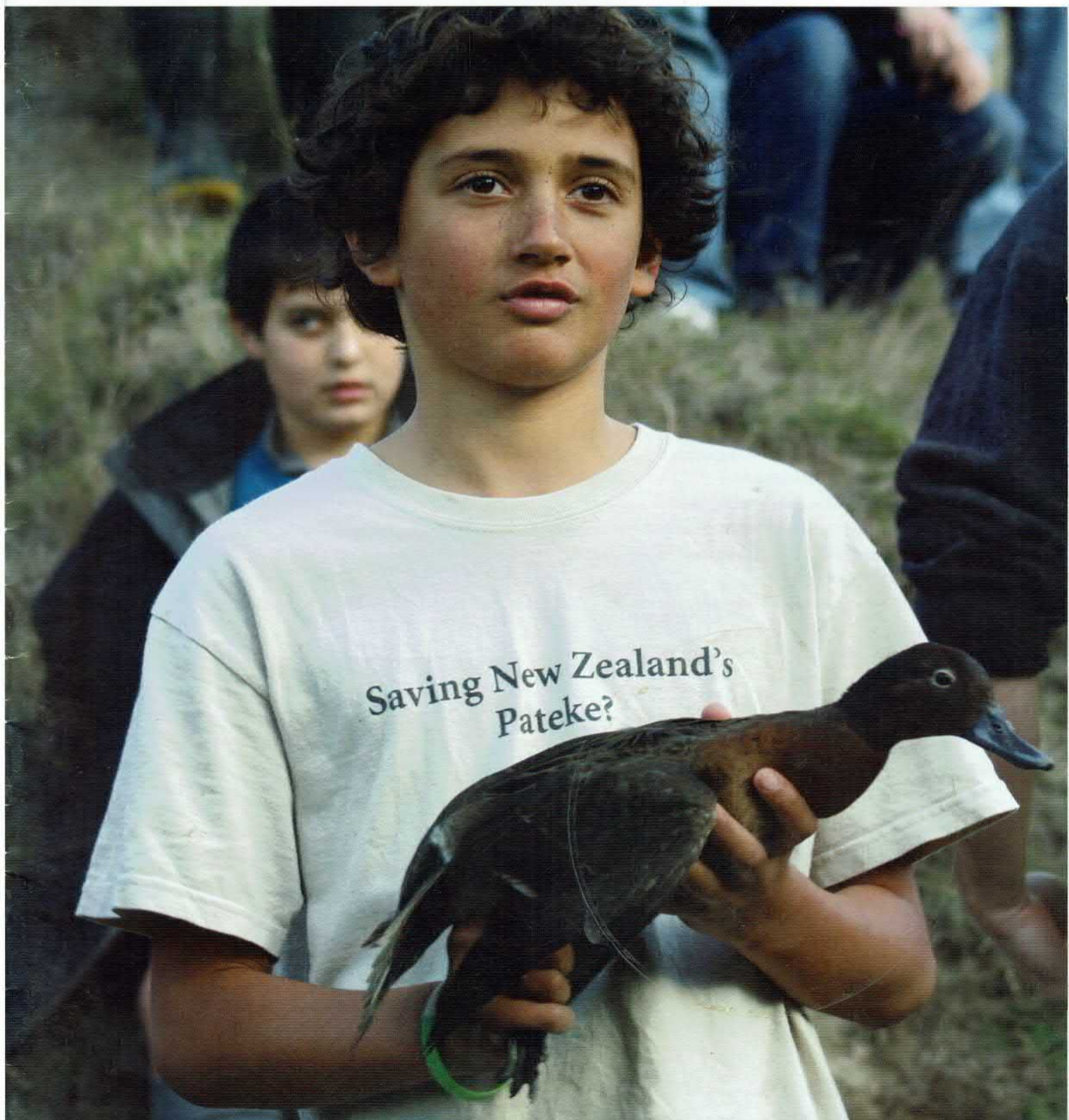


# Flight



ISSUE 140 - July 2009







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, among others:

**Tutukaka Landcare Coalition**

**Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society Inc.**

**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**

**Cape Kidnappers pateke release, 2008 and 2009**

**Fiordland pateke release, 2009**

For further information, please contact:  
William Abel - Director, Wetland Care  
New Zealand, phone 06-362 6675  
PO Box 281 Levin.

## In search of the Nankeen Night Heron - story on page 5



*Peter Frost of Whanganui took this photo of the Nankeen Night Heron in June*

## Waterfowl and Wetlands



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*William Abel sent this photo of a spoonbill from his and Jan's home, Huritini, near Foxton. William thought members might be interested in how much the loafing platform the spoonbill is on, is used. "Ducks, particularly teal use the flat bench all the time, as it keeps them safe and gets them out of the water," he says.*



# Insight

*In the past DUNZ has focused mainly on the development and enhancement of habitat for waterfowl.*

*In the Strategic Plan we developed three years ago education of the younger generation was identified as being something that should be encouraged.*

*With that in mind we brought Barbara Hanbidge out from DU Canada last year to speak at our 2008 AGM and to give us the benefit of her expertise in this area.*

*She is employed by DUC to promote conservation in schools in the Saskatchewan area and so was ideally suited to advise what to do and how to do it.*

*The article in this issue of Flight regarding the Conservation Week held at Lakeview School in Masterton is the first step in what will hopefully become part of the school curriculum.*

*The school itself has played an active part in the Henley Lake project and this is just a natural progression of that.*

*My congratulations go to the teaching staff at Lakeview for taking this bold step.*

Ross Cottle  
President



## 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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## Welcome to our new members

Kevin Stafford, Palmerston North; Karl Marwood, Taupo; Daryn Norling, Ohakune; John Batt, Foxton; Brian Hill, Whanganui; Chris Rohl, Palmerston North; Errol Harvey, Feilding; Bruce McKelvie, Palmerston North; Jeremy Dombroski, Palmerston North; Don Hamilton, Porirua; Jack Hartstone, Woodville; David James, Masterton; Ralph Fauvel, Masterton; Theresa Candy, Woodville; Rachael Candy, Palmerston North; Andy and Leanne Sherratt, Taihape; James Twigg, Papakura and Ian Stewart, Wellington.

### Welcome Back!

Karen Hayes, Upper Hutt; Viola Palmer, Waikanae and Dale Stevens, Thames.

*Cover photo shows Shaye Wilkins with a released pateke at Cape Kidnappers - photo courtesy Peter Russell*





The Wairarapa Times-Age reporter Gerald Ford produced this story on 20 May 2009 and has kindly given Flight permission to reproduce it for our readers.

## Swans reject own cygnet from group

Swan Lake in Masterton has evicted one of its native-born sons. The white or mute swan population at Henley Lake increased last year with the hatching of four cygnets, three of which still dwell there.

The fourth, however, was found weak and sickly a week ago and taken to the SPCA, after apparently being kicked out of the pool by its parents.

Masterton's Ross Cottle, national president of Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc, said that, in the wild, "apparently if a cygnet is sick, the mother will drive it away."

Cut off from the people who like to feed the birds at the lake, the young swan weakened and lost weight.

Mr Cottle's wife Sharon Stevens-Cottle noted that, "what happens in real life is that if there is not enough food around, she (the mother) will push the weakest one off. Or it could just have got on to dry land and somebody's dog has chased it."

Mr Cottle and Sharon took the bird, after it had been checked out by veterinarian John McLaren, and have re-homed it with a friend.

"It was all right, just very light, so they're feeding it up," Mr Cottle said.

The Henley Lake swans are part of a Ducks Unlimited breeding programme, to establish a managed population of the swans around New Zealand.

Mr Cottle noted the swans are "not like Canada geese which hatch seven or eight and raise seven or eight chicks every year; they're very slow breeders. In the wild they breed and the male will drive them away (to a new pond); but here because they are pinioned, they can't fly away."

For some reason most of the swans bred in captivity are male, and Mr Cottle first brought two males to the lake four years ago.

Three years ago another two birds, this time including a female, were added, and now the first generation of cygnets has hatched at the lake.

The swans come from Peacock Springs in Christchurch. "We pair them off and sell them or send them off to whoever wants them."

The Henley Lake white swan population, besides four imports and now three hatchlings, has another, free-flying pair that divide their time between the Masterton lake and other waterbodies nearby.

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## 35th Annual Ducks Unlimited

### Conference

### and dinner

### in Palmerston North

## Programme 24-26 July 2009

### Friday 24 July

7.00pm: Registration. Drinks and buffet dinner at the Armada Carvery, Kingsgate Hotel, 110 Fitzherbert Avenue, Palmerston North

### Saturday 25 July

9.00am: AGM in the Steeple at the front of the Kingsgate Hotel

### 10.00am: Morning Tea

10.30am: Bus departs for wetland tour, with visits to Mako Mako, Pahiatua, drinks and lunch at Hopelands, the home of Neil and Julie Candy, then a visit to Te Apiti Wind Farm and the Ashhurst Domain.

6.30pm: Bus departs from Kingsgate Hotel going to the Silks Room at Awapuni Conference Centre

7.00pm: Silent auction and award presentations

7.30pm: Dinner followed by main auction

### Sunday 26 July

9.30am: Guest speaker and morning tea

Members will have received the registration form in April 2009 Flight.

Queries to [info@ducks.org.nz](mailto:info@ducks.org.nz).

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# In search of the Nankeen Night Heron

*An expedition to Jerusalem/Hiruharama on the Whanganui River in June, in conjunction with Whanganui Awa School, Ranana. A report compiled by Barbara Lovatt, Ornithological Society of New Zealand, Wairarapa Regional Representative and Expedition Leader. (See Photo page 2).*

Whanganui Awa School at Ranana is on the middle reaches of the Whanganui River. The 24 pupils range from new entrants to Year 8 and are drawn from Jerusalem down to Matahiwi. As part of the school's Education Outside The Classroom, the Sole-charge Principal, Fiona Lovatt-Davis planned a Birding Experience, based at Pati Arero (the flowing tongue) Marae, at Jerusalem/Hiruharama.

For this Term's ornithological theme, Fiona's first point-of-contact was her mother, Barbara Lovatt, OSNZ Wairarapa Regional Representative, who assembled the following participants: Colin Scadden, Brian Boeson, Ngarie Chamlet and Mike Lynch, Barbara and Des Lovatt, from OSNZ Wairarapa, Peter Frost OSNZ Wanganui, and Roger and Jennifer Wasley OSNZ Rangitikei.

The birding theme was inspired by a pupil describing to Fiona how the family cat had caught a young bird. "He was a Nanking". Fiona asked around, and discovered that the pupil was referring to the Nankeen Night Heron, a bird that holds a special place amongst the river community.

## Strange History of the Nankeen Night Heron

An 1846 incident on Boulcott's outpost in the Hutt Valley involved some warriors from this area under a temporary alliance between Topine Te Mamaku and Te Rauparaha. Two hundred warriors took 11 lives that day. British authorities duly rounded up some suspects, any suspects it seems, charged them with armed rebellion and sentenced them to transportation to Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania), where they were imprisoned on Maria Island, on the East Coast. They were regarded as political prisoners rather than criminal ones and were treated moderately in those immoderate conditions. Most were given a reprieve but Te Umuroa, aged 25 years, from Jerusalem, died of tuberculosis within a few months and certainly before the pardon came through. He lay in Tasmanian soil for 142 years until he was brought home to Jerusalem, and re-interred on August 8, 1988.

With his return came the Nankeen Night Heron.

With this background history, it was a privilege for OSNZ to be invited into this community, and to experience possible sightings of this kaitiaki.

## THE EXPEDITION.

By Sunday afternoon, the group had all arrived safely up the river road, and settled in to the Old Convent. Following a convivial self-catered dinner, and an early night, they arose to a brisk frost. They walked down to the marae, for the commencement of the powhiri (welcome). Ron Hough made the traditional welcome oration in Maori, then in English, and the school pupils sang the waiata. Peter Frost then responded on the OSNZers' behalf. In his introduction he made reference to his African roots. He grew up in Zimbabwe, and his childhood memories were of the bush and the wildlife. Peter acknowledged the significance of the Nankeen Night Heron, within this community, and its kaitiaki status.

(...) At the completion of the powhiri, all adjourned to the Whare Kai which was to double as a classroom. Peter gave a

power-point presentation on Nankeen Night Herons, and herons generally.

An exciting time came, for the OSNZers, with the sighting of a Nankeen Night Heron, that had come out to sun itself in a huge old chestnut tree, adjacent to the marae. The school day was over, the pupils departed, and the OSNZers were wending their way home to the Old Convent, when Ngairie spotted it, high up in the tree, its feathering fairly glistening in the late afternoon sun. It was as if it had especially revealed itself to us. It was an awesome sight, in the true sense of that word. At 9.30 pm that night, while upstairs, in their sleeping bags, Barbara and Des heard up to five Nankeen Night Herons flying over. Barbara recognised the call, having heard it just an hour previously when listening to Peter Frost's audio tape. He had previously recorded the sound at the Nankeen Night Heron colony down river, near Kemp's Pole.

Following morning tea, the 24 pupils were buddied with the nine birders, and the groups went out to explore the environs and the birdlife. There was an animated discussion on pied stilts, seen feeding around a gravel strip in the river. Why were they pied? Well, that related to their colour. Why stilts? Well, they were like birds on stilts because they had such long legs. Learning continued to be a two-way process, with the pupils sharing their own knowledge of the birds known to them. Following Peter Frost's Powerpoint presentation on the Nankeen Night Heron, the pupil who had first spoken of the "Nanking" to Fiona, took the opportunity to share his interest in these birds with Peter.

Likewise, later, while standing under a big old tree in the grounds of the Old Convent, another pupil mentioned in conversation to Barbara that last year he had seen "a green bird flying around. When it settled on the ground I caught it, and held it in my hand. Then I let it go." He did not know its name, but when given the Field Guide to Birds of NZ he leafed through the pages and identified a Yellow-crowned Parakeet. "That's it, with that yellow bit on its head." Further discussion with other pupils, suggested other possible sightings of this bird, in the area. Before the weather closed in, on the second day, the four telescopes were set up, on different sites, again, much to the interest of the pupils, who queued up for their turn to view. In fact, 'telescope' became the buzz-word, in conversation and in art and written work, later that day. The pupils each created a thank you card which they presented to their mentors. This really touched the OSNZers' hearts, because their time with the pupils had been so special. Two memorable days ended with a final karakia before all went their separate ways.

The OSNZers had established an on-going relationship with Whanganui Awa School, in that they plan to keep contact both individually, and as the face of our OSNZ Regions. To foster the pupils on-going appreciation and observations of the birds in their area, the OSNZers could possibly return in early 2010 for a more intense short course for those pupils having a particular interest in birds. This could be extra-curricular, similar to the music lessons given by Sister Margaret-Mary, but confined to a weekend or mid-week, after school. The OSNZers personally donated bird-related books, and plan to donate further books for the school's library, on behalf of OSNZ.



# Lakeview School, Masterton, Learning Outside the Classroom Week





## Wonderful Wetlands "Kids and Wetlands Go Together"

In the first week in May a class of seven and eight-year-olds from Lakeview School in Masterton undertook a week-long LEOTC - Learning Experiences Outside the Classroom - programme at the wetland adjacent to the school, Henley Lake.

The unit was the first of a school-wide undertaking to utilise the local resource as a learning base. It is intended that other classes will follow the study, using various themes, depending on age level, such as the study of flax, predators to the wetland, conservation, pollution.

The focus for this class was to learn about some of the wetland birds that visit this wetland, become more aware of some of the plants that support wetland life, study a few of the trees that are good for wetlands, do some maintenance on the school's native stand, and generally have fun in the process.

The week was broken up into five main themes: Monday-wetland birds; Tuesday-wetland plants; Wednesday-wetland trees; Thursday-care of the trees; Friday-evaluation and fun; The next Monday - duck cooking!

The teacher, Mrs Sue Singh, wanted the children not only to learn something about their environment, but to appreciate the wonderful asset that was right at their back door, and to appreciate the work that many had put in to creating this resource for them to enjoy.

On Monday, Jim Campbell talked to the children about some of the birds that visit this wetland, such as the Canada goose, the paradise shelduck and the scaup. He demonstrated some of the different calls they make with his duck-calling skills. The class then went into the field to identify different birdlife. A worksheet provided a focus for the children's learning. Along the way the children were able to get answers to their many thoughtful questions with a hands-on expert.

In the afternoon the children were then given a sketching activity to do, an observational drawing.

On Tuesday, Trevor Thompson came to talk to the children about wetland plants. Out in the field he took them to different plants and told them little snippets about what made each one special. As an activity he gave them each a paint catalogue colour sample, and the children had to find something that matched that exact colour. Trevor talked to the class about how strong the leaf of the lacebark was, and was promptly urged to make a pair of shoelaces for one of the students.

On Wednesday the weather was torrential so it was timely that the class had a chance to stay indoors and make birds' nests for mallard ducks.

Another activity was for the children to work in their groups of three, and to discuss what the difference was between a duck and a goose. They came up with some very thoughtful and intelligent points!

On Thursday, Tenick Dennison, a local stalwart and driving force behind the development of Henley Lake, came along to school to talk about his passion, birds that visit the wider wetland zone. He brought along pictures which showed the children special adaptation features, and held their attention for an hour.

Then, in the field, the class set off on a walkabout to learn more from observation of other wetland birds, such as the pied stilt and the pukeko. He also showed them a crafty way to attract birds by rubbing a small piece of polystyrene against a jar. At morning tea time the class was joined by Robin Carlyon, another enthusiastic local and a retired school Principal. Robin has been part of the local team that has motivated Masterton schools to take ownership of a plot around the lake and plant native trees. Robin's brief was to get the children to revisit the school's site, the lesson here being that they must take care of the trees they plant.

The children were most enthusiastic and weeded the designated area.

Friday was to be Fun Day! Sue wanted to start with an evaluation of the week by assessing what the children had learned. She would compare this to the pre-assessment work the class had done the previous Friday, by charting what they already knew about wetlands, what they wanted to learn, and what did they think a wetland was.

After the evaluation the class trooped down to where the Ducky Derby was to take place. The Ducky Duo, Ross Cottle and Jim Campbell, had organised enough ducks for everyone and chosen the ideal course. The children were each given a number and their duck, and they were off! Much cheering was heard under the poplar canopy. The first three placegetters received a chocolate fish and their photo taken, and every participant was awarded a chocolate sprat! )

Back to the meeting area for a very welcome sausage sizzle. The Duck Derby had developed an appetite... Yum!

To culminate the very exciting week the class watched 'Fly Away Home', a story about some Canada geese that imprinted on to a little girl, featuring our Kiwi actress, Anna Paquin. The class was captivated, a pleasant way to end lots of activity, talking and learning.

On the following Monday a duckshooting Dad provided a duck, plucked and ready to cook. The children looked on the Internet for recipes and hints on roasting duck, which was cooked in the staffroom oven.

The teacher, Sue Singh, had accessed resources from the internet, from the Regional Council, and from DoC. And, of course, tapping into local Ducks Unlimited experts. She also spent many hours during the holidays taking photos, making worksheets and collecting equipment for the weeks work. All this would be put into a resource box for Sue's three colleagues to use with their classes later on in the year.



## Cape Kidnappers pateke release May 2009

These photos were taken at the Cape Kidnappers on Friday 15 May 2009 release of pateke. Here are some of the volunteers and captive-breeders present at the event - story on page 12.



*Bev Rennie*



*Rose Mohi*



*Diane Wilkins*



*Brearna Elers*



Photo left shows Sharon Kast at the Cape Kidnappers pateke release. She is an enthusiastic committee member of the Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society Inc, known as TOSSI, which was created to help the Open Sanctuary become a reality through fundraising and volunteer work. TOSSI works in partnership with the Auckland Regional Council on this project.





*Perry Cameron of South Wairarapa Rotary with a flax plant ready to plant.*



*The willing volunteers at Wairio planting day. Photos courtesy Amanda Cosgrove of DoC and Liz Patchett of Pirinoa.*



## Wairio Wetland Planting Day in June

Our planned June planting day was easily completed, thanks to a good attendance and a sunny day after the Queen's Birthday snowstorms.

How about: 370 plants into the ground, a social sausage sizzle (courtesy of Greater Wellington), and all away by 1pm!

Whilst Howard Egan, the DUNZ planting coordinator, didn't count heads, the features he noticed were: the best ever attendance by our DOC partners, great support by Greater Wellington Regional Council staff, Pirinoa Primary School pupils, teachers and parents out in force (with the children proudly showing their mates where they had worked last year) and a Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre gang who worked really well as always.

Forest & Birders, Rotarians and DU stalwarts, including some who drove from Otaki (Ian) and the Hutt Valley (Huia and Karen) were also there. And there was even a bittern at the Stage 1 site on the new water's edge.

Karen Hay commented, "We headed off this morning expecting a half dozen or so people spending all day digging and planting with clean up in the dark ... were most impressed by the turnout."

Highlights for Karen: "The kids from the Pirinoa school were a treat ... they were very enthusiastic, looking for direction and happy to pitch in ... there was a very positive attitude and good behaviour. And the parents and teachers were all in there too. Fab! And a sausage in bread finished off with a cuppa ... at lunchtime! It was worth taking the day off work!"

A huge thank you to very one who helped and especially a very large thank you to Howard for all your hard work in getting everything prepared and to Don Bell from GWRC who gave the youngsters a run down on planting best practice!

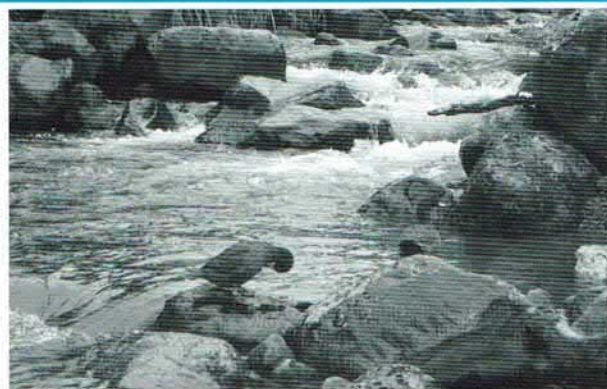
Stage 3 was fenced off in April and the tall fescue will be sprayed out in the spring and autumn as part of an experiment on fescue control, critical to newly-planted trees getting away to a good start.

Additionally, "There will be release spraying at Stages 1 & 2 in the early spring, but this is to be contracted out unless we get skilled volunteers," advised Howard.



## Whio news

*Tongariro Forest whio - from DoC*



*Tongariro whio from 2006*

Tongariro Forest is a 20,000ha forest in the central North Island located to the northwest of Mt Ruapehu. Tongariro Forest is bordered by three main rivers (Whakapapa, Whanganui and Mangatepopo), all of which hold high numbers of whio. Tongariro Forest is one of eight security sites identified in the National Whio Recovery Plan (2007) as a priority for whio management.

In 2004 an intensive five-year project began, investigating the impacts of predator control on the whio population. Predation by stoats is almost undoubtedly the number one threat to whio. Other threats include rats and ferrets.

For the first two years of the project just monitoring occurred (no management). In the third year of the project (2006) an aerial 1080 operation occurred throughout Tongariro Forest. In 2007 lines of predator traps were placed along the river banks to provide further protection from stoats.

Over the winter an additional 250 traps were installed in the security site, meaning 30km of river and 36 pairs of whio are now protected.

The Ruapehu 2008/09 season has turned out to be another bumper season for chick production and survival. After a slow start 75 chicks hatched (including four successfully hatched in captivity).

This is triple the number produced prior to predator control being implemented, meaning the local whio population has more than doubled since 1998 – a huge outcome for blue duck nationally.

Two blue duck contractors are employed from September to February (the whio breeding season).

They monitor the whio population and check the 600 or so predator traps. The majority of birds in the population have colour bands for identification.

DoC is now also micro-chipping the birds as a permanent way of marking them, as the colour bands can wear through and fall off after a few years in the harsh river environment.

## New Zealand endangered birds status re-assessed

The Department of Conservation reports that the re-assessment of the conservation status of New Zealand's birds has revealed both losses and gains. The review was undertaken by a panel of experts, to help identify those species most in need of help.

Of the 428 taxa (species and subspecies) assessed, 77 were considered 'Threatened' and 93 'At Risk'. The assessments are undertaken every three years by a panel currently led by Dr Colin Miskelly of DoC.

### Pateke officially listed as Recovering

"The threat classification system was revised in 2008, making it difficult to compare these results directly with those from 2005," Dr Miskelly said. "For the first time we have a category 'Recovering' for those taxa that have responded well to conservation management. These included little spotted kiwi, Pycroft's petrel, brown teal known as pateke, variable oystercatcher, and North and South Island saddleback. These birds all have populations greater than 1000 individuals and are increasing, and it is great to be able to recognise these success stories. "Of more concern is that all 21 bird taxa assessed as 'Nationally

Critical' in 2005 remain in that most threatened category, along with three additional species that are declining rapidly: grey duck, eastern rockhopper penguin and grey-headed mollymawk.

High profile 'Nationally Critical' species include two types of kiwi, kakapo, takahe, black robin, fairy tern, black stilt and Chatham Island taiko.

Overall, 19 taxa have improved their status, and 13 have declined. Those that have declined are mainly seabirds, and birds that use riverbeds and rough farmland. The main agents of decline for these taxa are fisheries by-catch, changes in oceanic productivity near breeding islands, and changes in land-use, particularly conversion of sheep farms to dairy production.

*Further information is contained in the article:*

*Miskelly, C.M.; Dowding, J.E.; Elliott, G.P.; Powlesland, R.G.; Robertson, H.A.; Sagar, P.M.; Scofield, R.P.; Taylor, G.A. 2008. Conservation status of New Zealand birds, 2008. Notornis 55: 117-135.*

## Saving whio on the Styx River in the Hokitika Area

A conservation project to protect New Zealand's endangered whio is happening in a popular tramping and hunting destination 40 minutes by car from Hokitika. The longterm goal is to establish a population of 30 breeding pairs throughout the catchments centred on the Styx Valley.

The project's foundation was a generous bequest from the Knuckey estate in 2003 for conservation work. In November 2004 rangers put 144 predator tunnels along the walking track adjacent to the river to protect eggs and ducklings from introduced predators such as stoats, rats and ferrets. Then the difficult work of locating, catching and banding birds began so that breeding can be accurately monitored.

If any readers are visiting the Styx Valley on a tramping or hunting trip they might like to keep an eye out for whio. Do everything possible to avoid disturbing them but let us know where and when you see them. Take a note of how many you see, where they are and the time of day. You can use the online report form or phone the Hokitika Area Office to report the sightings.

*Phone the Hokitika Area Office for more information on Styx blue duck:*  
*Hokitika Area Office*

*Phone: +64 3 756 9100*

*Email: westcoast@doc.govt.nz*

### Oparara blue duck

Whio are being carefully monitored for the Oparara Blue Duck Protection Programme. The Oparara and its tributaries are one of the few strongholds for South Island whio. The river system once supported a significant whio population, making it an ideal spot for a recovery programme. It is located deep in Kahurangi National Park, Karamaea; a diverse environment, providing the habitats for species such as great spotted kiwi, short tailed bats and giant land snails.

In 2002 Solid Energy agreed to sponsor the extensive predator and bird monitoring programme along the Oparara Valley. 42km of stoat trap lines have been established adjacent to sections of the river where whio were known to live. The traps are targeting stoats and rats, key players in whio predation. Coupled with this pest control, the DoC team are monitoring the breeding success of the whio. Adult birds are banded and backpack like transmitters attached.

DoC rangers can then keep a close eye on the whio's movements and patterns. If nesting is observed, the site is located and regularly checked until the ducks have hatched and reached a suitable size for banding.

Since May 2003, this project has been one of the 'virtual fieldtrips' offered to schools as part of the LEARNZ online education programme. Students can take part in audio conferences with DoC staff and log on to the daily website updates of video footage, photos and work taking place.

If you are visiting Kahurangi National Park on a tramping or hunting trip you might like to keep an eye out for whio. Do everything possible to avoid disturbing them but let us know where and when you see them. Take a note of how many you see, where they are and the time of day. You can use the online report form or phone the Buller Area Office on +64 3 788 8008 to report the sightings.

*Phone the Buller Area office for more information on Oparara blue duck:*

*Buller - Kawatiri Area Office*

*Phone: +64 3 788 8008*

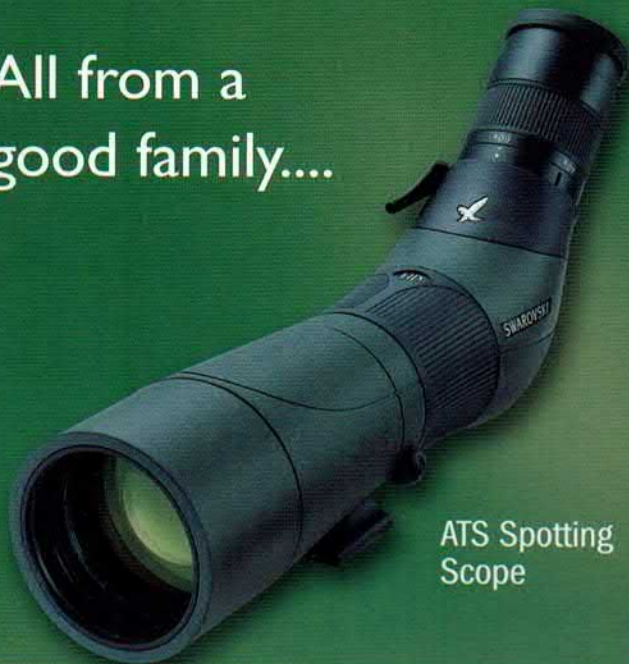
*Email: buller@doc.govt.nz*

*Full office details*

View the Oparara whio project report 2006 (PDF, 548K)



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## Cape Kidnappers and Ocean Beach Wildlife Preserve host to 60 more pateke in May

Sixty captive-bred pateke were released at the 2400ha Cape Kidnappers and Ocean Beach Wildlife Preserve in May, with the help of Banrock Station Wines and Wetland Care New Zealand and many enthusiastic conservation volunteers.

Situated on the famous Hawkes Bay headland and guarded by 9.6km of predator-proof fence, it is the biggest ecological restoration project in New Zealand, and is unique in this country as an ecological preserve, in that farming, forestry, a tourist lodge and a golf course continue to operate inside the fence.

This year the pateke were released on several different dams within the Preserve. After a number of 2008-released pateke were lost from outside the Preserve's fence, it was decided that the 2009 release would investigate whether wing clipping a proportion of the birds would assist with retaining a core population within the safety of the Preserve. Consequently, half the released birds this year were wing-clipped.

Wetland Care New Zealand Director and Pateke Recovery Group member Ossie Latham said the intensive predator control and new duck-friendly plantings around the ponds would give the pateke a good chance of survival.

"This proved true last year and the ongoing improvement in habitat bodes well for the long term establishment of pateke on the Cape," he said.

Mr Latham said he was very pleased that Banrock Station Wines had continued to support Wetland Care and the Pateke Recovery Programme.

"Their contribution to this project enables each bird to wear a transmitter so that they can be tracked and if survival rates continue to improve, further releases are planned.

"This would be a happy result for the Cape Kidnappers landowners and for the biodiversity of the Hawkes Bay region," he said.

Banrock Station Wines has a longterm commitment to global conservation and has committed more than AU\$5 million from sales of Banrock Station wines to 60 projects around the world to date. Banrock Stations wetland restoration program led to the Wine & Wetland Centre being listed as a wetland of international importance in 2002 under the international Ramsar Convention. Proceeds from Banrock Station wines sold in New Zealand are given to Wetland Care New Zealand, who, in partnership with Banrock, supports the Pateke Recovery Programme and other wetland restoration projects throughout New Zealand. To date, Banrock Station Wines have donated over \$250,000 to support 20 projects around New Zealand.

### Monitoring news at Cape Kidnappers

There has been very little movement of pateke in the first month, similar to the first 2008 release. One flew out to the coast to Rangaiika wetland area but has since returned; one female moved from an outer dam to join those on the main Release Dam; and two (a male and female) have joined the lonesome male out at the Te Awanga Lagoon.

Jenny Ricketts, a student from Massey University, is monitoring the 2009 cohort of pateke. As well as investigating dispersal and habitat selection in translocated pateke, Jenny is also looking at feeder use. Being primarily nocturnal it is unknown whether feeders facilitate the transition of captive-bred pateke to the wild. Each pateke has a small PIT tag inserted under the skin. Data loggers positioned above each feeder detect the PIT tag and therefore record the coming and goings of each pateke. This research is showing that in the early days feeder use by all the pateke is high.

One afternoon Jenny tracked the missing pateke out of the Preserve to the lagoon to find the opportunist pateke trio being fed bread on the bank by a happy two-year-old child, along with a number of other ducks. Of last year's release the known data suggests that 60% of the birds are still surviving. One pair produced seven ducklings in early October with all seven seen regularly. An unbanded pateke has also been sighted on the Te Awanga Lagoon, and another one on a dam elsewhere, suggesting there may have been other ducklings raised that have otherwise not been recorded.

Progress reports on the other species released at the Preserve are also positive. Robin, whitehead, rifleman, and tomtit, reintroduced over the last two years continue to flourish.

There are plans for releases of red-crowned parakeet/kakariki, fluttering shearwater, saddleback/tieke, and takahe.

Managers and volunteers maintain a network of 1300 traps and thousands of poison bait stations in a 50m x 100m network. As a result predator numbers

within the predator-proof fenceline have fallen to nearly zero.

### Pateke captive Breeding Programme

The Pateke captive breeding network is made up of 20 volunteer facilities made up of a mixture of private breeders and zoological institutions, each breeding birds for release into the wild each year, and with around 150 birds collectively being produced with an estimated rearing cost of around \$450 each, this is a substantial contribution to the conservation of this species. So far the reintroduction program has successfully established a new wild population of pateke into Moehau Cormandel and begun completely new flocks at Cape Kidnappers in the Hawkes Bay, Tutukaka near Whangarei and the Karori Sanctuary in Wellington. As part of its support of the Pateke Recovery Group Programme, Banrock Station Wines has help fund these releases as well.



## Cape Kidnappers pateke update late June

There have now been four Pateke casualties with in The Preserve this month. These are the first losses to actually happen within the protected area. Last year all occurred outside the fenced area.

One was found killed on the road, presumably by a vehicle. Three were killed by an unknown predator, probably a ferret, possibly a cat. This is the first known incursion of a predator since eradication began but is always possible given that for reasons of the requirement for public access a "Leaky System" has to be tolerated. The two points of entry, Ocean Beach and the Cape Road, are not sealed but rather intensively trapped.

The deaths all happened in a very short space of time and now appear to have stopped. Despite a very immediate and intensive trapping defence being established in the vicinity nothing was caught. It is possible that the culprit has been terminated by secondary poisoning as a result of intensive rabbit eradication being carried out at that time. Perhaps it has moved elsewhere in The Preserve or vacated entirely.

Dr John McLennan points out that this is frustrating. Of the four major attacks on kiwi elsewhere that he has observed the culprits were never found either. Without a successful capture it remains to be seen just how effective the response can be.

Only time will tell.



# A Gisborne Ramble Farm Forestry

- contributed by John Dermer of Feilding

Six o'clock on a Saturday morning in late April and we left Cheltenham to travel to Gisborne for the annual New Zealand Farm Forestry Conference. These conferences are annual affairs hosted by one of our 28 branches throughout New Zealand. They usually alternate between the North and South Island. This time we were hosted by the Gisborne branch, with the theme 'Trees for all reasons'.

The morning was still and clear. So still that only one of the wind turbines on the Tararua and Ruahine ranges was turning. A very rare event, which explains why so many are being built there. Woodville was covered in fog, which reminded me of the years I spent in the hills behind Neil and Julie Candy's where we looked down on the fog in the valley and felt pleased to be higher up.

The autumn colours are wonderful at this time of year so the drive was very pleasant. We stopped briefly at Lake Tutira to stretch the legs, where a very tame black swan greeted us, a quick cuppa at Wairoa, where hundreds of parries were enjoying a post-maize harvest bonanza, and we were in Gisborne by twelve o'clock.

The usual conference format is for two days of meetings with an opening dinner and guest speaker the first night, and an awards dinner the second. This year Dr. Hamish Campbell from the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences was the guest speaker, talking about the geology of the East Coast region. The Hon David Carter addressed us on this second night. He was there to get a drought committee going in Gisborne, but like many others, arrived rather wet as the drought seemed to have broken with a vengeance.

With the meetings behind us, 300 of us got onto buses and off to explore the East Coast. Our first field day took us up the coast through Tolaga Bay and Tokomaru Bay, to the Tapuaeroa Valley behind Ruatoria.

The easterly was only just clearing enough for 150 of us to clamber onto four-wheel drive vehicles and head up the Waiorongomai river. About 15 4x4s all in a line astern like Diny's Pekin ducks, with a bulldozer clearing the way. This river is similar to many others in this area. It is full of eroded argillite material washed down from the eroding gullies. From the look of the buried trees, the gully used to be deeply incised but years of erosion have filled it, so it is now about 300m wide, and the water is a dirty grey-brown.

From the top of a hill on the western side we were able, when the easterly murk cleared, to see the source of much of this erosion: Barton's Gully - a 90ha area of blue-grey argillite which is totally bare of vegetation. This is four times the size of the better-known Tarndale slip and looked awesome in the gloomy light. There was the chance to plant and control this beast in about 1920 but conservation was not on the farming agenda then. The whole Waiorongomai catchment, 3700ha in extent, is now planted with help from the East Coast Forestry project and other covenants, so hopefully erosion should slow. Barton's Gully is in the 'too hard basket' as no vegetation can hang onto its steep eroding walls.

Just to highlight the problem faced in this area: since the late 1950s there has been an approximate 27% net increase in gully erosion across the region - 10,000ha (100sq km). That means that 40 years ago most of this would have been productive pasture but has now degraded to the point where it has to be retired from farming and converted back to forest cover. The rising river beds mean bridges have to be replaced about every 20 years at a cost of approximately \$480,000 each. Sediment yields from these gullies into the Waiapu, Waipaoa

and Uawa rivers, and thence into the ocean, is 55 million tons per year. In an attempt to address this, the government funded the East Coast Forestry project (ECFP) in 1992 which is four years after Cyclone Bola knocked the whole region for six. This scheme plans to plant 200,000 ha of eroding land in the Gisborne area.

So far, 33,000ha have been planted and another 7000ha approved, but this seems pretty inadequate when you see the scale of the problem. Still, I guess any attempt to be proactive and get closed canopy forest into the area is better than the usual 'ambulance at the bottom of the cliff' approach. Only closed canopy forest, exotic or indigenous, will hold this land, and the distance from markets make radiata marginally economic at best.

The next day's field trip was to Nick's Head station. This is now owned by John Griffin, a New York financier, who bought it in 2002 after a long battle with the Overseas Investment Commission. This was resolved when a comprehensive management plan was drawn up which includes a major wetland restoration, replanting of native trees, and QEII covenants to protect iconic sites on the headland.

This famous place in our history was also the landing place for the great migration canoe Horouta around 1350, and many signs of their early occupation remain. Unfortunately we did not see the wetland development which is still going flat out, but the plan looked impressive and the cost, \$90,000 per fortnight, must indicate he is building a good one! The station also runs a predator-control programme and employs a man fulltime to carry it out.

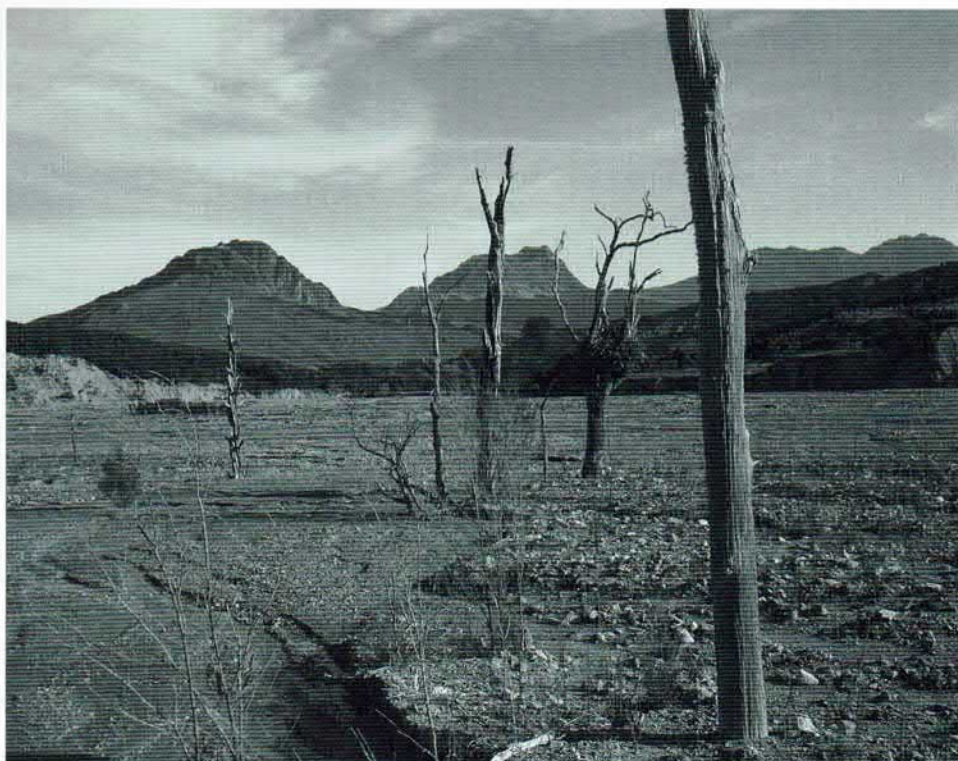
We will watch developments here with great interest.

I wonder what the Southland branch can show us next year? We can't wait to see.

The NZFFA has a web site: [www.nzffa.org.nz](http://www.nzffa.org.nz) if anyone wants to know more about the organisation.

Footnote: Why write an article about land use and forestry in a magazine like Flight? The answer is that Ducks Unlimited is basically a conservation-oriented organisation, in spite of its misleading name, and the issues I have written about here are conservation issues. Wise land use is, or should be, of paramount importance to the many farmer members of our organisation, and highlighting the dire consequences if we get it wrong should be of interest to us all.

*Below: this photo, courtesy of DoC, Gisborne, was taken in the Waiorongomai River where Barton's Gully joins the river. The shot is looking down the river at Mt Aorangi (middle) and Mt Hikurangi on the right.*





## What the...????



Tony and Bets Simpson of Bonny Glen sent us this funny little story. Out on a stroll Bets spied a 'stray' sheep - but not a sheep - a Cape Barren goose, the first one the Simpsons have seen at their place. Bets niftily recorded this on her camera. Apparently he/she spent several weeks on the farm.



## WANTED



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## Karori Wildlife Sanctuary

### re-named Zealandia with spectacular new website

The Karori Sanctuary Experience in Wellington is delighted to launch its brand new website [www.visitzealandia.com](http://www.visitzealandia.com).

"The website has some exciting new features," said senior marketing coordinator Al Dicks.

"The Visitors' Vids section enables wannabe David Attenboroughs to share videos of their animal encounters. The Visit Planner provides suggestions of what to see and do. The Online Tour Booking facility. And the Species Factfiles on our weird and wonderful wildlife.

Some of the things we'd like to look at down the track include a Tui's Twitter with daily updates on what the wildlife is up to in our sanctuary; a live-streaming 'bird cam' (so people in the Northern Hemisphere can keep an eye on our kiwi while we sleep!) and a Trade & Media Photo Gallery. Watch this space!"

ZEALANDIA is managed by the internationally-acclaimed Karori Sanctuary Trust. Previously known as Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, the new name was launched in late 2008 by Prime Minister John Key.

ZEALANDIA is one of the best places to see New Zealand's endangered native wildlife in its natural environment. Less than ten minutes from central Wellington, it was also the first urban conservation project of its kind anywhere in the world when it opened in 1995.

A new state-of-the-art exhibition centre is due to open in April 2010. In 2008, Tourism Industry Association of New Zealand awarded the Karori Sanctuary Trust the Conservation in Action Award and in early 2009, they were voted one of the top 25 eco-restoration projects in Australasia by the Global Restoration Network and the Ecological Society of Australia.

## Loss of genetic diversity and inbreeding in New Zealand's threatened bird species

By Ian G. Jamieson, *Science for Conservation* 293. 59 p.

### What's it about?

This report summarises findings from a five-year research project (2003-2007) investigating the extent of loss of genetic diversity and inbreeding across various New Zealand threatened birds. Introduced predators and habitat loss are impacting on many New Zealand native species, but many species also have exceptionally low genetic diversity as a consequence of persisting in small and isolated populations. Research indicated that temporary bottlenecks associated with founder events during translocations do not contribute as much to loss of genetic variation as the small, finite population sizes of island sites. The build-up of inbreeding within closed island populations can result in further reductions in individual fitness.

There is evidence of moderate inbreeding depression in a reintroduced population of North Island robin (*Petroica australis longipes*) on Tiritiri Matangi, and weak inbreeding depression in takahe (*Porphyrio mantelli*) translocated to offshore islands. To what extent reduced individual fitness translates to reduced population growth rates depends on the frequency of close inbreeding, the magnitude of inbreeding depression and which life history traits (i.e. fecundity versus survival) are most affected.

Genetic management of New Zealand threatened species should not take priority over other management concerns such as controlling predators or improving habitat quality, but it does need more attention than it currently receives. Recommendations for genetic management emulating from this research should not be viewed in isolation, but considered alongside other contributing factors to help inform management decisions. Moreover, the maintenance of genetic diversity should become a fundamental component in long-term management strategies for threatened species in New Zealand.

The above new publication is now in press and can be downloaded from:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/science-and-technical/sfc293entire.pdf> (630 KB)

It is also available to download in parts (smaller file sizes):

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/science-and-technical/sfc293.pdf> (380 KB)

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/science-and-technical/sfc293a.pdf> (265 KB)





*"I am committed to this! I have always thought that DU does a great job!" says Jay Robertson, above, when offering this generous raffle prize.*

## Wonderful DU Raffle Prize

Kevin Campbell, organiser of this year's Ducks Unlimited raffle, has received from Jay Robertson of the Cape Kidnappers and Ocean Beach Wildlife Preserve a wonderful donation to the raffle prize, two nights' accommodation for two people, at The Farm at Cape Kidnappers, which also includes pre-dinner drinks, dinner and breakfast daily,

along with full use of all the lodge facilities (except golf). This generous donation is worth \$5,355.00.

The prize is valid from November 2009 to November 2010, excepting December 15 - January 10), and is will prove a highly sought-after draw.

**Oh, wouldn't it be lovely? The Farm, Cape Kidnappers, for two, for two nights.**

**Buy the raffle tickets - be in to win!**

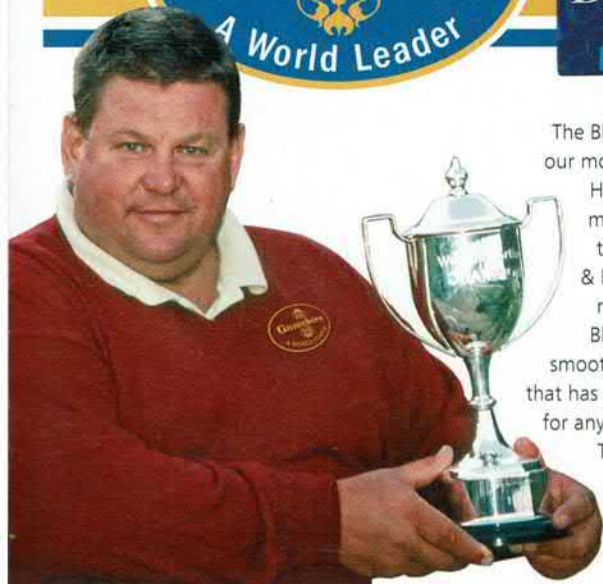
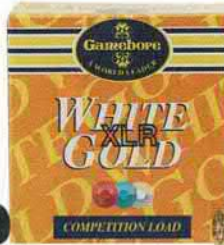


On the exterior, the Lodge resembles a cluster of farm buildings - hence the name. Local materials are incorporated into graciously-scaled rooms full of natural light and unexpected treasures. Comfort and ease are at a premium, with each room taking on a character of its own while harkening back to the rural feeling of the New Zealand sheep station and wine country. Spacious cottages, each with breathtaking views, open to large porches overlooking a stunning Pacific panorama. The cottages feature calm colours and materials that suggest a traditional rural farm, yet contain all the modern amenities one could wish for. The Lodge



offers two dining rooms and a covered loggia featuring a gourmet a la carte menu. Private dining and room service are available on request. Other rooms within the Lodge include a lounge/living room, library which can be used as a private meeting room, intimate sitting room, wine cellar, tasting room and a computer room.





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Blue Diamond (Fibre Wad)	28gm	1400fps	8
White Gold Original	24gm	1400fps	7½, 9
White Gold Original	28gm	1400fps	7½, 8, 9
<b>Black Gold</b>	28gm	1500fps	7½
20g Competition	24gm	1350fps	7½, 8



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