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NEW ZEALAND REGISTERED MAGAZINE

DUCKS UNLIMITED
QUARTERLY
WATERFOWL JOURNAL



Flight

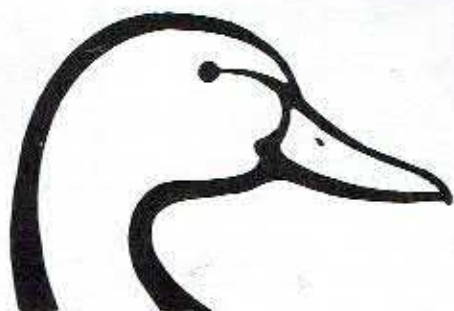


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Cover picture: Scaup chicks being raised under a bantam. Photograph by Gary Girvan. Other photographs by Neil Hayes, Arthur Thomas.

Ducks Unlimited (NZ) Incorporated is a private, non-profit membership organisation dedicated to the preservation, restoration, creation and maintenance of wetlands habitat in New Zealand and to the propagation of the country's rare waterfowl as a valuable natural resource. The organisation was founded in May 1974 by a group of far-sighted conservationists and incorporated by them in June 1975 at Wellington, New Zealand. The national headquarters mailing address is PO Box 44176, Lower Hutt. "Flight" is the official quarterly publication of Ducks Unlimited (NZ) Incorporated reaching 2000 devoted members and friends concerned with waterfowl conservation. DU memberships beings at \$5.50 pa for Junior to \$16.50 for full membership with provision for trade and life members. Membership of Ducks Unlimited carries with it subscription to this publication. To assure prompt delivery, members who move are urged to forward their new address along with current membership details to national headquarters. Letters and contributed manuscripts and photographs should be addressed to the "Flight" Editor. Views expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily constitute those of Ducks Unlimited (NZ) Incorporated.

"FLIGHT" IS PRINTED BY LITHOGRAPHIC SERVICES LTD, LOWER HUTT

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ducks Unlimited N.Z. has a long way to go to equal the fifty years that Ducks Unlimited Inc. USA has achieved. I am writing on the eve of my departure to attend their 50th celebrations in Vancouver and I am sure that all New Zealand members will want me to congratulate Ducks Unlimited Inc on this very special occasion. I am proud to represent all our members at this milestone event for our good friends in the USA and to report to them on the progress we have made here during the last twelve months.

Highlights of this year's activities include:

— A most significant contribution from the Tourist and Publicity Department towards the development of the Sinclair Wetlands. Their cheque for \$45,000 was presented on site by local MP, Clive Matthewson.

— A further contribution of \$10,000 from the New Zealand Wildlife Service for use in the Sinclair Wetlands.

— The commencement of construction of the

Sinclair Wetlands building complex which will provide an ideal centre point for these wetlands and comfortable accommodation for Horrie Sinclair.

— The delivery of another 18 mute swan to the North Island. Thanks are due to Sir Neil and Lady Diane Isaac for providing a further year's production to this project. In all, 23 birds were moved to various new locations. A team of catchers from Invercargill, Southland, Twizel, Christchurch and Wellington had most of these birds caught ready for transporting to their new locations ranging from Invercargill in the South to Albany in the North. Thanks are due to all those involved and especially to Kevin Campbell who piloted the Wairarapa Aero Club's Cessna 206 in the airlift north.

— The opening of the Waterfowl display at Masterton Intermediate School.

This display should prove invaluable as a focal point for many of the younger generation to observe New Zealand's waterfowl at

first hand. Many pupils were involved in the construction of nest boxes in their woodwork classes. Their enthusiastic involvement bodes well for the future of wildfowl in New Zealand.

— Chapter activities have been most encouraging. This year we hope to top the \$12,000 dollars that Chapters raised for presentation at the Annual General Meeting last July.

— Operation Pateke which aims to re-establish Brown Teal in the wild continues to gain momentum. In the far north, we have farmers fencing off further area of habitat and plans are ready for the construction of several new ponds.

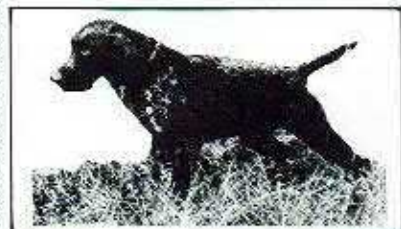
Finally, I urge all members to attend this year's Annual General Meeting at Wairakei on the 11th-12th July. Ducks Unlimited needs your support more than ever in the coming year, so let's try to break the 200 mark for attendance at this year's event.

Jim Campbell



President Jim Campbell being interviewed for local TV at the presentation of the cheque from Tourist and Publicity.

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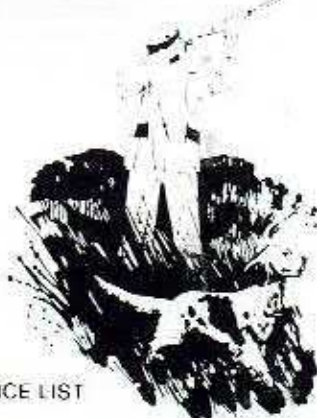
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DU NEWS

THC WAIRAKEI 13TH DUCKS UNLIMITED ANNUAL CONFERENCE 11TH JULY 1987

Members: Don't miss what has become "the social event of the year", to be held at THC Wairakei on the 11th July. Come and participate in DU's major social and fund raising event.

Thanks to the DU membership, each annual gathering has resulted in a record attendance and income. Let's ensure that this year's effort does the same.

This coming year sees the continued expansion of DU activities and we need **your** support to help maintain DU as the No. 1 in waterfowl and wetlands.

If you haven't already registered please phone Diane Pritt on Ohakune 58-016 pronto. Diane is again co-ordinating registrations and accommodation requirements.

This year's guest speaker is Dr Phillip Tortell of the Department of Conservation. Dr Tortell has had wide experience in environmental matters and he will no doubt relate some of these experiences to the meeting and he will also discuss the department's philosophy on the management of New Zealand's rare waterfowl.

There will be a slight increase in this year's registration fee, thanks to GST, and it will be up from \$30 to \$35 per head. This still represents excellent value for money and will cover an up-market smorgasbord dinner, plus coffee and biscuits on Sunday morning.

DU Sales section will be open all weekend and we will again have Winchester NZ displaying new goodies on Sunday morning. A taxidermy display is also being arranged and other sporting goods dealers have been invited to display their goodies.

FRIDAY 10TH JULY

DU (NZ) National Clay Target Championships to be held at the Taupo Gun Club, commencing at 8.30am.

SATURDAY 11TH JULY

The 13th Annual Conference at THC Wairakei, commencing at 1.30pm

1. 1.30pm Registration — \$35 per head
2. 2.00pm Welcome and apologies
3. 2.05pm Minutes of the 1986 Annual Meeting and matters arising
4. 2.10pm President's Report and Presentation of the Financial Statement for 1986-87
5. 2.20pm Appointment of Auditors for 1987-88
6. 2.25pm Election of four (4) Directors from the floor of the meeting
7. 2.30pm Report on operation 'Pateke' (Neil Hayes)
8. 2.35pm Report from Grant Dumbell on Brown Teal research
9. 2.50pm Presentation of the Breeder of the Year Award
10. 3.00pm Guest Speaker: Dr Phillip Tortell, Director of Protected Ecosystems, Dept of Conservation, will address the meeting on the topic "The Department of Conservation and its role in rare waterfowl management".
11. 4.00pm Break for President's "Shout".
12. 4.15pm The President will provide a few details about his recent visit to North America
13. 4.25pm Presentation of the Bill Barrett Trophy



Clive Matthewson presents the cheque for \$45,000 to DU President, Jim Campbell. Horrie Sinclair obviously approves.

14. 4.30pm Sinclair Wetlands Manager's report (Horrie Sinclair)
15. 4.35pm Report on operation 'Wetlands' (Brendan Coe)
16. 4.40pm Report on operation 'Whio' (Ian Bryant)
17. 4.45pm Report on operation 'Gretel' (Allan Elliott)
18. 4.50pm Report on operation 'Branta' (Neil Hayes)
19. 4.55pm Report on operation 'Royal Swan' (Jim Glover)
20. 5.00pm Editorial Report (Gary Girvan)
21. 5.05pm General Business, followed by refreshments
22. 7.00pm Annual dinner
23. 8.15pm Annual Auction
24. 9.30pm Refreshments and socialising.

\$45,000 RECEIVED FROM THE GOVERNMENT

On the 15th April Clive Matthewson, Member of Parliament for Dunedin West, together with a group of D.U. members, including President Jim Campbell, Secretary Neil Hayes, Sylvia Hayes, Bill McLay, Horrie Sinclair, plus Dunedin TV film crew and Otago Daily Times reporters, braved a cold southerly at the Sinclair Wetlands for the presentation of a \$45,000 cheque. As mentioned in the last 'Flight', the Minister of Tourism had approved a grant of \$45,000 to assist D.U.'s efforts to establish the Sinclair Wetlands as a major tourist attraction in Otago. D.U. aims to establish a Slimbridge style complex, which includes:

1. Erection of a Manager's residence, with workshop, garage, and boatshed.
2. Erection of visitors accommodation.
3. The establishment of public education facilities, research facilities, walkways, hides, landscaped and fenced ponds for captive waterfowl, and picnic areas for the general public.

To receive \$45,000 from the Government is certainly a "coming of age" for D.U. and is clear recognition of our vital work with waterfowl and wetlands. D.U. applauds the Government for this support and also for its efforts to preserve and enhance New Zealand's environment and its wildlife.

BUILDING COMPLEX CONSTRUCTION STARTED

At long last the building complex construction has started at the Sinclair Wetlands. Power, water and telephone are now on site.

driveway established, and, at the time of the \$45,000 cheque presentation ceremony foundation, boxing work was well underway.

Horrie turning the first sod — 15th March 1987

Foundation boxing nearly ready for the pour — 15th April

At the time of writing, Stage 1 of the construction work will cover construction of the manager's residence and construction of workshop and storage facilities. The final cost of these facilities will determine when the visitors' accommodation and public education facilities can be completed. Currently we need another \$45,000 to complete the project.

Construction of the landscaped ponds, walkways and hides will be completed during the year. Hopefully **your** support at this year's annual conference and **your** support for this year's national raffle will ensure that all work at the Sinclair Wetlands can be completed very rapidly.

While on the subject of building complex construction, we should mention the work of Bill McLay, our Clerk of Works at the Wetlands. Bill's work with the architect, county council and the builder has been outstanding and has ensured an extremely smooth and successful operation.

D.U. (NZ) PRESIDENT ATTENDS 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF DUCKS UNLIMITED IN NORTH AMERICA

At the end of April D.U. (NZ) President Jim Campbell left New Zealand to attend the 50th anniversary of the founding of Ducks Unlimited in North America, being held in Vancouver. Jim will present a report on his trip at the annual conference at Wairakei.

DU WILDLIFE RESEARCH STUDY AWARD

The first application for a DU Wildlife Research Study Award was received from the University of Otago, only three weeks after DU had circulated all NZ universities with details of the award. The Otago application seeks funds to assist research on the eutrophication of wetlands and its effects on the black swan population.

Applications for this year's award close at the end of October.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

In an effort to save postage, a subscription renewal form was enclosed with the March

'Flight' and a very satisfactory result was achieved.

If you have already renewed, sincere thanks, but if you haven't please do so promptly — to save the cost of very expensive reminders and so help DU keep pace with its numerous waterfowl and wetlands projects.

Subscriptions have been kept to the same level and are in fact the lowest of any national conservation organisation. But we also offer the widest range of membership categories to help you to pay what you can afford.

Besides paying promptly please encourage your friends to join, and to support Ducks Unlimited — New Zealand's major waterfowl and wetlands conservation group.

GRANT DUMBELL TO REPRESENT DU IN CANADA

Brown Teal researcher Grant Dumbell is off on a tour of Canada and the USA in late July. While in North America Grant will represent DU (NZ) at the International Waterfowl Breeding Symposium in Manitoba. This gathering will be attended by many of the world's eminent waterfowl people. Grant will also visit the headquarters of DU Canada and DU USA and will view some of the important DU projects in both countries. He will also have discussions with DU waterfowl biologists and engineers.

Grant's study on Great Barrier Island winds up this year and Grant plans to have his PhD thesis completed by mid year. He has already completed two major papers on brown teal, one of which was published in the Wildfowl Trust's scientific publication WILDFOWL 37 and covered brown teal from 1885-1985. The other paper on brown teal trapping techniques is due for publication in the journal NOTORNIS.

Later this year DU (NZ) hopes to financially assist Grant to carry out Brown Teal research in Northland — as part of the recovery and survival programme for brown teal on the mainland. As mentioned in the annual conference programme, Grant will provide an overview of his 3½ year study of brown teal on Great Barrier.

1987 NATIONAL RAFFLE

6 prizes will be offered in this year's DU national raffle, the aim of the raffle being to raise funds for waterfowl habitat. The 6 prizes are:

- 1st prize Janet Marshall original painting of a pair of NZ Scaup (value \$2,500)
- 2nd prize Limited Edition framed print of a Canada goose by Adele Earnshaw who is one of America's top wildlife artists. (value \$500)

- 3rd prize Pair of Zeiss binoculars (value \$400)
- 4th prize Ricoh XF30 Auto Camera (value \$220)
- 5th prize Bullers Birds of New Zealand (value \$80)
- 6th prize Readers Digest Book of NZ Birds (value \$40)

Tickets will again be \$2 each or \$10 for a book of 6 tickets. All members will be posted a book of tickets and we hope that you will provide the same enthusiastic support as last year, which saw \$7,500 raised.

SPECIAL DAY FOR YOUNG SHOOTERS

In association with the South Taieri Gun Club, and thanks to the efforts of Horrie Sinclair and Bill McLay, Ducks Unlimited held an instruction course for young shooters on April 12th. The course covered all aspects of game shooting, gun safety, bird identification, gamebird management and wetland habitat management. Demonstrations of shotshell reloading also formed part of the course and coaching was given on clay target shooting techniques. Nearly 50 young shooters attended the course which was an outstanding success. Personnel from the Otago Acclimatisation Society, the Department of Conservation and the NZ Clay Target Association also gave talks and the aim of the course was to provide the young shooters with an overall appreciation of firearms safety and the many aspects of wildlife management.

The course was held at the South Taieri Gun Club and to wind up the course a ballot was held to select 10 young shooters for a day in the Sinclair Wetlands during the duck season.

GREY TEAL NEST BOXES AVAILABLE

DU member Peter Nola, of Auckland has a quantity of grey teal nest boxes available to DU members at \$12 each or \$10.50 each for bulk orders of ten or more. The boxes are made of 9mm tanalised ply and held together by galvanised nails. They must be collected from Peter, in Auckland. His address is 8A Liverpool Street, Epsom.

DUCKS UNLIMITED CLAY TARGET SHOOTING TOURNAMENT IN THE USA

An international DU clay target shooting tournament will be held in Colorado in July this year. Henry Wagner of Whangarei will be representing DU (NZ) at the tournament, which is being heavily sponsored and supported by Olin/Winchester Corporation. Cash and prizes totalling over \$50,000 are being offered. Further information can be obtained by writing direct to: Ducks Unlimited, 1 Waterfowl Way, Gilmer, Long Grove, Illinois 60047, USA.

VIDEO TAPES

A reminder that DU has the following VHS tapes available on loan to members, for a maximum of two weeks and \$10 to cover postage:

1. Hidden Places/Sinclair Wetlands
2. Country Calendar/Ducks Unlimited
3. Country Calendar/Horrie Sinclair
4. River in Question
5. Wildlife Trust

MEMBERSHIP

Horrie Sinclair continues his fine example of recruiting members and is aiming at 200 recruited by this year's AGM.

Gideon Anderson, Conservator of Wildlife on the Westcoast, has recently joined DU. Gideon was officer in charge at the National Wildlife Centre for a number of years and has had an association with Ducks Unlimited.

Donations have been received from I. A. Armstrong, Peter Munro.

NEW LIFE MEMBER

DU is pleased to announce that Mrs M. C. Davison of Wyndham, Southland, has become the 22nd DU Life Member.

NEW SPONSOR MEMBERS

The following have taken out Sponsor memberships for 1987: King & Henry (1980) Ltd, Peter Noon, Ron Denny.

SIR NEIL ISAAC

DU members will have been saddened to learn of the death of Sir Neil Isaac on May 8th, 1987, at his home in Christchurch. Sir Neil and Lady Diana had recently been made Honorary Members of Ducks Unlimited in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the work of Ducks Unlimited most notably in connection with the Royal Swan project. For his service to conservation at Peacock Springs Conservation Park, Sir Neil had been awarded the Queen's Service Order in 1982 and was created a Knight Bachelor in the Queen's Birthday Honours last year.

Sir Neil and Lady Isaac created their conservation park from the quarries dug near their McLeans Island home by the construction company he founded in 1950. More than 40ha of quarries have been reclaimed as wildlife areas in this unique conservation project which has attracted worldwide attention and awards.

Sir Neil last year commented on his park: "We were ahead of our time. No one thought about conservation after quarrying a few years back. We have proved that it is possible to turn desolation into a wildlife refuge and to raise the rarest of birds within a stone's throw of our bulldozers and crushing plants."

The work he started will be continued by the Isaac Wildlife Trust.



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PROJECT REPORTS

OPERATION "ROYAL SWAN"

On Anzac weekend 9 DU members and 3 Department of Conservation officers assembled at Peacock Springs, Christchurch, for the second annual Mute Swan round-up.

DU's Royal Swan project commenced in March last year with the capture and distribution of 26 mute swans. This year with boats, canoes, swan hooks, nets, and lots of many and woman-power, 23 mute swans were captured — 16 males birds and 7 females. Last year there were 20 males and 6 females.

Ron Munro and Warwick Day had driven up from Invercargill to assist in the round-up; Neil Hayes and Jim Glover had flown down from Wellington; Christchurch-based members Sharon Walker, Peter McLeod and David Mitchell were on hand, as were John Andrew, Christine Read and Ron Neilson of the Department of Conservation.

Thanks to DU member Kevin Campbell, DU was able to charter a Masterton-based Cessna, which Kevin piloted down on Anzac Day, accompanied by DU President Jim Campbell, to fly the majority of birds to the North Island.

As with our first mute swan round-up, John Andrew was the key to the successful capture of the swans. Not only did John organise all equipment, he also generously accommodated five of the 'team' at his home.

Of course, the project would not be possible without the support and generosity of Sir Neil and Lady Diana Isaac.

After last year's initial experience, the capture of this year's swans went very smoothly and the team had 'bagged' all 23 juvenile swans by mid-day. A few hours were spent in the afternoon attempting to capture three full-winged juvenile swans — to no avail.

With such an imbalance of males to females we could not supply all members on the waiting list with pairs.

This year's distribution was as follows:

3 males and 1 female to Invercargill — to establish three new pairs in the district.

1 pair to Hilldale Zoo (DU members)

1 pair to Pukekura Park, New Plymouth (DU members)

1 pair to a DU member in Masterton

1 pair to a DU member in Auckland

1 pair to a DU member in Tauranga

1 female to a DU member in Matamata — to re-establish a pair

2 males to a DU member at Ohakune

At the time of writing the remaining males



Just prior to capture.



The team at work.

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Ron Munro caught one.

still had to be distributed.

The majority of birds were due to be flown back to the North Island on the Sunday morning of Anzac weekend, but bad weather kept the Cessna on the ground until Monday. During the flight Kevin and Jim were able to inspect several ponds and lagoons in the Wairarapa, from the air, and were able to check on the pair of mute swans released on Lake Ponui last year; these were looking good. All birds arrived in the North Island in excellent condition.

DU extends its sincere thanks to Sir Neil and Lady Diana Isaac, to John Andrew and the "team."



Sexing session.



Operation 'Whio' aims to boost the numbers of blue duck such as this one surviving in the wild.

GOOD NEWS FOR OPERATION 'WHIO'

Just before this issue went to print, the DU board received the good news that the Department of Conservation had approved the placement of five pairs of Blue Duck with approved DU members in a captive breeding programme. This move is a follow up to their successful release of 6 birds in the Egmont National Park where the birds are said to be thriving after two months.



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JULY 10th, 1987

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Place: Lake Taupo & surrounding
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Rules: As per current N.Z. Fishing
Regulations.

Weigh in: Wairakei Hotel from
5.00pm Friday. Fred Bailey
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Entries: \$10.00 per Registered
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Prizes: Heaviest Fish: Kilwell 3
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Every Fish weighed receives a
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ENTRY FORM

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Address

Age

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1987 DUCKS UNLIMITED N.Z. CHAMPIONSHIP ENTRY FORM

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Sporting (20)	7.00	3.60	2.00	12.60	
Sparrows (15)	7.00	2.70	2.00	11.70	
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NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

WELLINGTON CHAPTER

On Saturday 21 March some 65 members and friends of DU gathered at the Shaw Savill Lodge for the 2nd annual Wellington Chapter Dinner and Auction.

This event is Wellington chapter's premier fundraising event and was well attended by local and national officers. The Chapter AGM was held during the evening and the following people were elected onto the Chapter Committee:

Derek Morrison
Terry McDonald
Jane Parkes
Chris Hooson

National President, Jim Campbell, spoke briefly about DU's plans for the forthcoming year, then the Auction commenced. Our Chapter auctioneer, Anton Koolman, did a marvellous job and even managed to get guest Bill Wilkinson to assist with one or two items. Several items attracted great interest and bidding was very active.

The evening was enjoyed by all who attended and our thanks need to go to the Committee members who organised this great night out.

EKETAHUNA CHAPTER

The Eketahuna Chapter entered a team in the local Jaycees Clay Target team shoot held in March.

There were a lot of side bets with the local Gun Club team, but after a stern team talk by the Manager, the DU team came out on top and put a stop to the monopoly the Gun club had on the trophy.

Team members were:- Ted Hansen, Chris Hansen, Gary Thomson, Rex Foreman and Tony Roseingrave.

Another fund raising Simulated Field shoot was held on 29 March, 1987 at the Eketahuna Gun Club. There was a good attendance of local shooters and it was well supported by our Wellington friends. Some excellent scores were shot, as well as good bids on the silent auction items and some lucky shooters went home with goodies off the land.

Our chapter would like to thank Andy Tannock for sponsoring our shoot and putting up the excellent trophies that were won by the good shots.

Scores for the day were:-

A Grade, D West, Ted Hansen 46/60.
D West winner after shootoff.
B Grade, K Smith 45/60, J Campbell 40/60.



While sponsor Andy Tannock looks on, Glenys Hansen pins the winners badge on D. West at the Eketahuna Gun Club.

C Grade, C Hansen 40/60, G Girvan 39/60.
N/Reg Grade, M Mitchell 41/60, E Campbell 39/60.

This shoot was the Chapter's Championships and medals were presented to the winners. A number of new members were signed up.

6 chapter members with strong backs, filled an order for fresh pongas for a fence, and this has also helped to swell chapter

funds, as have firewood orders delivered recently.

During March Ted Hansen and Jim Campbell took their trusty Bulldozers to Home Lagoon, South Wairarapa. They spent 3 days working their machines making the stop bank and islands in this excellent wetland. I guess by now the ducks are enjoying the refuge on this wetland. ■

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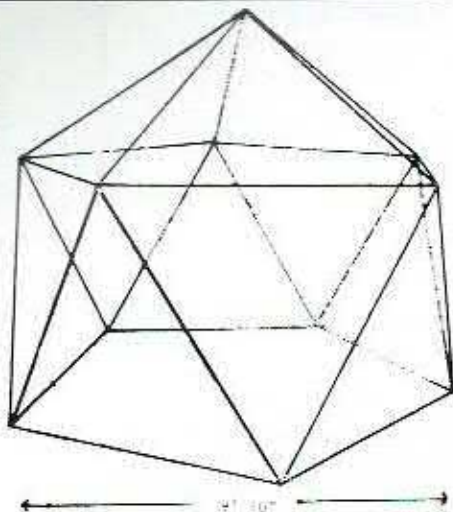
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A PROPOSAL FOR PRELIMINARY BROWN TEAL RESEARCH IN NORTHLAND

This proposal, written by DU sponsored researcher Grant Dumbell, was produced in November, 1986. Initial approval for the proposed research to be started was given by the Wildlife Service. It is to be hoped that, under the auspices of the new Department of Conservation, the research will continue.

INTRODUCTION

The endemic New Zealand brown teal (*Anas aucklandica chlorotis*, Gray, 1845) has been declining in both numbers and range for at least 100 years (Hayes and Williams, 1982). Today it is classed, in the Red Data Book (King, 1981), as a vulnerable species which makes it one of the four rarest anatids worldwide (Kear and Williams, 1978).

Brown teal are now largely confined to two areas in New Zealand (Bull et al., 1985) and while there is some evidence to suggest that the Great Barrier Island population is at least stable, there is no evidence to support this assumption in Northland (Hayes, 1981; Hayes and Williams, 1982). The species decline in Northland has been occurring for at least 50 years (McKenzie, 1971; Munro, 1971) and there is no reason to suspect this trend has been stopped or reversed, despite the management work carried out to date by the Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited.

In a recent review of Wildlife Service research priorities (Crawley, 1983) the status, population dynamics and habitat use of brown teal in Northland was given a "very high" priority ranking, which is the highest new project ranking. This proposal sets out the basic framework for a research programme, to fulfil these immediate research needs, in Northland. The overriding aim of the programme will be to complement present, and direct the future management of brown teal in Northland. It could be undertaken as an adjunct to the intensive brown teal research currently in progress on Great Barrier Island. Working hypotheses would be formulated from the Great Barrier Island research and the

By Grant Dumbell

research results would be quickly generated, for assimilation by the ongoing management programme.

CURRENT STATUS OF NORTHLAND BROWN TEAL

While reported population estimates vary widely (Table 1), no accurate estimate of the number of brown teal in Northland exists (Ogle, 1982). However, all authors agree that the population is declining, as is clearly shown by Hayes and Williams (1982). This uninterrupted decline must give cause for concern.

Author	Year	Estimate
Williams	(1978)	◀ 350
Hayes	(1981)	◀ 500
Anderson	(1983)	500 - 750
Hayes	(1984)	c. 400

Table 1: Northland population estimates

MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH WORK TO DATE

Brown teal management in Northland, to date, includes habitat protection, habitat restoration and the release of captive bred birds. At least ten sites have been protected by fencing (Table 2) and six of these have been further enhanced by planting programmes (Anderson, 1983). In 1984 the Ducks Unlimited/Wildlife Service captive release programme was concentrated in Northland (Hayes, 1984) and to date approximately 300 birds have been released. These have been concentrated at three sites on the mainland, in an effort to stabilise the population (Table 3), while a small number of birds has also been released on Moturoa Island (Munn, 1986b).

The research input into Northland has so far been minimal. A small number of teal

were banded and monitored at Helena Bay in 1976/77 (Anderson, 1983) and at the same time a capture-recapture study suggested there was a maximum of 200 birds in the Russell-Whangaruru area (Hayes and Williams, 1982). The immediate post release behaviour and survival of birds was monitored at Matapouri in 1984 (Williams, 1984) while the 1985 and 1986 releases were also followed up with some monitoring work (A. Munn, 1986a,b). Additionally there is a large number of anecdotal records of sightings and counts from many areas. However these are spread over a large number of reports and publications.

PROPOSED RESEARCH PROGRAMME

It is envisaged that this programme will be split into three main sections with the immediate emphasis being to assess the status of brown teal in Northland. To do this a complete survey of known teal sites will be made in early 1987. This will coincide with the peak numbers of birds using roosts in the new year (Jan/Feb) and will provide a known minimum number of birds in Northland. It will also provide a baseline against which previous counts and future surveys can be compared.

This survey will also provide a minimum estimate of the survival of the 1986 release of captive-bred birds over the first six months after release at Mimiwhangata. It may also detect the survival of birds from previous year's releases, as well as intersite movements, as all released birds are year-class banded.

During the 1985/86 summer, an electrophoretic survey of *Anas aucklandica* genetic variation was begun, by collecting blood samples from birds on Great Barrier Island and at the National Wildlife Centre. This will be extended to Northland during the 1987 survey. It is planned to trap, band and bleed a sample of birds from Parekura Bay. This will provide a small population of banded birds in the Bay of Islands and monitoring these wild birds will complement the monitoring of captive-bred birds released at Mimiwhangata.

The second section of the programme will follow the 1987 release of captive-bred birds, and will consist of intensive monitoring of the survival and movements of released birds. By ensuring these birds are individually banded before release a much more accurate picture of post-release survival will be possible.

In order to establish as successful a release method as possible the 1987 release should be postponed 2-3 months, and a substantial number of birds should again be released at Mimiwhangata. By comparing the survival of these spring-released birds with the survival of the 1986 winter-released birds the effect of the time of release may be judged. If a substantial number of birds are released at a second site, the survival of these birds would also be monitored. By comparing the survival of these to the survival of the Mimiwhangata birds the effect of release site may also be judged.

A second survey of brown teal sites would also be made during late spring so that sites where breeding had occurred, during the winter, could be identified. This would be necessary so the third section of the programme can be accurately targeted.

The final section of the programme would involve monitoring the birds use of habitat at selected sites. This would also begin after the 1987 release and would initially involve identifying potential feeding habitats. These would then be surveyed using the night sur-

Site	Year	Fenced	Planted
Helena Bay	1978/79	x	x
Takou Bay	1980	x	x
Kaero River	1980	x	x
Tararaire Road	1980	x	x
Wairoa Stream	1980	x	x
Ouhinui Stream	1980	x	x
Matapouri Bay	1982	x	
Mimiwhangata Farm Park	1982	x	
Clendon Cove	1983	x	
Whananaki East	1986	x	

Table 2: Habitat protection and restoration carried out in Northland to November 1986.

Date	Site	No. Released
August 1984	Matapouri Bay	54
	Mimiwhangata Farm Park	42
April 1985	Matapouri Bay	30
July 1985	Takou Bay	45
July 1986	Mimiwhangata Farm Park	104
	Kaero River	21
	Moturoa Island	6
	Kerikeri District	4

Table 3: Captive releases of brown teal in Northland to November 1986.

vey technique developed on Great Barrier Island.

A further brown teal site survey in early 1988 would allow a comparison with the 1987 survey results. This could indicate any increase or decrease in both site use and population status and would be accompanied by further banding at Parekura Bay. Movements to breeding sites (ponds?) could then be monitored at Mimiwhangata and Parekura Bay as birds disperse in the autumn for the 1988 breeding season. As the 1988 breeding season approached potential breeding habitat would also be identified. Once breeding had commenced these habitats would be surveyed using dogs, to find and monitor nest sites. This would then allow breeding success to be judged over a range of sites.

SUMMARY

As this is only a preliminary research programme its main goal is to provide a broad overview of the Northland situation. It will also provide some insight into the ability of the current management approach to reverse the decline of brown teal in Northland. This is most important, otherwise potential improvements may go unnoticed. It is not intended that this programme should run for more than a year after the 1987 release of captive-bred birds, but even after only one year it will provide information for more detailed research at a later date.

The proposed timetable for this programme can be summarised as:

- Section 1 — January 1987
Survey known Northland teal sites
Assess post-release survival at Mimiwhangata
Band wild birds at Parekura Bay
Collect blood samples from Parekura Bay
- Section 2 — Commence October 1987
Monitor post-release survival of birds
Monitor post-release movement of birds
Compare release success at different times/sites
Attempt to detect breeding over a range of sites
- Section 3 — Commence late 1987
Identify sites for habitat assessment
Identify and survey feeding habitats
Resurvey known Northland teal sites
Band more wild birds at Parekura Bay
Identify and survey breeding habitats
Monitor movements to breeding habitats

Northland is a potential testbed where the most effective habitat manipulations and the most successful release method can be developed. If the Northland decline is to be reversed then recruitment and survival must be increased. The provision of adequate habitat and supplementing the population with captive-bred birds are two potentially powerful methods to achieve this. If the Northland population can be secured by intervention then the chances of re-establishing further brown teal populations on mainland New Zealand must be enhanced. However, sound management decisions must be based on sound information and this information can only be generated by a rigorous approach to research.

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