

CONSERVATION

NEWS

Newsletter

Issue 17

Spring 2018

CONSERVATION AND KARTSPORT DO NOT MIX

The proposed relocation of Kartsport Canterbury to McLean's Island jeopardises our captive breeding programme.

The Christchurch City Council has provided funding of \$170,000 for Kartsport Canterbury (KC) to complete the consent application for this move to McLean's Island. A go-kart track so close to our boundary poses severe consequences to our native bird breeding programme which has continued in association with the Department of Conservation for over 25 Years.

Our nearest aviary is only 400 metres from the proposed track and houses the rarest wading bird in the world. In 1981 there were only 23 Black Stilt alive in the world. Now listed as critically endangered, extinction remains a real threat.

The main concerns this proposed KC relocation has to our native bird breeding programme include;

- Continual noise caused by Kart racing (potentially from 7am to 10pm)
- Increase in vehicular traffic on Mclean's Island Road.
- The risk of fossil fuels leaking into ground water aquifers.
- The proliferation of predators eg weasels,

stoats, rats and predator birds which will feed on KC participant's food scraps.

As a result of this proposed KC relocation, we have suspended the building of an additional aviary, that would expand our Blue Duck (Whio) breeding programme.

We have also suspended the expansion of the critically endangered Orange Fronted Parakeet breeding programme.

Attempts to mitigate the various problems, associated with the relocation of the kart track and its facilities, will not solve our concerns.

Conservation and Fossil Fuel Kart racing do not mix.

A record number of endangered Black Stilt (kakī) were released in the Mackenzie basin this spring after the best captive breeding season on record (commenced 26 years ago).



Overall 184 kakī were hatched and reared for release by the Department of Conservation (DOC) including 49 by The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust (ICWT).

Kakī are one of New Zealand's most threatened birds and the rarest wading bird in the world.



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News in brief



Wildlife News

Shore plover update

Breeding season is underway for the shore plover here at ICWT with mixed success so far. Our most reliable pair has already laid their second clutch of the season, whilst some of our other pairs are yet to begin.

Unfortunately, one of our breeding females, Fern has injured her bill recently and it remains to be seen as to whether she will breed or not this season. We currently have 3 pairs breeding out of a possible 6. It's still relatively early in the season so hopefully the non-breeding pairs will start nesting in the coming weeks.

Two clutches of wild eggs (6 eggs total) were recently collected from Waikawa Island in the Hawkes Bay to supplement the captive breeding programme. These eggs are currently being incubated here at ICWT and all going well will hatch in the coming weeks.

Reptile update

Mid way through September we sent our 4 adult tuatara off to the new Wildbase Recovery Trust building in Palmerston North. Though it is sad to see the likes of Big Boy move on, their new home is an amazing new aviary, and many more people will have the chance to see these beautiful prehistoric creatures up close once Wildbase open their doors in early 2019. We're still holding three juvenile tuatara while we find a new home for them somewhere in New Zealand.

We have now commenced quarantine procedures of our adult grand and Otago skinks for release. We received juvenile



Western Otago and grand skinks in early 2009, with the goal of growing the population while DOC work on a safe release site. While most institutions struggled to get the western species to breed, Isaacs had a lot of success breeding the Western Otago Skinks. With DOC securing a predator proof release site and more effort going into pest control in the area, the decision has been made to release all the skinks in captivity back into the wild, to manage the future populations in-situ. Though this

is not our normal role, this is still a huge success for the skink species, DOC, and ICWT. We will still hold three juveniles that were born in January until they are old enough for release into the wild.

Orange fronted parakeet update



After a strangely slow start to the breeding season, things are picking up. Gabby has just hatched her first chick of the season, Abby is on another clutch and we're seeing promising signs from Hone and Daisy. Most amazingly of all – Poldark and Hazy also have a clutch due to hatch. For people who have not heard of Poldark, he is one of the most genetically important birds in NZ due to his wild DNA not currently represented in the captive breeding population. If this clutch is successful it could result in many more pairs of breeding orange fronted parakeet (OFP). Keep an eye out on our Facebook page as we'll be quick to update it if there's any more exciting news regarding this pair. We're also currently holding 9 juveniles while we prepare them for release shortly, with the DOC OFP team working on their release site.

Waterfowl news

The breeding season for the waterfowl has got off to a relatively slow start this spring. As always our stalwart pairs of brown teal have been breeding since August and all 6 pairs have laid 2 clutches with a couple of pairs starting on their 3rd. As it's a slow season and we've not yet received any juveniles from other institutions, we will hold off any release until January 2019.

We have also created 3 new South Island blue duck (whio) pairs however, being first time pairs, there is often the occurrence of infertile eggs being laid. Out of 3 pairs only one pair laid fertile eggs which we incubated to hatch 4 ducklings. The other 2 pairs were sitting on infertile or clear eggs but it's a promising sign for the next season when they will hopefully produce many clutches of healthy fertile eggs.



Wildlife News continued.

We hand raise all Whoio ducklings and have 15 ducklings originating from captive pairs plus have 2 clutches of wild eggs in our incubators waiting to hatch, with the possibility of more wild clutches to come.



Maintenance News



The Isaac Construction laboratory seismic strengthening work in conjunction with an upgrade of the laboratory facilities is completed. An additional building relocated adjacently, is now housing the laboratory offices together with bathroom and kitchen amenities shared with the transport division staff.



Next our team of builders tackled a refurbishment of a relocatable building for the Isaac Construction quarry division. A seismic upgrade and improvements to the cavernous "ex-Holcim" building has provided a new home for the Isaac Construction engineering division.

Following on from here, our builders have just completed their third relocatable building refurbishment to provide urgently needed additional office space for the Isaac Construction office staff.



Heritage Village News

Now that painting weather has arrived, Peter our painter has completed the roof of a cottage (see the rooftop panoramic photo below!) and will now start working on exterior weatherboards. We look forward to seeing the finished product soon.





Landscaping News

This summer we launch our most ambitious and significant planting native programme to date!

During the upcoming summer months our landscaping team will be busy preparing new ground and areas for extensive endemic, eco-sourced native plantings within Peacock Springs and across the Isaac site. Our successes so far have inspired us to expand and we are looking forward to creating greater habitat for birds and invertebrates alike. Experience has taught us the importance of the four basic steps;

- P**lanning— selecting the site then indenting (forward ordering) the appropriate plants that will flourish to the site conditions.
- P**reparation— removing grass cover and weed species, installing irrigation, then spreading compost and/or mulch.
- P**lanting— Volunteers will assist in planting the thousands of natives we have on order for delivery this autumn.
- P**rotection— Mulching to retain moisture and minimise weeds, plant guards protect from rabbits, hares, wind and spray drift.

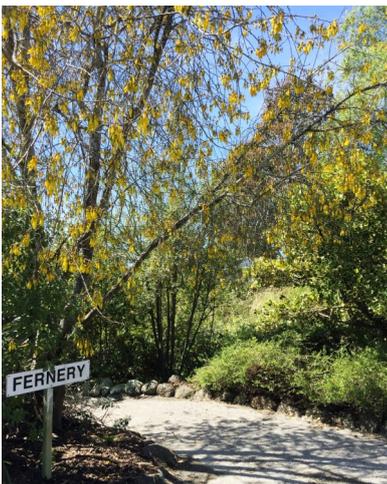
Spring arguably is the most exciting time in any garden and this year, the rewards of much hard work put in by our landscaping team, has certainly shown its rewards.

The fernery and adjacent mudfish pond is another area that has received much attention this spring and complements the nearby “Stonehenge garden” close to the Isaac Paint-shop. The fernery environment provides the perfect conditions for many endemic native ferns to flourish.

The Sir Neil Memorial Garden has received quite a facelift since the devastating nor-west wind event in 2013. Several mature trees were uprooted inflicting substantial damage to the landscape. Sir Neil loved rhododendrons and dahlias which both feature in the memorial garden, providing colour through spring, summer and autumn.



The Clifton Homestead Garden is looking superb with the established trees and shrubs dominated by exotics, some of which were planted nearly 100 years ago. Clifton was constructed by the McArthur Family, who raised their 7 children in the home. After they sold the house to Sir Neil and Lady Isaac, Mr McArthur helped Lady Diana extend the English style garden around the house. Through this work they developed a mutual respect & friendship for each other. However, upon one matter they did disagree, Mr McArthur had no time for the pesky peacocks that scratched up the gardens!





News in Brief



The Kotuku statue by Caroline Rothwell has “flown the coop” and is temporarily located in Lake Albert, Hagley Park, to celebrate 20 years of Scape Public Art. Normally this artwork resides in Peacock Springs and its heart-warming to see the public stop and admire this striking sculpture.

We farewell the last of the English Riding Ponies bred on site by Lady Isaac.

Master Caper, born in 1990, was a very handsome and extremely good natured stallion. Popular with all the staff, Master Caper loved attention, especially with carrots, apples, plus sweets and L & P!



Take a Kid Fishing event.

Another wonderful and successful day was held on 14th October 2018 at the Groyne by 5,000 children and parents. The Trust paid for the 800 trout (raised by Fish and Game) to stock the lakes, ensuring worthwhile fishing on the day.



The Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board Awards 2018 (sponsored by The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust) are awarded to Community groups, schools and individuals that are making a concerted effort to improve our natural environment. The 2018 winners are;



First place was awarded to - Squawk Squad—photo above.
 Second Place to - The Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust
 Third place to - The Little River Trap Library.

The Otukaikino Waterway has been named the country's most improved river at the recent Cawthron Institute NZ River Awards in Wellington.

We have contributed by fencing off from stock by a significant portion of land from the waterway, then planted over 50,000 natives. The Isaac Loop track is now open to the public to access and enjoy our riparian plantings. Park at Clearwater Golf resort and follow this waterway upstream. This award represents a tremendous collaborative effort from multiple landowners and organisations, who have worked in co-operative association, to prove that improvements to our natural environment are achievable.



Lastly, congratulations to Bruce Rule, Operations Manager of The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust, who has now worked 40 years for the Isaac Group!



THE ISAAC CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE TRUST

A study in conservation

Scholarship News



My name is Claire McCorkindale and I am the current holder of the Lady Isaac Scholarship at Lincoln University.

I am almost finished a Master's in Natural Resource Management and Ecological Engineering at Lincoln University.

A highlight of this programme was the semester exchange to Vienna, Austria, which I completed at the end of last year (unfortunately in their winter time).

This year I have been working on my thesis, which is focused on the Amuri Environmental Collective in the

Hurunui Waiau catchment. This collective was established in late 2014 and has led to a significant shift in farm environmental practices across the catchment.

My research is looking into whether or not there had been an associated shift in farmer mindset and farmer identity with the recent shift in importance of maintaining higher environmental standards on farms.

I have just finished my first draft (at 36,000 words!) and I am hoping to hand in the finalized version in the coming November 2018.

Who's who?

ICWT Administration

Rob Clarke—Executive Trustee
Bill Luff—Trustee
Alister McDonald—Trustee
Bruce Rule—Operations Manager
Catherine Ott—Administration Manager

Building/Maintenance Division

Hamish Milne—Builder
Bill Waterman—Apprentice Builder
Peter Jones—Painter/Handyman

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Wildlife Division

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Leigh Percasky—Assistant Wildlife Manager
Sean Kavanagh—Wildlife Keeper
Josh Forrest—Wildlife Keeper
Leonie Heyder—Wildlife Keeper
Jemma Martin—Wildlife Keeper
Fran Johnson—Wildlife Keeper

Landscape Division

Rachel Brewer—Landscape Gardener
Ian Gebbie—Landscape Gardener
Rob Smit—Landscape Gardener

