

# DUCKS UNLIMITED

## *A Force for Conservation?*

Do Forest and Bird members have anything in common with duck shooters? As the Public Lands Coalition – a third of which is made up of Acclimatisation Societies – has recently proven, such partnerships can be extremely beneficial. Tauranga member Ann Graeme argues the case for Ducks Unlimited.

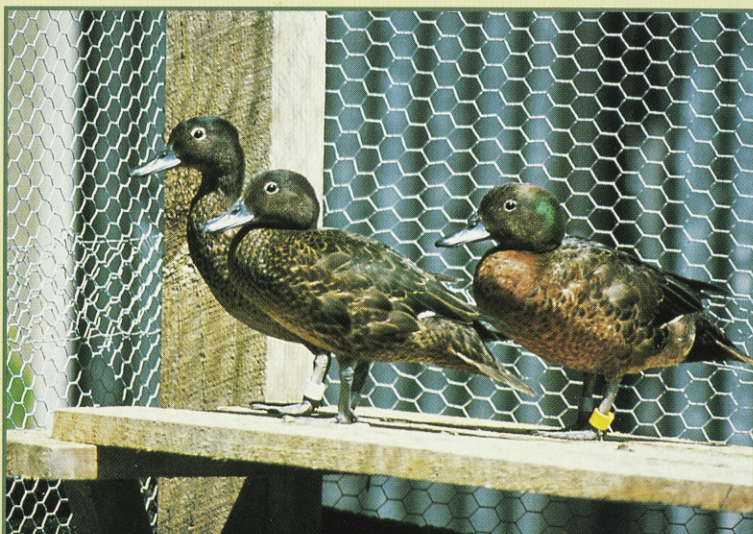
**D**ucks Unlimited NZ is a private non-profit membership organisation dedicated to the preservation, restoration, creation and maintenance of wetland habitats in New Zealand, and to the propagation of our country's rare waterfowl. Unlike Forest and Bird members, many Ducks Unlimited members are farmers and duck shooters.

Although Ducks Unlimited members

write submissions and lobby politicians, they are not as outspoken or as politically assertive as our own Forest and Bird Society. However, this difference of attitudes towards political action does not mean we should ignore them. By working with them we could combine our talents and perhaps motivate valuable allies in the political battle against wetland destruction.

### **Ducks Unlimited activities**

With practical advice, assistance and finance, Ducks Unlimited encourages the development and improvement of wetlands on members' properties. Their most notable property is the Sinclair wetlands near Dunedin, recognised as amongst the top 20 privately owned wetlands in the world. The Sinclair wetlands were gifted to Ducks Un-



*Top:* Between 1974 and 1984 the grey teal population jumped from 20,000 to 40,000. The increase is accounted for by the provision of 900 nest boxes throughout the country, which keep the ducks safe from rats and mustelids. *Photo: Ducks Unlimited*

*Bottom:* Hopes of saving brown teal rest in its adaptation to captivity, according to wildlife experts. Largest numbers are found on Great Barrier Island – up to 1000 – with dwindling remnants in Fiordland, inland Bay of Plenty, the Waikato, the tip of the Coromandel Peninsula and Northland. *Photo: Dick Knighton*

*Top:* New Zealand's rarest mainland waterfowl is the brown teal. Since 1976 Ducks Unlimited have released 550 into the wild.

*Photo: Dick Knighton*

*Bottom:* How "natural" is it to intervene with a species to this extent? The author argues that humans have a moral responsibility to save endangered species, since their actions placed the species in jeopardy. This bantam hen zealously defends her brood of brown teal ducklings as if she was the natural mother. *Photo: Dick Knighton*