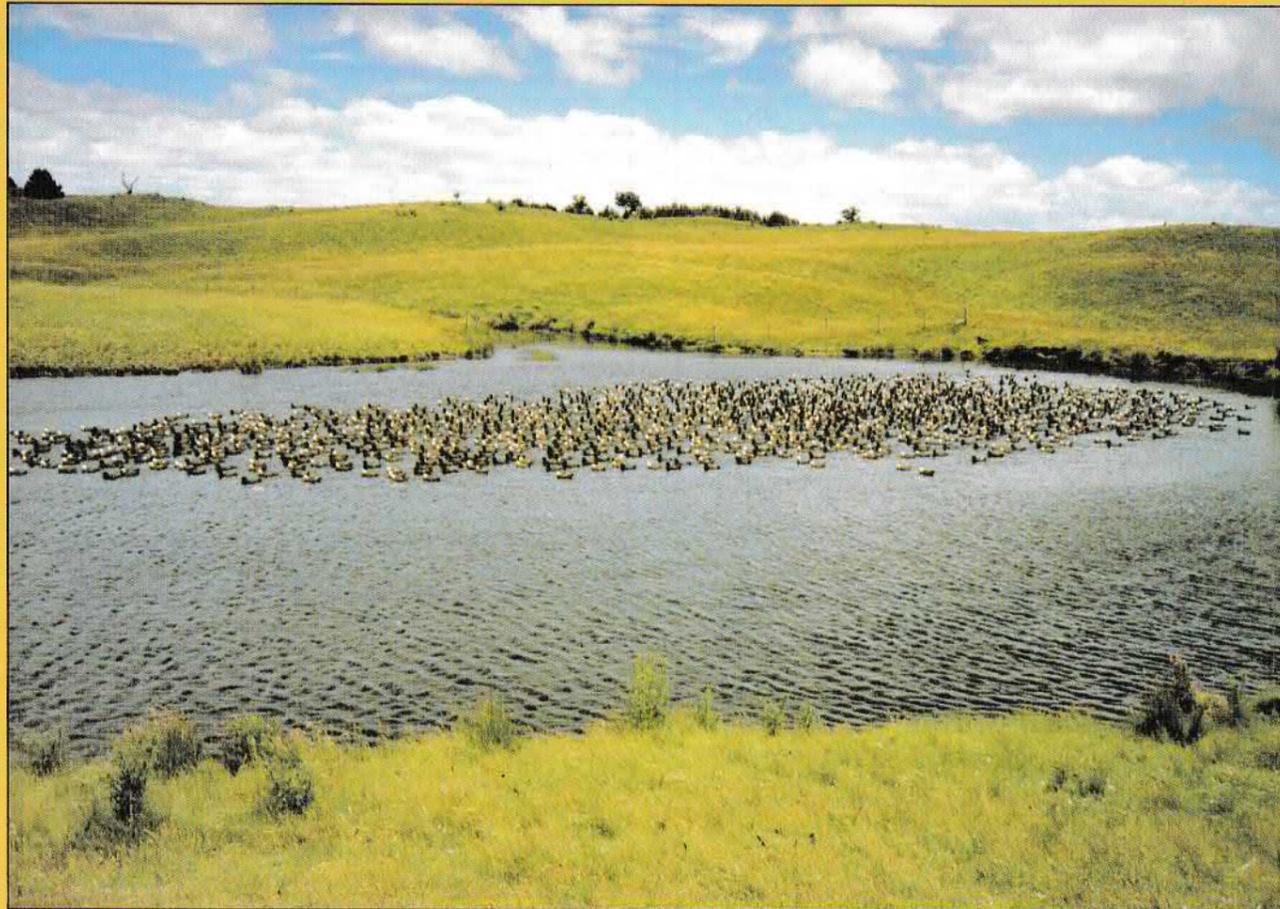


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Paradise ducks moulting at Pureora. Photo: Ian Jensen



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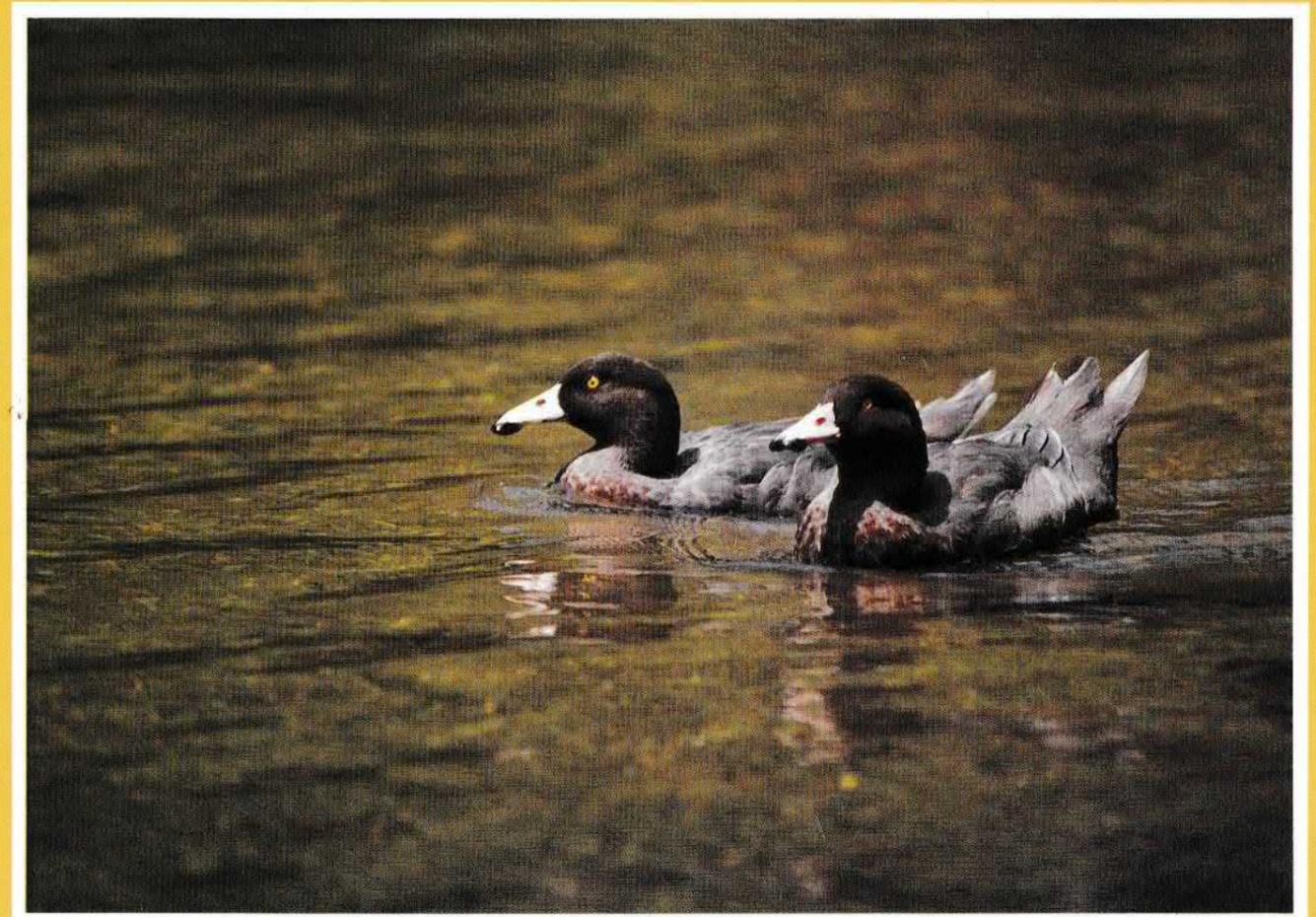
Flight

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NEW ZEALAND REGISTERED MAGAZINE

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Imagination Plus Mechanisation Equals Wetlands

Joint Authors: Howard Egan and Melvin Pike

A basic tenet of our Mission statement is the creation and maintenance of wetlands, recognising them as a valuable natural resource. This is co-ordinated by the DU Board through "Operation Wetlands" with the specific objectives of preserving and creating wetland areas by providing funding, technical and advisory services. Readers will be well aware of our flagship projects such as Sinclair Wetlands, Pearce Wetlands, Home Lagoon and the increasing number of quite significant ponds on private property, especially in the lower North Island. There is an insufficient awareness though amongst farmers and smallholders throughout New Zealand, of the potential to convert small rough corners of creeks into wet areas capable of supporting waterfowl and waders. In fact a whole separate ecology is formed - plants, birds, insects and reptiles. It is incredibly easy to do, there is little cost involved, it just takes a bit of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is catching. Wetlands in this way are steadily re-appearing. The resource is being replaced.

The authors recently spent one morning visiting the Southern Wairarapa properties described in this article. In outlining what has been done with each small project, we hope to illustrate the ease with which a couple of acres of wetland can be produced on any average property - all that is needed is the will to do so and just a little bit of imagination. Why don't you have a go? If you are a city dweller, talk to a country domiciled friend or relative, ask them what economic benefit they are getting from that area of rushes or rough creek. They will certainly get unexpected satisfaction when future groups of mallards or a pair of pied stilts come into wetlands that they were involved in creating.

A farmlet at Kokatau recently purchased by Mr and Mrs Stubbs has a three acre pond which was formed five years ago with a bulldozed dam. It lends itself to improvement by fencing stock out of the major part of the perimeter, so that edge planting can be done. Dabbling water will be created from a modest extension to one side, and grey teal nesting boxes are to be entered at the secluded inlet end. Vastly improved waterfowl habitat will result from these quite simple steps. The owners have looked to Ducks Unlimited for guidance.

With the expenditure of only about \$300, Mr Derek King at East Taratahi has built two small dams with culverts to an existing small stream. The water level can be controlled at the culverts and will provide two acres of ponding when full. Pied stilts were nesting at the pond when we called.

A quite different type of water was created three years ago in an old shingle pit at Waingaura which dated from the erection of the nearby Waitaki Freezing Works. Blocking the water outlet has given a four acre pond varying from one metre to fifteen in depth.

There is considerable edgerush country extending out into the pond with spectacular weed

growth in the clear water. Black swan are nesting there annually. The key here was the initiative to turn a disused shingle pit into an attractive and productive wetland. Within a short stroll from this pond is a two acre marshy area created two years ago by Archie Chorley. Nicely planted with a wide selection of wetland plants, this provides one man with somewhere to potter all year round and some modest waterfowling each autumn. This wetland cost \$500 in total to create.

Masterton's outlying areas are seeing considerable subdivision into 25 acre lots. Lifestyle farms mostly with a good percentage of owners looking at including a pond in the development. Typical is the property of Mr Gary Buchanan, Norfolk Road who in the last few weeks has used the water from a water race to create a nice little half acre pond. It is currently being fully fenced to protect the planting from stock and Gary is busily planting native trees. A wetland should be an attractive place. It should be noted that the digger hire cost only \$1500.

DU member Hugh Maxwell has also (with wife Di) recently purchased in Norfolk Road and his more substantial farm property has an attractive spring fed pond sited in rolling country. Approximately one acre in size, this pond was constructed ten years ago, with the stopbank being the only cost, approximately \$2,000. A noticeable feature is that wild Canada geese were in residence when we called and they bred there last year. Operation Branta is working well.

Wetlands can be of many types. We called at Alan and Jeanette Gates' Awaiti Gardens in Chester Road, Carterton which is on the visiting schedule for Wairarapa Tour Buses. At a cost of \$2,500 digger hire, and utilising a water race, Alan has just completed a purely ornamental pond as a part of the garden complex. Approximately 600 square metres in size the pond is

being used by wild mallard but lends itself ideally to exotic waterfowl such as carolinas. A wetland project at its most decorative and an approach which could be followed at many rural homesteads. The Carterton Golf Club has been mentioned in an earlier Flight. With DU help and involvement, the Golf Course features a now well established wetland which has become an important feature of the course landscaping. A useful breeding ground also for several waterfowl species - especially grey teal. We called to see pond number three which has just been completed with digger cost, \$300 only. The pond is currently being planted with native trees, another good example of wetland usage as part of the decorative aspect of property development.

Some ponds will be specialised in their purpose. In passing, we called at the Clareville A & P Showgrounds where a fire-fighting pond has been constructed to protect a large indoor sports arena. Formed four years ago, the pond is twelve feet deep with modest weed growth. Currently being used by mallard and grey teal, the pond is obvious scaup habitat. DU will assist in establishing them.

Our final call on what had been a pretty special morning to a group of wetland enthusiasts, was at the farm property of Mr John Falman, Main Road, Carterton. Mr Falman has always had an area of spring fed, swampy waste ground. Simply a muddy creek in a paddock, of little economic value. The expenditure of \$800 has produced a dam which will result in nine to ten acres of permanent wetland when the levels stabilise. Stock will be excluded and the margins planted. Obviously this will become excellent habitat. As you drive around the countryside just look about you - nearly every farm has a waste corner, a streamside gully or hollow; a potential wetland. It is up to all of us to encourage the thinking. Let's do it.

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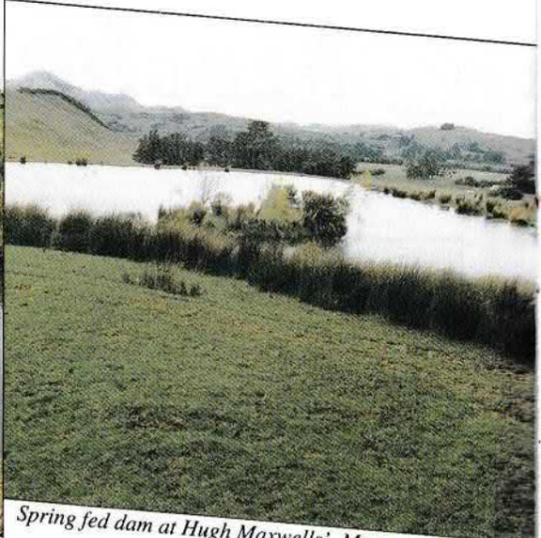
Cover Photo: Blue ducks. Photo: David Mathieson



Firefighting pond, Clareville A&P showgrounds



Carterton Golf Club



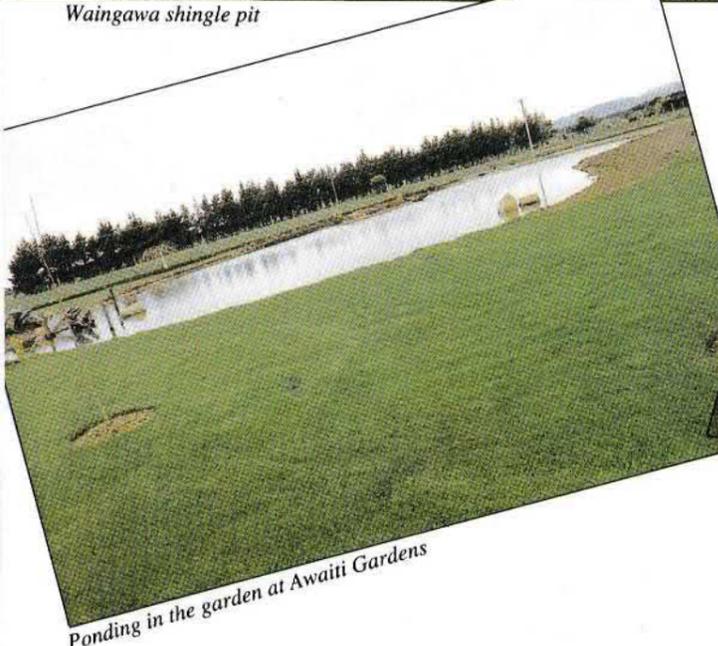
Spring fed dam at Hugh Maxwells', Masterton



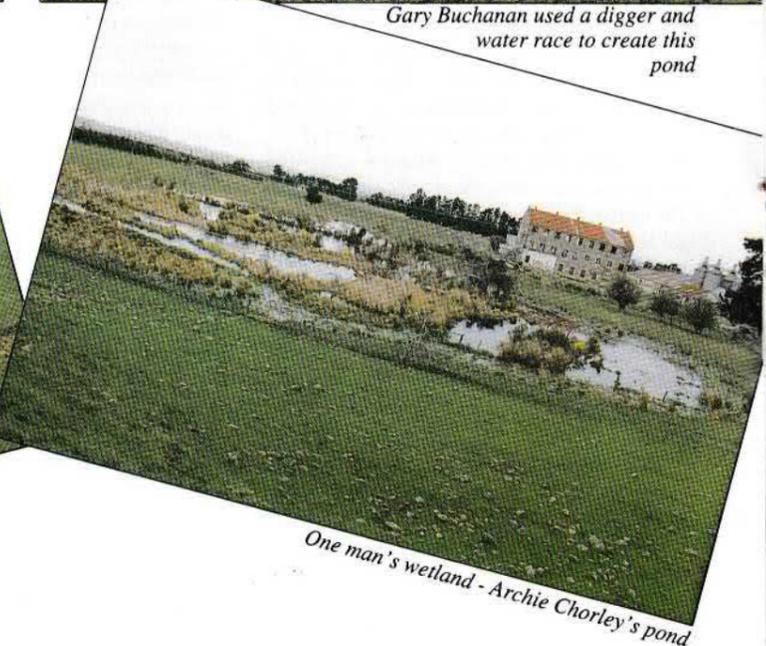
Waingawa shingle pit



Gary Buchanan used a digger and water race to create this pond



Ponding in the garden at Awaiti Gardens



One man's wetland - Archie Chorley's pond

Charting Our Course For 1993/94

Grant Dumbell Executive Director

Over the past eighteen months Ducks Unlimited has undertaken a range of actions to consolidate its operations and to improve its management structures, finances and lines of responsibilities. Part of this has been the critical assessment of the planning process we implemented for the last financial year and accordingly members will note some differences between the way this year's objectives have been structured when compared with last year. This will allow the various groups of objectives that we have set ourselves to be related more closely to our budgeting and financial management system which has also been modified over the past year. With this consolidation phase now largely behind us it is time to begin to plan for the managed expansion of the organisation so that Ducks Unlimited can make greater contributions to the conservation of New Zealand's wetlands and waterfowl. The 1993/94 Action Plan contains 62 specific objectives listed under 17 headings and includes all those objectives which were part of the 1992/93 plan but which were not completed.

"OPERATION WETLANDS"

With the success of the Makerua project we shall investigate all opportunities to actively contribute to wetland conservation and will complete the development and installation of the project inventory. We shall also work with The New Zealand Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust to help build a secure funding base for our wetland conservation activities.

SINCLAIR WETLANDS

We shall seek approval of the new financial accounting system for this project and will move to empower the Otago based Sinclair Wetlands Local Technical Committee as the day to day management committee. We will continue to work with our management partners to implement the necessary development of the project including the installation of display and educational material within the centre, and will assist with the review of the Sinclair Wetlands Management Plan as prescribed by the existing plan.

PEARCE WETLANDS

We shall seek to address and resolve all the outstanding details relating to the management of this property so that some form of covenant protection can be obtained for the area.

"OPERATION PATEKE"

This is still our most important species oriented conservation project and while the future direction of our Brown Teal conservation activities is now largely dependent on the approval of the Brown Teal Recovery Plan, we shall continue to seek permission for the use of alternative release sites while working towards the completion of the project review and restructuring which was commenced last year.

"OPERATION WHIO"

Following on from the success of the project last year we shall seek the inclusion of South Island bloodstock in the breeding programme while working to complete the breeders survey and draft captive release plan begun last year.

"OPERATION ROYAL SWAN"

The management of this project is now almost fully developed with the advances made last year, however, the outstanding parts of the project review and inventory needs to be completed while development of better guidelines of holders of mute swans needs to be addressed.

"OPERATION GRETTEL"

"Operation Gretel" will focus on moving more nest boxes into the field via the chapter network while maintaining the existing boxes and fabricating additional stocks of boxes.

"OPERATION BRANTA"

"Operation Branta" is now focusing on a research and monitoring role so we shall continue to catch and band geese in the Waimarino near Ohakune, and will begin to analyze the banding results already achieved over the past several years. People who wish to procure Canada geese will be held on a centralised waiting list.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Most of last year's objectives under this heading could not be completed because they could not be started until last year's plan had run its course. Accordingly they have simply been transferred into this year and include the critical evaluation of last year's work programme and the operating functions and responsibilities adopted at the beginning of last year. While a start was made on the development of long term objectives this must be completed along with implementation of a Forward Plan and annual Action Plan. Throughout last year it was also identified that a stronger policy base was needed for each of DU's areas of activity and this requirement will be addressed throughout this year. The implementation of better performance measures will also make it easier to objectively chart our progress.

CHAPTERS

Following on from the groundwork for the establishment of new chapters which was laid over the past year we shall continue to work towards the establishment of chapters in both the Waikato and Hawkes Bay. We shall also work towards the development of clearer guidelines for the proposal and approval of area based conservation projects.

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

To help direct this important function we shall develop sponsorship priorities for each area of our activities and shall identify and approach two new potential sponsors. We shall more widely promote our sponsorship initiatives to assist spon-

Feature Article

sors to identify us while continuing to seek support from philanthropic organisations.

FINANCE

Financially, Ducks Unlimited has adopted a surplus budget for 1993/94 and this will be achieved firstly by limiting expenditure to stay within budget. Income will be expanded through the continued promotion of Duck Bonds and the Pearce Wetlands Sponsorship scheme while a long term financial strategy will be developed and submitted to the Board of Directors for approval.

"FLIGHT"

The development of "Flight" will continue with the consideration of some format modifications and the inclusion of articles of interest to our members. The inclusion of technical articles will be restricted to allow the inclusion of more feature articles and an informative article on the Resource Management Act will be sought.

INTERNATIONAL

We will continue to actively participate in the international aspects of the Ducks Unlimited family by having DUNZ representation at the 1993 DU Canada convention in Edmonton and by receiving visits from and providing help and assistance to DU Australia as and when requested. The outstanding details surrounding our logo licence from DU Canada will also be finalised.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is one of our most important areas of activity for the foreseeable future and for the next year we will attempt to recruit one new member per day. This will be assisted with a membership competition in both "Flight" magazine and "Rod and Rifle" magazine and the wide distribution of our membership pamphlet through an expanded number of distributors and by circulation to all current and recent past members. We shall also see distribution of the pamphlet through other mailing channels and will give great recog-

nition to our Life Members by way of the manufacture and distribution of a DUNZ Life Member pin.

PUBLICITY

Publicity about Ducks Unlimited will be targeted to further raise the profile of the organisation so that our membership drive can be as successful as possible. This will entail consideration of a publicity plan and the regular issue of national press releases about our work. So that the effectiveness of our publicity can be judged we shall also establish a press clippings collection. Filin display advertisements will also be

developed for use in magazines as and when opportunities arise.

SALES

The reformatting of the Sales section in "Flight" will be considered along with other changes to the format of the magazine. More frequent meetings of the Sales committee will assist with the management of sales which will include the continued sell-down of art stocks and less favoured sales items. Where possible, sales promotions will be run in conjunction with the magazine.

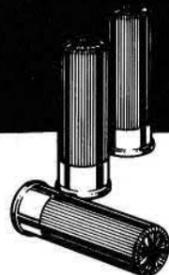


The photographs of Makerua Swamp in the last 'FLIGHT' were taken by Philip Budding from his microlight aircraft.

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Annual Reports

Executive
Director's
Annual Report

Grant Dumbell

Members will recall reading an article I wrote in the July 1992 issue of "Flight" entitled "What do we want to achieve in 1992/93." In that article I spoke of the need for Ducks Unlimited to plan its work to allow the extraction of the greatest possible value from our available resources. I also spoke of the need to communicate that plan to each and every member of the organisation so that everybody can be involved. Now that we have completed the 1992/93 year it is time to review our progress and measure our success.

The 1992/93 Annual plan contained a total of 79 objectives which were split 50:50 between conservation projects, administration and management. As an overall measure of our progress last year we completed 66% of all objectives. Within that, we completed 71% of the conservation projects objectives but only 60% of the administration and management objectives.

Three factors have contributed to these results. With hindsight we can now see that we were a little ambitious when we set our objectives and that we bit off more than we could chew. Secondly, some of the objectives contained more work than we estimated and as a result a number of objectives were begun but not completed. Thirdly, it proved necessary to commit time and resources to several tasks which were not included in the list of objectives but which none the less had to be addressed. All the uncompleted objectives from last year's plan have now been included in the plan for 1993/94 to ensure that they do not fall out of the system but rather they are completed during the coming year.

The results achieved by the conservation projects can be seen in the Project Supervisor's reports, and all projects turned in good performances during the year. For all projects the largest job at hand is the completion of project strategies and centralised project inventories. These were begun for all projects during the year and the development of these will continue until they are completed. Once they are in place they will significantly ease each Supervisor's job of managing our six projects which all have logistics spanning the whole year and nearly the whole country.

The most significant achievement among the administration and management objectives was the introduction of Ducks Unlimited's new logo. This now appears on our stationery, "Flight" magazine, and sales items and helps to present a clearly identifiable and consistent profile for the



organisation. This will be translated into a bigger membership base and a higher profile for Ducks Unlimited as a result of the initiatives which are part of the 1993/94 programme.

Another significant achievement has been the introduction of new communication and computing technology to take advantage of the efficiencies that these tools offer. Combining these with an archive management system and our new cost accounting system means that the management of the organisation has been simplified, yet made more responsive allowing the Board of Directors to more accurately target the organisation's resources to fulfilling the organisation's conservation objectives.

Without doubt, the highlight of the past year has been the tremendous support that we have received from both our sponsor members and the growing number of companies and organisations which are sponsoring our efforts to conserve wetlands and waterfowl in New Zealand. During 1992 we received significant sponsorship from DowElanco (NZ) Ltd, Canadian Airlines, Ansett New Zealand, Lithographic Services Ltd, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Ducks Unlimited Inc and the Pharazyn Trust. When this is combined with the support from our 33 Bronze Sponsors, five Silver Sponsors and three Gold Sponsors it is clear why our accounts for the 1992/93 year are a significant improvement over our result for the previous year.

We look forward to 1993 and beyond as we begin to reap the benefits of the consolidations which have occurred during the recent past and as consolidation turns into prudent, well managed expansion. With increase public awareness of the conservation issues facing New Zealand's wetlands and waterfowl we are well placed to be at the forefront of New Zealand wetland conservation.

Treasurer's
Annual
Report

Glenys Hansen

Members will find the Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc audited Annual Financial Statements for the 1992/93 financial year inserted with this copy of "Flight." These will be presented to the Annual General Meeting at The Tokaanu Hotel on July 17.

Members will see that there have been a number of changes to the format of the annual accounts compared to previous years. These are entirely due to changes in accounting policy which have been recommended to and adopted by the Board of Directors, during the year. These changes have resulted from a decision to modify the accounting procedures for Ducks Unlimited's largest project, the Sinclair Wetlands, and to include in the accounts the organisation's future commitments which previously have not been included.

Throughout the past year a comprehensive cost accounting system has been implemented which is based on 17 cost centres and it is envisaged that this system will significantly strengthen the organisation's financial management. Financial reporting has also been strengthened with the appointment of Richardson Epplett and Partners of Hastings as the organisation's accountants. In addition to the presentation of the annual financial accounts, the Annual General Meeting will again be asked to approve Eastwood Bourke of Masterton as the auditors of the organisation.

Operation
Wetlands -
Annual Report

Jim Campbell

MAKERUA

As reported in the last issue of Flight, machinery was able to work this autumn, and considerably enhance the western cell of Makerua Swamp in Manawatu. The local chapter are keenly progressing with tree planting this winter to add a new dimension in the area which will greatly increase habitat value.

WHANGAMARINO

The Department of Conservation have approval to build a weir which should immensely improve the wetland values within this area.

Annual Reports

Ducks Unlimited will continue to be very supportive in this very important wetland.

KAITUNA

Local regional council have been developing this area, and following on from Ron Coley's visit last year we hope to visit and hold an open day at this area this season. A most important wetland for the Bay of Plenty Region.

KAKAPO ROAD TE ANUA

A recent inspection on Mr D. McLarchlan's property where, in glacial type moraine country, tarns were drained as part of land development, but still remained very damp areas. By filling outlets and constructing islands to enhance the habitat values, these should be fully restored valuable wetlands in the near future.

FUNDING FROM TRUST

We now have from the New Zealand Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust an annual contribution of \$2,000 to be used for wetland habitat. This fund will ensure rapid progress with many wetland projects. This past year has seen an upsurge in interest to create wetlands. On the local scene several new areas have been constructed. Encouraging and advising is a most rewarding task, when one knows the end result is invaluable wetland habitat.

Pearce
Wetlands
Annual Report

Alan Wilks

A year ago I began my report by saying that the Pearce Wetlands are still there and unchanged. I now realise that a change is taking place due to natural accretion, caused by intermittent high lake levels driven by on-shore winds inundating the Wetlands with siltladen water which then recedes slowly, depositing the heavier material. It is due to the careful grazing regime employed by the lessee, Mark Pearce, that the accretion is considerably less than other areas on the eastern shores of Lake Wairarapa. By controlling growth, silt-retention is minimised. In consultation with DoC, Mr Pearce heavily stocked the Wetlands with cattle during February and on a recent inspection I was pleased to note the lack of coarse growth and improved feeding habitat.

It is Mr Pearce's belief that with the continued build-up silt deposits the value of the Wetland will diminish. Vegetation on the edge will still provide feeding and natural lagoons may develop to create more permanent breeding/feeding areas which could be enhanced with careful excavation, but this could become an ongoing and expensive exercise. I believe we have situ-

ation now that will require some serious consideration by the Board.

A number of members enjoyed the opportunity to hunt the area last year, but it is disappointing that more are not visiting the Wetlands simply to observe the wide variety of waterfowl to be seen at present.

"Operation
Pateke"
Annual Report

Alan Wilks, Project Supervisor

This was another successful captive-breeding year with 22 breeders producing over 100 birds from 46 pairs.

In August, our Executive Director, Dr Grant Dumbell, released 41 birds in the Bay of Islands on the Purerua Peninsula and three pairs on Urupukapuka Island. The balance of the year's production is still with breeders or at Jim Campbell's holding aviary, at the time of writing, but should all be released by early July.

During the year we have been working on a proposal to release Brown Teal bred in captivity in Southland in the 2,000 ha Sandy Point Domain, which is owned and administered by the Invercargill City Council. We consider the proposal to be of considerable significance. The ICC's Parks Division, which has bred some of the birds, is prepared to supervise the release. An ongoing predator-control programme is being conducted by the ICC, which is prepared to hold the birds on site in a release aviary, stagger the release and provide supplementary feed - all the activities we are unable to implement with the Northland releases because of the isolation of the release sites.

Although the proposal has been received by DoC with some favour, the suggestion has been raised (by DoC) that South Island brown teal may differ genetically from the birds we breed from North Island and Great Barrier stock. The department hopes to undertake DNA blood testing of South Island birds this year to try to establish any difference, so it would appear that our proposal is on hold in the meantime.

"Operation
Whio"
Annual Report

David Smith - Project Supervisor

During the past year "Operation Whio" has made some significant progress which is largely due to

the dedication and co-operation of the breeders who are currently part of the programme. I would like to open my report by thanking everyone connected with "Operation Whio" for helping to make 1992 the most successful year yet for the project.

The year began with the annual Blue Duck Captive Breeding Group meeting which was held at the Otorohanga Kiwi House. At that meeting it was decided to undertake a range of transfers to unwind the complicated pedigrees which existed within the programme and these were completed once the various permits had been received from DOC. The breeding programme now has three separate family lines where previously there was only one. This will help guard against the potentially damaging effects of close inbreeding in the future.

The highlight of the year was the production of seven young birds, five by Staglands and two by Melvin Pike. These birds will allow the first expansion of the programme for at least two years. Blue duck breeders also contributed to a comprehensive aviculture survey and it is hoped that the results from this survey will allow the identification of successful avicultural techniques.

Unfortunately several deaths were recorded during the year and while no firm causes could be established it is suspected that the severe winter conditions experienced last year were a major contributing factor. As a result, transfers of birds will not be undertaken during severe weather as the combined stress of both the move and the weather may prove to be fatal.

"Operation
Royal Swan"
Annual Report

David Johnston, Project Supervisor

In presenting this annual report it is pleasing to report the progress we have made in the last 12 months. This year has gone much better in this regard and we now have a stud book and central record system up and running well. Probably because of the very bad spring weather conditions less birds have been available for distribution, but once again our range of distribution has been from Southland to the Waikato.

It gives me much pleasure to publicly thank our Co-Patron Lady Diana Isaac and her staff at Peacock Springs for their hospitality and co-operation. Both Anne Richardson and Mark James braved the very cold water in the springs to help catch these beautiful birds.

Others who have been of much help have been long time DU members Sig and June Bronger of

Annual Reports

Tauranga, Peter McLeod and John Andrew from Christchurch, and especially Jim and Raana Campbell who once again travelled with me to the South Island and gave up their time for these truly Royal birds.

"Operation Gretel" Annual Report

David Rice Project Supervisor

During 1992 "Operation Gretel" made several advances and received good support from a number of quarters. First and foremost I would like to extend a very big thank you to Mr Wendell Phillips of Great Northern Merchants. Wendell negotiated an extremely favourable price from the manufacturers for the supply of plywood that is now sustaining the nest box programme, and then very kindly donated all the nails that were required to fabricate 300 nest boxes. This support will ensure that "Operation Gretel" will continue to make good progress over the next couple of years.

During the year approximately 300 nest boxes

were prefabricated and 100 of these were made available for installation in the field through our chapter network. Each chapter received 25 boxes and each will receive 25 boxes per year for the next several years. As has been recorded in the past, the level of usage of these boxes has, in some cases, been astonishing. In addition to the new boxes, existing box installations were also again visited and maintained prior to the last breeding season. I would like to thank everybody who assisted with this task, especially Howard Egan and Ken Cook who helped me coordinate the project in the southern part of the North Island.

"Operation Branta" Annual Report

Chris Hooson Project Supervisor

Another highly successful year for the Branta Operation. Our research banding took place again in Ohakune with the Waimarino population and over 120 birds were captured and band-

ed, including some rebands.

There is in the Waimarino some concern expressed by the farming community in the area about goose numbers and to this end, DU Director, Di Pritt has attended meetings with concerned farming groups and Fish & Game interests. Our operation in the Waimarino could not have been accomplished without the generous assistance of the Taranaki Fish & Game Council, to whom we express our thanks.

Members continue to express interest in adding Canada geese to their waterfowl collections and any member interested should contact the project supervisor.

Again I can report that this project with its updated guidelines has continued, during the past year, its strong and successful operation and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved.



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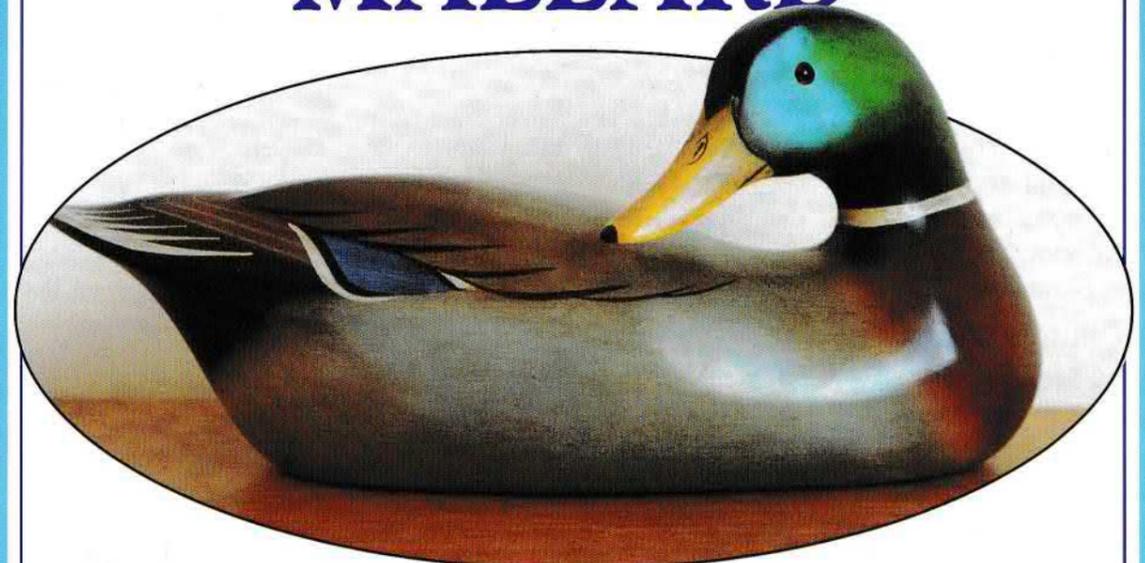
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Predators - "Dead or Alive"

Maxine R. Greenslade

Most people hold firm views on rats, mice, cats, stoats and ferrets in New Zealand forests and wetlands. These animals are blamed for predated many kinds of birds and for endangering others. It is widely thought that the only good

predator is a dead one, and no effort should be spared in killing them.

Others urge caution, arguing that cats might hold the more damaging rats in check. The predators are so numerous, widespread and expensive to kill, I wonder sometimes are we wasting our time in trying to control them and should we concentrate our activities on more modest but achievable goals.

The earliest record of rodents in New Zealand dates from 1150 AD. These are bones of Polynesian rats, or kiore, unearthed from Maori middens near Cape Palliser. Brought to New Zealand by the Maori about 1000 years ago, these rats were once abundant from one end of the country to the other, but all had disappeared

do know than ten out of twenty New Zealand pigeon clutches, four out of five kokako clutches, and two kaka clutches recently under observation in mainland forests were preyed upon by rats or stoats.

In the stomachs of 866 stoats collected from forests throughout New Zealand, bird remains and eggshells were the most frequently found items, accounting for 25% of all food. Discovering what stoats eat is one thing, assessing their effect on prey species is another. Ship rats are more numerous on stoat-free islands than they are on the stoat-infested mainland of New Zealand.

It has been suggested that stoats may help to hold rats in check on the mainland. However, unlike



Photo: Jim Cambell

from the mainland by the 1840's. Today they are restricted to about 30 offshore islands.

The Norway rat or water rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) are burrowing rats, nesting underground. They are less agile than the other rats in New Zealand and prey on ground nesting rather than perching birds. This particular rat is most prominent in our wetland areas as breeders of ducks will confirm. I did witness once a Norway rat being caught and eaten by a stoat.

The ship rat or roof rat (*Rattus rattus*) is also known as the black or bush rat. These rats come in three colour forms, a brownish grey with a white belly, a slate-coloured black and a fawn with a grey back and dark slatey underparts. A good thing to remember for duck breeders, is that the ship rat, unlike the water rat, does not move very far from its birth place. Over a twenty month period, 120 ship rats were tagged in a Rotorua forest, and recaptured on 118 occasions. 86 of these were recaptured within 50m of their previous point of release. If you are trapping around your wetlands, going on the above information, it could be possible to completely rid your area of the ship rat. However, the water rat is another story!

I personally don't know of any research that shows the effects of these rats on our ducks, but

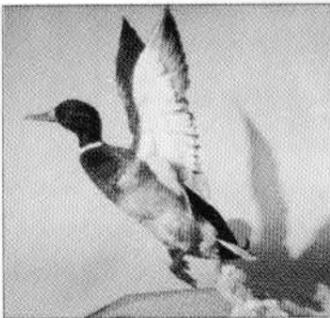
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DUCKS UNLIMITED NEW ZEALAND INC. ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 16 JULY

5.00 pm - Conference Room, Registration Desk, and Bar opens 7.00 pm - Happy Hour begins 8.00 pm - Happy Hour ends 12.00 pm - Conference Room and Bar closes

SATURDAY 17 JULY

T.B.A. - Guided trout fishing departs 9.00 am - Conference Room and Registration Desk opens 9.30 am - Guided walk departs 10.30 pm - Morning tea in Conference Room 12.00 pm - Buffet lunch (not included in registration price) 1.45 pm - Annual General Meeting opens Welcome from the chair Apologies Confirmation of 1992 A.G.M. minutes 1.50 pm - President's Annual Report 1.55 pm - Treasurer's Annual Report Election of Auditors 2.00 pm - Executive

Director's Annual Report 2.10 pm - Election of four Directors from the floor 2.15 pm - "Operation Wetlands" Annual Report 2.20 pm - Sinclair Wetlands' Annual Report 2.25 pm - Pearce Wetlands' Annual Report 2.30 pm - "Operation Pateke" Annual Report 2.35 pm - "Operation Whio" Annual Report 2.40 pm - "Operation Royal Swan" Annual Report 2.45 pm - "Operation Gretel" Annual Report 2.50 pm - "Operation Branta" Annual Report 2.55 pm - Editorial Report 3.00 pm - Annual Conference Guest Speaker's Address 3.50 pm - General Business 4.15 pm - Annual General Meeting closes

SATURDAY 17 JULY

7.00 pm - President's Shout begins in Conference Bar 7.15 pm - President's Shout ends 7.30 pm - Annual Conference Dinner

8.45 pm - Return to Conference Room Presentation of the Brown Teal Breeder of the Year Award. Presentation of the Blue Duck Breeder of the Year Award. Presentation of the Mute Swan Breeder of the Year Award. Presentation of the Jim Campbell Decoy Carving Trophy Chapter's present Annual Fundraising Totals. Presentation of the Chapter Challenge. Presentation of the Bill Barrett Trophy. Annual Conference Fundraising Auction 10.00 pm - Refreshments Late - Conference Room and Bar Closes

SUNDAY 18 JULY

9.30 am - Morning Tea and Trade Displays in the Conference Room 10.00 am - Captive Waterfowl Breeding Workshop 10.45 am - Planting Wetlands for Waterfowl Workshop 12.00 pm - Conference Room closes



DUCKS UNLIMITED NEW ZEALAND INC. 19TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 16-18 JULY 1993 AT THE TOKAANU HOTEL IN THE NEW CONFERENCE FACILITIES

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Number in party

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION: \$55 each x people = \$

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EKETAHUNA CHAPTER

Thirty waterfowling chapter members met late in April at member Ross Cottle's Mt Bruce farm property to enjoy the annual clay bird shoot and BBQ. The weather was kind, the birds were testing and \$430 was raised towards our annual contribution to national projects.

Members and supporters from the Manawatu and Wellington are asked to mark their calendars for Saturday 25th September. Make up a party to visit the Wairarapa for our fundraising dinner and auction to be held at the Majestic Theatre in Masterton. We intend to feature a set menu and promise (thanks to Masterton's well known Jazz Dance Theatre) a somewhat different presentation. To reserve your places please phone acting Secretary Shelly Harington on 06378-7468.

We are also planning a field trip to the Hidden Lakes near Masterton on a sunny Spring Sunday. The final date for this event will be notified later.

WELLINGTON CHAPTER

On Sunday 18th April, Wellington Chapter departed from the traditional Annual Dinner and Auction fundraiser by hosting a Luncheon held at The Lodge, Pauahatanui Hill. Approximately 80 members and supporters attended and enjoyed a finger food luncheon with wine. Auctioneer Bill Wilkinson presided over a range of imported and donated items and over \$3000 was raised on the day. Many favourable comments were received on the format of the function which proved to be low cost and was enjoyed by family groups. Wellington might be onto a winner.

Another success was notched up by the Wellington committee the next weekend when the annual "eye-opener" clay bird shoot was held at the Hutt Valley Gun Club grounds in Whiteman's Valley. Ninety shooters turned out, many new faces were seen, and over \$500 was raised on the day.

MANAWATU CHAPTER

Manawatu Chapter kicked off their 1993 programme in March with a field trip to DU's latest wetland project, the Makerua Swamp which featured in the April "Flight" magazine. During the field trip chapter members began to plan the planting of the area. The Chapter also held a simulated field shoot which was a real fun day in an ideal farm setting.

The Manawatu Chapter are planning to hold their Annual Dinner and Auction on Saturday, October 2nd at the Coachman in Palmerston

North. Further details will appear later, however, it might be a good idea to mark your calendar with this date now.

AUCKLAND CHAPTER

The Auckland Chapter held its Annual Dinner and Auction on Friday, April 2. This event was one of the most successful ever held by the chapter and resulted in almost 100 members and friends enjoying an excellent buffet meal at Sarmajaz in Takanini. In total the evening raised over \$4600 due to the good bidding which occurred, and the skills of the auctioneer for the evening Mr Mark Cederman.

The Chapter has also recently held its AGM and this resulted in an expanded committee with the addition of Simon Hunter and Michelle MacKay. The committee is currently planning its year's activities which will at least include the Annual Dinner, along with a clay bird shoot and the normal grey teal nest box maintenance fieldtrips.

MEMBERSHIP

Many thanks to all the members who have promptly renewed their subscriptions for this year. Among them is a large number of Sponsor members and a good number of new members. Please remember that the membership competition which is currently underway does not close until the end of August so encourage a friend to join and you could both win good prizes.

The Directors would also like to thank Brendan Coe who has provided a huge boost to our membership drive by donating a page of advertising in the May/June issue of "Rod & Rifle" magazine. This has ensured that well over 20,000 people will see our membership advertisement and after just two weeks we had received a good number of new members through this channel. As "Flight" goes to press we are unable to personally thank all our Sponsor Members for their support due to the backlog of membership renewals we are currently processing. This acknowledgement will appear in the October issue. For members who wish to claim their subscription as a tax deductible donation please don't forget to indicate that you want a receipt when you return your renewal. All new members will automatically receive a receipt.

INJURED BLUE DUCK IN CAPTIVITY

During May, an injured blue duck was rescued from the Bealey River at Arthurs Pass suffering

from a fractured wing. This bird was subsequently transferred by DOC to Massey University for treatment, however, due to the seriousness of the injuries the right wing had to be amputated.

"Daryll," as he was named by the DOC staff who found him, was subsequently transferred to Ducks Unlimited and was placed in the hospital facilities at Auckland Zoo for post operative care. He was in very poor condition after his ordeal but thanks to the expert care of Richard Jacob-Hoff and the Zoo staff he was feeding himself inside two days and put on 20% of body weight in less than a week. "Daryll" will become a permanent part of the "Operation Whio" captive breeding programme and will hopefully form the basis of a South Island breeding stock.

POSSIBLE TAUPO WETLAND PROJECT

Ducks Unlimited has recently been asked to provide advice for a very interesting wetland project which is being planned on the shores of Lake Taupo. The area lies between State Highway One and the lake shore between Taupo and Turangi and comprised approximately 35 acres of very low lying land which has been formed due to the gradual depositing of sediment. If this project goes ahead it will entail earthworks to readmit water into the area and will be a very high profile project which will be seen by thousands of people everyday. The owners are hoping that it will be a model for the rehabilitation of other degraded marginal wetlands around Lake Taupo.

RAMSAR CONFERENCE IN JAPAN

The contracting parties to the Ramsar Convention, including New Zealand, held their latest conference in Japan during June. This international convention protects wetlands of international significance, and for the first time the contracting parties have met in the Pacific region.

As a result, Ducks Unlimited asked the Minister of Conservation to nominate at least one further New Zealand wetland for inclusion under the treaty as an indication of New Zealand's continuing commitment to meaningful wetland conservation. However, this suggestion was not taken up by the Minister leaving New Zealand under-represented in terms of the number of sites which have been listed. Even some poor third world countries have a better track record under the convention than does New Zealand. Ducks Unlimited was also disturbed to hear that at least one senior DOC officer couldn't see any point in nominating a wetland under the treaty.

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- Wetlands by Gordon Stephenson 15.00
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