



# Travis Wetland

May 2004

A newsletter from Travis Wetland Trust and the Christchurch City Council

## PARK NEWS

### Dates to Remember!

#### Travis Wetland Trust Workdays

Everyone is welcome! Workdays are held on the third Saturday of every month.

Meet at 9.00 am at the Beach Road carpark, bring gumboots or boots. Workdays are an opportunity to become involved in the development of Travis Wetland, and learn about ecological restoration.

- 15 May 2004
- 19 June 2004
- 17 July 2004
- 21 August 2004
- 18 September 2004
- 16 October 2004



### A Changing Environment!

Autumn is perhaps the best time to appreciate the changes happening within the wetland as the annual grasses and weed species die back or lose their leaves and the native plants put on a spurt of growth, or like the *Carex secta* take on an attractive orange-gold tinge. These changes are providing cover, feeding and breeding habitat for native wetland birds such as the seasonal Australasian Bittern, waders such as South Island Pied Oyster Catcher, White-faced Heron and the resident Paradise Shelduck, Scaup, Shoveler Duck, and the migrant Glossy Ibis.

In some places within the park it is now possible to catch a glimpse of the mix of vegetation, waterways and bird life that would have occurred in the wetland areas of what is now Christchurch. It is now easier to begin to appreciate the potential of Travis Wetland. Native plantings done over the past six years are now well established in some areas thanks to the work done by schools, community groups, contractors, Travis Manuka Group and members of Travis Wetland Trust. Removal of areas from grazing and weed control is allowing remnant native plants, such as Raupo, *Carex secta* and *Baumea rubiginosa*, Manuka, Ti Kouka and Karamu to out compete exotic grasses and spread.



Millennium Planting-  
4 years old - April 2004

### IHC Conservation Team



The Conservation Team  
graffitti busting at Travis Wetland

It is timely to recognise the contribution of the IHC team. The team have been based at Travis Wetland for two (2) very successful years. They carry out; releasing and weeding of planted areas, lawn mowing, keep the north east walkway free of weeds, clean the information centre and toilets, planting projects, weekly rubbish removal. Without their help the main public areas of Travis Wetland would not be in such a well maintained state. This summer they began the task of painting the north east boundary fence which was covered in graffiti. This project is still ongoing. The team take pride in their work and are very protective of the park and the facilities. The team of 6 to 8 people and their supervisor are based at Travis 5 days a week and contribute approximately 500 hours a month to the Travis Wetland Project. Recently they have also become involved at Horseshoe Lake. A similar team has been based at Bottle Lake Forest Park building and maintaining walking and MTB tracks for over 10 years.

### Travis Wetland Contacts

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### Predator Trapping Programme

The setting up of the trapping system was completed in early summer. A total of 59 mustelid/rat traps are set around the perimeter and through the centre of the wetland. These traps are designed and set not to set cats or dogs. In the 8 months since the last newsletter in September 2003 we have caught 7 stoats and 1 ferret.

## Walkway

An exciting development nearing completion is the Wetland Walk circuit around Travis Wetland. This will provide a 3 km accessible walk around the wetland, allowing visitors to experience the diversity of habitat, bird life and views into and out of the park. The final section of walkway linking the information centre with Angela stream was completed and fenced in February and March 2004. To complete the walk a bridge will be constructed over Angle Stream to connect with the footpath alongside Angela Stream on the northern edge of Travis Estate. A tender has been accepted and it is hoped that construction will occur in early winter. The Travis Wetland Trust and the Christchurch City Council hope to mark the completion of the walkway with a public event in the spring.



Central walkway construction Jan 04

Recently new direction signs were installed to assist visitors to find their way around the wetland. The park maps will be replaced with up to date versions in time for the completion of the circuit walk.

When our electronic people counter is working correctly over 800 people a month have been recorded using the existing walkway.

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## Travis Wetland History Group

The history group has photocopied and collated into folders newspaper clippings of news articles, letters to the editor and other articles regarding Travis Wetland. Clippings are dated from 1975, when the Florence's' first sold 'Travis Swamp', to present day and make for interesting reading. It is amazing the range of emotions the swamp triggered both positive and negative. I'm pleased to say the positive won the day!

These folders are available for reading at the Travis Wetland Information Centre. Please do not remove the folders from the information centre.

If anyone has any information they would like to share with the History Group, whether it be oral or written please contact Denise Ford on 9813805 after 5 or email me at [deniseford@paradise.co.nz](mailto:deniseford@paradise.co.nz).

Recently Richard Hughes a past Trustee donated an Audio tape of Anne Flanagan talking about Travis Wetland. Thanks Richard for your continued interest. It is intended to have the tape transcribed.

## Wildlife

During the last breeding season ranger staff monitored 1 nests of several water fowl and wading bird species to determine the impact of predators on nesting success. From the results of this survey we have learned that monitoring pukeko nests is possibly less of an indicator than other water fowl or waders because of the habit of the young to vacate the nest almost immediately upon hatching. Of the 16 nests monitored the outcomes were; 1 confirmed unsuccessful due to a predator, 6 were confirmed successful and 5 classed as outcome unclear.

Several sightings of the Australasian Bittern have been made since mid-March at various locations around the central pond and also one sighting alongside and old farm, drain in the central peat swamp. A Glossy Ibis has also returned and has been seen using its favourite haunts in the grazing paddocks and shoreline of the pond.

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## Weeds

Monitoring of invasive weeds is a key task for ranger staff. In this way we can keep a track of existing weeds and locate new species or occurrences before they spread. Control of these weeds will be a continuing management challenge. This summer monitoring of known Purple Loosestrife sites turned up more seedlings and later in March two new plants in flower were found and removed from the central pond. It is most likely that birds are responsible for the transport of these seeds to widely scattered locations with in the park from a seed source outside the park. The changeable weather in February meant the spraying to control Beggars Tick was delayed and unable to be completed as planned so it is likely that we will have been less successful at reducing seeding as a result. More female grey willows were poisoned along the eastern edge of the western willow forest and as a result the canopy is opening up allowing some changes to take place such as the rapid spread of the native *Baumea rubiginosa* adjacent to the boardwalk. Currently blackberry is being attacked in the western willow forest and dead willow adjacent to the boardwalk are being felled.



Sean removing Beggars Tick at Travis

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## Education

The Learning Through Action programmes at Travis Wetland have again been popular, with over 300 school children plus their teachers and parent helpers taking part during the first and second school terms as part of the Regional Parks LEOTC programme. To find out more about the programme go to the Christchurch City Council website at; [www.cc.govt.nz/LearningThroughAction/](http://www.cc.govt.nz/LearningThroughAction/)