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NEW ZEALAND REGISTERED MAGAZINE

DUCKS UNLIMITED
QUARTERLY
WATERFOWL JOURNAL



Flight

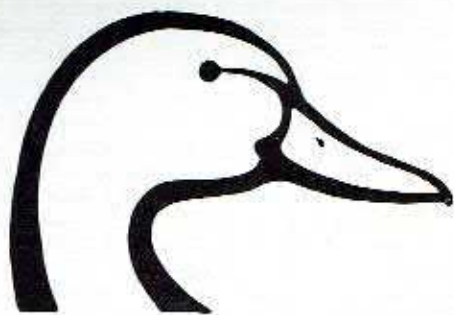


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Cover photo: At the opening of the Sinclair Wetlands Educational Centre, Horrie shows Sir Paul Reeves the wetlands.
Photograph by Neil Hayes.

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.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

1988 has to be one of Ducks Unlimited's more impressive years. Having attended the opening ceremony of the Sinclair Wetlands Educational Centre on 5 February, we can only be inspired to continue with development alongside and within the wetland area. The enormous effort by all involved with the building is, I'm sure, well rewarded by the most impressive complex that is very near completion, and is a fine tribute to Horrie Sinclair's foresight and dedication to retain one of the world's finest wetlands.

Horrie will be moving in within a few weeks and will then be readily available to host the increasing numbers of visitors. Landscaping and planting will be a priority this season, and we look forward to the QEII National Trust's landscape experts' plans in the near future.

We cannot become complacent at this point for nationally wetlands are still under threat, and we are thankful that we have members such as Ann Graham to remind us to be aware and watchful, as we rely on our members to keep our directors informed.

Grant Dumbell is now well into research on Pateke in Northland, and already has some very significant findings to report. Grant's abilities and information were witnessed on a recent visit to Great Barrier Island by several Directors and supporters of Operation Pateke.

In closing I must reiterate, that without the support Ducks Unlimited has received from the NZ Wildlife Service, QEII National Trust,



Dr Philip Tortell, Director of Protected Ecosystems and Species, presents Jim Campbell with DOC's \$20,000 cheque towards the Sinclair Wetland development.

Department of Conservation, Tourism and Publicity, Isaac Wildlife Trust, Ornithological Society, Otago Acclimatisation Society, Norman Marsh, Clerk of Works, Bill McLay, Architect, Stephen Loach, and all other associated organisations, we could not have

achieved such a tremendous result in Otago. I thank all involved with their contribution of labour, expertise, machinery, and support for this magnificent Educational Centre, which is certainly a dream come true for Horrie Sinclair. ■



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5th FEBRUARY 1988 — AN HISTORIC DAY FOR DUCKS UNLIMITED AT THE SINCLAIR WETLANDS

In front of well over 350 Ducks Unlimited members and guests, the Sinclair Wetlands Educational Centre was officially opened by His Excellency The Governor-General, the Most Reverend Sir Paul Reeves, on Friday 5th February at 3.00pm.

In addition to Sir Paul and Lady Reeves, DU was honoured to have so many people present. The large gathering included: Mr E.C. Hayes the Mayor of the Bruce District, Sir Clifford Skeggs the Mayor of Dunedin, Lady Diana Isaac of the Isaac Wildlife Trust, Peter Elworthy — Chairman of the QEII National Trust, the MP for Dunedin West Clive Mathewson, Noel Hellyer, Julian Rodda and John Andrew of the Dept of Conservation, Niall Watson of the Otago Acclimatisation Society and Alastair Cameron of the Taieri River Trust. DU members attended from far and wide and Dunedin turned on a glorious day, with not a cloud in the sky.

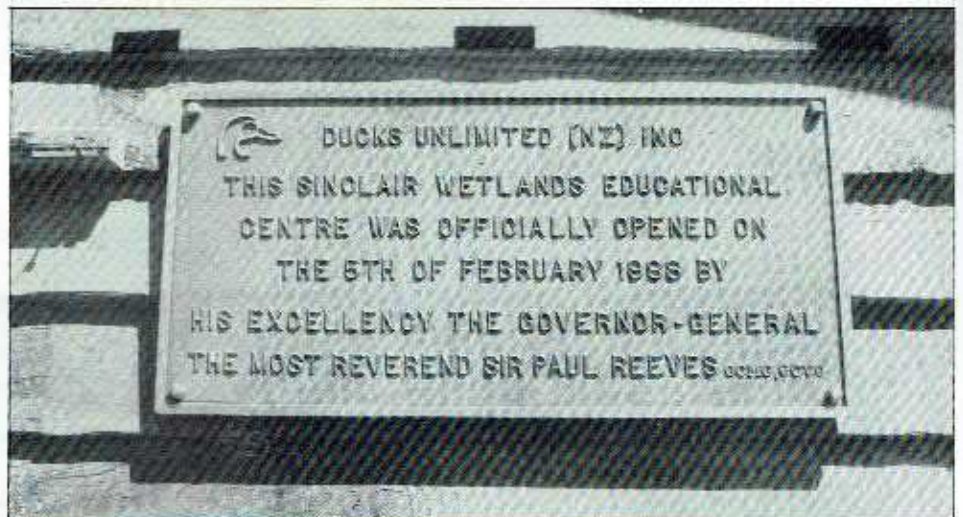
Prior to opening day Bill McLay, DU's Clerk of Works, and his team of workers had worked madly to get the building ready in time for the opening. And what a great job they have done. The octagonal shaped building, designed by DU member Steve



Sir Paul and Lady Reeves, Horrie and Jim Campbell at the jetty.



Horrie describes the wetlands.



The plaque — manufactured in Lower Hutt by DU member Malcolm Kingsford and generously donated by him.

Loach, is quite magnificent — far larger than DU Directors envisaged. The manager's residence is complete — with two bedrooms, office, lounge, kitchen and laundry. The public viewing lounge is also finished, subject to the visual static displays being added. The toilet and shower facilities have been completed in the visitors' accommodation, but bunks and cooking facilities have still be added. The other modules will, in the short term, be used as workshop and garage facilities, but will be developed as tea rooms and research areas as required.

DU President, Jim Campbell, was Master of Ceremonies for the opening which was started off by Mayor Hayes welcoming everyone to the district. This was followed by a fine address by Jim, in which he paid tribute to Horrie Sinclair — whose energy and vision had made the day possible. Jim also commented that as an organisation DU had much to quack about and he paid tribute to the DU membership and to the many organisations who had assisted with finance; particularly the QEII National Trust, the Dept of Tourism and Publicity, the Dept of Conservation, the NZ Wildlife Service,



Horrie and Jim admire the flagpoles.

the Otago Acclimatisation Society and the Ornithological Society of NZ. He went on to say that the work had to date cost around \$200,000.

During his address the President also mentioned the plight of the brown teal at Okiwi Station on Great Barrier Island and about the need to preserve wetlands.

Peter Elworthy, Chairman of the QEII National Trust, was the next speaker and he commented on his organisation's joint management of the Sinclair Wetlands with DU. He also provided information about the National Trust and about Open Space Covenants.

Mr Elworthy was followed by Bill McLay who specifically thanked all the local tradesmen and suppliers of materials, and those who had donated various items for the building.

His Excellency the Governor-General then addressed the gathering. Sir Paul said that wetlands were numbered amongst the greatest resources and assets of our country, and that we drain them at our peril. Wetlands, he said, were an essential part of wildlife conservation and that human access to wetlands was an asset.

Sir Paul also commented on the need to protect the NZ Brown Teal and that the DU Educational Centre would stand as a tribute to Horrie Sinclair.

His Excellency then unveiled a solid



Guests make use of the impressive balcony in front of the viewing lounge.

brass plaque and read its wording to the gathering. Sir Paul then opened the massive gates to the courtyard and with Lady Reeves went through to inspect the facilities; closely followed by the total gathering.

Afternoon tea was then served to all present and everyone had plenty of time to chat to their Excellencies, who were soon displaying their DU lapel badges.

TV Cameras were in action for some considerable time and we were fortunate to

have around three minutes on the late news the same evening.

After around two hours at the building their Excellencies were escorted to view the wetlands, initially from the jetty and then from high on one of the adjacent hills. Our honoured guests then departed for Dunedin airport, having spent well over two hours at the wetlands.

All in all a great day for Ducks Unlimited and Otago. ■

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO DONORS TO THE SINCLAIR WETLANDS CENTRE PROJECT

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DIARY OF A POND

Bill Clinton-Baker

What a difference when one is lucky enough to have one's house overlooking a pond. Having recently built a house in such a situation, I thought I would like to share some of the happenings during the first breeding season.

Sept 2 Got a male and female brown teal from Jim Campbell. These hid up in the rushes for the first five days, but when they appeared were firmly bonded.

Sept 7 Young ducks reared last season released onto pond. These are:— Two pair Chestnut Teal, two pair Carolina, a pair of Grey Teal, two female Shoveler, a female Australian Shelduck, a pair of Cape Barrens, two Black Swan, two Canadas and five Grass Whistle Tree Duck. Four of these were reared last season but in the Autumn three of the two pair of adults disappeared — wild cat? — but managed to catch the remaining one.

Sept 14 Pair of wild Shoveler flew in.

Sept 19 A male Tree Duck arrived from the Wellington Zoo. The only one there and we hope it may pair with one of the young females. Released him after dark — prefer to do this with new birds so that they can escape the attention of hawks & get settled before daylight.

Sept 21 Tree duck has not joined with the resident five. This unusual as they are very gregarious birds. Urban v Rural!

Sept 23 Zoo Tree Duck displaying with a Canada Goose — 'beak dipping' & 'head pumping' — has he been away from his kind for too long?

Erected five nest boxes — a bit late. Waded out to the swallow nesting tray (see photo). They have half grown young.

Sept 26 A Wild pair of Grey Teal already inspecting nest boxes.

Oct 2 Goose and 'City Slicker' still displaying.

A Kingfisher has taken up residence.



Carolina Wood Duck

Brown Teal male is on his own — sure sign that she has nested and started to sit.

Oct 6 Brown Teal copulating though she has been sitting for several days — ducks must also do it for fun.

Oct 14 Came onto the Canada just as she had laid her first egg — just a depression in the ground, but by evening she has covered it with grass. Young swallows have left nest & are being fed on top of tray by parents. They fly strongly from the first.

Brown Teal female not seen for several days — she usually comes off at feed time. Perhaps coming off at night?

Oct 20 Canada has three eggs — they appear to lay every other day. Eggs now well covered with mixture of grass and down.

Carolina has three eggs.

A wild male Shoveler has flown in — chases the two females who do not respond.

Oct 28 Male Shoveler starting to pair with one of the females? Swallows have second clutch of eggs. 'City Slicker' still a loner.

Nov 1 Watched the male Shoveler and one of the females in a pairing display. Both birds repeatedly dived with head pumping when surfacing. By the evening both were feeding close together and appeared paired.

Still no female Brown Teal — fear she has been predated though no sign of feathers. Shovelers firmly bonded and frequently displaying.

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Swallow Tray. The mud nest is stuck underneath in a corner. A group of five Tree Whistlers and Mountain Duck on raft.

Take Carolina eggs to a bantam.

A wild but fairly tame pair of Canadas have flown in. Quite a furore with the resident brides.

Nov 15 Another Carolina sitting on twelve eggs. She is a good 'egg coverer' so will let her hatch a few eggs herself. Ducks seem to vary in egg covering — covered eggs keep warm for at least an hour.

Saw most of ducks following something in the grass some way from the water. Found this to be a hedgehog — would they also have followed a predator such as a cat or ferret?

Nov 23 The paired female Shoveler is sometimes missing, so hopefully is laying. Two of the tree ducks seem to have paired and are sometimes separate from the five and think may have been copulating. This union very incestuous but with the small number in the country fear this is inevitable.

Nov 29 Shoveler definitely sitting. This is the only one which has nested. Of four pairs on the other ponds, not one has laid. Seasonal? — we had a very warm and dry Winter.

Nov 30 Shoveler came off at feed time and was able to watch her back to long grass at far end of pond. Have noticed that

the males are very attentive when their mates come off to feed and often follow them part of the way back at the nest. Must get bantam ready for her eggs.

A single Shag now spends most of the day at the pond. Watched it fishing for frogs; it dived, caught and swallowed a frog every thirty seconds and this went on for some five minutes. It then retired to one of the floating platforms with, one would have thought, indigestion.

Dec 2 Second family of swallows have flown.

Shag sits in the sun with wings fully spread — why do they do this? Found Shoveler's nest with nine eggs, well concealed in long grass. So they do breed in their first year — had doubts about this. Saw all the ducks in a group on the water close to the bank. Fearing a predator, took the gun down, but found that it was only a pukeko. Nice to have a few around but they are said to take eggs & ducklings.

Dec 9 Get a male Australian Shelduck (Mountain Duck) from Ron Munro who is one of the few people who can breed them.

Carolina I've left with some eggs is chipping.

Dec 11 The 'Mounties' are paying no at-

tention to each other — hope its not a repetition of the City Slicker.

Female Carolina left nest to feed — unusual when young are hatching, found three had hatched & were dried off.

Dec 12 Carolina family on water & feeding well — the male takes no part in family affairs which is surprising. Mounties appear to have paired & feeding together. In contrast the City Slicker is consorting with a Black Swan!

Dec 18 Carolina family are intact, though a hawk is around the pond. Am sure these vary a lot in temperament — some take ducklings, some don't.

Jan 6 Swallow's third family hatched & half grown.

Jan 22 Swallows flown — so this breeding pair have raised fourteen young in three clutches.

This brings the season to a close — as ever, with its successes and disappointments. It has been a poor breeding season for everything except Carolina which have been very prolific. Tree Duck did not breed but as most of them are juveniles did not really expect any results. Once again the Mounties have done nothing (have another pair on the top pond). Next season intend to have both pairs on the house pond in the hope that a little competition may produce results.

The City Slicker is still shackled up with a female Black Swan.

CRITICISM AND COMMENT

In the last issue of *Flight* both Landcorp and member Ann Graeme levelled criticism at Ducks Unlimited. Our reply to Landcorp in respect of an article about Okiwi Station on Great Barrier Island is printed below, together with our comments to the points raised by Ann Graeme.

"Dear Mr Menzies,

Thank you for your letter of October 14th regarding Landcorp, Brown Teal and Okiwi Station. It was good to hear that our journal is being well read and we will be pleased to publish your letter in *Flight*.

However, Ducks Unlimited makes no apologies for publishing Ann Graeme's article as it has been our experience — over many years — that most Government agencies have completely failed to appreciate the intrinsic value of wetlands. And many valuable wetlands have disappeared from Crown land.

It could well be that land management thinking is slowly changing, and it has certainly changed amongst our many farmer members; but are we safe to assume that Landcorp have adopted, and are putting into practice, the Crown Lands Wetlands Policy?

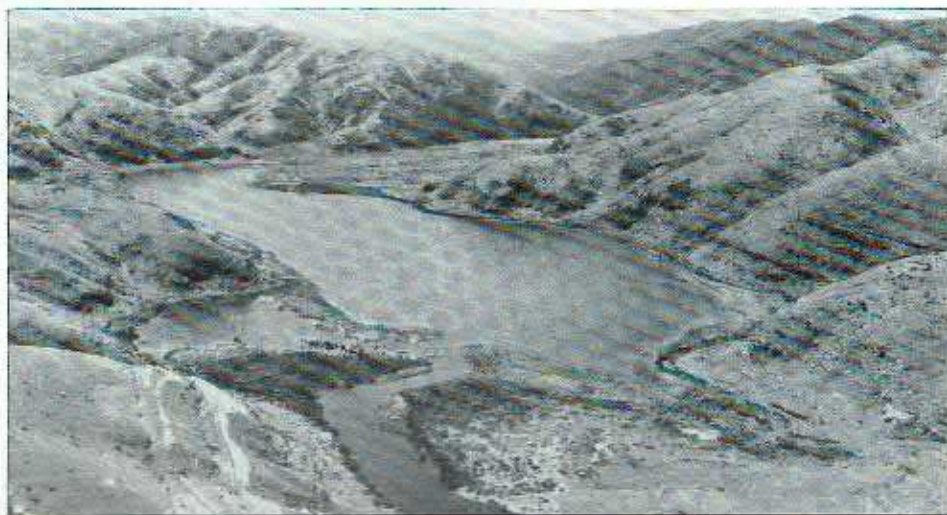
For 12 years now Ducks Unlimited and its members have spent many thousands of dollars attempting to save the endemic brown teal from extinction, and when, in some areas, its survival is left largely in the hands of commercial organisations we have every right to be concerned.

For example, a few weeks ago Ducks Unlimited (at great expense) released a number of captive reared brown teal at the Mimiwhangata Farm Park, near Whangarei. The part is farmed by Landcorp and it was extremely disappointing and frustrating for us to see several swampy gullies with recently dug ditches through them. It would have been of far more value — to farm management and to the survival of brown teal — to construct small ponds in each gully rather than drain the areas. Such activity as draining these swampy areas is, of course, completely contrary to both the Crown Land Policy on Wetlands and to the recently announced Government Wetlands Policy.

So we are sure you will appreciate that until the occupiers of Crown land make a significant contribution towards the preservation, creation and enhancement of wetland habitats, caring New Zealanders will continue to express concern about such areas when they are being managed by Landcorp or similar organisations.

Nevertheless we thank you for your comments and we hope that our two groups can establish a successful working relationship. Yours sincerely,

F.N. Hayes 21.10.87"



Lake Kohangatera at Eastbourne, Wellington, one of two Eastbourne lakes now protected by Reserve status.

AND IN RESPECT OF 'DUCKS UNCOMMITTED?' (also from Neil Hayes)

"I was interested to read Ann Graeme's article in the last 'Flight' and it's pretty obvious that in some instances we have failed to keep members fully informed about DU's efforts to preserve NZ's wetlands. In its short history DU has in fact helped to preserve a number of priceless wetlands, and contrary to what Ann has been lead to believe we have been battling to preserve Okiwi Station and other vital Brown Teal habitat on Great Barrier Island — since the mid-1970's. And certainly long before some organisations knew what a brown teal was!!! In respect of the Whangamarino Swamp DU has not only been battling to stop drainage it has also been helping to restore previously drained areas, to the tune of several hundred hectares. Such activity is surely of vital importance to the survival of waterbirds.

Of course, DU's success lies in its ability to get things done, quietly and efficiently, and to work with people — rather than against them.

A few DU successes which have obviously not been apparent to Ann have been:

1. The 12,000 hectare Waiholo/Waipori Wetland Management Reserve in 1979 — DU played a major role at ministerial level in helping place reserve status on the area.
2. DU played a major role in creating public awareness of the value of the Manganui-a-te-Ao River; prior to the water-right applications of the QEII National Trust in 1982.
3. DU and the owners of Te Hopai Station were solely responsible for instituting the project which saw the 30 hectare Home Lagoon saved from drainage and restored to its former glory.
4. Since 1979 DU has spent hundreds of

thousands of dollars preserving, protecting, creating and restoring close to 1,500 hectares of wetlands — from Northland to Otago.

5. Just recently DU played a major role in ensuring protection of Lakes Kohangatera and Kohangapiripiri near Wellington, and the establishment of Wildlife Management Reserve status over these lakes and their environs.
6. It was because of DU's work in the promotion of wetland habitat that Horrie Sinclair decided, in 1984, to gift his priceless 315 hectare wetland property to Ducks Unlimited.
7. In its 14 years of existence DU has spent a great deal of time making hundreds of submissions in respect of wetland protection (I know because I've written 99% of them) and we have also appeared at many hearings — only recently Diane Pritt represented DU at the NWASCO hearing in respect of the Managanui-a-te-Ao River conservation order and Horrie Sinclair represented DU on the conservation order hearing for Lake Tuakitoto. Of course, these efforts are rarely reported. But there is little doubt that for the size of the organisation, and remembering that DU employs no staff, DU does in fact perform miracles. By way of contrast, the R.F & B.P. Society employs 10 full time staff.

I can assure Ann that DU has been long awake to the fact that our captive rearing programmes have no chance of success without habitat in which to release the birds. Of course, our complex at the Sinclair Wetlands is designed to educate the public to a wider and greater appreciation of wetlands and waterfowl.

Hope these brief notes help to clarify DU's position."

(Ann Graeme is one of DU's major Brown Teal breeders and is also a prominent member of the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society). ■

D.U. NEWS

The highest tender received for the limited edition Browning A5 shotgun was \$2,800. This was not quite as high as the DU Directors would have liked, but as the money was urgently needed for the Sinclair Wetlands the tender was accepted.

We would like to thank DU in the USA for the generous donation of the shotgun. DU Inc's support of DU (N.Z.) has been one of the main reasons for our successes to date.

1988 NATIONAL RAFFLE

Prizes for the 1988 DU National raffle will be:

1. Original waterfowl painting by Janet Marshall
2. Limited edition waterfowl print from DU USA
3. Pair of binoculars
4. Camera
5. Waterfowl book
6. Waterfowl book

A book of tickets will again be sent to each member in June and Mark Newcomb has again generously offered to run the raffle.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUANGO REVIEW

DU made three submissions in respect of the reviews of environmental quangos — one on the future of the QEII National Trust, one on the future of the Environmental Council and the other on the future of acclimatisation societies. DU has had close associations with all three groups and has supported the retention of each organisation, but with the Environmental Council and the acclimatisation societies DU has made constructive comment on how the structure of these two groups might be improved. Copies of these submissions can be obtained from PO Box 44-176 on request.

PREDATOR CONTROL

For some years now DU philosophy has been that waterfowl predators — stoats, ferrets, rats and feral cats — should be eliminated from the NZ landscape. It is therefore encouraging to see more and more members with waterfowl collections doing serious predator control work. In Northland

Park Ranger at the Mimiwhangata Farm Park, Willie Bearman, had been eliminating feral cats around the two lagoons used for the release of our captive reared brown teal, as a result of which our birds are doing well at the park.

To assist predator control programmes for stoats, ferrets, rats and hedgehogs (hedgehogs are a real menace to the eggs of all ground nesting birds), DU has available a limited number of the famous English FENN trap. These are available to members at \$20 each, including GST & postage.

Full instructions are sent with each order. For feral cats we recommend the humane possum trap, which is available from your local farm supply merchant. Without doubt the feral cat in NZ is the ultimate menace to our birdlife and not only would DU like to see a mass extermination pro-

gramme but also far tougher penalties for people caught releasing cats into the wild.

MBE FOR DU MEMBER

All DU Members would have been delighted to see the name of Ralph Thomas Adams appear in the New Years Honours list. Ralph was awarded the MBE for his outstanding work as Director of the NZ Wildlife Service. Ralph retired from the Wildlife Service last year and was Director for 9 years. During his period as Director Ralph was responsible for a number of very successful endangered bird recovery programmes, notably the Chatham Island Robin, the Kakapo, the Takehe and, of course was responsible for helping establish DU's highly successful captive rearing programme for the brown teal. During his 30 plus years with the Wildlife Service he also did much to establish the high profile

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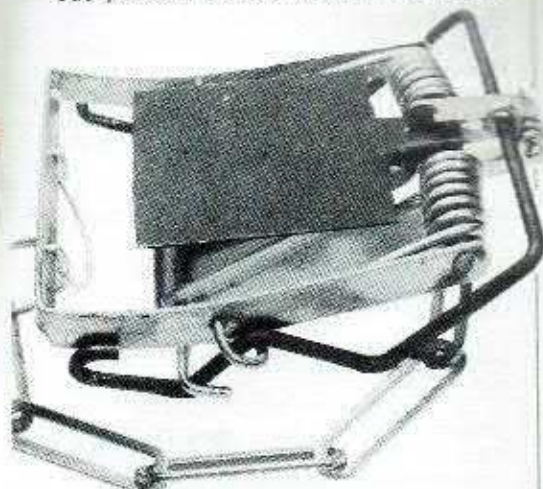
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of the Service, not only within NZ but throughout the world.

Ralph was also instrumental in helping the establishment of Ducks Unlimited in NZ, and in the early 70s, attending many of the early formation meetings. It was in fact Ralph who suggested the name 'Flight' for our journal.

Ralph is now our Honorary Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat Adviser and Ducks Unlimited congratulates him on this richly deserved recognition of his contribution to NZ wildlife.

MEMBERSHIP

Horrie Sinclair MBE has now reached his 200th recruit for DU. Horrie started to seriously recruit members on the 13th of October 1982 and his achievement is a fine example to all.

INSURANCE SPONSORSHIP

DU Directors are delighted to announce that DU has entered into a sponsorship agreement with National Insurance over the insurance policies covering the Sinclair Wetlands Educational Centre.

GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM THE ISAAC WILDLIFE TRUST

Readers of 'Flight' will have noted details in the last issue about the excellent open day at Peacock Springs — to raise funds for DU's wetlands work. Gate takings for the day were \$15,000 and DU expected to pay all expenses, such as advertising, support services, and so on. So when a cheque for \$15,000 arrived from the Isaac Wildlife Trust, DU Directors were overwhelmed by the Trust's generosity. We certainly thank Lady Diana Isaac and all the staff of Isaac Construction for their fantastic support.

DU WILDLIFE RESEARCH STUDY AWARD

Early last year DU established its Wildlife Research Study Award, whereby up to \$3,000 would be awarded annually to University based wildlife research projects. Four applications were received — one for funds towards a PhD research project on Canada geese in North Canterbury, another for an MSc student to study the eutrophication of lakes in Otago and its effect on the Black Swan population, another for

funds towards the Brown Teal research programme in Northland, and the other was for funds to assist an MSc student to carry out a study on the usage of nest boxes by grey teal in the Waikato. All applications were extremely well prepared and presented DU Directors with a few headaches when they considered the applications at the November Board meeting. Fortunately the applications had been reviewed by a University of Auckland advisory committee and recommendations made.

DU Directors decided to grant Sally McKinnon \$1,000 to enable her to complete the eutrophication, study, and to support the Northland brown teal research programme — funding level to be determined at a later date. The Directors will take another look at the grey teal nest box study and the goose study at a later date.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION MAKES AN OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO BROWN TEAL RESEARCH

At the Brown Teal Seminar (reported on elsewhere in the issue) the Dept of Conservation decided that it would assist Ducks Unlimited with its brown teal work in Northland by allocating \$18,000 to help Grant Dumbell follow up his Great Barrier Island study with a major investigation of brown teal in Northland. Grant's PhD thesis on the Brown Teal was completed in December for submission to his examiners and Grant agreed to continue studies in Northland until the end of March. The DOC funds will also be used to help Grant produce an in-depth recovery programme for the brown teal.

Besides following up on the progress of our captive reared birds released in Northland, Grant will also do a population census, follow up on the many rumours regarding brown teal in various areas of Northland, investigate areas for habitat creation and protection and look at possible release sites.

Plans are also in hand to get a full scale research programme on brown teal in Northland underway when Grant has completed the preliminary work.

Ducks Unlimited sincerely thanks the Protected Ecosystems and Species section of DOC, the Regional Manager of DOC in Auckland, and the District Manager of DOC in Whangarei for their support towards the Brown Teal work in Northland.

1988 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

A registration form for the 1988 Annual Conference, TO BE HELD AT THE WAIRAKEI on the 16th and 17th July is printed in this issue. Please complete this form promptly and send to Diane Pritt, Smiths Road, Ohakune.

Other attractions to be held in conjunction with the Annual Conference include the 5th annual clay target shooting championships to be held at the Taupo Gun Club (details given elsewhere in this issue); a golf contest is planned, details of which are still to be finalised, but members who are interested should contact Brendan Coe, P.O. Box 44-176 Lower Hutt; a field trip to one of the major waterfowl collections in the area is planned for the morning of Sunday, 17th.

Members who wish to donate items for the annual fundraising auction should send

DUCKS UNLIMITED (N.Z.) INC 5th ANNUAL NATIONAL CLAY TARGET CHAMPIONSHIPS

TAUPO GUN CLUB GROUNDS
FRIDAY 15th July 1988 — 9.00am
SATURDAY 16th July 1988 — 9.30am

PROGRAMME

Friday 15th July

1. 25 Tgt 1988 DU (NZ) Skeet Championship — Holder: J Woolley
2. 25 Tgt 1988 DU (NZ) Sporting Championship — Holder: J Bennett
3. 10 Pair 1988 DU (NZ) Double Rise Championship — Holder: M Havill
4. 20 Tgt 1988 DU (NZ) Sparrows Championship — Holder: A Hughes
5. 25 Tgt 1988 DU (NZ) Single Barrel Championship — Holder: G McPhee

Saturday 16th July

1. 25 Tgt 1988 DU (NZ) Points Score Championship — Holder: J McMillan
2. 25 Tgt 1988 DU (NZ) Single Rise Championship — Holder: J Coatham
3. 15 Tgt 1988 DU 5 man Chapter Teams Champs. — Holders: Waikato
4. 50 Tgt 1988 DU (NZ) International 10 man Team shoot.

All events graded A B & C. Sash & Silver Fern to HOA winners. Grade winners receive medals. Sash also for winning team members and HOA High Gun.

Entry \$10 per championship event, Targets 18c, Sweep \$5. HOA High Gun \$2.

Postal entries accepted.

Accommodation at competitive rates available at Adelphi Motel. Your hosts: Fay and Gordon Clark. ph 87-594.

Annual Ducks Unlimited dinner and auction held at Wairakei Hotel on Saturday evening. See notice re bookings in this issue.

Shoot Organiser: John Coatham R.D.1 PUTARURU ph (0814) 25-779



Jim Campbell and Ted Hansen man the barbeque at the Eketahuna Chapter claybird shoot.

details to Brendan Coe who is compiling the auction list.

Provision will be made for Trade members to display their wares. Trade Members who are interested should contact Diane Pritt, Smith's Road, Ohakune, for details.

Come along and help to support New Zealand's waterfowl and wetlands.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subs are due on April 1st. Subscription rates for 1988 are \$11.00 for Junior Members, \$27.50 for Full Members, \$55.00 for Trade and for sponsor Members, and \$550 for Life Membership.

All members will be invoiced and we ask that you support DU's efforts with wetlands and waterfowl by paying your subscription promptly.

GOOD PUBLICITY FOR DU

DU has recently received some great publicity, with 8 pages in the COUNTRY CALENDAR book, which was one of NZ's best selling books in December; the opening of the Sinclair Wetlands Education Centre on TV news; Jim Campbell's Mute Swan cygnets appearing weekly in the Wairarapa Times Age and the Sinclair Wetlands featuring very prominently in the recently published WORLD OF SHOOTING.

SUCCESSFUL SEASON AT OTOROHANGA ZOO

Under the guidance of curator Eric Fox, the Otorohanga Zoo has experienced one of its most successful captive breeding seasons to date with the following birds being reared:

Brown Teal	15
Grey Teal	60
Grey Duck	15
Shoveler	1
Scaup	8
Paradise Shelduck	1
Pukeko	18
Great Spotted Kiwi	1
N.I. Brown Kiwi	2
Falcon	1

(Your Editor would like to hear from other members who are doing well with their breeding programmes and is also keen to institute a waterfowl — Buy Sell or Swap column as a service to members)

EKETAHUNA CHAPTER NEWS

The Chapter held a Simulated Field Shoot

at the Eketahuna Gun Club on 31st January. A field of 51 shooters turned out to contest the Chapter Championships. Some good scores were posted considering the rather blustery conditions.

Medal winners for the day were as follows:

H.A.O.:	D. West	— 48/60
A Grade:	J. Bannister	— 44/60
B Grade:	J. Campbell	— 47/60
C Grade:	G. Girvan	— 39/60
Non-registered:	R. Lampp	— 36/60

Our President, Jim Campbell, showed his excellent shooting ability using a 20 gauge to shoot his winning score. Well done Jim!

With the usual raffles being run, the Chapter raised a further \$500 to add its already large bank account, to be presented at the Annual Conference in July.

WELLINGTON CHAPTER FUNDRAISING DINNER

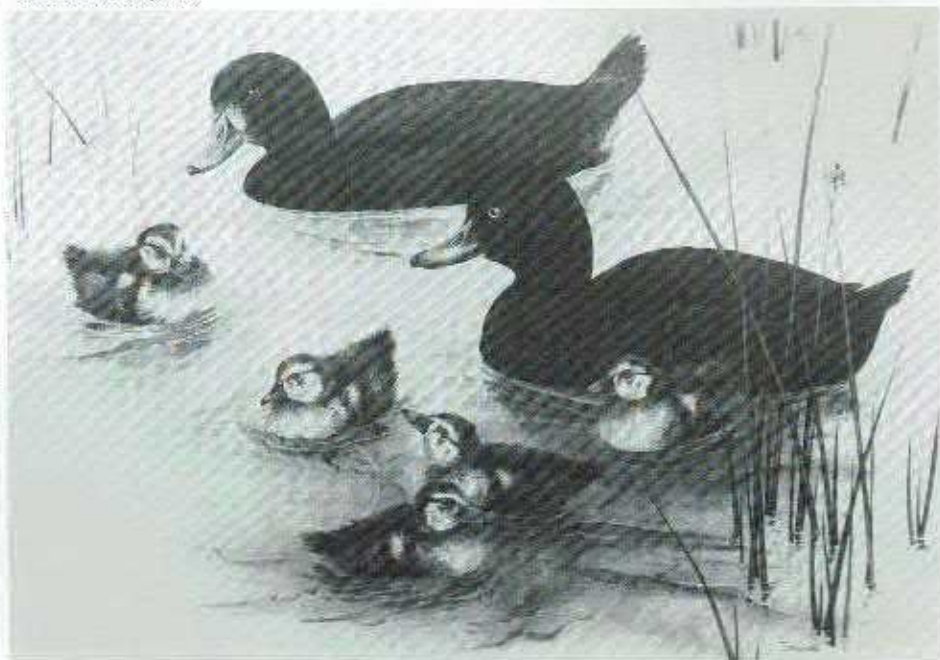
Host Harvey's, Kilbirnie (formerly the Shaw Saville Lounge) was once again the venue for the Wellington Chapter fundraising dinner on March 12th.

Close to 70 members and friends joined together to enjoy the dinner and support the auction. Thanks to the generosity of a large number of supporters there was a tempting array of donated auction items. DU's inimitable auctioneer, Bill Wilkinson, now resident in Wellington, was on hand to urge the bidding along. As a result the evening raised around \$3000 to help DU's efforts for waterfowl habitat.

The Chapter's next activity will be a Simulated Field claybird shoot at the Hutt Gun Club's grounds on Sunday, May 1st commencing at 9.00am.

Members will recall that the first prize in last year's national raffle was a Janet Marshall original painting of a pair of NZ Scaup with ducklings. The prize was won by Brent Piel of the American embassy, but when we went to make arrangements to present the painting to Brent we discovered that he had returned to the USA. Follow-up correspondence with Brent has resulted in the painting being gifted back to DU, and we are pleased to offer the painting for tender to the highest bidder.

Tenders over \$1,000 will be considered. But do remember that the painting is valued at \$2,500.



TENDER FORM

I..... of

wish to tender \$..... for the Janet Marshall painting.

Post to DU (NZ) Inc., PO Box 44-176 Lower Hutt.

Tenders will close at the end of May 1988

PROJECT REPORTS

OPERATION PATEKE

The 1987-88 breeding season is going well and the final figure for brown teal reared by members looks likely to be around 100.

In a recent DU/Dept of Conservation project, 3 pairs of brown teal were released on Tiritiri Matangi Island in the Hauraki Gulf. All part of a continuing programme to create breeding populations on off-shore islands. The release was carried out by Grant Dumbell and the birds have apparently adapted well to their new environment.

In early December a very constructive one-day Brown Teal Management Seminar was held at DOC Head Office in Wellington. The seminar covered such topics as;

Brown Teal research, Releases into the wild, Habitat work in Northland, Predator control in Northland, Captive breeding, Public education in Northland, and the need for a brown teal conservation officer in the Department of Conservation. The day was a really full one and some major recommendations were made; one of the main ones being that a major brown teal research programme should commence in Northland. At the end of the day captive breeding of Blue duck was discussed and the Department officials agreed that two further pairs of Blue duck should be released to DU as soon as possible. The meeting had been officially opened by Dr Philip Tortell, Director of Protected Ecosystems & Species, and it was expert-



Melvin Pike and his Blue Ducks at Carterton.



A contented mute swan family at Jim Campbells

ly chaired by his Assistant Director, Noel Hellyer.

Over the early part of January, Neil Hayes spent some time following up DU's September release of brown teal at the Mimiwhangata Farm Park, and he is delighted to report that of the 45 birds released in September he positively identified 35 of them. In addition four birds from the 1986 release were also identified.

And in Grant Dumbell's first week in Northland he also had some good news,



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positively identifying a 1986 released bird paired with a 1987 released bird, with a brood of ducklings. Grant also counted over 300 birds in the first few days of his research.

Further good news from Northland came from farm manager Dallas Greenway, who reports sighting two brown teal on the recently-created 7 hectare lake on the Purerua Peninsula, near Kerikeri. This is the lake where DU plans to release birds later this year. Dallas is carrying out a fencing planting and predator control programme on the lake and the area looks ideal for a release programme — the overflow from the lake flows into a quite massive mangrove swamp.

ROYAL SWAN PROJECT

The Royal Swan project really got cracking this breeding season and appropriately Jim Campbell's swans produced the first progeny within the new project — successfully hatching and rearing four cygnets. There is some really great interest in the project, with 27 members currently on the waiting list for pairs of Mute Swan.

OPERATION BRANTA

Charlie Money, R.D.2, Ruawai, Northland, reports that he has a number of Canadas available. Give him a phone on (0884) 38573.

Recent counts indicate that there are now close to 10,000 Canadas resident in the North Island.



17 acre lake north of Kerikeri. Note the large mangrove swamp on the right.

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Wildfowl Management on Inland Waters	\$15.40
The Duckshooters Bag	\$7.70
DU Badge(s)	\$5.50
Ducks Unlimited (N.Z.) Decals	\$1.10
The Hawaiian Goose	\$24.75
Gamebird Hunting	\$7.70
Managing Wetlands	\$23.65
DU Shirt	\$41.80
Brown Teal Booklet	\$10.10
Bic Pens	6.60/Box
New Zealand Birds	\$11.00
VHS Video 'River in Question'	\$64.90
DU Caps (one size fits all)	\$22.00
DU Jerseys (Red, Blue or Green)	\$75.00
Leather keyrings (DU insignia)	\$4.50
DU teaspoons	\$3.95

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Plenty of Brown Teal at the Mimiwhangata Farm Park.

NORTHLAND BROWN TEAL SURVEY

BY Grant Dumbell

Editors Note: Although this survey is now a year old, it is being published in 'Flight' so that members may compare these figures with those in the survey which is currently being conducted by Grant Dumbell. We hope to publish these results in the next issue of 'Flight.'

Introduction

A short field trip was made to Northland, between 29 December 1986 and 4 January 1987, in accordance with section 1 of my Northland brown teal research proposal (Dumbell, 1986). The brown teal present at 11 sites were counted over a three day period (30/12/86 - 1/1/87) to minimise the chances of birds moving between sites and being double counted. These counts have been corrected to achieve a likely upper limit of the estimate of the total number of brown teal using these sites.

The survival of captive-released birds was assessed at the three release sites used to date. In the case of the 1986 cohort of released birds, this information has been combined with data from the immediate post-release period to give an indication of survival over the first six months after release.

Finally, a small cohort of wild birds was trapped and banded in the Bay of Islands. It is hoped that these birds will yield at least a round estimate of the survival of wild-bred brown teal in Northland. A small (1ml) blood sample was also taken from these birds to allow genetic comparisons to be made between Northland and Great Barrier Island brown teal and between brown teal and its subantarctic conspecifics.

Status

The 11 sites visited have been divided into three subgroups and the numbers counted have been added together to get both sub-region totals and a grand total (Table 1). The grand total of 253 is a minimum figure, leaving the problem of estimating a likely maximum figure. Repeated counts of brown teal on Great Barrier Island suggest that two thirds of sites that record zero on the first visit will remain zero regardless

of how many visits are made. Over the remaining sites the mean increase between the first count and the highest count is seventeen. When this is added to the minimum number of birds counted it yields a figure which can be considered as a conservative maximum figure for the total number of birds using those sites. This technique can be summarised by the formula:

$$T = C + 17(Z/3 + (N-Z))$$

where T = estimated total number of birds
 C = actual number of birds counted
 N = total number of sites visited
 Z = number of sites that recorded a zero

Using this estimation technique the estimated maximum number of birds at the 11 sites is 395 (Table 1).

The minimum total of 253 is in accordance with the totals previously reported by Munn (1986a). He recorded 287 brown teal over the same sites (Table 1) but the counting period

Table 1: Northland brown teal survey counts

SITE	C	T	C(Munn)	T(Munn)
Helena Bay	29		39	
Mimiwhangata	52		28	
Whananaki East	29		15	
Whananaki West	40		88	
Matapouri	0		0	
Helena Bay - Matapouri	150	224	170	224
Bentzen's Farm Pond	9		8	
Bentzen's Farm	68		90	
Parekura Bay	26		19	
Bay of Islands	103	154	117	168
Kaero	0		-	
Te Huia Pond	0		-	
Takou Bay	0		0	
Kaero - Takou Bay	0	17	0	5
GRAND TOTAL	253	395	287	417

C = Actual number of birds counted

T = Estimated total number of birds

stretched over a three month period (13/11/85 — 13/2/86). Later in February 1986, 223 brown teal were counted over a shorter, but unspecified, counting period.

Survival

In July 1986 a total of 120 brown teal were liberated at Mimiwhangata and 16 were subsequently moved to Kaeo. The 104 Mimiwhangata birds were regularly monitored over the first two months after release (Munn, 1986b) and the number surviving on the 30 December 1986 (Table 2) was estimated to be 35. Of the 52 brown teal seen at Mimiwhangata only 12 were able to be checked for bands. Of these, eight (0.667) were part of the 1986 release, and this proportion suggests that 35 banded birds were present. This estimate was confirmed by Hayes (*pers. comm.*) on 11/1/87. He recorded 86% of 41, or 35, birds as being banded and this corresponds to a 33.7% survival rate (Figure 1) over the 23 weeks since release.

Figure 1: The survivorship curve for Brown Teal released at Mimiwhangata in July, 1986.



Table 2: Survival of the 1986 captive-released birds

DATE	WEEK	NUMBER BIRDS	% SURVIVAL
26 July 1986	0	104	100.0
7 Aug 1986	1.5	60	61.5
22 Aug 1986	4.0	46	44.2
31 Aug 1986	4.0	47	45.2
10 Sept 1986	6.5	45	43.3
23 Sept 1986	8.5	44	42.3
30 Dec 1986	22.5	35	33.7

No birds from any previous releases were seen and no birds were seen at either of the Takou Bay or Matapouri release sites. It is most likely that these birds have either died or dispersed.

Banding

The roost site on Bentzen's Farm, at Parekura Bay, was chosen as the trapping site because no captive-bred birds have been released in this area. A floating cage trap, as used on Great Barrier Island, was used to capture the birds but due to a partial trap failure a smaller number of birds was banded than hoped. Only seven brown teal were trapped and each was individually banded before release (Table 3).

A 1ml blood sample was removed from the humeral region of the wing on each bird using a syringe and hypodermic needle. These were centrifuged and are now stored at the University of Auckland. They will later be transferred to Dr Charles Daugherty for long term storage at Victoria University.

Table 3: Banded birds at Bentzen's Farm

METAL	COLOURS	SEX	AGE
L-24681	M — YO	F	A
682	M — YR	F	A
683	M — YW	F	A
684	M — YL	F	A
685	M — YG	F	A
686	YO — M	M	J
687	M — YB	F	A

Discussion

From this survey it appears that the number of brown teal using the 11 sites visited is less than 400. If the Northland population is bigger than this then it is most likely that the missing birds are using sites that are not known. If this is the case then a larger scale survey is required. The birds counted in this present survey are concentrated in the two southern sub-regions and given that the Kaeo — Takou Bay sub-region has totalled zero in successive years, doubts as to the viability of this population must be raised. If this population is defunct then the Northland decline of brown teal has progressed alarmingly since 1979 (Hayes and Williams, 1982).

The long term safety of the Bay of Islands population must also be questioned. The c.150 birds are concentrated into a small area with one site (Bentzen's Farm) accounting for 66% of the birds counted. Furthermore, the landowner has apparently subdivided and sold coastal land around Parekura Bay and this can only lead to greater disturbance of the population in the future. However, breeding was confirmed at Bentzen's Farm Pond in September 1986, where two broods were recorded, and the juvenile captured at Bentzen's Farm indicates that birds associated with his roost are also fledgling young. These breeding records indicate that the population will persist in the short-term, at least.

The Helena Bay-Matapouri population appears to be the most secure. Not only are the c.220 birds spread between four sites but juvenile birds were definitely seen at Helena Bay during this survey, including a brood of three fully feathered young. Breeding was also confirmed at Mimiwhangata this year and included a breeding attempt by a 1986 captive-released bird (Munn, 1986b). While the numbers of birds in this sub-region has been artificially raised by the release of captive-bred birds the slope of the survivorship curve (Figure 1) suggests the period of greatest mortality has passed. Twenty five of the released birds may remain by the beginning of the 1987 breeding season and it is important that these birds are monitored over this time to ascertain whether they recruit into the breeding population. If they do, the release can be considered a success, as it would have given rise to wild-bred birds. The lack of resightings from the other release sites suggest that the releases prior to 1986 must be considered failures.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the New Zealand Wildlife Service, especially Dick Anderson and Allan Munn, for providing transport in Northland. Charlie Daugherty provided a centrifuge at short notice and Marie McEntee helped with the trapping. Ducks Unlimited funded the remaining costs.

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