



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 3/79 ISSUE 21



SEPTEMBER 1979

"FLIGHT"



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.....PLUS MORE!

DU News

DU RECEIVES FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM MOBIL OIL AND MINISTRY OF RECREATION & SPORT

Ducks Unlimited (NZ) has just been advised that it is to receive a grant of \$ 750 from Mobil Oil New Zealand Limited as part of its 1979 Environmental Awards programme, following a submission by Neil Hayes. Submissions have been made in the past for consideration by Mobil but as they have many worthy applicants, DU has not been successful until now. Congratulations to Neil Hayes for his efforts in earning for Ducks Unlimited \$ 750 which will be placed to effective use - and sincere thanks to Mobil Oil. President Ian Pirani will accept the award on behalf of the group at a presentation function to be held shortly.

The Ministry of Recreation & Sport makes grants each year to organisations towards administrative and other costs in the field of recreation and sporting activities. Ducks Unlimited was fortunate to receive funds in 1978 and has just been advised the Ministry has granted a further \$ 500 towards expenses for 1979. Such support is invaluable and gratefully acknowledged.

NEW DIRECTOR FOR THE N.Z. WILDLIFE SERVICE

Members will be delighted to learn that Mr Ralph T. Adams, formerly Deputy Director of the Wildlife Service, has succeeded Dr G. Williams as Director. Ralph Adams has always been a member and good friend of Ducks Unlimited - it was, in fact, on his suggestion that the name FLIGHT be adopted as the name of our quarterly newsletter. Ralph has had wide experience as a conservationist and as a sportsman and is well able to appreciate the needs of both hunter and conservationist. Ducks Unlimited wishes him success in his new post which he is certain to fill with distinction.

DU DIRECTOR TAKES A BREAK

Mrs Cheryl Pirani, who has been a director of Ducks Unlimited since March 1975, resigned in June to take a well-earned break from the tasks she has undertaken for the group over a long period - minutes of board meetings, correspondence, membership processing, submissions to organisations for funds etc. Fortunately for Ducks Unlimited, Cheryl will continue as Editor and producer of FLIGHT. In this capacity she has developed the publication into a widely read and appreciated document - internationally as well as locally. Our appreciation for Cheryl's work was recorded at the Annual Conference in July. (F.N. Hayes)

YOUR DIRECTORS: AS AT SEPTEMBER 1979

President: Ian H. Pirani
Vice President: Paul B.C. Pirani
Secretary: F. Neil Hayes

Messrs Dudley G. Bell, S. Bronger, H.I. (Bud) Jones,
Garry Girvan, Peter M. McLeod, Miss Diane Pritt,
Mr Julian Nelson Parker.

Officers:
Membership Secretary:
Mrs June Bronger
"Flight" Editor: Mrs Cheryl L. Pirani



KEEMEN REPORT



FROM GORE:

Neil Mair reports - In a continuation of its "Pond Subsidy" policy, the Otago Acclimatisation Society is paying subsidies on pond construction for waterfowl. The ponds will be developed by fencing and planting. This important aspect of waterfowl conservation is one which DU applauds.

A census completed for Swan and Paradise Duck in the Otago district showed an increase in numbers as follows:

	1978	to	1979	
Black Swan	3,624	to	3,596	(it is not known specifically what
Cygnets	54		274	district these figures cover and
Paradise Duck	1,806		1,825	the time of year the count was made.
				D.G. Bell)

Coal mining in Southland may affect three rivers - Mataura, Makarewa, Waihopai. The Southland Catchment Board was asked to report on the environmental effects the mining may have in the region.

A 'CALL' FOR KEEMEN

Would you like to become a Keeman for Ducks Unlimited? Perhaps we should say "KEYPERSON" - as the task may be carried out every bit as well by our female members too so long as they don't mind moving about in swamps occasionally.

The duties of a Keeman are simply to advise our National Co-ordinator, Dudley Bell, concerning any matters of interest to Ducks Unlimited which may be happening in your area. Keemen carry out a very useful function. They let our members know (their reports are published regularly in FLIGHT) of any local "happenings" such as droughts or floods which may have affected waterways, the sighting of various waterfowl, any unusual movements or sightings, the date the first ducklings have been seen in spring etc etc.

A pair of binoculars, thighwaders and an interest in waterfowl and its habitat are the qualifications needed. We hope that some of you will give it a go! Write to Dudley Bell at DU Headquarters, P.O. Box 74 Hamilton and he will be pleased to send you further details.

D.U. ANNUAL CONFERENCE - WELLINGTON



Dr Murray Williams addressing
conference participants



The auction: Mr Bill Wilkinson
on the rostrum, flanked by Mrs
Sylvia Hayes & Mr Paul Pirani



During the auction: Ian Pirani
displaying waterfowl art

REPORT ON 1979 ANNUAL CONFERENCE HELD IN WELLINGTON

The 1979 annual conference of Ducks Unlimited (N.Z.) Incorporated is history now - it was one of the most exciting, and effective from a fundraising point of view. The conference was preceded by a meeting of the board of directors. Fifty-four persons attended the function from all over the country and a massive \$ 3,000 was spent at the auction. Income for the evening was \$ 3,549 and expenditure was some \$ 900. Many thanks to those who participated for their efforts in achieving this superb result.

DU does not normally "single out" person(s) when expressing thanks as there are so many who work hard to ensure conference successes. However, our sincere and special thanks to Mr Bill Wilkinson - Bill has been DU's honorary auctioneer since the group's first annual gathering - he has an infectious personality and ability to "persuade" participants to bid enthusiastically for auction items, plus a grand sense of humour, appreciated by his audience. Thanks Bill! Thanks, too, to Mr Rex Giles of Wellington - Rex was a major purchaser at the auction and at the conclusion of bidding, donated most of his purchases back to the auctioneer and they were "put up" again. This generous gesture by Rex of some very desirable items was a major factor in the financial success of this year's programme. Sincere thanks, Rex! Dr Murray Williams, one of the guest speakers, and Mr Tom Caithness (both of the Wildlife Service and friends of DU for many years) purchased two valuable publications donated by Ducks Unlimited, Inc U.S.A. - and then donated these back to the New Zealand organisation for its library. This is certainly appreciated by the New Zealand group and these publications are valuable historical records, handsomely produced, of the activities and "early battles" of our affiliated organisations in North America and Mexico - they have a proud place in our library records.

Without the following, of course, there would be no auction! Grateful thanks to the following contributors for their generosity:

Mr & Mrs Glen Butts Melbourne	(Jim Beam Bourbon in waterfowl presentation)	Mr K. Mackie	(2 camouflage hats)
Mr & Mrs S. Bronger	(waterfowl art, tray, coasters, bullet collection)	Mr A. Miller	(publication)
CAC Industries Ltd Auckland	(Icase "High Flyer" ammunition)	Mr J. Nelson Parker	("Wildfowl of the World", household linen)
Ducks Unlimited Inc U.S.A.	(waterfowl art, framed prints, volumes DU Inc & Canadian history, 1 volume waterfowling history, boxes "all occasion" stationery by nature artists)	Ohakune Pharmacy (Mr B. Wilde)	(series mounted waterfowl photography)
Mr & Mrs F.N. Hayes	(waterfowl publication, decoys)	Miss D. Pritt/ Mr B. Wilde	(Sacks of "Ohakune" asstd. vegetables)
Iscos Sports, Wgton	(2 decoys)	Mr & Mrs P.B.C. Pirani	(Raymond Ching print)
Mr H.I. Jones	(waterfowl publication)	Mr I.H. Pirani	(1 Angora goat)
Mr D. McNeil	(1 pair N.Z. Scaup)	Sports Depot	(gun cleaning kits)
		Mr M. Timms	(trays butchery products)
		Wellington Sporting Arms Co.	(duck calls, shotgun wads)
		Mr W. Wright, Potter	(pottery)

Ducks Unlimited believes that all those who attended received enjoyment from their participation, whilst benefiting DU's waterfowl programmes for the coming year. DU looks forward to seeing everyone again next year when the annual conference will be held in Auckland in July 1980.

Special note: re auction and other purchases

Some members have inquired whether or not they can submit for conference purchases i.e. auction and other purchases, the receipts received, as part of their annual return to the Inland Revenue Department and whether such sums qualify for tax exemption. Unfortunately, the favourable tax exemption for DU subscriptions does not extend to any other items (i.e. the sum claimed must be either for a donation or a subscription). Although purchases at DU conferences benefit waterfowl, the member or purchaser has received something tangible for his pleasure and/or use - therefore cannot claim a tax deduction. Please do not submit any receipts to the Department other than those for membership subscriptions or donations with your annual return to the tax department as these are certain to be rejected.

MINUTES OF THE FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF DUCKS UNLIMITED (NZ) INC

Held at the Shaw Savill Lodge, Wellington on Saturday, 7 July 1979 at 2.00 pm

WELCOME

The President welcomed to the meeting the distinguished guests including Mr R.T. Adams - Acting Director of the Wildlife Service, Mr Rex Giles, Dr M. Williams and Mr T. Caithness - Wildlife Service representatives - also Mr K. Kuiper, Director of the Wellington Zoo, and Mr Bill Wilkinson, the Official Auctioneer. The President expressed regret that Sir William Gilbert, Director of World Wildlife Fund of New Zealand was unable to be present because of hospitalisation.

PRESENT

The President, Mr I.H. Pirani, Vice President Mr P.B.C. Pirani and 54 members of Ducks Unlimited (NZ) Incorporated. Apologies, read from a list provided by the Acting Secretary, were accepted on the motion of Miss D. Pritt/Mr P.M. McLeod. During the course of the meeting, numbers in attendance rose to 70 persons.

MINUTES PREVIOUS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On the motion of Messrs P. Taylor/P.N. Hayes, the minutes of the previous annual conference held on Saturday 1 July 1978 at Hamilton, having been circulated to all members in FLIGHT issue September 1978, were taken as read and confirmed.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND PRESENTATION FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Mr Pirani expressed pleasure at welcoming those present to the Fifth Annual Conference on behalf of the Board. In reviewing his report, as published in the June issue of FLIGHT, he felt there were some particular items which needed comment. The exporting of Brown Teal to the United Kingdom was a very worthwhile operation and the birds would shortly be shipped to Slimbridge. He mentioned a \$ 500 subsidy received from the Ministry of Recreation and Sport had greatly assisted the group during the past year and had been placed to very effective use. Operation Gretel had been a worthwhile activity during the period under review; the species appeared to prefer one type of nestbox in particular and contrary to popular belief would in fact nest in close proximity to one another. He commented that the Wildlife Service would shortly commence a study on the Grey Teal nestbox project and that the scientific evidence arising from such a study would be of benefit overseas as well as locally which was pleasing. Commenting generally on his report the President said there had been changes in Directors during the year which he felt was beneficial in that changes brought with them fresh thoughts and ideas to benefit Ducks Unlimited - which in turn would benefit waterfowl. He expressed the thanks of the Board to all the various organisations and parties who had contributed to the success of Ducks Unlimited during the year and he felt that steady progress had been made, which he hoped would continue.

On the motion of Messrs P. Taylor, J. Glover it was moved that the financial statement as circulated in the June issue of FLIGHT 1979 be adopted. Commenting on the financial report, Mr M.D. Midgley expressed concern that the subscription rate had not been increased. Subscriptions are tax deductible in the hands of members and Mr Midgley felt that members could afford to pay a little more than at present, if not by way of subscription, then by donations which are also tax deductible. After some discussion on the question, the Vice President commented that this matter would in fact be discussed at the August meeting of Directors. Regarding the figure in the annual statement for travelling expenditure, Mr P.N. Hayes, Director, explained that although this figure appeared to be rather high, the persons receiving the funds usually "repaid" them in the form of donations which meant that most Directors were currently meeting their travel expenses from their own pockets.

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OPERATION GRETEL: PROJECT REPORTS

AUCKLAND

As members are aware, the Auckland area's operation is based at Mr Tony Flexman's property at Pokeno, South Auckland and the results this year are being monitored by the Wildlife Service of the Department of Internal Affairs. DU believes that over the next few years some very worthwhile scientific and technical data will be produced by the Wildlife Service as a result of this study. Our thanks to Mr Ian McFadden who is carrying out the survey and to Dr Murray Williams who is overseeing the project. Both are spending considerable periods at Pokeno and on occasions staying overnight in a duckshooter's hut in order to monitor the birds more closely and for longer periods of time. Thanks, too, to Mr Tony Flexman for his help and generosity in permitting further study to be carried out by the Wildlife Service.

First inspection was on 16 July 1979 and Ian McFadden reports that as at September the following situation occurs:

	September 1979	September 1978	September 1977
Total boxes in area	107	107	87
Boxes used	75	not recorded	not recorded
Eggs laid	1036	340	133
Eggs hatched (to date)	392	62	9
Percentage Hatch rate	83%	not recorded	not recorded

Notes: (a) To date there have been 109 clutches laid of which 46 broods hatched; 7 were deserted and 56 still under way. The 46 broods totalled 470 eggs from which 392 birds hatched - making a success rate of 83%.

(b) Ian McFadden has some preliminary comments, such as:

- * some predation of eggs by rats;
- * some nest desertion caused by mynas "invading" boxes;
- * some egg dumping is apparent (i.e. more than one Grey Teal laying eggs in a box)
- * some boxes are being utilised for the third time this season
- * birds could be laying throughout the year providing the water level is constant. This could be possible as Mr Flexman discovered a bird using a box with eggs inside in April this year.

We look forward to a further report from Ian McFadden in the December issue of FLIGHT. (P.B.C. Pirani)

OPERATION GRETEL NEST BOX CO-ORDINATION

Message from Dudley Bell, Operation Gretel Co-ordinator:

Would any DU member who has constructed and erected a Grey Teal nestbox from the plans supplied in recent issues of FLIGHT please reply to DU headquarters, P.O. Box 74 Hamilton with the following information:

- * date erected
- * location - as accurately as possible
- * number of boxes erected
- * usage by Grey Teal (if any)



MORE

OPERATION GRETTEL: WORKING PARTY ON KOURARAU DAM



A cold wet group of workers (l to r)
Elizabeth & Bud Jones, Sean Elliot,
Garry Girvan, Allan Elliot, David
Brenkley & Jim Campbell



Garry Girvan & Richard Pinkerton
putting finishing touches to a box



Fence posts again being used.



Some of the finished boxes



Jim Campbell, Allan Elliot hard at
work, with Sean Elliot supervising

OPERATION GRETEL: PUKE PUKE LAGOON WORKING PARTY



"The Workers" at Puke Puke
Paul Taylor, Andy Garrick, Bud
Jones, Garry Girvan, Paul, Mick
and Bob Penna, Bob Pomeroy



The hardest work the blokes
have done for a long time!
Paul Taylor & Neil Hayes



Garry Girvan ably assisted by
Mick & Paul Penna



A nice line of boxes.



More boxes in another part of
the lake

MORE

OPERATION GRETTEL REPORTS - CONTINUED

WORKING PARTY ON KOURARAU DAM

A successful working party was held at the Kourarau Dam, Masterton, on 1 July and 30 Grey Teal nesting boxes were erected - in the worst possible weather conditions. In spite of the weather, the entire job was completed in the record time of three hours. The photographs on the previous pages show how it was done and the participants. DU is most grateful to Mr John Dobbs for his kind permission to erect boxes at the dam.

(F.N. Hayes)

PUKE PUKE LAGOON

Another excellent working party, this time at Puke Puke Lagoon, Foxton, erected 30 nest boxes on 29 July. Puke Puke is a Wildlife Service Management Reserve. DU member Andy Garrick is the Wildlife Service's permanent technician at Puke Puke and he will be keeping a close watch on the boxes (rumour has it that he will be arranging a celebration party when he has witnessed a Grey Teal entering one of the boxes!) The sandy bottom of the lagoon made it extremely difficult to drive in the posts but we did have plenty of "muscle power" (as can be seen in the photographs on the previous page), plus plenty of verbal encouragement. DU is most grateful to the Wildlife Service for permission to erect boxes at Puke Puke; also sincere thanks to Mr Tom Caithness of the Wildlife Service, scientist in charge of research and management at Puke Puke, for his efforts and co-operation.

Grey Teal visit Puke Puke regularly but do not breed there. So, it was decided that it would be a worthwhile experiment to see if Grey Teal could be attracted to breed at Puke Puke in DU boxes. Early usage is not expected as Grey Teal are not normally present at the lake until January/February. However after they have made themselves familiar with the boxes, we are reasonably confident that some initial occupancy will take place, probably during the 1980/81 breeding period. (F.N. Hayes.)

Photographs this issue: F.N. Hayes, Wellington

DUNEDIN - MR H. SINCLAIR'S PROPERTY

Just a footnote: Neil Hayes reports that Mr Sinclair now has 50 boxes erected as part of the Grey Teal nest box programme on this property. We hope to have photographs for the December issue of FLIGHT.

WAIKATO

MOUNTLEY SITE: NGARUAWAHIA

Inspection 4 August 1979

22 boxes 6 boxes with eggs flooded, lost 31 eggs
1 box with 3 eggs in good order and dry.

All but 6 boxes of the total were flooded when the lagoon rose over a roadway and the level was raised by 0.75m. This has only happened once before, according to the property manager. Nest material was replaced in all but 4 boxes and hopes for re-nesting were high.

Inspection 26 August 1979

5 boxes with new sittings of eggs totalling 39+ as one nest was being incubated by a female who did not move. It now appears we have at least replaced the eggs lost in the flood. 1 box had been hollowed and another with 3 eggs appeared to have been deserted. A working "bee" was also held in an attempt to avoid further flooding of boxes. 6 DU members attended and 10 further boxes raised and 3 new boxes erected. Many Grey Teal were seen, including visual evidence of box usage.

TANGIRAU SITE: TE KOWHAI

Inspection 4 August 1979

10 boxes No Grey Teal activity and here, too, disastrous flooding was apparent with boxes affected. Nest material was replaced in 5 boxes and 4 boxes may be removed and relocated.

Inspection 26 August 1979

DU now has 2 additional boxes in this area. There was no Grey Teal activity near the boxes. New nest material was added to the boxes previously flooded.

MANGAKAWARE SITE: NGAHINAPOURI

Inspection 4 August 1979

10 boxes 3 boxes were flooded and 2 had evidence of scratching by Grey Teal. All boxes above water had new nest material added. Flood conditions again prevailed.

SUMMARY:

A disastrous start to the Waikato nest box season for the Grey Teal - we are hopeful of better things next inspection.

(D.G. Bell)

ANNUAL CONFERENCE: FROM PAGE 6

ELECTION OF FOUR DIRECTORS FROM THE FLOOR

On the motion of Messrs P.B.C. Pirani/P. Taylor, Miss D. Pritt was re-elected. Nominations were called for. Mr F.N. Hayes nominated Mr G. Girvan of Wellington who was subsequently elected - seconded Mr H.I. Jones. Further nominations were called for, but none received. The President declared nominations closed and welcomed Mr Girvan to the Board of Directors, representing members' interests.

REPORT ON OPERATION "PATEKE"

The President reported that the year's results had been circulated. He commented that Brown Teal were difficult to rear in captivity, they did not lay well and it appeared to be very good luck when a pair did lay. Wellington Zoo had decided to join the operation, which was very pleasing. The President reminded members that the Brown Teal was on the endangered waterfowl "list" (worldwide) and obviously much more work and study needed to be done. Brown Teal had been supplied to the Wildlife Service and there had been some liberations by the department. Dr Murray Williams commented that the birds supplied during the year to the Wildlife Service were still at Mt Bruce where there were facilities for 12 pairs. At present, the Wildlife Service had a surplus of 4 males from a total of 28 birds. He agreed that the species was very tricky to breed and felt that the problem appeared to lie in the artificial incubation. Referring to wild stocks, Dr Williams reported that there are stocks at Kapiti and Puke Puke Lagoon. On Great Barrier Island, the Service estimate there are between 800 and 1,200 birds and in North Auckland probably about 400 - they are seen less frequently in the south. Dr Williams was hopeful that the Wildlife Service would be able to raise sufficient funds from interested bodies to support a full three year study of the bird on Great Barrier Island with a view to supplementing the Ducks Unlimited liberations with birds from the wild. He felt it important to have wild stock liberated with reared birds and hoped to be able to start this research within the next twelve months. In answer to a question from the floor, Dr Williams felt that it would be unlikely if the sex imbalance so prevalent with reared birds was also seen in the wild.

GUEST SPEAKER: Mr K. Kuiper, Director, Wellington Zoo

During his address Mr Kuiper traced back fifty years to his first introduction to zoos when his father had become Director of a major zoo in Holland. He felt that this type of environment changes one's whole life. Children now can gain information on wildlife from the media but 50 years ago this was not the case. Being surrounded by animals, one can gain at first hand information and knowledge on their behaviour during the course of their life cycle - mating, giving birth, rearing, food and shelter. With captive animals and birds, one had to encourage them to live as they would in the wild. He stressed that housing and enclosures were important, not necessarily the size of them but the environment, which would encourage breeding. One had to be inventive with food - what would the creature eat if it could not get food for itself? People who are involved with animals can create food patterns which stimulate the life of the animal. He commented that health was the result of feeding. In captivity, injury and treatment of a sickness is one of the most important facets of the life of an animal. Once it was injured or sick, its instinct was to lie down and die. Therefore, one had to overcome this instinct and then, when it recovered, introduce the animal back to its old surroundings, its mate and to life again. Health was one of the main problems with caged creatures.

With regard to breeding, Mr Kuiper felt the future of the nest was something which should be left to the bird. Birds did not like to be disturbed while breeding. In eggs hatched with an incubator, there was the problem of rearing of the young without their parents and it was not certain whether artificially reared birds were as good as those reared by their parents. Care was the most important factor in keeping animals. Mr Kuiper considered care was more important than love - one should care for 24 hours, not love for two and forget for 22 hours! Caring for animals was a lifetime occupation - it never stopped. Mr Kuiper also considered that patience was important in caring and rearing for animals.

Mr Kuiper then answered a number of questions from the floor and was warmly applauded for his interesting and stimulating address.



REPORT ON OPERATION "GRETEL"

Mr P. Pirani reported that nest boxes for Grey Teal are now appearing all over the country. On a re-inspection recently of the Flexman property at Auckland, he reported that there were eight boxes occupied, one with 12 eggs and one with seven. The Wildlife Service have visited the area to work on a programme for inspection of the boxes during the coming season and will be working closely with Ducks Unlimited personnel - Mr Pirani expressed the group's gratitude to the Wildlife Service for their interest and co-operation. Brief summaries were given of nestbox location and success rate. It was mentioned that in the Waikato area, 10 boxes had been placed at Tangirau and Lake Mangakaware, a further 10 boxes at Hurrells Lake and 2 at Casey's farm property. In the Wellington/Wairarapa region (Barton's Lagoon), 25 boxes were placed last year, now increased to 30, and the area will take approximately 50 boxes. Last season, out of 47 eggs, 30 were hatched and 2 nests deserted. The Catchment Board have taken an interest in the area and it is hoped they will improve it. At Masterton, 30 boxes were erected at Kurau Dam and the Wildlife Service had given their approval for 30 to be placed at Puke Puke Lagoon at Foxton. It was hoped to have 20 boxes erected at the end of the month. A Wildlife Service technician was at Puke Puke all the time as an observer. The most exciting area appeared to be in the South Island - at Outram, near Dunedin - where 50 boxes had been erected. In spite of high numbers of Grey Teal in the area, in the past the birds have not bred well so it was expected that there would be many birds queuing to use the DU nestboxes. Further north, at Christchurch, it was hoped to erect boxes at Woodend Lagoon for next season.

During questions from the floor which followed the report, the subject of materials used for the boxes and their cost was discussed and there was some discussion on alternative materials and costings.

REPORT ON OPERATION "BRANTA"

Mr P.M. McLeod reported that the Canada Goose project was a long term one and there was evidence it would assist establish the species in the North Island. In 1978, 24 birds were transferred north and in 1979 28 birds. This was done with the authorisation, help and co-operation of the Wildlife Service. The problem with the Canada Goose is that the species tended to fly back to the South Island - however, Mr McLeod considered the North Island would benefit from a wild Canada Goose population and that numbers envisaged would not rise to such a proportion as to cause problems.

Mr F.N. Hayes reported on a meeting with the Wairarapa branch of Federated Farmers with whom Ducks Unlimited and the Wellington Acclimatisation Society are negotiating to leave some of the geese fully winged. Management plans were being drawn up for Canada geese in the Wairarapa and because of a long waiting list of farmers wishing to take geese, it was hoped that the Wildlife Service would issue a permit to bring further birds north early next year. At present, there were approximately 120 pinioned birds in the Wairarapa and Ducks Unlimited hoped to eventually establish flocks of 50 to 100 birds.

During questions from the floor, discussion took place on Canada geese and their establishment in the North Island. Mr McLeod answered questions on the species and Operation Branta.

GUEST SPEAKER: Dr Murray J. Williams, Wildlife Service "The Biology of the New Zealand Paradise"

With the aid of coloured slides, Dr Williams commented on the New Zealand Paradise Shell Duck, stating that it was one of perhaps seven species of birds known as the Shell Duck. However, it was mainly referred to as the Paradise Duck and its present status in New Zealand could be said to be never better. The North Island birds were first established in Waiouru and in the 1960s birds were liberated in the North Auckland area which now has a population of approximately 5,000. The Paradise Duck was slowly moving through the North Island and, given a chance, would become one of the most common birds in the northern landscape.

Dr Williams discussed banding and commented that birds are rounded up in January and February annually when they are moulting. There were two techniques for rounding up - on smaller waters, a normal flounder net was placed across the water and birds driven toward the net, which was subsequently hauled in, the birds taken out and placed in pens for banding. On larger waters, a wire net wing was set into the water and birds driven by boat into the wing, then down into pens. Bands are returned by shooters and from these can be established the birds' movements, mortality rates, success of shooters etc. Dr Williams stressed it was important to know how long, when and how often the species breed and banding helped with this study.

OPERATION PATEKE - BROWN TEAL EXPORT

Two Brown Teal females finally departed for the United Kingdom on 11 July. They were accompanied by one pair of New Zealand Grey Ducks and after a journey of some 48 hours arrived at Heathrow in excellent condition. The birds were collected from the airport by Wildfowl Trust staff who rapidly transported them to the Trust's headquarters at Slimbridge in Gloucestershire. All birds have settled in very well at the quarantine facilities where they were required to spend one month. DU is hopeful that pair bonds will be quickly established with the Trust's surviving Brown Teal males. Regular reports on progress at Slimbridge will appear in future issues of FLIGHT.

Good news coverage was obtained on 11 July and Television One produced an interesting story and film for a 6.30 pm regional news item.

Ducks Unlimited would like to take the opportunity to sincerely thank the Wildlife Service for its co-operation and assistance, Air New Zealand Limited for subsidising the cost of travel for a major portion of the journey, and the Wildfowl Trust for their participation in this valuable "export" project.

Mrs Sylvia Hayes with one of
New Zealand's most valuable exports



REPORT ON ANNUAL CONFERENCE - contd

Dr M.J. Williams: "The Biology of the New Zealand Paradise" contd

Dr Williams then outlined the results of his study of the Paradise Duck inland from Gisborne. The country consisted of soft mudstone which eroded easily and was highly productive farmland, which the birds seemed to prefer in the North Island. Dr Williams found birds using mostly stock ponds and wherever there was a pond, he found pairs of Paradise Duck. He then covered specific topics such as social categories, food, breeding, rearing and survival rate. The Paradise Duck was divided into two social categories - pairs on dams and the flock. The birds also used areas where there was no obvious open water. Flocks used places near very large water areas and were made up of birds in the first or second year of life - several flock sites could be found in an area of several square miles which were used by the same flock. Paradise feed virtually entirely on semi-aquatic vegetation. Commenting on breeding, Dr Williams observed that birds living in a flock situation did not breed - all breeding was done by birds living apart from others. A pair would occupy the same area for years as long as the other partner was alive, staying with the same mate and only changing if the mate died. July saw the beginning of breeding and fallen logs were preferred for nest sites although sites also include tree holes and holes in the ground. Clutches were laid in August at the earliest, the average clutch being approximately 9 eggs. It was not uncommon for more than one female to lay in the same nest. Eggs were white and incubation lasted around 30 to 32 days and was carried out by the female - after 29 days she stayed on the nest all the time.

Dr Williams then covered rearing and commented that after hatching, birds stayed for about a day at the nest site and were then led by the female to the water. Rearing sites were often near running water or farm ponds. The rearing period lasted 8 weeks and throughout this time the adults defended the area against other ducks. At about three weeks, first feathers arrived and ducklings gradually feathered up and lost down after about 5½ weeks. At 6 weeks old, they could be easily sexed, females having white on their faces.

Survival rate: Paradise duck did not breed before the age of 2 years and not all of them breed at that age. Of all eggs laid, only two thirds to three quarters eventually hatch. There was a high loss of eggs at hatching and during the walk to the rearing area, about 10 per cent. There was also a loss of young once they reached the water - up to 20 per cent. After the first ten days, survival was very good and approximately 80 per cent of the survivors would be reared.

Dr Williams then outlined some of the ways in which the Paradise Duck regulates its numbers. There were then general questions from the floor. The President thanked Dr Williams for his participation and his address which was warmly appreciated.

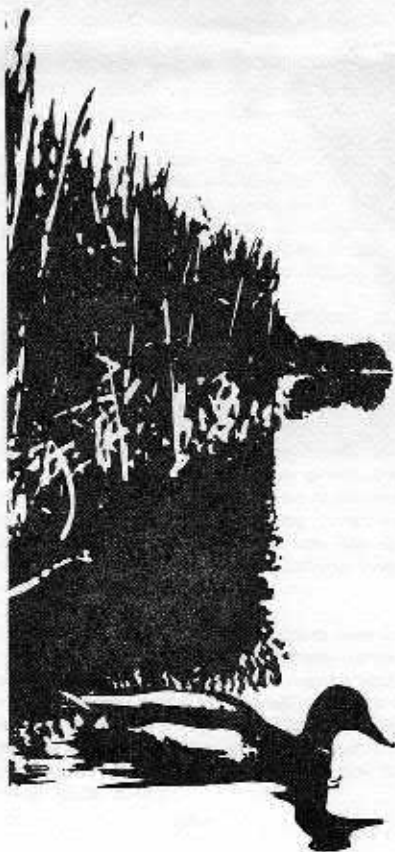
GENERAL BUSINESS

Appointment of Auditor: On the recommendation of the Directors it was moved (D. McNeil/H.I. Jones) that Messrs Hutchison Hull & Co, be elected auditors for the coming year.

Funding: Dr Williams asked the extent to which Ducks Unlimited had been successful in obtaining funds from the commercial sector of the New Zealand community. The President replied that several approaches had been made to larger commercial concerns over a period of years, but to no avail. One national airline had been willing to assist but that assistance had taken a great deal of work to acquire. The President added that this job was one for full-time effort and at present there was no-one within the organisation (all officers contributions being part-time and honorary) with the time to seek and plan such assistance, but that the matter was constantly in the minds of the Board.

"Flight" newsletter: Mr M.D. Midgley commented that the production of the newsletter was a remarkable enterprise and he felt the standard was extremely high. On the motion of Messrs Hayes and I.H. Pirani, the meeting expressed its thanks to Mrs Cheryl Pirani for all the work she has done with Flight production.

There being no other business, the President declared the formal part of the meeting closed and members rose for refreshments and dinner at 6.00 pm.



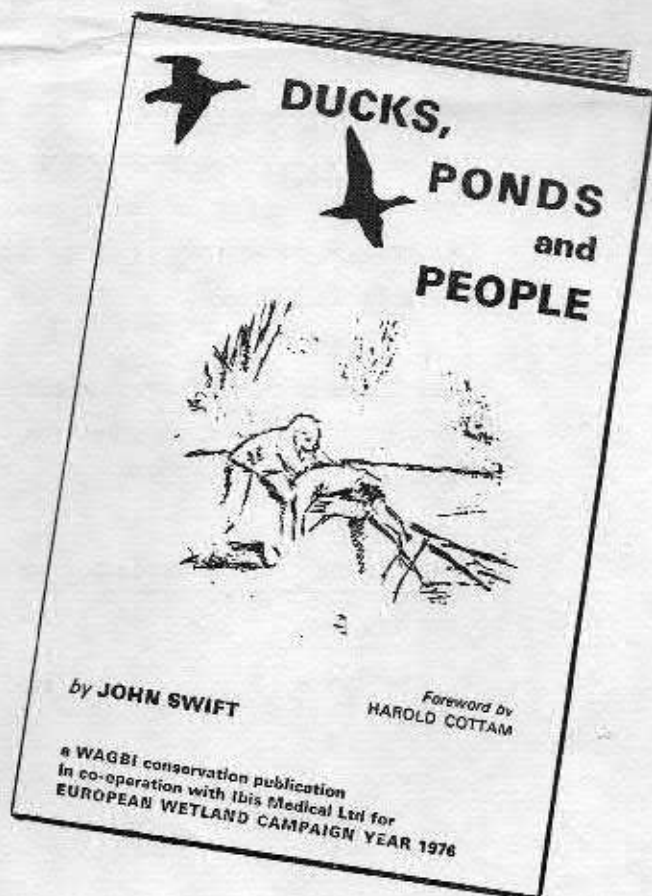
DUCKS UNLIMITED (NZ) EXTENDS A WARM WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS...

Bale G.F.	(F)	Head A.	(S)	Martin R.C.M.	(F)
Broadhead A.S.	(F)	Hellyer A.C.	(S)	Munro R.E.	(F)
Bulman W.D.	(F)	Humphrey Michael	(J)	Pomeroy B.	(S)
Christofferson M.A.	(S)	Jones Mrs B.J.	(S)	Putt G.H.	(F)
Cooper R.J.	(F)	Kinder J.	(S)	Rua J.	(S)
Cropper Mrs R.	(S)	Kingsbury Lynette	(J)	Steel S.G.	(F)
Douglas G.P.	(F)	Lench Miss M.	(F)	Van Huizum Mrs T.L.	(S)
Garrick A.	(S)	Lyons L.	(S)	Ward Mrs V.	(F)
Hayes Julian	(J)	McLennan B.A.	(S)	Westmacott dr H.P.	(F)

MEMBERS: ASSIST WITH DU FUNDRAISING - ORDER YOUR LAPEL BADGE!

ALL SALE PROCEEDS BENEFIT DU PROJECTS. PRICE: ONLY \$ 2-95 EACH.
(size - 5/8" diameter)

'RECOMMENDED READING' FOR DUCK PEOPLE



"DUCKS, PONDS AND 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.

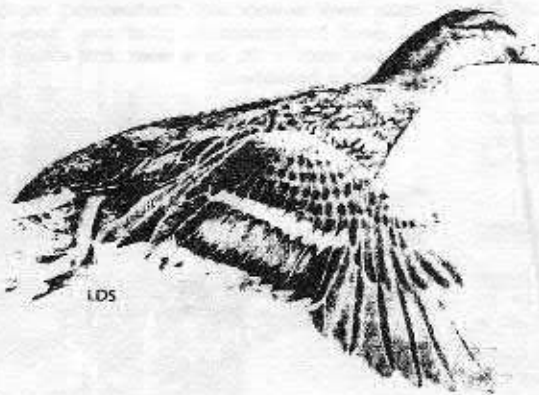
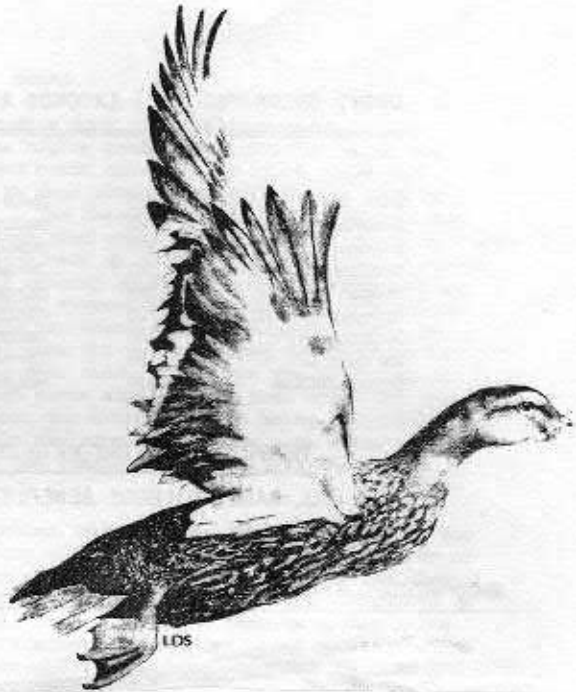
"SUBMISSIONS ON RARE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES AND THEIR HABITAT"

Copies are still available, at \$2.00 each (includes postage)

A FLIGHT OF GEESE OUTLINED AGAINST THE SKY, A FLOCK OF DUCKS FLOATING GRACEFULLY IN A SECLUDED COVE, THERE ARE FEW OF US WHO HAVE NOT PAUSED TO MARVEL AT THESE SIGHTS.

FOR SOME, THERE IS THE CHALLENGE OF SHOOTING, OF MATCHING WITS WITH A WISE OLD HONKER. FOR OTHERS, THE CHALLENGE IS CAPTURING THE NATURAL BEAUTY ON FILM OR CANVAS - OR JUST KNOWING THAT THE BIRDS ARE THERE.

BUT THE GREATEST CHALLENGE OF ALL IS IN PRESERVING AND RESTORING OUR WETLANDS - THE VITAL ELEMENT FOR THE CONTINUED WELL-BEING OF WATERFOWL.



IT IS TIME THAT ALL OF US WHO SHARE A COMMON CONCERN FOR WATERFOWL WORK TO MAINTAIN WHAT HABITAT IS LEFT, AND TO RESTORE WHAT WE CAN.

YOU CAN HELP BY SUPPORTING DUCKS UNLIMITED'S WETLAND PRESERVATION PROJECTS.

WHEN IS THE LAST TIME YOU GOT SO MUCH FOR TEN BUCKS?

Produced by Cheryl L. Pirani
Printed by Panicprint, Auckland
Graphics: courtesy Ducks Unlimited (Inc) U.S.A.