

Simple Steps to Improve Your Farm Pond

What do we all want? To turn a barren stock-watering pond into one where stock access water for drinking and the habitat for waterfowl is enhanced, while beautifying your property.

What we must do to get there:

- Ensure safe stock access to water.
- Make sure the pond system is protected in the long term.
- Improve water quality and areas of open water.
- Provide areas for duck nesting, feeding, loafing/preening.
- Provide protection for young and adult ducks.

How do we ensure stock watering and protection of the pond?

- Find the best place for stock to get to the water and leave an unfenced drinking access area. Try to keep this to, at most, half of the available shoreline.
- Fence stock completely out from dam wall, or fence the edges of the top of the dam to keep them off the critical dam faces to avoid erosion issues.

How do we improve water quality and open water areas?

- It's often easy to raise the level of the water outlet. Raising the outlet by 200mm or so will achieve an increase in water levels and area, possibly creating more shallow margins for waterfowl. (Note: Details of outlet structure requirements can be found at your local regional council).
- If you can, divert additional water supplies into ponds that regularly dry up.
- Fence off the parts of the shoreline not necessary for the stock drinking area.

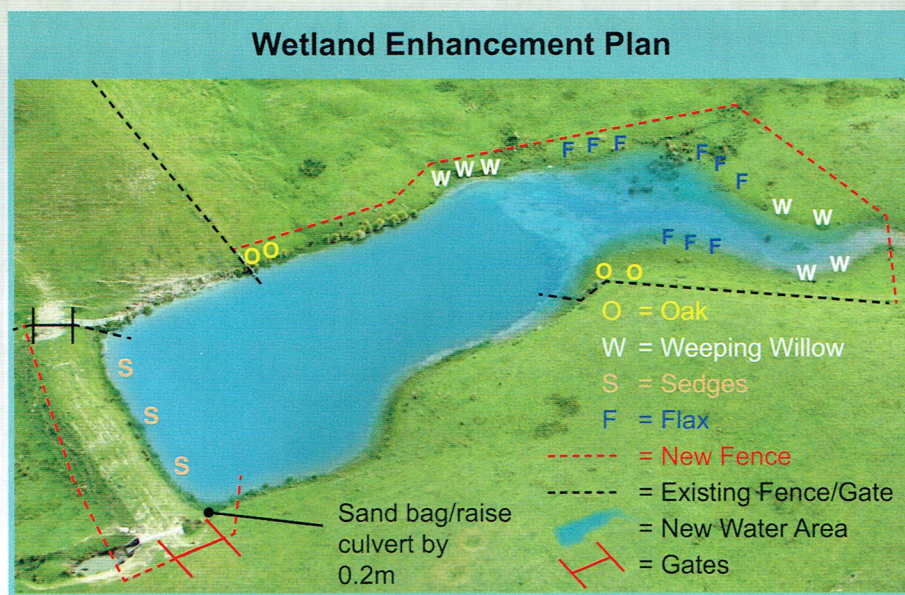
How do we provide areas for duck nesting, feeding, loafing/preening?

- In the fenced-off areas of the pond allow long grass to grow and plant sedges like *Carex secta* for ducks to nest in and feed on.
- Plant trees such as oaks near the water or in areas where acorns drop onto short grass (close to the fence boundaries). In time they'll provide a good food source for mallards, as well as stock shading.
- If a pond regularly dries out, then plantings need to be surrounded by fencing on all sides to stop stock access/grazing damage.

- Plant a couple of 2m weeping willow poles on the water's edge. After a few years these will grow out over the water providing duck broods with good cover.
- Plant flaxes, sedges and rushes on the water's edge for cover.

Other helpful ideas:

- On drier land away from the water, a mix of native and introduced plants will attract native birds and provide food for ducks. Hardy, quick-growing plants include cabbage trees, manuka, karamu and red flowering gums.
- Successful plantings are a result of site preparation and maintenance. Spot spray one month prior to planting using Glyphosate. The best time for planting is July – August. Plant spacings vary but as a guide 2-5m for trees, 1.5-3m for shrubs, and 1-2m for sedges, rushes, flaxes. Release spraying around the plant should occur each spring and autumn until such time the plant is not out-competed.



- Sunny grazed areas are important for loafing and preening. Unfenced stock drinking areas, or running some fencing close to the water, can provide this.

How do we protect both the young and adult ducks?

- Predator control greatly increases survival of all waterfowl. If it can't be done all year round then concentrate your efforts during the time from nesting until the start of the game season (August – May). **See overleaf for tips on ground predator control.

Cost: Many works can be undertaken at little cost, using resources already on the farm. PB3-sized plants cost approximately \$3 each, with traps ranging from \$25- \$55 each. Please note, it is worth inquiring about regional council subsidies for this kind of work.

Further advice: Fish & Game staff provide free advice on all aspects of wetland creation or enhancement. Visit our website – www.fishandgame.org.nz – to find more information, or for further free advice contact your local Fish & Game office.