



THE ISAAC CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE TRUST

A study in conservation

NEWS

Issue 20
Winter 2019

Minister of Conservation Hon. Eugenie Sage visit.

Minister Sage visited The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust

on 17th July 2019 to announce that New Zealand's rarest mainland forest bird, the kākārīki karaka/orange-fronted parakeet, is having its best breeding season in decades due to a beech seed bonanza.

Minister Sage acknowledged the crucial role of the Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust in producing captive-bred birds for release into the wild. While visiting ICWT Minister Sage took the opportunity to view the breeding facilities and also learn more about the other conservation activities of the Trust including the native plantings, scholarships and the Heritage Village.

"I am very grateful for the conservation vision of the late Lady Diana Isaac for creating the Trust and the dedication and skill of the Trust and its 20 staff in carrying on that work. What they contribute to conservation is priceless."

"The orange-fronted kākārīki bred by the Trust have been a lifeline for the tiny Canterbury population and we're now seeing

the real dividends of all of the Trust's hard work. The vision and commitment to conservation of the late Lady Diana Isaac has been a boon for kākārīki." said Minister Sage.

ICWT have had a dedicated captive breeding programme for this enigmatic bird since 2003

It's an impressive contribution by ICWT to breed more than 500 orange-fronted parakeets since 2003 for release on predator-free islands and back into Canterbury valleys.

Over the coming months DOC will be focused on protecting the critically endangered kākārīki karaka from increased numbers of rats, stoats and feral cats, which are also expected to increase in numbers.

This year 62 kākārīki (37 from the Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust, 17 from Auckland Zoo and 8 from Orana Wildlife Park) were released into the Hurunui South Branch with Christchurch Helicopters flying the precious cargo. Most of these birds have survived and are showing signs of pairing up to breed.

Both kākārīki photographs below by DOC



Wildlife



Landscape



Heritage Village



Scholarships



Maintenance



News in brief



ICWT awarded for stellar work in conservation

In recognition of the contribution to conservation by helping native species to thrive, ICWT has been awarded the Mahaanui Conservation Week award by the Minister of Conservation.

“The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust is the vehicle the Isaac Group uses to undertake its conservation activities. Both the late Sir Neil and Lady Diana Isaac were passionate advocates of conservation and ensured their conservation principles were applied across the Isaac Group.”

“The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust breed and rear highly threatened kākāriki karaka/orange-fronted parakeet, kakī/black stilt, pāteke/brown teal, whio/blue duck and tuturuatu/New Zealand shore

plover. Without their support we would not be seeing the current progress we are making with these species.” acknowledges DOC. “ICWT also works to support native

vegetation by planting pockets of native plants across its 1100ha site, and they have worked with others to plant 55,000 plants along the Otukaikino Stream. The Isaac Conservation walking track borders a large part of this planting programme. The Trust is also involved in the preservation of historical buildings”.

Conservation week is a fantastic opportunity for all New Zealanders to get involved in conservation activities such as joining a DOC-run event, backyard trapping of introduced predators like rats, stoats and possums, or volunteering with a local community conservation group.



Hon. Eugenie Sage & ICWT Trustee Chair Rob Clarke

Black Stilt / kakī release

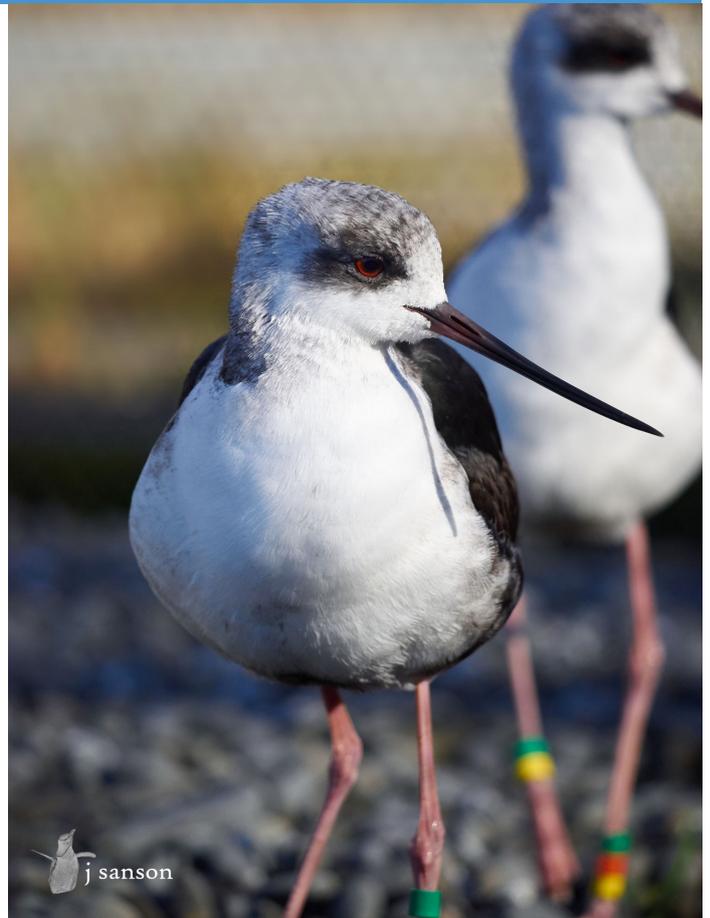
On August the 8th our 44 juvenile and 1 adult male (excess to the breeding programme) Black Stilt were released at Mt Gerald Station in the Godley and Cass river systems near Twizel.

Due to very windy conditions on the day, half of the birds were blown off course slightly, but fortunately were able to make it back with the rest of the group shortly after.

DOC stayed out with the group for 6 weeks supplementary feeding with their captive diet of minced ox heart and crushed Friskies (cat food!).

Surprisingly, DOC also needed to chase off endangered Black Billed Gulls to prevent them from eating all the Black Stilt’s food.

Over 2,200 new traps have been installed across the greater area, to provide these birds and other bird species too, with the best chance of survival.



Black Stilt in juvenile plumage. Photo Jeremy Sanson

“The sustainable conservation of our environment for perpetuity.”



Wildlife News

Orange-fronted parakeet / kākāriki karaka

It's a slow start to the breeding season this year with our normally prolific pairs aging and slowing down on production. We hope our newly formed pairs will start laying closer to December. Last season we received from DOC, 4 clutches of eggs from the wild, 2 from ex captive stock on Blumine Island and 2 from the Poulter Valley from a pair made up of a wild male and a captive bred female. The wild male is very important genetically to our captive breeding programme. We are currently flock mating these juveniles hoping to make up 4 new pairs.



Photo Dirk van Garderen

Blue duck / whio

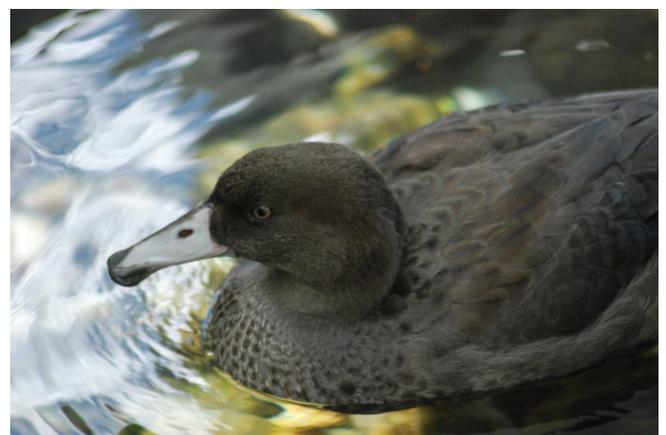
Our 2 Motueka pairs we formed last season have both happily gone down on eggs.

Now that the refurbishing of the wildlife kitchen and incubator room have been completed, their eggs will be collected for incubation and hand rearing. The parents then go on to produce additional clutches of eggs which boost duckling numbers for release.

Captive produced Blue Duck eggs are not left with their parents as the ducklings then tend to only eat live food in the water and will not go onto artificial food causing starvation and death.



Photo Dirk van Garderen



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



Building

The winter months are naturally quieter for the captive breeding facilities and so our attentions were focused on upgrading the Wildlife Headquarters.

In conjunction with seismic strengthening, a full renovation including the relining, rewiring and insulation of the incubator room and both kitchens was undertaken. The 2 bird food preparation kitchens were completely refurbished utilising enduring materials combined with heavy duty industrial components. Avian hygiene necessitates that separate kitchens are required for different bird species and their respective diets.

In addition, the sheep yards plus the shearing sheds and pens were upgraded over the winter months as also quiet there operationally.

The Salmon Factory has new flooring down with relevant site works to conclude the building repairs. The carparking, new roof area, gutters and exterior cladding treatment are all now completed.



Landscaping

Winter is physically a tough time to be working outdoors, so our 4 team members have opted to take their holidays. However, there is still work to be done and they have been busy with rose pruning, planting and mulching.



Many of you will have observed new fencing, pegs, mowing and activity in the paddock adjacent to McArthur's road. 5,000 square meters have been earmarked for an ambitious new native garden to mirror the attractive natives over the road. In the continuing months our landscaping team will continue with ground preparations for planting in the upcoming autumn.



Most of you may be unaware of the existence of this little known but special species of fish, let alone seen one. If you were to cross an eel with a whitebait – this is what the endangered Canterbury mudfish looks like!



A focus to increase numbers of Canterbury mudfish is being achieved on our site by optimizing their environment to promote their establishment. We have recently extended native planting around our mudfish ponds with species recommended by DOC, plus we keep the ponds free of predator fish species such as eel, trout and salmon.

Did you know that adult mudfish are nocturnal, while the juvenile are active only during the day, to avoid being eaten by their adult counterparts!



“A Study In Conservation”



Brown teal / pāteke release

The last Brown Teal release for this season occurred on the 22nd August, with 34 Brown Teal being processed and flown to Nelson and then transported to an area in the Abel Tasman National Park, managed by Janszoon.

Did you know that every captive raised Brown Teal in New Zealand comes to our facilities for pre-release conditioning? Here they learn to use special feeders that are also located at release sites to assist with their transition to living in the wild.



Preparing the birds for release is an enormous but rewarding task. Just catching these shy elusive ducks in water-filled expansive aviaries is challenging!

Expertise knowledge is required for banding, transmitter attachment, worming, weighing and disease screening. Our highly trained staff handle the birds with expertise and care to prevent injury and minimise stress.

We have also now bred the first Brown Teal ducklings for the season. 6 out of our 7 pairs are breeding and we are expecting an explosion of teal babies over the next couple of weeks!

Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board Awards

Once again ICWT sponsored the CACB awards again this year to reward community groups, schools and individuals that are taking action in conservation efforts within Canterbury. The award recipients must be making a concerted effort to make a difference to our environment and benefit from the ICWT financial support to continue their efforts.

1st - The Okuti River Project.

This project is community-based stewardship of the Okuti River on Banks Peninsula. The project is unique because it has adopted a catchment based management approach and has ambitious objectives that seek to protect a high value habitat. It also aims to improve the relationship people have with their freshwater environment.



2nd - Kids Discovery Plantout (KDP).

The KDP programme is a successful collaboration between Te Ara Kakariki, Enviroschools Canterbury and Lincoln University. Students from Selwyn schools adopt a local site where they achieve eco-restoration by native plantings with on-going monitoring.



3rd - Styx Living Laboratory Trust

The Styx Living Laboratory Trust is a local river care group that focuses on both learning and research of the Styx waterway. The Trust encompasses a role of guardianship and advocacy for the waterway and the biodiversity of the surrounding land as a living part of the Canterbury landscape.



Aspiration, Realisation, Conservation.



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Scholarship news

At Canterbury University and Lincoln University, both of our Isaac scholarship students are deep into data evaluation. Kathryn Bugler (the Lady Isaac Scholar at Lincoln University) is studying infra red camera technology and evaluating an overwhelming 6 weeks of 24/7 video footage!

Ariana Painter (the Sir Neil Isaac Scholar at Canterbury University) has finished her lab analysis for her first round of water sampling of the Otukaikino waterway and has now nearly completed identifying and counting invertebrates. This is a rather large job as, going by past sampling, Ariana is expecting somewhere around 25,000 invertebrates across the 10 sites.

News in Brief

In acknowledgment of staff who have worked 25 years or more with the Isaac Group, a dinner was held in the Lake House.

On 31st August 2019 we thanked;

Phil Black
Dean Cawte
Paul Coulter
Graham Higgins
Murray Powis
Anne Richardson
Bruce Rule
Wayne Tupe
Graham Uren

Your long standing service, loyalty, dedication and hard work is certainly appreciated.

Heritage Village

Although maintenance on our Heritage Village cottages slows over winter, recently we completed the deck under the veranda on the cottage known as "The Sawyers Arms Cottage".



The coming months will see a renewed focus on painting some cottage exteriors. With 14 buildings in total located in the Heritage Village, we aim to paint one per year in a rotating cycle, to keep them in optimum condition.

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
Olly Gooday—Wildlife Keeper
Emma Cournane—Wildlife Keeper
Fran Johnson—Wildlife Keeper
Katie Loyd—Wildlife Keeper
Chloe Jackson—Wildlife Keeper
Leonie Heyder—Wildlife Keeper

Landscape Division

Victoria Taylor - Landscape Gardener
Ian Gebbie—Landscape Gardener
Rob Smit—Landscape Gardener
Pryderi Hughes—Landscape Gardener

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