

Flight



ISSUE 149 - October 2011



Inside:
Love birds.
Nesting boxes.
Rare white birds again.



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, 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.

Wetland award

Have we got a wetland to nominate?

The International Wetland Globes awards scheme recognises best practice and wetland restoration, and if you are an NGO or community group, you can vote for a wetland you know right now. Voting is open from July 2011 to March 2012, and the results will be announced at the next Ramsar international wetland conference in June 2012.
www.worldnet.org/awards/



Box work: Chris Bindon left, and Henning Hovmand in 2006, see story page 4.

Contact the editor.

In the July Flight, Issue 148, I suggested members might like to have a say on issues or ideas relevant to DU or Wetland care. I waited for the ideas and issues to roll in – but none arrived. The member survey was sent out at the same time, and one of the ideas put forward was a letters to the Editor page.

Even emails or letters sharing what is going on at your place would be a start. What is happening with your pond, new or old, how you have managed it, watched it grow and any funny or sad incidents that might have occurred over the years. The sort of incidents members would relate to and be interested in.

Any helpful tips for recent pond builders or owners, especially when it comes to setting it up and to encourage water fowl.

We all like to hear what other enthusiasts are up to.

If you know of something in your district that would be of interest to members, let me know and I will do my best to follow up.

Email: liz.brook@farmside.co.nz No email? Send it snail mail to: Liz Brook, Brightnook Farm, 766 Beaconsfield Valley, RD 9, Feilding 4779.

Liz Brook

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

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From the President

All members will all have been aware of the survey contained with the last Flight or received by email. We are very heartened by the response, both in numbers and by the time taken to make comments. These have been collated and will form the basis for the Board's deliberations as to how we move forward. Thank you to all who took the time to respond.



We have engaged BRR Limited to assist with the development of strategy. Brian Richards, the founder, has a clear affinity with our interests owning a property on the Kaipara which contains several wetlands. His task is to assist us in defining a clear strategy for the future, to enable us to develop a brand which maintains what we have at present but also to reach a wider number of people.

It is early days at present. I am meeting with Brian and his team to arrange a workshop day for the Board this month. Hopefully we will have some possibilities to report by next Flight. *

Work at Wairio has been going full steam ahead. Jim Law reported: "We planted a further 600 flax/Toi Toi/Cabbage Trees at Stage three on August 5. Bridget Johnson and two colleagues from VUW also placed about 500 weed mats.

"Just for the record, we will have planted about 3500 trees in Stage 3 this year." As Jim commented: "A good effort folks".

I hope you all got through the polar blast with minimal loss of stock or plants. You should be enjoying the spring by the time this is published.

In closing please remember to note Conference in your diaries for March 16-17-18, 2012 at Ohakune.

David Smith

President

*see preliminary ideas feedback in centre spread.



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Our Mission

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

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

Cover photo: Love birds – love at first sight for these two – their story is on page 7. Photo: Rob Kitchin

Homeward bound: Henning Hovmand beside a well fenced wetland where two of the nest boxes are in use.



Nesting boxes for Grey Teal

Grey teal nesting boxes have been part of Henning Hovmand's life for some years. Now at age 89, he would like to see the remaining 60 kitset boxes go to good homes.

An email to DU members a couple of months ago, offering the boxes (for free) saw 25 snapped up straight away. Chris Bindon, who has been involved providing nesting boxes for Grey teal and has helped erect several hundred next boxes at various sites over the years, encouraged Henning to use some spare timber to make more next boxes.

For Many years Henning and his wife Birthe had a dairy farm at South Kaipara Head. There Henning and a neighbour felled a lot of scrub, including some Pine trees. Some were tall and straight and Henning had them milled. The timber was used from time to time, but there was still plenty left over.

The farm was sold in 1989, but Henning kept the timber. "The quality was still good," he said. They moved to Kumeu, where Chris Bindon and the late Murray Jones got Henning involved in making nesting boxes. Then the Hovmand's moved to Te Atatu South.

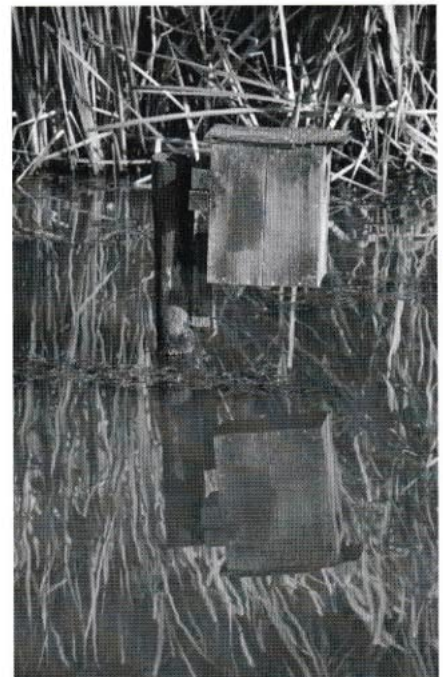
"We continued the nest box work in earnest and produced the vast majority of the unites at the Te Atatu property," said Chris. He estimates they made about 800, mostly completed ones, but many kitset also.

Once the farm timber was used up, the nest builders had to find other timber. It was "gleaned", (beg, steal or borrow) and Chris said that even in his eighties, Henning had been seen slowly climbing in and out of various skip bins to retrieve scrap bits of wood to use.

He and his wife Birthe moved to Bulls last year to be near their married daughter and now live on a farm near Scotts Ferry. Henning came to New Zealand from Holland in 1953, and Birthe arrived about five years later. During the nest box project Chris said special thanks go to Birthe who did without her husband for hundreds of hours as the kit sets were created.

The boxes have been used as fundraisers at DUNZ AGM dinner/auctions, and others have been given to wetland owners to help encourage Grey Teal.

The remaining kit sets are waiting for owners, Henning would love to see them put to use. Call him on 06 322 1056.



In place: A nesting box on the pond.

Photos: Liz Brook

Grey Teal

The Grey Teal, *Anas gracilis* is a dabbling duck found in open wetlands in New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands.

This is a mottled brown duck with white and green flashes on its wings. The male and female Grey Teal share the same colouration, in contrast to the related Chestnut Teal, whose male and female are strikingly different. The Grey Teal has almost identical colouration to the female Chestnut Teal and the Grey can only be distinguished by its lighter coloured neck and paler face. Juveniles are paler than adults, especially on the head.

The Grey Teal nests near its favoured freshwater lakes and marshes, usually on the ground, but also in tree holes or rabbit burrows – or special nesting boxes... A vocal duck, especially at night, the male gives a soft preep, and the female has a loud quack.

In Australia it is nomadic. In 1957, large numbers fled to New Zealand to escape drought.

It was formerly considered a subspecies of the Sunda Teal, as *Anas gibberifrons gracilis*.

It is often mistaken for a female Chestnut Teal, due to similar colouring.

The Grey Teal is almost all grey-brown. Each feather of the body is edged with buff, except on the rump. The chin and throat are white, the bill is dark green and the eye is red. The secondary wing feathers have glossy blue-black patch, broadly bordered and tipped with white. In flight, a large white wedge is visible on the under wing. The Grey Teal is one of the smaller Australian ducks (males are larger than females). Both sexes are similar in plumage. (Courtesy of Wikipedia).

Grey teal nest from June to October. For more information Flight July 2010, Page 10.



Needing a home: Nesting boxes anyone?

Love birds –

but not everyone included

Passionate, protective and possessive.

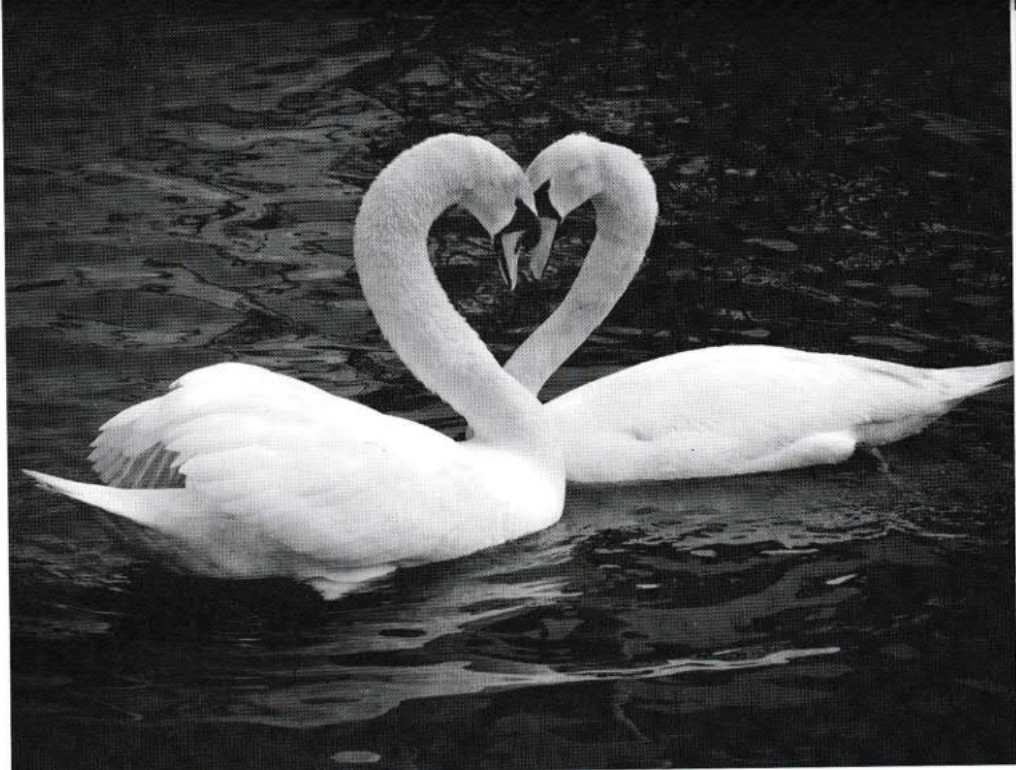
It was love at first sight, and make no mistake this suitor was not going to let anyone else get close to his new mate on Hokowhiti Lagoon in Palmerston North. Now known as William and Kate, named by the local newspaper, the female Mute swan was left alone after her mate died. Months went by, single white swans are not the easy to find. But DU were on the case.

Jim Campbell managed to acquire one from Christchurch, Michael Bourke collected it from Jim and he called Ken Cook who lives in Palmerston North. Ken rang the local paper, the Manawatu Standard and they sent head photographer Robert Kitchin to be on hand when the bird was delivered to the lagoon.

No one could have predicted how quickly the two would pair up. It was instant bonding. Rob managed a fantastic picture of the two, large on the front page of the paper the next night.

Ken said William quickly claimed one end of the lagoon and woe betide anyone who ventured there or nearby. Then – Oh dear – William being a hot blooded male defended his territory and his new found love.

Kayaker Jake Jackson-Grammer felt the full wrath of Williams's protection of what he now feels is his territory. One photo that appeared in print, taken by a student who just happened to catch the action, shows William standing on the back of the kayak and pulling at Jake's shirt. Another shows the bird beating him with its wings.



Love birds: Instant attraction for Kate and William.
Photo: Robert Kitchin, Manawatu Standard.

Another kayaker, Kane Sanson was also set upon. He said the bird jumped up on the kayak in front of him. "It tipped me up." Kane swan to an island with William in pursuit. Kane now avoids that end of the lagoon.

Ken talked to the canoe club and they agreed to steer clear of William. Children in a dinghy were attacked; although none were hurt they were pretty upset. Their mother said the swan was "very, very aggressive".

These incidents prompted a number of txt messages to the Manawtu Standard, some in defence of the swans, and DU, and some not so good.

Ken said the birds were preparing to nest meaning the male was more territorial than normal.

"Swans had lived at the lagoon for at least 40 years and this was the first time incidents such as these had been reported.

World wetlands and birds under threat

Wetland International (WI) is concerned about rapid land use change, particularly as it affects waterbirds. Use change for intensive agriculture and urban functions has a devastating impact on wetlands. Growing demands for agricultural lands for food and fuel are expected to have an exceptionally strong impact on wetlands and migratory waterbirds.

The ever-growing human population has an ever growing footprint. Reclamation of an area of the size of the Netherlands has been caused by the new, additional biofuel demands in the EU.

An earlier investigation of WI shows that natural areas with enough water (wetlands, rainforests) fall are especially vulnerable to the development of biofuel crops like sugar cane and palm oil. Reclamations of the Tana wetlands of Kenya for sugar cane are an example. It is hugely important for waterbirds and hosts 22 species including the Little Stint, Marsh Sandpiper and lesser Sandplover, which are recorded there in numbers exceeding their one percent of international importance.

Intensive agriculture in countries with water stress also has a considerable impact on downstream wetlands. An example are the irrigation project around the Niger River on

the Inner Niger Delta, home to millions of waterbirds including many species of intra-African migrants and long distance migrants from Eurasia such as Garganey, Ruff and Black-tailed Godwit.

Coastal development

A similar situation applies for coastal wetlands under severe pressure of land use change for urban development, tourism, and aquaculture.

An example is the rapid loss of mangrove forests on tropical coasts. Mangroves tend to vanish at a rate 3-4 times higher than forests on land. This can be due to conversion into fish and shrimp ponds, in other areas, coastal marshes and associated wetlands are greatly threatened due to urban, port, industrial and tourism development e.g. shrimp ponds and agriculture.

An example is the rapid loss of mangrove forests on tropical coasts. Mangrove forests tend to vanish at a rate 3-4 times higher than forests on land. In some areas this is due to conversion into fish and shrimp ponds, in other areas, coastal marshes and associated wetlands are threatened due to urban, port, industrial and tourism development.

Rapid industrial and urban development on the coasts of the Yellow Sea where 30-40 percent of the populations of 25 species of

shorebirds depend on the area, including the Spoon-billed Sandpiper, now considered amongst the world's most endangered shorebird, as well as many other globally threatened waterbird species: Nordmann's Greenshank, Saunder's Gull, Relict Gull, Chinese Egret and Black-faced Spoonbill. In addition this region is of critical importance for long distance migrants such as Bar-tailed Godwit, and Great Knot, species now rapidly declining due to the loss of safe feeding and resting areas at this crucial stopover site.

Chain falling apart

Of approximately 1292 Ramsar sites/ Wetlands of International Importance, more than 15 percent are degrading due to changing land use. These are areas globally recognised for their importance. The continued loss and degradation of many other wetlands are expected. This loss is having a direct impact on the survival of populations.

WI says it is time governments live up to their promises. Also, companies should take their environmental-social responsibility seriously and not invest in developments which violate the intention of these agreements.

More information: www.wetlands.org



Director profile Jim Law

Ducks Unlimited director Jim Law has been getting in the news lately. Apart from all publicity about Wairio Wetland and goings on there, he received a New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours. This was for services to the community. The citation said:

Mr Law served on the board of the Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre in the Wairarapa from 2002 to 2010, and was Chair from 2006.

The Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre has grown incrementally in the last 10 years. Mr Law has played a crucial role in ensuring that the direction of the organisation was to encourage the recognition of the vital nature of farming to our national economy. He was a Director of Lean Meats and is a Director of Brackenbridge. He is a member of the board of Ducks Unlimited, which aims to preserve the Wairio Wetlands in South Wairarapa. He has been a member of the South Wairarapa Rotary Club for the last 10 years.

He established annual scholarships at Pirinoa School for students to continue into tertiary education. Mr Law was Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Mobil Oil New Zealand from 1994 to 1997 and was Executive Director of Global Business Support, based in the United States from 1997 until his retirement in 1999.

Jim is very much a family man, married to Marilyn their daughter Michele is married and living in London with their first grandchild, Eleanor. Their son Anthony, also married lives in Crete.

Jim and Marilyn returned to New Zealand 11 years ago after a career with Mobil Corporation that took the family to different parts of Africa (Zambia, Kenya and Sudan) and the Middle East (Saudi Arabia) as well as the UK and the USA.

"Despite the corporate career, I have always had a great affinity with the land and the sea. Hence the fact that we now live on a commercial farm in the South Wairarapa and get to do some boating each year in the Med, after first catching up with the kids," said Jim.

Involved in many different things, Jim says he is like a lot of Kiwis: "I like to be busy. To have a purpose is key in life."

With Taratahi he has been able to utilise his corporate experience and focus on a clear vision for Taratahi, making sure governance issues were covered.



Official photo: After the investiture at Government House, Jim and Marilyn Law. Photo: Photography by Woolf.

His passion for helping young people to meet their potential has come about through his own experiences especially in Africa.

"I spent about 10 years working in Africa and saw thousands of children denied an education through the inadequacies of the State. The waste of subsequent economic contribution from those children was huge and the impact on their lives of their inability to reach their potential is unimaginable. I was keen to contribute to kiwi kids getting a chance to reach their potential in agricultural careers."

Jim joined Ducks Unlimited about 15 years ago and that includes some time in North America where DU was founded.

This is where his passion to get things done kicks in again, being able to help with wetland restoration and its many spin-offs. He said: "For example it provides enhanced habitat for waterfowl and aquatic species, filtration of water runoff and erosion control. These all contribute to the environment we enjoy and that's good stuff."

New Marton breeding spot

Rangitikei member Gavin Lampp has recently established a small pond on his property outside of Marton.

Gavin, helped by Neil Candy and William Able put in a low wall to hold the pond that has an attractive oxbow shape. The pond, in an old creek bed, curves around a stand of native trees providing an attractive backdrop to the water. When the front of the pond is fenced and planted the area will look very natural - as if it has always been there - an ideal breeding pond.

Gavin said there are always ducks in the area, a lot of ducks breed in the nearby Tutaenui Stream.

"As the Tutaenui often floods, the birds lose their eggs or young. The pond will provide a more secure site."

There is a little bit of seepage and Gavin intends to use bentonite, a type of clay used as absorbent filler to hopefully stop that.

"The pond will dry out a bit over summer, but there is plenty of water in winter and spring."

Once the pond is fenced off Gavin is sure more of the native seedlings will come through.



New pond: Gavin Lampp and Neil Candy beside the newly established pond.



Attractive curve: The oxbow shape of the pond is visible.

Photos: William Abel.

The Australasian bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*) or bittern (matuku) is under significant threat in New Zealand and Australia and indications are that the species is declining at some sites at an alarming rate.

Matuku - Australasian bittern – threatened

The bittern is a rare secretive brown coloured heron type bird found in some of our freshwater wetlands, particularly those with dense stands of raupo and reeds. Usually solitary and stealthy, in spring the male bird has a distinctive booming territory call. It is an iconic species, whose presence normally indicates a healthy wetland. The wetland restoration work of Ducks Unlimited NZ and Wetland Care NZ and its members over many years has gone some way to helping protect the habitat for this bird. They have also agreed to financially support a survey of bittern in Hawke's Bay which will provide a better understanding of bittern in the region and lead to a more successful species recovery programme. The bittern population in New Zealand is under considerable threat and has been accorded nationally endangered status, the second highest category. In 2009 the estimated population in Hawke's Bay was less than 50 birds. The regional population is subject to a range of significant threats and may be at crisis point. Maintaining a viable regional population will be a challenge for us all.

Wetland habitat protection and management, reducing barriers to fish migration to



Camouflage: Australasian bittern under cover.

protect important food sources, predator control, reducing human disturbance at key sites, minimising accidental deaths, and educating and inspiring people will assist the recovery of bittern both in Hawke's Bay and nationally. This work will also have significant benefits for other freshwater wetland biodiversity values.

The spring surveys of booming male bittern carried out to date in Hawke's Bay have been useful but further baseline population surveys of all large freshwater wetlands in the region are required. This will provide more complete information on the numbers in Hawke's Bay and identify key wetland habitats and specific vegetation types being used at each site. The surveys will be complemented by a review of anecdotal records/observations to gain an insight of how the distribution and abundance may have changed over the last 30 years. It will also help identify which wetlands should be the focus of future conservation actions to help reverse the decline in numbers.

The following are key actions recommended for Hawke's Bay:

1. Baseline population surveys - Complete a survey of booming males in spring 2011 (October-November) of all major wetlands and prepare a distribution map and report. Repeat again in 2012.
2. Long term population monitoring - Identify a number of key regional wetlands (Lakes Hatuma, Poukawa, Oingo, Whakaki, Opoutama) for monitoring population trends over time and commence long term counts of booming male birds.
3. Monitoring bittern response to wetland restoration projects - identify projects warranting this approach, design and implement appropriate monitoring programme.

Rare duck release

Pateke (brown teal) are being released on Purerua Peninsula, Bay of Islands with the intention to re-establish a permanent population on Purerua by releasing 20 this year, 40 in 2012 and 40 again in 2013. Pateke are one of our rarest species with less than 1500 surviving today. The first 20 pateke are to be monitored to check their survival and dispersal. Everyone on the Purerua Peninsula should keep an eye out for them as they will likely disperse from the release site over the next 12 months. All pateke sighted should be reported to Greg Blunden on 09 405 1244, 021 710 441 or (preferably) by email to nz.kiwi.foundation@gmail.com. Pateke look like a baby duck, they are small, brown and have a white ring around each eye. They are primarily nocturnal and often leave their wetlands at night to feed on nearby pasture. Pateke are easily run over around wetlands at night, so be alert when for example you

drive past Opete Creek. Watch out for kiwi as well.

Main predators are stoats, dogs and cats. Cats are an issue on Purerua Peninsula and Greg urges people to keep their cats and dogs properly under control and to have them neutered or spayed to prevent uncontrolled breeding and transfer to the feral population.

This first release on Purerua is a partnership between Banrock Station Wines, Brown Teal Recovery Group, Ducks Unlimited, Ngati Torehina, Ngati Wai, Mountain Landing Company, Northland Regional Council, NZ Kiwi Foundation, and the captive breeders of brown teal.

This release of pateke is only possible because of the extensive integrated pest management since 2002 undertaken on Purerua Peninsula by landowners and NZ Kiwi Foundation with assistance since 2007 of the Northland Regional Council. Greg Blunden, NZ Kiwi Foundation



Beautiful bird: Australasian bittern in flight.

Photos: Department of Conservation.

4. Identify sites for large scale habitat restoration on land managed by the Regional Council and DOC, prepare restoration plans and promote their implementation.
 5. Encourage and assist landowners and Iwi, to protect and restore habitat for bittern on private land which supports the majority of the regions bittern population.
 6. Support mammalian predator control at known key breeding sites.
 7. Eliminate barriers to native fish movement to and from major habitats.
 8. Reduce human disturbance at key sites over the breeding season (August-January).
 9. Minimise accidental deaths.
 10. Enable people to be aware of the plight of bittern and wetlands and inspire them to assist their recovery.
 11. Support national research/monitoring initiatives where possible.
- This article is based on the report *Australasian Bittern in Hawke's Bay – A Plan for Recovery* prepared by John Cheyne in 2011. A copy of the report is available by emailing johncheyne@xtra.co.nz
John Cheyne

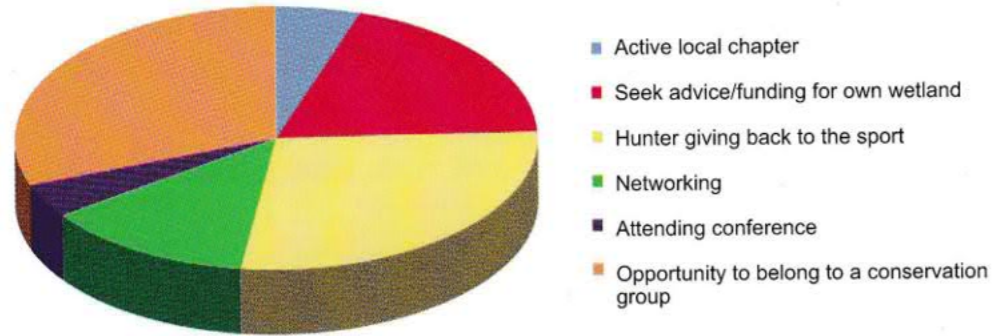


On the brink: Small and brown, but very precious.

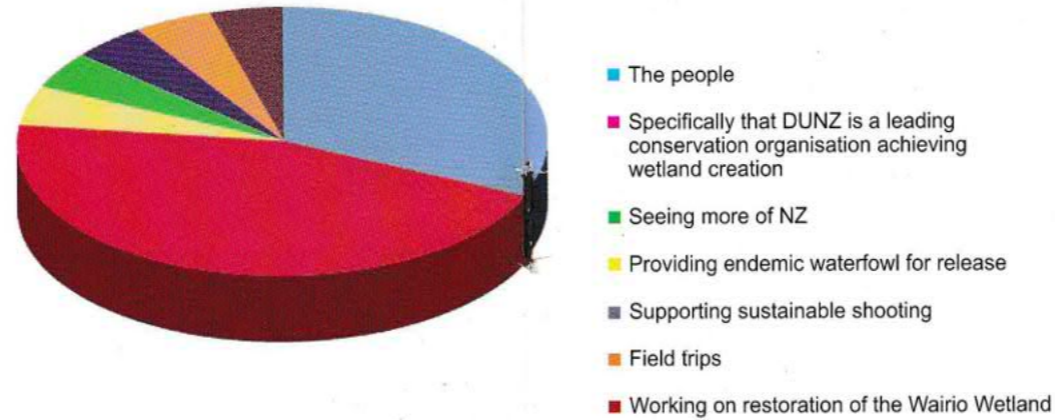
Photo: Dr Greg Blunden.

Preliminary peek at some Survey results

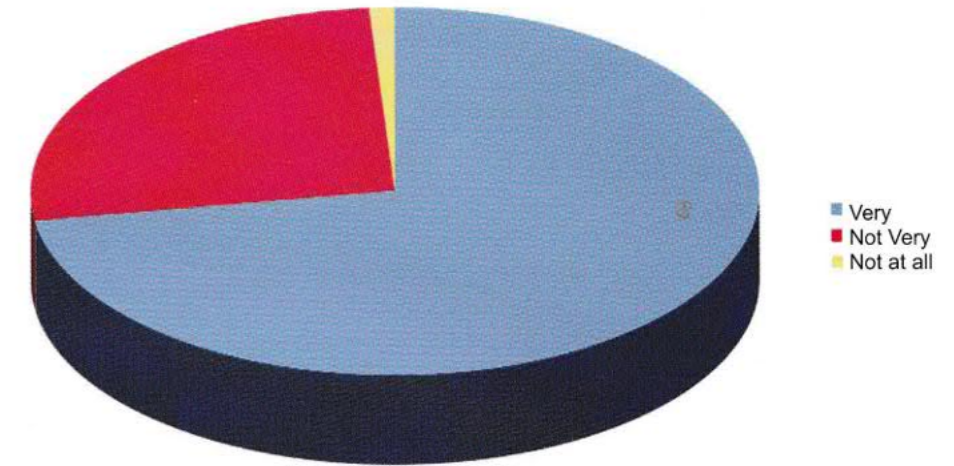
Primary reason for joining DUNZ



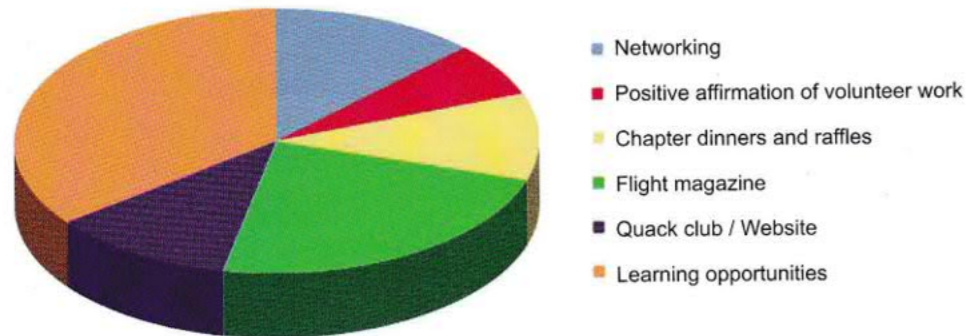
What else motivates DUNZ membership



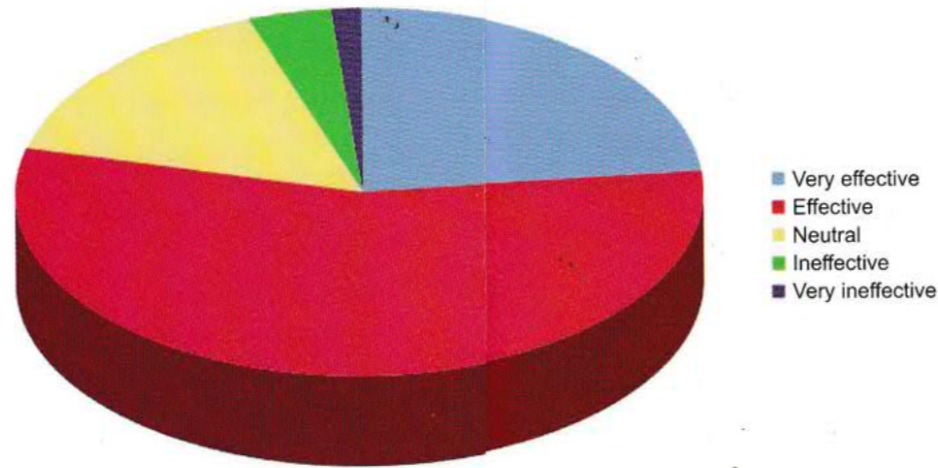
Importance of Flight Magazine



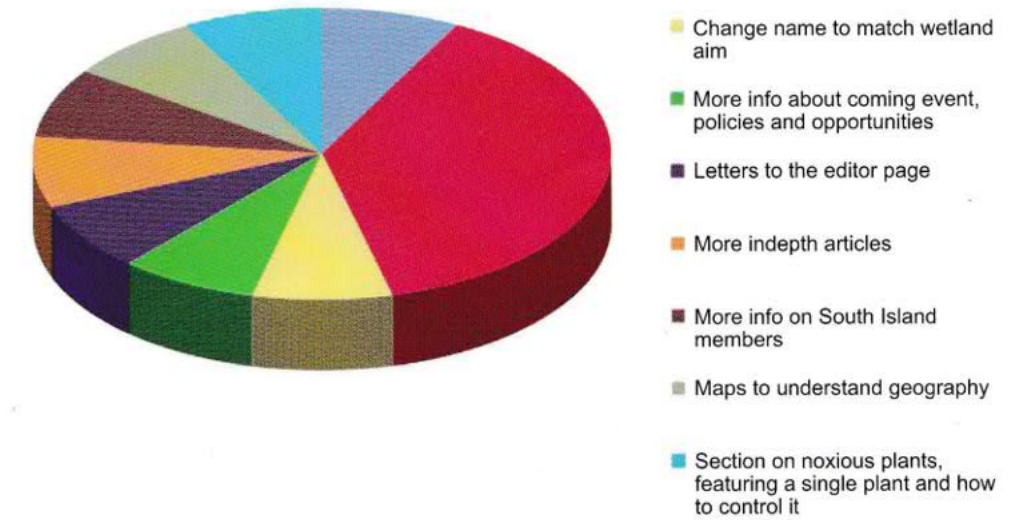
What is most rewarding about the DUNZ membership



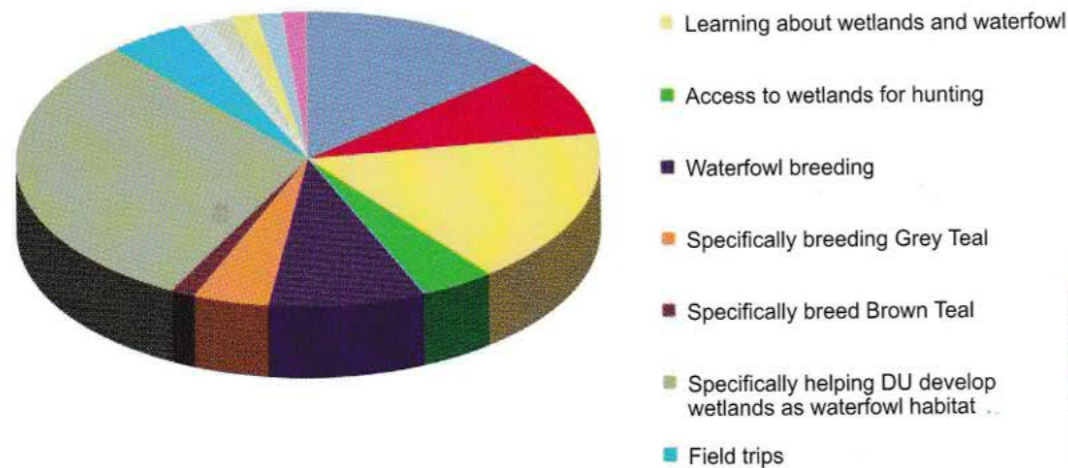
Effectiveness of DUNZ in fulfilling membership needs



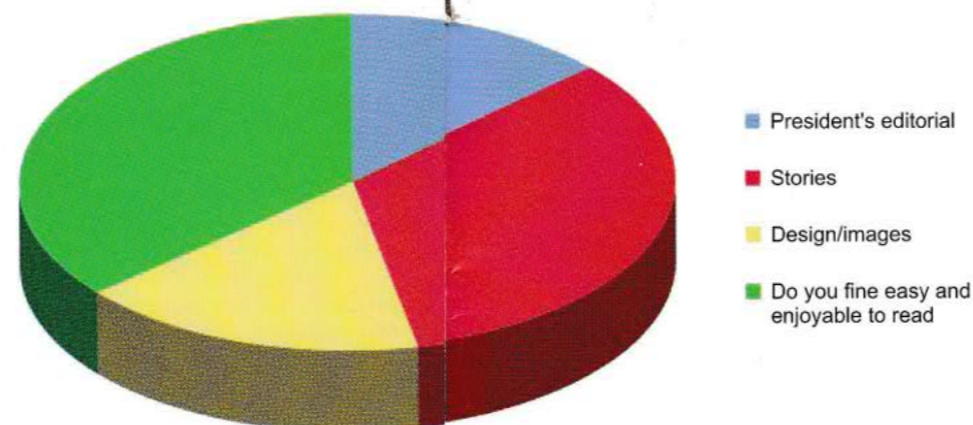
Improvement to Flight Magazine



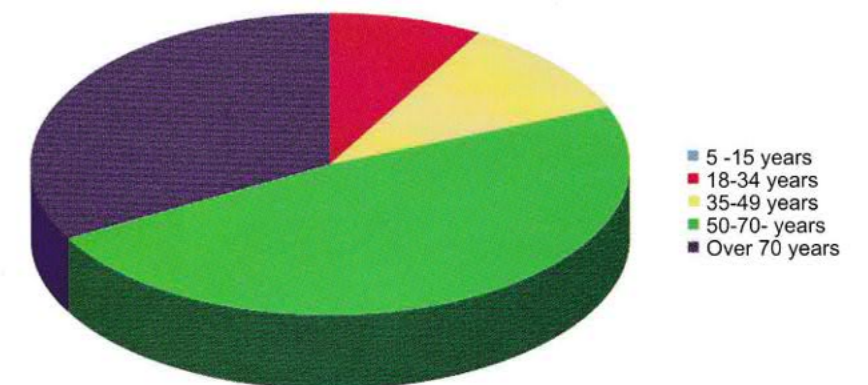
What motivates membership of DUNZ



What do members like about Flight Magazine



Age of members



Growth continues at Tawharanui

Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society Incorporated (TOSSI) has come a long way since it was formed nearly 10 years ago, thanks to the hard work of members and volunteers. The area east of Warkworth has become a natural habitat that is enjoyed by all – especially the birds. Due to recent planting days the twin hills are starting to look well covered.

This season, during five planting days, plantings exceeded 17,500 – a wonderful effort with optimum weather for plant survival. The Nursery Team are delighted. Over 90 volunteers arrived for action on the July 3 planting day – and it was good to see children getting involved. Everyone had a great time, in spite of the chilly wind. During TOSSI's Sunday in the Park volunteers put in 1500 plants, including larger native species. The last planting day at Twin Hills was August 7; among 80

volunteers was a group of students from the Philippines.

The International Student Volunteers (ISV) are a great asset. The students love the Park and it is a great experience for them. Many ISV students stay at the Vol Hole, assisting Park Rangers during the week.

TOSSI committee member, Patte Williams said that May, June, July and August plantings will make a wonderful addition to the Park.

"Some of the children are looking forward to going there to see 'their plants' in the future. How exciting for them!"

Planting days wind up with sumptuous hot BBQ lunches, provided by the Auckland Regional Council. "It is always a wonderful way to end a great day, thanks to the cooking team, Elizabeth, Steve and helpers and the happy guys from Recreational Services," said Patte.

"Did you by chance see the two bulls looking over the fence at us, whilst we were eating our lunch? Bet they wished they could join us too!"

Boardwalk Project Manager, Roger Williams has been delighted with progress. The Lagoon Boardwalk and the Mangatawhiri Boardwalk are now complete. Thanks to significant savings in the budget, they were able to add short boardwalks which completed the Mangatawhiri Loop Track.

Towards the end of construction, the Tawharanui Working Group donned gunnies and visited the guys working on the boardwalks who were enjoying their time on the job. Two Paradise Ducks had taken up residence on a boardwalk and were not happy when the team visited.

An official opening of the boardwalks and the Mangatawhiri Loop Track is planned for November. Future TOSSI workdays in the Park will include restoration of the dunes. There's even a chance for a plunge into the ocean at Anchor Bay.

The Tawharanui Marine Reserve was opened in a formal ceremony on August 28. Marine biologist, Roger Grace has monitored the reserve over past years and has seen a tremendous growth in fish life there.

Birds – Kiwi are breeding! Even Marrison – the female with the injured leg – has found a mate!

Nine Pateke have been translocated to Tawharanui from Shakespear* Open Sanctuary, whilst the aerial brodifacoum application takes place there.

Thanks to the continued monitoring of seabirds by Chris Gaskin and James Ross, we now know more seabirds are visiting the Tokato Peninsula. Let's hope they stay and breed there!

Saddlebacks are coming to Tawharanui, and Patte said: "It would be wonderful to hear their calls and trills while we work on, or walk the tracks."

The cost of collection and dispersal of these creatures is always high, so anyone wishing to donate towards this cause is welcome to contact the TOSSI Committee:

TOSSI, PO Box 112, Matakana, 0948. Or Patte Williams, for TOSSI Committee, 09 425 6030, or 021 137 9035.

*Why is Shakespear Park spelt without an e, as in the bard? Because it is named after Anson Shakespear who sold the land to the Auckland Regional Council in 1967.



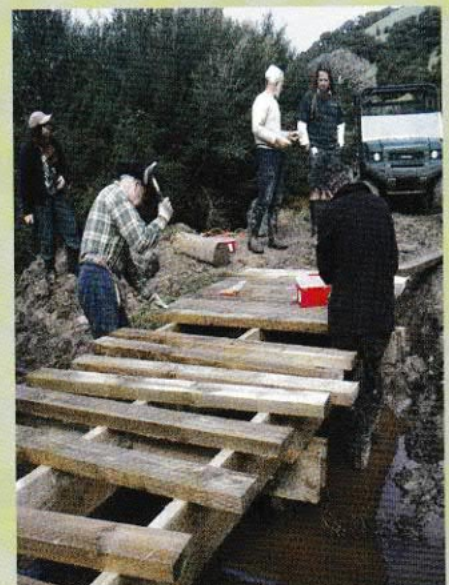
Satisfaction: Maggie enjoys her volunteering.



Gloves a must: Sue loves the planting days.



Ready to use: The Tawharanui Working Group visit and try the boardwalks. Photos: TOSSI.



All hands on deck: The boardwalks take shape.

Busy, busy at Wairio wetland

Recently over 25 supporters of the Wairio Wetland Restoration Project planted over 2000 sedges, flaxes, nurse trees and specimen trees.

Jim Law reminded the supporters of the vision to restore the wetland. Don Bell of the Greater Wellington Regional Council briefed the group on the preferred planting technique, and the teams heard from Bridget Johnson on her involvement with Wairio as a Masters student of biodiversity and restoration ecology.

Bridget's thesis is focused on restoration work at Wairio and will compare tree survival rates and costs related to different site preparation methods and subsequent maintenance treatments. "That's why we need the consistent planting technique, otherwise we introduce another random variable," said Bridget.

"The whole idea of the research programme is to introduce some scientific rigour to our restoration work," said Jim. "We all have our favourite ways of planting and caring for native trees but there is little, if any, science to back up what we do. Dr Hartley, Bridget's supervisor said: "We expect the results of Bridget's research and the results from future students working at Wairio will be applicable elsewhere around the Lake and at least in the wider Wairarapa."

The planting teams comprised students from the Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre, Ducks Unlimited, Forest & Bird and Rotary members, local iwi and both Department of Conservation and Greater Wellington Regional Council. They were joined by the "A" teams, environmentalists of the future from the Pirinoa, Kahutara and Martinborough Primary Schools.

"They love it and are proud of what they are doing. They also want to see further development of the wetland," said Steve Davis from Pirinoa.

By the end of the day over 2000 plants were in the ground. A further 600 flax/Toi Toi/Cabbage Trees at Stage 3 were also planted in August. Bridget and two colleagues from Victoria University also placed about 500 weed mats. That is probably two-thirds of the mats placed – the remaining plants are still under water and there are about 1500 mats to go. About 3500 trees in Stage 3 will have been planted this year.



Academic input: Dr Stephen Hartley and Bridget Johnson from Victoria University (Wellington).



Ag team: Dan Jenkins, a Tutor at Taratahi and a team of Taratahi students. Photos: Jim Law.

Rare white Pukeko

By David Bruce

A north Otago farming couple could not believe what they were seeing when four white pukekos emerged last spring among the hundreds born on their property. Highly unusual, two of the pukekos are virtually all white, while the other two have Dalmatian-like plumage.

The farm's owners, who did not want themselves or their property identified, to protect the pukekos, noticed them when they started to move around after hatching last spring.

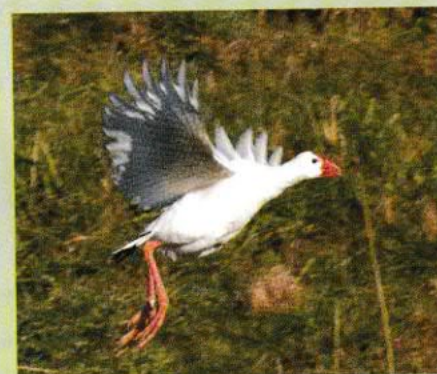
"We could not believe what we were seeing. "We'll do whatever we have to do to protect them," they said, fearing that if the birds'

location was known, they could be shot by hunters or for trophies. It is legal to shoot pukekos.

The couple are not sure if the white pukekos have come from the same clutch (nest) of eggs, because pukekos share raising chicks among the females in the family.

The white pukekos have been freely associating with their more familiar-looking relatives with their deep indigo plumage, white feathers under their tails, orange-red legs and scarlet bills.

Department of Conservation Otago conservancy acting area manager David Agnew, had not seen white pukekos, although he understood they did occur.



White flight: Pukeko can fly when need be:



Follow the leader: A standout pukeko, where does the white one hide?

Photos: Stephen Jaquiere, Illustrations Editor Otago Daily Times.

"You do get different colours with a lot of bird species and animals now and then, but I think it's reasonably rare with pukekos," he said.

He presumed it had something to do with the genetic make-up of the parents, resulting in a throwback.

North Otago ranger Kevin Pearce was hoping to get some feathers which could be DNA tested to learn more. While white pukekos had been recorded, he had not seen one in his 20 years with the department. Another North Otago farmer told the Otago Daily Times that white pukekos had been born at his farm in the previous spring.

Photos taken last year at Blue Duck Station at the start of turning drained swamp back into wetland. Three areas have been put back into wetland. Dan Steele said these have created new areas for birds while making the most of some marginal land. "It will be great to watch them develop and grow."



On the level: Neil Candy getting a level on a wetland.



What next: Richard Steele Retaruke Station, Jim Campbell and Neil Candy DU, deciding the next move.

Goings on at Blue Duck

Blue Duck Station continues to be a hive of activity. Dan Steele reports they have been busy with conservation projects.

Old One Eye the Whio who sadly died early this year (April Flight page 7) is missed, but Gobby her mate wasted no time and took up with a younger woman!?! Dan said that is fantastic for the Whio population DNA wise.

"We are really looking forward to this breeding season to see how the new pairing gets on. It was a bad season for all Whio in the area last year, so fingers crossed for this year.

"Tui and Kereru are starting to come back to the Kowhai which is always a good thing

especially when it flowers in the spring! We have also been seeing a lot of Falcon with an amazing swooping hunt being witnessed the other day, fantastic to watch."

Riparian fencing (river fencing) has also started on the New Farm and was expected to take a couple of months to complete. That is another project to the benefit of the local wildlife.

National Cycleway

Blue Duck Station is right in the middle section of the Ruapehu Mountain to the Sea National Cycleway and work has been moving ahead.

"It has been a flurry of activity involving gangs of men camping out in the bush and helicopters lifting massive

beams and ready-made bridges into place - awesome sight! It is nearly complete. When it is done you will be able to Jet boat down to the Maungapurua Landing and then mountain bike back to the Blue Duck Café and won't that coffee taste great or the beer even better?!"

A recent purchase is a bigger Jet boat that can take 11 adults plus the driver as well as 8/9 bikes - so a great day out for a group.

Award for Wario research student

The Golden Plover Wetland Research Award has been given to Victoria University student Bridget Johnson who has, and is helping at Wairio wetland carrying out research and helping with layout of new planting and of the species to be grown.

This Award, established in 2001 by Drs Tony Reiger and Steven Messerschmidt, in conjunction with the National Wetland Trust of New Zealand and the University of Waikato, is intended to support a student who is conducting original research into any aspect of the ecology of management of wetlands at Masters level.

Current donors are Dr Reiger and the National Wetland Trust. The Golden Plover is one of many migratory birds that make their way from Alaska to New Zealand. The award name symbolises this connection between the two countries. The key donor was originally from Alaska but now lives in New Zealand.

The Award rules say applicants must clearly demonstrate their research meets the majority of the following criteria:

Increase the appreciation of wetlands and their values by all New Zealanders; facilitates the enhancement and restoration of wetlands; increases the understanding of wetland processes by all New Zealanders; establishes good experimental design that will lead to an increase in scientific knowledge of an aspect of wetlands and improves communication about wetlands to key target groups (i.e. wetland landowners, policy makers, and councillors).

Bridget said winning this award brings special recognition to her Masters research and the continuing hard work of the Wairio Wetland Restoration Committee.

"Without them, my project would not happen. A condition of winning the award requires me to present my research to the National Wetland Trust. This is an exciting opportunity to meet and connect with other passionate wetland ecologists. As well as being a fortunate addition to my CV."

The award comes with a \$1000 monetary value.

More possum hunters

The Animal Health Board (AHB) has been building up its pool of contractors for ground control work contracts - almost 100 people responded earlier this year for possum/ferret ground control. Ground-based pest control methods like trapping, surveying and monitoring are part of the AHB's TBfree NZ programme, which aims to eradicate disease from wildlife like possums and ferrets over 2.5 million hectares.

It is a positive for birdlife as possums are known to eat eggs from the nests.

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Ducks: As well as the wild kind making their homes on our ponds, dams and lakes, there are also the domestic types. One of the most popular seems to be Pekin.

Daffy for ducks

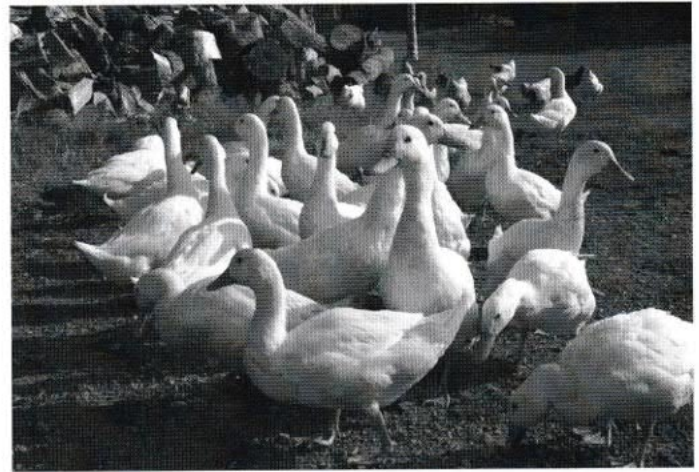
Docile, good eating, good layers, non-flyers and look cute too.

Liz Wright the author of *Keeping Ducks and Geese* say that Pekin ducks have supposedly been around since 2500BC in China. They were taken from China to the USA in 1873 and were such a success they become the principle table bird. They reached the UK about the same time, and had a similar reaction there.

It was discovered that they did not fatten in confinement. They do better if allowed to free range. They are high meat yielding and can produce between 70 – 100 eggs a year. Keepers in the USA say they expect up to 200 (Well they would...)

They are not good in muddy conditions, their open plumage gets dirty very quickly, and can be open to parasites. They can even be susceptible to fly strike. (bad enough having that in sheep). They can go broody and hatch eggs. Liz Wright warns those from commercial strains might not do so.

If you want to check out the myriad of other domestic ducks or



Too cute: These happy Pekins belong to Diny Dermer and have a large area to roam around, sharing it with quite a few hens.

Photo: Liz Brook

geese, and how to care for them, Liz's book is *Choosing and Keeping Ducks and Geese*, published by Hachette Livre UK, and sells in New Zealand for \$29.99.

Kokako breed in Fiordland

Fiordland Lobster Company are celebrating a conservation first with evidence that kokako have bred on Secretary Island in Doubtful Sound.

This is believed to be the first time in more than 30 years that kokako have bred in the South Island following the extinction of the South Island kokako. The company funded the transfer of 27 kokako from the North Island during 2008-2009, in a bid to re-establish kokako in Fiordland.

Company representative John Steffens accompanied Department of Conservation (DOC) staff to the island in March to check on the released birds, and a young bird was seen, confirming they are successfully breeding and raising chicks.

DOC ranger Megan Willans said: "This was an absolutely amazing sight - a wild Fiordland hatched kokako."

"By playing calls to the bird we were able to enjoy a really good look at it. Now we're excited to see how quickly these birds breed and expand across Secretary Island."

Kokako were once widespread across the forests of New Zealand, one subspecies in the north and another in the South Island. Unfortunately, they are easily killed by rats, possums and stoats.

The last confirmed South Island Kokako sighting was in 1967 and by the late 1980s there were as few as 350 pairs left in the North Island. In 2007 DOC sadly conceded the South Island kokako was extinct.

In the last 20 years North Island kokako have made a strong recovery. Pest control, transfers to secure offshore islands and the efforts of groups such as the Kaharoa Kokako Trust have meant there are now healthy populations in a number of northern forests.

"Returning kokako to southern forests will not only mean we get to hear their

enchanting calls, but like the kereru, they are important seed dispersers vital for the regeneration of our forests" said Ms Willans.

"This project stands out because it's one of the first times a surrogate species has been transferred specifically to replace a recently extinct species," said Ms Willans.

"Fiordland Lobster's commitment to the project was a bold move".

Kokako background

- Physical difference: the North Island bird has a blue wattle and the South Island bird had orange wattles.
- In 2008 10 kokako were taken from, Mapara near Te Kuiti. Transmitters were attached to the birds so DOC could monitor their initial survival to make certain there was suitable food and shelter. Results showed the Island provided these needs so in 2009 another 17 birds were translocated there.
- This transfer was expensive. Kokako were caught in high rig mist-nets in the forest canopy and held in make-shift aviaries. After 10 days they were taken in boxes via car, plane and finally helicopter to Secretary Island, over 10 hours with a number of feeding stops along the way.
- The Fiordland Lobster Company's sponsorship of island restoration projects is about commitment and passion for Fiordland and reflects the rising environmental awareness amongst Fiordland Fishermen. In 2005 the company funded an intensive trapping programme on Pigeon Island in Dusky Sound. By 2007 the stoats had been wiped out and the company helped reintroduce mohua and South Island robin to the island.

DOC watch

Interested in what the Department of Conservation is up to – Check out the DOC website: www.doc.govt.nz for plenty of information on conservation.

Volunteer opportunities exist all over the country including work on community conservation projects such as:

- Coromandel: Muriwai Walk site restoration.
- Nelson/Tasman: clean-up on Mt Misery near Lake Rotoroa.
- Nelson/Tasman: predator trapping around Fyfe and Sandstone rivers.
- Hawke's Bay: opportunities with the native wildlife project, Poutiri ao ō Tāne.
- Wellington: Rimutaka Forest Park hut wardens.

DOC wants to get more conservation happening across New Zealand and would like to hear from people who have helpful ideas.

There are many interesting spots for walking and sightseeing, right from Cape Reinga down through both North and South Islands, and including some of the smaller off shore islands as well. Auckland's Rangitoto Island for instance has plenty of walking tracks short, long or up to the summit.

Down south at Otago's Bushy Beach and Cape Wanbrow at Oamaru there is a chance to get a good look at the habitat of the Yellow-eyed penguins/hoiho with a special viewing hide from which to watch as they cross the beach.

For those interested in predator control there are images of rodent and stoat tracks and droppings to help identify if these pests are present at your place.

The Minister of Conservation recently gave notice to grant new concessions and these included the Taupahi Scenic Reserve and Tongariro River No 2 Scenic Reserve with NIWA monitoring infrastructure, and somewhere near the Waikato River the operation of a clay target shooting range with additional building and structures.



Special white kiwi is a girl -

the boys warm new eggs

Manukura, the first white kiwi chick hatched in captivity, is a girl. DNA tests conducted by Massey University scientists revealed Manukura's gender. Rangers caring for her at Pukaha Mt Bruce had convinced themselves she was a male.

Since she hatched on May 1, the 13th chick of the Wildlife Centre's record kiwi breeding season had been referred to as 'he'.

"I felt that Manukura was a male, we had come to think of her as a boy," said Department of Conservation captive breeding ranger Darren Page.

Darren said the only way to determine the sex of a juvenile kiwi is to remove a feather and extract DNA from the tip of the feather where it enters the skin.

Named by local iwi Rangitane o Wairarapa, Manukura means 'of chiefly status'. Rangitane spokesperson Jason Kerehi said there had been many chiefly women in Maori history and the name could be given to a male or a female.

Manukura remains in captivity in a fenced outdoor enclosure she shares with another female chick named Potiki, meaning youngest as she was the 14th chick hatched last season.

Manukura will remain in the enclosure until at least this month (October). Visitors can see her each Sunday at 2pm after she has been weighed.

The chicks are raised in captivity until they weigh 1.2kg, then are usually released into the wild.

While the young kiwi eat, sleep and grow in captivity, adult males are doing their job

of sitting on four new (out of season) kiwi eggs discovered by rangers in late June in the 940-hectare native forest.

Centre supervisor Kathy Houkamau said: "This is either exceptionally late in the kiwi breeding season, from September to May or exceptionally early.

"While we know the eggs are there, we don't yet know if they're fertile because we wait until they are 65 days old before bringing them in."

The eggs were discovered through 'egg timer' transmitters fitted to male kiwis that tell rangers how many days a male has been sitting on an egg. It's less intrusive than the old way of tracking males and testing eggs to determine their age and there is less risk of egg abandonment.

Kiwi eggs are collected at night when the male is out feeding. They are brought into the kiwi nursery where they are incubated and hatched at around 80-90 days.

Ms Houkamau said Manukura has raised awareness of work at the centre to restore the forest and reintroduce native species.

"We need all the support we can get to maintain our intensive pest control programme funded mostly by community efforts."

Further info: Kathy Houkamau, Pukaha Mt Bruce Field Centre Supervisor, Tel: 06 375 8756. Background information at www.pukaha.org.nz

Kiwi facts

- Young kiwi in captivity feed themselves on worms and insects and receive a top-up



Young star: Manukura as a youngster.

Photo: Pukaha Mt Bruce.

of ox heart, vegetables, bananas, cat biscuits and a special kiwi supplement. The special diet keeps the nutrient intake balanced and close to what they would eat in the wild.

- Female kiwi weigh up to 3kg and males up to 2kg. Females are bigger to accommodate their eggs which are huge in proportion to their body size. A kiwi egg takes up about 20 percent of the female's body size compared to 5 percent for a human baby.

- Manukura weighed 280g at hatch. Potiki was 340g at hatch.

- The hatch weight of a kiwi is usually 320g - 350g.

- It takes up to six months for a juvenile kiwi to reach the release weight of 1200g.

- Female kiwi are generally more stropy than males and harder to handle.

- Kiwi reach breeding age at 2 - 3 years and have a lifespan of approximately 30 years.

Floating wetland

A floating wetland built from 364,000 recycled plastic bottles and planted in native wetland species from around the Rotorua district has been set up in Lake Rotoehu. The roots of the plants reach into the water, removing nitrogen. Nitrogen is one of the key nutrients causing deteriorating lake water quality.

The wetland is secured in place by 10 screw anchors so it can be moved if there are changes to lake levels.

At 2800 square metres this is New Zealand's largest man-made floating wetland and has involved collaboration between the Rotorua District Council, Te Arawa Lakes Trust, Bay of Plenty Regional Council and local iwi.

The wetland was part funded by the

Government through its \$72.1 million funding deed to clean up four of Rotorua's most polluted lakes - Rotorua, Rotoehu, Rotoiti and Okareka, and through Bay of Plenty Regional Council rates.

Lake Rotoehu resident and chairman of the Lake Rotoehu Action Plan Management Committee, Jim Koller, said in the almost four years since work began he had seen vast improvements to water quality and the floating wetland would go a long way to improving the lake even more. "It's gone from a murky lake full of weed to being crystal clear out in the middle."

Bay of Plenty Regional Council lake operations manager Andy Bruere said the wetland, and other initiatives, such as a phosphorous locking programme at Waitangi Soda Springs and lake weed harvesting, would eventually see the lake return to a pristine condition.

Ghost net threat

GhostNets Australia (GNA) established in 2004 as an alliance of Indigenous communities seeking to find, remove and record these nets as well as to rehabilitate entangled wildlife. GNA have pulled together all of the ghost nets data collected by rangers between 2004 and 2009. The report highlights the serious ghost net problem facing north Australia's coastline as well as the hard work that rangers have been doing to combat it. Between 2004 and 2009, the rangers removed and recorded 6035 nets of varying sizes across approximately 1500km of coastline.

In New Zealand this year there has been news of whales tangled in nets, or even rope from buoys attached to crayfish pots. Dead birds are often found washed ashore entangled in net.

Oldest bird survives

Tsunami

A member of the Wairarapa branch of the Ornithological Society of NZ, Charlene James, came across the following item in the spring edition of "The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology".

It is the remarkable story of a Laysan Albatross on Midway Island in the northern Pacific, northwest of the Hawaiian Islands.

Apparently, this particular bird, named Wisdom, was first banded in 1956 on Midway Island as part of a research programme. At an estimated age of more than 60 years, she was seen with a chick in February, 2011. This made her the oldest wild bird known in the 90 year research programme, AND she was still breeding. According to chief of the US Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Centre Bruce Peterjohn, she has probably raised about 30 chicks in her life.

Apparently most albatross in the northwest Hawaiian chain seem to live 30-40 years.

Mr Peterjohn said Wisdom's story raises questions such as: Is this truly an exceptional age? Or if more birds get banded and are

followed, would this show a pattern of older birds.

The March 10 earthquake and Tsunami in Japan had a disastrous effect on Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge. An estimated 110,000 chicks and 2000 adult Laysan and Black-footed albatrosses were lost. Wisdom, nesting on higher ground, survived. She truly lives up to her name.

Big Bird cup

Despite its miniature size, the Big Bird Cup competition has loomed large in the minds of Wairarapa Ornithological Society members over the years. And, 2011 was no exception especially when both teams (Masterton and Greytown) knew their numbers were somewhat depleted.

Tenick Dennison promised a challenging quiz and was true to his word with questions divided into five categories: Nest identification, egg identification, knowledge of sea birds, knowledge of well known ornithologists in NZ and overseas, and a general.

Results were tied at the end of second round. That really put the pressure on. Nest and

egg identification were next. Both teams identified all the eggs correctly, but not the nests. At the end of four rounds the scores were still close.

The final round questions made team members probe their memory banks as they were given short clues about a particular person they had to name.

Greytown were finally declared the winners by a reasonable margin given that the previous positions had been close. Greytown last won the cup in 2007 so are pleased to hold it again.

New sponsor

Pukaha Mount Bruce is please that Genesis Energy is now a supporter of their forest restoration predator control programme. The company has agreed to join the existing sponsors for the next three years to support the predator control.

Chairman, Bob Francis said: "This new relationship is a bonus to the predator control work already underway at Pukaha. We are delighted to have Genesis Energy as a supporter."

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