



## Newsletter April 2015

### From the Chair.....

I had the pleasure of enjoying a fantastic Easter weekend on a beautiful lake in the South Island. No, it wasn't Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere, but there were certainly similarities – abundant birdlife, uninterrupted views and a calm expanse of water that offered plenty of recreational opportunities. It made me wonder - why hadn't we considered Te Waihora as an Easter destination?

The main point of difference this lake (Lake Benmore) has over ours is its relatively remote high country location, making it the 'top of the food chain' and largely insulated from the impact of human activity. Ironically, Benmore is not a natural waterbody, having been created through the damming of the Waitaki River in the 1960s.

However, despite some of the significant challenges Te Waihora's position in the catchment presents to its ongoing health and management, in my mind, this also makes the Lake much more accessible to a wider section of our community. And it's the ongoing work of this community – a snapshot of which is presented below – that makes me optimistic that the perception of the Lake as a destination can only improve. So my request to you, as you catch up on the latest of WET's news, is to have a think about your own positive perceptions, experiences and aspirations for Te Waihora, and how you might help spread the word on the qualities of the Lake amongst your own networks. With more people acting as Lake Ambassadors I've no doubt one day soon it will take its rightful place as a well-recognised and utilised 'jewel' of the region.

*Ruth*

Ruth Markham-Short, Chair

### 2015 Bird Survey

On February 21, 2015 almost 50 staff and volunteers from several organisations undertook a count of all the wetland birds present at the Lake. Some photos from the day are on our [Facebook page](#).



*Early morning briefing. Photo: Jane Demeter*

This year almost 48,000 birds were recorded around the lake – the results are available on the WET website in the form of a table which shows the birds counted this year, and then corresponding totals for each species from 2013 and 2014.

The Christchurch City Council Rangers took on the lake shore which falls within Christchurch City. They covered the area in 4 teams and counted around half the birds. The lake shore in the Selwyn District was covered by 9 teams. Each team included experienced OSNZ birders, supported by volunteers and staff from the Department of Conservation, Environment Canterbury and Waihora Ellesmere Trust.



*Photos left to right: Adriana de Groot, Anita Spencer, Steve Attwood*

Selwyn team members met in the morning for a briefing at Springston South Soldiers Memorial Hall, and returned there later in the day with their numbers, and to catch up with the other teams. Things were slightly slow to begin with as there were patches of fog around the lake. Fortunately this lifted and didn't significantly delay counting.

The count is a snapshot of the birds present on a specific day and, for the species which occur in large numbers such as the ducks and geese, the numbers are estimated by experienced counters. The total number of birds recorded is slightly over 13% down on last year, with just under 48,000 compared with around 55,000 in 2014.

The bird numbers this year are within the parameters of what we'd expect in a dry year. Numbers are affected by the habitat conditions and feeding opportunities. The low lake level we have had over summer will suit some species but others, including some of the ducks, geese and swans, respond by moving to other areas in the wider lowland Canterbury region where there is more food available.

## **WET on Facebook**

Have you liked our Facebook page? As the number of people following us increases we will add more content so visit us at [www.facebook.com/WaihoraEllesmereTrust](http://www.facebook.com/WaihoraEllesmereTrust)



## **The Living Lake**

As we reported in the last newsletter, the date has been set! The 2015 Living Lake symposium will be held over November 19 & 20, 2015, with Day 1 being a field trip to the lake. Day 2 will focus on reporting on the 'state of the lake' and a lot is happening behind the scenes to pull together the people and information we will need. We will be adding further details to our website over the next month or two.

We are keen to attract sponsorship for the symposium and the publication of the associated report. We have sponsor packages available from \$250 for Bronze sponsorship up to \$1000+ for Gold sponsorship. If you know of any businesses or organisations that might like to support the event please let us know.

## **Whakaora Te Waihora**

WET is continuing to support the implementation of the Whakaora Te Waihora Joint Cultural and Ecological Restoration plan by providing input to a range of projects. One exciting aspect of this work that is beginning to come together, and which WET is assisting with, is the integrated monitoring strategy being developed by Ken Hughey at Lincoln University. Students from Lincoln and the University of Canterbury will be able to contribute to the monitoring of projects such as riparian planting, additional water quality monitoring and hopefully gathering more data on recreational use of the lake and environs.

## Lake Margin

The Te Waihora Agencies has recently established a working group of agencies to look at issues associated with the lake margin. Amongst topics to be discussed will be the various options available for protecting valuable lake margin wetland habitat.



## Planning a drainage improvement project? Would you like some help?



*Carex secta* controlling the water weed growth.

No overhanging *Carex secta* – water weeds proliferate.

If you have identified areas of drainage management that could be improved, such as fencing and riparian planting, but you're not sure of the best way to proceed, we may be able to help.

Waihora Ellesmere Trust has some funding to provide technical advice, such as restoration planning, to farmers who would like to fence and plant drains. Get free advice on:

- how to prepare the site for planting
- what plant species to choose
- how to place them to achieve the best outcomes
- how to maintain the plants for high survival rates

We are also happy to talk to you about assisting with other drain related projects such as reshaping the banks or constructing small sediment traps. If you are interested, please contact Adrienne ph: 021 052 9720 or email: [manager@wet.org.nz](mailto:manager@wet.org.nz) before May 31, 2015.

## Kids Discovery Plantout

Nine schools have confirmed dates for autumn planting with this exciting environmental education programme. In addition to planting, and with huge support from Enviroschools, the students are also participating in a range of activities and learning about aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates, wildlife, cultural values and monitoring.

## Katherine Glasgow, Land Management Advisor at Environment Canterbury

Katherine works as a Land Management Advisor for Environment Canterbury and is responsible for extension activities in the Selwyn-Waihora catchment. Katherine works closely with the Selwyn-Waihora Zone committee to help implement some of their priority land use and water quality initiatives. This



is done by partnering with the local community, primary industry groups, local councils, non-governmental organisations and local rūnanga.

Here are some of the things Katherine can help with:

- Good management practice advice for your farm
- Helping prepare your Farm Environment Plan
- Facilitating and co-ordinating community discussion groups
- Providing advice on funding avenues for fencing, planting, and restoration projects
- Communicating the various aspects of the Selwyn-Waihora sub-regional plan and enabling understanding on the paddock level
- Assisting with the implementation of the actions in your FEP
- Planning and organising community field days and field trips i.e., nutrient management field days

You can get in touch with Katherine at 027 5123158 or at [Katherine.Glasgow@ecan.govt.nz](mailto:Katherine.Glasgow@ecan.govt.nz)

## New online guide to NZ's Environment

The Environment Foundation has expanded its recently launched web-based guide to the management of New Zealand's natural environment – [www.environmentguide.org.nz](http://www.environmentguide.org.nz)



The site includes comprehensive material on the Resource Management Act and other environmental policies. It is practical and user friendly and is intended to assist individuals, community groups, landowners and businesses to better participate in environmental decision-making processes. This website is currently under development and new material will be uploaded from time-to-time.

## Restoration site – an invitation to tour

Te Ara Kākāriki has organised a tour of established native restoration sites for Saturday April 18, starting 9.30am and finishing 1pm.



Go along to see what a site can look like 5 to 10 years after planting and hear from landowners what worked or didn't work for them. They will also have some experts on hand to talk about long term management of these plantings, and Hamish Rennie will talk briefly about the Sustainable Drain Management Project led by WET. There is more information and a programme on the WET website.

Please RSVP by Tuesday 14 April (for catering purposes) to:  
Te Ara Kākāriki, email: [register@kakariki.org.nz](mailto:register@kakariki.org.nz)

## What's coming up?

**TAK Restoration Tour** – April 18

**Green Footprint 2015** – September 11 (to be confirmed)

**2015 Living Lake Symposium** – November 19/20



Kind regards,

Adrienne Lomax

General Manager

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or 021 052 9720, email [manager@wet.org.nz](mailto:manager@wet.org.nz)