



THE ISAAC CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE TRUST

A study in conservation

CONSERVATION

NEWS

Newsletter

Issue 16

Winter 2018

Predator control has been scaled up around Peacock Springs

Detailed trapping records has enabled us to monitor trends in pest and predator species over the year to achieve greater trapping success. We look forward to collating a full years' worth of trap data to better understand this complex problem and play our part in working towards the national goal of Predator Free 2050.

Sean Kavanagh from our Wildlife department is focussing on 4 different types of traps on site, all targeting different predator species. These include DOC200 traps, Timms traps, live catch cage traps and Goodnature A12 traps.



For 2018 to date, we have successfully targeted and removed 49 x rats, 10 x stoats, 2 x ferrets, 1 x weasel, 6 x hedgehogs, 7 x feral cats and 60 x possums.

The Diana Isaac Cup



The Te Ara Kakariki Greenway Canterbury Trust and The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust have awarded the Diana Isaac Cup to Olive Webb and Carol Gurney for their excellent effort planting natives on their property near Hororata. The incorporation of native plants into the working lands of the Selwyn District will bring environmental, ecological and aesthetic benefits to the region. Lady Isaac created this award to embrace the principle shared by her late husband Sir Neil, of combining conservation with commercial venture, in the hope of encouraging and recognizing those who also espouse this vision.



Wildlife



Landscape



Heritage Village



Scholarships



Building News



News in brief



Heritage Village News

Trevor Robb provided us with his recollections of living in the cottage, that has been relocated from Milton Street, to the Isaac Heritage Village.

The cottage, built in 1878, was originally positioned at 234 Milton Street.

In 1947 the cottage was purchased for 500 pounds by Arthur Robb, a labourer, married to Phyllis Robb. Together they raised six children in the cottage, Trevor, Marie, Errol, Kay, Bruce and Heather.

The half-acre garden produced fruit and vegetables to furnish the family meals. Chooks plus Muscovy Ducks were raised for their eggs and meat.

Nuts collected from the large walnut tree were dried, hulled and halved, then sold to Ernest Adams and paid all the annual rates!

In 1956 the first and only hot water tap was installed inside the house.

A few years later hot water was then installed in the washhouse located in the garden, plus a bathtub too was installed within this outside washhouse.

When the Robb family finally sold the property in 2001 still with the outside loo (out-house) and bathtub contained within the washhouse located in the garden.

We appreciate the visit by Trevor as this provenance provides a valuable insight to the lives of the previous cottage residents.





Wildlife News

Black Stilt (Kaki)



A record number of endangered Black Stilt have been released into the wild this year after the best breeding season on record!

The highest number of eggs yet were collected from wild pairs in the McKenzie Basin to be raised in captivity, resulting in the largest number birds produced for release since the programme began.

Last season, the Trust had two pairs that successfully produced chicks to supplement the wild sourced eggs. Unfortunately, a third pair did not produce any offspring and have since been retired from the program. The Trust recently received a new breeding pair, so fingers crossed they settle well and produce chicks next season.

In total the Trust raised over 50 birds for release this past breeding season. That number combined with the birds raised at the Department of Conservation Captive facility in Twizel, brought the total number of birds released this year to 184. This is a 65% increase in the number of birds released from last year.

These numbers, combined with improved survival rates after releasing due to intensive predator trapping, means the future is improving for this critically endangered species.



Orange Fronted Parakeet (Kākāriki)

While most of our kākāriki pairs decided to take a winter break, Storm and Abbey haven't slowed down at all, with two chicks successfully fledged last week plus a 2nd clutch of eggs expected to start hatching any day.

Shortly the fledglings will move to a new aviary and begin their transition for release, along with the few remaining juveniles from earlier this year.

A few other pairs are showing promising signs of breeding – like hanging around the nest boxes, so hopefully it won't be too long before we start seeing more females nesting.

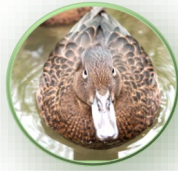


We've rolled out new automated seed feeders to more of our pairs and juveniles with great success, with the aim of making their upcoming soft releases into the wild an easier transition.



Brown Teal

The 2018/19 breeding season has already got underway with the Brown Teal always being the first ones getting into the swing of things. We already have a clutch of 6 juveniles not far off from being removed from their parents and placed into one of our hardening aviaries in preparation for release.



Continued

With all our 5 brown teal pairs at varying stages of breeding, some have ducklings, some have eggs and others are sorting out nest sites, it should be a very productive season. The pairs will generally raise 3 clutches with an average clutch size of 5 ducklings.

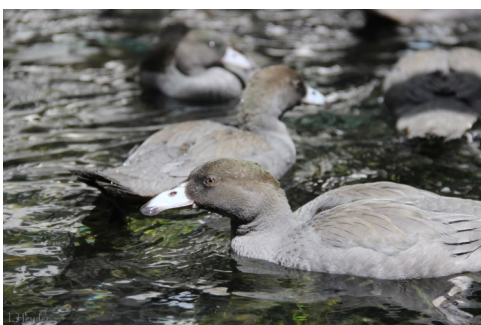


The birds, once old enough, will be separated into the hardening aviaries where they await release with all the other young ducks bred by other institutions participating in the Brown Teal recovery programme.

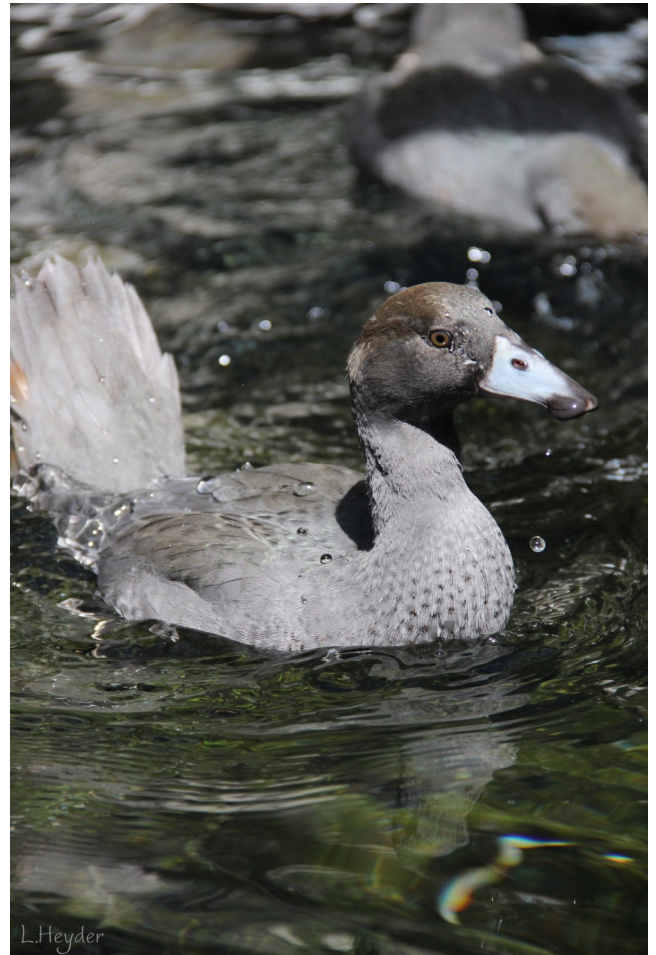


Blue Duck (Whio)

This season has been an exciting one for the South Island Blue Duck programme. We have held back 10 birds from 2 wild clutches collected from the Motueka region. These birds have been separated into 2 aviaries with a sex ratio of 2 males to 4 females. This allows for natural pair selection and generally achieves the best breeding results.



The 6 birds who didn't pair up will be released in September into the Abel Tasman National Park in association with Project Janszoon.



This selection process was a relatively quick one with 2 pairs forming up in a 3 week period. This was monitored mostly with trail cameras and observations during feeding and cleaning.

One pair was very quick on the uptake and showing signs of nest building already in their own aviary. This new season should shape up to be a very successful one at Peacock Springs for South Island Blue Duck.





Scholarships.

Ilina Cubrinovska is often here visiting, collecting samples and has sexed all our juvenile NZ Shore Plover this season plus has set up a best practice pairing chart according to their relationships. Ilina has also worked on finding the parent IDs of 2 unrelated chicks here whom had lost their colour bands and we were therefore unable to confirm the parenthood.

We are supporting Ilina during her research for a PhD at Canterbury University. Ilina's thesis is measuring genetic diversity and genetic differentiation of wild and captive populations of NZ Shore Plover using a genomics approach.




Sophie Hale, our Isaac Scholar at Canterbury University, was awarded an A+ for her Masters thesis and will therefore graduate with First Class Honors. Sophie has presented ICWT with a copy of her thesis on the recovery of functional diversity with restoration.

"This couldn't have been possible without the generous support of Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust, so my gracious thanks"


Sophie has been an outstanding student and has now secured employment in Wellington undertaking environmental research.

News in Brief

 This is Red Sheeran, one of our 3 busy little weeding companions.




They live in one of our aviaries and are a big help by keeping all the weeds controlled.


 The Cathedral Choristers enjoyed another development day here.



During a quick break from their singing, Bruce Rule captured their attention with stories of Sir Neil Isaac during the early days of Isaac Construction Limited.

 The Dept. of Conservation now has the availability of a 16ha predator-free release site in Otago and all concerned are in favour of releasing the Western Grand and Otago Skinks held in captivity. However, the 4 Otago Skinks born here earlier this year will not go back into the wild until 2020, thus giving them time to grow and mature.



 A new Toyota Hilux has been purchased for the Wildlife department just in time for the Black Stilt release of over 50 juvenile birds in the Twizel area this August.

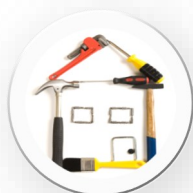


The release site is sometimes only 4WD access, plus these young birds require a comfortable journey to minimise stress and therefore provide the Black Stilt with the best chance of survival in the wild.



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Building News

Our builders have been incredibly busy preparing the “Holcim” building for Isaac Construction Engineering Dept to move into at the end of August. The new quarry office is now operational and the new Isaac Construction administration offices will be ready for occupation soon too.

Exciting Development

In the past the Blue Duck captive breeding focus has been North Island Blue Duck and only wild South Island Blue Duck eggs were brought in for hand rearing and release. There are distinct differences between North and South Island species.

Due to concerns with the South Island population not flourishing as well as the North Island population, some of the wild South Island juveniles have been held back to form new captive breeding pairs.

For this program to be successful an additional breeding aviary is required to extend our existing facilities. Consequently, ICWT have commenced construction of a new aviary to be built over

running water and in a quiet naturalistic area.

To acknowledge the contribution Hynds Pipes have made as a donation via their loyalty programme, this aviary will be named the “Hynds Blue Duck Aviary”



Hynds Blue Duck aviary foundations

Who's who?

ICWT Administration

Rob Clarke—Executive Trustee
Bill Luff—Trustee
Alister McDonald—Trustee
Bruce Rule—Operations Manager
Catherine Ott—Administration Manager

Building/Maintenance Division

Hamish Milne—Builder
Bill Waterman—Apprentice Builder
Peter Jones—Painter/Handyman

Wildlife Division

Anne Richardson—Wildlife Manager
Leigh Percasky—Assistant Wildlife Manager
Sean Kavanagh—Wildlife Keeper
Josh Forrest—Wildlife Keeper
Leonie Heyder—Wildlife Keeper
Jemma Martin—Wildlife Keeper

Landscape Division

Rachel Brewer - Landscape Gardener
Ian Gebbie—Landscape Gardener
George Maipi—Landscape Gardener
Rob Smit—Landscape Gardener

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