



"FLIGHT"

FLIGHT 1/77 ISSUE 11

March 1977

DU NEWS ! ! !

DU (CANADA) CHAIRMAN VISITS NEW ZEALAND

We received a visit in early January from Mr Rod Hunter, Chairman of Ducks Unlimited (Canada), his charming wife, Doris, and their travelling companions Mr and Mrs Jack Tuck. They were on a tight schedule and did not have an opportunity to stop at Plexman's property, Pokeno, the site of the Grey Teal nest boxes. However, they made a call at the wildlife sanctuary and kiwi house complex of member, Barry Rowe at Otorohanga and were entertained to lunch by Mrs Treve Rowe. From there, we left them to tour the lower half of the North Island and, in Wellington, director Neil Hayes and his family had a very pleasant afternoon with them when they met at the property of DU member, Wilf Wright at Waikanae on 9 January.

The DU Chairman and his party had a close look at Wilf's collection of waterfowl and pheasants. They seemed impressed with the collection and with the Waikanae countryside. The party also inspected Wilf's pottery making equipment (Wilf runs 'Reikorangi Pottery' with his wife Janet).

The Wellington visit of the Canadian party was, unfortunately, all too short and the following day they left for a tour of the South Island.

DU (Canada) Chairman, Mr Rod Hunter discussing a point with DU NZ member Wilf Wright at Waikanae.



WELCOME TO DUCKS UNLIMITED (NZ)

The following members have joined DU since the last issue:

Full membership

C.B. Arnold
P.V. Burlace
I. Davison
N.E. Fisher
T.R. Hartree
Hobson Acclimatisation
Society
I. Jordan
D.B. Morrison
Mrs Y. Skilton

Supporter membership

B. Butts (Waiuku)
P.F. Jamieson
R. Stevens
Junior membership
C.J. Hodsell
David Nethercliff
Trade membership
Havelock North Sports Centre

Sponsored members

K. Barnett	(S)	sponsored by W.J. Pritt
T. Brownlee	(S)	" " Mrs J.A. Crum
S. Cerbich	(S)	" " C. Worth
A. McLeod	(S)	" " A.A. Bourne
N. Mackay	(F)	" " G. Butts
J. Morris	(S)	" " A.A. Bourne
J.C. Richards Mrs	(S)	" " S.C. Gribble
S. Short	(J)	" " Kay Worth
Waimarino Acclimatisation Society	(S)	" " S.C. Gribble

REPORT ON OPERATION GRETEL (GREY TEAL)

Diary Notes: Co-supervisors G. Butts and K. Mackie (members' representatives on the board of directors) together with P. Pirani, Vice President made visits to nesting sites as follows:

18 January 1977 Nest box inspection at Tony Flexman's property, many boxes predated by Myna birds, nests found with eggs and also myna chicks.

As the December inspection was missed, it is possible that a nest which had 4 bad eggs in this inspection, could have had the average total of 9, 5 of which may have hatched.

3 February 31 plastic drums supplied by Diversey Wallace Limited, Wiri, were converted into nest boxes and numbered.

5 February Plastic drums transported to Tuakau and erected in a swamp area owned by Butland Industries Limited, under the auspices of manager, Mr Doug Lang.

Visit to Mr Tony Flexman's to alter some nest boxes to a type which has proved most successful, as well as cutting back willows from nest box entrances.

Special thanks: to Diversey Wallace Limited, Andrew Industries Limited and Enterprising Plastics Limited, all of Auckland who have generously supplied plastic drums free of charge for use with Operation Gretel nesting programmes.

Detailed Results - Nesting Season

		Inspection dates: 2 and 30 October, 28 November 1976 and 18 January 1977	
		<u>O type boxes</u>	<u>Z type boxes</u>
87 O type boxes	(brackets indicate an additional 5 eggs may have hatched Dec/Jan)		
15 Z type boxes			
8 X type boxes			
5 V type boxes			
Total eggs laid	67 (72)	eggs laid 52 (57)	eggs laid 19
Total bad eggs	14	bad eggs 13	bad eggs 1
% infertile eggs	20.89%	% infertile eggs 25%	% infertile eggs 5.26%
Total eggs hatched	53 (58)	eggs hatched 39 (44)	eggs hatched 18
% hatched	79.10% (80.55%)	% hatched 75% (77.19%)	% hatched 94.73%
Total boxes used	7 of total 115 = 6.08% occupancy	No. boxes used 5 of total 87 Occupancy = 5.74%	No. boxes used 2 of total 15 Occupancy 13.33%

Note: X and V type boxes were not used.

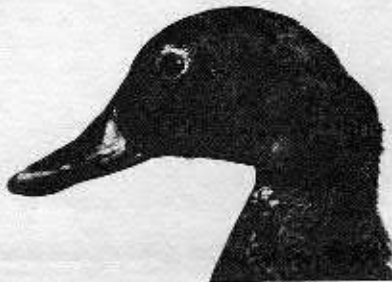
REPORT ON OPERATION PATEKE (BROWN TEAL)

19 Brown Teal were reared to maturity from 19 hatched chicks. A total of 56 eggs were laid and 60% of these were fertile, but the hatch was disappointingly low - the main cause being egg predation and embryo disease.

21 pair of Brown Teal are held by 17 DU members. The 19 surplus Brown Teal will be allocated among further members, who have applied to hold them, for the purpose of building up a base flock of 50 pair; thereafter the Wildlife Division to be supplied with any surplus for distribution by them to appropriate habitat throughout the country.

Applicants, who must be DU members, are required to conform with Wildlife Service requirements for pen conditions and have a permit issued by the department. Applicants are being dealt with in strict date order of application. Three further females will also be distributed to present holders of Brown Teal who suffered losses through predation.

Project supervisor and DU President, Ian Pirani, congratulates and thanks all Brown Teal breeders for their efforts this breeding season - although the result was not up to target, it was nevertheless an encouraging result and we plan for a major increase in the 1977/78 breeding season.



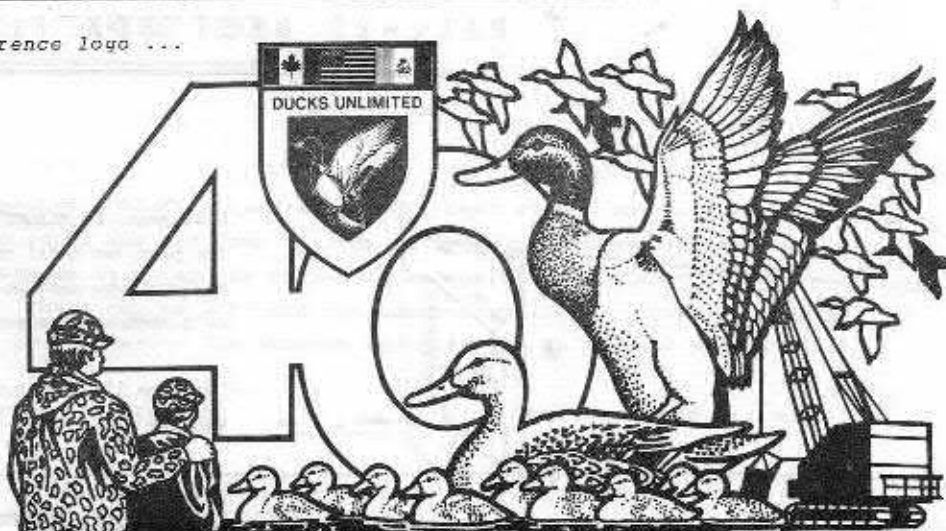
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OVERSEAS TRAVEL - DU (NZ) REPRESENTED AT DU CONFERENCE IN U.S.A.

... the conference logo ...



1937-1977 — FOUR DECADES OF CONSERVATION PIONEERING

DU (NZ) President, Ian Pirani (accompanied by his wife, Dawn) and Vice President, Paul Pirani and his wife, DU Director Cheryl, will attend the 40th convention of Ducks Unlimited Inc (U.S.A) in late April representing the New Zealand organisation. The four are taking in the conference as part of a private visit to the United States and Canada and air transportation will be largely provided by CE Air for major travel sections of the journey. They hope to call at DU projects in British Columbia and Manitoba on the way home.

DU (NZ) DIRECTOR CALLS AT U.S. HEADQUARTERS

Director, H.I. (Bud) Jones paid a visit to D.U. Chicago headquarters whilst on a private visit to the United States over the Christmas/New Year period. He was most impressed with the administrative operations he viewed, which are operated with comparatively few people on a most efficient basis with the use of computers, and extensive systems utilised for fund raising were noted by Bud. Bud presented the Chicago headquarters library with a copy of Elaine Power's publication 'New Zealand Water Birds - an Artist's Journal'.

KEEMEN REPORTS compiled by supervisor, Dudley Bell

Keemen are now forwarding reports of waterfowl counts made on swamp areas in their respective districts and these should, over the next few years, build into valuable visual, spot counts on those waterways.

It appears from reports received that the weather has been the waterfowl's friend this past breeding season. With extended rainfall, which maintained swamp water levels to a reasonable state for waterfowl, it seems that young duck successfully grew to maturity and are now on larger areas of water as the hot weather is causing the swamps to dry out.

From counts by Keemen in Whangarei and further north, as an example, interesting comparisons occur - in one Keeman's region almost all Greys were reported, while in the other, only one Grey had been seen during the early part of the breeding season.

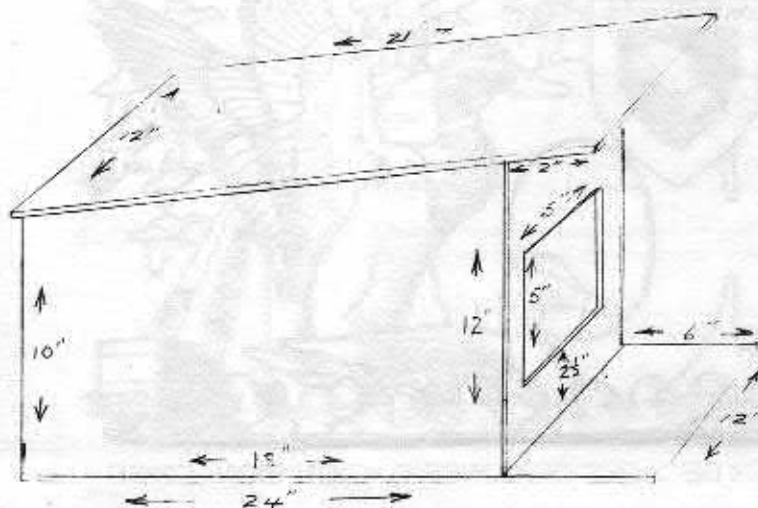
It also appeared that, from the extra rainfall this season, crop depredation reports were not as plentiful as in past years in nearly all areas covered by DU Keemen. In the Northland district, the Department of Internal Affairs have this year caught and banded many Paradise duck.

Keemen - appointments and resignations

Mr S.C. Gribble of Ohakune has been appointed a Keeman and we look forward to his enlightening reports of waterfowl conditions in his area.

With regret, we record the resignation of Dick Ball of Taupiri - Dick is leaving the district and has asked to be relieved of his duties meantime until he settles into another region (as yet undecided) - we look forward to welcoming him back in due course. Dick has indicated he still wishes to play an active role with working bee programmes etc.

MALLARD NEST BOX PLACEMENT



Last year, in *FLIGHT*, we reproduced the plan (at left) of a suitable mallard type nest box - in response to a request from members.

Cut from 12" x 1" R/S-G/R Pinus Radiata - (not drawn to scale)

Now, in response to further requests, we have 'consulted' with an expert who gives his views below:

MALLARD NEST BOX PLACEMENT OR THE ART OF "THINKING" DUCK

Good day, this is your old friend, Anas P - you know, the mallard duck. Well, I've been asked to talk to you about placing nest boxes. The first thing you have to do when placing nest boxes is 'Think Duck!'. In other words, you have to know what I think is important for the boxes. If you keep these three things in mind, you probably won't go wrong.

First is cover. As you can imagine, as the sheila's sitting on the nest, she doesn't like anyone to know where she is. Security is the name of the game. If the box is to be on the ground, then a good stand of reeds, grasses or raupo is needed to cover the area around the box. If it is high in the air, a good area of open water will afford good protection. You must be careful when placing nest boxes in the willows and ensure that the pesky opossum can't get in, and that there is adequate for the old girl to fly into the box. In a shallow swamp, say less than one metre growth, the boxes need not be placed higher than one and a half metres above the bottom.

In front of the nest box, there must be adequate open water which is the next important quality. If your box is on the ground, ensure that a good escape route to the water can be seen from the door of the nest box. The open water also provides a good area for the kids to play in and the grasses and reeds assure a good hiding place in case of danger. The open water also provides good tucker areas, as well as a place where courtship can happen.

Density of the boxes is another thing. Try not to pack the boxes too close, since I don't like to be bothered by the neighbours. A good shield of reeds and the walls of the nest box will provide a reasonable curtain.

Note: DU Headquarters has 50 metal drums available for use as mallard nesting boxes. Members are invited to uplift these for conversion into nesting boxes (DU is happy to tell how!) on their own waterfowl areas. Please write to P.O. Box 74 Hamilton detailing your requirements and we will advise where you may collect the drums.

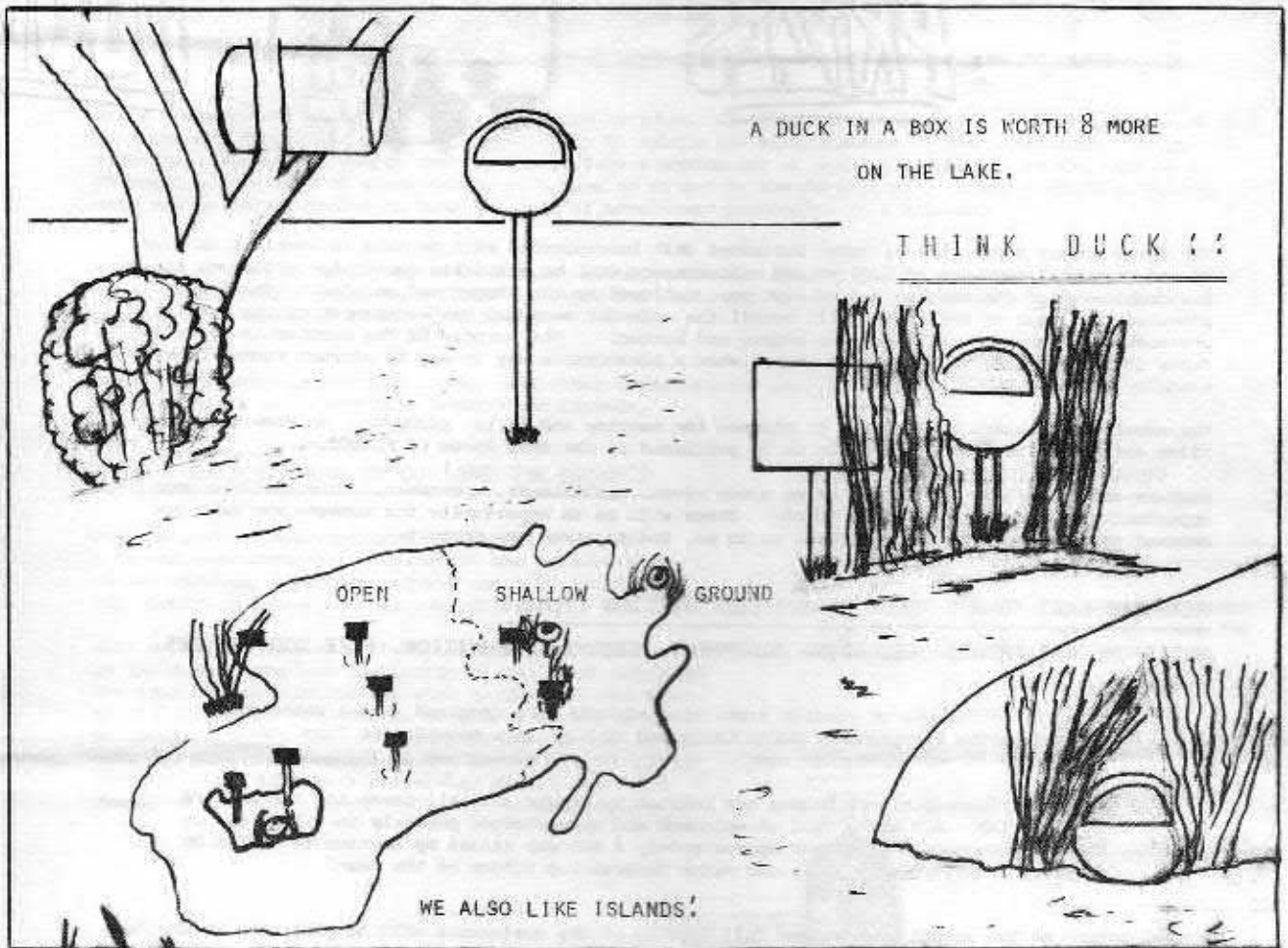


OR THE ART OF "THINKING" DUCK

As you know, I'm a pretty prolific breeder and will nest almost anywhere, which reminds me about the cocky who put down his tea at smoko, and three mallards nested and raised four broods on it before he picked it up again, but it does help to have optimum conditions. These can be achieved by remembering Cover, Density of your boxes, and Open Water. The diagram may give you an idea of what I like.

Regards from the marsh - Anas P.

(more from Anas P in later issues)



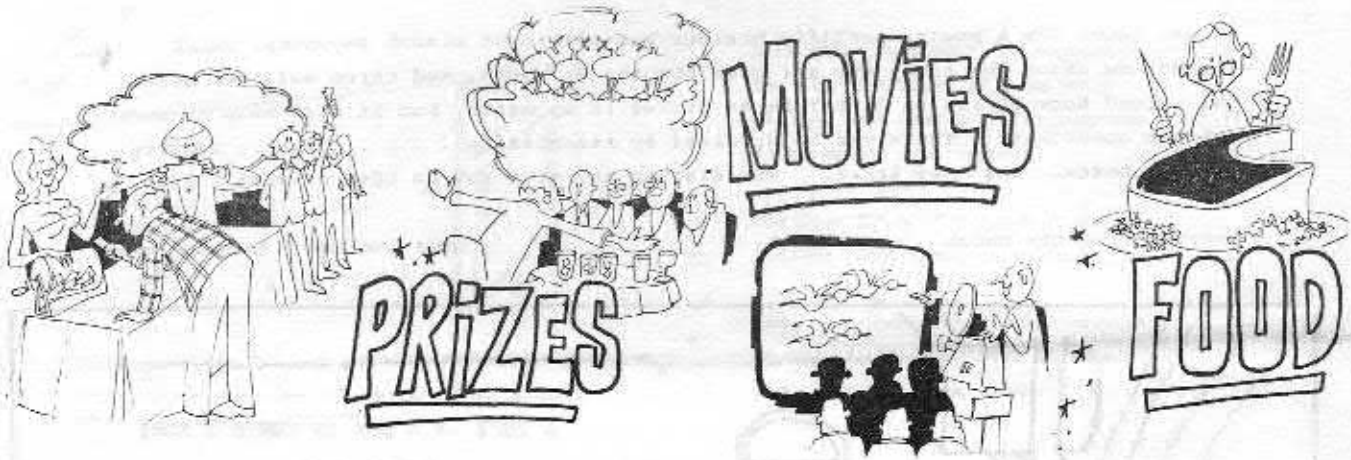
DON'T MISS THE DU (NZ) ANNUAL MEETING - JULY 1977 - AT AUCKLAND :

DATE

SATURDAY 9 JULY 1977

VENUE

GATEWAY LODGE, MANGERE
(formerly Hunters Lodge)



The third annual conference of Ducks Unlimited (NZ) Incorporated will be held in Auckland in July. The meeting will commence at 1.00 pm and refreshments will be available during the afternoon and at the conclusion of the meeting around 6.00 pm; followed by the dinner and auction. Those who attended last year in Wellington will recall the splendid menu and the excitement of the auction proceedings - this year will be even bigger and better! The purpose of the auction is to raise funds for DU projects and last year proved what a pleasurable way it was to extract funds for such a worthy cause!

Two excellent speakers have agreed to address the meeting and it is planned to show waterfowl films during the programme - details to be published in the next issue of FLIGHT.

Members and friends are welcome - bring along wives, girlfriends, sportsmen. This could be your opportunity to introduce a friend to DU. There will be an opportunity for members who have not renewed their subscription for 1977/78 to do so, and to enrol new members.

REMEMBER LAST YEAR'S TRULY MAGNIFICENT AUCTION ITEMS :

WATERFOWL ART PRINTS, RELOADING EQUIPMENT, DECOYS, AMMUNITION, FREE DOOR PRIZES!

Generous donations of auction items have already been received (one a waterfowl print from the President of Ducks Unlimited (U.S.A) in a magnificent frame ready to display in your favourite spot).

Members/friends/business houses are invited to donate suitable items for the auction if they wish - all gifts will be welcomed and acknowledged publicly in FLIGHT and at the conference. Last year approximately \$ 900 was raised by auction to assist DU projects in 1976/77 - this is our major fundraising effort of the year!

Formal notice of the annual meeting and full details of the conference will be published in the June issue of FLIGHT, due for publication and distribution early June.

YOUR ATTENDANCE

In order that we can finalise numbers for catering etc, would all members who plan to attend, with friends etc, please complete the form below:

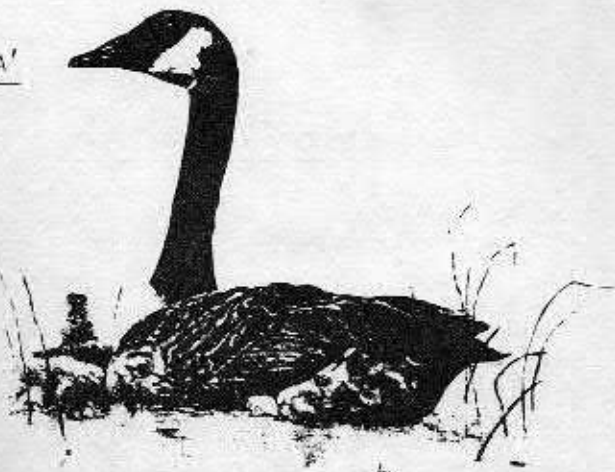
RETURN TO DUCKS UNLIMITED (NZ) INC P O BOX 74 HAMILTON

My name	<u>DU ANNUAL CONFERENCE</u>
Address	<u>ATTENDANCE INDICATOR</u>
<u>No. attending</u>	

DUCKS UNLIMITED (NZ) ANNOUNCES 'OPERATION BRANTA'

Ducks Unlimited (NZ) is arranging the release of Canada Geese from the South Island on a farm property in the lower half of the North Island having obtained the necessary approvals.

This is the first stage in Ducks Unlimited's fourth project - Operation 'Branta' (taken from the Latin name for the species) to establish a flock of Canada Geese in the North Island.



ADVERTISING IN 'FLIGHT'

Members will be aware that Trade members qualify for favourable advertising rates when advertising in the newsletter. Rates have been struck for 1977/78 and these are:

\$ 10 for a half page advertisement per issue and \$ 5 for a a quarter page.

Trade members, who wish to do so, are invited to submit an advertisement layout for approval. As we do not have art facilities, it will be necessary to submit the advertisement in the final form. Please note that this can be simply text or can include a photograph or graphic. However, in the case of a photograph, the cost of plate making will have to be met by the advertiser. Plate production can be very costly and we prefer to keep the cost of newsletter production to a minimum.

Please note also to make your advertisement almost twice as large, in width and length, as it will finally appear - the reason being that FLIGHT is typed for photocopying on double A4 paper and then reduced at the printer to A4 size for final reproduction.

Rates for members, other than trade, and other organisations are double those detailed above. DU welcomes advertisements in FLIGHT from members and friends.

GIVE A SUBSCRIPTION TO DU (AND THE DUCKS!)

You can give a subscription to Ducks Unlimited to a friend/acquaintance interested in the preservation of our wildlife - perhaps solving the gift problem for someone you know who has everything!

Gift cards are available at DU headquarters. You, as the donor, complete the inside of the card detailing the type of subscription you wish to give and the name of the person and his address to whom you wish to give an annual subscription. The card is perforated ... you give the gift card portion to the person of your choice and return the form with membership details and your cheque to DU headquarters, P.O. Box 74 Hamilton.

WEAR A DU 'T' SHIRT

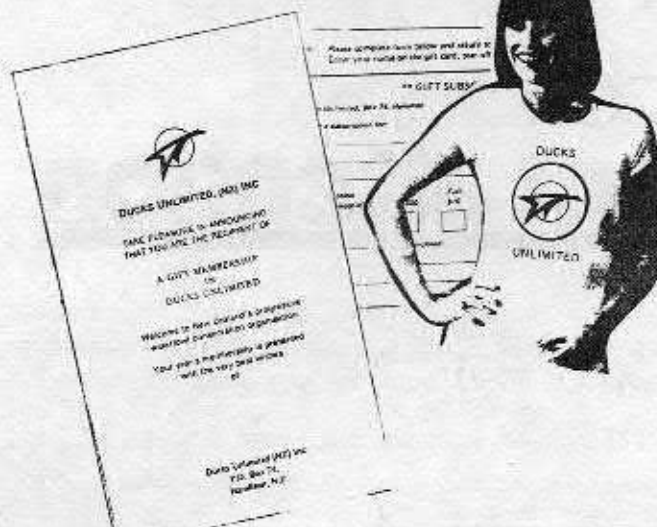
Sales of DU 'T' shirts benefit Operation Gretel - our Grey Teal nesting programme.

Shirts are top quality polyester/cotton and there is an assortment of sizes for both types as follows:

from 30-32" chest
SM, M, OS and XOS

As supplies are limited in some sizing, please include alternative size when ordering from DU headquarters, P.O. Box 74, Hamilton.

PRICE - \$ 3-95 each



DUDLEY BELL CONTINUES HIS TRAVEL DIARY

'Following our sojourn into North East Saskatchewan, we travelled to Alberta to the arid region east of Calgary where we met up with personnel from the DU office at Brooks.

We were to embark on the annual Canada Goose banding programme where over the next week, two crews of Wildlife personnel would trap and band close to 3,000 geese. Our team consisted of 10 men, 3 canoes, 2 outboard motored dinghys, 1 air boat and 2 large catchnets 2m. deep by 12m. long.

A lake where large numbers of geese were known to have bred was selected and, according to the location of the goose flock on it, a suitable site for the erection of the catchnet was selected and, with as little disturbance to the goose flock as possible, preparations for their capture were made.

The pen was situated in such a position to enable the birds being herded to see a means of escape e.g. through a lowland saddle. As geese, when being herded, are prone to take to land as a means of escape, this was a very suitable method of capture. Large wing nets were extended along the shoreline and into the lake and these led into the circular catch pen.

The most exciting part of the drive, once the geese had been persuaded to swim in front of the airboat and canoes was the approach to the nets. Sensing danger, they would split up and at great speed for 4-8 week old birds, would swim in whatever direction they could find a gap in the drive boat ranks. This then required some skill in re-forming the group and a test of the siting of the wing nets as to whether it would be a successful drive or not.

My wife, Lyn, was employed as scribe for the recording of band numbers, age and sex of the birds caught.

On occasions, young and flightless adult duck were also caught in the nets. These were let go immediately before any damage, through being trampled by the larger geese, was caused.

Altogether, over the seven days of banding, we caught 1,560 geese: From 18 geese off a DU project where we had to wade and almost swim to herd and catch the goslings, to 700 on a large lake where all men, boats and nets were put to a strenuous 4 hour test of skill and patience in the herding together of the geese - then in 90°P temperatures banding and recording of the data took place.

As the waterfowl breeding season was now in full swing, I was at all times looking for young broods of duck and especially anxious, as were all DU personnel, to see the first juvenile flying brood for the season. I saw a Pintail brood in flight on 10 July and this was quite early for that season as indications were, because of water conditions, that the duck hatch would generally be later in that year (1974).

Other wildlife was seen on all excursions into the field in the Prairies, from hundreds of gophers, the odd Badger, Antelope and Deer. We also saw many Bald Eagles and Large Owls. It was also surprising to find many pheasants established artificially from the Brooks Game Farm surviving extremely well in the cropping areas of the irrigation zones, as too were many hundreds of Danish partridge.

The most disturbing factor with the Goose banding programme for me was the thought that at any time while on land, a rattle snake could be encountered; consequently I spent much time over water in my boat. Fortunately though, the only 'rattlers' I saw had been killed on the road, the largest being a beautiful 4' 6" specimen. We did, however, catch and handle the common garter snake - but these were only about 12 inches long. '

D.G.B.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

FOR YOUR
urgent attention

THIS IS THE LAST ISSUE OF FLIGHT THAT WILL BE POSTED TO MEMBERS WHO WERE REGISTERED FOR 1975/76. TO CONTINUE RECEIVING FURTHER ISSUES, SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1976/77 MUST BE PAID PROMPTLY.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1977/78 ARE ALSO NOW DUE - SEE OVERLEAF.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.