

Flight

OCTOBER

2002

ISSUE 113



Norman Marsh 1926-2002. Co-Patron, Life Member and DU Benefactor

We regret to advise members that Norman was killed on 16 August in Canada while pursuing one of the great loves of his life, gliding.

Born in Ireland, he grew up mainly in India and was educated in England, finishing at Eton. His summers in Ireland, where his family leased a stretch of salmon river in Connemara, were the source of his life-long love of the countryside.

He joined the Royal Navy and learnt to fly, including in gliders, towards the end of the war, and achieved one of his greatest ambitions this year while in New Zealand, a Diamond Award for gliding. This was remarkable considering his age.

After the war Norman moved to Hong Kong as representative for BP and later ICI. He then established a partnership trading company serving mainland China, as well as other ventures including a restaurant. His businesses prospered and he bought properties in England, Italy, Canada and NZ, along with boats in most places. He also joined the Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force, flying Harvards and Spitfires. In the 1980s and 90s he gave financial backing to Desmond Norman, designer of the Britain-Norman-Islander which found favour with many airlines around the world in the 70s and 80s as a short-haul aircraft. He was a 'Name' with Lloyds, and the troubles that beset the company in the 90s may have cost him dearly although he never talked about it.

Norman developed a great interest in waterfowl and, with David and Anne Johnston, established the Broadlands Wildfowl Trust in the late 70s. On their property at Reporoa they bred blue duck, brown teal, mute swan and many other species on the magnificent wetland there. Norman hosted numerous board meetings at his house overlooking the water at Broadlands, and attended many meetings at Hatepe, sitting in a corner puffing on his pipe and adding to the discussion in a very positive manner.

He was generous to all and interested in people; it never seemed to matter to Norman who or what you were, he was always pleased to see you, and as a host was positively dangerous with the measure of wine he would press upon you. He genuinely enjoyed the company of people who shared his passions for waterfowl and flying, but could hold his own in conversations on almost any subject. He was widely read and travelled - his experiences in China alone would have made a fascinating book



- and he was a superb cook specialising in Chinese and Italian cuisine.

Norman supported and was present at most of the DU highlights over the past 20 years, attending the official opening of the Sinclair Wetlands complex in Otago, joining the DUNZ contingent to Australia for their inaugural dinner and auction, and assisting with the transfer of pateke from Great Barrier to the mainland, to name but a few.

His patronage was extensive. When he sold his property Rhyll Manor in Somerset he gave his entire waterfowl collection of between 50 and 60 species to the Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge. He hosted many DU members at his ranch at 100 Mile House in British Columbia where he had developed extensive wetlands, and supported DU in Canada and America. In the end, it is his contribution not only to DUNZ for which he will be remembered but also the assistance he provided for wetland development to many members throughout the country. He supported us in our formative years and continued an interest as Patron until his death.

He is survived by his wife Anna who lives in England and his son Simon, to whom we extend our sympathy.

DUNZ has lost a true friend who will be sadly missed.

Wetland Care New Zealand's mission is 'To harness community, business and government resources to restore and develop lost wetland areas within New Zealand.'

Funding

Funding for projects comes mainly from the Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust, which was established 12 years ago and has underwritten wetland development projects to a significant level. Extra resources have come through fundraising and corporate sponsorships like that from Banrock Station Wines. Wetland Care New Zealand actively seeks funding from private and public sources for its work.

Central to Wetland Care New Zealand's mission is forming partnerships with people and organisations with similar aims. Alliances are being established with conservation groups like DOC, NZ Fish and Game, Forest and Bird and regional councils.

For further information, please contact:
William Abel - Director, Wetland Care New Zealand
(04) 478 4335



wetland care
NEW ZEALAND

INSIGHT

Neil Candy
President

Congratulations to the Waikato Chapter for a very enjoyable and well-run conference in Hamilton in July. When I arrived at the Waikato Gun Club for the DU sporting clay event on the Friday, the car park was absolutely chokka. Initial amazement turned out to be unfounded on DU's behalf as the New Zealand secondary schools team clay target championships were being held. As it turned out, only a few shooters competed for the DU medals but there were 240 young shooters vying for the top school team. There were some very good shots among them and I was very glad they were not shooting against us oldies.

The field trip on Saturday was a real eye-opener to the non-locals, just by the sheer size and number of wetlands we saw and the poor condition of most of them. Thankyou to Murray Dench for his history lesson on the Waikato basin as we travelled around, it was very interesting and informative, and to Craig Worth for his driving, he just gets better every year!

Being President does have its perks. Julie and I attended the launch of the Central North Island Blue Duck Charitable Trust at Tokaanu on 16 August. The trust is a partnership between Genesis Power Ltd, DOC and Forest and Bird. Keith Chapple of F&B said this is the culmination of years of negotiation since 1986, sometimes very heated, but eventually common sense has prevailed and agreement reached. Sounds familiar doesn't it!

DOC officers Tim Shaw, the blue duck recovery group leader, and Cam Speedy gave a presentation on what the recovery group are achieving and some environmental problems they are facing, eg. predation and something I hadn't considered, adventure tourism - thrill seekers venturing further and further into who habitat. Tim and Cam are really on the ball and extremely enthusiastic about who.

Two days later we were at Masterton for the opening of the Masterton Intermediate wetland with Tony Sharley and crew from Banrock Station Wines. Thankfully the rain stayed away and a good turnout of parents, pupils and neighbours completed the planting. We then ventured across the road to partake of the sponsor's product and a couple of sausages. It was good to catch up with Tony albeit briefly and he reinforced Banrock's commitment to Wetland Care funding. I think he did say a project closer to Auckland would be good but the old memory is a little hazy after a bottle (or three) of Sav. Blank?

Regards

Neil

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OUR MISSION

We are a voluntary membership-based society dedicated to the conservation of New Zealand wetlands through:

- wetland restoration and development;
- conservation programmes for threatened waterfowl;
- advocacy and education of wetland values.

By these means we seek to ensure the ethical and sustainable use of wetland resources by all existing and future users.

*Cover photograph: Australian shelduck at The Sanctuary (see page 7).
Photo: Peter Reese.*

Flight is published by:
Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc.
ISSN 1173-2776
P.O. Box 9795, Newmarket, Auckland, New Zealand.

Contributions from members and other readers, including photographs, are welcome.

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Printer: Lamb-Peters Print,
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Greytown.

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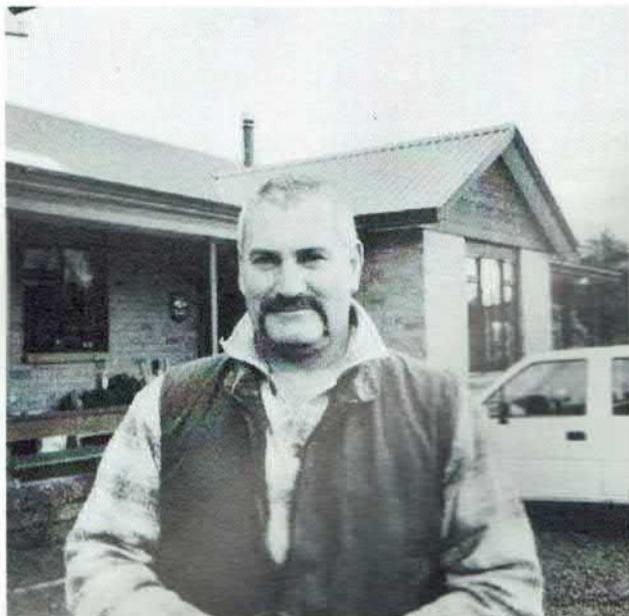
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OUR People



Ray Hayward

A member for five years, Ray is currently Waikato Chapter Chair. He was born in Rotorua and grew up in the Bay of Plenty at Opoitiki and Tauranga. He says that his education was 'extensive training in the university of life'. He and his wife Maxine have four children and three grandsons.

Ray's career has mainly involved him in the security industry, as manager of Armourguard in Tauranga, Rotorua and Hamilton for 18 years, and now as Security Manager for the University of Waikato, responsible for some 14,000 people on a daily basis. He says he has far too many interests keeping him away from home. Apart from DU he is involved with the Triumph Owners Motor Cycle Club, having restored the 1951 Thunderbird he has owned for 20 years. He is their National Vice-President and Waikato Area Organiser. He is a keen waterfowler and fisherman.

Ray's DU wetland involvement has been with Jack Worth and the Gretel project, looking after Hopu Hopu, the first teal project in NZ which began 27 years ago. He is also working on the expansion of the grey teal nest box programme at Lake Rotomanuka, and has helped Chris Bindon with a project at South Kaipara Heads - a very interesting private wetland.

If you would like to be included in this column, please choose one of these amazingly easy options, and we will send you a ridiculously simple list of questions about your wetland's past, progressions, people, plantings, predator programmes, particulars, plans and - birds. All photographs will be returned:

- drop a note to Flight, c/o 73 Wood Street, Greytown 5953
- phone/fax Alan (06) 304 9729
- send an email to the Editor: julieto@xtra.co.nz



Colleen Hansen

Colleen was born in Eketahuna, attended Eketahuna Primary School and then Solway College in Masterton. On leaving school, Colleen worked on the family farm, Tidsfordriv in Eketahuna. She developed an interest in DU helping her parents (Glenys and the late Ted) breed brown teal and other waterfowl species under bantams and in aviaries on the farm. Colleen became a Life Member of DU in 1989.

Colleen lives in Upper Hutt and has worked as a cook in rest homes there since 1996. She is at present studying full-time for the 'London City and Guild Cooking & Culinary Art' course at Wellington Institute of Technology in Petone.

Colleen's interests are reading, handcrafts and taking her dog Mo to visit and enjoy the serenity of the wetlands and gardens at the small family farm at Tidsfordriv, Matahiwi.

Quoting...

'...where young people who have never had a chance to hear the bellbird and tui sing can camp by the lake shore and learn about what really matters in life.'

'If we allow a species to perish, it is worse than carelessness.'

'The future of mankind is to make earth a paradise...reanimating its woods with birdsong.'

(Guthrie Smith of Tutira)

Annual Conference 2002

The Waikato Chapter really excelled itself, even the weather was better than last year.

The Alcamo Hotel was an excellent venue with friendly staff, comfortable rooms and good food. The chapter had organised a nice touch to make the hunters feel at home, the swimming pool was alive with decoys and a camouflaged dinghy.

About 40 members gathered in the Palermo Bar on Friday evening for the happy hour which was just that. The chapter had organised sponsors to provide free drinks and we acknowledge Armourguard Security Ltd, Murray and Margaret Shaw of Shaw Ashphalters Ltd, Jack and Clare Worth, Ray and Maxine Hayward, Murray Powell, Dave Shaw Guntraders and Outdoors, and Craig Worth Blueworth Coachlines Ltd for their generous support.

The Saturday field trip was extremely popular with nearly 60 members and friends boarding the bus at 9.30. First stop Moutly Piggeries at Hopu Hopu. This was DU's first grey teal nest box site and was selected by current member Dudley Bell in 1975. The area is now a little overgrown and the original 50 boxes have been reduced to 35 with approximately 85% occupancy.

Heading north from Huntly we passed the 522 hectare Lake Waahi, habitat for numerous swan, geese, grey teal, mallard, shoveler and grey duck, and on to the Blair property where member George and his father took us across the farm on tractor and 4WD with trailers to look at a magnificent pond, host to some 200 grey teal and heavily planted with oaks. George explained his ongoing involvement with the Lake Whangape Care Group (see article Flight 107 April last year) and provided maps and a report on the work of the group. We are grateful to the Blair family for their interest and support.

Next the bus stopped at the top of the hill overlooking Lake Whangape, 1450 hectares of prime waterfowl habitat but as George Blair had explained, suffering from siltation and deteriorating water quality. The plan had been for Jack Worth to muster a mob of swan and put them off when the bus arrived, but no birds where there had been hundreds two days before. Thanks for trying, Jack. We passed the Lake Rangiriri sanctuary on the way to Cooks Landing Winery for lunch, and on arrival were given a talk about the various wines we were offered, followed by an excellent soup and pizza lunch.

Further on we passed the Whangamarino wetland, 5690 hectares of fantastic breeding habitat now that Fish and Game and DOC have the weir functioning as intended. This is a Ramsar site or wetland of international importance, and the Government is responsible for protecting it, but unfortunately this vital wetland is clogged by the silt-laden overflow from Lake Waikare.

David Smith gave an informative commentary as we passed the Whangamarino, and when we reached Lake Waikare, which he has worked extremely hard on our behalf to protect.

The only way to describe the water quality is 'disgusting'. Yellow and uninviting, and as somebody said, 'too thick to drink, too thin to plough'.

Everyone agreed it had been an enlightening trip. The Waikato has so many vast wetlands still left that it is hard to imagine the area before so much was drained.

The bus was ably driven by Craig Worth whose company donated it for the day - we are grateful for this generous gesture and also for the informative commentaries given along the way by Craig, and Murray and Malcolm Dench.



Rotongaro pond, Blair Property. Photo: Fiona Stanaway.

Once back at the hotel about 3.30, the organisers started to set up the main and silent auction items, a vast array of imported and donated goodies. We thank members and supporters for their generosity.

Everyone gathered at 7pm for drinks and about 90 enjoyed an excellent dinner after the prize-giving. Murray Dench was over-all winner of the shoot, but almost all entrants seemed to win something. The Manawatu Chapter once again won the Chapter Challenge Trophy for raising the most money for the year, and David Smith received The Absolutely Quackers award for taking on Environment Waikato over the Lake Waikare issue. He was then presented with the Bill Barrett Trophy in recognition of his hard work.

After dinner Maestro Bob Wood, auctioneer and raconteur par excellence, got to work with about 30 items and for an hour had everyone rolling in the aisles, raising \$6040 less the cost of the Canadian items. Thankyou, Bob, for your sterling effort, also Sandra Pipes and Michelle McKay who organised the money. An enjoyable and worthwhile evening. The total raised for the weekend was almost \$7500, a wonderful effort.

Thirty-seven members attended the AGM on Sunday morning (see minutes).

At the finish everyone agreed that it had been a very successful weekend, and we acknowledge the hard work of chapter chair Ray Hayward and Maxine, Jack and Clare Worth, Murray Shaw and Fiona Stanaway.

- Alan Wilks



2002 field trip, Rotongaro. Photo: Fiona Stanaway.

Ducks Unlimited NZ Inc.

Annual General Meeting 21 July 2002

Present: Directors Neil Candy, Craig Worth, Ossie Latham, William Able, Graham Gurr, David Smith, Ross Cottle, Alan and David Wilks, Steve Rice, 26 members, Fiona Stanaway (minute secretary).

Apologies: Ron & Gay Munro, Neil Hayes, Geoff Reid, Dave Johnston, Peter Russell, Gary & Nancy Croad, Bill Clinton-Baker, Jim & Raana Campbell, Lois & Murray Tapp, Jim Law.

AGM Minutes dated 22 July 2001 - confirmed.

Financial Report - accepted.

Auditor: Beattie Rickman (Hamilton) - confirmed.

Waterfowl & Wetlands Trust - David Smith's financial statement was accepted (see details below).

President's Report - accepted.

Project Reports - accepted

Alan Wilks spoke briefly about Flight magazine and paid tribute to the new editor, Juliet Oliver. He urged people to send information, stressing that without this there would be little to publish relating to DU members. Juliet had sent forms to the meeting for 'Our People' profiles and wetland questionnaires, a Flight survey and a planting guide. (Let me know if you want any of these, there seem to be a lot left over -Ed.)

Election of Officers: No change.

Two directors retired by rotation and accepted re-nomination.

Other Business: Notice of Motion to change the name of Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc. to Ducks Unlimited Wetlands (NZ) Inc. Neil Candy advised that the Board's recommendation was to decline this motion. Murray Dench explained his argument for the change, as published in Flight 111. David Wilks spoke on name branding, and where Wetland Care stands in relation to Ducks Unlimited NZ Inc. After discussion and voting the motion was defeated. The name will remain as Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc.

Lake Waikare: David Smith explained the Lake Waikare situation. An out of court settlement has been reached, with a Deed stipulating that Environment Waikato will establish 20km of fencing along the Matahura Stream, involving \$76,000 in funding. The deed commits EW to immediate action with ongoing payments and support over the next 35 years. Ducks Unlimited needs to work with both the Lake Care Group and local farmers to ensure the fencing is completed each year.

David replied to a question on the cost of the settlement that Ducks Unlimited has spent \$41,000 over the three years and has been eligible for a legal aid grant of \$20,000. Costs will be shared equally by DUNZ, Fish and Game and the Environment Ministry. Ossie Latham made a vote of thanks to David on behalf of DU, for his successful work on Lake Waikare.

The meeting closed at 10.15am.

Speakers

Dave Pirrit, a Lake Waikare resident, talked about how he has seen the degeneration of the lake over the years that he and his family have lived there. He suggested that Dr Warwick Sylvester could be a good person to contact as this gentleman had been doing water testing on the lake 20 years ago. He would have some notes to compare with current testing.

Mike Holmes, Outdoor Recreation Party member and eel fisherman, explained the new political party, which worked for basically the same aims as Ducks Unlimited, and was seeking support in the general election.

DU Reports

NZ Waterfowl & Wetlands Trust

The last financial year for the trust (01.01.01 - 31.12.02) began well, but the effect of the events of September 11 have been seen in the world markets, and hence in the value of our portfolio. The Trust Fund was worth \$305,347.45 as at 1 January 2001 and \$296,920.01 at 31 December 2001. During the year \$9,000 was paid out to DUNZ so the effective loss to the trust capital over the year was \$572.56.

The value of the Trust Fund has fluctuated wildly since September and continues to do so, ie, as at 13 February this year the value was \$309,619.92, at 31 March 2002 \$295,324.60.

At the trust's AGM the trustees will consider whether to continue with our present investment strategy or to have more invested onshore.

- **David Smith, Chairman**

(This report was omitted from the AGM reports in Flight 112 -Ed.)

Wetland Care

The Wetland Care New Zealand/ Banrock meeting at the Elephant House Auckland Zoo late last month was a great success. Several DU members, Zoo Staff and a good representation from North Shore and Waitakere branches of Forest and Bird were present. Tony Sharley gave an enthusiastic and well-received presentation, supported by video.

Gretel

The explosion of teal in the Auckland/Waikato area is somewhat staggering and big raftings in the Thames/Paeroa area are fully matched by large concentrations in their favoured Waikato lakes. Other parts of the North Island seem to be benefiting from our nest box scheme, and we hope the South Islanders will soon get cracking. The Waikato Chapter was recently granted \$3000 for nest boxes from a local trust that assists clubs and organisations.

- **Jack Worth**

Whio

A great day out at the launch of the Central North Island Blue Duck Charitable Trust at the Tokaanu Hotel on 16 August. This trust is going to help blue duck in the central North Island with 1.5 million dollars over the next 10-20 years.

Some of this money will hopefully help with predator control work in Egmont National Park where we will be releasing captive blue duck back into the wild.

Over the next five years the Blue Duck Recovery Group will be releasing as many as possible captive bred blue ducks back into the wild in Egmont National Park.

The release of the seven birds at the end of February has been very successful with only one bird being taken out by a stoat after about 135 days. Great news.

As we are only at the beginning of the breeding season there is not very much else to report

- **Peter Russell, Blue Duck Captive Management Co-ordinator**

(More in Bird Talk, page 10)

Pateke

Ossie was away for the Flight deadline and presented his full report to the September board meeting. It will be printed in the January issue. These are some highlights from it:

The experimental release at Warrenheip is going well and it is suspected that pairs are starting to nest.

The Tiri Tiri Matangi release has mixed results with four birds predated by hawks. Counter measures have been taken and the carcasses are being kept to monitor the condition of the birds. It has been confirmed that birds predated by harriers on Kapiti were in poor condition. Susie Moore has found a link in assessing the wing fat of predated birds. One of the released male birds has paired up with a resident female. (See Bird Talk item)

The Recovery Group meeting was held on Great Barrier in mid August. It was a positive meeting in all respects with participants reporting on objectives from the brown teal audit.

Planning has begun for the large scale release next autumn at South Okarito Forest.

Intensive management of existing sites at Okiwi, Great Barrier and Mimiwhangata, Northland, has been maintained with improvements identified and implemented. The Mimiwhangata site has been extended at both ends

- *Ossie Latham*

Australian Shelduck

In Flight October 2001 I reported on the number of Australian shelduck in captivity in New Zealand. At that time there were only four breeding pairs, one juvenile pair and one young female. I am delighted to be able to tell members that it has been a successful season with 16 young birds being reared, between two properties. The situation has greatly improved and we now have the four breeding pairs plus seven new juvenile pairs on separate properties - though these cannot breed until 2003 at the earliest.

Hopefully we will have further young birds available for distribution to other breeders this coming season. If there are any members with suitable conditions who would like a pair, please get in touch with Jim Nilsson, Sunnyside Road, RD 3 Albany, Northland, or myself.

- *Bill Clinton-Baker, The Sanctuary, RD 4, Masterton. Phone 06 72 7801*

Manawatu Chapter

The annual dinner will be held on 19 October at Rydges Hotel, Palmerston North.

Waikato Chapter

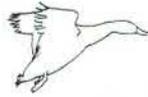
A successful nest box working bee was held at the end of August. The chapter dinner and auction evening will be on Saturday 9 November, and a fishing trip on a mussel barge is planned for December, date still to be confirmed.

Contact Ray Hayward 07 855 2205.

Wairarapa Chapter.

A dinner and auction was held in Masterton on 21 September and a report will be published next issue.

Sporting Clay Shoot: 20 October. Gladstone Pistol Club Grounds, starting 9am. For further details Contact Ross Cottle 06-378 7408 or Chapter Chair Miles Anderson 06-370 3636



Members in the News

Founding President of DUNZ and Katikati goat farmer Ian Pirani and his wife Dawn are involved in East Coast farmers' investigations into using wild goats and Boer bucks as a sustainable land management tool on weed-ridden, bush-covered country. Goats clear the weeds and blackberry effectively, making land available for farming, and farmers could shear the buck kids for cashmere before sending them to the works. Both goat meat and fibre realise healthy prices at present. As Ian says, 'Goats have a major role in effective farm management, particularly with two thirds of the world population eating mainly goat meat. Instead of buying chemicals, farmers would have a marketable product and create employment through fencing and shearing.' Early farmers did a lot of work developing land, but as Ian says, they 'milked it' without sustainably farming it. Those taking over the land are now paying for the consequences of poor practices. Ian says some farmers spent 40 years using 245T to eliminate gorse, which grew back when they stopped spraying. 'If they had used goats they would have cleared that land, it would have been more productive and the farmer would have had revenue from meat and fibre.'

From Rural News, 22 July 2002.

DU member and Waituna Landcare Trust secretary Gay Munro is involved with a group of Southland farmers in an initiative to improve water quality in what they say is one of New Zealand's best natural assets. The Waituna Lagoon is a coastal lake and wetland area about 30km from Invercargill, and as Gay says, has international significance as an important habitat for fish, plant and bird life.

The group formed in mid-2001 in response to concerns about the lagoon's algal levels, and wants to encourage sustainable land management within the catchment area. Environment Southland and DOC are providing support, local farmers are showing an interest in planting and fencing streambeds, and a field day was planned for August.

From Rural News, 22 July 2002.

Peas please? Gail Simons reports that a third wild native wood pigeon now turns up for feeds at Stoney Oaks (see story, Flight 112). They arrive three times a day, and with Freedom the birds manage to consume 1kg of peas daily. And DOC has given her another injured wood pigeon that will never be able to fly again.

Gail's hungry kereru would like some ideas about where to get cheap peas. If you can help, write to Gail at Stoney Oaks Wildlife Park, 356 Kaimata Road, Inglewood, or phone 06 756 7624.



Mealtime with Gail, LtoR Freedom, Fancy and Freck. Photo: Gail Simons.

The Flight 113 'Lamb-Peters Print' has been won by Gail Simons. Congratulations, Gail!



Banrock Project 2002 - Masterton Intermediate School

A happy crowd of pupils and their families, school staff and DU people converged on Masterton on 18 August, for the official opening of Masterton Intermediate School's new wetland by Tony Sharley, an ecoscientist and Banrock Station's Wine and Wetland Centre Manager.

William Abel reports that after Tony gave a short talk at the wetland, everyone manned the shovels for planting. The cold then forced everyone inside for the official opening. MIS Principal Fraser Mailman spoke about the history of the farm and introduced the previous headmaster, John McDonald, who set it up in the mid-1970s. Neil Candy then spoke briefly on the Wetland Care connection and Fraser announced winners of the logo competition. (see illustration). People then enjoyed a social session with the sponsor's excellent product and sausages from the barbie.

MIS children had done a lot of work around the pond during the week, eg putting up timber fences to separate sheep from plants. Ross Cottle and Jim Campbell had also done a lot of preliminary planting and had built a rock wall to divert the water flow and make the pond less muddy.

The MIS wetland (see Flight 112 page 8-9) covers a two-hectare site, the pond being 50% of the total. Pupils and volunteers are replanting the site with native species grown locally, some being kindly donated by Robinson's Nurseries. As Tony Sharley said in his speech, 'The school's commitment to conservation is a fine example of environmental leadership.'



Say Cheese, Jim! LtoR Jim Campbell, Tony Sharley, Neil Candy, Fraser Mailman.
Photo: William Abel.



MIS Wetland
A Wetland Care Project

Winning Logo by Kelsi Rutene.

The new wetland is this year's Wetland Care/Banrock project, and the wine company's second in New Zealand. Banrock Station is known for its 33 environmental projects in Australia and nine other countries, initiated since the company was launched in 1995.

Tony Sharley had a busy day - in the afternoon he launched a new 'fish ladder', also funded by Banrock, at the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary. A sloping concrete ramp shapes the water current to let fish rest as they swim upstream against it from one pool to the next, to breed. The sanctuary will develop six or seven species of rare fish, and the long-finned eel. It already has banded kokopu and short-finned eel.

Tony's visit to New Zealand also included a search for new wetland restoration sites.

The Kaituna Wetland

In 1982 the Kaituna Wildlife Management Reserve was nothing more than an overgrown jungle, full of blackberry, pussywillow and honeysuckle vines, and not much use except maybe for crops of dubious use unfit for wetland purposes. It was the result of a deliberate attempt by the local catchment board to dry the area in the hopes of gaining more dairy land.

This small remaining wetland of 250ha is now all that remains (less than 3%) of the once vast area of the Kawa swamps (9000ha) that stretched from Maketu almost to Te Puke. Needless to say, waterfowl numbers had dwindled to critical levels by 1992.

Frustrated by this situation, local wildfowling enthusiast Ray Bushell decided to take the bull by the horns and do something about it. After a period of lobbying and assembling, six groups of

local wildfowlers began to redevelop the area, working together on co-ordinated projects. Open water spaces, funded by the groups, were created in the reserve in the summer of 1994. Three existing ox-bows were left and incorporated into the wetland, after the catchment board finished digging the long straight ditch to the sea. At that stage the regulations only allowed open water spaces of 40m x 40m within all reserves, but this was clearly not enough. Those on the next development block the bulldozer visited decided with good judgment to increase their pond areas to 120m x 40m. All the heavy willow, blackberry, honeysuckle and vegetative cover was removed and the underlying soil was pushed into a series of islands and access causeways to create the open water spaces. The water reticulation system was completely blocked and was improved to introduce water into these new areas.

After observing the results of the 1995 waterfowl and game harvest season it was obvious that these open water spaces were not large enough. Three more groups agreed to fund an enhancement programme. The necessary consents were obtained and those works proceeded in February 1996. At the same time the original groups also carried out further work such as planting flax and native trees, and filling holes in access tracks where rotting materials had slumped. More bridges and culverts were also put in where needed and unobtrusive maimais were built. With a Lottery grant the local Fish and Game Club developed a new area and built a public viewing hide - a real boon in terms of enhancing the reserve habitats.

Wildfowl and indigenous species quickly took advantage of these new areas. Vegetation such as bulrush, flax, cabbage trees and ti-tree also quickly colonised all areas.

Predators were active in the reserve and the trapping programme Ray instigated has become more sophisticated over the years, culminating in an \$8000 Environment Bay of Plenty (EBOP) trapping programme over 2001-2002. While the EBOP programme is still in progress, the previous year's trapping accounted for 83 predators - a combination of stoats, weasels, ferrets, feral cats, and 35 hedgehogs. It is pleasing to observe many large broods of wildfowl reaching flapper stage. The Eastern Region Fish and Game Council banding programme seems to verify these observations.

For a considerable time Ray had been concerned about the quality of the water supplied to the reserve. An electric pump, prone to mechanical failure, had been extracting low quality water from a major agricultural drain. In 1999 Ray successfully lobbied EBOP with a plan to supply better quality water via a 1.8m diameter culvert from the adjacent Kaituna River. The

Department of Conservation and EBOP agreed to fund this and the new culvert was successfully installed in May 1999.

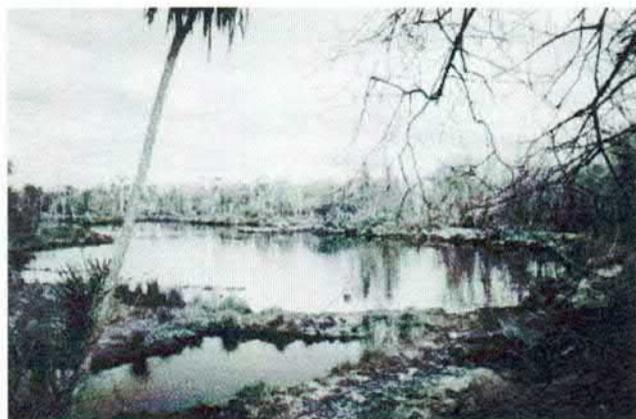
Public education about the project is important with many groups visiting the Kaituna Wetland. This year has seen visits from three primaries and a secondary school, and an interested group from the University of the Third Age (U3A).

A management plan is being finalised by Eastern Region Fish and Game and DOC, and the future of the reserve now looks secure. The general public is increasingly appreciative of this now Ramsar-acclaimed wetland, and wildfowling has more opportunities to enjoy their sport in the reserve. There is still potential for further enhancement. It is now widely acknowledged that the Kaituna Wildlife Management Reserve could be a model of its kind in wetland development for others to follow throughout the country.

Contact: Ray Bushell, c/o NZ Post, Maketu 3070 or email him at raybushell@xtra.co.nz



February 1994 and the start of Number 1 pond.



Number 1 pond in 1995. Photos by Ray Bushell.

The Future for Native Plants

'Why limit native plants to parks, reserves and traffic islands?'

Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment Dr Morgan Williams asked this question in his 2001 discussion paper 'Weaving Resilience into our working lands: recommendations for the future roles of native plants'.

'Native plants can enrich our farms and forests, improving ecological health and long term productivity,' Dr Williams said in the paper. 'We could use native trees such as lemonwood and totara rather than introduced species like macrocarpa and pine for farm shelterbelts. Why is it normal practice to use exotic species such as poplars and willows to prevent soil erosion and improve water quality? We know native tree and shrub species can in many cases also do these jobs, and at the same time provide habitats for native birds and insects.'

Dr Williams pointed out that it is somewhat ironic that New Zealand invests little in researching the qualities and attributes of our unique natural capital while spending tens of millions of dollars on exotic species such as pinus radiata, and millions on the quest for new species via genetic engineering.

When he presented his final report at the 2002 Mystery Creek field days, Dr Williams said that public feedback had been overwhelmingly supportive. 'There is a strong feeling that we are

at a turning point. If we really want to protect our indigenous biodiversity and improve the sustainability of our land usage, we have to move beyond a purely conservation approach.'

Dr Williams sees the sustainable use of native plants as providing ecological, economic, social and cultural benefits to landowners and the public. 'We just need to start thinking innovatively and look for win-win solutions across all these areas. We cannot expect landowners to actively protect, and more importantly extend native ecosystems, if there is little incentive for them to do so.'

Commissioner's Preface

What is this report all about? At its simplest it is about a deep clash of values or mindsets over what we should do with the native plants growing, or planted, on privately owned lands. Should these plants all be protected for their conservation values, or should some be developed in ways that will also contribute directly to wealth creation?

This clash is born out of widespread recognition that New Zealand has lost most of its former indigenous forest cover, particularly on lowland areas. This loss has led, rightly, to a major focus on protecting what is left - largely by purchase but also by covenanting. All this is well known, and the role of protection and preservation has been widely debated during the development of the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy. The conservation ethic is well developed in New Zealand. So, what else should we be thinking about regarding the future of our native plants?

continued on page 10





Whio. Photo: Department of Conservation.

Important Milestone for Blue Duck Conservation

The Central North Island Blue Duck Conservation Charitable Trust was launched on Friday 16 August. Neil and Julie Candy and Peter and Anne Russell attended the function at Tokaanu, at the southern end of Lake Taupo.

The trust, established to help the blue duck (whio whio), will provide an opportunity for increased research and management of this shy and nationally endangered bird, and is a significant step forward for the species.

It is the result of negotiations between Genesis Power Ltd, the Department of Conservation and the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, during the 10 years leading up to renewal of resource consents associated with the Tongariro Power Development.

The trust will seek funding and sponsorship and over the next 10 to 20 years will also administer a \$1.5million contribution from Genesis. Initially, the trust intends liaising with blue duck and other wildfowl specialists to assess information and decide priorities.

Key objectives of the trust include creating new self-sustaining populations of blue duck and enhancement of existing populations. While this will primarily benefit species affected in the catchments running off Tongariro National Park, it will also help blue duck throughout New Zealand. All projects that meet the trust's objectives will be considered.

Blue duck is an important indicator species of river health, and a number of individuals and agencies had raised concerns about the adverse impacts of the power development on blue duck habitat and populations.

'Genesis was able to successfully negotiate several mitigation packages with DOC and Forest and Bird,' says Tracey Hickman, Environmental Manager for Genesis. 'As well as funding for the trust, we have agreed to increased base flows on the Upper Whanganui and Mangatepopo Streams.'

Murray Jackson, Chief Executive of Genesis, sees the implementation of the mitigation package as a positive step in the resource management process. 'We are delighted to have been associated with the project and believe the work of the trust will help the ecology of the central North Island and blue duck in particular,' he says.

Keith Chapple, a former president of Forest and Bird, noted that the process had been a long haul, but worth the effort. 'The launch of the trust is a very significant step forward for the species. The blue duck now has a significant sum of money behind it, which will go a long way to ensuring the future wellbeing of this endangered white-water specialist,' he says.

The trust comprises a representative each from Genesis and Forest and Bird, two from DOC and an independent member.

For further information please contact:

Carolyn Vavasour, Genesis Power Ltd, Phone 09 580 4827

Lianne Fraser, Department of Conservation, Phone 07 377 4579 or 025 525 4546

www.doc.govt.nz



Whio family. Photo: Department of Conservation.

from page 9

Recommendations

I have made recommendations to the Minister for the Environment and Ministers of Forestry, Research Science and Technology, Finance and Revenue. These recommendations include one for increased research on native plants and their attributes. The recommendations aim to assist in the development of a more favourable policy, market and social 'environment' that will allow a wider range of uses for native plants. The recommendations include:

- More research on native plants and the ecological, economic, and social opportunities they could generate.
- Government to provide certainty for landowners who want to plant native trees with the view of sustainably harvesting them in the future.

- Changing the Forest Act 1949 to focus on sustainable forestry and not sustainable timber production.
- Amending the Income Tax Act 1994 to recognise that planting native plants is a part of good farming practice and therefore a deductible expense.

For more information contact: Dr Morgan Williams,
Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
Phone (04) 471 1669

Email pce@pce.govt.nz

Visit the excellent website at www.pce.govt.nz for more about the work of this independent agency.

Pateke on Tiritiri Matangi

Despite the fact that the Tiritiri Island population are the longest-surviving captive-bred brown teal in New Zealand, no studies have been done on their survival in this habitat in the absence of the introduced predators that have ravaged them on the mainland. Alarm bells rang four years ago when a survey found only four females. Although two males turned up, some means of both boosting and monitoring the population had obviously become crucial.

Although there are more important brown teal sites in New Zealand, 11 brown teal not previously allocated have been made available to Tiritiri Island by designated brown teal breeder Kevin Evans. Tiri Supporters funded the release along with radio transmitters for the birds. Five males and two females were released on several ponds on 22 June, with four more on 23 July.

Results have been mixed. There were problems with the transmitters making tracking of some birds difficult, and to date two have been predated, probably by hawks.

From a report by Carl Hayson, in the Tiritiri supporters' newsletter Dawn Chorus, Winter 2002.

Richard Henry Goes Home

The world's oldest kakapo has finally returned home. In early July DOC staff transferred Richard Henry and three other kakapo by helicopter from Maud Island in the Marlborough Sounds to Chalky Island, in Fiordland. Ten kakapo were also moved to Chalky Island from Codfish Island, near Stewart Island, after the bumper breeding season there.

Richard Henry, at nearly 50 years old, is not only the oldest living kakapo, but also the last known surviving kakapo from Fiordland - from mainland New Zealand. With these unique genes he is a key bird in the kakapo population. Four years ago he produced three chicks, the first time he had bred successfully for 20 years. DOC team leader Paul Jansen said the ultimate goal is to have a self-supporting kakapo population in a protected 'mainland island' environment, and that the Chalky Island move is a step along the way.

From the Dominion Post, 10 July 2002.

Richard Henry was one of the early NZ conservationists. In 1894 he realised that kakapo were becoming very rare, and he began to move them to the predator free Resolution Island at the entrance to Dusky Sound in Fiordland. By 1898 he had relocated 572 birds, but in 1900 a stoat was seen on the island and it was not long before other predators got to the island. Sadly, the sanctuary became a cemetery for the kakapo.

(Go to www.dnz.govt.nz for a fascinating Dictionary of NZ Biography entry about Richard Henry, or seek out the book *Richard Henry of Resolution Island*, by Hill, S. & J. Hill, Dunedin 1987 -Ed.)

Hectare Sponsorship a Hit

All 942 hectares of the Mt Bruce forest have now been sponsored for this year, says DOC Area Manager Derrick Field. (See story in Flight 112)

The scheme was launched in April, and there was a 'tremendous' public response. The intensive pest control the scheme pays for will give the forest a chance to regenerate so that birds like kokako can be released to live in the wild as they once did. People can still contribute this year by buying a copy of the award-winning CD and book 'Puhaka - songs from the forest' (see brochure in this issue). Albert Rebergen, DOC Biodiversity Manager, said that resident birdlife is expected to increase by 50% in the next year. People will still be able to sponsor hectares as pest control work will have to continue for the foreseeable future, says Mr Field.

From Wairarapa News, 28 August 2002.



Black fantail at Tarata, Taranaki - this type is extremely rare in the North Island. Photo: Gail Simons.

Avian Orchestra Tunes Up, Takes Off

In May a helicopter-load of 100 bellbirds, tomitts, whiteheads and robins was flown from Kapiti Island for release into Wellington's 250ha Karori Wildlife Sanctuary. Conservation manager Raewyn Empson said that bellbirds released earlier had proved highly mobile, following food sources throughout Wellington, and this time the females would be freed first in the hope that the singing of the captive males would keep them from wandering. (A nice reversal of an ancient human belief... -Ed)

Meanwhile resident bird numbers at the sanctuary are booming. The 40 robins released last year raised a total of 53 chicks, the little spotted kiwi produced a chick soon after arriving and the whiteheads had also bred well. Most birds had staked out territories and mated in the area.

Mice are still a problem, though, since it was found they were able to get through the fine mesh of the perimeter fence. Staff are seeking funding for a solution and using traps and baits, delaying the release of threatened insects and lizards in the meantime.

From The Dominion, 22 May 2002

...and on 16 June 39 endangered North Island saddlebacks (tieke) from Tiritiri Matangi Island were released at Karori - the first to return to the mainland in nearly 150 years. They were offered nectar, cakes and oranges at feeding stations and roosting boxes to tempt them to stay within the sanctuary boundary. Their habit of ground-nesting had been their death warrant, said conservation manager Raewyn Empson. Some would be kept in an aviary for a few weeks as an extra safeguard, and six would carry radio transmitters. All the birds are colour banded and people were asked to report any sightings outside the sanctuary.

From The Dominion, 17 June 2002.

...and then: Kaka fancies portrait sitting. Well-known photographer Peter Bush was at home one day when a kaka came into his house and 'started waddling around my photographic gear.' Two days earlier it had been released at Karori Sanctuary with two others, as part of a \$40,000 campaign to have kaka flourishing again in Wellington city. This kaka helped itself to Peter's lunch while he called the SPCA after seeing its leg band. The bird was fitted with a transmitter and was easily tracked and subsequently captured by Raewyn Empson, by way of tree climbing, gardening gloves and a walnut, it was reported.

From The Dominion Post, 26 August 2002.



What's Killing the Frogs?

About 50 endangered native Archey's frogs were given a powhiri at Canterbury University on 31 July. The frogs were taken to Christchurch, after being collected by DOC workers the previous day from the Whareorino Forest near Te Kuiti.

They were released into a special frog facility on campus where they will be studied for signs of amphibian chytrid fungus in a joint effort by the university and DOC. Dr Bruce Waldman, of the university's Zoology Department, will lead the investigation.

Populations of many frogs and toads around the world have been in severe decline or have disappeared entirely since the late 1980s - and what most perplexes scientists is that precipitous declines have occurred almost simultaneously in remote, pristine locations. Three years ago a newly discovered chytrid fungus was found infecting the keratinised tissues of dying wild frogs in Australia and Central America. Many consider 'chytridiomycosis' to be a new emerging infectious disease that may be driving global amphibian decline and species extinctions.

New Zealanders will be familiar with the three Australian species (genus *Litoria*), which have established themselves here, but these are now under threat in Australia, and even here, according to recent observations. Populations are now disappearing at an ominous rate.

Dr Waldman said that over the past six months dead native frogs had been found in forests on the Coromandel and near Te Kuiti. 'To find dead frogs is in itself pretty shocking, because they usually decay very rapidly or are quickly consumed by predators. Finding carcasses suggests quite a number are dying. To lose Archey's frogs to disease would be a disaster comparable to losing tuatara. Saving them is a matter of international concern,' Dr Waldman said. He hoped the Department of Conservation would approve an \$85,000 research grant.

New Zealand's four native frogs (the Archey's, Maud Island, Hamilton's and Hochstetter's frogs) belong to the ancient genus *Leiopelma* - and differ little from the earliest frogs that lived 200 million years ago. The Hamilton's frogs are the rarest with only an estimated 100 to 300 left. Archey's, Maud Island, and Hamilton's frog live in the bush rather than around ponds, do not have webbed feet, and do not croak but sometimes make a little squeak or chirp if threatened. They brood their eggs on land, and from these eggs hatch fully-developed froglets, missing the tadpole stage. Hochstetter's frog usually lives in the splash zone around streams and has aquatic larvae. All four are nocturnal and lack external ears. Dr Waldman said chytrid fungus has reached the United States and Europe. Infection is usually fatal. It is also believed to have caused a number of recent extinctions. Dr Waldman found the first known case of the disease in New Zealand in Southern Bell frogs, a species introduced a century ago from Australia. Bell frogs, like the native species, are infected throughout the country.

University of Canterbury zoologists have studied the Southern Bell frogs in a pond at Godley Head near Christchurch, finding some evidence of chytrid infection, especially in tadpoles as they approached metamorphosis - symptoms included distended bodies, skin ulceration, internal bleeding and developmental abnormalities. Tadpoles taken from the Godley Head pond and put into home ponds by the public were also affected, as were the young metamorphosing froglets. The scientists now believe that tadpoles can carry the disease, with both the pet trade and the public inadvertently spreading chytridiomycosis to new localities.



Archey's frog on liverwort. Photo: David Bos.

People's boots and clothes and waterfowl are also possible means of transmission.

Some workers believe that the global trade in exotic aquarium fish could be a factor in the spread of such new and virulent infections. Some pet shops operate their own licensed quarantine facilities, but it is difficult for even veterinary experts to diagnose this infection and infected animals are likely to escape detection. The Godley Head pond is a major source of tadpoles and frogs for the pet trade. They are also shipped around the country for commercial sale. They could be carrying chytrid fungus but show no symptoms until after they are liberated.

Dr Waldman suspects that the fungus came to New Zealand in stock imported for the pet trade and it is now spreading through waterways. Scientists believe it overcomes the frogs' immunity and paralyses them. They also believe that whatever is affecting the frogs could eventually affect humans. Frogs are considered to be a bio-indicator and are vertebrates, like humans. 'If something is impacting on frogs then it's likely to eventually impact on us as well. Frogs are robust creatures, so if they are being killed by this fungus, this suggests their immune system is being challenged by herbicides, pesticides, pollutants, higher UV levels and other environmental stresses, increasing their susceptibility to pathogens. The same can be said of humans... it will just take longer before we show the impacts.

'I have been hopping up and down trying to warn everybody. You used to go to ponds at the weekend and see families collecting tadpoles and frogs but there are simply none left to take,' Dr Waldman said. New Zealand native frogs are some of the oldest and rarest species on the planet. 'These frogs lived when dinosaurs roamed the earth. They are what frogs looked like 200 million years ago. Basically, they are living fossils.'

Sources:

1. 'Chytridiomycosis in New Zealand Frogs' by Bruce Waldman, Department of Zoology, Canterbury University, and others, in *Kokako, the Wildlife Society of NZ Veterinary Assn bulletin*, October 2001
2. *NZPA* 30 July 2002
3. Article by Seth Robson in *The Press*, 31 July 2002

With thanks to Dr Bruce Waldman and David Bos for their generous help with this article -Ed. Dr Waldman's email address is: bw.zool.canterbury.ac.nz

In Flight

Community Control

More than 90 landowners across 10,000ha of land in the Awaroa/Whangape area of north Waikato are seeing more native birds and healthier bush following a successful community possum control scheme over the past two years.

Many attended an inaugural meeting in July 1999 to plan the attack on a major possum problem in the area. Environment Waikato has worked on the issue with the community steering group, individual farmers, DOC, local schools and pest contractors. EW provided staff and materials initially, and has now spent more than \$220,000 on possum control across the area, while DOC has been working with landowners around the Awaroa swamp and wetland area. Farmers are being encouraged to 'feed' bait stations with bait delivered at wholesale cost, and scheme members have access to ongoing advice and support from contractors, co-ordinated by Peter Nichol. Landowners are reporting more native birds, especially kereru (wood pigeon), and more sprouting and fruiting trees. They are also reporting native seedlings appearing in bush areas.

From Coast and Country, August 2002.

Hornwort Spreads

An 'evil' aquatic weed is rampaging through the Wairarapa lakes area, DOC warns. Hornwort or *ceratophyllum demersum* was introduced to New Zealand as a garden pond and aquarium plant, and had appeared in Lake Ohakuri in the Waikato by 1963. It has spread steadily south ever since. Now the plant, which grows stems up to six metres long and forms dense submerged 'forests' has reached endemic proportions in the South Wairarapa wetlands, to the consternation of DOC, Fish and Game and farmers. 'Think of your worst garden weed, like oxalis, and this is 10 times worse,' conservation officer Tony

PREDATORS

Silbery says. People going into the wetlands are urged to be careful not to spread it, especially to Boggy Pond, an area still hornwort-free. There is as yet no way to control this plant, which has crippled hydro power stations and farm irrigation systems and has now been found in the northern South Island. The brittle stems fragment to become separate plants that move around with the currents. It can grow in water 10 metres deep and in low or high light. 'Aquatic weeds are just awful,' Mr Silbery said. 'You can't dig them out or spray them, and they move around so readily.'

From Wairarapa News 1 May 2002.

Super Sniffers

A successful DOC pilot programme using dogs to track stoats, rats and cats became a national one on 1 July this year. Scott Theobald, national predator dog ranger, travels with his three-dog team Tui, Heidi and Mick throughout New Zealand, going into the bush for a month at a time. The terriers are specialists - Tui and Mick seek out mustelids and cats while Heidi goes for rodents. Mr Theobald then writes up a report for DOC predator control staff to follow up.

'You should have seen their mouths drop when I brought in the first terrier,' he said. 'You don't usually think of dogs and conservation together, but they have completely proved themselves.' Terriers are ideal because they are loyal, hard-working and energetic, and this team has made such a difference that Mr Theobald wants to train more dogs and handlers. 'We're leading the world in some of the work we're doing in this area, and I'm getting calls from people around the world wanting to know more,' he said.

From The Dominion Post, 1 July 2002.

From the Far Side

WWT reaches 100,000 members

The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) is celebrating reaching its milestone target of 100,000 members. The Trust was founded by the late Sir Peter Scott in 1946 and now operates nine visitor centres in the UK, including the award winning developments in London and Slimbridge, Gloucestershire. WWT's membership has grown by around one third in just over two years, supports WWT's nine visitor centres and enables WWT to undertake key research projects, including its recent high-profile satellite-tracking of Irish Light-bellied Brent Geese on the Internet.

Tony Richardson, WWT Managing Director, says, 'Reaching 100,000 members is a crucial milestone in our history, which will help raise our profile as the largest UK charity dedicated to wetlands conservation. The impact of the decline of wetlands and its effect on wetland birds is a key driver for our growing membership. Our members' loyalty is vital to our continued success in saving these wetland habitats and the wildlife they support.'

WWT News 2 September 2002, full report on www.wwt.org.uk

(Last year Banrock Wines gave £25,000 to support WWT work at the London Wetland Centre, Barnes.)

Restored Wetlands as Good or Better.

A 1997-98 study published in the *Journal of Wildlife Management* shows that waterfowl and other grassland birds use wetlands restored by DU Inc. as much as, if not more than, natural wetlands. Dr John Ratti, research professor at the University of Idaho, led

the study. He said, 'Given the millions of dollars spent on restoration, it's important to evaluate projects and ensure that every dollar is being spent well...we now know that DU's habitat restoration work is functioning as it should.' Dr Ratti's team compared 39 wetlands restored by DU with 39 natural wetlands, all located in the Prairie Pothole region (also known as 'the duck factory') of North and South Dakota. Each restored wetland was paired with a nearby natural one of the same size and classification. The team counted and compared bird numbers, species numbers and breeding pairs. They also looked carefully at historical records to confirm that the natural wetlands had not been manipulated in any way. 'We all lament the loss of wetlands,' Ratti said. 'The good news is, we can turn this around very quickly. That's the terrific thing about wetland restoration, DU can almost immediately return drained wetlands back to naturally functioning ecosystems.'

DU Leader, Summer 02.

Alaska produces new fundraising idea

Jim King, DU Inc. regional director for Alaska, reported a new fundraising game called the 'Spud Toss'. As a prize the Petersburg committee had offered one hour of flying time in a De Havilland Beaver with a bush pilot, and three nights in a forest service cabin, a donated value of about \$400.

For \$10, each participant had to toss three spuds three metres into a dutch oven, to enter the draw for the trip. During the cocktail hour folks lined up to cheer and jeer, and the committee raised \$640 on the game, which they agreed brought in more than if they had auctioned the trip.

DU Leader, Summer 02

(One for the next chapter dinner? - Ed)



Clippings

Novel Ways Update

The firm sold 16 BL units at the 2002 Fieldays, and had a lot of interest in the pest trap as well (see *Catchy Tunes for Possums*, page 9 April issue) The Kiwi recovery programme people are interested, and they hope to get better sound tracks. That might be the best way Flight readers can help - very good quality tapes of rabbit squeals, birds nests with young, and other distress calls that will attract predators are needed. Graham says the trap should clobber mustelids as well as possums, and it will change the mode automatically - the door opens half height and reacts faster. If you can help, contact Graham Lynch (07) 856 6270, email gbl@novel.co.nz

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Food, glorious food... happened like this...

Peerie Mackerel

It is 'summer dim', or midsummer, in Shetland. Midnight. No, not night - a pale, pink tinted glow covers the hills and still water like an incredibly delicate veil - you want to blink in case it's your eyesight again. And after the roaring, freezing north wind the day before, this little bit of the world is all stillness.

My bed is beside the window, in my 90-year-old relation's stone cottage on the edge of Reawick Bay. There's a red geranium in a pot on the deep sill, and outside, a metre or two of short grass before the rocks fall away to the water. A dainty little Shetland ewe and her lamb wander past on legs like twigs, the ewe's wool moulting in random clumps around her neck.

Two eider ducks shepherd a clutch of seven new ducklings, close to the rocks. The adults are big, brown, handsome birds, and the ducklings bob along like tiny dark corks. Who could ever sleep at midnight with this to watch! You have your heart in your mouth - a couple of big grey seals have been cruising the shoreline every day, and you know there will be fewer ducklings later. It's hard to spot the seals unless they surface, just those great dark eyes, a nose and whiskers when you're pretending to look the other way.



Cleaning the Streams

Waikato farmers are lining up to apply for Environment Waikato's cash grants to fence waterways and plant stream banks. The regional council has set aside \$10million for allocation in the next 10 years, starting with \$400,000 this year. Grants cover 35% of costs, and Alan Campbell, EW Clean Streams project manager, hopes to get about 300 applications. 'At the end of ten years we would like more than half the region's streams fenced off and or planted,' he said. Currently 20%-30% are fenced, and up to 70% in areas like Taupo. High priority areas are headwater streams coming from bush areas into lakes and estuaries such as the Coromandel peninsula and Taupo catchments. Campbell says EW is doing the project in partnership with Fonterra, Federated Farmers and interested industry organisations.

From Rural News, 8 July 2002.

Water for Otago - Promoting Wetland Enhancement

In a key objective of the proposed Regional Plan, Water for Otago will promote the enhancement of Otago's remaining wetlands through voluntary conservation. As part of its wetland enhancement programme, the Otago Regional Council is to offer funding to protect wetland areas.

Eighty significant wetlands are identified in the Proposed Water Plan. Values considered as significant include: scarcity, naturalness, ecological or physical character, indigenous habitat, or Kai Tahu values.

Owners of wetland areas identified in the plan receive first priority for funding assistance under this programme. People wanting to preserve wetlands like these on private lands in Otago may be eligible for financial assistance from the Otago Regional Council.

Anyone with a wetland on privately owned or local authority land can apply, including wetlands not identified in the Proposed Regional Plan. Each

application will be considered on its individual merits, taking into account the wetland's habitat value, potential for long-term sustainability, level of public benefit resulting from the works, and landowner commitment.

Projects receiving money from this programme will be required to provide adequate security for any work paid for by public funds. This could take the form of a covenant on the land title or some other means.

The rate of funding will be based on an assessment of the public versus any private benefit resulting from the project. Depending on the level of public benefit achieved, up to 100% of the cost will be met for: capital cost of establishment of fencing; any enhancement works required including alternative provision for stock water; improvements to public access, or placing a covenant on the land title.

For more details about this programme please contact the Otago Regional Council by email, info@orc.govt.nz or phone 03 474-0827, freephone 0508 474 082 or fax 03 479-0015.

The old seal stories are easy to understand in wild places.

Last night, Norna and I were getting our meal, cosy with the peat reek and soft crackle from the fire (summer hasn't arrived yet in spite of the date) when we saw Dodie Anderson's little fishing boat pattering out of the bay. About an hour later he came back, and not long afterwards there was a knock on the door. (Norna always leaves the door unlocked for Dodie's wife Kathleen, postmistress and knitter of royal baby shawls that you can pull through a wedding ring, to put the mail inside.) Kathleen stood there with a tin plate holding four glowing little fish. 'Would ye like some peerie mackerel for your supper?' She held them out, smiling. Oh, yes please!

Norna cooked them the next day, merely rolling them in oatmeal and dry-frying them in her bent and blackened pan, with some pepper, their own oil more than enough to moisten them, an expensive lemon sliced carefully with that lethal pre-war knife. They fell apart a bit, and tasted, on her mother's best plates with a glass of good white wine from her stash under the roof, utterly wonderful - pure and honest, real food.

(See what happens when no one sends a contribution to Flight? You get the Ed instead. PLEASE send me your own stories!)