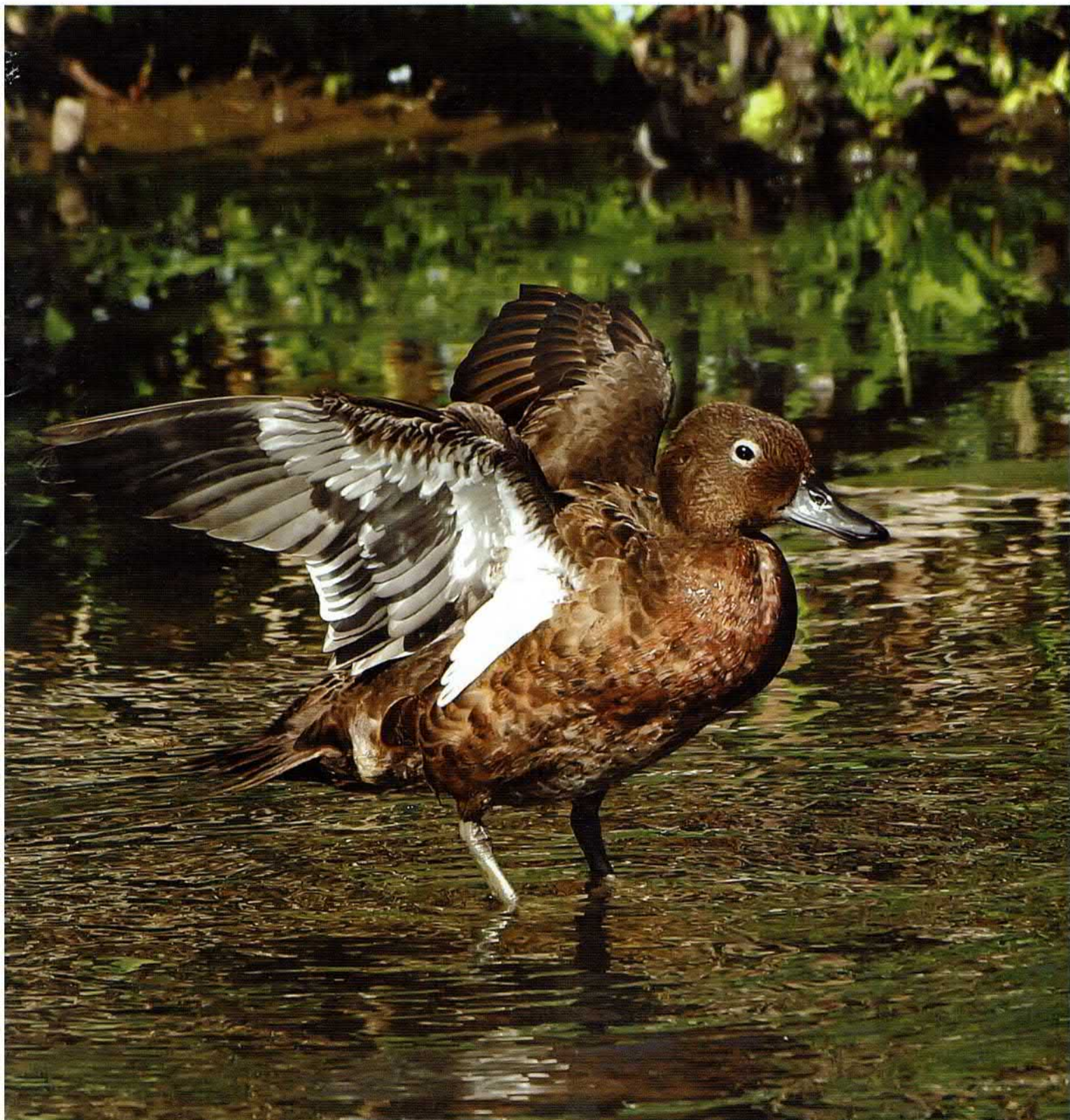


# Flight



ISSUE 142 - January 2010







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 and 2009**

**Fiordland pateke release, 2009**

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



*William Abel captured this duo on camera at his and Jan's Hiuritini. More Royal swan photos inside.*



## Raffle Results

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 1st | Audrey Pritt, Ohakune                                |
| 2nd | John McKinstry, Masterton                            |
| 3rd | Stephen Loach, Dunedin                               |
| 4th | Dennis Handyside, Featherston                        |
| 5th | Tracy Grey and Peter Billington,<br>Palmerston North |
| 6th | Andy Lowe, Havelock North                            |
| 7th | Neil Fisher, Hamilton                                |
| 8th | Tim Tatham, Masterton                                |

It will be remembered that the first prize for this year's 2009 Ducks Unlimited Raffle was donated by Jay Robertson of the Cape Kidnappers and Ocean Beach Wildlife Reserve which consisted of two nights' accommodation for two at the beautiful cottage site of The Farm. The prize included pre-dinner drinks, dinner and breakfast daily. We wrote about this on page 15 of the July 2009 issue 140 of Flight. Kevin Campbell organised both this and the other generous prizes this year - taking over from Howard Egan of Carterton who has done this duty for more years than we can remember!. William Abel captured this duo on camera at his and Jan's Hiuritini. More Royal swan photos inside



# Insight

*One of the very important functions of DUNZ is the breeding and releasing of endangered waterfowl.*

*This aspect of our organisation tends to be undervalued but could not function without a group of highly skilled and dedicated members who battle predators, weather and a myriad of other problems to supply birds for release.*

*The survival and habitat development of pateke, whio, Royal mute swan are all an important part of what Ducks Unlimited concentrates on, and our sincere thanks go out to all the breeders throughout New Zealand for making this possible.*

Ross Cottle

President



## CONFERENCE HEADS-UP

The DUNZ 2010 AGM and Conference is to be held at the Bayview Wairakei Resort just north of Taupo on the weekend of Friday 30th July to Sunday 1st August 2010.

## 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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Cover photo: Pateke sighted at Auckland Regional Park.

Copyright Harm Broekema of Kaukapakapa - see more photos and story page 6





## Fiordland pateke - report from Max Smart

Members will remember the release of 20 pateke at the Arthur River in Fiordland National Park last March. We covered this story on page 7 of the April 2009 Issue 139 of Flight. Andrew 'Max' Smart reports on their progress:

"...Not all our birds are now alive. We have had a total of four confirmed deaths. I've got the necropsy reports back for three of these and they found no cause of death. One bird had one bite mark to the sternum area but they believe this happened after it had died. None of the others had evidence of bite marks (both Te Anau staff and Massey inspected the carcasses for bite marks). Wing fat analysis was also carried out on the three bodies and two came back with fat being present and one with none (but called inconclusive).

Of the remaining 16 birds, one never had a transmitter fitted and hasn't been seen for quite a while but could still be around, one definitely has a failed transmitter and has been seen quite recently (hanging out with other pateke) and two have suspected failed transmitters. The suspected transmitter failures are birds that were always found in basically the same area but haven't been picked up on the last three trips (including a tracking flight). Unfortunately the weather has been too bad down here to get out on the kayak to do a full follow up on the ground/water. Hopefully when we can do a few visuals we'll pick up these missing birds.

No sign of any breeding activity this season but this isn't a huge surprise. These birds have probably gone through some of the worst weather they are likely to encounter. We hope the weather for the next lot of releases (planned for the beginning of March) will be a bit nicer.

All the birds are still hanging out in basically the same areas as when I last reported. One bird in left the release site within a couple of days and has lived by itself (occasionally joined by another bird) up a small side stream the rest of the time. Two are still at the release site and the rest live near the top of Lake Ada and the bottom of the Joes River. It will be interesting to see what the new birds do when they are released.

Overall I'm still very happy with the success of the release. We have what looks like a 75% survival rate nine months post-release. I'm pretty sure I would have taken this result when we started. Will be great to see some ducklings at some stage."

Andrew "Max" Smart

Ranger - Biodiversity

Te Anau Area Office

Department of Conservation

Te Anau

VPN 4825

### Debbie Latoa is also changing direction...

Debbie Latoa, Senior Imported Brands Manager of Constellation NZ, the company which promotes Banrock Station Wines in this country, is leaving for work which will give her a better work/life balance for her growing young family's benefit. She worked enthusiastically with Ossie Latham and Tony Sharley on the Banrock pateke conservation programmes and road shows for some years.

## Tony Sharley leaves Banrock Station Wines to go out on his own

Tony has given Flight permission to reproduce this letter sent to Ducks Unlimited via Ossie Latham, on the occasion of his leaving Banrock Station Wines to go out on business of his own. He was a wonderful champion of DU New Zealand's conservation efforts for so many years and his energy and enthusiasm which was such a boon to our organisation, will be sorely missed!

21st December 2009

Ossie Latham

Ducks Unlimited New Zealand

Dear Ossie,

I wanted to contact you personally to say how much I've enjoyed working with you in my role as Manager of Banrock Station. It is now six months since I officially finished work at Banrock and I have established my own consulting business — *Flow On Business* — based in my home town of Renmark on the River Murray in South Australia.

Banrock Station was a 10-year journey for me, on which I met many wonderful people, experienced many wonderful countries and the people in those countries who genuinely care about the future of our environment and our planet. I have learned a great amount from you and I will miss those regular liaisons. Thankfully the internet and email will allow us to share ideas and stay in touch easily.

It was a real privilege to spend time in your company and you brought incredible energy and a very professional approach to corporate sponsorship work for Wetland Care New Zealand and Ducks Unlimited.

I was so fortunate to have met Will Abel and to have had his enthusiasm to start the Wetland Care conservation sponsorships with Banrock. My trips with Will started back in 2000 and then with your good self are legendary and they are in my book of great memories. I really hope we get to work together again one day.

Please pass on my best regards to Mary and to all the team at DUNZ including my very good friends Jim and Raana, Dave and Ann, Dave and Myra, Will and Jan, Ken and Jan, Di Pritt, Graham Gurr, Ross, Neil and Julie. I also enjoyed the passion of Gail and Peter with their PR support.

Ken Evans and others in the Pateke breeding program were also great hosts and champions for their cause and I always enjoyed their company. The project partners we visited over the years were truly inspirational and I have very fond memories of our visits to them. I hope to be over to see you all soon.

I am looking forward to lifting my eyes from Banrock Station and taking some of my experience to help others.

I will always be an ambassador for Ducks Unlimited NZ and Wetland

Care NZ and hope to one day write a book about my global conservation experiences including some lessons learnt along the way. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of help in the future, and I wish you every success in your future endeavours.

My best regards and happy festive season.  
Tony Sharley



FLOW ON BUSINESS 0418 808475 PO Box 257  
PARINGA, SA 5340, Australia



## Dan Steele of Blue Duck Lodge recipient of the 2009 Bill Barrett Trophy



*Manawatu chapter president Neil Candy is pictured presenting the Bill Barrett Trophy to the indefatigable Dan Steele of Blue Duck Lodge for his work with whio. Dan and his energetic team have recently received a DoC conservation award as well. See the article on page 15 of the January 2009 No. 137 issue of Flight which covers much of the activity at this King Country reserve.*

### From the Blue Duck Lodge newsletter - [www.blueducklodge.co.nz](http://www.blueducklodge.co.nz)

It is with great pleasure we can announce the survival of four whio ducklings from one brood!! Dan first spotted them up by the boardwalk in the National Park in early October when there were five. They are real little replicas of their parents now with almost all of their adult plumage and almost the same size as Ma and Pa. They are great! We have put them onto Youtube, so just type in Blue Duck Lodge and they will show up. We have already put some up of Gobby and One-eye who live just above the waterfall. Dan put some more traps down by their nesting site recently so hopefully these will catch all the predators. In total we have found 31 chicks so far in the Retaruke catchment with more whio still nesting.

Whakahoro Centenary Music festival on 27 March 2010. Ticket price to include bands and associated things. Amount to be decided.

Another exciting development has been that Adventure Tours has started bringing two buses a week into the valley. They come in on Mondays and Thursdays staying in the Whio Lodge. We meet them down by the Blue bridge and those that want to kayak down the Retaruke and those that don't get taken out onto the Farm for a look see. We then put on a meal for them that night, sit around having a good yarn and then they are off by seven the next morning! Very short and sweet! We have been getting excellent feedback from them, with the only problem being, that they don't want to leave!!

An airstrip is being installed at Whakahoro for farming and tourism.

Along with Moira from Cambridge Bee products, we have put together a new label for the Blue Duck Lodge honey and it's O for awesome! We have some in stock now with the new label and some more on the way.

Send us an email if you'd like to order some Blue Duck lodge honey.

Country Calendar were in here for five days, filmed everything they wanted to and left very happy. They were a great crew, so a lot of laughs were had by all. It is too early to say when exactly it will be shown, but we are picking it will be in March/April next year, so we will keep you posted.





*Photo above copyright of the photographer Harm Broekema*

Coincidentally, photographer Stuart Chambers also took a photo of a pateke family in the same area - but it is not known if the little one survived. His website [www.arunbooks.co.nz](http://www.arunbooks.co.nz) has on its list an updated Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. This photo below, courtesy of Stuart Chambers.



## **Pateke sighted and shot - by photographers Harm Broekema and Stuart Chambers!**

Harm Broekema sent an email with photos he'd taken, to Jason Roxburgh, of DoC's Pateke Recovery Group. Harm said "The two birds were sighted in the pond next to the Waterfall Gully parking space at Auckland Regional Park: Shakespear Park on the Whangaraparoa Peninsula on 5 January 2010 between 16:00 and 16:45".

Jason responded that "These look like pateke to me, and are excellent photos. This is really interesting news, though unless they're banded (can't see any in the pics) we'll never know if they've come from Tawharanui or Tiritiri Matangi Island. For those who don't know it, Shakespear Regional Park is one of Auckland Regional Council's management sites, about 40km, as the pateke flies south from Tawharanui Regional Park. They are partway through developing the same level of predator control as at Tawharanui (check out <http://www.arc.govt.nz/albany/index.cfm?AAB58E0F-14C2-3D2D-B983-8FC0814DFC7B>).

Matt Maitland, Open Sanctuary Coordinator of the Auckland Regional Council, Northern Parks added: "Yes, we are aware of pateke at the Shakespear duckpond. From best we know this pair share residence between Shakespear and Tiritiri Matangi Island, approximately three km to the east over the water.

"We have a record of breeding at this site too (see photo on left by Stuart Chambers). Unfortunately we are unaware if this duckling survived. We do know that other siblings from the brood progressively disappeared.

"You may be aware that we are developing Shakespear Regional Park as an Open Sanctuary. This will provide pateke and other resident and visiting wildlife with a greater degree of protection from mammalian predators. Pest-proof fence construction commences this summer, with the intention of having a pest-free sanctuary by Christmas 2011. Check out [www.sossi.org.nz](http://www.sossi.org.nz) for details and how you can support this local conservation project."

*Matt Maitland*

*Open Sanctuary Coordinator*

*Auckland Regional Council, Northern Parks PO Box 332, Orewa*

*09 426 1200 or 0274 555 445*

*[www.arc.govt.nz](http://www.arc.govt.nz) [www.sossi.org.nz](http://www.sossi.org.nz) [www.tossi.org.nz](http://www.tossi.org.nz)*

(Editor's note: Am I the only one who wonders why Shakespear is not spelled like the great writer?)

*William Abel took these photos of mute swan at his and Jan's Huritini wetlands this spring.*





## Paul and Johanna McCarthy - Bay of Plenty Ballance 2009 Supreme winners

Galatea dairy farmers Paul and Joanna McCarthy were named Supreme Award Winners of the 2009 Bay of Plenty Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

They were also recipients of the PGG Wrightson Land and Life Award, LIC Dairy Farm Award and Fish and Game New Zealand, Eastern Region Water Management/Conservation Award.

Ballance Farm Environment Award judges described the McCarthys' operation as 'almost the perfect situation one could wish for when farming.'

Judges said the McCarthys ran a 'profitable farming unit developed over 23 years of hard work.'

Their 131ha dairy unit near Murupara contains about 300 cows.

The judges declared that 'Paul is a passionate dendrologist (someone who studies the cultivation of trees or woody plants) and this can be seen in both the home garden surrounds and out in the paddocks and riparian area of the farm. Trees in paddocks and along paddock-riparian boundaries provide shade for the stock, and in some areas away from watercourses the stock are able to wander into ring-fenced thickets of trees.'

They praised the presentation and the infrastructure of the farm which they said was farmed in a very environmentally-conscious manner.

In 1987 a series of ponds were built to attract and accommodate waterfowl. Dabchick and scaup, grey teal, now breed here every year. This area has developed into a beautiful garden park with well designed landscaping complementing the ponds.

The McCarthys purchased the original farm in 1985 and recently bought another 31ha across the road. The addition of this new block, which has irrigation consent, has enabled cow numbers to be increased by 100.

On the home farm, planting of trees in the riparian area started in 1999 and was completed in 2007. Planting on the new block will start this year.

Judges noted how the soils on the home farm have improved significantly over the last 23 years, with a substantial lift in organic matter.

They said the McCarthys and their five children share a strong interest in farming, and a good balance of other interests that include trees, tourism, school and travel.

Paul and Joanna possess 'complementary skills', their responsibilities are clearly segregated and they are physically fit, healthy 'and ready to meet the challenges of farming'.

The Ballance Farm Environment Awards celebrate the people who are farming in a manner that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

The awards are also backed by Environment Waikato, Environment Bay of Plenty, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Horizons Regional Council, Environment Canterbury, Otago Regional Council and the Northland Regional Council.

In a recent conversation with Flight, Paul said they were suffering yet another drought this season and with the change in irrigation regulations they were unable to increase their irrigation, so are down to milking once a day and feeding palm kernel. They had also spent about 20 years breeding pateke but have sent their breeding pairs up to a protected environment.



*Johanna, Paul and granddaughter Keira McCarthy pictured in front of one of their beautiful wetlands.*

*Dear Paul and Joanna,*

*We are writing to congratulate you both, on the awards you received this year at the Ballance Farm Environment Awards.*

*To have been named Supreme Award winners in the 2009 Bay of Plenty Ballance Farm Environment Awards, plus also receiving the PGG Wrightson Land and Life Award, LIC Dairy Farm Award and Fish and Game New Zealand, Eastern Region Water Management/Conservation Award is really wonderful.*

*To have received this award and recognition will hopefully be a fitting achievement and testament to all your incredible hard work, long hours, trials and errors that you experienced along the way. Hopefully others will aspire too and possibly increase the work they are already doing to farm in a manner that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. Well done again to you both, very well deserved.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*On behalf of all the members of Ducks Unlimited  
Sandra Pipes  
Administration*

### About the awards

The Ballance Farm Environment Awards find and reward farming operations which are achieving a high standard across three key factors essential to a successful farming operation:

1. Social: people and communications
2. Financial
3. Environment sustainability

While the Awards are about celebrating winning practices, they are first and foremost focused on learning and knowledge sharing.

For those farmers who do not yet feel they are ready to enter, the Awards are an opportunity to benchmark themselves against their peers and receive confidential constructive feedback from a team of three independent assessors.

Many people enter the Awards to share ideas and expertise with the wider farming community. Notable among our entrants is a pattern of seeking methods, often in innovative ways, to find sustainable solutions to limitations that they encounter in their farming businesses.

Each year one farming operation is judged as the supreme winner for the region, and seven additional awards are made across a range of farm types and businesses.

<http://www.envbop.govt.nz/Sustainable-Communities/Ballance-Farm-Environmental-Awards.aspx>





Legend	
	Stoats, Ferrets and Weasels
	Rats
	Cats (single, or 9 or more)
	Dual DOC 200 Trap
	Single DOC 200 Trap
	Older style Dual Fen trap
	Tunnel Trap -with single Fen
	Kiwi Listening posts
	Female Kiwi observed
	Male kiwi Observed
	Blue Duck Pair observed



# WHAKAHORO STOAT TRAP CATCH DATA REPORTING

Record for Traplines A to H up to May 2009.

Traps inspired and administered by Dan Steele and team,

Retaruke Station, RD 2, Owahanga, New Zealand,

With support and assistance from Department of Conservation.

Data recording and Google Earth Viewer by Bob Jordan

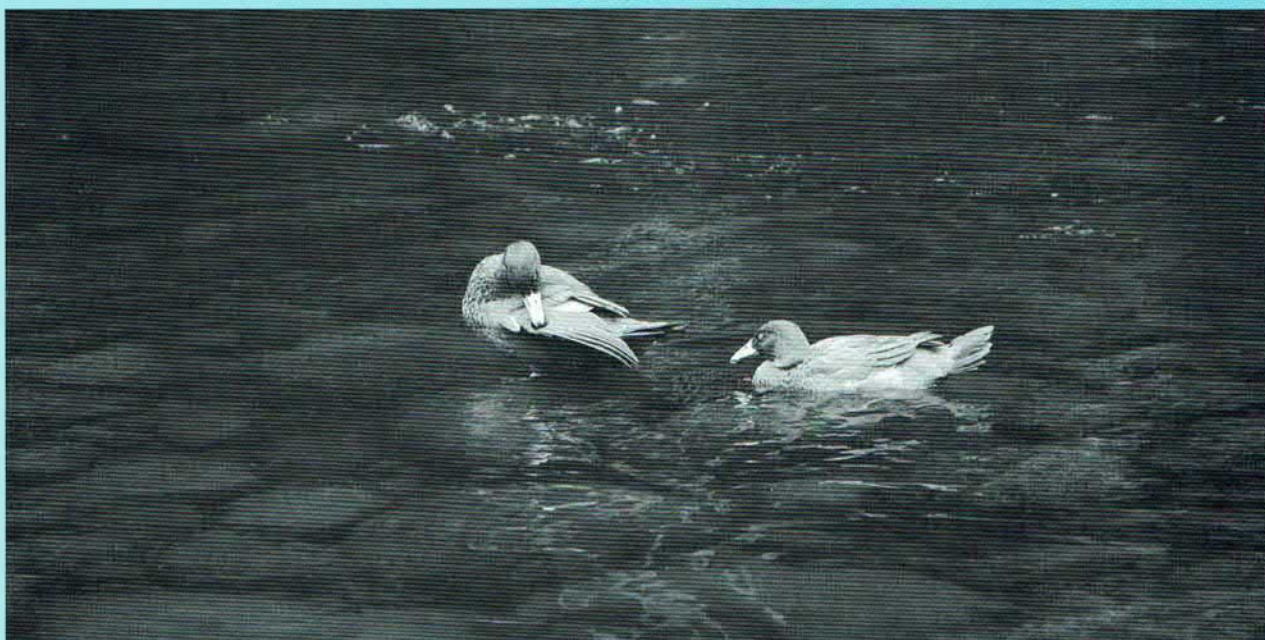
Icon Artwork by Sarah Lillas. Support Chris Clark

Contacts: Dan Steele <dan@blueducklodge.co.nz>, Bob Jordan <b\_jordan@xtra.co.nz>



Whakahoro Farms Stoat Trap Status from 14 Feb 07 to 23 May 09												
Line Name	Description	Setup Date	Original Setup By	Current Setup By	Latest Service	Trap Count	Stoat	Weasel	Ferret	Rat	House Cat	Double Trap
Line A	Runs from river bridge towards Naparua then up Maungapohia Rd	17/2/07	Dan Steele	Levin Strickland	23/4/08	184	17			483	9	346
Line B	Runs from near Magazine Inn National Park	14/2/07	Dan Steele	Patric Spence	23/4/08	63	22	1		182	6	188
Line C	Starts at Shant and Heads west up valley & round in Star's stream	11/1/07	Dan Steele	Dan Steele & Levan	7/4/08	82	6			96	3	68
Line D	Headed East from Shant up valley and round to North and back to Line B	11/1/07	Dan Steele	Dan Steele & Levan	23/5/08	36	1			14	1	56
Line E	From Naparua along Homur Stream, then follows NW branch towards Mt. Dewaan	11/1/07	Dan Steele	Patric Spence	1/5/08	27			1	12	2	34
Line F	Services open farmland above and top of Sages and Sages	23/4/08	Justin Ruff & Richard Teasdale	Justin Ruff & Richard Teasdale	06/10/08	10						1
Line H	From house back to Sages and Sages	23/4/08	Dan Steele	Dan Steele & Levan	16/5/08	21	1			3	14	7
Line S	Older DOC reserve @ Gray Street and Tin Street	1/2/08	Levin Strickland	Levin Strickland	27/4/08	10	1			8	2	8
Line U	Lower Naparua (upside), Starts Naparua Rd through upper Naparua Rd, via Rd A and through to Upper Rd	13/11/08	Levin Strickland	Levin Strickland	26/4/09	130	32			207	2	101
Current summary						Totals to date	569	80	1	1047	21	811
Trap Count							Stoat	Weasel	Ferret	Rat	House Cat	Double Trap





*Two happy whio on the Manganui-a-teao River photographed by DU member Liz Brook. She writes: "Found nowhere else in the world, whio have lived in New Zealand for many long years, possibly millions of years. These small uniquely coloured birds blend into their river surroundings where they enjoy the quickly running water and as they are better swimmers than most ducks they negotiate fast rapids using their oversized webbed feet. Like many of our unique birds they are endangered. Their numbers have declined mainly from forest clearance, loss of habitat and poor water quality.*

*Predators too, including stoats, are a threat. The whio is one of only four duck species in the world to spend its life in a river; these little ducks have a special bill that allows them to scrape insect larvae from rocks."*

*Picture and story: Liz Brook.*



*Aotea/Great Barrier - Joanna Sim took this photo of young pateke - she assumes they have been told to leave home. Jo put a transmitter on one of the females and will be following her progress throughout the summer. Jo has managed to create some more wetlands for the pateke, in spite of the dry and the less-than-satisfactory rainfall. See photos page 12 of this issue, showing the creation of the wetlands on Great Barrier Island.*



## Wairarapa Chapter Shoot - some photos

The Wairarapa DU chapter had their annual Sporting Clay Shot at the home of James and Di Martin at Waitawa in Martinborough in November.

Tommy Cushnahan took these photos and you can see Audrey Pitt receiving her DU raffle first prize. Obviously a good day was had by all.



## New Zealand falcons hatch at ZEALANDIA formerly Karori Wildlife Sanctuary

Conservation staff at the groundbreaking ZEALANDIA eco-sanctuary in Wellington believe they have found the first New Zealand falcons to have hatched in the city since the species disappeared as a breeding population in the Seventies.

"It's an extremely significant discovery," said ZEALANDIA conservation manager Raewyn Empson

"Although there are quite a few breeding pairs in the Hutt Valley and Eastbourne, they haven't bred in Wellington city for decades! And they are hanging around right next to the main track, so it really is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see these powerful predators up close and in their element"

This time last year, ZEALANDIA staff found the capital's first-ever recorded nest, very close to where this year's fledglings are hanging out. Unfortunately, the nest had been abandoned before any eggs were laid. A second nest, this time with eggs in it, was found in July - incredibly early for falcons - but that also failed.

"It seems it might have been third time lucky for these falcons" said Ms Empson

"Fledging four healthy chicks is almost unheard of. It's a good indication that there's a lot of food around. Being re-colonised by falcons means that ZEALANDIA has reached an exciting new stage in its restoration."

At the moment, the chicks are still being fed by the father. The male will call as he arrives with food and the youngsters will fly up to meet him whining. To train them how to hunt, he will drop the food for them to catch in mid-air. More often than not, they will miss and he will dive to catch it before it hits the ground

and then take it up and drop it again. But by May next year they will be New Zealand's most powerful native predators - able to take on species as large as black backed gulls, kereru and ducks.

# The New Zealand falcon/karearea (*Falco novaeseelandiae*) is found nowhere else in the world

# Since the extinction of the giant Haast's eagle, it has been the top native predator

# They are found on both main islands, but more common in the South Island

# A recent distribution survey by NZ Falcon ([www.nzfalcon.org.nz](http://www.nzfalcon.org.nz)) showed that the Wellington region now has one of the healthiest populations of falcons in the North Island

# However, they are still threatened - and declining in many traditional strongholds

# Falcons are killed by farmers, pigeon fanciers and duck hunters

# Being at the top of the food chain, they are also very susceptible to poisoning

# While falcons do pose a threat to smaller birds, they are an important part of a healthy eco-system

# The NZ falcon is a protected species

*Alan Dicks, Senior Marketing & Communications Coordinator, ZEALANDIA: The Karori Sanctuary Experience, PO Box 9267 Wellington. Tel +64 4 920 9205, Fax + 64 4 920 9000*





Joanna Sim has sent these photos of a pond being developed at Mercer on Great Barrier Island

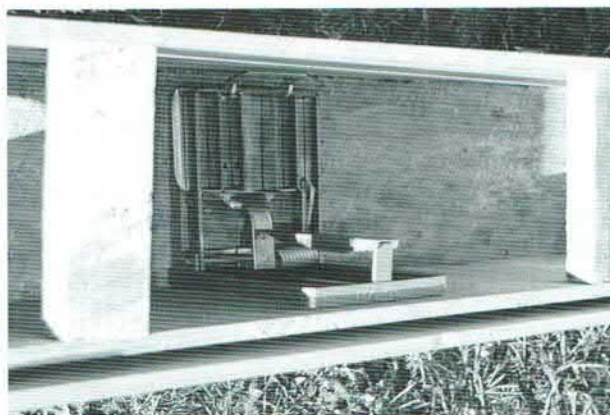


*Pateke love it on the new pond!*

### Russell Langdon and his stoat or ferret trap

Russell Langdon of Lagmhor, Ashburton writes that :

"To catch a stoat one has to think like a stoat (or ferret) as they can't resist anything they think is a burrow. No bait is required, and you don't need a bridge. He says that at the Riverbridge Nature Reserve, he and his colleagues don't use any bait. Russell recommends that you place a DoC 200 trap with one spring off. This is easy to set. He has set my box trap alongside the DoC box with netting at the end and caught three stoats and two rats in mine. His opinion is that his one M long box has proved superior to the DoC box so far, under parallel trials."



### Pukaha Mount Bruce Loop Track Opens

The summit walk at Pukaha Mount Bruce - Te Arapiki o Tawhaki, the well-known native bird reserve, which had been a pleasurable one-and-a-half-hour ramble, has just been extended to a loop walk.

The new, extended walk is approximately four km long and takes an easy two hours to complete. The track was officially opened on Boxing Day 2009.

At the summit is an ideal picnic spot where one can enjoy extensive views over the original 90 Mile Bush and out to the Tararua ranges. Bring your own picnic or pick up a gorgeous selection of healthy, delicious treats from Cafe Takahe on-site.



## Petition regarding threatened longfin eel

A coalition of environmental groups, Maori and Massey University researchers are calling on the public to sign a petition asking for a moratorium on the commercial harvest of the threatened longfin eel.

The petition, to be presented to Fisheries Minister Phil Heatley, aims to stop the serious decline of the longfin eel, which now has the same risk classification as the great spotted kiwi.

The groups backing the petition include the newly formed Manaaki Tuna (Massey University Tuna Research and Restoration Group), Forest & Bird, Greenpeace, the Environment and Conservation Organizations of NZ (ECO), and a growing number of iwi groups. They are concerned that, despite the increasing rarity of large, sexually mature longfin eels and decreasing numbers of elvers (very young eels) being found throughout New Zealand, longfin eels are still being targeted by commercial fishers under the Quota Management System, which is managed by the Ministry of Fisheries. "The eels being caught commercially are almost all in the smallest size range now," says Massey University freshwater ecologist and senior lecturer, Dr Mike Joy.

Mature eels migrate to sea and swim thousands of kilometres to undertake a mass spawning event, after which they die. "It takes many decades – up to 100 years – for female longfins to mature to breeding age. They are at constant risk of capture all that time," says Forest & Bird Advocacy Manager Kevin Hackwell. "Every eel caught is one less which will breed."

The larvae drift on ocean currents, changing into 'glass eels' once they reach New Zealand's rivers. They turn into darker 'elvers' as they swim upstream.

"Eel numbers are declining for many reasons," says Dr Russell Death, from the Ecology group in the Institute of Natural Resources, and a member of Manaaki Tuna. "Commercial harvest puts pressure on a population already suffering from loss and degradation of habitat (from swamp drainage and pollution) and barriers to migration such as dams. Improving the health of our river water quality is a vital step if the fishery is to be protected and restored."

"It is not acceptable anymore to harvest native birds or marine mammals for food" says Hackwell. "Yet they are commercially harvesting a native fish species to the point of collapse. Because eels need clean rivers, they are a crucial indicator for freshwater quality."

Dr Joy believes that with broad public support and good research, it will be possible to save the tuna. "It's crucial that we act now to bring about a recovery of the tuna and clean up our polluted rivers. We urge anyone who shares our concerns to sign the petition."

To sign the petition go to <http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/> and click on 'Lifeline for Longfins'

## The Ornithological Society of New Zealand Wairarapa chapter's recent activities

On Sunday 29 November at Mt. Holdsworth, Jenny Doring representing the OSNZ shared a display table with DoC. Displayed were books 'Where to Find Birds in the Wairarapa' and back and present copies of 'Southern Bird'. On the Loop Track, a thrush, a grey warbler and a kingfisher were the only birds noted. About 150 people were present at the event, most being at Mt Holdsworth without prior knowledge of the event, so it was an added bonus for them. Fifty people were able to participate in white-water rafting on the river. The End of Year dinner at Glenys Hansen's home at Matahiwi saw members enjoyed the feasting and Glenys's gracious hospitality. Some took a walk around the lake, and later asked about a lonely-looking male Australian shelduck (*Tadorna tadornoides*) that was haunting the area in front of the decks. Apparently, while on one of the ponds, its mate had been predated by a harrier hawk which held the shelduck's head under water until it drowned. An interesting observation.

Glenys's home was an ornithologist's dream. During dinner, a flock of Canada Geese took flight and formed the familiar V-formation. There were several different types of birds coming and going from the ponds. A pair of pied stilt arrived, and welcome swallows swooped above the diners on the deck.

## Banded rail release at Cape Kidnappers

This summer marked the release of 11 banded rail into the Cape Kidnappers Preserve, and they are the first of up to 150 captive-bred birds planned for release over the next four to five years.

The birds will be bred by captive breeders spanning the length of New Zealand from Auckland in the north to banded rail to do well here, particularly Queenstown in the south.

The first birds were delivered by breeders Peter Russell, the national coordinator for banded rail from Victoria Esplanade Aviaries in Palmerston North, Brian Day from Kowhai Park near Feilding and Paul Stuart-Higgs from Otorohanga Kiwi House.

Preserve manager Tamsin Ward-Smith said returning the banded rail to the Preserve was another important step towards restoring species to the peninsula that would once have been present. The safe habitat will support a large population of the birds and will expand their North Island range.

"They have gorgeous coloured plumage and are extremely charismatic and feisty," Tamsin said.

Leader of the Preserve project John McLennan said banded rail are expected to do well at the Preserve due to low predator numbers, particularly around the swampy coastal areas of Rangaiika.

## Banded rail details

Banded rail belong to the Rallidae family, of which there are eight species that breed in New Zealand including weka, pukeko and the endangered takahe.

Banded rail are small birds, weighing only 170 grams, and look similar to a miniature weka. They are crepuscular, or seen mostly in the twilight hours along coastal margins, estuaries and in ditches fossicking for snails, crabs, beetles, worms and sometimes seeds, fruits and succulent leaves.

Historically, banded rail were common throughout New Zealand, although now, due to predators and loss of habitat, they have retreated to swampy wetland areas such as around Northland's coastal regions, Auckland, Great Barrier Island, Waikato, Coromandel and Bay of Plenty.

Herbert Guthrie-Smith, a well known local farmer and naturalist in the mid-1800s, wrote about banded rail being present in Hawke's Bay swamps and to the north around Tutira.

Today, they are found in just one location in the region in a wetland on Mahia Peninsula, and it is likely to have been a number of years since they were present on Cape Kidnappers peninsula or at Ocean Beach.

## Pateke progress at Cape Kidnappers

A further 35 pateke have been released at the Preserve, which brings the total released this year to 95. They join the 11 from last year. Over 40 ducklings hatched later than usual meaning extra birds hatching from 10 pairs and a possible four more nests on available for release to the wild.

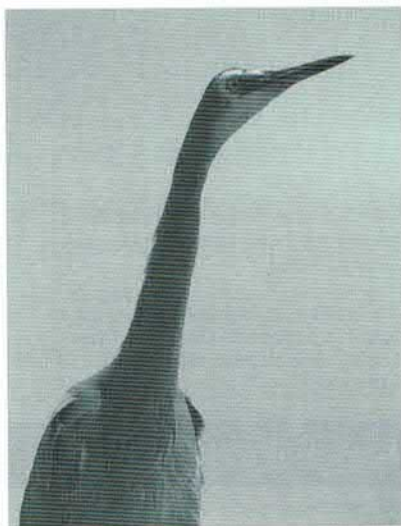
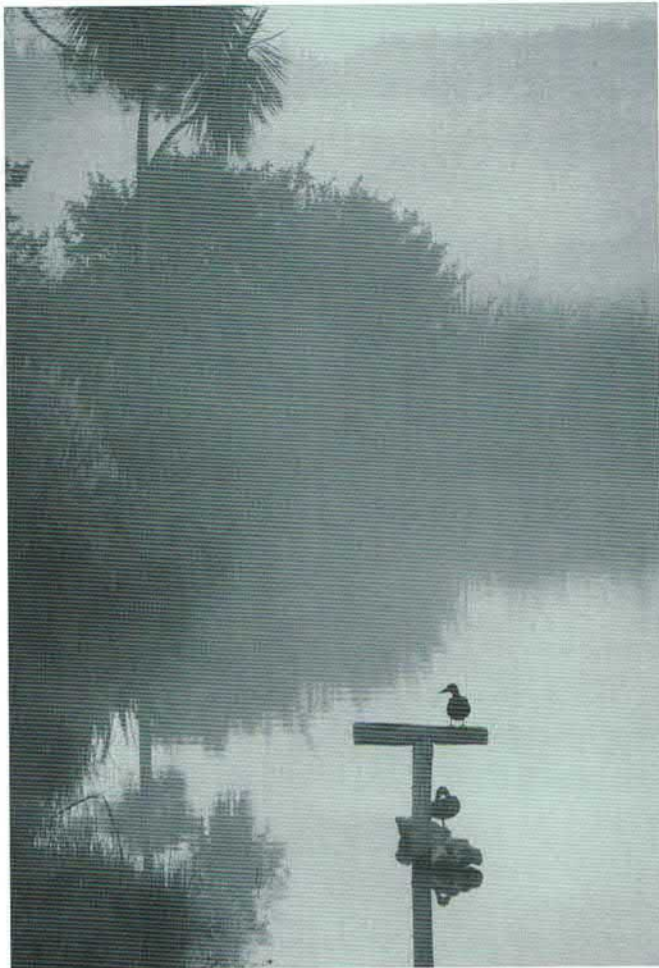
There are now at least 15 established pairs spread the length of the Preserve.

Jenny Ricketts has spent the last four months following the progress of the released pateke, and the news is both good and bad. Sadly, four were lost earlier in the year – one was hit by car, and three were killed by a predator. The dam area, where the deaths occurred, was flooded with traps and lures, and a cat was eventually caught. As with the banded rail, the nationwide captive breeders make these releases into the wild possible.

The Preserve team is very grateful for funding from Banrock Station to enable these releases and to Sirtrack for sponsoring the transmitters.







This rest log at William and Jan Abel's Huritini wetlands has been used by blue heron who is pictured on left, royal spoonbill and here, above, grey teal. William, who is a fine jeweller by profession, really has an excellent eye for photography, to the benefit of DU members!

## This year's first prize raffle winner



*Audrey Pritt winner of the DUNZ raffle 2009, pictured with Neil Candy, chairman of the Manawatu chapter of DUNZ*

This year's first prize raffle winner, Audrey Pritt, with daughter Di, pictured below, own a popular farmstay/ homestay called Mitredale, at Ohakune. She tells Flight that a new large kitchen and guest bathroom are being installed this summer. Mitredale is available all year round.

Long-time members and contributors to DU in so many ways over the years, these energetic and cheerful ladies appear at every conference, and Di partakes in as many shoots as she can. Di has been recipient of both the Bill Barrett Trophy and recently, the Lifetime Achievement Award. And she finds time for acting with a local theatre group, on top of everything else.

Just google Mitredale and you will find their website with all details of the homestay. Or phone 06 385 8016.

"We farm sheep, bull beef and run a boarding kennel in a beautiful peaceful valley with magnificent views of Mt Ruapehu. Tongariro National Park for skiing, walking, photography. Excellent 18-hole golf course, great fishing locally. We are members of Ducks Unlimited and our local wine club. We have three labradors. We offer dinner traditional farmhouse-style (Di is a keen cook and cookbook author), and breakfast with excellent home-made jams. Take Raetihi Road, at Hotel/BP Service Station corner. 4km to Smiths Road. Last house 2km.



## Winter in Wales and Basil's ducks are still hatching

Basil Arthur of the Vale of Glamorgan, Wales, who appeared in Flight 138 January 2009 sends a photo of a very late hatch on his pond - 20 November 2009! Considering the terrible weather this winter one hopes they all survived. Basil says that last season two ducks produced five and seven in October, but he has never seen such a late hatch. He reports that a big problem will be keeping them from the herring gulls this time of year.

His details are: Basil George, Ivy Cottage, Ogmore Village, Vale of Glamorgan, CF32 0QP UK. Tel: +44 (0)1656 654440





**Gordon Pilone of Pohangina Wetlands sent these photos of black swan and cygnets**

"I think the pic with mom swan with wings outstretched and body uplifting to offload the cygnet on its back is significant and may want to be shown with explanation on what is going on. If you look carefully you can see the little cygnet sliding towards the water at the tail. Most people probably don't know how the little ones get off their mom's back. I didn't. It was just a chance shot that I got this. Now I'm curious how they get onto mom's back; maybe in reverse: a good question to ask the members of DU?"

The wetland is at the Pullar farm owned by Chris and Christine Pullar. This is their first time nesting of black swans with good results.

Chris is a member of DU and is one of five trustees managing the Pohangina Wetlands.

He has several other ponds on his farm in the Pohangina Valley, near us."

Ross Cottle when asked about this, said in his opinion the little ones simply clambered up.

Any more ideas?





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