

# Flight

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OCTOBER

2004

ISSUE 121



**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.

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

## From the Flight Desk

We hope you have a spring in the eye at your place by now. Mine is still surrounded by ephemeral wetlands (see page 12). I think a mallard hen is trying to nest in a big agapanthus in the garden — twice now, she has erupted from the middle of it in a flurry of flap and quack when I walk too close, much to our mutual amazement. The cats had better mind their own business if she hatches a family.

I enjoyed my first DU Conference experience very much and was sorry to miss the AGM and field day. It was good to meet DU people from other regions, the presentations about who and pateke were excellent, and what we saw of Chris Thomas's film was superb — a must-have for your collection (see page 6). There is a fantastic level of knowledge, energy and commitment in your ranks that bodes well. Not to mention an unusual concentration of humour.

Thanks to all prompt senders and quick responders.

This Flight is not as colourful as the last one because the Board wants to discuss the logistics and costs of moving to full colour.

Several members have asked for reprints of good articles from past issues, so please let us know your favourites, with the date of the issue and a few words about why you like them. It's a great idea, we hope to run the first of them in the January issue. We need the information by 13 November.

*Juliet Owen*



## Banrock Station Wines and Wetland Care

In August David Smith and Ossie Latham had discussions with Tony Sharley, Manager of the Banrock Station Wine and Wetland Centre in South Australia, and Debbie Latoa, Brands Manager, Nobilo Wine Group. Ossie has taken over responsibility for the Wetland Care/Banrock Wines relationship while William Abel will continue with the operational aspects of Wetland Care.

There is the basis for a worthwhile partnership with shared objectives. DU has the technical expertise and capacity but currently lacks the infrastructure for effective promotion, which is identified in our Strategic Plan. The media information pack developed by Auckland University of Technology's Outside the Square programme provides a good guide for what we need to do.

Our key benefit to Banrock is our ability to identify and work up projects. The concept of clean water could be the vehicle for the Banrock brand to establish the relevance of wetlands and their flora and fauna to the brand and its customers. The development and implementation of this idea is a Banrock initiative.

The idea of one major wetland development every two years with 10 local projects each year gives sufficient capacity to achieve Banrock's objectives. It is our responsibility to identify and work up these projects. The riparian zone planting of Lake Waikere/Matahura Stream was proposed as a potential site for next year's allocation.

Banrock Station Wines is a brand within Hardys Wine Company and Nobilo Wine Group is the NZ Distributor of Banrock Station Wines. In October the Nobilo Group will launch their Wine Showcase, a major trade presentation in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. The funds will be presented to this year's recipient organisations at these functions. This year's grants have been made to the Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust (Dunedin), Travis Wetland (Christchurch), Kitchener Group (Feilding), Manawatu Estuary Trust (Foxton) and NZ Wetland Trust (Waikato). Ossie Latham will represent DU at the Banrock/Wetland Care presentations.





# INSIGHT

Ross Cottle  
President

At our last Board meeting held at Broadlands, Reporoa, on 21 August, high on the agenda was a review of the recent AGM held in Palmerston North. General feedback from those present was very good. In particular, the comments regarding Jim Law's AGM address on our new Strategic Plan were very favourable. Now comes the hard part, to expand the ideas and put them into practice.

To achieve this, the Directors have each been allocated sections of the Strategy to look after, depending on their skills and expertise. It will be a very big job, bearing in mind that we are all volunteers.

To reach the goals we have set ourselves, we will need your help. A great deal of what we are trying to achieve requires money, so please support fundraising dinners, the raffle and sporting clay shoots, and any other initiatives in your Chapter area, and join up as many new members as you can, so that we can realise the DUNZ vision: To be New Zealand's pre-eminent organisation dedicated to wetland conservation.

## CONTENTS

### Special Features

Lifetime Achievement awards 6

Strategic Plan 8-9

Ephemeral Wetlands 12

Swans on the Thames 14

### Regular Features

Our People 4

DU News 5

Bird Talk 10

Flight Ecofile 10

The Poem 15



### 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.

Flight is published by:  
Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc.  
ISSN 1173-2776  
P.O. Box 9795, Newmarket, Auckland, New Zealand.

### Flight Advertising Rates (excluding GST)

Full page \$224, half page \$112, quarter page \$56, eighth page \$28.  
Waterfowl adverts are free to members. Please contact the editor with any suggestions or to book a space.

Contributions from members and other readers, including photographs, are welcome.

Editing & Production:  
Juliet Oliver, Box 82, Greytown. Phone 06 304 9160.  
E-mail: julieto@xtra.co.nz

Printer: Lamb-Peters Print.  
106A Main Street,  
Greytown.

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Cover photograph: Bird's eye view of DU on the Handyside property Te Kopi, South Wairarapa. The wetland was developed in 1986.

DEADLINE for Flight 122: 13 November





# OUR People

John Dermer and Rachael Mitchell were appointed to the DUNZ Board at this year's AGM. Rachael will feature in Our People in Flight's January issue.



*John and Diny Dermer*

## John Dermer

We are relatively new members, joining after a bus trip to see Bud Jones's dams and Jim Campbell's lake. Thank you to Julie and Mike Jensen for introducing us to this organisation as we had never heard of DU before that. Is there a message there for future planning? I'm sure many others like us need the scales removed from their eyes so they can take part in all that DU has to offer.

Diny and I farm at Cheltenham, 15km north of Feilding. Bull and lamb-finishing are our main enterprises, with cropping to renew the pastures and provide income in good years (where did those go?). A fairly common style of farming in this area. Perhaps not so common are the plantings we have established in the last 25 years. We have approximately (it's hard to measure trees strung alongside streams) 10ha of trees on our 186ha farm and are starting to harvest some earlier plantings of pine.

Other production species include cypresses, gums, redwoods and acacia, with many amenity plantings as well. We are also keen members of the NZ Farm Forestry Association: I have just finished my term as Middle Districts President and have just been elected to the National Executive.

My interest in wetlands started with duckshooting. Now I see them as a wonderful way to enhance the landscape on the farm, with all the other benefits that flow from that. Like trees they enrich our biodiversity, and they provide some good feeds if you can shoot straight! We have created a 2ha wetland on the farm and have spent some DU money on a series of dams filling a gully. Unfortunately one of them has since burst so we now have a large area for trees. The other three look great.

I look forward to being involved at Board level. The small membership is a major concern, 554 at last count, so there is plenty of room for improvement. We must lift our profile in all ways, as I firmly believe there are many people who do not know what we stand for and will want to join us when they do. I will be working hard to see this happens, while continuing to hassle farmers in my area to put in wetlands. I encourage you all to do the same.

— John Dermer

## Winners of the Farm Foresters' McKean Cup 2004

The prevailing westerlies can be very strong where the Dermers live. The Halcombe clay loam soil varies from free draining to heavy, often in the same paddock. Extensive tile-drainage is a constraint to siting trees. Three streams flow through the property, all prone to flooding and subject to bank erosion — as in this year's floods.

The property, which John's grandfather bought in 1909, was originally a dairy farm. John planted the first pines in 1975 and harvested them in 2002. More pines, eucalypts and many amenity plantings followed in subsequent years. John has experimented to get the right tree for the right place, trying up to six eucalypt varieties and many other species.

John was Branch President of the NZ Farm Forestry Association in 2001-02 and has been responsible for organising the stand at the Central Districts Field Days. He served as a Kiteata county councillor for six years and is currently a director of an investment forestry company, and was recently elected to the NZFFA National Executive.

He sees the major issue facing NZFFA is lack of members, particularly young farmers. Having derived so much enjoyment and learned so much from eight years in the NZFFA, he is passionate about promoting the association's benefits.

John and Diny are most fitting recipients of the McKean Cup for 2004.

*Source: Middle Districts Farm Forestry Association June newsletter, with thanks to the Editor, Bruce Bulloch.*

Correction: There was a mistake in Gordon and Anne Pilone's website address in the last issue's Our People item. Gordon's interesting and user-friendly website at [www.pohangina.org](http://www.pohangina.org) is well worth visiting.

### Planting Guides

We will be happy to email or post you copies of a useful guide from Otari Native Museum in Wellington. Most regional councils or DOC offices also provide good information. The Otari guide is a summary of one used by their volunteers. Just contact the Flight Editor, details on page 3.





**Congratulations** to the hard-working people of the Manawatu Chapter, who produced a very successful and interesting 30th Anniversary Conference. They even brought on good weather! A report about the weekend will be printed in the January issue — if somebody who enjoyed it sends one. At the AGM Jim Campbell was confirmed as Co-Patron, while William Abel and David Smith were made permanent directors. Retiring Directors Alan Wilks (13 years), Craig Worth (eight years), Steve Rice (three years) and David Wilks (three years) were thanked for their service to DU. Rachael Mitchell (Bay of Plenty) and John Dermer (Manawatu) were appointed to the Board.

The AGM minutes will be printed in Flight's April issue to put them in your consciousness nearer to next year's annual meeting.

## Strategic Plan

(see pages 8-9 for the plan itself)

DU director Jim Law has been primarily responsible for drafting DU's goals for the next few years, and gave a presentation on the strategy at the July AGM. Strategic plans can look fairly off-putting, but don't be deterred, this one is admirably straightforward. Your feedback is absolutely essential to reaching the goals the Board has set. They need your suggestions and comments on the plan's content, and most importantly they need your offer to help with any aspect of it that interests you or for which you can offer particular skills. A strategic plan is a living document, always in draft form and open to improvement and change. This plan will be reviewed in the next two years.

Here Jim describes the process used by the Board at their planning meeting in May:

Why now? The last formal planning was in the mid 1990s; the time seemed right for DU to re-visit its current mission (see page 3) and add to that a vision – a 'light on the hill'. Three main topics were discussed:

- DU's current and future role in relation to public perceptions, member support, Government policies and attitudes, and business and community interest.
- similar organisations – where does DU fit into the mix?
- a 'SWOT' analysis of DU as it is (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)



*A group of past and present Directors. Back L to R: Ian Lyver, Neil Candy, (? obscured) David Wilks, David Smith, Graham Gurr, Jim Campbell (obscured), Ken Cooke, Ian Pirani. Front L to R: Di Pritt, Ross Cottle, Andy Tannock, Jim Law, Ossie Latham.*

Perceptions vary, as DU members know. There is wide general interest and support for environmental protection, especially in schools, and several organisations cater for this 'market'.

Membership is a problem for many organisations. There are many options available and while general club membership is declining, more money is often available. Many people want to put something back into their area of interest.

Government agencies are pro-environment generally, through public pressure, and there is some money available. DOC shows signs of taking sustainable use into account together with environmental protection.

Businesses have less sponsorship money to spend and are far more product-focused. Instead of competing for scarce dollars it would be better for like-minded organisations to work together. Property developments could be enhanced with DU help in creating wetlands. Eco-tourism and globalisation are potentially good for DU, eg supporting the designation of Lake Wairarapa as a Wetland of International Importance.

The SWOT analysis produced these points:

**STRENGTHS:** good skills with a practical track record, action-oriented, interest is growing

**WEAKNESSES:** limited resources, not

appealing effectively to youth, poor with promotion, maybe not bold enough

**OPPORTUNITIES:** growing environmental interest, town people (and tourists) want a rural experience, potential of useful alliances, input to research, global links (eg North America, UK)

**THREATS:** competition with other organisations is self-defeating, a vocal anti-hunting lobby, drain on volunteer time and energy

Directors will each be responsible for overseeing the plan's key strategies, but your help is vital for putting it into action. Please contact a Board member or your Chapter chairman if you have an idea or can help in any way. There might be a project you know could be organised; you might be able to contribute a 'How to...' or case study to the planned Wetland Development or Young Hunters' Guides; you may know of a research project or course which DU could support. And we look forward to your letters or comments on the plan.

So...it's over to you to make DU!





# Lifetime Achievement Awards

Wairarapa Chapter members Alan Wilks and Bill Clinton-Baker were presented with well-earned DU Lifetime Achievement Awards at the AGM, joining Jim Campbell who received his last year. David Wilks accepted the award on behalf of his father who was unable to attend because of temporary ill-health. The awards are beautifully-crafted models of ducks on polished timber mounts.



David Wilks presents the award to his father

Alan Wilks joined DU in 1980. From then on he has been very active with advocacy and practical support for wetlanders around the Wairarapa, and has developed a wetland on a friend's farm where his son David now shoots. He became a Board member in 1991, was President from 1996-98 and Chairman from 1998-2000. DU was facing considerable financial difficulty when he took on the President's role and the organisation went through some tough years. Hard decisions were made and acted on during his tenure. For example, DU owned the Pearce (South Wairarapa) and Sinclair (Otago) wetlands at the time, which had become increasingly expensive to maintain. The decision to sell the two wetlands was contentious. Another difficult decision was to discontinue the employment of a full-time CEO, to save funds for DU's core purpose of promoting wetland and waterfowl conservation. There is now general acknowledgment that these moves set the scene for the current solid platform the organisation has, financially and philosophically.

Alan and Di Wilks are great exemplars of dedicated volunteers for a good cause. He 'retired' in July from his 13 years of Board duties, which included hosting most Board meetings at the Wilks' Lake Taupo cottage. Since 1997 he has written for and helped to produce *Flight* and is responsible for the mailout. 'Prof' Wilks also maintains a spectacular vegetable garden that should be on any garden show worth the name. He knows his onions.



Bill Clinton-Baker receives his award from Ross Cottle

Ross Cottle's presentation speech to Bill Clinton-Baker:

Bill joined DU some 23 years ago and has been a very active member of the Wairarapa Chapter. After handing over the running of the farm to his son, Bill created The Sanctuary where with his wife Jan he continued his bird breeding operation.

As a boy Bill became interested in birds and passionate about waterfowl, and — would you believe it — he kept ferrets!

The birds reared at the Sanctuary each year were sold on to many other enthusiasts around the country. The proceeds were then donated to The New Zealand Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust of which he is a conservation Sponsor. Until recently he was also a trustee of the National Wildlife Centre at Mount Bruce.

A few years ago three pairs of shoveler reared by Bill were flown to the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge in England, where they successfully bred. In 1986 he was Brown Teal Breeder of the Year, when he reared 32 birds for Operation Pateke.

Bill is still a very active member and we consider him and Jan to be great ambassadors for conservation and the protection of our native birds.

On behalf of the Board and our members we would like to award Bill with a DU Lifetime Achievement Award.

## Bill Barrett Trophy

Anne Richardson of Peacock Springs was a very popular recipient of this important award, for her knowledge and dedicated work for endangered birds and her generous support of DU. There will be more about this in the next issue.

## Waterfowl and Wetlands – A New Zealand Odyssey

Yes, it's here! DU Member Chris Thomas's excellent film, towards which DU contributed \$6000, is now available on video. It was launched in Wellington on 8 September. Those who saw the preview at the AGM were very impressed and moved by it.

Waterfowl and Wetlands illustrates, in 75 minutes of superb photography, music and well-researched commentary narrated by Frank Torley, the value of wetlands, the waterfowl that depend on them and the efforts being made to reclaim the country's rapidly-shrinking wetland areas.

Waterfowl species are shown in detail and there is information on the various types of wetland and their management, waterfowl predators, the conservation value of hunters and also the Ramsar sites of ecological importance.

This is a film for educators, conservationists, hunters, ornithologists, natural historians and anyone with a love of the outdoors.

The price is \$49 (GST incl) plus \$4 postage. Send your orders with a cheque and return address to:

Scientific and Wildlife Films, 11 Hanover Street, Wadestown, WELLINGTON.

Phone/Fax: (04) 472 8147, email: c.thomas@paradise.net.nz



## Chapter reports

### Auckland

The next issue will report on the combined Auckland and Waikato Chapters' field trip to Jim and Faye Nilsson's property in September, and also on the Auckland Chapter's annual dinner and auction in October.

### Manawatu

Still recovering from the AGM and weather!

— Neil Candy

### Wairarapa

See the next issue for a report on the Chapter's annual dinner and auction. The annual clay shoot will be held on Roger Smailes' property at Te Whiti on Sunday 31 October. For details contact Ross Cottle, phone 06 378 7408.

## Project Reports

### Pateke

Selections from the Brown Teal Recovery Group's August 2004 report

Shaun O'Connor gave a presentation to 55-plus people at the AGM. It was very well received and from our perspective a success. Cheers for the practical helpers and enthusiastic advocates at DU.

Banrock Station is running a series of ads in popular magazines, one of which is about Pateke and Banrock's involvement at Karori Wildlife Sanctuary.

Captive programme – from Kevin Evans:

### DU welcomes these new members:

Glenys Dunne - Auckland

Bruce Spooner – Auckland

Ken Parker — Waikato

Gary Bevins — Manawatu

Johanna Somermeijer — Manawatu

### Email addresses

Now that DU has entered the 21st Century, Sandra Pipes is compiling a database of members' email addresses. If you would like yours to be included, please send a message to her at [info@ducks.org.nz](mailto:info@ducks.org.nz) with 'Database' in the subject line.

**The 31st AGM and Conference 2005** will be held in Auckland from 29 July to 1 August. Along with the usual wetland tour on Saturday, the Auckland Chapter is arranging a trip to Tiri Tiri Matangi Island on Friday 29 July, and possibly one to

A female has been moved to Auckland Zoo to be paired up with a wild male that was previously on display. This male has been a great example of what a fine advocacy specimen some male brown teal can be, and will continue that role well in his new enclosure as well as contributing to the captive programme.

The Auckland Zoo female was transferred to a new but experienced breeder Jack Worth in Hamilton. Jack was one of the original breeders when the programme started, so it is great to see Jack back on board and as enthusiastic as ever. A male bird from Paul McCarthy completes Jack's pair.

A flock-mated pair from Peacock springs

Great Barrier Island on Monday 1 August. They also hope to arrange a high profile guest speaker for a dinner on the Friday night, attendance optional. So...note the dates and save your pennies!

### Pheasant eggs

If you are partial to populating your pleasant paradise with pheasants, Jim Law's birds are starting to lay and he will have eggs available for DU members.

Phone 06 307 7855, or write to Jim at Burnside, RD 2, Featherston.

### In Memoriam: Purdey Wilks

Alan's faithful labrador companion for 14 years, after a stroke in early July. She was a honey in both colour and nature. Needless to say, he now has Jess to train up.



was transferred to Hamilton Zoo. The male is one of the 'wild seven' that came into captivity a couple of years ago. It has been a real problem trying to get it paired up, and for that matter even to tell what sex it is; it had us all changing our minds before DNA sexing.

Another pair has been transferred to Orana Park which has joined the programme. The male is the one-winged bird hit by a car in Northland. I am looking at experimenting with this pair to sort out artificial insemination techniques and protocols, for future reference.

There are some wild birds at Peacock Springs, on loan from Little Barrier Island while the rat eradication is under way. These birds have been paired up, have started laying, and we hope for some offspring from them for the captive programme.

If you haven't visited the website for a while, there have been some quite major changes, so please check it out: <http://www.brownteal.com> — I am always looking for new content and articles, and if anyone wants to add or change something, please contact me: [kevin@brownteal.com](mailto:kevin@brownteal.com)

Continued on page 10



*Pateke Recovery Group, May 2004. Back L to R: Ossie Latham, Jason Roxbrugh, Shaun O'Connor, Simon Stevenson, Thomas Gehly, Ray Pearce, Nigel Millar. Front L to R: Leigh Bull, Rosalie Stamp, Joanne Reilly, Leigh Marshall, Emma Neal, Richard Maloney.*



# Ducks Unlimited New Zealand

## Vision

To be New Zealand's pre-eminent organisation dedicated to wetland conservation

## Mission

To deliver effective wetland  
- restoration and development  
- research, education and advocacy

While supporting  
- the preservation of threatened waterfowl  
- ethical and sustainable use of wetlands



## Key Strategies

1. Increase efficiency and number of wetlands developed annually while supporting relevant wildfowl recovery programmes

2. Take advantage of global links to undertake national wetland research programmes; disseminate findings and other educational

3. Significantly enhance communications and relationships to stakeholders, partners and related interest groups, thereby providing inspiration, guidance and tools for wetland conservation

4. Double annual income by increasing breadth and depth of revenue sources

## Key Actions

Strategy: Increase efficiency of relevant wildfowl recovery

1. Every two years, identify a centre
2. Implement 10 small scale
3. Develop and disseminate the advertising of various programmes, eg public

Strategy: Take advantage of global links and disseminate findings

1. Prepare wetland development control, security, and
2. Offer assistance for other related organisations
3. Tap body of relevant other related organisations
4. Prepare a New Zealand

Strategy: Significantly enhance communications and related interest groups for wetland conservation

1. Establish contact with
2. Conduct with partners (and Bird) at least twice
3. Enhance Flight and
4. Initiate interim communication
5. Review prior Flight and
6. Update DUNZ website
7. Install signs at recovery

Strategy: Double annual income

1. Establish list of potential specific projects
2. Seek corporate partnerships
3. Identify local products
4. Increase membership



Efficiency and number of wetlands developed annually while supporting recovery programmes

Identify and develop a major public wetland near a major population

Support smaller private wetland projects every year  
Implement an urban-rural wetland programme ('adopt a townie'), including wetlands for sale and drafting covenanting and resource agreements  
Advocate for and take an active role in relevant wildfowl recovery programme

Strengthen a range of global links to undertake national wetland research programmes and other educational material

Develop a wetland management guide covering key values (eg, food sources, predator control, etc)  
Support PhD research regarding critical New Zealand wetland factors  
Make relevant scientific and educational material available in DU USA/Canada or other countries and disseminate to stakeholders and partner organisations  
Develop a wetland young hunters' guide to waterfowling and conservation

Work to enhance communications and relationships to stakeholders, partners and groups, thereby providing inspiration, guidance and tools for wetland management

Develop a list for relevant media and issue at least four press releases per year  
Work with partner organisations (eg, DOC, Fish and Game, regional councils, Forest Department) to hold two field days per year  
Work to increase print run to enable wider distribution  
Improve communications with members via email  
Write and publish articles and republish as appropriate  
Develop a website with links to/from partner organisations  
Promote all current and all future DU-funded wetlands

Generate additional annual income by increasing breadth and depth of revenue sources

Identify potential national sponsors, prepare and distribute funding requests for

Develop products that could be sold under the DU logo  
Increase membership by 5% per year



# Bird Talk



*Pateke ducklings (old photo, no details given)*

## Milford walkers help save endangered blue duck

This year Milford Track independent walkers who book a Real Journeys Milford Sound cruise after their tramp will help save the endangered whio/ blue duck in Fiordland.

Real Journeys and the Department of Conservation are happy to announce a new sponsorship programme, starting in this Great Walks season. When independent Milford Track walkers book their Real Journeys Milford Sound cruise in advance through the booking system, Real Journeys will donate \$10 per adult trip to whio recovery work in Fiordland.

Murray Willans, Programme Manager of Biodiversity at the Department of Conservation, Te Anau, was thrilled to have the extra support for this region's whio protection work, and encouraged walkers to help out. 'Blue duck numbers are on the decline. We are finding out valuable information through our research, but much more work is needed if we want to see blue duck in Fiordland's rivers 10 years from now.'

Mr Willans and his team have carried out intensive whio research in the Milford Track area since 2000, in which they have found that stoats are definitively the number one cause of nesting failure in the Clinton and Arthur Valleys. Video surveillance equipment documented stoats taking eggs, ducklings, and even adult females. The females are more vulnerable as they alone incubate the eggs and care for the ducklings until they reach the river.

Future research and management, which will now be supported by donations from trampers via Real Journeys, will concentrate on further monitoring to assess the effectiveness of stoat control methods. It will also help captive rearing of whio at the Burwood Bush Captive Rearing Unit to boost wild populations.

For more information on Milford Track bookings, or the Real Journeys Milford Sound cruises for making a donation, please see the Great Walks page on the DOC website [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) [explore> tracks&walks> great walks>] or phone: 03 249 8514 Great Walks Booking Desk.

*From page 7*

I have been working making good headway with our Brown Teal Education kit. I hope to network with others already working in the field at a day workshop for Environmental Education in Whangarei, and will encourage them to incorporate brown teal into their work.

With the 'Wild Egg Transfer' now in the final stages of the sign-off process, things look good for 20 wild eggs coming to be incubated at Peacock Springs and for getting some new wild pairs formed and distributed to everyone. There are potentially about seven new breeders in the process of building aviaries and getting permits, so once they are ready we should have some birds available.

- Kevin Evans

## South Island pateke sighting

Shaun O'Connor has reported that in the latest Southern Bird (OSNZ magazine that comes out with Notornis) Issue 18 June 2004, there is a mention of brown teal being seen in Southland. Phil Rhodes said in the report, 'We have also had reports of a brown teal on a pond near Lake George (between Riverton and Colac Bay).'

For more information you can send an email to Phil Rhodes: [p.rhodes@xtra.co.nz](mailto:p.rhodes@xtra.co.nz)

## Campbell Island Teal return home

On 9 September DOC officer Andy Cox escorted 50 captive-reared teal for release on Campbell Island. Decimated by cats and later, rats, the island's teal were thought to be extinct for more than 100 years. With changes in vegetation on Campbell Island and a diminishing food source the cats eventually died out, but rats then took over. 'Tens of thousands of rats' were killed in what Andy said was the biggest rat-eradication programme in the world at the time. This group was bred from a few birds captured on nearby Dent Island, where a small group had been found in 1972.

The Campbell Island teal is similar to the brown teal, and is a small, very secretive bird. While Andy Cox said some deaths are inevitable when captive-reared birds are returned to the wild, DOC hopes that in time the island will support high numbers of teal.

*From a National Radio report, 9 September 2004.*

# Flight Ecofile

## Wetlands in the Wellington region are getting a helping hand

Greater Wellington's wetland incentives programme is offering a helping hand to wetlands in the Wellington region. Last year Greater Wellington staff talked to landowners to find out what incentives would help them restore wetlands on their property. As a result Greater Wellington's wetland incentive programme now includes advice, help with weed control, fencing and monitoring. Currently up to \$40,000 is available each year under this programme to support landowners restore wetlands.

Any landowner with a natural wetland on their property can qualify for assistance of up to \$5000 and get free advice from Greater Wellington staff, including the preparation of a wetland management plan.

Since the incentives programme was launched last November, over 30 landowners have been given advice or assistance with wetland restoration.

Greater Wellington wetlands advisor Melanie Dixon says, 'Wetlands now cover less than 2% of New Zealand's land area, but are home to 22% of our native land bird species. Private landowners can play a huge role in helping restore wetlands.'

A Greater Wellington staff member will come out and talk to you about your wetland, she says. 'We can also organise professional contractors to undertake weed control, help with animal pest control, provide half the cost of fencing and help landowners to monitor wetland hydrology.'

The great news is that there is no specific funding round, and landowners can apply at any time of the year.

If you'd like to find out more about how you can receive assistance, contact Melanie Dixon on 0800 496 734. You can also send her an email ([wetlands@gw.govt.nz](mailto:wetlands@gw.govt.nz)), visit the website ([www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz)), or ask for a copy of 'A beginner's guide to wetland restoration.'



## Conservation Order protects 'Middle Earth' waters

The new Water Conservation Order on the Rangitata River will protect the wide braided river that was a scene for Lord of the Rings filming and is the habitat for 18 species of native fish and several of rare birds.

'Forest and Bird is delighted with an Environment Court decision that will see a Water Conservation Order placed on the Rangitata River,' said Forest and Bird Regional Field Officer Tony Lockwood when the order was announced in early August. 'Its success is a tribute to the commitment of Fish and Game, the co-operation of all those who care about the river and a law that allows places like the Rangitata to get the protection they deserve,' he said.

'The Rangitata River is one of the South Island's finest braided rivers. Its wild and spectacular landscapes provided the location for the town of Edoras in the Lord of the Rings film,' he said. 'The Water Conservation Order is extremely important to all the anglers, kayakers and rafters who use the river as well as the unique native fish and birds that rely on it,' he said. 'The order will prevent dams from being built on the river and sets minimum flows that will protect conservation and recreation values. This is an example of how important the Resource Management Act is for New Zealand's environment.'

The Rangitata River is home to bird species like the threatened riverbed specialist the wrybill, the only bird in the world with a sideways-curving beak adapted to seeking food under stones. Other birds dependent on the river include whio, one of only two species of torrent duck in the world, black-fronted tern, black-billed gulls, banded dotterels and South Island pied oyster catcher.

Water is fast assuming the value of gold in Canterbury as farmers convert from wool to dairying and cropping, significantly increasing land values. This has led to almost unlimited demand for water with a number of dam and irrigation schemes being proposed in recent years.

As smaller braids dry up from excessive abstraction, areas of shallow water and wet ground diminish, reducing available feeding habitat for wading birds. Weeds spread on to the riverbed providing cover for predators like cats, ferrets and stoats. The streams which create a protective moat around bird colonies dry up and expose the birds to increased predation.

The application for a Water Conservation Order was made by Fish and Game and supported at the Environment Court hearing by numerous other environmental and recreational interest groups including the Department of Conservation, Ngai Tahu, Forest and Bird and the NZ Recreational Canoeing Association.

*From Forest and Bird media release, 9 August 2004.*

## Tips for wetlanders

### Poisoning willows

John Dermer sent this recipe from Farm Forestry Assn. member Don McIntyre:

Use 1 part Tordon Brushkiller to 20 parts diesel. Paint it on to the bark right around the tree. Whether it works better in the autumn when the tree is going into hibernation he didn't know. Give it a try and let us all know how you get on. The Tordon will also be handy for that gorse.

I have seen several young plantings lately which are overtopped by old-man poplars; getting them down is going to cause much damage to the crop trees. Please be aware that a dead poplar is a brittle poplar, which can break at any time...we do not want empty chairs at future meetings!

Thanks, John.



Quoting...

'What dreadful noise of water in mine ears!'

*From Richard III by William Shakespeare*

## Applications invited for conservation grants

Farmers, community groups and others are invited to apply for funds to promote and care for plant and animal life on private land. There are two bidding rounds this financial year totalling \$4.1 million. The first closed on 27 September, with decisions to be announced before Christmas. The second round will be notified in the first quarter of 2005, with decisions announced by 30 June.

The Biodiversity Condition and Advice Funds were established as part of the Government's \$187 million five-year biodiversity package in 2000. 'We are committed to ensuring protection for our native plants and animals — New Zealand's unique biodiversity,' Environment Minister Marian Hobbs said when this year's round was announced. 'The funds support the great work private landowners are doing already for our special areas and species.'

Conservation Minister Chris Carter said that examples abounded of individuals and groups around the country with innovative ideas for conservation work on their land. So far, examples of projects funded include predator trapping in Northland, pest eradication on Great Barrier Island, fencing at Lake Rotoehu, fencing and pest control in Makaretu Stream near Gisborne, controlling wilding pines in North Canterbury, and eradicating rats from Southern Titi Islands near Rakiura/Stewart Island.

There is more information on the Department of Conservation's website: [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

Application forms and criteria for projects can be found in Biodiversity Information Online's Condition and Advice Funds section. You can also contact your nearest DOC office.

## Anti-1080 misinformation slated

Anti-1080 campaigner Phillip Anderton of Wairoa has admitted he wasn't speaking the truth when he claimed that a kiwi had been killed by 1080. The Wairoa farmer was convicted of wildlife offences in the Wairoa District Court in August.

'Over 70 kiwi have been monitored during 1080 operations and not one died from 1080 poisoning. So we're not surprised that Phillip Anderton's claim has proven false,' said Forest and Bird's Biosecurity Awareness Officer Geoff Keey. Phillip Anderton was reported as admitting he used a stuffed kiwi 'in a deceptive way' and described criticism of his deception as irrelevant.

'The misleading claims of some anti-1080 activists are jeopardising conservation efforts to prevent native birds from becoming extinct. It's disappointing that people are prepared to attack vital efforts to save native birds with blatant misinformation. It's astonishing that Phillip Anderton is reported as having no compunction about faking it,' said Mr Keey.

*Continued on page 13...*





# Ephemeral wetlands

## why are they so important?

Our thanks to Fish and Game officer Blake Abernethy who provided this article, which he wrote for the 2001 Game Season special issue of Fish and Game magazine.

For most of us a 'typical' wetland is a landscape dominated by the plants and animals that are adapted to live in a continuously wet environment. The raupo that encroaches on the open water where we set our decoys, or the bittern that we hear booming on still evenings; both are wholly dependent upon a habitat which is wet year round. Take away the water and many species disappear with it.

It may therefore come as a surprise, that from a waterfowl manager's perspective, some of the most important wetland areas hold no water at all for most of the year. These are the seasonal or 'ephemeral' wetlands; shallow depressions that are inundated by rainfall or surface run-off during winter and early spring, but which rapidly dry out during summer.

It comes as a further surprise to learn that it is precisely because these wetlands are seasonally dry, that they are such important waterfowl habitat. To understand why this is so, we need to compare the ecological processes at work in ephemeral wetlands with those operating in wetlands that remain permanently wet throughout the year.

All wetlands have a limited lifespan. Irrespective of their size, and seasonal fluctuations in water level, all are subjected to forces that will eventually convert them back into dry land. The water that feeds life into a newly formed wetland also carries with it the seeds of its destruction. As water flows in, it brings sediment that accumulates as a thick layer of mud or silt. This sediment is a rich source of nutrients, nourishing plant and animal growth. Successive plant die-off and entrapment of sediments transforms the shallow lake to a swamp and eventually dry land.

All wetlands are subject to seasonal fluctuation with water levels peaking in winter and falling in summer due to evaporation. Ephemeral wetlands are particularly graphic examples of this change, completely disappearing during the hottest months only to reappear if there is enough winter rainfall to allow them to refill. Although only intermittently wet from one year to the next, they are subject to the same processes of sedimentation and nutrient enrichment that affect 'permanent' wetlands. What differs is the rate at which these processes operate in ephemeral wetlands.

Because they are small and shallow, ephemeral wetlands receive almost all their water directly as rainfall, or indirectly with a rise in water table, but often with very limited run-off. As a result, the water entering them has little chance to pick up and transport sediment. Added to this, organic matter accumulates very slowly in ephemeral wetlands because any dead plants or animals are rapidly broken down when the wetland is dry. Because of this they tend to be very stable features of the landscape and can form and reform in the same place for hundreds, even thousands of years. The seasonal drying out of ephemeral wetlands, not only helps to preserve them; it makes them extremely productive places for waterfowl to feed in. During the 'dry' phase any organic material that has accumulated in the wetland is quickly broken down into the mineral nutrients that will fuel the re-invasion of aquatic life when the water returns. The shallowness of ephemeral wetlands is also important because it allows them to warm up quickly in spring, and this in turn promotes the rapid growth of aquatic life particularly invertebrates like midges, beetles and snails. Ephemeral wetlands are some of the most biologically productive freshwater environments known.

Studies of the rate at which these wetlands accumulate sediment relative to larger water bodies which do not periodically dry out, has shown that they can even out-last large lakes. It is remarkable to think that long after the bed of Lake Wairarapa has been consumed by raupo, manuka and flax, the seasonal pools that form on the surrounding farmland today may still be appearing and disappearing with the ebb and flow of winter rains. But for how much longer?

Ephemeral wetlands are extremely vulnerable to land development. Because they are generally small and shallow, even comparatively minor changes in land use such as the mole draining of a paddock, ground water abstraction, infilling, or the planting of a few pine trees can destroy them.

Ephemeral wetlands within the Wellington Fish and Game region are being lost at an alarming rate. A wetland inventory compiled by the Horowhenua District Council in 1999 revealed that 35% of their wetlands have either been lost or degraded in the last 20 years. It is a fair bet that the majority of these were ephemeral wetlands. It is sobering, too, to think that this loss has occurred despite wetlands (including ephemeral wetlands) being subject to the legal protection afforded by the former Water and Soil Act and

latterly, the Resource Management Act. Given that they are supposed to be protected from development, why are ephemeral wetland areas disappearing so quickly?

Clearly the Resource Management Act is failing to protect ephemeral wetlands. In the experience of Wellington Fish and Game staff, those who are responsible for giving effect to the Resource Management Act have considerable difficulty understanding the nature of wetland habitats and their values. The fact that some wetlands are intermittently dry seems to predispose local authorities to the view that they have no real value as wildlife habitat and they are perplexed by our efforts to prevent such areas being developed.

Most people will probably not notice the loss of our ephemeral wetland habitats, and nor are they likely to lament it — until perhaps it is too late. What exactly do we stand to lose if the disappearance of ephemeral wetlands continues unabated?



North corner of very old ephemeral wetland near Macraes village, North Otago



Climate is the most important single factor influencing the breeding success of ducks from one year to the next. It is no secret that drier than normal conditions during winter and early spring will be followed by lower numbers of ducks in May of the following year. One of the principal reasons for this is the influence which seasonal rainfall has on the abundance of ephemeral wetlands from year to year. In years with higher than average spring rainfall, the area of water available for ducks to rear their broods on increases as the ephemeral wetland areas flood.

The seasonal surge in invertebrate production in ephemeral wetlands makes them a very important source of food for female ducks during nesting. For example, aquatic insects and snails dominate the diet of mallard hens during the nesting season; seeds and other plant foods are temporarily avoided in response to the demand for the protein and calcium needed for egg formation. The abundance and quality of animal food available to the hen at this time is critical to giving her ducklings the best chance of surviving their first few days after

hatching. At this time the ducklings must obtain sufficient food from their unabsorbed yolk sac to keep them going until they can obtain enough food by themselves. If food for the hen at laying time was poor, she will produce eggs with a low yolk content. This will reduce the energy supply available to the new hatchlings and reduce their chances of survival. Ephemeral wetlands offer definite advantages to female ducks during the nesting season.

Mallard ducklings feed mainly on aquatic invertebrates like insects and snails, and the availability of these prey items is greater in areas where more ephemeral wetlands persist into spring and increasing water temperature fuels invertebrate production. When there are fewer ephemeral wetlands available, aquatic invertebrates are scarce. In this situation, ducklings spend more time feeding, have lower rates of food intake and move more. This increases the risk of chill, starvation and predation. As a result, in those years when fewer ephemeral wetlands form, duckling mortality is higher.

Natural variation in climate means that there are always going to be 'good' and 'bad' years for ducks. But the continuing loss of ephemeral wetland habitat will erode the capacity of waterfowl like the mallard to recharge their numbers when there is abundant rainfall during the 'good' years. Nesting females and their ducklings are unable to find food where the shallow basins of what were once ephemeral wetlands have been robbed of their capacity to hold water. It is critical therefore that the landforms that allow ephemeral wetlands to form remain untouched. For this to happen they must be identified, their worth recognised, and local authorities must take proactive measures to preserve them.

Ephemeral wetlands, the threats they face and their role in the biosphere merit more attention. Please send us your comments or references to good material. There may be important ones in your area or on your property. Historical material would also be great, with photos if possible. —Ed.

*From page 11*

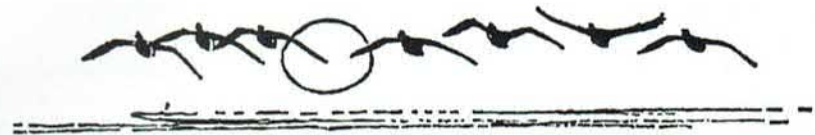
'If 1080 was wiping out native birds, Forest and Bird would be campaigning against it. Instead we are supporting its use because we know it is beneficial to our forests and their wildlife. The facts speak for themselves,' he said. 'Research into the breeding success of robins after 1080 control showed they fledged over eight times as many chicks because of the dramatic drop in predation by pests. No monitored endangered brown kiwi, great spotted kiwi, blue ducks or kaka have died in 1080 operations,' he said.

In part of Pureora Forest, the kaka population increased by 33% within six months of an aerial 1080 operation in 2001. In nearby Waimanoa Forest, stoats killed at least five of nine kaka females during the same breeding season.

Geoff Keey said, 'Unless there is effective pest control, these wonderful native birds will continue their slide to extinction.'

Contact: Geoff Keey, Biosecurity Awareness Officer, phone 04 385 7374, 021 426 984

*From Forest and Bird media release, 3 September 2004.*



## Wellington duck hunters get top marks for firearms safety

Wellington duck hunters shooting on and around the Lake Wairarapa wetlands over the opening weekend of the 2004 game season got top marks from Fish and Game NZ and the NZ Police for their safe use of firearms.

'Both our Rangers and the Police were very impressed at the high standard of safe firearms handling practised by the Wairarapa duck hunters', says Fish and Game spokesperson Blake Abernethy.

Fish and Game NZ and the Police mounted a joint operation over opening weekend — 'Operation Bird Shot' — with the Police checking Firearms Licences and Fish and Game Rangers checking hunting licences and compliance with regulations prohibiting lead shot. Mr Abernethy said, 'We checked 98 hunters and only three were in breach of game season regulations. Police found no one in breach of the Arms Act. We found hunters were very polite and co-operative and their handling of firearms was impeccably safe.'

Mr Abernethy says that this adherence to safe firearms use was no surprise to him. 'In our experience the duck hunting community is very responsible with a strong culture of safe and responsible use of firearms. We have also found over many years of liaising with hunters that committed hunters do not combine alcohol and hunting, and our experiences over the weekend bore that out. Many of the hunters we spoke to were pleased that Fish and Game and the Police were out and about in an effort to apprehend anyone hunting unlawfully, he said. 'Most hunters take a very responsible attitude and religiously observe both the game season regulations and firearms laws, and they don't want to see their good reputation tarnished by the irresponsible actions of a few "bad apples"'

Contacts:

Blake Abernethy, phone 04 477 6118 or 025 546 790

Graham Nel, Wellington Police District firearms licensing co-ordinator, phone 04 381 2000



## Moving the mag.

But it's just your regular mailout — isn't it? This magazine gets printed, some machine puts it in an envelope, another stamps and seals it... Well, not exactly. For seven and a half years Alan (mostly) and Di Wilks have been that machine. Mailing every issue, according to extremely basic arithmetic, involves about 11,200 separate actions by your postal centre manager, deep in the DU nerve centre, the garden shed/workshop/spare garage. Are you ready? Pick up envelope, stamp it with DU post permit, put it on pile — repeat about 600 times. Pick up envelope, remove address label from sheet, apply to envelope, put on pile — repeat as above. Pick up magazine, pick up envelope, insert mag in envelope, insert extra material if appropriate, stick flap down, put on pile... sort into local and international, count and pack envelopes into cartons, load them into ute, drive to Greytown, find a handy park (have you been to Greytown on a Friday lately?). Unload cartons and carry them in... then go to collect another set of wetland photos...

Four issues per year = 44,800 actions, five years of mailout = 224,000 actions... the Wilks mail centre has completed about 336,000 actions... and seems willing to continue! The only fuel has been commitment, accuracy and the odd drop of good oil, of an evening.

## The travels of Basil

Over the years, keen DU member the late Barry Pearce and his partner Wendy established an attractive series of small dams and a popular farm park on their property Ashley Park, Waitotara. It is so popular that for a short time in late August a young fur seal ventured forth, up the Waitotara river from the coast and into one of the dams, where Wendy found him contentedly playing one morning. She named him Basil, which seemed to suit him, and he was unusually approachable, keeping bus-loads of school children and other visitors entranced for nearly a week. He would come to be fed, but found Wendy's offerings of mackerel much less up-market than the blue cod fillets she had in the fridge on the first day.

Visits to Basil were useful lessons for school groups. 'I guess he's just like any young fellow out exploring,' said Jim Campbell of DOC in a television report. 'But cute and cuddly? Not! Don't get between a seal and its escape route, and keep kids and dogs at a distance. Their bite is far worse than a dog's and can spread disease,' he said.

After his adventure with stardom and humans, Basil the friendly seal was carefully returned to the coast by DOC field officer Nic Peet — who often features in Flight's blue duck reports.

# From the Far Side

## Swans on the Thames

Legend has it that the first swans came to England as a gift to Richard I from Queen Beatrice of Cyprus, and the species known as *cygnus olor* still haunts the river. The swan was, and still is, regarded as a royal bird. It was sacred to Apollo and Venus in ancient times. Swans have survived the centuries under strong legal protection and the ownership of swans on an English river has always been a privilege; only the owners of land above a certain value were allowed to keep swans. In 1496 it was ordained that anyone stealing a swan's egg could be imprisoned for one year and be fined at the monarch's will, and the stealing or snaring of swans was more severely punished. At the same time it was ordered that all swans on every river in the kingdom were to be counted, examined and recorded each year. Henry VIII decreed that no one owning swans could appoint a new swanherd without a licence from the royal swanherd, and he instituted the marking of cygnets with nicks on their beaks — with the proviso that any bird not so marked became crown property.

In 1570 Elizabeth I ordered that those who erased or counterfeited an owner's marks should be imprisoned for a year.

For many years only royalty and nobles were allowed to keep swans, but later, as a concession to encourage trade, London livery companies, Eton College and others were permitted to do so. For centuries the Thames swans were regarded not only as decorative in a majestic way, but as a delicacy for royal feasts, and swan feathers were used for palace upholstery.

The Thames swans belong today to the Queen or to the Dyers' and Vintners' Companies. The Royal Keeper's ancient title is 'Keeper of the Swans in the Thames from the town of Graveshede to Cicester'. The Keeper still presides over the ceremony of Swan Upping or Swan Hopping in late July or early August. Assisted by the Dyers and Vintners swanherds he rounds up the season's cygnets to mark their beaks — one for the Dyers, two for the

Vintners and none for the Queen. They travel up the river in a small fleet of boats with banners flying, the men in colourful uniforms, and the birds are 'upped' in sometimes energetic scimmages. The voyage ends with a banquet at a riverside inn, with a dish of swan meat as the main course. In the 1950s there were almost 1000 swans on the Thames, but owing to lead poisoning, probably from anglers' weights, the numbers have fallen drastically.

*From The London Encyclopaedia, Edited by Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert, published by Book Club Associates, 1983.*



'A visiting artist relaxes' from *Hoffnung in Harmony* (Pub. Souvenir Press 1985)



# In Flight

## Shopping

### 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.

## T H E P O E M

The Wild Swans at Coole

The trees are in their autumn beauty,  
The woodland paths are dry,  
Under the October twilight the water  
Mirrors a still sky;  
Upon the brimming water among the stones  
Are nine-and-fifty swans.

The nineteenth autumn has come upon me  
Since I first made my count;  
I saw, before I had well-finished,  
All suddenly mount  
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings  
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,  
And now my heart is sore.  
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,  
The first time on this shore,  
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,  
Trode with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,  
They paddle in the cold  
Companionable streams or climb the air;  
Their hearts have not grown old;  
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,  
Attend upon them still.

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

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*Mute swan at the Cottles' property, Masterton.*

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