

Flight



ISSUE 137 - October 2008



Inside:
Conference Summary and photos
Kiwi reintroductions
Godwit arrival
Karori Wildlife Sanctuary Conservation Award
Who news and much more . . .





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, among others:

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
Manawatu Estuary Trust, Foxton
Mangaone Wetland, Raetihi
Masterton Intermediate School, Masterton
Steyning Trust, Hawkes Bay
Travis Wetland Trust, Christchurch
Wairio Wetland, South Wairarapa
Wetland Trust New Zealand, Rangiriri
Waitakere Branch of Forest and Bird, West Auckland
Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, Dunedin
Cape Kidnappers pateke release, 2008

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

Wairarapa Chapter Shoot

23rd November 08
James and Di Martin's
Waitawa
Martinborough
Start Time 09:00
Last Registration 11am or
you can't compete!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Ashburton Aquatic Park, Ashburton
David and Karen Milner, Balclutha
Paul Lampp, Napier
Malcolm Nitschke, Marton
Susan Perry, Masterton
Max Lyver, Hastings
Barry Brunton, Hamilton
Bruce Gill, Palmerston North



We are sad to announce the passing away of

John McDowell
of Remuera last year

Noel Singer
of Hamilton in July

Our condolences go to their families from their friends and the membership of Ducks Unlimited New Zealand

Insight

Spring has sprung!

My favorite time of the year - the grass is growing, the lambs and calves are racing around and of course there are a large number of ducks and ducklings to be seen.

As you are all aware it has been a particularly wet winter this year with a lot of water lying around in shallow depressions on the paddocks for long enough to kill the grass.

These are now just muddy damp little swampy areas.

I was quite amazed the other day when riding around the farm at the number of mother ducks using these areas to feed their ducklings and it made me realize just how important and valuable even small wetlands can be to wildlife conservation.

Every piece of land that is drained or modified in some way has an effect on its surroundings, and not always for the better.

Ross Cottle
President



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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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All to be produced camera-ready.

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

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Gail Isaac
129 Grant Rd, Thorndon
Wellington 6011 tel: (04) 499 9747 or
47 Cross's Line, RD, Greytown 5794 tel: (06) 304 8034
or cell 027 3222 944
email: gail.isaac@xtra.co.nz or gail.isaac@gmail.com

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Front cover:

Albatross group photo courtesy Brian Strong - more on page 5

Inset left: Canadian DUNZ 2008 conference guest speaker Barbara Hanbidge, flanked by DU director Jim Law, Barbara's husband Professor Rod Johnson and DUNZ president Ross Cottle

Inset right: DU director David Smith with Graham Gurr and his Lifetime Achievement Award



34th Annual Conference in Napier, over the weekend of July 26/27 2008 - *report from Liz Brook*

While the wind blew the ocean spray aloft and the rain obscured the otherwise magnificent views, a band of intrepid sightseers (DU conference attendees) ventured by bus onto the blustery outcrop of land that is the Cape Kidnappers and Ocean Beach Wildlife Preserve.

The idea was to see what has been achieved to provide another sanctuary for our native wildlife but we spent more time inside the buses than out, although a welcome lunch and wine (Banrock of course) was provided at the Cape Kidnappers woolshed.

The landowners of Cape Kidnappers peninsula and Ocean Beach have joined forces to create the largest coastal peninsula wildlife restoration project in New Zealand.

Three families, the Robertsons, the Hansons and the Lowes have erected a 9.6km predator-proof fence stretching across the neck of the peninsula from the cliff face in the north at Clifton, south to encompass a large portion of the Ocean Beach sand dunes.

The fence excludes all pest mammals (cats, rats, stoats, ferrets, hedgehogs and weasels), though apparently baby mice can just squeak through. To prevent animals burrowing a skirt of mesh is dug into the ground, while at the top a metal hood prevents animals climbing or jumping over.

Volunteers are a big part of the project and have been involved with kiwi nest work, kiwi egg-driving, tree-planting, building bird boxes, bird transfers, rabbit control and pest trapping.

There are 890 traps for mustelids along the fence line, along with bait stations and 100 traps for wild cats. Shooting of goats, cats and rabbits takes place and as it is possible for some pests to invade around the ends of the fence, the pest control mop-up is a continuous operation.

Ocean Beach and Rangaiika sand dunes are the largest system on the east coast that are still actively forming and shifting as natural dune systems should. Rangaiika dunes also contain a significant wetland system suitable to re-establish pateke, New Zealand's rarest waterfowl.

Inland there are a number of areas that have potential for restoring native coastal and forest species and a 150ha block of mature kanuka forest mixed with titoki, karaka, rewarewa, mahoe and a few podocarps like kahikatea already provide the right habitat for native birds.

The preserve already has a number of native birds special like kereru, fantail, silvereye, bellbird and tui. Reintroduction of North Island robin and tomtit began in May 2007 and North Island rifleman, whitehead and pateke this year. Kiwi will be re-introduced later this year.

The big project underway is to re-establish seabird colonies. With mammalian predators there are few places where seabirds can breed on the mainland. Cape Kidnappers has 17km of coastal boundary that should provide a haven for birds such as grey-faced petrels, black-winged petrels, fluttering shearwater and others. Lizard restoration is also a focus.

Tamsin Ward-Smith, wildlife manager at the Preserve said, "There are two of us who are full time at the Preserve, myself and Travis Cullen who is our Pest Control manager. John McLennan is our technical advisor."

Ms Ward-Smith said the kiwi release is planned for August 30. "We are getting pretty excited now. We will be releasing five that day and another 55 over the next couple of years". (See story page 6)

The conference provided plenty of time for socialising as well as the AGM, featuring an interesting and pleasant speaker, Barbara Hanbridge, an education specialist with Ducks Unlimited Canada. Although DU Canada has a large amount of dollars to spend on promotion compared to little ol' NZ, she did give us all some ideas that could possibly be used here to promote the aims of DU.

The silent auction created a lot of interest and the raffle was a great success with each person attending the Saturday dinner buying a balloon in which there was a small note, most of which said "Thanks for the donation", but 10 of them were for prizes. The helium-filled balloons were attached to the seat backs at dinner and gave a festive air to the evening.

A little dampener was put on the night when the All Blacks surrendered to the Ozzies.



Diny Dermer examines the barbecue

The hut recently moved to Ocean Beach

Jim Law's conference report

Despite a major storm that swept over the North Island, the delegates who attended the 34th Annual Conference in Napier, over the weekend of July 26/27 had a great time.

Delegates gathered on the Friday night for a social hour before dinner and then, after dinner, a talk on DU Canada, by special guest Barbara Hanbridge. It was a great introductory evening, despite concerning reports of the approaching storm.

Saturday morning dawned clear and the formalities of the AGM were completed reasonably promptly with good reports on the major wetland projects sponsored by DUNZ, the Pateke Recovery program and a review of membership numbers and finances. The last two were both considered good but, like the old school report, "could do better". A special vote of thanks to our major sponsor, Banrock Station Wines, was passed by acclamation.

It was then into buses for the field trip to the Cape Kidnappers and Ocean Beach Wildlife Preserve. "Just a fantastic project" was a common descriptive as delegates viewed the kilometres of predator-proof fencing that secures the Cape. The delegates heard firsthand from the visionaries and custodians of the project, both on the wind and rainswept cliff top overlooking Ocean Beach and later, in the distinctly more comfortable woolshed. There, delegates enjoyed warm food, our main sponsor's great wine and more socialising.

Before arriving at the woolshed though, a quick detour was made to the Lake Lopez Wetland. "Where would wetlands be without a drop of water?" said DU President Ross Cottle as he toured the huge wetland in the rain. The wetland has recently planted clusters of native and exotic vegetation, that form a wonderful surround to the wetland and provide improving habitat for the already numerous ducks, swans and other resident waterfowl.

It was then back to the hotels to warm up before the main dinner and fundraising auction attended by over 100 delegates. A great evening, with awards, more fine food and wine and an entertaining auction which raised over \$9,000 for wetlands!

On Sunday morning Barbara took most delegates through the new education programmes run by DU Canada designed to start young kids on the journey to becoming the conservators of tomorrow. It was a great presentation, which left delegates with lots of ideas and a willingness to expand DU NZ's work in this area.

The 35th Annual Conference will be held in the Manawatu, probably also on the last weekend in July - a sunny one for sure!



Godwit

Much excitement when a few hundred bar-tailed godwit from Alaska arrived in the Avon-Heathcote estuary in early September.

Normally they fly to the northern hemisphere summer in Alaska in March, and make the trek back 11,000km to New Zealand later in the month of September.

E7, New Zealand's most famous godwit, was electronically tagged on a round trip of nearly 30,000km from the Firth of Thames in March, returning from Alaska on September 7. (See story in Flight October 2007, page 4).

This year, E7 appeared on September 2.

Massey University ornithologist Phil Battley has been quoted as saying that such early arrivals are not really unprecedented, and that it is possible small numbers sneak in early.

He said that it is possible that early arrivals relate to the presence of a good weather system at the end of August in some years, and not others. The low pressure systems southeast of Alaska give them good tailwinds.

Spotted Shag



Photos kindly supplied by Brian Strong - who is a photographer/writer with a particular interest in wetland and estuarine life. He is based in Christchurch, and is a member of the Nature Photography Society of New Zealand. His website is <http://www.findapic.co.nz/magic>.

Photos top and bottom show godwit preparing to leave Christchurch, all nicely fattened up.



Cape Kidnappers and Ocean Beach Wildlife Preserve Pateke Update September 2008 *Tamsin Ward-Smith reports*

It is now three months since the release of pateke at the Preserve and they are proving to be an adventurous bunch to say the least!

A few have 'flown the dam', with a male and female taking up residence at the Te Awanga lagoon almost eight km away from the release site. This is going to prove a precarious existence to say the least - living

among mallard, geese and pukeko in close proximity to the car park and houses, cats and dogs.

Another of the 30 released now lives under the Waimarama/Tuki Tuki bridge, 11.5 km away. It took him only a day's flight, with a brief stopover at Lake Lopez, to reach his new home.

Sadly six pateke have died due to unknown causes. They had flown outside the Preserve where life expectancy is greatly reduced.

Of the twenty still on the release dam the news is all good. They are starting to hang out in pairs on the main dam and are behaving in a bossy and territorial manner, chasing other pairs away from their area. This is a good sign that breeding may not be far away.

Kiwi re-introduced to Cape Kidnappers

Another exciting event took place at Cape Kidnappers Wildlife Preserve on Saturday 30 August, when five kiwi were released into a manuka-forested gully, in the area surrounded by the 9.6km predator-proof fence.

That number would breed from the 60 to be released there over the next three years and could also provide larger kiwi that could be returned to the wild.

Tamsin Ward-Smith, Cape Kidnappers and Ocean Beach Wildlife Preserve Manager, told Flight: "The kiwi release was pretty exciting for us with over 300 people attending including volunteers, landowners and staff, iwi, Bank of New Zealand kiwi sponsors, Sirtrack Ltd, Kiwi Conservation Club children and parents."

There was an official handing-over ceremony of a kiwi called Hine, from the Ruahine Ranges between the Ruahine people Te Aorangi Awarua and Ngati Kahungunu Heretaunga, which was very special, followed by afternoon tea and speeches up at Cape Kidnappers Station golf implement shed.

Later in the day a further four kiwi were released which had been bred in captivity at the Napier City Council facilities. "These are the first of around 60 kiwi we hope to release over the next two to three years which will come from the Ruahine Forest Park, Maungataniwha Forest and Kaweka Forest Park. We are sourcing the kiwi first as eggs from the wild and then they are hatched and reared at Kiwi

Encounter, Rainbow Springs or Napier City Council kiwi facilities until they weigh around 800gm" she said.

Tamsin Ward-Smith said that the Cape Kidnappers restoration project is regionally and nationally significant for four reasons: 1) it is a private initiative, funded largely by the landowners; 2) it is being undertaken on a large scale (2200ha - larger than Kapiti Island); 3) it focuses on a predominately coastal ecosystem with nationally-significant dune systems and seabird colonies and 4) it integrates conservation goals with economic ones in a way that has not been attempted before. Species restoration is being undertaken within what is now a predominately rural landscape, alongside traditional farming and forestry operations and other complementary forms of land use.

Restoration is being achieved with conventional tools - intensive pest control, species re-introductions, exclusion of domestic stock from forest patches, and re-planting of selected habitats. Robins, tomtits, riflemen, whitehead and pateke have already been released into the preserve, and liberations of brown kiwi are about to begin. If all goes well, these will be followed by re-introductions of species that are even more predation-sensitive, such as red-crowned parakeet, fluttering shearwater, saddleback, little spotted kiwi, and takahe.

Photo below: Te Aorangi Awarua bringing the kiwi to Ngati Kahungunu (All photos this page courtesy Ziko Photos)

Photo below: Andy Lowe and son Hunter take the kiwi, Hine, out of the box ready to release it into the Preserve. Ngati Kahungunu are looking on and Tamsin Ward-Smith, Cape Kidnappers and Ocean Beach Preserve Manager is opening the box.



Photo below: A hearty crowd for the speeches.



2008 Operation Pateke report

from Ossie Latham

Mimiwhangata and Aotea/Great Barrier: no change.

Port Charles: thriving.

Tuhua/Mayor Island, Tawharanui, Cape Kidnappers: all stable.

Tutukaka: this year's release more successful than the first one last year.

Travis Wetland: hanging on, with about half the released birds still alive.

In the coming year the third of the three planned releases will happen at Tutukaka, and the second of three at both Tawharanui and Cape Kidnappers. (These have by publication date taken place -Ed).

A new large-scale release is being investigated in the western Southland area. Options for the best release site are being appraised now, with areas under consideration including the Clinton-Arthur catchment and Anchor Island.

Other potential large-scale release sites will be looked at this year. These include Awarua/Waituna in Southland, Ashburton Lakes, Whangamarino, Matakana Island and Lake Rotiti. Any one of these may eventuate in the medium to long-term.

The appraisal is done according to a set of criteria formulated as a consequence of the year 2000 audit.

The key objective is to get a mix of large-scale sites and some smaller experimental sites, with the objective to have three or four release sites on the go at any one time, with each site receiving three or four annual releases. As a site receives its last release, a new site will be added.

The key to achieving this is the ability for sites to sustain effective predator control on a long-term basis, especially at the potential large scale release sites. A lesser, but nevertheless important, constraint for many sites is the ongoing cost of monitoring over the release programme period. This can amount to \$10,000 to \$20,000-plus, per season per site. We are grateful for the support received from Banrock Station Wines who help bridge this gap in funding.

The Recovery Group remains effective and enthusiastic and has coped with the changes in personnel over the last couple of years.

People from new release sites always bring questions and energy, which helps the old hands to remain focused and committed.

The genetic diversity of the captive population has come into question. Recent research from Victoria University suggests that the Aotea/Great Barrier flock has a very narrow genetic base and it is birds from there which dominate the captive flock. A plan has been formulated to freshen up the captive flock bloodlines from the more genetically diverse Northland populations.

As the science around the release of birds and post-release predator control progresses well, the Recovery Group intend to tackle other areas of concern. A major gap in knowledge is pateke diet in the wild. A suitable person and funding is being sought for this project now.

Stilt events

Forty black stilt - found only in New Zealand and known as *Himantopus novaezelandia*, were released at Lake Tekapo in the snow recently. Captive-raised, the birds formed part of the Department of Conservation's black stilt recovery programme.

DoC's Twizel biodiversity programme manager Dean Nelson said some of the birds were raised at Peacock Springs.

Although the Lake Tekapo site was outside DoC's main Tasman Valley predator control site, some pre-release predator control work had been done. There was a slight drop in the total black stilt population but the number of breeding pairs in the wild continued to rise, with 20 productive breeding pairs this past season.

And in Britain, Richard Bashford, from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds reports that three rare black-winged stilt - *Himantopus himantopus* - chicks have hatched for the first time in Britain, for more than 20 years.

A pair of the birds which normally bred in mainland Europe, set up home in Cheshire this year. The chicks are the first successful hatching since 1987, and only the seventh ever recorded. Mild weather is believed to have helped the situation.

New Zealand Stock Exchange to use conservation as global springboard -Water aspects will be crucial

TZ1, for Time Zone 1, will see New Zealand positioned at the very centre of the worldwide conservation movement. The New Zealand organisation will do this by taking a pivotal role in registering carbon sinks for the era of emissions offsets trading.

At the helm is Australian-born engineer Mark Franklin who was involved with some of Australia's major power projects of recent times. Now he is at the centre of a scheme to restore the nation to a place at the centre of global trading, this time in the carbon sphere.

The former head of Vector now heads NZX's move into the carbon trading sphere which many view as rivalling in significance contemporary and familiar exchanges in commodities and stocks and shares and currencies.

He is the head of TZ1, the NZX subsidiary focused on carbon trading and his objective is simple enough. It is to make NZX a 'world player' in the emerging sector.

He is determined to bypass what he describes as just 'local infrastructure' in favour of the global reach just because the market is global anyway as emissions created in one sphere drift across to another part of the world and vice versa.

A key point for New Zealand taking this influential position, he believes, is the predominance of emissions in New Zealand from agriculture.

NZX via its subsidiary TZ1 will follow the global emissions exchange market wherever it goes and in whatever form it takes, be they Points of Obligation, piquantly entitled POOs or allocation units, or certified emission reductions.

He intends to insert TZ1 and thus its parent NZX into the mainstream of this global focus and an initial step in this goal was the successful one to become a global registry for Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS), the most visible of the standards in the voluntary carbon market. TZ1 just recently became the registry for a rainforest development BioBank operated as a joint venture by the Government of Sabah and global investors.

Mark Franklin wants to get people involved, including conservation groups, particularly voluntary ones such as Ducks Unlimited, and especially so where engineers and farmers are part of the scene.

This pending sphere is full of possibilities for them, he believes. But first the new era has to be accepted. It is a fact and is underwritten by international treaty, notably the Kyoto one, he points out.

The carbon era as a new frontier and there is the scope for organisations to position themselves on the ground floor.

Water will be at the very centre, he is convinced. "Water. You look at Australia and New Zealand. You look at the most pressing problem and you see that 50 percent of the time that problem has something to do with water."



DU NZ Conference 2008



Below: Surveying the wetlands and photo above, the 9.6km predator-proof fence marches across the landscape

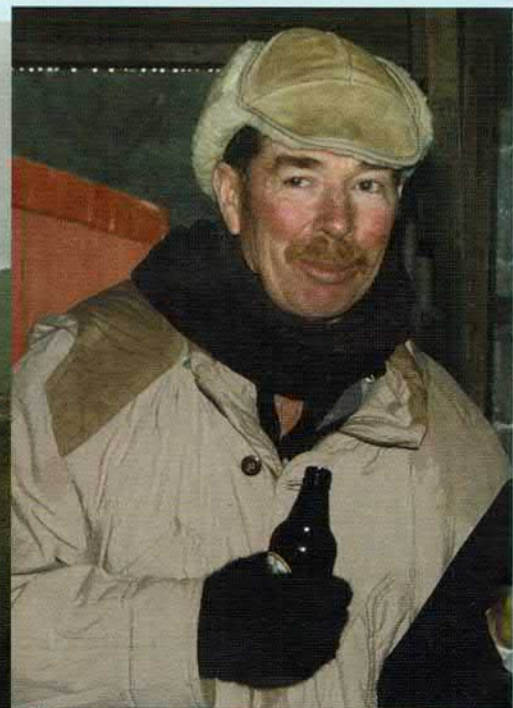
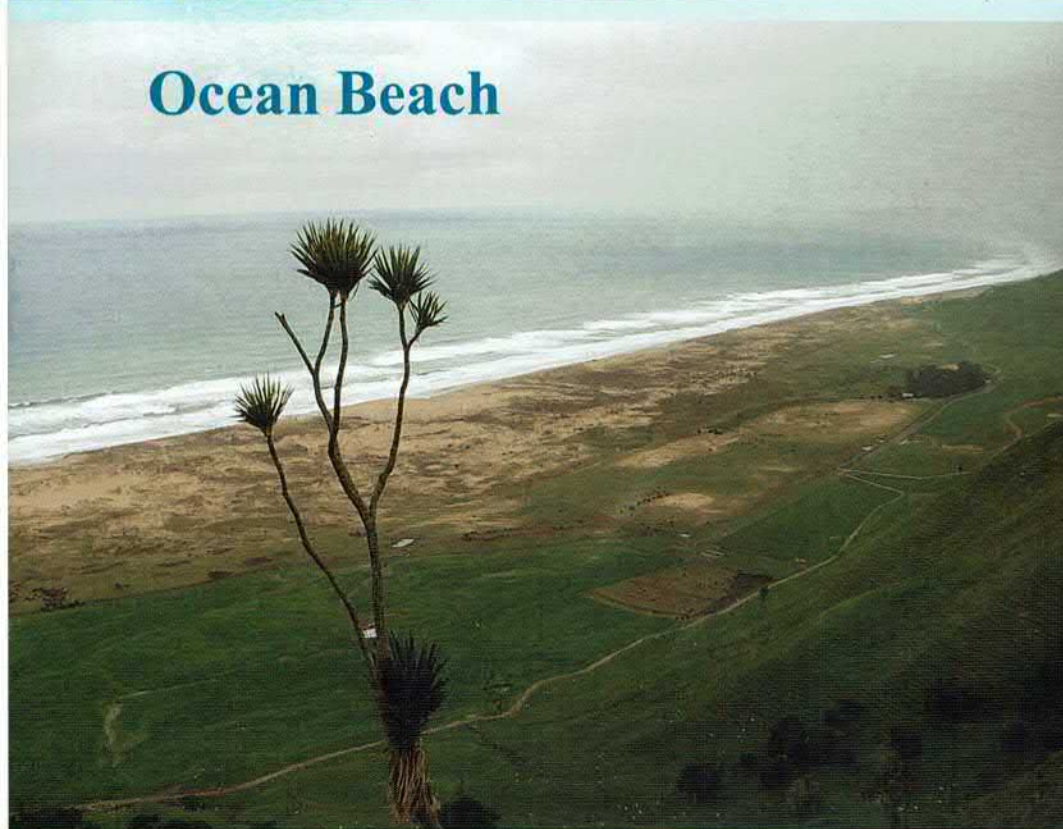


Brett Fotheringham chats with Chris Thomas



The ebullient Di Pritt and a bottle of something Banrock

Ocean Beach



President Ross Cottle warming up after the tour in the wet and windy July weather at Cape Kidnappers. Hoping beer would cure his bad flue.

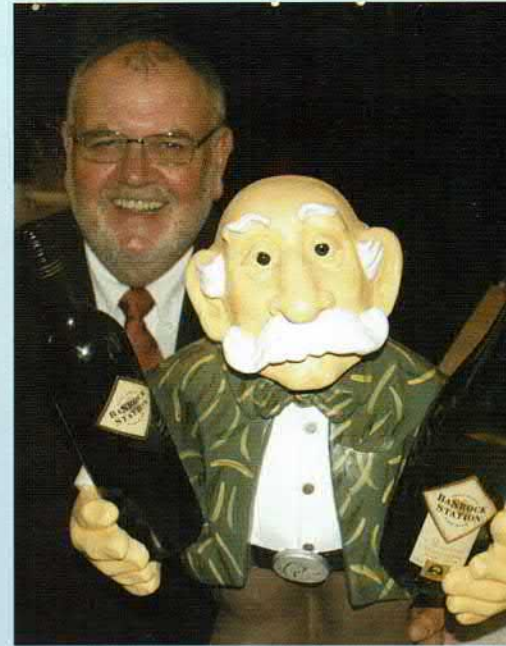
Bill Barrett Trophy awarded to Kevin Evans for his work with pateke



Kevin Evans received the Bill Barrett Trophy for his work with pateke - his friend Ossie Latham accepted the trophy from president Ross Cottle. Kevin is the Pateke Captive Breeding Co-ordinator whose keen work has been so advantageous to the breeding and recovery of the endangered pateke over past years. Tony Sharley of Banrock Station Wines sent the following message: "We have all seen first hand your fantastic commitment to recovery of pateke and how that is leading to an upswing in wetland conservation. Well deserved. Keep up the good work - Best regards, Tony."



Kevin Evans



Auctioneer Bob Wood performed his usual sterling job with humour and wit, tirelessly eking funds from the pockets of the conference attendees during the dinner. This highly sought item is a must-have...

Graham Gurr receives Lifetime Achievement Award



David Smith congratulations Graham Gurr on the presentation of his Lifetime Achievement Award. DU President Ross Cottle said of Graham Gurr that he has filled every single post on the Board, having served as Treasurer for many years. Graham commented that he started his participation and involvement with Ducks Unlimited NZ before he became a father and now that his children are over 21, he felt it time to stop!



Margaret Dorrington, Gail Cheyne, recently married to our latest DU director John Cheyne, Raana Campbell.

One view of the dinner on Saturday night.



Photo below: President Ross Cottle with Sandra Pipes whose enthusiastic work as Secretary of Ducks Unlimited has proved vital to the success of the organisation.



Great spotted kiwi chick spotted in Nelson Lakes National Park

Department of Conservation field workers were delighted to find a new great spotted kiwi chick in Nelson Lakes National Park during a June check of the population, as part of Bank of New Zealand Save the Kiwi.

It is the fourth chick known to have hatched in the national park's Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project area since great spotted kiwi were first reintroduced there four years ago.

The 700g chick, named Marama, was found deep in a burrow with Takaka, its father who was moved into the 5000ha Rotoiti mainland island project in 2004. The new chick is considered to be about three months old.

"For several months we have believed that Takaka had successfully incubated an egg this breeding season, as his radio transmitter signal was consistently originating from the same spot through late summer," said Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project Team Leader Paul Gasson.

"We tried to locate the chick with its father over a month ago, but the burrow they were using at that time was a solid log that we could not dig into without destroying it. It is fantastic to have finally seen the chick. It is now carrying a small radio transmitter so we can monitor its movements. Only a handful of great spotted kiwi chicks have been monitored in the wild, so we are hoping to learn all sorts of interesting things about great spotted kiwi biology".

The chick's mother, Onekaka, was moved to the Rotoiti mainland island in 2006. A total of 16 adult kiwi were released into the project area during 2004 and 2006.

Two other young kiwi that hatched in the Rotoiti project mainland island are currently being monitored. Miharo hatched in 2005 and Ngahere hatched in 2007. Another kiwi named Rito is currently 'missing in action' due to a transmitter failure, but staff are hopeful that Rito will be relocated.

Marama will need to grow to 1kg in weight before being considered safe from predation by stoats, the main predator of kiwi chicks.

"We maintain an extensive network of stoat traps covering 5000ha of kiwi habitat, and the three oldest kiwi chicks have all passed the 1kg threshold," Mr Gasson said.

The stoat trapping also protects a population of kaka, an endemic forest parrot.



Photo above shows Marama, three months old in June 2008. Photo courtesy of DoC

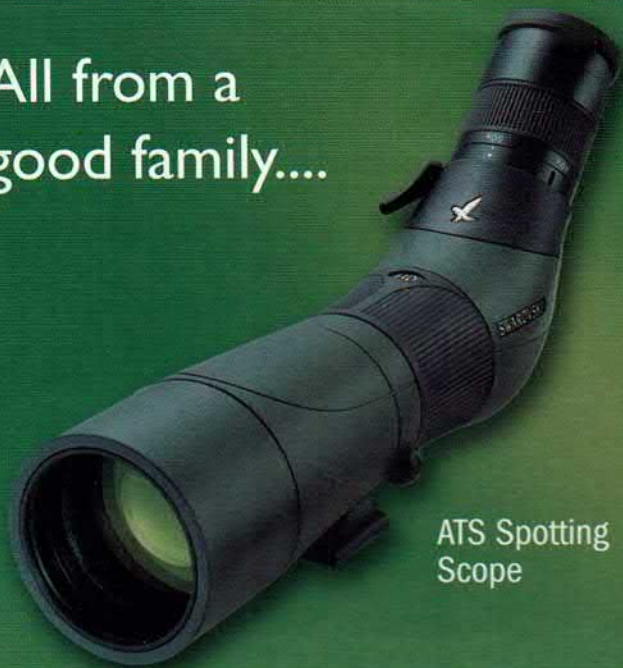
Kiwi Breeding at Tawharanui!

Matt Maitland, Auckland Regional Council Open Sanctuary Coordinator, reports that kiwi breeding at Tawharanui has been confirmed.

Two nests, each containing one fertile egg, have been found and are expected to hatch mid-September. If they hatch, these will be the

first kiwi known to be born on the Auckland mainland for 50 years, an important milestone for both Tawharanui Open Sanctuary and Kiwi Recovery. Matt Maitland enthuses that the support of the TOSSI membership in partnership with the Auckland Regional Council has been critical to getting to this exciting stage.

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Karori Wildlife Sanctuary wins 'Conservation in Action' tourism award

Wellington's Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, the 225ha mainland restoration area in central Wellington, won the Department of Conservation's 'Conservation in Action' Award at the annual Tourism Industry Awards in Christchurch in August. Ducks Unlimited was involved in this venture from the very early days.

"I am really delighted that Karori Sanctuary has won this valued award because they are a mainland island in the heart of a major metropolitan area and they have a wonderful vision, which is to be 'a world class conservation site portraying our natural heritage to capture people's imagination, understanding and commitments'" said DoC Director-General Al Morrison.

"Conservation is vital to their success as a tourist attraction and they personify the reason why we, in DoC, supported these awards, which is to celebrate the economic value of the green dollar. The Karori Sanctuary recognises that conservation is more than just preserving and protecting our wildlife in isolation, but is as much about getting people out to experience and understand the issues threatening our unique wildlife.

"In their 12 years of operation so far, they have made great progress, and they are overcoming some really tough issues and challenges such as predator-proof fencing an 8.6km area, much of it on a hillside. The gardeners of downtown Wellington are revelling in the reappearance of native birds from the Sanctuary," Mr Morrison said.

"Karori Sanctuary has also been a real inspiration to a whole host of other nature sanctuaries throughout the country and they aren't finished yet.

"The next stage of their development is expanding their educational opportunities to achieve longterm financial sustainability, with a \$16m development including a visitor and education centre with enhanced facilities, which is due to open in late 2009," he added.

The Sanctuary is a unique protected natural area for New Zealand's endangered wildlife. Over 35km of bush tracks and paths criss-cross 252ha of regenerating forest. There are walks and activities for everyone from children and seniors through to experienced trampers.

Photo below: the beautiful treeclad Karori Wildlife Sanctuary in the old Karori water reservoir valley. Minutes from Wellington's CBD, this tranquil spot is a safe haven for endangered native birds and other wildlife, and a well-laid out parkland and living classroom for visitors, young and old. Photo copyright Karori Wildlife Sanctuary.



Photo shows Al Morrison, Director-General of DoC with Nancy McIntosh-Ward, CEO of the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, holding Conservation in Action Tourism Award.

Karori's kaka teenagers on rampage

Meanwhile, this 2008 early spring, kaka teenagers have been causing havoc at the Karori Sanctuary.

It was bad enough when late last year a group of teenaged kaka living in Sanctuary hit the headlines when they were observed vandalising nest-boxes put out for smaller bush birds such as the hibi (stitchbird). This year, the 'neighbours from hell' have turned into 'terrible tenants', vandalising their own nest boxes by tearing the doors off, even gouging out chunks of wood with their beaks. 24 of the 44 new kaka nestboxes put out were ripped apart.

This type of behaviour is more normal with the kea, an alpine cousin of the kaka and staff at the Sanctuary are bemused, having never observed this type of behaviour before.

Male kaka don't start breeding until they are at least two years old, so around breeding season young males are at a loose end. It is believed that this mischievous behaviour could well be an outlet for frustration or boredom. What is certain is that the behaviour is more widespread than last year, indicating that it is being learned.

These highly intelligent and resourceful, inquisitive parrots like to investigate anything new, and the destruction could simply be a game for them. But the adults are peacefully trying to nest, and as a result of the bad behaviour at least one nest has been abandoned.



Banded who spotted on the Tongariro

Reports of a banded who (blue duck) on the Tongariro River has excited local Department of Conservation biodiversity rangers, especially as the bird is thought to have come from the upper Whanganui/Whakapapa or Mangatepopo Rivers.

On July 20 a local couple, Janet Hart and her husband provided DoC with exciting information when they emailed photos of three who they spotted by the Breakfast Pool. One of the birds had a coloured band on its leg.

DoC staff from Central North Island Blue Duck Programme, based at Ruapehu, confirmed the banded bird is a two-year-old breeding male, which had dispersed from the Upper Whanganui/Whakapapa or Mangatepopo Rivers.

"This is a very good sign for the survival of who on the Tongariro River," says Lucy Roberts, a Biodiversity Ranger in Turangi. "The benefit of a who flying in from the Ruapehu rivers is that the bird brings different genes and will increase the genetic diversity of birds on the Tongariro River."

In October last year a family of seven who were sighted on the Tongariro River and DoC asked members of the public to report any sightings of the threatened bird to its staff in Turangi.

"We had a great response to this request with more than 40 sightings reported throughout the breeding season," said Lucy Roberts. "The sightings are entered into a database which we use to map the distribution of who in this area."

"This enabled us to follow the progress of the who family, two adults and seven chicks, on the Tongariro River," she says.

Generally, who territories are approximately 1.5km in length but the Tongariro reports showed that this family used 9km of the Tongariro River, from Fence Pool down to the Turangi State Highway One bridge.

As well as adding to the gene pool, the Ruapehu who show that the birds don't always do what the text books says they should. When who disperse from their natal territory they mostly go **downstream** or over the whole catchment. Other birds banded in the same year on the Upper Whanganui/Whakapapa or Mangatepopo Rivers have been recorded dispersing 10km upstream from their natal territories.

"These particular birds obviously did not read 'The guide to dispersal of who' and flew upstream and even to another catchment!" says Lucy Roberts.

One reason for the unusual dispersal pattern could be that for the Central North Island Blue Duck Programme, this season has been the most productive and successful yet. Chick production was almost the double of any previous year. As a result, more chicks fledged, there was less local territory for new birds to inhabit and this increased dispersal of young male birds is a good indicator that the Ruapehu blue duck programme is succeeding in improving the future of who.

As readers are aware, predators and loss of habitat and water quality are the main threats to this endangered bird.

Department of Conservation offers funding to community groups for restoration projects

The Community Conservation Fund is a contestable fund established in 2008 and available from 2008 to 2010. It will fund established community groups to undertake restoration projects on public land and aims to improve and maintain the condition of rare and threatened native areas.

Areas of particular concern which are priorities for restoration work include wetlands, river streams and banks, dune lands, urban waterways and forest remnants.

What's available?

\$4 million to be allocated between 2008 to 2010.

For projects that require \$5000 to \$40,000 for up to two years.

There will be three funding rounds between September 2008 and June 2010.

The first round is currently **open**.

Applications close 3pm Wednesday 5 November 2008.

If you wish to be kept informed of future funding rounds please **contact**:

Community Conservation Fund
C/- Department of Conservation
P O Box 10420
WELLINGTON
Phone: 0800 86 2020
Fax: + 64 4 471 3130
Email: ccf@doc.govt.nz

Fatherhood at age 111

Henry is an 111-year-old tuatara resident in the Southland Museum since 1970.

Along came Mildred, a stripling of about 70 or 80 - and she has laid 12 eggs. Museum staff say that Henry's new interest in mating may be down to the removal of a cancerous growth from his nether regions.

11 of the 12 eggs are being kept in an incubator at between 18 and 21C and will hatch around February 2009.

Henry now has his own little coterie of females - a veritable harem. Juliet and Lucy have joined Mildred and the next breeding season is due in about April next year.

Obviously patience is the name of the game.

Who facts

Who, or blue duck, is a river specialist which inhabits clean, fast-flowing streams in the forested upper catchments of New Zealand rivers. They occur nowhere else in the world.

Who, or blue duck, establish exclusive territories of up to a kilometre long. Strong pair bonding results in individual pairs occupying the same stretch of river year after year which they aggressively defend against other who, as well as grey duck, paradise duck and even shags or gulls. The larger (1000gm) males can live for up to 12 years but smaller (750gm) females are generally much shorter-lived. Nesting and egg incubation of four to seven eggs is undertaken by the female while the male stands guard. Nests are shallow: twig, grass and down-lined scrapes in caves, under river-side vegetation or in log-jams, and are therefore very prone to spring floods. For this, and other reasons, their breeding success is extremely variable from one year to the next.



Canadian guests at Annual Conference note success of all-voluntary organisation and put forward new ideas on cultivation to encourage wildfowl

Barbara Hanbidge M.Sc., based in Saskatchewan, is one of 300 permanent staff in Canada of Ducks Unlimited. Education specialist Barbara has been with DU for many years and is one of 50 DU staff in Saskatchewan. She was guest speaker at the DUNZ annual conference in Hawkes Bay this year and in her address Barbara emphasised the pivotal part that DU filled in conservation in Canada nationwide.

Her brief covers general conservation and wetland care and devolves on the issues of how people at large in their everyday lives can work for the broad objectives of the conservation movement.

As the guest of Ducks Unlimited New Zealand, she noted to her surprise the entirely voluntary structure of the organisation here. It was something she would take back to Canada, she said, as an example of the effectiveness of an all-volunteer nationwide movement.

Meanwhile, Zero Tillage could offer New Zealand farmers a pathway to achieving emissions-balancing counterweights, believes Professor Rod Johnson of the University of Saskatchewan, a member of DU in Canada and who accompanied his wife Barbara Hanbidge on the New Zealand visit.

He outlined in an interview with Flight a new Prairie Regime in Western Canada in which light and partial tillage was now evolving into what he described as 'zero tillage'.

Ploughing or tilling releases into the atmosphere immense amounts of carbon dioxide. Professor Johnson said that zero tilling was a key component in what he described as the priority of getting people to feed 'lower down the food chain' by eating crops instead of feeding on animals, which fed on the crops.

He is professor of Physical Geography at the prairie university and while in New Zealand told Ducks Unlimited members about the



Pictured at Wairio wetland in July, from left, Professor Rod Johnson, Barbara Hanbidge of DU Canada, DU New Zealand president Ross Cottle and DU director Jim Law.

way in which the move to zero tillage was contributing to the flourishing of waterfowl in Canada.

Acknowledging the differences in the seasonal nature of arable farming in the two countries, Professor Johnson urged agrarians here to take seriously zero tillage just because experience was demonstrating that it allowed nature to do the work of ploughing.

This was achieved, he said, by planting different crops on rotation which thrived at different depths, thus replicating the effects of ploughing. These rotations he said also contributed to effective water usage through leaving the soil undisturbed. Experience was also demonstrating that zero tillage crop rotation served to eliminate crop diseases.



Laurence Barea, Terrestrial Ecologist with the Department of Conservation has recently sent out this request which we reproduce in Flight:

I am putting together a study assessing the effects of predator control on mallard brood survival as a form of outcome monitoring in general and in the context of possible future pateke reintroductions to the Whangamarino. We plan to radio-tag a number of hens there and at a control site over the next four years: two years pre-control and two after, and monitor brood size / survival. Are you aware of any published (internal or otherwise) work doing something similar for pateke, or any other species of waterfowl?

Cheers,

Laurence Barea, Terrestrial Ecologist, Technical Support Supervisor - Biodiversity, Department of Conservation, Waikato Conservancy, Private Bag 3072, Hamilton Ph. +64 (07) 858 1000 (VPN 6033), DDI +64 (07) 858 1033,

Fax. + 64 (07) 858 1001 e-mail Lbarea@doc.govt.nz

web: www.doc.govt.nz

Kakapo Chicks safely home to Codfish Island/Whenua Hou

The Department of Conservation reports that the six kakapo chicks, which thousands of people took the opportunity to meet in June, are settling in well following their recent return home to Codfish Island/Whenua Hou. More than 8000 people saw the newest additions to the small but increasing kakapo population at the Invercargill and Nelson public viewings.

All the chicks were removed from Whenua Hou/Codfish Island, off Stewart Island, at a few weeks old to be hand-raised as there was not enough natural food for their mothers to raise them.

Getting the chicks home safely was a major relief for the National Kakapo Recovery Team. The team had worked tirelessly over the previous three months, with many sleepless nights after three of the chicks became ill. Fortunately they recovered and are doing well.

While there are still risks, as is the case for any young animal when it goes out on its own, being on predator-free Codfish Island and still under the watchful eye of a team of dedicated DOC staff, means that they are as safe as they can be. There were no problems with the trip from Invercargill to Codfish, said Deidre Vercoe, Technical Support Officer on the Kakapo Team, who escorted the chicks home.

The chicks will spend the next month in a large outdoor pen being fed increasing amounts of natural food before being slowly introduced to the wild where they will have to care for themselves.

This breeding season has shown that birds as young as six years old can breed successfully so it is hoped that these chicks may themselves be parents around 2014.

Signs are looking very favourable for another, even better, breeding season next year with potentially up to 40 chicks being produced.

Kakapo need extra calcium - new discovery

Kakapo breed only when rimu trees fruit heavily - a phenomenon known as 'masting' and this happens only every three to five years.

Massey University nutritional ecologist David Raubenheimer has been working on a project to find the best way of boosting the kakapo diet during lean years.

And briefly, the answer is calcium. This is needed in high levels during breeding for the development of shells and for bone growth. The kakapo has an unusually large skeleton.

And rimu fruit is high in calcium. Till this interesting discovery, conservationists have simply been feeding protein-enriched supplements to kakapo which is the normal key nutrient for most species.



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