



THE ISAAC CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE TRUST

A study in conservation

Issue #27 Autumn 2021

CONSERVATION

NEWS

The Minister of Conservation Hon. Kiritapu Allan visited our facilities in March, as part of Whio Awareness Month and to see the 17 Blue Duck / Whio that were released into the wild.

This iconic NZ species of duck is endangered with only approximately 3,000 left. The Minister enjoyed a tour of the property to view the captive breeding facilities, the native planting programme and learn more about the conservation efforts of the Trust. Soon after visiting our facilities Hon. Kiritapu Allan took medical leave from parliament, we all wish her a full recovery!



Wildlife



Landscape



Heritage Village



Maintenance



News in brief



Wildlife News

Blue duck/ Whio



Success in one of the whio release sites.

After 18 years of management and a comprehensive survey by the Dept of Conservation's Biodiversity Team – we 'officially' have 79 pairs of blue duck/whio in the Wangapeka/Fyfe Rivers region. This area is one of several that we supply whio juveniles to. DOC's national goal for this Whio Security Site was to achieve 50 pairs.

Teams involved in this project included trap building and deployment, trap-checkers, trap-line clearance, volunteer management, whio surveys, whio research, breed4release, WHIONE, infrastructure maintenance etc

– *a huge collective effort.*

Orange-fronted parakeet / kākārīki karaka

One of our orange fronted parakeet/kākārīki karaka pairs named Beech and Tabby, decided with the earlier warm weather in May, to lay another clutch of eggs. Clutch sizes are normally 7, but Tabby laid a whopping 9 eggs!

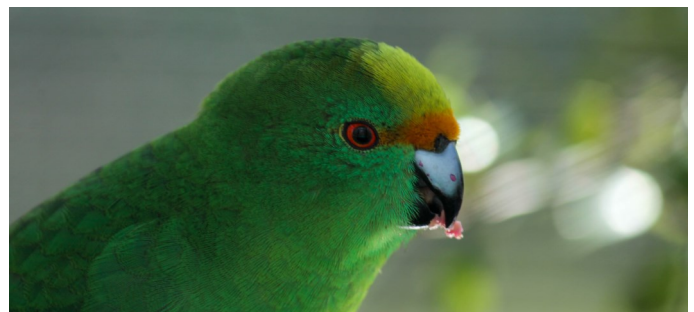
Past parenting skills for this pair have been marginal, so we relocated half the clutch to our red crowned parakeets who have vast fostering (and parenting) skills.

When relocating half the eggs, we left behind dummy eggs. However, Beech and Tabby were not fooled by our subterfuge and subsequently abandoned the nest.

In spite of the viable eggs cooling down, we rescued them and placed these eggs also with Ricky and Ruby, our super star red crowned foster parents. Ricky and Ruby have hatched all 9 eggs and are frantically eating as much as they can to feed the huge brood. Consequently we are feeding the red crowns 3 times per day to keep up with brood demands.



Above is a red crowned parakeet tending to newly hatched orange fronted parakeet/kākārīki karaka chicks.
Below is an orange fronted parakeet/kākārīki karaka.



“The sustainable conservation of our environment for perpetuity.”



Wildlife cont.

NZ Shore Plover/Tūturuatu

The wild Chatham Island Shore Plover/Tūturuatu juveniles have been moved from the insect proof aviaries, down to our main Shore Plover aviaries in the wetlands.

A portion of these juveniles from Chatham Island wild laid eggs, hatched here, are being quarantined prior to their transfer to Pukaha and Cape Sanctuary. The transfer has been delayed due to a large outbreak of avian pox this season, although the birds had some nasty pox lesions on their legs, once these dry out and fall off, the birds are fine and ready to go.

The remaining Chatham Island (Rangatira) birds will be held here in separate sex groups until we are ready to start flock mating at the end of June. We have found in the past if we mix sexes in the earlier stages, they become friends and then we find it difficult to form pairs when the time comes to make up the breeding pairs. By holding the sexes separately until flock mating, they are keen to find a mate who is unknown and not a friend! These juveniles will be flock mated with a mix of some birds already within the captive breeding programme and other Rangatira birds from different nests therefore sharing their valuable wild genes.



Black Stilt/Kakī

This was a bumper season for Black Stilt. It was a slow start, then suddenly the captive pairs started laying eggs along with all the wild pairs as well. The DOC Twizel Breeding Centre collects wild eggs for hand rearing to increase the overall survival rate of black stilt. All the chicks are kept in captivity until August, as it is normal wild behavior for the juveniles to remain with their parents until breeding starts again.

We found one group of six birds started showing signs of “bumble foot” which normally occurs after the bird incurs a crack in the skin of the foot and then an infection sets in. Just to be on the safe side these juveniles were sent down to Dunedin Wildlife Hospital for surgery and follow up treatment.



All the birds are well and are now being held at Twizel until release. The aviary they were held in here had more shingle placed on any exposed concrete to reduce the risk of foot injury in the future.

Brown Teal/Pāteke

The pairs are now enjoying a breeding break for a short spell over winter after a very busy time raising their ducklings. However, we fully expect the more amorous pairs to commence breeding again next month.

In August, for the final release of the breeding season, the few remaining juveniles will be sent to a new area for brown teal, within the Abel National Park (managed by Project Janszoon). (Normally there are 4 releases per year)



Aspiration, Realisation, Conservation.



Landscaping News



We are planting natives to surround the aviaries that hold orange fronted parakeet/kākāriki karaka to provide multiple advantages and practicalities too.

Until now the areas have been largely grassed, however mowing disturbs the birds, particularly the fledglings. By selecting native plants with berries and flowers they love to eat, we can harvest browse effortlessly for the birds, plus reduce noise disturbance.

Normally we utilize bark mulch, but here jute will be the preferred mechanism for weed suppression as bark mulch can harbour *Aspergillus* spores, which can be harmful to these precious birds. We have just started planting!



Heritage News

Constructed circa 1904, the stable/coach house provided space for the horse cart (or gig) with hay stored in the second upstairs room. An iron hoisting device, attached above the upper exterior doorway, raised bales of hay to the top floor.

Originally located in Merivale, Christchurch with a house built for Dr Earnest Gibson, the Robertson Family purchased the house and stable/coach house from the second owner Dr Cooke in 1942.

Recently Robertson family members visited the Isaac property to view the stable/coach house that was relocated here in 2008 for conservation and restoration.

Tony Robertson explained “My parents Dr Hal and Betty Robertson lived at 121 Papanui Road from 1942 until 1965 when they subdivided, building a new home on the original vegetable garden, retaining the stable/coach house until 1986.”

“I’m delighted that the stable still exists, as it holds many happy memories of my childhood.”



“To fulfil the legacy of Sir Neil and Diana, Lady Isaac.”



Maintenance News

The Isaac Construction workshop has been the focus for our builder over many months now with seismic strengthening, clear light roofing, a new roof over the parts dept and north east bay over the workshop.

A weir has been constructed close to the termination point of a stock-water race (to hold a flowmeter) that will provide valuable irrigation when water surplus allows, for the use around the gardens of Isaac Construction and here at the Trust. The native garden particularly, provides staff and visitors alike, with good protection from the prevailing easterly wind.

The Salmon Hatchery tank room has just received an upgrade. The concrete floor was removed and a new one poured, a new colour steel ceiling (yes ceiling – not roof) has been installed and finally the lighting upgraded to provide much improved working conditions and operational function-ability.

Residences located at 25 Jessons Road have also kept our maintenance team busy, working on heat pumps, new insulation, painting and other repairs to ensure they are ready for occupancy and remain warm through winter.



The Isaac workshop, stronger, lighter, better.



The Salmon Farm Tank room.



The new weir under construction.



Isaac workshop new clear-light + roof.

“A Study In Conservation”



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News in brief

*There is an excellent documentary series produced for Radio NZ called **Fight For The Wild** that is certainly worth watching.*

Look for the a short feature by our assistant Wildlife Manager, Leigh Percasky. The series is called Fight for the Wild. Episode 1 and 2 are available now and comprise 45 mins each. See link below.

Go to www.rnz.co.nz/programmes/fight-for-the-wild

The Christchurch Cathedral Choristers

Utilise the Lake House for their quarterly development day. We enjoy hearing their singing practice and following the tradition of the late Lady Isaac, who first invited them here for practice over 10 years ago. There's nothing like a captive audience and we always take the opportunity, to explain to the choristers about the different and varied conservation activities of the Trust!

The Christchurch City Festival 2021 Walking Festival incorporated The Isaac Walking Tracks for an epic "Long Loop" covering approximately 24 km.

The day started with rain, but soon cleared for good walking conditions and good fun. Thank you to the CCC and Ecan staff who gave interesting talks along the way, plus took care of our safety, comfort and conveniences through the day. A great day out.



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 ONZM—Wildlife Manager

Leigh Percasky—Assistant Wildlife Manager

Olly Gooday—Wildlife Keeper

Chloe Jackson—Wildlife Keeper

Kate Barclay—Wildlife Keeper

Emma Cournane—Wildlife Keeper

Fran Johnson—Wildlife Keeper

Landscape Division

Lee Cheneler—Landscape Gardener

Ian Gebbie—Landscape Gardener

Rob Smit—Landscape Gardener

Pryderi Hughes—Landscape Gardener

Po Box 20 440, Bishopdale Christchurch 8543 ph 03 359 8962 Email; enquiries@isaacconservation.org.nz

www.isaacconservation.org.nz and follow us on facebook.