

Flight



ISSUE 133 - OCTOBER 2007

**Banrock Road Show on
Public-Private Path to
Wetlands Care**

Conference 2007 Photos

Book and dvd Reviews

and more inside...





wetland care
NEW ZEALAND

Our business is to harness community, business and government resources to restore and develop lost wetland areas within New Zealand.

Wetland Care members recognise that wetlands are vital to the wellbeing of the environment, acting as huge ecological sponges by soaking up pollutants and filtering water before it reaches streams, rivers, lakes, aquifers and the sea.

Our initiatives focus on matters as far-reaching as groundwater replenishment, flood control, nutrient and contaminant management and climate change – all critical factors for the conservation of freshwater and saltwater wetlands and marshes.

We want to preserve and conserve the flora and fauna of our most endangered ecosystem so that vibrant wetlands are our legacy to future generations.

Funding for projects comes from the Waterfowl and Wetlands Trust which was established by Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc in 1991, as well as membership, donations and corporate memberships such as that from Banrock Station Wines.

Central to Wetland Care New Zealand's mission is forming partnerships with people and organisations with similar aims. An example is Banrock Station Wines who place the Wetland Care New Zealand logo on their wine bottles distributed in New Zealand. In return, Banrock contribute a fee, which is based on each bottle sold, to Wetland Care New Zealand.

Money from this partnership has been given to wetland conservation projects done by:

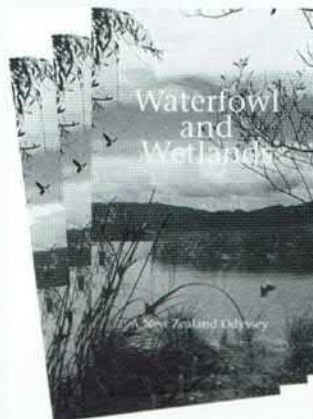
Tutukaka Landcare Coalition
Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society Inc.
Ducks Unlimited Operation Pateke
Port Charles release 2005 at Coromandel
Henley Trust, Masterton
Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, Wellington
Kitchener Park, Feilding
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Wairio Wetland, South Wairarapa
Wetland Trust New Zealand, Rangiriri
Waitakere Branch of Forest and Bird, West Auckland
Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, Dunedin

For further information, please contact:
William Abel - Director, Wetland Care
New Zealand, phone 06-362 6675
PO Box 281 Levin.



Our Website is : www.ducks.org.nz

Waterfowl and Wetlands



Videos \$49
DVDs \$55
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A New Zealand Odyssey

"Waterfowl and Wetlands - A New Zealand Odyssey" is a 75-minute programme that illustrates the value of wetlands, the waterfowl that depend upon them and the efforts being made to reclaim the country's rapidly shrinking wetland areas.

New Zealand is home to some of the world's rarest waterfowl as well as the more common introduced species. Each one is shown in detail. 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.

DVD indexing takes you directly to any waterfowl species, wetland type, Ramsar site and other subjects.

ORDER FROM:
Scientific and Wildlife Films
11 Hanover Street, Wadestown,
Wellington, New Zealand



Ducks Unlimited
new members
are as follows:

James Lazur (Queenstown)
John Cheyne (Waipukurau)
Gregory Flintoff (Kerikeri)
Elizabeth (Liz) Brook (Feilding)
Murray Williams (Paekakariki)
Ian Moore (Wanganui)
Craig Thomas (Featherston)
Pete and Judy Morrin (Wairoa Hawkes Bay)

Insight

People With Vision

Our 2007 AGM in Taupo highlighted the context of this Insight -starting with the bus trip to Wairakei Pastoral about 20km north of Taupo where a private group is turning 24,000ha of pine trees into grazing land.

They are putting a lot of effort into ensuring that there is minimal impact on the environment by fencing off and planting any potential wetland area or waterways, as well as planting trees on any of the steeper country.

At the dinner on Saturday night the Bill Barrett Trophy was presented to Graeme Berry for his Vision in buying a farm with Wetland potential and over the next three years developing that potential.

Lastly on the Sunday morning we were treated to the Vision of the people behind the Cape Kidnappers and Ocean Beach Reserve.

A privately-funded project to put a 9.5km predator-proof fence across Cape Kidnappers through three separate farms, creating a mainland island on which to release endangered New Zealand wildlife - a truly remarkable Vision.

These are three inspiring stories and I congratulate all those involved.

Ross Cottle

President



CONTENTS

2. Wetland Care
3. Insight
4. Wairio Planting Day
4. E7 Godwit's Tale
4. Waikanae's Nga Manu photo archives
5. Obituary Tom Caithness
6. DU 33rd Conference photos
7. DU 33rd Conference roundup
7. Wairarapa Chapter Shoot
8. More Conference photos
9. Banrock Road Show photos
9. Dermer wetland photos
10. Jack Harper wins Environmental Award
11. Banrock Road Show summary
12. Letter from Howard Egan
13. Tiritiri Matangi's pateke news
13. Masterton Recreational Trails
14. Book Review
14. DVD Review
15. Letter to the Editor re native grey ducks

Our Mission

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

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

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Front cover Photo:

Grey duck family.
Copyright Nga Manu Images. See story page 4.



Wairio Wetland August planting day supported by large group of volunteers



The planting of 750 plants and small trees by lunchtime at Wairio Wetlands on the eastern side of Lake Wairarapa on 1 August was a resounding success.

20 five-to-12 year-old children from Pirinoa, plus mums and a teacher, joined 15 students aged 16 to 19, from the Taratahi Agriculture Training Centre in Carterton, plus Dave Webster their tutor, Rotarians from South Wairarapa, DU members and representatives from the Farm Forestry Association, Forest and Bird, Greater Wellington Regional Council and the Department of Conservation. Don Bell, a Forest Conservator with the GWRC instructed the students in the skills of tree planting. Some of the students from Pirinoa Primary School even had to go back home to collect wet weather gear before coming to the wetland.

DU board member Jim Law, with Howard Egan a DU member and Wairio Wetland Restoration Project organiser shared the vision DU had for the wetland – to restore it, as near as possible, to the paradise it once was, providing pristine habitat for waterfowl.

“A great team effort involving a great cross-section of the community” said Howard Egan, Carterton-based DU member who, along with Jim Law, had fought to get the project started back in 2005. “The Taratahi students are happy workers - they skylark but they work hard too. They respect the tutors, but also treat them as one of the group. They take on board what they are told or shown, because they often ask me questions during the day which I have had trouble answering”, remarked Howard Egan afterwards.

Howard’s small boat was used to get to the islands, with hilarious and soggy results for the participants.

John Hayes, Member of Parliament for the Wairarapa, also put hand to spade, joining in the spirit of the venture.

(Photos courtesy of Howard Egan)



E7 the amazing godwit's tale

What's in a name? E7 – the female bar-tailed godwit fitted with a transmitter in February 2007 at Miranda, Firth of Thames, left Piako early on 17 March and flew nonstop up the Yellow Sea to Yalu Jiang, a nature reserve, part of the rapidly expanding city of Donggang in China, a total distance of 10,219km, arriving on 24 March – travelling 181 hours at an average speed of 56.4km.

On May 1, she flew eastwards then south of the Aleutian Islands, and landed on 5 May at Nelson Lagoon on the Alaskan Peninsula – a distance of 6459km. Onwards then to a few more hard-to-pronounce areas in the Yukon, and arriving on 15 May, her final destination, where she stayed and probably nested until 17 July. Leaving Manokinak on 18 July, she ended up at the Kuskokwim Shoals on the Yukon Delta south-east coast and refueled at Avinof.

On 30 August our time, she took off at dawn from Avinof and headed south, missing Hawaii, veering near Fiji and ending up at the North Cape of New Zealand, thence to Piako, arriving Friday 7 September after a return journey of eight days, 12 hours – 204 hours' flying time. It is considered unlikely that she stopped in Northland – and thus she would have flown 11,570km nonstop.

75,000 godwits – down from a former 100,000 – have done this impossible-seeming journey ever since forever without any real tracking system – and now, thanks to modern transmitter technology we have a fair idea what these astonishing birds go through.

Thanks to Chris Bindon and BIRDING-NZ@yahoogroups.com sending us the information. For more detailed information, contact BIRDING-NZ@yahoogroups.com.

Nga Manu Waikanae photo gallery

Our front cover photo of native grey ducklings with their parent is a typical example of Waikanae's Nga Manu Nature Reserve new educational photo gallery website.

Established on 13ha of natural bush and wetland at the northern end of Waikanae about 30 years, Nga Manu is now home to 57 species of birds. The 200 images on the site were selected from about 100,000 images caught by five motion-activated cameras positioned around the reserve, of birds and animals over the past 20 years, including kiwi and tuatara. Dramatic pictures include fantail in flight feasting on bugs, rats raiding a kererū nest and a morepork plucking a fantail chick from its nest.

The Nga Manu Trust is a charitable trust dedicated to conservation and conservation education. See www.ngamanuimages.org.nz or contact info@ngamanuimages.org.nz by email.



Obituary

Tom Caithness 1932 – 2007

It's never much fun saying farewell to a good friend. And it's even harder to do so to one that has been

with you for almost as long as you've been around. But farewell Tom Caithness DU must. Tom Caithness, the personality that lit up many an annual meeting. Tom Caithness, purveyor of outrageous stories and opinions. Tom Caithness, hunter, waterfowl biologist, unforgettable character, and enricher of so many lives.

When DU started in the early 1970s, Tom was already acquainted with most of the 'founding fathers'. Being a member of the Wellington Acclimatisation Society and Wellington Gun Club (he was then also a national gun club referee) and being a waterfowl biologist with the Wildlife Service, Tom knew all the important people. He came to love and hate those early DU conferences: he loved the camaraderie, the sense of mission, the shared passion for waterfowl but he hated the auctioneer. "There's a conspiracy," he used to say. "I keep my head low, and no one's head is naturally lower than mine, and that bloody (Bill) Wilkinson still reckons he saw it nod. I reckon he starts the night with 500 bucks alongside my name and he gets a percentage for every 100 bucks above that!" Yep, Tom reckoned he owned DU and that he had bought it many times over.

Tom loved trout fishing and duck shooting with a passion. An uncle taught him both when, after having spent his entire youth in hospital, he started work with the P&T. When a job as a technician was advertised in the Wildlife Branch in 1955, he applied and was eventually appointed – eventually, because after four consecutive interviews Tom told the interviewers "to stop mucking about and give him the job 'cos clearly there weren't any other candidates". That was Tom all right! And off to work he went trapping and banding quail in central Otago and Taupo.

If you worked on gamebirds in the 1950s you worked alongside wildlife's pioneer gamebird biologists Ken Miers, Gordon Williams, Kaj Westerskov and Ron Balham. And you worked on all gamebirds – quail, pheasants, swan, Canada geese and ducks. Duck trapping was one of Tom's favourite jobs; at Lakes Tuakitoto (Otago), Wahi and Whangape (Waikato) was where he claimed to have looked up the dates of more ducks than any man before or since! Interesting years those, because Tom was witnessing the gradual, and then explosive, numerical ascendancy of mallards over greys.

When Ron Balham moved to a university job he encouraged Tom to do a science degree. With only two years formal schooling behind him it was a struggle but that steely determination we came to respect saw Tom graduate BSc in 1966. Doing it part time didn't make it any easier, what with his high workload with gamebirds and the new problem of birds hitting aircraft at the many New Zealand airports he was required to investigate.

With the degree under his belt, Tom was given the rank 'biologist' and he started research programmes of his own. The birds and aircraft programme carried on for the rest of his working life, and into retirement, and he spent a couple of years as a consultant to Singapore Government during the construction of their new Changi airport. However it was to ducks that Tom really devoted his quality time.

Tom set up Pukepuke waterfowl research station on the Himitungi coast. He employed a number of excellent technicians to live there fulltime (Bill Pengelly, Andy Garrick, Andy Grant) as well as Karen

Tilley to help process the data (he made them all join DU). The first genuine understanding of our ducks emerged from that work and much of this reached hunters via another of Tom's innovations, the national waterfowl hunters' diary scheme. Hunters who contributed to Tom's diary scheme from 1969 to 1991 absolutely loved his idiosyncratic and irreverent annual summary, and his wee 1982 book *Gamebird Hunting* was based on questions which many of them kept asking him. Tom thought Fish & Game's decision to stop the diary and replace it with telephone-based surveys of hunters was a big mistake.

Pukepuke happened to be a spectacular gathering site for courting shoveler each July and Tom became very interested in this bird. When his good friend Roger Sutton found a shoveler moulting site deep in swamps of Southland's Waituna Lagoon, the pair started a pioneering banding programme. It was pioneering not just in New Zealand – nowhere else have shoveler been banded other than in occasional handfuls, but one capture at Lake Whangape (orchestrated by John Cheyne) comprised about 700 birds and is still a world record. It wasn't long before Southland shoveler were being encountered in the far north and the bird's habit of racing all around New Zealand each year was revealed.

Roger and Tom teamed up again to conduct a series of pond-feeding experiments in Southland that led to pond-feeding becoming a legal practice for hunters. And it was Roger who also encouraged Tom to start his memorable appearances at annual meetings of Acclimatisation Societies around the country that are still fondly remembered by older hunters. In return, Tom taught Roger to drink whisky!

When the Department of Conservation was formed in 1987 Tom was one of many Wildlife Service staff who transferred to the new organisation. Tom was not enamoured by the overtly preservationist culture that developed and was very happy to retire early in 1991 when the opportunity arose. From that point on his interest in waterfowl focused on the culinary and the annual hunt, especially in Southland and, more latterly, the Wairarapa.

Retirement simply meant a change of venue for Tom. His second great love in life, after his wife Diana and their children Sue and Steve (and at times, I'm sure, Diana came to question this ranking), was golf. With a handicap that can best be described as 'dangerous', Tom became almost a fixture at Petone's Shandon golf club. Although he greatly enjoyed playing, his interest was focussed on junior golfers. He developed junior golf at Shandon and then became selector and manager of Wellington junior golf teams. He became President, first of his club and then of the Wellington Golf Association, giving years of voluntary service that both delighted and frustrated him. Junior golfers in Wellington have never had a more outstanding patron!

Tom was just 75 when he died following a fall while starting a golf tournament at Shandon. Over 700 farewelled him at the clubhouse a week later with DU, Wildlife, Fish & Game, DoC, aviation and golfing friends and colleagues prominent amongst those gathered. We all felt our lives had been enriched by one of life's characters.

Murray Williams

(See photo page 9 of Tom's gun and backpack)



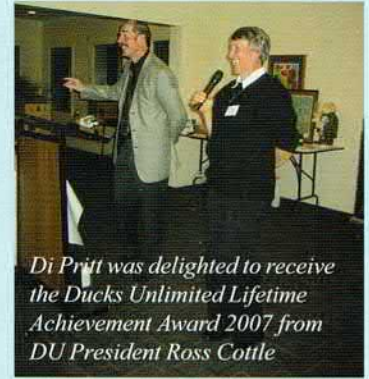
Ducks Unlimited NZ Inc 33rd AGM and Conference, Taupo (more photos page 8)



Graeme Berry is presented with the Bill Barrett Memorial Trophy in acknowledgment of his work on his wetlands, over three years at Mangaone, near Turoa.



Banrock Station's Tony Sharley presents Ducks Unlimited with the cheque for \$70,000 - president Ross Cottle on right.



Di Pritt was delighted to receive the Ducks Unlimited Lifetime Achievement Award 2007 from DU President Ross Cottle



Audrey and Di Pritt of Mitredale, Ohakune where, apart from their involvement in DU, they farm and run a successful homestay business.



DU board member Jim Law of Wairarapa above, and upper left DU treasurer John Bishop with Banrock Station Wines' Tony Sharley



Ken Barnes volunteered to return the shield to Manawatu's Ken Cook, again, with pretty good grace



Kim and Roger Lorigan of Reporoa, near Taupo



At right: Chris Bindon and Sharon Davies of the Waitakere area, Auckland



Angela Flynn of Nobilo Wines makes a bid in the silent auction



Jacqui and Ken Barnes of Wairarapa



Below: Peter McDonald of Nobilo Wines sports a Save the Pateke shirt much admired by all including Jan Cook of Manawatu



Stephen Pipes and Ray Hayward



Below: William and Jan Abel



What did Raana see? Chris Thomas look like he knows.



Janine and Philip Smith of Taupo

OUR Conference

Ducks Unlimited NZ Inc 33rd AGM and Conference, Taupo, July 2007

The 33rd AGM of Ducks Unlimited held over the weekend of 27-29 July 2007 at the Suncourt, Taupo, was attended at its peak by about 85 people.

It started with a casual drinks-and-dinner get-together on the Friday night, as attendees from both ends of the North Island re-united in the restaurant. After breakfast next day the AGM took place during which reports were given by President Ross Cottle, David Smith, Jim Law and other board members. (The following notes are a summary by your editor and the complete AGM report will appear in a future issue of Flight).

New treasurer John Bishop explained the change in auditors and thus accounting systems, which have taken place this year. He pointed out that the raffle organised by Howard Egan has gathered \$10161 this year from \$8653 in the previous 2006 year. Reports were delivered as per the Agenda, a lively hour.

Then a full coachload of us visited Wairakei Pastoral Developments which is a venture with which Ducks Unlimited has assisted - turning former pine forest into usable dairy farmland, over 25,000ha which two years ago was a basic site with dams and ponds dug out, now planted and developing into habitat for wildfowl and grazing for dairy cattle. Gary Winslade, Planning and Logistics Manager of Wairakei Estate answered our questions and explained the venture. Very efficiently fenced, the Wairakei Pastoral Ltd development continues its progress with wetlands and long riparian strips with copses of amenity trees, helped all along the way by DU. For more details see Flight 127, April 2006. Our hill climbing tour in hi-vis jackets (a novel sartorial treat for some of us) on this calm morning gave us views of the rolling terrain and ponds created in dips for wildfowl and revegetation belied the former forest acreage. It was hard to imagine this. 25,000 acres from forest to dairy and conservation-sensitive wetlands. One of our members did question why all the trees around the new dams were demolished to be replaced by new vegetation, which was a good question and interesting debate followed.

Anne and Dave Johnston treated us to the sight of their magnificent wetlands at Reporoa - one of New Zealand's largest private wetland areas. Barbecued sausages and Banrock wine for lunch.

The Bill Barrett Trophy was presented to an astonished Graeme Berry of Mangaone, Ohakune - his partner Jane Davies was, with Di Pritt and Audrey successful in their subterfuge involved in getting Graeme to actually attend in the middle of his busiest time ski season with Jane and Graeme's Turoa Lodge. Graeme gave a touching speech in which he thanked DU for all their help at Mangaone, where he has developed his wetlands in a short three years.

Di Pritt, now hugely relieved to see her old friend up there at the rostrum, felt she could now relax. To her profound amazement she heard her name called as the recipient of the Ducks Unlimited Lifetime Achievement Award for her work with the society since the tender age of 22. "Sorry, Ross, I wasn't even listening properly - I didn't expect this

for a second!" she exclaimed to laughter and applause.

More amazement continued on the night of the dinner, silent auction and grand auction conducted by the hilarious and witty Bob Wood. Tony Sharley, Manager of Banrock Station's Wine and Wetland Centre and who oversees Banrock Station's Global Conservation Programme worldwide, presented a cheque for \$70,000 to President Ross Cottle for Ducks Unlimited's Wetland Care New Zealand work. Tony was enthusiastically applauded as he presented this generous donation, adding to Banrock's funding of over \$170,000 to wetland projects in this country.

The dinner was noisy and busy - a large choice of objects for the silent auction ringed the dining room and after dinner auctioneer and showman Bob Wood entertained and cajoled, auctioning the high quality goods with jokes and hilarity. A simple system of helium-filled balloons each containing a number which could or could not be a winning number for certain special prizes, brought in an amazing amount of funds, selling at \$10 each. The photo opposite gives the picture. Unsung heroine Sharon Cottle-Smith in the background assured it all went smoothly. A new efficient system of payment using eftpos made paying for silent and not-so-silent auction items, and purchase of balloons, a breeze for payers and one of the other quiet heroines, Sandra Pipes in her other role as paymaster of the night.

On Sunday, Tamsin Ward-Smith gave an entertaining talk with slides, on the subject of Cape Kidnappers' Ocean Beach Wildlife Preserve of which she is the manager. Their aim is to return the peninsula to a place where it may once again be able to support native flora and fauna characteristic of a Hawke's Bay coastal ecosystem. At 2200ha, the Preserve will be the largest type of coastal and forest habitat under protection in New Zealand. A 9.5km-long mesh-type predator fence has been erected along the shoreline. Associations between Ocean Beach and Jim Campbell as a result of their request for assistance from DU, instigated the invitation to Tamsin to address the AGM, and as a result, Banrock's Tony Sharley and his team went to inspect the following week, which augurs well for our future combined involvement in this large venture.

Weather was kind, and we had a good time networking and were only sorry more members could not come to enjoy the weekend.

Next year's conference will be held in the Hawkes Bay and Cape Kidnappers Ocean Beach Wildlife Preserve will be a highlight. As soon as details are finalised members will be advised.

Wairarapa Chapter Annual Clay Shoot

Sunday 11th November at 0900am

James and Di Martin's "Waitawa"

339 Ponatahi Road, Martinborough.

Tel: 06 306 9835

100 target Shots

Be there by 11.00am or miss out.



Conference Day Trips....first to Wairakei Pastoral Developments



Ken and Jan Cook are almost recognisable...



Maxine and Ray Hayward with Claire Worth



Dr Mike Hucks and Colin Paton ride the range



Mark Barlow, Field Operative Wairakei Estate Beautification Team pictured at Broadlands

Right: Gary Winslade, Planning and Logistic Manager for Wairakei Estate, explains the work which DU had help with on this massive project. Sandra Pipes is seen on left, Diny Dermer's nice hat just visible behind.



...then to Reporoa for lunch at Broadlands Wildfowl Trust, hosted by Ann and Dave Johnston



Above and left: Barbecue lunch. Dave Johnston explains the history of this beautiful wetland and garden which was originally owned by the late ebullient character Norman Marsh. Dave and Ann live adjacent to this property and help maintain it on a permanent basis. Ann Johnston is pictured behind president Ross Cottle.



Photo right: Award-winner Glenys Hansen with Athol Rowland - they had just returned from a visit to the Bahamas where they visited ex-CEO Ducks Unlimited Canada, Stu and Patsy Morrison.



Above: DU stalwarts Dave Johnston, Jim Campbell, Kevin Campbell, Ross Cottle and John Dermer survey the view as seen below.



Banrock Road Show - a few photos



Banrock Wines manager Tony Sharley is impressed with a predator trap being shown by Mike and Jane Camm, conservationists and TOSSI members, while Angela Flynn watches from the left.



Angela Flynn of Nobilo Wines chats with Sharon Kast of the Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society Inc - one of its many busy and passionate supporters.



Ossie Latham with his daughter Rebecca at Tutukaka



Mike Camm demonstrates the trap to Ossie Latham.



Wendy and Brian Simmons of Algies Bay pictured at Tawharanui soon after attending DU's AGM at Taupo and bidding enthusiastically for many items at the auction!



Photo above: Les Cave, Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society Inc (TOSSI) chair with Jo Ritchie, TOSSI projects, Tony Sharley of Banrock Wines and Mace Ward, Parks Operations Manager for Auckland Regional Council.



Peace on earth. Ossie Latham and Mike and Jane Camm at Tawharanui in August



Photo shows: from left at Cape Kidnappers, Dr John McLennan, QSM, kiwi expert of Landcare Research Ltd, Ossie Latham of the Pateke Recovery Group, Angela Flynn and Prue Hill of Nobilo Wine Group, Andy Lowe of Hapouri Station and of the Ocean Beach Wildlife Preserve who took the group on a helicopter tour of the venture with visiting Banrock Station Manager Tony Sharley. (photo courtesy Angela Flynn)



Left and below: John and Diny Dermer's wetland project as photographed by Liz Brook of Feilding - more photos on the website....



The late Tom Caithness (see obituary page 16) bequeathed his gun and backpack to Ducks Unlimited for auction and they were purchased in lively bidding at the DU conference in July 2007 by John Cheyne of Waipukurau for \$600. John said he'd known Tom since 1967 - "Tom and his gear meant a lot to me, and I was determined to have it".



Jack Harper receives ARC's Sustainable Environment Award

Waikato chapter Ducks Unlimited long-standing member and environmental pioneer Jack Harper was honoured as the Individual Supreme Winner Award for a lifetime of environmental work on the Awhitu Peninsula at the Auckland Regional Council's Sustainable Environment Award evening in August.

Jack, who has farmed in Awhitu for over 30 years, was described by the judges as a catalyst for environmental enhancement on the Awhitu Peninsula. He has completed a major wetland protection project, forest protection, has put 20 hectares of his own land into a QEII Trust covenant and grows native trees in his nursery and has given away thousands of plants. He was nominated by the landcare group he has long been involved with and many members of the group were in the audience to acknowledge Jack as he was presented with his award.

Sustainable Environment Awards project leader Cathy Klouwens says the awards recognise and celebrate outstanding individual and group environmental achievement within the Auckland region.



Jack Harper was snapped by your editor as he appeared on "Breakfast" on TV1 in August

Book Review

contributed by Murray Williams

Atlas of bird distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004 by CJR Robertson and others

Ornithological Society of NZ, 533 pp.
>300 maps & figures. \$99.00

Did you know that mute swan have been recorded living wild in Golden Bay, near Kaikoura, in South Canterbury, at Oamaru, in the McKenzie Country, and on coastal Canterbury wetlands from Cheviot to Lake Ellesmere – and that's just the South Island!

Would it surprise you to know that Cape Barren geese are breeding in the wild around the Kaipara Harbour and near Cheviot, that there are several feral populations of Muscovy ducks, that feral geese are the fifth most widely-distributed of our 15 species of wild-breeding waterfowl, and that in the past 25 years scaup and parries have gone ballistic?

I know these things, and a great deal more about recent changes in waterfowl numbers, because of a quite astonishing book just published by the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (OSNZ).

Between 1999 and 2004, the members of OSNZ systematically collected records of birds seen all over New Zealand. In that time bird lists were recorded for 96% of the 3192 10x10km grid squares that form the New Zealand mapping grid. Almost 32,000 sets of observations were made by some 850 members, and they were careful to ensure there were records from all months of the year. The outcome is a massive 533 page book in which over 300 beautifully-crafted maps show the seasonal and overall patterns of distribution of all bird species found on land and in freshwaters. And on each species' map is a vignette of its distribution in the 1980s (from the OSNZ atlas of the time) so that the change over the past 25 years is immediately visible. Wow! The scale of the

field exercise is mind-boggling, and the quality of the resulting publication quite superb.

The best advertisement for this book are the maps, samples of which are illustrated here. They are maps to linger over. But what really impresses me is the sheer quantity of information gathered and the extent of the analysis presented. There is an awful lot of very, very interesting reading in this book. Even if your interest in birds doesn't go much beyond waterfowl there are several hours of absorbing reading awaiting you.

OSNZ planned, conducted, analysed the survey data and compiled the book as an in-house operation. The only thing it didn't do was print the book. The Society raised grants of about \$100,000 to buy in specialist help but did the rest entirely voluntarily, a contribution in kind it estimates at about 10 million dollars. And in a further example that the volunteer social spirit is still alive, every OSNZ member gets a copy of the book free. Wow – again!

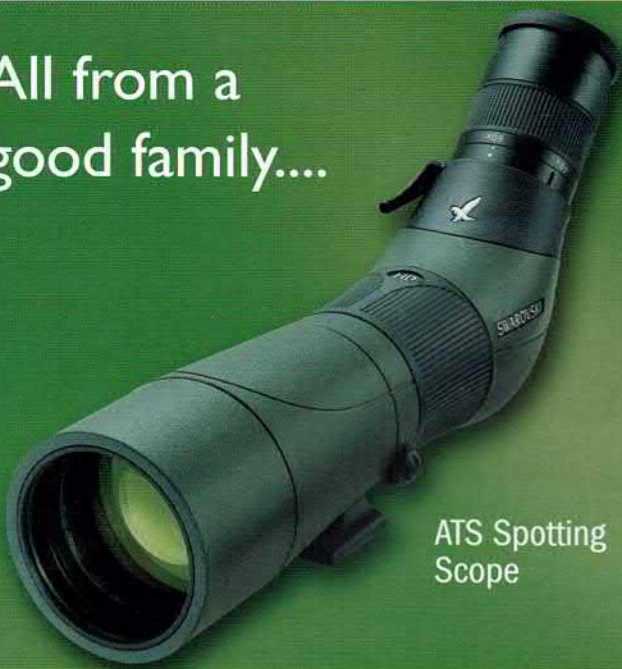
You won't find **Atlas of bird distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004** in any bookshop. You can only buy it from 'OSNZ Atlas, PO Box 12397, Wellington'. OSNZ's aim is to sell this book at cost and to share their information as widely as possible. Send a cheque for \$99 to the above address (made out to 'OSNZ atlas') and yours will come straight back in the mail.

Murray Williams

Forest Restoration donations sought

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Banrock Road Show Encourages Volunteer-Departmental Collaboration in Conservation

The Banrock Station Road Show of August 2007 led by Tony Sharley, the manager of Banrock Station itself, started with a guest appearance at the Ducks Unlimited AGM and annual dinner at Taupo on Saturday July 28. With him was Angela Flynn, Senior Brand Manager - Imported Wines, Nobile Wine Group and Prue Hill and Peter McDonald, also from Nobile Wine Group. After meeting old friends and encountering new ones Mr Sharley presented DU with the Banrock cheque for \$70,000 towards wetland care – only the latest in many financial contributions Ducks Unlimited has received over recent years. This was greeted with not surprising acclaim during the fundraising dinner and auction on the Saturday night.

During the AGM and at its accompanying ceremonies Tony Sharley, along with DU officials, outlined the groundwork behind what was to come – a reinforcing of links between DU subsidiary Wetland Care New Zealand and its joint venturer Banrock Station with all elements of the conservation movement, both private conservationists and those under the government wing.

Indeed, this course of action was jump-started at the AGM when the road show rapidly rescheduled to take in the nation's largest private coastal wildlife preserve at Cape Kidnappers, a cooperative development by landowners on the Cape. This group had earlier had associations with Ducks Unlimited patron Jim Campbell, who then invited Tamsin Ward-Smith to address the conference. This presentation was attended by Tony Sharley and Angela Flynn, who acted quickly to set up the engagement later in the week.

But first the party set out to Abel Tasman National Park to visit Awaroa Lodge whose proprietors had embarked upon a comprehensive independent wetland restoration development.

Mr Sharley presented the Awaroa Lodge proprietors with a cheque for \$7000 in order to assist them in their project.

Then the party, Mr Sharley, Angela Flynn, Senior Brand Manager with Banrock subsidiary Nobile, and Ossie Latham of Wetland Care New Zealand, flew across the Strait to Wellington to meet Department of Conservation officials, including the head of the department Al Morrison.

A meeting followed this with officials of the Forest & Bird Society.

It was now that the visit to Cape Kidnappers was squeezed in and a feature of this area inspection was a close scrutiny of the predator-defence fence which in effect screens off the tip of the cape from introduced species of the type which prey upon the pakeke, which remains the priority regeneration objective of the Wetland Care and Banrock support scheme in New Zealand.

Some rapid movement now as the group headed for Whangarei. Here Mr Sharley presented members of the Pateke Recovery Group with a cheque for \$12,000 in support of the group's work on a handbook and dvd on the pakeke and another cheque for \$7,000 towards efforts being made to recover the species and for freight and radio transmitters.

In making the presentation at the Whangarei area office of the Department of Conservation Mr Sharley spoke of the effectiveness of volunteer groups working with departmental forces in conservation, and he especially drew attention to the value of the group's work in releasing pakeke into the wild in the region.

The party then drove to the coast, to Tutukaka and the Tutukaka Landcare Coalition. Here damming has taken place to restore historical wetlands and this work has been in parallel with intensive trapping in the area in order to rid the zone of predators. Mr Sharley and the group were scrutinising the area with a view to it being a possible site for the release of pakeke.

Another \$12,000 cheque was presented towards the Pateke Recovery Programme and the anticipated release of pakeke early next year.

The next day the party headed south to the Tawharanui Regional Park for an on-site study of the work of the Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society Incorporated, or TOSSI as it is known. This visit was conducted in a carnival atmosphere generated in part by the very large number of people who turned out for the occasion.

Among them was a group of Auckland Regional Council field officials led by Mace Ward, group manager of parks operations for the council which controls the sanctuary.

Mr Sharley, in handing over the substantial Banrock cheques totalling \$30,000 in support of the work of TOSSI noted that the society embodied the spirit and effectiveness of volunteers and departmental officials working together on conservation projects.

In his address, he observed too, the innovative nature of the sanctuary development, which saw existing in fruitful coalescence a number of activities once considered to be incompatible: farming, tourism, and the conservation of endangered species.

Tony Sharley and his group made a special tour of the anti-predator fence that, as at Cape Kidnappers, insulates the conservation zone from the neighbouring territory.

The custom-designed sanctuary protecting fence at the ARC's Tawharanui Regional Park is often considered the prototype for the anti-predator fences installed subsequently at a number of other high protection conservation areas around the nation.

As a result of the Banrock Road Show 2007, and subsequent to the AGM weekend, articles appeared in newspapers in most of the areas the Banrock Road Show visited and in other towns where DU members resided, raising our profile, one hopes, in the community of conservation-minded citizens.



With publicity like this no wonder so many turned up at Tawharanui for the Banrock presentation

Joint letter to Greater Wellington Regional Council, Department of Conservation and Fish and Game Wellington region, sent by Howard Egan.

Subject:

Lake Wairarapa Ecosystem - Wetland Status

I have taken an active interest in New Zealand wetlands for nearly 60 years, have closely observed the Lake Wairarapa

wetlands for 20 years, and am currently involved with the joint program of DOC and Ducks Unlimited to restore the Wairio wetland at the eastern shore. That overall deep interest has brought me to a recent reread of the 1989 report by Dr Hugh Robertson (DSIR) to the Wairarapa Catchment Board.

The report is headed as above.

That reading left me with feelings of disquiet. In summary, I felt that Dr. Robertson's recommendations have largely been lost sight of. I then extended my study by re-reading DOC's Lake Wairarapa wetlands action plan for the period 2000-2010. An action plan developed after consultation. As to my specific concerns which relate to lake levels and the effect on lakeshore, exotic grasses, delta buildup and the combined effect on wildlife though, that reading too gave me little comfort. I shall explain why. In doing so, I do not set out to cause offence, rather to emphasise points which were earlier made.

Dr Robertson noted (p.12,13) that take levels below 9.9m could be detrimental to wildlife and it is encouraging to note that over the next five years those abnormally low levels did not occur. I have seen no levels data after 12/94. Those same report pages though, highlighted two major (my personal opinion) problem areas: the rapidly-worsening buildup of the shore at the Tauherinikau and Poprua deltas; the invading exotic grasses and weeds along the eastern shore. The report recommended five yearly resurveys (next 1990) of the shore and vegetation profiles at the lakeshore. DOC's current Lake Wairarapa action plan has the goal (2.1.2g) to annually monitor standardised shore vegetation profiles.

One hopes that this has in fact been carried out. The major problem of invading exotic grasses and weeds sees the recommended control method of submerging the vegetation by maintaining the lake level at 10.2 - 10.4m for prolonged periods - especially in the less flood-prone months of September and October. It is concerning to read then, that DOC's Wetland action plan has the objective (2.1.2.c) when the take level is over 10.3m to lower it as soon as possible. Reference to Greater Wellington lake level charts (at least for the years 1989-1995) illustrates that this appears to be the practice. Surely the problem of invading exotic grasses is thus being worsened? Dr Robertson has noted too (p.19) that the well-being of native turf associations depends upon periodic flooding, which cannot

happen if lake levels are too low.

Two important wildlife areas are particularly highlighted by a reading of the Dr Hugh Robertson report and DOC's Lake Wairarapa wetland action plan. The JK Donald Wildlife Reserve carried an Ecology Division ranking of High, and water levels in the Donald block ponds are managed by the Wgtn Fish & Game Council. Prior to the erection of the lake barrage gates (now controlled by Wgtn Regional Council) the report notes high lake water levels would have regularly inundated the Donald block. Since the barrage gates, Fish & Game have applied for resource consent to divert water from the Otakura stream into the Donald block during certain months, and to dam surface water at certain points thus enhancing the wetlands. Whilst this consent process appears to be bogged down, both the Robertson report and DOC's wetlands action plan refer to existing consents which entitle Fish and Game to maintain a fairly constant level about 10.5m. It is disappointing the Donald block habitat has declined considerably over recent years.

The second important wildlife area showing severe shortcomings is Simmonds Lagoon — and this in fact is owned by Wellington Fish & Game Council. In 1989 (p.27 Robertson report) the encroachment of willows on areas of open water had reduced the quality of the wetland. Fish & Game then planned to block off the outlet drain, raise the water level and reduce the area of willow and aspen. My judgement is that the wildlife values at Simmonds Lagoon are vastly worse now than then.

We have a wetland of international importance where key wildlife values are deteriorating despite the involvement of three major authorities — the addressees of this letter.

(signed) Howard Egan, Parkers Road, RD1 Carterton

Postscript from Howard: As we go to press, a full response has come from Fish & Game Wellington Region. Very briefly they say: 1. They share my concerns with lake water level management and exotic grasses encroachment. They consider it a matter though for the other two parties (Regional Council & DOC), as do I.

2. Re Donald block, they hope to progress a resource consent application within 18 months!

3. Tauherinikau river floods have ruined the wetland values of Simmonds lagoon. Fish and Game hope to sell it.

Tiritiri Matangi's pateke

From 'Dawn Chorus', Tiritiri Matangi's August 2007 edition, Morag Fordham reports in her Fauna Report the movements of the pateke resident there.

"On 12 May between the hours of 7.30am and 10am, poor Jemima was found floating on the Wharf dam, having been predated by an Australasian harrier. Ray and Barbara Walter buried her under the cabbage tree by the dam. The now single Ossie continues to greet the visitors. Daisy has not been seen for several weeks on either the Fisherman's Bay dam or the stagnant dam. Finn the Philander is in his element as he now has three females on the Bunkhouse dam. Rose and Connie are both seen from time to time around the NE Bay wetlands area".

For more information contact:

Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc, PO Box 90814, Auckland Mail Service Centre, Auckland 1142

New Recreational Trails opened in Masterton

Ducks Unlimited Wairarapa is shortly to begin beautifying wetland areas and streams for the new Lansdowne Recreational Trails in Masterton. These are for citizens' enjoyment, cycling, walking or dog-walking. Created by Masterton District Council and the Wairarapa Multisports Club the venture has had huge input by other conservation-minded individuals and groups. Working bees have been enthusiastically attended and native trees and plants installed, most of them donated by armfuls and bootloads full.



Book Review by Murray Williams

Whio: Saving New Zealand's Blue Duck

by David Young.

Craig Potton Publishing, 152 pages, 78 photos, \$39.95

At last! A book about a New Zealand duck. Why has it been so long coming?

Fittingly, this first book is about our most enigmatic waterfowl, the one with no relatives anywhere else and which lives in a habitat that only a handful of other ducks worldwide have managed to exploit. The blue duck fascinated our early European explorers, gave sustenance to Maori and early Pakeha alike, and today still welcomes backcountry trampers and fishers in the decreasing number of headwaters where it precariously clings to life. This is a bird in big trouble, and in need of both friends and action. And this is what David Young's fine book is all about.

But first, a declaration of this reviewer's bias. My name and some of my research are mentioned in this book. Furthermore, I helped the author find a number of the people whose blue duck stories made the pages of this book. Truthfully I have been too close to the book's development to be an objective reviewer!

The chapter that will most interest Ducks Unlimited members, I think, is that devoted to the releases of their birds on Mt Egmont/Taranaki. Ducks Unlimited recognised a long time ago that blue duck needed a helping hand. *Operation Whio* has been one of DU's flagship projects. The ultimate outcome of DU's efforts, and that of breeding coordinator Peter Russell, is well-chronicled over 10 pages. If there is a disappointment it will be that the uniquely Ducks Unlimited side of the story is not given the prominence some might wish to see.

Whio gives reason for, and results of, a seriously under-resourced and low-profile conservation programme. Astonishingly it is the *only* public reporting of a DOC-threatened species recovery programme that I can find on shop or library bookshelves.

The nature and scale of the conservation problem is laid bare and there is no hint of any PR massaging of what's been happening. Appropriately, but unusually, David Young has gone directly to those doing the fieldwork and given them a voice. It is they who narrate the story. He allows Andy Glaser to talk about his Waimana River population in northern Te Urewera while sitting on a rock in the field, trusty GSP "Neo" at his side and rifle over the shoulder ("I use the scope for reading duck bands" - yeah right!). Kerry Oates' and Rufus Bristow's efforts on behalf of whio in the rivers of the central North Island provides inspirational reading. Tim Shaw's willingness to try new approaches in north-west Nelson (nest robbing to induce second nestings while hatching the stolen eggs in captivity) and the role of Peacock Springs in supporting this is a wonderful example of how aviculturalists can make a huge and effective contribution. The voices from Fiordland are those of Murray Willans, Max Smart and Kerri-Ann Edge, all DOC staff whose video cameras on nests exposed the predatory roles of stoat and possum so graphically.

The claim on mountain water by electricity generators is highlighted by reference to the Tongariro power schemes and the water flows in the Wanganui River. Quite a saga this at the time, and quite a challenge for the author too. Not all the players were happy with the way this chapter has been told - but hey, isn't this the way with "history".

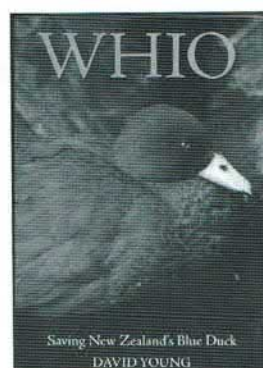
David Young has produced a very readable book. This is not a dry scientific account, nor is it a drooling PR document. It's a story, and you can tell that it has been crafted by a very experienced journalist and writer. The book gains strength and authenticity by not having been written by someone close to the action. Likewise, it gains strength from the inclusion of so many (78) excellent, specially-commissioned photos. Rod Morris, Rob Suisted and John Shorland have produced some stunning images. It is good also to see included a couple of photos by Hokitika's Alan Reith, he of the \$10 note image and of all the blue duck images that DOC has used for the past 15 years (check out my favourite two-eyed stance photo on page 9).

Now for words of due acknowledgement. This book was funded in equal part by Forest & Bird, Central North Island Blue Duck Trust and Genesis Power, and has a healthy subsidy from the publisher. Good on 'em!

So am I biased about this book? Probably. Let me finish then by referring to the recent Montana book awards. *Whio* was entered in the environment category of that competition. It didn't make the final three, but the judge's report indicated that the reduction from a final five down to three was very difficult and specifically mentioned that "David Young's splendid *Whio*" was worthy of making the final cut. No bias there surely!

Whio: Saving New Zealand's blue duck hit the book shops before Christmas last year but, like the bird itself, flew low and silently (and that is despite being launched by the Governor-General). You may have to ask your local bookshop to get it in for you, or you could try sourcing it direct from the publisher's website (<http://www.craigpotton.co.nz>). If all else fails, email me.

Murray Williams
murray.williams@vuw.ac.nz



The Impossible Dream The Campbell Island Teal Story - a DVD

New members Pete and Judy Morrin of Wairoa are experienced and passionate natural history filmmakers and have produced a half-hour dvd on this fascinating story.

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The Campbell Island teal is descended from the New Zealand brown teal or pateke, who when they appeared on Campbell had to evolve to the food scarcity situation by becoming smaller, losing muscle which was not needed, in the breast, which reduced their flying ability. To save energy breathing they produced fewer but larger eggs, enabling the ducklings to stay longer in the egg and emerge in a more mature state to cope with the cold temperatures. Sealers arrived - with attendant rats - demolishing the population to a near-extinct state... see the dvd to find out how the plot thickens.

Today they are back on Campbell Island. This is the story of 'extinction' to re-introduction back to their homeland. A journey fraught with difficulties for the teal and for the conservators trying to restore teal to Campbell.

This educational and well-documented dvd with its excellent filmwork, thoughtful interviews and charming guitar background soundtrack answers all the questions one would ask about this rare species.

To purchase this DVD or other natural history documentaries for NZ\$29.50 see website www.kiwinaturalhistory.com or contact:

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New Zealand - Phone : 0274 510 117



Letter to the Editor

Subject: Native grey duck plea

Dear Flight Editor,

I am writing in reply to Chris Bindon's letter to Ross Cottle in Flight 132, July 2007, re native grey ducks. Amongst the large number of ducklings 'WillowHaven' Waterfowl Refuge cares for each year, we usually receive some native grey ducklings. Some are pure grey and some have a percentage of mallard. In previous years we have released both mallard and grey ducks to the same localities.

Because of the frequent interbreeding between mallards and greys, we were concerned that the numbers of pure greys could diminish considerably, until they become functionally extinct, as Chris mentioned. In recent years, we kept a couple of pure grey ducks which laid well in a free-range situation, although we did not breed from them at that stage, because we had no grey drake. When we did get a drake, we put them together in our 50sqm aviary, but in spite of their 'five star hotel' accommodation, they completely refused to lay! Greys obviously don't like breeding in an aviary situation. We found the same with the grey teal.

At WillowHaven we have now decided to initiate a conservation project to help increase the grey duck population, by releasing and concentrating any pure or near-pure greys into selected areas where mallard are very few or preferably absent. Furthermore, we think that, in order to help the native grey duck to survive as a pure species, it needs to be fully protected.

We would be interested to hear from anyone, anywhere in New Zealand, who has suitable wetlands for grey duck releases.

Vyndina Smith (D U Auckland)

*WillowHaven Waterfowl Refuge Inc., P.O. Box 1765, Whangarei 0140
Phone: 09 4302079 Email: smith8090@yahoo.com*



Two and a half week old mallard x grey ducklings, posed in a Banrock Wine box that Winston Smith brought some groceries home in.

Picture from 'WillowHaven' Waterfowl Refuge 2004-2005

In a later email, Vyndina adds: "We get mostly mallard or mallard cross grey duck, some pure grey duck, paradise duck, some grey teal. However brown teal (pateke) from this area, which could be sent to us for raising or rehab, are sent to such places as far away as Peacock Springs! We have Conservation Department permits to keep mallard, grey, paradise, grey teal, shoveler, black swan, and Canada goose".

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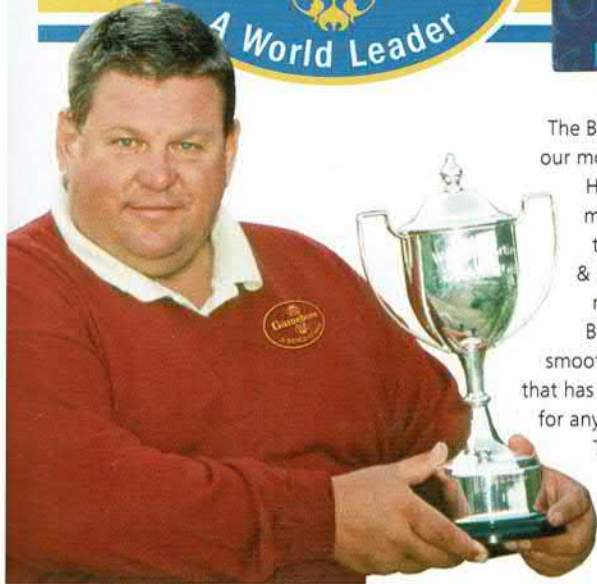
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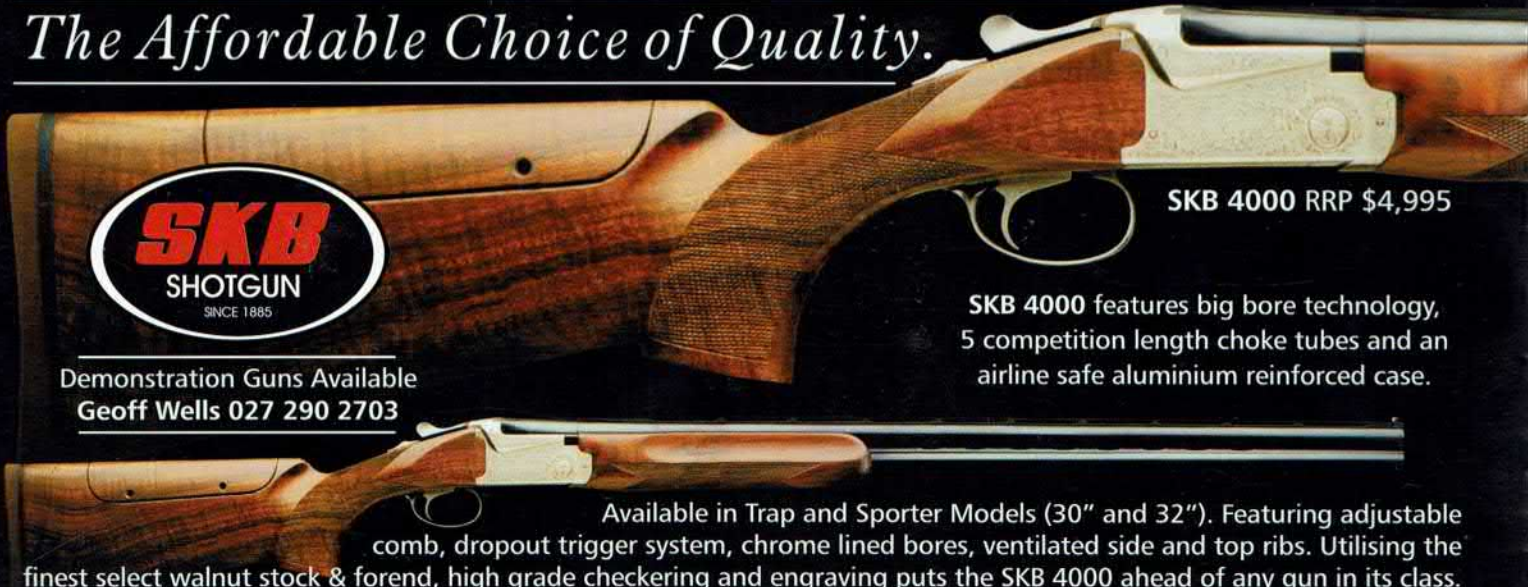
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