

Travis Wetland Trust website

The Travis Wetland Trust now has a presence on the World Wide Web. You can now catch up with the news, find out dates for workdays and special events and contact us by logging on at www.traviswetland.org.nz. You can also download our latest pamphlets online now.

We will be expanding the present one page to contain information on plants and animals found at the wetland. We also hope to include scientific reports and the history of the area in time so that website becomes a useful resource for people to use.

The Trust also has a new email address and can be contacted at info@traviswetland.org.nz



Ground water monitoring

By Eric Banks

Christchurch City Council's Capital Programme Group is currently developing a ground water monitoring programme for the wetland. This will involve resurrecting some of the existing measuring tubes and installing some new ones.

The measurements will be taken and recorded on a regular basis by the ranger, John Skilton and, possibly, some Trust members.

The objective is to gain a better idea of trends in ground water levels compared with rainfall and Waimakariri River levels to better understand where the water comes from, and if it is likely to change significantly over time.

This information will assist with decisions over weir management and future bunding and waterway design in order to maintain suitable water habitat levels.

Manuka Group

By Denise Ford

Over the years the Manuka Group has been collecting seed and propagating special plants in the wetland. This is to help insure the survival of these species.

Looking after these plants is a very labour-intensive job: on hands and knees and weeding with fingers and hook hoes and, in some batches, having to be very careful where we put our feet!

A display area of some of the special plants has been established along the boardwalk. This is to increase the area of these plants, both to ensure its continued survival and to allow the public to view and appreciate them.

The Manuka Group not only looks after the special plants but is also involved in re-vegetating areas in the wetland. This takes an ongoing commitment of weeding and maintenance as the weeds soon creep back in. One area we have been working on for a few years is along the boardwalk. The exotic *Carex flacca* has been weed-eated and then planted with the native

sedge *Carex secta*, which has been grown from seed from the wetland.

In this area we are also working on extending the area of Manuka. A technique which has already proved successful is being used again - a large area is weed-eated and then covered with newsprint and old willow branches. Then it will be up to the newsprint to do its job of smothering the weeds.

Once this has happened, Manuka seed will be distributed and we will wait with anticipation for Manuka seedlings to grow!

Over the last 18 months, as a result of our seed growing efforts, we have potted on over 800 *Carex secta*, 156 *Plagianthus regius*, 74 *Cyperus ustulatus*, 180 *Cordyline australis*, and 360 *Phormium tenax* as well as smaller numbers of other species. Many of these plants have recently been planted in various places at the wetland. Daphne has been growing from seed a number of *Celmisia graminifolia* plants at her home, potting them in her spare time!!! and then returning them to Travis to be permanently planted.



Community planting - Travis Wetland, September 2008

Pateke (Brown Teal) breeding: One year on

By John Skilton

Over a year ago, on May 16, 2007, twenty captive-reared pateke were released into Travis Wetland. On the September 10, 2008 a female brown teal was seen leaving a nest which was then found to have a clutch of six eggs. The male bird is often seen guarding the territory from a

nearby vantage point on the pond or shoreline. Pateke have an incubation period of 30 days. Another pair has been seen but it is not known whether they are nesting. All the radio transmitters have stopped working and the only way to track the birds now is through observation.



Travis Wetland

October 2008

A newsletter from Travis Wetland Trust and the Christchurch City Council

PARK NEWS

Dates To Remember

Help Restore Travis Wetland

Travis Wetland Trust Restoration 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 weeding and invasive weed control. Morning tea provided.

- When: 3rd Saturday of every month 9.00 am to 12.30 pm.
Where: Meet at the Beach Road car park.
What: Bring gumboots or boots, gardening gloves and clothing suitable for the weather and season.
- October 18, 2008
 - November 15, 2008
 - December 20, 2008
 - January 17, 2009
 - February 14, 2009
 - March 14, 2009
 - April 18, 2009

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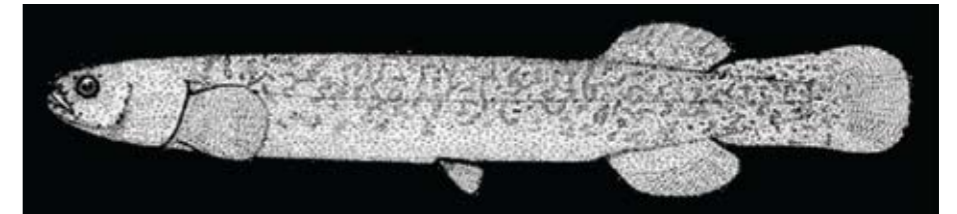
**Annual General Meeting
Travis Wetland Trust
Tuesday 21 October 2008
7pm, Beach Road Education Centre**

**Nominations are open
for Board membership**

Topic: "Aquatic reintroductions"

Speakers -

- Anita Spencer, Biodiversity Ranger, Dept Conservation, "Proposed reintroduction of Canterbury Mudfish to Travis", and,



- Dr Bob McDowall, NIWA scientist has spent all his life working on native freshwater fish and will be speaking on "Giant Kokopu - potential translocation to Travis wetland".

All Welcome - Come along and sample some Banrock Wines.

Memorial seat

Fran McGrath and Edwin Daniel donated \$600.00 to the TW Trust for a seat to be erected on the Wetland Walk in memory of Sue Quirk.

Fran McGrath & Edwin Daniel has this to say:
"We had a commemorative gathering this past weekend, and 'unveiled' the seat on the Travis Walkway. Christchurch weather blessed us!"

"The seat looked really good - a particularly nice piece of wood and

the seat was beautifully made. Thank you for your work to get it in place. Please also thank the person/people who made the seat for their care and craftsmanship. They can be really pleased with their work...the 20 or so people who came were very appreciative of you and the CCC for the seat and the site".

"Thank you from all of us...and I'm sure from the many people who will now get to sit and enjoy that spot. Sue would have liked that".

Restoration Workdays - Travis Wetland Trust

By Joe Greenaway

Over the last 20 or 30 years I have seen many changes in the wetland. Areas that were blackberry and grey willow (and other areas of neglect) are now showing progress with good growth and even regeneration.

It is still a challenge to ensure a satisfactory percentage of survival, even though we have adhered to information on soil make-up and conditions, like wet bog areas and dry sand dunes. In sand dune areas, the plants are selected for the conditions they have to endure: cold prevailing winds and dry periods of weather.

We adjust our planting techniques to the conditions. Plant deeply with a good hollow to catch any moisture in

dry conditions and plant slightly raised on poor drainage. Areas which can be dry at the time of planting can become quite waterlogged during heavy rain, as we have had in the last month. Some species will endure this better after they have formed a good root structure, but others won't survive.

Once we can establish some stands of growth they can be in-planted and extended, giving protection to the new additions. This can be seen now when visiting the wetland. Frost can be quite brutal to new plants and it can be a few degrees harder in the low pockets of the wetland than recorded elsewhere. Here again, established companion plantings help to protect.

I hope I haven't relayed a message of despair, rather described the work that is done to regenerate an area and ensure its survival. This work is done by the many volunteers who give up their time to plant, weed and water and slowly improve areas until they can establish themselves. Nature spreads many seeds although only a few survive given the harsh conditions. While we do tend to expect every plant we put in to survive, this may not be possible every time. Given the right conditions we can have a high success rate.

Looking back 20 years to when we started, what has been achieved is very satisfying indeed.



Moats

By Eric Banks

The extension of the existing moat system to create islands for predator control purposes is also currently being investigated.

The creation of a more comprehensive moating system would reduce the incidence of predation of birds and skinks by cats, dogs, mustelids and rats. These predators would not be eliminated from the islands but would make other control methods more

effective by directing the pathways predators take to the islands.

Construction of new or modified existing moats will be dependant upon funding priorities and availability.

Mighty Matai

By Dave Evans

In the SE corner of the wetland, across Angela Stream from Travis Road, the Trust and CCC are working to establish a Totara-Matai forest. There have been regular plantings for the last couple of years and the trees and shrubs planted this winter were bought with a grant from the Honda Tree Fund. The Totara tree is reasonably well known, but Matai (*Prumnopitys taxifolia*) is less frequently seen.

The Matai is a lowland forest, coniferous tree that grows all over New Zealand. I have trouble distinguishing the adult Matai from Miro (*Prumnopitys ferruginea*), as both have attractive hammer-marked bark and leaves similar to the yew tree. Adult Matai leaves, at 10-15 mm long and 1.5-2 mm broad, are shorter and narrower than those of the Miro and the Miro doesn't grow as tall as the Matai, which reaches 40 metres high and two metres in diameter.

However, when small, the Matai has a very distinctive form. As is common among New Zealand plants the juvenile tree is divaricating, presumably to confound the browsing

Moa. It tries very hard to look unappetising, to the extent that the first person to introduce me to a young Matai called it "moth-eaten Matai". The leaves are brown, pale yellow or dirty white. The adult tree grows out of this shambles and eventually the divaricating branches fall off.

Adult Matai produces large (12 mm), black fruit that take up to 18 months to mature. Kereru eat the fruit and disperse the single seed they contain. The fruit can remain on the tree for a long time so I suspect they are a valuable year-round food source for Kereru.

Second only to Kahikatea as a native timber tree, Matai timber was used extensively for flooring and weatherboards, as it is very hard

and durable, though not when in the ground like Totara. Due to heavy logging not much Matai dominated forest remains, especially in lowland Canterbury.

Matai grows on fertile alluvial soils and doesn't mind it being dry in the summer and waterlogged in the winter. Sounds ideal for Travis! In pre-human times Matai was probably quite common on the Canterbury Plains. I read that Matai beer can be brewed from the gum (sounds like my kind of tree!).



Juvenile Matai

Just another reason to look forward to the time when the mighty Matai graces the Travis Wetland once more.

(Thanks to the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network and Wikipedia for the material in this article.)

INAUGURAL WORLD PARKS

The inaugural World Parks Day at Travis Wetland on September 20 brought together many people from the community working on a variety of activities towards the restoration of Travis Wetland.

The events included the Carbon Crusade event in which people either walked or ran from Bottle Lake Forest to Travis Wetland and assisted with the planting, and the Community Planting event sponsored by Trees For Canterbury (which donated a 1000 plants).

An impressive 1500 plants were planted by about 100 people, adding to the restoration of a mixed podocarp forest on the south side of the wetland (a future "Riccarton Bush").

A big thanks to every one who helped in the planting: Trees for Canterbury, Travis Wetland Trust,

Carbon Crusade; and Simon Johnson for towing out the Travis Wetland Ranger!! A beautiful spring day with a fine BBQ afterwards - thanks to Travis Wetland Trust members Joe

Greenaway and Chrissie Williams – offered a great opportunity to chat with old and new friends.



Planting at Travis Wetland