

Ōruapaeroa / Travis Wetland News September 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 2022-3 are:

- 17 September, 15 October, 19 November and 17 December with Christmas BBQ
- 21 January, 18 February, 18 March and 15 April

A note from the Treasurer

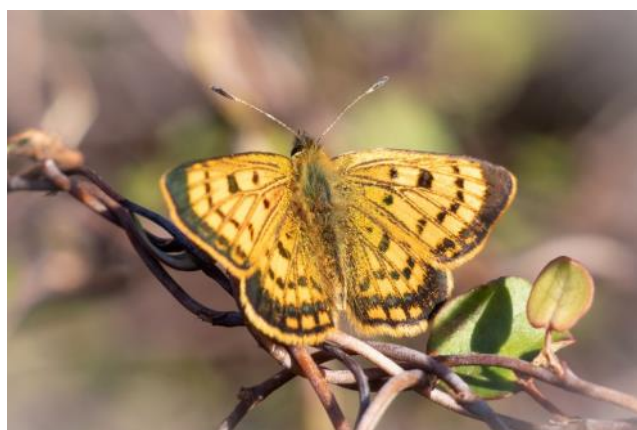
The Travis Wetland Trust 2023 financial year began in July. A subscription renewal form will be included with this newsletter if you have not already paid a subscription for the 2023 year. **The Trust account is Kiwibank 38-9018-0341728-00. Subscriptions may also be paid by credit card on the website page "Contact/Membership Form" or with cash at the AGM in October. 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. The Charities Services registration number is CC24462.

Dave Evans
treasurer@traviswetland.org.nz
366-0628 (H) 021-043-7128

Butterflies at Ōruapaeroa / Travis Wetland

Article John Skilton and image John Dunlop

The tangle of *Muehlenbeckia australis* by the car park caught the attention of entomologist Brian Patrick, an expert on NZ butterflies. Brian has helped several schools establish butterfly gardens to provide habitat for the butterflies and to enable us to appreciate them. Earlier this year Brian released 6 female and 6 male Winter Copper butterflies (previously Canterbury Copper) in the *M. australis* at Ōruapaeroa/Travis. On a warm autumn day in April Brian was excited to discover that the release had been a success and we saw several bright orange butterflies flying about. We are now adding stones for sun bathing and more plants for food (see article on next page).



The classification of Copper butterflies is currently under revision. There appears to be as many as 7 species. An interesting source of information on them is the website nzbutterfly.info.

Mysterious Earth and Stone Works

Article Eleanor Bissell and image John Skilton

Is great to have ranger Kenny back and almost immediately he is on to the digger and scooping out topsoil for the next development phase at Travis: the new Moth and Butterfly Habitat inspired by the famous local lepidopterist Brian Patrick. Some essential (if you're a Canterbury butterfly) *Muehlenbeckia axillaris* were planted there last week and it was very exciting working among the stones!!!

On the June work day we had some more plants available so that all volunteers could add a plant!!! After that we added a variety of suitable species to those already at the Inwoods Rd entrance.

We're hoping to emulate the successes at Charlesworth Reserve, and also at Burnside Primary School, where Copper butterfly gardens have been established.

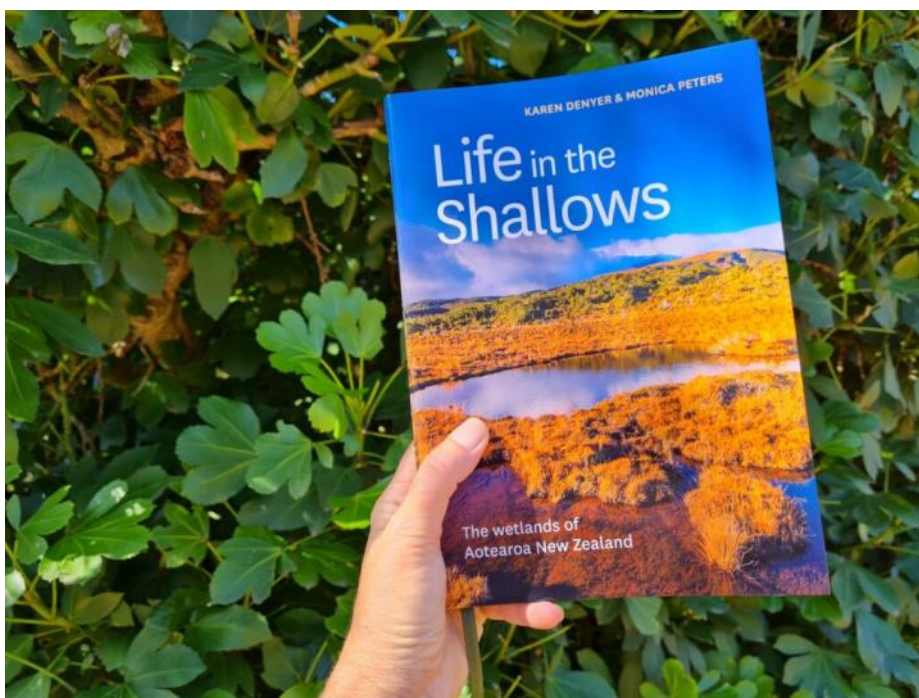


Life in the Shallows

Article Sue Britain

I have recently purchased a copy of this beautifully presented book and have been amazed by the range of topics covered. Wetlands all across NZ, and even in Antarctica, are included and Maori perspectives are explored. The featured scientists explain their work in an accessible way, with techniques such as drone use and environmental DNA monitoring described.

Canterbury features with notes on visiting the 360 trail and Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere. Emma Williams has a chapter covering her work with bittern and spotless crane, which are both Travis species.

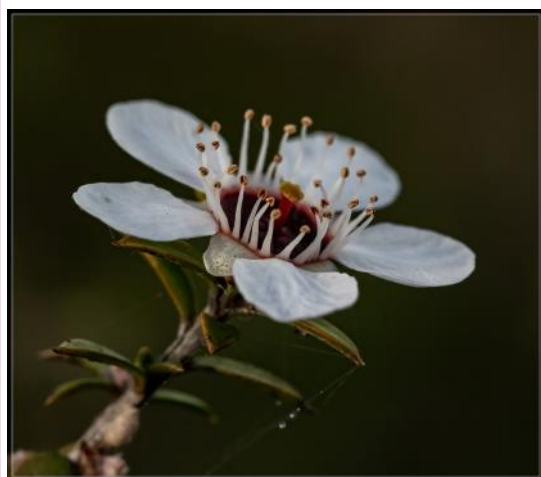


I am looking forward to some in depth reading in the weeks to come and thoroughly recommend the book.

The book is a fundraiser for the National Wetland Trust and you can purchase copies directly from the NWT on their website wetlandtrust.org.nz/latest-news/. All proceeds will go to the NWT and will be used to help continue wetland advocacy and education.



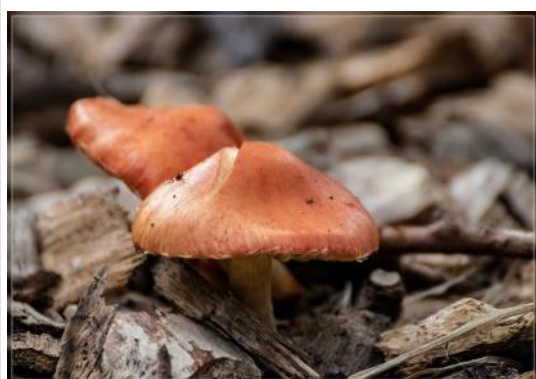
Silveryeye / Tauhou



Mānuka



Nurseryweb spider



Genus Leriomyces

Images: Grahame

Clematis Species at Travis

Article Sue Britain and images Grahame

New Zealand has 8 to 10 native species of Clematis and, unlike species from other parts of the world, they have male and female flowers on separate plants. We are lucky to have specimens of 4 species at the wetland.

The best known is *C. paniculata*, which thrives in many native forests. It has large white flowers with shiny petals that reflect sunlight beautifully.

Clematis paniculata



Another is *C. foetida* which, despite its name, has sweet smelling greenish yellow flowers.

Clematis foetida



C. quadibracteolata likes dry places and also has strong smelling flowers of a dull light purple colour.

C. afoliata is leafless and resembles a tangled bundle of wires. Large specimens can be seen at Kaitorete spit. Its flowers are tiny and cream coloured.

Keep a look out for these plants during spring flowering season. At Travis they are likely to be fairly close to the ground as the plants are still young. Hopefully you won't see *C. vitalba*, the invasive weed known as Old Man's Beard.

Secretive Stick Insects

Article Eleanor Bissell and images Grahame



Responses on seeing one of these little critters up close is mostly —eee — aaah! (Accompanied by the observer shrinking away!)

At Travis these bright green (sometimes brown) insects which grow to about 10 centimetres and can be observed resting with their front legs forward along the branches, looking like a branch. Camouflage is their only protection – our New Zealand ones can't fly. The best place to see them is resting in warmer sunny spots on Kānuka and Tōtara trees. They feed on leaves at night, as that is safer than being discovered and eaten by a bird, rat, mouse or lizard during the daytime.

The female lays eggs in autumn to complete her life cycle, but some survive through the winter. The eggs hatch as miniatures of the adult. Growth occurs by moulting, each moult is called an instar. This happens six to 9 times as they develop. Watch out for these cute little, peace loving, vegetarian insects.



Vagrant Birds at Travis

Article Grahame and image Noah Fenwick

In June not one but two new vagrant species were added to the Travis bird list. First up was a Sharp-tailed sandpiper, *Calidris acuminata* seen over 2 days around June 4th.

A small number of these migratory birds reach NZ from Siberia each year. While a few birds are often recorded during the annual bird survey at Te Waihora / Lake Ellesmere, this is the first time the species has been recorded at Travis.

The second bird was a male Chestnut teal, *Anas castanea* found on June 5th. The chestnut teal is an abundant Australian species of duck that is sometimes seen in NZ, particularly at the Manawatū Estuary. While they have been recorded before on the Bromley oxidation ponds, it's a new species for Travis.

This now brings the total for number of bird species seen at Travis to 81.

Grey Teal
Chestnut Teal (left rear) others



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

John Skilton, CCC Park Ranger, Travis Wetland
Phone: 941 8999
Email: john.skilton@ccc.govt.nz

Sean Ward, Chair, Travis Wetland Trust
Phone: 388 5431
Email: wardos365@gmail.com

Mail:

The Secretary
Travis Wetland Trust
280 Beach Road, Burwood
Christchurch 8083

Travis Wetland Trust Website:
www.traviswetland.org.nz

Email: info@traviswetland.org.nz

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TravisWetland

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