

Ōruapaeroa / Travis Wetland News

April 2023



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: Usually third Saturday of every month 9am to 12.00pm (may be moved to another Saturday due to Easter or Labour Weekend, check dates below).

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 2023 are:

15 April, 20 May, 17 June, 15 July, 19 August, 16 September, 28 October (TFC planting day), 18 November and 16 December with Christmas BBQ

A note from the Treasurer

The Travis Wetland Trust 2023 financial year began in July 2022. 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 Kiwi-bank 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 (a receipt will be issued). The Charities Services registration number is CC24462.

Dave Evans

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Waitākiri School Planting

Article and image Dave Evans

Over two days in the middle of October, eleven groups of 50 to 60 students from Waitākiri School came to Travis to plant trees near Clarevale Park. Students from the school have been coming to Travis to plant for decades and some have even returned as parents to help their own children with planting. Some kids are horrified by the dirt and the worms while others are right into it. All of them go away having had an experience of helping to restore the natural environment over the back of their school.

Rangers John and Kenny kept everything running as smoothly as is possible with a large group of excited and enthusiastic children. Trust volunteers Wayne, Shona and Dave helped the teachers and parents guide the children to get the diverse plants into the ground.

Fortunately this year the weather was great and all the groups got to do the planting at their scheduled time. While conditions were good I'm sure several kids went home with muddy shoes and clothes as well as a greater appreciation of environmental restoration.



Christchurch
City Council



Pest fish Control in an Urban Wetland Travis Wetland, Christchurch



- Largest freshwater wetland in Christchurch
- Farmed for several decades
- 1992 Travis Wetland Trust formed to prevent residential development of site
- 1997 Site bought by Christchurch City Council and protected as Travis Wetland Nature Heritage Park.



1998



Ongoing work



2021



Key:
— Panel gill net
● Gee minnow trap

Aim: Control rudd population to zero density, to help restore the site and reduce rudd spread to other sites.

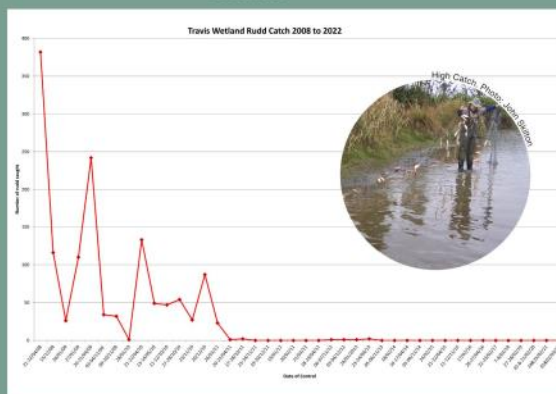
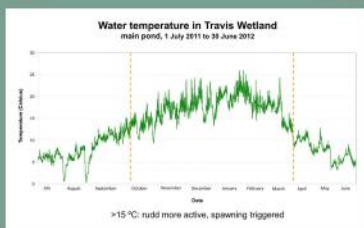
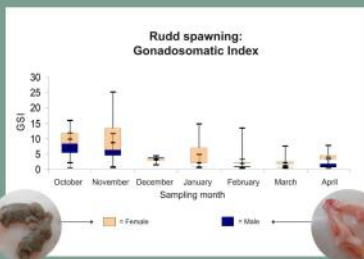
Methods:

- Initial fish netting throughout wetland, replicated effort in core population area; supplemented with additional netting and environmental DNA sampling throughout.
- Water temperature and gonads monitored to identify spawning peaks and best time for control work.

Pests can be in the water too: rudd found in 2008

- Prefer still or slow-flowing waters
- Eat plants and invertebrates
- Can reduce water quality
- Breed young and in high numbers.

Results:



Conclusions:

- Wetlands are about what's in the water too
- Pests in the water can have detrimental impacts
- Know the pest and know your site
- Consistent, ongoing control can be effective (rudd undetectable for last nine seasons)
- Working together can get great things done.

Authors:

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Welcome Swallow



Dragonfly



Pūkeko and juvenile



Shortfin eel

Images: Grahame

Honshu White Admiral butterfly

Article and image Grahame

In early November 2022 the Honshu white admiral butterfly, *Limenitis glorifica* was released at Travis Wetland for the first time. Honshu butterflies are endemic to the island of Honshu, Japan and are used to help control Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*). Japanese honeysuckle has the potential to become a serious pest weed in New Zealand.

Japanese honeysuckle is difficult to control and we hope with the help of the Honshu butterfly we will be able to reduce the amount of herbicide used.

Honshu butterflies were first approved for use in NZ in August 2013, but the project hit a few stumbling blocks along the way including the 2011 Japanese tsunami. Eventually the problems were solved and they were first released in The Waikato and Auckland in 2014.

There is always a risk when introducing bio control agents that they will change host species and choose one of our natives. Landcare Research has thoroughly tested this species and hasn't found it to be a threat. In fact it is pretty much a Japanese honeysuckle specialist, though they could be reared on Himalayan honeysuckle, which is another NZ invasive weed.

While Travis doesn't currently have a major problem with Japanese honeysuckle, it is well established in a couple of areas. Hopefully our new friends will be able to help with the effective management of this invasive weed. Keep a lookout for these butterflies on your wanders around Travis as they have already dispersed from their release site and have been seen on the track margins.

We would like to thank Landcare Research for their generosity in supplying us with the brood stock of this butterfly.

Info source:

<https://oldwww.landcareresearch.co.nz/publications/newsletters/biological-control-of-weeds/issue-71/honshu-butterflies>



Cape Barren Geese

Article John Skilton and image Grahame

Over recent years first one and then two Cape Barren geese (*Cereopsis novaehollandia*) have been seen at Travis. This past winter the two paired up and in November they were seen with two chicks. Recent visitors to Ōruapaeroa/Travis Wetland have seen the four Cape Barren Geese in the newly mown grazing marsh paddocks near the stock yard. The adult pair have successfully raised the two young to fledging. This is the first record of Cape Barren Geese breeding here.

Cape Barren geese are from Bass Strait and SE Australia. They are named after Cape Barren Island near Tasmania. They do not normally fly long distances and those found at Travis are almost certainly released or escaped captive birds, perhaps from Peacock Springs.

Fun fact, recently they have been found to be related to the extinct, giant, flightless New Zealand Goose *Cnemidornis* weighing up to 18kg and 1 metre tall.



Matai Berries

Article and image: John Skilton

Matai trees are dioecious, meaning they have male and female flowers on separate trees. The matai tree behind Charlie Catt's memorial seat is a female and is laden with berries. This is the first time in hundreds of years that a matai tree has fruited at Ōruapaeroa / Travis Wetland! The berries are a favoured food of the kererū, perhaps this will be the next bird species to be seen here.



Little Owls

Article Dave Evans and image Grahame

During January and February there was often a collection of photographers with huge lenses lined up along Beach Rd near the car park. The attraction was a family of Little Owls posing cooperatively in the willows.

As NZ Birds Online says: "The little owl is a small grey-brown-and-white streaked owl that is widespread throughout the drier open country of the eastern and northern South Island. Little owls were introduced to New Zealand from Germany between 1906 and 1910, with the intention that they would help control the numbers of small introduced birds, which were becoming a pest in grain and fruit crops. With the exception of one pair released in Rotorua, all were liberated in the South Island."

There are probably more of them around Christchurch than most people realise. I hear and occasionally see one near my home in Opawa, particularly in the autumn.



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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