

# Flight



ISSUE 164

July 2015



**QSM for first president**  
**Who doing well**  
**Rare whistling ducks**

# From the President

I recently returned from a day looking at some coastal rivers and wetlands in Hawke's Bay with Regional Council staff. On this occasion the focus was not birds but whitebait, and in particular inanga. Inanga are one of five species of native fish that make up the national whitebait catch. In my region inanga make up about 90 percent of the catch. So what is the connection with DUNZ?

Inanga spawn amongst the bank side vegetation of the lower reaches of rivers like the Tukituki, Ngaruroro and Tutaekuri at the top of the spring tides, normally during April to June. During the next sequence of high tides the eggs, about the size of a pin head, hatch and wash out to sea and then return to the rivers six months later as the whitebait most of us love eating. Those that avoid capture spend the next year in the river and adjacent wetlands before returning to these very small and critical spawning sites. Like waterfowl habitat, these sites are under threat from many directions and without protection the inanga could locally become extinct.

Habitat protection is the key whether you are a duck or native fish. Our wetland work normally benefits much more than birds.

Keep up the good work. See you at the AGM in Palmerston North 1-2 August.

**John Cheyne**



## New member

A very warm welcome to Murray Allen of Invercargill.

## Subs reminder

To all those that have paid – thanks so much. To the rest of you who haven't – please do it promptly. If you do not intend to renew please advise by email so I don't waste postage, it is a large cost to DUNZ.

(See notice P15).

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

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Black and white half page \$180, black and white ¼ page \$90.  
All to be camera ready. Discounts for long-term adverts.

Waterfowl adverts free to members.

Contact the Editor to book space or check discounts.

Contributions to Flight from members or other readers are welcome.

**Deadline for copy for Flight 165 is October 8, 2015.**

(Please make an effort to send photos & stories)

New publication dates see page 15.

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## Board of Directors

### Patrons:

Jim Campbell      Wairarapa

Diane Pritt        Ohakune

### President:

John Cheyne      Waipukurau      06 858 9506

### Chairman:

Ross Cottle        Masterton        06 378 7408

### Treasurer:

John Bishop       Cambridge        07 823 7070

### Directors:

William Abel      Levin              06 362 6675

Neil Candy        Woodville        06 376 4448

John Dermer      Feilding          06 238 9740

Jim Law            Wairarapa        06 307 7855

Dan Steele        Whakahoro      07 895 6276

**Cover photo:** Mute swan putting on a show at Staglands. Read more page 11.

**Photo:** Yvonne van Leeuwen.

# DUNZ AGM / Conference 2015

Are you ready for the Ducks Unlimited 41st AGM 2015, Conference and Dinner, July 31 to August 2.

The Distinction hotel in Palmerston North is the venue. The rooms are comfortable, and the food is excellent. Yip – I have eaten there.

A bus trip to view the lovely Rangiwahia Wetlands is a scenic ride there and back, and Mike Bourke's Wetlands have been a true labour of love. I hear there are even a few trout swimming around there.

Lunch at the refurbished Apiti Country Pub, (now called a bar and grill). Apiti still seems to have that slightly "wild-west" flavour. Soak up the atmosphere.



**Treat in store:** Interesting water birds at Bourke wetlands.

**Photo:** Mary Beliski.

## Message from the editor

Due to some difficulties with fitting the timing of Flight around other events happening in the year, we have decided to change the publication dates.

After this issue of Flight, July 2015, publication dates will be November, February, May and August. This way, Christmas

Back in town in time for a drink or two before dinner and time to browse around the silent auction goods. Dinner followed by what is often the highlight – the real action auction.

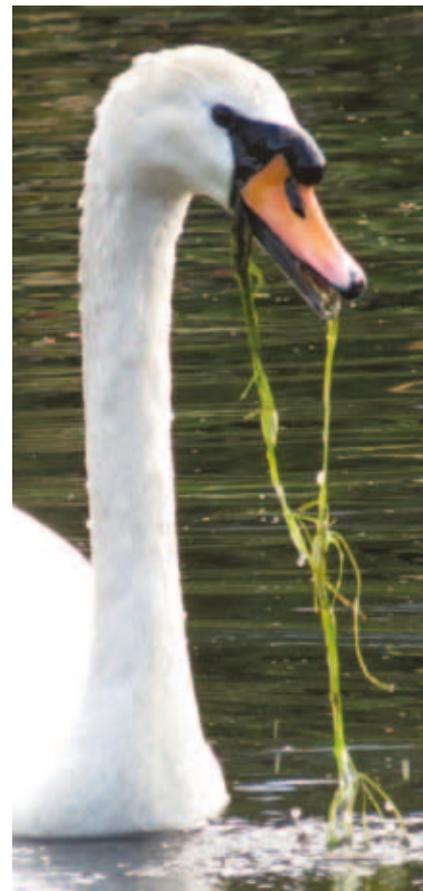
Sunday morning 9am – hopefully no hangovers – Emma Williams can bring us up to speed on her research into bittern at Lake Whatuma.

So – as they used to say when many of us were younger – “See you there or be square!”

If you have not received the Conference flyer, please contact DUs efficient secretary Jan Abel. Email: [info@ducks.org.nz](mailto:info@ducks.org.nz). Or as a last resort you can contact me. My email and phone number are at the bottom left of page 2.

**Liz Brook**

# Royal Swans



Want a pair of these on your lake or large pond?

Well you could be in luck. It seems there is a small surplus of Royal Swans this year, so if anyone is interested and have not already contacted Will Abel, now would be the time to do it.

You can reach Will at 06 362 6675 or [huritini@xtra.co.nz](mailto:huritini@xtra.co.nz)

## wetland care NEW ZEALAND



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

Wetland Care members recognise that wetlands are vital to the wellbeing of the environment, acting as huge ecological

sponges by soaking up pollutants and filtering water before it reaches streams, rivers, lakes, aquifers and the sea.

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

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

Funding for projects comes from the Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust established by Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc in 1991, as well as from 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**  
**Steyning Trust, Hawke's Bay**  
**Travis Wetland Trust, Christchurch**  
**Wairo Wetland, South Wairarapa**  
**Wetland Trust New Zealand, Rangiriri**  
**Waitakere Branch Forest and Bird**  
**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.



# Ducks Unlimited New Zealand

## 40th Annual General Meeting 2 August 2014

### 9am at Brackenbridge Conference Centre, Martinborough.

#### Welcome:

The President John Cheyne, welcomed members to the 40th Annual General Meeting.

Apologies: Ian, Dawn and Paul Pirani, Nancy Payne, James and Di Martin, Dan Steele, Anne Russell, Chris Bindon, Clare Worth

Motion: That the apologies tendered are accepted.

Moved: Di Pritt

Seconded: Ian Jensen

Carried

#### Minutes of the last AGM:

(Copies available at the AGM.)

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

Moved: John Bishop. Seconded: Jim Campbell.

Carried.

**Matters arising from the 2013 minutes:** No matters arising.

#### President's Report:

John Cheyne

(Circulated in Flight #164, copies available at the AGM.)

- John thanked the Board for their contribution.

- Talked about Bittern research which the Board is supporting to \$2.5K

Motion: The President's report is accepted.

Moved: John Bishop, Seconded: Jim Campbell.

Carried.

**Matters arising from the President's 2013 Report:** No matters arising.

#### Financial Report:

John Bishop

John presented the Financial Report which is subject to review

Income \$61K

Expenses \$68K

- Our membership is waxing and waning.

- Change in AGM receipts due to way accommodation was charged.

- Chapter donations are half.

- Still a deficit of \$7K.

Motion: That the 2014 financial report be accepted.

Moved: John Bishop, Seconded: Jim Campbell.

Carried.

#### Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust Report:

David Smith.

A/Cs completed and reviewed.

The Financial Year ends 31 December.

Funds were up from \$415K to \$437K, an improvement of our position by 8.4%.

As always subject to \$\$ fluctuations however fund is in good shape.

Moved: Di Pritt, Seconded: K Barnes.

Carried.

#### Election of Officers:

Board Election:

The President read out the following

Statement: The Constitution states that the Board should consist of not less than 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:

As there are no new nominations the existing board members, Jim Law and John Dermer, be re-elected.

Moved: David Smith, Seconded: Glenys Hansen.

Carried.

#### Reports:

Wetland Care: William Abel (tabled).

Royal Swan Report: William Abel (tabled).

Website Report (tabled).

Michelle Cooper (webmaster) covered off her report.

Have had good hits on the website. If anyone has anything for website please let us know

#### Wairio Wetland:

Jim Law (Full report tabled).

Jim firstly recognised the involvement of Ross Cottle, Jim Campbell, Howard Egan and John Cheyne on the Wairio project. He showed some photos of the project.

Summary: This project lead by DU, is strongly supported and seen as a success. It is a forerunner for the collaborative process with DOC.

#### Pateke:

Mike Camm (Full report tabled).

#### Whio:

Peter Russell (Full report tabled).

Peter talked to his report. Young pairs going well, using wild birds and flock mating. Bringing in South Island eggs. Survival rates are pretty good. Releasing at Egmont, think the tides have turned.

#### Membership Report:

Jan Abel.

- 75% renewal rate for membership to date – about same as last year.

- How would people feel with emailing out membership renewals? With another increase coming up in postage would this be a good opportunity?

#### General Business:

Liz Brook Flight Editor spoke to the meeting – she would like more photos or material from members.

John Bishop talked to the AGM.

- looking for guidance from members as to where DUNZ goes in the future. Mentioned that DU Canada has their AGM every two years, also mentioned letter from Whangarei Forest & Bird. Maybe put money in a Trust?

#### Closure:

The meeting closed at 10.05am



2014: Dinner fun

Photo: Liz Brook.

# Presidents Annual Report August 2015

It gives me great pleasure in presenting my annual report for 2014-15. As you will read we are not short on challenges.

Over the last 12 months we have had a number of highs and the odd low. Starting with the low, we have the same problem faced by DU Canada, DU USA and many other New Zealand based organisations in trying to maintain the number of members. Our membership is aging and few younger people are joining.

The DU Board have over the last four years sort advice on our future direction and increasing membership. This included aligning ourselves more closely with other similar organisations which are experiencing similar problems. Unfortunately people appear to have a greater array of demands on their time and this seems to reduce their desire to be members of organisations like DU. Declining membership naturally impacts on income. Any DU member with a magic wand and a few pearls of wisdom on the issue please let me know.

In spite of this problem DUNZ and its wetland

conservation arm, Wetland Care NZ still punch well above their weight in terms of what they are achieving. The Wairio wetland project in the Wairarapa continues to be our major wetland restoration project. The recent construction of the long bund to better retain water in Stages 1-3, highlights what can be achieved when collaborating with others. This \$30,000 project received magnificent financial support from the Clean Up Wairarapa Moana Fund (Greater Wellington Regional Council), NZ Game Bird Habitat Trust, South Wairarapa Rotary Club, Nikau Trust and Pharazyn Trust. While DU's finances are limited, we are on the lookout for other worthwhile projects where DU seed funding can leverage contributions from other organisations.

Fund raising is important for DU and the Manawatu and Wairarapa Chapters do an excellent job in organising the pre waterfowl hunting season clay target field shoot which results in a welcome donation towards our wetland projects. Our AGM weekend also generates valuable income.

DU is still involved with conservation programmes with blue duck (whio), brown

teal (pateke) and white swan. A new project DU is supporting is the doctorate study on the endangered bittern at Lake Whatuma in Hawke's Bay being undertaken by Emma Williams, Massey University. Her findings will assist the conservation of this flagship species, which in turn will lead to improved wetland outcomes nationally.

Our organisation is like an extended family with many members looking forward to the AGM to renew friendships. This is important, but could not happen without the excellent work of our Secretary Jan Able, Flight Editor Liz Brook and Web Site Manager Michelle Cooper. Your Board of Directors also work hard to achieve positive outcomes for DU. Being a Director is fun and involves working alongside a group of similar minded people. If you are interested in becoming a Director please talk to one of us.

Thank you for your on-going support. Wetlands are always going to need a helping hand.

**John Cheyne**  
President

## Wairio Wetland planting continues



**Digging in:** Some of the 40 volunteers helping at Wairio.

The Wairio Wetland Restoration has taken another step forward with the completion of the 1.7 km Bund Wall linking Stage 1 and Stage 4. If it is as successful as the Bund in Stage 4 we will have another 15 to 20 hectares of shallow open water with low islands scattered throughout.

This type of habitat is an ideal breeding and feeding area for a wide variety waterfowl such as swan, geese, bittern, royal spoonbill and of course ducks.

The Bund has been fenced to keep stock out as well as protect planting.

A planting day, held on April 21 was attended by about 40 people including students from a local school and Taratahi Agricultural College, members of the South Wairarapa Rotary and a variety of people from DU, Greater Wellington Council and the local district.

We received \$2500 worth of plants from the Honda Fund, as well as three people from Southey Honda in Masterton to help with the planting.

Start time was 10am and 2000 plants were in the ground by 12 noon, just in time for lunch provided by Greater Wellington.

Special thanks go to The Game Bird Habitat Trust, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Nikau Foundation, Pharazyn Trust and South Wairarapa Rotary Club for their generous sponsorship.

It was an excellent day my thanks to all involved.

We now await rain to see just how successful we have been.

**Ross Cottle**



**Many hands:** 2000 plants now in the ground.



**Bottoms up:** And heads down, in go more plants.

**Photos:** Ross Cottle.

# The years make a difference

At a fairly recent DU Manawatu Chapter dinner, our president John Cheyne successfully bid for a weekend at Jim Campbell's (one of DU's patrons), lodge near Mount Bruce in northern Wairarapa.

"I last visited Jim's property in 1982," John said. "It was soon after the pond had been constructed and was unfenced and not planted. What a difference 33 years makes!!!"

Gail (John's wife), and I had a magnificent weekend that involved a guided tour of the farm and all Jim's wetlands. The hospitality and company was magnificent, the venison tender and the whiskey smooth. A big thank you to Jim."

**John Cheyne**



**Weta watching:** The weta house (three at the top).

**Photos:** John Cheyne



**Jim's eye view:** Jim and weta house.



**Impressive pond:** Gail, Jim and Lynn O'Neale beside that impressive pond.

## Did you know?

Ducks Unlimited was incorporated by Joseph Knapp, EH Low and Robert Winthrop in January 29, 1937, in Washington, DC, USA as a result of their concerns (and those of other sportsmen), about the loss of wetlands as habitat for waterfowl and the impact this would have on waterfowl hunting.

Ducks Unlimited Canada was incorporated in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada in March, 1937. Other chapters have since become operation in Latin America, Mexico, New Zealand and Australia.

Anti-hunting lobbyists have consequently had an historically difficult relationship with DU

and accuse DU of simply breeding ducks to be shot.

It was waterfowl hunters intent on preserving their recreational interests who founded DU USA, and it remains a pro-hunting organisation. Supporters counter the anti-hunting lobby by pointing out that many species besides waterfowl live in the habitat restored and protected by DU. Wetlands improve the overall health of the environment by recharging and purifying groundwater, moderating floods and reducing soil erosion.

DU has become a leader in waterfowl habitat conservation and has conserved

more than 12.8 million acres (46,900km<sup>2</sup>) of waterfowl habitat in North America. DU USA partners with a wide range of corporations, governments, non-governmental organisations, landowners, and private citizens to restore and manage areas that have been degraded and to prevent further degradation of wetlands.

DU USA, in keeping with its founders' intentions, also promotes the continuation of safe and regulated waterfowl hunting. The majority of financial contributors and members are waterfowl hunters, and over 90 percent of those who read DU's magazine are hunters.

# QSM recognition for DUs first president Ian Pirani

Ian Pirani received a Queens Service Medal (QSM) in this year's Queen's Birthday honours for services to conservation.

In 1974 Ian was a co-founder of Ducks Unlimited and was the first president of DUNZ through to 1980. During this time he and his wife Dawn initiated a Pateke breeding programme and nesting boxes for Grey Teal throughout New Zealand.

A former goat farmer who has given voluntary service to wetland preservation and other farm environment initiatives, Ian has contributed to conservation and the environment.

Early in his farming career Ian suggested to his employer to fence rather than drain a wetland. Later he and his wife established the largest water fowl collection in Australasia and were the first people to privately breed who in captivity. He joined the Wellington Acclimatisation Society as a councillor in 1964, serving until 1972 and was a Councillor on the National Acclimatisation for three years.

He is a strong advocate for the profitable live harvest of feral goats from indigenous forests for environmental reasons and for use as a meat export. Ian has served on a variety of environmental and farming boards including the Meat and Wool Board as a member of the Goat Advisory Group, on the Eastern Fish and Game Board, Bay of Plenty Goat Farmers Association, the Department of Conservation



**Ian's reward:** Andy Garrick CEO of Eastern Fish & Game (left) and DU Life Member Ian Pirani; has also been recognised for his long involvement with Eastern F&G. The inscription says: In recognition of your long term dedication and commitment to the conservation and management of New Zealand's water fowl and their wetland habitats.

East Coast Board, and the National Trust of Balance Farm Environment Board.

Ian was a senior assessor and on the management committee for the BoP Balance

Farm Environment Awards.

Ian has not been in the best of health lately, and DUNZ members wish him well.

## Planting day at Ruffit Lodge

Fine weather was ideal for a 'planting' day at Ruffit Lodge (east of Woodville) mid May, with a few neighbours, friends and family mucking in to help. 160 trees were planted, with most getting the Don Bell 'Growtector' treatment.

"This is the last section of our waterway to be fenced and planted. Just a few more flaxes and trees to go." To encourage helpers Julie Candy offered soup and buns for lunch.



**Getting ready:** Off for an afternoon planting.



**Child's play:** Jack Allomes showed it is child's play to assemble the 'Growtector'.



**Protected:** Work in progress.

**Photos:** Julie Candy.

# Something about opening day



**Rickie Cameron 10, Omamari, Kaipara.**

“He has been out previously (not shooting), but never opening weekend.”

Rickie is David Cameron’s son. They live in Silverdale. “This was his first opening weekend and he was shooting with a Optima 410 single barrel shotgun and his trusty Ridgeline gear.

It was on private land, thanks to the local Omamari farmer.

Rickie loves to shoot clay birds, although with the 410 it isn’t that easy. Will move him up to a 20ga soon.”

**Photos:** David Cameron.



## Action at Ruffit Lodge east of Woodville



**Left:** Two Mallards escaping the guns!

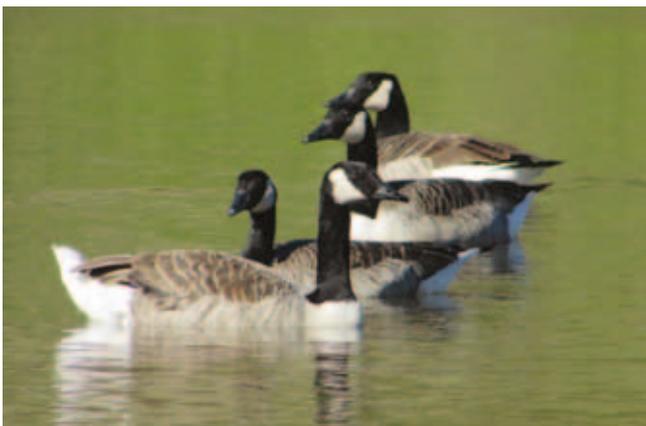
**Photo:** Theresa Morris.

**Below left:** Julie Candy thought the geese were avoiding the guns, sheltering on the home pond.

**Photo:** Julie Candy.

**Right:** Neil Candy in action. Clay bird shooting day and, below anxious shooters await results

**Photos:** Chris Thomas.



# - the excitement of the shoot



**Lake Koromatua:** South-west of Hamilton.

**Sunrise:** Waiting for the right light.

**Retrieving:** Rowing to collect the game.

**Maimai:** Has stood test of time.

Glen Butts at Lake Koromatua. "I have been shooting there for 33 years, the Maimai was rebuilt about 1992 by Murray Davies who uses the Maimai from the second weekend. In the foreground is my nephew Murray Butts and behind him is my son Craig Butts. Opening weekend always sees a few birds for the table."

Murray has been a member of DU pretty much since the beginning, and said he and Kelvin Mackie were the first elected Directors of DU, back in the days of Ian and Dawn Pirani, Paul and Cheryl Pirani, Jack Worth, Bud Jones, Neil Hayes, Henry Lickers, Neil McCleod etc.

**Photos:** Glen Butts.



## There must be ducks somewhere



**Diane's dogs**

**Left - Waiting:** Ready to work.

**Below - At last:** Finally wet.

**Photos:** Diane Pritt.



# Who released earlier this year

Hi all, another release in March with four birds on the Tongariro and the other four on the Whakapapa not far from the Chateau. Because we had so many people we split the release on the Whakapapa and released two birds at each site about 200m apart.

It was another fantastic day

The first photo at the Trout Centre are all Orana Birds. With the last release we found ourselves a cave – well almost.

**Peter Russell**

**Who Captive Co-ordinator**



**Freedom:** Whoie on their own.



**Whoie release:** Ready to let go.



**A crowd:** Keen spectators watch whoie release.

**Photos:** Peter Russell.

## Weedbusting, Mahurangi River, Warkworth



**Convolvulus:** Pattie finding the end of convolvulus vine so it could be pasted.



**Privet pest:** Roger working on the hard to cut and paste Tree and Bush Privet.

Just thought I'd fill you in with a couple of the shots taken of our Weedbusting along the Mahurangi River, Warkworth.

Mardieraa Vine produced wee tubers that then drop to the ground. Dreadful thing!

Convolvulus – another dreadful invasive vine. And then there is privet, both tree and bush growing along the river edge. Quite hard to cut and paste.

Heaps of work to be done as the river really needs this love and care! Although the Mallards don't mind it!

**Pattie Williams**



**Maderia Vine:** Isabel collecting Madeira vine and the wee tubers it produces.

**Photos:** Pattie and Roger Williams.

# Fabulous Whio

The whio or blue duck, which features on our \$10 note, is endemic to New Zealand. Rarer than some species of kiwi, with an estimated population of under 3000, it is nationally vulnerable and faces the risk of becoming extinct.

Their Maori name is whio whio, and they are found nowhere else in the world. A river specialist, they inhabit clean, fast flowing streams in the forested upper catchments of our rivers.

Nesting along the riverbanks, they are at high risk of attack from stoats and rats.

Staglands Wildlife Reserve have had whio for many years and are one on New Zealand's most successful breeders of this iconic bird. Their current pairs' aviary is undergoing major renovations. The plan is that it will become a much larger, walk-through aviary that will house not only the whio but also kakariki and possibly kaka, with the ultimate goal being to offer visitors an even better experience.

In 1976, Staglands was a world leader in developing the first walk-through aviary for



**Family group:** Whio – the young stay close to mum.

**Photo:** Yvonne van Leuwen. Staglands Wildlife Reserve.

their kea, well ahead of what was considered the norm at the time. For owner, John Simisters the motivation was simple, 'to offer both visitors and the kea a richer interaction' Today, 40 years on, walk-through aviaries are

recognised as best practice by the industry. Given this track record visitors should be in for a treat, once renovations are completed, later this year.

## Austrians halt lead phase-out

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**Duck shoot:** Misty morning at Lake Huritini – spot the dog.

**Photo:** Will Abel.

## Call to bring back lead shot for duck shooting

On the eve of the duck shooting season New Zealand First repeated its call for the restoration of lead shot.

"Many shooters say the steel shot does not always kill and birds may die over hours or days," said spokesperson on Outdoor Recreation Richard Prosser.

"Some shooters are using smaller gauge shotguns so they can use the lead shot to kill instantly. Others are having to cope with steel

shot, and taking care to aim appropriately to try for a 'clean kill', but they want a return to lead shot.

"It's high time the government listened to shooters, took all aspects of animal welfare seriously and ensured lead shot was made available for the commonly used 12 gauge shot gun".

**Authorised by Richard Prosser, Government Buildings, Wellington.**





## Rare and interesting sighting

Five plumed whistling ducks were sighted on a Kokatahi farm near Hokitika on the South Island's west coast a few weeks ago and reported to the Department of Conservation.

These plumed whistling ducks are a striking waterfowl species endemic to Australia.

Formerly considered of rare occurrence in New Zealand (recorded eight times during the 20th century, small flocks have occurred at least six times since 2000).

Most sightings have been of small flocks (about 14 birds) at the western edge of New Zealand, but birds have reached Hawke's Bay (Napier, two were still present in February this year) and the Chatham Islands (two different flocks of three, both in 2011).

**Supplied by the Issac Conservation and Wildlife Trust.**

## Wicked wasps

Wasps are one of the most damaging invertebrate pests in New Zealand; they harm our native birds and insects and compete for food with our native species. If you put together all the wasps in honeydew beech forests they would weigh more than the weight of birds, rodents and stoats combined.

This new study has found that wasps also have a major financial impact on primary industries and the health sector. This includes:

- More than \$60 million a year in costs to pastoral farming from wasps disrupting bee pollination activities, reducing the amount of clover in pastures and increasing fertiliser costs.
- Almost \$9 million a year cost to beekeepers from wasps attacking honey bees, robbing their honey and destroying hives.
- Wasp-related traffic accidents estimated to cost \$1.4 million a year.
- Over \$1 million each year spent on health costs from wasp stings.
- On top of the direct costs, almost \$60 million a year is lost in unrealised honey production from beech forest honeydew which is currently being monopolised by wasps. Honeydew is also a valuable energy source for kaka, tui and bellbirds.

DOC Scientist Eric Edwards said these numbers are conservative. The actual cost of wasps is much higher especially if you take into account the impact on tourism and our love of the outdoors, which this study wasn't

able to measure in full.

"It's hard to put a dollar value on people's attitudes to wasps and to what extent wasps prevent them from visiting conservation land or taking part in outdoor tourism activities," he said.

"Wasps are a massive annoyance and their multiple stings can cause a lifetime effect of making young people reluctant to return to forests and parks."

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) Dr Erik van Eynhoven said that reducing wasp abundance would produce major flow on benefits to pastoral farming and horticulture through increased bee pollination services.

"This study shows it makes economic sense, as well as environmental sense, to invest in research to control wasps," he said.

"MPI is working with DOC to encourage the science community, and their funders, to further explore a range of tools needed to control wasps in the long term," Dr van Eynhoven said.

The MPI Sustainable Farming Fund has recently supported investigations into the bio control potential of a new mite discovered in wasp nests. And DOC has been actively working on a programme to better control wasps and has been piloting a targeted bait station method on conservation land.

An evaluation of the cost of pest wasps (*Vespula* species) in New Zealand, by the Sapere Research Group, was jointly funded by the Department of Conservation and the Ministry for Primary Industries.

## Kiwi deaths at Pukaha

We are saddened to let you know that we are currently dealing with a suspected ferret incursion at Pukaha with the death of 7 kiwi (3 juvenile and 4 adult) since March 2015. The juvenile kiwi deaths include the two white kiwi hatched in the wild in February this year.

The Department of Conservation, which looks after predator control at Pukaha, has stepped up its trapping regime and consulted a number of experts, both within DoC and the wider predator control community, to ensure everything possible is being done to stop this predation event. This includes changing the type of bait in traps and the frequency that the traps are serviced.

While this event is without doubt a setback, we are confident that the predator control programme in place throughout the reserve and in the buffer zone around it will continue to make our unfenced reserve as safe as possible for our birds.

While the programme gives kiwi and other native species the best possible start, we cannot ensure their complete safety and have to accept that there will always be losses.

The sad loss of these kiwi has been a blow to our staff and the Pukaha community. Kiwi have a precarious existence and there will always be loss of life as has been seen in fenced and unfenced predator-protected reserves in New Zealand. It makes us even more determined to continue with our long-term aim of a self-sustaining kiwi population at Pukaha.

Since the Pukaha Forest Restoration project began in 2002, 3 endangered native bird species have been successfully reintroduced and are thriving – North Island Brown Kiwi, North Island Kaka and North Island Kokako.

We are grateful for your ongoing support.

**Helen Tickner**  
General Manager.

# Working in the edge of the wetlands

Boggy Pond, Matthews lagoon, Wairio Wetlands, JK Donald Reserve and Barton's Lagoon. These areas in the east and north of Lake Wairarapa are regarded as the best examples of native wetlands left at Wairarapa Moana.

All are on public conservation land and have infestations of pest plants to some degree – alder, willow, hornwort, tall fescue, aquatic weeds, and more. The pest plants have changed the natural character of the wetlands and made it difficult for some native plants and animals to thrive and also made it difficult for the wetlands to act as sediment and nutrient filters. Some money and time will be spent dealing with the pest plants in these areas and planting to enhance the native ecology already there.

The Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project began in 2008 to enhance the native ecology, recreation and cultural opportunities on the public land in the area. Project partners are Greater Wellington Regional Council, Department of Conservation, Dairy NZ, and of course Ducks Unlimited.

Threats to native biodiversity include:

Aquatic weeds: - hornwort, largarosiphon, elodea, curled pond weed. These plants clog waterway and irrigation equipment and crowd out native species.

Invasive trees: alder, willow. Both fast growing and water tolerant they invade wetlands and lake edges and can dominate an entire ecosystem.

Invasive grasses: tall fescue, Mercer grass. Both introduced and out-compete native grasses and form an impenetrable barrier for native species the might try to establish.

Introduced mammals: Rabbits, hares, possums,

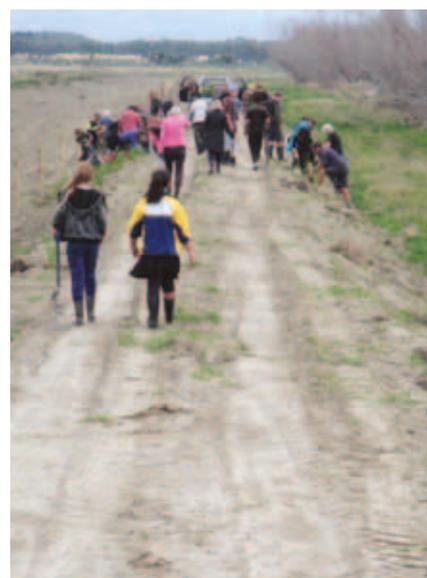
stoats, ferrets, feral cats, rats. They eat pasture, native plants and/or native animals.

Introduced fish: Perch, tench, rudd, goldfish. Some of these eat our native fish, other out-compete them for food, while others eat plants and create more sediment in the water.

Poor water quality: Nutrients, effluent, waste water. Many native species will not tolerate nitrified water.

The clean-up work around the edge wetlands is just one part of the wider Wairarapa Moana Wetland Project. The prime focus is the publically owned land within the Wairarapa Moana catchment. The group is committed to working with the adjacent farmers and the users of the Moana.

Each year a management team has been completing tasks within areas of recreation, marketing, relationships and biodiversity investigations and enhancement.



**Volunteers:** Working at Wairio Wetlands.

**Photos:** Ross Cottle.

## Wetlands help reduce nitrates (USA)

Agricultural runoff often results in large concentrations of phosphorous and nitrates making their way into local waterways. But new research suggests wetlands can help stem the tide of leaching fertilisers.

In a recent two-year study, conducted by researchers at the University of Illinois, local wetlands helped reduce the amount of nitrates leaking into the Embarras River by as much 62 percent. The wetlands also helped diminish nitrous oxide emissions, a potent greenhouse gas.

“Slowing down the rate of flow of the water by intercepting it in the wetland is what helps to remove the nitrate,” researcher Mark David, a biogeochemist in Illinois’ College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, explained.

“The vegetation that grows in the wetland doesn’t make much of a difference because the grasses don’t take up much nitrogen,” David said. “It’s just about slowing the water down and allowing the microbes in the sediment to

eliminate the nitrate. It goes back into the air as harmless nitrogen gas.”

These particular wetlands, between the Embarras River and the surrounding tile-drained agricultural land, were created 20 years ago. And they seem to be doing a solid job of curbing runoff contaminants - an isolated but noteworthy success story.

David says the USDA is interested in new methods for ensuring fertilisers stay put, and don’t accumulate downstream.

Fertilisers like nitrates make their way into America’s waterways and travel downstream. Significant accumulations of phosphorous and nitrates in the Gulf of Mexico have been blamed for massive algae blooms, which give off toxins and suck oxygen from the water - creating large dead zones and wreaking environment havoc. Similar scenarios have played out in the Great Lakes and anywhere major river systems dump fertiliser-laden water into lakes, seas and oceans.

Environmental groups have been pushing

for regulators to build more wetlands, but farmers are reluctant to sacrifice land that could otherwise be used to grow more crops. Farmers prefer wood chip bioreactors to soak up nitrates from farm runoff, but they don’t do as well as wetlands at stemming high flows.

No one wants to mandate a certain practice - wetlands, bioreactors, cover crops, adjusting the timing of applying fertiliser—all of these things that we know help reduce nutrient loss,” said David. “But, because of this research, we know that wetlands are a long-term nitrate removal method that keeps on working with little greenhouse gas emission.”

“By building a wetland, farmers have an opportunity to make a substantial nitrate reduction in the transport of nitrate from their fields to the Gulf,” David added.

The work of David and his colleagues is detailed in the latest issue of the Journal of Environmental Quality – should any of you be interested.

# Letters

## RE: Grey Teal

Dear Editor

What an excellent article by John Dyer on grey teal in New Zealand (Flight April 2015); one that exemplifies the DUNZ contribution to the population growth of this bird.

I was at Tony Flexman's property at Pokeno in 1975 when the first teal boxes were erected there; I remember it vividly as the weather was atrocious! It was the same day that the All Blacks played Scotland at Eden Park – when the pitch totally disappeared underwater – and I ended up with a severe flu bug!

In the first season usage of the boxes was 6 percent - and we were 'over the moon'!

From then on the usage grew at a phenomenal rate, but in 1978 I attended a meeting of Acclimatisation Society Councillors' (I represented DU on the Wellington Acclimatisation Society for 15-years) – organised by the NZ Wildlife Service - and towards the end of the gathering a councillor asked Wildlife Service Scientist Jim Mills what he thought about Ducks Unlimited grey teal nest box programme? Jim replied that he did not expect grey teal to use artificial boxes!

Around 2-years later Jim visited Pokeno and became wild with excitement on seeing huge numbers of grey teal queuing up to use the

boxes – and he published a highly supportive paper on the subject.

By that stage DU was organising the erection of boxes in numerous areas – Mathews Lagoon, Barton's Lagoon and Kaurarau Dam in the Wairarapa, Woodend Lagoon north of Christchurch and on numerous properties in the Waikato.

The population growth of grey teal has been incredible – so much so that on opening morning 2014 at Taumata Lagoon grey teal outnumbered mallards by at least 500-1.

Neil Hayes

## Peking ducks – home and abroad



**Peking ducks:** Invade the Dermer lawn, happy and free.

**Photos:** Diny Dermer and also courtesy of the Vietnam Tourist Bureau.



**Rough ride:** While back in Vietnam the ducks travel in rather crowded conditions. Still look quite perky though.

## Unique kiwi

Kindara, the uniquely ginger coloured kiwi chick at his stoat-proof weight was released back into the wild.

The ginger Kiwi has unique colouring and this tickled the fancy of red head Emma Bean who works at the Rainbow Springs Kiwi Encounter where Kindara's egg was incubated and hatched. Emma made the trip to Ohakune for Kindara's release to the wild on the Karioi Rahui on the southern side of Mt Ruapehu.

Also at the release were students from Tauhara College, Kindara's sponsors. They watched Kindara's journey as he was raised at Rainbow Springs, and gained naming rights through the National Kiwi Trust. They visited Kindara in Rotorua after he hatched, and were there to welcome him to crêche at the Wairakei Golf + Sanctuary, Taupō in November. Two students helped the DOC Kiwi team catch Kindara at Wairakei, and a group went to the forest for Kindara's release.

Tauhara student Tegan Clark said, "Through Kindara's sponsorship, the students know more about the kiwi and their plight, and the efforts going towards saving kiwi."

Kindara is one of an estimated 70,000 kiwi left in New Zealand. He's one of the lucky ones with a very good chance of survival thanks to a great collaborative effort.

"This is what saving kiwi is all about – inspiring future generations to care for our native species," said Kiwis for Kiwi executive director Michelle Impey.

To learn about how to help save kiwi, or to make a secure on line donation, visit [Kiwis for Kiwi](http://Kiwis for Kiwi).



Kindara as a chick.

## Boggy Pond April rounds

Last April, I was able to complete the servicing round down at Boggy Pond, Mathews and the Wairoa Restoration Block. The total predators trapped there for the month was **1 cat, 5 ferrets, 1 weasel, 9 rats, 29 hedgehogs, 6 mice and 1 hawk.**

While there I GPS'd another eight potential trapping sites on the new bund wall that was recently created.

A Timms trap was missing from the trap site by the Bridge to No Where and a Timms/DOC 250 was missing past the second bridge leading to the Viewing Hide. I suspect these have been stolen as they were there when I serviced the gear in February. These missing traps will be replaced after duck shooting season. I am wary that more may disappear during that time with the influx of hunters to the area.

Steve Playle.

# Membership details

A plea to members to avoid any disruption to your membership benefits please remember to inform us when you move or change any of your contact details by dropping us a line to:

Membership Secretary  
- info@ducks.org.nz  
- P O Box 281, Levin 5540.  
- New Zealand.

## Renewing subscriptions

When the members pay next year's subscriptions could you PLEASE...Provide me with your postal code. We were all sent a card with the new numbers attached we are going to have to have this code on all mail in the future. To save both a lot of time and money for DU it would be much easier for members to provide that information now!

Those who pay by credit card please ensure you provide the card expiry date as the banks have become extremely picky about this (as they should).

For those who have authorised DU to have their subscription paid automatically by credit card I need your card expiry date. The majority have long since expired and as stated above the bank will no longer accept either an old date or the blank spaces. Members can either email this information now, wait and provide it on the subscription renewal notice that will come out in April, or send a note now to me at the above address.

**Jan Able**  
Membership Secretary



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## 4000 milestone

QEII National Trust recently celebrated the registration of its 4000th covenant. This is on Keith and Margaret Ormsby's property and is the second to be registered on their Otorohanga (Waikato) farm.

Waikato is the birthplace of the QEII NT and this new covenant is

near the site of its first covenant registered in 1979 by the Trust's key founder Gordon Stephenson and his wife Celia.

The area now covered by QEII covenants is approximately the same size as Stewart Island at 189,000ha.

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## WETLAND CARE'S **QUACK CLUB**

Quack Club is created by Wetland Care NZ especially for kiwi kids who are conservation minded... So if you want to learn more about NZ Wetlands & the animals that live there & have lots of fun become a Quack Club member today!

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