



MORE THAN A NAME. A LEGEND.

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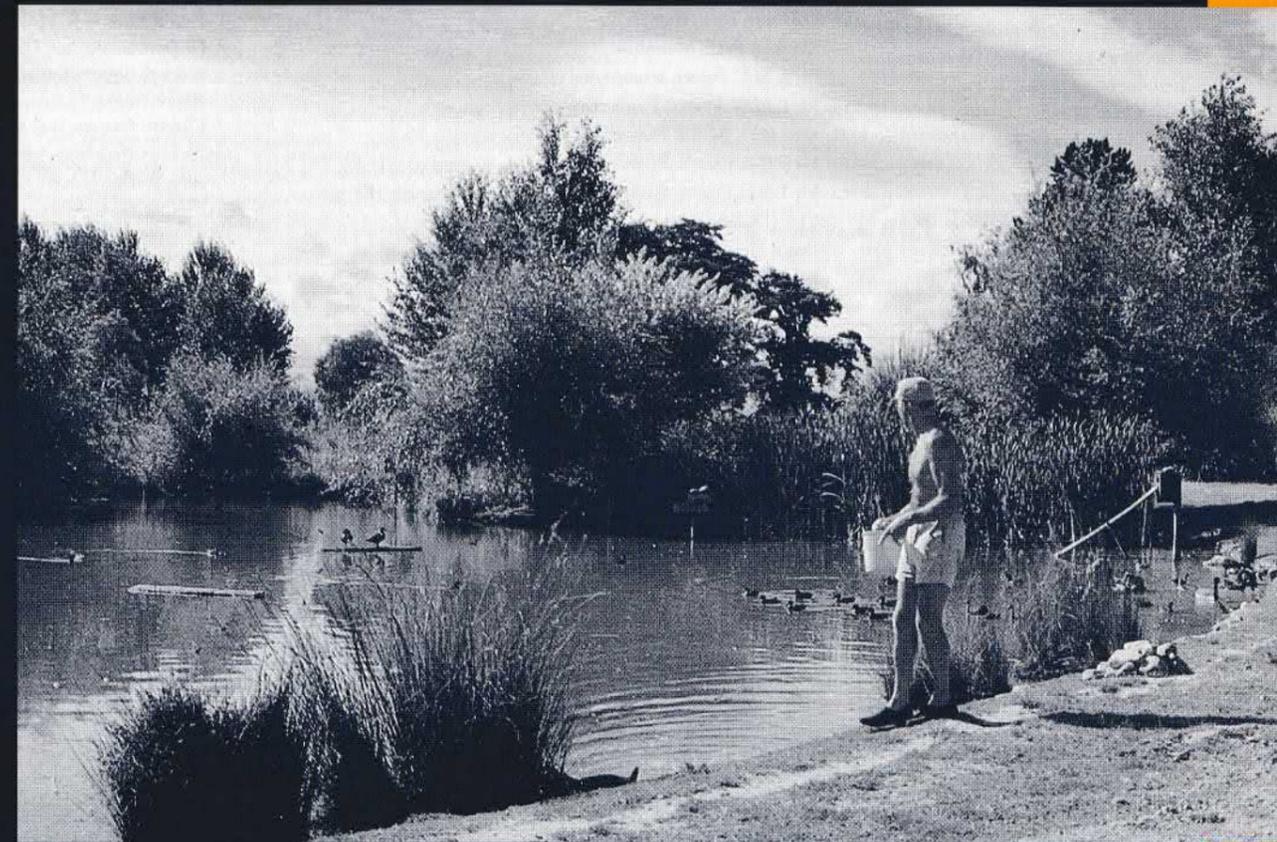


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Flight

ISSUE 87



DUCKS UNLIMITED NEW ZEALAND INC.

For Wetlands and Waterfowl.

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INSIGHT

Alan Wilks

President

As I begin as President I am conscious of my new responsibility and am grateful for the support of a very able Board. I am particularly pleased to have Graham Gurr as Vice President, plus the experience of David Smith who achieved so much during his term of office.

With regret we received the resignations of Diane Pritt and John Bishop. Di has run Sales and our Conference for as long as I can remember. She has worked extremely hard for DU and I take this opportunity to thank Di for everything she has done. We wish her well and are sure she will continue as one of our staunchest supporters.

John Bishop has been posted to Pakistan and feels it is too far to come to meetings! In the short time John has been with us, his input has been significant. His management skills and sound common sense will be missed. We wish John and Alison success and happiness in Pakistan, and look forward to welcoming them home.

At our February meeting it was heartening to see directors volunteer for office. Glenys Hansen will continue as our efficient and ever vigilant Treasurer, Carolyn Hooson was elected as Secretary and Flight Editor, William Abel will manage the National Raffle and Graham Gurr will handle Sales. The positions of Project Supervisors remain unchanged, so you have a strong and unified Board with a good management system under Grant Dumbell as Executive Director.

And now to the future. Although we have now resolved a number of complex issues, no matter how hard we trim we are faced with a deficit budget for the coming financial year. The sale of the Pearce Wetlands will considerably reduce our outgoings but we must expand.

We need more members - more members, more income. We have the capacity to handle three times our present membership without any significant increase in costs and that means surplus funds for wetland conservation projects. We have a number of membership initiatives underway and we will pursue these with vigour. However, we will need your help so we can report success before April 1997. The first part of this is our membership survey which was circulated with the January issue of Flight. Please remember to complete this and post it back to us.

OUR MISSION

We are a voluntary membership based society dedicated to the conservation of New Zealand wetlands through:

- wetland restoration and development
- conservation programmes for threatened waterfowl
- advocacy and education of wetland values.

By these means we seek to ensure the ethical and sustainable use of wetland resources by all existing and future users.

Cover Photo: Bill Clinton-Baker feeding waterfowl on his pond in Gladstone, Wairarapa.

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Or you could get really serious with your brushweeds and use

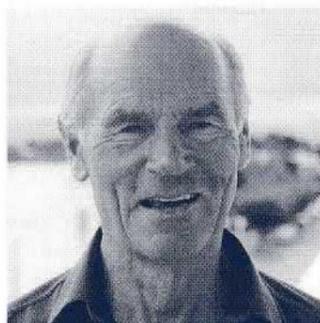
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BILL CLINTON-BAKER

Bill C-B joined DU some 15 years ago and is an active member of the Wairarapa Chapter. He and his wife Jan, live at the idyllically named "The Sanctuary", near Gladstone, 15 km from Masterton. Bill served with the Royal Navy during WWII before retiring to farm on the Cotswold. He emigrated to New Zealand in 1953, and has farmed at Gladstone since.

As a boy he became interested in birds

and passionate about waterfowl. Each year many are reared at "The Sanctuary" and go off to other enthusiasts all over the country. The proceeds are then donated to The New Zealand Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust of which he is a Conservation Sponsor. Until recently he was also a Trustee of the National Wildlife Centre at Mount Bruce.

A few years ago three pairs of Shoveler, reared by Bill, were flown to the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge in England, where they successfully bred. In 1986 he was Brown Teal Breeder Of The Year, when he reared 32 birds for Operation Pateke.

PHIL SCULLY

Phil has been a member of DU for over eight years. His interests are mainly outdoors, including classic and historic car racing, fresh and salt water fishing, hunting and clay target shooting. He is a Wellington pharmacist by profession.

Phil also collects books on fishing and hunting in New Zealand and has been a firearms instructor in Wellington for over 10 years. Phil is also a member of the Wellington Rifle and Gun Club and New Zealand Deerstalkers Association.



However, most outdoor activities have been on hold for the last year or so as Phil and his wife Julie, and sons Chris and Greg, have just completed renovating their new home in Lower Hutt.



MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Thank you to all the members who have so far completed and returned their membership survey forms circulated with the January issue of "Flight". If you haven't yet done so, please don't forget to fill in your survey and return it to us. Once the flood of replies has dwindled to a trickle we will summarise the results and will publish them in a later issue of "Flight".

SORRY FOR THE LATE "FLIGHT"

Please accept our apologies for the late arrival of the January issue of the magazine. With the recent redesign of the magazine we have also changed to compiling and editing the magazine in its electronic form to not only save costs but to ensure a higher quality output at the end of the exercise.

The delays to the January issue were caused by a combination of the Christmas / New Year shutdown and teething troubles associated with electronically embedding the photographs into the body of the text. Our graphic designer, BSP Design, has kindly installed new equipment to circumvent the problem in the future. Our aim is to have this issue in the mail within the first week of April.

We would also like to thank Brendan Coe and his staff at Lithographic Services for all the help they have given us during the changes to the magazine. Brendan has printed "Flight" since 1982 and with the magazine now being put together using 1990's technology the process is become a lot faster. The January issue was printed, trimmed, stapled, folded and packed by Lithographic Services in less than three days. That must surely be a record.

BACKCOPIES OF "FLIGHT" WANTED

If you have any back copies of the magazine that you no longer need we would very much like to receive them. In particular we are looking for issues 10, 11, 12, 13, 18 and 20 to complete our main

archive collection. We also have a member looking for 8, 16, 17 and 23. If there are any issues you are seeking please let us know as we do have limited quantities of a number of back issues of the magazine.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

Enclosed with this issue of "Flight" is your invoice for your 1996/97 subscription. If there is no invoice enclosed then your membership is current and you will continue to receive "Flight" for the coming year. We would be most grateful if members promptly renewed their membership as subscription income is one of the most important parts of our annual budget.

In response to a large number of requests, we are this year introducing a Family membership. This is for those households in which more than one person wishes to belong to Ducks Unlimited, but who only want to receive one copy of the magazine each issue. The Family membership has replaced the Trade membership which was discontinued at the end of last year and has been set at \$50.00 per year, just \$15.00 more than the Contributor membership. The success of this new membership will be judged at the end of the 1996/97 financial year.

AGM AUCTION DONATIONS

If any member would like to donate items for the Annual Conference fundraising auction these would be gratefully received. Please contact either Ken Cook on 06-3575484 or Alan Wilks on 06-3049729 so we can arrange to have the items collected in good time for the conference. You could also drop us a note to P.O. Box 9795, Newmarket, Auckland to let us know you have something for the auction. Once again, we will then arrange to have the items collected.

As always there will be a selection of auction items from DU in America and Canada but we will happily sell all manner

of items. In the past we have sold trees, jams and pickles, and handspun jerseys. We have even sold digger time so don't think that what you have got to offer would not be of interest.

JUNIOR MEMBERS

You will recall seeing a plea for member's profiles in the January issue of "Flight". As yet we have not received anything from our Junior Members so why not send us a recent photograph along with your name and age, where you live and some information about your interests. If you send us your phone number we can then check with you that the information that we have used is correct.

AUCKLAND CHAPTER HABITAT DAY

A brilliantly fine morning was a great start to Auckland Chapter's first Habitat Day. The first port of call was Michael and Margaret Beddek's property at Tuakau. Michael and Margaret have an interesting collection of Oak trees with nine varieties planted around their pond. Michael is also involved with planting the Dean Block at Pokeno, a wetland owned by the Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Council, and his thoughts and experiences were shared with the twenty people attending. After a wide ranging discussion, and morning tea kindly provided by Margaret, the group moved on to Waiuku.

At the Thompson property, Anne Thompson showed the group around a long established and well planted pond. At times it resembled a jungle trek but was well worth the effort. Some magnificent specimen trees shade the water and allowed the group to see a dramatic contrast to the more recent planting on the Beddek property. The group then moved on to Michelle and Grant MacKay's property where a barbecue lunch was enjoyed along with some more informal discussion on planting and pond maintenance.

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The Restoration of HOME LAGOON

By Grant Dumbell
Executive Director



Photo: Lloyd Homer, Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences.

On the banks of the Ruamahunga River near the southern end of Lake Wairarapa about where this major river used to turn to empty its waters into the lake, lies a shallow lagoon a couple of paddocks away from a homestead. The homestead belongs to Te Hopai Station, a distant reminder of the now drained wetland of the same name. The lagoon belongs to Dennis Handyside whose family have already farmed Te Hopai for several generations.

The apt naming of Home Lagoon is as clear as the summer sky as you sit at the dining table with Dennis and look across to the brown stands of raupo under the hot Wairarapa sun. The lagoon is dry, the river is low and there is no way to get the watery lifeblood of the wetland back into its veins. Either heavy rain must swell the Ruamahunga, or the coastal outlet of Lake Onoke must be blocked by a southerly blow heaping up piles of gravel to dam its mouth. Needless to say, there is not a duck in sight.

FLOODING VERSUS FARMING

A close look at a map of this part of the country will quickly reveal the magnitude of the changes that have occurred in the Lower Wairarapa Valley, all of which have been designed to quench the thirst for flood free productive farmland. As recently as 1947, prior to the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme, a flood could cover 20,000 hectares of land with some areas being underwater for up to eight days. At the completion of the scheme this had been reduced to 700 hectares, both a magnificent engineering achievement and a

catastrophe for wetlands.

Thankfully the final phase of the scheme was abandoned during the 1980's. This would have seen dykes built out into the lake and pumps would have further reduced the most significant wetland remaining in the southern North Island.

THE BIG PICTURE

To understand how Home Lagoon fits into the Wairarapa wetland jigsaw one must have an overview of the whole system. Lake Wairarapa lies in the shadow of the Rimutaka Range and originally received its water from the Tauherenikau River in the north and the Ruamahunga River in the south. It is the Ruamahunga that drains the lion's share of the Wairarapa valley as its course takes it south towards Palliser Bay picking up many tributaries along the way. It flows east of Lake Wairarapa before its original course then turned west and north to link up with the lake. Between the river and the lake lay a mosaic of wetlands including Matthew's Lagoon, Boggy Pond, the Wario Block, Te Hopai and Home Lagoon.

Once the water from the Ruamahunga had entered the lake it had to make its way south again to link up with Lake Onoke on the coast before it could be finally released to the sea. However, because the lower valley is so flat and is so low lying these two factors traditionally conspired with the distance the water had to travel to slow the drainage process down to such an extent that even a minor flood would back itself up and spill out of the rivers to pond itself across the dining table of the area's livestock.

DRAINAGE SCHEMING

The Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme has achieved its aims by stopbanking the rivers, to keep a greater volume of water in the channels, by diverting the Ruamahunga River away from Lake Wairarapa so it now drains directly to Lake Onoke, by installing barrage gates at the outlet of the lake and by building the Oporua Floodway, a safety valve which achieves a controlled diversion of floodwaters out of the river and into the lake. This combination of works has meant that Lake Wairarapa has been isolated from its major water source and now primarily functions as a floodwater storage basin.

In the event of a minor flood the water simply bypasses the lake and flows directly to Lake Onoke via the much shorter river diversion. In a major flood there still isn't sufficient capacity to carry the flow so the barrage gates can be closed to shut Lake Wairarapa off from Lake Onoke and the Ruamahunga River can divert the troublesome peak of its flow down the Oporua Floodway and into the lake. Here the water is stored until the flood passes when the barrage gates can be reopened and the stored floodwater emptied to the sea via Lake Onoke.

The result is thousands of hectares of flood free farmland and the removal of the water source needed to replenish and sustain the wetland mosaic that lies between the Ruamahunga River and Lake Wairarapa, including Home Lagoon. The sensitive restoration of wetlands without compromising farming productivity is one of the main challenges of wetland conservation in the Lower Wairarapa Valley.

DUCKS UNLIMITED'S ROLE

The draining of Te Hopai Lagoon also led

First blow of the new drain. Photo: Dennis Handyside



The new 400m drain carrying water to Home Lagoon. Photo: Dennis Handyside

to the partial draining of Home Lagoon with the result that Home Lagoon only held water after heavy rain and then for such short periods that its biological values as a wetland were seriously compromised. This was first addressed in 1986 when DU became involved (see Flight No 49) with the first work to secure a water supply for Home Lagoon.

The proposed remedy was to trench through the Ruamahunga River stopbank and lay a pipe slightly above normal river level. This way water could be transferred to Home Lagoon during periods of high river level by having the water flow through the pipe and down a short drain to the wetland. At the same time a low causeway was built to keep the water in the lagoon and a couple of islands were raised up in the shape of DU by a pair of local dozer drivers intent on leaving their mark on the project.

However, approval could only be gained for a nine inch pipe with the result that the volume of water which could be transferred was severely restricted. Likewise the level of the pipe meant that no water was available to the wetland during prolonged dry periods, the very time when the ability to shift water into the lagoon was most important. The result was that while the lagoon held water throughout the winter periods it was bone dry throughout the summer.

A PERMANENT SOLUTION

The final phase in the restoration of Home

Lagoon has now been completed with the installation of an alternative water supply which can provide water to the lagoon with the turn of a tap. This new supply has been brought from a large 48 inch culvert, about 500 metres upstream, which was originally installed to drain water out to the river, but is now being used to flow water from the river to the lagoon.

There is a certain amount of satisfaction in using an instrument of wetland drainage to provide for wetland restoration but this could only be achieved by digging 400 metres of new drain to link up with the existing drain network on Te Hopai Station. A further 630 metres of existing drain was also modified to make it fit into the transfer system and two new concrete weirs have been installed to act as a flow control.

Dennis can now open the valve on the culvert and, using the weirs, direct water into the lagoon, or he can keep water in the lagoon while at the same time use the drains to keep pasture dry. Conversely, he can take water out of the wetland to allow easy control of the ever spreading raupo. By having the new drain dug with a level bottom allows water to be directed in either direction along the same section of drain and the hydraulic head of the river is sufficient to move the water over such a long distance.

Because Home Lagoon sits in the middle of an intensive farming operation it does not have large areas of nesting cover

The intake from the river. Photo: Dennis Handyside



The new concrete weir diverting water to Home Lagoon. Photo: Dennis Handyside

associated with it. However, because it is so shallow it is highly productive and is extremely valuable habitat for waterfowl during the brood rearing phase of their breeding cycle. Birds that have nested throughout the surrounding area, and in the raupo, all have easy access to Home Lagoon and can simply walk their broods to this bountiful food larder before they take wing to the deeper water wetlands nearby. As a shallow non-permanent sheet water wetland it provides a great compliment to the permanent pond habitat of nearby Matthew's Lagoon and Boggy Pond and to Lake Wairarapa itself.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Depending on the amount of water in Home Lagoon it may be as large as 40 acres when full. Stage One of the restoration cost a total of \$14,600 while Stage Two has cost a further \$6,000, plus the cost of installing the two new concrete weirs. Therefore, for a total of approximately \$22,000, or less than \$600 per acre, a 40 acre part of the Wairarapa wetland heritage has been restored to its former glory.

The restoration of Home Lagoon also shows how the collaboration of Ducks Unlimited and private landowners can lead to the salvage of some of our lost wetlands. Throughout this project DU has received valuable financial assistance from its own sponsors and from the now defunct Wildlife Service and the North Island Council of Acclimatisation Societies. We are most grateful for this assistance, and the ongoing support of the Handyside family, and we look forward to the possibility of one day seeing the restored Home Lagoon protected in perpetuity with a covenant.



WHO'S WETLAND IS IT ANYWAY?



As the scarcity of New Zealand wetlands increases, more people are purchasing their own land to either secure an existing swamp or to create a wetland on.

For most of us it isn't possible to do this on our own, so we need to do it in conjunction with one or more friends. Therein lies the problem of how to own the property as whatever form of ownership you use there may be problems. In this article we will look briefly at three forms of ownership.

FORMING A PARTNERSHIP

Joe, John and Jerry purchase a prime wetland and have their names entered on the title. They are in general agreement as to what they want to do, but after a while Joe, who is better off, wishes to erect a building. Who contributes, and how is the construction organised? With one partner in conflict with two others the situation can be more easily resolved, but, if it is two against one then the odd person out is at a distinct disadvantage.

If the cost of the building is met by the two who can afford it they may claim there is not a problem. But, if one of the partners who paid for the building experiences financial difficulties an argument may arise and the conclusion often involves the engagement of lawyers, more expense, and the end of friendships.

This may be avoided by having a carefully crafted partnership deed from the beginning. However, that in itself won't remove the potential for problems unless the partner's aspirations are identical.

CREATING A TRUST

This is done by way of a formal trust deed and overcomes some of the above problems. Joe, John and Jerry must agree what is to happen and then commit it to paper, for all to see. However, once the trust is in place it cannot be changed so the deed must be drafted with flexibility to allow for changes in the aspirations of those concerned, the untimely death of a

beneficiary, and how to decide when to wind the trust up and sell the property.

One main advantage is that a trust does not die with a person so there are no ownership problems in the event of a death. However, the maximum time a trust may exist is 80 years, then the assets must be transferred to the beneficiaries.

As with a partnership, problems may arise when further funds are needed. No trust deed can insist there be a certain contribution so if capital works are planned they must be carefully thought through as to how they are to occur and who is to make what sort of contribution.

FORMING A COMPANY

Joe, John and Jerry could use a company for the ownership of the property. The company's shares could then be held in unequal proportions and voting rights attached to the shares rather than to the individuals who own them, unless otherwise specified. This still does not overcome all the problems of further contributions of capital and again begs the question of what to do when the aspirations of the parties differ or change. Joe, John and Jerry must also remember their responsibilities as company directors and the liability this may expose them to.

One advantage of a company is that further shares may be issued to either existing or new shareholders when finance is needed for development of the property. This avoids unsecured shareholders loans to the company and the possibility they may be called up in the event of an argument. Existing shareholders can also leave the project by selling their shares if their circumstances change but, unless the company's constitution addresses the issue, the remaining shareholders may not have any control over who purchases the shares.

USING AND DEVELOPING THE PROPERTY

Each form of ownership has its problems, unless there is a serious consideration of



By David Smith

all future possibilities. If one of the parties wants a property where their children may learn to appreciate nature, how is that going to fit with the others when young tearaways arrive to create havoc and end up damaging new plantings?

The issue of a building may be reasonably straightforward, but what about capital expenditure on landscaping and planting? What type of plants are going to be planted and where? What are the desired landscaping results and how is the development going to be financed?

Borrowing funds is one solution, but, Joe, John and Jerry must remember they must each assume some personal liability. Should one of them run into financial difficulties the remaining two may have to repay substantially more than their share of the debt. These sorts of issues should be discussed to ensure that contingencies are made for unexpected events, prior to the purchase.

RESOLVING DIFFICULTIES

It may sound like a lot of work, but attention to detail at the start of the project can save heartache and unnecessary expenditure later on. If you cannot attend to these matters prior to purchase then consider saving your money until you can do the project on your own.

If you are in the situation where there is strife consider dealing with the matter professionally as it may avoid the loss of a friendship. There are mediators who can assist people to work through problems which would be to your benefit if you wished to maintain goodwill.

With the value of these types of properties now becoming quite high there is often some serious money involved. Spending some on proper advice at the start could save yourself a lot more at a later date.

I sometimes ask myself whether or not any of our members wonder about Board meetings - like where they are held, who attends, who pays, what goes on....?

I was elected as a Director in July 1990 and it seems much longer than six years ago. I think I was conned, because the only Board meetings I had attended prior to that was as an observer and they were held at the National Wildlife Centre, only 40 minutes drive from home since we had left city life and moved to Greytown.

My first two meetings as a member of the Board were one day affairs held at the THC Tokaanu. Certainly more central for everyone but I was immediately aware of the cost to DU - hiring a meeting room and providing morning and afternoon teas and lunch. The Board was also realising that we needed more time to get through the business.

These meetings were long days for most Directors. Some drove from Wellington or Auckland and then back in one day, as well as spending six or seven hours attending to the affairs of DU. It was agreed that two-day meetings had become necessary, to reduce the driving on one day and to get through the business without being pressured for time. Directors were already paying for their travel. Could we expect them to pay for accommodation as well?

As one of our Directors had a little cottage

BOARD BUT NOT BORED

By Alan Wilks



The Board at work. Even though the fish are rising and sun is shining it's business first, then pleasure.
Photo Ian Lyver.

between Turangi and Taupo, and we found that we could rent the cottage next door, it was suggested this could provide a solution, which it has since August 1991. The Friday night travellers stay in the first cottage, we then set up next door for a 10.30am start on Saturday, using a door on trestles added to the dining room table as our board table. We borrow chairs from

wherever we can to seat 12 Directors and our Executive Director. We don't like to talk about 13, so it's always 12 plus Grant who, with all his papers, normally takes up the space of two anyway!

It all sounds pretty free and easy but, I can assure you, once we sit down at that table it's on with the business and it gets quite formal at times. We deliberate on a wide range of topics relating to the operation and management of DU - there are always matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting, the Treasurer's report takes time to consider where the money has gone in the last quarter, and where it will come from in the next. Then, of course, things like future policy and programming, Blue Duck, Brown Teal, Royal Swan and Wetlands to mention just a few - not time to get bored!

We normally meet from 10.30am to 6pm on Saturday, and from 9.30am to 1pm on Sunday, which gives everyone time to travel home. Directors pay for their own travel, bring their own breakfast and lunch, plus something to throw on the barbecue on Saturday night (weather and season permitting, but we do have access to a good oven if we need to be indoors), so the four board meetings held in February, May, August and November cost DU a total of \$200 plus Grant's travel which DU obviously pays. It costs to be a DU Director but I'm sure we all feel it's worth it.



The Board at February's meeting following presentation of a Blue Duck print to John Bishop. From left to right: Elizabeth Lyver (member in attendance) Ian Lyver, Executive Director Grant Dumbell, Alan Wilks (kneeling with Purdy), Graham Gurr, David Smith, John Bishop, William Abel, Glenys Hansen (kneeling), David Johnston, Ken Cook. Absent: Carolyn Hooson and Diane Pritt. Photo: Di Wilks.



ANATIDAE 2000

- a Waterfowl Talkfeast

By Murray Williams

Murray Williams is a waterfowl biologist employed by the Department of Conservation. He has recently been based in the Bay of Islands to contribute to the conservation of Brown Teal in Northland. In late 1994, and with financial assistance from Ducks Unlimited, he attended the Anatidae 2000 international waterfowl conference in France organised by IWRB, of which Ducks Unlimited is a member. This is his report on the proceedings of the conference.

Outside of North America, gatherings concerned solely with the research and management of waterfowl are fairly rare. And meetings with truly global flavour are rarer still. This is what made 'Anatidae 2000', held in December 1994 in Strasbourg, France, such a special event.

After almost four years of planning, and one cancellation, the International Waterfowl Research Bureau (IWRB), of which New Zealand is no longer a member, managed to assemble 350 waterfowl experts from 58 countries in the magnificent debating chamber of the European Parliament for a whole week.

Very commendably, IWRB managed to fund delegates from many African nations and the new republics of the former Soviet Union, funding that was provided by way of grants from the Council of Europe and the French Ministry for the Environment. But the North Americans were conspicuous by their absence - the Atlantic still seems to be quite a gulf when it comes to waterfowl management, research.....and politics. IWRB

contributed toward my attendance, as did the French Embassy in Wellington, NZ Fish and Game Council, Ducks Unlimited New Zealand and my family, to all of whom I record my appreciation.

So what was the conference all about? At the heart of the matter was the preparation of a "Global Action Plan for the Anatidae" - a fine title indeed! The IUCN Species Survival Commission has contracted IWRB to prepare this document, one of a series of global conservation plans for various wildlife taxa. IWRB did some initial work to try and define and assess all populations of waterfowl worldwide (in Waterfowl Population Estimates, IWRB publication 29), and found the task incredibly daunting and data for so many species almost non-existent.

Their solution was Anatidae 2000, a way of not only defining all the issues, but also scoping solutions. So, through four plenary sessions, nine symposia, 15 workshops and over 150 scientific presentations (not to mention hours of chat and innumerable gatherings) and in two languages, issues confronting the 410 biogeographic populations of 159 species of Anatidae were aired. By the end of 1995, the Global Action Plan and Proceedings of Anatidae will be published - and hopefully neither will sit on the bureaucratic shelves to gather dust.

RELEVANCE TO NEW ZEALAND

There were several conclusions of the conference that were of direct relevance to New Zealand. One was the finding that, worldwide, the Ramsar convention (wetlands of international importance) was shown to have failed to protect the

habitat of any of the 'threatened' waterfowl and there was certainly some soul-searching about that. This is the case in New Zealand too - when you think about it, most of the present habitat of Brown Teal is completely unprotected!

Another point of interest was the inclusion of two New Zealand species on the list of globally endangered waterfowl (see list at the end of this article). In fact, one fifth (31 species) of all Anatidae taxa meet the new IUCN criteria as 'threatened' species - in addition to the above, Blue Duck and Brown Teal are amongst the 11 'endangered' taxa, and Auckland Island Teal, one of 29 'vulnerable' taxa.

Two other species of southern teals are on the critical list - Madagascar Teal and Andaman Island Teal. The biologists trying to do work on these species have almost zero information to work with. It looks as though the eggs, nest and young of Madagascar Teal have never been seen (and I thought Campbell Island Teal were unique in this regard!), and modern records for Andaman Island Teal are non-existent also! Talking with these biologists (from Jersey Wildlife Trust and India) both teals behave a bit like our Brown Teal and we are now exchanging information, ideas and tape recording to see if these rare birds respond to field techniques used for Brown Teal studies.

What is clear, however is that Madagascar and India, like some African and former Soviet republics, are dreadfully short of resources with which to fight for the survival of their endemic waterfowl. If global conservation documents are to have any real value, then the great

international disparity of resources and skills has to be confronted and rectified - and a small fund to assist this may well be one of the outcomes of the conference.

CAPTIVE BREEDING RELEASES

Two issues that received a good deal of discussion were captive breeding and releases of exotic species. Conservation successes based upon releases of captive-raised birds are exceedingly rare internationally despite some enormous efforts. The belief that captive breeding provides a satisfactory conservation response was severely challenged, and the conference recommendations called it a 'response of the last resort'.

Much of the failure of captive-raised birds to contribute to species conservation worldwide was considered to stem from inappropriate and unmonitored releases wherein little, if any, further understanding was obtained. It was a point fairly made and one which those of us guiding recovery efforts with the Brown Teal could learn from. However, the conference recommendations also made the obvious point - the "conservation action plans should be developed and implemented for threatened species before they reach a critical stage" (as to require captive breeding). On that basis, Blue Duck ought to be getting some greater attention!

EXOTIC SPECIES

Exotic seems to be a very big issue worldwide. As a result of escapes from collections and deliberate introductions, exotic waterfowl threaten, through competition and hybridisation, 32% of the 51 globally threatened Anatidae taxa.

Presently, Europe's attention is directed at the spectacular advance of the American Ruddy Duck across the continent. It reached Europe from British collections in 1965 and now is common throughout western Europe from Norway to Spain, and recently has reached Morocco to the south and Ukraine to the east. It is producing fertile hybrids with White Headed Duck and out-competing it so that there is a real possibility of the White Head, already a 'vulnerable' species, being eliminated from Europe.

It's a lesson we have learnt all too well and at the expense of the Grey Duck it seems while Australia happily lets it's Mallard populations expand. IWRB is so worried about the scale and effects of exotic introductions that they intend to make them illegal.

OTHER ISSUES RAISED

Many other issues of relevance were discussed - lead poisoning (NZ may soon join many other countries by replacing lead shot), global population monitoring (now getting underway in Asia and parts of the Pacific after over 25 years of counting in Europe), the gathering anti-hunting sentiment, hunting management (a lot of interest in North American techniques based on waterfowl banding data), cultural harvesting (a big issue in Canada), waterfowl banding, international skill sharing, and habitat conservation funding (the general lack of it). These are discussed in a larger report provided to, and available from, Ducks Unlimited.

One of my contributions to the conference was a paper discussing the plight of island endemic waterfowl, using the three teals, two Madagascan ducks and Laysan Duck from Hawaii as case studies. In short I asked the question "What do you do when, as a result of alien animal introductions and human land use, there is no hope for these island endemics in their natural range?."

I suggested an answer - "Establish them somewhere safe outside of their natural range eg. Campbell Island Teal on one of the Falkland Islands, Brown Teal on Raoul Island", sat back and waited for the tomatoes. A few came. Someone commented that the idea was going a little far, but I never did work out whether he had a sense of humour. It may seem like a frivolous question today, but I'll wager it will be widely discussed over the next one or two decades, and in the columns of this magazine!

Global plans and international discussion are all very well but, in the end, action has to take place on the home front and in the field. I suspect that, when released, the Global Action Plan for the Anatidae will be a little short on specifics but

contain a lot to enthuse and direct voluntary organisations like Ducks Unlimited in the fight to save New Zealand's waterfowl and their habitats. With five species in threatened categories, there is no shortage of things to do.

The World's 10 Critically Endangered Waterfowl

- New Britain Whistling Duck
- Recherché Cape Barren Goose
- Campbell Island Teal
- New Zealand Grey Duck
- Borrero's Cinnamon Teal
- Crested Shelduck
- Andaman Island Teal
- Laysan Duck
- Madagascar Pochard
- Brazilian Merganser

Inclusion of the Grey Duck is a bit of a surprise given present understanding of the species abundance. According to Andy Green of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust UK, who compiled this list for IWRB, it satisfies two of the IUCN criteria based on its apparent rate of decline over the past ten years and the threat of hybridisation.

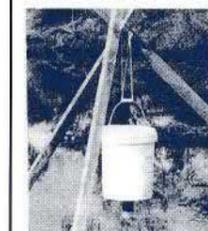
Certainly both factors are real, and some recent work suggests hybrids now comprise at least 40% of our Grey Duck / Mallard population....and the process is gathering pace!

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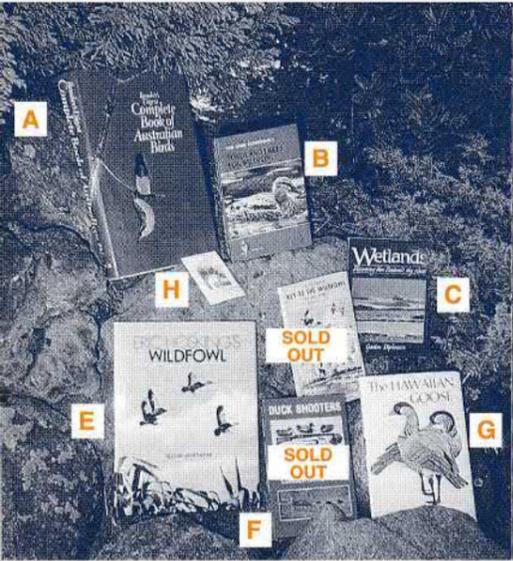
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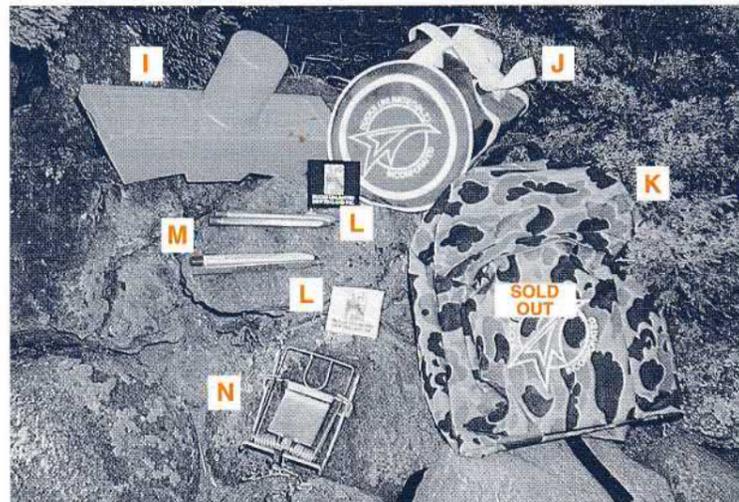
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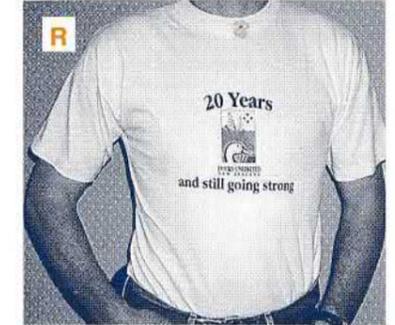
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