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The Broadlands Wildfowl Trust in winter. Photo: Dave Johnston.

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Flight

ISSUE 88



DUCKS UNLIMITED NEW ZEALAND INC.

For Wetlands and Waterfowl.

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INSIGHT

Alan Wilks

President

Let me first share with you an experience I had the other day. My ute, with DU logos on the doors, was parked outside a Wairarapa delicatessen. When I returned a young woman came out and asked if I was the duck man. Naturally I thought "This is where I sell our conservation story." Once inside she asked, "Now what sort of ducks do you sell?" She got the DU conservation story all right, but unfortunately I didn't get a new member.

As you are aware, it is our intention to sell the Pearce Wetlands and as I have received comments from some members I would like to again explain this decision. With a QEII covenant on the property, its wetland values are protected for all time. Therefore, we see little point paying rates and interest with money raised by our members while capital is tied up which could be put to use creating wetlands. Our founding partners, DU Inc. and DU Canada, are not long term wetland owners but commit all available resources to conserving them. The Pearce Wetlands were bought with borrowed money and DU has been financially stretched ever since. Once it is sold, and we certainly won't give it away, we can get on with new wetland conservation projects.

Recently I visited Masterton Intermediate School to discuss their plans for an Environmental Science Block. This is a \$50,000 project to upgrade the old Fish and Game Trout Hatchery building and ponds where they plan to hold week-long Environmental Science Classes. The facility will be available for other schools in the area and I was delighted to write a letter in support of their Lottery Grants Board funding application.

Thanks to those of you who have returned the Membership Survey. This is most helpful, and it's not too late to send yours in. We are about to embark on a major membership initiative and I will report on this in the next issue. In the meantime, the Conference Committee has agreed that non-members attending the dinner may pay a special invitation price of only \$30. So please, bring your friends to the conference. They may even join as members.

Let's make this the Year of the Member, but not forget that we are still dedicated to Wetlands and Waterfowl.



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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: Mallard taking flight. Photo Scott Neilsen.

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WILLIAM LAMPP

William is eleven years old and lives in Mangaweka. At the time this photo was taken William and his Dad were getting ready for the duck hunting season which William was really looking forward to. In the photo he is holding his first duck.

William also enjoys golf, cricket, hunting

and touch football, but says the best past time is duck hunting. William really enjoys reading "Flight" and looks forward to receiving each issue. He is also encouraging some of his friends to join Ducks Unlimited and has sent us a large pencil drawing of a wetland full of ducks.

NEIL CANDY

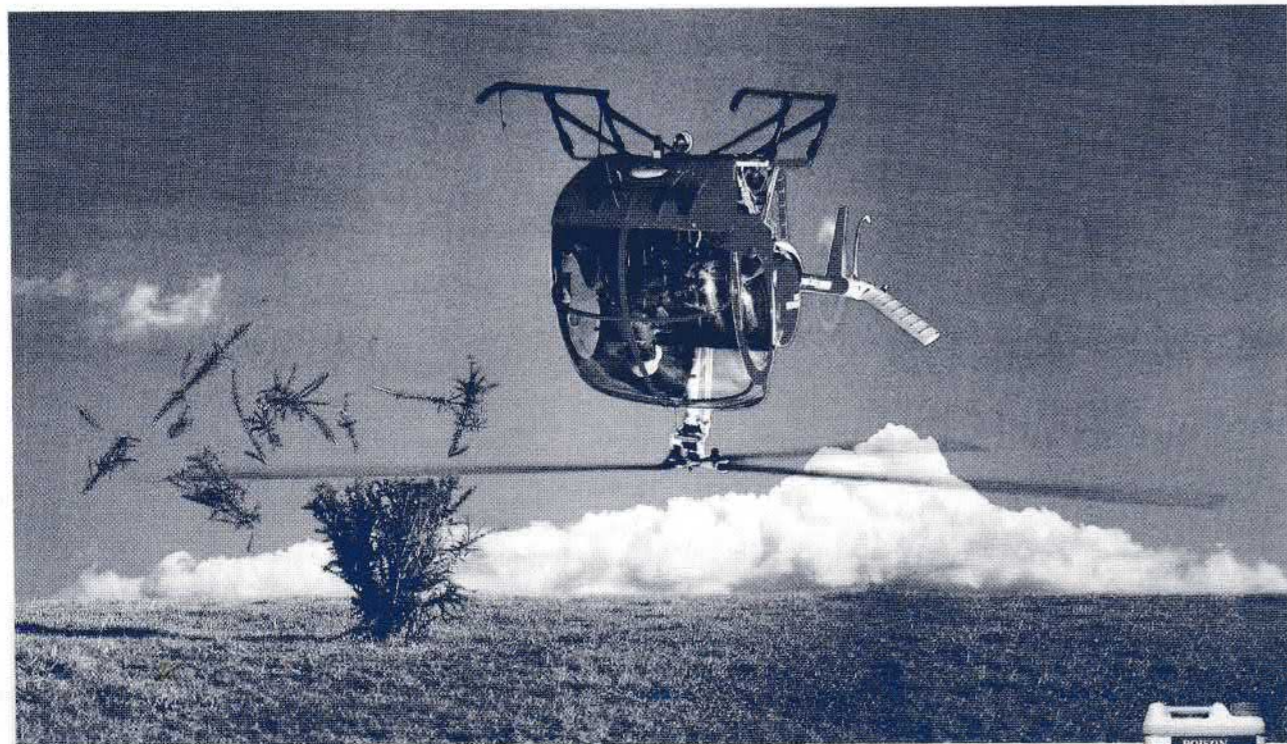
Neil has been a member of Ducks Unlimited for 11 years, and he, and his wife Julie have 'job-shared' the roles of Secretary and Treasurer for the Manawatu Chapter for almost all of that time.

Neil grew up in the Horowhenua and has spent the last 15 years dairy farming on a property adjacent to Ducks Unlimited's Makerua Swamp restoration project near Palmerston North. He and Julie have

recently sold the farm and are planning a three month sojourn to the United States to catch up with friends and Ducks Unlimited over there. They will continue



to farm on their 50 acre block near Feilding, a property which is also the site of the successful Manawatu Chapter clay target shoots.



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GIMPEX FEEDERS

We have mistakenly printed the incorrect address for Gimpex Feeders in the last two issues of "Flight". The correct address to use to purchase these very successful feeders is GIMPEX NZ, P.O. BOX 2202, ROTORUA. We hope this mistake has not caused any of our readers any inconvenience and of course we extend our apologies to Gimpex.

FENN TRAPS

The Fenn traps which we import from England are proving to be a very popular item amongst our recent sales orders. These humane traps are designed as a kill trap so they can be set with the confidence that they will not subject their target species to a lingering painful death as in the case of many hold traps. Their trapping efficiency also makes them suitable for setting in places where the traps may not be checked on a daily basis. Should anybody who is considering trapping predators have any doubts as to the effectiveness of the Fenn trap a quick look at the photo we recently received from Dave Johnston will dispel their concerns. Dave trapped this stoat at a permanently set trap site using a Mark 6 Fenn Trap.



A stoat trapped and killed using a Mark 6 Fenn Trap at the Broadlands Wildfowl Trust near Reporoa. Photo: Dave Johnston



Shane Treadwell, Pharazyn Estate Trustee, admires the scaup decoy presented to the Trust in recognition of their significant support of DU's wetland conservation activities. Photo: Di Wilks

PRESENTATION TO PHARAZYN TRUST

During April, Alan Wilks presented the Pharazyn Trust with a Foundation Sponsor Award in recognition of the Trust's outstanding financial contributions to Ducks Unlimited's wetland conservation work, including their support of the Pearce Wetlands. The award, which was accepted by Shane Treadwell, a trustee of the Pharazyn Trust, included a hand carved scaup decoy, a Foundation Sponsor lapel pin and a certificate to recognise the Trust's generous support of our wetland conservation programme. Ducks Unlimited is extremely grateful for the support of the Pharazyn Trust as wetland habitat conservation places the greatest demands upon our conservation budget.

WELLINGTON CHAPTER LUNCH

Another successful fundraising luncheon was held by the Wellington Chapter during April. Eighty guests enjoyed a light lunch then spent \$2,500 on some superb auction items. Thanks to all those who attended especially the large number of non-members. While we managed to secure a couple of new members, if you did bring a friend along to the luncheon why not ask them if they would like to join. This way they will receive "Flight" magazine which will keep them up to date with the full range of projects and

activities that are undertaken by Ducks Unlimited.

ANNUAL WELLINGTON SPORTING CLAY SHOOT

There was another record turnout for the annual Wellington Chapter Sporting Clay Shoot. For some inexplicable reason this event attracts the numbers of participants any gun club would be proud to boast of. On a not too tropical day 130 shooters turned out for the 100 target sporting clay shoot and this came close to the record for the highest number of entrants at one event at the Hutt Valley Gun Club. The record of 144 shooters was set some years.

This event was kindly sponsored by ROD AND RIFLE magazine and in part owes its success to the types of targets arranged by the club. There wasn't a single-figure score for each of the fifty target rounds which is very encouraging for those who dust off the old Browning once a year for the game season.

A LETTER TO THE BAY OF PLENTY TIMES

The following letter was published recently in the Bay of Plenty Times. Our reply, which was heavily edited, is printed below.

The Editor - The recent articles by Val Sherriff on the efforts of duckshooters to

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protect wetlands impressed me not one bit. It hardly comes as a surprise that they should want to do this because without wetlands there would be no ducks and therefore no duckshooting season.

Equally transparent are the efforts of Ducks Unlimited to breed and release endangered waterfowl. It would be a fairly safe bet that these birds, when their numbers are sufficient, will be added to the game shooting list.

Over the years the hunting lobby has stocked our lakes, bush and forest with birds and animals that don't belong here, much to the detriment of our native flora and fauna. They have done this while at the same time perpetuating the myth that hunters are really conservationist.

Each year hunters fire literally tonnes of lead into the waterways. The end result of this being the lingering deaths from lead poisoning of not only game birds but protected species as well. An excellent article on this matter "Let Them Eat Steel" appeared in the Forest and Bird Society's magazine. Forest and Bird also say the N.Z. native grey duck is dwindling in numbers as a result of recreational duckshooting.

Despite any good intentions by hunters, duckshooting by its very nature, leaves birds wounded and crippled. If the real motive for protecting wetlands is only to safeguard the future of recreational killing, then the sooner they're drained the better.

R. SKIVINGTON
Mount Maunganui

OUR REPLY

The Editor - While your correspondent R. Skivington is entitled to his opinions his contribution to the wetland conservation debate might be more helpful if he was longer on facts and shorter on rhetoric. New Zealand has an appalling wetland conservation record having destroyed over 90% of its natural wetlands. Wetlands are the most productive ecosystems on earth and in New Zealand over 60 species of birds live in them, compared to about 35 species in native forest. All of our native freshwater fish and a number of threatened plants

also depend on wetlands.

Your correspondent seems to lump everyone involved in wetland conservation into the category of a game bird hunter, which in the case of Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc is not true. Ducks Unlimited is not and has not ever been directly involved with waterfowl hunting and while many of our members participate in recreational game bird hunting, approximately 50 per cent, like me, have never owned a hunting licence.

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; and advocacy and education of wetland values.

On the matter of the grey duck, the international conservation community recognises this species is threatened, not by hunting, but by hybridisation with introduced mallard.

DR GRANT S. DUMBELL
Executive Director
Ducks Unlimited NZ Inc

KERMIT LEAPS ON WETLAND CONSERVATION

An international star has spoken out with an SOS that exactly mirrors the protection of wetlands aims of Ducks Unlimited New Zealand and the New Zealand Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust, our charitable trust which invests donated funds and uses the interest to support meaningful wetland conservation action. S.W.A.M.P. is basically what the Trust is all about - Saving Wetlands by Assistance for Marshes and Ponds - and its brochure features an SOS: Save Our Swamps.

We have a famous supporter for this in Kermit the Frog of the Muppets fame. Recently in the USA, Long Island University's Southampton College honoured Kermit for his work on environmental issues by awarding him an honorary Doctorate of Amphibious Letters. In his acceptance speech, Dr Kermit advised graduates to save the world's swamps. Welcome aboard, Dr Kermit!

Annual 1996 Conference Programme

The Board of Directors and the Wairarapa Chapter are pleased to be hosting the 22nd Ducks Unlimited Annual Conference at the Solway Park Travelodge in Masterton on the weekend of 12 to 14 July 1996.

Solway Park Travelodge is an excellent venue for a Wairarapa conference and DU has been able to negotiate a special rate for accommodation of only \$89 per room.

A varied programme is being arranged, starting on the evening of Friday 12th July with a friendly 'Happy Hour' and get together at the conference venue for those who arrive on Friday night.

On Saturday morning guided tours will visit National Wildlife Centre to see the rare flightless Campbell Island teal and the other species on display, and Bill and Jan Clinton-Baker's superb gardens and waterfowl pond.

Transport will be provided and, depending on weather, it may pay to bring gumboots. Lunch will be available at both venues, or at Solway Park, but is not included in the conference registration.

The Annual General Meeting will open at 1.45 pm in the Palliser Room. The business session will include presentation

of annual reports and will be followed by a Guest Speaker's address. Dinner will be served at 7.30pm and will be followed by the annual fund-raising auction.

Some superb auction items have again been procured. Members are invited to donate items for the auctions. Donated goods are a major contributor to the success of this annual fund-raising event.

Sunday morning will begin with morning coffee at 9.30am followed by a workshop on trees and plantings for wetlands by Bud Jones. The conference programme will finish just before lunch.

REGISTER NOW

special non-member dinner only invitation price of only \$30



DUCKS UNLIMITED NEW ZEALAND INC.

Annual Conference 12 -14 July 1996 Solway Park Travelodge Masterton

Please register _____ people for the Ducks Unlimited Annual Conference

Name _____

Address _____ Phone _____

I/We will require accommodation for (please tick) Friday 12 July Saturday 13 July

Conference registration \$45 each x _____ persons = \$ _____

Non-member dinner only \$30 each x _____ persons = \$ _____

Accommodation (\$89 OR \$50 deposit - balance payable on check-out) \$ _____ x _____ nights = \$ _____

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ANNUAL

95 - 96

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

David G. Smith

INTRODUCTION

As this is my last President's annual report to the members of Ducks Unlimited I do not wish to concentrate on the mechanics of what has occurred over the year as the various reports below will give a better analysis than I can here. What I want to reflect on is where DU is going and why the board has chosen the path it has.

The overriding theme of the last two years has, of necessity, been one of consolidation. DU grew very quickly in its early years and some of the decisions made during that time have impacted greatly on DU in the 90's. This is not a criticism of those decisions, as they were made in completely different circumstances than exist now, but an acknowledgement of the fact that Rogermomics and the '87 crash has altered not just the financial environment but the way in which DU operates.

During the 1980's it was relatively easy to raise project funds as managers did not have to account as they now do for their decisions to support charity. It was accepted any publicity was good publicity. Individuals were more able, and ready, to put their hands into their pockets and wallets while members were more able to spend time on chapter and DU affairs. I am sure we are all aware that is no longer the world in which we live.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

The two decisions which have had the greatest impact on DU was obtaining ownership of both the Sinclair and Pearce Wetlands. On the face of it these properties epitomise what DU is about and our ownership has saved them and their inhabitants from destruction. All the effort that has gone into them I do not regret in the slightest, but the continuing ownership of them will be the death of DU. They are a never ending and increasing cost which we cannot sustain.

Last year I signalled that the Board was moving to sell the Pearce Wetlands. Before we were prepared to do that we negotiated the terms of a Queen Elizabeth II National Trust open space covenant to ensure the wetland not only remains as it is but that necessary maintenance to keep it a wetland can be carried out. As owners, these steps are all we could ever achieve and if we can retrieve our financial input and use those funds again to secure other wetlands our effectiveness as a conservation organisation must be that much greater. Similarly the Sinclair Wetlands must be looked at. Somehow we must maintain it, and Horrie's dream, for perpetuity but at the same time remove the financial burden it creates.

MEMBERSHIP IMPACTS

The effects of these properties are not just financial. They have a direct effect on membership which affects membership income and causes the danger of a downward spiral. Because we do not have anywhere near the funds we want, the work we can do in assisting new projects is severely hampered. Members who have turned up faithfully to dinners year after year see less and less happening. Not surprisingly their interest wanes. That we have retained the number of members we have is a testimonial to our members loyalty.

Auckland is a classic example. It is the largest chapter in terms of members yet there has not yet been a DU wetland project in the area. It is not surprising that its committee is one of the smallest. In February the Board received an application for a project in the Auckland region and with assistance from DU it could have been an excellent project. The

decision to advise we were unable to help was, emotionally, one of the hardest for me. Financially there was no question.

GOING FORWARD

All is not gloom however. By facing the reality of its difficulties the Board has developed strategies to overcome them and I am confident the next few years will see DU moving, slowly at first, but with increasing speed, in the right direction.

A number of people have suggested to me that if we are financially constrained then we could alleviate our problems by not having any paid staff. Personally I cannot see a quicker way to ensure that DU becomes a minor, inconsequential organisation.

One of the effects of the restructuring of New Zealand society has been that we all have to work harder and longer. The time I and other directors can put into DU affairs is but a small portion of what we could have done ten or fifteen years ago. Because of the impact DU does make, our mail is voluminous and many of the queries are scientific. I cannot conceive our being able to handle that without help, let alone membership servicing or any of the numerous weekly tasks presently undertaken.

Another fact which is not appreciated is that the lump sum funding which we have attracted over the last few years has been the direct result of the Executive Director's effort - and exceeds the cost of his contract. If we delete the position we will be financially worse off. What we really need is more staff - a person for membership, a secretary for correspondence. Then we could give real service to our members, and it is for this that we must strive. Consequently I know you are going to hear a great deal more on the need for new members from Alan Wilks during his term as President.

SUMMARY

During the past year three directors have resigned. Jim Campbell has retired after 14 years and Diane Pritt after 17 years. Their contributions have been staggering and I find it impossible to express fully the gratitude DU has for their efforts. I know their interest has not waned but the

realities of the personal cost to them has had to be met. May I also say thank you to them both for the support they have given me personally. John Bishop has also retired - not because he wanted to but because he felt attending board meetings from Pakistan, where he has been seconded, was going to be a "tad difficult". John's wisdom and business acumen has been valuable and we hope he will return in a few years time.

Alan Wilks became President on 1 April. His enthusiasm is to be admired and I look forward to serving on the Board under him. Thank you for the opportunity to be your President and thank you for your support.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Grant Dumbell

INTRODUCTION

In my last annual report I set out the strategic objectives which form the basis of our forward planning for our third decade of operations. In this report, I would like to build on that by detailing the progress we have made over the past year towards achieving those objectives.

The three priority areas that have been identified in our forward plans are Wetland Conservation, Membership, and Financial Management. Clearly, our ability to deliver wetland projects hinges on our ability to recruit a larger membership base and to successfully remove the financial constraints which have prevented our growth in the past several years. During the past year we have concentrated on these two areas, beginning with our finances.

FINANCE

The audit of the Sinclair Wetlands, completed two years ago, resulted in a more efficient cost accounting system for DU and has led to a greater appreciation of how DU was employing its financial resources. This indicated the true cost of DU's ownership of properties and how those assets were monopolising our available capital. A quick glance at last year's Balance Sheet shows that \$517,000 of property assets were funded by

\$358,000 of accumulated funds and \$159,000 of interest bearing debt, which in turn costs over \$11,000 per annum to service.

Faced with a simple choice between continued wetland property ownership, which does not add to New Zealand's wetland habitat, or active wetland restoration, which does, the decision was taken to move towards the divestment of the Pearce Wetlands. Having this important area of Lake Wairarapa protected in perpetuity by a Queen Elizabeth II National Trust open space covenant achieves everything that DU ownership could, while giving greater long term security to the habitat, and will allow DU to recover its financial input. In turn, DU will be able to retire its debt and plough the \$11,000 annual interest cost into new habitat. This result will, on its own, go a long way to ensuring we meet our strategic objectives.

With this decision taken, the terms of an open space covenant were negotiated with the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust and a mutually agreed management plan has been developed. In addition, a number of legal loose ends left over from the 1988 purchase of the property have been tied off, including the provisions of a grazing lease to ensure the habitat values of the area are able to be maintained in the long term. We are confident that the Pearce Wetlands now has greater legal protection than ever before and we will be able to offer the title for sale by tender in the very near future.

"FLIGHT"

Throughout the year the continuing cost increases affecting "Flight" magazine also became a concern. Coupled with this was a concern the magazine was not providing sufficient communication to DU members, a limitation that could reduce the success of any membership recruitment initiatives. As a result, the DU Board made the hard decision to drop colour from the magazine and replace it with more specialised design input. The outcome is a magazine which provides more information to members, at less cost, without reducing its frequency. DU is indebted to Brendan Coe and BSP Design for their help with this daunting task

which may reduce the magazine budget by more than 25%.

MEMBERSHIP

The recruitment of a larger membership base requires the expenditure of funds which are not readily available, therefore, during the second half of the year an appeal for funds was made to all of DU's Life and Sponsor members, both in New Zealand and overseas. At the same time, donations to cover the placement of magazine advertising were received. These combined initiatives have resulted in a membership "fighting fund" of nearly \$3000.

Plans have now been drawn up to employ these funds in a direct mail campaign targeted firstly at rural New Zealand. The farming community has long been a strength of DU's membership base and is the most easily identified market segment which has had exposure to DU. In addition, it is the farmers of New Zealand who own many of the country's remaining wetlands and these people will be able to easily relate to our conservation message.

Through advice received from New Zealand Post, a direct mail membership recruitment programme has been designed which will ultimately reach every rural household in the country. This programme will begin with a series of trials to build upon the expertise we have already gained from previous direct mail programmes.

If successful, a full scale programme will be implemented, in stages, over the next two years. This will ultimately see us reach 142,000 households with a specially designed brochure explaining what Ducks Unlimited is all about and how people may benefit by choosing to become a member. We are hopeful that this initiative will allow us to meet our first target of 2700 members as at that point subscription income will cover all of our overheads, allowing fundraising income to be directed towards our conservation projects.

CONSERVATION

Despite our financial constraints, our conservation work has been continuing, albeit at a reduced level of activity.

During the past year our most significant Operation Wetlands effort concentrated on the establishment of a secure water supply for the 40 acre Home Lagoon in the Wairarapa.

As mentioned above, the long term protection by covenant of the 300 acre Pearce Wetlands was a major achievement. I am confident that once we have completed our involvement with the project it will represent one of the most significant wetland conservation achievements of Ducks Unlimited.

Both of these projects were featured in "Flight" to ensure that members saw the significant role that DU played with their conservation. A range of smaller wetland projects in the Manawatu have also been approved and once completed they will also feature in "Flight".

Our Operation Pateke and Operation Whio projects have also made progress during the year, although there has not been much evidence of work in the field. The Department of Conservation's approval of the Brown Teal Recovery Plan has ended six years of debate as to how to approach Brown Teal conservation. Accordingly, DU has now applied for funding to undertake an assessment of the available habitat on the Chatham Islands and whether they represent a viable option for the establishment of a new population.

Blue Duck have also benefited from DoC reviewing the recovery plan and we are hopefully that 1996 will see an end to the hiatus that has recently affected this species. However, the most significant event for Operation Whio has been an extremely generous corporate donation received by The New Zealand Waterfowl And Wetlands Trust. This will ensure that Operation Whio has an ongoing income every year from now on.

SUMMARY

There is no doubt that 1995/96 was a difficult year for Ducks Unlimited, however, in spite of the adversity we have made progress on a number of fronts. More importantly, the progress that has been made has been part of a coherent and integrated strategy to build DU into a significant force in New Zealand wetland

conservation. I am sure members are tiring of hearing about consolidation and planning, however, it is worth remembering that "a failure to plan is a plan to fail". We have made our plans and are committed to them. Failure simply isn't an option.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Due to a delay beyond our control, the full Treasurer's Annual Report will appear in the October issue of "Flight", along with a copy of the audited Ducks Unlimited Annual Financial Statements for the 1995/96 financial year. Copies of the Annual Financial Statements will be available at the Annual General Meeting and will be posted to those members who request them prior to the publication of the October issue of "Flight". We apologise for this delay.

OPERATION WETLANDS

Ken Cook

Over the past year our biggest earthmoving project has been Home Lagoon, South Wairarapa. This project was fully reported on in a recent edition of "Flight". To be able to have complete control of the water level of this 40 acre wetland is a tremendous asset and all concerned with that project are to be commended, especially Denis Handyside, the owner of Te Hopai Station. This project is a model for the further development of Operation Wetlands as it shows what can be achieved through a strong partnership between private landowners on one hand and Ducks Unlimited and its sponsors and contributors on the other.

The ponds of Alan and Sue Fielding at Tokomaru in the Manawatu have proven very successful and have a large population of birds of many species. Further north, Mike Bourke of Rangiwahia is in the process of developing a further 15 acre pond to add to his already established wetlands. A few more Mike Bourkes and we would see a reversal of the decline in wetlands!

Makerua Swamp is taking on its winter appearance again. Part of the bank built

by DU has eroded, however, this has been restored with a heap of voluntary labour and some organisation by Neil Candy, the new Chapter Chairperson from Manawatu.

There is increasing co-operation between DU and some Fish and Game Councils regarding building and restoring wetlands and combining the expertise of both organisations can only be beneficial to all concerned. Currently in the Manawatu there are three sites where both organisations are involved. The Regional Councils are occasionally a stumbling block and there seems to be no 'fast track' system with them.

Wairarapa wetlands continue to grow under the encouraging eyes of Jim Campbell. It is surprising just how many new ponds seem to just appear. A flight over the Wairarapa looking at these small, and not so small ponds, is quite exciting.

Throughout the year DU began the development of a more rigorous mechanism to assist with Operation Wetlands resource allocation. This is a necessity if we are to be able to get the best wetland value for our money. I am certain there will always be more projects available than we are able to assist with and being able to choose which projects receive support will ensure that we are able to employ our available resources in the most profitable way possible. This will be an important consideration once DU is able to free up its wetland capital with the impending sale of the Pearce Wetlands.

PEARCE WETLANDS

Alan Wilks

Two years ago I reported our concern over possible land accretion on the property reducing its wetland value. During a recent inspection there was no evidence of further accretion and the wetlands were covered with large areas of water and large numbers of waterfowl were evident.

During the year about the same number of members as last year have enjoyed the wetlands for recreational purposes.

Mr Pearce has relinquished his lease of

the Wellington Regional Council's block on the southern side of the wetlands and that boundary has been surveyed and fenced by the council and the new lessee. Our property is now fenced on the true boundary, on three sides, the fourth side being Lake Wairarapa. As soon as the provisions of a grazing lease have been agreed with Mr Pearce, the property will be put up for sale by tender, to free up capital for further wetland development.

OPERATION PATEKE

Alan Wilks

The most important event of the year occurred last November when Grant Dumbell, our Executive Director, and I attended a two day Brown Teal Recovery Group meeting held by the Department of Conservation at Mimiwhangata, some one and a half hours' drive north of Whangarei.

Since 1990, drafts of a Brown Teal Recovery Plan have kept turning up like little tax demands. The first was written by our Executive Director, DOC then completely changed it, considered that for a while, then wrote another one which was virtually the same as the original, and so it went on.

By mid 1995 we had another draft, then just before the November meeting we were asked to forget that and Dr Murray Williams (DOC Waterfowl Biologist) produced another entirely different one which, I think possibly in desperation, was recommended for approval. However, we do now have an agreed plan of approach for Brown Teal recovery and DOC is now taking Brown Teal recovery seriously. They are spending money at Mimiwhangata to create new Brown Teal habitat, conducting predator control at roost and breeding sites, and monitoring releases of captive-bred birds.

Last year I reported that DOC had asked us to reduce our captive breeding output to 40 birds per year until new release sites could be identified. They have now asked us to maintain the 40 bird annual production as that is the maximum number they have the resources to monitor after release. We are hopeful that some of the recently announced extra Government funding for threatened species will trickle

through for Brown Teal.

The good news is that with the co-operation of our 13 breeders, who are holding 26 pairs of birds, only 41 birds were reared last year. At the time of writing we are still awaiting returns from breeders for the 1995 season and I will be in a position to update production numbers once these reports are to hand.

The bad news is that of the birds released last year, when 12 out of 20 were fitted with radio transmitters at two release sites, all 12 were predated. It is clear that a greater effort must be made to identify and prepare suitable release sites and that predator control must continue after the birds have been released.

I believe DU has a major role to play in Brown Teal recovery with our captive breeding programme, funding of habitat restoration and predator control. To this end we have applied for Lotto funding to undertake an assessment of habitat on the Chatham Islands to ascertain if they are suitable for considering as an option for the establishment of a population of Brown Teal.

OPERATION WHIO

David Smith

The past year has seen Operation Whio largely in a holding pattern as with the absence of a recovery plan for the species there has not been any overall direction to Blue Duck conservation provided by the Department of Conservation. I am confident that this situation will change in the near future as DoC have recently completed the redrafting of the proposed Blue Duck Recovery Plan and have circulated this for comment before calling a meeting of interested parties as a precursor to having the plan approved.

From Ducks Unlimited's point of view, 1995 was a watershed year in our involvement with Blue Duck conservation as Operation Whio can now rely on a dedicated annual income as a result of a significant corporate donation which was received by The New Zealand Waterfowl And Wetlands Trust. I am extremely pleased to be able to announce that DowElanco (NZ) Ltd has provided a

\$20,000 donation to the Trust and have tagged these funds entirely to Operation Whio.

As a result of this very generous donation, DU has now prepared a development plan for Operation Whio. We look forward to being able to implement this over the next several years using the funds which will annually flow into the project from The New Zealand Waterfowl And Wetlands Trust. On behalf of Ducks Unlimited I would like to express our sincere gratitude to DowElanco (NZ) Ltd for their outstanding support and I look forward to working with DowElanco to strengthen and enlarge Operation Whio as one of DU's flagship conservation projects.

During 1995 Blue Duck were again successfully bred by John Simister at Staglands in Upper Hutt and Hamilton Zoo have also joined the ranks of successful breeders. A full report on the outcome of the last breeding season will be completed once all the annual reports from breeders are to hand.

Ducks Unlimited has also sought permission from DoC to send replacement male Blue Duck breeding stock to The Wildfowl And Wetlands Trust as it is now apparent that the original males sent to England were brothers. This leaves the UK stock with virtually no breeding flexibility and, in the long term, it will lead to the demise of this important insurance position.

Operation Whio now has a much brighter future and DU will be able to contribute so much more to Blue Duck conservation. Accordingly, it is planned to feature the project in an upcoming issue of "Flight" so that all members are able to see how important a project it is and how the DowElanco support will be used to assist Blue Duck.

OPERATION ROYAL SWAN

Dave Johnston

In this Mute Swan report for 1995/96 it has been hard to find any good news. The spring of 1995 was the coldest ever in many districts, and I believe this was the main reason for the worst breeding season on record. Normally we can have good

results in some areas and poor in others, but this season we only have seven cygnets to distribute to our members.

If there are any members that I haven't contacted who are holding cygnets please phone me on (07) 333-8453 or (025) 819-135.

On a more positive note we have made some tentative investigations of possibly getting some eggs from Australia. If this is indeed possible I will keep you informed through "Flight" magazine. In conclusion my thanks to everybody who helped with Royal Swan especially Ken Cook and Peter Russell in Palmerston North and Jim Campbell at Masterton. Lets hope that next season will be better with lots of cygnets everywhere.

EDITORIAL REPORT

Carolyn Hooson

REDESIGN

With two major changes in two years who can blame you for wondering what shape "Flight" is going to take next. Rest assured. I don't intend to redesign the magazine again. The rationale behind the changes was that "Flight" initially needed 'freshening up' which nicely coincided with the need to introduce our new logo. Our 'new look' continued using four colours throughout, however, we then began to face increased costs.

Without the tremendous support from Brendan Coe and his team at Lithographic Services colour would not have been an option at all. DU is certainly blessed to have that support but with the financial resources of DU being stretched by the Pearce Wetlands and our financial input into the creation and development of wetlands, the board quite rightly decided that colour was a 'nice to have', not a 'need to have'.

Grant Dumbell, Blair Prewett of BSP Design, and I pulled together a range of publications to serve as a starting point to reshape the magazine. In the resulting layout Blair has done a fantastic job in using background images, different typefaces and layouts to produce an interesting looking magazine to make up for the loss of colour. We have also

changed the order in which articles appear. We have brought DU News to the front, renamed the regular features and have introduced regular member profiles along with icons to denote specific purpose articles such as the "DU Field File" and "Conservation Projects".

CONTENT

We are still faced with a constant lack of news and stories to fill each issue and without contributors like Graeme Marshall, David Yerex, David Smith and Alan Wilks (to name a few) we would have a lovely looking four page magazine, instead of 16 pages. Members profiles are always needed. Even if you do not rate yourself as a blockbuster novel writer (as most of us don't) this does not preclude you from putting pen to paper to tell us about your wetland project, or experiences, or just plain good old-fashioned handy tips and hints to share with the rest of DU.

GETTING IT OUT ON TIME

Unfortunately publication deadlines has not been our strong point lately and for that we apologise. I am not going to make excuses, only a resolution that every effort will be made to ensure "Flight" is out on time in the future.



Flight
**NEEDS
YOUR
INPUT**

*Articles
DU News
Our People*

Contact: Carolyn Hooson,
Flight Magazine,
P.O. Box 9795 Newmarket, Auckland.

THE Great Greytown Water Race Duck Race

By Alan Wilks

Recently I received an invitation in our mailbox from the local Greytown Primary School inviting me to take part in a fundraising plastic duck race. Di and I agreed we should wave the Ducks Unlimited flag and participate.

When I rang the organiser to find out more, she asked "Do you realise you are in the celebrity race?" It turned out I was considered one of the pillars of our local community including the Headmaster, heads of school departments, the Mayor, the ex-Mayor and the local Alliance candidate. Heady stuff!

Di and I bought two ducks in the general race, and, of course, one in the celebrity race. The events were to float off from 11am on a glorious Sunday morning on a local water race. We duly arrived and I parked the ute, DU logo on each door, in a prominent position as close as possible to the raffle-ticket seller and the sausage sizzle. After all we were there to wave the flag.

The course was about 500 metres of water race. What better place to have a race than on a race! All 137 sponsored and numbered yellow plastic ducks were put in a wool pack and then dumped at the starting line. What excitement! The course was far from straight but some

ducks floated serenely onwards while others got delayed by overhanging grass or uneven edges, to be released by a watchful monitor. Standards had been placed at intervals and if a duck touched one it won a spot prize. The winners of the events were rewarded with cash.

There were parents and children following the field and shouting encouragement. It was mayhem, the ducks spread out over a considerable distance, but eventually one reached the finish line and with further excitement the winner was announced. I don't think we were in the first hundred!

Next was the celebrity race with seven entrants. Unfortunately, not all the other so called celebrities turned up. There was personal support for the duck representing Headmaster and Staff, and for Ducks Unlimited. I stuck a DU decal on the bottom of our duck because as most of



Alan Wilks with Greytown Primary School Headmaster John Robertson. Photo: Di Wilks



The Great Greytown Water Race Duck Race. Photo: Di Wilks

them seemed to float on their sides it was clearly visible. The seven ducks jockeyed for position with bystanders shouting "C'mon the Ducks Unlimited duck!" We were just pipped at the post, although we won a spot prize of an Instant Kiwi ticket. True to form this brought us no luck either.

Then came the Sweepstake race with the winner taking a good cash prize. Sadly DU's funds were not to be swelled. I think our duck was getting a bit tired by this stage although I did wonder if some of the others had been stripped down for racing. The Headmaster won the race and I summed it up as the story of my schooldays - thrashed by the Headmaster!

However, all was not lost. One of our tickets won the raffle, so you should expect to bid up large for the worthwhile prize that will now be in the auction at the Conference Dinner. An entertaining couple of hours was had by all, the school raised over \$600, and we'll be there again next year.



Shopping



BOOKS

A READERS DIGEST COMPLETE BOOK OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS

A superb book, full of colour photographs covering the spectrum of Australasian bird life, this is the sister volume to the Readers Digest Complete Book of New Zealand Birds.

\$50.00 ~~\$85.00~~

B PONDS AND LAKES FOR WATERFOWL

Published in Britain by the Game Conservancy, this book covers the development and improvement of waterfowl habitat with many interesting ideas.

\$54.00

C WETLANDS - DISCOVERING N.Z.'S SHY PLACES

An excellent book in which the author, a former QEII National Trust Regional Representative, visits wetlands of varying types throughout New Zealand.

\$15.00

E ERIC HOSKING'S WILDFOWL

A must for anybody interested in wildfowl this book is full of magnificent photographs by one of the world's foremost wildlife photographers.

\$20.00 ~~\$50.00~~

G THE HAWAIIAN GOOSE

A comprehensive commentary of the conservation programme that saved the goose of the Hawaiian Islands.

\$15.00 ~~\$25.50~~

NOT SHOWN

NEW ZEALAND WETLANDS: A MANAGEMENT GUIDE

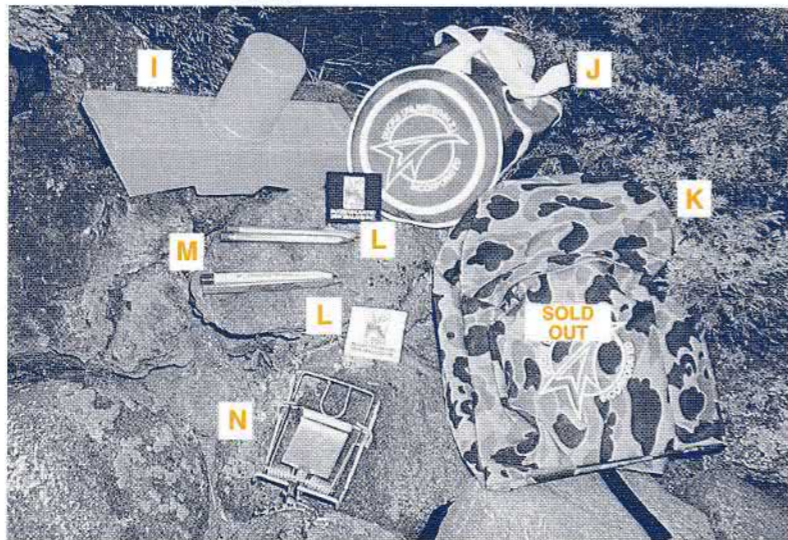
Far and away the most comprehensive New Zealand guide to managing wetlands. This has a load of answers to your questions about how to build a wetland, what to plant, what lives in a wetland, what legal controls apply and where to go for further information. This book is required reading for anybody who is serious about looking after wetlands.

\$25.00

NEW ITEM !!!

We now stock the well known and effective Timms Trap to complement the Fenn Trap. The Timms Trap is perfect for larger animals such as possums and cats. Bait with either fruit or meat depending on your trapping target.

\$40.00



OUTDOOR

H DU DECAL

Show your membership with pride with our colourful logo in permanent vinyl suitable for cars, boats, bags, anywhere.

\$1.00

I BAIT STATION

A waterproof heavy duty plastic bait station, including two long life poison baits, ideal for around your captive pond or aviary.

\$25.00

NOT SHOWN

TALON POISON BAITS

These poison baits are specially made to fit the Bait Station pictured as "I" and are designed to minimise bait loss through rats carrying the baits away. They are wax based so have a long life to extend the effectiveness of your Bait Station

\$20.00 per kg

J DU ROLL BAG

Made from waterproof nylon with a heavy duty synthetic zip perfect for carrying whatever you have with you.

\$10.00 ~~\$21.00~~

L DU MONOGRAMMED CLOTH PATCH

Show your support with a cloth patch, available in navy and white. These have overlapped edges and can easily be sewn onto your jacket.

\$10.00

M DU MAXI PENS

The pen that you will never lose, our maxipens come with both blue and red ink and can be supplied singularly or in a box of ten pens.

\$1.50 ea or \$13.00 box

N FENN TRAP MK 6

Deadly on ferrets, stoats, weasels and rats, these all metal traps are easy to set and are the ultimate quick kill tunnel trap.

\$30.00 ea or \$50.00 pair

NOT SHOWN

GREY TEAL NEST BOX

As featured in "Flight" magazine, these Grey Teal nest boxes come in a prefabricated form ready to assemble and erect on your pond. They come complete with mounts ready to fit to your own pole.

\$25.00

APPAREL

O DU CAPS

These hats are one size fits all and are in a range of colours including black, red and blue. Limited bright colours are also available, as are corduroy hats.

\$15.00

P DU LAPEL PINS

These look good on your jacket lapel and include a duck head stick pin (\$5.60), the DUNZ logo lapel pin (\$5.00), and the large duck head lapel pin (\$6.75).

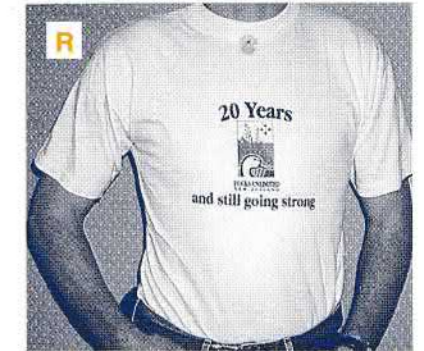
\$4.00



R DU 20TH ANNIVERSARY T-SHIRT

These cotton, unbleached T-shirts proudly display a silkscreened DU logo and come in sizes of medium, large and extra large.

\$15.00 ~~\$25.00~~



S DU SILK TIES

Our very attractive imported 100% silk ties come in three colourways of green/claret, navy/green and navy/red, and feature the DU duck head in gold.

\$40.00

Q DU MONOGRAMMED POLO SHIRT

Our hard wearing white polo shirts are great casual wear. They feature an embroidered DU logo and come in sizes of small, medium, large and extra large.

\$30.00



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