

Flight

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2004

ISSUE 118



DUCKS UNLIMITED NEW ZEALAND INC.

For Wetlands and Waterfowl.



wetland care NEW ZEALAND

Wetland Care New Zealand's mission is to: 'Harness community, business and government resources to restore and develop lost wetland areas within New Zealand.'

Funding

Funding for projects comes mainly from the Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust, which was established in 1991 and has underwritten wetland development projects to a significant level. Extra

resources have come through fundraising and corporate sponsorships like that from Banrock Station Wines. Wetland Care New Zealand actively seeks funding from private and public sources for its work.

Partnerships

Central to Wetland Care New Zealand's mission is forming partnerships with people and organisations with similar aims. Alliances are being established with conservation groups like DOC, NZ Fish and Game, Forest and Bird and regional councils.

Taking Care of Wetlands

Wetland Care New Zealand's current and completed projects and partnerships include:

Ashhurst Domain Wetland - Manawatu
Camm Brown Teal Wetland - Northland
Home Lagoon - Wairarapa
Karori Sanctuary Wetland - Wellington
Magill Wetland - Reporoa
Mana Island Brown Teal Wetland
Pearce Wetlands - Wairarapa
Sinclair Wetlands - Otago
Masterton Intermediate wetland - Wairarapa
Matuku wetland - Auckland
Tapp wetlands - Northland

For further information, please contact:
William Abel - Director, Wetland Care
New Zealand, phone 04 478 4335.

From the Flight Desk

I hope your summer is treating you well - and it's now only six months to DU's 30th birthday in July. You'll be thinking about searching out those photos and wetland histories for the special issue of Flight, won't you...

My cheeky comments on names in the last issue sparked two excellent, passionate letters on the topic (see page 7). Thanks also to other contributors.

Wendy Finlayson is a Waikato dynamo on environmental issues. Her stand against a proposed sewage outfall into Lake Waikare, from the planned South Auckland Men's Prison near Te Kauwhata, could be of interest (see page 11). She has also been active in trying to stop a massive rubbish dump near the Waikato River. Then there is the Mighty River Power proposal to extract a very large amount of water from the same river, an issue the Wildfowlers' Association of NZ, one of DU's new partners, is involved in... and Meridian Energy's Project Aqua project for the last 60kms of the Waitaki River. Where did all these people get their training...at 'How to Rape the Planet' courses in Texas?

Neil Candy's Insight in this issue might be his Presidential swan song, but is also a powerful alarm call about issues vital to conservationists.

Contributions

For the faithful contributors of hand-written material. It's great to get, we can't do without it, but please, if possible, call in those favours from family and friends, bribe or threaten them with a shaggy duck story, and send it to me either in an email (just copy and paste) or as an attached document. The pen may be mighty, but at this end transcribing it can be tedious. You can help delay the onset of editorial RSI, thereby ensuring that yet more marvellous Flights will glide into your mailbox from this direction. The Our People and Wetland sheets are fine as they are, but for anything else...I will thank you. And a reminder about images. Good quality prints are best for our printing process; if they are digital photos, please send me an email beforehand to let me know if you're about to send an oliphaunt or two? Address details on the next page.



Mallard. Graphite drawing by Paul Martinson

INSIGHT

Neil Candy
President

It would seem that we in New Zealand are not capable of learning from the mistakes made by more populous countries over the last half century. Abuse of the environment is gathering momentum in this country on a huge scale, in the so-called name of progress. Increasing demands on our natural resources, particularly water, are going to create irreparable damage to our magnificent land. In my view, big business and greed of the consumer society are riding roughshod over environmental concerns. We may have had a small victory with Lake Waikare - so far (see page 11) — but now the country is faced with Project Aqua, in which Meridian Energy has plans to decimate a huge stretch of the Waitaki River, and the plans of Mighty River Power on the Waikato River, where the level is being raised and wetland areas drowned. As soon as our annual winter power crisis is over, consumers are encouraged to return to high levels of electricity use, when we should be reducing the need for extra power generation schemes. Donations made to environmental groups do not compensate for the unnecessary destruction of our few remaining natural areas.

Citizens, Unite! Unless we act now and all interested people start working together, we will lose more than the oft-quoted 'Clean Green' image. People from all over the world flock here to admire our unspoilt environment, but it will not take terrorism to destroy this myth, we are doing it ourselves. Just pay the money, use the resource, and leave the consequences for somebody else to worry about.

Last October I had the privilege of signing, on behalf of the DUNZ Board, a memorandum of understanding and co-operation between the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC), the Wildfowlers' Association of New Zealand (WANZ) and DUNZ. BASC is one of the largest conservation organisations in the UK, and like WANZ have similar aims and objectives to DUNZ. This agreement should pave the way for a more united approach to common interests. It will hopefully help draw other conservation groups to work more closely and assist in saving our assets for future generations. [See DU News.]

As this is my last 'Insight', thank you to those who took the time to read them and only bothered to laugh when I intended humour! I wish Ross Cottle well during his term as President and thank the Board members for their support and for the fun we have had.

Neil

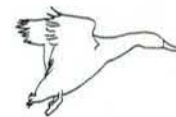
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OUR MISSION

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.

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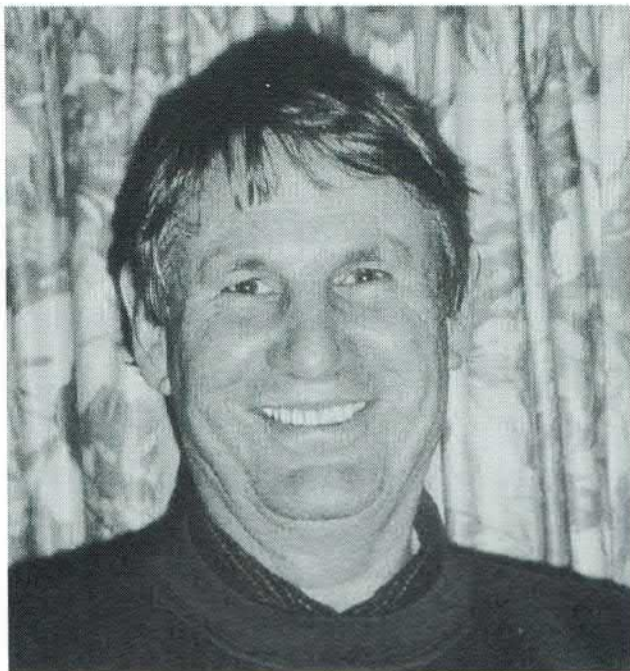
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Cover photograph: Pateke family, Karori Wildlife Sanctuary.
With grateful thanks to freelance photographer John Shorland
(business email: john@noah.co.nz).



OUR People



Tony Simpson

The first impression one gets of Tony is his expansive sense of humour. He tells us he was born at an early age in Marton. A relatively new member, he grew up at Closeburn, the family farm his great grandfather had established in the early 1860s and which Tony farms to this day. After leaving school his education was 'on the job'.

Tony and his wife Betty have four married daughters.

He has been active in Federated Farmers for many years, and has developed a cropping enterprise in conjunction with lamb and bull finishing on the farm.

His interests include the Automobile Association, gardening and Rotary where he is currently involved in a very big 'bucket project' collecting 20L plastic buckets from a local food factory to be sorted and sold.

Eight years ago, Tony began to create this attractive wetland on the property he farms with his wife, Bets. A blocked drain had caused ponding, to which ducks seemed attracted. Using the bucket on his tractor, he started developing an open area of water about an acre in size. Realising the project had outgrown his and the tractor's ability to cope he engaged the help of a willing neighbour with a Caterpillar bulldozer.

Today the pond is home to Indian runner, pekin and cayuga ducks. Visitors include mallard, paradise sheldrake, and two muscovy cross. Unwelcome guests are hawks and pukeko - the latter vandalising nests with one even seen with a duck egg in its beak. Recent additions have been a black orpington rooster with his hens. Predator control for rats and stoats is largely successful. Tony is now keen to develop a series of four other ponds about 0.5km away that were originally part of an extensive water scheme for 720ac. These ponds were frequented by mallards, often in large numbers, and were a favourite hunting spot for family and friends.



Rain approaching



The finished product, summer 2003. Photos: Tony Simpson

Since the advent of a deep-well system the need for farm water has diminished, while the variety of bird life has increased. As a new DU member it seemed logical to Tony to establish an improved habitat. This breeding season there have been 14 mallard hatchings, and the first-ever paradise hatching. He says there are usually white-headed heron, shags, kingfisher, plover, many welcome swallow, pukeko, and the occasional black swan. Around 20 May for the last seven or eight years, a dabchick has popped in for a couple of weeks. Last October one was seen for a few days - could it be the same one on a return journey? Tony has begun the planning to improve the habitat, and is waiting on advice from the DU experts.



DU Strategic Plan

The Board has decided that we need a plan to guide DU into the future. Three directors have experience in this area. The plan will be reviewed annually, and input from members is imperative. Are you happy with our performance, where do you want to see DU heading, and how do we achieve changes?

To be effective a strategic plan has to be more than just a wish list. It must be clear and straightforward, it must define viable goals and it must show how we can reach them.

Your thoughts and comments are vital. Please send them to Ducks Unlimited Strategic Plan, PO Box 9795, Newmarket, Auckland, to arrive no later than mid-February. We hope to print some of your ideas in the next issue.

DUNZ website

If you have had trouble connecting to the DUNZ website, this is because it is not operating at present, pending a Board decision on whether to invest in upgrading it, or to let it go. Your thoughts on this issue would be helpful - contact your local chapter chair, any Board member or the Editor.

A new partnership

The October 2003 'DUNZ / BASC / WANZ' Agreement (See Insight) will enable the three organisations to apply the strengths of each for the common good. The Memorandum sets out areas of agreement for developing practical co-operation and understanding in the future. They will share information of mutual benefit, which could include material on research, conservation, firearms and other legislation, training and standards, marketing and communications, and policies.

BASC represents all forms of shooting in the UK, employing full-time professional staff and working in partnership with organisations such as English Nature, The Environment Agency, Scottish National Heritage and many others.

WANZ was formed by some 400 gamebird hunters in 1997, with the intention to protect and promote gamebird hunting, ensure the welfare of NZ gamebirds and protect their habitat. WANZ has close links

with DUNZ, the NZ Deerstalkers' Association, the NZ Clay Target Association and local gundog clubs. WANZ organises permits and access for its members to private forestry and wetland reserves, runs game fairs, target and gamebird shoots and publishes a bi-monthly members' newsletter, and promotes the annual national Keith Draper Memorial Trophy event. WANZ liaises with Fish and Game NZ; its members assist local fish and game clubs, are involved in conservation activities and advocate for public wetlands locally and nationally. The current Patron is a founder member, Dr Michael Hucks.

DUNZ was formed to ensure the ethical and sustainable use of wetland resources through wetland restoration and development, conservation of threatened waterfowl, advocacy and education. It currently has about 600 members and two part-time clerical and editorial staff. Since 1974 DUNZ has raised and contributed about NZ\$2million in cash and materials for the protection and creation of wetlands in New Zealand. DUNZ is affiliated to Ducks Unlimited in the USA, Canada, Australia and European groups, and is a partner in the Blue Duck and Brown Teal Recovery Programmes with the Department of Conservation. DUNZ is represented on the Game Bird Habitat Trust Board, which raises funds through an annual gamebird stamp attached to all licences sold. The annual \$10,000 wetland development grant from South Australia's Banrock Station Wines, now in its fourth year, is managed by DUNZ.

Project reports

Blue duck - update from November 2003

The breeding season is just about over with some disappointments and some great happenings. There are 10 ducklings on the ground from our captive pairs and five hatched from Operation Nest Egg. These are South Island birds and will be released back in South Island Rivers next year. Another clutch has just been brought in and we hope they hatch to make a good South Island release.

One extremely lucky wild duckling was washed down the flooded river by Whakatane and rescued by an astute member of the public who handed it in to DOC. Only a few days old, it travelled by

car to Taupo and then Nic Peet from Wanganui went over to collect it, arriving at my place late at night. It was a little cold but recovered over the next 24 hrs. It has been reared and will be released back to where it was found later next year.

Anne Richardson at Peacock Springs is very busy with all the ducklings and will also be getting the wild duckling to be hardened before release.

There are still some clutches of eggs to hatch so we might still get up to 20 ducklings.

There are not many ducklings on the central North Island rivers, with many clutches of eggs and ducklings taken out by flooding, not the best news. We were hoping for a good year so that we could bring some central North Island juveniles into the captive-breeding programme.

The Whio Recovery Group meeting (28-31 October 2003) was a busy time with most nights working up to 9pm, stopping only for a few beers and food and back into it. Te Urewera Waimana Lions Hut was a great place to meet with solar power for lighting and gas for cooking. Andy Glaser did a great job here and we ate like kings. This hut is used by schools and groups and can sleep about 40 people. The Te Waiiti River visit was great, and we saw a lone male keeping a watchful eye on us from the bank.

Blue duck are in big trouble and funding is badly needed. DOC spends only \$70,000 a year over the whole country. I could not believe it was so little, and I hope DU will put pressure on the Government to help in blue duck recovery. The Recovery Group are great people, trying to do the best they can for the species with minimal money. If funding is not forthcoming in the near future, this species will disappear and future generations will never see them in the wild.

— Peter Russell

Pateke Roundup

A selection from November 2003 reports: Okiwi: General condition better than in 2002, 45 birds caught in October. Of 20 females monitored this season 14 have nested, 13 successfully.

Moehau: Human residents are a lot more aware of pateke since the release, through a combination of our advocacy, locals doing the predator control and simply seeing more birds around. Caution signs have been placed at strategic points on the roads.



Mimiwhangata/Northland: Total 57 birds with transmitters, and older juveniles are dispersing. This season 35 nesting attempts were recorded for 32 pairs with 33 fledged ducklings so far. Predator control continues with 349 trap sites.

Karori Wildlife Sanctuary: One pair produced seven ducklings with six surviving to date. In 2002 they produced five ducklings. Another pair has one surviving duckling of five after successfully fledging five earlier in the year. All the birds have access to kibbled or whole maize in feeders inside cages that can also function as traps. The parents killed a five-month-old male in one of these cages, which we have modified to allow easier escape.

Tiritiri Matangi Island: Two pairs each with three and another pair with seven ducklings. We know of 19 ducklings hatched this year — one of the best breeding seasons so far. The aggression shown by male ducks towards pukeko and takahe coming near the breeding sites has been interesting; not evident in early releases — must be in the feed from the captive-rearing group!

Warrenheip: Seven adult brown teal seen in November and one nest with eggs. We feel we have only a rough idea how many teal there still are in Warrenheip.

Kapiti and Mana Islands: An adult teal seen twice leading four ducklings on Kapiti — good news as the July survey was uncertain. Two chicks about to fledge from the most productive known pair on Mana, another pair with four chicks.

Captive programme: Productivity is down compared to last year with several new pairs yet to produce. Ten youngsters from the early flush of breeding were transferred to Peacock Springs and will be part of a trial for a high-fibre conditioning diet produced by Don Thomas at Massey University. If the trial goes as intended, the diet will be used to condition birds pre- and post-release. Another 15 ducklings are with captive breeders with more to come. Despite numbers being down we should achieve 40 birds for release at Moehau early next year. Two new potential breeders have expressed interest in the programme.

Brown Teal Conservation Trust: It looks like being quite a good season. Peacock Springs is sending four brown teal to the Wairarapa for flock mating. Wellington Regional Council has established a long-term predator control programme on the Hayes wetland, covering around 30ha. In the first month only two rats and two hedgehogs were caught; we are seeing very big broods of mallards, grey ducks and grey teal reaching the flying stage.

In November the Trust published an educational/fund-raising brown teal brochure, which it planned to circulate widely.

Other recovery programme activities

In early November Ossie Latham and Jim Campbell attended the Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust's field day, 'No Rats, No Cats, What's next?' which covered 'monitoring for success' and a visit to the pest management project at Little Windy Hill (see In Flight — Predators, page *). Michael O'Shea reports a good breeding season in the Awana on Great Barrier, plenty of food, fledglings about, two broods of six and seven.

The second edition of the National Guidelines for Monitoring Pateke is available. If you haven't got a copy and would like one, sing out.

Site visits to Okiwi and Port Charles in mid-October reviewed progress and identified a number of key changes to improve the effectiveness of management guidelines, predator control in particular.

The Outside the Square PR student team from Auckland University of Technology has completed their project for the recovery programme. Outputs include a PR Campaign Plan, draft School kit and some PR templates and contacts for us to work with. They have just produced another run of three press releases regarding the road kill issue and progress with the Moehau release programme. Interest from the Northern Advocate already. They have given us a structure to build on in creating and implementing ongoing PR for all the information that comes available. The OTS unit would like to take on another pateke recovery project in July 2004. They are looking at proposals for building links and opportunities with key partners, and external funding opportunities. The latter has also been put to AUT as a post-graduate exercise.

— Contributed by Shaun O'Connor



Gretel

The annual hunter grey teal survey was held in the 2003 season. Many thanks for your great support in our continuing effort to establish the number of teal in New Zealand. We began the scheme in 2002 with only six diaries, and in 2003 we were delighted to have 33 returns. However, to establish a meaningful result we need over 100 returns to reduce the margin of error and dispel the critics of our nest box scheme. Please send me the names and addresses of any others who would be prepared to assist. 2003 results: 33 hunters saw 33,138 mallards and 5229 teal, which equates to 15.7%. On the assumption that there are 100,000 mallards in New Zealand, teal numbers would be 157,000 birds. In 2002: 130,000 teal estimated.

— Jack Worth

Chapter Reports

Manawatu

The Manawatu Chapter held their major fundraising event on 11 October in Palmerston North. There were 91 people in attendance and very spirited bidding ensued for the auction items, both imported and some magnificent donated craft items. A special thankyou to Gayle Hopcroft and Alice Hood for their works of art. Also to Andy Tannock who supplied a variety of items from his recent sojourn in the US. Bob Wood in his usual fine form highlighted a most enjoyable evening. Thanks, Bob!

Manawatu Chapter Shoot

This event will be held on 13 March 2004, starting at 9am at the same venue as last year (Himitangi Block Road, Foxton). We have moved forward two weeks to ensure that we have good light at the end of the day to avoid doing presentations by torchlight. There will be 100 targets and two fields so delays should be kept to a minimum (I hope).

— Neil Candy

Wairarapa

A good crowd of 62 members and friends attended the annual dinner and auction held at Copthorne Solway Park Masterton on 18 October, and all had a very enjoyable evening. Member Matt Paku provided more crayfish than could be eaten even though people were having several helpings from the heaped dish the hotel had served. Our thanks also to auctioneer Ed Beetham who raised over \$2,500 from the main auction, to Janet and Ron Denny who canvassed local businesses for a vast array of silent auction items, and the members who generously donated.

The proceeds of the bucket raffle brought the total raised to over \$4,500.

Results of the Sporting Clay Shoot and raffle will be printed in Flight 119.

— Alan Wilks

Waikato

The Waikato Chapter is a stunning example of active DU membership, fundraising, education — and fun. Their simple photocopied newsletter is bordered with the names of 11 (yes, that many!) organisations that support them. Jack Worth reports:

In October 19 members including four youngsters headed out on a day trip to Auckland Zoo in perfect conditions and two minibuses. The zoo has some magnificent exhibits. It will be hard to forget the size of the male giraffe and the monster white rhino, the athletic sealions in their glass-fronted tank, the meerkats in a

fantastic arena, the two elephants walking around the park unattached to their keepers, the speedy tortoises munching away on the grass, the two free-flying macaws and many more. However a poor waterfowl display apart from the Carolina drakes, no bears, leopards or cheetahs, bison or buffalo - but a great outing all the same. Our thanks to Ray Hayward and Bryan Johansen who drove us there and back without mishap.

Chapter members met again in late November for an aviary and pond walk and family BBQ. After viewing over 50 varieties of birds including 11 species of waterfowl, we were thrilled by the arrival of Santa's local deputy Noel Singer who was most generous in handing out sweets to the 16 children present. Our special thanks to Murray and Margaret Shaw and family who protected us splendidly from the bad weather and provided a fantastic array of food.

Still to come, activities include: Tiritiri Matangi trip (January), Coromandel mussel barge fishing trip (February), and the Chapter's annual dinner (March),

Note: Please keep in mind that we hope to fill a bus for the AGM in Palmerston North in July, so plan ahead to avoid missing out.

— Jack Worth

DU extends a warm welcome to new members:

- Ian Jensen — Otaki (rejoined)
- Peter Muller — Waikato
- Gareth Morris — Wairarapa
- Mark Bostock — Bay of Plenty
- Colin Glasgow — Auckland
- Graham Ford — Wellington
- Tony Pittams — Bay of Plenty

Waterfowl for Sale

Available to permit holders: grey teal and paradise juveniles, pinioned or free-flighted.

Wanted: grey duck, shoveler or any Australian origin waterfowl.

Contact: Murray Shaw,

Hall Rd., No. 2 RD,

Hamilton,

Phone 07 843 4111 (please quote permit number).



A nest box working bee at Murray Shaw's property last August resulted in 11 people making up a grand total of 73 boxes. Left to Right: Graeme Singer, Dean Limbrick, Bryan Johansen, Barry Spain, Ken Parker, Murray Shaw, Tody Campbell, Noel Singer, Murray Dench, Jack Worth. Photo: Ray Hayward.

An enthusiastic approach to predator control — notes from a visit to Great Barrier Island

Jim Campbell reports:

A group of 15 people purchased some 230ha of forest on the south-east corner of the island. They covenanted 116ha with the QE11 National Trust and have set about an enthusiastic predator control programme. The energy and drive of supervisor Judy Gilbert had to inspire any Kiwi.

There are no mustelids or possums on the island, so targeted species were rats, mice and cats. No poisons are used and a rigid recording system is already showing that enthusiasm can win the battle. Many baits have been assessed, and one of the more popular was peanut butter. Over four years, 1600 rodents and 21 feral cats have been dispatched.

We also visited a neighbouring property to inspect pateke habitat (see page 6, Flight 117), met the owners of the macadamia nut farm involved (and sampled some of their chocolate macadamia bars which I can thoroughly recommend) and had a pleasant tour of their patch. A hearty vote of thanks to our 'taxi' driver Fenella Christian and to all the enthusiasts we met on the island.

(See 2003 Green Ribbon Awards page 10)

Letters to the Editor

— Congratulations to both Dave Johnston and Jim Campbell from Dunc Sinclair. A well-deserved honour for their tireless work for the ducks and their habitat. Marg and I and the Morrisons hope we can come back down your way sometime soon.

— Duncan Sinclair (Past President, DU Canada)

Swamps need protecting

— I enjoy reading Flight and have done so for many years. However, I felt a little disappointed after reading the Flight Ecofile in issue 117 which states 'for nearly 30 years DU and now Wetland Care have been encouraging landowners to convert harmful swamps, bogs and marshes into productive open wetlands'. I think it is important to note that swamps, bogs and marshes often provide valuable habitat for many rare plants and animals (many of which will not survive elsewhere) and deserve protection in their own right. Sequestration rates of two tonnes of carbon per hectare per year have been recorded for Waikato peat bogs, which therefore actually play

an important role in mitigating emissions of greenhouse gasses.

— Neil Fitzgerald (Landcare Research)

Naming matters

— Reading your editorial in Flight 117 raised my hackles. Please don't advocate for a flash magazine or a name change for DU. Our hard-won savings can be better spent on habitat where they do most good. Most of our members are pragmatic conservationists who also pull triggers. Hunters, because of the nature of their sport, are more cognisant of wetlands, their flora and fauna, than most other citizens. Agencies, charged with protection and management of NZ's fast-deteriorating wetlands, are inadequate; hunters, disgusted and concerned for endangered indigenous waterfowl, have played a significant role in attempting to restore the situation.

For Tom Parker — most townies still like ducks if only to see the delight of their kids in feeding them. Ornamental duck-type objects sell well in shops. Duck meat is a delicacy for diners. Due to the continuing deterioration and pollution of wetland habitat, especially publicly-owned areas, a goal of unlimited ducks is not unreasonable, better indeed than no duck.

Continued on page 10...

Alan Perano - Captain of Ocean Bay

A member for three years, Alan has led a fascinating life and his family has a unique place in New Zealand maritime history. We think readers will enjoy this special Our People item.

Alan's paternal forebears arrived in New Zealand from Genoa, Italy, in 1870. Alan's maternal great great grandfather was the first whaler to settle in New Zealand, and on his father's side he is a last-generation whaler from the fabled Perano factory in Tory Channel.

Alan's father was captain of the mother whale ship Tuatea. The whaling season ran from May to August, so after the family moved to Picton when he was six, he saw nothing of his father during those months.

His first schooling was by correspondence at the bay next to Fishing Bay where the whaling factory still is. When they moved to Picton he went to Picton Primary and Marlborough College.

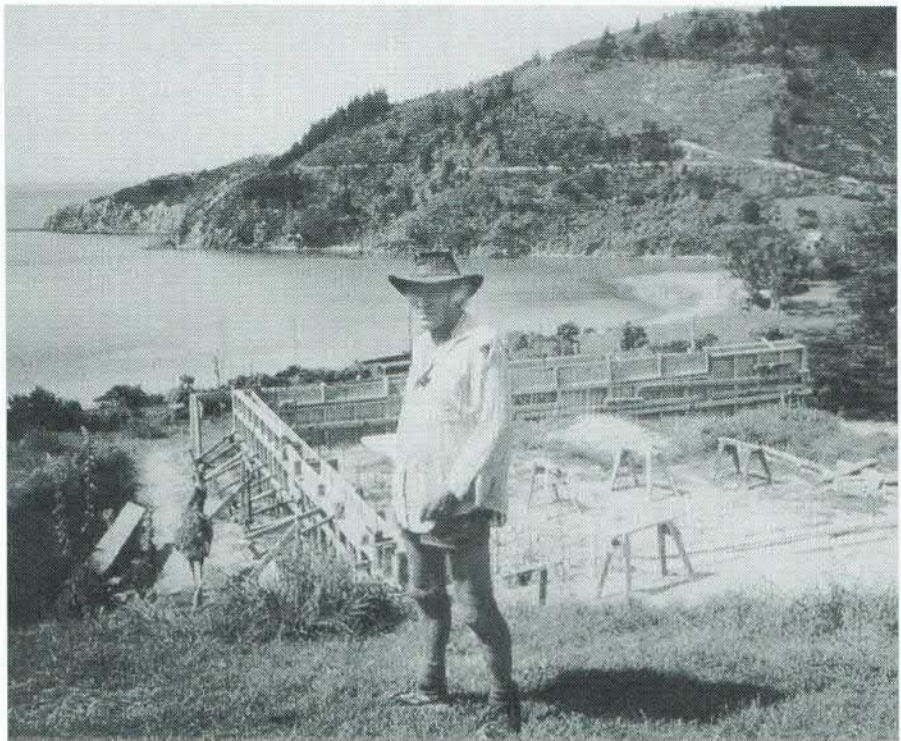
In 1946 the Picton Sea Scouts had just been formed; his mother enrolled him and he went on to represent NZ in 1952 at a Scout Jamboree in Sydney, and at 16 was the first sea scout in Marlborough to attain the Queen's Scout Certificate. He played rugby for Marlborough at all levels and took up amateur wrestling, winning the South Island welterweight title in 1959 and '61. He was in the squad for the 1966 Commonwealth Games in Jamaica but went to university instead, attending the Institute of Technology and Navigation School in Wellington. Subsequently he studied at the Coastal University Berkeley California, University of America Washington, University of Holy Cross Louisiana and Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology in Aberdeen.

His career background covers fitting and turning, a machinery apprenticeship and advanced trade certificate, certification in pressure vessel and structural welding, launch master's certificate, Diploma of commercial deep-sea diving in which he majored in sub-aqua medicine, and an MSc degree in sub-sea and ocean engineering.

Alan worked in engineering for 11 years in Blenheim and during that time started diving as a lucrative hobby at weekends or at night. He then spent 20 years overseas in the off-shore petroleum fields, working out of 43 countries and travelling through over 80 where he controlled dives — he has dived to 360m. He also assisted Red Adair in quelling sub-sea gas and oil blow-outs. Unsurprisingly, Alan Perano is multi-lingual.

He now chooses his projects and acts as a consultant to industry and government. Where he lives, burglary and coastal poaching are rife; he holds honorary positions with seven government departments including that of voluntary coastguard for Customs.

He now lives at Ocean Bay, Port Underwood, the first place in New Zealand where Europeans settled and worked, on a property he calls 'Triple C Nest' (C for Coastal Country Cetaceous), 30



Alan Perano at his house site, his land in the background. Photo: a passing pig hunter

mostly unsealed kilometres and an hour's drive ('it's hard to do more than 40kph') from Picton where he was born.

A widower for 10 years, Alan has three adult sons and a daughter. He is busy breaking in his 54ac of rough hilly land and building a log house. He has no electricity except when rain powers his water turbine.

His livestock numbers 180, mainly birds including Rouen, khaki campbell, pied muscovy, silver appleyard, paradise and mallard ducks. His black swan cob Sky 'follows me around, never stops talking. I would dearly love a pen for the boy,' Alan says.

He also has poultry, common and Sebastopol geese, doves, pigeons, guinea fowl, pheasant, turkeys, 22 breeding emus, five ostriches, and the wild birds - kiwi, pukeko, bellbird, tui, weka, fantail and native pigeon. Among his rare birds he has a pair of Australian eagles. Much in the minority are cats, a three-legged dog, a goat, a mini horse, a pig, goldfish and bees. Many of the birds and animals are partly or fully blind, deaf, or missing a limb. Referred from the SPCA or veterinarians who would otherwise have to put them down, Alan looks after them for the rest of their lives.

He has lost many birds to wild pigs and cats, stoats and harrier hawks - but still looked after an injured hawk for six weeks before it died. With a chain around one leg it became tame enough not to attack passing cats and other birds, and Alan fed it with dead possums he looked for on the road.

His interests have been marathon running, in which he competed in 34 overseas, and a 45-year involvement with scouting, but now his farming and the distance from town preclude that. He enjoys history, particularly old maritime items and data. He reads a lot but his birds are his great pleasure.

As Vince Martin says, Beat That!

Bird Talk

First national policy protecting native species in captivity

The first national policy standards on how protected native species in captivity should be managed was launched by Conservation Minister Chris Carter last October.

The Captive Management Policy will apply to everyone holding in captivity native species absolutely protected under the Wildlife Act. This includes highly endangered species, such as kiwi, kakapo and tuatara, through to more common species, such as tui and skinks.

DOC estimates there are over 50 protected species held in more than 30 public facilities, such as zoos, and in private collections.

'Until now we have lacked a national policy outlining when it is appropriate to hold a protected native species in captivity, how they should be held and the standards that those holding them must meet,' Mr Carter said. 'This policy is a major step towards ensuring that the best interests of a protected species is foremost among the issues considered when putting it in a cage.'

'DOC has worked to ensure that the policy reflects the zoo industry's movement in philosophy to displaying captive animals in more natural settings and only for a clear conservation purpose,' he said.

Under the law, holding absolutely protected species requires a permit which DOC is responsible for administering. The policy will be applied when permits are reviewed or first granted.

'Obviously the highest priority for DOC is protecting New Zealand's native species in the wild,' Mr Carter said. 'However, captive management can be useful for raising public awareness of the plight of threatened species, and for breeding. Last season DOC's Kiwi Recovery Programme at Rainbow Springs in Rotorua successfully reared 40 kiwi chicks in captivity before releasing them into the wild.'

'Captive management by other individuals and institutions outside DOC clearly plays an important role provided it is done properly, and the policy recognises this,' he said.

A Captive Management Policy Fact Sheet is available at DOC area offices or from www.doc.govt.nz



Black swan nesting. Photo: Gail Simons

Native bird care guide welcomed

A book on caring for sick or injured native birds was welcomed by volunteers at its launch by DOC last September.

Dennis Fordham, a voluntary full-time bird rescue worker in Upper Hutt for 15 years, said that 'Wild City Neighbours: a guide to native bird rehabilitation' is a welcome addition to his resources.

'It's a very good first step....before, there was nothing.'

DOC Wellington Conservancy biodiversity officer Lynn Adams says Wild City Neighbours, compiled by a combined team of veterinary professionals, experienced volunteer bird handlers and DOC staff, was part of the department's efforts to support volunteers working with birds and add to their resources. 'The book is aimed at someone who doesn't know a lot, or to fill gaps for an experienced person who doesn't have all the information.'

Ms Adams says there is a real need to support the volunteers' work. 'Injured birds are especially a problem in Wellington because of their large population.' She estimates there are around 20 or 30 volunteers in the area who look after injured birds. 'The SPCA often uses the same volunteers for the non-protected species while DOC focuses on protected species, their rehabilitation and release into the wild.' Ms Adams says the book was written following a training session for volunteers with vets and experts from Massey University, and basically summarises that training.

DOC plans a 2004 edition with more detailed information about individual species. Information for this will come from experienced volunteers like Mr Fordham, vets and wildlife professionals.

Mr Fordham says he would welcome a second edition. 'Information on individual species and their diet would be useful. People like me who have been doing it for

No blue duck young at Mt Bruce this season

The National Wildlife Centre's captive breeding programme reported in November that every blue duck nest had been washed away in floods or predated. Better news was that one Campbell Island teal was nesting and others looked likely to start, six wild kaka were nesting with four others possibly about to nest, and three hihi (stitchbird) were nesting with one chick hatched.

years know a lot about some species. My head's full of junk! But I don't know about species I see less often, kiwis for example.'

For more information contact Lynn Adams, phone 04 472 5821.

Poison-free project wins Green Ribbon Award

The 2003 'Caring for our biodiversity' Green Ribbon Award was won by Great Barrier Island's Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Catchment Trust, and presented by Minister for the Environment Marion Hobbs to Trust representatives Judy Gilbert and Chris Thompson on World Environment Day, 5 June 2003.

Formed in 2001 to create a sanctuary where species lost to the island or threatened elsewhere can be reintroduced, the Trust manages two pest management programmes over 250ha of ecologically significant land, without using poisons. The chevron skink has been reintroduced and the Trust plans to reintroduce the North Island robin to Great Barrier.

The Trust works in partnership with Work and Income, the Auckland Regional Council, Auckland Museum and DOC, and has created eight jobs in an area with few employment opportunities.

The Green Ribbon Awards, first presented by Environment Ministry in 1990, formally recognise outstanding contributions to sustaining, protecting and enhancing New Zealand's environment, and highlight the initiative, dedication and sheer hard work of individuals, communities and organisations in a wide range of projects around New Zealand. Eleven people and organisations were presented with awards at Parliament last year. A record of more than 200 entries was received for eight categories and a special International Year of Freshwater award.

Continued from page 7

The recent agreement signed between DUNZ, the Wildfowlers' Association of NZ (WANZ) and the large British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) will enable exchange of information and expertise to the benefit of all parties. [See item page 5]

I've always interpreted the 'Flight' as the rise of an idea taking wing. DUNZ continues to maintain altitude despite setbacks. A bit like the bittern I suppose, although nowhere near as endangered!

— **Dr Mike Hucks (Taupo) Life Member, DUNZ; Patron, WANZ Inc. (Abridged)**

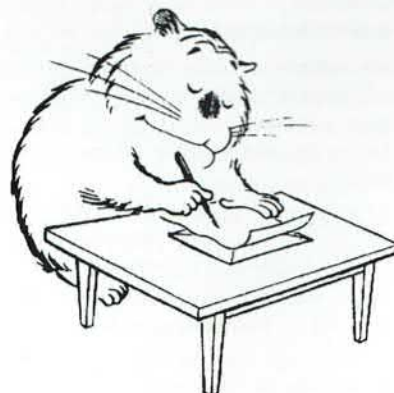
— Congratulations on Flight, I think it is good at the moment and the member contributions you are receiving must indicate that many agree.

Your comments 'From the Flight desk' touched a nerve though. Change is not necessarily good. The name Flight, to me, brings to mind a wetland at dawn or dusk. More than aeroplanes. Yes, move towards the coffee table magazine but why change the name we have known for thirty years? The three aspects of DUNZ's Mission (wetland development, waterfowl conservation, wetland values) all result in flight.

Similarly with Mr Nelson Parker's and your own comments on the Ducks Unlimited

name: incorporating Wetlands in our name is not the answer. I can best quote the Director-General of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust when he said (1993) 'The word 'wetlands' is still associated with rather negative images — unattractive expanses, wastelands, dangerous and troublesome places.' We have had a good association since our inception with Ducks Unlimited Inc (USA) and Ducks Unlimited Canada; with considerable tangible (financial) support from them. We should not weaken that link. I understand the suggestion of a name change has been discussed and discarded at a recent AGM.

— **Howard Egan (Wairarapa)**



A bouquet for DU

I am delighted that Ducks Unlimited is to become a 274 Participant to the Environment Court proceedings, under the North Waikato Action Group Inc. appeal.

To protect and improve the environmental state of our beautiful Lake Waikare, it will take a persistent all-round community effort.

Thank you very much for your awareness of this issue and subsequent help. Our community wishes to protect and improve Lake Waikare, but it seems the local councils and the Crown do not appreciate the lake's importance.

My Grandfather was one of the first members of the Acclimatisation Society. He bred and released duck and pheasant and was an avid duck hunter. If he could see the state of some of our wetland habitats today, he would be turning in his grave. I feel a strong duty to do my best to protect our heritage.

I would like to thank Ducks Unlimited so much for their support in this matter and look forward to working with you.

— **Wendy Finlayson (Waikato).**

Ednote: DUNZ has filed a notice with the Environment Court to ensure that the organisation is included in proceedings. DUNZ involvement in any hearing will be determined by the Board at its February meeting.

What goes in comes out - into Lake Waikare?

Lake Waikare - an environmental disaster!

Lake Waikare, an already shallow lake about 3m deep, was lowered by 1m in the 1960s under the Flood Protection Scheme, to increase its holding capacity in floods. However, the lake's lowering destroyed huge areas of adjacent wetland that formerly filtered run-off water entering the lake. As a result the water plants that fed the lake's 60,000 or so waterfowl (once the highest concentration in the country) all collapsed about 1977-78 and have never returned.

Fish and Game has proposed a comprehensive inter-agency study of the lake's problems, so as to choose the most cost-effective way to avoid, remedy or mitigate the combined effects of the Flood Protection Scheme and the agricultural discharges of silt and nutrients. These have all made this a 'dead lake', as overseas experts have described it. Furthermore if the new South Auckland prison (in Meremere, North Waikato) goes ahead, the intention is to pump the prison's sewerage through the Te Kauwhata oxidation pond and into Lake Waikare, further adding to the lake's pollution.

Environment Waikato recently commissioned a NIWA report, which better outlines the possible management options. However, it appears that there is little regional political will to enact its conclusions. Significant negative ecological effects will continue under the current 35 years consent regime unless urgent action is undertaken. We need your support to resolve this problem.

From www.fishandgame.org.nz 26 November 2003

Get mad, then get active...

Feisty North Waikato horse enthusiast Wendy Finlayson had conducted her own Environment Court case as one of several appellants against a massive proposed dump that would be the largest in Australasia, sited beside the Waikato River, the news website Scoop reported last September. One of her arguments was that the dump would cause land instability and create toxic leachate that could eventually pollute the river. Most of her expert witnesses donated services, while the dump's legal team and about 40 technical witnesses cost over \$1.65million. The dump, still unbuilt, would take mostly Auckland waste. It is now 100% owned by Fulton Hogan Ltd, dominated by Shell Oil interests after the 50% publicly-held share was sold a few days after the go-ahead from the Environment Court.

Source: www.scoop.co.nz, 9 September 2003

Extracts from material supplied by Wendy Finlayson

The North Waikato is currently feeling the negative effects of Auckland City's rapid expansion, with the likely establishment of Australasia's largest rubbish dump and potentially New Zealand's largest prison.

...I have travelled widely; this experience has heightened my appreciation of the natural values that many New Zealanders take for granted. Our unique and special wetland habitats must be treasured and protected.

I live and work on a 650ac farm next to the proposed South Auckland Men's Prison site. This property has 2.8km of boundary in common with the 215ha site that the Department of Corrections has acquired for the establishment of the South Auckland Men's Prison.

...Currently I am a member of the Te Kauwhata Community Committee, committee member of North Waikato Tourism, and a member of Federated Farmers and the National Wetland Trust.

The issue of the site designation for the prison is now before the Environment Court. The Minister of Corrections' decision on the site designation is to be appealed by a community group, a near neighbour, Federated Farmers and myself.

Our community considers that the major environmental impact associated with the proposed prison is its sewage disposal. The Department of Corrections' current plan calls for the prison's sewage to be treated at Te Kauwhata's small treatment plant, and the outfall released into Lake Waikare. For two years our community, including local marae, has strongly voiced disapproval of the proposal.

The Waikato District Council has stated that it will be responsible for accepting the prison's sewage at the Te Kauwhata Treatment Plant, to which the department intends to pump the prison's waste through an 11.2km pipeline, to utilise the community's small sewage plant and existing consents. However, research into the issues surrounding these consents shows that there is no way the plant can accept this waste within the consents' guidelines. The department, supported by both Environment Waikato and the

Waikato District Council, promotes the proposal as being viable.

Legal opinion obtained by Environment Waikato includes this statement: '...The Te Kauwhata Wastewater Treatment Plant Discharge Permit can only authorise the discharge sought by the original application and may only authorise that discharge on the terms referred to in that application....'

Lake Waikare is suffering the effects of suspending sediment and nitrate and phosphate loading. Currently the treated sewage entering Lake Waikare is contributing to 10% of the lake's nitrate loading. If the volume was doubled, it is clear that this loading would also double. This becomes even more significant when other non-point source contributors to lake pollution are coming under control.

The impact of the additional loading of treated sewage on Lake Waikare is of major concern to our community. It would be contrary to the past efforts and future aspirations of many groups within the community working towards improving the lake's environmental state. There is currently a combined effort promoting the restoration of Lake Waikare. Project Watershed, Clean Streams, the Waikare Steering Committee, the Te Kauwhata Community Committee and other groups are working towards restoring the lake to its former glory. Farmers contributing to Lake Waikare's catchment are working with environmental groups in order to reduce their adverse effects on Lake Waikare, by improved stock management, riparian fencing and planting.

This lake historically was once a waterfowl paradise, sadly today, it is a fouled paradise.

The use of Lake Waikare as a receiving environment for treated sewage is having a negative impact on the lake. The continued use is not sustainable and contrary to the RMA (1991).

Ducks Unlimited's support on this matter would be greatly welcomed.

For more information contact Richard Gardner, Federated Farmers' Policy Analyst, phone 09 379 0057.

With thanks to Wendy Finlayson.

To contact her, phone 07 826 3458, or email: oxlea@xtra.co.nz



The Great Lakes of the Waikato

The Waikato Region's lowland lakes (peat and riverine) are the largest remaining collection of these habitats in New Zealand. The biggest is Lake Waikare (34.4 km²) at Rangiriri. One of the smallest is Lake Posa. The clearest and deepest (8m) is Lake Rotomanuka, near Ohaupo. The Waikato riverine lakes are part of an extensive wetland system, one of the most important freshwater habitats in New Zealand.

There are 14 riverine lakes in the region, formed by deposits of alluvial material from the original path of the Waikato River which blocked valleys and tributaries. Most of the lakes remain linked to the Waikato River, and its floodwaters determine their physical, chemical and biological characteristics.

The lakes support a wide diversity of waterfowl including several threatened native species including grey teal, New Zealand shoveler, grey duck, Australasian bittern, spotless crake, marsh crake, banded rail, royal spoonbill and New Zealand dabchick. Brown teal are still present in some areas, but in low numbers.

Although some of the wetland birds are sedentary, most are very mobile, moving between lakes and wetlands as food and nesting requirements change with seasonal variations in water levels. The large lakes are especially important as a refuge for moulting birds that are growing new flight feathers.

Native fish such as the long and shortfinned eel, grey mullet and whitebait species also move between the swamps, lakes, rivers

and the sea, depending on their particular life cycles.

Populations of the endemic black mudfish can be found in wetlands next to riverine lakes.

The lakes support a number of endangered plants along their margins. Several of these species form low growing water-loving turf communities that develop in areas exposed from summer to autumn and submerged during winter.

A botanical survey in 1870 reported that Waikato riverine lakes had high water clarity with a diverse native submerged flora. The original catchment vegetation surrounding them was mixed podocarp-broadleaf forest with dense stands of kahikatea forest in the low-lying valleys.

Since human settlement, clearance of the original forest and wetland vegetation and conversion to agricultural land use has greatly modified the condition of the lakes. Many are now turbid (cloudy) and can't support submerged plants.

The riverine lakes are naturally shallow and exposed. Historically they were exposed to high wave disturbance from wind, but there was little sediment input due to the dense surrounding vegetation. Submerged plant communities also helped dampen the wave disturbance.

Today, vegetation clearance has increased sediment loads and reduced water clarity. Submerged plants can't photosynthesise, and die out. Stock grazing and trampling reduces plant cover and prevents the

growth of vegetation that would help reduce nutrients entering the lake. Fertiliser and stock wastes increase nutrients in the lakes causing algal blooms. Invasive plants such as grey and crack willow have displaced native sedges and rushes along the lakes' edges. Introduced oxygen weeds largely replaced submerged native plants, but the weed has since died off from lack of light and oxygen and grazing by swans and rudd. Introduced koi carp and brown bullhead catfish stir up the lake sediments and uproot aquatic vegetation, affecting water quality. Environment Waikato and the Department of Conservation are undertaking a trial with set-netting techniques to see if rudd can be eradicated from small lakes.

What is being done?

Lakecare groups are restoring the natural vegetation around lake edges and wetlands with fencing and planting. Weirs have been installed to maintain water levels in the lakes and wetlands. A large rock-rubble weir has also been installed in the Whangamarino River to protect water levels within the Whangamarino Wetland. A fish pass has been constructed for Lake Waikare to allow the movement of eels, mullet, inanga and smelt into the lake. The Regional Pest Management Strategy restricts the sale and movement of pest fish around and into the region, and a resource consent is required for any wastewater discharge.

From the Environment Waikato website, www.ew.govt.nz

Flight Ecofile

Biodiversity Success Stories in our Waters

Support Available for Biodiversity Work

The Government is providing funding for projects aimed at helping landowners protect and restore native plants and animals on their properties.

The Director-General of DOC, Hugh Logan, and Barry Carbon, Chief Executive of the Ministry for the Environment, are encouraging landowners and groups working with landowners to apply for money from the Biodiversity Condition Fund and the Biodiversity Advice Fund.

'These funds recognise the valuable contribution that private landowners and land managers make to conservation,' says Mr Logan. 'We want to encourage that work and we look forward to supporting some exciting projects that will help turn the tide for biodiversity in New Zealand.'

'The funding aims to promote the protection of New Zealand's indigenous plants and animals on private land,' says Barry Carbon.

The Biodiversity Advice Fund focuses on information and advice to land managers. It funds projects which inspire landholders or groups to better protect indigenous species on their land, such as workshops, field-days, and publications.

The Biodiversity Condition Fund aims to improve and maintain the condition of areas of indigenous vegetation, species and habitats.

The fund seeks to broaden community effort in the management of indigenous biodiversity. Suitable projects may include fencing or pest control on private land.

Applications can be for a single project, or a package of projects as part of a partnership arrangement. Potential applicants for the latter include local authorities, non-government and semi-governmental organisations, iwi, hapu and primary production and industry groups. Applications can also be made for multi-year funding for either a single project or for a package of projects.

A total of \$2.3 million was available in the 2003 financial year; \$1.5 million from the Biodiversity Condition Fund and \$0.81 million from the Biodiversity Advice Fund.

If you are interested, information, application forms and criteria for projects can be found at www.biodiversity.govt.nz or obtained from the Department of Conservation at: Biodiversity Funds, Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 10420, Wellington.

Phone 04 471 3296 Fax 04 471 3093 Email: biofunds@doc.govt.nz

New website

www.biodiversity.govt.nz includes progress reports and case studies of work underway on land, freshwater and marine environments to meet the aims of The New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy. The site was developed by the Fisheries, Agriculture and Forestry, Environment Ministries and the Department of Conservation.

From the Far Side

Canada

Stewart Morrison honoured

In early 2003 a dedication ceremony was held at the Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre in honour of Stewart Morrison, retired CEO of Ducks Unlimited Canada and chairman of the Wetlands International Board of Directors. Stewart is well-known to many DU members. The centre's wetland exhibit hall was named after Stewart Morrison in honour of his vision and perseverance in the establishment of the Centre, where a bronze dedication plaque now reads:

Morrison Wetland Hall

Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre's Wetland Hall is named in honour of D. Stewart Morrison, Ducks Unlimited Canada's Executive Vice-President from 1969-1995. During Morrison's 26-years of leadership (as Chief Executive Officer), Ducks Unlimited Canada became a major conservation force on Canada's landscape. A firm believer in raising awareness about wetland conservation, Morrison's vision and perseverance were instrumental in the establishment of Oak Hammock Conservation Centre. Ducks Unlimited Canada is pleased to dedicate the Wetland Hall in honour of Morrison's many valuable contributions to wetland conservation in Canada.'

From Wetlands International at www.wetlands.org

Oak Hammock Marsh is a 36km² Wildlife Management Area (WMA), one of North America's birding hotspots. It features a restored prairie marsh, aspen-oak bluff, waterfowl lure crops, artesian springs, 30km of trails, and some of Manitoba's last remaining patches of tall-grass prairie — an endangered habitat. Each season at the marsh offers unique natural beauty and wildlife-viewing opportunities.

The WMA provides important habitat for 25 species of mammals, 296 species of birds, numerous amphibians, reptiles, and fish, and countless invertebrates. The number of waterfowl using the marsh during migration can exceed 400,000 at one time. In 1987, Oak Hammock Marsh was designated as a Ramsar Site — a wetland of international importance for wildlife and people. Beyond the borders of the WMA and a surrounding buffer zone the Province of Manitoba operates a managed hunting area with the co-operation of private landowners.

Nestled at the western edge of the restored wetland is a Conservation Centre housing the national headquarters of Ducks Unlimited Canada, plus an award-winning Interpretive Centre, jointly managed by Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Province of Manitoba.

The roots of Ducks Unlimited Canada were planted in North America during the dirty dusty days of the great depression, in 1938. Waterfowl numbers were plummeting and wetlands were steadily disappearing from drought and agricultural and urban expansion, so a group of conservation-minded sportsmen set out to contend with the destruction and neglect. They initiated habitat conservation projects in Canada — where 70 per cent of North America's waterfowl nest — by raising funds in the US. They called their effort Ducks Unlimited.

Six decades later, DUC's original mandate has remained consistent. As a nonprofit, charitable corporation, DUC has invested millions of dollars to restore, enhance and conserve critical wetland habitat for the benefit of North America's waterfowl. This habitat also supports hundreds of species of wildlife and benefits society with clean drinking water, flood protection and economic spinoffs.

In recent decades, Ducks Unlimited in Canada and the United States have been joined by related organisations in Mexico, New

Zealand, Bahamas, Australia and Europe. In Canada, staff in 40 offices help secure, enhance and manage habitat and deliver conservation programmes.

Canadian wetlands remain threatened despite the fact that DU Canada has protected more than 18 million acres of habitat and built more than 5700 projects throughout the country. More than 102,000 Canadians raise \$8 million annually at over 900 fundraising events held across the nation.

From www.ducks.ca

[Visit this interesting website, where apart from a vast amount of good information and quick-loading links, there is more about the award-winning building and Oak Hammock Marsh, which has won Manitoba's Tourism Award, British Airways World's Best Environmental Experience and Canada's Best Outdoor Site for 2000. Note the number of power companies sponsoring DUC's work. DUNZ could well aim at a website of this quality, if the current one is to be maintained -Ed]

United Kingdom

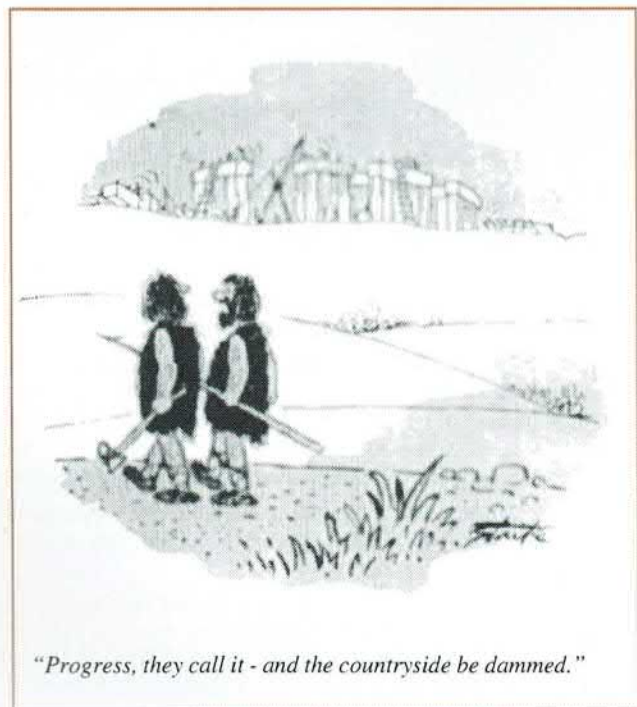
Hunting Helps to Conserve Natural Habitats

Field sports, such as fox hunting and game-bird shooting, help to conserve natural habitats in the countryside, scientists have reported in the journal *Nature*. An independent study by researchers at the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology at the University of Kent has shown that landowners involved in hunting and shooting conserved about 7.2% of their farm area as woodland cover, compared to only 0.6% among other landowners.

'Much of the debate over country sports centres around animal welfare concerns,' said Professor Stuart Harrop, a co-author of the report. 'While the legislation proposed in the Hunting Bill seeks to balance cruelty against utility of control, our results suggest another valid test of utility could focus on the role of landowners in voluntary habitat conservation.'

The researchers, who focused on three sites in central England, said landowners involved in field sports were also more likely to plant new woodland.

From www.planetark.org 30 May 2003.



"Progress, they call it - and the countryside be damned."

Mixed messages obscure the importance of action

By David Suzuki

Watching the news, it seems that there's a new environmental crisis occurring almost daily: global warming, pollution, habitat destruction, species depletion and extinction, and much more. The bad news is plentiful and painful. But then, on a fairly regular basis, a nice-looking man pops up and says that everything you are seeing is an exaggeration. The environment is fine. Everything's fine. Go buy a new SUV. It's okay. Such a nice-looking man. To the average person, it must be quite confusing. What's going on here? Are the stories on environmental calamity really an exaggeration?

The quick answer is no. On a global basis, the environment we depend on for our lives is in trouble. Natural services that provide us with essentials like a stable climate, clean water, fertile soils and others are being depleted. We are heading in the wrong direction if we want to leave the next generation with the quality of life and opportunities that my generation took for granted when we were young.

So, why the mixed messages? Well, part of the problem lies in the way the media present news stories. First, they are presented as episodic, focusing on single events rather than issues and analysis. Second, media stories are driven by conflict, so reporters are always encouraged to find someone to contradict prevailing opinion, turning complex problems into a simplified, false 'he says, she says' dichotomy. And third, there are well-financed interests at work who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, so they lobby hard to make sure their voices are heard.

Scientists have a duty to warn society of any potential environmental problems. But because of the incremental nature of science, not all predictions made come to pass. Sometimes, action is taken to avert the problem and sometimes the prediction turns out to be wrong. When that happens, it enables critics to say that there never really was a problem in the first place and environmental scientists are merely Chicken Littles who should be ignored.

To see if there is any truth to this argument, scientists at Princeton University and others conducted a study that looked at the costs

and benefits of society's reaction to environmental alarms. Their report, published in the journal *Science*, examines the costs and benefits of measures such as the Clean Air Act in the United States and others to see if society truly benefited from these actions.

It has. The researchers found that, for example, regulation has played the dominant role in improving air quality in the United States, earning Americans more than \$22 trillion in net benefits over 20 years. Furthermore, they found that in states or nations with equal wealth, those with higher memberships in 'green' organizations and higher civil liberties have lower levels of air pollution. And they go on to point out that the costs of responding to environmental problems are often far less than originally anticipated.

The researchers conclude that society receives substantial benefits by responding to environmental alarms. In fact, they point out that 'our environmental alarm is currently too conservative, not too liberal.' In other words, far from being Chicken Littles, environmental scientists are perhaps being too cautious in communicating environmental problems. Certainly public policy makers are slow to respond, as 'Problems of detecting warning signals and overcoming vested interests inevitably lead to delay in regulation, often incurring damages that could have been prevented with higher sensitivity.'

Critics of this report will no doubt say something to the effect that it's merely a case of alarmists supporting alarmists, but that argument amounts to nothing more than grasping at straws. The sooner we get serious about dealing with our environmental problems, the greater the benefits will be. True, it would be easy to listen to the nice lobbyists who tell us that everything is just fine, but waiting to take action will only make the good news less frequent and the bad news much worse.

From www.davidsuzuki.org, 5 September 2003 (the website of the David Suzuki Foundation)

David Suzuki's column *Science Matters* is published weekly in Canadian newspapers.



Lake Ada on the Milford track, South Island. Photo: Mary Lambert

Putting a value on it

It is estimated that building dams and bridges to equal the flood control and storm protection afforded globally by wetlands would cost US\$4.9 trillion. This substantial contribution to the quality of human life represents the quantification of only one wetland value. Add on the societal benefits of improved water quality, secure ground-water sources and recreational opportunities and the dollars roll up.

Source: Costanza et al. 'The value of the world's ecosystem services and natural capital' Nature 387:253-260 (1997) From The International Rivers Network: www.irn.org

[Even here, human life is assumed to be the only beneficiary of 'nature'. Is a monetary definition of 'value' the best one to use in funding applications these days? Should we perhaps seek more fiscal leverage and call conservation, like the arts, an industry? - Ed.]

Quoting...

'The Government is now reinforcing its commitment to energy efficiency and renewable energy by examining whether a national policy statement on energy would be beneficial. At the same time the Government has committed to amending the Resource Management Act to give greater weight to renewable energy.'

From the Environment Ministry's newsletter Environz, February 2003

Power to the river

Braided rivers are rare in nature - we are one of only three countries that have them...[Project] Aqua would be one of our largest power stations - bigger than the Clyde dam and Manapouri, bigger than any thermal power stations except Huntly. ...It will provide for less than five years' growth in demand. It will give us nothing in a really dry winter...that's the sort of energy planning 'the market' provides. Energy comes at a high price - but it's not mainly in dollars.

Source: Jeannette Fitzsimons MP, Green Party Co-Leader, in Green Times, October 2003

NOSLOC FEEDERS

The Nosloc feeding system has been developed in New Zealand by Dennis Colson of Te Kuiti. The feeders are suitable for duck feeding and free range feeding. Of most interest to DU members will be the duck and pheasant feeders. The newly designed nozzles feed both wheat and barley, or you can feed whole maize by using the special end cap provided. Other sizes of nozzle are available for feeding pellets to ostrich and emu. The nozzles are made of galvanised steel and will not rust or break from use. Each feeder requires a waratah and bucket (20 litre) which you supply. Larger drums can be used for the system but require additional brackets and waratahs. The nozzle, either parallel for maize or spiral for wheat and barley, and a waratah mounting bracket are supplied.

Nozzles are \$26.25 each (please advise spiral or parallel) and brackets \$26.95 each.

FENN TRAP MK 6

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

\$35.00 each.

THE THUMPER

A lightweight tunnel trap designed to kill rats and stoats. The tunnel incorporates the spring mechanism on the same principle as the Timms trap. Available as single with a closed end or double, which is a run-through with two traps. The traps are set from the outside by pulling a cord. Easy and safe to use.

Single \$35, double \$49.

The Mitredale Duck Club Cookbook

By Di Pritt, published by Halcyon Press. \$19.95 including GST, postage and packing.

The Poem

Ducks Ditty

All along the backwater,
through the rushes tall
ducks are a-dabbling
up tails all.

Ducks' tails, drakes' tails,
yellow feet a-quiver
yellow bills all out of sight
busy in the river.

Slushy green undergrowth
where the roach swim
here we keep our larder
cool and full and dim.

Everyone for what he likes -
WE like to be
heads down, tails up
dabbling free.

High in the blue above
swifts whirl and call,
We are down a-dabbling
Up tails all.

By Kenneth Grahame, in *The Wind in the Willows*.

Change of Address

Are you moving? Please send us your new details.



Name.....
 Old address..... New address.....
 Phone..... Email.....

For membership and general inquiries, Ducks Unlimited, PO Box 9795, Newmarket, Auckland, or email: info@ducks.org.nz

- YES, I wish to join Ducks Unlimited as a member
- Please send me further information, I may join later.



DUCKS UNLIMITED NEW ZEALAND INC.
For Wetlands and Waterfowl.

Title..... First Name..... Surname.....
 Address.....
 Phone..... Fax.....
 Email.....

All subscriptions include GST. Membership is available in eight categories:

- Junior (under 16) \$10 Contributor \$35 Family \$50 Business \$75 Life (one payment) \$1000

Note: Bronze, silver and gold sponsorships, which can be changed annually, include the membership fee of \$35. For the balance, sponsors will receive a receipt as proof of a tax deductible donation.

- Bronze Sponsor \$60 Silver Sponsor \$125 Gold Sponsor \$250

My Donation of \$ is enclosed. Please find my cheque attached.

Please charge my VISA/MASTERCARD No:
 Expires: Signature:

Please renew my membership each year and charge my credit card YES/NO

Post to: Ducks Unlimited, P.O. Box 9795, Newmarket, Auckland.

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Making circles in the sky. Photo: Juliet Oliver.

Proud to support Ducks Unlimited
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in their efforts to conserve
New Zealand's wetlands and waterfowl