ducks hold territories on this stretch and all four bred successfully this season. A number of ducklings disappeared from broods at various stages, perhaps swept away during spates. Apparently ducklings do not necessarily perish after separation from their parents. A solitary, half-grown duckling appeared in the middle of the study area in November (see photographs). It must have originated elsewhere because its size did not match any of the breeds on adjacent territories. It was caught and banded and has been seen several times since. It fledged successfully and still continues to live on the study area.

continued on page 11



Bryan Williams of Department of Internal Affairs (left) and Frank McKinney weighing Blue Duck.



Blue Duck juvenile



Single duckling living alone, as mentioned in text, held by Frank McKinney



Frank McKinney and Bryan Williams



**DU
ON
DISPLAY**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

DUCKS UNLIMITED (NZ) INCORPORATED ANNUAL CONFERENCE
JULY 1981 - WELLINGTON
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DATE: SATURDAY, 18 JULY 1981

VENUE: SHAW SAVILL LODGE, KILBIRNIE
WELLINGTON

The Seventh Annual Conference of Ducks Unlimited (N.Z.) Incorporated will be held in Wellington on Saturday, 18 July 1981. REMEMBER TO KEEP THIS DATE FREE FOR DU'S MAJOR EVENT OF THE YEAR!

Conference proceedings will begin early afternoon with the formal Annual General Meeting. Refreshments will be available during the meeting and at its conclusion (approximately 6 pm). Dinner (prepared by Shaw Savill's chef) will follow and the DUCKS UNLIMITED ANNUAL AUCTION will commence at 7.30 pm. Members who have attended previous conferences will remember the excitement and pleasure generated by the auction (and the massive funds raised for the organisation) and this year promises to be a repeat performance of these successes!

Guest speakers will address participants, reports presented by DU Project supervisors, slides and other visual techniques will be in evidence reporting DU's progress for the year. Full details of activities will appear in the June issue of FLIGHT.

All DU members and friends are warmly invited to attend. Wives, friends and sportsmen are also most welcome - this could be your opportunity to introduce a friend to Ducks Unlimited. There will be an opportunity to renew your membership, enrol new members, purchase "T" shirts, lapel badges etc and waterfowl publications.

MAGNIFICENT AUCTION ITEMS FOR THE 1981 CONFERENCE INCLUDE:

WATERFOWL, POTTERY, AMMUNITION, OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT,
WATERFOWL ARTWORK, DECOYS, PRODUCE, PUBLICATIONS,
CAMOUFLAGE CLOTHING AND MUCH MORE...

Many auction items have already been generously committed for the DU auction. Members and friends are invited to contribute also if they wish. Previous conferences have raised substantial funds to benefit waterfowl projects undertaken by Ducks Unlimited in New Zealand. THIS IS DUCKS UNLIMITED'S MAJOR FUNDRAISING EVENT EACH YEAR - HELP MAKE IT AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS!

Formal Notice of Meeting and details of the conference will be published in the June issue of FLIGHT, due for issue early June 1981. Watch for the June issue.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE INDICATOR
=====

I/WE PLAN TO ATTEND THE 1981 CONFERENCE

To assist us finalise catering with
Shaw Savill Lodge, please complete
and return to DU Headquarters, Box 74
Hamilton.

NAME
ADDRESS
NO. ATTENDING

OPERATION PATEKE

=====

BROWN TEAL ON MATAKANA ISLAND

As briefly reported in the December issue of FLIGHT, 32 Brown Teal were released on Matakana Island's main lagoon on 6 December 1980. This occasion marked the largest single release of Brown Teal to date. According to DU Director, Sig Bronger, the birds have adapted well to the wild and 20 or so are being seen during monthly observations. Sig Bronger is resident on Matakana Island and is carrying out regular observation work. The main lagoon on the island is situated at the northern-most tip, and the lagoon and much of the surrounding countryside is a wildlife reserve. There are in fact three lagoons in the reserve and all seem to be suitable for Brown Teal liberations. The island is very private, low in predator numbers, and no shooting of waterfowl is permitted. Therefore it is a very suitable and non-hostile environment in which to release DU's captive reared birds. At the time of the release, broods of Scaup and Shoveler were observed which is a further indication of good habitat.

Preparation for the release went smoothly and 22 birds - from Rotorua, Hamilton and Wellington - were assembled (see photographs pages 8 and 9) at Tauranga wharf at 9.30 am on 6 December. New Zealand Forest Products Limited had very kindly arranged a boat to take the large party of DU directors and television camera crew to the island. NZFP had also arranged for a bus and two Landrovers to meet the party at Matakana wharf. This generosity was certainly appreciated and helped ensure a successful release. DU takes this opportunity to thank N.Z. Forest Products for their assistance and permission to use Matakana Island; thanks too to Mr and Mrs Sig Bronger who not only planned the release but also entertained all participants magnificently.

As mentioned previously Sig Bronger has made several trips (a 20km journey) to the lagoon and has seen Brown Teal on every occasion. He says they have adapted well to the wild and he is very confident that DU can establish a "wild" population on Matakana Island and in the surrounding area. Since the December release a further 32 Brown Teal have been released at Matakana bringing the total number there to 64. Thirty birds have been retained for flockmating. This is an excellent beginning to DU's efforts to rear and release several hundred Brown Teal on Matakana Island over the next few seasons.

PROJECT REPORT

One word can be used to describe the progress of DU's 1980/81 captive breeding programme for Brown Teal - FANTASTIC! After the very successful 1979/80 season when DU members reared 45 Brown Teal, DU directors were confident that a figure of around 60 birds could be reached for the following season. It has therefore been very pleasing to record that 89 Brown Teal have been reared by DU members. The final cut off point for breeding is 30 April 1981 so this figure could be improved still further. A full report will appear in the June issue of FLIGHT but in the meantime DU congratulates and thanks DU breeder members for their efforts which are a classic example of what can be achieved in a practical way in the conservation and wildlife propagation fields. Mt Bruce Station has also had a good season and the final figure for Brown Teal reared there is expected to exceed 30 birds. When DU figures are added to those for Mt Bruce it can be said that over ten per cent of the world population of the species has been reared in captivity this season.

Captive Brown Teal Breed Successfully in Wild

Further exciting developments have occurred at Lake Puke Puke near Foxton where the resident Wildlife Service technician, Andrew Grant, has observed two broods of Brown Teal ducklings during the breeding season. This is the first officially recorded breeding of handreared Brown Teal in the wild. On several occasions, Andrew Grant has observed one brood of five and another of six Brown Teal. There appears to be little doubt that the large release at Lake Puke Puke last year (of some 40 birds) was responsible for this success and clearly indicates that given the right environment, captive reared Brown Teal can survive and breed in the wild.



BROWN TEAL RELEASE AT MATAKANA ISLAND: PHOTOGRAPHS



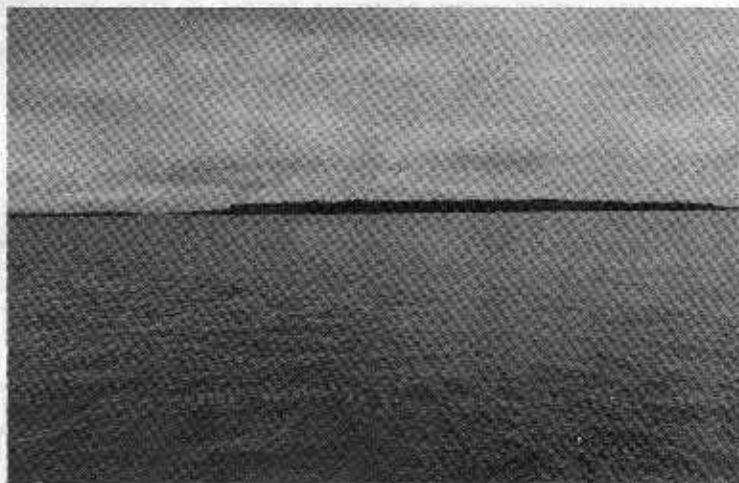
Photography: F. Neil Hayes, using an Olympus OM10 and 28mm Zuiko wide angle lens. Film: Ilford FP4



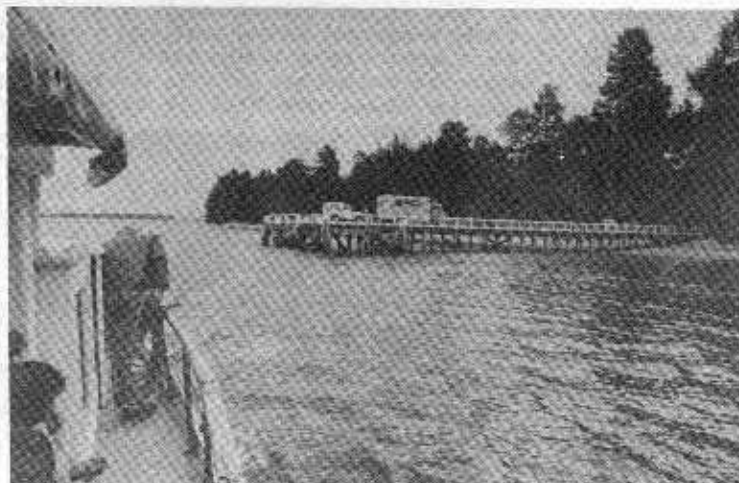
Mr Bill Swale, Forestry Manager, N.Z. Forest Products Limited giving a helping hand



Boxes of birds, and people being loaded on to N.Z. Forest Products Limited boat

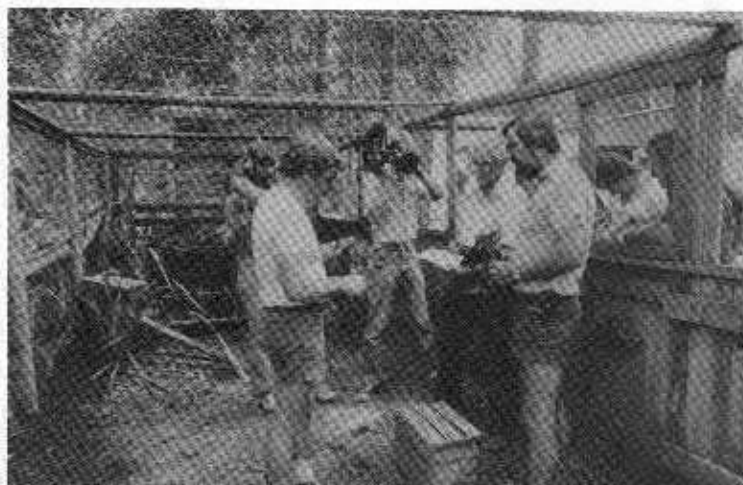


Matakana Island and its 16,000 acres of pine trees



Approaching the wharf at Matakana Island. Mini bus and Landrover await the party

BROWN TEAL RELEASE AT MATAKANA ISLAND: PHOTOGRAPHS



Television crew filming the
banding and recording.
Neil Hayes John Gill, Ian Pirani
doing the the the
banding recording sexing

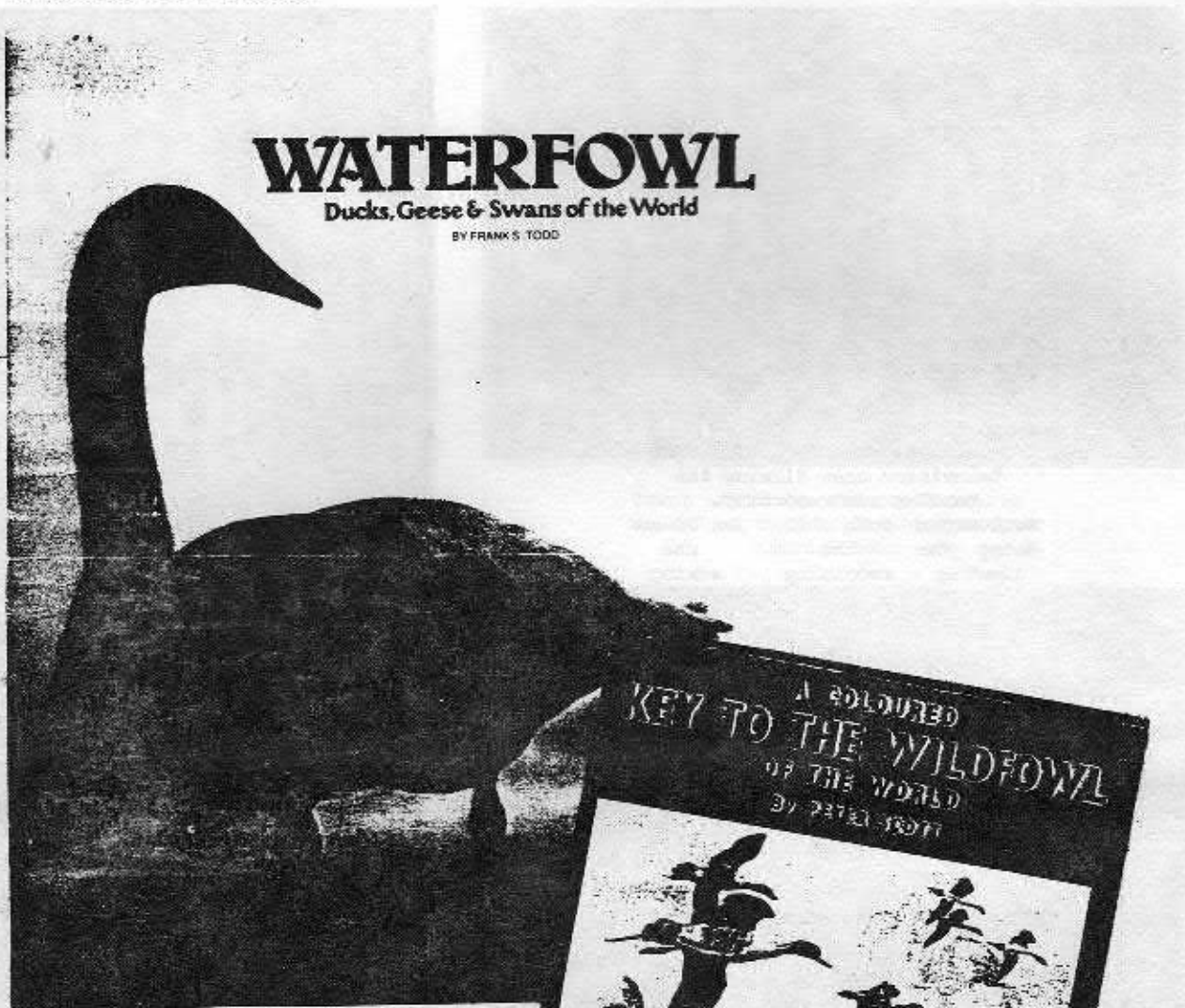


The release - filmed by TV
camera crew



Main lagoon on Matakana Island

BOOKS FOR "DUCK" PEOPLE

**WATERFOWL**

Ducks, Geese & Swans of the World

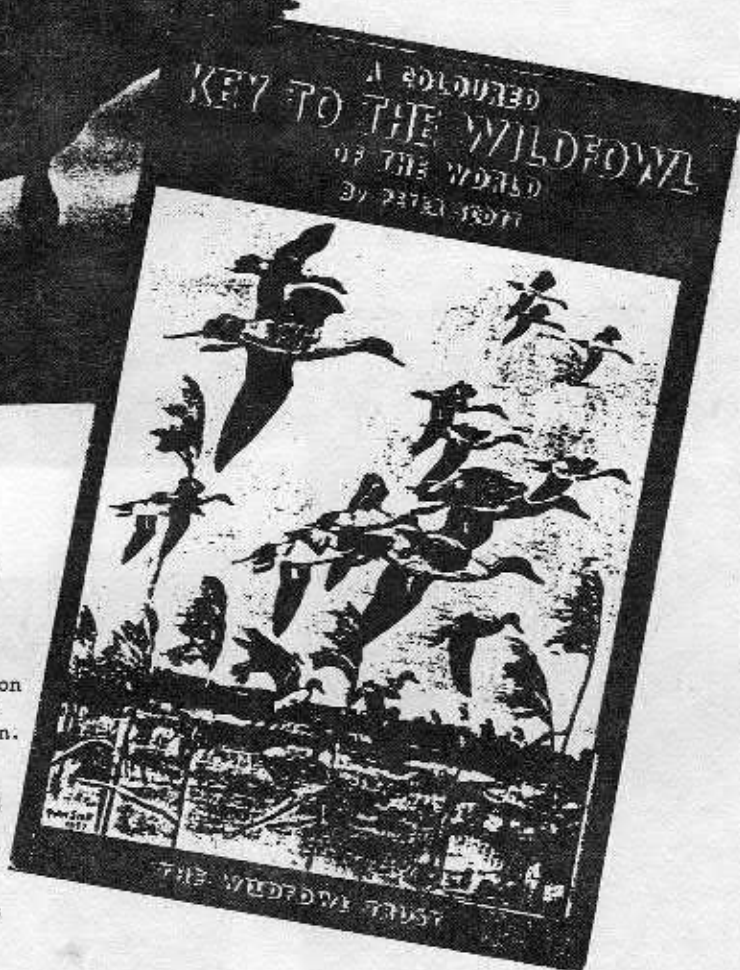
BY FRANK S. TODD

"WATERFOWL: Ducks Geese & Swans of the World" by Frank S. Todd. This book is a "must" for all DU members. Contains 400 pages covering the status of the world's waterfowl, their aviculture and general management. Also excellent chapters on the hunter/conservationist and on photography. \$42 incl. postage

"THE INCUBATION BOOK" by Dr A.F. Anderson Brown. 246 pages detailing all aspects of gamebird and waterfowl egg incubation. \$ 32 incl. postage

"A COLOURED KEY TO THE WATERFOWL OF THE WORLD" by Sir Peter Scott. Priced at \$ 10 this publication enjoys popularity among DU members.

(Please note "Ducks, Ponds & People" is temporarily out of stock)



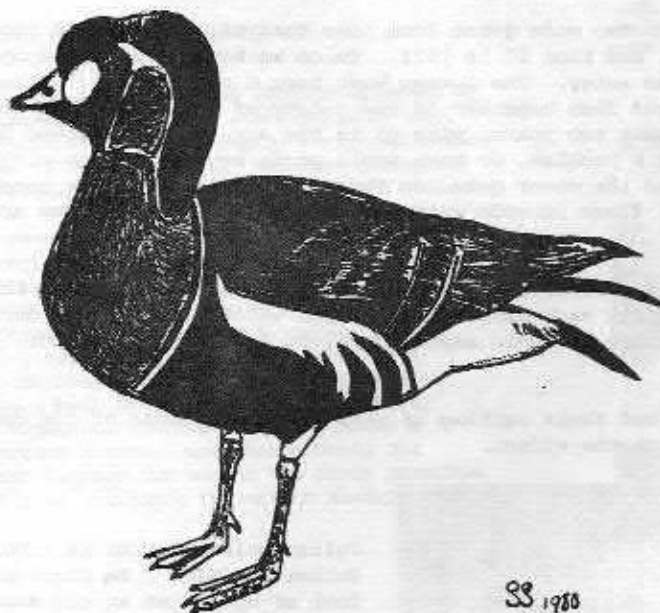
BLUE DUCK BEHAVIOUR STUDY: continued from page 4
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Ducklings finally dispersed when they reached flying age at about 11 - 12 weeks. Break-up of the two early broods occurred in early December while the parents were still full-winged. In the case of the two later broods, ducklings continued to associate with their parents for several weeks after the latter had gone into wing-moult. The vigilance and attentiveness of the parents waned conspicuously at the time when they lost their flight feathers and thereafter it was the ducklings that maintained the association.

Two of the four pairs and a total of five ducklings have been colour-ringed to date. Various trapping methods have been tried out but mist-nets stretched across the stream have been most successful. Erosion effects of gravel and boulders on the metal and plastic rings appear to be very light in this study area. In fact, several birds marked during Jan Eldridge's study in 1978 are still carrying their rings and the colours are recognisable.

Territory sizes average slightly over 1 km of river course, based on extreme up-stream and down-stream sightings of each pair over a six month period. On any one day, however, a pair rarely uses all parts of the river within these limits. The size of the areas used has changed considerably during different phases of the breeding cycle. For example, daily movements were restricted during the incubation and wing-moult periods but extensive during brood-rearing. The movements of marked juveniles will be plotted during the rest of the study to see how far they disperse from the home territory."

An aspect of social behaviour in the Blue Ducks is that the male is active in brood care, whereas in the case of most other Northern Hemisphere ducks the male is not active in brood care. While here, Dr McKinney is also studying some dabbling duck species, the Grey Teal at Pokeno, the Brown Teal at Helena Bay, and Chestnut Teal for features of the males being active in care of ducklings.



SS 1980

The Red-breasted Goose, not seen in New Zealand (sketched by Sylvia Hayes during a recent visit to Slimbridge)

ONE MAN'S HOBBY : JULIAN NELSON PARKER

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This is an account of a small flock of Canadas, written in the hope that it may be of some use to others beginning this most enjoyable hobby. We got our first four birds, already pinioned, from the Wildlife people in Canterbury, probably from Lake Forsyth although this was never confirmed as the point of origin. They were sent up in a bulk lot to Hamilton and collected from there. That was in early 1972. At that time we were in a citrus orchard near Tauranga, and we had to dig a pond, 20' x 20', on a piece of waste ground. The rather steep pen of about half an acre was occupied by various ducks and two juvenile Cape Barren geese. The Canadas soon settled in and grazed between the trees, keeping an eye open for the Cape Barrens who had the mastery, as is usual with this species. On the water, the Canadas were boss, but very soon showed us one of their more annoying habits by biting lumps of mud off the banks, and thus doing a good deal of damage. To prevent this, wire netting was installed, and this led to the first casualty. A small piece of wire, cut when fixing, fell into the water and was later picked up by a gander who died when it pierced his crop.

The remaining three Canadas moulted in due course, and in September 1972, the other gander, using his nice new pinion feathers, took off from a high point into a strong wind, and flew away to the north. Weeks later we heard that he had joined a large flock of Canadas at Katikati, where most of the birds were fullwinged. The truant was later caught up in a muster, when all the geese were flightless in moult, and returned ignominiously packed in a sack with his head sticking out of the corner.

The next part of the story was at our new rough swamp farm of 100 acres, on the edge of Tauranga Harbour. The gander had his wing clipped as well as the earlier pinioning, and lived with our scaup, grey duck and grey teal in a series of three new ponds. One day in September, three strange Canadas flew in. Canadas often fly miles looking for suitable nesting sites but usually in even pairs. The three was definitely unusual. When I got to the pond to see the visitors, one, a neat little goose had joined up with the old gander as a tight pair, and were driving the other two away. I believe the courtship had gone on at Katikati and the little goose had found her boyfriend at last. All ended as it should, with a nest of 5 eggs, 5 goslings; and Mum and Dad are still here breeding each year. Dad flies now with the others in a lopsided sort of way but he is good for a couple of miles any day.

Gradually, with the introduction of two more geese from Lake Forsyth, and the old pair's efforts, the flock rose to a dozen in 1977, and then 17 in 1978. Twice we have been raided by shooters who have shot the pinioned birds on the water. The losses have been 6 or 7 in all. This year on Opening Day all the geese got up and flew together to the safety of the ponds, and showed us how successful they have been in the last two years, with 41 in the air, and 2 pinioned birds on the water. Nesting sites have become a problem, so more small ponds have been made with an island in the middle of each. But as soon as the cover gets too thick on the islands, the geese go elsewhere. About knee-high cover seems ideal. Those islands with very dense cover are used by scaup for nesting so they are put to good use.

Canada geese in South Island have developed regular moult migrations, and the same thing has occurred in Yorkshire in the United Kingdom, in each case to large open waters, for safety during the flightless period. It will be interesting to see how this aspect develops in Tauranga Harbour, or will they go further afield?

Finally, they are a joy to watch, and their calling is with us at all hours of the day, and moonlight nights as well. They are well worth the effort.



Julian Nelson Parker is a Director of Ducks Unlimited (NZ). He started keeping waterfowl at age 18 at an old moat in Essex, with Mallards and Carolinas. Influenced by Sir Peter Scott's first book "Morning Flight" he joined the Severn Wildfowl Trust (as it was then) shortly after it was formed, now a Life Fellow. After 25 years in Ceylon, where he shot Snipe especially, and some duck and jungle fowl, Julian Nelson Parker came to New Zealand in 1966.

OPERATION BRANTA

Further good progress was made in the Canada goose programme when a shipment of 30 geese (transportation costs met by Ducks Unlimited) arrived at Wellington from Christchurch in mid February; the bulk of these were distributed to farmers in the Wairarapa region. DU thanks Messrs Peter McLeod and Laurie Piper of Christchurch, and Ian Buchanan of Wellington for their efforts and assistance in moving the geese. Thanks, too, to the North Canterbury and Wellington Acclimatisation Societies for their excellent co-operation.

OPERATION GRETEL

Neil Hayes reports that an excellent third season was experienced at Barton's Lagoon in the Wairarapa, with just over 300 eggs from 18 of the 30 boxes (not 20 boxes as reported in the December issue of FLIGHT). At the final inspection on 18 January 1981, four clutches were recorded - 8, 8, 8 and 9. Earlier on, a clutch of 18 was recorded in one box and all hatched successfully. At this stage no work has been carried out on duckling survival but next season time will be spent watching the birds from a "hide". On 18 January 50 Grey Teal were observed, which is many more than the 2/3 pairs which were noted when the boxes were first erected.

BROWN TEAL SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS

As a result of the Brown Teal Seminar arranged by Ducks Unlimited and held in Auckland last July, a paper entitled "The Aviculture, Re-establishment and Status of the Brown Teal" has been prepared by Neil Hayes, DU Secretary and published by Ducks Unlimited. The paper outlines the objectives of the programme and the various techniques applied for the captive breeding of Brown Teal, the attempts being made to re-establish the species and its past and present status. Written in a straightforward manner, the publication makes interesting reading and contains photographs and illustrations. It will be distributed to institutions such as universities and similar overseas organisations. DU believes it is a very important document and thanks Mobil Oil New Zealand Limited for making the study possible. Copies will be available through DU Headquarters shortly.

FIREARMS SAFETY DEPENDS ON YOU



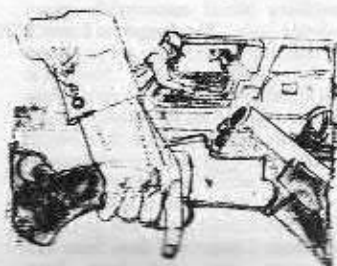
when to load

Load your gun when you're ready to shoot and not until then. That means away from cars, houses, livestock and pointed away from people. Load only when shooting opportunity is actually present.

Unload before leaving the hunting field, before entering cars or trucks, prior to entering a building of any kind, crossing fences or streams and anytime you might drop your gun or not be assured of full control of the muzzle direction. Always open the action of any firearm when handing from one shooter to another. Watch your muzzle when unloading. Keep it pointed in the right direction, and always completely remove finger from trigger when loading or unloading.

Think of yourself and your gun as parts of a system whose safe operation depends on you. Your gun can't think, but you can. Let's all keep a safe sport safe.

when to unload



MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT!

WE REPRINT BELOW AN ARTICLE FROM A RECENT ISSUE OF THE "GAME CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER" WHOSE PATON IS H.R.H. THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH KG, KT, OM WHICH WILL BE OF INTEREST TO DU MEMBERS.

HRH Prince Philip, attended the recent meeting of the Standing Conference on Countryside sports. Reminding members that he is Patron of the Game Conservancy, in addition to his association with many organisations concerned with the Protection of wildlife and the Countryside, he said:

"Everyone knows that I shoot, fish, and although unlike some I have never hunted, that was due to circumstances rather than to inclination.

"If all this seems contradictory I can only say that I am in very good company, in fact I would not be surprised if most of you here today were in the same situation. Indeed, as far as the conservation of wildlife is concerned, it has been the countryman, and particularly the follower of countryside sports, who has been most conscious of the decline of wildlife and most active in its conservation.

"The fact is that there is no major clash between conservation and countryside sports. The clash is one of principle between those who are opposed to the killing of all animals and those who see nothing wrong in killing some animals."

While the full text of Prince Philip's speech has been printed elsewhere, we considered that many of the points he made were so important that we are including these extracts.

"When I first heard of the idea to set up this Standing Conference I thought to myself 'and about time too'. Not that I think the critics of countryside sports are wholly wrong or that everything about countryside sports is wholly right. The danger as I saw it was that the critics, who are as always on the offensive, might force the participants in countryside sports into separate entrenched defensive postures when their only hope lay in the strength of mutual support and encouragement.

"This is why I am so pleased that the anglers' organisations have decided to join this Conference. The co-operation which I hope will flow from this Conference may not have been necessary when half or even a third of the population lived in a rural or semi-rural situation and could be expected to understand, if not actively sympathise with, the basis of countryside sports.

Strong opinions

"However, once the balance had shifted wholly in favour of the urban population, the situation was radically altered and for the first time it gradually came to be realised that understanding of countryside sports could not be taken for granted. Indeed it was more difficult than that, because the very reverse began to develop. The urban-intellectual took it for granted that countryside sports were wrong in principle and in practice.

"It is all very well to have strong opinions one way or the other, but if you are going to defend those opinions



OUR PATRON at the Standing Conference on Countryside Sports

it is vital to know exactly what you are trying to defend and exactly where are the weak points in the opposition's case. It seemed to me that the formation of the Standing Conference would stimulate its members to give a bit more considered thought to all aspects of the sports it represented, and I think that this is how it is turning out.

"I say there is no major clash with conservation but there are certainly minor problems, particularly in connection with the control of pests and predators where there is liable to be a three-way clash between protection countryside sports and agriculture.

"My own rules are fairly simple. Never kill anything if the species is under serious pressure or in any danger of extinction. Only control predators and pests to the minimum extent and always treat them with the same consideration as game animals.

"As far as game is concerned I believe they should be treated as a crop and in any case I will only kill those game animals, including fish, that I, or someone else, would like to eat. I suppose I am what in other circumstances would be described as a moderate.

"There is, of course, a very big and important grey area in all this. Some wild species such as rabbits, rooks and foxes, seem to be indestructible while others such as partridges and butterflies only manage to survive with considerable human assistance. But the species that really suffer are those in which no-one is particularly interested and whose habitat and survival is under indirect threat from farming techniques, egg-collectors, road construction, urban development, drainage, pollution and sometimes by predator control.

"None of this answers the two central questions: to kill or not to kill under any circumstances, and whether countryside sports are cruel. It seems

to me that those who are against countryside sports in principle should also be against the slaughter of domestic animals in principle and, to give them their due, there are some who take this line.

"If they do not, that is if they are prepared to condone the slaughter of domestic animals for food or if they suggest that pests or excessive populations should only be controlled by professionals, the inference is that they are not against killing animals but simply against anyone deriving any satisfaction from it. This is an odd bit of morality.

"One of the important side-issues connected with countryside sports is the control of firearms. Rifles and shotguns are one part of the tools of the trade of game-keepers and deer-stalkers and essential equipment for anyone who shoots or stalks. Unfortunately the same weapons tend to be used to hold up banks, to assassinate and for other criminal activities.

Common sense

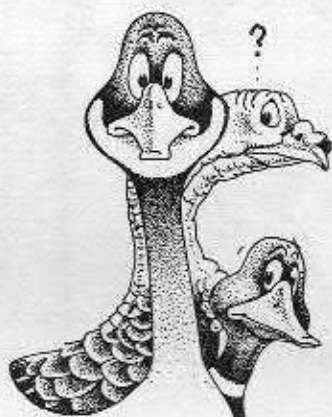
"It may seem totally absurd to anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of countryside sports, but there are those who are more influenced by statistics than common sense and end up coming to the wrong conclusions. Except in the more lurid books of fiction, people who use their firearms for shooting or stalking do not, as a rule, go around shooting other people - at least not on purpose - neither are they known for violent crime. Therefore while it is perfectly reasonable to ensure that firearms of all kinds are kept in a secure place, it is quite unreasonable to treat their owners as potential criminals.

"Taking all this into account it is obvious that the members of the Conference have quite a number of different groups to convince of the reasonableness of their case. I think it must be generally accepted that there is little hope of making any impression on the militant vegetarian protectionist. Neither is there as much chance of getting the facts through to the urban-intellectual so many of whom seem to have as their motto 'My mind is made up, do not confuse me with the facts'.

"Therefore I can only repeat what I said at the beginning. It is high time such a Standing Conference was formed. It has most important functions to perform, both in relation to its member bodies and the way they carry out their responsibilities, and also in relation to outside interests whether they be opposed to, prejudiced against or simply ignorant of the sports and interests which its members represent.

"From what I have heard of the work of the Conference, an excellent start has been made and I can only encourage all its members to keep up and indeed to expand its good work."

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TELEPHONE: 54 991

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Preserve This Legacy...

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT
FOR OUR SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS



It is with regret that your directors recommend an increase in the DU membership fee. This has been brought about by crippling increases in the cost of running your organisation such as fuel, materials, transportation of waterfowl, postage etc (e.g. the annual cost of producing and posting FLIGHT has risen to \$ 5 per member) - these problems are not unique to DU but familiar to every one of you. Since DU was established it has not been necessary to consider an increase in subscriptions but the time is now appropriate and somewhat overdue. Rule 5.01 of Ducks Unlimited covers such an eventuality.... it reads " Subscription rates shall be determined from time to time by the Board and in so doing the Board shall have due regard to the effects of economic factors including inflation....". The decision has not been an easy one - we hope members will "get in behind" and support the increase to enable DU's work to carry on.

New rates are	Junior membership	increases from \$ 2.00 to \$ 3.00	(rates for Life and
	Supporter membership	" " \$ 5.00 to \$ 7.50	Trade membership
	Full membership	" " \$ 10.00 to \$ 12.50	remain at \$ 500 and
			\$ 20 respectively)

Members will be aware that Ducks Unlimited is run as efficiently as circumstances allow - the work of all officers and members is voluntary. No funds are involved in the purchase of land, motor vehicles or major assets. The majority of funds are placed directly in the field. Because of the generosity of farmers, business houses, government departments and individual members and friends, DU has been able to function successfully "on a shoestring" until now. When subscription reminder notices are issued shortly they will reflect the new membership rates.

MAY WE COUNT ON YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT? ALL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

"FLIGHT"

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