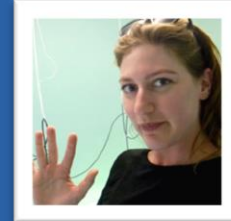




ICWT Newsletter

Issue 4 –Autumn 2015



Editor: Sabrina Luecht

Wildlife Division

A bumper breeding season (with 170 chicks hatched) means that aviaries are now filled to the brim with **black stilt**/kaki juveniles – here at the Trust and at the Department of Conservation facility in Twizel. This season was the first time that the Trust incubated black stilt eggs and hand reared chicks, which will continue next season. The Trust now also holds a fifth breeding pair. Recently an old pair and their chicks were switched for a younger pair (and their chicks) with the Twizel facility. Juveniles will be held until releases occur in September, growing stronger by the day. These releases are generally accompanied by eager school groups and members of the public.

Black stilt juvenile



New Zealand shore plover male



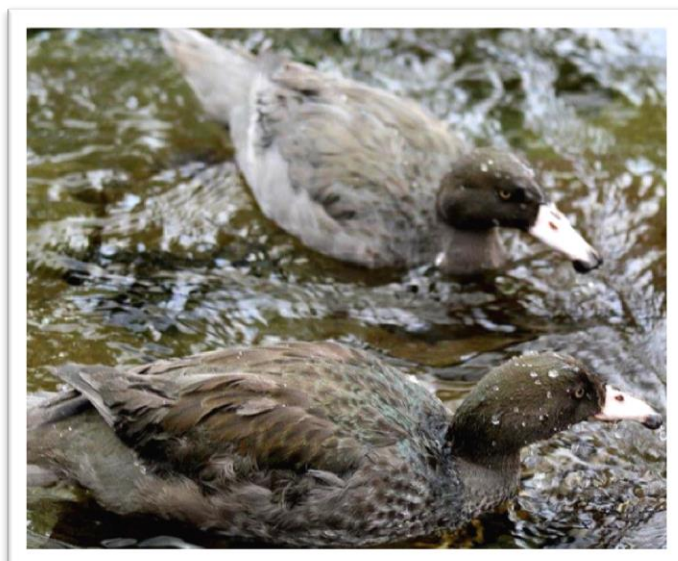
New Zealand shore plover/tuturuatu have decreased to three captive breeding pairs at the Trust. Three juveniles were recently transferred to the Trust from Pukaha Mount Bruce National Wildlife Centre, for flock mating purposes. However these individuals are young and thus pairing may not be successful until later in the season or next year. The stronghold translocation site is currently Waikawa/Portland Island, with the last release occurring there in May 2015. On a recent trip 37 shore plover were sighted on the island, which is hopefully a positive sign for the coming breeding season.

Orange-fronted parakeets/kakariki karaka have unfortunately decreased to two captive breeding pairs (globally). This means the Trust is now relying heavily on the Department of Conservation to collect wild clutches next breeding season. The Trust is set to receive a red-crowned parakeet breeding pair from Pukaha Mount Bruce National Wildlife Centre to utilise as foster parents - this has been undertaken in the past and worked well. Regrettably post-release monitoring at the Hurunui South Branch valley (the first attempted mainland release, which took place earlier this year) indicated a low survival rate. This means future releases will again take place on predator-free islands, as the mainland is still too risky given the status of the species.

Orange-fronted parakeet female



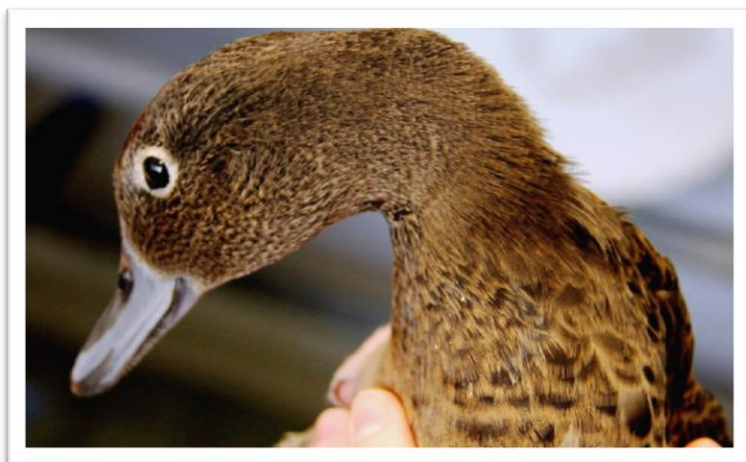
Blue duck pair



The Trust holds two North Island **blue duck**/whio breeding pairs, and a third breeding pair will be acquired once another waterfowl aviary has been constructed. Things are fairly quiet on the blue duck front once releases finish for the season, with little new activity to report during the non-breeding season. The last releases of the season took place at Retaruke River and at Blue Duck Station. The Tongariro area (where many juveniles have been released over time) also reports the best blue duck season on record. Last breeding season was the highest on record for the Trust, so the coming season could be even more productive!

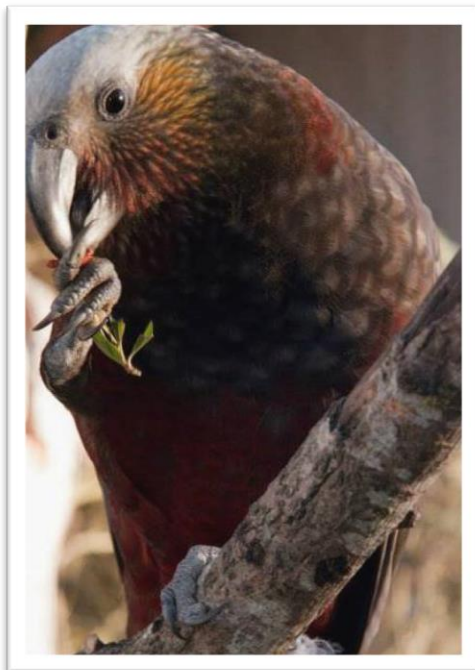
There has been a noticeable decrease in national breeding of **brown teal**/pateke. This is due to the Northland teal line showing a decrease in clutch size and increased aggression (males vs females and ducklings) over time, resulting in poorer breeding outcomes. It is also likely that these first generation wild pairs prefer higher quality aviaries, compared to the older blood lines. The Trust is therefore retaining six second generation teal for flock mating, in order to replace some of the poor breeders. Some of these poor breeders will be sent to the Trust to re-attempt breeding in our aviaries. Three releases have occurred this autumn, with the last release for the season scheduled for August. Twenty juveniles were released within the safety of a predator proof fence at Lake Opouahi (a new release site) in northern Hawke's Bay on 21 May 2015.

Brown teal juvenile during transmitter attachment



On 28 May 2015 the Motutapu Restoration Trust and Department of Conservation released twenty juveniles on Motutapu Island.

South Island kaka



The **South Island kaka** pair have been transferred to Willowbank Wildlife Reserve, to encourage flock mating. They are now housed with another pair – it is hoped behavioural cues will promote competition for mates and stronger pair bonds, as neither of the pairs have successfully bred yet. The likelihood is that all four birds will pair up with the same partner, but there is also the potential for one new pairing that could be bred from. One pair will remain at Willowbank, whilst the other pair will in time be transferred to Natureland Zoo in Nelson.

Otago skink



Grand skink



The **reptiles** are slowing down for the winter, with less activity seen from the **Otago and grand skinks**. These skinks tolerate the cold fairly well, using warm schist rocks to obtain their body heat. The enclosures also contain heat pads which automatically turn on if temperatures drop below zero degrees. The **Northern tuatara** are now entering torpor/hibernation until spring, and the juveniles have been brought inside for winter. The Trust is still searching for release sites for immature tuatara.

Northern Tuatara



Canterbury Mudfish (*Neochanna burrowsius*)

Department of Conservation ranger Anita Spencer recently visited the Trust to conduct a **Canterbury mudfish/kowaro** count. Their numbers on site are good - particularly due to the drought last summer causing ponds to dry up in many other areas, resulting in large losses. Peacock Springs is now considered one of the last safe havens and strongholds - consisting of a good population, being disease free, and holding the largest Canterbury mudfish on record. Canterbury mudfish are one of New Zealand's rarest freshwater fishes, and are the most threatened of the New Zealand's mudfish species. Under the New Zealand Threat Classification System, they are **classified as 'acutely threatened' and 'nationally endangered'**. They are only found in a limited number of waterways in the Canterbury Plains, between the Ashley River (in the north) and the Waitaki River (in the South). The populations are now highly fragmented and occur in small pockets of habitat. Mudfish are special in that they can survive several months out of water (aestivation) during periods of drought.



OUT AND ABOUT

Progress at the **Otukaiki River**. Plant pest eradication on the **Lake Woodley** peninsula. Maintenance at the **Clifton Homestead** gardens.



ANZ staff volunteered for a planting day at the Lake Diana embankment, planting nearly 1000 natives. They worked incredibly hard, for which we thank them very much!



In Brief

The **Otukaikino River bridge** project is well underway. The piles and abutments are now in place and with the ground to be built up, then the span put in place. The plantings at the Otukaikino River have put on extraordinary growth this year and along the bridge section of the river, with over 10,000 natives have been planted to date.

The north side of the **Lake Diana planting project** is now completed. 2000 natives are flourishing and with the irrigation these plantings will soon mature. Thank you for all the hard work from the Maintenance Division and also to the ANZ staff who volunteered.

The **Lake Woodley peninsula** has now been eradicated of plant pests such as willow and alder. The peninsula will be grassed in spring, with the water edges to be planted in native *Carex secta*. This area was previously an impenetrable mass of weeds and can now be easily enjoyed and maintained.

This autumn the more formal aspects of the **Clifton Homestead gardens** are enjoying some long overdue maintenance work, which will really improve for next spring and summer.

The Maintenance Division has been focusing on **EQC repairs at the Trust's residential properties**. The Trust has also taken the opportunity to upgrade the rental houses at the same time, including new carpet and freshly painted walls.

The Trust has been busy **upgrading the vehicle fleet**, replacing three older vehicles with a Toyota Hilux, a van and a dual wheel 3 way tipper truck.

The Trust's **Facebook page** has hit a milestone of 3,000+ Likes and a post reach of 100,000 people from all over the world. We thank everyone for their support and encourage you to keep tuning in!

FAST FACTS

ICWT Facebook



3,127 Likes

Find the link via our website:

www.isaacconservation.org.nz



Trust Staff

Trust Administration

Rob Clarke – Executive Trustee (Chairman)
Alister McDonald – Trustee
William (Bill) Luff – Trustee
Bruce Rule – Operations Manager
Catherine Ott – Administration Manager
Michelle Foster - Accountant

Wildlife Division

Anne Richardson – Wildlife Manager
Sabrina Luecht – Project Administrator
Josh Foster – Senior Wildlife Keeper
Mike Robb – Wildlife Keeper
Leonie Heyder – Wildlife Keeper
Nicki Wells – Wildlife Keeper

Landscape Division

Bill Waterman - Landscaper
Ian Gebbie - Landscaper
George Maipi - Landscaper
Rachel Brewer – Landscaper/Caretaker

Maintenance Division

Jamie Ward – Builder

The Trust **welcomes** Senior Wildlife Keeper Josh Foster and temporarily farewells Wildlife Keeper Emma Cournane who is now on maternity leave, and is replaced by Leonie Heyder. The Trust also **farewells** Handyman Andrew Smyth.

Wildlife Keeper Leonie Heyder



Senior Wildlife Keeper Josh Foster



Heritage Village

Milton Street

This weatherboard cottage was **originally built in 1878**. It was the long-time home of an elderly lady who lived in the cottage all her life. Unfortunately the cottage was later on land required for road widening. She intended to relocate the cottage and live in it until she passed away, but was sadly unable to obtain the resource consent. Due to its historic status the Trust then relocated the cottage to the Heritage Village in order to salvage it. The cottage was in poor condition upon arrival, and subsequently underwent extensive renovations.

