



# Travis Wetland

March 2018

## 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, release weed-ing and invasive weed control. Morning tea provided.

**When:** Third Saturday of every month 9am to 12.30pm.

**Where:** Meet at the Education Centre near the Beach Road car park.

**What:** Bring gumboots or boots, gardening gloves and clothing suitable for the weather and season e.g. sunhat, raincoat, warm hat.

#### Saturday Work day dates for 2018 are:

- 21 April, 19 May and 16 June
- 21 July, 18 August and 15 September
- 20 October, 17 November and 15 December

## A note from the Treasurer

The Travis Wetland Trust financial year began in July 2017 and those who have not yet paid a subscription for the 2017-18 year will have a subscription form posted to them. **Note that the Trust has moved its account to Kiwibank 38-9018-0341728-00 .** Please help the Trust continue its work at Travis Wetland by paying an annual subscription and/or making a tax-deductible donation. If you are sure you have paid your subscription, but receive a form all the same, then contact the Trust treasurer so he can correct his records.

Dave Evans

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## World Wetlands Day 2018

- Denise Ford

World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on 2 February. This day marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

This year the theme was "Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future". This theme is very relevant to Christchurch and especially to Travis Wetland it being an urban wetland. To celebrate World Wetland Day the Travis Wetland Trust hosted a walk and talk at Travis Wetland followed by morning tea.

The day was a little cool after the very hot weather the city had been experiencing. However, we had a great turn out with 30 people doing the walk lead by Dr Colin Meurk the Trust's President. Other Trust members such as Grahame chipped in with his knowledge on the birds and insects of the wetland. Eleanor kept the children interested and excited by finding the smaller inhabitants of the swamp. The walk was followed by morning tea where everyone had a chance to chat and ask questions. We also had the honour of having one of Anne Flanagan's sons in attendance.

It was fantastic to see the interest in the wetland and I am sure everyone had an enjoyable and informative morning.

Each year the Trust holds some sort of event around World Wetlands Day, most often an informative guided walk. Look out for this in February next year and join us to celebrate the importance of wetlands to the health of the planet.

**Christchurch**  
City Council



## Travis Forest Giants

- Grahame Bell, text and images except where noted

In January ranger John Skilton found self-seeded Tōtara along Angela Stream. In February seedlings were noticed appearing under the Tōtara on the bird hide track. This is what a Tōtara fruit looks like up close. The seed is the green blob on the end.



Also on the bird hide track is a Pōkākā with a healthy crop of berries, a first for Travis. This tree was planted in 2000 as part of the millennium plantings.

Image: John Skilton

Another notable first is a Mataī on the bird hide track that also has fruit on it, another Travis first. This tree was also planted in 2000.

Image: John Skilton



The fourth of the Travis giants, Kahikatea has been fruiting and producing self sown seedlings for the last 3 years.

Some facts about these noble trees:

Pouakāni is the biggest Tōtara in NZ, it's over 35 meters high and has a trunk diameter of 4 metres and is around 1800 years old. It is in the central NI.

Mareikura, before she was felled by a storm in 2014, was NZ's largest Mataī. Around 2000 years old and 43 meters tall she lived NE of Nelson.

The Kahikatea is NZ's tallest tree, with trees standing 80 meters high known before extensive logging started. Kahikatea pollen and leaves have been found in Jurassic rocks dated to 160 – 180 million years ago. Deans Bush has a remnant population of Kahikatea trees with the oldest thought to be 550 years old.

The Pōkākā that is thought to be the largest / oldest in NZ lives close to Akaroa. It's 18.4 meters high, has a girth of 3.43 meters and is thought to be between 200 and 300 years old.

## Images from Travis Wetland

Grahame Bell



Yellow Admiral, *Vanessa itea*



Panakenake, *Lobelia angulata*



*Icneumon* wasp



Coral tooth fungus, *Hericum coralloides*



## Slime Moulds

- Dave Evans, images by Grahame Bell

Late last year five species of slime mould were found at Travis, all looking quite different from each other.

Slime mould is a name given to organisms that can live as isolated cells, but often clump together to form multicellular structures. They used to be classified as fungi, but are now classed in a catch-all group of things that are neither animal nor plant nor fungi. There are many species of slime mould all over the world and often they will exist as a jelly-like slime for some part of their life cycle. Some species occur in sizes up to several square metres and can appear to move as a single body! This can happen when food is short and drastic measures are necessary. In this state they are sensitive to smells and can detect food sources. They can readily change the shape and function of parts of the colony and may form stalks that produce fruiting bodies, releasing countless spores, light enough to be carried on the wind, or hitch a ride on passing animals.

They feed on micro-organisms that live in any type of dead plant material. They contribute to the decomposition of dead vegetation, and feed on bacteria, yeasts, and fungi. For this reason, slime moulds are usually found in soil, lawns, and on the forest floor, commonly on deciduous logs. However, in tropical areas they are also common on flowers and fruits and in the canopy of trees. In urban areas, they are found on mulch or even in the leaf mould in rain gutters, and also grow in air conditioners, especially when the drain is blocked.

When a strand of slime mould moves it can reach speeds of up to 1.35 mm per second which is the fastest rate recorded for any micro-organism. When a slime mould mass or mound is physically separated, the cells find their way back to re-unite. Not surprisingly in a 2014 British documentary about slime moulds called *The Creeping Garden* a connection was drawn between slime moulds and the films *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Blob*.

(This information was taken from Wikipedia)



*Dog Sick Slime Mould, Mucilago crustacea*



*Leocarpus fragilis*



*Wolf's Milk, Lycogala epidendrum*



*Stemonitopsis typhina*



*Chocolate Tube Slimes, Genus Stemonitis*



## Travis Pest Control News

- John Skilton

Rangers Kenny Rose and Blair Balsom started the second round of rat poisoning last week and we finished it in the rain on Tuesday. On Tuesday we also did the trap checks with 38 plus rats caught, up on 9 last month (Feb). Could be a post-breeding effect when the population numbers go back up. This is the reason for the second poison to knock the numbers back to a low for winter. We will follow this up with monitoring later this month. While checking the traps I saw a bittern on the west side of the central willows, nice to confirm one is still about.

On Wednesday and Thursday we did the annual pest fish monitoring. No Rudd were caught. Five years of zero catch! There is always some trepidation in my mind that we will catch 400 again. This year we followed Helen McCaughan's plan to monitor Travis Stream and Angela Stream. This will be done over a 3 year period by doing one third of these streams each year, in conjunction with the main pond. The idea is to monitor for pest fish and native fish. No Rudd were found, but 349 short finned eels were caught, lengths from 80mm to 870mm. Also caught 4 giant bullies, 2 common bullies and 1 inanga.

Thanks to Grahame, Blair, Kenny and Helen McCaughan for a successful and fun day.

**P.S. On the Tuesday afternoon we saw a flock of at least 5 bellbirds in the willow trees by the bridge and heard several others nearby, also that evening there were several hundred welcome swallows wheeling above the pond.**



Giant bully (*Gobiomorphus gobioides*) at Travis, 175mm in length. Image Kenny Rose.

This dark-coloured fish prefers lowland waterways especially estuaries and is almost always found beneath cover, only to emerge at night to feed. Specimens of over 250 mm in length have been reported, although fish in the 120-150 mm range are more common. The life cycle of giant bullies is somewhat of a mystery. The larvae are thought to have a marine phase, but no juvenile giant bullies have ever been positively identified. In fact, few giant bullies of less than 80 mm have been recorded.

Info from DoC and NIWA websites.

## Stick Insects (Phasmatodea)

- Grahame Bell text and images

Phasmatodea are found in all continents except Antarctica, but they are most abundant in the tropics and subtropics. The New Zealand stick insect fauna contains 21 valid species in eight genera.

They are herbivorous with many species living unobtrusively in the tree canopy.

They have a hemimetabolous life cycle with three stages: eggs, nymphs and adults. Many species of phasmids are parthenogenic, meaning the females lay eggs without needing to mate with males to produce offspring. Eggs from virgin mothers are entirely female and hatch into nymphs that are exact copies of their mothers.

### Smooth Stick Insect (*Clitarchus hookeri*)

In the South Island *Clitarchus hookeri* males are rare or absent, while in the North Island both asexual and sexual populations occur. They come in a variety of colours ranging from brown to green. Info from Wikipedia.



## Travis Wetland Trust Meetings

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

## Travis Wetland Contacts

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