

# Flight



ISSUE 152 - June 2012



**Inside:**  
**Special members**  
**Ruffit Lodge Shoot**  
**DU donates dog vests**  
**Southland tour**

## From the President

This is my first insight as President since being press ganged back into the position by Judge Smith.

There are some really positive things happening within the organisation at the moment. Presently we are in discussion with the National Wetland Trust, seeking methods where both our organisations can pool resources and knowledge. We want to retain the autonomy of both groups but are confident this collaboration will lead to greater opportunity in our fight to retain our precious wetlands.

Already there is the possibility of DU being able to get involved in a large Waikato wetland restoration through this association.

We will keep you informed on progress. Opening weekend has come and gone and I hope all you shooters enjoyed this annual event safely.

It is usually a weekend where good friends gather together for serious discussion and analysis of life. I am sure the nation's meat consumption and LPG use spikes on this weekend each year, but I doubt that it impacts the vegetable sales though... Frequently this fellowship has been happening for the same folk, in the same maimais for decades. This gives us a great historical base. From talking to other shooters it is apparent that throughout the North Island mallard numbers are still dropping.

Sites that have shot large numbers of mallards over the decades are returning very few birds from the opening. This is despite the wetland improvements that have been made. Obviously there are a number of places that still shoot extremely well but there are a number of hunters very concerned at the constant erosion of mallard numbers. We would be interested in how our shooting members got on, and any opinions you might have regarding the bird numbers.

These issues have a large bearing on our work. Don't be shy; a letter to the editor would be greatly appreciated.

Work at our Wairio project is carrying on at good pace. This season we have done extensive machine work and opened up approx two hectares of water, creating several new Islands. This has given the development a considerably larger area of margin for our dabbling species. On our planting days we have planted in the ground thousands of trees and wetland species. (see report page...)

A great thrill to us all was the arrival of four Royal Spoonbills; they are happily feeding the margins and seem to have taken up residence for the time being. This further reinforces our desire to move the restoration ahead as quickly as funding allows.

Memberships are out now, if you have yet to renew please do so promptly, every reminder letter that goes out utilises funding that could have gone into our wetlands.

*This message was a collaboration between President Ross Cottle and Director William Able.*



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**Cover Photo:** Mute swans – serene, graceful, and dignified – but not always. Read White Swan report page 3.

Photo: William Abel.

# 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  
Steinyng 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.

## **Remember the Love Birds? Flight April 2011. They get a mention in this report.**

### **White Swan report**

A reasonably successful year with the swan, thanks to the efforts of Ross Cottle and Jim Campbell.

They have collected \$4000 for four pair of swan but have distributed and swapped several others that a donation could not be asked for.

We need to mention the publicity DU received from the swan we placed on Centennial Lagoon in Palmerston North. This bird reached the local paper due to its unfortunate desire to assault kayakers, we fielded many email complaints about its undesirable disposition and finally had to remove it. The pair have gone to a good home. Supposedly any publicity is good publicity???

This year, 2012 is not looking good at all, no signets in Christchurch, we assume the constant earthquakes giving the birds all the trembling required for the year.

Even here our pair have not bred a signet, first time in four years.

There is a strong possibility that the swan will provide no income at all this year.

*William Abel*



### **Wetland care last year**

In 2011 DUNZ assisted financially with six new wetland projects.

We had been careful not to commit to every project that has come along because of the funds we have been spending on our possible new direction.

In the end though there is only one project that we have not been part of financially, and the conditions never became suitable for machinery anyway.

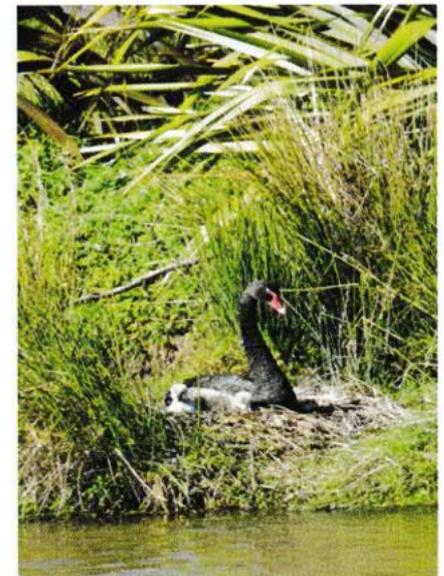
The six projects have been located as:

- one in Carterton.
- two in Masterton
- one in Marton
- two in Hawke's Bay.

We have advised on several others, and as usual fielded numerous phone calls and handed out lashings of good advice and enthusiasm.

The total funding spent or committed this year was \$9311, this does not include the money spent on the Bittern count in the Hawke's Bay which was another \$1000.

*Willan Abel and Neil Candy*



### **Wetland to visit**

Magical Places - 40 Wetlands to Visit in New Zealand is a recent brochure from DOC. Discover the full beauty of these places by exploring along the boardwalks and paths, or in some cases, by boat or kayak into bays and inlets. It can be downloaded from their web site though it is a large file and can take some time to download. Go to [Magical places - 40 wetlands to visit in New Zealand \(PDF, 4,933K\)](#)

**Happy with her family -**

Read more on page 13.

Photo: Julie Candy



## Director profile William Abel

Born and educated in the Hutt Valley I left school to pursue an apprenticeship in manufacturing jewellery. Next year I will have been in the trade for 40 years, self-employed for 34 of those. Although a stint of about seven years retailing in Wellington was an enjoyable experience, I found the commitment of fixed hours hard on my leisure time. Reverting to a simpler workshop situation in Johnsonville; I still operate in this manner but now - from home. Married to Jan (the new DU administration manager) for 28 years, we had a house full of daughters and now have three grandchildren. The outdoors has been an interest forever, not being a sports person I spent a large portion of my youth avoiding such onerous activities by hiding and hunting in the Orongorongo ranges and various other forest and national parks around our beautiful country; a particular favourite being Nelson Lakes. I have always enjoyed freshwater ecosystems, possibly influenced by growing up so close to the Hutt River.

I got into shot gunning after we purchased a beautiful German Shorthaired Pointer, she needed some serious exercise and a friend got me into pheasant shooting. I had no access to duck shooting in those days so formed a partnership with two friends and bought a property on the Para Para Road. (runs between Whanganui and Raetihi).

We owned that property for about six years, developed a small wetland there, built a palatial hut and covenanted with QEII to protect a lovely stand of native bush in the back gully. Unfortunately the waterfowl were always thin on the ground but we expended a great deal of time and lead on the peacock population that inhabited the valley, interspersed with pheasant and quail. Our respective families really enjoyed the property.

During these years we bred hundreds of pheasants for release, we also had Kakariki and parrot aviaries operating out of our Hutt Valley backyard.

I had been aware of DU through seeing the old concord logoed Flight magazines. I had read about the oddly named organisation and the night we signed up the Para Para property I joined DU. I immediately joined the Wellington chapter committee, those days under the strict and highly organised controls of Howard Egan, sometime later I joined the board and have never left.

Having belonged to various other conservation groups over the



**DU stalwart:** Will and Jan Able in Alaska, 2009.

years, I find the DU mix of practical no nonsense advice and activities, the physical achievements and the laughs we have enough to keep me interested and active. I have not found this mix with other groups.

Jan and I then bought Lake Huritini and set about transforming what was used simply as a water hole, into a worthwhile wetland. Twenty years, thousands of trees and a great deal of digger work have seen the wetland turn into a haven for all manner of bird species. Being so close to the coast means we enjoy a varied collection, Bittern, Royal Spoonbill, Crane, Kotuku are some of the rarer species we have visit.

Four years ago we moved here permanently, the development of the property has pretty much come to an end and we are now in maintenance mode.

I am a strong advocate of covenant protection, and we have one on the lake and wetland surrounds with DOC.

I have gained a great deal from my association with DU. Of concern to me, however, is the lack of our youth showing a desire to belong to organisations throughout the country. They do not seem to be willing to put in the time and effort required, so they and the country can benefit as we all have.

Organisations such as ours desperately need fresh input to thrive, and more importantly, to simply survive.

*William Abel*

## A 16 year gestation

New DU member Donald Robb has been busy at Raetihi creating a good sized pond.

Don said the pond was started in January 2011. It took eight days to reform the existing wall that had mostly eroded away due to years of neglect of original overflow outlet.

"An extra couple of days were needed to form the islands and the short peninsular.

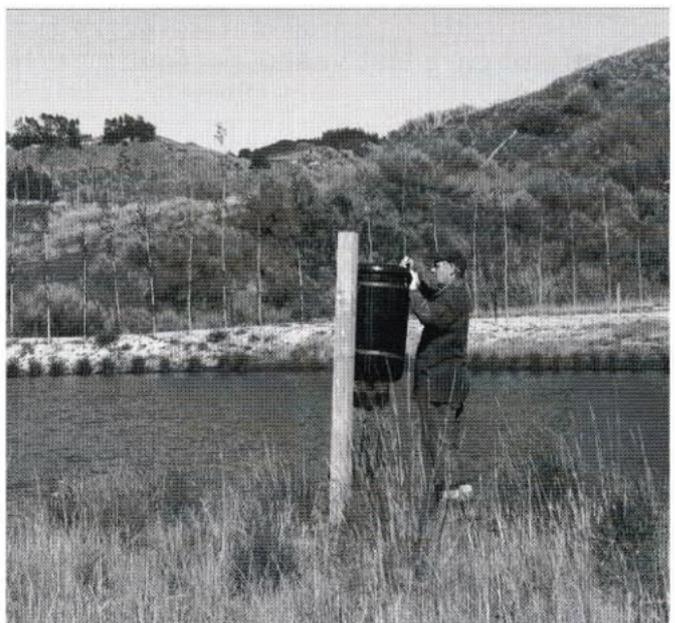
"I had wanted to reconstruct this pond for 16 years, ever since I bought the 100 hectare property off a retiring neighbour to our home farm.

"The problem was being able to have all my contracting machines at home all at one time and during a Christmas break.

"Well, 2011 was the year it finally happened. I had my two Komatsu tractors, 14 and 8 tonne machines and my 13 tonne Komatsu digger and Mack 4x4 on site ready to do the biz. Also helping was my good friend Graeme Purvis from Wanganui who drove the 8 tonne tractor and did the rolling and fill compaction in the bottom of it."

The water area is approx 1 hectare. Don and his friends have planted it extensively and the plants will start to have an impact on the landscape over the next few years.

It already has regular visits by dabchick, shags and all the normal duck species common to the region. The pond and planting is entirely fenced off from the stock and Don is planning to create some more areas around the main pond suitable for quiet breeding places.



**Finally - a pond:** Don checking his feeder beside the pond.

Photo: William Abel.

# Love of life keeps Nancy alert

Nancy Payne is DU's oldest member. But what is really important about Nancy is that she is an inspiration, full of energy - eager to continue to learn and to be active.

Born in Clevedon, the family moved to the Ness Valley, then she was at school at Waharoa. Each place was close to a river or stream with wetlands.

The Waitoa River was where in summer they spent a lot of time swimming and exploring the boggy areas. After heavy rain Nancy said stilts and sometimes ducks used to set up temporary residence in the flooded paddocks.

"I have therefore always been interested in the types of plants and animals found in these areas."

Nancy was an only child and her father often took her for walks in a small patch of native bush where there was a small stream.

"That gave me a love of nature and I learnt from him to distinguish between matai and totara."

Her own family consist of four sons and two daughters. The eldest son lives in France with his French wife. The other sons are spread around New Zealand between Taranaki and Central Otago. Her daughters live in Australia, Perth and the Gold Coast.

She has recently been to a grand daughter's wedding in Perth, and then to the Gold Coast to see her daughter graduate with a B.Com majoring in accountancy.

"We are late learners," she said. One son got a B.Com when he was 56.

Nancy got her own BA when she was 63, and last year she graduated from Elim Ministry College with a Certificate of



**Inspiring:** Nancy Payne at the Ohakune conference.

Photo: Liz Brook

Ministry Skills. She is continuing studies for an internship - though her age prevents her going into the ministry.

She has or has had, grandchildren (three have died), 12 boys and four girls, and has 10 great grandchildren, five boys and five girls.

Her early years provided the interest in wetlands and water birds.

"As no conservation group, seemed to do much about preserving wetlands, I was

interested in hearing from Horrie Sinclair what Ducks Unlimited were doing.

"When I first joined DU were more hunting orientated and so a lot of people were not interested, but I saw the necessity of reducing the numbers of mallards particularly, being a most precocious bird we would soon lose our native ducks if nothing was done, so I had no problem with shooting. Canadian Geese also need culling to keep numbers down.

"Over the years I have seen DU members becoming more conservation minded. I am also a member of Forest and Bird and support a number of other groups such as Northland's Puketi Forest Turst."

She is also a member of the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust in New Plymouth. Nancy's husband died just before their 40th wedding anniversary. He had been a photographer, professionally and as his hobby.

"We visited many places, lakes, rivers, wetlands, beaches and bush land. Now I live on 1/8th acre at Howick, Auckland's eastern suburbs; 26 years ago I thought I had moved to the country, now it is the city and growing all the time."

Other interests have been tramping, now walking, mainly in Tongariro National Park; reading, sewing, embroidery, various crafts, painting, gardening, and some travel when finances allow. Nancy walks to classes, walks to church, walks to the Womens' Group.

"I walk each day and that keeps me fit."

## Young advocate for DUNZ

***DUNZ is really fortunate to have members who want to be involved, who make sure they are taking care of wetlands, helping native ducks survive, or simply spreading the word about DU, what it is and what it does. Jennifer Pipes, our youngest member is doing her bit.***

Hi my name is Jennifer, I live in Auckland, and have just turned 13. Apparently the youngest member of DU.

I am a member because I believe we should be caring for our environment and I think our wetlands are a good place to start. My Mum worked for DU that is how I know about the organisation.

Already I've been to a couple of the conferences which I really enjoyed. We don't have a wetland ourselves as we live in the middle of the North Shore but when I grow up its certainly in my dream.

What I get out of being a member is the thought that I help to keep our wetlands and protect the ducks and our native environment.

I am in year 9 (form 4) at Carmel College, Milford - Catholic school for girls. I learn the trombone, am a member of the jazz and symphonic bands, a kiwi sister to one of our international students and represent my class on the school council.

Also I am a Girl Guide currently working on completing the most senior award this year "Guides Aotearoa" and I am one of only 15 chosen by NZGG to represent NZ at the Jamboree in Tasmania in January 2013. Dance is my main love. I learn both Jazz (AJDA) and Lyrical dance forms, this is my greatest enjoyment.

Recently at the school council meeting we were asked for organisations we could donate to through the fund raising we do from time to time. Of course I nominated DUNZ. None of the others had heard of DU so I went into a small spiel about the wonderful work you do as individuals on your own wetlands and the bigger projects, like down near Wellington.

Thought I'm not sure that anything will come of it this year, the idea has been planted and by the time I'm in year 13 (form 7) they will be sick of me mentioning it and give in!

*Jennifer Pipes*



**Happy as:** Jennifer Pipes at Ohakune Conference 2012.

Photo: Liz Brook

# Wetland restoration in Southland

Restoration of wetlands was a big attraction for the wetland and water bird enthusiasts who gathered in Southland in late March for the National Wetland Restoration Symposium.

Field days organised by Southland Ecological Restoration Network (SERN), took participants to four local wetlands to see restoration work in progress.

The Southern Wetland Trust - Big Lagoon at Taramoa west of Invercargill was the first stop. Tony Reiger has restored the Big Lagoon, once a large coastal lake, almost back to its original size after having been virtually drained for decades.

Tony's interest in waterfowl and wildlife has led to the formation of several other associated open water areas and he has seen an increase in numbers and species visiting the area. For those interested in hunting, he has one of the largest decoy collections in New Zealand.

At Manuka Mire Wetlands, Ron and Gay Munro have protected 64ha of peat bog on their sheep farm at Mokotua east of Invercargill. Using moats as the QEII covenanted wetland boundary has provided additional habitat for koura, eels and kokopu. The several dams created, have good numbers of waterfowl and a resident breeding population of the threatened giant kokopu.

Along the Armstrong Creek, a tributary of the Waituna Creek the main stream feeding the Waituna Lagoon, there have been riparian plantings undertaken under the Arawai Kakariki programme, as well as experimental work by an Otago University student on fish friendly drain management.

The following day the field trip was to Brian and Chris Rance's



**Fish first:** Gloria Reiger far left, explains about the fish pass for native fish to come and go to Big Lagoon. Ron Munro takes a closer look.

Southland Community Nursery and wetland restoration site. The group then visited Ian and Jenny Gamble's where visitors walked through an ecological sequence from Kahikatea forest to manuka shrub land to jointed rush on the estuary edge. The rush area has a resident population of fernbird and Ian has undertaken extensive pest control to ensure their wellbeing.

*Gay Munro*



**Pest control:** Ron Munro holds up a dead ferret watched by David McPherson.

Photos: Gay Munro



**Up and Down pond:** A haven for life under the water and on top.

## Kakapo setback

The death of a male kakapo on Whenua Hou/Codfish Island in January brought disappointment to the Kakapo Recovery team, as it faces a year without any breeding.

Waynebo was found dead by rangers on January 2 after his transmitter went into mortality mode. Discovered on Stewart Island in 1989 Waynebo was transferred to Whenua Hou/Codfish Island where he fathered several chicks. His age was unknown.

Kakapo Recovery programme manager Deidre Vercoe Scott said it was sad news for the programme, which had seen the population reduce by three to 128, since September.

Deidre said kakapo deaths were a reminder that, although Kakapo Recovery had achieved much during the past 21 years - increasing the total population from 49 to 131 last year - the kakapo was still critically endangered.

"Due to a poor rimu mast, we predict there will be no brood this year and only a low chance of any on Anchor Island. So the population count is likely to go only one way in 2012 - we hope it will remain as it is.

"The good news is more than half the kakapo population consists of young breeding age birds, so the recovery of kakapo is still in good shape."



# Pateke at Purerua



**Family of five:** Pateke and ducklings

Photo: Tim Robinson

Mountain Landing, a luxury housing development on Purerua Peninsular in the Bay of Islands, is now home to a number of Pateke.

Tim Robinson who works at Mountain Landing as a gardener, is a trustee of the NZ Kiwi Foundation; they carry out pest management on Purerua and initiated the Pateke translocation to that area. Twenty six birds were released there last September. Tim said initially the birds were supplemented with feed from stations located adjacent to the ponds/wetlands, but the birds have since been self sufficient.



**Top fashion:** Rua the pateke-indicating dog wearing the high-visibility vest sponsored by DU. Rua's handler is Pete Graham.

Photo Tiff Browne

## DUNZ sponsors High-Vis vests

Rua the pateke-indicating dog now sports a brand new high-visibility vest while working on pateke at Mimiwhangata and Whananaki in Northland.

Rua's job is to locate pateke for his handler Pete Graham and pateke ranger Tiff Browne, who are moving eggs from nests in the wild to captivity to rejuvenate the pateke captive population. The captive pateke are the source for the large number of birds being reintroduced to the wild at suitable sites around the country. Also, some pateke are tagged with GPS/GSM transmitters for a habitat research project undertaken by Deb Armstrong of Otago University. The Pateke Recovery Group would like to thank Ducks Unlimited for their support in raising the profile of pateke through the purchase of these vests, also used by Maddi and her handler Jo Sim on Great Barrier Island.

*Tiff Browne Pateke Ranger - Kaiârahi Tiaki Pâteke*

*DOC - Te Papa Atawhai*

"Ducklings were sighted with a monitored bird in November. The ducklings were very secretive and stayed in the raupo cover. Another two pair demonstrated possible signs of breeding – one pateke came racing out of cover to chase away mallards as they swam past. Another bird had a deceased signal on its transmitter - then live signal - possibly fault with transmitter or perhaps was incubating eggs."

In the first six months of monitoring three birds were lost due to cats.

"The birds released in the wetlands have rarely been seen but on our ponds they are often visible, mostly early morning or late afternoon. They are often active during rainy weather (hence the saying "nice weather for ducks" I suppose).

"A pateke with five ducklings (see photograph) has been sighted every day on one of our ponds since mid April. Surprisingly they are quite happy to be out in the open during the day, mostly early morning and late afternoon. It is fantastic to see the offspring from one of our first released birds."

Another 30 birds were due in late May. Tim said the timing of these ducklings is very reassuring.

"I think it is fair to say there will have been a few clutches since September last year – five eggs seems to be the average per clutch and with good productivity like that I expect some of the young can make it to breeding age."

The goal is to have a sustainable population of Pateke for the whole of Purerua peninsular. With the extensive pest management in place by NZ Kiwi Foundation the birds are well placed to make this happen.

## Success at Sweetwater

A Chatham Petrel chick hatched at the Sweetwater Conservation Covenant on Chatham Island was a significant step to recovery for one of the world's rarest seabirds.

Probably once abundant in the Chathams, habitat destruction by humans and the introduction of predators saw the birds restricted to one small island, Rangatira. Farming on the island forced the birds to be confined to small forest patches where they had to compete for burrows with the broad-billed prion.

By 1990 the Chatham petrel population was estimated to be around 1000 and vastly outnumbered by the prions.

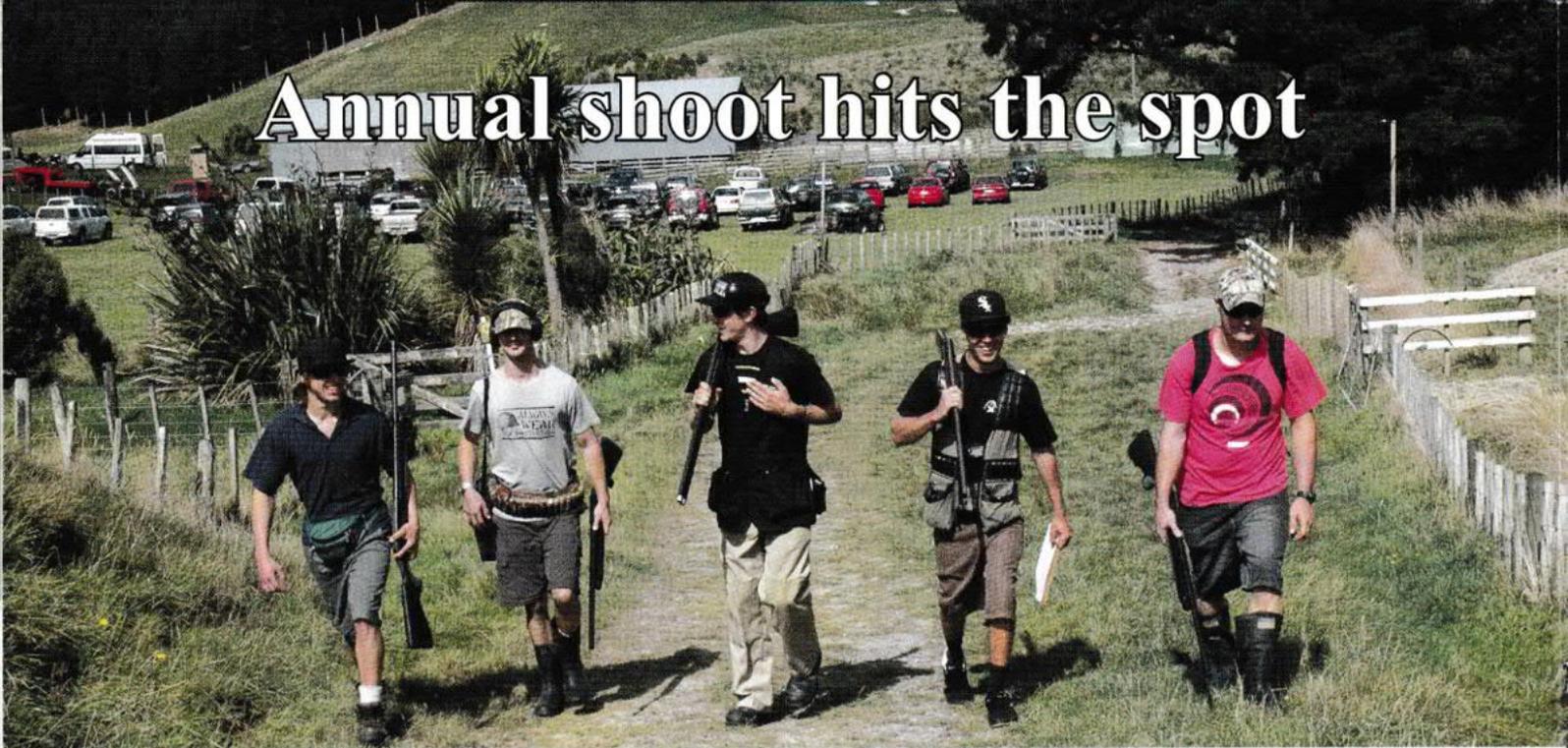
When Lincoln University researchers came up with a way of keeping the prions out of the burrows hatchings increased to around 90 percent. Eventually 200 chicks were translocated to predator-proof homes on Pitt Island and hand-fed until ready to fledge.

The success on Pitt Island led the team to start the return of the petrel to Sweetwater on Chatham Island in 2008. Another 200 chicks were moved over four years to nest boxes within a 4ha predator-proof enclosure built by the Chatham Island Taiko Trust.

It was autumn 2011 when a pair of petrels was seen in a burrow; the pair had returned to Sweetwater from South America and laid an egg in February. Trust members were delighted to find a chick during burrow checks in March. More hatchings have increased the number breeding at Sweetwater. Surely a sweet success.



# Annual shoot hits the spot



**Young guns:** From left, Neale Sinclair, Ian Westcott, Vaughan Danks, Brad Webb and Stephen Procter head out to shoot.

Photo: Liz Brook

The sun shone, the shooters arrived food was provided and everyone was in good spirits. Top score on the day was Adam Green with 93, followed by Vaughan Danks on 90. Winner of the gun was Pete McNeur. Neil and Julie Candy have held a clay bird shoot at their Ruffit Lodge near Woodville for the last five years and before that for four years on a farm at Himitangi Block Road. Before

that on their runoff block at Hickford Road Foxton from about 1994. "So we have been running/organising a shoot for a long time," said Neil. "Shooter numbers have stayed pretty static over that time, reaching a high of 180 to a low of 85. The last three years have been 107, 85 and this year 91."

Every year they get to see familiar faces from Ohakune to Wellington and all places in between, with one trusty soul from Auckland, (who managed to combine it with some deer hunting). And this Neil said is what makes these days so special. "A lot of work goes into setting up, taking registrations, cooking the BBQ, keeping the clay traps full, being nice to competitors, making sure they are having a great day then cleaning up at the end of the shoot. Luckily we have a great band of helpers who turn up each year to do this important process and I might add we have a lot of fun doing it!"

The big advancement has been the vast array of different auto-traps (rabbit, looper, springing teal, battue etc) and remote control release systems that allow traps to be placed in some great positions to make the shooting more realistic. These auto traps mean more people can actually shoot rather than having to operate the old manual traps. Neil said there has also been an increase of female and younger shooters having a go. "It is an exciting and fun sport, it is like all sports the more you do the better you get until the reflexes slow down. Or is it that the targets are getting smaller and faster?"



**Showing promise:** George Lynch, 13-years-old, was giving notice that he would be taking on the winners before too long.

Photos: Liz Brook



**Target duty:** Neil Candy was kept busy replacing targets in the traps.



**Top cooks:** Gayle Hopcroft and Marline Paddy kept hungry shooters feed.



**Prize Gun:** Pete McNeur left received the prize gun from Neil Candy.

Photo: Julie Candy.

# Conference extras

*Some good photos taken at the Ohakune conference arrived too late for the April issue of Flight. So here is small a selection.*



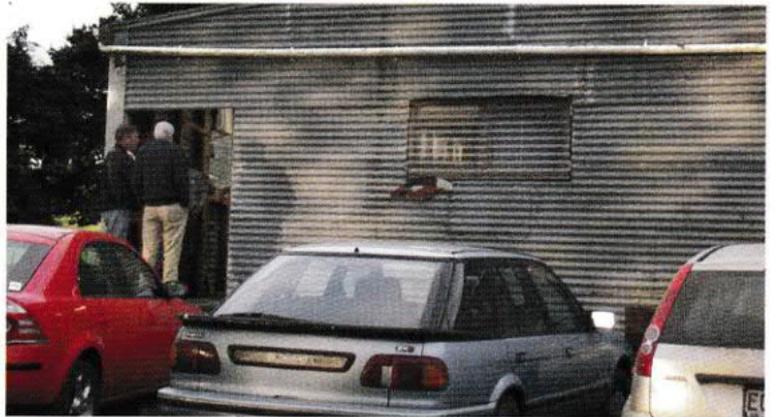
**Good grub:** Venison patties, and steaks for hungry guests.



**Friendly group:** A few drinks and lots of chat before dinner.



**Dinning hall:** Woolsheds have never looked this good.



**Rural hospitality:** Cars give the show away – party inside.

Photos: Jaeme Cooper.

**Left - Overview:** Farm view with a cloud shrouded Mt Ruapehu in the background.

**Bottom left - High shot:** Almost an aerial view of Preston Lake. At the top of the catchment two trees make the spot where a homestead once stood.

Photos: Ian Jensen.

## *Mangaone wetlands*



**Lakeside stroll:** Di Martin and Lorraine Jensen beside Preston Lake.

# Exciting events at Wairio

Royal Spoonbills at Wairio wetland restoration site in the southern Wairarapa lifted the spirits of volunteers. It is not unknown for Royal Spoonbills to be seen on Lake Wairarapa but this is the first time they have been spotted at Wairio. If we are attracting these birds then we are doing something right. Approximately \$7500 was spent on bulldozer and digger work on Stage 1 during April, creating two hectares of open water interspersed with islands on the

**Royal visit:** A group of Royal Spoonbills reflect improvements at Wairio Wetlands. Photo: Tony Silvery, DOC.

western edge of the wetland close to Lake Wairarapa. In early May 4000 trees, shrubs and flaxes were planted. We were helped by two van loads of students from the Taratahi Agricultural Training Farm. One load on the Tuesday put the plants onto the islands and another van load planted them on Thursday.

Help was also forthcoming from South Wairarapa Rotary as well as Forest and Bird and a small group from DU. Thanks go to all these people for their support. This year's work has transformed the western side Stage 1 and we will watch its progress with great interest.

*Ross Cottle*

## Pateke Report 2011-12

### Summary:

All release sights remain successful. The Arthur River/Fiordland site reported their first breeding successes. The evaluation of pateke preferences in diet and habitat has commenced. The Recovery Group is cohesive, focused and effective. The captive breeding programme has managed to keep pace with the demand for birds and the genetic diversity of captive managed stock has and is being addressed.

### Highlights from around the country

Twenty six birds released at Purerua for the first time in September 2011, with only three killed so far, and breeding confirmed. The release has been successful, no doubt due to the predator control programme.

There have been 219 birds released into Fiordland to date, with at least one more release planned. Survival has been great. A stoat plague has not affected the Arthur River site yet. The site is giving fantastic results in terms of survival post release and confirmed breeding this year. The area is so vast with really good habitats still available for more Pateke, this area could potentially hold very large numbers of birds. If realised, such success will fulfil the Recovery Group criteria of having a geographically independent large population of pateke. The Tuhua/Mayor Island population is now estimated to be in excess of 90 birds, well up from the projected 50 when the project started in 2006

A census of pateke in the Whangarei Area was carried out in February. DOC staff, local landowners, Ngati Wai representatives and volunteers surveyed the area from Whangaruru down to Ngunguru over three days. This time 391 pateke were counted, similar to last year's count of 408, although numbers at the traditionally larger flock sites were lower overall. On Great Barrier, DOC has made real efforts to ensure the lessee of the DOC estate, farms in a manner complementary to pateke. All sites report positively. I'm sure it is a combination of the predator controls established, the expertise and keenness of the people involved and the favourable weather. Further releases were planned for May at

Tutukaka and Purerua.

Site evaluations on the East Coast of the North Island and Matuku on the West Coast of Auckland are planned for this year

### Research

Debbie Armstrong is well into evaluation of the habitat and diet preferences of pateke. This project is the primary thrust of the Recovery Group. We are fairly sure her findings will raise more questions to be answered. This project has been reported in Flight.

### Sponsorship

We acknowledge and thank Banrock Station Wines for their significant contribution to the Arthur River, Tutukaka, and Purerua releases. They have been great partners to Ducks Unlimited and Operation Pateke.

### The recovery group

The Recovery Group is operating effectively despite the disruption and morale sapping of ongoing restructuring. It is a credit to the personal integrity of those actively engaged in saving pateke. The definitive Pateke Survival Guide was published in 2011 as was the first Pateke News for a long time. In 2011 DOC did an internal review of the Recovery Group resulting in a paring down of DOC and external people. Ducks Unlimited role was redefined as Community representative, a far wider responsibility than solely representing the views of DU. This is a fundamental shift from our historical role of captive coordinator, which we have not done since 2000-01, and bringing the views to the Recovery Group of practical wetlanders. As Recovery work is more in the hands of individuals and communities, I can understand the reasoning behind the redefining of our role. However it is something we should be sure we are comfortable with as it is a wide role to fulfil. The Recovery Group AGM was programmed for May.

### Captive management

Another group who remain under the radar, but who all success depends on, are the captive breeders. They truly progressed the work



Pateke at Tawharanui.

Photo: Alison Stains.

started by a few dedicated DU members many years ago. I quote Captive Co-ordinator Kevin Evans; "The breeders efforts are just amazing, for the group to be producing between 170 – 200 birds a year, disease screening, transporting birds to Peacock Springs and doing it all for the conservation of the species is very humbling. I cannot thank the breeders enough for their continued efforts throughout the year, it seems I always have a release to organise as preparations start at least three months out and I no sooner release them and the next release needs to be arranged. I also need to thank Anne and the team at Peacock Springs for their amazing work, we are so lucky to have the amount and quality of aviaries available to our programme, not to mention full time staff caring for the birds which I know at times can be a massive undertaking when you have over 100 birds to look after".

### Acknowledgements

It is a pleasure to represent Ducks Unlimited on the Recovery Group. I thank the Board for their continued interest and the Flight Editors, past and present, for their efforts to keep our membership well informed on Pateke matters. I acknowledge the contribution of Andrea Booth, Tiff Browne, and Kevin Evans to this report.

*Ossie Latham*

# Whio Report 2012

At the launch of the Genesis/DOC partnership on March 1 at Turangi, DOC director general, Al Morrison signed a document with Genesis Energy in an initiative to protect whio.

Dignitaries included Dame Jenny Shipley and Minister of Conservation Kate Wilkinson who joined supporters to launch 'Whio Forever', branding the campaign focus on marketing and education to promote whio recovery.

Kate Wilkinson acknowledged the work of communities and organisations invested in whio.

In addition to the 2.5 million contributed to the project, Genesis has committed further resources for marketing and has a website [www.whioforever.co.nz](http://whioforever.co.nz) to help build whios' profile, including Whio Forever TV advertisements.

This is a Whio-astic achievement, when we reflect on all our hard graft over the years to build our whio recovery programme. This new partnership will help achieve the goals of the Whio Recovery Plan and raise the profile of Whio as an icon of our waterways.

Please mention the Whio Forever brand through your work to support this initiative.

## Ups and downs of captive breeding

Peacock Springs had a busy Blue Duck season, with 27 chicks raised out of 33 fertile eggs incubated.

Orana had success from the two-year-old birds, with one clutch of seven, and another of five. Hokitika had two clutches, and there were three from Greymouth. The first clutch of five eggs were hatching during transport and one hatched when being taken out of the portable incubator on arrival at Peacock Springs.

A duckling from Hokitika managed to bend the flap of his bill under one side, into his mouth. After an unsuccessful attempt with super-glue and a wooden splint (which did not last the night), a plastic splint was stitched to the top of the upper bill, and it came right within a week.

Two from Greymouth died at four days old. They were sent to Massey for diagnosis, but because technicians were busy with the Rena oil spill, results were delayed before another four ducklings died a week later. Finally, Massy staff found signs the eggs contained E-Coli, and a lot of Coccidia was found.

We still do not know how four-day-old chicks could contract this much Coccidia to cause death. The three remaining ducks were treated and survived.

## Esplanade Aviary Palmerston North

Our young pair laid for the first time, but in two nesting sites with three



Whio

Photo: Kerry Oates.

eggs each, only one egg was fertile. Hope for better luck next year.

On December 8, a clutch of four eggs came from Egmont National Park and all hatched December 30. They were sent to Peacock Springs where they were hardened up for release.

Nine Whio were released on to Egmont National Park.

Mt Bruce received a clutch of six eggs from a wild nest, laid by the Myers pair on September 19 (2011), on the Manganui-a-te-ao River, and successfully hatched October 8-10. These birds will stay as part of the captive breeding programme.

On October 19, 2011 a clutch of seven eggs arrived from a Tongariro River nest. One egg was too damaged and discarded. When candled, the six eggs showed no signs of development. Thirty days into incubation, all six were viable, and the first signs of hatching were visible in three eggs. One duckling hatched on November 23, and looked healthy. Two hatched on November 25, but both died from yolk sac retention and associated problems. The other three failed to hatch.

Rather than hand rear the remaining duckling by itself at Pukaha Mount Bruce, it was sent to Peacock Springs, where ducklings of the same age were being reared.

The duckling settled in well.

*Peter Russell DU Blue Duck Recovery Group and Coordinator and Andrew Glaser DOC Recovery Group Leader*

## The joys of volunteering



**Wet work:** The diggers did their work and there were plenty of new islands to be planted with the 4000 new shrubs, trees and flaxes.



**Mud fun:** Good for the complexion so they say... Volunteers get stuck into the dirty work. (story page 10).

Photos: Ross Cottle.



Mallard duck and ducklings, the first hatched appeared on March 16, at least a month early in Ogmore village, in the Vale of Glamorgan in Wales.

Basil George, a life member of DUNZ, sent this picture. He said these are reared, like all those to follow, in the wild.

"We get some problems with Herons and Herring Gulls but if the ducklings get over the first week to 10 days they seem to survive.

"We had a pair of Canada Geese set up house on the island, but we switched the fountain on one morning and haven't seen them since!

However, there is a flock of around 100 Canada Geese on the mudflats at Ogmore, so that pair might yet return, who knows?"

Basil said he knows the term "wetlands" is used in New Zealand but over in Wales they refer to ponds, lakes or moors.



# Half a world away

Early birds: A Welsh Mallard and her early ducklings.

Photo: Basil George.

"I live in an area where we have large moors leading down to the sea where the rivers Ogmore and Ewenny enter the Bristol Channel. Water fowl of all descriptions are plentiful. One of the local estates covering some 2000 acres (900ha) run a game and

duck shoot. They rear well over 1000 ducks (Mallard) and around 2000 pheasants for the season's shooting from November to February."



## White kiwi No 2

Mauriora, pictured at just one month old in January, was the second white kiwi chick hatched at Pukaha Mt Bruce. In April it was confirmed a male and was doing well in the outdoor enclosure, the DOC rangers say he is the stroppiest chick they have ever handled.

Manukura, the older female is reportedly "proud" of her younger brother. She turned 1 on May 1 and was one of 14 kiwi bred at Pukaha last year.

Photo: Pukaha Mt Bruce.

## Catch the view



Tossi Hautura



Tossi planting.  
Photos: David Stone.

TOSSI volunteers had a successful day planting the 2000 native seedlings at Tawharanui on May 6. Hauturu (Little Barrier Is.) is in the background. As usual a barbeque lunch was put on after the planting.

Secretary David Stone said it was a great day. Over 100 people were there and were extremely busy.

Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society inc (TOSSI)

*A seemingly simple idea led to trials, tribulations and many adventures before DVD "Waterfowl and Wetlands, a New Zealand Odyssey", was complete. This DVD contains background and information any water bird lover should know.*

## Determination and stamina needed for waterfowl DVD

Flood, fire, loss of gear and even lack of finance could not stop Ducks Unlimited member Chris Thomas from completing a DVD that fills in the gaps for water fowl enthusiasts

A labour of love and perseverance started in 1998 when Chris became aware he really didn't know too much about the ducks he hunted. It was quite likely other duck hunters didn't know of the interesting aspects and backgrounds of their quarry.

Video identification of the various water birds led on to more detail, including the wetlands they inhabit. Chris was no novice at film making. His work for various scientific organisations had already seen him involved with production of documentaries on science and wildlife subjects.

With some regrets Chris sold his glider to help finance the venture.

A film of the film-making might have been a best seller, had another cameraman been around. The camera hide was lost in a wetland flood, precious footage was spoiled when Chris's van hit a hidden drain and the back flew off the 16mm camera exposing 400 foot of irreplaceable film.

At times sound recordings were interrupted by the starting of a chainsaw or a farm bike. But even more dramatic was an expedition to the Auckland Islands when the huts with all the camera equipment and field gear were totally destroyed by fire. Chris was left with nothing except the overalls he was wearing and a pair of gumboots.

Fortunately a vessel bringing the relieving party to the island was close by and Chris



**Enthusiast:** Chris Thomas talking with Nancy Payne at this year's conference.

Photo: Liz Brook

was taken away to Bluff. There was a long delay before he was able to replace the gear and continue filming.

Approaches to various organisations for funding came to nothing, then DU stepped up and filming continued. Later he also received funding from other Trusts.

The adventures resumed. The truck got stuck in the braided rivers in the McKenzie Country, he was marooned over a high tide

at Farewell Spit, and finally the last phase was delayed for a year as all the technical experts were involved completing the final episode of Lord of the Rings.

"Why they gave priority to that production I cannot think!" said producer, director, cameraman Chris.

If you want the definitive DVD on waterfowl and wetlands, all your questions answered, see the advert on page 14.

## Cygnets arrive early – or is that late?

During the clay target shoot at Ruffit Lodge on April 1, a black swan was sitting on eggs on an island in the lake very near to where shooters and helpers were gathering for food, catch-ups, and to buy ammunition. The swan was quite indignant about all the activity.

However Julie Candy reports the swans settled down and on April 24 the cygnets hatched.

"The swans brought the cygnets to meet us. As you can see there are four cygnets, and we look forward to seeing them grow. So they did survive the clay target shoot!" said Julie.



**Beauty afloat:** Black swan family. Photo: Julie Candy

# Waterfowl and Wetlands

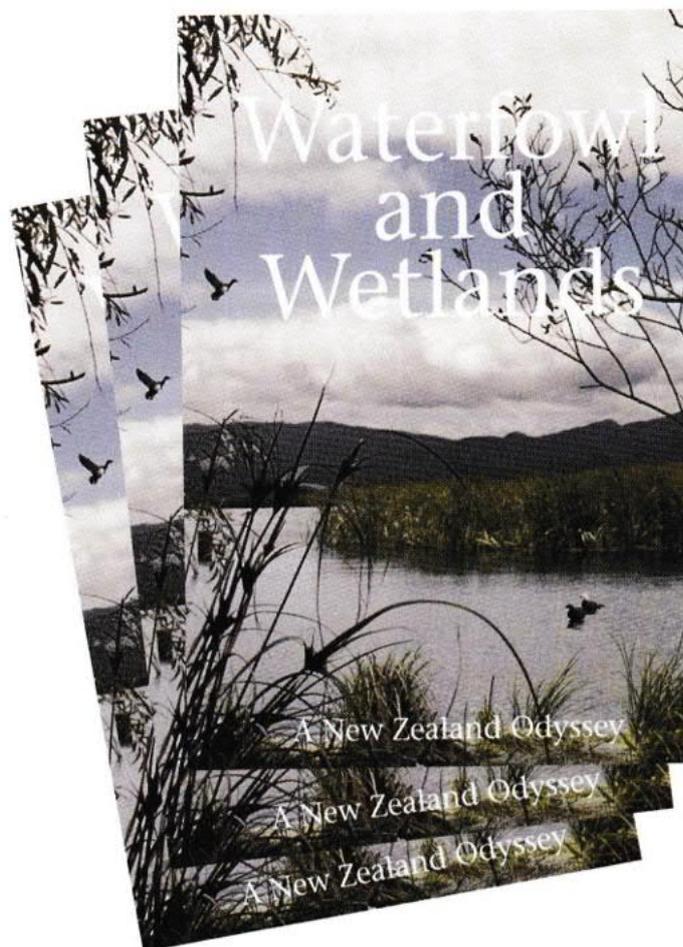
## A New Zealand Odyssey

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

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

There is information on the various types of wetland and their management, waterfowl predators, the conservation value of hunters and also the Ramsar sites of ecological importance.

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# Natives find refuge on Motutapu Island

Two native freshwater species with declining populations have been released on pest free Motutapu Island.

Redfin bullies - New Zealand's most colourful native fish - and koura or native crayfish were released into Home Bay Stream on Motutapu Island, by the Department of Conservation (DOC) with support from the Motutapu Restoration Trust, Ngai Tai and the Mahurangi Technical Institute.

This is part of a programme to move at risk native wildlife onto Motutapu and neighbouring Rangitoto Island after eradicating animal pests including rats, stoats and possums from the islands.

"It's great to see two native fish whose numbers are falling joining the two species of threatened birds we released on Motutapu," said DOC ranger Callum Bourke.

The birds, takahē and tīeke, or saddleback, were released on Motutapu in August last year.

"Nationally koura and red fin bully populations are declining due to habitat loss, loss of water quality and other factors," said Callum.

"Volunteers from the Motutapu Restoration

Trust have done a great job restoring the native bush providing essential shade and cover for the koura and redfin bullies."

Callum believes it's the first time there's been a translocation of redfin bullies in the wild. "So it will be exciting to see if they'll establish a self-sustaining population on Motutapu".

Some of the koura and redfin bullies released were rescued from a section of stream that was removed to make way for a large pipeline.

A total of 120 koura and 120 redfin bullies have been released and DOC hope to release more later this year.

There are four other species of freshwater fish on Motutapu - long fin and short fin eels and two native whitebait species, inanga and banded kōkopu.

## Koura

Koura are native freshwater crayfish that live in streams, ponds, lakes and swamps. They are scavengers that eat leaves and small insects that float by or settle on the bottom of a stream. They also filter fine sediments improving conditions for other organisms.



**Endangered:** Freshwater crayfish Koura.

Photo: Nick Hirst.

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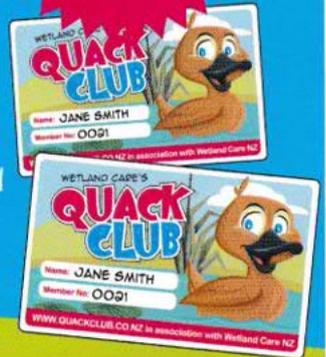
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# QUACK CLUB

FEATURING THE  
**GREY TEAL (TETE)**

This issue is dedicated to the Grey Teal, one of New Zealand's smallest ducks!



GREY TEAL

## The Tiny TēTē!

The Grey Teal or TeTe is a dabbling duck. It is a very friendly duck, liking the company of its own kind and gathering in flocks of 10-50 on average.

### What do they look like?

The Grey Teal is a mottled grey-brown duck with prominent white bands and green flashes on its wings. The Grey Teal has a blue-grey bill and red eyes. It also can be identified by a triangle of white under its wings when in flight.

Because the male and female Grey Teal are the same colour they are hard to tell apart. Young Grey teal are paler than adults, especially on the head. Grey Teal can be distinguished from Grey Ducks by their dark head, pale cheeks and smaller size. The Grey Teal is a small duck.

The Grey Teal can also move in a very 'clock-work-toy' fashion making it very distinctive and entertaining to watch.

### Lots of noise

This is a vocal duck, especially at night. The male gives a soft preep, and the female has a loud quack. When in flocks there is a constant chatter.

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# Teal wordfind

CAN YOU FIND THE 17 WORDS HIDDEN IN THE GRID BELOW?

H	A	F	T	S	A	F	U	D	A
P	F	L	E	D	G	E	C	N	U
L	W	I	N	G	S	A	N	A	S
M	T	H	L	M	J	H	O	L	T
A	L	T	L	O	N	E	M	A	R
G	A	Q	A	U	D	E	R	I	A
E	N	E	M	L	E	S	I	C	E
B	D	I	S	N	E	A	N	T	I
L	D	A	B	B	E	T	I	N	G
L	T	L	A	E	T	Y	E	R	G

- Wings
- Feathers
- Flight
- Distance
- New Zealand
- Fledge
- Moult
- Plumage
- Dabbling
- Nomadic
- Grey Teal
- Australia
- Wetlands
- Fast
- Small
- Nesting
- Bill



I AM OFF TO NEW ZEALAND WHERE THE GRASS IS GREENER!



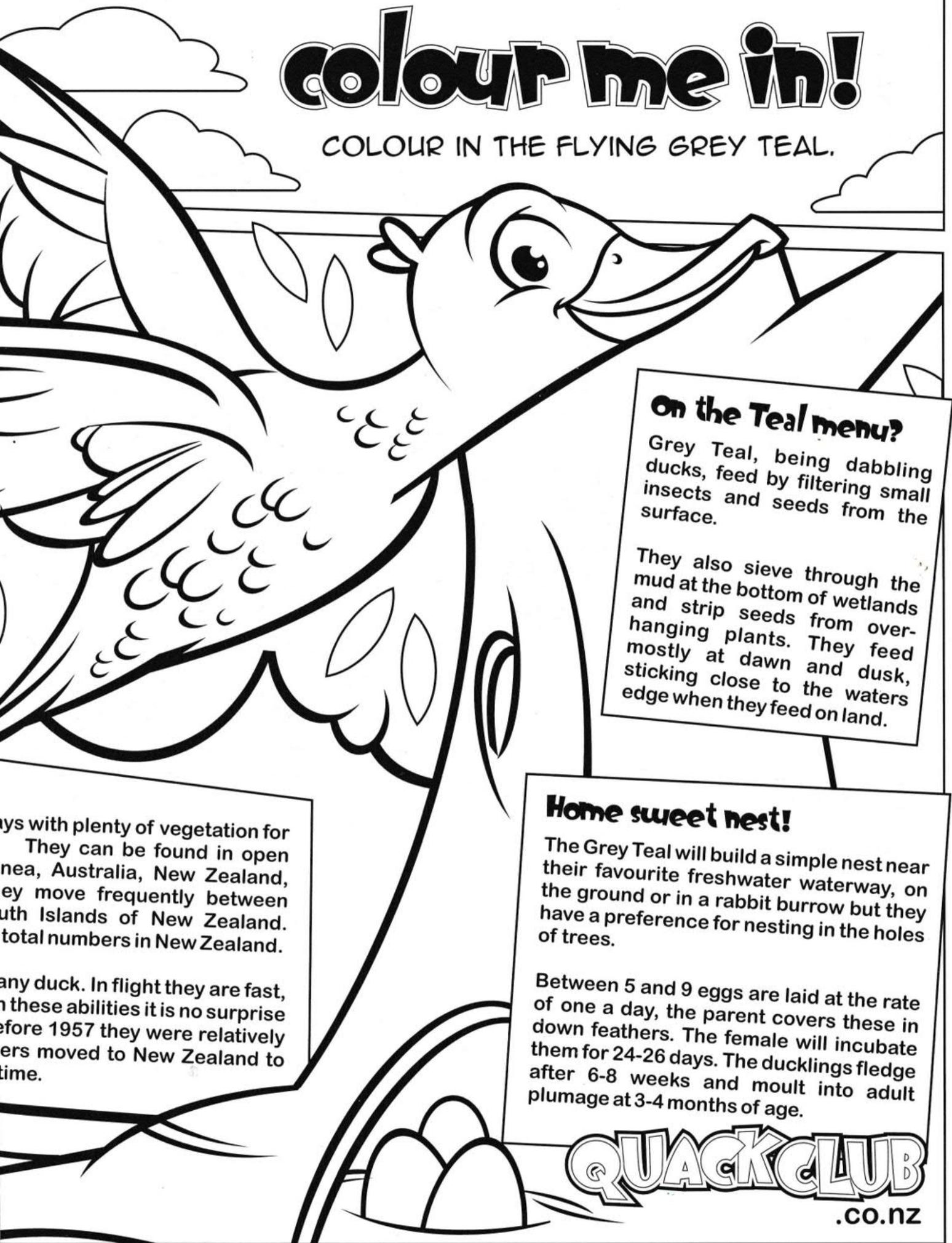
## Where do they live?

The Grey Teal prefers fresh water waterways for shelter rather than salt water estuaries. They live in wetlands in such countries as New Guinea, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. They live in wetlands throughout the North and South Islands. Because of this it makes it hard to estimate their population.

The Grey Teal has the fastest wing beat of any duck. They are agile and are able to fly long distances. With their long legs they are well known for being nomadic. They are rare in New Zealand but then large numbers migrate to avoid the dry conditions in Australia at that time.

# colour me in!

COLOUR IN THE FLYING GREY TEAL.



## on the Teal menu?

Grey Teal, being dabbling ducks, feed by filtering small insects and seeds from the surface.

They also sieve through the mud at the bottom of wetlands and strip seeds from overhanging plants. They feed mostly at dawn and dusk, sticking close to the waters edge when they feed on land.

## Home sweet nest!

The Grey Teal will build a simple nest near their favourite freshwater waterway, on the ground or in a rabbit burrow but they have a preference for nesting in the holes of trees.

Between 5 and 9 eggs are laid at the rate of one a day, the parent covers these in down feathers. The female will incubate them for 24-26 days. The ducklings fledge after 6-8 weeks and moult into adult plumage at 3-4 months of age.

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ays with plenty of vegetation for  
They can be found in open  
nea, Australia, New Zealand,  
ey move frequently between  
uth Islands of New Zealand.  
total numbers in New Zealand.

any duck. In flight they are fast,  
n these abilities it is no surprise  
efore 1957 they were relatively  
ers moved to New Zealand to  
time.

Because we have talked about what a good flyer the Grey Teal is I thought we would take a little look at flight and aerofoils.

# AEROFOIL

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

All bird's wings are thicker at the front than at the back, just like an aeroplanes wings. This means that as they fly the air that goes over the top of the wings has to move faster than the air underneath, this creates lift and the wing is pushed upward. This process is created by an aerofoil.

### Science Experiment:

To see an aerofoil in practice, hold a piece of paper in your hand, let it droop over your fingers, then blow along the top of it. It should flutter upwards!



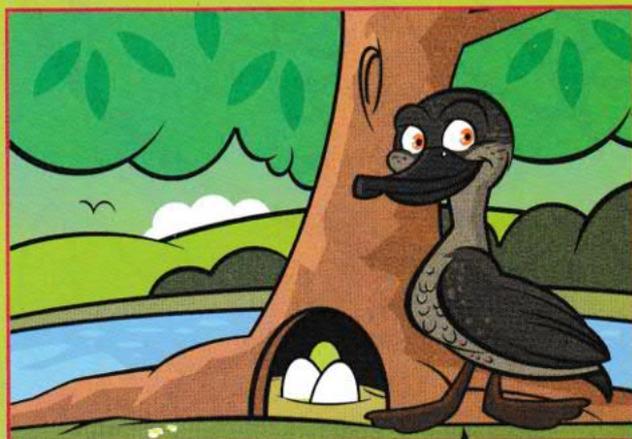
AEROFOIL

### IN THE NEXT ISSUE

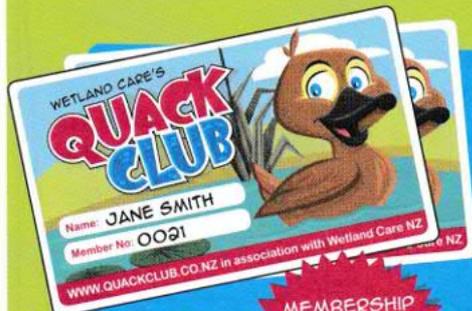
In the next issue we'll feature the cheeky & colourful Pukeko.  
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# SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

CAN YOU FIND 10 DIFFERENCES IN THE TWO PICTURES OF OUR LITTLE GREY TEAL BELOW?



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