



DUCKS UNLIMITED (N. Z.) INCORPORATED
P. O. Box 74, Hamilton, New Zealand

POSTAGE PAID
Auckland, N.Z.
Permit No. 3118

NEW ZEALAND REGISTERED MAGAZINE

Registered at Post Office Headquarters
Wellington, as a magazine



“FLIGHT”

FLIGHT 1/79 ISSUE 19

MARCH 1979

IN THIS ISSUE

- * D.U. "CONTRIBUTES" TO NEW ZEALAND'S EXPORT DRIVE WITH RARE BROWN TEAL TO WILDFOWL TRUST, SLIMBRIDGE
- * OPERATION GRETTEL EXPANDS TO DUNEDIN - THE "STAR" OF TELEVISION DOCUMENTARY "HIDDEN PLACES" IS LOCATION OF MOST RECENT GREY TEAL NEST BOX PLACEMENT
- * D.U. ANNUAL CONFERENCE - SATURDAY 7 JULY 1979 MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
- * PLUS REPORTS ON OPERATIONS BLUE DUCK, BRANTA, FINAL BREEDING RESULT FOR OPERATION PATEKE, AND MORE!

YOUR DU MEMBERSHIP . . . THE *OTHER* RENEWABLE RESOURCE

ANY BOOK ABOUT DUCKS AND GEESE WILL TELL YOU WATERFOWL ARE A RENEWABLE RESOURCE GIVEN GOOD HABITAT PROTECTION DURING REPRODUCTIVE TIMES ETC ETC. FOOD, WATER AND SPECIAL COVER ARE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN THIS 'GOOD HABITAT' BUT, FIRST, SOMEONE MUST ASSURE THERE WILL BE HABITAT TO BEGIN WITH. THAT'S WHAT YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN DUCKS UNLIMITED IS ALL ABOUT.



AT DU WE CONSIDER YOUR MEMBERSHIP A RENEWABLE RESOURCE TOO. WHEN YOU RENEW, YOU GUARANTEE THE COMPLETION OF WATERFOWL PROJECTS ALREADY UNDER WAY FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR AND PROVIDE FOR NEW PROJECTS. SO - JUST AS FOOD, WATER AND COVER ARE WHAT GOVERNS HABITAT QUALITY REGULAR MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE WHAT GOVERN HABITAT DEVELOPMENT.

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1979/80 ARE NOW DUE - HAVE YOU RENEWED ?

OPERATION PATEKE - EXPORT OF LIVE BIRDS

You will recall that we mentioned in the last issue of FLIGHT that we had received a permit to export a clutch of Brown Teal eggs to the Wildfowl Trust in the United Kingdom. Unfortunately we were unable to produce sufficient fertile eggs as the breeding season was already well advanced when we obtained the permit. We have now, however, obtained an authority to export 2 female Brown Teal which is much better than sending eggs.

The Wildfowl Trust has three surviving male Brown Teal and we are hopeful that pairs will soon be established when D.U. birds arrive. The Wildfowl Trust have reared Brown Teal since 1960, but because of inbreeding the birds have slowly died out, leaving only 3 males. As mentioned in the last issue of FLIGHT, the Wildfowl Trust has agreed to join Operation Pateke, to forward us details of birds reared and, if it ever becomes necessary, to return birds to New Zealand.

Air New Zealand Limited has very kindly agreed to arrange the birds' journey to the United Kingdom, where they will spend some time in the quarantine facilities at the Wildfowl Trust, Slimbridge in Gloucestershire. We will have a further report on the Brown Teal export in the next issue of this newsletter. We take this opportunity to thank the Wildlife Service for their close co-operation and for the authority to export the birds, and Air New Zealand for its generous co-operation in shipping the birds to the United Kingdom.

OPERATION PATEKE - SUMMARY OF SEASON

Final figures for birds reared during the past breeding season are set out below. Ducks Unlimited has already handed over a further 4 Brown Teal to the Wildlife Service from this season's birds and is hopeful that a few more will be available shortly. The total passed to the Wildlife Service is now 15, plus 5 eggs from which 3 birds were hatched and reared. The Wildlife Service holds 8 pairs and individuals who are not members of D.U. are believed to hold 4 pairs of Brown Teal. Ducks Unlimited's project calls for 50 pairs to be held by members - so we are making good progress toward this figure.

OPERATION PATEKE BREEDING REPORT 1978/79 SEASON

<u>No. Pairs Held by DU Members</u>	<u>No. Eggs Laid</u>	<u>Hatched</u>	<u>Reared</u>	<u>Birds have been supplied to the Wildlife Service as follows:</u>
4	9	-	-	
1	7	6	5	
1	-	-	-	January 1975 - 5 birds
1	-	-	-	January 1977 - 4 birds
2	-	-	-	July 1978 - 2 birds
1	-	-	-	December 1978 - 4 birds
3	-	-	-	
1	14	14	13	
1	3	-	-	
1	5	4	4	
2	10	4	4	In addition, 5 eggs were supplied in September 1978 from which 3 birds were reared.
1	-	-	-	
1	-	-	-	
1	4	3	3	
<u>21</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>29</u>	

WELLINGTON ZOO JOINS OPERATION PATEKE: D.U. is pleased to record that the Wellington Zoological Gardens have recently joined Ducks Unlimited (as have two of the staff) and will be participating in Operation Pateke. The Zoo already holds 2 pair of Brown Teal and hopes to extend the number of birds held to 5 pairs. The Zoo has excellent facilities for Brown Teal and we are certain that this progressive move by the Zoo will be of great benefit towards the propagation and, hopefully, the assured survival of the Brown Teal.

BROWN TEAL AGAIN REARED UNDER GREY DUCK: Following last year's success in the North Island of Brown Teal being reared under a New Zealand Grey Duck, Laurie Piper of Christchurch (in only his first season with Brown Teal) successfully reared three Brown Teal under a Grey Duck. Well done Laurie!

BROWN TEAL REVIEW: A very interesting and informative review of endangered waterfowl appeared in the latest "Wildfowl" Journal No 29. "Wildfowl" is the annual scientific journal of the Wildfowl Trust, United Kingdom. The review, compiled by Dr Janet Kear and Mr Gwn Williams covers all the world's endangered waterfowl, plus those considered to be vulnerable (N.Z. Scaup and N.Z. Blue Duck). The New Zealand Brown Teal receives close attention in the Review and details of Ducks Unlimited's Operation Pateke are discussed. Bearing in mind that "Wildfowl" is distributed worldwide to universities, Wildlife Departments, Zoos etc, we have certainly gained some international publicity.

OPERATION GRETEL - D.U. DIRECTORS VISIT DUNEDIN



Fig 1

Enjoying an excellent lunch.
l. to r. Laurie Piper,
Horry Sinclair, Peter McLeod



Fig 2

Horry Sinclair pointing out
boundaries to the visitors.
Shot taken from large island
seen in background, Fig 1



Fig 3

Peter McLeod - getting some
"worthwhile exercise"



Fig 4

A further view of the area.

OPERATION GRETEL - DUNEDIN VISIT

On Saturday, 20 January, Christchurch director Peter McLeod, Wellington director Neil Hayes and Christchurch D.U. member Laurie Piper travelled to Dunedin to meet with Mr Horry Sinclair, on whose property it is proposed to erect a quantity of Grey Teal nesting boxes.

The purpose of the visit was to discuss the project with Mr Sinclair, particularly in respect of the number of boxes to be erected, box design and construction, and to look over and photograph the property - reputed to be one of the finest waterfowl areas in the country. D.U. members may recall this property and Mr Sinclair's work was the subject of a television documentary "Hidden Places" recently.

After meeting Mr Sinclair at his cottage in Outram, the party drove to the farm, 15 km south of Outram. An excellent lunch of cold duck and Italian wine was provided by Mr Sinclair, and this was enjoyed at the edge of one of the lagoons - see Fig 1.

Mr Sinclair's property is over 300 ha (750 acres) and consists of many lagoons and islands - refer Fig 2. A fairly constant water level of about 1 metre of very fresh water, full of invertebrates, plant life and an adequate amount of cover, makes the property ideally suited to waterfowl.

The property is situated between two lakes - Waihola and Waipori - and up until the early 1950's (when Mr Sinclair purchased the property) many attempts had been made to drain the area. Since then, further attempts have been made to encourage Mr Sinclair to drain the area, but being an ardent ornithologist, conservationist and wildfowler (Yes, all three do go together!) all attempts have been rejected completely.

Needless to say, ducks are not the only birdlife to benefit from such a magnificent property - in fact, Mr Sinclair has counted 23 Fernbirds in one afternoon.

Mr Sinclair recently agreed to have the Wildlife Service designate the area a Wildlife Management Reserve, and plans are in hand for this to happen. Such a move will of course ensure that the area can never be drained.

To say that the visitors were impressed with the area would be the understatement of the year! Several thousand Grey Teal were seen, many Shoveler, many Black Swan, and few Mallards. Black Swan breed well on the property and do in fact have priority grazing rights.

Apparently, however, the Grey Teal do not breed as well as their numbers should suggest, and the party agreed that the birds would be "queuing" up to use the D.U. nest boxes. With the aid of D.U. members (who are not too prolific on the "mainland"), plus shooters privileged to hunt on Mr Sinclair's property, Mr Sinclair will organise the erection of 50 boxes before next breeding season. Without doubt, the property is ideally suited for the erection of several hundred nesting boxes.

The whole of Saturday afternoon was spent being rowed over the property by Mr Sinclair. Peter McLeod was given a boat of his own and he managed to get some worthwhile exercise - see Fig 3! Ducks Unlimited (NZ) wishes to thank Mr Sinclair for his time and hospitality, and for his efforts in conservation and propagation.

NOTE: HORRY SINCLAIR ELECTED AN HONORARY D.U. MEMBER

At the D.U. board meeting held in Turangi on 11 February 1979, the Board decided to elect Mr Horry Sinclair of Outram an Honorary Member of Ducks Unlimited (N.Z.) Mr Sinclair has spent a lifetime working for waterfowl and the D.U. Board is delighted to have him involved with Operation Gretel.

REPORT ON OPERATION BRANTA

Further good progress has been made with Operation "Branta", which aims to establish the Canada Goose in the North Island. In February another shipment of geese arrived from the South Island for distribution in the Wairarapa.

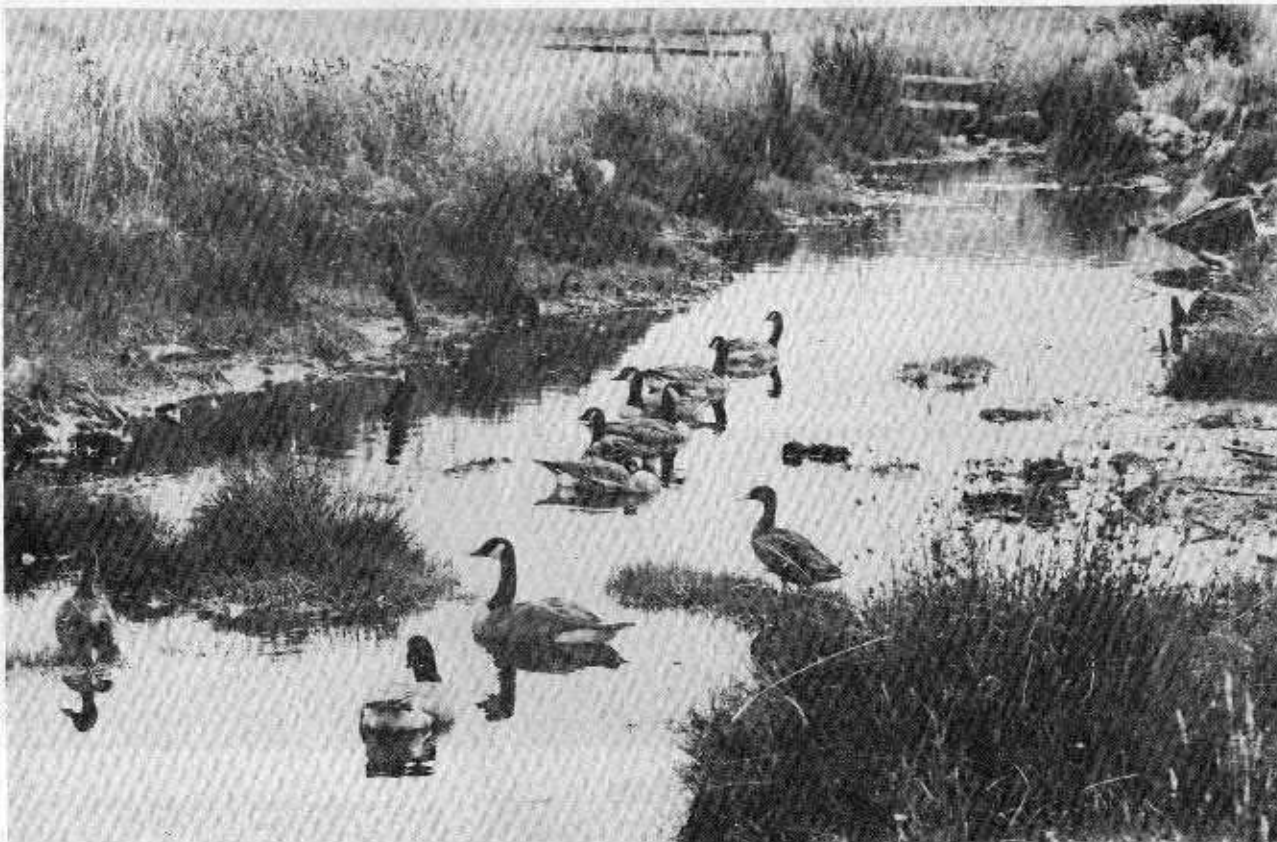
The majority of birds went to Mr Mike Moore at Homewood. Mike is the Federated Farmers' representative on the Wellington Acclimatisation Society Council. Fig 1 shows birds being released on to one of his dams.

Director Neil Hayes and member Ian Buchanan, Senior Field Officer with the Wellington Acclimatisation Society, carried out the releases and Neil was very impressed with the areas where the birds were released. A typical dam can be seen in Fig 2.

Geese again bred well in the Wairarapa and in accordance with requirements, the progeny had to be caught up and pinioned. Rounding up full winged geese is no mean feat and several interesting hours were spent at D.U. member Jim Campbell's property, as can be seen from Figs 3 and 4, on page 7.

Plans are in hand to extend Operation Branta to the Wanganui area and DU has applied for permits to transfer birds to two properties in the Wanganui district.

Below are Canada Geese at the property of member Mr W. Pritt, Ohakune.
(photograph: Diane Pritt)



OPERATION BRANTA - PHOTOGRAPHS



Fig 1

Barry O'Neale, Mike Moore,
Ian Buchanan & George Moore
releasing Canada's on Mike
Moore's dam



Fig 2

A nice looking Canada Goose
dam on D.O. member Allan
Rayner's property at Te
Wharau, Masterton.



Fig 3

Full winged geese being
quietly driven across dam
and into catching pen. A
very successful operation.



Fig 4

Jim Campbell, David Brenkley
Barry O'Neale & Ian Buchanan
studying the catching pen
design

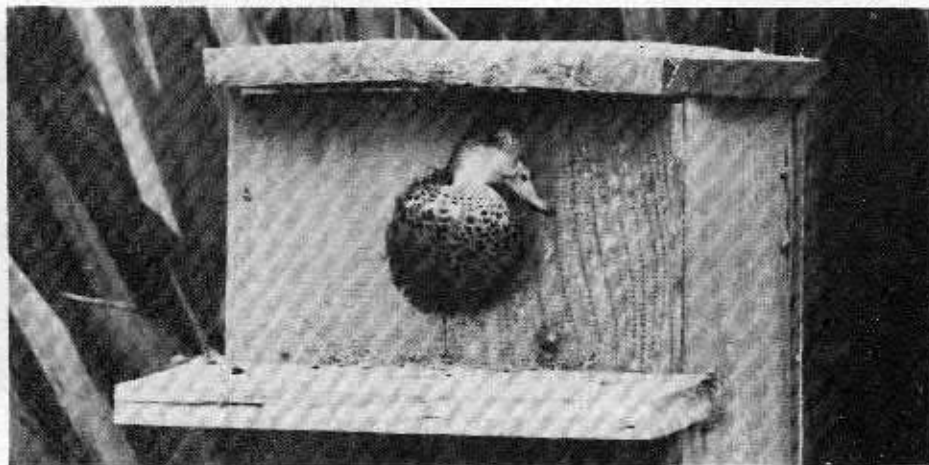


Fig 5

OPERATION GRETTEL (SEE OVER)
"A Tight Squeeze" - Neil Hayes
captured this delightful shot
of a Grey Teal leaving a nestbox

REPORT ON OPERATION GRETELBARTON'S LAGOON, MARTINBOROUGH

The final inspection at Barton's Lagoon took place on 25 February. The season's results can be summarised as follows:

Total no. of boxes	25	Two nests with 8 and 7 eggs respectively failed to hatch, with all eggs proving infertile. (In addition four nests out of the six which were utilised by starlings, contained dead starlings. We can probably assume that the boxes are too deep for starlings to climb out. Starling nests are not thought to be a serious problem as they normally nest later than Grey Teal.
Total no. of nests	6	
Total no. of boxes used	4	
Total no. of eggs laid	47	
Total no. of eggs hatched	30	

All in all, a pretty successful first season at Barton's Lagoon - and we would again like to thank Mr John Barton for his kind permission to use the area. (F.N. Hayes)

W. & R. HELLABY PROPERTY, NGARUAWAHIA, WAIKATO

No new result at this site since December inspection. The water level at the site is dropping and it is fairly certain there will be no further breeding this season. A further 5 boxes could be placed, which would reach saturation point as far as this particular site is concerned and maintenance work will be required on some boxes shortly. (D.G. Bell)

MR TONY FLEXMAN'S PROPERTY, POKENO, SOUTH AUCKLAND

Interesting final results have now been analysed for the 1978 breeding season. These are summarised below with comparisons for the 1977 season (which members will recall was 700% up on the 1976 season).

	<u>1978</u>	<u>1977</u>
Total Grey Teal eggs	533	525
Hatched (some birds still sitting at final inspection)	320	391
Infertile eggs	120	(not recorded)
Abandoned nests (8)	70 (eggs)	" "
Total boxes used - of 107 boxes placed	54	51 (of 87 boxes placed)
Largest clutch (some utilised 2 or 3 times)	18	17

Once again a Mallard utilised one of the boxes and from 11 eggs, hatched 10 with the help of member Kelvin Mackie who raised the nest in the box to a level to enable the young, upon hatching, to leave the box.

There appeared to be a high rate of infertile eggs during the 1978 season. Perhaps this could be attributed to birds reared in 1977 using the boxes for the first time this year. It would appear that despite increasing the number of boxes by 20, we have not achieved a corresponding increase in the number of eggs laid. From this it would appear that this particular area on Mr Flexman's property has reached nestbox saturation. This is a personal observation only and the writer is not an expert. Our thanks to Mr Tony Flexman for his co-operation and generosity again this season. (P.B.C. Pirani)

WILDLIFE SERVICE TO STUDY OPERATION GRETEL

The Wildlife Service has agreed to carry out a long term study of the Ducks Unlimited Grey Teal nesting box project. Dr J.A. Mills will be in charge of the study and he will be assisted by Wildlife Service technicians and D.U. members. Some of the objectives the study will attempt to achieve are:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (a) marking sitting birds | (e) compile data on nest box usage |
| (b) marking ducklings | (f) compile data on egg production |
| (c) determine whether females are returning to nest in the boxes | (g) analyse D.U. data |
| (d) determine whether the birds hatched in the boxes are returning to nest in them | (h) observe broods |
| | (i) perhaps initiate a Grey Teal population census. |

Naturally, Ducks Unlimited is delighted to have the Wildlife Service working with them in Operation Gretel. Initial work is expected to begin next breeding season.

OPERATION BLUE DUCK - PRELIMINARY REPORT

Jan Eldridge recently forwarded D.U. a copy of her preliminary report on Blue Duck research undertaken in New Zealand last year sponsored by Ducks Unlimited and other parties. This report contains details of

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| (a) the study area - i.e. habitat | (d) case histories of blue duck behaviour |
| (b) Blue duck displays | (e) genetic relationship of the blue duck with other waterfowl. |
| (c) Territorial displays | |

The report is not for publication but any member who would like a copy to read should write to Ducks Unlimited at P.O. Box 74, Hamilton. If the preliminary report is an indication of what we will see in the final scientific paper, then our financial assistance to Miss Eldridge has certainly been money well spent.

SMALL HYDRO DAMS

While small hydro dams are generally of benefit to many of our waterfowl, the proposals to erect small hydro dams on the Mangai-A-Te-Au River caused D.U. great concern. It was on the Mangai-A-Te-Au River that Miss Eldridge carried out her D.U. sponsored study of the Blue Duck and discovered a very healthy population in the process. At the earliest opportunity, D.U. therefore made submissions to the Rangitikei Electric Power Board, pointing out the disastrous effect their proposed dams would have on the Blue Duck population. We suggested that other less destructive sites be sought, and await the outcome of our approach with concern.

D.U. EXHIBITS AT WAIMARINO A. & P. SHOW

Director Diane Pritt reports a successful display by Ducks Unlimited at the Waimarino A. & P. Show in February despite atrocious weather conditions. To quote Diane, "We put up the tent on Friday in a howling gale, pitch black it was too, but as luck would have it, the tent withstood the test of the elements." Below is part of the tent interior display. Visitors displayed much interest in D.U. activities - Diane says "We combined with the Waimarino Acclimatisation Society for the display. Member Peter Broonbridge and I borrowed some of their gear and erected a sign for them as well. We also constructed a nest box model in half an hour flat!" (photograph - D. Pritt)



DU News

GENEROUS DONATION TO D.U.

Ducks Unlimited (NZ) Inc is delighted to record a very generous donation from Director, Sig Bronger. Sig has recently constructed 30 Grey Teal boxes and has donated them to the organisation. The value of the boxes is conservatively \$ 150. Thank you Sig for an outstanding gesture.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE WATERFOWL IMPROVEMENT ASSN (U.S.A.)

We have had some interesting correspondence from the Waterfowl Improvement Assn of the U.S.A. This group has a nesting box project in operation for the Carolina Wood Duck and to date over 1,100 boxes have been erected in New York State. Usage of the boxes is over 70%, which is impressive. Their nest box design is almost identical to the D.U. box except that their front is hinged for easy inspection - something we could have a close look at incorporating in our design. Boxes sit over the water, just as the D.U. box does, and it is interesting to see how the the nest box projects of the two organisations, in separate parts of the world, have developed along very similar lines.

DUCKS UNLIMITED (N.Z.) FEATURES IN THE DUCKS UNLIMITED (U.S.A.) MAGAZINE

A full length feature article written by Ducks Unlimited (N.Z.) Vice President, Paul Pirani, appeared in the August 1978 issue of the Ducks Unlimited Magazine, the official publication of the United States organisation. While Ducks Unlimited in New Zealand operates independently of the American organisation, the Americans have been most generous with their moral support and encouragement; their assistance from promotional and technical viewpoints, and with generous donations from time to time of items for our annual auctions. The article by Paul Pirani gave background to the organisation in New Zealand and featured some of the projects undertaken to date.

WE EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS :

Miss G.M. Bowthorpe	(F)	D.S. Nelson	(S)	
Dr W.K. Bryson	(F)	R.J. Pinkerton	(F)	
K.J. Cook	(F)	T.H. Sampson	(F)	Note:
G. Eley	(S)	G. Vanderstaak	(F)	(S) denotes Supporter membership
J.O. Gill	(F)	Wellington Zoological		(F) " Full "
D. Leeflang	(S)	Gardens	(F)	(T) " Trade "
I. Muir	(S)	Vern Wilson	(F)	

MEMBERS : ASSIST WITH D.U. FUNDRAISING - ORDER YOUR LAPEL BADGE!

ALL SALE PROCEEDS
BENEFIT DU PROJECTS.

PRICE: ONLY \$ 2-95 EACH
(size 5/8" diameter)



To: Ducks Unlimited (NZ) Inc - LAPEL BADGE ORDER FORM
P.O. Box 74 Hamilton

PLEASE SUPPLY ME WITH LAPEL BADGE(s)

CHEQUE ENCLOSED FOR \$

POST TO: (name)

(address)

DON'T MISS THE D.U. (NZ) ANNUAL CONFERENCE - JULY 1979 - AT WELLINGTON!

DATE SATURDAY 7 JULY 1979

VENUE SHAW SAVILL LODGE - KILBIRNIE
(formerly White Heron Lodge)



The fifth annual conference of Ducks Unlimited (N.Z.) Incorporated will be held in Wellington on Saturday 7 July 1979. REMEMBER TO KEEP THIS DATE FREE FOR OUR MAJOR GATHERING OF THE YEAR!

The conference will commence at 1.30 pm with the formal proceedings. Refreshments will be available during the afternoon and at the conclusion of the meeting, around 6 pm. Dinner will follow and then our major fund raising event - THE DU ANNUAL AUCTION - at 7.30 pm. The purpose of the auction is to raise funds for DU projects and past years have proved what a pleasurable way this is, for all concerned, to "extract" funds from our supporters and friends.

Two excellent speakers will address members and we plan to show a movie and/or slide presentation; details of these will appear in the next issue of FLIGHT.

Members and friends are welcome - please bring along wives, friends, sportsmen. This could be your opportunity to introduce a friend to Ducks Unlimited and its work. There will also be an opportunity for members who have not done so, to renew their subscriptions, and to enrol new members.

REMEMBER LAST YEAR'S MAGNIFICENT AUCTION ITEMS !

WATERFOWL ART & PUBLICATIONS, RELOADING EQUIPMENT, AMMUNITION, POTTERY, CAMOUFLAGE GEAR ETC!

An exciting collection of items has already been generously committed for the annual conference. Members/friends, business houses are also invited, if they wish, to donate gifts for the auction - these will be most welcome and acknowledged in FLIGHT and at the conference. Last year, some \$ 800 net was raised at auction to assist DU projects in the 1978/79 year. THIS IS OUR MAJOR AND ONLY FUNDRAISING EVENT OF THE YEAR - TO BENEFIT WATERFOWL!

Formal notice of the meeting and full details of the conference will be published in the June issue of FLIGHT due for publication and issue early June 1979.

YOUR ATTENDANCE

In order that we can finalise numbers for catering etc at the Shaw Savill Lodge, would all members who are planning to attend with friends, family etc, please complete the form below:

RETURN TO: DUCKS UNLIMITED (N.Z.) INCORPORATED, P.O. BOX 74 HAMILTON

MY NAME:

ADDRESS:

D.U. ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ATTENDANCE INDICATOR

NO. ATTENDING

KEEMAN REPORT

Neil Mair of Gore, reports as follows:

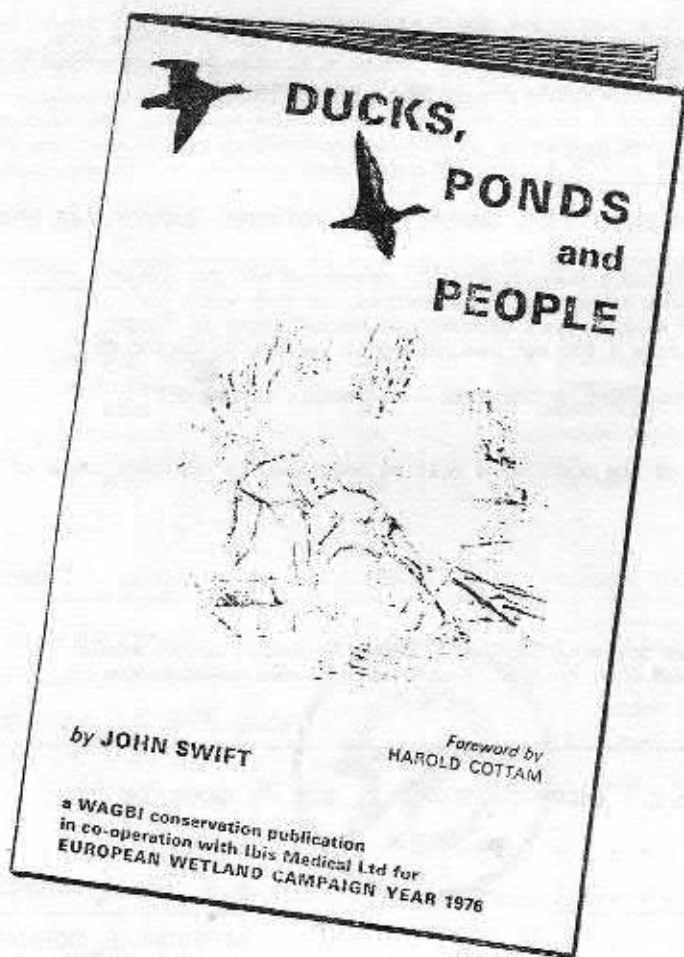
"Unfortunately, waterfowl information during the last three months has been relatively "scarce".

Gore Oxidation Pond Census revealed:

8 October 1978	102 Mallard 24 Shoveler
28 October 1978	30 Mallard 26 Shoveler
26 November 1978	220 Mallard

It would be impossible to estimate the waterfowl destruction which took place during the floods on 14 - 15 October. All five major rivers rose to levels never seen since the 1878 floods, as did most streams over the Otago and Southland provinces.

Enormous numbers of ducklings - along with eggs and nests would have perished. But, one female Mallard was observed with four ducklings swimming across fast flowing flood waters. They had to vacate a "once dry" spot because of the rising waters and head for higher ground approximately 20m away. The ducklings survived by remaining on the upstream side of the female whose body prevented them from being swept away."

'RECOMMENDED READING' FOR DUCK PEOPLE

Ducks Unlimited (N.Z.) again has copies available of the excellent publication "DUCKS, PONDS AND PEOPLE" by John Swift of W.A.G.B.I.

This book covers all fundamental aspects of pond construction, planting, conservation etc. It is a must for every D.U. member's bookshelf!

Cost is only \$ 3-95 including postage.

"FLIGHT"
Prepared by C.L. Pirani
Printed by Panicprint Ltd