

Ōruapaeroa / Travis Wetland News

April 2022



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 12.00pm.

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 2022 are:

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

A note from the Treasurer

The Travis Wetland Trust 2022 financial year began in July last year. A subscription renewal form will be included with this newsletter if you have not already paid a subscription for the 2022 year. **The Trust account is Kiwibank 38-9018-0341728-00. Subscriptions may also be paid by credit card on the website page "Contact/ Membership Form" or with cash at the AGM. Call the treasurer if you have no suitable way to make a payment.** Please help the Trust continue its restoration work at Travis Wetland by paying an annual subscription and/or making a tax-deductible donation.

Dave Evans

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New Seat by Viewing Tower

Article and image: Dave Evans

The Trust contracted Chris Bissell to build an indestructible (we hope) Macrocarpa seat, which has been installed by him and the CCC ranger staff on the boardwalk near the foot of the viewing tower.

Passers-by have already commented on how comfortable it is and it also fills a gap in resting places along the circuit.

Thanks to the CCC and the ranger staff for providing the Macrocarpa slabs and assistance with the weighty task of installation of the seat. Special thanks to Chris for making such a comfortable seat and finishing it so nicely.



Work days and Covid precautions

We are able to hold monthly work days at Covid red. Stay home if you are unwell or if you have been asked to isolate. Please leave a contact number on the sign-in sheet. Maintain 2m distance from fellow workers. We'll be providing refreshments outside after the work day, bring your own cup if you wish.

Christchurch
City Council



Information Centre Panels

- Article and images: Dave Evans

A completely new set of panels has been developed and installed in the information centre. It must be 20 years since the previous set were made.

Since the pictures were taken 4 more panels on the cultural use of Harakeke and Raupō were added to complete the installation.

There's also a new interactive fish information display by the bridge on the way to the bird hide.

Thanks to Karyn Durham, Sarah Mankelow and Lynda Burns of the CCC for the design work and to Grahame for contributing many stunning images for the panels.

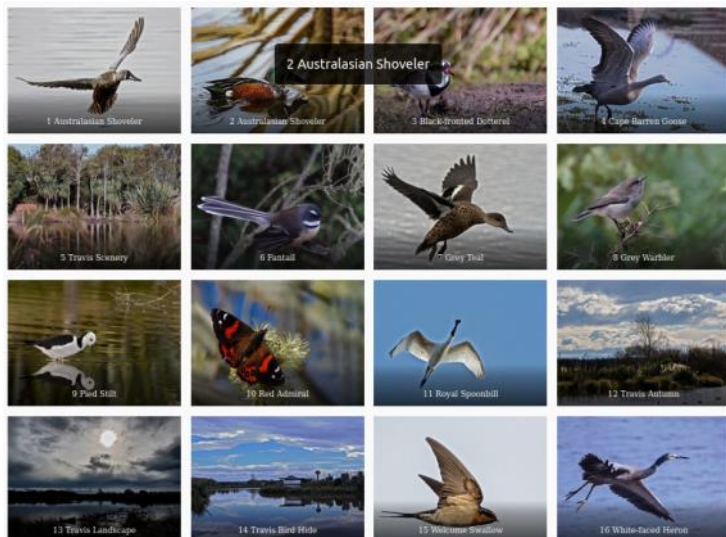


Travis Cards

The Trust has had a fresh set of blank (inside!) cards printed using Grahame's beautiful images of Travis Wetland and its wildlife. We are very grateful to Grahame for making his images available to us for fundraising purposes and even putting the print-ready files together.

Cards cost \$4 each, or 6 for \$20, and include an envelope for posting. All proceeds go to the Trust. Cards are available for purchase via the website; postage costs \$5 per order.

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Royal spoonbill, Kōtuku ngutupapa, Platalea regia

Ōruapaeroa / Travis Wetland is a 116 hectare (287 acre) nature heritage park within the boundaries of Ōtautahi / Christchurch and is the largest urban wetland in Aotearoa / New Zealand.

It is a precious remnant of once more extensive wetlands along the coastal plains of Canterbury. As such it is a rare and significant habitat for many native plants and wildlife.

The Travis Wetland Trust and the Christchurch City Council have worked together for over 20 years to develop the educational, scientific and recreational values of Ōruapaeroa / Travis Wetland, by restoring it as a refuge for the indigenous flora and fauna of the wetland and its surrounding dunes.

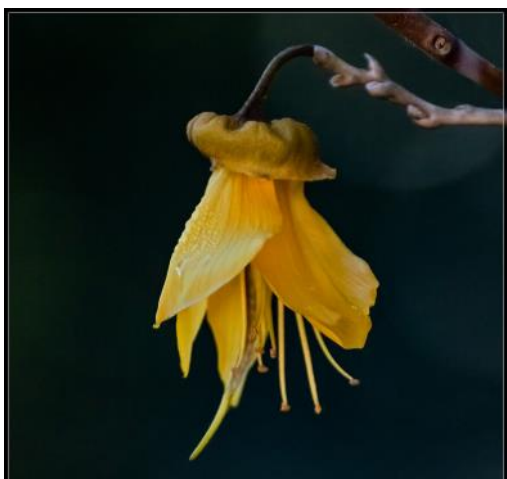
www.traviswetland.org.nz



www.facebook.com/TravisWetland



Three White-Faced Heron fledglings being fed in ash tree by the Education Centre



Welcome Swallow nest in bird hide



Swamp Crane Fly and Social House Spider

Images: Grahame

Royal Spoonbills Breed at Travis

- Article: John Skilton, Image: John Dunlop

These beautiful birds, with their brilliant white feathers and spoon shaped bills, have been creating a lot of excitement amongst Trust members, birders and photographers. The maximum number of birds seen roosting over the summer was 18.

This is the first breeding colony at Ōruapaeroa, Travis wetland and also for the Little Cormorants (Kawau paka) that joined them in the same tree. Both species nest in colonies, in trees overhanging water. At Travis they chose a visible but safe location in trees surrounded by a moat of water near the corner of Travis and Frosts Rds. In this case the trees were the exotic crack willow, which provides suitable sites until native trees are of a sufficient size.

Spoonbills did attempt to build nests in the same tree in February last year but these failed, so it's really exciting to see them return and succeed. First mating in the past season was observed in September 2021. There were 8 – 10 nests with 6 – 8 chicks successfully fledged and only 1 known to have been lost.

Large flocks of spoonbills are often seen on the Ihutai Estuary with their distinctive method of sweeping their beaks from side to side. They feed on invertebrates, fish and frogs.

There is a delightful video of the colony taken by Trust board member John Dunlop. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOuZRK2_tSU

The spoonbills are nesting at Travis as a result of the collective hard work of the partnership between Travis Wetland Trust, Christchurch City Council regional park rangers and contractors. This work includes creating habitat, planting natives, controlling exotic weeds and animal pest control.



Conservation Volunteers

- Article and images: Eleanor Bissell

A 12 week training course for interested people is currently run by Conservation Volunteers in Christchurch. Travis Wetland was fortunate to have them on site Wednesday 1st December.

A guided walk around the Wetland revealed to them wetland types ranging from open grazing marsh to willow woodlands, which have many New Zealand native plants growing and thriving. The participants viewed the many resident birds with their young.

Following a lunch break the group willingly and energetically embarked on removing undergrowth from the stand of trees at the Beach Road car park. Unfortunately this has been necessary due to ongoing break-ins to parked vehicles happening throughout the day. Chopping, sawing and cutting the branches has made for a much better view through to the road on the other side. This should make it more difficult for thieves.



After completion of that task, the volunteers grubbed burdock and hemlock, two unwelcome residents on the old dunes. Time was left for rewarding them at afternoon tea time with a sit down where they were treated to Grahame's beautiful, professional presentation of our Wetland inhabitants ranging from moths and butterflies, insects, birds, plants – a truly amazing selection of natural inhabitants.

Thank you to Sam and Donna for including Travis in your schedule.



Contractors at Travis

- Article: Dave Evans

Contractors retained by the Christchurch City Council have been very busy at Ōruapaeroa, Travis Wetland over the summer.

Wai-Ora Landscapes have completed their willow sapling control work in the peat swamp and have got to most of the willows emerging from the raupō. It's hot, strenuous work out in the middle of the swamp where there's no solid ground and no shade from the sun. We're grateful to them for preventing further spread of grey willow that would turn Travis into a willow forest, given half a chance. They have also been doing biosecurity work removing Giant Willow Herb plants from the southern paddocks and parts of the Tōtara/Matai forest. I hope they are winning the battle against what has the potential to become a serious pest at Ōruapaeroa and other local Christchurch reserves.

Keystone Ecology have controlled the infestation of hops near the Beach Rd entrance to the wetland. They have also released the plants in the Trees for Canterbury one millionth tree planting near the Beach Rd car park and released the Waitākiri School plantings at the SW edge of Travis near Clarevale Park. The ample rainfall over the summer has been good for sustaining the native plantings, but also used to their advantage by the weeds.

The summer students employed by the CCC have been out many mornings drilling and poisoning the larger willows adjacent to Frosts and Beach Rds.

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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