

# Canterbury Biodiversity

## Newsletter Q1

### From the Coordinator

Welcome to the first Canterbury Biodiversity newsletter. The goal of the newsletter is to promote biodiversity in the Canterbury region by providing updates on the 'state of play' in biodiversity protection and enhancement for Canterbury. To do this I will present stories on the aspects - plants, animals and ecosystems - that are unique and special to Canterbury. The newsletter will also highlight the efforts being made to protect and enhance Canterbury's biodiversity, including upcoming events that you can attend. I also welcome your contribution! So if you have words, images or opinions that you would like to share, please send them in to: [wayne.mccallum@ecan.govt.nz](mailto:wayne.mccallum@ecan.govt.nz).



Wayne McCallum  
Coordinator

### Reviews & Research

#### New Wrybill Populations Identified

Survey work completed by Environment Canterbury ecologists in late 2008 has identified new breeding locations of the rare braided river wader, the wrybill (Ngutu pare). The populations, found on the Waiau River,

represent the northern most recording of breeding birds in the province (although wrybill regularly fly further north to the Firth of Thames and beyond to spend winter).

The Waiau survey also confirmed the river's importance as a home for banded dotterel, black-fronted tern, and black-billed and black-backed gulls. During the survey several smaller rivers in North Canterbury were also identified as supporting significant bird populations, including the Kahutara (near Kaikoura) and the Kowai (near Liethfield). Full details of the survey are available in a report from Environment Canterbury: *Braided river bird surveys of the Waiau River and eight smaller Canterbury rivers, spring 2008* (Author: Frances Schmechel). Contact Customer Services (03 365 3828) to find out about securing a copy.

### Biodiversity Update

#### Tui Set to Return to Banks Peninsula

The Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust, with the Department of Conservation, iwi, Christchurch City Council and supporters, has been working intensely to ensure things are in place for the re-introduction of 30 Tui to a forest site in the southern portion of Banks Peninsula. The Trust and supporters have spent the last two years raising money for the project, which will see Tui moved from Maud Island, in the Marlborough Sounds, to the Peninsula. A pricy undertaking, fund raising has relied on the generous support of agencies and individuals to ensure that



Work in preparation for Tui releases on Banks Peninsula.

the necessary finance and resources have become available to support the venture. The eradication of rats, through the establishment of poison bait lines, has also been undertaken in preparation for the releases.

The last resident population of Tui disappeared from the Peninsula in the 1960s, with habitat loss, predation and (possibly) disease thought to be responsible for their demise. Today, an occasional vagrant bird makes its way to the Peninsula but these birds are the exception rather than the rule. Maud Island currently has a surplus of Tui, with the translocation offering a useful means for reducing numbers on this island sanctuary. The Tui release is scheduled for early April and will include a special ceremony to celebrate the return of this native songster to the Peninsula.

### Initiatives

#### Ashley/Rakahuri Rivercare Group

Protecting nesting river birds and promoting public awareness of the Ashley River, North Canterbury, is a key focus of the Ashley/Rakahuri Rivercare Group.

Arising from community concern about the plight of river birds in the Rangiora portion of the river catchment in the 1990s, the group has become a key organisation in the protection and management of the biodiversity values in the lower Ashley.

Present initiatives include the monitoring of nesting bird numbers, control of riverbed weeds (mainly lupins), predator control around breeding areas, and public education and awareness raising. Collaboration and partnerships with agencies and other groups has been a key feature of the rivercare group's work.

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### Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy

# Canterbury Biodiversity

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### Recent Events

#### Peninsula Walks - Oashore Farm

As part of the fund raising efforts to support its Tui restoration project, the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust has organised guided walks around parts of the Peninsula. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 35 hardy trekkers undertook a hike on Oashore Farm, situated on the southern side of Te Wairewa (Lake Forsyth). Although the day started under gloomy skies, things steadily improved and it was hot by the end of the day's walk.



A working farm of around 500 ha, Oashore belongs to an overseas owner who has taken a keen interest in the restoration of biodiversity values on the property. Our host for the day, Kate Whyte, is employed to oversee this work and was able to share her experiences and hopes for the farm during the 4-hour trek.



Whale pot remains, Oashore Bay, Banks Peninsula.

Special features on the property include a covenant protecting native grassland on the slopes above Te Wairewa and the remains of buildings and a pot associated with a whaling station that operated from the bay in the mid-1800s (one of several on the Peninsula).

### Kaikoura Biodiversity Bonanza

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> of March,  
Kaikoura Memorial Hall and  
Green: 9:00 – 4:00 pm

The aim of the event is to:

- Raise awareness of biodiversity in the Kaikoura area
- Provide a 'one-stop shop' for those seeking advice and services for promoting biodiversity on their properties.

Email: [Jodie.denton@kaikoura.govt.nz](mailto:Jodie.denton@kaikoura.govt.nz) for further details.

### Becoming Involved

**Bioblitz – Lincoln Liffey Domain**  
April 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>



Come and join in! It is a free event, educational and a lot of fun. "Bioblitz is a scientific race against time. Our goal is to find as many species as we can in 24 hours in the Liffey Domain. There will be lots to see and do at Base Camp at the church hall on James Street (opposite the Lincoln Fire Station). You can also join field trips with scientists throughout the day and after dark." **3:15 pm Friday 3rd April - 3:15 pm Saturday 4th April.** Everyone is welcome.

### Other Events

- Canterbury Restoration Day, 1st week in September. Watch out for further information in this newsletter
- Bush Telly at the Ellerslie Flower Show, mid-March. Over 40 interviews on practical 'how to' activities for restoring biodiversity on your land. DVD of interviews to come!

### Did you know?

#### Wrybill Facts

- Wrybills are the only bird in the world with bills that curve sideways. Birds use these to find invertebrates and larvae hiding under braided river stones and to scythe their way across tidal flats.
- Most wrybills spend the winter along the mangrove line (38° south) in the North Island, with 50 percent of birds gathering in the Firth of Thames. Spring and summer are spent in the braided river environs of Canterbury and Otago.
- Accounts from the early 1900s indicate a wrybill population of 10,000+ birds; today fewer than 6000 birds are thought to exist.

Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy