

Flight



ISSUE 147 - April 2011



**Inside: 2011 Conference
and AGM.**



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.

Central to Wetland Care New Zealand's mission is forming partnerships with people and organisations with similar aims. Money from our partnership with Banrock Station Wines 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:
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PO Box 281 Levin.

Ducks Unlimited

Dinner/AGM 2011

Conference Venue Gateway Motor Lodge, Masterton

Easter - April 22 – 24 (Friday to Sunday)

Good Friday April 22.

1pm Walk around Henley Lake.

Followed by BBQ at Ross and Sharon Cottles place, Manaia Rd, RD 5 (just down the road).

Saturday April 23.

9am. AGM at the Gateway Motor Lodge

Followed by a Bus Trip, two choices available:

1. Down to Wairio wetland to see progress over the last four years, then onto Martinborough for lunch. OR

2. Bus to Paua Factory in Carterton followed by a tour of the Richmond Gardens an Italian styled garden. Then onto Martinborough to team up with the other tour for lunch.

Dinner and Auction at the Gateway Motor Lodge.

Sunday April 24

10am Morning tea and speaker at Gateway.

Cost: Full Registration Includes:

Friday afternoon walk and BBQ, AGM, Saturday Night Dinner and Sunday Speaker \$70

Plus Bus Trip Wairio and Lunch \$50 = Total \$120

OR Paua Factory Gardens and Lunch \$80 = Total \$150

OR Dinner only \$45.

Book accommodation through Sandra. Email info@ducks.org.nz

Accommodation: - rooms booked first come first serve. Please do not contact the Hotels directly, any correspondence through Sandra. Email: info@ducks.org.nz

The Gateway has only 10 rooms:

6 standard rooms @ \$142 per night

4 double size so bring the family along @\$185 per night

Or 100 metres north is the Chardonnay with 9 rooms @ \$110.00 p/n

Or 150 metres further north Solway Park which will take overflow.

Please include your \$50 deposit in your conference registration payment.

New members

John de Bueger of New Plymouth

Harvey Verwaayen of Dannevirke

Sable Fine Hair Ltd, Wellington

From the President

Those of you on email will have been reminded that conference this year is being held over Easter as opposed to the usual July to avoid the disruption caused by visitors for the Rugby World Cup.

We have tried to make the programme a smorgasbord as opposed to a fixed menu. You can pick and choose which parts you attend, according to your taste and time available. We also hope to create a relaxed time for those able to attend. Starting on Good Friday there is a walk around Henley Park at 1pm for those who can be there, with a barbeque at the Cottles in the evening. On Saturday two tours are on offer to cover difference interests.

Please give Easter in Masterton thought if you have not already done so. We would love to see you there whether you are a regular or a first timer.

The earlier conference inevitably forces me to reflect on what we have achieved since July last year. I think the biggest decision made by the Board has been to employ a person, half-time initially, to manage our drive to increase awareness of Wetland Care and Ducks Unlimited. A job description has been drafted and is presently receiving a professional review as to its drafting and how to get the best person for the position. If that is completed in time for this issue we will try to include it. It will be on our website so please look for it there. It would be great if one of our members was the right person for the job.

There have been other changes. After years of sterling service Sandra Pipes is stepping down as administrative assistant to take up a new position. Sandra has done a great job and her efforts are greatly appreciated. She will be at conference this year (and we hope in future years). Her role is being picked up by Jan Abel who will be known to many of you.

The other change is to this magazine. This is the first issue by Liz Brook who has taken over from Gail Isaacs. Gail felt with her increased family commitments she could no longer do the job justice. I think Gail deserves our heartfelt thanks; being editor is not an easy task (Liz, don't read that bit!). Hope to see you in Masterton.

David Smith
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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Cover Photo: Sinbad the Kakapo –an amazing bird. He doesn't swim or even fly, but he is special. Story page 10.
Photo: Shane McInnes.

9am at Bayview Wairakei Resort, Taupo.

Welcome:

The President, Ross Cottle, welcomed members to the 36th Annual General Meeting.

Apologies:

Kevin and Vietta Campbell, Alan Wilks, Ossie Latham, Glenys Hansen, Shirley Jenkins, Liz Brook, Jim Campbell, Nancy Payne, Chris Bindon, Dave and Ann Johnston, Chris Cant, Jim Bicknell, Vynnie Smith, Janet Denny, John Dermer, Megan and Tommy Cushman, Lorraine Jensen, Mike Connole, Graham Gurr, Ian & Dawn Pirani, Susan Kerry, Mark Grace.

Motion: The apologies tendered are accepted.

Moved: John Bishop. Seconded: David Smith. Carried

Minutes of the last AGM:

Circulated in Flight No144 and copies available at the AGM.

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

Moved: James Martin. Seconded: Ian Jensen. Carried.

Matters arising from the 2009 minutes: There were no matters arising.

Presidents Report: Ross Cottle

As circulated in Flight No 144 summarise.

Outgoing President Ross Cottle handed the meeting over to the new President David Smith. Huge thanks to Ross for a wonderful job done, with the help of his wife Sharon.

New Presidents Report: David Smith

He welcomed Li Camilleri of Constellation and Amanda Moss of Banrock Station Wines.

Also Michelle Cooper, our webmaster who will be giving a presentation on Sunday.

Those supports are what help us to continue to do the work we do.

Sid Bronger died early March 2010, he was a founding member and director, very involved in breeding ducks with his wife June. He put in considerable work and this parting is noted with sorrow.

How is Ducks going to move forward in the future? Numbers are well down across the world and we have to try new initiatives, board tries various things, if they don't work try something else. New position – brand support; we're working on job description now. For someone who will be part-time, revitalise the membership and get support from the corporate sector of society and raise awareness of DUNZ. Half our membership hunt and are conservations and the other are just conservations. Support from society as a shooting society we will not precede. Profile through wetland care, DU as the hands on. Change of emphasis to the public support for the organisation, an interesting journey, will keep you informed, advise the job description once finalised. We may not get it right to start with but will work on it.

Board membership generally over the age of 60, we need to have balance on the board. There are no women and no member in their 30s and 40's on the board for us to pass down the knowledge; any thoughts please speak with David Smith or one of the directors.

GST is increasing, plus other costs; membership subscription was debated at board meeting and we have decided that we don't want to add to the burden, so the charges will not increase but it is inevitable that it will have to increase next year.

Suggestions as to the major prize for the raffle this year would be appreciated. The lodge last year was wonderful, electronic items in the past and can continue but any inspiration for a First prize would be much appreciated.

Motion: The Presidents report is accepted.

Moved: Ross Cottle. Seconded: Di Pritt. Carried.

Matters arising from the President's 2010 Report:

No matters arising.

Financial Report: John Bishop

Presented at the meeting.

Auditor increased costs last year discussed, \$2000 - \$2500 to \$4000 to do audit and continue to rise. Herbert Morton new accountants.

Financial reports discussed; chapter moneys down on last year. Project also down, raffle receipts up; sponsorship and donations about the same. This year small surplus vs slight lost last year. Total assets 76,000. Total equity \$66,000.

Wetland Care sponsorship \$21,000 to Cape Kidnappers and \$17,000 to Arthur River sponsored by Banrock, previously forwarded. Carried forward \$2400. Banrock this year donated \$5000 less cost of embroidery etc Pateke \$14,163 balance to spend.

David Smith advised that the constitution states the accounts be audited, cost up dramatically, for the organisation of this size. If we don't get ourselves audited could have problems with the charities commission, board meeting moved a change to the constitution that the accounts be reviewed rather than audited.

Motion that we put to the AGM.

"That the constitution be amended to the accounts being reviewed by engagement but not audited as we are a charity." The board can make this decision on behalf of the members.

Accounts be accepted subject to the review of engagement

Motion: That the 2010 financial report be accepted.

Moved: John Bishop. Seconded: Jim Law. Carried.

Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust Report: David Smith

December 31, 2009 ends Spices \$318,000 on deposit as at the end of the year. Market is not consistent. Down \$15,000 gained \$6,000 further gain of \$41,000 over the year. Has taken serious hits over the previous year; almost back to where we were. As at June 2010 \$367,342. Trustees are still to meet this weekend. Nervous investors are driving the market down, volatility will continue for some time.

Moved: David Smith. Seconded: Ross Cottle. Carried.

Election of Officers:

Board Election:

The President read the following Statement:

The Constitution states that the Board should consist of not less than six, 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 Neil Candy and William Abel.

Nominations for the Board:

Retiring Director is Ossie Latham and with sadness the board accepts his resignation.

Standing for Re-election to the Board: John Dermer, Jim Law, John Cheyne and Kevin Campbell.

Are there any other nominations from the floor?

Dan Steel Nominated by Ross Cottle. Second: Di Pritt.

Moved: John Bishop. Seconded: Alice Hood. Carried.

Motion: That J Dermer, J Law, K Campbell and J Cheyne be confirmed as Board Members.

Duly elected.

Reports:

Raffle: Kevin Campbell, read by Ross Cottle.

This year we were very fortunate to receive a fantastic first prize donation from The Farm at Cape Kidnappers worth over \$5000 dollars which unfortunately did not translate to greater ticket sales. It seems that members just give a \$20 dollar donation (in some cases disappointingly not!) regardless of prize value or the prize itself. So we will be loath to approach them again for a prize of such worth. We sold \$7428 worth of tickets after deductions for administrative expenses.

Electronic prizes were a cost of \$2423 – remember the first prize was donated.

Giving a net of \$5005.

Upon my return to New Zealand I will investigate some other options for this year's prizes, but any suggestions of what may create more interest will be welcome.

Wairio Wetland: 700 acres on the Eastern Shore of Lake Wairarapa. Jim Law.

Pateke: Ossie Latham – Report tabled by Ossie Latham and read by John Cheyne on his behalf.

General Business:

Thanks from Murray Tapp for the presentation last year, much appreciated. It was our pleasure.

Ducks Unlimited Canada: Babara Hanbridge will advise us of the 75th celebrations in 2013. We will keep you informed in Flight with a personal invitation from them to us to attend (in their summer). They are wonderful hosts. AGM next year – The Rugby World Cup, affects school holidays and accommodation.

So this time next year we could have problems so suggest bring it forward to April 2011. Is this reasonable? Accounts will be available but not completed which will then be forwarded once reviewed. Possible better to have a bit of a change, summer or autumn might be better. Masterton is the possibility but it will depend on accommodation. More of a family event possibly a three-day and possibly expand it, wanting to get young people involved, create a gathering where the younger members can come along. Majority of those present would all be able and interested to attend in April.

Closure: The President thanked the Board for their work throughout the year.

The meeting closed at 9.54am

Numbers attended: 45

Other Activities over the 36th AGM weekend:

Wetland Tour: The recently created 24 hectare Ohaaki wetland established by Fish & Game at a site. We will also visit multiple remnant oxbow lagoons at Waiotapu which are currently being restored by Fish & Game.

Saturday Dinner:

Lifetime Achievement awarded to: None this year.

Bill Barratt Trophy awarded to: Ossie Latham.

Chapter Challenge: Manawatu.

Special Award to Banrock Station Wines for their outstanding contribution to wetland conservation here in New Zealand

Sunday Talk: Dan Steele - "The Economics of Conservation."

Michelle Cooper - Our new look webpage and kids corner.

Jim Law - Wairio update.

President's Report

It seems a short time since our Conference at Wairakei last year. In part that is because it is shorter by about three months but nonetheless the time has flown.

Contrary to many charitable organisations of our size we are in good financial shape. While there is a myriad of projects we could be involved in it is particularly important at times like these we remain without debt and living within our income.

We have been assisted in that by the generous donations made to our project at Wario from the community and other like minded trusts. The support has been greatly appreciated and important to keep the momentum going.

Our focus this year has been in laying the foundations for the coming years. We have concluded the job description for a half-time position to promote our brands – Wetland Care and Ducks Unlimited. That job description is to be circulated among members in the hope one of our own may be the appropriate person. If not we will then look further afield.

The work on our website and the hatching of "Quack" are down to Michelle Cooper's perseverance and dedication to the cause. If you have not visited our website lately please do, I think you will be pleasantly surprised – www.ducks.org.nz.

Profile of a president

While a young David Smith wanted to be a farmer, his father had other ideas and into law he went, and admits it is a rather good profession.

Although born in Auckland (1950), David spent the years before school in Canada. Primary school was in Gisborne, Lytton High, and finally one last secondary year at Whangarei Boys High.

That final high school year had a happy outcome. The Boys High biology class was combined with the Girls High class and there he met Myra, his wife. David and Myra married in 1972 – on the January 1. "Makes it easy to remember," said David.

Law School at Auckland University followed, but he had already started work in a law office before completing his degree. He graduated 1973 and was admitted to the Bar 1974.

A couple of years work under his belt and some hard work and in 1978 he became a partner. He finally left the partnership in 2005 to become a barrister on his own account.

David said law was very much a second choice as a career.

"I wanted to go farming but my parents convinced me I would never have sufficient money to buy my own farm. I'm still not sure that was correct, but it is impossible to have trial runs on life's decisions. Nonetheless I have enjoyed my career at the law.

"My father came from a farming background – and went teaching. But my cousins were on farms and that is where I spent my holidays. At 11 years-of-age I was introduced to duck hunting and from there grew an interest that is now far wider than just hunting. Habitat is the prime focus. Hunting should only be when there is a surplus able to be sustainably cropped."

The 164 acre (66.3ha) property in Clevedon was bought in 1982. There are 30 acres of flats the rest hungry hills with more than a liberal sprinkling of gorse where they ran Hereford cows.

"For a while also we also had in interest in a large property in the back of Hawke's Bay.

"But the realisation that two jobs and occasionally three is not sustainable long term grew. Reluctantly we sold Clevedon and Hawke's Bay. These days we live on the edge of Papakura and

Our involvement with other projects has continued. Those reports will be published in Flight. The level of activity remains constant but if we are to make a greater impact we can only do that with greater public awareness leading to more members and more donations. If you have spare copies of Flight or have finished reading it please pass it on to someone else.

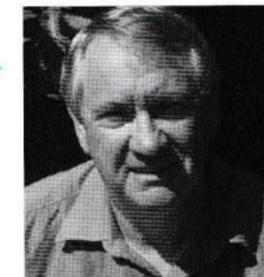
In the last year Sandra Pipes has stepped down as administrative assistant. I thank her for her contribution – always with a cheery smile and laugh – and we must have made her want to tear her hair out at times. It has always been appreciated, Sandra. Thank you.

Also Gail Isaacs has stepped down as editor of Flight. Producing Flight is not easy. It involves not only journalist skills but the ability to cajole copy and photos from members and others and then to tie it all together. Gail, thank you also. All members are grateful for your work.

We welcome Jan Abel as administrative assistant and Liz Brook as Flight editor.

While recognising the economy is having a down time we look forward to the next year with confidence. I thank all members for their support.

David Smith



DUNZ president:

David Smith.



Practising for May: The Chesapeake Bay retriever shows off his talents on the lake at the Waikato property.

Photos: Provided by David Smith.

own 125 acres (50.5ha) of swamp in the Waikato with Graham Gurr.

David said there are two lakes and other ponds have been put in, there are pine trees on 20 acres (8ha) and the rest is habitat for birds - upland and waterfowl.

"I joined Ducks Unlimited in 1974. Became a Board member in...hmm it's too long ago to remember. DU has opened up many contacts and has been the source of some great trips to North America.

Oh – and by the way David and Myra have three children and six grandchildren.

"They are all interested in DUNZ but child raising takes priority at the moment - they have two each, all under 4-years-old."

Love them or hate them, we probably all have to admit Canada geese are handsome birds.

Urban geese cull

Canada geese look great out on the lake, or swanking over the lawn on their way to the water. But on a lagoon in the middle of suburbia where large numbers of Canada geese were living – they were not popular.

According to some sources the Canada goose was first introduced to New Zealand in 1876, by the Government and regional acclimatisation societies for hunting. Another source suggests that Thomas Donne, of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts imported the geese in 1905 and distributed them among acclimatisation societies.

Yet a third source claims they were a gift from President Theodore Roosevelt, which could tie in with the 1905 date, as he was in office from 1901 to 1909.

However they got here, they are now largely regarded as a pest, certainly by farmers, also often by Council parks and reserves staff, and by the near neighbours of the parks, ponds and lagoons that attract the birds.

Early this year the Canada geese numbers had built up to about 146 on the 5.2ha Hokowhitu lagoon in Palmerston North. Not only were they competing with the other water fowl that inhabit the lagoon, these include up to 600 mallards, coots, swans (black and mute) and even shags. The geese were also making a great mess on the grass and lime paths with their rather large poos. Not good for picnics and children playing or walkers and runners wanting to enjoy this popular Palmerston North reserve. The Hokowhitu lagoon is overlooked along one side by some of the more luxurious homes in the city. The other side has one of the Massey University campuses, and a golf course.

Brian Way, City Council Leisure Assets Officer and Peter Russell, City Council Aviary Keeper, decided it was time to cull.

“The mess was unbelievable, large birds with very big droppings, almost as big as sheep,” said Mr Way. “People couldn’t picnic because the geese were aggressive and frightening for the kids.”

Mr Russell and seven staff used a flounder net, and also had help from members of the local canoe club to move the geese off the water.

“They were fairly placid because of the moult. We took more geese later, and there are now about 20 left,” said Mr Russell.

During the moult in January 60 geese were culled, apparently the birds are less likely to fly during the moult.

“They were fairly placid because of the moult. We took more geese later, and there are now about 20 left,” said Mr Russell.



The Hokowhitu Lagoon - surrounded by suburbia. Image Palmerston North City Council.



Canada geese on the Hokowhitu lagoon in Palmerston North.

The geese first started arriving at the lagoon about 15 years ago. “They didn’t seem to breed for a while and the numbers stayed at about 20, then suddenly they seemed to come from everywhere,” said Mr Russell.

Mr Way said the Canada Geese problem is big. They can also be a hazard to planes, as Mr Russell well knows - he is a member of the bird control committee at Palmerston North Airport.

Just how dangerous these geese can be to aircraft was highlighted by the investigation into the cause of the ditched landing of US Airways Flight 1549 into the Hudson River in New York, on January 15, 2009. The remains of Canada geese were found in the engines. The investigators said that disrupting bird habitats close to airports would probably not have helped Flight 1549 as an analysis of the remains of the geese showed they were migratory — perhaps from Labrador, Canada — not part of the Canada geese population that lives year-round in the New York area.



Swanking off to the water at Hokowhitu lagoon.

A wetlands convention

Ramsar – what is it and do we care?

This year, 2011, is the 40th anniversary of Ramsar.

In 1971 the value of wetland site was finally and formally recognised and a Wetland Convention was signed in Iran in the town of Ramsar. In New Zealand it seemed that anniversary, World Wetlands Day, February 2, passed almost unnoticed.

There are now 158 countries signed up to the convention, New Zealand included, with 1828 wetlands covering 169 million hectares designated as sites of international importance.

The Ramsar definition of wetlands includes; swamps and marshes; lakes and rivers; wet grasslands; peat bogs; oases; estuaries, deltas and tidal flats; coral reefs; and even human-made sites such as fish ponds, rice paddies, reservoirs, and salt pans.

The idea is to encourage the wise use of wetlands so they can be sustained economically, socially and environmentally looked after.

In New Zealand we have six Ramsar sites, Farewell Spit (top of the South Island), Firth of Thames (Hauraki Gulf), Kōpuatai Peat Dome (Hauraki Plains), Manawatu Estuary (Foxton), Awarua Waituna Lagoon (Southland) and Whangamarino wetland (northern Waikato).

Several other sites are being investigated for listing. These include:

Avon-Heathcote Estuary in Christchurch,

Mangarakau near Farewell Spit,

Okarito Lagoon (home of the white heron colony) in South Westland,

Lake Wairarapa,

Ohiwa Harbour Bay of Plenty,

Kaipara Harbour north west of Auckland.

There are Ramsar listed wetlands in over 130 countries including Indonesia, France, the USA, Mexico, Egypt and Canada. One of the Indonesian wetlands is inhabited by local people who harvest 3000 tonnes of fish from the wetland every year. Other human activities in the Indonesian Ramsar site include cultivation and the traditional harvest of forest products. Ramsar does not lock up the wetlands but encourages sustainable use.

To find out more go to: enquiries@wetlandtust.org.nz

Bill and the kiwis

The new kiwi house at Pukaha - Mt Bruce, was opened in early March by Bill English, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Members of the Pukaha Board and iwi from Rangitane o Wairarapa welcomed Mr English and other guests from the many organisations that had donated to the refurbishment of the kiwi house.

Following a powhiri and welcome from the board chair, Bob Francis, Mr English was both humorous (he loves coming to a town where the airstrip doubles as a drag strip) and passionate about his love of our native forest and birds and the need to protect them. He is a trustee for a remnant of forest in Southland that is being compromised by mammalian pests.

Following the formal part of the day he spent time with DOC Rangers discussing the efficacy versus the cost of predator fences.

Mr English and other guests enjoyed viewing the kiwi chick and had a good wander through the new facility.

Kiwis capture attention at Mt Bruce

After an absence of almost 100 years, kiwi are again living in the wild, even though it is in a wildlife reserve at Pukaka Mt Bruce in northern Wairarapa.

Kiwi numbers have increased at Pukaka Mt Bruce, there are now more than 50 there, and with 11 healthy chicks born recently and two further nesting males, the stringent forest restoration programme at the reserve is providing a healthy breeding environment.

The March newsletter from the reserve said three babies were still in the nursery with the balance of the chicks graduating to outdoor enclosures.

The exciting news though, is that the new chicks are on view to visitors in the new kiwi house. One of many upgrades to the kiwi house, the brooding room and nursery are highlights, as visitors are able to view the rangers hand rearing the chicks through windows built into the incubation and brooding rooms.

After about 21 days of hand rearing, the chicks are shifted to a predator-fenced area. Once the young kiwi reaches enough weight to ward off a stoat it can be released into the scenic reserve where it must look after itself.

An ongoing danger in the unfenced forest is mammalian predators, (i.e. rats, stoats, etc). An ongoing review of types of traps resulted in upgraded and additional traps, and the newsletter said the DOC250 have been particularly successful in catching stoats and ferrets.

Although 14 kiwi were lost when two stoats penetrated the pest-controlled reserve last year the pest eradication programme has been significant and has also helped lift the number of kokako.

Both kiwi and kokako had been lost to the area, and since 2003 have both bred successfully in the wild.

Pukaka Mt Bruce is the only non-fenced wildlife sanctuary in New Zealand.

Popular whiro bows out

For those who have been to Blue Duck Station and into the valley, you may remember a pair of Whio who lived under the Depot bridge. Gobby (yes, he talks a lot!) and One-eye (yes, she had one eye!?!). About six weeks ago, Simon was taking a tour group down to the bottom of the waterfall and he found old One-eye under the stairs! She was out of her territory and on the skinny side. A call to DOC and they came and took her to Massey University where she was tested her for diseases and feed. She was doing well and organising was underway to get her an Honorary degree! The first Whio from the valley to get one!! Unfortunately she took a turn for the worst and died. It was sad and we were keen to get her back, but she would have had a shock as Gobby has taken up with a younger woman!?! Great for the Whio.



One Eye: This was one of the photos that alerted Blue Duck Station to the one eyed Whio.

Photo: Sara Testoni (a Swiss eco-warrior).

History of the Dermer dam -

The dam is situated beside the Kiwitea river (Manawatu) and has been there for as long as I can remember. I used to stalk it as a kid, crawling across the paddock on my tummy. These days it's easier to place shooters on the flight path and chase the ducks off, but I actually have not shot the dam for ages.

Several years ago the dam was silted up, the eels were dying and sheep insisted on getting bogged, although they had two very good troughs in the paddock. I had heard from a member of the Historic Places Trust that early plans showed a sawmill on this site and sure enough, when we started cleaning out the silt we found old wooden tram tracks in the bottom of the dam. These happened to be at just the right depth so the digger driver used them as a depth gauge, and left them there.

This current dam is one I redeveloped in 2007 with help from Ducks Unlimited. Digging what was essentially a new dam beside an older one

full of water can cause problems if the water fills the new workings, but Gary Thompson and Jim Campbell were more than up to the task and left a thin wall between the two.

Next year was a very dry and I discovered that the old one had filled with silt. Again! That's when I remembered what had happened in the 2004 flood. The river had overflowed its bank and gone through the dam, and I had wondered at the time why the dam had stayed dirty for so long. It was chocker! This time I hired a 20 tonne digger and away we went. Once again the tram tracks appeared and were used as a depth gauge, although as the dam bottom is very close the river bed I asked the driver to dig down to see if we could get a good source of water from the river. There was water there all right but I chickened out as I reckoned water could drain out as well as flow in, so we sealed the hole and decided to rely on what nature provides. Not usually a problem in this climate as rainfall is around 1100mm per annum.



What now: Diny and John Dermer survey the mess – no wonder John is scratching his head.



Waterless bridge: The big digger with John Dermer and driver Ray from Tararua Roding enlarging the dam.

or – a dam within a dam

The pile of sticky wet silt left on the bank was difficult to deal with. When Gary and Jim did the extension to the dam, all the soil was carted away to fill various low spots in the paddock, this time there wasn't the opportunity as they were all full anyway. The digger driver did his best to spread it out but I had to get Gary back for a final spread.

I also discovered it was full of wood of various sizes so many long days were spent "picking up sticks". Something I got very tired of after the flood, which left wood scattered all over the show. The plus is that we now have a dam with permanent water in some parts and others that are only covered when the dam is full. Last spring certainly must be one of the worst on record. When farmers loose a tenth of our national lamb drop, 2 million lambs during September, it has to be one of the worst. Great for the ducks though!

The dam is now fenced but I have left a reasonable area of paddock so birds can walk out onto pasture. Not that the grey teal bother. They sit on the rails.

I am now into a planting phase although do not plan to put many trees around this one. I have chosen one of the swamp cypress species, *Taxodium ascendens*, different to the more common swamp cypress *Taxodium distichum*, and a much more conical stately tree.

Those of you who went to our AGM in Auckland will have seen a wonderful specimen at Bev McConnell's. This was growing on one of

the islands and was about 15 metres tall with a spread of only 5 metres. They are beautiful trees and can still handle the wet conditions, although a couple I planted in a low part of the dam before it completely filled have died. I love the swamp cypress for its ability to handle water, its wide spreading branches, which provide duckling cover from hawks', and its lovely autumn colours.

When the ducks aren't flying at least you have a nice tree to look at!

For some reason this dam has a much wider variety of bird life than the others on the farm. We have seen mallard, paradise, grey teal, dabchicks, black swan and Shoveller, with pukeko, pied stilt and sometimes banded dotterel roaming round the edges. There is a parry drake which I have seen chase a harrier away.

We are very pleased with what we have created. I just hope no more floods go through as I am totally over "picking up sticks"!

Talking of picking up sticks, I put the paddock in barley after spreading the silt out, but spent ages digging up logs big enough to bend a plough if I hadn't. One way to hold ducks is to grow a cereal crop around their dam. I have a paddock right now which is yet to be harvested, also in a paddock with a dam. (not unusual here), and the air is full of happy ducks whenever we go near!

John Dermer.

Dam now: Still not much water under the bridge, but fences leading into the water allow the birds access to pasture, without farm animals being able to access the dam.



Ducks galore: The old dam was already well liked by the ducks.

Kakapo of international fame

Shane McInnes, a ranger for the Department of Conservation (DOC), took the cover photo of Sinbad the Kakapo while volunteering on Codfish Island a couple of years ago. Sinbad is a very important bird as he has very rare Fiordland genes in him.

"I used a Canon G series camera and had very little time to try and get lighting and composition right but sometimes it just works out," Shane said.

It worked out so well that Shane won first prize in an international competition organised by BirdLife International who intend to publish a book based on the competition images.

Shane's job is as a ranger for DOC on Little Barrier Island where he manages the day to day running, biosecurity, infrastructure, visitor management and undertakes regular patrols. "It's a very varied job!" he said.

BirdLife's aims are to:

- * prevent the extinction of any bird species
- * maintain, and where possible improve the conservation status of all bird species
- * conserve, and where appropriate improve and enlarge sites and habitats important for birds
- * help, through birds, to conserve biodiversity and to improve the quality of people's lives
- * integrate bird conservation into sustaining people's livelihoods.

From Wikipedia:

The Kakapo (Māori: kākāpō, meaning night parrot), sometimes also called owl parrot, is a species of large, flightless nocturnal parrot endemic to New Zealand.

It is the world's only flightless parrot, the heaviest parrot, nocturnal, herbivorous, visibly has a low metabolic rate, no male parental care, and is the only parrot to have a polygynous lek* breeding system. It is also possibly one of the world's longest-living birds.

The Kakapo is critically endangered; at February last year only 120 were known, most have been given names.

The common ancestor of the Kakapo and the genus Nestor from which it is diverged, became isolated from the remaining parrot species when New Zealand broke off from Gondwana, around 82 million years ago. In the absence of mammalian predators, it lost the ability to fly.

Because of Polynesian and European colonisation and the introduction of predators such as cats, rats, and stoats, the Kakapo was almost wiped out. Conservation efforts began in the 1890s, but were not very successful until the implementation of the Kakapo Recovery Plan in the 1980s. Since January 2009, surviving Kakapo are kept on two predator-free islands, Codfish (Whenua Hou) and Anchor islands, where they are closely monitored. Two large Fiordland islands, Resolution and Secretary, have been the subject of large-scale ecological restoration activities to prepare self-sustaining ecosystems for the Kakapo.

Latest news:

February 20, 2011. The breeding season was in full swing on Codfish Island and 10 females had mated.

Out of 20 eggs laid on Codfish this year, 15 were fertile, 25 per cent more than eight years ago. Three chicks were born in the first week of March bringing the population to 123. Eight more eggs were due to hatch, but sadly a further four embryos had died.

*Polygynous sexual behaviour when a single male mates with multiple females, but each female mates with only one male.

*A lek is a place where the males of a species of bird gather to perform their courtship displays.



A winner: Sinbad the Kakapo –an amazing bird. He doesn't swim or even fly, but he is special.

Tourist attraction or not...



Lunch: The Lake Taupo black swans know when it is food time. Photo: Liz Brook

The black swans at Lake Taupo can be an attraction, or they can be an annoyance. Travellers stopping for a picnic lunch often find them fun to feed, and take photos of. Sometimes the birds become bossy, and demand more.

They are unpopular with some Taupo residents, who say they foul the water and shore and intimidate people.

Rob Pitkethley, Fish and Game manager for the Eastern Region, said the recent aerial count, done at the same time each year, showed the numbers have remained stable over an 11-year period. The numbers have fluctuated between 1000 to 2000 with the birds mostly based at the southern end of the lake.

Swans can make quite good eating, but because they had a comparatively long life the younger ones are tastier.

Origin:

The black swan (*Cygnus atratus*) is an Australian bird that flew into New Zealand in the 1800s at the same time as acclimatisers were releasing it, resulting in an explosion of numbers.

Before the arrival of the 'modern' black swans, there had been an extinct native swan (*Cygnus sumnerensis*), but this is now thought to probably be the same species - or at least very close to the Australian black swan. So it is possible that these birds traded between both countries and black swans could be thought of as native indigenous birds...

There are seven species of swan in the world, all pure white except for the Australian black swan and the South American black-necked swan. The black swan is the state bird of Western Australia.

Cape Kidnappers experience a special prize

It was a great thrill to win first prize in the Ducks Unlimited national raffle. The organiser, Kevin Campbell assured us that it was drawn under JP supervision, so we will have no comments about it being rigged! Thank you very much!

With Kevin back from Indonesia to pilot us in early February, and able to fill a couple of extra seats, six of us joined him at Napier airport on February 4 for an amazing day. Our daughters Theresa and Chanelle (sorry Rachel) and also Will and Jan Abel ingratiated themselves upon us enough to be selected from numerous volunteers. The weather was beautiful as we set out around the port and Bluff Hill with cameras clicking. We followed the coast south to Cape Kidnappers, checking out the steep ravines that make the uniqueness and challenges of the fantastic golf course.

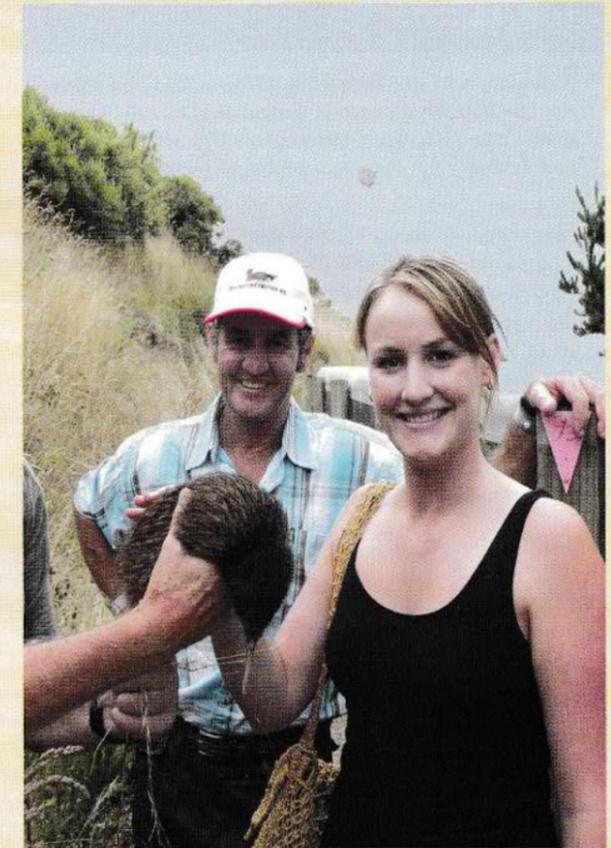
First stop near the lavender plot was to meet up with Dr John McLennan, resident wildlife expert, and also Kevin's wife Vietta. Dr John was equipped with tracking gear and we set off on the hunt for a kiwi. The kiwis had heard of our mission and were seeking cover in the steep ravines! However we were able to see the areas where the kiwis and pateke have been released and appreciate why the releases have proved so successful.

Back to the chopper and off to the seabird sanctuary, situated on the coast south of the actual Cape. This is a 1ha plot with mouse-proof fencing, a sanctuary within a sanctuary. Over coffee (from the trusty thermos), Dr John explained the seabird project to us. The endeavour has been going for three years, providing burrows for the grey faced and Cook's petrels. Chicks a few weeks old are transported from their nests to this site where they are fed by volunteers until fledging about three weeks later. The hope is that their new home will be imprinted as a base for them to return to as adults (at five-years-old). This type of scheme has worked in other parts of the world, so they are hopeful. Once again the tracking device came out and this time we managed to find a kiwi chick – Hendrix! It was wonderful to see our icon up close and personal, not sure what Hendrix thought of us!

We took a quick flight over the sand dune area, now on the list of sites to be preserved. Maori middens scattered throughout and it has quite an historical and ecological significance. We landed at the historical early shepherds' hut, where Will recovered from the thrill of the flight.

Hungry time, and a late lunch at Elephant Hill Vineyard, landing on the helipad, we wandered through the vines to this amazing complex. Most other diners were in their No 1s, whilst we turned up in our kiwi tracking clothes. The ambience was superb and the food delicious.

Thanks must go to Andy Lowe, for the donation of this wonderful prize, and to Kevin Campbell, our pilot extraordinaire, for not only his flying skills, his



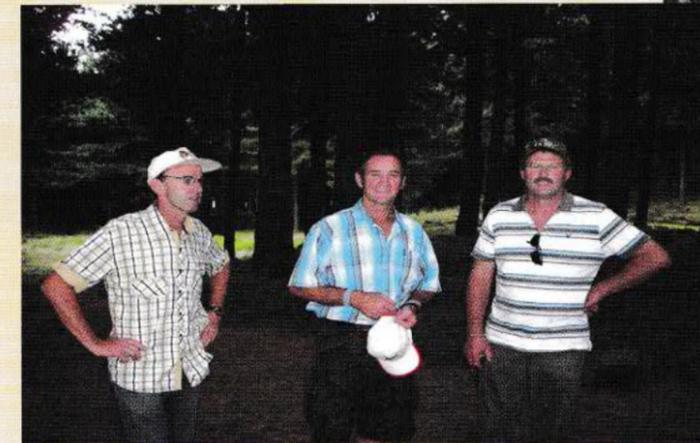
Bird in the hand: Neil and Chanelle Candy with Hendrix the kiwi.

knowledge of the area, and also for organising the raffle prize and the day. Special thanks to John McLennan, to Vietta, and to our guests, for giving us such a memorable day.

Neil Candy

Three directors: Kevin Campbell, Neil Candy, and William Able.

Photo: Julie Candy.



Spectacular: Cape Kidnappers is sensational – the view from Petrel lookout.

Photos: William Able.

The Pateke Recovery Group for Tuhua

Extracts from the February 2011 update and annual count for the Pateke Recovery Group at Tuhua (Mayor Island) from John Heaphy, Conservation Officer (Protected Species and Islands) for the Department of Conservation.

Pateke were originally released onto Tuhua in February 2006 with a supplementary release in March 2008. Three dead Tuhua released banded pateke have been found on the mainland.

The last supplementary maize feed was done around western edge of Black Lake in November 2008 and the feeders were all removed in November 2010.

There has been no active management in this population for the last 26 months and none is now intended - they need to sink or swim on their own and hopefully learn to live with the hawks which I'm sure take a major toll of pateke there.

Count:

February 17 - 18, 2011, I did the annual Tuhua February post breeding flock count as requested by the Recovery Group.

The crater lakes water level had been at the highest I'd seen it over the previous 14 years for all of last winter and early this summer, but currently it is now half a metre higher again. The strongest La Nina weather pattern since 1978 sent down two tropical cyclones in successive weekends in January this year with 374mm rain falling in Tauranga plus numerous other rain events over the month. Must be good for pateke as parts of the crater walking tracks and a large area of extra habitat under the adjoining forest are currently flooded.

The counts over the two mornings from dawn are not robust due to the large area of wetland and forest currently flooded with pateke scattered far and wide. No disturbance or double counting problems either day.

There were no "flocks" with most groups consisting of one or two individuals; highest either day were two groups of four birds. I could hear numerous birds not able to be counted calling or flapping all over the wetlands. Also one brood of 2x Class 2 pateke ducklings were seen with mum, and also a male in prime breeding plumage looking absolutely spiffing with his girlfriend obviously ready to do something.

I have not seen breeding after December on Tuhua previously with all birds having been in eclipse plumage by now so unusual weather patterns and water levels may have contributed to changed behaviours. Potentially the pateke could breed all year on Tuhua this year.

17/02/2011:

Green Lake (0645-0800 hrs): 18 pateke (3x unbanded). Black Lake (0830-0920 hrs): 12 pateke. Wetland joining both lakes: 1 adult and 2x ducklings.

Total: Minimum 31 adults and 2 ducklings.

18/02/2011:

Black Lake (0640-0750 hrs): 9 pateke (RM/GR, 6x unbanded). Green Lake (0805-0910 hrs): 13 pateke.

Total: Minimum 22 adult Pateke.

More likely 37 but cautious of double counting possibility.

Only one banded pateke was seen on either day - RM/GR. Have seen a number of others during the spring/summer. Wild unbanded birds

are sometimes hard to confirm on Tuhua if only standing on one leg (as most of them do) as most of the original 2006 release birds only had one metal band and no colours. Trying to gently get birds to stand on both legs without them taking instantly to the water is easier said than done. I prefer to leave them undisturbed to minimise chance of flying away and then double counting.

Approx 15 grey ducks and 1x mallard were also present. Several grey duck broods have been sighted over the season but none recently. No bittern were sighted this season although a was male heard booming in August.

Other pateke records:

11/8/2010 - 22 pateke seen all over both lakes middle of day. Sept - saw three broods in one day while doing other work.

23/10/2010 - 1 pair pateke and 5x class one ducklings mid west side Black Lake. 1 female pateke and 3x Class three ducklings southern mid west side Green Lake.

A rodent report at Labour Weekend last year from a member of the public meant bait stations, tracking tunnels and baited snap traps were set up. No rodent sign was detected. And Fin Buchanan and his two rodent detection dogs also spent three days on Tuhua and the dogs did not detect any sign.

Background:

Tuhua (Mayor Island) is run by the Tuhua Trust Board in conjunction with DoC who manage the reserve area which is away from the buildings.

John Heaphy said as the island is a wild life reserve there a lot of restrictions on what can happen there.

Five species of birds have been introduced to the island after a pest eradication programme cleaned out the rats, wild cats and wild pigs. By 2002 it was declared pest free.

North Island robins were released in 2003, two lots of pateke (Brown teal) were released in 2006 and 2008, then two lots of kiwi (North Island brown), 30 Tuatara in 2007, and Orange fronted parakeets in 2009. Sixty three have been released in six transfers.

The island is now open to the public from Labour weekend to Easter while a full-time caretaker is in residence.

Conversely the island is closed to the public between Easter and Labour weekend.

Bookings to visit can be made through the Tauranga DOC office. There are also cabins and some camping sites available, though strict quarantine requirements are in force.

History:

Tuhua is a hilly volcanic island in the west of the Bay of Plenty on the east coast of the Coromandel Peninsula. Not many landing places and pohutukawa trees around the coast. There are twin volcanic craters where two lakes are both below sea level. One is the Green Lake and the other the Black Lake.

Fierce thermal activity in the past produced large quantities of obsidian (volcanic glass) which was of great value to the Maori for sharp-edged tools. Tuhua is the Maori name for obsidian. In the 1700s it was a Maori stronghold for the Ngaiterangi with a number of pa sites.

For a time the Island was a big game-fishing base and a semi permanent camp was set up there. Recreational and commercial fishing severely depleted the fish stock. The island's Maori Board of Trustees as representative of the owners and tangata whenua, called for the area to be a marine reserve.

Canadian news

Hi everyone, this note is to let you know about a change in mailing address for the DUC office in Saskatoon. Due to cutbacks and staff layoffs we have moved into a smaller building.

The DUC office is where my Flight magazine is sent so your records will have to be changed before the next issue.

I like the new look of Flight and am also enjoying the Facebook page and Quack Club! Good work folks.

We were at Prince Albert National Park this past weekend for some cross country skiing. It is about a 3.5 hour drive north of Saskatoon and we were there from Friday night until Sunday afternoon.

We had fun skiing and snowshoeing but the temperatures ranged from -31 to -15 degrees which put a bit of a damper on things. Normally we see elk, moose, white tailed deer and often wolves but it was pretty quiet in the forest due to the cold. The hot tub on the roof of the hotel we stayed at, on the other hand, received lots of use as did the fireplace in our rented condo. The hot mulled wine and hot rum toddies did not last too long either.

Best wishes to you all,

Barb

Ed's note:

Barb is Barbara Hanbidge MSc, a Saskatchewan education specialist who is a main stay of Ducks Unlimited Canada. Barbara and her husband Rod Johnson attended the DUNZ 2008 conference and AGM held in Napier. Barb talked to us about Project Webfoot - Inspiring our Future Conservationists.

Project Webfoot is the DUC national wetland education programme that started in 1999 and at the time of the 34th conference Barbara said that over 65,000 Saskatchewan children and their teachers had been learning about the values of wetlands through class presentations and wetland field trips.

Canada goose shoot



Heavy snow and temperatures of minus four degrees did not put these two off the hunt for geese on February 23, on the east coast of Vancouver Island. Len Everett, right, is president of DU, British Columbia, Canada, and his friend is unnamed, but obviously happy with the bag.

Len and his wife Pat are great friends of DUNZ.

Photo: supplied by Len Everett.

Catch the big ones - get into the record book

On March 1, this year an agreement between the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) and Rowland Ward was signed.

CIC-measured Trophies of European Game can now be entered into Rowland Ward's "Records of Big Game" book. The agreement was signed by CIC Director General Tamás Marghescu and Rowland Ward's Chairwoman Jane Halse.

This brings together CIC, the world's oldest global hunting organisation, and Rowland Ward, the world's oldest trophy record book (first edition in 1892).

CIC was created in 1928 as a non-profit, politically independent advisory body. It assists governments and environmental organisations in maintaining natural resources by sustainable use. It is all about conservation and sustainable hunting, supporting projects around the world.

This unique group has gained global recognition as an advisor in the field of sustainable use and conservation of wildlife. The organisation unites 32 states as members, universities, NGOs as well as private members and scientific experts from 82 countries. This knowledge-based network formulates recommendations, organises scientific conferences and supports projects related to specific aspects of wildlife conservation and sustainable use. National delegations are responsible for local activities in over 40 countries.

During its long years of existence, CIC has achieved major goals in the conservation of endangered species e.g. the Peregrine Falcon, Thaki Wild Horse, Houbara Bustard and strives to help the Saiga Antelope and the Bukhara Deer.

Further information: www.cic-wildlife.org

Duck shooters - identify your target

May and the start of the game bird hunting season is fast approaching. This is a reminder to duck hunters to please remember the pateke, a little brown duck, a bit like a mallard but smaller. Pateke is an endangered species, do not shoot it.

Pateke or brown teal, are very similar to mallard with a few exceptions. Pateke are a darker brown and much smaller than mallard. In flight their wings move faster and they fly lower and slower than mallard.

There are only around 2000 of these special ducks left in the world, so we need to do all we can to protect them.

Pateke, on the Coromandel Peninsula, are found around Port Charles, Port Jackson, Colville Bay and Waikawau Bay. Shooters can help by identifying their target before firing.

Fines for hunting, killing, selling or buying protected wildlife can be up to \$100,000 and six months imprisonment. Identify your target.

Speical tuna



Speical tuna: Rupene Waaka eel fisherman, he gathers eel(tuna) a couple of times a year from William Able's place to be eaten at special tribal events at his marae. It is good for the wetland to have them harvested in a sustainable manner, it keeps everything in balance. About 50 are taken each time and the rest are returned to the lake.

Artificial seagrass helps fish

Fake grass mats are being used by scientists to prove fish stocks can be boosted.

The plastic mats are being used at Coromandel by NIWA scientists to test how seagrass attracts fish such as juvenile snapper and trevally.

A large amount of seagrass has been lost from land sediment washing into harbours. Seagrass at Whangarei Harbour has gone from 14 sq km in the 1960s to virtually none, while Tauranga Harbour lost 90 per cent of its seagrass between 1959 and 1966.

NIWA fisheries ecologist Mark Morrison said scientists had created artificial beds at Whangapoua Estuary made from plastic fronds 5cm to 30cm long and tied to wire frames to form an artificial mat.

"We made them with tantalising long blades of artificial grass, the things fish really go for," Dr Morrison said.

Fish numbers reached their highest towards the highest seagrass densities. This summer fish were being tagged to track their survival and growth rates.

"What we found, initially, is that fish are really looking for shelter and seagrasses provide good protection."

New Zealand Recreational Fishing Council president Geoff Rowling said the research and steps to enlarge seagrass areas was vital.

Local body authorities need to stop agricultural run-off and sediment run-off from development as the best way to encourage regrowth.

Wildlife reserves unscathed

Christchurch has been the focus of attention for weeks, ever since February 22, at 12.51pm.

Two DUNZ members, the Willowbank Wildlife Reserve and Peacock Springs Wildlife Reserve have both reported no damage or disruption because of the earthquake.

Nick Ackroyd, head of native species at Willowbank said there had been not problems for them and a few weeks before the quake they had delivered some Pateke to Peacock Springs.

Robert Clarke, a trustee of Isaac Wildlife Trust, also reported that Peacock Springs had come through unscathed. Mr Clarke said he almost felt guilty as they had no damage.

We need the bees

Bees ensure our crops will produce and people continue to be fed, and of course there is the bonus of honey.

An important and disturbing development over recent years has been the decline in bee numbers. They seem to have been attacked from all directions, and it is becoming clear there are a number of reasons. Most of them man made.

The varroa mite is one that has invaded out shores and is killing our bees, now it appears a new generation of insecticides, neonicotinoids are probably responsible for a world-wide decline in bee populations.

Neonicotinoids are used to coat seeds before planting, these collect in the soil and they are taken up by the plants as they grow, right through to the pollen and nectar. The bees absorb the neonicotinoids and it affects the bee nervous system. This causes "chronic mortality" - dead bees. Research in the US has shown the neonicotinoids are a potential cause of Colony Collapse Disorder.

One way we can help the bees, is to provide bee friendly environments. Perhaps as we organise what to plant around our dams and ponds we can keep in mind the types of vegetation that will not only provide cover for water birds, but will also provide flowers for bees.

Shrubs, bushes and trees that perhaps don't mind damp or even wet roots, but also produce flowers would be ideal. Though others planted back a bit from the water could expand the range.

If you are a purist and like to stick with the natives think of cabbage trees, flax, five-finger, and three-finger, kanuka, karamu, karo, manuka, mingimingi, and napuka. Even North Island broom and kowhai. And back from the water a bit koromiko and trees like lacebark and wineberry.

Then if you don't mind a few emigrants - grevillea, rosemary, tree lucerne, willow, eucalyptus - red flowering gum always look good, even the silver dollar gum, or the white iron bark.

Some farmers are happy to plant fruit trees as well, apple, plum, pears. The bees will love the blossom and the birds will love the fruit - might even keep them out of the real orchard.

Some plants that are good for bees are unfortunately on the weed/pest list because they are invasive. Which is a reminder that pampas grass, including the purple one, is now (since 2001) declared a pest plant and if you have it on your property you have until 2012 to destroy it. Replace it with toetoe.

Other pest plants include barberry, blackberry buddleia, gorse, scotch broom, Spanish heath, crack willow, grey willow, lantana, and sadly Scottish heather.



To check out pest plants go to www.biosecurityperformance.maf.govt.nz and/or www.biosecurity.govt.nz/nppa

Bee food: Pretty flowers, lovely scent, and the bees love it. Koromiko and Lacebark.



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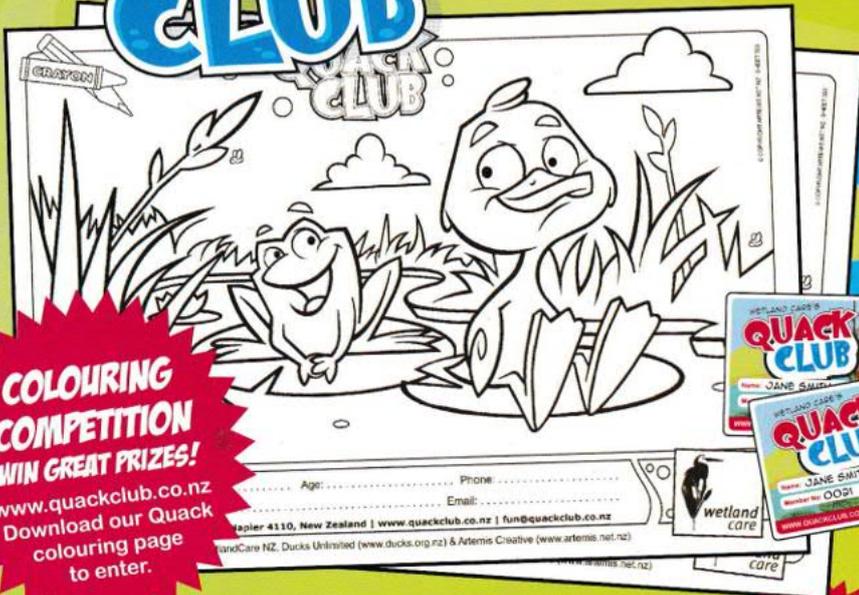
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