

Flight

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1999

ISSUE 98



DUCKS UNLIMITED NEW ZEALAND INC.

For Wetlands and Waterfowl.

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Wairarapa Chapter

WETLAND AND GARDEN TOUR FAMILY DAY

Sunday March 7, 1999

Neighbouring Chapters Welcome

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Bring along the family and interested friends

Barbecue facilities for lunch

For a programme, please phone:

Wellington members: William Abel (04) 586 2752

Manawatu members: Neil Candy (06) 353 6132

Wairarapa members: Glenys Hansen (06) 378 9967

INSIGHT

Graham Gurr

President

By the time you read this, another Christmas will have passed, and we can start counting down the shopping days until the next. I hope you have had a safe Christmas and New Year. The seasons come and go, and we all get older.

Ducks Unlimited, too, is older and, I would hope, wiser. This year we celebrate our 25th Annual General Meeting. The challenges for the future seem to get greater each year, and after 25 years I wonder if we are fulfilling the vision of those who started the organisation in New Zealand.

Our American and Canadian friends in DU go from strength to strength. We hear of multimillion dollar budgets as they deal with migratory waterfowl that know no boundaries and cover a continent. That they are succeeding is demonstrated by the return of waterfowl in numbers not seen since the fifties.

It should be easy for us in New Zealand to achieve similar success. Our waterfowl are not migratory in the same way as they are in North America. We can readily identify problems with local populations. Yet, each year, we fail to make any discernable impact with brown teal and blue duck - species whose very survival is threatened. It may be time to look for new directions.

You, as a member, have a role in deciding where this organisation goes in the future. Support a local Chapter and, if there isn't one, start one. Come to the next AGM. This year we will be returning to Tokaanu for the weekend of July 23 - 25. Your invitation is enclosed with this issue of Flight. It should be one hell of a party but it's also an opportunity for you to have your say.



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OUR MISSION

We are a voluntary membership-based society dedicated to the conservation of New Zealand wetlands through:

- wetland restoration and development;
- conservation programmes for threatened waterfowl;
- advocacy and education of wetland values.

By these means we seek to ensure the ethical and sustainable use of wetland resources by all existing and future users.

Cover Photo: Brown teal. Photo supplied by Melvin Pike.

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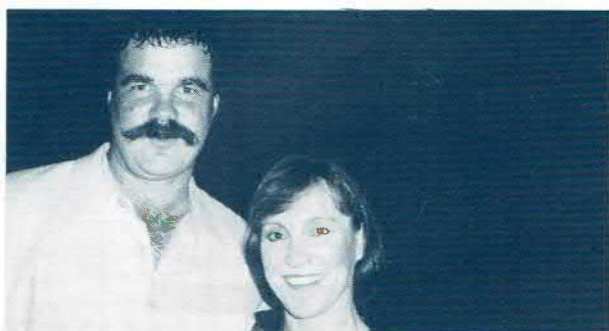
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OUR People

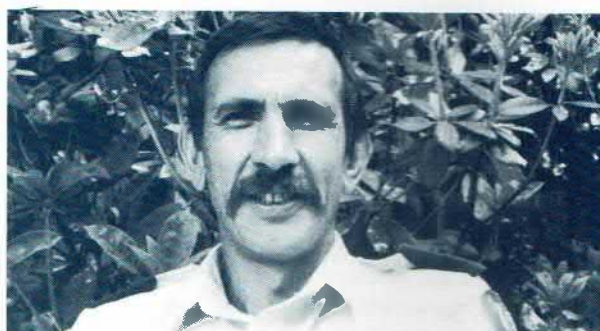


Peter Dobson and Carolyn Andrews

Peter and Carolyn have been staunch DU members for four years. Carolyn is a hairdresser and an avid gardener, and Peter a hunter. Both share a love of travel and skiing.

Born in Auckland, Peter met Marton-born Carolyn in Marton when they both attended Rangitikei College there.

Flight readers will be familiar with Peter Dobson's work at the Ashhurst Domain. He has his own contracting business, which mainly involves digger work. His efforts at the Ashhurst Domain development gave him a great deal of satisfaction, though he experienced some problems with the uncertain solid base. Most of his clients claim that he has nerves of steel.



Geoff Reid

Geoff has been a member of DU for five years and is developing a wetland at Mikimiki in the foothills of the Taranaki just north of Masterton (see article on page 8).

Born in the Bay of Plenty, Geoff went to school in Rotorua. After secondary school, he served a sheet metal apprenticeship and was employed in the industry for two years before joining the Police Force in 1981. He is now a senior sergeant in Masterton.

Geoff's interests include hunting and diving and the property at Mikimiki. He is married to Gayle and they have two sons, Damian, 23, and Cory, 15.

Wetlands: an Active Engagement

Twenty years ago Dr Tony Reiger made his first trip to New Zealand and fell in love with the beauty of the country, the people, the thrilling quality of the bird song and the precious wetlands teeming with all levels of life and wonderment.

The following edited extract is from a letter written by Tony Reiger in which he explained his perception of the mission and commitment he shares with many others in DU and the conservation "movement" broadly:

"...We have come to a point where people of good faith must try building bridges to one another, developing a common ground and implementing a responsible majority consensus to enhance and expand the world's wetlands.

The alternative is acceptance of the deteriorating status quo and further fractionalising and encouragement of the wall builders. While extremists on all sides may not be available to reason, the general public is educable and is worth building bridges to.

What the general public thinks about hunting, fishing (the so-called blood sports) and DUNZ's mission will, rightly or wrongly, determine the future of these activities. Posturing about "traditional" rights, legal technicalities, and who has the moral high ground, will all be moot in the long run.

The majority in a democracy will eventually decide the future or lack of one for these endeavours. North American studies show a decline over the past 40 years in public support for hunting and fishing. While there are reasons for this, New Zealanders and non-New Zealanders must not allow one of the reasons to be

unwillingness to find a common ground with that same general population.

If we care for the future of responsible and ethical hunting and fishing, then we are overdue in engaging the public in thoughtful, mutually respectful ways. The public will respect and understand us if we foster an exchange of ideas, lead by cleaning up our own acts, foster debate on innovative problem-solving, and stop being defensive whenever set ways are challenged.

I have lots to do in Alaska where I live. I actively engage everyone I can in whatever way to commit to the vital future of wetlands. I am blessed in being able to spend some time in New Zealand. I get out of it the awareness that I'm spending time and energy in something beyond and more important than me - hopefully, something timeless in this world.

It doesn't matter where we are based; all that really matters is that we understand that we're all in this together...

Sincerely,
Tony Reiger"



HAMILTON CHAPTER

The dinner and auction on October 9 last year was extremely successful, attended by 26 members who raised \$2,500. Our thanks to the auctioneer and all those who contributed.

Particular acknowledgement must be made to Michelle MacKay who organised the event virtually single handed. With some membership support, this is the beginning of a resurrected Hamilton Chapter. It will take only a couple of keen members to contact Michelle on (07) 824 1087 and the chapter will be up and running. Michelle can't do it alone.

MANAWATU CHAPTER

Over 80 people attended the Manawatu Chapter annual banquet and auction held at the Coachman on October 17. Complimentary champagne cocktails set the night off, and the women were presented with an orchid corsage, the orchids being kindly donated by Bunny and Marlene Paddy. Dishes supplied by members included Canada goose, swan, pheasant, peacock, venison, trout and wild pig.

Alan Fielding gave a short slide presentation after dinner, outlining the proposed education centre and viewing facilities at the Ashhurst Domain, to be funded by the Pacific Development and Conservation Trust and local and national businesses who have offered support.


With auctioneer Bob Wood once again in fine form (he tried to sell Alan's slide carousel as the first auction item), a healthy profit of \$4,500 was made. (Was that a \$2 bid or a \$200 bid, Pete?).

The Chapter is grateful to the people who contributed auction items, particularly Murray's Nurseries who donated trees and the Coachman which provided a dinner-for-two prize for the raffle.

MANAWATU A & P SHOW

The display stand pictured below advertising wetlands and the aims of the organisation was mounted by DU at last year's Manawatu Show. Several display boards featured photographs of local wetlands and there was a great deal of interest from a wide cross-section of the public. The DU profile was lifted in the area and genuinely interested people went away with membership forms. Hopefully, many more are aware of DU and the work being done. (Photo supplied by Neil Candy).

Thank you to Alan Fielding who managed to book the site free of charge, and also to Peter Dobson who gave freely of his time over the two days.

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YOUR WETLANDS
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MANAWATU CHAPTER CLAY SHOOT

The increasingly popular clay shoot will be held on March 28, 1999 at Neil and Julie Candy's property, Hickford Road, Foxton. This is the annual Andy Tannock's Hunting and Fishing Miroku Shoot of 100 targets spread over two fields. The majority of prizes will be lucky draw.

BLUE DUCK UPDATE

The transfer of further blue duck to WWT in 1997 is paying dividends. The Winter issue of the WWT Wildfowl and Wetlands magazine notes that four pairs of the blue duck bred this year. Infertile eggs meant only four birds were reared. These were from the most successful pair at the WWT Arundel centre. At Arundel, the blue duck have a refurbished pen. Work involved removing silt and relining the ponds in the Blue Duck Pen which now houses the four offspring from this season. Expectations were that once the birds were resettled, courtship behaviour as a prelude to another successful breeding season would be seen.

WATERFOWL EXCHANGE

There has been no response to date, but Flight is always willing to publish buy, swap, sell or steal information about waterfowl.

WETLAND GARDEN DAY

A wetland garden tour in Wairarapa is planned for March. Wellington and Manawatu members are warmly invited to take part in what is proposed as a fun day and not a fundraiser. See inside front cover for details.

NATIONAL RAFFLE

Circumstances prevented DU running a raffle last year but members will be receiving tickets soon for a raffle which has a first prize of a \$3,500 gift voucher from Sportways Hunting and Fishing, Hamilton, or \$3,000 in cash. Please support this vital fundraiser.

WELLINGTON CHAPTER

The dinner planned to be held at Shandon Golf Club on November 7 had unfortunately to be cancelled. By the cut-off date, Chapter Chair William Abel, who is also a Director and co-ordinates the Mute Swan programme, had only 15 bookings. William needs some help and a ring-around could have come up with a more positive result, and those who had booked were disappointed. So "C'mon Wellington" - give William a call on 586 2752 and make sure your Chapter remains viable.

WAIRARAPA CHAPTER

An amusing incident occurred during the auction at the Chapter dinner on September 12 last year when our very first woman auctioneer, who really entered into the spirit of things with camo-gear and duck caller, made a small slip. Prue Hamill is a real-estate auctioneer and, at one point in proceedings, had taken



a bid for \$148. She automatically called: "\$148,000 I have - any advance?"

The Chapter acknowledges the outstanding effort of Alan Jury who solicited 54 items from local businesses for the silent auction.

The Chapter held a very successful simulated field clay bird shoot on October 25 at the Eketahuna Gun Club. Forty-five shooters competed for the Chapter Challenge and the Sos Savage Memorial team events. Manawatu again won both, and \$550 was raised over the day.

MacMaster Trophy

1998 Recipient: Mt. Albert Grammar

The Andrew Dixon MacMaster Trophy was established and is funded by retired American teacher and DUNZ Life Member Dr Tony Reiger, in memory of his father-in-law. The trophy is provided to encourage student involvement in wetland conservation and DUNZ is indebted to Tony Reiger's support in assisting in conservation education in New Zealand schools.



designed to give students a better appreciation of wetlands and the vital role they play in our environment.

John Wright, HOD Science, has prepared a full report of the development which may appear in a future issue of Flight

Mt. Albert Grammar is the recipient of this year's MacMaster Memorial Trophy. The photo opposite shows DU President Graham Gurr (right) having presented the trophy and cheque to Headmaster Greg Taylor (left) and Peter Ladyman (centre) on the site of the proposed development.

The development will be part of the curriculae for science and horticulture,



PREDATOR FILE

Efforts to create, preserve or enhance wetlands take place in an environment in which delicate balances have been upset. The presence of predators is entirely natural, although it may upset the best-laid plans of those helping to preserve wetlands and their waterfowl populations.

Waterfowl and ground nesting and ground feeding birds are subject to predation by stoats and ferrets (collectively known as mustelids). Cats and dogs are also culprits. More recently, the hedgehog and possum have been identified as predators of eggs and young.

Native morepork, harrier and pukeko are known to predate other native bird populations. Hawks are protected birds, but you are allowed to dissuade them if they are causing trouble.

If your wetland or breeding area has a pond or lake, large eels will take ducklings. A commercial eel fisher will be happy to remove eels.

Waterfowl breeder Bill Clinton-Baker believes cats are the worst. "You may think that you haven't got any, but they will be around." Domestic cats will hunt over a wide area, and wetlands near towns may be in areas where people abandon unwanted cats from time to time.

Predator activity, from anecdotal and other evidence, varies from year to year. This has to do with changing numbers of usual prey populations, control programmes targeting species like rabbits, and predator survival rates, and so on. For example, a study of stoat numbers in an area of Nelson/Marlborough found that intensive trapping of stoats over a five year period had resulted in a revival of ship rat numbers.

Dealing effectively with predators requires certainty as to what is doing the damage so that appropriate remedies can be used. Predators are creatures of stealth and often nocturnal. They may move some distance overland in their hunting, and use the cover encouraged around wetlands. Their numbers may not

become apparent until you begin effective trapping. Most predator birds will be seen operating in daylight.

The signs left by particular predators may include: wounds on the head region (mustelids); damaged feet of young (rats); chicks or ducklings disappearing (cats, bird predators); and eggs broken and eaten in situ (harrier, mustelids, hedgehogs).

It may be possible to control one pest by targeting another. A study of secondary poisoning of stoats with diphacinone (an anticoagulant which was used in a cereal bait fed to wild-caught captive Norway rats) suggests that poisoning rats with diphacinone could kill stoats. The study was to further examine if stoats would die after eating diphacinone-poisoned mice, as these are more usual prey for stoats than rats. This method may pose a risk to other species which prey on mice and rats and further advice should be sought.

Vigilance, Vigilance, Vigilance

The need for constant vigilance against predators is a "must", advises Bill Clinton-Baker. He advises always having a cage trap baited with meat. Change the meat every few days, especially in hot weather. If you have house cats, a cage trap is preferable to the equally effective Timms trap. Predation may be intermittent, but disastrous when it happens.



Stoat in Fenn trap. Photo: Dave Johnston.

RCD and Predator Shift

When the green keeper at the Carterton Golf Club reports seeing stoats and ferrets in the early morning and members comment on the lack of rabbits on the fairways, does two plus two equal RCD? RCD (rabbit calicivirus) was introduced to New Zealand without any study of how it would affect native populations. Research programmes have only just begun.

A study of how banded dotterel would fare from an expected increase in predation as a result of a declining rabbit population in the McKenzie Basin began in September 1997. Although the study was confounded by conflicting activities, the early impression from the data was that as rabbit numbers declined with RCD, predators increased consumption of dotterel eggs.

Predation levels reached those found to be associated with the effects of 1080 poisoning twenty years before. (Source: *Ecological Impact of RCD, in Rare Bits, No.29, July 1998. Department of Conservation.*)

The blind introduction of RCD may have encouraged predators to turn their attention from dwindling rabbit populations to birds and wildfowl. Wetland guardians need to step up predator control.

Trapping Tips

- Start setting traps now and continue all year round.
- Age new traps. Remove oil with turps and wash. Bury traps for several weeks or boil in water with a little caustic potash. Traps should be well-rusted, but use rust preventer on the spring annually.
- Set traps on runs, paths though undergrowth, around and under cages or the foundations of sheds or aviaries. Set Fenn traps in tunnels (made from wood, pipes, formed from rocks, etc.) about 10cm square - large enough to take the trap, but small enough to exclude accidental catches. Tunnels set through walls are effective, as are tunnel traps set against fences or against coops or aviaries.
- Suspend bait several feet over a lightly buried trap.



PEST PRODUCTS

KBL ROTATIONAL MOULDERS LTD

Rat Bait Box

Designed to sit against walls to fit rats' hunting patterns. Enabling rats to feed inside without fear of being seen, this should ensure an adequate poison strike.



Bait Station

This bait station has a flat back and flexible pre-drilled holes for securing in position on posts or trees. Fastening the red filler cap with its positive bayonet action takes only a quarter turn and it is designed to prevent water entry. A warning logo is moulded into the plastic. Capacity: 1.5kg (pellets)



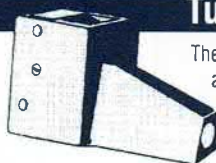
Possum Kill Trap



timms

The Timms Kill Trap of tough polyethylene plastic has a light colour which effectively lures the curious possum. When activated, the possum's neck is forced upwards into the upper part of the unique keyhole opening.

Tunnel Trap



The KBL Tunnel Trap is designed to attract and kill ferrets, stoats and weasels. The trap's small access hole stops cats, dogs and other non-target species from entering.

Available from your
Farm Merchandise Supplier.
Timms Traps available from
DU (see Page 14).

- Tether the bait to a stake, or place a live bird in a predator-proof cage, and place traps around it.
- Cage traps have the advantage of allowing accidental catches to be freed.

Bait

- Meat (rabbit, hare, possum, chicken), fish (fresh or smoked), eggs (whole, or broken over the trap plate), blood bled onto the trap plate.
- Chemical attractants available from chemists include aniseed (possums), valerian.
- (mustelids, hedgehogs). in-season female mustelid urine.
- A possum trap which has caught once will be effective if left in place.
- Tunnel traps do not necessarily need to be baited as they depend on mustelids' natural proclivity for exploring tunnels.

Types of Trap

- Timms trap - effective for wild cats, ferrets and possums. A disadvantage may be this trap's bulk.
- The Fenn trap - DU has no hesitation in recommending the Fenn trap as one of the best traps and every bit as effective as the out-of-favour gin trap. The Mark VI Fenn traps and Timms traps are available from DU (see In Flight Shopping, page 14).
- Cage or box traps - can be made by the handyperson from scrap metal and netting, etc. The principle involved is that when an animal disturbs the bait suspended inside the cage, this triggers a catch which lets the door at one end fall, trapping the animal.

Killing Trapped Animals

Timms and Fenn traps usually kill immediately. But despatch of live trapped animals should be done humanely. A .22 rifle is probably the best option. The alternative is a sharp blow to the

back of the animal's head with a short length of pipe or iron bar.

Animals caught in cage or box traps can be humanely gassed. Place the trap containing the animal inside a household plastic rubbish bag and connect a short length of plastic pipe to a vehicle exhaust. Place the other end of the pipe into the plastic bag and seal the bag around it. With the motor running, the trapped animal will quietly die in several minutes.

Acknowledgements:

"Waging War on Vermin." John Dyer. Flight, No.4/93, issue 77, October 1993. Ducks Unlimited.

Share Your Experience of Predators

The foregoing article is by no means exhaustive and DU members are encouraged to contribute their experience in the subject of predator control for publication in future issues of Flight. We're interested in tips and approaches members may have found to be particularly effective, their observations of predator behaviour, the best baits, and so on.

Wetland Development

"Forget The Swimming Hole..."

"Forget the swimming hole - let's create a wetland." That was neighbour Jim Campbell's response when Geoff Reid ran past him the idea of forming a swimming hole in a stream running through his Mikimiki property.

Alan Wilks reports on a DU-assisted wetland development near Masterton...

Several years ago, Geoff Reid, his two brothers and two sisters, and their respective spouses, bought a 108 acre property in the Mikimiki Valley north of Masterton. It was to be a retirement investment and half the property is now planted in pine and cypress.



A small stream sparked memories of a swimming hole from childhood. Photo: Geoff Reid.

A tributary of the Mikimiki Stream runs through the property and Geoff had fond memories from childhood of the swimming hole in the river near his home. He wondered if he could make one at Mikimiki and talked to

Jim Campbell about it. With Jim's advice and help in planning, a proposal for a two stage wetland development was formed and a Resource Consent applied for in 1995.

Only after months of frustration and considerable expense, during which Geoff seriously considered dropping the idea, was approval granted in early 1996 and stage one went ahead. (See Flight, April 1997).

The enthusiasm of the owners for this part of the project and a promise of a one thousand dollar subsidy from DU encouraged Geoff to move on to stage two in 1997. This involved extending the spillway in accordance with the original design which created a little pond and a larger shallow one with a small catchment area. Three islands were made on existing high spots, so slumping was minimal.

Using a laser level, it was possible to set an optimum water level and then walk around with the receiver rod and mark the shoreline. While Geoff was impressed with this single -



Stage one went ahead in 1997. Photo: Geoff Reid.



Further cosmetic work is planned and planting will happen as time and finance permit.

Photo: Alan Wilks.

operator tool, Jim Campbell had reservations. He relies on an antique Dumpy level which some believe Noah used to establish when the

Ark would float. When Jim checked the final levels, he was slightly put out when they corresponded.



Stage two in 1997 involved extending the spillway in accordance with the original design which created a little pond and a larger shallow one with a small catchment area. Photo: Alan Wilks.

Jim Campbell is in like a terrier after a rabbit when he sniffs a wetland development. More like him are needed. Geoff is extremely grateful to Jim for his advice and assistance with his 'dozer which was used with the digger.

Further cosmetic work is planned this year to extend the shoreline with small bays and to create shelving edges to encourage loafing sites. Geoff is now into trapping eels, having seen a well-grown duckling taken by an eel. As soon as time and finance permit, wetland planting will begin - under Jim's supervision, of course.

Geoff and his family, who are all now DU members, are enjoying this new wetland on which DU money has been well spent. The wetland's population now includes nesting Canada geese, numerous mallards and the seven ducklings raised by one pair of paradise shelduck last season. One of Geoff's greatest pleasures is watching the welcome swallows during an evening visit and the interest that visitors, some from overseas, show in the wetland and bird life



Book Review

Care Taken in Defining Differences

[Malcolm Ogilvie and Steve Young, *Photographic Handbook of the Wildfowl of the World*. London. New Holland Publishers, 1998. Hardback. 175pp + 700 illus. ISBN 1 85369 625 5 (hbk). \$90.00 inc.gst.]

Publishers New Holland are relatively new on the scene in New Zealand but they will soon become an important source of natural history books, if this publication is any indication. New Holland already have a long list of Australian guides, with many more from Europe, Asia and Africa. In this series of photographic handbooks they have published *Seabirds of the World*, and *Rare Birds of Britain and Europe*, as well as this latest, *Wildfowl of the World*.

Covering 236 species and sub-species, it is clearly not possible to devote more than half a page to any one bird. But within those limitations, the authors do a useful job of detailing the distribution and identification. I was particularly taken with the efforts to define the differences between the closely related species, which are then illustrated in the photographs on an opposing page. The giant Canada goose, well-known to us in New Zealand, can be differentiated by "the rearward-pointing extension to the white face patch". Sure enough, the relevant photograph shows this feature which is absent in the Atlantic and Central Canada geese on the same page. On checking with the latest New Zealand guide, Heather and Robertson's *Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand*, it was interesting to see that their painting had illustrated the same feature.

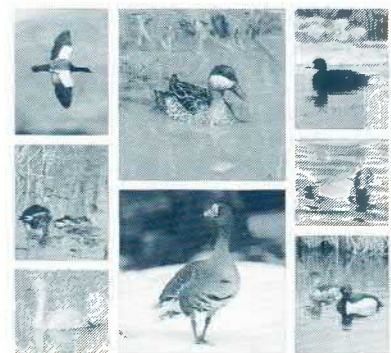
The New Zealand blue duck has a page of photographs all to itself, partly because there are no photographs available of its page partners, Berlepsch's torrent duck, or the Peruvian torrent duck. But of the 236 varieties, only 13 lack illustration.

Some of the photographs give extra value, with the Chilean teal, photographed in the Falklands, with a backdrop of Magellan penguins. The careful selection of the photographs is never better illustrated than in the birds in flight where the diagnostic features can be clearly seen.

If there is one quibble, it is that the less expert among us may have to hunt very carefully for any bird which is listed only under one common name. If you didn't know that the Carolina duck is also the North American wood duck, you would have to hunt through the photographs until you spot it.

Generally, this is a thorough, well-illustrated guide to the wildfowl, a coffee table book rather than a field guide. But then, how many of us will ever see the Abyssinian yellow billed duck in the wild?

- John Kirby



As Graham Gurr discovered, there's...

A Trick to Growing Oaks

Planting trees enhances the environment and, if you plant the right trees, they are good for wildlife.

Over the past few years we have planted a large number of oak trees. The acorns are good duck food and, if you plant enough different oak varieties, you can have a continuous supply of acorns for half the year. The nice thing about it all is that, once the trees are established, it costs nothing.

We started off by buying trees from nurseries. They cost varying amounts but when we considered the total number required, the potential cost became quite daunting. To



A stake placed where the acorns are planted will make finding them easier.



Oak seedling growing well in its protective plastic cylinder.

overcome this, we switched to growing acorns in planter bags at home where we could keep an eye on them and watch them grow. The acorns cost nothing - all we had to do was collect them from established trees.

One thing which was apparent, at least for the first year, was that the trees sulked and refused to grow much. Because oaks grow a very long taproot, after a few months the root was through the bottom of the planter bag. Once it hit the outside world beyond the bag, it became an annoyance and in most cases got snapped off. We grew about 200 this way and planted them out, half at one year, and half at two years old.

The losses were disheartening. Pukeko pulled many out the first year, and those which survived grew hardly at all over the next year. The two-year-old trees did a little better - at least they were harder for the pukeko to uproot - but they still sulked at least for the first year.

A conversation with John and Bunny Mortimer suggested the following method. We can claim no credit for it, but it does work.

Trees which have been grown in situ and never moved put down a long tap root. Once that is

established, the tree shoots up. Newly sprouted tips are full of sugar and a treat for most browsing animals so, first and foremost, exclude stock from the planting area.

Choose where you intend your trees to grow, then cut and remove a square of turf to expose bare soil. Plant at least four acorns per square to the depth of an acorn. By planting at least four acorns in each square, should slugs, hares and rabbits get some, as long as one remains you are winning. If you can, place a handful of oak leaves over the soil in which you have planted the acorns. This does make a difference.

Mark the position of each planted square with a stake so you can easily find where you have planted the acorns later. Go away and return after four weeks.

In the interim, save (and *rinse* - if you don't, you'll know all about it later) two-litre plastic milk containers. With a sharp knife, cut the tops and bottoms from each container so you have a square plastic cylinder.

When you locate the sprouted oaks, they should be up to ten centimetres tall. When you plant four acorns together, you have to be

prepared to thin, selecting the most vigorous. We planted at four metre intervals with the intention of thinning at least twice over the next 10 years or so to select only the best trees.

Remove grass from around the emerging oaks and place one of the prepared milk containers over the seedling. The containers will protect them from things that chomp until they get going, prevent the grass smothering the seedlings and encourage straight growth.

At the time of writing we have nine-month-old and less oaks which are already above the tops of the containers, and two-year-old trees which are waist high. These will, in the long term, beautify the property and feed the ducks.

Photographs for this article by Graham Gurr.



Photography for Flight

Each issue of *Flight* requires photographs to accompany articles and features and to illustrate aspects of the magazine's coverage of wildfowl and wetlands.

Photographs are also used on the front and back covers. Additional photographs are required from time to time. Photographs of wetlands and waterfowl are sought for future issues and payment for suitable photographs used will be negotiated.

Send standard colour prints for consideration, or description of photographs able to be supplied, to:

Flight Editorial,
73 Wood Street,
Greytown, 5953.

The 25th AGM : TOKAANU 99



The first time DU went to what was then the THC Tokaanu was in 1982. Prior to that, conferences had been held in Hamilton, Wellington and Auckland and no doubt it was decided that a central North Island venue would be more convenient for members.

Hosted by Keith and Dulcie Barnett, who managed the hotel and were keen supporters of DU, the 1982 Tokaanu conference will be fondly remembered by many of the old hands as the best they ever attended.

The highlight of the AGM was the guest speakers. These included notables like Sir William Gilbert, Chairman of the New Zealand arm of the World Wildlife Fund, Dr Murray Williams, of DOC, who talked about his study of Auckland Island teal, and Bryce Johnson, Chief Executive of what was then the New Zealand Acclimatisation Society.

The meeting was attended by 92 members and the number rose to 120 for the dinner.

Bill Wilkinson, who conducted many DU auctions over the years, was in great form and didn't disappoint his many fans. The net figure raised after expenses was \$5,100 - a record at the time - and the highest bid was \$550 for an Angelo Zoli shotgun donated by Wellington Sporting Arms Co. Ltd. of Petone.

At the end of the auction Murray Dench of the Hamilton Chapter presented President Paul Pirani with a cheque for \$2000 which had been raised by the Chapter at its Hootnanny in April, attended by over 300 people.

Those who attend the conference this year are assured of a memorable conference venue. Seventeen years on, the Tokaanu Hotel is extremely comfortable, with its open fire and thermally heated swimming pool. Close to the lake and good fishing streams, it is only twenty minutes' drive to Lake Rotopounamu and a two-hour scenic walk, and well-placed for visiting the trout hatchery south of Turangi and the shops and other attractions of Taupo.

ELECTRONIC BANKING

DU members wishing to make payments to DUNZ can now do so via electronic banking.

Our Bankers are:

The BNZ Frankton Branch

Account number: **02 0312 0038729 00.**

The information we require is:

Your name (if different from that on invoice or statement)

Your ACC/CUST number (which is stated on invoice or statement)



Try this for...

Dog Arthritis

4 parts honey
3 parts safflower oil
1 part cider vinegar

Feed 2 tablespoonsful each meal for a week, then 1 tablespoonful a meal in subsequent weeks.

- Jan Clinton-Baker

Selling Covenanted Land?

If you are selling land with a covenant on it, please notify the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust or the regional representative in your area.

The Trust needs to know who the new owners are so the representative can visit them and go through the covenant document and discuss ongoing management of the area.

Also, if you are the initial covenantor, your new address will be needed so the Trust can continue to send its newsletter and Trust information to you.

The Trust has over 20 years of its existence assisted landowners with foresight who wish to protect elements of New Zealand's unique landscape for future generations to enjoy.

Photographic Handbook of the Wildfowl of the World

This new book by Malcolm Ogilvie and Steve Young covers 236 species and subspecies, showing virtually every significant plumage variation. A hardcover book of 700 photographs and field descriptions of all the world's wildfowl, this is a must for anyone interested in wildfowl.

We can offer members of Ducks Unlimited a special price, including postage and packing:

\$85.00

See the review on page 9 in this issue of Flight.

For this, and many other books on natural history, contact:

Wildwood Books

Masterton RD 9

Ph.(06) 378 7458

Fax.(06) 377 2958

SWANNING AROUND . . .

No... But How About a Trained Eel?

DU was recently approached by a film agent seeking trained swans on behalf of a British film company which was sending a crew to New Zealand. The inquiry was referred to David Johnston who was the mute swan co-ordinator for many years. He was unable to help but did mention to the company that he had heard of a farmer who had a trained eel and on dewy mornings used it for mustering. The eel was eventually run over one wet day while fetching the paper from their mail box.

Mute Swan Breeding: A Disaster

Mute swan breeding this season has been a disaster, with only four cygnets reared. Peacock Springs, which have been very successful breeders, report no success for three years due to embryos going rotten in the egg for some inexplicable reason.

Unless nature reverses the situation, this most beautiful of waterfowl could be lost in New Zealand.



*Mute swan,
Carterton
golf course,
Wairarapa.*

*Photo:
Alan Wilks*



Up the Swans

Since the 12th Century, British monarchs have inherited the ownership of every swan on open water in Great Britain. The right was instituted to stem a shortage of the birds for court banquets at the time. This meant that swan had to be counted regularly, and the office of Swan Marker was created.

The institution continues, with the present Swan Marker accompanied by a team of "swan uppers" boating the Thames counting some 14,000 swan. The Swan Marker's position is now honorary and the pay token. The present incumbent receives a Christmas card from the Queen every year.

An attempt is made to mark every cygnet between London and Henley-on-Thames, as well as check the birds' health. In the mid-80s, swan numbers plummeted as the birds were poisoned by lead from fishing weights.

The exercise is accompanied by the wearing of traditional uniforms - scarlet for the Queen's uppers, navy for uppers from the Worshipful Company of Dyers, and white for uppers from the Worshipful Company of Vintners. The companies were licensed by the monarch to own swan in the 15th Century.

Abduction at the CALGARY STAMPEDE

Ducking into a display at the Calgary Stampede, David Wilks and partner ran into waterfowl play...

In July, Laurie and I were fortunate to be in Calgary to see what has become a huge Canadian tradition: the Stampede. It's a festival when Calgary really comes alive as "cowboy fever" hits town. It is impossible to escape the checked cotton shirts, blue jeans, Stetsons and boots which typify the North American West. From banks to bars, everywhere is decked out with cowboy paraphernalia, all contributing to the amazing atmosphere.

The focus of the two-week Stampede is the rodeo - an incredible competition that pits top rodeo riders against one another. We were amazed to discover that there was quite a number of Kiwis competing - and holding their own.

At the Calgary racetrack, an awesome spread of amusement rides, stalls and displays accompanies the rodeo. One display which stood out was the DU Canada tent. Complete with an inflatable duck, the stand displayed a vast amount of information and was manned by a bunch of energetic Canadians who tried to ensure that anyone coming near was "ab-duck-ted".

We were impressed by the display resources available - from 3D models of wetlands and video presentations, posters and leaflets, to the stunning duck dominating the entrance. It was possible to go inside the duck where a further video presentation was running and a friendly DU helper was rubber stamping wrists, arms and foreheads as proof that we had been abducted.

The Calgary Stampede was a highlight of our trip. Although the rodeo was a true spectacle, with its feats of sporting toughness, we were left



Laurie at the entrance to the DU Canada inflatable duck.

Photo: David Wilks.

with clear memories of the magnificent duck responsible for our abduction.

DRAWING: The Black-backed Gull

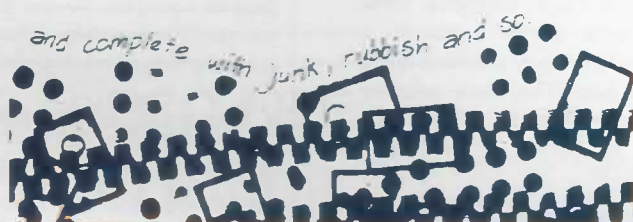
Easiest of all...
Draw two smooth hills of equal size...



add on this small circle for the body...



and now a head, a beak, with legs below...



A regular feature introducing a simple drawing technique for new wildlife artists...

More correctly named the Dominican gull (*Larus dominicanus*) this native of New Zealand, commonly called the black-backed gull, is also known as karoro, kelp gull, or southern black-backed gull.

The male and female are alike, approximately 600mm from beak to tail, although the male is larger. The gull is easily recognised by its yellow beak, white head and neck and black wings.

It is the largest and only black-backed gull and is found in South America, Southern Africa, Madagascar and Australia and is common on the New Zealand mainland.

Nests are built mostly by the male and up to three green or grey eggs are incubated by both parents. The black-backed gull adjusts its diet to its environment, over water feeding on algae, shell fish and surface fish. It will drop shell fish from a height on to a hard surface to break the shells. On land the gull feeds on grasses, worms, insects, small reptiles and mammals, young birds and eggs, offal and carrion and scavenges noisily in rubbish dumps. The gull's growing population as a scavenger is directly related to the growth of human population.

Illustration republished courtesy of Alan Fielding.



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For Wetlands and Waterfowl

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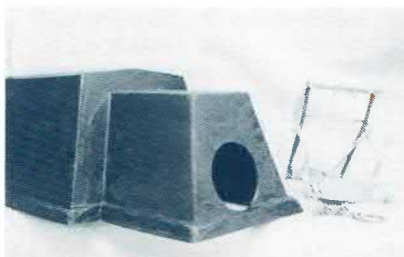
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Please renew my membership each year and charge my credit cardYES/NO

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Shopping

FOR AROUND THE POND

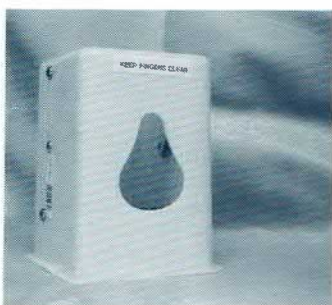


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These heavy duty moulded Fenn Trap tunnels are perfect for safely setting your Fenn Traps. Each tunnel can be used to house either one or two traps, depending on your set. As used by the Department of Conservation, they actually increase your catch rate. **\$35.00**



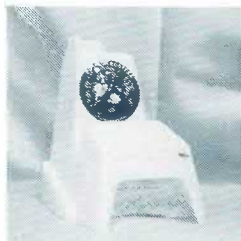
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We now stock the well known and effective Timms Trap to complement the Fenn Trap. The Timms Trap is perfect for larger animals, such as possums and cats. Bait with either fruit or meat depending on your trapping target. **\$40.00**

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This waterproof heavy duty plastic bait station is ideal for around your captive pond or aviary. It has a huge bait reservoir and can be used against possums, rabbits and rats. It really is a "set and forget"

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GREY TEAL NEST BOX

As featured in Flight magazine, these grey teal nest boxes come in a prefabricated form ready to assemble and erect on your pond. They come complete with mounts ready to fit to your own post. **\$25.00**

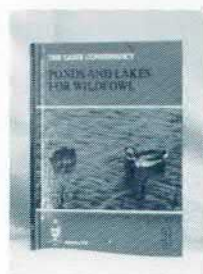
ESSENTIAL READING

NEW ZEALAND WETLANDS: A MANAGEMENT GUIDE

Far and away the most comprehensive New Zealand guide to managing wetlands. This has a load of answers to your questions about how to build a wetland, what to plant, what lives in a wetland, what legal controls apply and where to go for further information. This book is required reading for anybody who is serious about looking after wetlands. **\$25.00**

PONDS AND LAKES FOR WATERFOWL

Published in Britain by the Game Conservancy, this book covers the development and improvement of waterfowl habitat with many interesting ideas. **\$54.00**



Raupo Control

When Dennis Handyside won the 1997 DU raffle, he elected to take the cash instead of the gold ingot and used the major part of the prize money to spray raupo on Home Lagoon, on his property in South Wairarapa.

The spraying, using four litres of Roundup per hectare, was done in late January last year with a helicopter. This application was insufficient and Dennis intends to mist spray again this year.

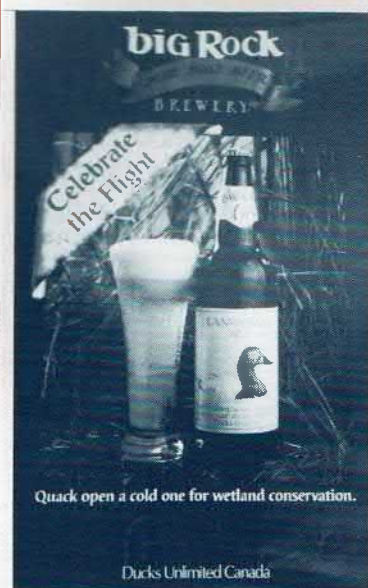
Enquiries have revealed that the recommended application is six litres per hectare. The dilution is not important and the greater the wetting of the foliage the better.

What is crucial, though, is the timing of spraying. Mid-February is the best time to spray for a good kill. Around this time of year the flowers are dying off and the sap is running back down to the plant roots.

Quack Open a Cold One

That's the slogan on advertising for a Canadian beer, Canvasback Ale, produced by the Big Rock brewery in Calgary. The ale, described as an "all natural, medium bodied brew, golden in colour with a mild aroma and a crisp clean finish", is a special brew produced for the promotion. In partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada, a portion of sales is donated to wetland conservation. The photo of a poster promoting the ale also shows how wetland conservation can be promoted in partnership with business.

Photo: Di Wilks.



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Address: _____	_____	_____	\$ _____	\$ _____
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PAYMENT DETAILS	_____	_____	_____	_____
I enclose my cheque for	_____	_____	_____	_____
\$ _____ as payment.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Please charge my credit card	_____	_____	_____	_____
VISA/MASTERCARD	Prices include GST and Postage & Packing		TOTAL \$	_____
	Tax Invoice Required <input type="checkbox"/> Tick			
Card No. _____	Send your completed order form and payment details to.			
Expires: _____	Graham Gurr, P.O. Box 9795, Newmarket, Auckland. Ph: 09 489 5337			
Signature: _____	Please allow three weeks for delivery.			

Flight ECO-FILE

Blue Duck

- Determining the relationship between blue duck energy and habitat quality is the subject of a study by researcher Jason Godfrey who is based in Scotland. Earlier last year blue duck from the Egmont National Park and Manganui-a-teao River were captured to collect data for the study which will use information from right around New Zealand.
- A jointly-funded (DUC and DOC) project to review the captive blue duck population received support at the April 1998 meeting of all captive blue duck breeders. The review will cover facilities management, husbandry techniques, and relationships with the view of enhancing the ability of the captive birds to produce juveniles for future release programmes.
- An ongoing survey of blue duck is running on the West Coast. DOC staff last year surveyed populations on five rivers, counting each bird seen against the amount of river covered. It was hoped to establish a base population count to allow comparison with future surveys. The survey suggested that catastrophic floods in the region caused by the El Nino weather pattern may be responsible for the absence of blue duck in some streams where populations were formerly known to have existed. Rock-turning revealed an absence of the organisms on which blue duck feed, and this is blamed on disturbance of the stream beds by severe flooding. The survey is to be extended this year.

From Rare Bits, No. 29, July 1998. Department of Conservation.

The Flamingo's Pink

The distinct colour of the characteristically pink flamingo is a result of carotenoid pigments laid down in their feathers. Carotenoids are present in the cells of green plants and trap light to fuel photosynthesis. Carrots, ripe tomatoes and autumn leaves gain their colour from carotenoid pigments. Algae, on which flamingo feed, contain carotenoids which are also present in zooplankton and small invertebrates also eaten by the bird. The carotenoids are absorbed by the flamingo and, as they are one of the few species with the biochemical pathways, converted to colouration. MAF gave permission for the importation of flamingo into containment in registered zoos in New Zealand last year.

From "In the Pink", by Dr. S. Pickering. In Wildfowl & Wetlands. Winter 1998, No. 126. Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

Drought May Benefit Wetlands

Periodic drying of wetlands may not be the disaster it appears. There is evidence that in periods of drought, new life is allowed to germinate on moist wetland soils. This may include the germination and growth of tree species suppressed while the wetland is waterlogged. There may be



animals and other life forms which take up residence in cracks in the exposed bed of lake and pond areas. Australian studies of wetlands under drought conditions suggest appropriate management of wetlands, including allowing periods of drying out, is needed to maintain species diversity, exclude unwanted species, for example carp, and boost water quality. Wetlands restoration projects could well include installation of control structures to allow periodic drying.

From Wetlands Alive, June 1998, Vol. 2, No. 1, Wetland Care Australia.

Camelus Non Grata

Those who load up the four-wheel-drive straight after work on Friday and head out for our Saharan expanses to do their thing in the dunes with other Bedouin types can now relax. There is absolutely no chance of the barbie being upset by stampeding rogue camels. A 1998 application to introduce camels (*Camelus dromedarius*) into New Zealand for use in a tourist business venture has been refused, according to an article quoting Biosecurity MAF - Issue No. 5 in CMAg News. "MAF refused the introduction on the grounds that should enough camels escape or be released into the wild to form a feral population, the likelihood of damage to New Zealand's natural resources would be significant."

From CMAg News, October 1998, Vol. 1, Issue 9. New Zealand Conservation Management Group. Page 5.



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The Trevor Douglas Wetland, Manawatu. Photo: Alan Wilks.

**Proud to support Ducks Unlimited
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