



Newsletter December 2014

From the Chair.....

It's a little hard to believe that the end of the year has arrived, and it has been almost three months since our AGM! So a belated thank you is required to some of our retiring and new Trustees and office holders. Firstly, to our outgoing Chair, Hamish Rennie, thank you for the hard work and dedication shown over the last two years. I'm pleased to say Hamish will be staying on as a Trustee and will continue to be involved in the Management Committee, so his knowledge and extensive experience with WET and the Lake will still be on hand.



Thanks also to our two retiring Trustees, Kerry O'Brien and Stephen Brailsford. Both have been long serving Trustees and their involvement with WET has contributed greatly to its development as a well-recognised community organisation. We wish them well in their future endeavours!

We'd also like to welcome our newest Trustee, Murray Stephens. Murray farms at Irwell and is the third generation on the property known as Waipuna, with 8 kms of stream boundary with the Irwell River. For over 50 years Murray has had a connection with the Lake and in his younger days was heavily involved with the Ellesmere Aquatic Club at the Lakeside Domain. Murray was also a founding member of the Selwyn Sustainable Agricultural Society.

It wasn't all business at our AGM – we were privileged to have Lincoln University Vice Chancellor Dr Andrew West (Andy) speak to us on the direction he sees the University taking. This was an interesting and informative presentation, and there are certainly synergies between the vision of WET and the University. We look forward to continuing to develop and strengthen this relationship.

Finally, Merry Christmas to every one of our volunteers, subscribers, members and Trustees. May you have a safe and relaxing break!

Ruth Markham-Short
WET Chair

Green Footprint 2014

Over 80 volunteers gathered at Coes Ford on September 12 to plant natives and celebrate the 10th planting to be carried out as part of this project. This is a great collaboration between WET, SDC, YHA, the Coes and Chamberlains Ford Reserve Management Committee and, in the last couple of years, Enviroschools.

Students from Leeston, Southbridge and Springston Schools



joined in the planting and learned about biodiversity. Several larger Totara trees were planted by representatives of the main organisations involved. WET was ably represented by Chair Hamish Rennie and our secretary and Green Footprint supporter Judith Kidd.



The Green Footprint Project

Connecting communities with the environment to enhance our native biodiversity, providing opportunities to learn about restoration and make a contribution through partnership

Canterbury Plantout

Two very successful volunteer planting days, led by Te Ara Kākāriki, were held in September. The first day focused in the lower catchment with around 125 volunteers planting at several sites. Lunch was at Lakeside Domain, which provided an opportunity to relax and enjoy the sunshine at a lakeside location.



There were several family groups involved in the Plantout, including a group of recent migrants from China, who were delighted to have the opportunity to meet and talk to other volunteers from around Canterbury and to make a positive contribution to their new country.

The volunteers heard from several different speakers on the buses as they were transported from site to site, including hearing about WET's recent projects and the wildlife of the lake. Over the two days several thousand native plants were planted.

Kids Discovery Plantout

This project aims to provide schools with an opportunity to learn about native biodiversity through hands-on experience, building a long term relationship with a restoration site. The Kids Discovery Plantout is a collaborative project between Te Ara Kākāriki (TAK), Enviroschools, WET and Lincoln University.



WET is continuing to support schools we have developed a relationship with in past years. One of those is Leeston Consolidated School and we were delighted to be able to help out with their recent day out at Lakeside Wildlife Management Reserve. 500 native plants were planted at this DOC Reserve and the students were also able to learn about the insects and wetland processes. Students from Leeston planted at this site in 2013 and this year's planting day gave them a chance to see how well the plants they planted last year had grown.

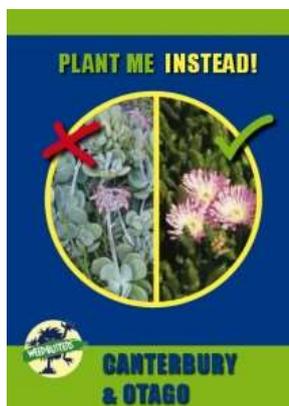
A&P Show

The weather held for a great day out at the Ellesmere A&P Show. This year WET got together with Te Ara Kākāriki and Weedbusters (supported by the ECan Biodiversity Team).



Our displays had lots of information about native plants, riparian restoration and drain management, funding options and how to deal with weeds – plus giveaways, games and a prize draw. The Weedbuster game was particularly popular with children – and a few adults!

We asked local MP the Hon. Amy Adams to draw the winners in our competition. Congratulations to Hamish Rennie, Mrs S. Holmes, Dean Chapman, Jack Carruthers, Mikayla Field, Isaiah Fortune, Charlotte Cathcart and Ben Fortune.



A great resource is the “Plant Me Instead” booklet from Weedbusters. This will help you identify problem weeds and give you suggestions for garden plants which can be used instead.

We have copies available – contact us if you would like one. Alternatively, you can download it from the Weedbusters website (www.weedbusters.org.nz).

Whakaora Te Waihora Science Hui

Whakaora Te Waihora is a cultural and ecological restoration programme for Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere, led by Ngāi Tahu and Environment Canterbury. Their vision and goals are very similar to those of WET and we are pleased to be able to assist with a number of their projects. One of those was the recent Science Hui, which WET helped to plan and organise.



We had a great turn out for the event where the results and progress reports on a series of research projects were presented. The slideshows are now available on the Whakaora Te Waihora website.

If you have any questions or comments, please send to Adrienne at WET (manager@wet.org.nz) and it will be passed on to the right person.

One of the projects featured in a Maori TV documentary recently – you can watch on line to see what is happening with the re-establishment of the weeds beds around the lake shore <http://www.maoritelevision.com/tv/shows/project-whenua/S01E006/project-whenua-series-1-episode-6>.



Bird Survey 2015

The date has been set for the 2015 wetland bird survey of Te Waihora/lake Ellesmere. It will be held on Saturday February 21st, 2015. We’re now collecting the names of those interested in helping out and there will be more information to follow nearer the time.

Volunteers should be reasonably fit and committed! Some experience of identifying and counting wetland birds would be helpful, but not essential. Volunteers will be assigned to a team—transport and some equipment will be provided. Don’t worry if you don’t know all species – each team member can



take on the counting of a few species. For example, it is really useful to have someone in each team counting ducks and geese, while someone else counts the waders.

We will also need other helpers on the day – as drivers, to do data entry, to help with catering and more.

If you would like to be involved please email Adrienne (manager@wet.org.nz) your details, including an indication of any previous experience in bird counts or similar events.

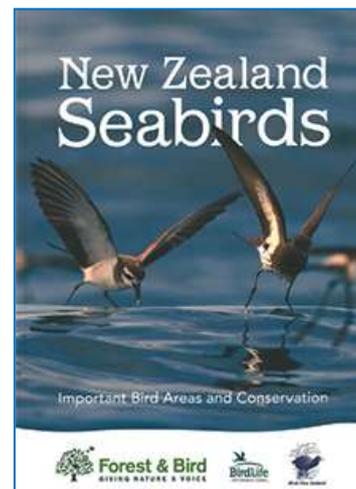
The 2014 survey counted over 55,000 birds – the details are on the WET website 2014 Bird Survey page.

New Zealand Seabirds: Important Bird Areas and Conservation Report

This recently released report gives an overview of the network of places of international significance to New Zealand seabirds, which includes Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere. It can be found on the Forest and Bird website (<http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/important-bird-areas>).

Important Bird Areas are internationally recognised sites that are important for bird conservation and support key bird species. The protection and management of these sites is of global significance.

The report is intended to give community groups, DOC, lawmakers, politicians, iwi groups and councils a useful guide to where our seabirds breed and feed, and to help ensure their protection. This overview will be followed up by more detailed reports, coming soon, on *Coastal sites and islands, Seaward extensions, pelagic areas and Rivers, estuaries, coastal lagoons and harbours.*



Royal Spoonbills

The Royal Spoonbill is an Australian species which has naturally colonised New Zealand since the 1950s. Numbers have increased hugely over recent years, from only 26 recorded in 1979 to over 2,300 in the winter of 2012.

A recent survey of Royal Spoonbill nesting colonies has identified the Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere colony as the largest in NZ, with more than twice the number of nests than any other location. In the 2013/14 breeding season over 130 nests were recorded at the lake, and in the February 2014 wetland bird survey 871 individual birds were recorded. (Birds New Zealand 3, 2014; 2014 Bird Survey results – www.wet.org.nz)

With the agreement of DOC and the private landowner, CCC Rangers have located traps along a section of the Rail Trail to offer some protection from predators.



Photo: Matt Searles

Filming at Harts Creek

As part of the Sustainable Drain Management project, we're making another short video. This time we'll be telling the story of the fantastic work of the Harts Creek and Birdlings Brook Streamcare Group. We had a great day for filming recently down at Harts Creek, with Peter Chamberlain and Colin Patterson of the Streamcare Group. We hope to have the video up on our website early next year.



LAWA

Land, Air, Water Aotearoa (LAWA) is a recently established website which is aiming to help local communities find a balance between using natural resources and maintaining their quality and availability.

It is a collaboration between New Zealand's 16 regional and unitary councils, the Cawthron Institute, Ministry for the Environment and Massey University. It is supported by the Tindall Foundation. www.lawa.org.nz/

The site includes data for 14 sites in the Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere Catchment (although unfortunately not Harts Creek yet). Scientific data is available for most of these sites on nine indicators, showing current state and the trend. The indicators include bacteria, clarity, nitrogen and phosphorus. Recreational water quality is included for some of the sites.



Ellesmere Responsible Business Awards

At the recent Responsible Business Awards evening Hamish Rennie, outgoing WET Chair, spoke about the work of the Trust and opportunities for everyone, including businesses, to make a positive contribution to improving the health of the waterways and the lake. It was very encouraging to see the number and range of businesses participating in the scheme.



The awards are coordinated by the Lincoln Envirotown Trust and sponsored by the Selwyn District Council with the printing costs covered by Lincoln University. The aims are to encourage businesses to reduce their impact on the environment, to congratulate them on the steps they are taking to do this, and to promote local businesses and services. The 2014 winners were:

Lincoln: (record number of 8 overall winners!)

Overall Winners of the Lincoln University and Ngāi Tahu Property Ltd Trophy: BHU Organics Trust, Kidsfirst Kindergarten Lincoln, Lincoln University Hospitality Catering, Lincoln University Early Childhood Centre, Lincoln University Childcare & Preschool, New World Lincoln, The Gift Box and Lincoln Playcentre

Also receiving Platinum were: Linc Works Property Services, Dave Clarke Joinery and Deutsches Eck Ltd

Tai Tapu

Overall winner of the ASB Tai Tapu trophy: Tai Tapu Primary School (who received Gold)

Prebbleton

Overall winner of the Meadow Mushrooms Trophy: Mark's Automotive (Gold)

Rolleston

Joint winners of the Rolleston Square Trophy: New Zealand vegetable Oil Ltd and BNZ Rolleston

Also receiving platinum: Selwyn Aquatic Centre, Kiwiflora Nurseries, Jones Road Auto, Rolleston Osteopathic Clinic, Rolleston Vet Services, Rolleston Drycleaning

Ellesmere

Overall winners of the Ravensdown Trophy: Poppita's and The Matariki Practice

Other platinum: McMillan Drilling Services, Dunsandel Playcentre, the Dunsandel Old Church Shop, Ellesmere Echo, Southbridge Playcentre and BNZ Leeston.

Submissions

Over the last couple of months WET has made submissions on the Draft Significance and Engagement Policies from both Environment Canterbury and the Selwyn District Council. One thing we raised was asking them to consider including a performance measure of some sort to gauge if local residents are happy with the way the councils are consulting the community and engaging with different sectors.

We also made a detailed submission on Selwyn District Council's Draft Open Spaces Strategy, seeking much more recognition of the importance of the lake as an open space and recognition of the work of the Trust. We will be watching with interest to see what is included in the final versions.

2015 Living Lake Symposium

This will be the fifth Living Lake Symposium hosted by WET, and a great opportunity for those with an interest in the lake to get together and share information, and find out about what has been happening and what is planned.

The dates have now been confirmed. We'll be hosting a field trip on Thursday November 19 and then on Friday November 20 we have a full day at Lincoln University to hear about the state of the lake. As with previous symposia, fees will be kept as low as possible. More details will be coming soon.

What's coming up?

2015 Bird Survey – February 21

2015 Living Lake Symposium – November 19/20



Kind regards,

Adrienne Lomax

General Manager

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