

# Flight



ISSUE 126 - JANUARY 2006





wetland care  
NEW ZEALAND

Our business is to harness community, business and government resources to restore and develop lost wetland areas within New Zealand.

Wetlands Care members recognise that wetlands are vital to the wellbeing of the environment, acting as huge ecological sponges by soaking up pollutants and filtering water before it reaches streams, rivers, lakes, aquifers and the sea.

Our initiatives focus on matters as far-reaching as groundwater replenishment, flood control, nutrient and contaminant management and climate change – all critical factors for the conservation of freshwater and saltwater wetlands and marshes.

We want to preserve and conserve the flora and fauna of our most endangered ecosystem so that vibrant wetlands are our legacy to future generations.

Funding for projects comes from the Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust which was established by Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc in 1991, as well as membership, donations and corporate memberships such as that from Banrock Station Wines.

Central to Wetland Care New Zealand's mission is forming partnerships with people and organisations with similar aims. An example is Banrock Station Wines who place the Wetland Care New Zealand logo on their wine bottles distributed in New Zealand. In return, Banrock contribute a fee, which is based on each bottle sold, to Wetland Care New Zealand.

Money from this partnership has been given to wetland conservation projects done by:

Ducks Unlimited Operation Pateke  
Port Charles release 2005 at Coromandel  
Henley Trust, Masterton  
Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, Wellington  
Kitchener Park, Feilding  
Manawatu Estuary Trust, Foxton  
Mangaone Wetland, Raetihi  
Masterton Intermediate School, Masterton  
Steyning Trust, Hawkes Bay  
Travis Wetland Trust, Christchurch  
Wairio Wetland, South Wairarapa  
Wetland Trust New Zealand, Rangiriri  
Waitakere Branch of Forest and Bird, West Auckland  
Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, Dunedin

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

## Raffle Results

William Abel reports that 20% of the raffle tickets sent out were not returned, or paid for. This meant that he had to send out 170 reminders, and the cost of this took about \$300 off the profit.

He would like to request that if members have no intention of buying or selling the raffle books, they return them immediately. The system is such that each book has to be accounted for, as the raffle winners are pulled out under Police supervision. The amount of administrative work involved in cancelling un-returned books and sending out reminders takes hours. So please, if you're not interested, think of William and the time he has put into this. Bizarrely, one un-returned book which, of course, was null and void, would have won both second and seventh prizes. So, had the person just spent the \$20, they would have had two prizes!

On a more positive note, Greytown resident and DU member Joyce Brooks sold an amazing 70 books – over \$1400 worth – and she is to be warmly congratulated for her great efforts, once again. We hope to do a profile on Joyce in a future issue.

### RAFFLE WINNERS

- 1<sup>st</sup> C Bostock, Tauranga
- 2<sup>nd</sup> B Lampp, Hunterville
- 3<sup>rd</sup> D Mitchell, Christchurch
- 4<sup>th</sup> I Morrison, Geraldine
- 5<sup>th</sup> A Laidler, Levin
- 6<sup>th</sup> P Bayliss, Masterton
- 7<sup>th</sup> G Lundie, Greytown
- 8<sup>th</sup> M Candy, Shannon
- 9<sup>th</sup> T Tatham, Masterton
- 10<sup>th</sup> R McCusker, North Canterbury

*Thank you to our Sponsors*



**Carpet Court**  
YOU'LL LOVE THE LOOK



# Insight

by Ross Cottle, President

*Another year has come and gone and it is time to reflect on the year. It has been a very busy year from DU's point of view, what with the Board trying to implement the strategic plan we formulated last year. Along with the usual things like creating habitat and increasing membership we also focused on lifting the profile of the organisation and be more proactive in selling our story and getting the conservation message out there.*

*The joint venture we signed with DOC at the beginning of 2005 and the subsequent publicity we received when the dam wall was reinstated has been fantastic.*

*The other point of high publicity was at the end of the year when the Banrock Wine team travelled the country donating money to Wetland Projects that DU had located, once again more promotion for Ducks Unlimited.*

*So let us all work hard in 2006 and build on the successes of 2005.*



## Our Mission

*To deliver effective wetland restoration, development, research, education and advocacy;*

*While supporting the preservation of threatened waterfowl and the ethical and sustainable use of wetlands*

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

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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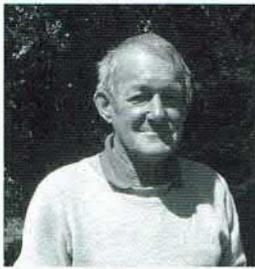
### Front Cover Photos:

Top. DU patron Jim Campbell, DU director Jim Law, Banrock Wines Tony Sharley and DU's Don Hill at Wairio wetlands, see page 8-9.

Bottom left: Whio heavy with eggs, mate nearby, see page 14.

Bottom right: Native Green Bell frog and Golden Bell frog, see page 6.





## OUR People

### DAVE SIM TO RETIRE – AND THEN REPORT BACK FOR MORE DUTY

When Dave Sim retires next April he will barely know the difference. He will just keep on doing what he has always done, which is to encourage the natural habitat for mankind and for bird life.

A founding member of Ducks Unlimited, Masterton-born Greytown resident Dave has braced this interest with an even longer attachment to the Ornithological Society. His job in the field with local government, currently with the Wellington Regional Council, for decades, has put him exactly where he most wanted to be anyway, and doing what came naturally, which was looking after nature.

For many years he lived close to Lake Ferry, a convenient position for one whose idea of a stroll is to take part in an ornithological shore patrol. On such patrols he has helped injured birds, and preserved dead ones for his extensive taxidermy collection, one of the finest examples outside a museum.

Of all the birds that have come into his purview, none has interested him more than the shag, known elsewhere in the world as the cormorant. He was an early holder of a permit to band the shag, a process that gave new insights into the movement of the sea bird in these latitudes. One of his banded shag turned up on Lord Howe Island, furnishing valuable proof of the heavy bird's flying range.



*Dave Sim with a crane from his taxidermy collection*

In his Lake Ferry years, Dave Sim was in the right place at the right time to provide first-hand evidence of the danger to shag of flounder and other high-in-the-water nets. He observed that all the drowned shag were six months old or under, thus providing empirical evidence that with age the diving birds learned to identify the nets, and dodge them, before being caught up in them.

He played a large part in restoring to the Chatham Islands, the

Chatham Island robin, and this, he notes was achieved by restoring to the island the bird's natural vegetation.

Another such visit was to Cod Fish Island where he was part of a similar team effort to bring back the kakapo, and still another to Little Barrier Island where he helped rid the island of predators of the kiwi – mostly wild cats. Locally, an important discovery was that of finding in Matthew's Reserve a banded rail, thought to have been extinct in the area for the past 50 years.

In recent years Mr Sim of Kuratawhiti Street, Greytown, in his role as an officer of the regional council has been busy with the swamp reserve at the Oporua Floodway. He has played a big part in initiating the programme of securely fencing off the area, which has subsequently become an important district wetland.

When Mr Sim hands in his Regional Council officer's badge in April, few doubt where he will be the next day; which will be back on duty in his beloved wetlands.



*This is an albatross - almost as big as Dave!*



*Dave Sim holds a banded rail from his collection*



*Kelvin and Helen O'Hara of O'Hara Wildlife Estate are new Bronze members of Ducks Unlimited. They have sent the following letter to the Editor, describing their business.*

The O'Hara Wildlife Estate is home to Kelvin and Helen O'Hara (their six children return regularly with a growing brood of grandchildren), not to mention the largest range of deer species in the country and a virtual menagerie of other game species. Located midway between Rotorua and Tauranga with the Kaituna River providing its western boundary, the property enjoys the best of all worlds with easy access to both the Pacific and the many lakes in the Rotorua district. The Wildlife Estate has risen from the major portion of a rundown dairy farm to become a venue offering small visiting groups the opportunity to experience 'Outdoors New Zealand'.

The original focus was on the production of red deer for sale as sires with excellent antler genetics. Increasing numbers of requests from the public to explain how a deer farm operated and how the deer industry evolved saw an inevitable move into the tourism market. To explain how the deer industry developed, it is necessary to provide information about the introduction of all game species, which inevitably leads to discussion about environmental, economic, and social implications. We felt the need to establish a wildlife management strategy, as opposed to the extermination preservation mentality which in our opinion pervades government agencies at present. Any discussion in these fields inevitably includes gamebirds and waterfowl.

An objective of the Estate is to provide guests with the opportunity to view and photograph game species in their natural habitat. This has led to several developments and a number of yet-to-be-initiated projects. Flight aviaries have been built with more on the way, to enable guests to readily identify the various species they will see when on safari at the Estate.

You may have noticed that the back cover has changed. Here's a little information on the product which our continuing sponsor is now promoting and we thank Kilwell Sports for their continued support for Ducks Unlimited New Zealand and Wetlands Care.

"Gamebore is firmly established worldwide as a top class manufacturer of shotgun cartridges. Using all the latest, technically advanced loading and testing equipment, the company manufactures and supplies a superb range of game, water fowling and field loads, along with high performance, record breaking competition loads for the serious clay target shooter."

# Wetland Care Projects

## Pateke Recovery Programme – Key points

Following the November visit of Tony Sharley, Executive of Banrock Wines which is a corporate sponsor of Wetland Care, an affiliated DUNZ organisation, Ossie Latham has sent Flight readers the Pateke Recovery Programme.

**1. Currently - SECURE PHASE** – secure the species against extinction  
Experimental management of predators to identify management prescriptions that deliver positive response for pateke (R&D)

- 2 intensive managements sites – Mimiwhangata and Okiwi (largest remnants)
- Proven prescription at Mimiwhangata; still to be achieved at Okiwi

Experimental large scale reintroduction to mainland predator managed habitats (R&D)

- National site assessment – suitable sites ranked, regular re-assessment
- Moehau kiwi sanctuary (Port Charles) programme – annual releases of 40-60 captive-bred birds for five years. Aim to establish breeding population of at least 50 breeding pairs. Looking promising at year three in terms of residency, survival and other key demographics
- Establish insurance populations on predator-free islands
- Kapiti, Mana, Tiritiri, Karori, Warrenheip done to date since 2000
- Mayor Island in 2006
- More as they become available (predators removed)

## 2. Next – RECOVERY PHASE

More predator control in pateke habitat, apply proven prescriptions more broadly

More landscape scale predator control in pateke population remnants  
More re-introductions

More large-scale sites – especially South Island (spread extinction risk)

More medium-scale – especially community-led sites (e.g. landcare network sites northern NZ); predator free islands, mainland fenced sanctuaries

Experimental management of wet pastoral habitat to identify farming prescriptions that are pateke-friendly and farm-friendly – 'optimise farming for pateke' (R&D at Mimiwhangata) – then apply learning more broadly

## 3. Opportunities for Funding Collaboration

Release programme ( events focused, beautiful places, media interest/newsy)

- Single sites - Moehau 2006 (2007?)
- Single sites - Community-led site – Tutukaka from 2006
- Whole release programme medium/longer term (above sites plus expansion as progress to new sites) – DOC sites, community sites, left field/longer term option - urban Christchurch flagship (300-400K population) (Avon/Heathcoat wetlands) if predator control can be brokered
- New captive breeding aviaries (increase capacity to service releases)
- Purchase significant key habitat – e.g. Awana on Great Barrier Island (beautiful places)
- Research – farming for pateke (rural market – pateke as icon for sustainable farming practices); wild diet.

- Ossie Latham



# Frog Week 2005

Frog populations are declining throughout the world, including New Zealand. Frog Week (24-30 October 2005) was an opportunity for New Zealanders to learn more about our unique native frogs, says the Department of Conservation's Native Frog Recovery Group Leader, Avi Holzapfel.

"Many people, such as DOC staff and community groups, have been working tirelessly for many years on frog recovery. Frog Week is a time to celebrate the successes of this work, but also to be aware of the challenges and risks ahead. Without the support of everyone, we face the risk of losing this unique national taonga (treasure)," Dr Holzapfel said.

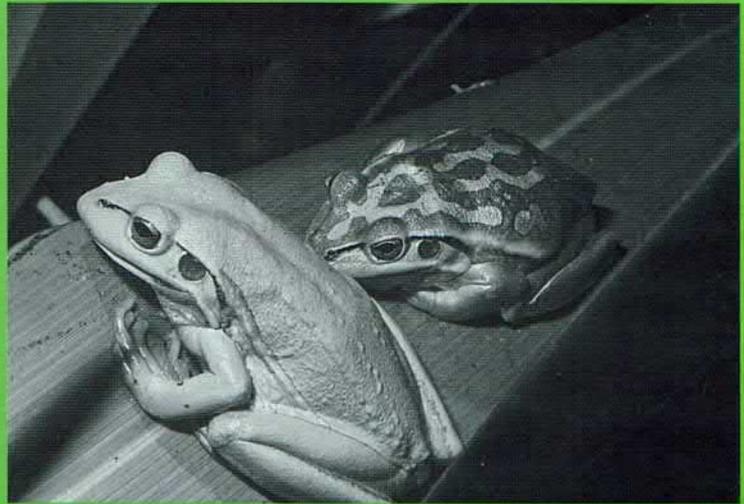
During Frog Week 2005 there were displays, workshops, live frogs and talks by experts in frog biology at many regional centres around the country.

## Native frog facts

New Zealand's native frogs have several distinctive features, which make them very different from frogs elsewhere in the world:

- They have no external eardrum.
- They have round (not slit) eyes.
- They don't croak regularly like most frogs.
- They don't have a tadpole stage.

The embryo develops inside an egg, and then hatches as an almost fully-formed frog. The young of most species are cared for by their parents - for example, the male Archey's frog may carry his young offspring around on his back.



*Green Bell frog (left) and Golden Bell frog (right), Lake Rotopiko, Waikato, (1999). Crown Copyright: Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai. Photographer: P. Schilov.*

## Pepeketua, New Zealand's Native Frogs

### What are native frogs?

New Zealand's native frogs belong to the genus *Leiopelma*, an ancient and primitive group of frogs. The frogs have changed very little in 70 million years. They are small, nocturnal, and are hard to see as they camouflage themselves well. Three of our remaining species live on land in shady, moist forested areas, and one is semi-aquatic, living on stream edges.

### Different species

New Zealand originally had seven species of native frog. Three species have become

extinct since the arrival of humans and animal pests, like rats, in New Zealand. The four remaining species are:

**Hochstetter's frog** - the most widespread, it has been sighted around the upper half of the North Island, including at Hunua (see story) Waipu, Great Barrier Island, the Coromandel, central North Island, and the Raukumara Ranges. It grows up to 48mm long. It has partially-webbed feet, more warts than the other frogs and is generally dark brown.

**Archey's frog** - is found only in the Coromandel and in one site west of Te Kuiti. It is the smallest native frog, growing up to 37mm long. It lives in misty, moist areas around 400m in altitude.

**Hamilton's frog** - one of the world's most endangered frogs, it is found only on Stephens Island in the Cook Strait.

**Maud Island frog** - is only found on Maud Island in the Marlborough Sounds. In 1997 DOC transferred 300 Maud Island frogs to Motuara Island.

There are also three introduced species of frog in New Zealand. These species are easily distinguished from native frogs because they have loud mating calls and pass through a tadpole stage.

### Fight for survival

Frogs are declining everywhere in the world. More than most creatures, frogs are sensitive to



*Maud Island frog, Maud Island, November 2004. Crown Copyright: Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai (2004), Photographer: A. Holzapfel*

disease, pollution, chemical poisons and environmental changes, as they absorb many things through their sensitive skin.

Fossil records show that our native frogs were spread throughout both the North and South Islands several thousand years ago. The four remaining species have declined significantly in range and in numbers over the past one to two thousand years, as land has been cleared of forest and predators have been introduced.

Hamilton's frog is the most critically endangered species, with less than 300 individuals remaining. Fossil records show it was once spread from Waikato to Punakaiki. Now it survives only on Stephens Island, where it is carefully managed by the Department of Conservation. DOC has created a second population of the frogs on the island, enclosed in a predator-proof fence because tuatara occasionally eat frogs.

#### Recovery plan in action

The Department of Conservation has a Native Frog Recovery Group that coordinates management and research into native frogs to help with their conservation. The impact of 1080 on native frogs has been investigated, methods for frog monitoring and translocation are being developed and improved, and frog distribution and numbers are being documented.

#### How you can help

As native frogs are small, well-camouflaged and nocturnal, they are hard to find. The public can assist the Department greatly by reporting any sightings of native frogs. Record carefully the location, the type of habitat (stream edge, forest floor), the time and date you sighted them, and if possible take photographs. Avoid touching the frogs, because you may damage their sensitive skin. If you do touch them, make sure your hands are wet.

#### Avi Holzapfel

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*Hochstetter's frog, Whareorino, 2002. Crown Copyright: Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai (2002), Photographer: E Meyer.*

## GOOD FROG NEWS IN HUNUA

Intensive pest control may be helping the native Hochstetter's frog in the Hunua Ranges, reports DOC's Michael Crossland, who has been trialling new native frog monitoring methods in the Hunua and elsewhere.

"More than most creatures, frogs are sensitive to disease, pollution and environmental changes," he says. But a recent frog survey in the 850ha Hunua kokako management block has found the Hochstetter's frog population there in good health. This area is jointly managed by the Auckland Regional Council and Department of Conservation to protect the threatened native wattlebird, kokako.

In collaboration with DOC, Auckland Regional Council, EcoQuest Education Foundation, Dr Kim Babbitt from the University of New Hampshire and two American ecology students Heather Moulton and Janelle Bosse used the new monitoring technique to survey Hochstetter's frogs over a three-month period from May to July this year. They found an abundance of frogs with lots of juveniles, suggesting a healthy breeding population.

These findings are in line with previous surveys using a different technique. ARC monitoring of frogs in the kokako management area over the last ten years, indicates that the health of the population has improved with pest control.

Surveys show that since 1994 when rats and other animal pests began to be controlled in the forest block, the numbers of young frogs increased from ten percent of the population to 30 percent.

"Three of seven of our native frogs have become extinct since the arrival of humans to New Zealand," said ARC ecologist Dr Graham Ussher. "We're hoping that this research will tell us more about the threats to Hochstetter's frogs and how we can protect them."

For more information: contact Katrina Knill, DOC Auckland Area Office, ph 09 446 6549 or email [kknill@doc.govt.nz](mailto:kknill@doc.govt.nz)



*Banrock Station Wines Director Tony Sharley presents the cheque for \$5000 (the next \$5000 to come in February) to Ducks Unlimited president Ross Cottle, while DU's Wairarapa chapter chairman Ken Barnes looks on.*

## Wairio Wetlands to Receive \$10,000 from Banrock Station Wines

The wind nearly flattened us and the Wairio Wetlands water not only had waves, it had whitecaps. But it was a cheerful lot of people who gathered in mid-November at the Wairio Wetlands near Lake Wairarapa, to witness the presentation of a donation of \$10,000 for further work to be done at Wairio during 2006.

Banrock Wines, a Corporate sponsor of Wetland Care, an affiliated DUNZ organisation, donated \$10,000 (one cheque of \$5000 this day, another to come in February) towards the second year's restoration work at Wairio. Banrock executive, Tony Sharley, visited Wairio with DUNZ's Auckland-based vice-president Ossie Latham on Wednesday 16 November and presented a cheque to Ross Cottle, chairman of the

Wairio Restoration Committee and DUNZ's president.

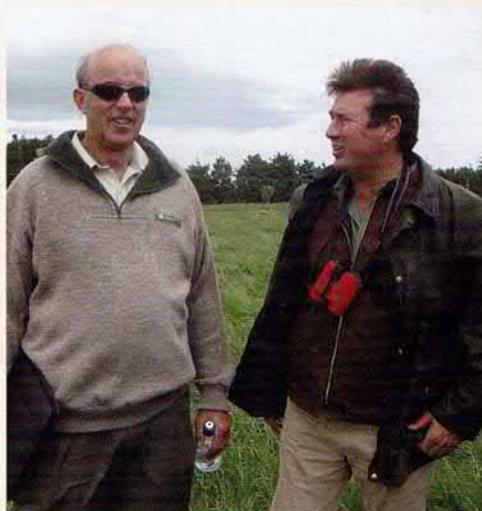
Among those who attended were DU patron Jim Campbell, Department of Conservation Wairarapa Area Manager Derrick Field and his colleague Sally Thomas, DU President Ross Cottle, DU directors Jim Law, John Dermer and Ossie Latham, Nobilo Wines executive Jane Williams, DU Wairarapa chapter president Ken Barnes, DU members Howard Egan, Don Bell, members of the press and new member Gill Lundie of Greytown, along with past editor of Flight Juliet Oliver and present editor Gail Isaac armed with camera. Tony Sharley has been instrumental with Ossie Latham in assisting Operation Pateke in this country, as seen in past issues of Flight, and his very gracious speech to president Ross Cottle upon the presentation of the cheque was received with warmth and delight.



*Wairio Wetlands on a winter's day*



*DU patron Jim Campbell and Tony Sharley in discussion.*



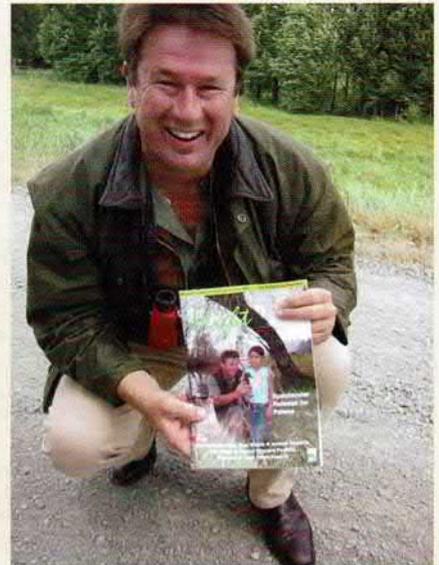
*Area Manager DOC Wairarapa Area Office Derrick Field pictured with Banrock Station Wines, Tony Sharley.*



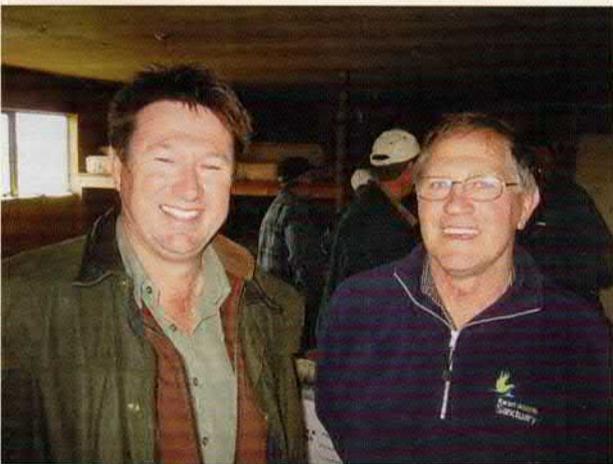
*From left, DU's director John Dermer, patron Jim Campbell, director Jim Law and Wairio Wetlands Restoration project committee member Don Bell.*



Out standing in the field at Wairio - from left DU director John Dermer, DU patron Jim Campbell, DU president Ross Cottle, DU director Jim Law, Banrock Wines Director Tony Sharley and DU's Don Bell.



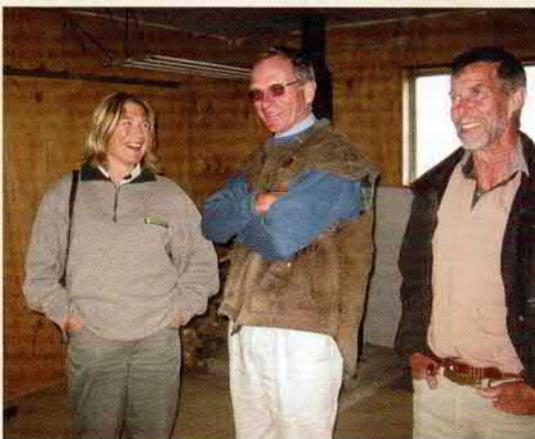
Banrock Wines Director Tony Sharley appeared on the cover of July 2005 Flight magazine.



Banrock Wines Executive Tony Sharley with DU Director Ossie Latham - they travelled together around the country on Wetlands Care projects.



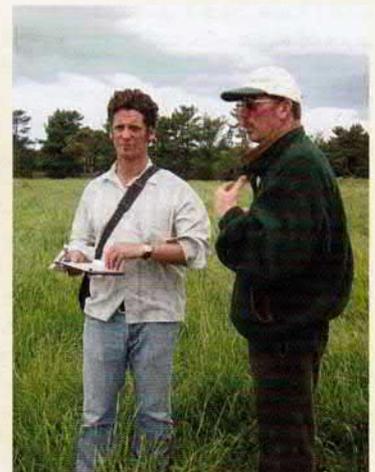
With the cheque and big grins - from left Derrick Field Area Manager DOC Wairarapa, DU president Ross Cottle, long-time DU member Howard Egan, WRC's Don Bell, DU patron Jim Campbell, Banrock Wines executive Tony Sharley and DU director and passionate Wairio Wetlands advocate Jim Law.



Sally Thomas of DOC Wairarapa, with DU director Jim Law and Wellington Regional Councillor Don Bell, who is also on the Wairio Wetlands Restoration committee.



Jane Williams, Marketing Assistant with the Nobilo Wine Group.



Wairarapa Times-Age reporter Piers Fuller getting the story from Ross Cottle.

# Brown Teal Roundup

14 November 2005

Below are edited progress reports from pateke conservation sites for the last quarter. We have kept the style informal as it is mainly direct from the contributors.

## Mimiwhangata, Northland from Emma Neill

As at 7 November 2005, 31 birds are fitted with transmitters. 10 juveniles of the 2005 season have been radio-tagged so far, with more broods coming of age over the next two months. No deaths of the radio-tagged sample have occurred since the end of June 2005. 25 breeding attempts recorded from 23 pair; of those attempts, one nest was preyed upon.

## Okiwi, Great Barrier Island from Joanna Sim

As at the beginning of November there are 54 birds fitted with transmitters. Of these, 16 are missing - a combination of suspected transmitter or battery failure and possible movement out of the basin. An aerial flight is planned soon to search specifically for these birds. James Fraser has been out recently to attach transmitters to juveniles and is also scheduled to come out for another transmitter attachment trip later this month to boost the numbers. Two pateke with transmitters have died since July. Both birds died during the day but at this stage it is unclear what killed them. A duckling was seen in the claws of a pukeko in Okupu (further down the island) that had been decapitated - all birds have been sent off to Massey to ascertain cause of death. In addition three more un-transmittered birds have been found run over, one on Mabeys Road and two on Aotea Road.

At present there are no monitored females sitting on nests. Since July, there have been seven failed breeding attempts, two unknowns and six successful nesters of which all still have broods. They range from 3 to twelve weeks old. Monthly counts have been undertaken with increasing numbers at all sites recorded so far as post-breeding females and juveniles move to these areas. Craig has caught 25 cats for the months August to October and is continuing to survey and control for rabbits and pukeko.

## Port Charles from Jason Roxburgh, Lettecia Williams and Rebekah Caldwell

Since the last Roundup, the trapping has caught two cats (kill traps) and in live traps one possum, three rats, one banded rail (in a cage trap) and... 14 hedgehogs!

Since the 19 May release there have been 12 deaths of monitored birds. This means there are now 31 (78%) of the monitored 2005 release birds still alive. In late October we removed transmitters from two released birds due to transmitter attachment problems. Apart from that, we've had no further transmitter or harness failures, so we know the whereabouts of all the monitored birds. There are a lot of almost-fledged pateke around, and several of the broods Rebekah has been following will fledge 100% of the ducklings hatched. Three nights spent out with James Fraser and dog Percy netted 34 birds. Twenty of these were fledglings, all of which were large enough to take leg bands, but only nine were large enough to take transmitters. This is part of a shift in our monitoring toward following ducklings through to their first breeding.

A hazing fence has been erected to stop pateke crossing the road from the release site into one of their favoured feeding paddocks, forcing them to either fly over, or use the culvert under the road. This has meant there have been no vehicle deaths on that stretch of road since the fence was erected. Negotiations continue with the District Council to replace the two culverts under Carey Rd. Rebekah and Lettecia continue to advocate strongly with residents and visitors about pateke, especially asking people slow down and be careful while driving. As mentioned above, we continue to have vehicle-related deaths, though the numbers are reducing around Port Charles.

## TiriTiri Matangi from Barbara Walter

It is hectic here! So many visitors, so it is great that they get to see Jemima and Ossie at the Wharf Dam. We were on leave when the last Roundup was done.

In April nearly all our dams were dry and apart from Jemima and Ossie at the Wharf Dam and Finn at Lighthouse Valley Dam most of our ducks disappeared. One of our males, Ralph from the N.E. Bay Dam was sighted in the Gulf Harbour Golf Course dam. As the dams filled our pateke were all seen again (this is of our monitored pairs) including Ralph were seen at Gulf Harbour.

## Brown Teal Conservation Trust from Neil Hayes

A pretty satisfactory breeding season so far, with two broods reared - one of five and one of seven. Five hatched and reared by our old pair and seven hatched and reared by our new pair, in their first season - this pair having been flock-mated in the BTCT's new aviary. This is the aviary built with financial assistance from the Pacific Development and Conservation Trust.

The BTCT is hopeful that Massey University will soon find a student to work on the pateke diet research programme in 2006. Sue Moore has already done much work in this area and further applied research into pateke diet will provide vital additional information at specific key sites - and information necessary for survival of the species - and for the critical evaluation of proposed release sites for captive-reared birds.

Fund-raising to assist this research is ongoing and we take this opportunity to thank all members and supporters who have contributed to the research fund.

Our good friend, Janet Marshall - leading New Zealand waterfowl artist - has generously offered to paint pateke, especially for the BTCT to use as a fund-raising exercise. Initial thinking is that we should produce a BTCT promotional greetings card from the painting and then to either auction or tender the original. This is a magnanimous gesture and we are extremely grateful to Janet. We will keep you informed of developments.

## Karori Wildlife Sanctuary from Neil Anderson

Late August saw two new clutches on the Taylor Wetland and lower lake but survival has been low with only three of seven and one of five respectively, coming through.

In October, two clutches appeared on the top dam and with one of these at least survival has been once again low with only one of five still around. This is, however, something of an achievement for this pair who are notoriously poor parents, having lost every member of their previous two clutches. The other hatch was six from a previously very successful pair adjacent to the creeks at the south end of the dam. The female and ducklings have not been seen for a while but the indications are that she may have taken them back up into the creeks where her previous clutch was raised. The male meanwhile has stayed on the dam having paired up with a new young female.

Elsewhere, our most successful pair on the top dam would appear to be nesting once again as are the lower lake south end pair whose juvenile has recently fledged.

A new young pair has formed at the north end of the lower lake and may well have started breeding. If this is the case this will signify a distinct new territory which will bring the number on the lakes and wetlands up to six, a likely maximum carrying capacity for these areas.

We have recently picked up another pair at the south end of the valley which contains some excellent habitat but as yet have been unable to identify them.

Other individual birds continue to come and go in the regularly monitored areas of lakes and wetlands with some birds not being seen for many months at a time, there being plenty of opportunity to secrete themselves away from view. The three juveniles fitted with transmitters continue to be picked up, although only one is regularly seen in person (*as it were* - Ed.)

We have recently begun to reduce the amount of supplementary feeding provided in our main breeding territories and it will be interesting to note any alteration in productivity or visibility.

[www.brownteal.com](http://www.brownteal.com)

# Wairarapa Chapter

## October Shoot

The annual Wairarapa chapter DU shoot was held at Roger Smailes' property at Te Whiti, Masterton on Sunday 30 October. Ken Barnes, Wairarapa chapter president, took the photos and supplied the captions.

### He writes:

Special thanks to Roger for the use of his farm and to John Moulder, proprietor of Hunting and Fishing, Masterton who was the sponsor of all the prizes. The main prize was a pump action shotgun donated by John Moulder, won by Gary Dickens.



To Ross, sitting on the log "We don't care if you are the president, we are not moving the log to the right for you!"

Thanks too, to Geoff Reid for the barbeque and life member Mat Paku for the paua, Ngaire, Rana and Gail for registration, book-keeping, score cards and lots of cheek! Thanks too, to Ross and Jim and all the helpers who set the traps and cleared up afterwards.

It was a great day, with an excellent turn out of approximately 80 shooters, made all the better by the Wairarapa chapter taking the chapter shield off the Manawatuans by a convincing margin for the first time in ten years. The weather held off until the last squads were mainly finished, which put a kind of dampener on the after shoot activities! In about an hour, 15mm of rain fell – and in an unkind irony while John Moulder was presenting the prize donated by him and his business Hunting and Fishing, his shop in Masterton was flooded by the downpour.

Wairarapa co-chapter president Mat Wyeth turned out to be a dab hand at presenting bottles of whiskey.

In conjunction with Greater Wellington Regional Council, we are hoping to organise an evening when their Environmental officer Melanie Dixon will give a presentation on wetlands development, interacting with the council and aspects of the Resource Management Act and Regional Council Policy. Members will be advised when the details are finalised.



Gary Dickens, left, is pictured as winner of the main prize, a pump action shotgun donated by John Moulder at right, owner of Masterton's Hunting and Fishing



The Manawatu squad to Chris Thomas "What do you mean, you think the clay is hiding in that bush???"



The white diagonal bits are hail.



Long-time DU member Pete Noon watering down his drink



Joe Bannister got wet...

## PHEASANT FEEDER PROBLEMS

A Hastings member made an enquiry through this magazine regarding pheasant feeders. Apparently their feeding system was being plagued by thieving creatures. So the editor threw this query open to the directors to answer, and Jim Law and Graham Gurr came to the fore.

Jim Law's answer was that they use 40-gallon steel drums, weld on legs and cut open the base of the drum to form an inverted cone which they cover from the inside with chicken mesh. They then pour in a sack of barley "blowings".

Graham Gurr pointed out that NOSLOC feeders have a guard around the nozzle to protect against birds stealing the food. Nosloc can be contacted on 08003840465.

## EXTINCT SEABIRD DROPS IN FOR DINNER

A small seabird known only from specimens collected over 150 years ago flew inside a fisherman's boat anchored off Little Barrier Island in early November.

The bird is thought to be the New Zealand storm petrel (*oceanites maorianus*), which was re-discovered nearly two years ago when it was photographed off Whitianga and Little Barrier or Hauturu.

Fisherman Geordie Murman and his crew were sitting down to a lasagne dinner when the small black and white bird flew into the cabin. Having worked with seabirds before, Mr Murman realised it could be the elusive storm petrel that scientists had been seeking, and put it in a box.

Next morning DOC island biodiversity manager Richard Griffiths and Karen Baird of Kiwi Wildlife Tours identified the petrel as the same bird that had been photographed in 2003. They took notes and measurements, as well as feather samples for DNA analysis, before releasing the bird.

Mr Griffiths said it was a miracle the petrel had landed on Geordie Murman's boat, who was one of the few people who would have been able to recognise it. The capture was very exciting and could lead to the bird being confirmed as the once presumed extinct New Zealand storm petrel, he said.

"If the DNA matches up then we've got a bird that people had believed to be extinct for over 100 years. It's as significant as the rediscovery of the takaha.

"For two years we've been trying to discover where it was breeding. We now think it is likely to be nesting on the Mokohinau Islands or another pest-free island in the outer Hauraki Gulf," he said.

A louse specimen found on the bird is also of interest said Mr Griffiths. "Seabird lice tend to be host specific so we may have found an entirely new species."

DNA from the bird will be compared with that taken from skins of New Zealand storm petrels caught in the 1800s. Only three skin specimens remain in museums in London and Paris.

A DNA sample was crucial for scientific confirmation of the species, said Mr Griffiths. The rare birds committee of the New Zealand Ornithological Society had failed to be convinced by digital photos taken of the storm petrels off Little Barrier and had requested more evidence.

The New Zealand storm petrel was first re-sighted by New Zealander Brent Stephenson off Whitianga in January 2003. Later that year two British ornithologists saw a small flock of the petrels off Little Barrier. Since then bird watchers and DOC staff have made a number of trips aboard the 'Assassin', skippered by Brett Rather, to attempt to catch one of the petrels and discover where they are breeding.

The storm petrel is about 20 cm long and is black and white with black streaks on the belly. It feeds at sea at night and returns to land only to breed.

For more information: Contact Richard Griffiths ph 09 425 7832 or 027 243 9795 or Fiona Oliphant ph 09 307 4846 or 027 5111 222.

## Kaka Released - from Hamilton to Mt Bruce



The photo of above was taken by Peter Daniels and was kindly supplied by DOC, Masterton.

The wild kaka population at Pukaha Mount Bruce was given another boost in November with the introduction of new arrivals released into the forest.

Five captive-bred kaka from Hamilton Zoo were released into the wild to join more than 55 wild counterparts. The new arrivals will help to increase the genetic diversity of the species because they have genes that are unrelated to the existing Pukaha Mount Bruce wild kaka. Increasing genetic diversity makes a population more robust by reducing the chance of in-breeding and diseases that could wipe out the whole population.

The newcomers spent their first four weeks in quarantine before their release and were acclimatised to help them adjust to their new home. Their arrival was timed to coincide with the kaka breeding season, which is already underway with captive and wild pairs either incubating eggs or raising chicks. A captive pair of kaka are currently raising four chicks and at least five wild pairs are currently caring for chicks in nests.

The Pukaha Mount Bruce forest has the capacity to support more than 500 wild kaka, and it is hoped that the ongoing pest control programme and future releases of kaka to the wild will see the area become one of the major strongholds for this species in the North Island.

In 1996 nine juvenile kaka were released into the Pukaha Mount Bruce forest, from where the species had been absent for nearly 50 years. They were a mix of wild-caught juveniles from Kapiti Island and captive-bred, hand-reared juvenile kaka from Auckland Zoo and Pukaha Mount Bruce. Five more juvenile captive-bred, parent-reared kaka were released into the forest a year later.

The kaka released into the Pukaha Mount Bruce forest in 1996 were the first ever to be released from captivity onto the mainland and the first relocation of wild kaka. To help them adjust to live in the wild, their diet was supplemented with food provided on feeding trays and there was intensive protection from predators for nesting birds.

When Europeans first arrived in New Zealand, they found kaka in abundance throughout the forests of both islands, but by 1930 the birds were localised to a few areas. Today, they are still reasonably common in the Whirinaki and Pureora forest parks, but even within these strongholds, numbers are thought to be declining and today the kaka is classified as being Nationally Endangered.

The large, noisy parrot has fallen victim to introduced predators that kill chicks on the nest and introduced competitors that deprive it of vital foods.

For further information contact Sally Thomas, Programme Manager, Community Relations, DOC, Masterton.

Phone (06) 3770700 Masterton or email [sthomas@doc.govt.nz](mailto:sthomas@doc.govt.nz).

# TOP ENGINEER BACKS WETLANDS DEVELOPMENT

## Sees Wetlands as vital to Water Treatment

The nation's top environmental engineer believes that wetlands need accelerated development in order to cope with accelerating water treatment requirements. He is Jim Bradley, who won the top prize for his leadership in directing engineering projects sympathetic to nature at the inaugural New Zealand Engineering Excellence Awards in November 2005.

The Awards were sponsored by the Institution of Professional Engineers of New Zealand. In an exclusive interview with Flight following this accolade Mr Bradley said it was imperative that wetlands be developed to minimise the damaging effect of run-offs.

Wetlands were needed, he said, quite literally to absorb run-off. He questions the extent of the huge energy requirements of water treatment in all its forms in regard to things like pumping and aeration. As they blissfully churn through their pressure-delivered water, later to be re-pressured and forced cleansed as wastewater, he wonders if householders understand the true cost of all this in energy consumed.

He is actively following possibilities such as the re-birth of wetlands, and domestic fresh-water tanks among other things.

"We have to ask ourselves, can we take a step back?" He thinks we can.

"With built water – fresh water, stormwater, waste - we must now examine integrated approaches in which we can shape treatment round nature. I know it's a precious word, but we are faced with eco systems such as putting storm water into wetlands...putting things back in their natural group. We have to confront less run-off, and this means using alternatives to the big diameter pipes."

He gives the Resource Management Act high marks. But has reservations about its preoccupation with "what comes out of the pipe," as he puts it. He wants serious study on the integration of urban water with natural water.

In his view Maori attitudes will continue to become increasingly significant for professional engineering practitioners. Though some might consider the matter to be well understood, he believes that often there is still lip service to Maori imperatives where there should be understanding and thus acquiescence. Those beyond the Maori sphere, he remonstrates, as a rule do not understand their abhorrence of deliberately fouling fresh water with human waste.

He insists that engineers, and indeed, the public at large, instead of sidestepping such attitudes, confront them, and thus learn to understand and comprehend them. "It's the question of linkages. They have to be seen, and then understood, and the main set of links are the ones between humans and nature." In regard to the deep-seated Maori belief against deliberately fouling potable water with human waste, apathy or passive acceptance by the engineering community is not enough.

"Alternatives must be found and implemented."

Just as he signposts social ahead of engineering, so do his words tend to follow his deeds. He worked closely with the Palmerston North City Council and the Marae Ohu Working Party in devising a natural treatment regime that re-processed human sewage back into the environment through discharge into the Manawatu River.

His long career, still seemingly only in mid-passage, has been in what used to be known as public health engineering encompassing as it does water treatment in all its forms. As he sees it, the profession is changing from the previous era, which he describes as being one of decide-action-defend to the new one of continuous consultation, dialogue, and partnership.



*Jim Bradley: Wetlands renaissance ahead.*

The old excavation mentality "once were quarriers," he quips, is on the way out.

The Resource Management Act and more recent Local Government Act have merely sealed the fate of the old unilateral era. This past era he describes as a linear one in which engineers punched their way through terrain. It is being superseded by the current looped era in which everything, especially people's beliefs and feelings, have to be taken into account. This is the holistic and self-renewing era of complex human and structural interrelationships.

"There has been this disconnection between people and nature, and now we are seeing the loop closing again. The demand that this has placed on the profession of engineering is that we can no longer view anything in isolation. There can no longer be specialist silos. The skill now is to see the big picture." This includes wetlands, he emphasises.

Mr Bradley of the international water treatment engineering firm of MWH is responsible for a project in China in which development was required to be sympathetic to natural catchments.

# Whio News

## Real Journey for whio ducklings

Five blue ducklings - whio - successfully hatched at the Te Anau Wildlife Park in mid-October, thanks to a project made possible through the support of Real Journeys, part of Fiordland Travel Ltd. Under the watchful eyes of Department of Conservation rangers Andrew Smart and Chris Golding, all five ducklings hatched without assistance and are doing well.

The five eggs were collected from a nest along side the Bowen River at Milford last month as part of Operation Nest Egg (ONE) Programme. "We are only sourcing eggs from nests like this one outside stoat control areas," said Andrew. "The pairs in this area still have the ability to produce a second clutch which they will be left to raise if they manage to hatch them."

Whio have been steadily declining in Fiordland over the last 30 years. Stoat control has significantly increased the survival rate of whio but the population needs a boost to reach sufficient numbers.

The five new ducklings will be kept in captivity until they are approximately 15 weeks old. They will then be released into the stoat control areas of the Clinton and Arthur Valleys. "We do not intend to return the juveniles back to their source location," Andrew said. "Given the dire situation whio are currently in, we need to act fast and can not afford to return healthy juveniles into unmanaged areas."

Operation Nest Egg will transfer whio eggs to captivity from October 2005 till October 2010. The operation aims to increase the genetic diversity of the Fiordland whio population. Captivity-



reared juveniles will not be released alone. They will be released in groups within the stoat control areas at around 15 weeks old.

*Andrew "Max" Smart, took the photo above and has told Flight that he may have more photos of the older ducklings for our next issue. Thank you, Max! - Ed*

*For further information please contact Andrew Smart at the DOC office in Te Anau, Tel: +64 3 249 7921; or mail: [asmart@doc.govt.nz](mailto:asmart@doc.govt.nz)*

## Expecting, in Egmont National Park

Peter Russell sent this picture "from Egmont National Park with a whio female full of eggs in picture with mate not far away. This bird was from the release in August last year. The photo was taken by Dean Caskey from DOC Stratford Office. We hope everything goes well for it."

So do we all!



**Waikato chapter  
will be holding our  
Annual Dinner & Auction  
on  
March 4<sup>th</sup> 2006  
at the  
Glenview Club  
in  
Hamilton**

Any inquiries to  
Clare Worth 078463808  
Marie Singer 078395644

## New Pond Construction Guide Available

A new guide put together by Greater Wellington with help from Boffa Miskell, is designed to help those considering construction of a pond, not, perhaps, always on the scale of the Ducks Unlimited projects! These include lifestylers, farmers, developers, duck enthusiasts and landscape architects, and the guide provides advice on how to plan, design and maintain a healthy pond.

Melanie Dixon, policy advisor for Greater Wellington, is quoted as saying the guide was written as a direct response to the growing popularity of artificial ponds as landscape features. "A number of ponds in the Wellington region have been badly designed, built in the wrong place or poorly maintained. Many of these ponds then end up causing environmental problems and occasionally damage existing streams and wetlands", she says.

Greater Wellington has a website which can assist new or existing ponds - giving advice on improving water quality and appearance.

The website is [www.gw.govt.nz/wetlands](http://www.gw.govt.nz/wetlands).



**The Wairarapa chapter of Ducks Unlimited Inc will hold its Annual Lunch get-together on Sunday 5 March 2006.**

**Members will be contacted separately regarding the venue and other details.**

## New Members

Kevin O'Hara, Te Puke  
Ailis Conrad, Tirohanga  
Iain Mitchell, Whakatane  
Christopher Evens, Warkworth  
Fergus Brown, Paraparaumu



## Change of Address - are you moving? Please send us your new details.

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Old address..... New address.....  
Phone..... Email.....



For membership and general inquiries, Ducks Unlimited, PO Box 9795, Newmarket, Auckland, or email: [info@ducks.org.nz](mailto:info@ducks.org.nz)

- YES, I wish to join Ducks Unlimited as a member  
 Please send me further information, I may join later.

Title..... First Name..... Surname.....  
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Phone..... Fax.....  
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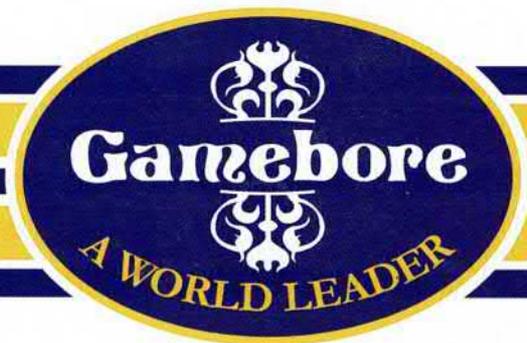
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*Black swans and babies. Photo: Gail Simons.*

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