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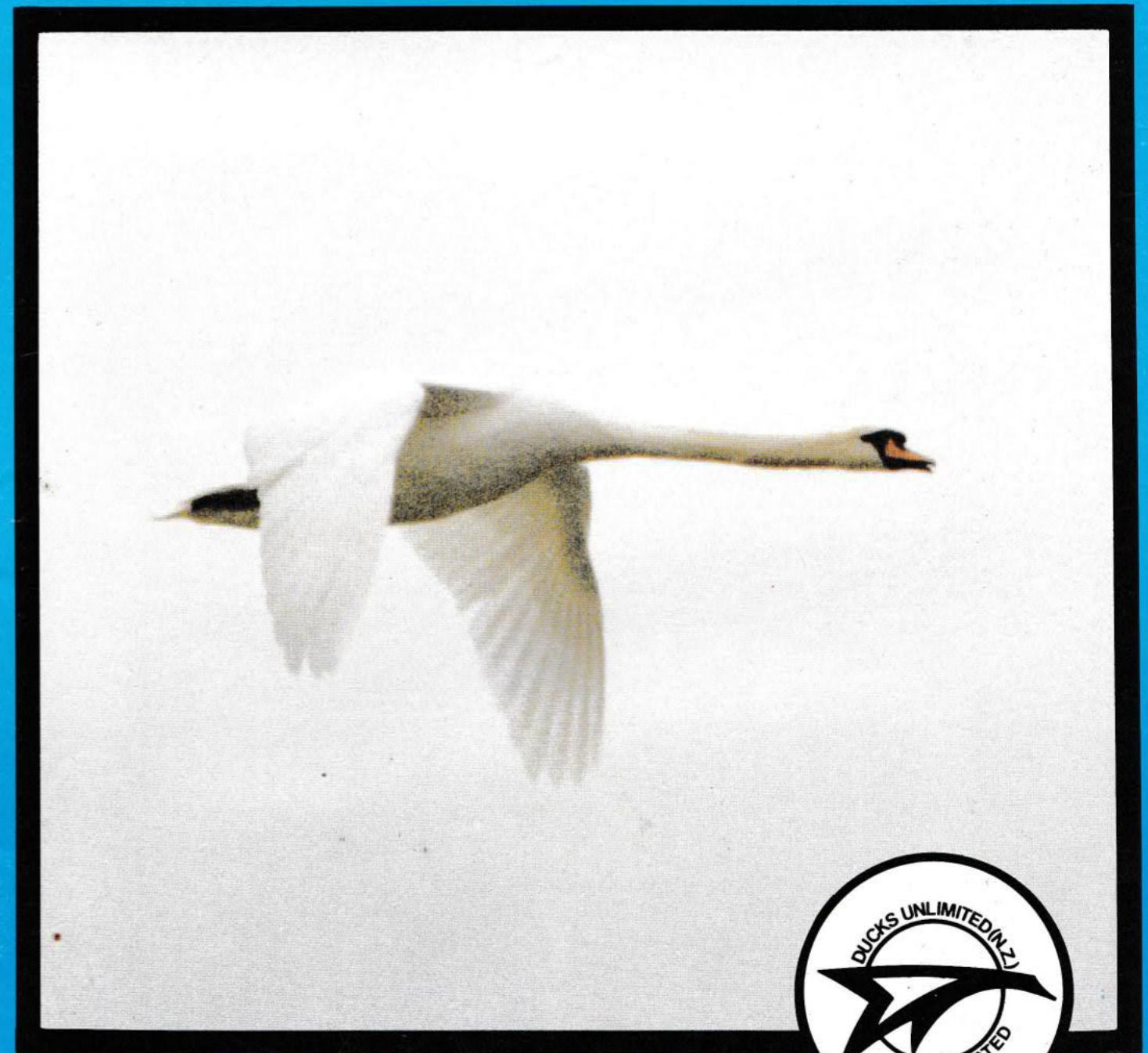
Distributed in New Zealand By: Winchester New Zealand

# Flight

No. 4/86 • ISSUE 50 • DECEMBER 1986

NEW ZEALAND REGISTERED MAGAZINE

DUCKS UNLIMITED  
QUARTERLY  
WATERFOWL JOURNAL



# DUCKS UNLIMITED (N.Z) INC.,

— FOR WATERFOWL AND WETLANDS —  
PO BOX 44-176 LOWER HUTT, NEW ZEALAND

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Cover picture: Mute Swan flying through the early morning mist at Lake Ellesmere.

Photographed by Bud Jones: Olympus OM2, Olympus 300mm lens.  
Other photographs by Gary Girvan, Neil Hayes.

Ducks Unlimited (NZ) Incorporated is a private, non-profit membership organisation dedicated to the preservation, restoration, creation and maintenance of wetlands habitat in New Zealand and to the propagation of the country's rare waterfowl as a valuable natural resource. The organisation was founded in May 1974 by a group of far-sighted conservationists and incorporated by them in June 1975 at Wellington, New Zealand. The national headquarters mailing address is PO Box 44176, Lower Hutt. "Flight" is the official quarterly publication of Ducks Unlimited (NZ) Incorporated reaching 2000 devoted members and friends concerned with waterfowl conservation. DU memberships beings at \$5.50 pa for Junior to \$16.50 for full membership with provision for trade and life members. Membership of Ducks Unlimited carries with it subscription to this publication. To assure prompt delivery, members who move are urged to forward their new address along with current membership details to national headquarters. Letters and contributed manuscripts and photographs should be addressed to the "Flight" Editor. Views expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily constitute those of Ducks Unlimited (NZ) Incorporated.

"FLIGHT" IS PRINTED BY LITHOGRAPHIC SERVICES LTD, LOWER HUTT

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Another festive season approaches as wetland areas continue to disappear. One area which has given some cause for enthusiasm is Home Lagoon, featured in the previous issue of "Flight". Thankfully, the Handyside family was encouraged to retain this impressive wetland and with considerable input from Ducks Unlimited together with assistance from the Wildlife Service and the Acclimatisation Society movement, this valuable remnant of habitat has been saved and restored. The final steps of the construction of islands and other improvements will be carried out this dry season.

There are many more such areas within our grasp but which require a financial input far beyond our resources at the moment. In the United States, most of Ducks Unlimited's massive funding comes from the contribu-

tions of local Chapters. Ducks Unlimited in New Zealand hopes to emulate the impact of its big brother in America by encouraging the growth of Chapters to assist in the urgent task of wetland preservation and restoration. To this end, the Board has recently appointed Derek Morrison as Chapter Coordinator to assist in this important task. So come on Christchurch, Blenheim and Dunedin; Eketahuna needs some challenge from further South.

I spent a very pleasant evening recently with DU members Elizabeth and Bud Jones at their Nireaha property wandering around ponds and inspecting the large variety of trees they have planted. The enthusiasm shown by Bud as he described how much growth some trees can achieve in just three seasons would be sure to stimulate anybody

interested in planting to enhance habitat and to add beauty to the landscape. Bud has proved which varieties thrive in varying conditions and has very valuable advice to offer.

We are fortunate to be hosting Herb Moulding from Canada shortly. Herb has been an engineer with DU Canada for some thirty years and will have a wealth of information to impart. Any members wishing to host Herb and his wife whilst they are touring New Zealand will, I am sure, be well rewarded. Please contact any Director for further information.

Finally, I thank all Directors and members for the support they have given me over the past year and wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.  
Jim C. Campbell



President, Jim Campbell, surveys the mute swans on his property.

# DU NEWS

## NATIONAL RAFFLE

The D.U. National Raffle was strongly supported by the D.U. membership. The support in fact overwhelmed Directors.

A gross income of \$7,500 was achieved, with a net profit of \$5,000 — equivalent to another large wetland project.

While we all wanted to win, it was great to see the three prizes going to prominent D.U. supporters. Leo Moslin who won the bronze shoveler is a farmer at Takou Bay north of Keri Keri and it was on Leo's property where we released 46 brown teal last year.

Second prize — the brown teal original painting — went to Dennis Handyside at Te Hopai Station in the Wairarapa. Denis is the owner of Home Lagoon where D.U. has been working on its largest wetland project to date (see September 'Flight'). Third prize of the Zeiss binoculars went to Pauline Chitty of Auckland. Pauline has been a D.U. member

for many years. D.U. Director Mark Newcomb did a fine job as raffle organiser and hopes are high that the D.U. raffle will become an annual one.

Sincere thanks to all for a great result.

## 1987 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

A registration form for the 1987 Annual Conference is printed in this issue. We will be back at THC Wairakei on Saturday and Sunday 11th & 12th July.

Diane Pritt, Smiths Road, Ohakune (Phone 58.016) is again co-ordinating accommodation and registration requirements. Please complete the form and post to Diane, with your \$30 registration fee, as soon as convenient.

## MEMBERSHIP

Horrie Sinclair continues to send new members in each week. Horrie is aiming at an all-up figure of 200 recruited by himself before the 1987 annual conference. This is a fine example to us all and membership continues

to grow at a healthy rate. But there is no reason why each member should not be recruiting at least one new member per month!

**New Life Member.** Mark R. Grace of 'Rathmoy' Hunterville has become D.U.'s 21st Life member, and at 15 years of age is easily our youngest Life member to date. Mark and his family have been D.U. members for many years and they have recently joined the Royal Swan project, having two impressive ponds in front of their residence.

**New Sponsor Member:** Bill Morrison of Masterton.

**New Trade Members:** The Queenstown Nature Park has recently joined as Trade members. The Park has also joined operation 'Pateke'.

**SINCLAIR WETLANDS BUILDING FUND.** Recent donations to the fund have been received from J. Begg (John's second major contribution), the Dunedin Naturalists Wildlife Society who sent a substantial donation after Horrie Sinclair had provided the society with a guided tour of the wetlands, Mr and Mrs R. E. Pirani, G. B. Mitchell, and Buster Abbott.

## VIDEO TAPES

DU has the following VHS tapes available on loan to members, for a maximum of two weeks and \$10 to cover postage:

1. Hidden Places/Sinclair Wetlands
2. Country Calendar/Ducks Unlimited
3. Country Calendar/Horrie Sinclair
4. River in Question
5. Wildfowl Trust

## CHAPTERS

The D.U. Board of Directors has appointed Derek Morrison of Otaki as D.U. Chapter Liaison Officer. This position will involve drawing up an annual programme of all chapter activities, arranging for chapter reports to be published in 'Flight', ensuring chapter financial statements are presented to the D.U. Board, keeping chapter committees in touch with new projects, and attending D.U. Board meetings.

Derek has been a D.U. member since D.U.'s formation and in the early days was responsible for an arrangement with Canadian Pacific Airlines whereby D.U. Directors were able to travel to Canada, at minimal cost, to study D.U. Canada projects.

**WELLINGTON CHAPTER FIELD TRIP**  
On Sunday 2nd November about 25 Committee members, DU members and friends attended the annual Field Trip.

The trip started with a visit to the Mt Bruce Wildlife Centre at 10am, where we were met by the Wildlife Services Officer in Charge and DU Board Representative, Ian Bryant, as well as Allan Elliott. Ian gave us a short address on Mt Bruce and the birds we would see.

The tour through Mt Bruce followed and it was pleasing to see the magnificent displays of native birds and waterfowl. On the pond site we were able to view Grey Teal, Scaup, Brown Teal and Mallard broods being reared.

The Blue Duck were on a separate pond enclosure, sharing this area with the Takahē and some time was spent by the party viewing these birds. I would highly recommend that an effort be made by all members to see this magnificent facility.

Then after a short break for lunch, on the

road went our convoy, firstly to Jim Campbell's to view one of his newer ponds and a pair of mute swan, then to Rathkeale College. Rathkeale has a fine pond layout with a magnificent range of birds on it. It is a tribute to the DU members involved and the school.

Our tour had been joined by our local guides Ted and Glenys "don't follow us, we're lost" Hansen, who then took us (via a scenic route!) to Bill Clinton-Baker's property. Bill gave us a short and most interesting talk on his success with, in particular, brown teal. Then we proceeded to his ponds. Bill explained his programme for rearing both Brown and Grey Teal, using foster Bantams

which have been through a selection process to ensure they have the correct maternal instincts. We were able to have questions answered and were most impressed with Bill's activities.

It was a most interesting and enjoyable day and we can only hope our party of mainly new members is as enthusiastic about our projects as the Committee are and that our trips will be as well supported in the future.

A particular thanks to Derek Morrison for his planning and arranging of this excellent trip.

**Wellington Chapter Fundraising Dinner.**  
The Chapter's third Annual Dinner and auc-

tion is to be held on the 21st of March, 1987 at the Shaw Saville Lodge, Kilbirnie, Wellington. Chapter members will receive an invitation in their next newsletter. All members and friends are, of course, welcome and any who do not receive the newsletter should make bookings through Chris Hooson, 39 Dominion Park St, Johnsonville, Wellington.

## DUCKS UNLIMITED PROJECT IN THE NEWS

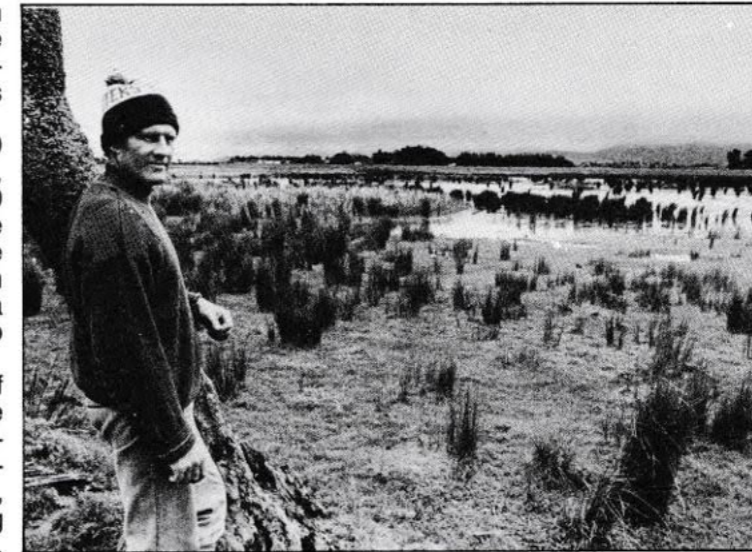
The following photograph and short article appeared in 'The Evening Post' of Tuesday, October 14 and is reproduced here with their kind permission.

## Farmer revives wetlands

Wairarapa farmer Denis Handyside alongside his 20 hectare wetlands reserve which this year, with assistance from the conservation organisation Ducks Unlimited, was reflooded.

At a cost of about \$14,000 the Te Hopai Home Lagoon, which largely dried up in 1980 through draining, has had the water returned to it. The water has been piped from the nearby Ruamahanga River, and will be regulated to allow plant regeneration.

Mr Handyside said most of his 240 hectare farm on the eastern side of Lake Wairarapa was once wetland. It included huge areas of lagoon, but most had dried up during the years through drainage.



It appeared as though the remaining 20 hectares would go the same way until Ducks Unlimited offered financial assistance. Support has also been given by the Wildlife Service, the Wellington Acclimatisation Society and the Wairarapa Catchment Board.

Black swans, bitterns and a variety of ducks including shoveller, mallard, and grey, all make their home on the wetlands.

Mr Handyside said a covenant would be taken out on the reserve so it would always be protected. While it would not be open to the public, anyone wanting to visit would be welcome to do so if they asked.

SPORTSMEN  
&  
HUNTERS

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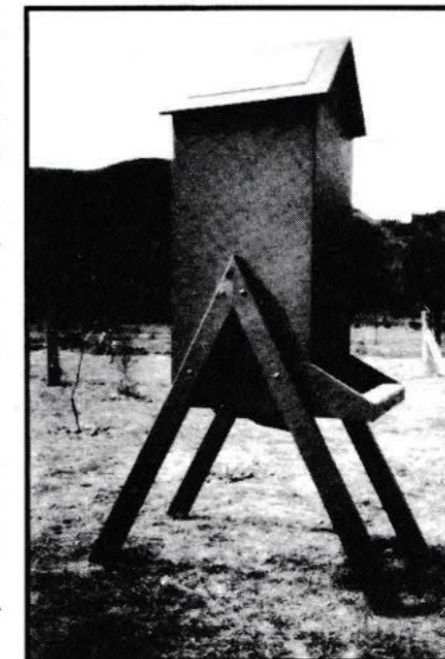


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2. The feeder will operate on any time frame around 24 hours. For example feeding out 2 litres of maize once a day the feeder will continue to distribute for at least 6 months without attendance. The feeder can repeat any number of times during a 24 hour period.

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DU display at Mt Bruce Wildlife Centre.

# PROJECT REPORTS

## OPERATION PATEKE

Final breeding figures for 1985-86. Final figures for the 1985-86 brown teal captive breeding programme and our successful breeders are set out below:

C. MONEY	18
MRS M. ATKINSON	3
M. PIKE	10
M. DENCH	6
R. MUNRO	14
WGTN ZOO	1
W. WRIGHT	3
J. CAMPBELL	2
W. CLINTON-BAKER	32
OTOROHANGA ZOO	14
F. N. HAYES	9
HILLDALE ZOO	8
W. SANDERSON	9
MRS A. GRAEME	1
NATIONAL WILDLIFE CENTRE	23

TOTAL 153

For the 1986-87 breeding season 34 members will be holding 75 pairs of brown teal.

**Liberations in Northland.** 125 brown teal were released in Northland in late July — 104 at the Mimiwhangata Farm Park and 21 at Kaeo — bringing the total released in Northland to 296 in two years; an incredible achievement. Observations clearly show that our birds are surviving well and successful breeding has been recorded.

**Whananaki fencing.** Thanks to farmer Jeff Carson the fencing of the Whananaki Estu-

ary brown teal roost site has been completed. D.U. and the Wildlife Service financed the materials for fencing and Jeff completed the work, which involved some 200 metres of fencing.

Protection of brown teal roost sites by fencing — and planting — is thought to be vital to brown teal survival, and D.U. thanks Jeff Carson for his outstanding support. Six brown teal roost sites have now been fenced in Northland.

**Future plans for Operation Pateke.** Whilst D.U. and its members have achieved miracles with the captive breeding of the rare and endangered brown teal — over 700 reared since 1976 — D.U. Directors are concerned about the long term future of the project. With this concern in mind, D.U. has recently drafted its thoughts on future brown teal work and on priorities. To keep members in touch with brown teal work the following is a slightly abridged version of a submission recently made to the Wildlife Service.

### BROWN TEAL RECOVERY

Thank you for providing some encouraging comments on the Brown Teal recovery programme.

Your comments have prompted D.U. to review its ten years involvement with brown teal and to consider future work and priorities.

But before itemising our thoughts we would like to state that *all* groups and individuals involved in the brown teal recovery programme must be prepared for *long term* involvement, if they expect the project to be successful.

No waterfowl recovery programme anywhere has been an overnight success; indeed the most outstandingly successful — the Carolina Wood Duck recovery programme — is still going some 80 years after it started, even though the population has increased from near-zero to 4 million. The Hawaiian Goose programme is still going some 40 years after it started, as are the Laysan Teal and Aleutian Canada Goose projects, many many years after they started.

We believe that the brown teal programme is very much in its infancy, yet if we look seriously at the results to date some outstanding progress has been made. (We have in fact just received a letter from Dr Janet Kear congratulating D.U. and the Wildlife Service on progress being made.)

We do, however, become a little depressed when we hear negative comments about the project and about D.U.'s involvement. We never expected our captive rearing programme to be able to reverse the decline of brown teal on its own, as can be clearly seen in the enclosed article which was written a couple of years ago. Captive rearing is only part of the programme, but in saying this it has long been recognised that in any waterfowl recovery programme captive breeding is a vital part of the programme.

Our thoughts on future work and priorities are as follows:

1. **Production of an in-depth Recovery Plan for Brown Teal.** This should be prepared by the Wildlife Service, with assistance from D.U. and should incorporate all of the following points. (Much work has already been done on a Recovery Plan and the work involved in producing an initial plan should not be too great, but it is now two years since it was agreed that

someone in Wildlife should spend 90% of their time on brown teal work! The Recovery Plan should determine other areas outside Northland where brown teal re-establishment should be attempted.)

2. **Maintenance of existing habitat in Northland.** From recent observations it is apparent that many areas of fenced and protected habitat are degenerating.

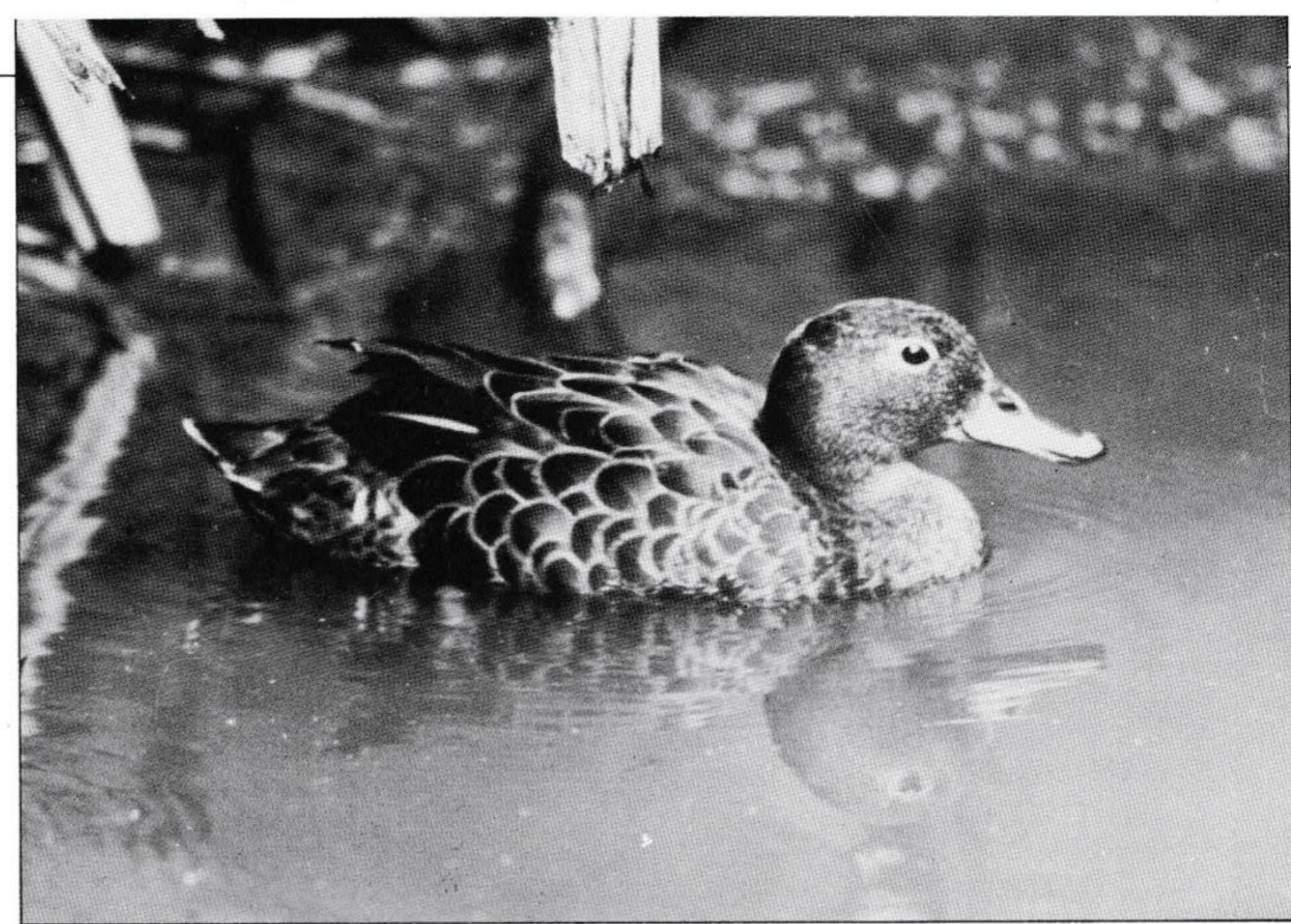
3. **Legal protection of brown teal habitat in Northland.** All known brown teal roost sites should be legally protected, or purchased and protected by Wildlife or the new Dept of Conservation. We believe this to be a relatively simple and inexpensive exercise, but feel that the brown teal is simply not receiving the priority it deserves. If we cannot maintain a stable population in Northland then none of us should be involved in wildlife management. We believe there are a few problems involved in ensuring a healthy brown teal population in Northland; particularly when you look at the Carolina recovery — from virtual extinction in 1910 (an era when the word 'conservation' had not been invented) to 4 million. Shooting, predators and massive destruction of habitat reduced the Carolina population to near-zero; birds were imported, 10,000 reared in captivity, tens of thousands of predator proof nest boxes were erected and vital wetlands were created and protected. In today's world with our advanced knowledge and technology our problems with the brown teal are surely insignificant by comparison?

4. **Creation of habitat.** From what we have seen at Mimiwhangata the creation of ponds and lagoons in suitable areas and with suitable protection could well be the key to not only maintaining a stable population of brown teal in Northland but increasing the population also. In this respect the creation of two further large ponds at Mimiwhangata should be given *urgent* priority to ensure that the ponds are constructed *this* year.

Other areas for pond creation should be sought and to help in this, adverts should be placed in Northland papers asking land owners to reply if they have suitable areas for ponding. Ducks Unlimited would certainly have money available for adverts and for pond creation. Our work in the Wairarapa clearly shows that the vast majority of farmers are only too pleased to have wetlands created. A large lagoon at Matapouri, or a series of small ponds, would have immediate benefit for brown teal.

5. **Enhancement of habitat.** Fencing, islands, rafts, planting, and nest boxes must all be part of the habitat creation and management programme. And a strict habitat maintenance programme must be instituted to cover all brown teal habitats. This is in an area where D.U. members can be of considerable assistance. As we have seen at Mimiwhangata, islands and rafts are a vital ingredient in the brown teal habitat programme.

6. **Predator control.** The reasons for the decline of brown teal on the mainland — shooting, predation, habitat destruction — have all been clearly documented and at Mimiwhangata where shooting is not



Brown Teal raised in Neil Hayes' backyard.

allowed brown teal are thriving. The predator trapping programme currently in operation is another excellent move to eliminate one more reason for the decline of brown teal and ideally a predator control programme should be instituted at all release sites. Of course, one important feature of Northland is the absence of mustelids in many areas, but on the other hand feral cats are a real menace to brown teal. Nest boxes will certainly help the predator problem and there is much work to be done in this area.

7. **Research in Northland.** We believe that a comprehensive study of brown teal in Northland is vital to the long term management and survival of the species. In fact this item should really head our list — above the Recovery Plan. At present we know little about brown teal in Northland and a research project to determine such matters as: the population size, habitat requirements, preferred habitat, food requirements, movements, usage of roost sites, adaption to man-made habitat, and so on, should be given urgent priority in the recovery programme.

8. **Captive breeding.** This is a vital ingredient of any re-establishment or recovery programme and D.U.'s success in this area has been impressive, but no recovery in the wild will be possible without all of the above points being implemented. But regardless of what happens in the wild D.U. will pursue, with vigour, its efforts to build a massive number of captive brown teal. We certainly appreciate your support for his part of the project.

After ten years of captive breeding, with well over 700 brown teal reared from under ten original pairs, we feel that the time is right for an influx of a small number

of wild birds to the captive rearing programme. An application has been made for approval to remove 5 males and 5 females from Great Barrier Island. This influx of new blood could well be vital to the continued success of the captive rearing part of the recovery programme.

Two years ago, at the last brown teal gathering, it was decided that Mt Bruce (now the National Wildlife Centre) should expand its role in brown teal breeding. We believe that this should be pursued and the Centre encouraged to rear, say, 50 brown teal each season.

9. **Liberations.** Contrary to our earlier thoughts we now believe that releases of brown teal in Northland should continue for a ten year period before a major review is undertaken.

Our observations show that captive

reared brown teal can survive for many months, and years, and breed quite successfully, but we have felt for some time that there has been a tendency to write-off release areas before giving them a fair go.

To quote the Carolina project again, large numbers of Carolina's into a relatively small area was one of the key features of the recovery programme.

Mimiwhangata has been an outstanding success, but we feel that 100 birds released at one time is too many. When the new lagoons have been constructed and the raupo infested lagoon cleared the means of over 100 should be possible. In the meantime we believe that a carefully structured release programme should be drawn up and except at Matapouri we believe that releases should be on to lakes or ponds, not estuaries. Our experience seems to indicate that brown teal

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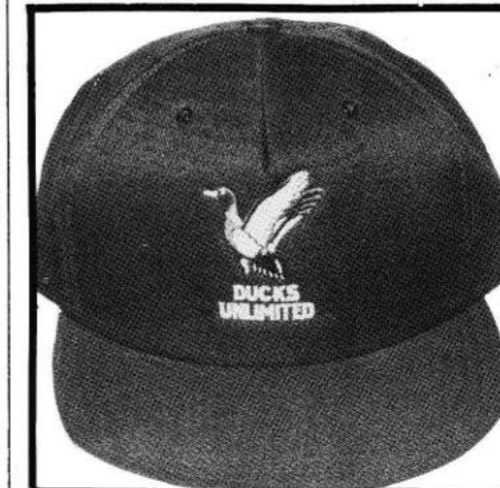
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adapt very readily to a lagoon environment — as witnessed at Puke Puke, Nga Manu, Matakana, Mimiwhangata and Koputara. A suggested release programme for the next few years is:

Mimiwhangata — 30 birds  
Matapouri — 20-30 birds  
Lake Ohia — 40-50 birds (if Ohia is suitable)

We strongly support the idea of releasing small numbers of translocated Great Barrier birds with captive reared birds.

We also feel that feeding the birds for, say, one month after release should be part of the programme, along with many hours of follow-up observation work.

**To sum up our thoughts:** Research on brown teal is needed in Northland.

A brown teal Recovery Plan is needed. Far more work is needed on habitat creation and enhancement.

A structured release policy is needed. Someone in the Wildlife Service needs to be appointed to the full time position of Brown Teal Recovery Officer.

We feel that the project is heading in the right direction, but a little too slowly for the brown teal.

We also believe that the brown teal recovery programme should be given a much higher profile before the Department of Conservation gets off the ground.

### OPERATION WHIO

The good news from the National Wildlife Centre is that good numbers of Blue duck eggs have been laid and hopes are high for a record number of blue ducks reared in captivity.

Bad news from the U.K. in that one blue duck has died after getting its leg band tangled in the wire netting. Hopefully the remaining pair will breed next season.

### OPERATION ROYAL SWAN

The 26 Mute Swans transferred from Peacock Springs last March have all been distributed to D.U. members.

A long list of members wishing to join the project has been compiled and if everything goes to plan more swans will be available early in the New Year.



Dusk at the Pearce Wetlands.

## WETLANDS PROTECTION POLICY ANNOUNCED

Ducks Unlimited is pleased to publish the recently announced Government policy on wetlands. It is pleasing to see that the philosophy and objectives of the policy so closely resemble those as set out in DU's Constitution.

### Foreword

The wetlands of New Zealand have always been an important part of the New Zealand environment. It was around the coastal estuaries and lagoons that the earliest Maori settled and harvested the shellfish, fish and eels that abounded. It was from the flax swamps that material for weaving was collected and waterfowl snared. To the early Pakeha the swamp brought an export product — flax fibre stronger than any fibre yet in use in the world — to help establish the settlement on a firm economic footing. And it was the enormous flat swamplands that yielded fertile soil when drained, sustaining farmers and supporting sheep and dairy cows. Drainage became a major cultural activity, like the bush clearance a symbol of the "great work" of turning New Zealand into an economically productive land.

Today, however, times have changed. With few of our lowland wetlands intact the many other uses are being recognised — habitats are rare plants and wildlife, landscapes in sharp contrast to the more uniform image of farmland, water storage systems and filtration plants for managing floods and water quality, recreational pursuits like hunting waterfowl and fishing.

But it is hard to reverse a trend. There is

little legislation for protecting wetlands, and a lot of policy, equipment and expertise ready to facilitate destruction. The agencies of government responsible for wetlands are scattered so that a coordinated policy for protection is difficult to recognise.

It is the extent of wetland depletion, the many positive values they have as intact ecosystems, the fragmented administration and conflicting policies, that have led the Government to ratify this New Zealand Wetlands Policy. It is a policy designed to show the way, rather than to specify particular actions. It foreshadows the establishment of the Department of Conservation which will clearly become the major advocate for wetland protection. Armed with this policy and WERI (the national wetlands inventory which will serve as the data base for the implementation of the policy), the new environment administration will be in a position to foster the sensitive management of remaining wetlands: as beautiful, complex, productive ecosystems, rich in unique plants and animals, rich in historical memory of how our culture developed. Just as the indigenous forest policy has served to enlighten and lead forest protection on crown lands, so will this Wetlands Policy help us find an ecological perspective for one of our most characteristic natural features.

Minister of Conservation

Minister for the Environment

*Russell Horsham* *Phil Goff*

### Wetlands Policy

In approving the policy, the Cabinet Policy Committee noted "that the policy is intended to indicate that in broad terms the Government regards the protection of representative important wetlands as being desirable, rather than to bind the Government to any course of action or to justify restrictions on the actions of the private sector".

### The Policy

In the context of this policy, wetlands is: A collective term for permanently or intermittently wet land, shallow water and land-water margins. Wetlands may be fresh, brackish or saline, and are characterised in their natural state by plants or animals that are adapted to living in wet conditions.

One hundred and fifty years ago the wetlands of New Zealand were widespread. They supported very large populations of birds, a prolific range of plants, and were an integral part of the life cycle of many species of fresh and salt water fish. Like the indigenous forests and tussock grasslands, many wetlands were subsequently developed for productive economic uses.

The various wetland types in their wide range of location (mountain top to estuary, snowfield to mud pool, swamp to braided river) are valuable for many reasons. **Hydrologically**, they may assist in reducing floods, in maintaining minimum water flows and in recharging underground aquifers. **Biologically**, they are habitats for a wide array of fauna and flora, including some that are in danger of extinction. **Economically**, they are essential for some inland and offshore fisheries. **Recreationally**, they are enjoyed by many thousands of fishermen, shooters, naturalists and those engaged in other water sports. **Educationally**, they form excellent examples of the functioning of ecosystems and the study of biology. **Scientifically**, they offer a storehouse of information on climate,

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vegetation, vulcanology, archaeology and other events enabling a better ability to manage future events. **Culturally**, they are of great historic and current importance in Maoritanga. **Scenically**, the New Zealand landscape would be sadly depleted without them.

Because past and current development and modification of wetlands has greatly reduced their former extent, emphasis in wetland management has to be given to preservation, with development only when there is an overwhelming balance in its favour.

**The need to preserve representative natural ecosystems already has public support and has been embodied in legislation.**

Society's recognition of the need to preserve representative natural systems is embodied in international conventions and within legislation. New Zealand, as a signatory of the International Convention of Wetlands, shares the international concern for loss of wetlands as a habitat.

*"Being convinced that wetlands constitute a resource of great economic, cultural, scientific and recreational value, the loss of which would be irreparable . . ."* (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, IUCN Bulletin April/June 1971).

It is now accepted internationally as well as in New Zealand that there are values in wetlands that have been too often neglected in the past and lost through lack of appreciation and knowledge.

New Zealand as a society has expressed in legislation its desire to preserve represen-



tative samples of natural ecosystems (Reserves Act 1977).

**Wetlands are a diverse group. Generally diminished, some kinds of wetlands are very scarce indeed. Immediate and continuing action is therefore necessary in order to protect them.**

**Brendan Coe sets off to explore the Pearce Wetlands.**

Wetlands are depleted. It is not only the overall quantity that has been reduced, there are many distinctly different types of wetland, all with their special values, and some are now scarce. Policies and management must recognise these differences both of scarcity and kind.

Wetlands continue to be modified. The Government is concerned that many of the rarest wetland types may be developed and lost.

**Wetland management must consider causes and consequences beyond the wetland boundary.**

Wetlands can be seen as distinct natural systems but are affected by and have effects on other systems. Management must go beyond the 'wet' land to encompass the greater system of which the wetland is a part. Such management may not necessarily mean reservation of the whole catchment, but particular care of sensitive areas.

**The long term benefits lost by modifying wetlands frequently do not justify the short term benefits gained. The government must act as advocate for wetland preservation because of the less tangible benefits from unmodified wetlands which accrue to the general public. Government also has an important role in wetland management promoting research and fostering awareness of wetland values.** It may not be easy to identify and characterise some of the benefits that flow from wetlands. Such direct and indirect benefits tend not to be valued in monetary terms and may accrue to large numbers of people over a long time period.

For example, unmeasured hydrological benefits include protecting downstream water quality, preventing excess flooding, maintaining water flows in summer and recharging aquifers and maintaining water tables. By comparison, the benefits obtained from modifying a wetland tend to be

more tangible (for example, revenue from grazing stock). As these usually flow to one definable group, modification often has a strong advocate.

As trustee of the public interest the Government has the responsibility to retain wetlands because of their "economic, cultural, scientific and recreational value" (IUCN).

The Government acknowledges its further role in the management, promotion, enhancement and creation of wetlands.

**Wetlands modification may cause irreversible changes. Such changes reduce choices available to future generations. This risk is heightened by the lack of knowledge about wetlands themselves as well as wetland catchment interactions.**

Once a wetland has been significantly modified it can rarely if ever be returned to its original state. Some of the values lost may be irreplaceable. A wetland may contribute benefits that are not appreciated until they have gone. Possible future benefits may not be recognised at the time of development.

The Government acknowledges a responsibility to future generations. If more of our unique wetlands are irreplaceably lost, the quality of life available for future generations will be diminished.

Accordingly, this statement sets out Government policy as a guide to all agencies and individuals who manage and make decisions in relation to the use of wetlands throughout New Zealand. The provisions of this policy are to be reflected in local, regional and national policies and legislation that relate to wetlands and their management.

#### Objectives

##### 1. Preservation and Protection

- 1.1 To act urgently to protect by reservation additional wetlands that fulfill the criteria of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) for Wetlands of International Importance.
- 1.2 To protect wetlands of national importance, and where appropriate, wetlands of regional and local importance.
- 1.3 To gain adequate permanent protection of representative examples of all types of wetland in private and public ownership. Priority will be given to preservation of the least modified and most ecologically viable examples of each kind.



**Wetlands need maintenance. Mark Pearce hard at work in the Pearce Wetlands project.**

in such a way as to maintain or enhance that role.

##### 2. Wetlands Inventory

- 2.1 To maintain an inventory of the most significant wetlands.
- 2.2 To link the national inventory for wetlands with other related government resource inventories to ensure optimal compatibility of the inventory.

##### 3. Public Awareness

- 3.1 To promote public awareness of wetland values and encourage public participation in the planning and management of wetlands.
- 3.2 To preserve and enhance the opportunities afforded by wetlands for education, scientific study and recreation.
- 3.3 To promote the tourism and recreational potential of wetlands.

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# Peter offers respite for Waikanae birdlife

The following article appeared in 'The Dominion' newspaper of October 4, 1986 and is reproduced here with their kind permission. It will be of interest to readers of 'Flight' not only because it reflects the growing public awareness of the importance of wetlands, but also because of the strong DU connection both in writer and subject. Adrienne Longuet, the writer, was made an honorary member of DU in recognition of the valuable publicity she brought to the organisation in her direction of two 'Country Calendar' programmes which featured Ducks Unlimited activities and Horrie Sinclair's wetlands. Peter McKenzie, the subject, is a DU member whose Nga Manu Sanctuary is participating in two DU projects. In 1984, 22 Brown Teal were released there at the sanctuary and are reported to be breeding well there. Earlier this year, a pair of Mute Swan were released there as part of the 'Royal Swan' project.

When Peter McKenzie inherited a fortune in 1974 he gave \$100,000 of it away — to found a wildlife trust. Mr McKenzie, 33 wanted to create an area near Wellington where all types of birds could live and breed safely and where fast-disappearing swamp forest could be preserved.

But two factors turned his dream into a long-term project — the difficulty of finding a suitable site and the subsequent struggle with the legal niceties of subdivision. It was not till this winter that his generosity and single-minded ambition were rewarded with freehold title to the 10 hectares he had transformed during the preceding eight years.

That land, in Waikanae, is now the Nga Manu Sanctuary.

**Peter McKenzie trained as a geologist before his interest in birdlife started taking over his life. With money from an inheritance and help from a landowner he has set up a bird sanctuary at Waikanae. ADRIENNE LONGUET reports.**

Just about any day of the week you'll find Mr McKenzie at the sanctuary — a tall, energetic man with brown eyes as bright as his moreporks and a black beard big enough for

a nesting site. In his office at the sanctuary an interview is constantly interrupted by the telephone.

He picks it up. "Bird sanctuary . . . does it have a leg band? Ah, a racing pigeon. Just ignore it. Don't feed it and it'll go away. They're not the brightest of birds. It'll be taking part in a race — obviously having a couple of days rest!"

People phone in about anything and everything, from spiders in the bath to penguins under the house, the latter being a very smelly business according to Mr McKenzie.

He has been barmy about birds since he went to Mt Isa, Australia, as a young man to work as a geologist. Instead he became interested in the local birdlife and returned to New Zealand determined to find work in that field.

It's hardly surprising he ended up in a job that keeps him outside. He's a fresh air freak from way back. He brightened up life as a boarder at Nelson College by heading for the hills whenever possible. He loved the outdoors and would often go hunting with friends near the Nelson lakes. He was grateful to be in one of the first classes to use a lodge the college built in the hills near the Abel Tasman National Park.

Peter McKenzie became one of the lodge leaders and would set off on three-day tramps with several boys under his wing.

The fact that it also saved him from attending cadet training was entirely incidental, he says.

It was that same love of the outdoors that prompted him to try geology as a career. University, however, was not quite as he had imagined and it was the refund of his second-year fees that paid for his trip to Mt Isa.

On his return to New Zealand a friend told him about an opening at the Wellington Zoo and "they took me on the strength of my keeping an Australian gallah". He became the zoo's birdkeeper. "I picked up lots in my two years there."

Zoo staff often talked of opening a native flora and fauna section but nothing came of it. Then came the inheritance that made it possible for Mr McKenzie to do something similar on his own. "I decided the best way of going about it would be to set up a trust, so I leapt in with both feet before I could change my mind."

The Nga Manu Trust was established in 1974 with Sir Robert Falla, one of New Zealand's foremost ornithologists, as its chairman.

Mr McKenzie spent the next four years searching for a suitable site. The requirement was reasonable access, bush and a decent amount of water. It was not until 1978 that he literally stumbled on the Waikanae property while inspecting a neighbouring farm that was for sale. "I staggered to the top of a sandhill and there it was — a big swamp."

He was elated, with most of the surrounding area having been drained for farming, true swamp has been almost impossible to find.

Moss Smith, a Waikanae identity, owned



Peter McKenzie feeds wood pigeons at the Sanctuary. Photo, Simon Townsley.

the property. "He thought I was nuts when I told him what I wanted to do with a little bit of his land," Mr McKenzie said. "But he was great when he cottoned on. He leased it to

the trust for a peppercorn rental."

For the next few years Mr McKenzie did all the development himself.

He flew over the area with a camera then drew his plans on to the photographs. They were then drawn onto the land with a bulldozer and dragline.

By digging three large ponds he created vast mountains of black, greasy peat. One of his trustees remarked: "What a bloody mess." But Mr McKenzie thought his mess was marvellous, even though it did take two years to clean up.

"The peat had to dry out before we could

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spread it. I became an expert at getting bulldozers out of the stuff — virtually every machine we had here got stuck."

Mr McKenzie planted trees, built aviaries and pushed three truckloads of rock and gravel around in a wheelbarrow to form a bushwalk. "I was fit and lean in those days."

His achievement has been the preservation of wetland — a type of habitat that has been vanishing along with the particular birds and plants it supports.

Extensive drainage has already cost New Zealand much of its swamp forest, which can take centuries to re-establish. Mr McKenzie has saved a significant remnant.

His kahikatea, pukatea, and swamp maire attract many budding botanists from Victoria University, while the number of bird species at the sanctuary has risen from 26 in 1978 to 53 at present. Mr McKenzie has been breeding and releasing birds into the wild too, with the help of the conservation group Ducks Unlimited.

Most of the common native birds use the sanctuary and all types of waterfowl, except the blue duck, feed on the ponds, from scaup and grey teal to the larger black swans and Canada geese. Some of the rarer visitors include wild falcon, brown teal bitterns, kakas and the Australian glossy ibis.

A discussion is interrupted by the phone again. "Bird sanctuary... yes, wood pigeons often fly into things. Well if you bring it in I'll have a look at it. We should be able to strap up its wing."

The hospital section has many patients. Moreporks who have been hit by cars and dozens of blackbirds and thrushes. The casualties usually have broken wings which Mr McKenzie either splints or straps up. The more difficult cases go to the vet.

Many invalids are victims of the strong nor-westerly that goes with Nga Manu's location. Seabirds like the albatross and giant petrel are blown in exhausted and simply need a short convalescence.

In the meantime, Kapiti coast sailors, beware! Mr McKenzie has resurrected another of his outdoor passions. His newly painted pink and grey trailer sailer will be chasing the winds that blow his birds about and this summer he will be out to catch the leaders.

Nga Manu Sanctuary is open every day except Mondays and Christmas Day. Admission: adults \$1.50, children 50 cents, family \$3. For further inquiries contact Nga Manu Sanctuary, PO Box 126, Waikanae or phone 34-131.

Peter McKenzie with part of the original 1984 Brown Teal release at Nga Manu.



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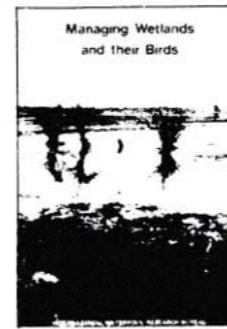
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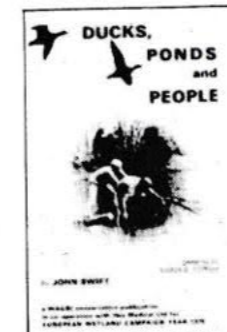


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