

Flight

ISSUE 161

October 2014



**AGM/Conference
roundup**

More pateke matters

Trapping pests



From the President

Another excellent AGM and Conference was held at Martinborough. Great venue, organisation and attendance. A big thank you to everyone for making it a success.

The field trip showcased Wairio wetland which enabled members to see where we have directed significant effort over recent years supported by numerous sponsors.

At the Sunday morning session we received excellent updates on the Pateke programme by Mike Camm and the Whio programme from Peter Russell.

DU are supporting bittern research by approving funding of \$2500 for Emma Williams, Massey University student doing doctorate studies at Lake Whatuma, Hawke's Bay, to purchase radio tracking transmitters. Emma will be providing regular updates to be published in Flight so I look forward to these.

John Cheyne



New members

A very warm welcome to DUNZ Inc to:

Mitchell Beddis of Huntly

Ryan Trigg of Kamo

And welcome back to Howard Egan.

Conservation week November 1-9

New Zealand is full of great places and hidden treasures. DOC knows because they manage over 1400 great places, each with its own special appeal.

This Conservation Week DOC is making it fun and easy to get out and explore the great outdoors. They are hosting activities and events around the country. Even if you can't make it to an event you can encourage some mates to join you in an adventure, tell your friends about somewhere you love to go, or get your kids to be creative.

There is a range of things to do and see so head out with family and friends and explore the great outdoors – it's fun and easy! Go to www.doc.govt.nz for more information.

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Contributions to Flight from members or other readers are welcome.

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(Please make an effort to send photos & stories)

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Jim Law	Wairarapa	06 307 7855
Dan Steele	Whakahoro	07 895 6276

Cover photo: Diane (Di) Pritt and her Labradors.

See story page 3.

Photo: Wanganui Chronicle.



Presentation: Diane Pritt, named as co-patron at the August AGM. Past president David Smith presented the flowers.

Photo: Liz Brook.



At home: Diane Pritt at Mitredale.

Photo supplied.

DU's new co-patron - Diane Pritt

Ohakune farmer and long time DU member, Diane Pritt is the new co-patron of Ducks Unlimited New Zealand (DUNZ). She replaces Diana, Lady Isaac, who died in November 2012.

The position, shared with Jim Campbell of Wairarapa, had been vacant while the DUNZ board decided on the best person to fill the role.

Diane (known to most members as Di) has been involved with DUNZ since a year after its formation in 1975, when she and her father, Bill, became members.

"Dad was a very keen duck shooter and followed Roy Cavanaugh's (Wildlife Service) creed that 'without water you have nothing'. Hence, the 40-odd dams and wetland areas here at Mitredale."

Di was on the DUNZ board from 1978 to 1993,

running the AGMs. The annual board meetings in May started during her time on the board and Di says: "Thank you to the guys for their efforts as directors."

Apart from her farm Mitredale, Di has many other interests, including Women in Farming, duck and pheasant shooting, simulated field (clay target) shooting, amateur dramatics, reading, Labrador dogs, wine and cooking. Her Mitredale Duck Club Cookbook was published in 2001.

She has run the 125 hectare sheep and beef farm since 1982 and, with her mother also manages a homestay and boarding kennel.

Di said it is an honour to be selected as co-patron.

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 established by Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc in 1991, as well as from 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
Steyning Trust, Hawke's Bay
Travis Wetland Trust, Christchurch
Wairo Wetland, South Wairarapa
Wetland Trust New Zealand, Rangiriri
Waitakere Branch Forest and Bird
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.

Two DU directors, John Dermer and Dan Steele made the news this year, both appearing in mainly rural papers, and both for very good reasons.

DU directors in the news – for good reasons

Dan Steele - Conservation and tourism with farming

Dan Steele is the main driving force behind Blue Duck Station, central North Island, with the Retaruke River close by and Whanganui National Park on the boundary, it is the ideal place for a conservation minded man and his family.

The 1440ha station the cattle and sheep are important, but looking after the environment is always foremost in the running of the property. As a committed conservationist and a committed Ducks Unlimited member birds, particularly Whio (Blue Ducks), receive special care.

By allowing 800ha of land to regenerate, the bird life is returning along with the regeneration of the bush. There are 450 predator traps in use, water quality in streams and rivers has improved, and bird numbers continue to increase. Kereru and tui in particular, plus there are brown kiwi, native bats, and native fish.

Dan and his family, and his parents living next door, are all keen on seeing the conservation side increase. Young visitors from around



Setting the trap: Dan Steele hot on predator control.

Photo: supplied.

the world are welcome at Blue Duck Station, where they are known as Eco Warriors, helping with the conservation programme jobs that take time and they get educated along the way.

But it is not only the backpackers who head for Blue Duck Station, Dan has built

accommodation, and tourists are welcome. Hunting, horse-trekking, kayaking, hiking and even bush safaris are offered.

Dan has been a director of DUNZ for some time now, and has recently taken over the important role of auctioneer for fund raising at the annual DU AGM.

John Dermer – the ultimate Farm Forrester

John and Diny Dermer were this year named as the North Island's top farm foresters. They both love trees, and their farm at Cheltenham near Feilding reflects the attention that has been put into enhancing the landscape with a wide variety of native and exotic trees.

Selected as top forester in the North Island, John received a Husqvarna chainsaw. The foresters are tested on their tree knowledge, along with how well their trees are planted and managed.

John, a long time director of DUNZ, is

obviously also keen on the birds. Ponds and nesting places are available around the farm. He is always on the lookout for yet another spot to be turned into a haven for water fowl.

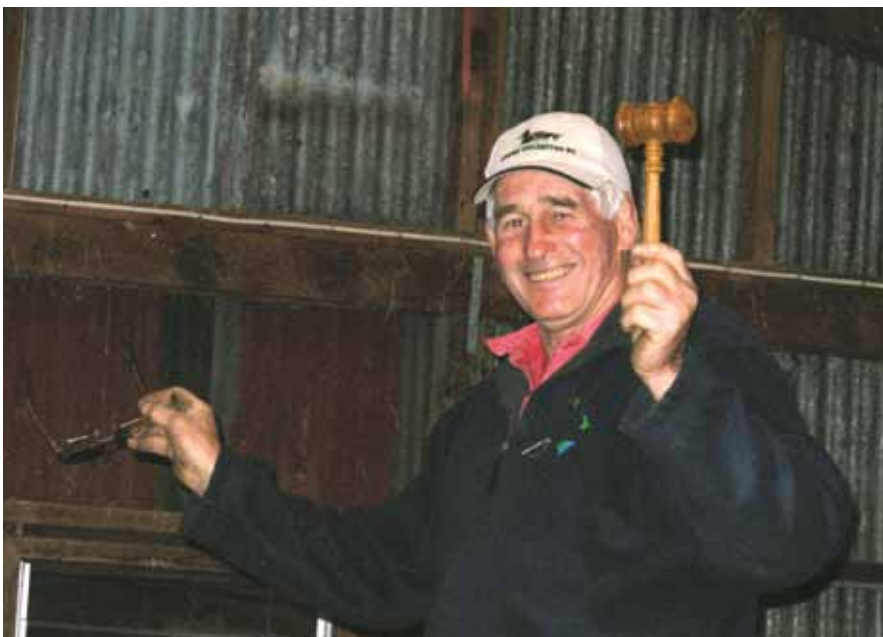
The trees, radiata pine, cypress, redwood and eucalyptus are mostly planted on land that would be difficult to farm effectively. Many older trees including large oaks and several large fruit trees in the original old orchard show the love of trees was encouraged long ago.

The Dermers also grow cereal cash crops, do bull finishing, lamb finishing and run a small ewe breeding flock. Oh – and there are turkey's that have the freedom of the farm.

Diny also maintains a large number of hens, and several Peking ducks. Diny keeps the garden in order and has several citrus trees including an orange, grapefruit and several lemon trees always covered in fruit. They do well around the house. There are also several camellias. But Diny is also the extra farm hand, and is often to be found out on the tractor or helping in the wool shed.

Auctioneer: John Dermer knocking 'em down at Farm Forestry auction.

Photo: Liz Brook.



Letters

Pateke efforts pay off

Dear Editor,

After reading the article written by Neil Hayes on 'A brief History of Ducks Unlimited Operation Pateke' in the July 2014 issue of Flight, I feel there are a number of claims in his reference to pateke at Cape Kidnappers, which are inaccurate and need rectifying. I have taken the trouble to consult with the manager of The Cape Sanctuary, Tamsin Ward-Smith, to ensure I have the facts right.

In the past Mr Hayes has been in print promoting his criticism of the introduction of pateke to Cape Sanctuary, formally the Cape Kidnapper's and Ocean Beach Wildlife Preserve. This time he goes further. He suggests that although the sites (Cape Sanctuary is one of five which he states are failures), had predator control programmes, they all failed because: (1) there are no wild populations of pateke in the area, (2) habitat was not suitable, (3) no suitable flock sites, (4) no suitable pateke habitat adjacent to these sites and (5) no suitably protected adjacent wetland for population expansion. Well, I'm afraid I don't know what Mr Hayes regards as a success but for those of us with any knowledge of the pateke project at Cape Sanctuary it is anything but a failure.

Nearly every one of the 40 plus stock dams and ponds at the sanctuary have resident pairs. Numbers in excess of 60 birds are counted on the main flocking dams. Over 60 juveniles fledged last season (and that from only 10 pairs that were observed). Pateke are so numerous that they are no longer monitored to the ninth degree. They don't need to be. They're self-sustaining.

Amongst Mr Hayes reasons for proclaiming Cape Sanctuary is unsuitable for pateke is that there is no history of pateke in the area. This is incorrect. A palaeofaunal survey conducted by Trevor H Worthy specifies that pateke do indeed have a history there. Many pateke bones have been identified in the area. The fact that pateke are no longer present does not mean they should not be returned. Cape Sanctuary is about restoring the peninsula with fauna and flora representative of a healthy Hawke's Bay forest and coastal system. Pateke were once a component of this system and so it makes sense to restore the wildlife that once inhabited the region as well. To date seven bird species have been successfully restored to Cape Sanctuary, including pateke. Programmes are also underway for four other forest bird species, as well as translocation programmes for grey-faced, Cook's and diving petrel, tuatara and giant weta.

The habitat on Cape Kidnappers peninsula may not be what many may perceive to be



Photo: Tim Robinson

ideal for pateke; pasture and pine forest dominate. However the remnant wild populations that exist in NZ today may only reflect the last strong-holds for this species and not necessarily a preferred habitat. Those members of the Recovery Group who supported an initial trial of 40 pateke to Cape Sanctuary in 2008 must be commended for breaking the mold and taking a risk. Pateke are known as a forest duck after all and extensive wetland areas are certainly not what many pairs at Cape Sanctuary are thriving in. Bathtub sized ponds suffice. Pateke are often seen in 'mobs' at night time 100s of metres from water busily working the pasture invertebrates. Who are we to say what is suitable habitat and do we have options to be so choosy if we are to establish predator 'safe' populations and secure the long-term survival of this species?

True, pateke are moving out of Cape Sanctuary's 2500 hectare protected area. Pateke sightings are regularly reported on the Maraetotara River, at Te Awanga and even as far as Clive River. Some may be lost, but by Mr Hayes own admission pateke are very territorial and, since the project is so successful, juveniles are forced out

of the sanctuary simply because it is full. Some failure! If a few birds are lost outside Cape Sanctuary, the fact there is a thriving population within the predator controlled area, providing a "Pateke Bank," has to be good news for the species.

Future protection for overflow birds (and not just pateke), is in the pipeline with a large scale, multi-agency, predator control and habitat restoration programme being established over 26,000 hectares immediately adjacent to Cape Sanctuary on outlying farmland. So in the longer term the odds on survival of pateke outside Cape Sanctuary will be high.

The fact that the Cape Sanctuary population is remote from the Northland and Coromandel regions has to be a plus as well.

I wish to correct Mr Hayes claims so that Banrock Station Wines can rest assured their initial sponsorship was not in vain, and that the efforts of volunteers and breeders has paid off. Pateke are thriving at Cape Sanctuary here in Hawke's Bay.

Kevin Campbell

Great place Great weekend



Lake Ferry: Ideal lunch venue. Photo: William Abel.

Dear Editor,

We'd like to thank the organisers of DUNZ annual meeting for a fabulous weekend at Brakenridge Lodge, Martinborough.

Once again we heard the conservation message and saw first-hand the amazing progress of wetland restoration being done. I believe the expertise we have amongst our membership and the track record of DU makes this organisation the leader in wet land

preservation and re-establishment in NZ. We are light years ahead of any other group.

Our suggestion is that the Board should be striving to become the "Consultants" of the industry. The speaker from the Regional Council gave them the credence to do so. Other organisations are getting the kudos but DU is doing the practical work.

Once again thanks to all those doing the job.

Alice and Ross Hood

Top AGM speakers

Steve Playle gave a good account of trapping in wetland areas, and provided some (very dead) mustelids for member to see and get a real appreciation of their size. (Read his account of trapping on P 10.)

Peter Russell was able to bring us up-to-date with the latest Whio breeding results and Mike Camm provided interesting insights into Pateke recovery in Northland.

Read on:

Northland Pateke recovery

The milestone for Pateke this year is seeing the Northland flock count top the 2000 recovery plan of 750 birds.

Dangerous as it is to make any assumptions, it would appear that the natural spread of wild birds on this part of the Northland coast is benefiting from the expanding network of loosely linked conservation projects carried out by a wide range of operators, including DOC, NRC, Forestry, farmers, and individual land care groups. Birds that fly out of one trapped zone are likely to arrive in another.

Overall the graphed flock count results for the traditional Pateke strongholds - Northland, Great Barrier Island and Moeheu on Coromandel, are tracking in the right direction, upwards.

In the words of our science advisor for the PRG, the Pateke Captive Breeding Programme has to be the most successful in NZ, and quite possibly the world. Breeders take a bow. To consistently make available for release upward of 200 birds annually, is no mean feat. Congratulations to you all.

As I see it there are two main drivers for Pateke recovery:

1) Groups engaged in habitat restoration and trapping.

2) The annual crop of captive bred birds.

As of now, these appear to be self balancing, although this may change as more, suitable habitat becomes available through conservation efforts. Not a serious problem to have!

Captive Breeding

Kevin Evans does an amazing job coordinating this effort. How he keeps it up I have no idea.

In 2014, 158 birds have been released into Puerua north east of the Bay of Islands, bringing release there to 288. It's an area with few stoats, but they initially experienced problems with cats. They are now on top of this.

Another 12 birds were due for release this August.

Recovery Group Future

Following the recent DOC reshuffle, it would seem that Technical Advisory Groups will replace the recovery groups.

In English, we will see Groups designed to provide advice on large clusters of work around species and ecosystems.

It's unlikely Pateke will be in a group of its



Top trap: Mike Camm said this is a top cat trap.

own, but a possible special case may apply because of the captive breeding programme. We can expect it to shake its self out over the next 12 months.

Certainly it's important that organisations like DU continue to foster close working relationships with people within the DOC structure. Build bridges, not enemies!!!

Mike Camm

Positive Whio captive results

Breeding Results 2013-2014

What a great year we have had with 33 ducklings reared and released over the last two weeks in March. This is a new record. Peacocks, two pairs lead the charge with having three clutch's each and producing 23

and then Mt Bruce's pair produced six from two clutch's and Orana pair had four.

Queenstown pair did have one but it died at seven-weeks-old which was a shame. The pair from Auckland had infertile eggs but the female had been flocked mated not long before at Mt Bruce after losing her mate. The pair at Hamilton did nothing as well as the pair at Staglands. The pair at Palmerston North Esplanade did lay three eggs and one being fertile but died in the shell. The pair at Otorohonga did lay a clutch but nothing came from them.

Egmont meet a milestone with 100 known birds on the mountain.

- 77 Eggs
- 49 Fertile
- 40 Hatched
- 33 Ducklings reared.

All released.



Photo: Peter Russell tells members about good outcomes.

Photos: Liz Brook.



Release Tongariro March 11, 2014

6 Captive breed.

Release Egmont March 13, 2014

14 Captive breed

2 Whione

Release Manganui -a-te-ao March 20, 2014

13 Captive breed birds

Released Birds to Date from 2000 to 2014

141 released Egmont National Park

25 released Manganui -a-te-ao

12 released Tongariro area

Deaths for the year 3.1

1 male Auckland Zoo 14years

1 male Staglands 13 years

1 female Hamilton Zoo 18 years

1 male Otorohanga 3 years

Peter Russell



*Convivial company, great food, interesting tour destinations,
the chance to catch up with old friends and make new ones.*

Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Annual Conference

To the uninitiated, the name Ducks Unlimited (DUNZ) conjures up images of guns, and birds falling from the sky. However, DUNZ is anything but one that focuses on duck shooting. It is, in fact, New Zealand's leading wetlands and waterfowl conservation group. DU works to save our wetlands through protection, funding, technical aid and education so that the flora and fauna of our most endangered ecosystem are a legacy we can pass down to future generations.

Attendees from as far north as Auckland gathered at Brackenridge near Martinborough, Wairarapa, for DU's annual conference and AGM. The conference included a trip to the Wairio Wetland on the eastern shores of Lake Wairarapa to catch-up on restoration progress. Delegates saw the results of recent earthworks to create a 1.2 kilometre bund wall which has increased the open water area at the wetland providing ideal waterfowl habitat.

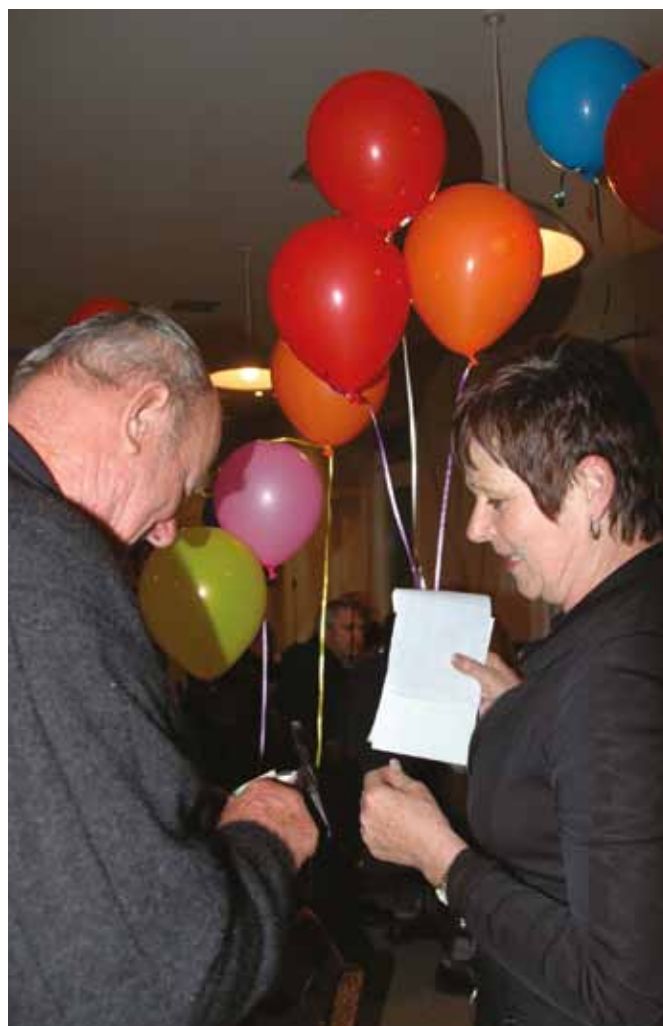
During our visit about 100 black swans lifted off, creating quite a spectacle. The results of the annual planting exercises which average 3000 odd sedges, flaxes and swamp trees were obvious. Steve Playle from the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC), also a DU member, provided details of the predator trapping programme he had in place at Wairio and adjoining wetlands of Matthews Lagoon and Boggy Pond. Since July 2013 Steve has caught 50 ferrets and a number of other undesirables! (Read details P10).

Local wetland environmentalist Jane Donald received the Bill Barrett Trophy for her contributions to wetland restoration, at a dinner superbly catered by Providore. During the evening a fun auction raised \$6500 for wetland restoration work and bright balloons added a festive touch to the event.

Sunday morning Mike Camm from the Northland Pateke Recovery Group gave an up-beat talk on the progress of their group in trying to remove Pateke from the endangered species list. Peter Russell from DU Manawatu Chapter provided an update on the Whio (Blue Duck) recovery programme. DU has been a member of both recovery groups since their inception.

Those interested can check out DU's activities on www.ducks.org.nz or better still visit Wairio Wetland on Parera Road, just south of Kahutara southern Wairarapa.

Jim Law



Balloon lady: Fraser Chetwin buys a balloon from Sharon Cottle.

Photos: Liz Brook.

The joys of a DUNZ AGM,

Photos: Ian Jensen, Will Abel, Liz Brook, Di Pritt.



Trophy joy: Howard Egan – another trophy winner at the AGM.



Treasured trophy: Jane Donald popular winner of the Bill Barrett trophy for her work with wetlands.



No cobwebs: Olwyn Griffin, Audrey Pritt and Dawn McCallum battle the wind round the headland by Lake Onoke



Wairio entrance: Intrepid members cross very wet ground to reach more rewarding destinations



Gritty bunch: From left -Wendy Simmons, Liz Brook, Peter Russell and John Bourke.



Close up: Ian Jensen, one of our keen photographers, looking for that special shot.



Green protectors: Howard Kean amazed at the number of protectors at Wairio wetland.

Conference, Tours and company



Auctioneer helper: Ross Cottle eliciting bids for “throwing horseshoes”.



Discussion: John Cheyne and Tony Roxburgh share a quite pint at the Lake Ferry Hotel.



IT wiz: Jamie Cooper found his services in demand for speakers with visual requirements.



Decisions: But do I need it? Howard Egan and Anne West ponder over silent auction items



Thanks: Jan Abel, who holds us together, received a thank you bouquet from president John Cheyne.



Silent auction: Discussion on the merits of the merchandise. From left, Colin Shore, Joanna McVeagh, Mike Burke.



Wario tour: Jim Law points out important changes at Wairio. But look at those dark clouds rolling in.



Gro-tectors Galore: They come in two sizes, are easy to use, and they work. They are certainly doing the job at Wairio.



Gro-tectors: Demonstrated by their designer Don Bell, had members enthralled, especially the clever weed mat and accessories – all reusable.



Storm clouds: Threatening weather rolls towards Wairio making members hurry back to the buses.

Photo: Ian Jensen.

Predator control essential Boggy Pond/Wairio Trapping Update

In early August Steve Playle completed the trapping maintenance down at the wetlands for the month. It was the first servicing of equipment for the new financial year. Result were 7 ferrets, 2 weasels, 6 rats, 3 hedgehogs, 3 harrier hawks and 2 magpies.

“We have cracked 50 ferrets since trapping commenced last July. A big tabby cat was swimming from the new Wairio bund out to the sprayed willows when I approached it on the quad. Pity I wasn’t carrying a firearm as it would have been easy to dispatch. Water levels were very high in places so some traps were not able to be serviced.

“I saw a slate grey Bittern in the Mathews drain almost opposite where DoC launch their boats in Boggy Pond. I saw a second darker coloured Bittern at the southern end of the Stage one area of the Ducks Unlimited Restoration block. Great to see!”

Heavy rain prevented Steve from getting traps out at that time but he was out again the next week. Lake Rototawai was serviced also. He also took a cat, 1 rat, 1 hedgehog and a mouse from traps at Te Hopai Lagoon.

Steve regularly services traps in the areas we monitor. In July, almost 12 months since the first Timms traps went on the ground at Boggy Pond/Wairio Wetlands he caught 3 cats, 4 ferrets, 2 weasels, 4 rats, 12 hedgehogs, 4 mice, 6 magpies and 1 harrier hawk.

For the year total predators removed from this job are; 20 cats, 43 ferrets, 1 stoat, 13 weasels, 159 hedgehogs, 52 rats, 29 mice, 10 magpies, 2 harrier hawks and 1 rabbit.

During duck shooting season Steve reported we lost a total of 3 DOC 250 traps and 2 Timms traps to light fingered people.

Steve also did the first service of the Lake Rototawai predator control sites on July 4 and



Mustelids: From the top, Ferret, Stoat, Weasel.

Photo: GWRC.

cleared 2 cats, 2 hedgehogs and 1 mouse from the traps. All bait stations were empty of bait too. The Te Hopai Lagoon traps were serviced and he took 2 very large cats, 3 hedgehogs and 1 mouse from those traps.

Wario September 5 Steve completed trap servicing down at the wetlands for the month. Predators caught were 2 cats, 6 ferrets (plus one that Jim Law took from a trap making a total of 7), 1 weasel, 3 rats, 8 hedgehogs, 8 mice and 2 magpies.

Steve reports he saw a Bittern about 60 meters south of the viewing hide on the Boggy side of the stop bank and he saw another at Pounui Lagoon.

Steve will have commence fortnightly servicing of the traps at both of these operations until breeding season is finished around the end of February.

“As a matter of interest we have already caught 14 ferrets at the Boggy/Wairio wetlands for August and September so it just shows we cannot take the handbrake off regular predator control any time soon,” said Steve.

Planting continues at Wairio wetland

A small band of us managed to get a further 790 plants in the ground at Stages 1 and 4. This brought the total for the year to about 2500.

The water was quite high at Stage 4 so there are still some spots to be planted.

We still have 400 suitable plants at Norfolk Road Nursery and Don Bell will arrange for them to be planted when the water recedes. He will also plant about 100 Totara and

Kanuka in spot sprayed areas of Stage 2. These plants will be a modest addition to our Tree Budget. Don will also arrange to place the weed mats and install the Grotectors not yet in place.

We did not do this during the July planting due to time constraints – priority was on getting the trees in the ground.

Jim Law

Winter shorebird survey results at Lake Wairarapa

Steve Playle, Hugh Robertson and Nikki McArthur took advantage of excellent weather conditions on June 20 to carry out a winter shorebird census at Lake Wairarapa. The water level was relatively high (10.3 metres above datum), so most of the mudflats were under water and in turn that influenced some of the species counts.

By the end of the day they had counted 22 species of shorebirds and waterfowl, totalling 5647 birds. Highlights of the day included four Australasian bittern, two white herons and a little egret (the latter a relatively rare Australian vagrant). Hugh encountered a flock of 122 red-billed gulls at the Oporua Floodway, which is exceedingly unusual for this site. Red-billed gulls are extremely rare visitors to Lake Wairarapa, having been reported only a handful of times previously (11 birds in February 1948, “irregularly” between 1982-1983, 2 birds in April 1992 and 1 bird in February 2012).

A full summary of the species counted during June 20 census follows. For anyone who wishes to test their bird ID skills, or read background about any of the species recorded go to New Zealand (NZ) Birds Online website (<http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/>).

Species	Number counted
Dabchick	38
Black Shag	74
Little Black Shag	38
Little Shag	15
White-faced Heron	21
White Heron	2
Little Egret	1
Bittern	4
Royal Spoonbill	10
Black Swan	2174
Canada Goose	1448
Feral Goose	128
Paradise Shelduck	97
Variable Oystercatcher	5
Pied Stilt	1000
Banded Dotterel	42
Black-fronted Dotterel	66
Spur-winged Plover	39
Black-backed Gull	136
Red-billed Gull	122
Black-billed Gull	176
Caspian Tern	11
Total	5647

This is the third winter survey since initiating this work in 2011, so it's now possible to

begin comparing average species counts from June 2011-2014 surveys with those from Hugh Robertson and Barrie Heather's earlier set of surveys carried out between 1985 and 1994, for the section of shoreline between the Tauherenikau Delta and the Oporua Floodway.

These comparisons give an early indication of some of the changes that appear to have occurred to the relative abundance of various bird species at the lake over the past 30 years. A number of species appear to have increased in abundance over the intervening time, among them NZ dabchick, black shag, little black shag, little shag, black-fronted dotterel and black billed gull. A smaller number of species appeared to have declined in abundance over the same period, including SI pied oystercatcher, pied stilt and spur-winged plover.

Species	Average count 1985-1994	Average count 2011-2014
Dabchick	5.1	52.3
Black Shag	11.6	39.0
Little Black Shag	3.1	69.3
Little Shag	2	15.0
Pied Shag	0	0.3
White-faced Heron	10.5	12.0
White Heron	0.1	0.3
Cattle Egret	0.1	0.0
Bittern	0	1.7
Glossy Ibis	0.5	0.0
Royal Spoonbill	0	1.7
Black Swan	X	692.0
Canada Goose	X	966.0
Feral Goose	X	134.0
Paradise Shelduck	X	24.0
Pied Oystercatcher	14.7	0.7
Variable Oystercatcher	5.6	3.0
Pied Stilt	607.9	516.7
Banded Dotterel	187.5	159.0
Black-fronted Dotterel	32.3	45.0
Wrybill	0.1	0.0
Spur-winged Plover	57.5	13.3
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	0	0.3
Bar-tailed Godwit	0.6	0.0
Black-backed Gull	X	58.3
Red-billed gull	0.1	40.7
Black-billed Gull	51.5	195.0
Caspian Tern	1.6	9.0

Nikki explained the original aims of this survey work were relatively simple (i.e. to give the ability to describe changes that have occurred

in the lake's bird fauna over the past 30 years; to allow them to detect future changes and to re-examine the relationship between shorebird abundance and water levels). You might be interested to know the data from these surveys have recently been put to a variety of other uses, including:

- To provide quantitative evidence in support of an application to have the Wairarapa Moana wetlands recognised as a “wetland of international importance” under the Ramsar Convention.
- To provide evidence to support the Wairarapa Moana Wetlands (together with the Ruamahanga River) being listed as an “Important Bird Area” under Birdlife International's global IBA programme.
- To form part of our flood protection department's programme for monitoring the health of riverbed-dependent bird populations on rivers affected by flood protection activities (large proportions of the regional populations of several riverbed-dependent bird species overwinter at Lake Wairarapa).
- To provide regional population estimates for a number of shorebird species used for the development of a regional threat classification system for birds of the Wellington Region.
- And lastly, data collected during these surveys are combined with data compiled from other key shorebird sites around NZ to provide estimates of the national population sizes of a number of NZ's shorebird species. These national population estimates are in turn put to a variety of uses, including a regular review of national threat classification rankings and ongoing monitoring of the population health of Arctic-breeding migrants using the East Asian/Australasian Flyway, a major avian migration route stretching from Alaska and Siberia in the north to NZ and Australia in the south.

Thanks go to Ian Gunn, Tony Silbery and Bob Green for assistance preparing for this survey, and to Bob Green, Grant McGhie, Graham Field and Tim Loe for permission to access various points of the shoreline. The next scheduled shorebird survey at Lake Wairarapa is for November 2014.

Nikki McArthur
Environmental Scientist
Greater Wellington Regional Council



High flyers:
One of the 1448 Canada Geese counted.

Photo: Paula Gillett.

To save Pateke

Knowledge, care and endurance

Positive aspects of the recovery programme

The release of captive reared Pateke by Ducks Unlimited (NZ) in the Northland area between 1980-1992 had a number of positive outcomes, particularly at the 350-hectare government owned Mimiwhangata Farm Park during a brief period when predator control was being carried out. Pre-release aviaries were used and supplementary feeding took place. 3½ half months after the release of 64 captive reared Pateke at the Mimiwhangata, Farm Park in 1986 all 64 Pateke were believed to be still alive (Hayes 2002).

1. Flock mating/natural pairing of Pateke was the key to the highly successful captive breeding programme – together with the enthusiasm of participants. Flock mating is now being used in a number of rare waterfowl recovery programmes.
2. Captive reared brown teal adapt readily to a wild environment, natural or created.
3. In Northland captive reared Pateke released at Mimiwhangata, Whananaki and Purerua between 1986-1992 survived for long periods and produced offspring – in spite of little predator control, with predator control Pateke are doing well.
4. Where predator control programmes have been in operation at suitably selected quality release sites in Northland (and more recently on the Coromandel) Pateke have survived very well and have successfully reared many progeny.
5. In the absence of waterfowl hunting and predators, captive reared brown teal released into quality Pateke habitat have few problems adapting to the wild.
6. A gradual transition from captive bred to wild, using pre-release pens and a supplementary diet was successful.
7. Brown teal are by far the most predator vulnerable species amongst all species of waterfowl
8. Captive reared teal released on off-shore islands that have suitable predator-free habitat survive and breed well.
9. When the release of captive reared Pateke into quality habitat is coupled with predator control, a pre-release aviary, supplementary feeding and with the site having an adequate area for a significant population increase (such as at: Mimiwhangata, Purerua and Port Charles), the recovery process is a very simple one!
10. Between 1969-1992 it was learnt that releasing captive reared Pateke at a large number of unsuitable and disconnected habitats, with 35 different sites being used, achieved little, was counterproductive and very expensive.
11. Since the 2000 Audit of the recovery programme steady progress has been made towards increasing the wild populations of Pateke.

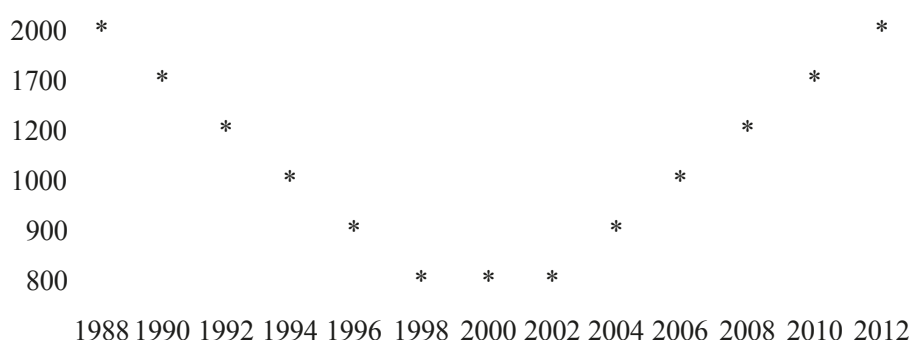
Starting in 2009 a150 captive reared Pateke have been released in Fiordland, but it is too early to predict the outcome of this programme. Pateke were once widespread throughout Fiordland, the habitat is still excellent and with ongoing predator control a South Island population could be re-established.

Negative aspects of Recovery programme

Between 1975 and 2002 there were 2000 Pateke released into mainland wetland sites, with all releases failing to slow the species decline, largely due to:

- Lack of continuity amongst Pateke management personnel and others directly involved in planning the survival of Pateke.
- Sites used were poorly selected.
- No pre-release study to see if there was an adequate food source.
- No pre-release study to determine whether the habitat was suitable.
- Little predator control and little knowledge of the subject.
- Little understanding about the main predators to control/eliminate.
- Until early 2000 no sites had ongoing predator control.
- Many sites were out on a limb, with no wild Pateke in the area.
- Many sites had no adjacent wetlands for progeny expansion or to which adults could escape.
- Many sites had no loafing facilities or aerial protection.
- Insufficient supplementary feeding of released birds. The value of this is recorded in a paper published in 2013.
- Pre-release aviaries rarely used.
- Competing waterfowl were present.
- Hybridisation with mallards and grey teal occurred.
- Instant dispersal of released birds occurred.
- A lack of ongoing support.
- A lack of monitoring of released birds.

Brown Teal population dynamics from 1988 to 2012



The 2000 audit of the pateke recovery programme

As already discussed, in late 1999 the Department of Conservation carried out a major audit of the Pateke Recovery Programme, into which 39 people with Pateke experience had input. The outcomes were published in 2000.

Continued next page

Maori Bay track

Volunteers have been working on the Maori Bay track at Tawharanui.

Many Flight readers would possibly be going fishing or bird watching on this southern coastline of the Tokata Peninsular so they might like to see what the track looks like now! Loose metal will be added once the drier weather occurs.

Roger Williams has been leading this mid-week volunteer group working on the Maori Bay Track which is about 30 minutes walk from the Anchor Bay carpark. On the way you walk through the Ecology Bush and should see/hear Brown Teal, Saddlebacks, Robins, Keruru, Tui, Bellbirds and may even see Kaka and Kakariki. The track upgrade should be completed by the end of September.

Tawharanui work: The working folk, planting, weeding and more on the Maori Bay track.

Photos: Patti Williams.



Pateke success at Tawharanui

Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary reintroduced pateke between 2008 and 2010, with 148 captive reared ducklings released in total. An earlier release in the 90s failed due to inadequate predator control, an unfortunately common occurrence for pre 2000 pateke releases.

More recent releases within the predator free open sanctuary have successfully established a population of approximately

30 pair, with pateke and ducklings regularly seen throughout the park. Tāwharanui pateke have also dispersed from the park and have established as two new satellite populations at nearby Christian Bay and Omaha, as well as supplementing remnant population on Kaware Island.

Matt Maitland
Senior Ranger Open Sanctuaries
Northern Regional Parks

Continued from previous page

Since the Audit set down clearly defined recommendations and objectives of what needed to be done to save Pateke from extinction there has been a remarkable turnaround - from a total population of 800 in 1999 to a population of 2000 by 2012, with 350 in Northland, 550 on Great Barrier Island, 650 on Coromandel Peninsula, 200 on off-shore island.

Recovery mode

The population chart shows there has been significant improvement in Pateke numbers since the 2000 Audit; this has been achieved in three historic Pateke areas of the North Island mainland; at the Mimiwhangata Farm Park, Whananaki, Tutukaka, Ngunguru, and Purerua Peninsula all in the Northland region of New Zealand, on the Coromandel Peninsula and on Great Barrier Island - all areas where Pateke were extant in 1999.

The key to the recovery has been the introduction of major predator

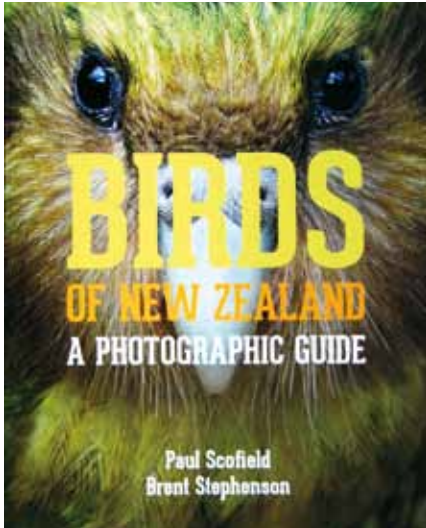
control programmes using a variety of trapping techniques, in association with Pateke habitat creation, habitat enhancement, protection and management, no duck hunting, and in Northland and Coromandel Peninsula the release of significant numbers of captive reared Pateke.

By 2012 the Pateke population in Northland had risen from 350 in 2000 to 550. The most spectacular re-establishment has taken place on the Coromandel Peninsula, where from 20 Pateke in 2000 the population had risen to 650 by 2012.

The recovery on the Coromandel clearly endorses the philosophy that provided Pateke have suitable habitat, protection from predators and ongoing management support they will survive and breed very successfully, with the success on the Coromandel possibly being the most rapid recovery of an endangered duck.

Since the 2000 Audit there has been major predator control.

Bird book winner



Shaun Morgan of Rotorua won the Birds of NZ book.

Shaun and Karen were really thrilled. They have been thinking of ordering the book from their local book store, so this win was a real bonus.

Thanks to all the members who entered, I am just sorry there were not enough books for all of you.

And special thanks to the Auckland University Press who supplied the book.

Editor.

Police supervision: Mark Dickens, rural policeman, reads out the winning name.



Protecting our kākī

By DOC Ranger Cody Thyne

As a ranger based in Twizel the main part of my job is supporting the Kākī Recovery Programme.

Kākī/black stilts are one of New Zealand's rarest birds and the mission of the Kākī Recovery Programme is to increase their population in the wild and ensure this special bird is not lost for future generations.

As part of a small team of four permanent and a few seasonal staff, my responsibilities involve managing kākī in the wild. This includes counting how many adults are out there; traipsing up and down numerous braided rivers in the Mackenzie Basin searching for breeding pairs; observing and interpreting behaviour; finding their nests; reading leg bands and collecting eggs from the wild to bring back to the captive rearing facility in Twizel.

Walking up and down large braided rivers isn't for everyone, particularly if you don't like uneven ground, stumbling around, getting

your feet and other body parts wet, super hot days with no shade, howling winds, abrupt temperature changes, long periods of time staring through a spotting scope with one eye, and lunchtime sandwiches turning to toast when exposed to the dry alpine air. However, the views are breathtaking, and the chance to see wildlife that manages to scrape out a living in this environment, is definitely worth the trip.

The eggs I collect are brought back to the captive rearing facility in Twizel which is also home to a number of kākī pairs for captive breeding.

The facility is where kākī eggs are artificially incubated and young chicks are raised in captivity.

At 3–9 months they are released into the wild. Rearing them in captivity significantly increases their chances of survival by preventing predation when they are most vulnerable and it also gets them through their first winter, which can be tough for young birds in the wild.



Rare bird: Kākī/black stilt.



Kākī chick: Found thanks to Jazz the conservation dog.

Photos: Department of Conservation.

Million dollar project for Pukaha Mt Bruce

A state of the art walk through aviary is one step closer for Pukaha after receiving a grant of \$250,000 from Trust House Foundation.

This grant has kick started fundraising for the \$1.1 million project designed to provide visitors to Pukaha with an exciting experience – allowing them to get closer to native bird life and flora and fauna.

Construction of the project is due to commence in May 2015 with completion expected in November 2015.

This is a substantial grant from Trust House Foundation who have long been a key supporter of Pukaha Mount Bruce.

This walk through aviary will give visitors an amazing experience, providing a greater understanding of New Zealand's precious flora and fauna and how we, as individuals and collectively can play our part in its protection.

The proposed aviary has been designed by the Pukaha Mount Bruce Board in collaboration with Fabric Structures Ltd, who built The Cloud in Auckland Viaduct; Boffa Miskall Landscape Architects and

Rigg Zschokke Ltd. Pukaha also received assistance from Healesville Sanctuary in Victoria, Australia and the Department of Conservation.

To be built on site near the current blue duck aviaries, it will be 40 metres long by 20 metres wide and is expected to house at least eight different species of native birds.

Spring arrival at Pukaha

A nice surprise for spring - three Whio eggs were laid. Staff will carefully look after them in the brooder room and hope for another clutch soon.

Staff are also keeping a close eye on five male kiwi who are sitting on eggs in the forest and hoped to bring in the first kiwi chick of the season. While they had intended to bring it in as an egg and hatch it in their nursery, the burrow was too deep for the egg to be safely taken out without damaging the burrow.

Keep right up-to-date with all new hatchings and events on the facebook page - www.facebook.com/PukahaMountBruce.

Whio Forever wins green ribbon award

The Whio Forever recovery programme won the Ministry for the Environment Green Ribbon Award this year for protecting our biodiversity.

The Awards recognise outstanding contributions of individuals, organisations, businesses and communities to protecting and enhancing New Zealand's environment.

The National Whio Recovery Programme is a partnership between Genesis Energy, the Department of Conservation, Forest and Bird and the Central North Island Blue Duck Charitable Trust. It is focused on the protection and recovery of the whio, a threatened native bird and supports whio security and recovery sites across the country.

Genesis Energy Environmental Manager, Bonny Lawrence and the Department of Conservation Whio Recovery Group Leader, Andrew Glaser accepted the award from the department's Director General, Lou Sanson.

Genesis Energy's Chief Executive, Albert Brantley said the credit for winning the award has to go to the large community of people nationwide who are dedicated to the protection of whio.

"This award recognises the efforts of all of the people who are involved in protecting the whio and raising the profile of this iconic bird. That Genesis Energy is able to fund and support this work is something we are very proud of," said Albert.

Sponsorship from Genesis Energy will enable the 10-year recovery plan to be delivered ahead of schedule. The target number of whio pairs to be protected at recovery sites has doubled to 200 pairs. Based on results to date it is estimated that by 2016, the target of 400 protected whio pairs will be reached at the eight security sites

Receiving the award DOC's Whio Recovery Group Leader Andrew Glaser said it was exciting the Whio Forever partnership was acknowledged, as the Awards recognised a wide range of amazing environmental initiatives around New Zealand.

"It was inspirational to hear about the incredible work happening across the country, and to talk to people who have the same passion and drive to make changes to our natural environment.

"The whio is an icon of our waterways, where there are whio there are healthy, clean waterways so this programme is incredibly important," he said.

Andy also acknowledged the many whio practitioners and community supporters who have contributed to the success of the programme.

The whio recovery programme also funds WHIONE projects (Whio Operation Nest Egg) that allows wild whio populations to be boosted with ducklings hatched and raised in safe havens, then released into the wild.



Blending in: Two Whio at Arthurs Pass.

Photo: Nigel Boniface.

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