

Creating Wetlands



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Why Create Wetlands?

The draining of wetlands for developments of various kinds has drastically reduced the habitat available for wetland dwellers. If New Zealand is to retain its full range of unique plants and animals, it is vital that new wetlands are created.

Well-planned and constructed ponds can provide habitat attractive to a variety of plant and animal species. They are especially valuable as breeding places and can provide hunting sites during the game season. Ponds frequented by native and introduced animals and birds are places of absorbing interest and can provide much enjoyment to owners and the public.

The Game Bird Habitat Trust Board, which is serviced by Fish & Game New Zealand, provides grants for wetland protection, including helping private landowners protect and develop wetland on their land. The funds for this come from sales of a game bird habitat stamp, which features on each year's game bird hunting licence.

What Makes a Good Pond?

In general, the larger the pond, the better, as larger ponds encourage more diversity of wildlife. However, ponds of 0.5 hectares can be good brood-rearing areas, provided there is suitable cover and minimum disturbance.

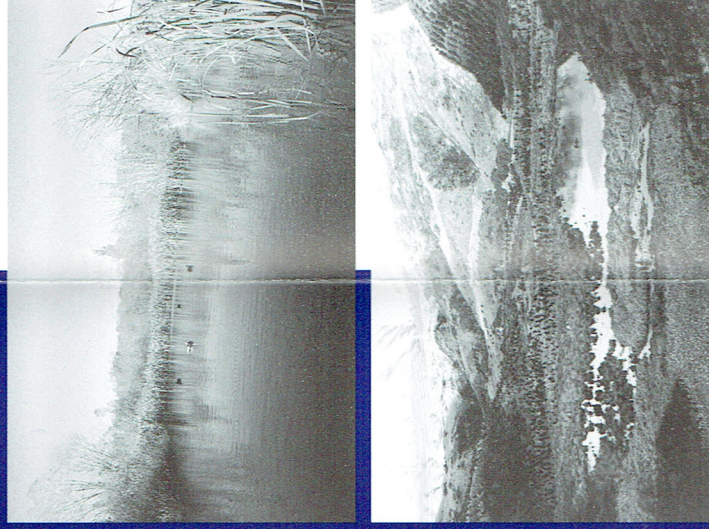
A ratio of 1:1 open water to swampy/dry margin is recommended to increase the diversity of habitat being created.

A successful pond must have the right mixture of desirable features. Careful planning and design will ensure best value for money.

Shallow water: with the exception of scaup, New Zealand ducks are dabblers and do most of their feeding in shallow water. Shallow water is rich in food.

Sloping margin: gently sloping, "saucer-shaped" ponds provide different habitat zones for plants and animals.

Resting places: open margins, low-lying mudbanks and half-submerged logs provide ideal places for waterfowl to rest, preen and sun themselves.



Irregular edge: the edge of the pond provides the best places for feeding, resting and shelter. The more irregular (and thus longer) it is, the better.

Islands: these provide additional edge and less disturbed nesting and resting places.

Ground cover: patches of tall grass and low, bushy shrubs close to the pond provide good nest sites when fenced off to exclude stock.

Overhead cover: A few trees overhanging the water will provide cover for young birds before they can fly. Rushes, sedges, trees or other vegetation growing in the water will also provide essential escape cover as well as secluded feeding areas.

Building a Pond

1. Damming

Most new ponds are made by building a small earth dam across a boggy gully. This can be a relatively simple operation but there are a few points that need to be considered before starting.



Farm stream after dammit



Pond fills up



Ready for planting