

Then and now – the millenium planting and bird hide.

Denise Ford – Travis Wetland Trust

The late Basil O'Connor took many photographs around the wetland, documenting the people involved in the wetland restoration and the changes to the wetland itself.

One such photo is of the bird hide (pictured nearing completion in 2001). The plantings around the birdhide were part of the millenium planting in the year 2000.



Bird Hide November 2001, taken by Basil O'Connor



Bird Hide 2012, photo taken from similar position

In the 12 years since the original plantings the area has become one of the many lovely spots in the wetland. Trees such as Totara (*Podocarpus totara*), Hoheria *angustifolia* and Ribbonwood (*Plagianthus regius*) are reaching heights of four metres and natural regeneration is evident. The bird hide is a great place to spend some quite time observing birds and enjoying the vistas of the wetland.

Michael O'Connor has kindly gifted the Travis Wetland Trust a photograph album containing photograph of the wetland taken by his father. The Travis Wetland Trust would like to thank Michael for the album and the time he took in putting it together. Basil was a staunch supporter of the Wetland and the Trust. His photos are a valuable part of the history of the wetland documenting the many changes he saw in the years he was involved. It is wonderful to look back at his photos and see the great progress that has been made in the regeneration of the wetland.

The photo album is on display at the Education Centre.

Travis Wetland Contacts

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Travis Wetland Trust Meetings

The Travis Wetland Trust Board meets monthly on the Tuesday following the work day, from 6.30 pm – 8.30 pm at the Travis Wetland Education Centre. The Board extends a welcome to all who wish to attend.

Travis Wetland Trust Website

www.traviswetland.org.nz

email
info@traviswetland.org.nz

facebook
www.facebook.com/pages/Travis-Wetland-Trust/185672953313



Travis Wetland, Pest Fishing

Travis Wetland

May 2012



Birds of Travis Wetland

John Skilton

Welcome Swallow – *Hirundo tahitica*

The Welcome Swallow is commonly seen at Travis Wetland catching insects in flight, low over the water and the open grazing marsh. They make nests of dry mud in the eaves of buildings and structures, or under bridges and culverts. For several years pairs of swallows have built their nests in the bird hide, sometimes raising several broods in a season and building a new nest each time. It takes several days for a pair to build a nest.



Welcome swallow building a nest

Dates to Remember

Help Restore Travis Wetland

Travis Wetland Trust Work Days are an opportunity to help the Travis Wetland Trust and Christchurch City Council restore the wetland. Meet people interested in restoring the native biodiversity of our city, share ideas and do some light physical work. Tasks vary according to the seasons and range from planting to release weeding to invasive weed control. Morning tea provided.

When: 3rd Saturday of every month 9.00 am to 12.30pm.

Where: Meet at the Beach Road car park.

What: Bring gumboots or boots, gardening gloves and clothing suitable for the weather and season.

Workday dates for 2012 are:

- June 16
- July 21
- August 18
- September 15 (Community planting event sponsored by Trees for Canterbury, followed by BBQ)
- October 20
- November 17
- December 15



From the Chair

Hi to all our Trust members out there. I hope you have been taking the opportunity to enjoy Travis over this period of beautiful autumn weather. Unfortunately it looks like it might not last much longer...

There have been a few things happening around Travis recently as earthquake repairs continue to infrastructure throughout the east. And we have seen the commencement of demolition in some red zoned areas. The fate of the red zoned land in proximity to the river is being debated by many people, and various end uses of the land are being posited.

After our AGM last October the Trust made a submission to the CERA Recovery Strategy. The submission was based on a proposed use for the red zoned land as a living memorial, and included the idea that one of the major projects to stimulate post-quake recovery could be the creation of an eco-sanctuary. Some parts of the red zone (for example the Horseshoe Lake area) may be suitable for this type of project.

While the Trust had been pursuing the development of a fence around Travis it was always a difficult proposition given the ground conditions and the number of waterways that would have to be crossed. The general area of the wetland has dropped by around 200mm post-quake and this may ultimately mean that there is only a small area of the wetland that may stay above water in larger rainfall/flood events. The assured availability of dry land was something that may have counted against the introduction of some species (like kiwi) had the wetland been fenced, and we are now faced with a situation in which even more area is likely to be submerged in larger events.

When you combine the situation around submersion in rainfall events with tidal influence associated with sea level rise, the idea of fencing Travis seems less and less likely. It was to this end that the submission to the Recovery Strategy was made. Christchurch is the only Major metropolitan area in New Zealand that does not have an eco-sanctuary of appreciable size. The quakes, for all the devastation and tragedy they have delivered, may also have provided an opportunity for a substantive conservation gain.

Please keep an eye on the Avon-Otakaro park progression and support it if you feel you can. See their website www.avonotakaronetwork.co.nz

Also see our website – www.traviswetland.org.nz – and please feed us any comments you have regarding Travis. The address is: info@traviswetland.org.nz

See you at the planting day!

Sean Ward

Chair – Travis Wetland Trust

Evening walks

Eleanor Bissell – Travis Wetland Trust

The Travis Wetland Trust has started monthly evening walks.

Our walk theme for March was Pests! – plenty to be found at Travis Wetland including the pest fish, Rudd. Helen from DOC was out with set nets to catch them, this time a great result – none caught. But they still have to continue monitoring them.

During the March walk we moved along the walkway, watching pukeko quietly feeding in the paddock. It was a pleasant stroll which included lots of Travis chit chat. Our visit lasted just over an hour.

The theme for the April walk was photography. Grahame Bell took us on an enjoyable photography adventure and the participants enjoyed both his helpful hints and the walk. Walks will commence again in the spring so do join us on our next stroll.

From the Treasurer

We are posting out a subscription form to our Travis Wetland supporters who have yet to pay for the 2011–2012 financial year (ending in June). Please help the Trust continue its work at Travis Wetland by paying an annual subscription and/or making a tax-deductible donation. If you have paid already, but have received a form all the same, please contact me (dave.evansii@gmail.com, 366 0628) and I will correct the records.

The Travis Wetland Trust wishes to thank the following people and businesses who have made a substantial donation to the Trust in the past year: Jeffrey Plowman, Te Whanau Trust, Parklands New World and Jackie Arvantinos. The Trust greatly appreciates the support shown through these and other anonymous donations.

Te Whanau Trust is behind Piko Wholefoods, the organic grocer driven from their premises by the February earthquake. In case you don't know already, Piko has found a temporary home at 248 Stanmore Road. It's wonderful that the Travis Wetland Trust enjoys the support of this cooperative with a social and environmental conscience.

Dave Evans

Treasurer – Travis Wetland Trust

Wetland Walk repaired

Come and enjoy the newly repaired Wetland Walk which is now back to accessible standards. Contractors Niveau Construction started work in December repairing earthquake damage to footpaths and boardwalks. Thank you to local residents and visitors for understanding the disruption the works caused. I'm sure visitors to the park will appreciate the new surfaces. This work was funded from the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal Trust.



Kahikatea Fruit

About 3000 Kahikatea seedlings were planted between 1999 and 2000 through a generous donation by Trees for Canterbury. Many others have been added during the past 12 years. Kahikatea are long-lived and don't reach maturity for at least several hundred years: Kahikatea at Riccarton Bush are thought to be 600 years old.

Many of the surviving 12 year old trees are now producing seeds. The introduced grasses present in the wetland probably stops seeds from reaching the ground and germinating. This will become less of a problem as a forest canopy develops and shades out the grass. This is another step in the restoring the wetland.

Pest fish control succeeding

John Skilton

Rudd control started in April 2008 with the discovery of Rudd in the pond. With the help of Department of Conservation rangers Rudd have been removed using fine set nets every year since. From 2010–2012 Helen McCaughan of DOC has been collecting 'ageing and spawning' data to find the Rudd's spawning peak in order to remove them before spawning happens.

In 2008/2009 season we caught 877 Rudd. This season (2011/2012) we caught just two Rudd. Next season we will continue the control work especially before spawning and will include the waterways and old drains.



Rudd control

New skink found at the wetland

In March we observed a skink with different markings to those normally seen in the wetland. Some traps were set with the help of DOC Biodiversity Ranger Anita Spenser and we got to identify new species as a McCann's Skink, *Oligosoma maccanni*. Previously only the Common Skink *Oligosoma polychroma* has been recorded at Travis Wetland. It is quite possible other lizard species live at Travis. Next summer we will have a collection permit and be able to conduct more thorough surveys.



Common skink



Travis Wetland, Lizard Monitoring, February 2012



Expanse of Secta

Plants of Travis Wetland – Pukio, *Carex secta*

- Dave Evans Travis Wetland Trust

Carex secta is a sedge that is very common at Travis Wetland. It has at least three Maori names (Purei or Makura or Pukio) and a non-PC European name, so maybe it's no surprise that Trust members find it easier to call it *secta*. It grows throughout New Zealand from sea level to 900m. It forms large tussock-like clumps very reminiscent of red tussock and looks great in morning and evening light. It's a plant that feels right at home in wet ground, even submerged soil, and large areas of the north-western part of Travis are well endowed with it.

Given the large number of secta pots in the shade houses behind the Education Centre it appears to be reasonably easy to propagate and I can vouch for it being quite easy to plant out and get established



Secta

alongside drains and ponds. It's even quite tolerant of competing grasses so after releasing it a couple of times during its first summer in the ground it will be away and looking after itself. So it's a pretty good choice for Travis where we are trying to re-establish native vegetation.

When secta is grown in partial shade it will be a bright green, but out in the open it adopts an attractive golden brown colour. It doesn't like growing in the shade. As it matures in wet sites it develops a trunk-like base that can be up to a metre tall. The heads of secta provide good locations for nests of the Pukeko and good cover for the Pateke (brown teal) during the day.

It also seems that cattle like it because when the electric fences were out of action after the February earthquake the stock reached over the fences and mauled secta planted just on the other side. These plants look like they will recover. The cattle must have tough mouths as secta can cut you if you unwarily run your finger along a mature leaf. The seeds look rather like the trampers' enemy, hook grass, but I haven't noticed it adopting that unpleasant habit of clinging to leg hairs. Just as well, as we have planted lots of it!