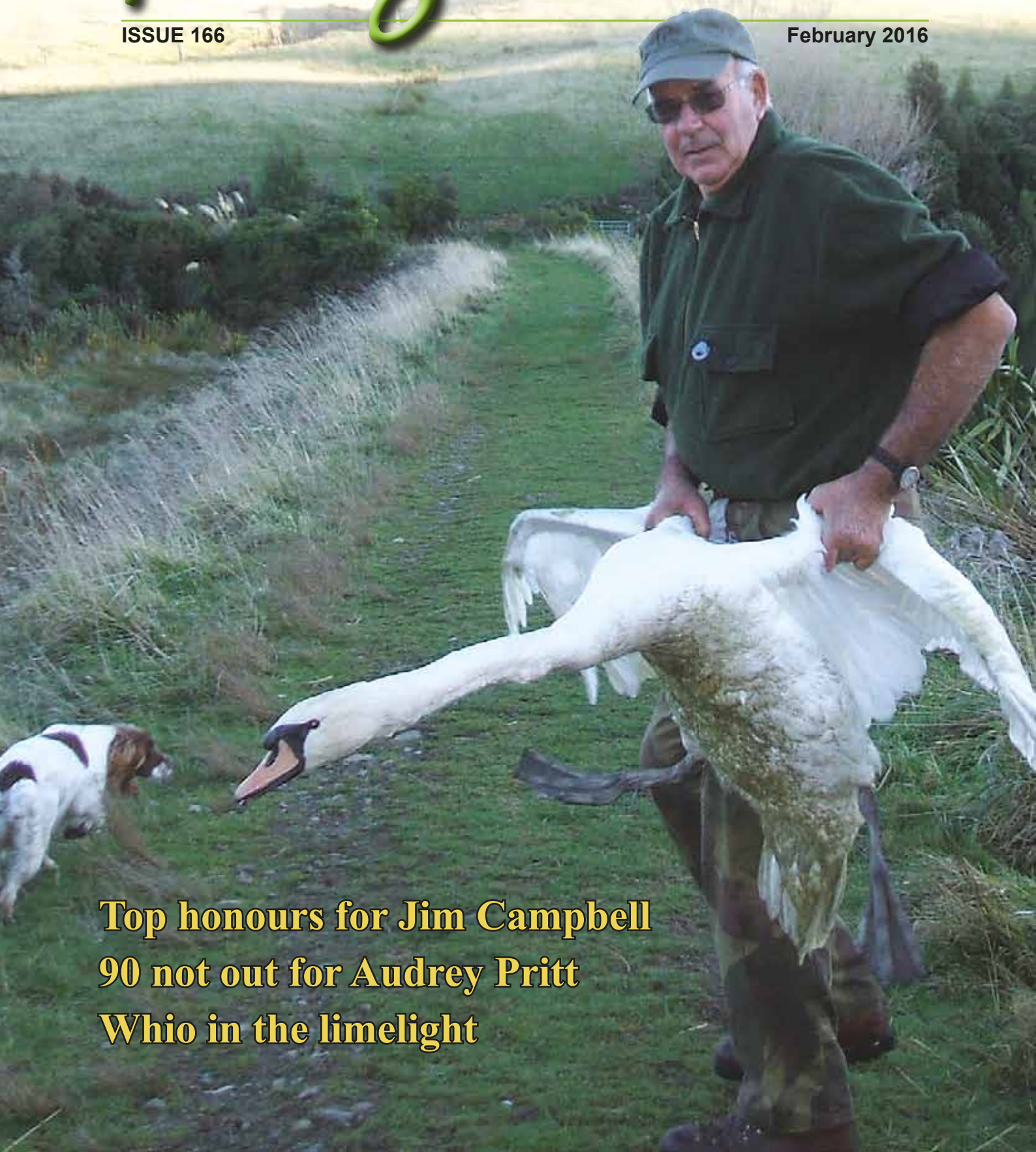


Flight

ISSUE 166

February 2016



**Top honours for Jim Campbell
90 not out for Audrey Pritt
Whio in the limelight**

from the PRESIDENT

Best wishes for 2016 and may it be a satisfying year for everyone.

The challenges for DU remain very much the same with wetlands under increasing threats from climate change and drainage. Amendments are proposed by the Government this year to the Resource Management Act (RMA) and we need to be vigilant to ensure the current protection measures for wetlands under the RMA are not eroded away.

The Directors have decided that the 2016 AGM will be held in Taupo and are currently checking suitable venues. Venue and dates will be confirmed shortly.

Looking forward to seeing you all again then.

John Cheyne



Jan replacement

Hope you all had a great Christmas and happy New Year.

1. Membership renewal time is coming up for 2016/2017 year. Hopefully they will be in the post at the end of March/early April.

2. DUNZ is looking for a new me (Jan) to take over from this role. I have returned to fulltime work and am finding I can't do justice to the Administration role for DU.

We need someone to do the tasks such as the membership renewal, organising the conference/AGM, email/enquiries from the DU website, emails/enquiries from DU membership, and banking.

If you want to find out more about this role then contact me - it is only part-time. If you are interested in applying for the role then contact John Cheyne.

Thanks, Jan Abel, Administration

Big boots to fill

It is sad Jan Abel has decided to resign her position as secretary and membership coordinator for DUNZ. She has been much of the glue that has held us together for several years. Jan will be missed for many reasons, she has done a great job of coordinating and organising many events and keeping us in line with her management skills.

Jan will be missed. But somewhere out there is another person who has the energy and skill to take over this position. It is not full time and it is interesting. And there is an hourly rate.

Contact John Bishop or Jan for more details.

Liz Brook, Editor

New member

A very warm welcome to Alison Stanes from Auckland.

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Waterfowl adverts free to members.

Contact the Editor to book space or check discounts.

Contributions to Flight from members or other readers are welcome.

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(Please make an effort to send photos & stories)

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Cover photo: Patron Jim Campbell with hands full, 2007.

Photo: Trevor Thompson.

Starting young

Jim Campbell helps the duckling race.
See pages, 7, 8 & 9.



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.



On the brink

Birds at risk. Check out the chicks.
Pages 10 & 11.



Whio up-dates

Protection and encouragement.
Page 14.

Whio Crèche visitors arrive

Volunteers have received their first whio/blue ducks at the Tongariro National Trout Centre this season.



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.

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.

Wairio scores again



NIKAU FOUNDATION

Thanks to the Nikau Foundation, Wairio wetland has again been granted a generous amount toward development for the wetland. The Richard and Doreen Evans Charitable Trust provided \$4000 in the 2015 Nikau Foundation funding round.

Conditions placed on the grant:

It must be used for the purpose applied for.

The Trust must receive a feedback form from within a year of the grant being made.

The Trust requires an update of progress towards completion of the project. Also forward two or three photos and an update that can be used on their website / annual report / newsletters. Before and after photos are especially welcome with captions. Talent release permissions are DUNZs responsibility.

Please acknowledge Nikau Foundation contribution to DUNZ in any publications or any other means of release – The Foundation would like to become better known throughout the Wellington region.

Our logo is available to use in your publications.

Please keep informed through our website and “Like” us on facebook.

Should any of you wish to know more go to the Foundation’s web site, www.nikaufoundation.org.

New GM

The Nikau Foundation has appointed a new General Manager who brings a wealth of experience from the community and voluntary



Pretty pleased: Looking like cats who got the cream, Jim Campbell and Ross Cottle. It was said Mr Campbell had a relative (an uncle) who was once on the old Wellington Harbour Board. Mr Campbell decided to try out his uncle’s seat!

Photo: Nikau Foundation.

sector. Louise Parkin has had 25 years working with charitable and philanthropic organisations both in New Zealand and internationally.

Ms Parkin had been at Nikau Foundation as their Philanthropy Advisor for six months before taking up the role of General Manager in January this year.

In her spare time, she teaches the Japanese martial art of aikido to adults and children. Her personal philanthropy is for the benefit of the

environment and international aid.

The Nikau Foundation is part of a world-wide network of community foundations set up to benefit a specific geographic area, in this case the Wellington region. The Foundation manages 22 endowment funds that benefit the arts, education, social and youth projects, the environment and beyond. It does this through the generosity of local donors. The funds it manages grew 100 percent in the last year.

River Story Award and Morgan Foundation

In conjunction with Kaiwaiwai Dairies Ltd, Ducks Unlimited NZ won joint first place in the River Story Award at a recent Morgan Foundation Dinner.

Held at the Ridges Hotel in Wellington, the Award recognises conservation efforts to improve water quality before it enters lakes and waterways.

Kaiwaiwai Dairies received the award for the construction of a serpentine waterway on their farm to slow the passage of the water down, thereby allowing more time for nature to extract nutrients from the water.

DUNZ was recognised for the effort we have put into Wairio (Southern Wairarapa) for not only the creation of water fowl habitat but for also slowing down the water so when it enters Lake Wairarapa it has a greatly reduced nutrient loading.

Our thanks go to all the organisations that have contributed time and money over the last 10 years.

The family of Joanne and Gareth Morgan of Wellington established this charitable trust primarily for the purpose of reducing wealth disparities between people. In particular the focus of the Foundation is on improving the lives of the poorest folk in the world and enabling people to participate in their society and workplaces to the full extent of their potential. The Foundation work extends in New Zealand to public interest research and education as well as to investment in conservation and natural environmental enhancement.

The trustees are Joanne, Gareth and independent Charles Purcell. The



Awards: From left: Ian Gunn (Greater Wellington), Ross Cottle (DUNZ), Verne Brassel Kaiwaiwai Dairies, and awards presenter Rebecca Macfie (Listener journalist). The names of other category winners shown were unavailable.

advisory board for the trust comprises the Morgan’s four children – Ruby, Floyd, Jessi and Sam. The Manager of the Trust is Margaret Mather, whose responsibilities include liaising with applicants for funding, administering the grants programme, and ensuring the Foundation participates in philanthropic community activities to the extent the trustee’s desire. The trust has no religious orientation although willingly finances religious-based organisations doing work that satisfies their criteria.

Audrey Pritt 90 not out

Di Pritt wrote: "This is mother (Audrey, front row middle). The group includes daughters Christine, Diane and Lois plus sister-in-law Betty Elliott, then daughters Yvonne and Alison, and nephews Gary, Colin Worsley and cousin Barbara Heap.

"We had a great day at the Pritt homestead which included a luncheon with about 40 friends and relations. The weather held well till 4.30pm when a glorious 28mls of rain fell

over the next few hours."

The following day most of the group set off on the Forgotten World tour, leaving from Tauramarunui by bus to Whangamomona and then rail cart back (the carts are converted golf carts). This little adventure was one Audrey's 90th birthday presents.

The Pritt family have been involved with DUNZ since 1975.



90th smile: Audrey on her special day.

Birthday photo: Most of the relatives with Birthday girl Audrey in middle front row.

Pukaha Mt Bruce ups the anti on predators

New self re-setting traps for Pukaha

Pukaha has been looking at a wider range of options for predator control in the reserve and the surrounding buffer zone. Then thanks to a generous donation from Pub Charity, they were able to purchase a number of A24 self resetting stoat and rat traps. You can check them out at www.goodnature.co.nz

The initial consignment of traps are for their buffer zone provided by the Greater Wellington Regional Council and are also near the aviaries at the Visitor Centre. This February they will be rolling out these devices into their 'front face' to supplement the current DoC 250 traps.

The total number of rats caught in the 12 month period September 2014 - September 2015 in both the reserve and buffer zone was 1530. The number of mustelids (weasels, stoats and ferrets) was 104.

Pukaha are continuing to look at innovative predator control techniques and will keep supporters updated on progress.



Beginning: Free flight aviary takes shape.

Concrete, concrete and more concrete was the order of the day when the footing was laid for the new free flight aviary. The construction was underway thanks to the teams at Rigg-Zschokke Ltd and Higgins Contractors, The team at Pukaha Mt Bruce were hoping that all going to plan they are aiming for an opening date in late February 2016.

Game bird hunting season coming up... Better start getting ready

Top of the list should be the hunting licence, and probably the regulations booklet.

Check out the Fish and Game website for the most up-to-date information.

May 2 seems to be the opening day this year. Remember you must have your licence with you whenever and wherever you go hunting.

Don't try to use the licence from last year. They are not upgradable, exchangeable or refundable. If you lose your licence report it to Fish and Game and they will sort it out.

F&G have an online licence system, or you can call their free phone licence number 0800 542 362, business hours only, \$5 booking fee.

Or you can visit any Fish and Game office or regional licence agent.

Hunting kit reminders:

- Game bird hunting licence, regulations booklet. Carry firearms licence at all times.
- Confirm access with landowners.
- Get permit to hunt on Fish & Game and DOC land.
- Fix the maimai: leaks, rotten boards seating etc.
- Clean decoys.
- Vaccinations and worming for the dog.
- Check regulations for the region you are hunting in.
- Hunt ethically and responsibly.
- Don't drink and hunt. Alcohol impairs judgement.
- Be a tidy kiwi – take your rubbish when you leave.

Basic safety rules:

- Shotgun in tip-top condition. Check sighting.
- Treat every firearm as loaded.
- Store firearms and ammunition safely.
- Always point firearms in a safe direction.
- Load only when ready to fire.
- Always, always - identify your target.
- Check the firing zone.



Under cover: De-Jay watching out.

Keep it happy hunting

With Duck Shooting seasons not far away it is well to remember about obligations of farm/land owners and of the recreational visitors on the property.

Owners do have obligations under Health and Safety legislation.

The first thing to take into account is that this is not a paperwork nightmare. There is not lengthy form-filling required nor a need to sign people on and off the farm. It is really a matter of thinking about where the hunters will go, identifying hazards and risks the hunters wouldn't reasonably expect in those areas, and warning them about those risks and how to avoid them.

The recommendation is to have a conversation with the hunter or hunter in charge of the party to pass on that information. Make a note in your farm diary about what you told them. Most people usually ring up the night (or during the week) before to make sure it's all ok, so that's a good time to have the discussion.

Think about the sort of things to warn them about. Remember the things they wouldn't reasonably expect (so if they are townies you might have to make allowance for that) in the areas they will be in. Some examples: Dangers from things like tree-felling, spraying or other work – if there is tree

felling in another area, are the trucks using the same tracks? Areas of instability such as paddocks with unexpected tomos or subject to landslips. Aggressive stock that are near where they will be hunting. You might also let them know about communications (e.g. no cell coverage) so they can make alternate arrangements if they need to.

It's also a good to get an idea of their timings, and tell them they should let you know if these change. You also need to make sure that all the people who are in the area (staff, contractors, other visitors / hunters) are aware of each other.

If a visitor trips over a tree-root or stone, a property owner or occupier is unlikely to be held responsible for the other person's carelessness. In addition, if the property owner or occupier could not reasonably have been expected to know of a hazard, they cannot be held responsible for any harm that occurs to a customer or client.

Remember the General Rule - as the person in charge of the workplace you are legally required to point out specific hazards, which you know could harm the person and which the person wouldn't normally expect to encounter.

Happy hunting season.



Retrieving the game: Someone has to do it.

Our Jim makes the media – and so he should...

A Wairarapa man has been given a “big lift” by being made a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MZNM).

Jim Campbell has been recognised for more than 50 years of service to conservation in the New Year Honours List.

Mr Campbell said he was humbled by the news.

“It’s huge. I’ll get used to it, I suppose. We knew the process was happening, it takes a couple of months. But it was a big lift.”

Mr Campbell has had a long involvement in habitat restoration and waterfowl captive breeding and recovery programmes, including whio (blue duck), pateke (brown teal), grey teal and mute white swan.

He has created many wetlands on his property, the largest being a 8ha area covenanted with the QEII National Trust, of which he is a life member.

Mr Campbell joined Ducks Unlimited in 1976, serving as president, board chairman and now co-patron.

He has been a trustee of the Masterton Henley Lake Trust since 2003 and has given more

than 60 years of support to the New Zealand Forest and Bird Society.

As trustee of the Mount Bruce National Wildlife Centre for 25 years, Mr Campbell was instrumental in promoting the building of the classroom facility, and the Sir Edmund Hillary Memorial Lectures.

However, Mr Campbell remained modest about his contribution. “A lot of people do more than I do, but when you start to add up what you’ve done it does get to be quite impressive at times,” he said. “It was a team effort and that goes for a lot of things.”

His passion for conservation was sparked as a child, when he took rides on the mail truck and visited the aviaries on Elwyn Welch’s farm.

“I’ve always been interested in that sort of thing, and I was probably encouraged by Elwyn Welch who was one of the pioneers who had a farm where Pukaha Mount Bruce is now.”

Jim has racked up a number of other accolades



Jim Campbell: Taken 2013.

including a Wellington Regional Council inaugural Ballance Farm Environmental Award.

Courtesy of Wairarapa Times-Age.

Alisa Yongalisa.

(see and read more next pages 8-9)



Colourful: Mature trees enhance one of Jim’s lakes. They continued to grow well since this photo was taken in 2012.

Order of Merit for top bloke

Why has James (better known as Jim) Campbell been awarded the Member of New Zealand Order of Merit? Usually it is for achievement or service to the community and for Jim Campbell mainly for services to conservation. But there is more – read on.



Striding out: On the go, DU AGM 2015.

The Order is awarded to those “who in any field of endeavour have rendered meritorious service to the Crown and the nation or who have become distinguished by their eminence, talents, contributions, or other merits”. That is our DUNZ Patron, our Jim.

The list of reasons below makes that clear:

- A sensitive farmer
- A compulsive tree planter
- A digger of large holes
- A breeder of birds
- An arch-enemy of vermin
- A National Trust Covenanter
- Patron of Ducks Unlimited New Zealand
- A teller of tall (and short) stories
- An outstanding host
- A generous, encouraging and humble gentleman.

There are few people of the Wairarapa who haven't heard of Jim Campbell – and many well beyond. His reputation as a farmer, conservationist, wetlands creator, water fowl breeder and welcoming host, precedes him.

At age 73, an age at which for many, signal retirement, Jim Campbell is constantly in motion – helping, giving, inspiring, leading and directing in the cause of environmental quality.

If ever an Honour was richly deserved; this is it – long overdue to an outstanding environmental role model.

Alan Fielding



Jim and Prince: Prince Charles gets the low down.



Swan Upping: Jim supervising (second left with stave) as swans are collected for their journey north. Every year a few young mute swans are brought to the North Island to provide new genes.

James Clarence Campbell MNZM



Jim's pond: A few years ago.



Jim's pond now: Hard work plays off.



Originals: Di Pritt, Jim Campbell, Ian Pirani, Dawn Pirani and Paul Pirani.



Weta house: Jim inspects the pets...



Jim and mate: Always room for the dog.



Bogged: An embarrassing moment in Jim's life. He got bogged, and apparently it was life member 80-year-old Anne Nielson who came to the rescue.

The black stilt/kaki - a unique wader on the brink

Once the common stilt of New Zealand, the endemic black stilt (*Himantopus novaezelandiae*) remains critically endangered and is considered the world's rarest wader, despite over 30 years of intensive conservation management.

Black stilts have a distinctive elongated neck, jet-black plumage, red eyes, long red legs and a thin black bill. Due to their variable plumage, juveniles and sub-adults can be easily overlooked amongst pied stilts, while hybrids add to the confusion. Juveniles in their first winter plumage have a black back, smudgy grey hind neck and variable dark markings on the flank. The plumage darkens during their second summer moult, and by mid-summer they are predominantly black. Contact calls are a single or repeated "yep". Territorial birds are noisy, having a higher pitched and more penetrating call than the pied stilt.

Typical black stilt habitat consists of wide-open braided riverbeds and associated nearby wetlands, ponds and shallow lake edges. During flooding more stable side-streams, swamps and ponds are favoured. Nesting territories are located in areas with abundant food, such as shallow river channels rich in aquatic invertebrates. Outside the breeding season black stilts move locally within the Mackenzie Basin, but small numbers frequent the Canterbury coast (Lakes Wainono and Ellesmere), and Kawhia and Kaipara Harbours in the North Island.

At the time of European settlement this now exceptionally rare wader was widespread throughout New Zealand and bred at North Island locations until the late 19th century. Settlement intensified swiftly, exotic plants and animals were introduced, wetlands were drained and rivers were channelised. The environment changed rapidly and black stilt numbers decreased swiftly to devastatingly low levels. During the 20th century the range contracted from being South Island wide, to being confined to Canterbury and Otago by the 1950s, South Canterbury and North Otago by the 1970s, and the Mackenzie Basin by the 1980s. The breeding population is now restricted to the area between the Lake Tekapo and Lake Pukaki basins in the north, and the Ahuriri River in the south. In 1981 the population fell to just 23 birds, which increased to 55 birds by 2005 and 85 birds in 2010. Before the annual release of captive birds, the free-living population was ~130 birds in 2012. We are now in 2016 and the population continues to increase, but only ever so slowly.

Today black stilts face a wide range of threats including habitat loss and modification (agriculture, hydroelectric development, weed invasions, flooding), introduced mammalian predators (feral cats, rats, hedgehogs and mustelids), avian predation (Australasian



Nest site: Chick and eggs.

harrier and black backed gull), human disturbance (recreational river users disturb nesting adults and crush eggs/chicks), and pied stilt hybridisation (now a lesser issue). The development of irrigation has seen significant changes in land use, particularly modification for conversion to dairy farming, resulting in considerable habitat loss.

To address these threats and increase numbers, the Department of Conservation initiated the Kaki Recovery Programme in 1981. The programme has produced great results by focusing on wild egg collection, artificial incubation, captive rearing of chicks for release, predator control to protect wild populations, research and promoting awareness.

Only two captive facilities globally breed black stilts for release into the wild – the Department of Conservation in Twizel and The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust in Christchurch. To date the Trust has played a pivotal role in black stilt conservation with 45 birds housed per season. Each season three to four clutches are collected from captive breeding pairs. First, second and third clutches are transferred to Twizel for artificial incubation and hatching, while the last clutches remain with pairs at the Trust. Older chicks and juveniles then transfer from Twizel to the Trust for preconditioning until release in the Mackenzie Basin. This process is vital for black stilt survival and resumes each breeding season at both facilities. The Trust aims to expand its operations by constructing separate incubation and brooder facilities by 2020, which will result in fewer transfers and enable more chicks to be held on site.

While intensive conservation management has succeeded at increasing black stilt numbers, the species continues to struggle and remains critically endangered. Annual releases and predator control have prevented black stilt extinction; nevertheless various challenges remain with managing wild populations. Releases on the mainland are limited to certain sites and continue to be a numbers game. In New Zealand many threatened species benefit from predator-free island translocations; however there are no predator-free island



Black Stilt: On the brink.

habitats with braided river systems. On average 120 chicks (including wild collected eggs), are released annually, slowly increasing the population. However the post-release survival rate is only 33 percent with even fewer birds becoming part of the breeding population. The species long-term survival therefore remains highly dependent on long-term captive breeding efforts and predator control.

How you can help -

- Follow the River Care Code when visiting riverbeds.
- Ground nesting birds, their eggs and chicks are almost impossible to see. Do not drive on riverbeds from August to December.
- Birds swooping, circling or calling loudly likely have nests nearby. Move away so they can return to them, or their eggs and chicks may die.
- A dog running loose can wreak havoc. Leave dogs at home or on leads.
- Jet boats disturb birds and can wash away nests near the water's edge. The speed limit for boats is 5 knots within 200 m of a bank.
- Place bells on your cat's collar and keep it indoors at dusk, night and dawn.
- Plant natives and trap introduced predators on your property.

Sabrina Luecht

The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust



Well hidden: Precious eggs.

Photos: Leonie Heyder.

The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust

Brown teal/Pateke

The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust's seven brown teal/pateke breeding pairs laid their first clutches, with 34 ducklings hatched in total.

Laying of second clutches has now begun. Two older pairs have been released on Rotoroa Island in the Hauraki Gulf, making way for a clutch of orphans coming off Great Barrier Island – providing new genes for the captive breeding programme. The Trust continues to be the major breeder in producing the largest brown teal output for release into the wild.

Find out more about the Trust's captive breeding activities on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/The-Isaac-Conservation-and-Wildlife-Trust-409424942495457/>



Young pair: Happy and healthy.



Wing exercise: Brown teal stretches her wings.



In the mire: Green weed hinders a good swim.

Shore Plover - Tuturuatu



Young Plovers: Blend in with the surroundings.



Cheeky beak: Shore Plover chick checks for food.

Photos: Leonie Heyder.

There was a slow start to the New Zealand shore plover/tuturuatu breeding season, most likely due to the severe winter. The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust said three out of four NZ shore plover pairs are breeding. The fourth pair had not bred last spring, due to a grumpy male.

The first clutches had been lifted for artificial incubation, with eight chicks hatched. Two second clutches have been lifted, with another due shortly. The third clutches will be left with the pairs to rear.

Chicks will be directly transferred to offshore island holding aviaries, rather than to Trust aviaries, a new move to minimise dispersal, due to protect hatch site. Department of Conservation monitoring on Waikawa/Portland Island recently reported five pairs on eggs and one pair with a chick.

Photographed (left), a recently hatched critically endangered shore plover chick as it checks out its brooder box surrounds on the hunt for tasty mealworms. Shore plover are one of New Zealand's very rarest of birds and are one of the world's most threatened waders. They continue to be on the brink and captive breeding efforts are essential in creating and maintaining translocated offshore island populations."

Sabrina Luecht

Running the trap line...



Albino: Dead ferret is a good ferret.



Snail cracker: Hedgehog in trap, snails on top.

Photos: Ian Jensen.

Predators and pests - battle continues and that includes rats and mice...

Not an exact science – but getting better.

It never ceases to amaze me at the continuing number of predators/pests that are dispatched on a yearly basis at “The Patch”, a western coastal wetland and dune property, southern North Island where I have lived for 27 years.

For a number of years we did not record the numbers dispatched, albeit with one Tims trap early on we did account for around 35 ferrets over three years.

However in February of 2008, a record was started. To date that list, which is compiled from mainly pests that my dogs find with others like the hares that keen hunters dispatch and me on a wasp run over the summers read like this: 301 hedgehogs, 131 hares, 37 possums, 40 wasp nests, 4 stoats/weasels, 1 ferret and 10 “others” mice, rats etc. I also run five bait stations for rats/mice.

In May 2009, with the appreciated assistance of Greater Wellington Regional Council, a number of DoC 200 traps were provided to me and other adjacent wetland owners.

I have six of the traps here, located mainly around the wetland areas of the property. In the time since they have accounted for an additional 75 hedgehogs, 80 stoats/weasels, with weasels being the predominate catch, 2 ferrets, 46 rats, 15 mice, a grand total since February 2008 of 742 ‘items’.

Of note, we have not found/shot a possum for over three years, albeit recently during an ‘agency’ initiative three were accounted for on a neighbouring property. What we have found though is that after a run of catching mustelids, the rat numbers go up a bit and lately the hare count has been high, 17 in four weeks and eight on the run sighted on afternoon. We do consider that bird number, particularly pheasants have increased over recent years. With the ducks it is harder to make a comparison as water levels also play a very important part in their survival due to hawks and pukeko.

For my traps I use the juice from Sardines in spring water. I have a small sealed container kept in the fridge, when I have about three to four lots combined it is enough to do a round, once every three months is enough. It is easy

to drip into the trap box. I aim for under the treadle plate or down the side of the box past the treadle plate, no need to open the trap as it can be tilted up.

The lead into the traps is bare, I have found that keeping this sprayed is best, and also the area around the trap as I consider it allows the breeze to whisk the smell away over the wider area. Note the trap with the hedgehog is has been used extensively by blackbirds to crack snail shells on. Snail juice stains the trap top and snail shells litter the surrounds. One negative of this is that activity by the blackbirds sometimes sets the trap off.

While we now trap very few ferrets, one - an albino is in the photo, also had another earlier in the year. I keep the traps located just inside a fenced margin, firstly just far enough in so that inquisitive stock don’t set it off, but I also consider that the mustelids do run the margins so the traps are located in that zone. I did widen out the mesh openings to the traps from 3 x 3 squares to 4 x 4 as I found we were not catching big hedgehogs – which we do now.

Ian Jensen

Crayfish (Koura) anyone

When I was a kid (and that was a while ago), there was a stream a couple of gullies away from our place with freshwater crays (koura) living there. They were not big but they did taste good.

On a camping holiday at Taupo there was the opportunity to head off to the lake outlet and dangle tempting tit bits on string and pull up a few koura, and they were slightly bigger than the ones at home.

So it was with interest that recently I read about a South Island forestry company who decided to stock their fire-fighting ponds with

fresh water crayfish. What a smart idea. They now have 400 ponds.

Takes a while for the little koura to get big enough to provide a good meal, and I don’t know how they would co-habit with ducks, but for those with a good sized pond/lake it just might be a new idea.

It seems their distribution is shrinking through loss of habitat. So this could be an interesting venture or hobby if you have the right sized water area. The Department of Conservation regard them as a threatened species, so if you lean more toward conservation than a good

meal, this could be an opportunity to do a bit for their survival.

Koura may possibly prefer free flowing water so a quiet pond might not be their home of choice.

But don’t be in a rush to eat them – it takes a while for them to reach eatable size. Feeding them might help. Oh - and you do need a permit if you consider farming them as a commercial venture.

Liz Brook

Special treatment for Egmont National Park



Freedom: Whio group at Egmont National Park. **Photo:** Peter Russell.

Project Taranaki Mounga, a ten year \$24 million project involving pest eradication and reintroduction of species over the 34,000ha of Egmont National Park was last December given the green light with a funding commitment by the NEXT Foundation.

Local philanthropic organisation the NEXT Foundation announced it would invest up to \$15 million in the restoration of Taranaki's native ecology. The Foundation has committed to funding Project Taranaki Mounga, a 10-year project involving pest eradication and reintroduction of species in Egmont National Park.

The venture between the NEXT, DOC, iwi, and the Taranaki community will begin with pest and weed control and the ecological restoration of Egmont National Park and a small number of volcanic peaks and offshore islands. NEXT and DOC have committed to funding the first phase of 18 months with strong interest from other parties. DOC has committed just over

\$1.6 million for the first phase.

Work will start on phase one this February and during the 18 months the project intends to:

- complete a goat eradication feasibility plan;
- develop a translocation strategy for black petrel; patēke, kākā, kākāriki, takahē, kōkako and short tailed bats;
- develop a pest reinvasion monitoring regime;
- extend the predator trapping network to protect birds particularly whio and kiwi.
- translocate North Island robin into the park.

DOC Director General Lou Sanson said he was thrilled Project Taranaki Mounga has been given a green light with the commitment of funding from the NEXT Foundation.

"Project Taranaki Mounga has been recognised

as one of the next big exciting and bold conservation ventures," said Lou Sanson.

The project's vision is to protect our mountain for our wellbeing – Ko Taranaki tooku whakaruruhau.

"Given the strong Iwi connection and Whakapapa to Taranaki Mounga, Iwi are a critical partner in the successful delivery of this project.

Lou said the project will create a legacy of cultural, environmental and economic benefits for generations to come.

"Healthy flourishing ecosystems will sustain the quality and abundance of freshwater underpinning the Taranaki economy which adds to New Zealand's image, and showcases this country's leadership in pest eradication.

"It's exciting knowing lessons learnt in Taranaki will be able to be transferred to even larger landscapes when successful," said Lou.

Mute swans on site



Having their own water feature right in front of their home is a rewarding and entertaining result for hard work for Steve Clarkson and Lyn Watson.

Several years ago they built their attractive home that sits right on the edge of their main pond, and now after years of toil they have a grand vista as a backdrop to their everyday living.

Just last year they acquired two Mute Swans. The pair settled in well, and add another interesting touch to the scenery. With luck there will be more than two white swans on that pond.

Steve and Lyn also run a few black and coloured sheep and Lyn takes full advantage of using their wonderful wool to make a variety of garments and useful items.



Swans. Loving new home: Even the ducks have accepted them.

Photos: Liz Brook.

Last October I received a long and comprehensive Whio Newsletter 2015.

It was rather long. Also quite a bit dated back to 2014 because of the people who work to protect and encourage our water birds and who do a darned good job, I was not going to let it just lie on my desk. I have cut it down a bit and hope you still find it of interest.

We love to have this background information for Flight, but coming in one big block makes it a bit difficult.

Smaller – and hopefully – interesting snippets are here for you to read. **Ed.**



Whio Chicks: Growing up learning water skills.

Photo: Kerry Oates

Protecting our water birds

Whio News 2015

At Oparara/Ugly a 1080 drop in November 2014 was a success with rat numbers reduced from 58 before the drop to 0 after. Scott Freeman reported that summer was the best recorded at the site with 40 wild ducklings and five whione duckling released. Another 1080 drop was planned for this summer.

Kate Steffens reported from the Wangapka/Fyfe site with very few floods and a dry summer they had the most productive whio season since monitoring began in 2003, with 36 fledgling from 16 pairs, and nine Whione juveniles were released from three clutches.

At the Te Urewera Whirinaki area they set up an entire site in one year instead of two. They installed 1600 double set DOC200s and needed volunteers to help with that. The heavy traps ranged between 16-24kg and had to be carried into the sites.

Tim Allerby reported the traps caught well. One block caught 26 stoats during one trap check.

Sara Treadgold reported a total of 22 confirmed whio pairs were seen within the Manganui o te Ao – Retaruke security site. This included 25 ducklings seen over the season.

Predator control saw 120 mustelids and 1372 rodents caught between July 2014-April 2015.

Tongariro Forest Security Site

Mild weather during spring along with a 1080 drop in August and a trap replacement programme saw a total 215 ducklings with 185 surviving to fledge.

A new trap line was installed on the Whakapapanui in Whakapapa Village run by Whakapapa residents. Interesting was the arrival of a whio of very pale colouring and paired up and set up territory on the Whakapapanui. (See Flight 162 page 5.)

Egmont National Park Whio Recovery

The whio population at Egmont had a similar breeding success to the previous season and the census resulted in 86 whio being captured. Of these 31 were adult males, 31 were females and 17 were juveniles. (See Flight 163 page 7.)

Egmont whio monitoring presents considerable effort with breeding across eight rivers within the National Park. From September 2014 to March 2015. A total of 32 pairs were located, an increase of two pairs on the previous season. A census was conducted with support and expertise of many whio practitioners and support from the Central North Island Blue Duck Trust. A total of 86 whio were captured though out the duration of the census.

Three adult birds caught were injured, two with

head wounds consistent with injuries by stoats.

Captive breeding

Seventeen juveniles (including three females), were released into the Park. Ten whio including one female were released into the upper Waiwhakaiho River and seven including two females into the Little Maketawa Stream in February.

The trap network within Egmont National Park is serviced and maintained and since July 2014 trap catches were 245 stoats, 0 ferrets, 28 weasels, 16 cats and 1670 rats. Trap checks have continued for the 42 trap boxes on farmland.

Emily King

The 2014 season had been the best yet with 39 ducklings reared and 37 released back to the wild. These were from four pairs with Mt Bruce's pair having three clutches and producing 16 young. A record for a pair in one breeding season. Peacock two pairs produced 18 and Orana Park pair produced five.

The big event for 2015 was the opening of the hardening facility at the Tongariro Trout Hatchery which has turned out to be a great asset for getting captive juveniles ready for release.

Peter Russell



Ghost flow: An unusual whio on the Tongariro.

Photo: Adam Clark



Whio pair: Enjoy the Tongariro.

Photo: Kerry Oates.

Lots of babies at Pukaha Mt Bruce

The Wairarapa breeding programme is going very well at Pukaha Mt Bruce. The Shore Plover programme has hatched 22 healthy chicks so far this year with five pairs now sitting on their third clutch.

The two pair of pateke are nesting again having so far successfully reared 12 ducklings between them.

The whio pair has three ducklings and there are three juvenile kiwi in the creche nearly ready for release as well as a kiwi chick hatched on Christmas Eve and one kiwi egg externally pipped and will hatch any day.

One red-crowned kakariki pair have three chicks to look after while another pair are waiting for their five eggs to hatch.

Wild kaka have this year utilised three of the nesting boxes with one pair already fledged and another three chicks not far behind.



Happy chicks: Aren't they beautiful...!

Remember the AGM is not too far away. Taupo this year. Keep it in mind, could be fun.

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