



## Travis Wetland Community Planting Day 2013

By Trees For Canterbury, September 20

Light rain didn't deter the many volunteers at Trees for Canterbury's annual 'Community Planting Event' held at Travis Wetland on Saturday 21 September. This event is a partnership between community, Trees for Canterbury, the Travis Wetland Trust and the Regional Park Rangers of the Christchurch City Council. More than 70 volunteers included a large group of staff from Fulton Hogan, and also from FedEx who have been supporting this event for five years. It is great to see business supporting community events.

Well over 1000 native plants were planted by the volunteers in just under two hours in an area that will become a matai – totara forest area. The plan is to continue with the creation of a six hectare mixed podocarp forest, which over time will provide habitat for a range of forest birds and invertebrates. Travis Wetland is noted for its regenerating native bush and wildlife habitat, and is the largest remaining area of fresh water wetland in Christchurch.

Many thanks to everyone who attended on the day, and made this event a wonderful success.

Trees For Canterbury have been involved at Travis Wetland for 10 years and in that time have donated 10,000 native plants.



## 95,000 plants help restore a wetland

Since 1998 more than 95,000 plants have been planted by volunteers, school children and contractors to reestablish native plant communities, which in turn provide habitat for birds, insects and fish. Little remained of the original vegetation so the plants include harake (flax), ti kouka (cabbage tree), manuka, pukio (Carex secta) and forest trees such as kahikatea, pokaka, matai and totara. Physical and visual changes have also taken place including the construction of ponds and waterways and willow trees being replaced by native wetland species. After only 15 years, views from a walk around the wetland are dominated by native plants. Imagine what the wetland will be like in 200 years when the podocarps trees form an eight hectare forest, larger than Riccarton Bush, providing a home for forest birds and insects. On the grazing marsh and waterways the number of native species of waders and ducks already out number the introduced species.



Travis wetland Trust Board 1992, back left; Larry Sutherland, Anne Flanagan, Tom Hay, Jill Roberts, Jim Payne; front left Colin Meurk, Jenny Lineham, Joe Greenaway, Absent Keith McKay.

## Travis Wetland Trust Meetings

The Travis Wetland Trust board meets monthly on the Tuesday following the work day, from 6.30 pm – 8.30 pm at the Travis Wetland Education Centre. The board extends a welcome to all who wish to attend.

## Travis Wetland Contacts

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### Mail

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### Facebook

[www.facebook.com/pages/Travis-Wetland-Trust/185672953313](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Travis-Wetland-Trust/185672953313)



# Travis Wetland

## October 2013



Aerial view of Travis Wetland, 2013

## Celebrate Travis Wetland Trust 21 years and AGM

– Saturday 9 November 2013

This year is the 21st anniversary of the formation of the Travis Wetland Trust and so good cause for a celebration! This will be held on Saturday 9 November at Travis Wetland education centre. The schedule for the day is as follows:

- 10am – AGM followed by morning tea, “birthday” cake and reminiscing
- 11am – Foundation and current members planting specimen trees to commemorate the anniversary
- 12.30pm – Barbecue lunch at the Education Centre
- 2pm – Guided walks for the general public around the wetland

Please join us to celebrate the Trust's coming of age. We have tried to contact and invite those who had a significant role in the life of the Trust, but please let us know the names and contact details of anyone you think we might have overlooked. Email [info@traviswetland.org.nz](mailto:info@traviswetland.org.nz) or phone secretary Denise Ford on 981 3805.

Watch the website [www.traviswetland.org.nz](http://www.traviswetland.org.nz) for plans as they develop.



Aerial view of Travis Wetland, 1998

## 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 weeding and invasive weed control. Morning tea provided.

**When:** Third Saturday of every month 9am to 12.30pm.

**Where:** Meet at the Beach Road car park.

**What:** Bring gumboots or boots, gardening gloves and clothing suitable for the weather and season.

**Work day dates for 2013 are:**

- 19 October 2013 planting
- 9 November 2013 - 21 years celebration and AGM
- 16 November 2013 – Forest and Bird Society 90th anniversary planting event
- 21 December 2013
- 18 January 2014
- 15 February 2014
- 15 March 2014
- 19 April 2014

## Travis Nature Photography Walk, Saturday 9 November, 3 – 7pm

For photographers and interested people join a photo walk with Grahame Bell. The walk begins at 3pm until 7pm (ish). Follow on from the celebrations and walk off that cake! [Or slide under a tree and have a rest...zzzz.] Bring a camera; the walks are good – learn a lot through a photographer’s eyes. How to take good shots and questions answered.

## A note from Treasurer Dave Evans

Subscriptions to the Travis Wetland Trust for the 2013/14 year are now due and unless you have paid recently you will be sent a subscription form. If you are sure you have paid, but receive a form all the same, then contact the Trust treasurer Dave Evans (dave.evansii@gmail.com, 3660628) and he will correct his records. Please support the work of the Trust by renewing your annual subscription.



## Travis Wetland petition

- Dave Evans and Colin Meurk

For more than a century Travis Swamp (as it was then known) was a dairy farm supplying Christchurch with “town milk”, but eventually the farms were sold and the land rezoned for residential use. Developers came and went through the 1960s and 1970s culminating with the plans of Travis Country Estates in the 1980s to create a large housing estate. This prompted locals and conservation groups to rally together to save the wetland from being ‘reclaimed’, built over and lost forever to the pukeko, recent plant discoveries, potential for restoration of a diverse and representative Christchurch habitat, and human engagement with their history. As the housing plans, with a small area for preservation in the northwest, firmed up, the Travis Wetland Trust was formed 21 years ago to campaign for preservation of the entire 130 hectares.

To give weight to their arguments a petition was launched by the Trust with the following message:

“This petition calls on the Christchurch City Council to expeditiously acquire all of Travis Swamp for the purposes of developing a nature park

Council must pursue the total acquisition of Travis Swamp (130ha) to ensure the future viability of the many biological and visual touchstones of Christchurch heritage - plant, animals, soils and landscapes. All the compromises have been made - 12 000ha of wetland have been lost in the City; this is the final opportunity to hold the line and create a lasting, living statement of this special dimension of our history; there won’t be another chance.

The petition has been organised by the Travis Wetland Trust which was set up in 1992 for the purposes of promoting the development of Travis Swamp as an educational, scientific and recreational reserve for the benefit of Christchurch citizens.”

Nearly 7000 people signed the petition, with many prominent citizens adding their support. By the time it was presented to the Christchurch City Council, it had become a precious art work. It was beautifully bound by the late Erena McNeil using Mark Lander’s flax paper and contained dried plant specimens named by Colin Meurk in Maori, Latin and English, from the very habitats being eyed up for housing development.

The Council took notice of the petition and after buying some of the land in 1994 sought reports from experts on the wider ecological values of Travis Wetland. The outcome was the purchase of the remainder in 1997 and the gazetting of 119 hectares as a nature heritage park. Since then the Christchurch City Council and the Travis Wetland Trust have continued to jointly maintain and develop the park.

The petition holds a very special place in the history of Travis Wetland and will be on display at this year’s twenty-first anniversary AGM of the Travis Wetland Trust.

## Wednesday’s willing weeders.

Meet at the car park off the no exit end of Beach Road at 1pm on the Wednesday before the work day each month. Light weeding around the Education Centre and carpark is the focus. It’s low key and nice to chat with others. Please bring your favourite tools also garden gloves. A drink and snack provided. Finishes 3pm at the latest.

## Insects of Travis Wetland – Cabbage Tree Moth - Epiphryne verriculata

- Denise Ford



The Cabbage Tree Moth (*Epiphryne verriculata*) is a moth endemic to New Zealand. It is a member of the Geometridae family. This family of moths are commonly known as looper moths because the way the caterpillar walks. The

caterpillar has three pairs of true legs by the head and two pairs of prolegs (false legs) at their rear end. They walk by bending their body and bringing their rear legs up to their front legs. They then stretch their body forward holding on with the rear legs, this process is repeated to move the caterpillar along.

The Cabbage Tree Moth is about 10mm long with a wing span of 35mm and as the common name suggests its host is the cabbage tree (*Cordyline* spp.). The adult moth is well camouflaged against the dead leaves of the cabbage tree. It is a light brown colour and in the day time when resting it spreads its wings and lies flat against the leaf aligning the strips on its wings along the strips of the cabbage tree leaf. The caterpillar moves up into the crown of the cabbage tree and feeds on the unfurled new leaves. Firstly they feed by grazing the surface of the leaf, leaving a brown scar, and as the caterpillar grows they begin to chew holes and notches in the leaves. This damage is not obvious until the leaves unfurl so if you look at open cabbage tree leaves you may see these distinctive marks.

### References:

[http://nzacfactsheets.landcareresearch.co.nz/factsheet/OrganismProfile/Cabbage\\_tree\\_moth\\_-\\_Epiphryne\\_verriculata.html](http://nzacfactsheets.landcareresearch.co.nz/factsheet/OrganismProfile/Cabbage_tree_moth_-_Epiphryne_verriculata.html)

<http://www.terrain.net.nz/friends-of-te-henui-group/local-butterflies-moths/cabbage-tree-moth.html>

## Birds of Travis Wetland

- Dave Evans

### Pūkeko – *Porphyrio porphyrio melanotus*



The distinctive pūkeko is a very special bird for Travis Wetland. That the wetland is a stronghold for the pūkeko, threatened by habitat loss throughout Canterbury, was one of the reasons behind making Travis Wetland a Nature Heritage Park. It was also a great reason for featuring the pūkeko in the Travis Wetland Trust logo. Being such a charismatic and colourful bird did not go amiss either. Although the pūkeko is

not nationally endangered, Travis has become even more valuable as a refuge for the bird, as houses have encroached on farmland areas of north-eastern Christchurch. This farmland used to be home to many pūkeko and the houses have displaced them. Travis Wetland has the most significant population of pūkeko on the Canterbury Plains.

The melanotus subspecies of purple swamphen that is our pūkeko is also found in Australia, Papua New Guinea, eastern Indonesia and some Pacific islands. It has been in NZ about 1000 years and may have been introduced by the Maori, or their predecessors. It could also have self introduced as there is some evidence of long range dispersion over the sea and it is actually a relatively good swimmer. This is despite its feet being better adapted for living in a swamp. It is the closest relative of the takahe, which evolved to be a very heavy land bird due to its isolation from mammalian predators for many million years.

They are well settled at Travis and over the years they have become ever more bold and unfortunately learned that a rustling plastic bag could mean food! Tender shoots and roots should form the bulk of their diet and when we are planting we must heel the plants in well to avoid them being pulled up by pesky pūkeko. This is not new behaviour and in previous centuries they raided Māori gardens. Despite being predominantly vegetarians they will eat eggs, ducklings and small fish, when the opportunity arises. They need grit to aid digestion and this can lead to their undoing when they venture onto busy roads to satisfy their desire. We would rather they fossicked on the grit paths of the wetland than risked their lives on the road.

On occasions a giant pūkeko has been seen at Travis so watch out for it at the Trust’s 21st birthday celebration!

## T-shirts



The Travis Wetland Trust now has t-shirts for sale. Two great designs in a variety of colours and sizes.

Check the website [www.traviswetland.org.nz](http://www.traviswetland.org.nz) for details and ordering.



## A photographic ramble

- Eleanor Bissel

Travis the perfect place for an early morning ramble – with camera and Grahame!

A five degree frost and a stunning sunrise greeted the hardy group who rambled along, with Grahame giving hints for taking the best photos in the amazing light. Frosty spider webs, crystallised leaves on trees, tiny fruiting lichens; even the swans had frost on their feathers. Half way all enjoyed a welcome hot drink and more questions answered. The walk was supposed to last two hours – but it was a little longer. Thank you Grahame.



Travis Wetland Pateke release, May 2007.



Travis Wetland Trust, Chrissie Williams launching the guide book, 2005.



Travis Wetland Trust, Joe Greenaway, Simon Shikongo Civic award, 1999.



Travis Wetland Canterbury Mud Fish, May 2010.