

# Flight

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1998

ISSUE 95



**DUCKS UNLIMITED NEW ZEALAND INC.**

For Wetlands and Waterfowl.

# IMPORTANT NOTICE

Ducks Unlimited is pleased to announce that it is now in a position to actively seek applications from members for subsidies to create, restore or develop wetlands.

These subsidies could provide digger hire, fencing or planting for a wetland project where the owner is also prepared to make a financial contribution, but all applications will be considered and funds allocated on merit.

In the first instance, contact:

Ken Cook, DU Operation Wetlands Supervisor,  
53 Waterloo Crescent, Palmerston North.

Ph. (06)357 5484 Fax (06)357 5704.



*After several years' association with southern North Island DU members, we would like to offer a special rate to all DU members for the*

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# 1998

# 24th

# ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## 3 - 5 July 1998

### The Coachman

### Palmerston North

Full weekend programme

Conference Registration \$45 per person.

Accommodation \$88 per room per night  
for two. \$13 per night per extra person.

(\$50 deposit, balance on checking out)

Bus organised from Auckland/Hamilton Friday  
evening to pick up members at points along  
State Highway 1. Returning Sunday afternoon.

### Send your registration to

Ken Cook

53 Waterloo Cresc.,  
Palmerston North.

Ph (06) 357-5484

# INSIGHT

Graham Gurr

President

It is a very strange feeling to take over the presidency of Ducks Unlimited. During the years I have served on the Board, the constant struggle has been to make the funds available cover all the costs. At times it has seemed an almost insurmountable feat. The work that Glenys Hansen did as Treasurer for many years to keep the books balanced was acknowledged last year with the presentation of the Bill Barrett Trophy.

Of course, all the directors have worked hard to keep this organisation moving forward. Acknowledgement, however, must be made to the work put in by Alan Wilks and David Smith over the past two years. Their contribution has been above and beyond what anyone could reasonably expect.

Over the past years, in spite of our financial pressures, we have still managed to complete four or five new wetland projects a year. Many of these have been reported in Flight. One of the first things to be done this year is to complete the signage for each of these projects so that people will know that it was with money raised by this organisation that these projects were completed.

The importance that habitat plays in the restoration of New Zealand's waterfowl populations cannot be understated. Ken Cook, our Wetlands Co-ordinator, has for many years been a lone voice at the board table as we grappled with other matters. With the change in our financial situation, we have appointed two of the directors to assist Ken.

This year, for the first time to my memory, we are faced with the problem of how to spend the money we will have available for our projects and for wetlands. Already the size of the new challenge we will face is apparent from the response to the request for submissions in the January issue of Flight. Our task will now be to spend our money wisely and for the lasting benefit of New Zealand's waterfowl and wetlands.



## 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: Mute Swan.

Photo supplied by Jim Campbell.

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## SPECIAL FEATURES

**A Member's Urban Wetland**

Page 4

**A Wetland Returns at Opiki**

Page 11

**Will the Swan Sing?**

by David Johnston  
& Jim Campbell

Page 7

**The Hawthorn Wood Wild Fowl  
and Wetland Reserve**

by Susan Sandys

Page 8

**Of Steel Shot and Other Things**

by David Smith

Page 10

**24th Annual Conference:  
Programme Preview**

Page 11

**Art in Flight**

Page 15

## REGULAR FEATURES

**Our People**

Page 4

**DU News**

Page 5

**Review**

Page 6

**Drawing: The Harrier Hawk**

Page 13

**In Flight Shopping**

Page 14

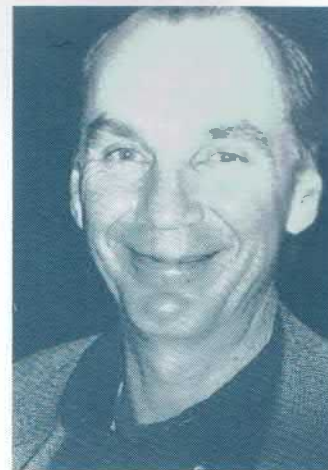
**Flight Eco-File**

Page 15

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-patrons	Lady Isaac, QSM, Christchurch Norman Marsh, Reporoa	
President	Graham Gurr, Auckland,	(09) 489 5337
Chairman	Alan Wilks, Greytown,	(06) 304 9729
Vice-president/Treasurer	Craig Worth, Box 5095, Hamilton,	(07) 846 8719 a/h (07) 847 7537
Directors	William Abel, Wellington, Ken Cook, Palmerston North, David Johnston, Reporoa, Glenys Hansen, Masterton, Dale Stevens, Cambridge	(04) 586 2752 (06) 357 5484 (07) 333 8453 (06) 378 9967

# OUR People



## Mark Newcomb

Mark has had a lifetime interest in waterfowl and wetlands, encouraged by his parents who were keen shooters. He purchased his first wetland of one hundred acres in the Whangamarino area at the age of 16. This was subsequently taken over by the Auckland Acclimatisation Society. A Life Member, he joined DU about twenty years ago and served as a Director for four years in the early 80s. Mark is married to Diana and they have five children.

Mark was involved with Fred Bailey (see Flight 92) in forming the syndicate to purchase "The Home of the Duck" in 1988. The owners have a commitment to increase the conservation values of the property.

Although he still enjoys the camaraderie of opening morning, Mark is no longer a shooter. He has a successful Auckland reprographic business specialising in photocopying, plan printing and colour reproductions up to bill-board size. His interests are fishing, skiing and travel.



## James Hooson

James Hooson is a life member of DU - that is, he has been a member all his life. He joined when he was two months old and now, aged three, he enjoys helping dad Chris feed out at the wetland. He spends time there with the crew cutting and pulling out raupo. With all due seriousness and aplomb, he experienced his first duck season out in the maimai last year, and even helped with the plucking.

James' other interests include "helping" his mother Carolyn in the kitchen and garden. He has many friends in rural south Martinborough and looks forward to playgroup and receiving fortnightly pre-school correspondence packs. The cycle of life is to the fore in James' country environment and he takes a keen interest in the meat served at mealtimes - specifically whether it is dead cow, dead pig or dead sheep. A younger brother, Liam, bears the brunt of James' over-zealous brotherly love, and his parents bear the brunt of everything else he gets up to.



## A MEMBER'S URBAN WETLAND

A water race runs through DU member Max Edridge's Greytown property. Getting permission to enlarge a bend in the water race meant putting down a plastic liner. He concreted the edges to assist landscaping. A small weir at the lower end has raised the water level to form a pond without lifting the height of the race on the upstream neighbour's. A small island has been built from old tyres. The result is a very attractive feature of his property. *Photos by Alan Wilks.*



**WHIO WORKSHOP**

A Blue Duck Captive Management workshop is to be held in Palmerston North on April 23 - 24 this year. Guest speakers include Wayne Hutchinson, Recovery Group leader, John Simister, our most successful captive breeder, and many more speakers. Contact: Peter Russell, Blue Duck Captive Management Co-ordinator, P.O.Box 117, Bunnythorpe. Ph. (06) 329 2904 (after 6pm) or work Ph. (06) 356 8199, Ext. 7621.

**COINCIDENCE**

One of DU's directors met up recently with a delightful couple from Seattle, Alan and Jeanne Bluechel. They are not DU members but we thought they could be interested in the January Flight article on David Johnston's and Graham Gurr's trip to the States. It turned out that the Olsons, with whom David and Graham stayed, are close friends of Alan and Jeanne. Did somebody say "small world"?

**EKETAHUNA CHAPTER**

Chapter Chair Ross Cottle advises that he has again acquired grain seed screenings for duck feed. This proved very popular last year and the \$5 per bag goes to DU. Contact: Ross, Ph.(06) 378 7408, or Manaia Road, RD5, Masterton.

**C'MON WELLINGTON**

To date there has been no response from Wellington members to help run the Chapter. Please don't let your Chapter fade away. Any offer of help would give William Abel a bit of much-needed encouragement, so give him a call on Ph. (04) 478 4335 or a/h (04) 586 2752.

**ASHHURST DOMAIN WETLAND DEVELOPMENT**

The Ashhurst Domain contains the only ox-bow in the Pohangina system. This ox-bow wetland is approximately 1.2 kilometres in length and averages 50 metres in width. In its present state it contains about 30 square metres of open water. The balance is completely choked with raupo.

Since the Palmerston North City Council vetoed the development of the Awapuni Lagoon (see Flight 94) DU has searched for another sizeable project. The Ashhurst ox-bow is really what Ducks Unlimited is all about. At present the area is useless for waterfowl and the intention is to remove large areas of raupo to create a useable wetland once more. Planning has involved DOC, Forest & Bird, Fish and Game, Palmerston North City Council reserves staff, and DU members.

Finally, DU has the responsibility of carrying out the work and supervising it. Funding for the whole project has come from the Pacific Development and Conservation Trust, for which we are very grateful.

In late February, Peter Dobson, "Digger Man", will move in with his machine and, as this issue goes to press, there will be a change of scene for the Pohangina waterfowl. Watch this space.

**WETLAND FUNDING**

Operation Wetlands Supervisor Ken Cook reports a very positive response to the advertisement in the January Flight seeking applications for subsidies to create wetlands. When this issue went to press he had received 27 applications for subsidies.

*DU News continued on page 6...*



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At the moment David Smith and William Abel are assisting Ken Cook to prioritise applications to ensure maximum value for dollar and to complete as many projects as possible before winter. An update on progress will appear in the July issue of Flight.

In November DU received an approach from a South Wairarapa property owner for advice and possible assistance to develop a wetland. Ken Cook, Jim Campbell and Alan Wilks visited the property and recommended a three level development which it is estimated will produce 1.5 hectares of open water. Total cost of the project, including fencing and planting, is approximately \$3000 and DU will contribute \$1000. This project will go ahead as soon as the necessary consents have been obtained.

### MANAWATU CHAPTER SHOOT

In a real carnival atmosphere, 143 shooters fronted up to 100 targets, over two different fields, for the DU Sporting Clay Shoot at Neil and Julie Candy's Foxton property on March 22. Shot in lupin covered sand dunes, the course was quite an experience

and many were the excuses for some missed targets. Most excited shooter was Bill Curtis who took away the \$2000 Miroku gun which was drawn on entry numbers.

Top shooters over the 100 targets were Rod Bryant 91, Don Bauckham 89 and Chris Parkinson 88. Prizes were distributed at day's end after a few brief words from Chapter chair Neil Candy and National President Alan Wilks.

A huge vote of thanks to Hunting & Fishing for heaps of prizes, and to Grouse Whisky and Coca-Cola for their generous gifts.

### ANDREW DIXON McMASTER TROPHY

DU will award this trophy to a school for the 1997 and 1998 years. It entails a grant equivalent to US\$250 a year and is for an on-going project related to a wetland.

If you know of a school in your area which may qualify, please write with details of the school to DU so contact can be made.

Dr Tony Reiger, a retired American teacher who established the trophy, and funds it, will visit New Zealand in May. He has offered to talk to schools about DU. His itinerary is not yet available but he has suggested that offers of accommodation would be helpful. If you can assist, please write to Alan Wilks, 73 Wood Street, Greytown 5953, or Ph. (06) 304 9729.

## Review

### If You Must Leave It Behind....

#### *Voluntary Protection of Nature on Private Property.*

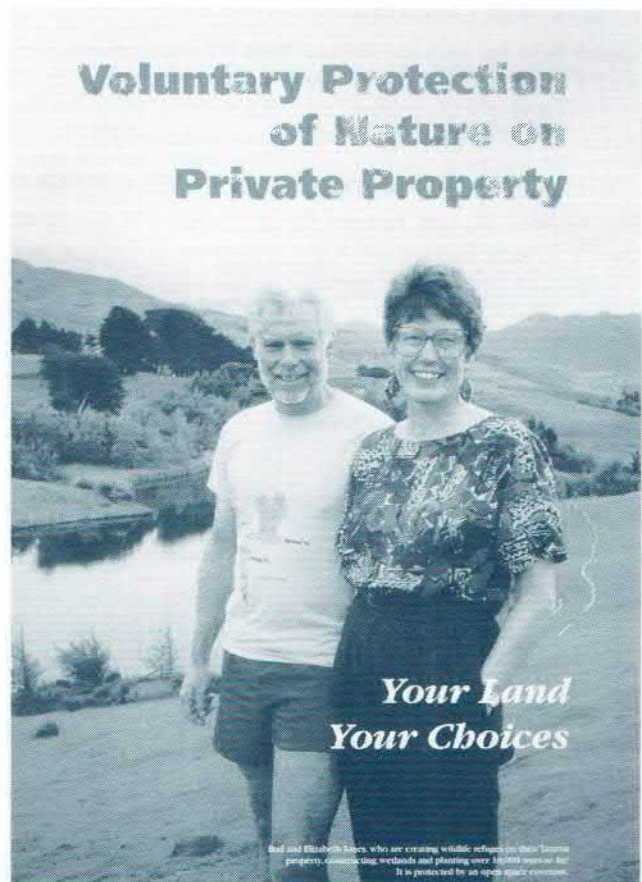
Department of Conservation, Wellington, 1998.

The effort to simply conserve what remains of New Zealand's natural values is never-ending on a broad range of fronts, both private and public. And there is a continuing need for incentives and support to extend the work. The effort involved in preserving and re-establishing even small areas is not something which ought to be lost along with the passing of those involved.

There are surprisingly many options open to those, whether farmers, smallholders or conservation organisations, seeking to ensure long-term protection of nature on their property. This brochure sets out these options. It also briefly outlines what's involved in the options available, ranging from covenants and management agreements to gifts and bequests. The agencies and organisations which need to be approached to explore each option are listed.

The brochure was co-ordinated by the Department of Conservation and launched by the Minister of Conservation on February 5 this year. Groups and organisations supporting the publication include Local Government New Zealand, Forest Heritage Fund, Nga Whenua Rahui, Federated Farmers of NZ (Inc.) and the Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust.

Additional copies of the brochure are available from DOC offices or from the supporting agencies listed.



Neil and Elizabeth Jones, who are creating wildlife refuges on their family property, demonstrating wetlands and planting over 10,000 trees in 1997. It is protected by an open space covenant.

# WILL THE SWAN SING ?

by David Johnston and  
Jim Campbell

**That most regal of all waterfowl is in decline in New Zealand. Ducks Unlimited is in the forefront of efforts to conserve this gracious asset to our wildlife population.**

The mute swan (*Cygnus olor*) is the largest of all waterfowl, a strongly territorial bird, fiercely defending its feeding and nest area. Human association with the swan predates historic times and as far back as 1800 BC. Drawings of swan decorated French and Italian caves and they have always been revered as sacred creatures. Many legends in old Celtic mythology focus on swan creatures known for their purity. In Scotland and Ireland it is considered unlucky to harm mute swan because the birds are believed to embody the souls of the dead. Old County Cork mythology suggests that swan harbour the souls of virgins remarkable for their purity. The swan was declared a "Royal Bird" in Tudor England, and playwright Ben Johnson liked to refer to Shakespeare as "The Swan of Avon".

The history of the mute or royal swan in New Zealand is by comparison fairly recent. They were imported in the 1860s

***Swans sing before they die - 'twere no bad thing***

***Did certain persons die before they sing.***

*- Epigram on a Volunteer Singer.*



from the Royal collection at Windsor. Over the years, their fortunes have ebbed and flowed. The wild population on Lake Ellesmere was decimated by the Wahine storm in 1968. DU is trying to keep this important species going in New Zealand.

At present it is impossible for DU to supply more than a few birds to people interested in helping with the species'

recovery as our numbers are in decline. We have a very long waiting list and are desperately in need of birds to re-establish pairs which have lost mates. If we can place mute swan with you, please look after them. Although we have to charge for the birds, this only covers some of the costs associated with

the programme. We also, of course, buy back young swan and singles. We are in the business of the conservation of these beautiful birds and it is a condition of our placing them with interested people that we can do this.

In the future, our breeding programme would be secured by our being allowed to import eggs. So far, we have had no luck in achieving this.

If members or readers have, or know of, any young birds or single birds to shift, please contact Jim Campbell, (06) 372 5869 or David Johnston, (07) 333 8453.

## **The following advice is offered to answer common questions from people who have swans:**

- Fencing of the breeding ponds is important. Although swan can handle most predators, dogs are known to kill mute swan every year.
- An ideal nesting site is on an island within a pond safe from most predators and other disturbance. Ideally, the island should gently slope to enable the birds easy access to the water. A bale of hay or straw placed on the site for nest material may encourage a pair to nest there.
- Males should be separated from the sitting female before she hatches her eggs. Although the males can be very protective, they have been known to drown cygnets.

- Incubation of eggs is around 35 - 36 days. In the latter half of incubation, check the eggs. Candle them and remove the infertile eggs. Alternatively, simply smell each egg and remove those going "off". Most swan will tolerate this disturbance and readily return to their eggs, but caution is advised with aggressive birds.
- "Breeding is in the Feeding." The most effective breeders keep the feed up to swan during breeding and also, when the cygnets are young. Feeding is important at times when natural food is short in the cold of winter and in summer drought. A pair of mute swan can eat up to one five-litre bucket of grain daily. They need to have ad lib feeding, as they take only a small quantity at each visit to the feeding site. The feeder needs to be at a height only the swan can reach, over or close to water. There

are many kinds of suitable feeder which can be easily made.

- Cygnets should be pinioned to prevent their flying away. Like most small operations, this is best done as early as possible - at two or three weeks after hatching. This minor operation can be done using sharp scissors and a suitable anti-septic for the wound. If pinioning is done later, it becomes a stressful operation involving a vet and avoidable expense.
- It is essential to remove cygnets to a new location before the adults are ready to breed again. An aggressive male coming up to breeding will kill any young birds, unless there is a very large water area suitable for more than one territory.



# The Hawthorn Wood Wild Fowl and Wetland Reserve

by Susan Sandys

**Russell Langdon is creating an extensive wetland on his property. One of the dividends is seeing a rich variety of native and exotic species taking up residence ...**

Before European settlement, the Lagmhor area in mid-Canterbury was a network of wetlands, home to native flora and fauna. Red tussock, cabbage trees, and dozens of bird species occupied the area covering some 75 square kilometres. Maori visited for eeling, and artefacts attesting to such have been discovered there this century.

European settlement last century saw the area, which became known as the Lagmhor Swamp, converted to farmland. Like so many other places around the country, the native species vanished.

Now doing his bit for the birds is third generation farmer and retired businessman Russell Langdon, who has reconverted some of his property into wetland. Ten years ago he used a bulldozer to dig out three hectares of ponds, which are fed by a spring, and built wooden shelters around the ponds.

**...Settlement last century converted Lagmhor to farmland and native species vanished...**

Today, Russell Langdon's Hawthorn Wood Wild Fowl and Wetland Reserve provides a home for some of New Zealand's rare bird species, including blue duck and brown teal. Other exotic and native species which have a home at the site include black scaup, weka, spoonbill duck, partridge, quail, black and white swan, paradise duck, pheasant, bob white quail, white dove, wood pigeon and, the most recent addition, banded rail.

Last year Russell Langdon added to his farm by buying a neighbouring 48 hectares. The property borders the Ashburton River which is rich in braided river habitat birdlife. He called the property "Riverbridge" and has already begun to excavate new wetlands there. Plans include up to ten hectares of ponds on the property with trout streams and a lake for fly fishing. Partridge and quail for hunting will also be released. The facilities will be for the benefit of his numerous grandchildren, aged from six to sixteen, who visit regularly and love fishing and hunting.

Although Russell Langdon used to shoot the odd hare, he now enjoys seeing the creatures around his property. After retiring from running a farm machinery business, developing wetlands and captive breeding takes up all his attention outside the daily running of the farm. He is a participant in a number of national captive breeding programmes. Species Russell Langdon has successfully bred in recent years include blue duck, brown teal, wood pigeon and weka.

Russell Langdon's love of nature is in his blood. His father, who farmed the neighbouring property, on which Russell grew up with five brothers and sisters, planted many trees which still stand today.

It has never been plain sailing, though, and as well as the personal preferences for birds Russell Langdon has had to battle bureaucracy. Wanting to inject some new blood into his weka population with birds from the Chathams, he has been negotiating with DOC for some years now. The department is having trouble getting permission from local iwi. He was also turned down by the Minister of



*Facilities for the benefit of his numerous grandchildren*

Conservation when he applied for permission to breed South Island kiwi. DOC was not supporting a breeding programme for the birds as they were not part of an official recovery programme.

Each year, Russell Langdon travels to England to visit the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust at Slimbridge, renowned for its captive breeding programmes. He is co-operating with Auckland Zoo in the captive breeding of wood pigeon, although recently he had to return one male as it was not compatible with a female he had.

**...A pied stilt factory this summer...**

As well as regular human visitors,





An aerial view of Hawthorn Wood.



including local birdwatchers and conservationists, feathered visitors to his property have included the rarely-seen bartailed godwit. Migrating from Alaska to New Zealand each Northern Hemisphere winter, the bird is more commonly spotted in coastal areas of this country. Riverbridge has been a pied stilt "factory" this summer with many taking up residence and breeding. Native shoveler duck are among species which have really taken to the wetlands, with their numbers having increased markedly over the years.



Photos courtesy of Russell Langdon.

## Russell Langdon



### "...Love of nature in his blood..."

Russell Langdon, 66, is a mid-Canterbury farmer who dedicates much of his land and time to creating habitats for birds. He is married to Velma and they have four children and eight grandchildren.

Ten years ago he began forming wetlands on his property, starting with an initial three hectares. His plans for the development of his reserve include another ten.

A member of DU for a decade, Russell became interested when he heard the group was co-ordinating the brown teal recovery programme. Just beginning to create his own wetland at the time, he became involved in the programme and bred some of the birds. He has continued this involvement and has captively bred a number of endangered species.

Russell Langdon's a third generation farmer in the area, farming livestock and crops. His parents, John and Jean Langdon, farmed Passchendaele which remains in the family and adjoins Russell's farm. He ran a successful farm machinery business for thirty years.

### ELECTRONIC BANKING

DU members wishing to make payments to DUNZ can now do so via electronic banking.

Our Bankers are:

The BNZ Frankton Branch  
Account number: 02 0312 0038729 00.

The information we require is:

Your name (if different from that on invoice or statement)  
Your ACC/CUST number (which is stated on invoice or statement)

# Of Steel Shot and Other Things ...

**David Smith's visit to Ducks Unlimited Inc.'s United States headquarters and places nearby left him impressed with some things, awed by others, and looking askance at an American hero. He writes ...**

In late October last year I was able to make a detour from a business trip and visit Ducks Unlimited Inc. headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee. I was well looked after by Allan Wentz and Matt Connelly (Executive Director). The size of the DU building is impressive, as is the quality of staff. Most are there because they have answered "the call" to save wetlands. While I am sure they are paid appropriately, it is the commitment which brings them to work each day. A positive, challenging, exciting workplace which is a credit to Matt, Allan and the rest of the team.

We heard that the first of the geese from Canada had started to arrive. So Allan and I, with a DU zoologist, took a ride in one of DU's Suburbans into Arkansas to see if we could find them. (I want a Suburban - four wheel drive, auto, comfortable cruiser, roomy enough for the family, the dog, the pool table and an Auckland Chapter meeting. Unfortunately, to get a right-hand drive Australian conversion will cost you over \$70,000 before you import it. At fifty cents a gallon for gas, no one seemed bothered to work out the fuel consumption figures, either.)

We crossed into Arkansas over the Mississippi in downtown Memphis. I thought the Canterbury Plains were flat. Arkansas is FLAT. There was only one hill in some 300km travelled and that was a geological irregularity. I was told Tennessee is largely similar. Davy Crockett has lost all my respect - the man never had to climb a decent hill in his life.

Rural Arkansas is poor. It would appear that some people live in dwellings not much better than the slaves would have had when they were working in the cotton fields - which is where their descendants in this region still largely work.

However, duck shooting is a way of life. Indeed, it is a necessity of life. Many of the farmers stave off bankruptcy each year by selling hunting rights to flooded



*The Ducks Unlimited Inc. United States headquarters, Memphis. Photo: David Smith.*

grain or timber, and rights to shoot pheasant and quail on the dry land. Many shacks had cars for sale outside - older vehicles which would fail our WOF test. But the shacks often also had green or camouflaged duck punts or boats as well, either new or well maintained. The priorities were evident - the ducks and geese bring the money.

After two short and memorable days, I left Memphis and flew to Seattle where I met up with Graham Gurr and Dave Johnston (see Flight 94). We drove across Washington State to spend a few days with Paul and Suzanne Sullivan and family. We enjoyed warm hospitality, comfortable beds and hunting.

On the morning after our arrival the three of us, plus an up-and-coming guide, shot over a pond created by Paul. The blind was essentially a half round of netting covered with local vegetation with a flap which was let down at the point you stood up to shoot. While it provided great cover, it was awkward getting used to waiting for the flap to be lowered. I would have liked to have tried a more Kiwi-style maimai with full camouflage to see if that was effective on ducks which

had been shot at since they left the Arctic Circle.

All shot was steel. Because of its lightness compared to lead, sizes 1 to 3 were used on duck. The result was that half the birds which were well hit, but not shocked sufficiently to die quickly, staggered off to the Snake River to rust to death. So change of tactic - only shoot within 20 to 25 yards. The result of that was dead birds, cleanly killed, but with holes like colanders due to the short range and large size of shot. For the ducks' sake, if we must give up lead, please let it be for one of the alternatives which have lead-like properties.

I must echo Graham Gurr's comments about the migration of wildfowl from the North to these parts. Even though the migration was only just beginning, some of the flocks of ducks looked like masses of starlings, there were so many. It is too much to imagine properly and I'll have to go back and see it when it's really under way.



# 24th Annual Conference

## Programme Preview

### Transport to and from Palmerston North

As advertised, we are hoping to run a bus from either Auckland or Hamilton picking up members along State Highway 1. This will depend on the response which will govern the cost. Obviously it will be cheaper if the bus run starts and finishes in Hamilton and for 30 people the fare would be \$60 per head, costing more or less depending on numbers.

We will need an expression of interest immediately to confirm the bus and work out costs. Please contact Ken Cook, 53 Waterloo Cresc., Palmerston North. Ph. (06) 357 5484

### Weekend Programme

Friday evening - happy hour at the Coachman, from 7pm, where members will be able to catch up with old friends and meet new ones.

Saturday - AGM starts at 9.30am, which proved popular last year. 10.30am - the bus leaves for a tour of four wetlands and lunch will be provided by Trevor Douglas at his wetland.

6.30pm - members gather for drinks, followed by dinner at 7.30pm, followed by the auction.

Sunday - two workshops will be held, finishing at midday.



## A WETLAND RETURNS AT OPIKI

The picture below graphically illustrates what can happen when a small group of enthusiasts gets together with a co-operative landowner. A thousand dollars' worth of digger time has created an asset in the landscape pictured above and the group involved is now busy fencing and planting the wetland on McAloons' property at Opiki (south of Palmerston North) this winter. There will certainly be more to report as this project develops. *Photos: Neil Candy.*



## Of Interest to Wetland Conservationists

Chris C. Tanner and Vivian C. Kloosterman.

### ***Guidelines for Constructed Wetland Treatment of Farm Dairy Wastewaters in New Zealand.***

NIWA Science and Technology Series No. 48.

June 1997. \$22.50.

Much of the land's former wetland areas have been drained or extensively modified with consequent loss of the long-recognised filtering function of natural wetlands in removing sediments and pollution from water running off the land.

Chris Tanner and Vivian Koosterman's publication outlines the use of specially constructed wetlands for supplementary treatment of dairy farm waste stabilisation pond discharges. Their work is of immediate interest to the dairy farmer using

"oxidation ponds" to treat dairy effluent and seeking to improve the quality of the outfall. Guidelines on establishing requirements, design and construction, and costings are given.

But the publication will interest those considering or involved in creating or re-establishing wetlands. It explains how wetlands work, how plant and microbial life interact with water flow in the processes going on in the system, and the life-cycles of plant and animal life which contribute to the nutrient flows. These kinds of dynamics, along with considerations of how such things as water flow are to be managed, are clearly important to those constructing wetlands.

There's a useful section on wetland planting - the timing, selection, establishment and care of wetland plants. Tables list plant species, their NZ habitats, and comments on their suitability and usefulness. A following section on landscaping gives guidelines to features which will enhance wildlife values. An appendix lists North Island wetland plant suppliers.

Copies available from the Publications Officer, NIWA, P.O.Box 11-115, Hamilton. Fax (07) 856 0151, or E-mail : d.lee@niwa.cri.nz.

## RARE BUT NEAR:

### New Zealand's Waterfowl and the Sinclair Wetlands

This 30 minute video covers the story of the Sinclair Wetlands and the waterfowl and bird life which can be seen there.

The Sinclair Wetlands is the largest area of its kind in New Zealand and lies only minutes from the centre of Dunedin. This video will allow you to experience the private lives of waterfowl in their natural habitat from spring to winter.

Waterfowl and birds endemic to the wetlands include shoveler, scaup, grey and paradise shelducks, pigeon, fernbird and the New Zealand marsh crake. Native species shown include grey teal, royal spoonbills, pukeko, pied stilt, whitefaced heron and Australasian coot, bittern and harriers. Introduced species include mallard, Canada goose and black swan.

"Without habitat you have nothing," says Horrie Sinclair MBE, founder of the Sinclair Wetlands.

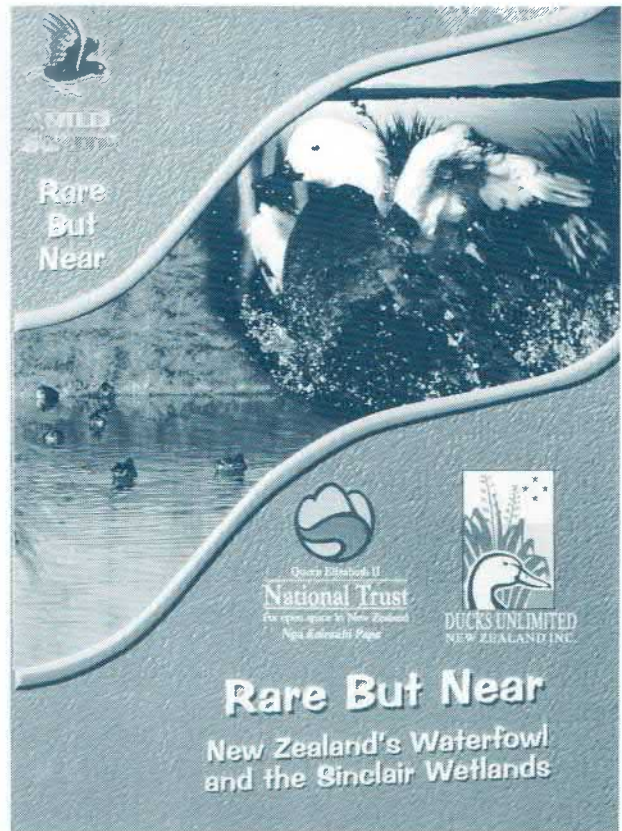
Two years in the making, with many hours of voluntary work, this wonderful video was produced by the TVNZ Natural History Unit "Wild South" which absorbed seventy-five percent of the cost.

Available at \$29.95 inc.GST and postage to New Zealand DU members.

Overseas orders, packaging and postage extra. PAL format: Australia \$8, UK and Europe \$12.

NTSC format: USA, Canada, Japan, \$12. Discounts on bulk order of 5 - 9 (5%) or 10 or more (10%).

Orders to: Sinclair Wetlands, P.O.Box 169, Mosgiel 9007, New Zealand.



## Wetlands and the Emerging Fresh Water Crisis



The term wetlands embraces a number of swamp and forest ecosystems, including peat swamps, peat swamp forest, marsh, fen, lake margins and so on.

Wetlands are now recognised as ecosystems rich in fish, birds, plant and other wildlife. Some two billion people in Asia depend on a wetland food grain: rice. In water systems, wetlands serve as buffers and regulators in periods of flood and drought, act as carbon sinks and have a cleansing function in the flow of fresh water.

But wetlands are recognised as one of the most fragile and threatened ecosystems on the planet.

The forest fires in Indonesia late last year raged through extensive areas of Sumatra and Kalimantan - much of this peat swamp forest. Some 1.5 million hectares were affected by fires, many deliberately lit by people clearing forest for agriculture and industrial plantations. As well as the immediate health problems due to smoke affecting hundreds of thousands of people, and short-term economic losses, longer-term problems will include pollution of waterways, loss of fish, extinction of threatened species, impact on climate - local and global - and loss of long-term economic potential.

In South East Asia generally, peat swamp forests have become a severely threatened habitat through the activities of logging, drainage and reclamation.

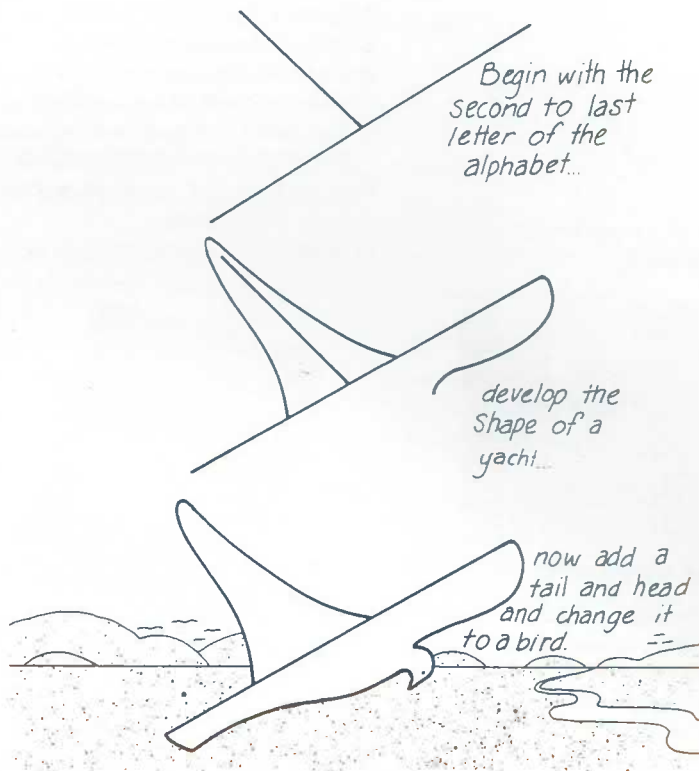
The United Nations' Comprehensive Assessment of the Freshwater Resources of the World makes grim reading. Only 0.26% of the world's water is available for use as fresh water - the remainder is in the seas (97.5%) or locked in icecaps, glaciers or deep groundwater. Demand for water rose 6-7 times from 1900 to 1995 - more than twice the rate of population growth - and is likely to rise even faster in the future. More than 80% of the water is used for agriculture and 60% of this is wasted by seepage and evaporation. Much of the fresh water returned from agriculture, industry and municipal uses is in a highly polluted state.

Fresh water for human use is not evenly distributed globally. The UN Assessment shows water scarcity (water withdrawal as a percentage of water availability) to be a particular problem in the northern hemisphere middle latitude, reaching its peak in the nations bordering the Mediterranean and adjacent seas where water is already being taken in an unsustainable way from ancient aquifers. By 2025 it is predicted that two-thirds of the world's population will be suffering water stress and that risks of conflict over water will be increased. Climate change could heighten these risks.

The UN Assessment notes the complete lack of available information on the requirements for fresh water particularly to maintain wetland ecosystem functioning.

*Drawn from: Wetlands - the Newsletter of Wetlands International. November 1977. No.4.*

# DRAWING: The Australasian Harrier



.. A regular feature introducing a simple drawing technique for new wildlife artists.

The Australasian harrier (*Circus approximans*) is also known as the swamp harrier, kahu, marsh harrier, and simply the hawk.

A native of New Zealand, it is fairly common throughout the country, except in heavily forested districts and alpine areas. It is also found in Australia and the South-west Pacific.

Measuring some 600mm from beak to tail, both sexes are similar although the female is larger. The bird's upper surface is mainly dark brown with the edges of head and neck feathers tawny. The feet are yellow. The female builds a rough nest on the ground and lays up to four chalky-white eggs.

The Australasian harrier is common on our country roads feeding on carrion, rabbits, possums and hedgehogs that have been run over. It is easily recognised when hunting on the wing for its slow flight into the wind, alternately flapping and gliding for long periods as it quarters open country in search of prey such as rabbits, rats and mice.

*Illustration republished courtesy of Alan Fielding.*



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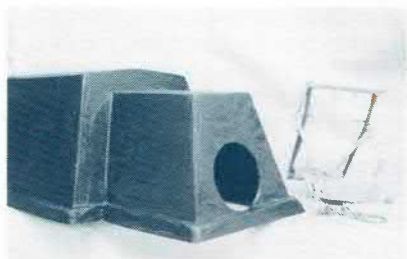
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# Shopping

## FOR AROUND THE POND



### 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 each or \$50.00 pair**

### FENN TRAP TUNNEL

These heavy duty moulded fenn trap tunnels are perfect for safely setting your Fenn Traps. Each tunnel can be used to house either one or two traps, depending on your set. As used by the Department of Conservation, they actually increase your catch rate. **\$35.00**



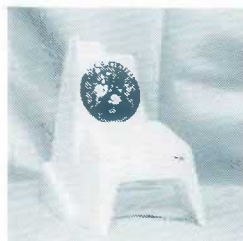
### TIMMS TRAP

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**

### BAIT STATION

This waterproof heavy duty plastic bait station is ideal for around your captive pond or aviary. It has a huge bait reservoir and can be used against possums, rabbits and rats. It really is a "set and forget"

predator control weapon to add to your trapping programme. **\$25.00**



### 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 post. **\$25.00**

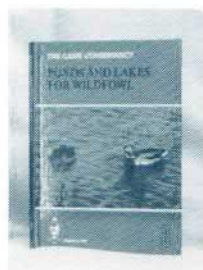
## ESSENTIAL READING

### 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**

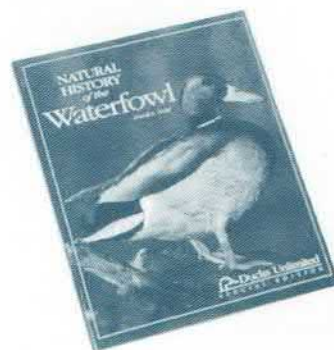
### PONDS AND LAKES FOR WATERFOWL

Published in Britain by the Game Conservancy, this book covers the development and improvement of waterfowl habitat with many interesting ideas. **\$54.00**



## NATURAL HISTORY OF THE WATERFOWL

A superbly illustrated large format book. It covers 160 members of the duck, goose and swan families from around the world. The text deals with all aspects of biology, feeding habits, courtship and migration. Coloured maps show the distribution of each species and large photographs simplify identification. **\$195.00**



## THE DU ART GALLERY

### WILDLIFE CARDS

These cards feature attractive photos of mute swan and brown teal. Each pack contains 10 cards of each (total 20 cards). **\$10.00 per pack**



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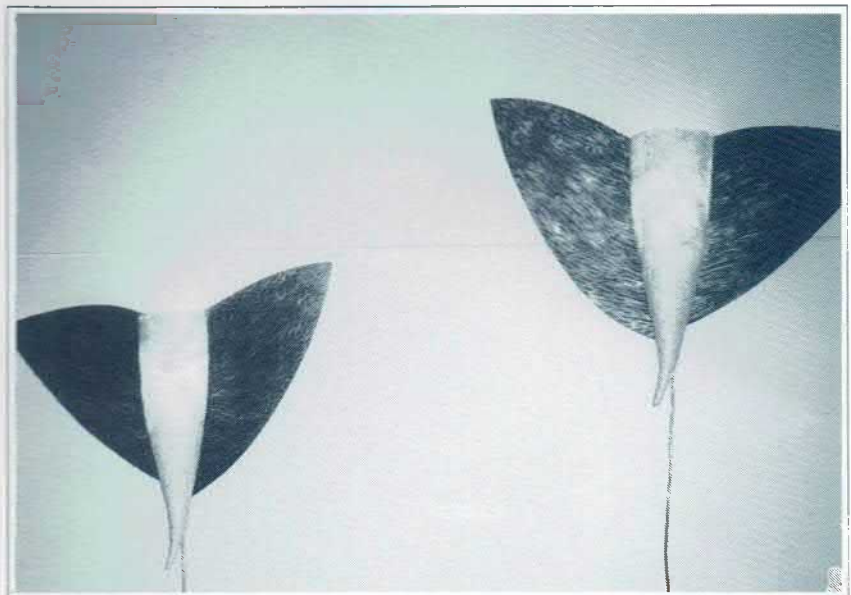
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Address: _____	_____	_____	\$ _____	\$ _____
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I enclose my cheque for		_____	_____	_____
\$ _____ as payment.		_____	_____	_____
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Card No. _____	Prices include GST and Postage & Packing	_____	TOTAL \$	_____
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## Art in Flight

Evocative of rising flight and spiritual ascension, *Winging It I & II* are two striking works by a leading Wairarapa artist, Bronwyn Reid. The paper shades for the lamps mounted on carved customwood are made from a wetland material, flax.

The works were part of Reid's acclaimed "A Diet that Works" joint exhibition with artist Greg Bloomfield at the Wairarapa Arts and History Centre, Masterton, in February-March. The exhibition opens at the Rotorua Art and History Museum on June 13.

Photo: Di Wilks.



## Flight Eco-File: Peatlands

Peatlands are a distinctive wetland type. These swamps support a large, diverse range of plant species - sedgelands, rushlands, reedbeds, mossbeds and tussock grasslands. These in turn form habitats for native birds, animals, reptiles and insects.

Peat, found in many types of wetland, is dark fibrous matter formed when decomposition fails to keep up with the production of organic matter. It is created where there is waterlogging, lack of oxygen, high acidity or low temperatures. It is the first stage of transformation of plant matter into coal.

Peatlands play a major role in controlling water flow to the downstream river system and the filtering of nutrients and pollutants. However, in many parts of the world, these

wetlands have been destroyed and are under threat from mining, draining for agriculture, and fire. Burning and trampling by stock has led to total destruction of vegetation and drying up of the peat, followed by considerable erosion of surrounding land.

Peatlands occur on all continents, and in New Zealand, and globally cover 500 million hectares. These unique wetlands are of immense value - historical, scientific and ecological. The peatbeds of the swamps hold a record of past climates and vegetation types, species and changes. They form major storehouses of natural history records.

[Acknowledgement: Wetlands Australia, July 1997, Issue No.: 6.]



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*Pukepuke Lake, Tangimoana (Manawatu). Photo: Alan Fielding.*

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