



New Zealand Federation of Bird Clubs (Inc)

NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2013

This is my first newsletter and I would like to thank Stephen Silk who has been doing this very important job for the last year. Like him, I encourage ALL CLUBS to send in material and hope that all secretaries either forward the newsletter to their members, or have copies printed off and made available at club meetings.

So what do you want or expect from this newsletter? Personally, I prefer one that provides information, that provokes comment, that records the activities of bird clubs and their members, that encourages participation and that can be seen as a worthwhile means of communication so that the hobby we are involved in and enjoy can thrive and grow. So, I welcome articles, photos, club happenings and letters from members that are relevant to the NZ scene. I would also stress that comments in this newsletter are not necessarily the view of the NZ Bird Federation committee! In upcoming newsletters, I intend putting in some helpful tips for Clubs to try, whether at their shows, for their sales/auctions or to liven up meetings and newsletters. Let's be honest, there wouldn't be any involved in birdkeeping throughout NZ who could genuinely say that changes aren't needed to improve the hobby, to attract/retain more members, to make our annual shows more appealing (these after all are the main way we can 'showpiece' our hobby to potential new members and sponsors) to increase the number of judges, to provide different ideas for our meetings and to relieve the burden for the same few who in many cases, are holding some clubs together.

So my main message to all readers, is that we must communicate and co-operate, to share ideas and to work together to make birdkeeping an interesting, stimulating, rewarding and social hobby. The pessimists will say it's all a 'sign of the times' (...yawn...!) and 'been there, done that!' Conversely, the optimists will say: 'Let's give it a go and if it doesn't quite work out as we had hoped, let's discuss, modify or adapt and try again!' Which camp are you in?! As clubs, we should be getting together, talking about the REAL issues (forget the politics and who upset who many years ago!) setting short and long term plans/goals and working to achieve them, with some adaptation necessary along the way. To me, the key issue facing every club is to build up the membership; just think, if every current member's goal was to introduce ONE potential NEW member during the year, numbers would be doubled! Sounds simple? So why aren't we doing it?

Dave Nicholson

Club Secretaries - Please send all your news/contributions to d.nic@xtra.co.nz or post to: 9 Pelorus Place, Pakuranga, Auckland 2010. Please acknowledge contributor.

NZ National Bird Show, Napier, 26-28 July, 2013

The Hawke's Bay, Hastings, Poverty Bay & Tararua Clubs have combined to host this year's 81st National in Napier. A big thanks to TOPFLITE, who are once again the major sponsors of this event which is the culminating highlight of the show season. Accommodation

is available but rapidly filling up in the immediate area. Don Birch is Show Secretary and Brenton LeProu the Show Manager. There is plenty to see and do in and around Napier and the coach tour should be a cracker! Conveniently for all, the AGM & the Awards Dinner will be held right next door to the show venue. Entries close 10 July.

Reminder to all Clubs!

Do check that your details on the NZ Federation website www.birdclubs.org.nz are updated and 'user-friendly!' Include: first names as well as surnames of key personnel along with their contact numbers and email addresses. Other essential information: meeting venue/time, subs, sale/show dates and a brief paragraph on what your club can offer to potential members.

Buddy Club Allocation

This is the list of clubs allocated to NZ Federation committee members. Please 'use' these people and seek advice and information when required:

Dave Nicholson: Auckland Metro, South Auckland, Huntly, Hamilton, Te Awamutu, Piako, Tauranga.

Stephen Silk: Upper Hutt, Hutt Valley, Wellington & Porirua, Kapiti, Wairarapa, Levin.

Steve Parry: North Shore, Palmerston North, Wanganui, Dunedin, South Otago, Southland.

John Perry: Northland, Whakatane, Taranaki, West Coast, Christchurch.

Murray Hodgson: North Taranaki, Stratford, Rotorua, Ashburton, Timaru.

Graham Evans: Poverty Bay, Hastings, Hawke's Bay, Nelson, North Otago.

We Can't Keep Losing Experience!

How many of the following names are familiar? Joe Wilkes, Les Silby, Rex Bint, Allan

Gamble, Wally Payne, Shirley Newman, Jake Tilyard, Fred Rix, Bill Rogers, Bill Agnew, Jim McLay, Vic Salter, Bill Hulsegge, Tom Crook, Tom Kennerley, Hugh Nicholson, Bill Bates, Bob Johnston, Des Grant, George Howell, Owen Simpkin.....They were all 'expert' bird breeders/exhibitors and have passed on. With them, in some cases has gone their 'bloodline,' but so has a vast store of knowledge. I firmly believe we cannot let this situation continue. Reading overseas books and trawling through pages on the internet is fine, but all that advice is largely relevant to birdkeeping in Australia, UK, America etc. The NZ Finch Society has produced an excellent booklet on virtually everything to do with Finches as applicable to New Zealand. I think we should produce something similar, divided into sections with each type of bird discussed in some detail as well as the illnesses/treatments, aviary/birdroom design, show advice etc, making use of all the talent currently available **AS RELEVANT TO BIRDS AVAILABLE AND CONDITIONS IN NEW ZEALAND!** I intend following this up with interested parties and 'experts' while there is still.....TIME!

Aviary Plants

Many birds are so destructive with their beaks and claws, it is almost impossible to establish a balance of birds and plants in your aviary. Try rotating potted shrubs. Finches, softbills and parakeets tend to be less harsh on your planting efforts and even the materials used to build your aviary, than budgies and parrots. In general, the most suitable plants to establish should be hardy, flowering shrubs or trees which can be easily pruned. Deciduous varieties are good to use as winter sunlight can not be impeded by leaves. Planted aviaries are useful additives for the birds' diet with nectar from the flowers, insects can be attracted, while the berries and fruits can be rich in vitamins, minerals and proteins. They can also act as a perch, nest-site, windbreak or even as a refuge from more aggressive species!

Bottle Brush: Ideal for shelter/perching & flowers attract insects

Citrus Trees: Look good, provide shelter/attract insects

Conifers: Dwarf varieties, hardy, excellent nest-sites & shelter

Cotoneaster: Hardy, good for perching & berries

Creepers: Passionfruit vines, Canary creeper good for shade/shelter; honeysuckle attracts insects & birds like the berries

Eucalyptus: Dwarf varieties are hardy, look good, provide shelter/perching, flowers provide nectar & mice hate the smell!

Ferns: Great ground cover & look good

Hibiscus: Ideal! Easily established, perching, attract insects, large flowers for nectar, broad leaves provide windbreaks, takes pruning

Miniature Bamboo: Good in corners for quail & finch nest-sites

NZ Xmas Tree: Hardy, windbreak, good nesting sites, attracts insects

Privet: Hardy, perching, nesting, windbreaks, berries for health, looks good

Tea Tree/Manuka: Growing or cut is ideal for nesting, windbreak, insects

Wattle: Looks good, perching, insects. Don't plant too close to wire as it causes damage!

Perhaps at our Show/Sales we can invite the local garden centre or local growers to offer aviary friendly suitable plants/shrubs etc for sale & this could include ones suitable for discouraging mosquitoes (tansy) As well as being beneficial for our birds, a well planted aviary looks far more attractive to the human eye and in fact, can help make your aviary a showpiece in your back-garden.



This mixed collection enjoy a variety of fresh greenfood daily as well as exploring and nesting in the growing shrubs/tress at the back of the aviary and in their shelter. Do leave a clear 'flight path' for that essential exercise every bird enjoys: flying!

Quote of the Month

Grandson: "Grandfather, which is more important – to love or to be loved?"

Grandfather: "Which is more important to the bird – the left wing or the right wing?"

Lakota Indian Saying.

Marketing Your Club!

With a few exceptions, Bird Clubs in NZ are facing a drop-off in numbers and with that, a whole chain of other problems tend to arise. There are a variety of reasons that have led to this increasing decline and rather than dwell on the problems, we as a movement, should be seeking solutions. The key focus of all NZ Bird Clubs must be to increase membership! In succeeding newsletters, I intend putting forward some relatively simple ideas/solutions and by trying some of these and adapting them, I am certain that we will be able to increase membership, thus reducing many of the other related problems.

Marketing in its simplest form is: The process of matching a **product or service** with its **market**. The product is: the bird club. The service is: what we can provide eg friendliness at meetings, information at shows, encouraging non-showing members to exhibit. The market is: members of the local community eg potential new members and sponsors.

Marketing can help your Club to: 1) Identify opportunities for growth eg increase membership and funds. 2) Increase participation and enthusiasm of existing members. 3) Attract sponsors. 4) Clearly communicate and raise awareness of exactly what your club has to offer. 5) By becoming more 'visible,' create a positive image & broader profile in the community. 6) Gain wider recognition for being 'pro-active.'

Times have changed but some Clubs have not adapted & seem content to run things as they have always done. So what do people want when they join YOUR BIRD CLUB?

1) Consistent friendly welcome & not being made to feel isolated by the clique few. 2) To see & talk about birds either at your meeting or by being invited to current members' aviaries. 3) To gain knowledge and information, through a range of guest speakers/workshops. 4) To feel they have had the chance to contribute in some way, eg during discussion. 5) Fun, keep the official business to a minimum. 6) The opportunity to buy birds & accessories. 7) To feel they can ask a question or seek advice without 'feeling foolish.' 8) To feel the desire to return!

Tips on Marketing Your Club & Making Meetings Enjoyable.

1) Use local radio and newspaper's community notices section to promote your meetings.
2) Use supermarket noticeboards to give details of your next meeting.
3) Run a poster competition at the local kindergarten/school.

4) Display the winner/s or your own designed poster in high pedestrian traffic areas (eg malls, vets, petshops, schools, resthomes etc.
5) Send your newsletter or club events to local media sources, schools, vets, petshops, i-Sites.
6) Have your membership forms available at every meeting along with your minutes & financial report on a table when people arrive. Ensure every member has several membership forms & encourage them to 'recruit someone new' when they visit them to purchase a bird. Even have an award for the member who recruits the most new members during the year.
7) Consider the location/timing/day-night of your meeting venue and survey your members in case a change may be necessary.
8) Commence each meeting with a 5-10 minute talk by a member on how/why they got in to birds & some tips they can offer. It's best if they can bring along some birds, after all, *bird clubs ARE about BIRDS!*
9) Try to get a range of speakers, covering a variety of topics & subjects. Sometimes, think outside of the square & invite someone from MAF, DoC, vet, petshop, working dogs (police, hearing, sight, sniffers etc)
10) Have an occasional 'special meeting night' when you invite people from the community (eg mayor/councilors, school, retirement village, reporter, other sorts of clubs)
11) Delegate/roster duties, such as supper, welcoming guests/new members, library etc.
12) Introduce a Buy/Sell/Swap board.
13) Periodically, ensure you have all members' correct contact details, especially if you email your newsletter. Lack of contact with members for whatever reason, is one sure way of losing them!
14) Occasionally have a 'meeting with a difference.' For example, an in-house 'Buy/Sell/Swap night, organized workshops on different types of birds, a quiz or 'game night, your own in-house 'show,' ideal for newer members to bring along their birds, have them 'judges/assessed' and this may help encourage them into showing.
15) Remind members to MARKET THE CLUB!

