



# **“FLIGHT”**

NO 3/75

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Enclosed with this issue of "FLIGHT" is a full report on our annual conference held at Hamilton on 2 August 1975. This was a worthwhile first gathering of members and, for the information of those who could not attend, we enclose a report of proceedings.

## DIRECTORS

We welcome two new directors to the Board - Glen Butts and Kelvin Mackie, both of Auckland, were elected at the annual conference to represent members. Since joining DU the performance of these two men has been quite outstanding and fellow directors consider they have a valuable contribution to make to DU affairs.

## RAFFLE RESULTS (to benefit "Operation Gretel")

We are pleased to announce the winners - all of whom come from Auckland - most appropriate really because it was at the Game Fair that most tickets were sold.

1st Prize - Janet Marshall painting of Shovelers	J.W. Weir, Takapuna	Ticket	07357
2nd Prize - Pair binoculars	A. Harre, Birkdale	"	07068
3rd Prize - American Buck Knife	F.R. Hedlund, Manurewa	"	07399

Total ticket sales were \$ 680-40 and expenses (including printing, notices, prizes and advertisements) totalled \$ 273-75 - leaving a net profit of \$ 406-64. This is a most worthwhile effort for our first fundraising activity - and our thanks to all those members who took part in raffle selling.

## MEMBERSHIP

We are pleased to note that membership continues to steadily increase and we note with much pleasure that Mr P. Mullins has become our fourth life member. We welcome the following new members to our ranks:

Mrs K.L. Ball (A), Messrs R.B. Cooper (A), D.F. Crawford (A), R.W. Dench (A), J. Dickson (S), R. Douglas (S), R.M. Douglas (A), R.W. Douglas (S), H.W. Egan (S), B. Gilmer (A), R. Gilmer (A), D. Hartstone (S), J. Halley (A), D.A. McCulloch (A), P.F. O'Halloran (A), Miss J. Roberts (S), and B. Southee (A).

### REPORT ON "OPERATION GRETTEL"

Members will be interested to read the notes of members of the Executive (in diary form) concerning progress to date with Operation Gretel:

14 June: - under atrocious conditions, seven crazy members ventured forth to erect boxes on Tony & Bill Flexman's property at Pokeno. With the rain running out of our boots, we erected 30 boxes in a very suitable swamp that has a permanent water level. Director Neil Hayes made a special flight from Wellington to familiarize himself with the method of erection so that the boxes being placed in the Wellington district will be roughly the same.



2 August: - after receiving a report that the boxes had been flooded out, we again visited the site at Pokeno, to find everything in order. We also received an unexpected thrill when a pair of Teal flew away from one of the boxes and, upon inspection, we found that the rim of the hole was wet, which indicated that the Teal were having a quick look.

16 August: - Four members erected 9 boxes on Mr Arthur Harlock's property in the Whangamarino Swamp. While we were travelling down the Whangamarino River in our boat, we were treated to a great spectacle of hundreds of waterfowl flying at once..... we estimated that approximately three hundred birds were in the air and that the majority were Grey Teal and Shoveler, with a fair number of Greys and Mallards - and a solitary Paradise Drake.

31 August: - Visited Arthur Harlock's property again and erected 3 further wooden boxes, making 12 in all of the designed boxes, and also erected 3 x 5 gallon drums on poles with vermin protection around the base of the drum..... these drums are a further experiment and should they be successful, they could be erected at a far cheaper cost. Saw plenty of Shoveler, Grey and Mallard but only 5 Grey Teal on this occasion. Swamp was flooded.

Visited Lake Karapiro where we have nine Mallard type boxes erected. On checking the boxes we found 1 predated, 1 with a Mallard hen sitting, and 2 others with eggs freshly laid, but the clutch uncompleted. This gives an average of 44% occupancy. Very pleasing.

### "OPERATION PATEKE"

Jack Worth's introduction to our second project, and comments on the Brown Teal by Dr Murray Williams, are to be found in the annual conference report enclosed with this issue.

Director Neil Hayes reports that he is first away with the Brown Teal rearing, and has a pair sitting tight at the moment. Member Wilf Wright of Waikanae has just received his pair from the Wildlife Service, and has high hopes for an early success.

### KEEMEN REPORTS

Criteria for the establishment of Keemen Reports and Duties is still being finalised and at present we are publishing observations volunteered by members round New Zealand. Our report this issue is contributed by Mr R.D. Fenwick, member from Waimate:

"I am pleased to report on the recent game season in this area. The shooting on ducks was the best for many years, since 1958. Ducks were plentiful, after a very good breeding season. I make an estimate of the game at Wainono lagoon one week before tagging day - a friend, who was the local ranger for many years was good enough to volunteer his estimate which was 6,000 - 7,000 ducks - Mallard, Grey Teal and Paradise; 2,500 Geese and Black Swan. My estimate was identical except that I counted some 350 Teal in the duck total, and the Canada Geese count was 870 of the total of 1,700 Geese and Swan. In my opinion, the Grey Teal population has steadily increased in recent years. As you can see, Wainono is a very valuable habitat and I would like to see it declared a wetlands area."



ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MINUTES OF THE FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF DUCKS UNLIMITED (NZ) INC  
 HELD AT THE CHARTWELL TAVERN, HAMILTON ON SATURDAY 2 AUGUST 1975 AT 2 PM

WELCOME

The President, Mr I.H. Pirani, welcomed all those present (a total of 31 members) and recorded the following apologies - Messrs R.T. Adams, S. Bronger, K. Baucke, J. Byrne, D.G. Bell, L. Bell, J. Boscawen, I. Jensen, H.I. Jones, P.M. McLeod, Mrs J. Parry, M.D. Midgley, and A. Vaughan.

CONSIDERATION OF ANNUAL REPORT & BALANCE SHEET

After the welcome the President delivered his report, which had been circulated to all members previously. He commented that, at 2 August, there were now 159 members and 4 life members. At the conclusion of Mr Pirani's remarks on the balance sheet, during which he mentioned that the financial situation had vastly improved since March, Mr Worth pointed out that the financial position circularised was for 21 months to 31 March and not 12 months, as it was a full summary of establishment expenditure (the error being a printer's one).

ELECTION OF TWO FURTHER DIRECTORS

Mr P.B.C. Pirani, Acting Secretary, read the Provisions of Rule 3 to the meeting and pointed out that the Rules were available for any member to peruse at the conference. The President then called for nominations and the following names were put forward - Kelvin Mackie (J. Worth/G. Butts) and Glen Butts (F.H. Lickers/F.N. Hayes). There were no other nominations received and therefore the President declared these two persons elected to the Board and welcomed them. Comments were made on the outstanding contribution made by Messrs Mackie and Butts to DU affairs.

ADDRESS BY DR MURRAY WILLIAMS

Wildlife Division, Department of Internal Affairs on the Brown Teal:

"My reason for being here is really as a substitute for Ralph Adams - but, nevertheless, I am able to be here as of right because I am also one of the two Wildlife members of Ducks Unlimited. My interest centres around game birds. My research work centres on the Shelduck and Black Swan, but also I have a considerable interest in the Brown Teal.

All too often in New Zealand conservation projects, we tend to wait until the animal is virtually on the eve of extinction e.g. some of the Kakapo, Takahe, Saddleback birds are so reduced in numbers and range that you are fighting very much a losing battle before you begin. With the Brown Teal, I think Jack Worth will tell you a little about the past history of the species and some of the reasons he thinks of it as worthy of our attention. The species is now restricted to Great Barrier Island, parts of Northland and there are a concentrated few in Stewart Island although specimens have not been seen there for a number of years.

Waterfowl, in general, are relatively easy to keep in captivity. I suppose of all the groups of birds, they present some of the fewest problems and collections of waterfowl are very common in many countries of the world - and these has obviously been a lot of expertise built up over the years by people in waterfowl management. We have members of Ducks Unlimited who are among those who have kept Brown Teal in captivity for a number of years, and among DU members there is considerable experience in management and captive husbandry of the species.

My interest is to see whether, at this relatively early stage, we can induce the Brown Teal back into parts of its former range. There are sufficient birds on Great Barrier Island to allow the taking of some birds from there each year - simply cropping birds from that population - but it is not a population I would like to take a number, say

200 a year, from until we know a lot more about the general adaptability of the bird from the wild. A couple of years ago, I requested that the Department give very serious consideration to the breeding of Brown Teal in captivity for the subsequent liberation into initially the Manawatu district. The Manawatu was originally one of the districts where the birds remained common up until the end of the 1930's. We have not really a great idea why the species died out in that area as no accurate records were kept in those days. We can make a few guesses as to what the causes were and Jack Worth has a few ideas on that - but, whatever factors were responsible for their extinction, those factors still exist and I think there is probably very little we can do about that.

Like so many other native species of New Zealand - given the opportunity to adapt to changing circumstances - many of the native species have come back and there are now species such as the Kingfisher, Bellbirds and Tui etc which are now common when, ten to fifteen years ago, you hardly saw any on the roadsides. They are examples of species which have adapted to the quite extraordinary change in New Zealand's feral composition over the years. I think the Brown Teal are one of these species which, given the opportunity, could perhaps come again - and the opportunity could be presented by rearing the birds in captivity and releasing them in the hope that they will 'take'. If they don't 'take' then in fact we have lost nothing. If they do, then we have gained a great deal.

We have already liberated some birds on Kapiti and in the Manawatu district. On Kapiti Island, the birds bred within three months of liberation - all were surplus stocks from Mt Bruce Reserve. With regard to the birds in the Manawatu, we threw out some pinioned birds into one small rat infested area three years ago. One of these birds was re-trapped last year, still alive. We have not seen others, partly because they are very difficult to see there anyway, but also we have not kept a very close watch on the area. We have since liberated another 85 birds on two other lakes in the Manawatu and these have survived two years, so there is every possibility birds can take in the wild.

It is my hope that, given successful introduction of the species back into the Manawatu, other areas of the country could be considered for liberation and when drawing up a list of these possibilities, I would certainly notify suggestions and comments from the members and directors of Ducks Unlimited.

Brown Teal are just one of the species where we all feel that, given good breeding in captive situations - cropping from the wild - we could make a very positive contribution to the conservation of a bird which has declined to be one of the rare and endangered waterfowl species of the world."

The President thanked Dr Williams for his address and invited questions from the floor - these were answered by Dr Williams and the gathering showed their appreciation of his comments.

#### DUCKS UNLIMITED DIRECTORS

The President introduced each Director to those present, and noted that Messrs H.I. Jones and D.G. Bell regretted they could not be present.

#### DUCKS UNLIMITED MOTION PICTURE

"DECISIONS" - this film was winner of a special award in the United States and was chosen to represent that country in foreign film competition. Starring John Wayne, we were told in brief, convincing form why DU has been carrying out its habitat improvement programmes since 1937 and why the work is more urgent today than ever. It featured historical wildlife and outdoor film and also an original song and score written specially for it.

ADDRESS BY MR JACK WORTH ON "OPERATION PATEKE"

Before commencing his address, Mr Worth produced a pair of Brown Teal in a display case.

"Most of you have probably seen a Brown Teal but those who have not will be interested in this pair. Pateke is the Maori name for the Brown Teal. This is Ducks Unlimited's No 2 project and we are very proud of it and, as Murray has explained, it will achieve something for New Zealand wildlife.



"Operation Pateke" which will commence in 1975, is Ducks Unlimited's second project and it entails the captive rearing by members of over 1300 Brown Teal for liberation at various sites under Wildlife Service direction. This will provide a great opportunity for Ducks Unlimited (NZ) to share in a specific project with the Wildlife Service and this privilege is not being taken lightly by the Board of DU who will be making every effort to ensure that our target is reached.

Interested members are being solicited to assist in rearing the Teal and we plan on having about 50 pair (breeders) distributed to our members throughout the country just as soon as they can be reared.

Captive raising of waterfowl is an interesting and rewarding hobby, and members will be reimbursed to some extent by the Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited, who have set a fixed amount to cover costs. The experience gained from this project could be utilized in the future, should DU propose to introduce a new species of waterfowl into New Zealand.

Why, may you ask, should we become involved in such a project as "Pateke"? Well - the answer is this: Brown Teal are an endangered species and need careful conservation, and DU would, by far, have the organisation and expertise to bring about the raising of such a great number of birds for such a low cost.

The term "endangered" is given to any animal which numbers less than 1,000 in the wild, and has a declining population - and, while it is believed that the Brown Teal have actually increased marginally during the last decade due to the very wise policy of declaring Great Barrier Island a sanctuary for waterfowl, the margin is still very slender and this is the reason why the Wildlife Service have decided to release birds into selected areas on the mainland where they should have maximum protection, plentiful food supply, and be situated on properties with receptive "landlords" who will promote the birds' welfare.

In early times the Teal were numerous and were distributed throughout the entire country. Today - apart from Great Barrier and Northland, you are lucky to even sight a bird. They were an important part of the Maoris' diet and also the early Europeans made good use of them for food, as their very trusting nature, their habit of wandering away at night, coupled with their poor flight, made them easy targets and led to their accelerated decline.

Ducks Unlimited (NZ)'s part in the "Pateke" project calls for the building up of a breeding flock of Teal from the present 5 pairs of birds, to 50 pair by 1979 and, at the same time during this build-up period, we propose to make available for liberation some 240 birds. This will enable Dr Murray Williams of the Wildlife Service (who will be heading the entire project) to maintain continuity of liberations. Dr Williams is in sole charge of the New Zealand Brown Teal population and, incidentally, is an active member of Ducks Unlimited (NZ).



From the year 1979 to 1984 we plan to supply Dr Williams with 190 birds per year, rounding off in 1984 with 1380 birds supplied.

The Wildlife Service have committed themselves to a \$ 5 per bird subsidy and DU will match this with an equal sum..... although this will not fully reimburse members for all their costs and effort, it will well and truly cover all feed bills.

Ducks Unlimited (NZ) will also undertake the collection and delivery of all the juvenile progeny and these will be forwarded to the liberation sites on Dr Williams' instructions. Members will be invited to assist with the liberations and follow-up work, such as counting, banding, trapping etc.

The cost to DU of such an undertaking on today's values will be approximately \$ 9,450 spread over a period of ten years. This is a very reasonable cost and at approximately \$ 6-84 per bird in the field, I feel that we are getting off very lightly. However, it should be remembered that we have no field work charges to meet - neither do we have to face up to research costs which will be met by the Wildlife Service.

In conclusion, we invite all members who are interested in attempting to raise Brown Teal to contact headquarters - and you will receive a copy of the conditions that will have to be met before a licence could be issued for an individual to retain a pair of Teal in captivity. We are also completing plans and specification of a suitable breeding pen, and full instructions on caring and feeding will also be supplied.

Finally, I feel this is a great opportunity for Ducks Unlimited (NZ) to establish itself as a conservation force in this country. This operation will not cost us a great deal but its achievement will bring tremendous satisfaction and recognition."

Questions followed and these were answered by Mr Worth. Mr Noel Baucke, member from Te Aroha, asked if "Operation Pateke" was already under way. Mr Worth replied that it was, this year, with four birds. Dr Williams also commented that the Department has entered the breeding programme with 11 pair at Mount Bruce.

#### DUCKS UNLIMITED MOTION PICTURE

"THE WETLANDERS" - this was a 25 minute film on the men of Ducks Unlimited, Canada who plan, build and manage the high-production DU wetlands. Bing Crosby was narrator and the film featured the HOW, WHEN WHERE, WHAT AND WHY of DU and its work in Canada. In a dramatic and colourful environmental saga, we were shown how DU builds its 'duck factories' - from the location of potential wetland areas, through brawny bulldozers and massive equipment changing the face of the land to the production pay-off - the myriads of waterfowl which stream down the flyways.

The President commented at the end of this film that while, at present, DU in New Zealand, did not have the resources to contemplate the use of such massive equipment and projects, it was an example of what had been achieved in North America, from nothing - and he pointed out that DU's work there had been begun when conservation was not "fashionable" - and there were lessons for all in New Zealand to be learned from progress made on that continent.

#### GENERAL BUSINESS

A letter from Director H.I. (Bud) Jones, was read to the meeting - this outlined the work he has been doing with publicity and membership as an example of what others might achieve.

Mr Noel Baucke, Member from Te Aroha, paid tribute to the directors and said he felt the organisation was in good hands and he was sure that they had the confidence and support of all members. He further stated that, in view of present economic circumstances, the financial statement was an excellent one.



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The President thanked Mr Baucke for his remarks and commented further that the directors were extremely cost conscious and all expenditure was researched very carefully before being incurred. Members showed their appreciation of Mr Baucke's remarks and endorsed them.

Mr Nigel Pauli from Hamilton brought up the suggestion of public education regarding DU and the need for maybe more effective publicity material. He quoted instances of university policies which have been successful and which might be applicable. The President, in reply, outlined efforts to date with advertising and mentioned that cost was always the limiting factor - but the executive were working at ways to overcome this - sponsorships etc from public companies and organisations. He also mentioned that Ducks Unlimited now had a tax deductibility rating from the Department of Inland Revenue which made donations from larger groups a likely possibility.

The representative from Tauranga Acclimatisation Society (members of DU) mentioned major changes in that particular movement and the hope of a national shooting licence for New Zealand. He also mentioned the duck stamp system in the United States and suggested that, in New Zealand, this be incorporated with the national shooting licence, with funds for waterfowl going to Ducks Unlimited and that an approach to the Wildlife Service be made in this connection. The President gave an outline of DU thinking on this matter and said there were plans for such a scheme. He pointed out however that the duck stamp system was a government administered levy and that, probably, if introduced here, it would operate on a similar basis with a proportion of total funds going to waterfowl. An approach was being made to appropriate authorities to see if such a system could be operated in New Zealand.

At the close of the meeting, the President invited all members to partake of some refreshment and continue their discussions on a more informal basis. He thanked all for attending and those present showed their appreciation. Formal business concluded at 4 pm.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW ZEALAND FROM U.S.A.

Members will be interested in an extract from a letter received from Mr Dale E. Whitesell, Executive Vice President, Ducks Unlimited Inc, Chicago, Illinois - Mr Whitesell and his organisation have taken a personal interest in the affairs of DU in New Zealand and encouragement and help from the U.S.A. and Canada has been valuable and gratifying.

"Thank you so very much for the copies of "Flight" just received and the annual report. All of you are to be congratulated on the great progress and achievements of Ducks Unlimited New Zealand. If there is anything that Ducks Unlimited Inc can do to assist you in your efforts, please let us know."



**DUCKS UNLIMITED (N.Z.) INCORPORATED**

P.O. Box 74, Hamilton, New Zealand

*In Association with Ducks Unlimited, Canada, U.S.A., Mexico.*

## HIS tomorrow



## DEPENDS ON YOU TODAY

Ducks Unlimited (N.Z.) are pioneers in the business of ecological management in New Zealand. Work started during I CARE YEAR 1974. DU's objectives are to aid in the conservation of New Zealand's waterfowl resource — by building, restoring and preserving a quality environment in which waterfowl can live and reproduce.

