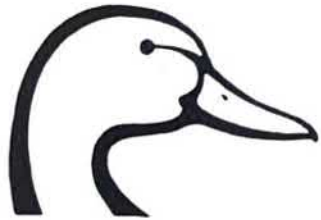


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Paradise Shelduck



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NEW ZEALAND REGISTERED MAGAZINE

DUCKS UNLIMITED  
QUARTERLY  
WATERFOWL JOURNAL



# Flight





# DUCKS UNLIMITED (N.Z) INC.,

— FOR WATERFOWL AND WETLANDS —  
PO BOX 44-176 LOWER HUTT, NEW ZEALAND

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This issue of FLIGHT is the last one for 1987 and sees the conclusion of what has been a very successful year for Ducks Unlimited. The Sinclair Wetlands building is nearing completion and the official opening is planned for the first half of 1988 if progress continues at its present rate. Horrie Sinclair and Bill McLay have ensured that the construction and planning have run smoothly and on time; not an easy task given the size of the job and the many sub-contractors involved. Members will know of the successful Open Day held at Peacock Springs and I would like to record a personal vote of thanks to Lady Diana, her loyal staff and the D.U. Directors who made the day such a notable event.

On a sad note, the International Conservation Movement lost three of its most prominent members with the passing of Sir Neil Isaac, Sir Charles Fleming and Brigadier Sir William Gilbert. Men of this calibre are few in any generation and they leave behind them a legacy of dedicated achievement that will serve as an example to future generations of conservationists.

Ducks Unlimited is growing and I look forward to further achievements during 1988. In closing I would like to wish all members and their families a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.  
Jim Campbell  
President

## STOP PRESS

His Excellency the Governor General has graciously accepted our invitation to open the Sinclair Wetlands building complex on February the 5th, 1988.



A Canada gosling bred on DU President, Jim Campbell's property.

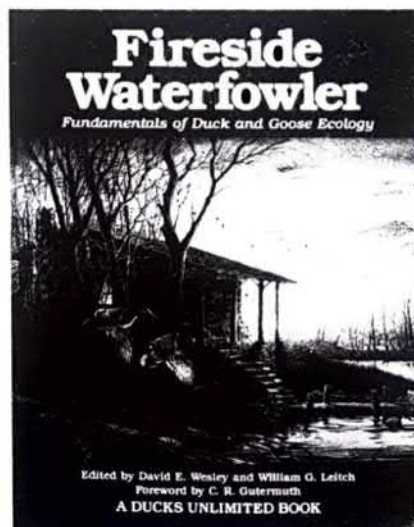


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Cover picture: At Peacock Springs, a protective cob arrives to ensure that all is well with its nesting mate. Photo: B. Coe, other photographs by F.N. Hayes, G. Girvan.

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 begins 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.



## Fireside Waterfowler

Edited by David E. Wesley  
and William G. Leitch

Foreword by C. R. Gutermuth

## Fundamentals of Duck and Goose Ecology

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# TWO LETTERS TO DUCKS UNLIMITED

## LANDCORP REPLIES TO ANN GRAEME

Ann Graeme's article on the brown teal on Great Barrier Island, published in the September issue of 'Flight', prompted the following response from Landcorp:

Dear Sir  
MISINFORMATION ON LANDCORP  
Our attention has been drawn to a recent article in your magazine entitled "Land Grab Another Threat to Rare Ducks". In the article the writer infers that the allocation of wetlands at Okiwi Station on the Great Barrier Island to Land Corporation will further decimate the population of the New Zealand Brown Teal. While I would not argue with your right to make these views known I would respectfully suggest that you check

out the "facts" before publishing articles such as this.

By mutual agreement, the land allocated to DOC at Okiwi Station includes all the wetlands and breeding areas associated with the Brown Teal duck in the area. That land allocated to Landcorp includes only that which has already been developed as pasture, and as such is used quite extensively for duck grazing as is much of the other pasture all across Great Barrier Island. Landcorp wishes to carry on utilising that allocated grazing land in a similar manner to that which it has in the past, and we do not see that our future management proposals will in any way differ from the opportunity that the duck population has had to propagate in the past.

At Landcorp we are very concerned that

a small sector of New Zealand's society have tended to use the assumed commercial objectives of Landcorp as a target to relieve their frustrations and concerns which we believe are more properly aimed at the creation of corporations per se, and the classification of publicly owned land. We have no intention of "exploiting" land, especially marginal land where the economics of any further development are negative. If Landcorp is to increase the intensity of its farming it will most likely be in the more intensively farmed areas where the opportunity for return on investment is greater, and we can help contribute a greater amount to the public purse. At Landcorp we respect the views of your magazine, however we would prefer that you check out some of the statements of your contributors before publishing. I, or any other of the senior executives at Head Office would be only too pleased to answer any questions you may have by phone at any stage.  
Yours sincerely

Will Menzies  
Assistant General Manager  
(Planning and Marketing)

## ANN GRAEME CHALLENGES DU MEMBERS

In this abridged version of a letter to DU, Ann Graeme, DU member and brown teal breeder, describes how she read of the situation on Great Barrier Island and throws down the gauntlet to other DU members and to 'Flight'.

by Ann Graeme

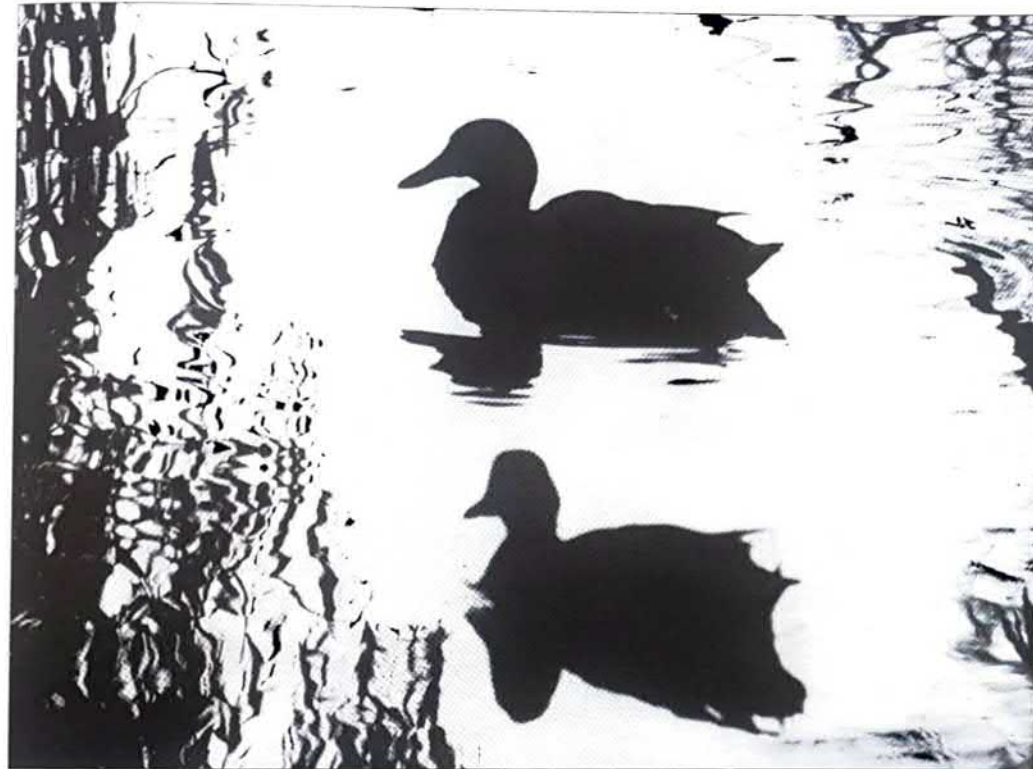
### "DUCKS UNCOMMITTED"?

On Thursday May 7th, my attention was caught by an article in the N.Z. Herald entitled "Fears for Teal in Land Split."

How fortunate I saw the article in the newspaper. On rereading it I found its source — the Auckland Branch of the Native Forests Action Council. A small conservation organisation, primarily concerned about native forest protection, had researched the land allocations and drawn this to the public's attention — not Ducks Unlimited.

That really set me thinking about our organisation. D.U. is dedicated to the "preservation, restoration, creation and maintenance of wetland habitats in N.Z. and to the propagation of our country's rare waterfowl." I see us restoring the Home lagoon, maintaining the Pearce wetlands, financing research, creating ponds and propagating waterfowl through nestboxes for Grey Teal and rearing Brown Teal. But what about the preservation of existing wetland?

Our efforts seem directed at restoring wetlands that have already been drained, to managing wetlands saved by others (like Horrie) and captive-breeding of species that



Mallards at dusk resting on one of NZ's threatened wetlands.

are endangered by habitat destruction. Surely our first priority should be to press for the protection of wetland habitat before it is drained and destroyed?

Our Board of Directors apparently make excellent submissions opposing the now defunct drainage subsidies — the greater wrecker of wetlands in this country. Forest & Bird were the instigators of this thrust to protect wetlands. How much more effective that initiative would have been had D.U. members been similarly activated through "Flight" and then the voices of D.U. members could have been added to those of the other conservation groups.

The hard fact is that about 90% of N.Z.'s original wetlands are gone. We know that when the wetlands go, so does all the dependant wildlife. To quote Horrie Sinclair "Without habitat, you have nothing."

Surely our first priority must be to protect existing wetland. In the past, draining to create farmland was a way of life. Times are changing and so is the public perception of the best use of natural resources. Laws that previously gave lip service to conservation values are now being interpreted to give real protection.

Here are two recent Court Cases which set important precedents for wetland protection.

### The Whangamarino Swamp

In 1985 the Court of Appeal upheld the

Auckland Acclimatisation Society's action to prevent land owners draining parts of the swamp for pasture.

The case hinged on the land owner's right to drain his own land. In his decision Judge Cooke said, "The farmers have the ordinary rights of landowners to use their land in its natural state, but the effect of the 1967 Act is that they have no right to divert the natural water that is on the land. Ownership of the land does not of itself carry the right to alter the natural conditions in that way. The scheme of the Act means that to refuse the water rights applied for would not be to deprive the landowners of anything. Rather it would be to deny them privileges. There can be no moral claim to or expectation of compensation in the event of refusal."

In other words, to create farmland by draining a wetland is a *privilege*, not a right. We should challenge that privilege wherever valuable wetlands are threatened.

### The Tauranga City Saltmarshes

In 1986 the Planning Tribunal upheld the appeal brought by the Tauranga Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society and the Kaimai Branch of the Native Forests Action Council. These conservation groups were appealing against the Tauranga City Council's action in removing an "Environmental Protection" zoning from all the privately owned salt marsh and mangrove areas in the city, opening the way to draining and filling for

various residential developments.

The appellants based their case on the Town & Country Planning Act, Section 3(1). This requires local bodies to preserve "the natural character of the coastal environment and the margins of lakes and rivers, and . . . protect . . . them from unnecessary subdivision and development."

In his decision, Judge Moore cancelled the City Council's decision, reinstated the Environment Protection Zone, and admonished the Council that its reinstated policy "achieved only token compliance with the Act." (Town & Country Planning Act) "The Council will need to be a good deal more assertive of its enforcements (of the Environment Protection Zone) than it has been in the present matter if it wishes to be seen as complying with the provisions . . ." (of the Act).

These two cases are milestones in Environmental law. We could be and should be using these valuable precedents to protect wetlands in our own districts.

Our members are scattered all over N.Z. With their local knowledge, D.U. could challenge drainage destruction and protect wetland through the Planning Courts. Again, using our members local knowledge, D.U. could draw public attention to local wetlands, and influence local bodies to include wetland protection in their District Schemes.  
D.U. is a conservation organisation specifically involved in the wildlife of wetlands. It is not seen to be pulling its weight in the critical area of wetland protection. ■



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# D.U. NEWS

## SINCLAIR WETLANDS PROGRAMME RECEIVES AN IMPRESSIVE CONTRIBUTION FROM THE DEPT OF CONSERVATION

Ducks Unlimited has just received a very generous contribution towards its work at the Sinclair Wetlands, from the Department of Conservation. In a letter dated late October, Dr Philip Tortell, Director of Protected Ecosystems, had this to say: "In association with the Regional Manager, Department of Conservation, Dunedin, and as Director, Protected Ecosystems & Species, I have much pleasure in making a grant of \$20,000 towards the construction of two viewing hides on the Sinclair Wetlands.

The educational function of the observation hides is most appropriate for the Department which has an advocacy role in conservation and is particularly interested in the promotion of wetlands.

May I take this opportunity of wishing your organisation every success with this worthwhile venture."

## PEACOCK SPRINGS OPEN DAY

Brendan Coe has fully reported on the outstanding success of the Open Day at Peacock Springs on October 4th, when over 5,000 Christchurch people (including many

*Shingle works and waterfowl at Peacock Springs.*

DU members) turned out to view the magnificent wetlands and waterfowl, and numerous other species of wildlife.

The DU Board sincerely thanks Lady Diana Isaac and the Isaac Wildlife Trust for their outstanding generosity and support for Ducks Unlimited by allowing all profits from the Open Day to go to Ducks Unlimited.

The DU Board also thanks the staff of Isaac Construction who contributed their spare time to help organise the Open Day and without whose assistance the day could not have been the success that it was.

## 1987 NATIONAL RAFFLE

The gross income from the 2nd annual DU National raffle was \$7,750. The net figure is expected to be around \$5,500, which is another outstanding result. The DU Board wishes to thank all members for their loyal support. Winners were well spread throughout New Zealand and were as follows:

- 1st Prize, Janet Marshall original painting; Mr B.W. Piel of Wellington
- 2nd Prize, Adel Earnshaw limited edition print; Mr S. Chambers of Hamilton
- 3rd Prize, Weatherby binoculars; Mr J.R. Richards of Hawera
- 4th Prize, Ricoh camera; Mr N.F. Rowsell of Whangarei
- 5th Prize, Buller's Birds of New Zealand; Mr C.J. Clark of Christchurch
- 6th Prize, Readers Digest Book of NZ Birds; Mr I. Lucas of Masterton.

## SINCLAIR WETLANDS PROGRESS

In late October all seven modules of the building complex had been erected and the roof and gutting had been completed.

The official opening of the building complex has been set down for February 5th next year.

## SINCLAIR WETLANDS MANAGEMENT

As mentioned in the last 'Flight', the day to day management of the Sinclair Wetlands will lie with a Dunedin based committee. Invitations to join this committee have now been sent to the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society and to the Ornithological Society of NZ. The full committee will therefore now comprise: representatives from the OEII National Trust, the Otago Acclimatisation Society, DOC, Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society, OSNZ, DU and Horrie Sinclair.

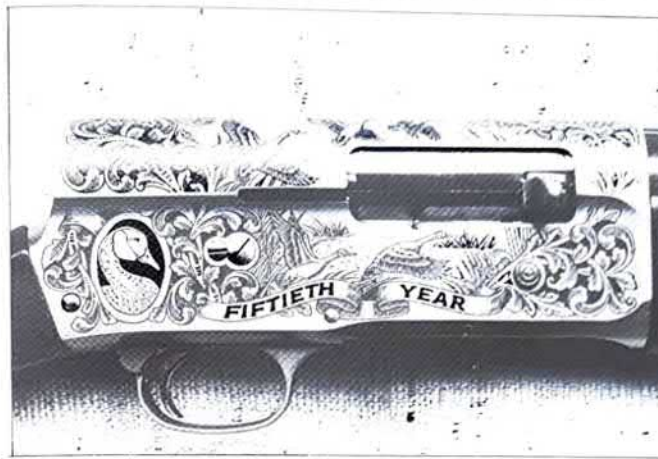
## 1988 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

A registration form for the 1988 Annual Conference, at the THC Wairakei on the 16th July, is printed in this issue.

The 1988 DU National Clay Target Championships will be held at the Taupo Gun Club on Friday 15th July and full details will appear in the March issue of 'Flight'.

## DU TOUR TO CANADA 1988

Don't forget to write to Jim Campbell, 'Ramslie', R.D.1, Masterton, if you are in-



A detail of the engraved action of the DU commemorative Browning A5.

terested in joining DU (NZ) trip to Canada in mid June next year to attend the 50th anniversary of DU Canada.

## SPONSORS MEMBERS

Tony Roxburgh recently renewed his sponsor membership.

## DU WILDLIFE RESEARCH STUDY AWARD

Four applications have been received for DU's annual award of up to \$3,000 to assist waterfowl and/or waterfowl habitat university based research. Applications closed on the 31st October and were set to be considered at the November DU Directors meeting. Full details in the next 'Flight'.

## SIR NEIL ISAAC SCHOLARSHIP IN GEOGRAPHY RECENTLY ANNOUNCED

The University of Canterbury geography department's fiftieth anniversary celebrations, were marked by the establishment of a new scholarship for geography students.

The Sir Neil Isaac Scholarship for the study of people and their environment by geography masters students was announced by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Bert Brownlie.

He said the scholarship would be worth \$5000 next year. In 1989 it would be worth \$10,000 and the intention was to maintain it at that level in the future.

Lady Isaac presented the scholarship which she said was to honour her husband's memory within the university.

Sir Neil was born in New Zealand and lived in India with Lady Isaac for several years. They developed the Peacock Springs Wildlife Park in Christchurch and formed the Isaac Wildlife Trust.

Lady Isaac said her late husband was an energetic and enthusiastic person who was interested in the environment. He was a good businessman too, she said.

Sir Neil founded the Isaac Construction Company Ltd.

Professor Brownlie said that the geography department had developed from a small teaching unit when it was established in 1937 to one with a high standard of teaching and research.

## EKETAHUNA CHAPTER NEWS

The Chapter's first fundraising dinner and auction proved to be an enormous success. 134 members and friends packed into the Ambassador Lounge, Masterton. Bidding for the auction items was very competitive and the evening saw \$4300 raised. Eketahuna still leads the field in energetic fundraising showing other Chapters how it can be done.

The Chapter's annual Simulated Field Claybird Championships will be held at the Eketahuna Gun Club on 31st January, 1988 commencing at 11.00. It is hoped to make this a family day.

Barbeques will be provided for a B.Y.O. lunch on the completion of the first round. Non-shooters should take this opportunity to visit the nearby National Wildlife Centre at Mount Bruce.

## DUCKS UNLIMITED (N.Z.) INC

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NUMBER ATTENDING .....

NUMBER OF ROOMS REQUIRED .....

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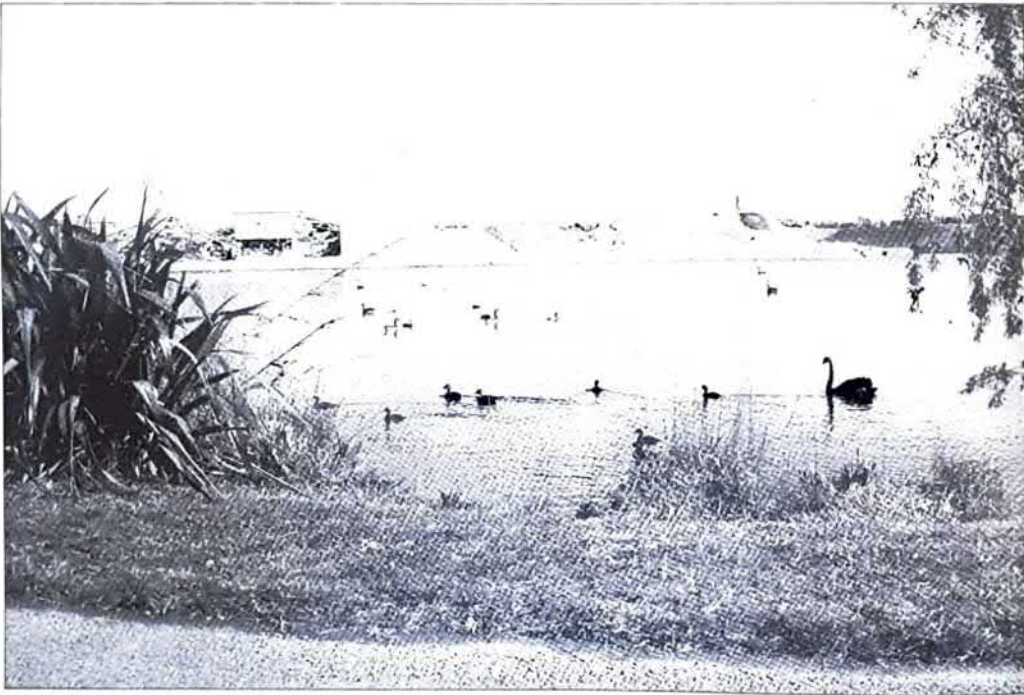
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The people of Christchurch enjoy their visits to Peacock Springs.

## DUCKS UNLIMITED OPEN DAY AT PEACOCK SPRINGS

BY Brendan Coe

The city of Christchurch in the spring is one of the most beautiful in New Zealand. The English trees are budding and coming into leaf, and azaleas and rhododendrons catch the eye with their vivid splashes of colour. It was to this city that nine D.U. directors flew on Friday October 2 for the open day at Peacock Springs. The Wildlife Park was being opened to the public for the purpose of raising funds for Ducks Unlimited (NZ) Inc.

Peacock Springs is owned by The Isaac Wildlife Trust, the donors of which are Lady Diana and the late Sir Neil Isaac, and it is situated at McLeans Island on the outskirts of Christchurch and close to the Waimakariri

River. The objects of the Trust which was established in 1977 are to promote and encourage the preservation and conservation of wildlife, fauna, flora, water, soils and other natural resources and more particularly to breed and rear animals, birds and fish of all kinds and to provide areas where they can live in a protected state. The Trust aims to promote public support for conservation programmes and public interest in the conservation of wildlife generally.

The park is essentially a series of pits that have been created by excavation for gravel extraction and then landscaped by spreading topsoil, planting trees and making roadways and access areas. Several aviaries, salmon hatcheries and outbuildings that have been landscaped to blend in with the Wildlife Park complete a magnifi-

cent complex. I took a walk early on the morning of the open day, just as the sun was appearing over the horizon and was able to observe much of the wildlife that inhabit this area. Black swans with cygnets swimming in their wake were common on some of the lakes and the ubiquitous mallard was everywhere, sometimes to be seen with broods of ducklings scattering for cover at my approach. Scaup have done very well at Peacock Springs and were in good numbers on the water. New Zealand's only diving duck, as opposed to all the other species which are classified as dabblers, the scaup requires good water with some depth and a reliable food source to survive. Paradise shelduck, grey and shoveler paddled about here and there and the Canadian geese were to be seen in groups of two or three.



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Part of the fabulous Peacock Springs Wildlife Park.



A mute swan. Note the shingle works in the background and the lake in the foreground. A perfect blend of industry and conservation.



A swan goose.

Some animals live at Peacock Springs such as Llamas, donkeys, barbary sheep and monkeys, and the aviaries house cockatoos, parakeets — both red and yellow crowned, and barn owls. Perhaps the feature of the waterfowl collection are the mute swans. These birds are magnificent to observe and at the time we were there the females were nesting and provided an opportunity for some photography. The mute swan is one of D.U.'s more glamorous projects and the waiting list from waterfowl enthusiasts around the country is a long one.

While staying at Peacock Springs, one is always aware of the bird that gives its name to the property. There are a lot of peafowl there and one evening we were able to count nearly twenty birds on the front lawn of the house. The cocks would flight in the evening into the trees to roost for the night and in the early morning they could be seen displaying their gorgeous plumage to the various peahens who seemed to show no interest at all. Lady Diana is a keen horsewoman and there is a pony stud on the property as well as a few horses. My early morning walk completed, the rest of the

morning was spent in preparation for the opening of the gates.

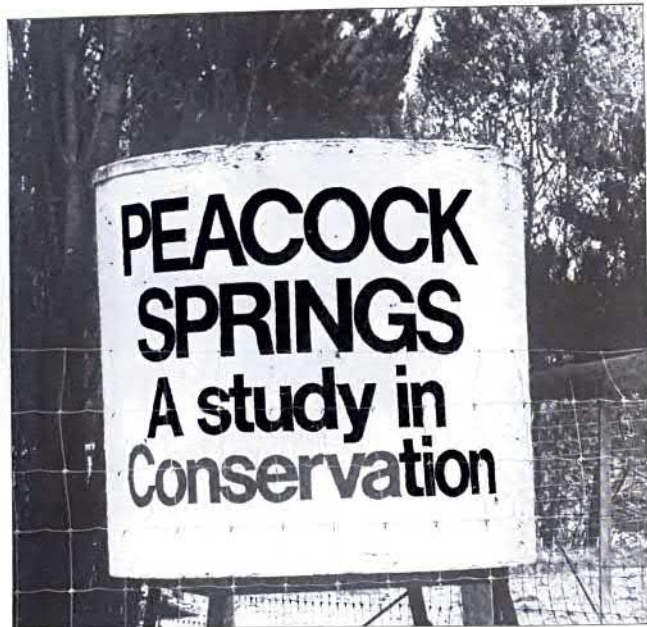
At approximately 9.00am, two people to whom D.U. are deeply indebted arrived. One was Alan Jones, the General Manager, who announced that he was there to count the gate takings and that, based on past experience, it would take him all day. A statement that greatly encouraged the keen, but slightly apprehensive D.U. directors who formed part of the workforce. The other person was Bruce Rule, also a member of the Isaac executive staff and his efficiency and organisational talents were quickly to the fore. Bruce issued us with white coats, "official" badges and instructions that were clear and concise. As well he told us that he would relieve the gate keepers of their takings and take them to Alan Jones at periodic intervals. Other Isaac staff assisted during the day about the property and their dedication and loyalty as well as an obvious pride in being there was apparent and very much appreciated by D.U.

At 9.30AM the cars were starting to arrive and soon there was a queue as far as the eye could see. At the command of Bruce



D.U. Directors receiving instructions from Bruce Rule.





Rule the gates were opened and onward came the public of Christchurch. The fee was \$12.00 a car, regardless of the number of occupants and they never stopped coming all day. Each car was given a D.U. pamphlet, a Peacock Springs salmon pamphlet and a map of the area. Some cars parked outside and the occupants doubled up with another car of friends. Pensioner couples were charged a reduced fee and two Canterbury Hospital Board vans were not charged at all. At the peak, just after lunch, there were two lines of cars coming in, four D.U. directors taking the proceeds, three Ministry of Transport officers showing a little concern over the traffic queues, and two policemen overseeing operations with a benevolent albeit watchful eye.

Inside the grounds there were people everywhere and we were told later that it was the first open day that had seen the car-park full. One was soon caught up in the enthusiasm of the public. They loved it, and one woman whom I overheard comment "Isn't it marvellous to be able to come here once every year or so and see all this" seemed to typify public reaction. Cameras clicked, people walked and talked, looked and pointed and the sun shone. D.U. President, Jim Campbell, who arrived from Masterton on the Sunday morning spent a lot of time folding pamphlets for the gate keepers as well as mixing with the crowd and he was obviously pleased with the way the day was proceeding. There were no incidents, a tribute to the organisation of the Isaac staff and Lady Diana too was pleased with events as they ran. Sharon Walker and John Andrew were a great help and Diane Pritt and Glenys Hansen ran the D.U. sales table all day and the only photograph I could get of their efforts was a crowd of people completely surrounding the table.

The gates closed at 5pm and Lady Diana very generously provided food and drink in the boardroom for many of the workers, some visiting folk and the D.U. contingent. It was a perfect way to cap off what had been one of the great days in the history of Ducks Unlimited (NZ) Inc and to celebrate the statistics; 5000 people, an estimated 1200 vehicles and a take of \$15000.00. A record for an open day at Peacock Springs.

Thank you Lady Diana, Alan Jones, Bruce Rule, Isaac staff and the people of Christchurch for playing an important part in the fight to save and preserve our diminishing wetlands and endangered waterfowl species.



## New from DU Sales Dept

Baseball-style cap suitable for all outdoor activities. Available in Hunter Green with 5-colour mallard logo. One size fits all. \$22.00 from DU Sales Dept. See back page for ordering details.

## ROD & RIFLE

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## THE PROBLEM

### ARE WETLANDS WASTELANDS?

The general public think they are! Why? Because they don't know anything about them and because they have never seen one first hand.

### ARE DUCK HUNTERS CONSERVATIONISTS?

The general public think not! Why? Because they have not had the opportunity to see any of the wetlands we have saved, enhanced or created, or learned about the projects we have initiated to the good of waterfowl and habitat.

## THE SOLUTION EDUCATION!

And be assured that nobody else will educate the public. We must do it ourselves. That costs, but D.U. is racing to reverse the trend of public thinking by establishing a facility in Otago where the public, school parties etc. can go to learn about wetlands and what we as sports people and conservationists are doing to save them. Our business "Andy Tannock's Hunting & Fishing Ltd" in Palmerston North has devised a way you can help pay for the Sinclair wetland facilities without it costing you a cent extra. Just make your normal Hunting or Fishing purchases through our shop or by mail order and include the coupon below. We will donate 5% of your purchase to the Sinclair Wetland Building Fund! (In the case of expensive firearms we restrict this donation to \$50.00 per gun as they are already discounted heavily!).

All items including fishing gear are subject to this offer. Just post or bring in the coupon.

<b>GUNS:</b>	S K B s x s new	\$1795 00	Miroku s r s used	\$795 00
	S K B Sporter new	\$1795 00	Bettinsoli 20g O/U new	\$649 00
	S K B Sporter new	\$1195 00	Bettinsoli S Trigger new	\$649 00
	S K B 600 Trap new	\$1995 00	Bettinsoli D Trigger new	\$599 00
	S K B 500 Sxeel new	\$1495 00	Bettinsoli multi choke used	\$750 00
	S K B 1300 Semi Auto	\$1195 00	Russian O/U new	\$599 00
	Beretta 687 Field new	\$1950 00	Remington 1100's used	\$799 00
	Beretta 686 Field new	\$1795 00		
	Beretta 686 Trap new	\$1995 00		
	Winchester 101 Inled new	\$1550 00		
	Winchester 8 Shot pump	\$539 00		
	Miroku 3000 Field new	\$1550 00		
	Benelli Field semi used	\$995 00		
	Mossberg pump multi. choke	\$595 00		
	Mossberg Pump 8 Shot	\$539 00		
	Simpson as new O/U	\$1495 00		

### RIFLES SPECIALS

- Sako's. Enquire about new shipment due soon as discounted prices include Left Hand Models. \$595.00!
- Winchester Lever Action 30-30's \$250.00
- Clayco (Brno Copy) 22s complete with scope & 500 rounds ammo. \$250.00 package deal.

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Palmerston North. Ph: 86-961

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I am a supporter of Ducks Unlimited N.Z. and I wish to have 5% of the total purchase listed below donated to the Sinclair Wetland Fund. (In the case of firearms purchased this donation will be restricted to a maximum of \$50.00). I agree to pay by cash or cheque. (Credit Cards By Arrangement only).

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Phone No. Home: ..... Work: .....

Items: (1) ..... Cost: \$ .....

(2) ..... \$ .....

(3) ..... \$ .....

TOTAL ..... \$ .....

DONATION = ..... \$ .....

Free Freight ..... Free Freight ..... Free Freight .....

Please Support — We Wish To Look After Your Interests!



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The President, Mr J.C. Campbell, welcomed members and guests to the meeting, specifically mentioning Lady Diana Isaac, Dr Philp Tortell of the Dept of Conservation, Ralph Adams former Director of the Wildlife Service, and Don McCulloch, DU's Honorary Legal Adviser and member of National Acclimatisation Societies Executive.

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The Du flag flies over THC Wairakei, July 1987.

Reporting further, Mr Hayes said that the past season's total brought the total number of brown teal reared in captivity by DU members to 901 birds since the project started in 1976. Releases into the wild had continued in Northland, with 112 birds being released there in July last year, bringing the total released in Northland to nearly 300 in three seasons. The Northland releases had met with some success at Mimiwhangata Farm Park, but Mr Hayes said he felt that DU had a long way to go before any real and lasting progress would be made in DU's efforts to maintain a viable brown teal population on the mainland. He said that the 1987 release would also be in Northland and it was hoped that Grant Dumbell would be able to follow up the progress of the birds.

The project had received good publicity during the years, largely due to Grant Dumbell's efforts and he had a paper published in WILDFOWL 37.

Mr Hayes summed up his report by saying that the project was in a reasonably healthy state and that lots of positive moves were planned for the future. He thanked DU breeders for their continued support and hoped that many more DU members would join the project. He also thanked the DU membership and the DU Directors for their support for the project.

### ADDRESS BY GRANT DUMBELL - THE MARRIAGE OF BROWN TEAL RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT

In my talk last year (*Flight* 49:7, 13) I gave an overview of the annual cycle of Brown Teal on Great Barrier Island, with an emphasis on how the birds used the roost sites. However, one question that was not addressed, yet should be, is "How does research help with the practicalities of managing Brown Teal?" Currently the main thrust of management is directed towards halting the species' decline in Northland, while the main thrust of research is directed towards understanding the Great Barrier Island population. The immediate consideration, then, is how can these two objectives be brought together?

The best way this can be achieved is with

a comparison of the two populations. I have been following the Great Barrier Island population for three years and now have a range of baseline information about it. However, comparisons with Northland are not yet possible simply because there is a total lack of information about that population and, unfortunately, no time frame has yet been set for its collection either. Until these comparisons are made we are unable to be sure of the causes of the decline, and we have no idea of our chances of success in stopping it, or whether, in fact, we are doing the right thing to stop it.

What we do have is some information about the success of birds released in Northland, and this is one area in which research can help immediately. Because captive bred birds are expensive to produce it is both economically and ecologically sensible to measure the release success, and then to try and improve it. The main purpose of any release is to increase the wild population size by increasing reproductive output and in this respect the released birds are expendable. If they replace themselves with wild-bred birds then the release has succeeded. However, in order to do this the birds must survive long enough to be able to breed.

From the Great Barrier Island data it is clear that Brown Teal are surviving well, with an annual survivorship of 63%. Compared to other ducks this is very good and gives an average life expectancy, from when the birds become independent of their parents, of 2.2 years. I have also measured lifetime productivity of Brown Teal on Great Barrier Island and found that each bird is at least replacing itself, which means the population is stable. Apparently, the single largest brake on population growth is duckling survival, and this is lowest in the older age classes.

We can now compare these results with the results from last year's release when 104 birds were let out at Mimiwhangata. Their survival was followed for five months and, initially, birds disappeared quickly till after four weeks only 50% of them were still present. However, the rate of disappearance slowed markedly and after five weeks the released birds, that were still present, were surviving as well as the wild birds on Great Barrier Island. Given that the main purpose of releasing birds is to get them to breed, the first opportunity for them was the 1987 breeding season, at least 11 months after their release and with these results we could not expect more than 33 of the original 104 birds to be still present at that time. One bird was found breeding with a wild bird three weeks after its release but, unfortunately, this is the exception and not the rule. However, it is further proof that captive-bred birds can breed in the wild.

Now we can examine how these research results feed back into the management programme. The simplest way to maximise the success of a release must be to maximise the number of released birds that breed and this can be done in two ways. Firstly, the time between the release and the next breeding season can be shortened and, secondly, the rate of disappearance within the first month can be minimised. The 1987 release was postponed for two months to try and meet the first requirement, while the currently used direct release method



Grant Dumbell tells the AGM of brown teal research and management.

should be changed to the gentle released method, where birds are held at the release site and released over a number of days, to meet the second requirement. The gentle release has been used in the past, but it is unlikely that the release site was suitable so it was impossible to tell whether a bad release method or a bad release site caused the failure.

By continuing to release birds at Mimiwhangata we know the site is suitable so the release method can be adequately tested. This can be done by varying one component of the release each year and then seeing its effect on the bird's survival. The only difference between the 1986 and 1987 releases was the timing so by comparing the survivorship of the birds in these two releases we can choose the best time for the release. Then in 1988 the release method can be changed to the gentle release and once survivorship data from all

years is compared the best release time and best release method can be chosen. They can then be used at a new release site with the confidence that if future releases fail it is an inadequacy of the release site and not the release technique.

Why a release site is unsuitable is a different problem, but again, one that research can help provide answers to. With a history of so many failed releases we must stop guessing and try to be rigorous, which is the major advantage of research. There have been encouraging signs in the past, and there are more on the horizon, so while the marriage between research and management may at times be stormy it also promises to be very fruitful.

### BROWN TEAL BREEDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The President announced that Ron Munro of Invercargill had won the Brown Teal Breeder of the Year Award for rearing 16 Brown Teal. Mr Munro was not able to be present but the announcement of the award was followed by acclamation.

### GUEST SPEAKER: DR PHILIP TORTELL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Dr Tortell said he was extremely pleased to be present and was grateful for the invitation to address the meeting and to meet with many DU members. As a marine biologist he had been somewhat removed from the interests of Ducks Unlimited and until recently he had had only distant connections with DU's work. In the late 1970's he did have contact with the late Sir Neil Isaac and with the Nature Conservation Council, he was involved with the citation presented to Horrie Sinclair last year.

From these rare and distant contacts Dr Tortell said he now found, as Director of Protected Ecosystems at the Department of Conservation, that part of his new responsibilities was to liaise with groups such as Ducks Unlimited.

In the early 1970's he was involved in a number of major environmental debates, such as the Nelson pulp mill, Aramoana, and protection of the Motu, all part of his work with the Commission for the Environment, where he had spent 10 years. He said that this period had many frustrations because there was little government commitment towards conservation. Funds were not made available and well researched advice was ignored.

While some victories could be claimed during this period, it was generally economic considerations that saved some areas rather than any conservation commitment.

He was now trying to re-establish a programme called 'Protected Natural Areas Programmes' - a programme which aims to survey areas which are representative of the unique character of the country. Such areas being vital to tourism.

In particular the wetlands policy had until recently, been watered down and one organisation had been responsible for protecting wetlands. The only major organisations with a dedicated commitment to wetlands protection was, of course, the Wildlife Service. The Service had made an outstanding contribution to species and habitat protection and had established a high profile image that was going to be extremely difficult to follow. But the vast majority of staff from the Wildlife Service were now in DOC and had brought with them a wealth of knowledge and experience which all leads to continuity.

DOC came into existence on the 1st April and its responsibilities came from a number of different departments which no longer existed. DOC had a formidable list of responsibilities but these could be brought down to two major areas:

1. Management; active, on the ground management of resources, be they land, trees or animals, and resources which are crown or publicly owned, and
2. Advocating conservation philosophies. Doc's responsibilities in fact cover one third of NZ's land area, including 10,000 kilometres of coast line, NZ islands, antarctica, all native and indigenous plants and animals, plus some animals introduced for recreation, and all water areas within NZ.

The main tasks of DOC were at local levels as it is in these areas where direct management and liaison with groups such as Ducks Unlimited should most effectively take place. In fact the hierarchy within DOC had a very narrow, decentralised and flat structure. There are basically three levels within the department; there are 8 regions which cover the entire country and each region is like a department within that region. Each region co-ordinates the work within the whole of DOC. In addition there are 34 district offices throughout NZ and it was at district level where all the action takes place. To co-ordinate the activities of districts and regions, and to establish poli-

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cies, law and nation-wide perspective, there was the central office. From DU's viewpoint if DU needed to get in touch with the department the initial approach to a regional, district or central office would be dependent on the issue under consideration. The central office has six areas of interest — research, advocacy, land & fauna, recreation and tourism, coastal marine and protected ecosystems and species.

Within his own area, the Directorate of Protected Ecosystems and Species, this directorate had four sections within it.

1. Protected flora & fauna, including protected species — plants and animals,
2. Protected ecosystems — habitat values PNA Programme, etc.
3. The Species Protection Unit, which covers laws relating to protected species and law enforcement.

Dr Tortell then went on to background some of the problems involved in getting his section up and running and he also outlined the work of other sections within the central office. His section had undertaken to honour previous commitments and the first three months had been spent familiarising themselves with the task and in bringing staff together so that they were fully aware of what was expected of them.

Dr Tortell said that DU and Doc had a lot in common and the DU President's report had a great deal of material with which DOC had a vital interest. The aims were in harmony and the principles and objectives were very similar and it was logical that DU and DOC should work very closely together. Such areas of close liaison should be in public education, keeping rare waterfowl in captivity, developing policies for rare waterfowl management, wetlands creation and protection, international liaison, inventories for habitats and species, and work at the

Sinclair Wetlands. He said that his section could possibly financially assist DU's work at the Sinclair Wetlands and would be pleased to receive an application.

Dr Tortell then went on to describe plans for the establishment of 250 computer terminals throughout the country, for data base collection and inventory.

Dr Tortell thanked the DU Board of Directors for the opportunity to talk to the meeting and he looked forward to many years of co-operation with DU towards preserving, restoring, creating and maintaining wetland habitats and species within New Zealand.

Dr Tortell's address ended with resounding acclamation.

Dr Tortell then went on to answer several questions from the floor of the meeting, including one from Tom Caihness regarding rare waterfowl management. In reply Dr Tortell said that an overall philosophy would be established regarding the management of rare waterfowl and that Ducks Unlimited would be invited to participate in establishing the management programme.

The meeting adjourned at 4.00pm for refreshments.

(Since the AGM Dr Tortell has generously supplied a diagram which clearly shows the structure of the Dept of Conservation. Sec.)

#### VISIT TO CANADA

The President provided a detailed run-down on his recent visit to Canada to attend the 50th anniversary of the founding of Ducks Unlimited in North America. The North Americans had looked after him really well and many important wetland projects had been seen. The whole size of the operation is massive and DU is now by far the largest conservation group in the world. For him one of the highlights of the conference was

a run-down on each country's fund-raising events work by representatives from each country. Canada was first, Mexico second, NZ third, DU USA fourth. In spite of NZ's relatively modest offering, four people at the conference had chosen to support DU NZ's cause by joining as Life members.

The President said he was working hard at ensuring that good numbers of North Americans came to visit NZ. He said he was also working on ensuring that a good contingent of New Zealanders visited Canada next year for their 50th anniversary celebrations.

#### PRESENTATION OF THE BILL BARRETT TROPHY

The President said he would like to invite Lady Diana Isaac to come forward and receive the Bill Barrett Trophy, a trophy which was awarded annually to the person or persons who the DU Board of Directors believed had done outstanding work in promoting the aims and objectives of Ducks Unlimited.

Sir Neil & Lady Diana's work at Peacock Springs with Mute Swans and in creating impressive waterfowl habitat had been tremendous.

On receiving the award, together with a Mute Swan figurine to keep permanently, Lady Diana said that the award was totally unexpected and while her and her late husband's association with Ducks Unlimited had only been a relatively short one they had both enjoyed it greatly and she announced that an Open Day had been set aside at Peacock Springs for Ducks Unlimited. This announcement and the award were carried with resounding acclamation.

#### SINCLAIR WETLANDS MANAGER'S REPORT

In introducing Mr Sinclair the President said that at long last the building complex construction was underway.

Mr Sinclair said he would like to echo the President's remarks about Dr Tortell's address and it was obvious that Dr Tortell's heart was in the right place and that he looked forward to seeing him at the wetlands in the near future.

In presenting his report Mr Sinclair outlined his and DU's association with the Berwick Youth Adventure Trust. His involvement with a great number of visitors to the wetlands was outlined as was his recruitment campaign, whereby he had recruited 195 new members for DU. He also reported on the number of ducks shot during the season by some 50 hunters and on the two new lease areas acquired by DU, one of 52 hectares and the other of 85 hectares. It was because of DU's positive moves towards public education and its high profile that the lease of the two areas had come to DU. Both areas were adjacent to the Sinclair Wetlands.

He reminded those present about the importance of getting out there and recruiting new members. He said a video had been made by himself and John Begg of the two new lease areas and this was on hand for viewing.

Mr Sinclair went on to say that plans were in hand to establish a DU Chapter in Dunedin.

He expressed concern about the falling numbers of ducks and reminded everyone that very careful management was needed.

Hunter education was continuing in Otago and DU and the local gun club had held another junior hunter education day. A day which covered many aspects of game management.

#### REPORT ON OPERATION WETLANDS

Mr Coe said that the past year had been a good one for DU's wetland projects. Besides the work at the Sinclair Wetlands the Home Lagoon project in the southern Wairarapa had been extremely successful. He outlined the work of Messrs Campbell and Hansen in creating a series of islands at the Home Lagoon.

Thanks largely to the President's efforts a number of lagoons had been created in Wairarapa and in southern Hawkes Bay. Mr Coe said that this sort of enthusiasm was also needed in other areas and currently DU was working in the Manawatu creating a series of lagoons on private property.

Many new wetlands projects were in the pipeline and DU was looking forward to a very full wetlands creation and management programme.

#### REPORT ON OPERATION WHO

Ian Bryant reported on the trial release of Blue ducks on the slopes of Egmont. These birds were doing well in the wild. The 3 pairs were held in a pre-release pen for ten days and on release had immediately adapted to the fast flowing stream. Observations were continuing. As a result of this success the Department of Conservation had approved the placement of several pairs of Blue ducks to selected DU members to increase the captive base for a recovery programme.

#### REPORT ON OPERATION GRETLE

Mr Elliott outlined Gretel activities during the year, in which additional nest boxes had been erected at Pikes Lagoon in the Wairarapa, and in the Waikato. It was obvious that the project was very successful and Grey Teal were now being recorded in just about all parts of NZ.

#### REPORT ON OPERATION BRANTA

Mr Hayes reported that as a result of the Wellington Acclimatisation Society's decision to place Canada geese on the game licence, DU Directors felt that operation 'Branta' had just about run its course and that DU had been totally successful in establishing the Canada in the North Island.

Mr Hayes then went on to describe the history of the project and how DU had concentrated much of its efforts in the Wairarapa. He said that since 1976, DU had spent \$3,850 on the project, or approximately \$10/bird, but when the input by DU members was taken into account the figure in real terms would be well over 100,000 dollars. He said it was therefore somewhat disappointing that the Wellington Acclimatisation Society had chosen to place geese on the licence without any consultation with Ducks Unlimited. One DU member was in fact so irate about the decision that he had written at length to the Minister for the Environment in an effort to determine why the decision had been approved by the Government.

Mr Hayes said that it was fortunate that very few geese seemed to have been shot in the Wairarapa, but as a result of hunting being allowed it was very unlikely that there would be any more transfers of geese from

the South Island. Members wishing to establish a flock of geese could, however, still acquire them through DU and its members.

The Wellington Zoo had again assisted the project by supplying DU with 13 geese from the last breeding season.

Mr Hayes said that today there were probably at least 7,000 now resident in the North Island, but that if reasonable numbers were to be maintained, very careful management was essential. He said that the DU Board of Directors wished to thank all those who had contributed to the success of the project.

#### REPORT ON OPERATION ROYAL SWAN

Mr Glover reported that last year 26 Mute Swans had been removed from Peacock Springs and distributed to members and this year a further 23 birds had been removed. This year a light plane had been chartered and the birds had been flown from Christchurch to the Wairarapa, from where they were distributed.

When the project started, concern had been expressed as to where the birds were to be placed, but at present there was still a very long list of members wishing to join

the project. Mr Glover went on to describe this year's catch-up at Peacock Springs, in which 13 people had taken part. He thanked everyone for their support.

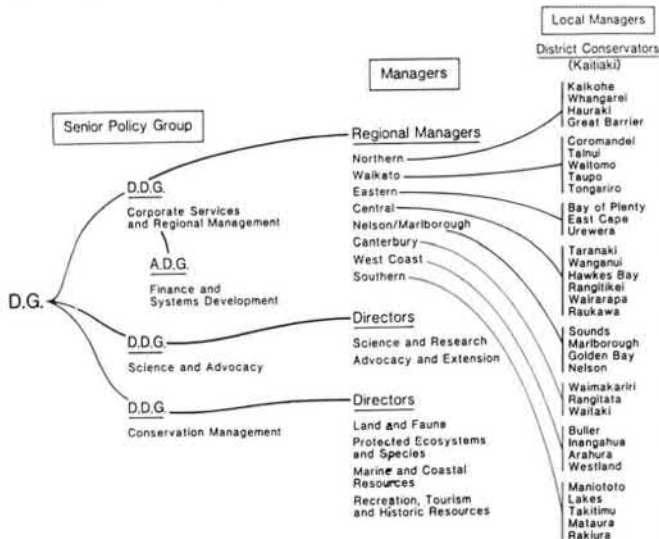
#### EDITORIAL REPORT

On introducing Gary Girvan the President reminded members that more articles were needed from them if the success of *Flight* was to continue.

Mr Girvan reported that four issues had been published during the year and he paid tribute to the excellent support received from the printers, Lithographic Services, Spectrascan, whose Director Terry McDonald produced the colour separation work for the coloured covers at no cost to DU, and to the many others who assisted with the production of *Flight*. In addition he thanked the regular advertisers, particularly Winchester NZ who had supported *Flight* ever since the establishment of Winchester in NZ.

THERE BEING NO GENERAL BUSINESS, THE PRESIDENT THANKED EVERYONE FOR THEIR ATTENDANCE AND CLOSED THE MEETING AT 5.15pm

## DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE



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