



Travis Wetland

Parks News – May 2003



A newsletter from Travis Wetland Trust and the Christchurch City Council

Walkway

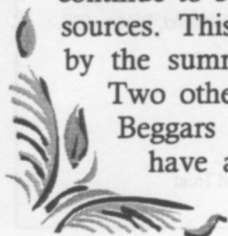
The section of walkway linking the main entrance and developments at Beach Road with the existing track was completed and fenced in March and is already proving popular. This 230 meter section starts adjacent to the information pavilion and joins the existing track near Inwoods Road. The steep bank will be planted in May and June. The Burwood/Pegasus community board contributed a \$5000 grant towards its construction. Direction signs are planned for the walkway in the near future.

Predator Control

A permanent predator control plan and programme has been in operation for 5 months. This comprises 40 traps set primarily for stoats, ferrets and rats. Traps are in wooden tunnels designed to stop cats and people accessing the traps. Since being set up in November 7 stoats, 16 hedgehogs and 8 rats have been caught. Six of the stoats have been caught in the centre of the wetland. This may explain the numerous bird carcasses found about the wetland this summer.

Weed Control

All marked female grey willows in the western willow have been drilled and poisoned this summer and autumn. The results are encouraging and should see a reduction in seeding next year. This should result in less herbicide and time being spent on control of grey willow seedlings in the future, though there will continue to be reinvasion from nearby seed sources. This involved over 400 hours work by the summer students and contractors. Two other weed threats to biodiversity Beggars Ticks and Purple Loosestrife have also been priority for control.



Beggars ticks appears to be more extensive than last season and its prolonged growing season and late seeding makes it a difficult weed to control. Purple loose strife has been monitored and removed from the two locations where it was found.

Education

Education and ranger staff have been busy delivering the Learning Through Action environmental education programmes. In the first term more than 300 primary and intermediate students took part. The curriculum centred 2 hour programmes are activity based. Two programmes are offered at Travis; 1) Wetland, Waders and Water boatmen and 2) Plants, Pests and People. The programmes explore the changes and impacts wetlands have undergone and encourage students to identify and participate in resolving environmental problems. The programmes are run by both LEOTC education staff and rangers. More information can be found on the Council's web site at www.ccc.govt.nz/LearningThroughAction/



DATES TO REMEMBER

Travis Wetland Trust Work days

Meet at the car park at Beach Road at 9.00 am on the third Saturday of every month: -

17 May
21 June
19 July
16 August
20 September
18 October



Wildlife

A glossy ibis was seen at the pond by Travis Wetland Trust members on their March 18 workday. This is the 5th consecutive year that Glossy ibis have now been recorded at Travis Wetland. Canada geese numbers are increasing again with the seasonal migration of breeding birds from the high country returning to the coastal areas for winter. The low pond over late summer provided ideal feeding habitat for juvenile and adult pied stilt. The recent rain has filled the pond and large numbers of grey teal, shoveler duck and paradise duck are now present.

Spiders and their Webs (Manuka Group Report)

Did you know that there is a difference between a spiders web and a cobweb?

A spider spins a web to catch insects. To start making a web off the ground, a spider attaches its silk thread to something firm and then jumps or drifts on the wind across a space to take a thread to the other side. It then uses its own thread to move over and make a web. Spiders' webs do not have to be vertical, they can be horizontal on the ground. This can be seen more distinctly in the autumn dew/mist; check out your cut lawn.

A cobweb is a place where some spiders live and is more likely to be seen inside a house. It has a closer weave and is smaller in size. A nursery web is where young spiders hatch and if you are lucky you might see a female spider on the outside protecting the web. The young ones eat their way out. During their time there they will have shed three shells.



Spiders can live under water. They take a bubble of air down trapped in the hair on the back of their hind legs. They place the bubble in their bell-shaped web that they have built underwater.

There are thousands of spiders some do not make webs at all.

At Travis Wetland we have observed the nursery spider sitting on her web. The one we have seen is quite large, 5 cm across. The legs are red/chestnut, while her body is like a satin and covered in fine hairs. Another spider has its feet straight front and back so that it looks like a stick.

Kiwi Conservation Club Travis Wetland Overnight - by Eleanor Bissell

A Saturday Sleep Over at Travis Wetland for KCC Kids Families busily pitched their tents while I anxiously watched the weather! Kids and parents enjoyed the farmyard tour, cow bails with their lichen covered wooden supports, the old concrete water trough, slimy, but with a few hardy back swimmers, the rickety red barn with a dream number of spiders webs, then latter the cattle yards.

A wetland walk followed Barry's BBQ and the weather deteriorated!!! We were slightly sheltered at the ampitheatre where the kids helped build a food chain around the life of a spider. They saw how every thing was related when they attempted to destroy it.

The sound of the swamp birds on a beautiful sunlight morning at Travis - a perfect way to begin the day! Break fast with the birds at the bird hide was a great experience, then it was on to the Forest and Bird Kahikatea area to clear around existing plants, then to plant some more helped by a few F & B members. Thank you to Denise Ford and Simon Shikongo also for kindly helping us.

A good mornings work was rewarded by two inquisitive down covered pukeko chicks checking out the kids feet!!! A lovely finale to a great 24 hours.

Thank you to the smiley Ranger Ian Surgenor for a great BBQ lunch, to Travis Wetland Trust and CCC for your generosity and allowing us to stay the night.

For More information contact: -

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