

# Flight



ISSUE 129 - OCTOBER 2006



## Inside:

2006 Conference photos  
Pond planting for wildfowl  
Obituaries  
Wet Wairio





wetland care  
NEW ZEALAND

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

Wetland 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.



Our Website is : [www.ducks.org.nz](http://www.ducks.org.nz)

#### New Members:

Aidan Mahony, Wellington

Ian Chorley, Masterton

Caroline Ammundsen, Wellington

Judith Callaghan, Masterton

Frank Vosper, Kerikeri

Matthew Smith, Te Awamutu

Barbara Hanbidge, Canada

Terry Simmonds, Masterton

Jack Luttrell, Featherston

Welcome back, Jack!

Reproduced here from Flight no. 98, January 1999, is a useful recipe.

Contributed by Jan Clinton-Baker

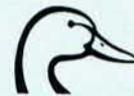
#### DOG ARTHRITIS

4 parts honey

3 parts safflower oil

1 part cider vinegar

Feed two tablespoonsful each meal for a week, then one tablespoonful a meal in subsequent weeks.



The conference photos in this edition were taken by editor Gail Isaac. Should you like an emailed high-resolution copy sent to you for you to reproduce as a paper photograph, or low-resolution for the web, simply email [gail.isaac@xtra.co.nz](mailto:gail.isaac@xtra.co.nz) or [gail.isaac@gmail.com](mailto:gail.isaac@gmail.com), or leave a message on the phone as indicated on page 3. Or write to me and we can make an arrangement for a paper copy to be sent if you are not on email.

# Insight

by Ross Cottle, President

*The 2006 AGM has come and gone and I for one was very pleased with the result.*

*As usual there was a rush of registrations in the last week which certainly helped to boost numbers but does make it very difficult to organise the various weekend activities.*

*Nevertheless, the gods smiled upon us and despite the weeks of wet weather we had been enduring, the sun beamed down all weekend making the trip down to the Wairio wetland, lunch at Lake Ferry Hotel and the visit to Stonehenge Aotearoa, everything we had hoped for. Along with the usual dinner and auction, followed by the Sunday morning talk by Tenick Dennison on his pet subject, the Henley Lake development, to which Banrock Wines has made a substantial contribution.*

*The AGM meeting itself was well received and I was very pleased to record a lot of feedback from the assembled membership, some of which will be discussed further at our upcoming board meeting.*

*The board received a letter from a chapter asking if they could and meet with the board. It has been an ongoing policy that any member is welcome to attend and speak at a board meeting whenever it is held, so just give me a call to find out when they are being held.*

*All things considered a very good AGM.*

Ross Cottle,  
President

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## 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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Front cover photos:

Howard Egan, winner of the Bill Barrett Trophy, pictured at Wairio during the visit of conference delegates in July 2006, just after the floods.

Inset: Casey Barnes, Massey student, helps with the establishment of new plants at Wairio in July, most donated by Howard Egan, just before the July floods - see story page 12



# Developing and planting a pond for waterfowl

compiled by Glenys Hansen, Matahiwi, Masterton.

So you have the pond built and have it fenced off with a convenient gate wide enough to fit your quad bike and trailer through – what next?

Within the fenced area you'll want to establish both trees and shrubs to provide fruit, nuts, acorns, flowers and cover which can be used by a variety of waterfowl and other countryside and garden birds. It is recommended that you spray areas or 'spots' before you start to plant. Use a non-residual herbicide spray such as Roundup or similar, as this type of spray is the recommended one to use around waterways.

Large trees should not be planted so close to the pond as to shade it, and in most cases this means planting the southern and eastern edges only. A mixture of oak species that includes (*quercus robur*), pin oak (*q. palustris*) and turkey oak (*q. cerris*) will be most productive providing the protein the birds crave when they're recovering from moulting and breeding stress. The pin oak seed is a favorite, and this species also provides delightful autumn colours that last a good while. The pin oak doesn't mind wet feet and can be planted in damp areas or quite close to the water's edge.

Ducks need security and feel most relaxed when there is a low vegetation screen around the pond hiding them from passing prying eyes. Screens of flax (*phormium tenax*) are ideal very close to the water's edge as this species also likes damp moist ground. (*P. cookianum*) flax has the lovely drooping leaves which make an ideal plant for islands and on banks just above the water's edge as does the native toetoe (*cortaderia fulvida*). The larger North Island toetoe (*c. toetoe*) is best planting in a dryer situation. Do not plant pampas grass by mistake!! A good variation of colours is available in the flax spp. and a mixture of these will give interest around the pond and also provide the food for the tui. Remember old dry flax heads make excellent firelighters when dried and stored away for the winter!!!!

Areas of grass near the water edges can be left to go rank and this provides not only cover for nesting but also food, as the mature seed heads find their way into the pond where greys, mallards and shoveler sift them up.

Ducks also like to use the plain grassy areas to loaf on and sun themselves and the grass grazers will keep an area trimmed with a little help from a mechanical string trimmer. This also applies to the islands – don't plant all the way around the island; leave an area for the ducks to use as a loafing pad as well. If you have a number of islands in your pond, leave one free with minimal planting with a shade tree or two and plant up the others quite heavily to provide good nesting sites.

Sedges and rushes can be planted along the edges if not present naturally. Clumps of tall grasses such as the native niggerhead (*carex secta*) can be planted in the water as well as on the pond edge: it is a large vigorous, green sedge which forms lifted tufts in the water. Plant in groups, to give excellent cover for nesting dabchicks and other waterfowl.

These plants can be easily established in large planter bags and then transplanted into the pond with a stake or two to keep them secure. The ducks really love the seeds. There are many other *carex* spp. which can be utilised on islands and around pond garden edges, though they need to be kept weed-free to look their best.

Some shrubs should overhang the water to provide escape cover for both adults and broods. Flax and *cotoneaster* are useful and most small ponds would benefit from one or at the most a couple of weeping willows (*salix babylonica*) or golden weeping willow (*s. alba chrysocoma*) overhanging on the southern side. If these are planted anywhere else on the pond they should be pollarded to about two metres in height and allowed to grow no higher. Swamp cypress (*taxodium distichum*) similarly treated should provide some cover and a clump of three or four such stumpy trees can be planted in the shallows for broods to escape in to. These trees provide the most vivid orange colour in the autumn and a lovely lime green in the spring.

Remember to avoid planting along the dam wall as the roots of trees will often cause the dam to leak. Very low sedges/grasses can be planted and this helps to prevent the waterfowl from stripping the grass roots and undermining the dam itself. Remember that while planting can make average ponds into top class ones, you can have too much of a good thing. Don't close the pond in completely with trees. Ducks need to fly in and out easily and if they need to climb steeply and crash through branches to get out they'll frequent the pond less often. Always study a pond closely before planning your planting. Note the way the birds fly in and out in different winds and note also how the sun falls on it and where the birds like to come out and preen. If you place an old log in the water at this point they'll almost certainly use it in preference to the shore. Don't crowd the shore as the birds fear the bushes may contain predators and will not rest easy there.

Talking of predators, don't forget that once you provide habitat for waterfowl then you are also providing habitat for the mustelid family – stoats, ferrets and weasels, and also rats and hedgehogs. Be vigilant about setting up a trapping programme and keep the predators under control. Rabbits and hares are also a real nuisance and provision needs to be made to protect the young trees that are planted. Cheap protectors are available from nurseries and there is also an egg-based spray which can be used as a deterrent.



*Salix babylonica*

A slow release fertiliser pellet under each tree will give them a good start. Don't forget to stake and tie up the larger trees and keep them firmed in at the base. Trees should be kept free from weeds and grass and watered in the summer if it is hot and dry.

Listed below are trees that can be planted around ponds in various situations.

#### Trees for the flowers, fruit and foliage

Wattles *Acacia* spp.

Chestnuts *Aesculus*

Fruit trees Crab apples, feijoas etc

Magnolia

Ribbonwood *Plagianthus* (moist)

Lacebark *Hoheria* spp.

Kowhai *Sophora* spp.

Gum *Eucalyptus* spp.

Cedar *Cedrus* spp.

Cypress *Cupressus* spp.

Spruce *Picea* spp.

Weeping willow *Salix*

Flowering cherry *Prunus* spp

#### Autumn colours & specimens

Black Tupelo *Nyssa sylvatica*

Water Tupelo *Nyssa aquatica* (wet)

Flowering cherry *Prunus* spp.

Liquid amber *Liquidambar styraciflua* (moist)

Dogwood *Cotonus* spp.

Maple *Acer* spp.

Beech *Fagus* spp.

Tulip tree *Liriodendron tulipifera*

Larch *Larix* spp.

Ash *Fraxinus* spp.

Honey Locust *Gleditsia tricanthos*

Walnut *Juglans* spp.

Poplar *Populus* spp. (some moist)

Oak *Quercus* spp. (some moist)

Swamp Cypress *Taxodium distichum* (wet)

#### Natives – small to medium for group plantings

*Coprosma* spp.

*Corokia* spp.

*Pseudopanax* spp. - five finger & lancewood

*Sophora* spp. - kowhai

*Phormium* spp. - flax

*Cordyline* spp. - cabbage tree

*Griselinia littoralis* - broadleaf

*Chionochloa* spp. - snow tussocks (dry)

*Clianthus* spp. - kakabeak

*Cortaderia* spp. - toetoe

*Myrsine australis* - red matipo

*Olearia* spp. - tree daisy

*Schefflera digitata* - pate

#### Natives – large

*Corynocarpus laevigatus* - karaka

*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides* - kahikatea (moist)

*Dodonaea viscosa* - akeake

*Hoheria* spp. - lacebark

*Leptospermum* spp - manuka, tea tree

*Pittosporum* spp.

*Podocarpus totara* - totara

*Weinmannia racemosa* - kamahi

#### Recommended reference books:

'Trees for the NZ Countryside - A Planter's Guide'

by John & Bunny Mortimer

Taupo Native Plant Nursery Catalogue

This useful article has been reproduced from Flight 107, April 2001:

## Wetland Revegetation - Using Seed Bank

Seed bank can be an additional source of vegetation for newly-created wetlands, or for restoring existing ones.

Seed bank is the store of dormant seeds in the sediment and soil margins of a wetland. Collect it carefully from an existing healthy wetland (the 'donor' wetland) by taking small amounts from a range of depths and zones (i.e., shallow water, water's edge, bank, bush margin). Several bucketsful will be sufficient. Avoid collecting seed bank where there are unwanted weeds.

Spread the collected material on a plastic sheet, mix well and allow to dry in the sun for several days at least. (Some seeds need drying before germination).

At the site you are revegetating, spread the seed bank in lines perpendicular to the water's edge, from above water level to as deep as you can work. Space lines of seed bank up to 30m apart. Cover the seed bank lines with netting or other suitable cover to prevent disturbance.

When the seed bank germinates, it may be possible to weed out undesirable species, or to transplant larger already-established species.

To protect and encourage newly-germinated plants:

- provide mulch or buffers against water movement, wind and waves
- construct gently-sloping areas from the water's edge
- fence to prevent stock grazing
- establish plants when water levels are low and animal pressure is reduced
- ensure water clarity
- manage water levels to allow slow refilling after drying out.

Adapted from M.A. Brock and M.T. Casanova "Are There Plants in your Wetland?" *Revegetating Wetlands. Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation, Canberra, 2000, ISBN 0 642 76041 1.*



## Some conference photos...



Matthew Wyeth and Ken Barnes - Wairarapa co-chairs



Ian and Lorraine Jensen



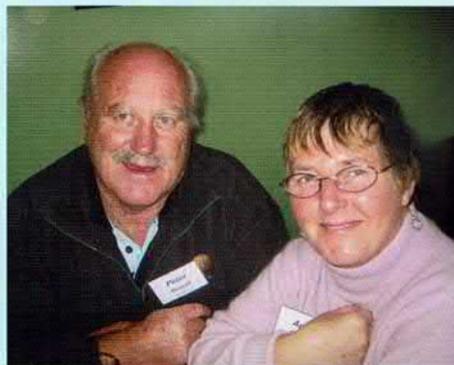
Janet Denny



Jan Cook



Di and Audrey Pritt



Peter and Anne Russell



William Abel



Chris Bindon on left with Henning Hovmand and some of their many hundreds of grey teal nest boxes in kitset form

## Henning Hovmand and Chris Bindon - friends dedicated to grey teal

For the past ten years, Auckland DU member Chris Bindon and his long-time friend Henning Hovmand have built and erected over 800 grey teal nest boxes. They originally started out together with another friend, the late Murray Jones. They first designed the boxes together and have created approximately 800 units in that time - some as kit sets and some complete - "all for the love of the birds", as Chris told Flight, to donate to DU fundraisers as auction items and to present as gifts to known members with an interest in grey teal. Some have also established themselves at appropriate wetland sites.

Originally from Denmark, Henning Hovmand, who is now approaching his 85<sup>+</sup> year, shows no signs of wishing to retire from the grey teal nest box project, says Chris.

Together they have gleaned the materials from where ever they can. A long-time farmer with a practical bent and a passion for saving valuable materials, which he believes to be useful (he hates waste!) Henning has enjoyed a life-long interest in observing and helping nature while farming.

Chris says that Henning's dedication to this project in his spare time has meant his wife Birthe has done without her husband for hundreds of hours as the kit sets have been created, and Chris believes special thanks are due to Birthe Hovmand for this.

In acknowledging Henning's work and enthusiasm, the Board of Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc made a decision at its 32<sup>+</sup> Board meeting in July 2006 to reward him with a five-year free membership, acknowledging their thanks and that of the Wetland Care community.

## Howard Egan of Canada Flats awarded 2006 Bill Barrett Trophy

Howard Egan of Canada Flats, Carterton, was presented with the Bill Barrett Trophy by president Ross Cottle on Saturday 29 July at the annual conference in Masterton.

Howard was awarded the Bill Barrett Trophy in recognition of his tireless efforts in ensuring the Wairio Restoration Project at Lake Wairarapa went ahead. Said Ross Cottle, "We are now into the second year of the Project and Howard is still heavily involved both in the decision-making on the Wairio committee and with the hands-on job of the recent planting of 1400 trees and shrubs, 200 of which he supplied himself, being part of the prize he won for being Best Small Farmer of the Year in 2005".

Howard is one of Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc's founding members, a past member of the board, and an active member of the Wellington chapter who moved to the Wairarapa around 15 years ago.

He is active in the Wairarapa Chapter of which he is a past chairman.

As a matter of historic interest, the Bill Barrett Trophy is awarded annually for an outstanding contribution to Ducks Unlimited. Bill Barrett, an Australian who made an outstanding contribution to wildfowl and wetlands, was DU's first life member. He pioneered the use of nest boxes for chestnut teal in Australia and helped design boxes used in this country. Although he never visited New Zealand, Bill Barrett made a substantial donation to DU here and the trophy was instituted in his honour.



*Photo shows Howard Egan receiving the Bill Barrett Trophy from Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc president Ross Cottle on Saturday 29 July 2006.*

## Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust Red House Wetland in the United Kingdom - from DU director Rachael Mitchell

On a recent trip to the UK, I visited my aunt and uncle, Lizzie and Dave, who live on a small, nearly self-sufficient block of land near Montgomery, just inside the Welsh border. Both sides of my family have been keen on birds since I can remember – in fact my paternal grandparents gave me membership to the Young Ornithologists Club (the junior version of the RSBP) for most of my youth, probably one of the reasons for my strong love of birds now.

Lizzie and Dave are participating in several ornithological projects. One of them, although not the focal point of this piece, is a survey of all birds seen within 500m of their property. The most exciting aspects of this are the sightings of curlew (a marshland bird somewhat similar to the snipe) and one sighting, so far, of a red kite, the symbol of Montgomeryshire. This is an endangered bird of prey that is slowly clawing its way back to safety after secondary poisoning and persecution last century.

However, the major project that involves Lizzie and a group of friends is a wetland project, situated just beneath the Montgomery Canal and flanked on the other side by the River Severn floodplains, this river being the boundary between Wales and England. The area now under protection was traditionally part of the riverflats grazed by local farmers. It is a very wet and swampy area as the surface of the Montgomery Canal is a good 15 feet above the wetland. Seepage from this waterway occurs all year around. Added to this is the residual water table on the flats, dryer in summer but very wet in winter.

Not the kind of wetland we would see in New Zealand, it is not for shooting purposes but has been set up to preserve the flora and fauna which were originally found there before the intensification of farming. The only bird species recognisable to New Zealanders would have been a solo Royal Swan adult raising four cygnets after she lost her mate, and a very healthy clutch of twelve-day-old mallard ducklings with Mum. The focus of the area is mainly about protecting the existing wetland – no earthworks have been carried out. The major construction works have been the creation of easy walking access and fencing off the area to limit stock access. Cattle are allowed in at certain times of the year to keep the grass surrounding the area manageable.

It was a magical spot – although only early summer there was already an abundance of dragonflies and smaller birds such as reed warblers and finches. The project has only just been completed and is quite easily accessible from the main road running alongside the canal. There is already one really well-presented information board, with more planned. The great thing about this project is that it is under the umbrella of the local Wildlife Trust but is being managed day-to-day by a local group of volunteers.

*(Rachael's photos will be produced in the next issue of Flight . Ed.)*



## Wairio visited by conference delegates July 2006



*Robin and Robyn Borthwick are flanked by Dave Johnston on left and Jim Campbell on right.*



*James and Di Martin*

## Stonehenge Aotearoa A great hit with delegates



*Following a tour of Wairio and lunch at Lake Ferry, conference delegates visited the new Stonehenge Aotearoa near Carterton, a stirring and impressive structure, with a detailed description by an enthusiastic Richard Hall, one of the creators of the development.*



*Graham Gurr*



*David Smith*



*Dave Johnston*



*Jack Harper and Joan Hood*

# Matahiwi wetlands



## Glenys Hansen of Matahiwi presented with Lifetime Achievement Award

Glenys Hansen of Matahiwi, Masterton has been presented with the prestigious Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Lifetime Achievement Award during the annual Conference held in Masterton over the weekend of 28 to 30 July 2006. President Ross Cottle presented the award in front of a dinner audience of over 80 members from around the country, including Glenys' daughter Colleen who has been a life member of Ducks Unlimited since she was sixteen.

Initially moved to tears and unable to speak, Glenys said that her immediate thoughts upon receiving this unexpected honour flew to her late husband Ted who died in 1997. "He was the quietly-spoken 'do-er' and worked for years on conservation projects with Ducks Unlimited patron Jim Campbell, including the building of Henley Lake". Glenys has been a busy and passionately-involved member for 22 years. She has arranged fundraising dinners and shoots and she and Ted initially created Ducks Unlimited NZ Inc's Wairarapa chapter, which now boasts one of the strongest memberships in the country. Glenys, who says she has been a treasurer all her working and recreational life, served on the Board of Ducks Unlimited from 1986 to 1999, and remains treasurer of Ducks Unlimited's New Zealand Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. She also served as secretary/treasurer of Ducks Unlimited for around nine years. Glenys has enjoyed a lifelong interest in conservation and wetland care, and her own home base contains 4.4ha of wetlands alone, as the photo above demonstrates.



*Glenys Hansen presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award by president Ross Cottle at the Conference in July 2006. Pictured above is a view of some of Glenys' Matahiwi Masterton wetland. See article on page 4.*



*Ian Chorley and Toni Stokes*



*Joe and Sue Bannister*



*Jim and Raana Campbell, with Bud Jones*



*Nancy Payne of Auckland has never missed an AGM*

*What was Michael O'Leary describing to Denise Sandall?*



*Auctioneer Bob Wood not only whipped up a lot of money for the cause but had everyone in stitches*

Article below sent by John Dermer

## The Dam : The Letter

This is an actual letter sent to a man named Ryan DeVries from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Quality, State of Pennsylvania.

SUBJECT: DEQ File No.97-59-0023; T11N; R10W, Sec. 20; Lycoming County

Dear Mr. DeVries,

It has come to the attention of the Department of Environmental Quality that there has been recent unauthorised activity on the above referenced parcel of property. You have been certified as the legal landowner and/or contractor who did the following unauthorised activity: Construction and maintenance of two wood debris dams across the outlet stream of Spring Pond.

A permit must be issued prior to the start of this type of activity. A review of the Department's files shows that no permits have been issued. Therefore, the Department has determined that this activity is in violation of Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams, of the Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act, Act 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, being Laws, annotated.

The Department has been informed that one or both of the dams partially failed during a recent rain event, causing debris and flooding at downstream locations. We find that dams of this nature are inherently hazardous and cannot be permitted. The Department therefore orders you to cease and desist all activities at this location, and to restore the stream to a free-flow condition by removing all wood and brush forming the dams from the stream channel. All restoration work shall be completed no later than January 31, 2006. Please notify this office when the restoration has been completed so that a follow-up site inspection may be scheduled by our staff.

Failure to comply with this request or any further unauthorised activity on the site may result in this case being referred for elevated enforcement action. We anticipate and would appreciate your full cooperation in this matter. Please feel free to contact me at this office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

David L. Price

District Representative and Water Management Division.

## The Dam : The Response

Here is the response sent back by Mr. DeVries:

Re: DEQ File No. 97-59-0023; T11N; R10W, Sec. 20; Lycoming County

Dear Mr. Price,

Your certified letter dated 12/17/02 has been handed to me to respond to. I am the legal landowner but not the contractor at 2088 Dagget Lane, Trout Run, Pennsylvania.

A couple of beavers are in the (State unauthorised) process of constructing and maintaining two wood 'debris' dams across the outlet stream of my Spring Pond. While I did not pay for, authorise, nor supervise their dam project, I think they would be highly offended that you call their skillful use of nature's building materials 'debris'. I would like to challenge your department to attempt to emulate their dam project any time and/or any place you choose. I believe I can safely state there is no way you could ever match their dam skills, their dam resourcefulness, their dam ingenuity, their dam persistence, their dam determination and/or their dam work ethic.

As to your request, I do not think the beavers are aware that they must first fill out a dam permit prior to the start of this type of dam activity.

My first dam question to you is: (1) Are you trying to discriminate against my Spring Pond beavers, or (2) do you require all beavers throughout this State to conform to said dam request? If you are not discriminating against these particular beavers, through the Freedom of Information Act, I request completed copies of all those other applicable beaver dam permits that have been issued. Perhaps we will see if there really is a dam violation of Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams, of the Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act, Act 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, being sections 324.30101 to 324.30113 of the Pennsylvania Compiled Laws, annotated.

I have several concerns. My first concern is: aren't the beavers entitled to legal representation? The Spring Pond beavers are financially destitute and are unable to pay for said representation — so the State will have to provide them with a dam lawyer. The Department's dam concern that either one or both of the dams failed during a recent rain event, causing flooding, is proof that this is a natural occurrence, which the Department is required to protect. In other words, we should leave the Spring Pond Beavers alone rather than harassing them and calling their dam names.

If you want the stream 'restored' to a dam free-flow condition please contact the beavers — but if you are going to arrest them, they obviously did not pay any attention to your dam letter, they being unable to read English.

In my humble opinion, the Spring Pond beavers have a right to build their unauthorised dams as long as the sky is blue, the grass is green and water flows downstream. They have more dam rights than I do to live and enjoy Spring Pond. If the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection lives up to its name, it should protect the natural resources (Beavers) and the environment (Beavers' Dams).

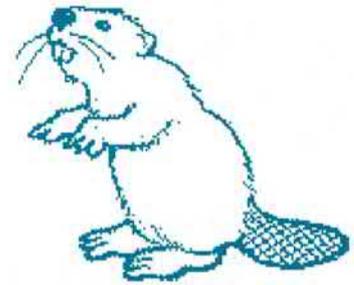
So, as far as the beavers and I are concerned, the dam case can be referred for more elevated enforcement action right now. Why wait until 1/31/2006? The Spring Pond beavers may be under the dam ice then and there will be no way for you or your dam staff to contact/harass them then.

In conclusion, I would like to bring to your attention a real environmental quality, health, problem in the area. It is the bears! Bears are actually defecating in our woods. I definitely believe you should be persecuting the defecating bears and leave the beavers alone. If you are going to investigate the beaver dam, watch your step! The bears are not careful where they dump!

Being unable to comply with your dam request, and being unable to contact you on your dam answering machine, I am sending this response to your dam office.

Thank you.

Ryan DeVries and the Dam Beavers



More conference photos...



Mary and Ossie Latham



Alice and Ross Hood



Marilyn and Jim Law. Jim proved an admirable tour guide on his microphone on the bus trip to Lake Ferry for lunch and on to Stonehenge Aotearoa.



Membership Secretary Sandra Pipes received a special vote of thanks from president Ross Cottle on behalf of the board, for all her sterling work and her organisational abilities, all year as well as for the conference, not to mention her vital sense of humour!



Ray Hayward ex Waikato Chapter Chairman, Stephen Pipes, Sandra Pipes and Maxine Hayward.



The Chapter Shield reluctantly handed back to Manawatu's Neil Candy, by Wairarapa's Ross Cottle



Neil Candy and Gary Thomson



Brian and Pam Maunsell



Dave Johnston, Ross Hood and Jack Harper



Ken and Jacqui Barnes



John Dermer

John Maulder of Masterton Hunting and Fishing spent up most generously at the auction conducted by a hilarious Bob Wood



## Wairio Wetland under surveillance during winter floods

Subsequent to the severe three-day flooding in early July in South Wairarapa, Howard Egan visited the Wairio wetlands project when the road reopened, for an initial damage assessment (see photo below). The whole of the Wairio block was under water. The stage one project site though, made a better than expected impression. Bill Roodekerk said it was the highest flood he had seen in his 20 years' residence at Wairio. It was ironic that the flooding happened within a week of Howard and his team's superb effort in planting 1700 trees (1200+200+300) at the new earthworks.

Reports Howard, "When the flooding started, Bill shifted all leftover fencing materials to the patch of kahikatea across the road. He says there is adequate material to re-fence the original lake boundary fence (the western edge of our existing stage one). It is a very low, poorly maintained, three-wire electric fence. I have seen cattle step over it when they are grazing the lake edge. Bill says with the number of trees we have planted, it would be stupid not to fence that side". Howard is worried that duckshooters based at Kilmore lodge normally bring quads with which they access the lake, riding straight through the Wairio block, and is calling for the inner gate to be locked, with a stile provided for pedestrians.

### August report more cheerful

Howard Egan then spent four hours in mid-August at the Wairio wetlands development in South Wairarapa for a post-floods/late winter inspection. He reports that he felt the situation was excellent.

After the huge July floods, water had stopped flowing over the end of the bund, so the water level can be seen as 'normal winter' and he said it was similar to last year. Water lay across the rank pasture, between the windrows. And it also connects the stage one permanent water with the number two permanent water which was dug last summer.

As to flood damage, Howard reported that there is very little. All the islands were exposed at stage one. He was encouraged to see that a good proportion of the new planting is still there, although a bit knocked about. "As to the planting generally, inside our enclosure, there is a bit of variation between species but many plants look quite good. The kowhai would be the worst. Kahikatea and cabbage trees seemed the best. Last year's flaxes on the bund look ready to forge ahead over coming months". Howard added, "I aim to plant grass seed on the islands in a few weeks and will include the stage two islands if there is enough seed".

On the day in question, Howard said he saw six dabchicks on one of the stage one ponds and a bittern at the stage two roadside water edge, as well as a couple of obvious nesting pair mallards at stage one. "I also found wild cyperus ustulatus in the pasture inside our stage one enclosure - nice to know it won't be grazed off. We must be careful to include adequate rank grass areas inside all our fenced enclosures - the grass will soon change, provided we plant cypress, toetoe, flax", he concluded.



## Mammoth planting effort at Wairio

Ken Barnes reports that close to 1700 native plants were planted in the two days at Wairio wetlands, and adds that most of the credit for that has to go to Matt Wyeth, co-chair with Ken of the

Wairarapa chapter, who "jacked up a team of 10 cadets from the East Taratahi Training Farm. A couple of them managed to sink the *SS Egan* (Howard's duck punt), although this didn't deter them. One even swam over to an island and continued planting!!! Midwinter swimming - who said there were no hard men left!" says Ken.



Above left, from left: Jim Campbell, DU patron, Wellington regional council's Don Bell, DU president Ross Cottle, Jim Farley, a volunteer who heard the plea for help on the radio and came to help. He has been shooting at Wairio for years. On the right is Wairarapa co-chairman Ken Barnes. His daughter Casey above, took the photo. Ken says Casey came down from Massey to keep an eye on the old man to make sure he didn't drown in the mud - but Ken maintains it was she who needed the rescuing in the end!

## Taratahi Training Centre Volunteers

A great big thank you to the following Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre students and their tutor Dave Webster, who volunteered their time and labour to the planting of Wairio in July: Cameron Beaven, Nick Bruce, Hamish Burlace, Corey Casseley, Tom Higgins, Jo Jordan, Michael Kuypers, and Vaughan Lawton. It was a great effort!

(See page 15 article).

# Obituaries

It is with deep regret that we record the passing of three of our members in the last few months. We offer our condolences to Alan Wilks, Jan Clinton-Baker and Ruth Mitchell.

## David James Mitchell of Christchurch

On 11 June 2006, David James Mitchell passed away in Christchurch. He had been a DU New Zealand Life Member since 1990. His wife Ruth writes, "In the early years Dave enjoyed participating in the development and increase of white swans here in Christchurch and at the Isaac Wildlife Peacock Springs. He made many friends through Ducks Unlimited".

We offer sincere condolences to Ruth and her family on their sad loss.

## Di Wilks of Greytown

Di Wilks, who died in July, had been a DU member for 25 years and was the wife of Alan Wilks. Di, Alan and son David have been passionately involved in all aspects of Ducks Unlimited. At the funeral, David spoke movingly and humorously of his Mum who always made sure she was home before him, no matter what, and who corrected his schoolwork in the role of a proofreader, as a result of her years working in London on the boys' paper Eagle.



Latterly resident in Greytown, Di was born in Ashburton but had lived and worked in Europe and London, having attended boarding school in Christchurch and Timaru. A woman of independence, courage and dignity, Di was strong-minded, of academic bent and had a large and varied group of long-time friends. She struggled with illness for many years and both she and Alan coped graciously and uncomplainingly with Di's deteriorating health. Recently, while waiting for the ambulance to

arrive after she had had a particularly bad fall, she insisted on the hairdresser doing her hair. Her interest in others and her good humour seldom failed. Di will be much missed by her many friends and her family. She was involved with Flight until within weeks of her death.



*The large gathering outside St Luke's Church, Greytown after Di Wilks' funeral.*

*Juliet Oliver writes:*

I miss the Flight proof-reading sessions with the eagle-eyed Di. Her attention to detail was legendary, honed by years of sub-editing experience such as working for Eagle magazine in the UK, and her passion for this extraordinary language. Wandering apostrophes never made it past Di.

I learned a tremendous amount from her, more from our spirited 'debates' than the corrections she made. There were landslides of them per page of copy, mostly about commas and caps and the correct 'house style', and unless I was feeling rebellious (fairly frequently as Alan would agree), I almost always had to admit that she was right!

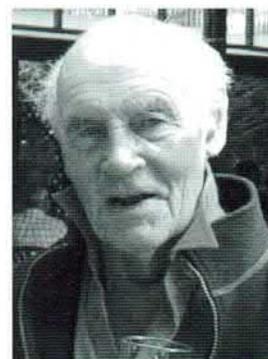
We first met through DU in the late 1970s, and it was a real pleasure to see more of the Wilks while I was editing Flight magazine. As with everyone who knew her, I will miss Di's lively mind, her friendly patience and encouragement and her very infectious giggle. She was courage personified.

## Bill Clinton-Baker of Gladstone

The small Epiphany church and its hall overflowed with family and friends for Bill CB's funeral in Masterton at the end of July. A DU member for over 25 years, Bill had passed away at home at Essex Street, Masterton. Only days before, he and his wife Jan had attended Di Wilks' funeral.

A superb organiser, Bill had arranged every detail of the service that movingly celebrated his full and interesting life. His son came from Canada and gave a wonderful account of Bill's early years, his naval service in the Second World War and his farming life in New Zealand. The Rev Ted Dashfield spoke of Bill's years of service to Rathkeale College. Bill would have relished the rafter-raising sound of that large crowd singing Lord of the Dance at the end. Bill CB was one of the most active DU members, especially through his captive breeding work with shelduck. He was also a very generous provider of items and photographs for Flight magazine, a great role model for current members.

After he had passed on the running of his farm to his son Jamie, Bill created The Sanctuary near Gladstone with his wife Jan and continued his interest in bird-breeding - a lifelong passion. Birds reared at The Sanctuary were sold each year to enthusiasts around the country, with the proceeds donated to The New Zealand Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust, of which he was a conservation Sponsor. In 1986 Bill was Brown Teal Breeder of the Year, when he reared 32 birds for Operation Pateke. Three pairs of shoveler reared at The Sanctuary were flown to Slimbridge in the United Kingdom, a few years ago, where they successfully bred at the Wildfowl Trust. Bill received the DU Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004. He was a dedicated and active member of the Wairarapa Chapter until the end. He will leave a huge gap in the lives of those who knew him.



*Bill Clinton-Baker*

## The Canada goose conundrum - Letters to the editor

Dear Editor

I was interested in your article 'Goose in the gun' in issue 128. The Canada goose is an important species of the goose tribe and a wonderful gamebird. Incidentally your stated New Zealand population figures are incorrect; those figures are the Lake Wairarapa population ones. I started shooting Canadas at Lake Ellesmere in 1971 and assure you the South Island population of Canadas would be in the tens of thousands.

Yes, over the past two or three years the Canadas became out of control in the Wairarapa region. In my opinion, this was largely because of lack of action by the Wellington Region Fish and Game Council. The furore created by Wairarapa Federated Farmers last year could have been avoided. Four years ago I wrote to Wellington Fish and Game, pointing to the need for movement pattern/nesting research on the region's Canadas, so as to enable local management decisions. I pointed also to growing anger amongst farmers. Fish and Game simply didn't want to know. Their judgment was taken with no knowledge at all of goose movement.

In the South Island, initiatives are in place by the different regions of Fish and Game to control Canadas within the agreed population levels you have referred to. Many of those control activities involve organised groups of licensed waterfowlers. Those activities are quite sporting and work well. The unpleasant helicopter slaughter of flightless moulting birds which took place at Lake Wairarapa in February could have been avoided if Wellington Fish and Game had acted earlier and differently.

*Howard Egan, Canada Flats, Carterton*

Dear Editor

In his Fish and Game article (*Treasure or Trouble? Issue 53*) Murray Williams asks some pertinent questions. Flight introduced the subject again in the last issue, Flight no. 128, July 2006. Prior to any decision to alter the status of Canada geese in the Wildlife Act more of these queries need to be answered.

To farmers, anything that disrupts or consumes pasture becomes a problem, whether it be grass grub, clover weevil or game birds. Add the vagaries of weather patterns and economical price changes in overseas markets and most hunters would understand their concerns. Our New Zealand economy relies heavily on rural output. There is however irrefutable evidence that some farming practices such as irrigation and intensive dairying are severely affecting freshwater quality and the ecological balance precious to all citizens of New Zealand.

Murray Williams suggests that those who are anti-Canada geese and proponents for them need to keep things in perspective.

Firstly, because of the flocking behaviour of geese and their propensity to graze and move on, there are no reliable population figures. Observations by hunters suggest that some farmers, afflicted by a flock, over estimate numbers. 'Heaps' or 'hundreds' is a generic term often quoted. How many grazing geese are a sheep equivalent? Murray in his article, quotes four; other well-qualified avian biologists state seven.

If indeed the total goose population in New Zealand is approaching 50,000, then the grazing sheep equivalent spread over thousands of farming hectares of potential habitat is miniscule, with little to no effect on an overall economic basis. There is a basis for individual farmer complaint of goose damage especially in localised areas where substantial flocks of geese moult and where winter feed is growing or spring new grass is establishing, particularly in more southern colder or drier areas.

Murray Williams is again correct on two counts; one, that affected farmers have yet to establish an accurate audit of economic loss due to geese and also by his observation that hunters who could assist with goose control are denied access.

Knee-jerk reactions such as the Orange Ribbon campaign by Federated Farmers over proposed access legislation and a very confrontational approach by Fish and Game to water quality and use issues have added fuel to a long smouldering fire. Game bird

hunters are caught in the middle between two increasingly bitter strident adversaries.

Learning the effective techniques for successfully hunting Canada geese is a challenge yet to be seized by many of the annual 35,000 game bird licence holders. An effective spread of 20 goose decoys, a caller and other equipment requires a capital outlay of around \$1000.

The advent of non-toxic shot requirements has meant the purchase of more modern multi-shot shotguns and a real loss of ballistic fire power effectiveness at the longer ranges that geese often require to be shot. Despite propaganda, steel does not replace lead as the most humane and efficacious shot material. Alternatives to steel such as bismuth or tungsten-iron are horrendously expensive. Finding out where a flock is currently feeding can involve considerable time and effort. Liaison between affected farmers and groups of hunters is a key factor. Fish and Game need to improve liaison skills, as they are generally the first to receive complaints.

Hunters do resent their licence money being spent on culls when better administration and co-operation could achieve a similar and more consistent result. Mass culls are indeed ethically repugnant to most hunters denied opportunities for which they have paid licence fees. These could well be avoided if more hunters were prepared to target geese.

There is substantial resentment that having invested considerable personal funds to enable successful goose hunting they are denied access or involvement in providing solutions to a problem.

One million dollars has been quoted as the sum Fish and Game have spent on game control over the years. Money, in my opinion, better spent on waterfowl habitat. Despite an ever-increasing game bird licence fee, Fish and Game spends at least 85% of their limited income on administration. Game bird enhancement funding is in most of their regions negligible.

Canada geese in the North Island are welcomed by hunters often having difficulty targeting other waterfowl whose populations still remain well below previous numbers. Some farmers and horticulturists previously denied Fish and Game 'Permits to Disturb' find the .22 rifle a useful deterrent outside the prescribed season.

Prior to any further discussion on changes to First Schedule status of Canada geese, Fish and Game should consider the management possibilities available to them and further extend the months in which Canada geese may be legally hunted in 'hot spot' areas. They can extend the length of special seasons and be more responsive to requests for 'Permits to Disturb', which can allow a specified number of birds to be slain.

A register could be developed of experienced hunters prepared to co-operate and give this information to affected farmers who require urgent assistance.

Landowners who, of right, do not need to purchase a game bird licence to shoot on their own land during a specified season could, in return, purchase a licence to assist with costs and remain legal, and entitling them to hunter group help.

Clubs and organisations such as Wildfowlers Association should encourage more of their members to learn the arts and pleasures of hunting Canada geese. Numerically successful goose hunts are very dependent on hunter groups combining to cover 'hot spot' areas.

The Minister of Conservation could play his part by approving revised Canada goose seasons and allowing the use of lead shot for this species. Like the hunters the Minister may well feel he is the 'meat in the sandwich' and welcome a pragmatic resolution for a trial period of, say, five years.

Combined sustained and organised effort from all parties could well prove Murray Williams wrong in his theorem that Canada geese cannot be controlled by hunting.

*Dr M.L. Hucks, Q.S.M.*

*Patron The Wildfowlers Association of New Zealand*

## Taratahi Training Centre taking part

Taratahi Agricultural Training CEO Nicola Morris, new DU member and Chief Executive Officer of Taratahi Agricultural Centre, between Masterton and Carterton in the Wairarapa, wrote to the Ken Barnes, co-chair of the Wairarapa chapter in August, regarding the DU conference she attended and also in relation to the volunteer work the Taratahi students put in at Wairio in July.

She says "...the students had a thoroughly enjoyable day planting down at Wairio and from all accounts got well and truly wet in the process. It is really good from our perspective when we can do off campus projects like this. Obviously it is good to help out the community but it is also a good team-bonding type day". (See story page 12)

Regarding the conference, Nicola said, "I thoroughly enjoyed the day with the group and, like a lot of people, took my hat off to the vision of those who started the Wairio project. Stonehenge Aotearoa was also fascinating and I have to say that I hadn't been there and had presumed, quite wrongly, that it was a copy of Stonehenge. I now possess a nice bottle of port [from the auction] and a couple of pictures and found the whole evening very pleasant and certainly plan to maintain my and Taratahi's involvement".

## Grey teal nextboxes installed at Waioatarua Reserve

Auckland Chapter member Chris Bindon gratefully acknowledges the help he received in July during a working bee to install a number of grey teal nest boxes at Waioatarua Reserve in St Johns, Auckland this winter.

The working bee was organised in conjunction with Neil Perrott of Wetland Solutions Ltd.

Having erected several hundred nest boxes at various sites over a number of years, Chris says that "this installation of 45 nest boxes was one of the most rewarding, thanks to those involved".

Neil's team enjoyed having Chris explain the grey teal project and were keen to learn more about the other birds of the wetland area, including their Maori names and meanings.

Chris says that despite some unforeseen problems with vehicles and some equipment just prior to the installation, he was very grateful to Neil and his workers for their involvement and hard work. Neil and Chris are planning to work on future projects towards waterfowl and wetland enhancement in other areas

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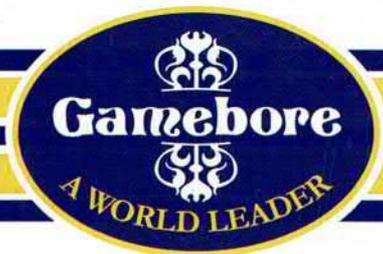
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