President/Chair's Summary Report Travis Wetland Trust AGM

Colin D Meurk ONZM & Sean Ward (for you all)

20th October, 2026

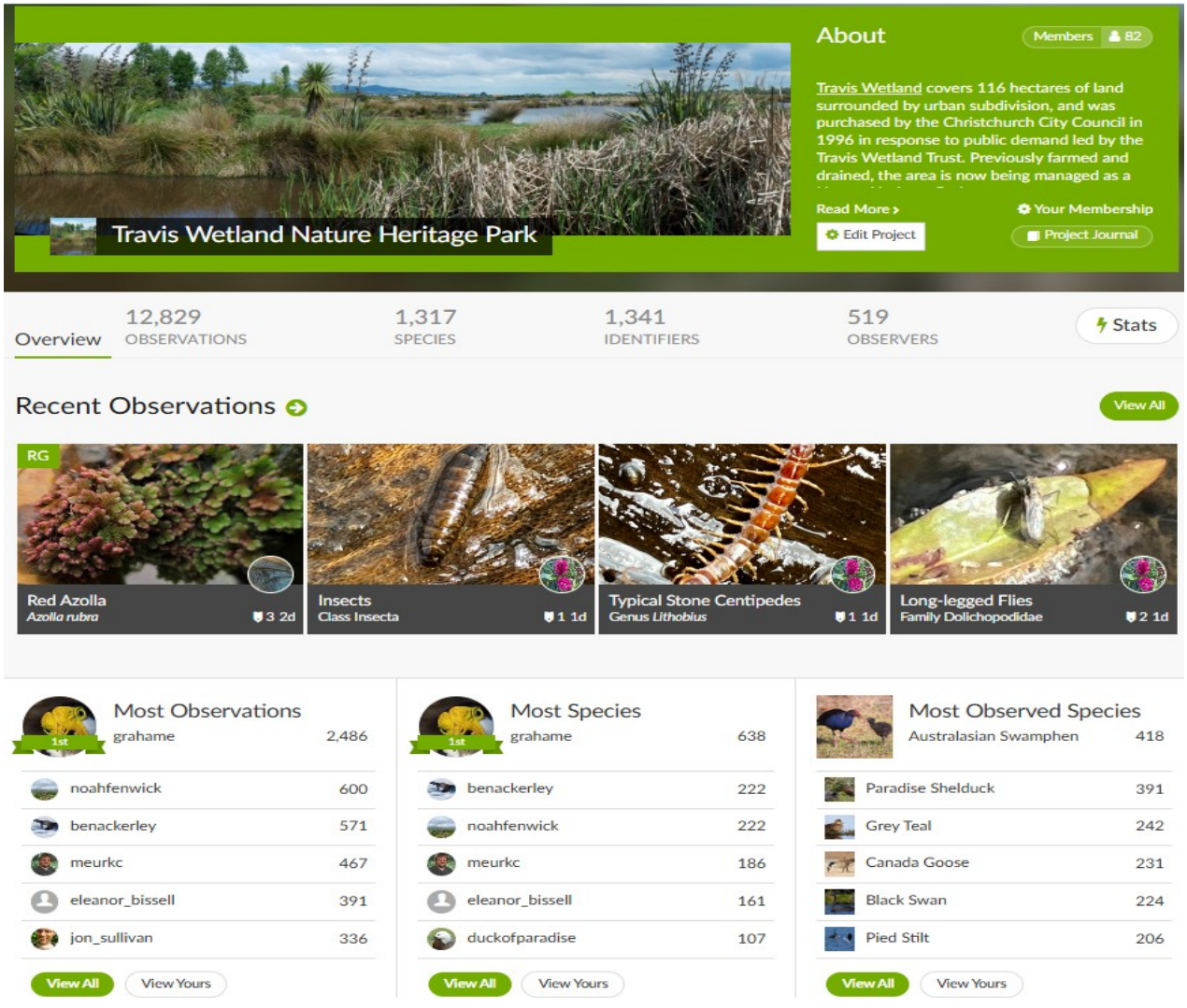
Thanks to Trustees et al. - Dave, Denise, Eleanor, Sue, Wayne, John, Bruce, Carol, Phil, Joe; CCC Rangers – Robbie, Matt, Alice, Mika, and John (up to this last year), and to all our wonderful volunteers who turn out weekly and monthly. The maintenance of this amazing place & its biota could not happen without your concerted and ongoing efforts.

We acknowledge that both Dave and Eleanor in recent history were rewarded for their efforts with much deserved Civic Awards from CCC.

Natural History Observations keep pouring in on the *iNaturalist NZ Project*.

Records from **14th October 2025** were: **10,141 observations of 1,240 species, by 418 observers.**

The increased numbers as of 18th October 2026 are:



Grahame & Pūkeko are still top of the pops 😊.

We must get an automatic upload onto this Project – for all observations made within the boundary of the Reserve regardless of whether people actively join the Project.

On this basis the current number (including those that are non-Research grade) **total 15,554 observations of 1,485 species** (both native and exotic and including birds, invertebrates, fungi and plants)**, by 660 observers**.

Remember this is the largest urban wetland in Aotearoa, so not surprising it is rich in species.

A student invertebrate night bioblitz was held on the site on Saturday evening 10th October. They had fun and saw lots of stick insects apparently.

Developments

Since the earthquake and with quite a bit of heavy rain over the past few years, the water table has risen and substantially increased the wetness and ponding across the southern part of wetland. This resulted in the decision a couple of years ago to remove sheep grazing of what was referred to as 'Grazing Marshes' - designed to maintain turfs for browsing and wading birds, and localised, low growing native plants. It seems silverweed is quite abundant, but unintended consequences may be some reduction of this and spread of 'beggars tick'. However, Council is periodically mowing the area and together with geese and ducks and periodic ponding, the turf is being maintained. It does need to be monitored, and the **technical advisory group** to the maintenance managers has been reinstated to ensure Trust members are represented.

The other decision made in recent years has been the intended complete elimination of grey willow from the western willow stand. This fertile seeding species is an extreme danger to wetlands and other open ground. This will also need to be monitored to ensure other invasive species, like blackberry are not boosted by the light.

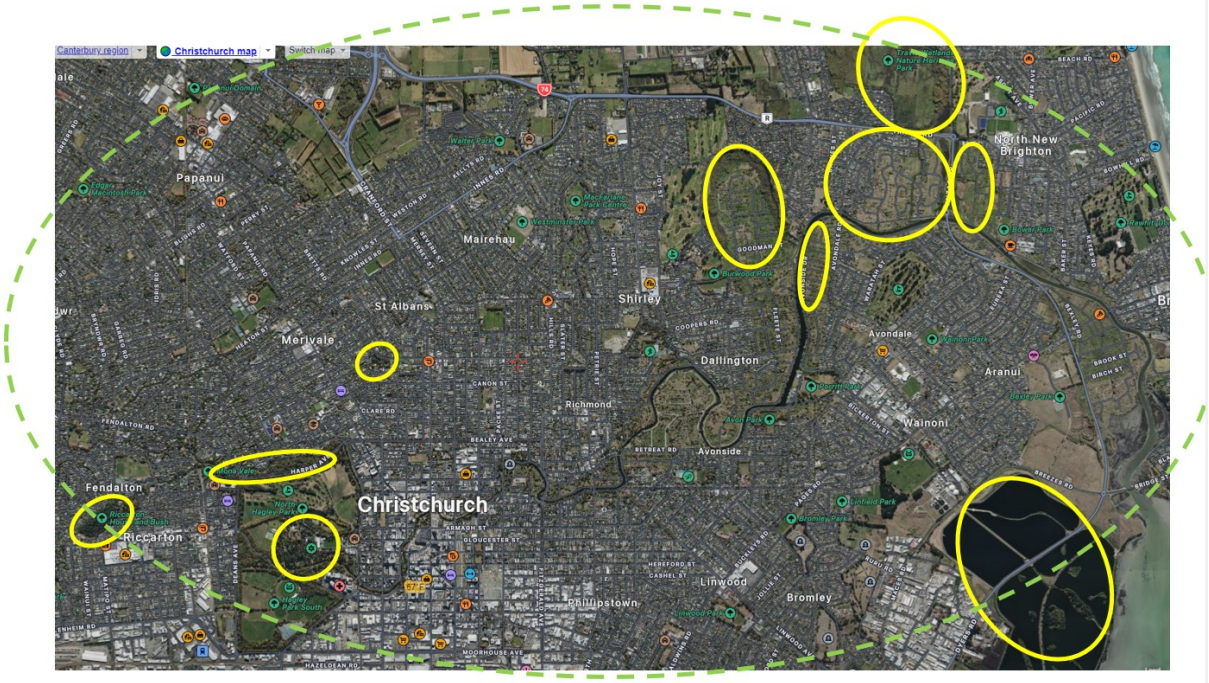
Work in progress

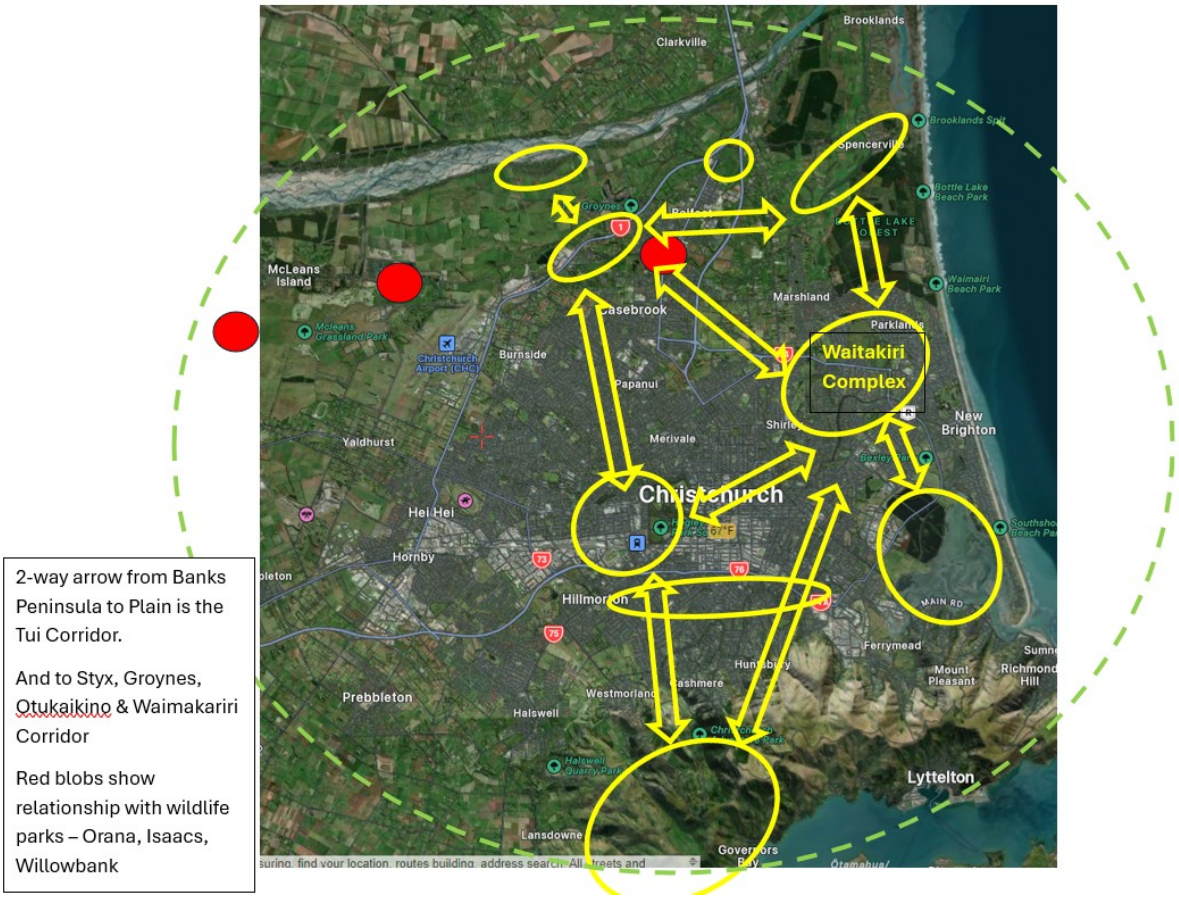
Whereas most large-scale planting by the Trust, is now in the red-zone land to the south, there was the usual Trees for Canterbury event last Saturday (17th October) where nearly a hundred people turned up on a perfect day and planted over a thousand wet forest and edge species south of the old cattle yards. It was a typically vibrant day of volunteers, City Council and Trees for Canterbury partnering and helping consume dozens of BBQ meat and vegetarian "sausages".

We are now generally throughout the year on the Wetland, more involved in pest plant management, facilitating regeneration, targeted enrichment planting (that is species, not present and not within dispersal range) and expanding the halo. More rarer birds are being seen, and the spoonbill nesting continues to be remarkable.

We have been observing regenerating seedlings of kahikatea and totara for over 10 years but only in the past year have pōkākā seedlings been observed, alongside the other 2 mentioned species, under the 26-year-old pōkākā tree near the bird hide. Most other established tree species are rampantly regenerating but so are the invasive bindweed, veldt grass, blackberry, etc. We must keep a close eye on these plus grey willow, great willowherb, yellow-flag iris, ivy, lady fern, male, fern, Japanese honeysuckle, and Old Mans Beard.

There is some further progress on the conversation about realising the dream of a constellation of ecosanctuaries including southern Travis Wetland and the red zone since prescribing this in last year's report. Watch this space!





2-way arrow from Banks Peninsula to Plain is the Tui Corridor.

And to Styx, Groynes, Otukaikino & Waimakariri Corridor

Red blobs show relationship with wildlife parks – Orana, Isaacs, Willowbank

Visits

The Wetland and Education centre continues to be visited by tens of thousands every year, walking, running, with families, and organised groups. Recently a Rangiora Rotary club was welcomed and escorted down the southeastern side by Sue and moi, and they were delighted with the eels/tuna, birds and plants we saw along the way.

Many similar groups and school parties request assistance throughout the year, and Eleanor and Sue are always there on call to show off the stick insects and other natural wonders. Thankyou.

It does however surprise me that the Christchurch NZ website does not feature Ōruapaeroa/Travis Wetland (or Pūtarikamotu/Riccarton Bush) as 'go to' highlights of our city. They are not obvious unless one searches for those names directly.

I believe it is time for these gems of the city, that are the historically genuine natural sites, to be raised above the radar. This seems to be especially relevant as we approach 30 years since CCC acquired the last of the land that forms our Nature Heritage Park – the biggest urban wetland reserve in the country.

Thankyou everyone for another rewarding and heart-warming year

Colin & Sean