

Flight



ISSUE 132 - JULY 2007

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Royal swan season - Peacock Springs donates again

Royal spoonbill and estuary birds at the Abels' 'Huritini'

Last year's AGM Minutes

Wairio planting progress

Pateke and whio news

Rotary's generous donation





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



Make sure you register
NOW for this
exhilarating weekend

Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc
2007 Annual General Meeting
27-29 July 2007

Venue and Accommodation
Sun Court Hotel, North Croft Street, Taupo

Programme

Friday 27 July

7pm Registration and pre-dinner drinks in the Swifts conference room.
\$30 set menu dinner available.

Saturday 28 July

9am AGM
10.30am After morning tea visit to Wairakei Pastoral Developments. Drinks and lunch to follow.
6.30pm Drinks Swifts Conference room and silent auction.
7.30pm Award presentations
8.00pm Dinner and main auction

Sunday 29 July

9.30am Social gathering.
Tamsin Ward-Smith, Manager of Cape Kidnappers, will give a talk, followed by morning tea.

Insight

June 2007

In his inaugural address President Kennedy said: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country".

The same can be said for Ducks Unlimited.

I cannot recall the number of times someone has said to me, "if I join DU will you give me some money to construct a wetland?"

My answer is generally "probably not". But we can give you advice and discuss the potential.

The reason for that is while we want more members, we also want members who are prepared to help out and give something back to the organisation.

That can be in the form of helping run chapter dinners, DU Shoots, coming on to the Board or even just buying extra raffle books; after all the money to build wetlands has to come from somewhere - as well as the fact that many hands make light work and I can tell some of the old hands are getting tired.

So remember President Kennedy's words and let's all go forward together.

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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Front cover photo courtesy of Trevor Thompson who says:

"On a bright and sunny June day an intrepid team of swan-catchers set forth to catch Jim Campbell's elusive swans, with two kayaks and a row boat. Ross Cottle, Jim Campbell, Kevin Campbell, Trevor Thompson and helpful neighbours rounded up, a number of times, and caught, these majestic resident birds for some swapping of partners to keep those genes."



Ducks Unlimited New Zealand
32nd Annual General Meeting
29th July 2006
Cophthorne Resort, Solway Park,
Masterton.

Welcome: Ross Cottle welcomed the members to the 32nd Annual General Meeting.

Mr Cottle asked the meeting to note and remember Ron Denny, Di Wilks, Bill Clinton-Baker who have past away since the last AGM.

Apologies: Diana, Lady Isaac; Ann Nooyen; Philip Smith; Michael and Margaret Beddeck; Dan Steele; Mark Grace; Kees Wiewtmans; Noel and Marie Singer; Rachael and Andrew Mitchell; Murray and Lois Tapp; William and Jan Abel; Anthony Griffin; Clare and Jack Worth; Mat Paku; Nancy and Gary Croad; Robert Hood; Anne Johnston.

Motion: The apologies tendered are accepted.

Move: Ian Jensen

Seconded: Glenys Hansen, carried.

Minutes of the last AGM; circulated in the 32nd AGM and Conference pack.

Motion: That the minutes of the last AGM be accepted as a true and complete record.

Moved: Nancy Payne

Seconded: Neil Candy, carried.

Matters arising from the 2005 minutes: Nil

President's Report: Tabled

Motion: The President's report is accepted.

Moved: Ross Cottle,

Seconded: Ken Barnes, carried

Matters arising from the President's 2006 Report: Nil

Financial Report

Motion: That the 2006 financial report be accepted.

Moved: David Smith

Seconded: Neil Candy, carried.

Matters Arising from the Financial Report: Nil

The President noted that it was the last report Mr Gurr will Table.

Appointment of Auditors:

Motion: That Beattie Rickman be appointed as Auditors for 2006/07

Moved: Peter Russell

Seconded: John Bishop, carried.

Election of Officers:

Board Election:

The President read out the following Statement.

The Constitution states that the Board should consist of not less than 6, of which half, but not more than two-thirds shall be permanently appointed Directors.

As of right, the permanent appointments are the Chairman, President, Vice- President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Other permanent appointments are David Smith and William Abel.

Retiring directors are Rachael Mitchell, John Dermer, Jim Law and Graham Gurr.

John Bishop was co-opted to the Board during the previous year.

Standing for re-election to the Board: Rachael Mitchell, John Dermer, Jim Law.

Standing for election is John Bishop.

Nominations for the Board:

Motion: That R Mitchell, J Dermer, J Law, G Gurr and J Bishop be confirmed as Board members.

Moved: Di Pritt.

Seconded: Ken Cook, carried.

Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust Report:

David Smith reported that the balance as of 27/7/06, was \$386,728.85 in the Spicer's Portfolio No 224771 and a further \$50,000.00 on term deposit for a total of \$436,728.85.

An improvement of just over \$90,000.00 since last AGM. There has been no call on the funds over the last year. The weakening of the New Zealand dollar over recent times has contributed to a fair portion of the value increase.

Wetland Care Report:

Jim Campbell queried the issue of providing trees to wetland developers.

The President reported on behalf of William Abel that over \$65,000.00 has been spent on wetland development.

Mr Campbell suggested that PR on this success should be distributed.

Mr Law commented on the Wairio project and the PR spinoff that this has achieved.

General Business:

Membership: The president reported that membership is static.

A question from the floor queried the lack of members from the Waikato. Mr Hayward commented that it appears to be very difficult to attract new members. The question was asked if we should spend money advertising or with PR to attract new members. Mr Smith recounted an experience of some years ago when a direct marketing exercise through Rural Post was attempted to no avail.

Mr Cottle stated that the lack of members coming through is one of the most critical aspect for the future of DU.

It was suggested that an advertisement in rural papers may be of value. Glenys Hansen suggested that the advert could be supported with good copy on wetlands. She also suggested that sponsorship of school membership may be fruitful.

Jim Campbell queried the availability of Chris Thomas's DVD.

It was suggested that the brand name could be an issue.



Strategic Plan

Mr Cottle reported that good progress is being made on the Strategic plan objectives, and other than PR we are on track.

Flight magazine

The editor Gail Isaac was introduced and warmly welcomed to the meeting. Mr Cottle asked for more support for articles. Gail mentioned that good photographs are always welcome.

It was suggested that local chapter contact details be listed in Flight.

Dave West expressed concern about the cost of publishing the magazine. He suggested the Board seek alternative prices for printing Flight.

Dave West tendered congratulations for the work on the Wairio block. He did wonder about the value of then digging small ponds throughout the area. He suggested that in doing this, changes the intent of the area.

Mr Cottle advised that the intent was to retain moisture in some of the area by digging out to lake level in an effort to retain water through the whole year.

Mr Law accepted that there is nothing wrong with wetlands drying. However he believed that if an effort to retain permanent water was not made, the wetland would be lost. He also stated that when compared to the other wetlands in the area, Wairio is the only wetland area that is showing any progress. Mr Law stated that the Wairio block is perceived locally as the shining light of wetland restoration. Mr Law reminded the meeting that the Wairio Standing Committee would welcome advice on best practice.

Mr Cottle stated that the area has been so modified and that there are no natural flows from other areas into the wetland.

Mr Cottle explained more on our contact with Wairakei Pastoral which has been reported on in Flight. The intent is to turn the forestry area into dairy farms. All riparian areas have been planted and water quality monitoring processes have been established. Over 2000ha have been designated for riparian plantings. DU is providing advice through Jim Campbell to the project.

Peter Russell updated the meeting on who/blue duck. A new recovery plan has been worked on. The key aspects are that they will concentrate on eight key sites, four in the north and four in the south, with up to 50 pairs. As part of this, some key research on site evaluation and juvenile dispersment is required. The Egmont releases are going well. This is to continue for one more year and then be reviewed.

Closure:

The President thanked his Board for their work through the year. 10.15am.

O. J. Latham
Secretary



President's Report 2007

Another 12 months have come and gone and DUNZ is still going strong.

Wetlands are being recognised more and more for their importance in the filtering of sediment and nutrients before they get into lakes and waterways, as well feeding areas and habitat for a whole range of wildlife.

This in turn is making it easier for us to convince local bodies and government departments to take action in restoring wetlands.

The Wellington Regional Council is soon to take over management of all the publicly-owned areas bordering Lake Wairarapa and turn it into a Regional Park.

CONSERVATION IS BECOMING FASHIONABLE

We must be ready to take advantage of this and expand our organisation to meet this challenge.

Other DU Projects are making considerable headway.

Pateke (brown teal): Approximately 100 birds released in various parts of the northern North Island. Also captive-bred birds were released in the South Island for the first time this year at Travis Wetland which is situated on the outskirts of Christchurch.

Mute swan have done quite well this year with five pairs and some singles being placed with members.

Our association with Banrock Wines Ltd is still very strong and the funding we receive from them helps considerably with our larger projects.

Finally my thanks to the Board for their work over the last year and a very special thanks to Sandra Pipes for the work she does in administration. I can assure you I could not cope without her.

Ross Cottle
President

The Financial Report will be available at the AGM and will be re-produced in the next issue of Flight.





Santoft flax grows over three metres and is used extensively at Huritini

William Abel surveys part of the wetland he and Jan created at his 53-acre Huritini



William's collection of memorabilia has been a hobby for years



William in the pine forest gloom outside his old-style forester's hut



This is the view from the deck outside Jan and William's home - Canada Geese in sight



On the edges of this tiered waterside deck, William has crafted eel in copper with bubbles of other metal. He created a fountain from pedestals and shapes created by his brother. Tiny 10cm metal lizards and other tiny beasties William has hand-made nestling in cracks and crevices can give a visitor a sudden surprise.

Huritini recreates historic estuary habitat for Royal spoonbill

Royal spoonbill are at home at Huritini, the Horowhenua wetlands development of Ducks Unlimited board member and Wetland Care director William Abel and his wife Jan. Royal spoonbill began breeding in New Zealand in the early 1940s and juveniles were first recorded at the Ohau River mouth in Horowhenua in 1944.

"Nowadays, they are frequent visitors to Huritini," comments William, "they like to work their way up the estuary looking for food." He notes their quite different feeding habit from other waterfowl in that they shovel for their food and disturb the small creatures on which they feed. They move their bills furiously back and forth, notes William, a constant spectator.

No wonder the royal spoonbill, known as kotuku-ngutupapa, feel at home at Huritini. William and Jan moved there 14 years ago and all that greeted them was a pond and water-tower. Their 53 acres was part of 1000 acres which had recently been cut up into smaller lots. The only other thing greeting them were several stands of old pines on hills.

When Jan and William arrived they resolved to re-create the area into what it had been not so long before, an estuarine wildfowl habitat. Developing from the original pond, they have extended it into, in effect, a multi-level wetland area with waterways and sympathetically-planted islands. They planted tens of thousands of trees, flaxes, grasses and shrubs.

One of the reasons that the royal spoonbill have found the area such a natural habitat is just because this whole area was once a series of river and stream deltas navigable up to where SH1 is now. The fact that this area is so new to cultivation is demonstrated by the shallowness of the dunes. Almost within living memory, the area was planted and drained and dedicated to pastoral application.

William is quick to point out that the area is, however, drought-prone, and thus great care has been taken to ensure that the water tables are arranged at different levels so drought or flood, the wildfowl can always feed. "We have to remember that frequently ducks, for example, can only feed in a few inches of water."

Among the denizens of Huritini, aside from the royal spoonbill, are the white heron, the blue heron, stilts, dabchicks, mallards and of course Canada geese. William and Jan, in their 14 years developing Huritini have observed the controversial Canada geese in their habitat more closely than most people. "They are very intelligent. They stay in the same place. They know how to make the most of their surroundings". In this strength, he notes, lies their vulnerability, at least to *homo sapiens*.

"Their ability to adapt gives them this tremendous breeding ability," he observes. He also takes delight in pointing out the dabchicks,

especially the way in which they transport their young on their backs.

Huritini's role as a habitat for dabchick is of particular value for the conservation of the once-dwindling dabchick because Huritini provides exactly the kind of stable water that the species requires. Although the dabchick population in the South Island remains imperilled, the provision of sheltered ponds such as Huritini's has seen the population stabilise and increase in the North Island.

William has braced his pond habitat capability by an enclosure for Cape Barren geese, who keep company with his herd of fallow deer. Here, the Cape Barren geese fulfill an ancient and historical role for such migrant geese, as warning of intruders who may have designs upon the fallow deer.

William joined Ducks Unlimited 20 years ago and for 15 of them has been on the board of Ducks Unlimited. His and Jan's establishment of the Huritini wetlands has been central to their strategy towards dedicating themselves to wetland conservation and development on a more permanent basis.

To this end, they have built a large, ecologically-friendly, warm house alongside the main wetland development with a picture window effect which gives visitors the impression that they are surrounded by the water and islands. Self-confessed tinkerer, which is hardly surprising considering his profession of manufacturing jeweller, and collector of Ducks Unlimited memorabilia, William has one of the largest private archives of waterfowl-related artifacts in the nation. Other useful outbuildings have been sourced and nestle neatly in the hillocks and hummocks. William and Jan have re-established part of the pine forest in a notable stand and in the middle they have developed a replica mountain/forester's hut of the type that was still being built 50 years ago, complete with potbelly stove and ancient implements.

Huritini is south of Foxton and the great lower Manawatu flax-growing area. With a view to encouraging tui and other rush birds, they have experimented with planting local flax, and have had considerable success with the Santoft variety, growing to three metres (see photograph).

Huritini is part of the Kapiti/Horowhenua area microclimate and it is this that gives the district its special estuarine qualities, so important to wetlands and thus waterfowl development of the kind that encourages, for example, black swan. William notes the often hard-to-comprehend geographical fact that Farewell Spit is actually parallel with Palmerston North, quite some distance of course north of this district.

Whio News

Operating Report to the Central North Island Blue Duck Conservation Charitable Trust
May 2007

Egmont National Park Population Establishment Project : March 1 to May 31 2007

New Birds

In early March seven new captive-bred birds (six males and one female) were transferred from Peacock Springs in Christchurch for release into protected areas both inside and outside the national park. Each bird was fitted with a transmitter and legbands on the release day for standard monitoring. As a trial to increase survival for their first 12 months in the wild, each bird was lightly wing-clipped to decrease mobility in an attempt to keep them within the protected areas. This trial was approved by the Animal Ethics Committee.

At the time of release four birds (three males and one female) were released on to the Manganui River in the Biodiversity Fund-protected area on farmland adjacent to ENP. The other three males were released into the Maketawa (two) and Little Maketawa Streams inside ENP. UK volunteer Clare Andrews greatly assisted with the first month of monitoring of new birds on the farmland.

All new birds have been regularly located and appear to be doing well to date. The wingclip trial looks to be working well at this stage with only one of the new birds requiring recapture and relocating on two occasions. Due to the area this bird was travelling he was obviously getting a limited amount of flight and a further two primary feathers were removed on the second capture.

Another small trial was also made on a single male from the 2006 release who was living well outside the protected area. This bird was transferred back to the safe area of the Manganui and also wingclipped following an approved application to the Animal Ethics Committee. This bird also regained some mobility and required transferring back to the protected area. A few more flight feathers were removed from this bird which has appeared to settle his movements. He was recently found with the female released this year although it would be too early to say if they are truly paired.

Locating other birds

Four monitoring flights were undertaken along with surveys on foot which located 25 other birds over this period. One of the birds located (L33129, 2005 released wild male) appears to have been killed by a

predator inside the trapped area on the Ngatoro Stream. Again it appears this event happened during the stoat peak in summer and moult period for whio.

Nine birds were captured for transmitter replacement or removal over this period.

Foot surveys also confirmed that the transmitter failure rate from last year is growing. A number of birds which were missing from tracking by air have been found by foot surveys and their transmitters were confirmed to have failed.

At least five other birds have not been heard from in the last few months which also may be due to transmitter failure.

Discussions with the manufacturer should have resolved this issue although the failures have caused extra costs and inconvenience with tracking by plane and foot.

Not all pairs were checked over this period although pairs confirmed together were:

Kaiaua Stream 2006-released female 2005-released male.

Maketawa Stream near park boundary 2006-released female 2004-released male.

Manganui River 2005-released female 2006-released male.

Manganui River 2003-released wild female 2002-released male.

Manganui River 2007-released female 2006-released male (paired for now?).

Ngatoro Stream 2005-released female 2002-released wild male.

Waiongana Stream 2002-released female 2004-released male.

Other pairs that could be together or need confirming are:

Little Maketawa 2005-released female 2004-released male.

Little Maketawa 2004-released female 2004-released male.

Maketawa Stream 2006-released female with ?

Mangamawhete Stream 2005-bred (fledged duckling) female 2005-released male.

Manganui River 2002-released female 2003-released male.

Waiwhakaiho River 2006-released female 2006-released male.

Waiau Fork Stream 2005-released wild female 2005-released wild male.

Waitepuke Stream 2005-released female 2005-released male.

Predator control

Servicing of the network of trap boxes continued twice monthly until April. Stoat catches inside the national park followed the usual trends with numbers falling away in March (29) and April (18) and a moderate number were caught in May (31). The planned mustelid monitoring for May was abandoned due to poor weather.

The stoat-trapping programme on farmland from the Biodiversity funded area for the Manganui River and part of the Maketawa Stream has also continued to be serviced. The landowners in this area were updated on the trapping results and the whio project.

The East Taranaki Environment Trust biodiversity funded expansion of the predator trapped area on farmland is currently under way. This area will provide a significant contribution to protected whio habitat.

Upcoming work

Monitoring will continue for the seven 2007 released birds and the wingclipped adult male. Searches on foot will continue for missing birds and confirming pairs listed above. Transmitter changes are required for a few more resident adult birds. Servicing designated predator control trap lines will continue monthly over the winter period.



Wairio - June progress on the planting front - report from Howard Egan



I have just spent one-and-a-half days at Wairio, supporting Don Bell and his assistant Andrew with release-spraying of the March planting at Stage 1 windrows and south of the bund; and prespraying at the stage 2 front margins area. A team from Taratahi Agricultural Centre gave us an excellent half day (weather disrupted our programme) doing the pre-spraying at stage two.

The work was thoroughly done and all completed. The project has benefited from the warm summer/autumn conditions, plus our earlier emphasis on release-spraying. The March planting result is excellent - a very high survival rate at the windrows (except maybe *carex secta*), and exceptionally good at the high ground south of the bund. Nearly 100% survival over that 480 plants.

All necessary fencing is now complete, so planting at stage two will be planned for July/August. Seeding plots of cover plants at the frontal margin country, and stabilising plants on the seven pond islands - 730 plants in total. One good planting day should suffice. Beyond that, further release-spraying of the March planting will be necessary in mid-spring.

The whole Wairio block is damn near bone dry at present. Most unusual. I note the gate to Kilmore Lodge is now padlocked and the lodge itself has securely-locked doors. All windows have been barred. The owners are Fish & Game, Palmerston North.

Howard Egan. Planter



Generous donation by Rotary Club of South Wairarapa in support of Wairio Wetland Restoration

Lesley Christian, President of the Rotary Club of South Wairarapa, is pictured above presenting a cheque for \$5,000 to Ross Cottle, President of DUNZ in June. Lesley Christian said "the Rotary Club was delighted to be able to support Ducks Unlimited NZ with its restoration project at the Wairio Wetland."

The funds which were raised at the Rotary Club's very successful Martinborough Fair, would be used for fencing and tree-planting in a recently rehabilitated area of the wetland. Ross Cottle, in thanking Lesley and the Club, said "it was most encouraging to have the financial support of a local service organisation like Rotary. We would also love to have Rotary club members along at our planned winter tree-planting working bee in August!"

Captive-bred pateke crisis in Carterton

The Brown Teal Conservation Trust in Carterton, Wairarapa, suffered a huge blow in January 2007 when a pair of stoats killed 12 juvenile brown teal (pateke) and three adults including a 14-year-old pair. The stoats had entered a hole where two sheets of roofing iron had sprung apart close to ground level. They were caught within 12 hours with the assistance of a Mark VI Fenn Trap.

One breeding pair and one adult male from another pair survived. One of these is the pair which reared eight birds from eight eggs in 2004.

Neil and Sylvia Hayes were devastated - having never experienced anything remotely similar in their over 33 years of working with the endangered species - and rearing nearly 300 of them in that time.

Within two weeks of the disaster, Neil, his two sons, Sylvia and some BCTC members commenced a complete rejuvenation programme. The work was completed by May, apart from the planting of low level vegetation. The work involved eliminating all tall vegetation in each aviary and re-netting some areas. Neil Hayes emphasises the importance of not planting any trees or other vegetation capable of growing through the roof netting, in

particular cotoneaster. There will in future be four trapping stations around the perimeter of the BCTC aviaries.

Neil underlines that this disaster highlights several key points in respect of pateke captive management. These are:

1. Monthly aviary inspection and maintenance programmes are essential.
2. Monthly checks are needed to determine that the captive birds are still alive - remembering that the captive pateke are invariably nocturnal.
3. Predator control stations around the aviary are essential.

The recovery programme must ensure that sufficient numbers of captive brown teal are retained to instantly replace losses.

The mute, or royal swan

The white swan, also known as the mute or royal swan, possess qualities of gentleness and tameness and this, combined with their elegant beauty is a hard combination to resist. Indeed, swans mate for life or until their partners die. Although they can live up to 25 years, the average life-span of a mute swan is more like six.

Mute swans were domesticated in the United Kingdom and used as a source of food centuries ago. Ownership was indicated by way of a mark on the beak or foot. All unmarked swans became the property of the crown - thus the 'royal bird'. In Elizabethan times, the penalty for stealing a swan's egg was imprisonment for a year and a day. Today, the Queen only lays claim to swans on the River Thames. These are rounded up, checked and tagged by Her Majesty's Keeper of the Swans, who, dressed in full nautical regalia, directs the ceremony of 'swan-apping'. The Queen's Swan Marker and Swan Uppers are accompanied by Swan Uppers from the Worshipful Companies of Vinters and Dyers livery companies who were given a share in the swans in the 19th century. In scarlet uniforms, with flags flying from their traditional rowing skiffs, the Swan Uppers set out on a five-day journey upstream. Swans are rounded up, cygnets are weighed and measured and the birds examined for any sign of injury. Cygnets are ringed with identification numbers by the Queen's Swan Warden, whose role is scientific and non-ceremonial. This is believed to have saved the swan from being hunted to extinction.



Ross Cottle and friends. They didn't drive the whole way in this fashion, dear readers.

Peacock Springs' repeated donation of royal swan benefits DU's gene pool exchange

In early May, patron Jim Campbell and president Ross Cottle headed south to Peacock Springs near Christchurch to pick up the royal or mute swans which Lady Isaac's Peacock Springs had kindly donated to DU this year, once again, to help with DU fund-raising. This bringing in of new blood is important for gene exchange and Ross has swans available for purchase to anyone who is interested. Peacock Springs donates two of these birds and they are much appreciated.

Ross explained that he made a large straw nest in his ute, tied a tarpaulin over it and the swans were happily transported from Christchurch by ferry to arrive in the Wairarapa and their new home.

By coincidence, the men were lucky enough to arrive on the same day that 20 pateke were to be released in the Travis Wetland, a large swamp situated right on the edge of the city of Christchurch which the council, along with many volunteers, is developing into a wildlife park with all-weather walkways and viewing hides to observe the birds. A considerable amount of work has also been done on predator control.

This is the first time captive-bred pateke have been released in the South Island and we wish them every success.



The group of volunteers collecting swans in Christchurch

A full-scale soap opera with elements of abandonment, betrayal, infidelity, loss and a heart-warming ending played itself out in the Rimutaka Forest Park

Trained dog finds untracked kiwi father safe and well, and shenanigans in the undergrowth

Rimutaka Forest Park's young kiwi has been named Matatua by volunteers at a recent social gathering. Matatua means first born, and Rimutaka Forest Park Trust chairman Bill McCabe says the name indicates hopes of future breeding success in the park, where eight North Island brown kiwi were released from near Wainuiomata, near the entrance to the Rimutaka Forest Park, during 1996. Matatua is thriving in the care of staff at the Department of Conservation Mt Bruce Wildlife Reserve, and will join the other birds at Rimutaka Forest Park when he weighs 12kg and can fend off any stoat attack.

Meanwhile Matatua's father Waikiwianui, who parted company with his tracking transmitter two months ago, has been found with the help of a trained kiwi tracking dog.

Waikiwianui's transmitter was found on the ground soon after his egg was taken from his burrow to be incubated and hatched at Pukaha Mt Bruce. Without the transmitter attached to his leg, an extensive ground search was needed to check his wellbeing, and the best efforts of volunteers over two months proved fruitless.

James Fraser and his dog Percy were called in to locate the missing kiwi. Accompanied by three volunteers, Percy searched within 40m of his handler, repeatedly criss-crossing an area near the home range of Waikiwianui and his mate Manaia, and where he had dropped his transmitter two months earlier.

The first day's search was unsuccessful, but early on the second day of searching, Percy's sense of smell led James and the volunteers to finding Waikiwianui roosting alone in a burrow under an old fallen stump. (*Joyous reunion!*)

"We did a little dance and took some photos of James proudly holding the kiwi," says Susan Ellis.

After fitting him with a new transmitter, they decided to track Waikiwianui's mate Manaia. She was found sharing a burrow with younger and smaller male Lorenzo! (*Dramatic development*).

"Maybe this was a secret tryst," says Susan Ellis. "We hadn't



Matatua, one day old!

picked up his signal, presumably because he was buried beneath the bulk of Manaia". (*Yes, well....*)

Finding the kiwi gave the volunteers the opportunity to learn the skills of kiwi handling and weighing, and fitting transmitters on the birds.

"All are in good health, and it was a successful couple of days," says Susan Ellis.

Article written by Margaret Willard, freelance writer, and publicity officer for Rimutaka Forest Park Trust in a voluntary capacity. Tel: 04 973 1378.



Susan Ellis holds Manaia, and James Fraser holds Lorenzo. Photo courtesy of Melody McLaughlin

Marine Protected Areas: draft Protection Standard & Classification System

The Ministry of Fisheries and Department of Conservation have been working together to develop a Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Protection Standard and Classification System.

They welcome comments on the draft MPA Protection Standard and Classification System.

Please submit your comments by 31 August 2007 to:

mpa@biodiversity.govt.nz or

MPA Consultation
PO Box 11-146
Wellington 6011

Banrock continues pateke support

Just in case anyone didn't already know, and particularly for our new members, part proceeds from the sales of every bottle of Banrock Station Wines in New Zealand are donated to Wetland Care, contributing to the vital Pateke Recovery Programme, and the preservation and restoration of pateke native habitats. It is New Zealand's rarest waterfowl species on the mainland. This endangered little bird, found only in New Zealand, has a population of only about 1000 living in the wild and is in great danger of extinction. The small, shy, nocturnal pateke, also known as New Zealand brown teal, has received and will continue to receive assistance from Banrock Station Wines' dedicated involvement in the release of pateke at Tutukaka this winter and the preparation of habitats for pateke release in Tawharanui next year.

Readers and members will be aware of past financial contributions to Wetland Care by Banrock Station Wines' charismatic Tony Sharley, Manager of Banrock Station's innovative Wine and Wetland Centre in South Australia, who visits this country regularly and who will in fact be at the DU Conference in July. Flight will continue to keep readers informed about these projects.

Banrock Station Wines, which are sold in 50 countries and is one of the fastest-growing brands in Europe, is preparing a publicity campaign to raise awareness of its mission to save the pateke in New Zealand. So, dear readers, remember this when you are stocking up on wine. Go on, drink up!

Pukaha Mt Bruce Captive Breeding News

Hihi - Izzie's fledgling was released at Karori Wildlife Sanctuary in early April. We also released Scotty one of our adult breeding males from aviary 2. Scotty will be replaced by one of the three wild caught hihi males that arrived from Karori Wildlife Sanctuary in March. Unfortunately one of these birds was found dead two weeks after arrival. Early pathology results showed this bird died from a bee sting.

Kiwi - We recently gave Ruakiwi and Kopakopa our male and female kiwi in the nocturnal house access to each other. Both introductions ended with aggression and the birds were separated. It is hoped that these birds will be able to be held as a pair in the future.

Tuatara - Measurements and weight were recently taken from our five tuatara during their bi-annual health check. All five are healthy and doing well. These details are provided to the tuatara captive co-ordinator to help with the management of New Zealand's captive population.

Teal - We have started to pair up our Campbell Island teal so that they have company over the winter. Some of the teal have adapted to the idea of sharing their pens more readily than others.

Kaka - Moka and Cheeno seem to be settling in well back in Aviary 3, and are busy chomping their way through perch branches quicker than we can replace them (at least they are leaving most of the newly planted trees alone, for now). Cheeno was seen in the artificial nest-box recently, which is positive news for next breeding season.

Kokako - All kokako were weighed in April and had routine disease screens. The juvenile from Aviary 16 was caught and colour banded. Feathers taken for DNA sexing indicated that it is a female. She is scheduled to be released on Tiritiri Matangi Island in June. Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi have asked that she be named Pukaha.

Shore Plover - During April the last group of shore plover were placed in quarantine prior to release on Mana Island. Three other birds were still exhibiting signs of pox and remained in the brooders for treatment. These birds will not be released this year, and will be held back as potential breeding birds for the next season.

World Heritage Site Nominations

In June, Conservation Minister Chris Carter announced a tentative list of eight sites New Zealand is intending to work towards nominating for world heritage status.

The tentative list will be submitted to the World Heritage 31st Session Committee meeting which began in Christchurch at the end of June.

The sites are listed below, and will be developed for nomination in the order listed:

- Kahurangi National Park, Farewell Spit, Waikoropupu Springs and the Canaan Karst System
- Waters and Seabed of the Fiords of Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) – an addition to Te Wahipounamu – South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area
- Napier Art Deco Historic Precinct
- Kerikeri Basin Historic Precinct
- Waitangi Treaty Grounds Historic Precinct
- Kermadec Islands and Marine Reserve
- Auckland Volcanic Field
- Whakarua Moutere, or the North-East Islands (including Poor Knights Islands).

"These sites are all important places for New Zealanders offering different and outstanding opportunities and experiences that will stand up very strongly against similar sites elsewhere in the world," Mr Carter said.

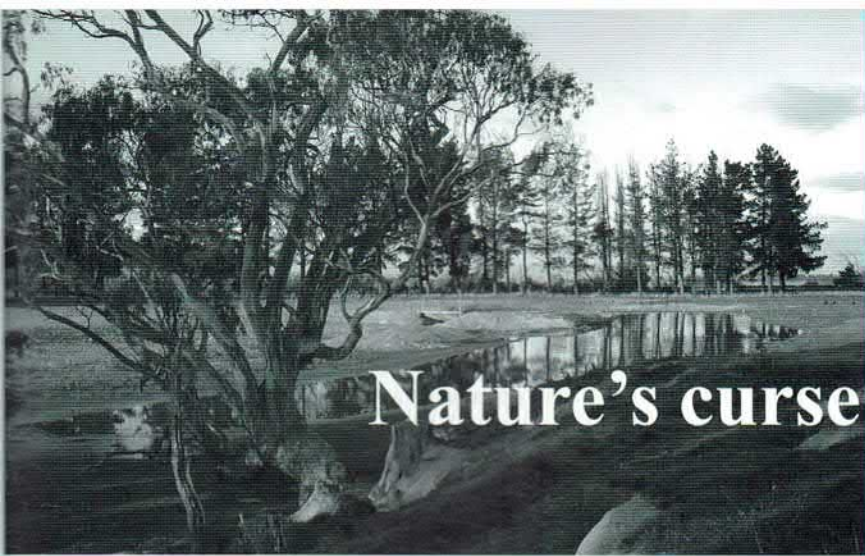
"What is on the list, and what is not, has been worked through by two expert advisory groups following more than 300 submissions from the public on 28 sites people thought should be considered. The expert advisory groups have whittled the list down, and Cabinet has made a final decision upon it.

"In this process there were always going to be winners and losers, but it is important to stress this list is tentative only. The sites themselves and the priority given to them may change as New Zealand begins to work through the complex process of formally nominating them for world heritage status," Mr Carter said.

"The nomination process alone can take up to three years for each site, and those nominations can only come from a tentative list lodged with the World Heritage Committee. The process involves extensive consultation with communities and parties likely to be affected, and there is no guarantee of success.

"Our aspiration is to begin one site nomination per year from New Zealand's tentative list," Mr Carter said.

The World Heritage Convention seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage considered to be of 'outstanding value to humanity'. Today, 182 countries have ratified the convention making it one of the most widely supported conventions of the United Nations



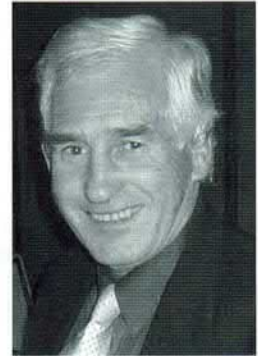
Nature's curse or nature's gift?

It's all the way you look at it

Part of John Dermer's wetland - photo courtesy of Liz Brook, Feilding

This is an article written by **John Dermer** for the *Central Districts Farmer*, a paper which is published monthly and covers roughly the southern half of the North Island. It is aimed at encouraging land owners to build dams or wetlands, by pointing out some of the benefits. It is also a blatant attempt to encourage new members of DU in line with the board's policy. Many members of DU do not need to be encouraged to build more wetlands as they are already doing so, but perhaps a reminder of the organisations which can help is timely.

John says "the pictured wetland is my latest, and perhaps my last, as I can't think of anywhere else to build one. It was done with the help of DU money and I had the two best guys in New Zealand to build it, Gary Thomson and DU patron Jim Campbell. It is very close to Highway 54 and Diny and I have had many comments from locals on the great job Gary and Jim did. They also did the job \$5000 cheaper than the other quotes I got. I can't wait for it to fill!"



I'm talking about those wet and hard-to-drain parts of most farms or lifestyle blocks: the bits which contribute little revenue to the farming enterprise. There are also wide flat gullies where a low wall will create a decent-sized pond. Why not think outside the traditional 'farms are about growing grass' stereotype and consider a different land use option for these areas? Creating a wetland will give you a lot of pleasure as you watch the birdlife increase and the trees you have planted start to grow and add beauty to your land. A good dam is always a capital asset so you will recover the cost many times over if you sell.

Help is at hand!

There are few activities in life on the land, (or anywhere else for that matter), be it a farm or lifestyle block, where we receive financial help to enjoy ourselves! Creating wetlands is one of these. There are three organisations which have funds available to help. The Game Bird Habitat Trust, administered by Fish and Game, your local Regional Council, which can help with the fencing and planting through their environmental grant, and Ducks Unlimited NZ (DU) which is the organisation I chose to help fund the pictured wetland. All it takes is a phone call.

Why create a wetland?

New Zealand has drained or destroyed 90% of her original wetlands. They are nature's sponges, soaking up pollutants and filtering water before it reaches rivers and streams. Water quality is a very topical issue right now, and creating wetlands is one way to improve our environmental footprint. Another is to create habitat for wetland birds. Not just ducks, but the other species as well. One of the reasons for digging this new wetland on our property was because of the wide range of water birds that enjoy the present dam. Ducks: mallard, paradise, grey teal and shoveler. Waders: pied stilt, banded dotterel, with a royal spoonbill as a recent visitor.

One of the problems when digging a dam of this type is how to dispose of the soil. You can only create so many islands in an area. We decided to cart the soil to fill hollows in the paddock, which is a more expensive option but will make the paddock easier to crop while we take advantage of increased grain prices.

Will we fence it? The jury is still out on this as the birds seem to love the present very open environment. I run bulls in the paddock as the Kiwitea stream cuts it off from the rest of the farm and buildings, and the road is just too full of idiots these days to run sheep backwards and forwards. I suspect a fence will be needed to stop bulls wrecking the place, so may approach our Regional Council for help.

Steps to take

- (1) If you do decide to create a wetland, seek advice. There are many people in D.U. who have built **hundreds** of dams. Their advice is free so why not use it?
- (2) Do a detailed budget. This should include the cost of fencing, the trees, and any other cost you may incur. The Farm Forestry Association can give you advice on what to plant.
- (3) Make sure you are conversant with the local Resource Management Act as a resource consent may be needed. Contact your local Regional Council for help before you start.

If you do receive funding from DU, there is no ongoing commitment. What you do with the area you have created is entirely your affair, but the experience of a Farm Forester who sold his farm, complete with a treasured wetland, is worth repeating: the new owner had cattle in the wetland a week later!

Please look at some form of covenant to stop this sort of thing happening. For those who have the desire but not the land, why not do a deal with a friend who has the land? It might make for an interesting partnership with benefits for both parties.

John Dermer

Letter to DU President re blue duck

Dear Ross,

As I'm sure you are aware, the native grey duck (parera) has been losing ground in New Zealand habitats in many areas for some years now. I am not sure specifically about grey duck reduction down your way but up here in the north, the greys are usually few and far between these days although you do sometimes come across small grey duck hot spots.

I have a real concern for the species longterm survival in this country by the continual yearly interbreeding by mallard with them. The grey duck in at least some type of hybrid form will be around for some years yet but I believe that without some longterm planning and intervention, the species could become functionally extinct in New Zealand within the next twenty years or so.

With this in mind and with our national Ducks Unlimited AGM approaching, I would like to see some forward planning achieved for the Grey Duck's future in NZ and for it to be considered as an agenda item as a potential captive breeding species by the DU board please. I know that there would be a good number of members keen to help keep the pure stock going in NZ in the same way that we have breeding programs for brown teal (pateke) and blue duck (whio).

The grey duck can sometimes be nomadic but generally, given plenty of good quality habitat with plenty of water and with little external pressures, they can and do mainly remain a sedentary species. This means grey duck would be an excellent candidate species for island wetland establishment situations in a similar way that brown teal are re-established now.

I look forward to your thoughts on this and will catch you at the AGM in Taupo.

Regards,
Chris Bindon,
D U Auckland

Letter to the Editor

Ian Morrison of Kakahu, RD21, Geraldine 7991 writes:

Dear Flight Editor

Although most birds in this list (see below) are not of interest to DUNZ members, I thought the item was quite interesting. It will appear in a book to celebrate the Geraldine 150th, and will be out within two to three months. It is called 'Glimpses of Geraldine'.

Yours sincerely
Ian Morrison

"House Sparrows Protected

June 3rd 1974. Timaru Herald (South Canterbury)

The following animals and birds have been turned out at large by the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society for the purpose of increase in various parts of the Province, and are PROTECTED under the 'Protection of Animals Act 1873':

Hares, Rooks, Jackdaws, Pheasants, Partridges, Blackbirds, Thrushes, Australian Magpies, Californian Quails, Skylarks, Goldfinches, Brown Linnets, Green and Grey Linnets, Twites, Redpolls, Chaffinches, Bramble Finches, Yellow Hammers, Starlings, Hedge Sparrows, House Sparrows, Australian Quail, English Quail, Wonga Wonga Pigeons, Brent Geese, Mandarin Teal, Cape Barren Geese, English Wild Duck, Black and White Swans.

S.R. Farr, Hon. Sec.

Less than eight years later, (1882), the 'Small Bird Nuisance Act' was passed. Poisoned grain was made available and a bounty paid on birds' heads and eggs. The bounty provided pocket money for many country kids. On one property, poisoned grain yielded 300 birds to the acre (0.4ha).

Source: Don Pearce

More plaudits for Glenys Hansen

Glenys Hansen of "Tidsfordriv", Masterton is the 2007 winner of the Akura Conservation Centre Lifestyle Farm/Small Block Award. Glenys and her late husband Ted developed this block with tender loving care. Glenys was presented with Ducks Unlimited New Zealand's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006. We are so proud of you, Glenys!



Gardens good for people, not always good for wildlife

In a similar yet different vein to the letter above, environmental groups in Britain are launching a campaign to encourage homeowners to make their gardens more wildlife-friendly. House sparrow and song thrush numbers have halved in the past 25 years. They, along with hedgehogs, bats and stag beetles are disappearing from cities and towns at an alarming rate, conservationists warn. More and more, gardens have become extensions of the house where people entertain, rather than being a horticultural area. Impermeable surfaces such as paving for parking spaces, decks and patios create the likelihood of run-off and flooding, leaving less soil to absorb rainwater. Trees, grass and shrubs are being removed. Thus wildlife is being deprived of shelter and food. A warning for us here, perhaps?

Pick on someone your own size

About 1000 endangered Tristan Albatross chicks – about 70% of those born – are being taken by swarms of carnivorous mice on Gough Island, a British territory about 200km from the coast of South Africa. This island is the breeding ground for almost the entire world population of these rare birds. As well, scientists have discovered that common house mice which live on islands in the south Atlantic are evolving to prey upon the giant chicks of albatross which can weigh more than 10kg, about the size of a goose and other seabirds, some more than 150 times bigger than their 50-gram bodies. Oddly, the chicks seem to have no fighting instinct so let themselves be literally chewed to death by swarms of mice.

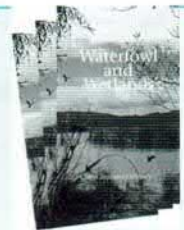
Estimates are of £5 million to rid Gough Island of its 700,000-strong mouse population and scientists fear this is not the only island in the area with this problem.

Biologists are to spend two months on one of the remote Atlantic islands to find the best way of eradicating the mice which were introduced there by passing ships in the 19th century

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

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- Jack Elliott, Pahiatua
- Garrick Rocard and Diana Annandale, Taupaki
- Clive Allen, Masterton
- Toby Clarke (Jnr), Waiuku
- Rob and Marie Burke, Gisborne
- Tawharanui Open Sanitary Society, Matakana

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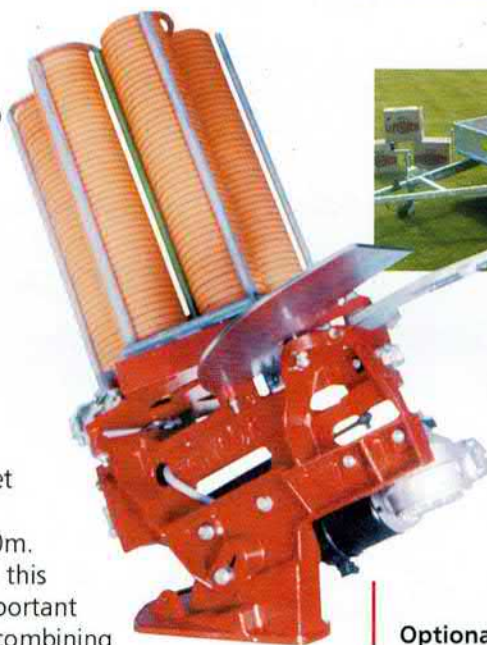
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