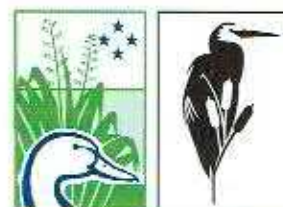


# Flight

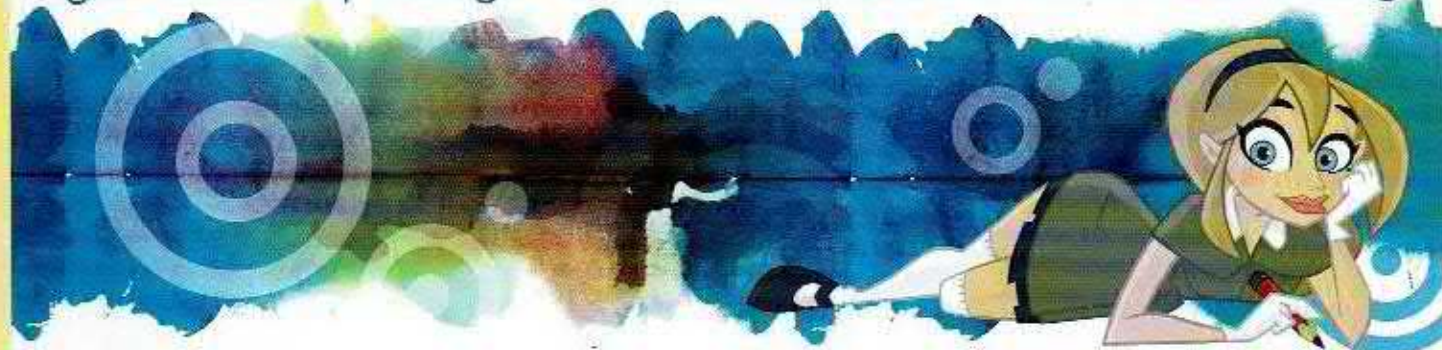


ISSUE 148 - July 2011

Inside:  
AGM Wairarapa.  
Honours for  
two members.  
The lake House.



logos • stationery & design • kids clubs • illustrations & cartoons • web design



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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.

Central to Wetland Care New Zealand's mission is forming partnerships with people and organisations with similar aims. Money from our partnership with Banrock Station Wines 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, Rautahi**

**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.

#### **New Members**

Welcome new members

Timothy Robinson of Palmerston North

Cameron Pipes of Auckland

Jennifer Pipes of Auckland

Nigel Hudson of Manukau

Callum Passey of Mt Maunganui

Kylie and Andrew Stewart of Marton

Members - passed away

Joe Neill of Waiuku

Margaret Rossiter of New Plymouth.

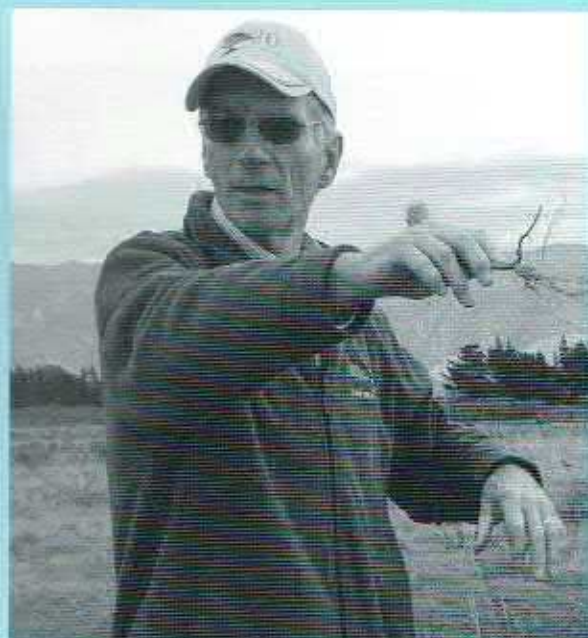
## **Queen's Honour for**

## **Jim Law**

James Robert Law of Featherston received a Queen's Honour, and is now a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM), for services to the community.

Jim said: "The main bit (of the citation) relates to my role at the Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre. It then refers to work at the Wairio Wetland."

Congratulations Jim.



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

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# From the President

It seems a very short time since the last issue of Flight, probably a consequence of a number of things happening, the major one being our conference at Masterton over Easter. Those who attended thoroughly enjoyed themselves and despite the lower numbers than usual the funds raised at the Saturday night dinner were up on previous years. Thank you to those generous bidders.



What the conference showed is Easter is not the best of times. Too many people have long standing family commitments and the roar took away some keen deerstalkers. The Board has decided the earlier time in the year is still worth persevering with, at least for another year. However we aim to avoid Easter and the roar.

Next year conference will be March 16-17-18, 2012 at Ohakune, at the Powderhorn, at the bottom of Mountain Road. For the first time since the days of conferences at Tokaanu we will be able to house nearly all attendees in the same building as the function. The bedrooms are of a high standard and the facilities perfect for the AGM and dinner. It will be a great weekend so please put the dates in your diary now.

The other matter which has progressed and developed is the position advertised in the last Flight. A surprising number of applications were received. What came out of the applications was a clear need to seek a specialist branding firm to assist us in clarifying and updating our image before anyone takes up the position advertised. The Board at its May meeting decided to follow that indication and is now in the process of considering appropriate firms before appointing one. The process will involve quite a lot of Board time but it's one which needs to be done and promptly. Despite the extra work there is excitement in making the move. Hopefully I can provide more information in the next Flight.

The reports I have received from around the country as to duck shooting indicate there is still a great need for our work. Duck numbers have been well down in places like the Wairarapa and patchy elsewhere. Personally I believe if we do not have sufficient birds to crop on an annual basis we should not be taking them. Otherwise there will be no birds let alone any duck shooting. I remain convinced habitat is the key, which is why your support is appreciated and needed.

David Smith  
President



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## Pic apology

Sorry the wrong photographer was named under one of the Cape Kidnapper trip photos in the April issue, Page 11. Theresa Candy, not Julie, took the photo.



## 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*

Cover photo: Tranquillity - a mute swan at rest.

Photo: William Abel.



# Obituary Conservation Warrior

Don Merton one of New Zealand's greatest conservationists and a pioneer of methods to save endangered birds is remembered by his friend and colleague John Cheyne.

Internationally renowned ornithologist Don Merton died on Sunday April 10 this year after a battle with cancer. He was 72.

Don started work with the New Zealand Wildlife Service in 1957 before transferring to the new Department of Conservation in 1987. During this period his services were often sought by overseas agencies to assist with their endangered bird problems. He retired in 2005 when he moved to Tauranga with his wife Margaret.

Don was involved with many wildlife conservation battles, some of which were won and some that are still ongoing. The most notable being the Chatham Island black robin and kakapo.

Supported by Brian Bell his long time manager in the Wildlife Service, other staff and volunteers, Don achieved the near impossible task of saving the black robin by cross fostering eggs from the sole remaining breeding female robin "Old Blue" initially to the nests of Chatham Island warbler then tomtit. This allowed

her to continue to lay additional eggs for further cross fostering. When the chicks being raised by tomtit showed imprinting problems he then doubled up clutches and back-fostered those to black robins so they learnt to behave like real robins. As a school boy he had experimented with exactly this technique with some goldfinch chicks and a pet canary. The population of black robin has increased from a low of five to over 250 birds.

Don was also responsible for leading the kakapo recovery team during the extensive Fiordland and Stewart Island surveys before many of these birds were transferred to a number of islands free of the larger mammalian predators. Ultimately the majority of these birds were translocated to Codfish Island, near Stewart Island which is now the focus of a very successful conservation programme. The population now stands at 123 birds.

I had the pleasure of working with Don on a number of projects during my spell with the Wildlife Service.

In early 1967, as a very new Wildlife Trainee I was posted to Auckland and I assisted Don with a wildlife survey of a small island off Whangamata. Accompanying us were Margaret and their six month old son David. We drove to Whangamata then travelled to the island in a 12 foot wooden clinker built boat in a slight swell. When we arrived I hopped onto the island to hear "catch" and turned to see young David being carefully thrown towards me. Thank goodness I caught him as my career was at stake if I had dropped him. Shortly afterwards I was helping Don to capture kokako near Kawhia using mist nets. After two days we had caught two birds and Don then drove through the night to get the birds safely to the National Wildlife Centre at Mount Bruce, once again accompanied by Margaret and son. Dedication to the conservation cause and family support were important elements in the Merton family.

I also had the pleasure in 1974, with my dog



**Friends:** Don Merton with Bridget at South East Island from the book "The Black Robin - Saving the World's Most Endangered Bird" by David Butler and Don Merton.

Photo: R Empson.

Mandy, of assisting Don to capture "Richard Henry" the only Fiordland male kakapo to contribute to the gene pool of birds captured on Stewart Island. Richard Henry died on Codfish Island in late 2010 but not before son David arranged for Don and Margaret to go with him to visit the island and allow Don to say farewell to this special bird estimated to be at least 80 years old.

Don was never a member of Ducks Unlimited but he was a friend of many members and directors. He was involved in the early patcke (brown teal) surveys on Great Barrier Island and Northland and latterly was appointed patron of the Brown Teal Trust.

While Don had led island translocations for many New Zealand birds and pioneered cross fostering of eggs and chicks, he also became a great proponent of using trained detection dogs for locating threatened species. Few people could lay claim to saving a species, yet Don, as well as having a major hand in saving multiple bird species, also developed approaches that have been adapted for other threatened species.

Don was very methodical, committed and a great leader. He motivated and inspired many of the people who will continue his great work. His death is a sad loss for New Zealand but he has left us all a great conservation legacy.

John Cheyne



**Tender care:** Don Merton with a 12-week-old Kakapo chick named Adler on Stewart Island from the book "Quest for Kakapo" by David Butler.

Photo: M Shepard.



## Our own environmentalist honoured

*The New Zealand Brown Teal (*Anas chlorotis*) is one of the world's rarest ducks; found only in New Zealand and believed to have evolved from the very beginning of life in NZ. Neil Hayes says "It is a bird we have spent nearly 40-years attempting to save from extinction."*



**Old and rare:** Neil Hayes with a Brown Teal.  
Photos: Linda Feringa, Wairarapa Times Age.

Neil Hayes QSM, Ducks Unlimited Foundation Director and Life member, has been honoured by the UK's Royal Chartered Society for the Environment with the award of Chartered Environmentalist - CEnv. This is the UK's, and possibly the world's, most prestigious environmental qualification. Late last year the Institution of Engineering Designers in the UK, in association with the Society of the Environment, invited Neil to

be one of the IED's first members to apply to become a Chartered Environmentalist (CE). Neil has been a member of the Institution of Engineering Designers since 1961 and his environmental work is well known in the UK.

Neil said the application process was involved and he had to demonstrate knowledge, competence and experience in sustainable management of the environment. He also had to write a thesis covering what he believed was needed to preserve and enhance what is left of the world's natural environment - in order to preserve its unique flora and fauna for future generations.

There are 21 CE's in New Zealand. The Hayes Family have owned part of the 10-hectare Taumata Lagoon since 1990 and have been working hard to restore the lagoon environment to what it was a century or so ago - by planting nearly 7000 native trees (mainly totara and kahikatea), removing thousands of undesirable willows, eliminating nearly 4000 predators (with help from the Greater Wellington Regional Council), creating more wetlands, enhancing the wetland environment and placing a protective covenant on the 10.5 hectare property.

After close to 40 years Neil is still involved in the efforts being made to save the endemic NZ Brown Teal from extinction.



**Worth saving:** Brown Teal mother and chicks.

When Europeans started arriving in New Zealand brown teal were by far the most common species of waterfowl and were spread in their millions from Russell to Invercargill to the Chatham and Stewart Islands.

Brown teal are found nowhere else in the world and fossil research shows the species was here over 10,000 years ago, but from a population of millions it could not adapt to the drainage of wetlands, hunting pressure and the ever increasing spread of predators - predators, such as ferrets, stoats, weasels, cats, rats, hedgehogs - most introduced by farmers, and by 1999 there were just 750 brown teal surviving in the wild, but thanks to a major review in 1999 - inspired by Neil and an associate - brown teal now number close to 3000 in the wild.

Neil also wrote the Open Polytechnic's NZ WETLANDS distance education course and acknowledges that late Sir Peter Scott of the UK's Wildfowl and Wetlands has been his inspiration for his work with waterfowl and wetlands.

## An oldie but a goodie doing her bit

*Humans are living longer and birds it seems are doing the same.*

The UK's oldest breeding female osprey named Lady, returned for the 21st consecutive year to the Scottish Wildlife Trust's (SWT) Loch of the Lowes Wildlife Reserve in March, and dutifully prepared her nest for the return of her mate known as Laird. She laid three eggs in April. Sadly the eggs failed to hatch.

Staff at the reserve were hopeful the eggs would prove to be fertile and that the chicks would have hatched by late May, making the resident female osprey a mother for the 49th time. They believe that a combination of the bird's age and bad weather may have had an impact this year.

Lady's return was said to have "baffled" bird experts and wildlife enthusiasts across the globe. The Trust's reserve manager Robert Potter said, "This bird is an incredible specimen of nature. The average osprey lifespan is eight years, and this bird is now around 26."

When it returned this year, Mr Potter said that despite the odds, it looked healthy after just completing a 5000-kilometre migration from West Africa.

Having laid 58 eggs in its life time, (and the latest eggs make it 61), records show that 48 chicks have hatched and successfully fledged the nest. Mr Potter said this one individual has single-handedly made a significant contribution to boosting osprey numbers breeding in Scotland. Anna Cheshire, the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Perthshire Ranger, said: "We were optimistic about a successful hatching for the osprey. Unfortunately, it may be that her age has affected the fertility of the eggs. We have also had terrible weather at the reserve."

Her current mate is not old - she has outlived several mates. Lady was on the nest most of the time, though her mate would occasionally take a turn during daylight

hours. He also had the role of catching fish to feed the pair.

The birds and eggs are also at risk from wildlife criminals and egg thieves but thanks to funding and help from volunteers, until the eggs hatch the ospreys are watched day and night.

Ospreys have been nesting at this reserve in Perthshire since 1969. The reserve covers 98 hectares and from early April to late August the star attraction is of course Lady. The nest is within 150 metres of an observation hide.

The staff say they haven't written off their amazing osprey being a mother again just yet, and hope to have more chicks hatching during the breeding season in 2012. They believe with 'Lady' anything is possible.

For more information go to [www.swt.org.uk](http://www.swt.org.uk)



# The Lake House



## Vision and hard work pay off for two DU members

A resident colony of blue herons, lots of roaming pukekos, heaps of mallard ducks (especially during May) and quite a few grey teal along with eels, koura, and native fish, all frequent the lakes that surround a rather unique home. Built right on the water, almost in the water, this house and surroundings is an eye stopper.

Not that many folk get to see this gem and its water wonderland. Owners (DU members), Lyn Watson and Steve Clarkson, found and bought their 4ha property in 1995. The intervening years have seen it transformed from a rather run down patch, to a watery wonderland.

The two were looking for the right location; they did not want the standard boring lifestyle block. This property had a small stream, a large swampy area and a remnant of native bush badly degraded by stock and the balance in pasture. There was a lot of broom, harberry and some gorse, plus a scattering of mature kanuka.

The first year they lived in town, visiting the property at weekends clearing weeds and rubbish and starting to grow natives for the later planting. The house was built the following year while they lived in a shed on the property.

Steve said the architect was given an open brief using the natural landscape and taking into account a possible lake for the swamp. Cost was a consideration but they did not want heaps of bedrooms or bathrooms, just



lots of light and energy efficiency.

The house they have is very little changed from the original concept. It was built on and into the side of a point adjoining the swamp, to extend out over the water once the lake was created. "This provided some interesting engineering concept issues," Steve said.

Good use is made of passive solar heating, and water heating is entirely from solar panel and wetback, and recent double glazing throughout has provided extra comfort.

Following the completion of the house, lake banks were formed by a local contractor, after obtaining all required resource consents.

Ducks Unlimited provided early assistance determining levels (Dave West and Ken Cook) and providing ferret traps (still in use). A series of three lakes were created — Steve said they say "lake", as size is

**Private paradise:** Hard work has its rewards. Photos: Lyn Watson.

important and pond seems to suggest something small.

First, a small lake on the upstream side of the house is fed water by a 160mm pipe from a concrete weir upstream. Most of the sediment load from the stream stays in this lake.

A second large lake occupying most of the water area, and surrounding the front of the house, is fed from the first lake.

A third lake is in the lowest area, fed from the second and with an outlet back into the stream. Flood flows go over the weir, down the original stream bed, bypassing the lakes and so avoiding possible damage.

Embankment edges are all reinforced with a wall of broken concrete pieces to counter erosion by duck activity. An added benefit is an excellent habitat for koura and other fish.



## Director profile

### Ross Cottle

#### DU Chairman

According to Ducks Unlimited Chairman Ross Cottle, Jim Campbell has a lot of answer for. Ross said: "Approximately 30 years ago, during my contracting days I met Jim Campbell and he invited Sharon (Ross's wife) and I to a Ducks Unlimited dinner in Masterton. We were shocked and amazed at the amount of money that was raised at the auction and the fact that it was all going onto Wetland and Waterfowl Conservation. "We became members and I was hooked." Ross was born 60 years ago in Upper Hutu just north of Wellington, a couple of years later he moved with his parents to farm just south of Masterton. He has lived there ever since.

It was a dairy farm, therefore: "On leaving school I started milking cows for my father and at the same time started an Agricultural Contracting business in partnership with my brother.

"We expanded the contracting business and gave up milking cows and this became my occupation for the next 25 years.

"After giving up contracting I leased the farm off my parents finally purchasing it about five years ago which is where I am today.

Ross married Sharon 27 years ago and they have two children and a granddaughter.

"I became involved at chapter level (with DU) helping with organising fund raising dinners and shoots taking over as Chapter Chairman for a number of years before joining the Board of Directors about 15 years ago.

"I did my share of raffles and AGM organising and was elected President a job I held for about five years and am now Chairman of the Board," Ross said.



**Rugged up:** Ross Cottle at a previous AGM/Conference weekend, when the weather was rather cold.

## White delight at Pukaha Mt Bruce

The hatching of a white kiwi chick at Pukaha has created quite a stir world-wide in fact. Not only has this special kiwi been a thrill but this breeding season has been the most successful in Pukaha's history with a total of 14 chicks hatched.

The all-white chick is not an albino but the rare offspring of kiwi transferred from Little Barrier Island to Pukaha in May last year. The transfer was to increase the kiwi gene pool and grow the population in the long-term so the number of chicks hatched is great result. The white chick is not albino but a North Island Brown kiwi that is white.



**Precious charge:** Darren Page, DOC captive breeding ranger at Pukaha Mt Bruce moves Manakura to an outdoor enclosure.



**White kiwi:** Manakura with feet on real ground at last.

Photos: Pukaha Mt Bruce.

"As far as we know, this is the first all-white chick to be hatched in captivity," said Pukaha Mount Bruce Board chairman, Bob Francis. "The kiwi population on Little Barrier Island has birds with white markings and some white kiwi, but this was still a big surprise."

Local iwi and Pukaha Mount Bruce partner, Rangitane o Wairarapa, named the chick Manakura which means chiefly status. Rangitane chief executive and Pukaha board member, Jason Kerehi said tribal elders saw the white chick as a tohu or a sign of new beginnings. "Every now and then something

extraordinary comes along to remind you of how special life is. While we are celebrating all 14 kiwi hatched this year, Manakura is a very special gift."

Manakura was in the kiwi nursery until the end of May and was weighed daily and will remain in captivity with the other chicks for at least four to six months. There will be the opportunity to for regular viewings while it is being cared for. The health and safety of this special chick is a top priority at Pukaha.

Phone ahead to make sure it is available to see 06 375 8004.





**Auctioneer assistants:** William Abel left, and Ross Cottle do the hard work.



**Takeover bid:** Flanders, the motel cat, moved in on the president. But David Smith gave him the evil eye.



**Fiesta feel:** Balloons perhaps containing a winning ticket provided a happy space.



**Al Fresco:** Barbeque under starlight on Good Friday.



**Italiano:** Richmond garden in Carterton recreates a formal Italian style, but is there room for ducks to land on the water?

# AGM

# 2011

Photos: Sharon Stevens-Cottle, Julie Candy and Liz Brook



**Steady hand:** Ian Jensen does the honours at lunch in the Village Café, Martinborough.



**Happy:** Jennifer Pipes shows off her winnings, perhaps slightly too big.



**Busy staff:** The old and the new, Sandra Pipes left handing over duties to Jan Abel.



**Hot to handle:** Ross Cottle does his fireman act at the Friday barbeque.



**Catch up:** Jim Campbell deep in conversation with Karen Hayes at the Saturday dinner.



# Conference – three days full on

The DU Quack Club hit the ground running – well hit the park really – with a successful Wairarapa launch at Henley Park on Easter Friday, the first day of the Ducks Unlimited and Wetland Care 37th AGM and Conference.

A quick and successful AGM was held Saturday morning followed by members breaking into two tour groups. One group headed to the Wairio Wetland in southern Wairarapa, while the others sought out the delights of the Paua Factory and Richmond Gardens in Carterton. Members met up again for a late-ish lunch at the Village Café in Martinborough.

A small band (breakaway group), discovered the pleasures of shopping in Greytown on the way back to Masterton. Money was spent.

The evening brought the usual excitement of the silent auction, a very pleasant dinner with wine supplied by Banrock Station, and followed by a not so quiet auction with an array of interesting duck style memorabilia, much of it from Canadian DU, along with some unusual prizes for the more adventurous.

The three day event wound up on Sunday with Trevor Thompson teaching members a few more ideas and methods for predator control. For those who did not make it – you missed a good one.



**Restoration underway:** Jim Law tells DU members about the plantings and a bit of history of the Wairio Wetland. DU is leading the restoration of the wetland.  
Photos: Liz Brook.



**Quacking good fun:** Children and parents crowd around the Quack Club booth.  
Photo: Sharon Stevens-Cottle.



**Luxury lunch:** At the Village Café, good food, good wine and good company.

## Quack Club - fun and education

Quack Club kicked off the AGM/Conference weekend in great style with events at Henley Park in Masterton. Duck races, treasure hunts, face painting, and dress-up all added to the fun. Even better – 25 new members signed up to Quack Club. The Club now has 50 members.



**Proper poser:** Modelling the whole Quack Club costume was great fun for Georgia Shearer as she posed in front of the Whio banner, Marilyn Law looking on.



**Face fun:** Dressing as ducks was all part of the fun for Sian Douglas left, and Justine Grant, as they went about the serious task of face painting.

**DU Patrol:** Even revered older member Jim Campbell was at the Quack Club afternoon and was in charge of catching the ducks (toy ones) under the bridge at the end of the race.

Photos: Sharon Stevens-Cottle.





## Wetland impresses

The Wairio Wetlands were on the list for the 200 members of the New Zealand Farm Forestry Association being hosted by the Wairarapa branch for their 55th annual conference.

Our own DU member and director, John Dermer is currently their national president. Wairarapa Farm Forestry president Stu Orme, and secretary Shane Atkinson, were thoughtful enough to write to Jim Law and

thank him for hosting their field trip to Wairio:

"We would like to thank you for the effort you put in to host our field trip to the Wairio wetlands.

Your restoration project directly addresses all three themes of our conference and is an outstanding example of a local initiative on a grand scale.

Lake Wairarapa dominates the whole of the lower valley and the re-creation of wetlands along the degraded eastern boundary is a task with very long-term benefits.



**Struck by size:** John Dermer, right, National President of the NZFFA, and members on a pleasant and informative visit to Wairio Wetlands. Photo: Jim Law

All our visitors enjoyed their trip.

Thank you again."

John Dermer said that all 200 of the NZFF conference attendees visited Wairio.

"We visited Castle Point Station in the north and down to the southern end to Pirinoa Station and Waiorongomai on our last day with a look at Wairio and a talk from Jim Law."

John said that once again he was struck by the sheer size of the Wairio Wetland although it was living up to its name, "dry water" at the time.

"Jim told us about the weed issues, mainly tall fescue, which makes getting trees established more difficult and the answers we are trying to find. One thing I noticed was how well plants are managing on the piles of soil excavated, so my main question is Why not do more?"

"There must be a shallow water table underneath so why aren't we digging deeper?"

"What is the point of digging holes so shallow they don't hold water?"

John said there is no way he would site his maimai on this bit of dry wetland.

He said he is sure the Farm Foresters were impressed, and they certainly asked lots of questions.

## Enthusiasm and hard work for restoration

During the last weeks of June, a band of enthusiastic Wairio Wetland members and other helpers were involved in more planting at the wetland.

The Wairio Wetland Restoration Committee in May agreed the last two weeks of June would be planting time and Don Bell (GWRC) would be requested to check on Warren Field's (DOC Schools Coordinator), availability as well as the GWRC BBQ Team. Attendees were expected to be the two local primary Schools (Pirinoa and Kahutara), plus South Featherston and Martinborough, students from the Tararua Agricultural Training College, Rotarians, DU members and others (eg F&B members).

Jim submitted a claim for an agreed payment by Rotary for the costs of signage at Stage 1 (\$450). Additionally he made a further application to Rotary for the cost of weed mats (\$2200). Both were approved by Rotary.

Bridget Johnson, the Masters student from the School of Biological Sciences at Victoria University was onsite supervising the digger scraping of planting test plots.

The purchasing of trees and other materials has progressed with assistance from Don Bell, Trevor Thompson (EQII) and Tony Silbery (DOC). Specialist and consistent tree planting skills are required to ensure the integrity of the research programme.

### Budget for 2011

The budget for this year's Programme agreed at the previous meeting and additional costing data that became available was agreed as follows:

Earthmoving (scraping planting plots at Stage 3 and a lagoon site at Stage 2) \$2,500

Fencing (repairs to Stage 1) 500

Spot Spraying

(stage 3 prior to planting) 2,000

Weed Mats (stage 3) 2,500

Plants (stage 3) 5,000

Noxious Weed Spraying

(stage 3 prior to planting

and maintenance at

stages 1 and 2) 1,000

Release Spraying

(stages 1, 2 and 3 in late

spring 2011 and late

summer 2012) 2,500

Total \$16,000

The meeting also agreed that a provisional

budget of \$2500 should be ear-marked, subject to further fund-raising and commitment by DU for resources for additional plantings in two small fenced off areas north of Stage 3. An audit of their suitability for additional planting by Don, Trevor and Tony would also be required and it was hoped this could be scheduled over the next few months.

### Think Big discussion

Based on feed-back from recent visitors to the Wetland (Farm Forestry and DU groups), as well as growing confidence within the Committee that significant progress is being made, the possibility of a major plantings to complete Stages 1, 2 and 3 in the next few years was discussed.

There was agreement in principle to this approach and as a first step an estimate should be made of the planting required in each Stage. It was also agreed that at the same time estimates be made of what areas not suitable for planting could be bulldozed to create significant lagoons. Financial costings would then be prepared as well as estimated manpower requirements to complete the work.



# Transformation taking shape at Wairio

From the road it doesn't look much, but once in the Wairio wetland, the scope of the restoration effort and the rewards gradually growing, becomes obvious.

The care and plantings of the 130 hectare Wario Wetland, on the eastern shore of Lake Wairarapa being managed by Jim Law will require attention for some years to come.

In his report to the DUNZ AGM, Jim said the previous year (2010 – 2011), was most successful with significant tree survival compared to previous years. This was partly due to a novel site preparation method using a bulldozer to scrape the top few centimetres of top soil and tall fescue off the planting area. Subsequent release spraying around recently planted trees helped survival rates.

A major programme is planned for 2011 – 2012 and includes the planting of more than 2000 sedges, flaxes and trees at Stage 3 as part of a Victoria University School of Biodiversity and Restoration Ecology research project. This research is being done by Masters student Bridget Johnson (see below) and compares different planting methods and maintenance regimes.

The 2010-2011 work was financially supported by the Nikau Foundation, Rotary and the Phazyn Trust.

DUNZ signed a management agreement in 2005 with DOC, custodians for the Crown, of the 130 hectare site. A staged approach to the restoration started that same year. The project is now onto Stage 3.



**Transition:** A glimpse of what lies ahead for Wairio Wetland.

Photo: Liz Brook.

## Wetland vegetation focus of examination

The Wario Wetland has come in for some close scrutiny by Victoria University Student Bridget Johnson who is this year studying towards an MSc in Ecological Restoration. The overall title of her thesis is "Ecological restoration of the Wairio Wetlands, Lake Wairarapa: vegetation dynamics and succession".

A Summer Scholarship meant she was able to do 10 weeks of research in her chosen field at Wario with the title for that part of her research being "Temporal and Spatial Patterns of Wetland Vegetation during the Summer Desiccation Period at Wairio Wetlands, Wairarapa".

In addition to the summer scholarship, Bridget has been preparing a second site at Wario for a large scale experimental project where around 2400 trees have since been planted.

The summer study programme provided an introduction to the Wairio Wetland for Bridget where she continues the research for her thesis on factors contributing to wetland restoration. Flight, with help from Jim Law, has been able to follow Bridget's research so far.

A poster she produced she said was just a snap shot of some of that research. "Due to the limiting size of the poster, I only talked about rare species vulnerability." All the summer scholars got to show their posters at a poster evening. Her poster included the following information plus a number of illustrations.

### Introduction

Small in size, New Zealand's native wetlands plant species are repeatedly outcompeted by more aggressive weeds.

The surrounding vegetation invades when wetland plants are most vulnerable, during the desiccation (dry) period. A number of threatened low-lying plants (*Pratia* and *Glossa*) inhabit the Wairio Wetlands. To conserve these native plants a greater understanding is required of their optimal conditions and their spatial and temporal dynamics. "My aim was to investigate the temporal scale of the native species, and which abiotic factors affect their spatial distribution."

### Methods

Vegetation composition was sampled in 20 quadrants over a 10 week summer period. The quadrants were set five metres apart along two 50 metre perpendicular transects. The first transect followed a moisture gradient, whilst the other ran parallel. Additional abiotic variables were measured, such as soil moisture, soil pH, percentage open ground, sunshine hours and rainfall. Water Plantain was chosen as a comparative species as it is a common invader and an indicator of high soil moisture.



**In the field:** Bridget Johnson, Bruce Read, her field assistant and father left, and Don Bell (Greater Wellington Regional Council Field Officer) taking a spell from field preparation.

Photo: Jim Law.



**Invasive:** Water plantain with its attractive white flowers growing at Wairio.

Photo: Bridget Johnson.



## To fly like a bird...

Planes of all sizes have taken me to different parts of New Zealand and the world, but there is magic in flying without an engine. Drifting on the air currents and at times turning in a complete circle – a bit like ice skating but the view is better.

Being yanked into the air at a great speed and reaching a height of 1000 metres in a matter of seconds was a shock quickly overtaken by delight, I gazed down on the patchwork of rural Wairarapa.

As the glider levelled out there were the Ruamahanga and Waiohine Rivers snaking below, the only sound the gentle swish of air and a photo opportunity in every direction.

A bad habit of opening my mouth too often led me to an afternoon of exhilaration, adventure (mild), and an overload of information. This came about by being caught up in auction fever at DUs AGM dinner when the opportunity for a successful bidder to go gliding with Gliding Wairarapa at Papawai airfield near Greytown came under the hammer.

The least foolhardy members did not bid. A few maybes dropped out and left just two tenacious thrill seekers determined to outbid each other. I made my last bid, confident my opponent would go higher, and well he might have, had not the auctioneer, quick as a flash knocked the flight down to me. I am not sure who was most surprised, me or my rival.

Hence a few weeks later, having waited for the right weather conditions, I finally made it to the Wairarapa to meet up with Jim Bicknell, a DU member who was a founding member, and still is a prime mover behind Gliding Wairarapa. Jim provided the land for the airfield when the club started 22 years ago.

Instructor Selwyn Roberts, also a founding member of the club, and a qualified gliding instructor was my pilot. Jim was the winch operator while another club member Robin Stephenson from Lower Hutt was record keeper and extra hand when needed.

During a gliding experience years ago for me we were towed into the air, this time it was a winch launch.

A winch launch is a bit like being catapulted into space. Jim said a launch by powered aircraft uses about 15lts of fuel, the winch uses 1lt. The glider we were using was a Rhomark (German). Checks are carried out at the beginning of every flight and a broadcast is made to let other aircraft know the glider is in the vicinity.

The runway is about 3km long and still being extended. The winch is positioned at one end, with three km of a very expensive cable that attaches to the glider. Two lead weights were added as I was not heavy enough. There is not much room inside – a truly tight fit, legs stretched out, instruments on the panel, Selwyn sitting behind me. We were both strapped in (seat and shoulder straps) with a perspex canopy pulled over.



**Anticipation:** Strapped in and ready to go.  
Photo: Jim Bicknell.



**Weather eye:** Jim and Robin check the weather

The pilot talks to the winch operator by wireless and the slack takes up quickly, the tow rope goes taught, there is an enormous jolt and we are in the air.

A slide in the canopy provides a peep hole to put the camera lens through.

The land below is green and lush, slips scar some hills and there is a wonderful circular irrigation system. I had photographed that a couple of years ago – from the ground – what fun to see it from the air. Also a huge covered orchard, many hectares, provides a great white blob when seen from up there.

The wind was low and smoke from winter fires drifted lazily over Greytown and Carterton. Martinborough had no smoke – must have been warmer, or perhaps had more wind.

It was sad to come back to earth, and we came down with a bang. I don't think Air NZ would have been happy about that landing. All up it was a wonderful afternoon. It is easy to understand why gliding enthusiasts keep going back for more.

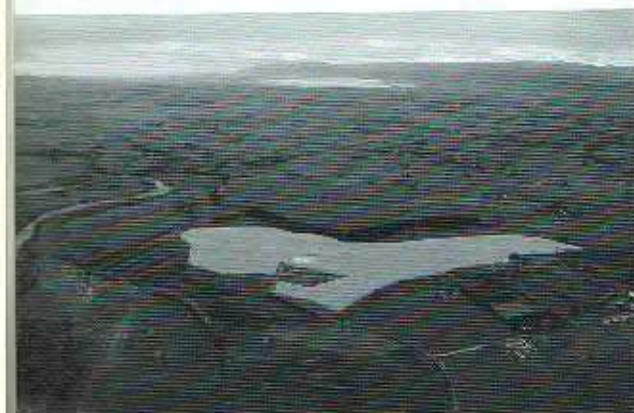
The club operates Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, other times by arrangement. Contact Jim Bicknell 06 304 8452, or 0274 445 701.  
Liz Brook.

### **Covered orchard:**

Not pretty, but it keeps the birds out. Lake Wairarapa in background.

### **Crops growing:**

Circular irrigation and the Ruamahanga River.  
Photos: Liz Brook.





## Good breeding and patience produce top dogs

Jim Cook knows about gun dogs, he grew up with them. His father had German Shorthaired Pointers, and Jim had some of that line until quite recently. Now he has a German Wirehaired Vizsla called Hoki, just over a year old and is pointing and retrieving. "She catches chooks and bantams from around the yard." His previous dog, Brook - a Wirehaired Vizsla cross, picked up an infection in a test that turned out to be cancer. She was 12 and had to be put down.

It is experience that teaches the dogs, and Jim said they need to start as pups. "Take the dog out as a pup, get it used to being around the guns and the water and the people. And the sooner you can introduce them to electric fences the better."

"After a while the dog learns to work and not to get too far away and not to hunt for itself. Keep the dog with you. Dogs left to



**Faithful and smart:** Brook, an excellent gun dog, a Wirehaired Vizsla cross, on a pheasant shoot with Jim Cook.

themselves learn bad habits. Bring out the good points and discourage the bad." Jim said you can't make a dog hunt. They might chase a rabbit, but that does not mean they have the instinct of a hunter.

"Hunting dogs will go off and retrieve. That is their instinct. If you have shot the bird, they should head off looking, and find it. Importantly never leave the area until the dog has found the bird."

He said it is important to let the dog use its instinct to get the best out of them.

It is not just water fowl that Jim is interested in hunting for. He also hunts pheasants, and heads to the Mackenzie Country to hunt Chukkar - an Indian mountain partridge.

"For that you need a dog that can cover lots of country and think for itself but also be in a pack of dogs that work as a team. They need to use their eyes as well as their nose. That is something that Pointers can do, they are a multi-purpose dog. Labradors are retrievers, and work from a fixed point, ideal for a maimai."

Jim likes the multi-purpose dogs that can be used for deer, duck or pheasants. Another of his dogs Max (well Maxine really), is a spaniel, not aggressive especially once they are past adolescents, a good house dog.

"They have become popular," he said.

The hunting was bred into Jim and he started at about age 10. Nowadays with his mate Nick Perry, he goes deer stalking and fishing, mostly for trout. He also rears pheasants.

"I don't shoot a lot of ducks, mainly because I don't have a pond." But he managed to bag a few this season.

In his early years Jim worked for the Wildlife Service, ending up as Fishery Officer at Queenstown. He said they shot a lot of ducks and recalls one year when there were 600 - 700 ducks shot near Lumsden.

They spent all weekend gutting them and he said it got to the stage where it was not fun.

For some years he worked for the Forestry Commission in New South Wales and did field trips for the Melbourne museum, before heading to Darwin for a while. A quick trip back to New Zealand then off to South Africa where he set up a trout farm. He came back to New Zealand to sort out some things just at a time when regulations were being changed back in SA, and going back was no longer an option.

Now with a four-day a week job, he has more time to pursue the hunting and fishing he really loves.

### Hunting dogs

Hunting dogs have developed for various tasks. Major categories include hounds, terriers, cur type dogs, and gun dogs. Further divisions are made based on the dogs' skills.

Gun dogs are primarily used by small game hunters using shotguns, and are classified as retrievers, flushing spaniels, and pointing breeds.

Once classified as a water spaniel, a retriever's primary role is to find and return



**Young and keen:** The dogs of course, Jim Cook with his two current dogs, Maxine (Max) and Hoki.  
Photos: Liz Brook

shot game to the hunter. Retrievers can spend long hours in a maimai and visually spot and remember the location of downed birds. All going well at command, they retrieve the birds. They may be able to follow hand, verbal, and whistle commands to the downed bird. They typically have large, gentle muzzles.

Setters have a long history as upland gun dogs. They should have the ability to locate and point at game birds then flush the birds at the hunter's command.

Spaniels have been used to hunt for hundreds of years and flushing Spaniels are also used to locate and flush game for a hunter.

Pointers are trained to locate and point at small game allowing the hunter to approach and flush the game. Pointing breeds have greater range than Spaniels.

Water dogs are a subclass of retrievers.



**Working dog:** Doing what a retriever should.



*Water is shaping up to be one of the big issues of this century. The world either has too much of it or too little. In New Zealand we have coasted along without too many extremes. Now it is the issue of water quality that needs to be addressed. Farmers would like more irrigation, DU members would like more wetlands protected, restored, or even totally new areas developed.*

*If any of you have strong thoughts with good ideas on this issue (or any other issues relevant to DU), don't be shy, write them down and send to Flight. (liz.brook@farmside.co.nz)*

## Freshwater policy aimed at improving water quality

After the announcement of the Government's Freshwater Management policy in early May, Forest & Bird were quick to respond with a media release which said an opportunity had been missed to set clear national objectives for water quality.

"We welcome the government's commitment to give a stronger national focus to the need to stop the decline in the quality of our freshwater," Forest & Bird Advocacy Manager Kevin Hackwell said.

"Unfortunately, the government has dropped the ball by missing the opportunity to set clear national objectives for water quality. This means we will be left with different standards in the regions around New Zealand."

### Freshwater management

The final report of the Land and Water Forum makes recommendations about the main areas where change is needed in the way New Zealand manages its freshwater. The areas include:

- setting standards, limits, and targets for water quality and quantity
- water allocation and the transfer of water permits
- irrigation
- storage and hydro projects
- governance arrangements (rules around freshwater management)
- the knowledge required for water management

The government's announcements follow last year's report of the Land and Water Forum (LWF), a collaborative body set up by the government to reach a consensus on improving the management of freshwater resources. The LWF comprised 58 organisations, including primary industry groups, environmental and recreational organisations, iwi and other parties with an interest in freshwater and land management.

Mr Hackwell was a trustee of the LWF and a member of the forum's small group that met regularly for a year to do detailed work in drawing up the recommended reforms.

The LWF travelled the country for a series of public meetings to discuss the report's recommendations. Mr Hackwell

- urban water services
  - working collaboratively so issues about water are owned by water users and better ways of managing it result.
- The forum recommended immediate action on:

- developing a National Policy Statement on freshwater
  - new regulations
  - getting examples of good practice by water users and water regulators.
- It considered matters such as allocation and water services management as "works in progress."

The report is at [http://www.landandwater.org.nz/index\\_files/releases.htm](http://www.landandwater.org.nz/index_files/releases.htm)

said the feedback had been consistent in those meetings. The public wants action to introduce consistent national standards.

"Without clear national objectives to set water quality standards, we risk losing our unique freshwater biodiversity, and our children may no longer be able to swim and fish in our rivers and lakes. We should also never forget how much our economy relies on clean freshwater."



**Nothing stirs:** Morning mist rises above the tranquil scene at Huritini, Horowhenua.

Photo: William Abel.



### Whio Family Day

More than 550 people turned up at the Tongariro National Trout Centre in March for DOC's annual Whio (Blue Duck) Family Day. It was part of National Whio Awareness month to help raise the profile of one of our rarest and most unusual birds.

The Taupo Forest & Bird branch and Central North Island Field Officer Al Fleming, joined the Central North Island Blue Duck Trust, the Department of Conservation and Genesis Energy to highlight the plight of Whio.

There were displays and activities for children. A Whio tracking dog was on show, and a "combat training" obstacle

course allowed kids to navigate their way around supplejack and slippery river beds on their way to protecting Whio.

A Whio calling competition, an auction, sausage sizzle and face painting all raised close to \$2300 to support the Central North Island Blue Duck Trust. There are only about 2500 of these unique birds left in New Zealand. Pests, particularly stoats and uncontrolled dogs, are major threats.

So far didymo, otherwise known as rock snot, has not reached North Island rivers. An infestation would be devastating for the Whio because didymo would smother the freshwater aquatic nymphs they feed on.

### Assistance with wetland care

The Wetland care report from William Abel to the AGM told members the organisation was involved financially with four projects in 2010. These did not include the ongoing commitment to the Wairio block. In Masterton another hectare of ponds was developed with the Cottles. Two hectares in Woodville with David East and Stephen Schofield involved extensive planting, and repairs to an existing dam to a large mature wetland area in Pahiatua with Richard Gavigan.

Assistance was also given at Blue Duck Station at Retaruke, where Dan Steele has been developing a series of ponds and wetland areas. These will greatly add to the conservation areas Dan already had underway.



## Birds of a feather...

Henley Lake proved to be rich territory in May for members of the Wairarapa Branch of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand.

Armed with clip boards 10 members walked round the lake to record numbers of fresh water birds, and other species. Member Peggy Duncan said a cold wind got up during the last leg home and the counting was probably not as enthusiastically attended to as earlier in the walk.

Count of freshwater species:

Muscovy Ducks 10, Mallard Ducks 127, Pekin Duck 6, Cayuga Duck 4, Coot 31, Scaup 240, Canada Geese 49, White feral and Greylag geese 10, Black Shag 1, Little Shag 1, Black Swan 35 and Mute Swan 12.

Other species noted in the vicinity: sparrow, blackbird, swallow, chaffinch, spur-wing plover, tui, fantail and starling.

The counters included Tenick and Janet Dennison, Colin and Shirley Scadden, Brian Boeson, Peter Griffiths, Emil Schmieg, Beth Andrews, Jenny McKenzie and Peggy Duncan.

## The right gear and right dogs



**Collaboration:** Di Pritt right, hiding behind her face camouflage, with John Bishop at Paddy Chambers pond near Raetihi, where between three of them 13 ducks were bagged. The three Labradors, Chase, Dale and Rommi belong to Di. The third member of the team was William Abel who also took the photo.

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