

Travis Wetland News

April 2019



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 2019 are:

- **27 April (due to Easter)**, 18 May and 15 June
- 20 July, 17 August and 21 September
- 19 October, 16 November and 21 December

A note from the Treasurer

The Travis Wetland Trust financial year began in July 2018 and those who have not already paid a subscription for the 2018-19 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

– Dave Evans

On Saturday 2 February, World Wetlands Day, about 20 people gathered at the Education Centre for a walk down to the Tōtara/Mataī forest area of Travis Wetland.

The Tōtara/Mataī forest is beginning to live up to its name as the trees are really taking off and extending way above head height. They are also beginning to reproduce naturally as the canopy suppresses the introduced grasses. We were very grateful that the rangers had spent several hours mowing a path through the long grass so that we could make the trip to the forest without having to wade through the rank growth.

After we returned to the Education Centre we enjoyed a celebratory BBQ cooked expertly by Al and salads prepared by the Trust board members. We enjoyed a chat while we ate in the relaxing surroundings of the Ed Centre to round off the World Wetlands Day event.



Christchurch
City Council



Magpie Moth

- Article: Sue Britain, Images: Grahame Bell

This delightful insect entertained us with its gentle fluttering around the waist-high weed growth at Beach Road during our January workday. The adult moth is active in daylight and is mainly black with white patches near the edges of both sets of wings. It measures about 40 mm across and has a striking black and orange striped body.

The Magpie Moth (*Nyctemera annulata*) is endemic to NZ and is found all around the country. Its caterpillars are known as 'woolly bears' and feed on Senecio species. They will eat native Senecio or introduced types like ragwort or groundsel, and there are plenty of these in drier parts of the wetland. The caterpillars are black with yellowish stripes lengthways and have many long black hairs. They have the ability to survive being frozen, which may help explain their survival throughout the country. Caterpillars often leave the host plant to form loosely spun cocoons which incorporate some of their long hairs.

Research suggests that caterpillars contain high levels of Senecio alkaloids, from eating these plants, and they may be toxic to potential predators because of this.



Cape Barren Goose

- Article and images Grahame Bell

Recent visitors to Travis may have noticed a strange looking grey goose in among the groups of Canada geese. It's a Cape Barren goose (*Cereopsis novaehollandiae*), named after Cape Barren Island in the Furneaux Group off the NE coast of Tasmania. Occasionally an Australian vagrant will reach NZ, but most birds you see will be either in collections or escapes. Peacock Springs and Orana Park both have some of these birds, also Lower Styx Rd. This is the first time in 10 or so years that one has been seen at Travis.

So how do you find it ? Its current favourite place seems to be in the paddock behind the stockyards, associating with a group of Canadas. It has also been seen from the bird hide and hidden away in the western paddocks. Anywhere you see a group of Canadas have a look through them for an all grey goose, slightly bigger than most Canadas. It has reddish legs and black feet, the short bill is yellow / green. Look at any geese you see in flight, it readily stands out from the Canadas as a uniform grey rather than the brown, black and white of the Canadas.



Unwelcome weed

- Article: Dave Evans Images: Grahame Bell

During the World Wetlands Day walk a new and very unwelcome weed was observed at Travis. While it was readily identified as a species of willowherb its large size set it apart from the usual ones – it was head height. It was subsequently identified through the iNaturalist site as Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*). The find was reported to MPI and they visited to check it out. MPI expects it to take 4 days to remove it from the Mānuka and Tōtara/Mataī areas. Wai-ora Forest Landscapes have been to Travis a couple of times to search for it and one plant was found in the ANZAC Drive / Lake Kate Sheppard area.

The pest plant was first observed in NZ in 2018, when it was found by the lake at Pegasus and over a large area near the Kate Valley landfill. The MPI media release from May 2018 says: "Great willowherb is characterised by its aggressive growth, and there is concern it may crowd out native wetland plants. It can form dense stands, impeding water flow in waterways and wetlands. It may also spread to undisturbed damp areas and invade existing vegetation." "Great willowherb reproduces by wind-dispersed seeds and spreads by its thick rhizomes (underground stems)."

Eradicating it from NZ could be a significant challenge and MPI also says: "It's extremely important that members of the public do not attempt to remove this weed on their own. They may mistake it for other, similar-looking native plants and, just as importantly, they may risk spreading the seeds." So if you see it report it to MPI by taking a photo and calling 0800 80 99 66.



Welcome surprise

- Article: John Skilton, Images: Kenny Rose

A longfin eel (Tuna) was caught in a fyke net at Hard Rush Corner (by the Travis Rd / Frosts Rd roundabout) on Thursday 28 February. This is our first record of longfin eel. We have been fishing for 11 years and during that time have added to the native fresh water species known to be at Travis: longfin eel, shortfin eel, common bully, giant bully, upland bully, Īnanga, black flounder and smelt. We now have observed 8 native species.



This discovery was made during the annual pest fishing. No Rudd were caught; our 6th year of zero catch. This year we fished the central pond plus Hard Rush Corner to Corsers Stream, next year we will be fishing in the central pond plus Angela Stream. Last year we did the pond plus the first third of Travis Stream.



Thanks to Helen McCaughan at Wildlands who set up our successful Rudd control and monitoring plan and provides heaps of enthusiasm each time.

Maintenance at Travis

- Article: Dave Evans, Image: Grahame Bell

Work started on 19 March to fully seal the Beach Rd entrance to the wetland and reseal the car park. It will be wonderful to have this well-used access to the wetland in good order again. The road and car park will be open in the weekends, but closed at times during the week. Immediately prior to sealing vehicle access will be closed so the final surface isn't damaged. Walkers can still use the adjacent path while the road is closed.

Late last year the raupo was removed from the pond in front of the Information Centre. This restored the view and removed the gloom from the interior, making it much easier to appreciate the interpretation displays.



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.

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