



Coleridge Habitat Enhancement Trust
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28 September 2019

Coleridge Habitat Enhancement Trust (CHET) Summary of Activities 2018-2019

Overview

During the 2018-2019 year CHET has continued work on long-term projects, particularly:

- Scamander Wetland wilding pine control
- Investigating willow control
- Continuing and improving pest trapping

Relationships with stakeholders

- Key relationships continue to be maintained with Lake Coleridge Station and Glenthorne Station Managers, who are interested in CHET's work and assist where they can.
- The CHET Coordinator has also continued to liaise with BRaid (Braided River Aid) and ECAN on braided river weed and pest control initiatives to keep CHET Trustees informed of these organisations' work.
- SDC Biodiversity Manager Andy Spanton and ECAN Selwyn-Waihora Zone Delivery Lead Johannes Welsch have both attended CHET meetings this year and are supportive of CHET projects and willing to investigate partnership funding of projects.
- The Coordinator maintains contact with the Lake Coleridge Tourism Group (LCTG), informing them of CHET initiatives, and this year provided CHET information boards about braided river habitat and species for the LCTG stall at the Hororata Highland Games.
- CHET Trustees who represent DOC, Trustpower, SDC, Forest & Bird and Fish & Game provide a valuable connection with these organisations, enabling CHET to tap into expertise and resources within these organisations.
- CHET has been without a Federated Farmers' landowner Trustee this past year due to incorrect process being followed unfortunately in initially appointing a new representative, which has subsequently taken time to correct. It is anticipated this role will be filled early in the 2019/20 year and there is an opportunity to extend CHET's relationship and activities with a wider group

of landowners/farm managers in the Coleridge Basin once a Federated Farmers' representative is appointed.

Signage

- Signs installed in late 2016, advising members of the public that endangered birds nest on braided rivers accessible from Harper Village, are still in good condition.
- More extensive braided river habitat and species information boards were printed for use at the Hororata Highland Games this year and installed permanently at the Lake Coleridge Village noticeboard.

A copy of these same signs is also due to be installed in Harper Village, with the assistance of Glenthorne Station, whose managers have offered to construct a structure for the signs which will be a considerable cost saving for CHET. Glenthorne has also offered to build a structure for a sign about crested grebes to be put in the Lake Ida walk car park, which overlooks Lake Selfe. It is hoped both these jobs will be complete by the end of 2019.

- Camping/toilet signs have been put up in Harper Village by SDC, pointing to the Trustpower-managed campground/public toilet, to help tourists find these facilities.

Predator Control

In some specific areas, volunteers look after CHET and BRaid-sponsored DOC200 style traps as well as some rat and Timms traps.

A sign warning that trapping occurs in these locations was created by CHET this year and put up in relevant locations by the Glenthorne and Lake Coleridge Station managers.

Trap numbers have increased again this year with Trustpower buying 6 more Timms traps for the Harper Village area, which are effective at catching wild cats. Two DOC200 traps were moved from Lake Coleridge Village to the Boat Harbour area. A new trapping area was added for the summer period around the Rakaia/Acheron confluence.

Within Trustpower, Holly Simperingham has for a long time recognised the value of the trapping that staff member Brian Lancaster has been doing around Harper Village and this year managed to get increased support from within Trustpower for this. In July she mapped all the Trustpower traps in Brian's area as well as purchasing 6 extra Timms traps.

Meanwhile also in early July, Brian Lancaster, CHET Coordinator Toni Barlow and CHET Trustee Chris Stewart attended a trapping workshop run by DOC North Canterbury. The workshop was set up to teach trapping organisations about how to trap more effectively and encourage them to become part of a new Animal Pest Trapping Application that DOC is setting up. DOC's new system will provide a map of trap locations throughout Canterbury and the trapping results reported by volunteer trappers. It has the potential to improve our trapping information collection by making recording of trapping results easier and access to that information easier. The CHET Coordinator will be working on getting CHET traps set up in the system in 2019/20.

CHET trapping results:

The results below do not represent the full number of predators caught, but do give a useful indication. Reporting of what has been caught has not always been consistent throughout the year, due to a couple of factors:

- Trustpower staff member Brian Lancaster not being available all year to undertake trapping.
- David Murchison spending less time in the area, along with insufficient contact by the Coordinator with Pete/Helen Patterson.

Around lakes along Harper Road - monitored by Rosalie Snoyink - Total 30 x DOC200 traps, 6 x rat traps (as at 31 July)

Lake Evelyn - 5 x DOC200 traps, 2 x rat traps
Lake Georgina - 10 x DOC200 traps, 2 x rat traps
Lake Selfe - 10 x DOC200 traps, 2 x rat traps
Rakaia/Acheron confluence - 5 x DOC200 traps

- **Total 2018-2019 caught predators recorded: 22 stoats, 1 rat, 8 hedgehogs**

Around Boat Harbour (south-east end of lake) - monitored by David Murchison and Helen/Pete Patterson – Total 5 x DOC200 traps (as at 31 July)

- **Total 2018-2019 caught predators recorded: 1 stoat, 3 hedgehogs**

Around Lower Harper River - monitored by Brian Lancaster of Trustpower - Total 18 x DOC200 traps, 7 x Timms traps (as at 31 July)

- **Total 2018-2019 caught predators recorded: 1 stoat, 8 hedgehogs, 2 rats, 3 cats, 3 ferrets, 1 hawk**

Glenthorne Station predator control:

Glenthorne Station undertook a major predator control operation on its land again this year. Targeting a different part of the station to that covered in 2017/18, during May/June/July similar numbers of predators were caught to the previous year, including approximately:

- 1640 possums
- 97 pigs
- 600 hares
- 300 rabbits

DOC's Rakaia Pest Trapping Project

In 2017/18, CHET set aside \$10k for black-backed gull (BBG) control to support a DOC-managed predator control project that began on the Rakaia River in spring 2017 and will run for 6 years. DOC still has not found a use for this money, although the project manager remains aware that it continues to be available towards this predator control work if a good use can be found.

Grebe Platform

In mid-November 2017, an experimental platform designed for crested grebes to nest on, was launched into Lake Coleridge in the Boat Harbour area (south-east end of the lake). The design has been successfully used in the Wanaka area for several years now.

The platform and signs associated with it have remained in good condition. Grebes still use the area, but none have yet chosen it as a nesting site. Likewise, a platform launched on Lake Lyndon the year prior has still not been used by grebes for nesting.

The CHET Coordinator continues to maintain contact with the platform builder Ray Goldring to experiment with changes that might make it more attractive as a safe nesting location.

Grebe breeding success is not monitoring in the area and presents is a potential opportunity for CHET.

Weed Control

Wilding Pines in Scamander Wetland

The results of removal of a stand of pines beside the Scamander Wetland by Lake Coleridge Station and ECAN a couple of years ago, and spraying of large wildings that had spread into the wetland, is evident with a number of dead trees visible in the wetland.

To deal with smaller wildings, this year CHET contracted AgriDrone (Richard Cookson) to use his drone to spray smaller wilding seedlings that had spread throughout the wetland. The success of this operation will be known in spring/summer 2019/20. It was an extremely economical method of killing the small wildings, costing CHET under \$3,000 and Lake Coleridge Station contributing by providing the spray and liaison with Richard. The drone however cannot detect very small wildings. For these a hand-pulling volunteer day is being considered to take place before the end of 2019.

Willows

CHET is concerned about the invasion of willows around river tributaries, the margins of smaller lakes in the area and in the Scamander Wetland.

SDC Biodiversity Coordinator Andrew Spanton has met with Glenthorne Station this year to discuss a plan for willow control around Lake Selfe. It is hoped this work will begin in 2019/20.

Trustpower has started working on a plan for willow control along the Acheron Diversion with Lake Coleridge Station. It is hoped this work will begin in 2019/20.

Willow control in the Scamander Wetland has also been discussed at CHET meetings and will be advanced further in 2019/20.

Riverbed weeds

CHET is continuing to stay informed about the ECAN/DOC-managed riverbed weed control programme in the region (called the Braided River Flagship Programme - BRFP).



The BRFP is critical to monitoring and managing weeds in the upper reaches of the braided rivers in the area, but ECAN Project Manager Frances Schmechel has expressed concern that the programme is not doing enough. She has raised the idea of establishing a dedicated role to manage weeds in the Coleridge Basin on a landscape scale. CHET Trustees believe the idea has merit, but feel it would be an initiative DOC or ECAN should lead. It is likely this idea will be further discussed and considered.

Trustpower sprayed the Harper Delta just before winter this year, which was becoming weed infested. It is hoped that this area will be attractive for braided river birds returning to the area in spring 2019 and looking for safe feeding and nesting areas.

Events attended:

- **Braided River Flagship Programme – Annual Meeting**
CHET Trustee Holly Simperingham, Trustpower staff member Mike Walker, and CHET Coordinator Toni Barlow attended the BRFP annual meeting coordinated by ECAN in spring 2018 to stay informed about the programme. As an affected landowner, Glenthorne Station Manager Jo Johns also attended this meeting.
- **BRaid Seminar**
CHET Trustees Holly Simperingham and Donna Field attended the Braided River Seminar organised by BRaid in late June.
- **DOC North Canterbury Trapping Workshop**
CHET Coordinator Toni Barlow, CHET Trustee Chris Stewart, and Trustpower staff member Brian Lancaster attended this workshop in early July.

CHET Trustee Representatives

- Selwyn District Council - Councillor Bob Mugford (Chairperson)
- Trustpower - Holly Simperingham
- Department of Conservation - Chris Stewart
- Coleridge Farm Representative – To be appointed by Federated Farmers
- Fish & Game - Tony Hawker
- Forest & Bird - Donna Field
- Coordinator – Toni Barlow
- Secretary – Judith Pascoe