

Summary of Activities 2024

Overview

This Annual Report highlights the activities carried out by the Trust for the year 2023/2024; the CHET audited accounts are managed by the Selwyn District Council audit process.

Key achievements during the 2023-2024 year for the Coleridge Habitat Enhancement Trust (CHET) have been:

- **Willow control** – CHET funded stage 1 (\$17,730 + gst) of the willow control work at Lake Selfe.
- **Predator control** – purchased 4 AT220 traps to add to the current CHET trap lines that are carried out in the Lake Coleridge/Wilberforce catchment by the CHET volunteers.
- **New CHET Grants process** – CHET provided funding for the following projects:
 - \$60,000 to LINZ for the agreed weed eradication programme within the Coleridge – Acheron Catchment.
 - \$50,000 (\$25,000 24/25 and \$25,000 25/26) to ECAN for funding associated with the proposed weed control project on the vegetated Rakaia River Terraces.
 - \$33,000 to ECAN for the removal of willows in the Scamander Wetland.

More information about these activities and other work follows.

Relationships with stakeholders

The CHET Coordinator has continued to liaise on projects with the following key stakeholders:

- Landowners/Managers (particularly of Lake Coleridge Station, Glenthorne Station, Algidus Station, and the Murchison family) – especially in relation to trapping activities, signage, and willow control.
- Land Information NZ (LINZ) and Department of Conservation (DOC) staff – particularly in relation to predator trapping, weed control and 4WD damage to the Torlesse Conservation Area.
- Environment Canterbury (ECAN) – particularly in relation to the weed control programme in the Scamander Swamp and CHET's willow control project at Lake Selfe.
- Selwyn District Council (SDC) biodiversity officers – particularly in relation to willow control and weed control works.
- Manawa Energy – trapping and weed control.

Visitor Signage

CHET has invested in higher-quality versions of signs warning the public to be aware of nesting river birds. The new signs should withstand UV exposure and wind much better so should last several years



at minimum. These signs have been installed at all points where the public can easily access major rivers (i.e. Rakaia, Wilberforce, Harper Rivers).

At the same time, CHET has also replaced lower-quality versions of a sign warning the public that predator traps are set in particular areas with a more durable version.

Predator Control

CHET has added 4 AT220 automatic traps to the trapping network around Lake Coleridge this year.

The AT220 is New Zealand's first multi-species, automatic resetting and reluring pest trap. It has proven to quickly and effectively clear pests' species with minimal labour costs. It is highly effective, and the 4 traps are included in the current trap lines (Harper and upper/lower Lake Coleridge).

Catch statistics

Five volunteers, with occasional assistance from the CHET Coordinator, have continued to monitor traps in areas where predators are a particular risk to ground nesting birds (either river birds or grebes).

The traps are ones purchased by CHET, BRaid and Manawa Energy. The CHET Coordinator maintains an inventory of all the traps. All volunteers record their trapping results on the Trap.NZ app giving a full picture of trapping results.

Trapping results reported during the year were:

- **Harper Village area** - 26 traps (12 DOC200; 12 Timms and 2 AT220) monitored by Manawa Energy's Brian Lancaster
 - Brian started using the Trap.NZ app to record his catches from May 2022.
 - During the 2024 year, the following catches were recorded: 3 mice, 1 ferret, 8 hedgehogs, 1 rat = **Total 13 catches** (Note: not all catches were recorded on TrapNZ due to a change in phone and requirement to reload the App.)
- **Lakes Selfe, Evelyn, Georgina** – 19 traps (18 DOC200 traps; 1 DOC250 trap at Selfe from Jan 2022) monitored by Rosalie Snoyink and David Anderson
 - Rosalie and David started using the Trap.NZ app from April 2022.
 - During the 2024 year, the following catches were recorded: At Selfe - 7 hedgehogs, 2 rats, 2 stoats; At Evelyn - 1 hedgehog, 2 stoats; At Georgina - 1 hedgehog, 1 stoat, = **Total 16 catches**
- **Lake Hill's Boat Harbour, Lake Coleridge** – 5 traps (5 DOC200 traps and 1 AT220) monitored by David Murchison
 - David started using the Trap.NZ app from early December 2021.
 - During the 2024 year, the following catches were recorded: 2 stoats, 10 possums = **Total 12 catches**
- **Homestead Road Lagoon** - 4 traps (4 DOC250 and 1 AT220) monitored by Rebecca Rose
 - Rebecca started using the Trap.NZ app from January 2023.
 - During the 2024 year, the following catches were recorded: 1 stoat, 1 hedgehog = **Total 2 catches**.

- **Landowners** continue each year to do significant trapping operations on their land, in particular to control numbers of possums, pigs and deer. Vespex is also used to control wasps.

Rakaia River Predator Trapping managed by LINZ

The Trust encourages the efforts undertaken for the Rakaia River Trapping programme. The trapping network consists of 606 traps; the trapping network runs approx. 20 kilometers along the true left and true right of the Rakaia Gorge. This network is on Crown and private land and is funded by LINZ.

Redeployment of the original trap network was required to meet the 2023 review objectives. This was a complex task and required the Contractor to complete the following actions:

- Retrieval of all traps in the network, including walking closed DOC trap lines to locate any traps lost during flood events.
- Maintenance of traps and boxes (e.g., each trap cleaned, secured if in a trap box, calibration, fixing any broken parts) before redeployment back into the field.
- A stocktake of all traps available for redeployment.
- Traps deployed along 'proposed trap lines' that had been agreed by project partners, stakeholders, and landholders.
- Micro-siting of traps on the ground (the act of refining a device's placement within the field on a scale within several metres of the desired GPS point based on appropriate land features, habitat, and vegetation at that site).
- Each trap secured in the environment (e.g., by chain, re-bar or waratah), where cattle, flood risk, or theft (e.g. on public road) may be possible.
- The layout of traps entered into the new Trap.NZ project 'RAKAIA RIVER BRAIDED RIVER BIRD PROTECTION'.
- All tracking tunnels removed and brought back to the depot during trap redeployment.

The redeployment phase occurred in January and February 2024. This was later than originally planned due to consultation and operational planning taking longer than anticipated, as well as the need to ensure redeployment was done properly to set the network up well for future seasons.

For the period 2023/2024, the following catches were recorded: 42 stoats, 18 ferrets, 34 weasels, 135 feral cats, 78 possums, 107 rats, and 513 hedgehogs = **Total 927 catches**.

Willow control

Crack willow infestation is an increasing problem in the Lake Coleridge catchment.

CHET's priority area for willow eradication is Lake Selfe - ECan produced a 'Restoration Plan' which enabled ground-based willow control to start.



CHET engaged Norton Contracting to undertake stage 1 of the willow control work at Lake Selfe during the 2024 winter (the willow control work needs to be undertaken outside the Grebe nesting season).

This work was very successful and thanks to Glenthorne Station who generously provided accommodation to the contractor. Glenthorne also carried out willow control work between Lakes Henrietta and Selfe and this assists with the overall eradication plan underway.

General weed control

The Trust has taken a 'catchment' view in regard to weed control in the Lake Coleridge/Harper Road area. This means than rather than address specific weeds in specific areas, the view is to manage weeds within the catchment and take a systematic approach to this. CHET funding is assisting with the following weed control initiatives:

- Willows at Lake Selfe.
- Willows/woody pest species along the Ryton River to Lake Coleridge.
- Willows within the Scamander Swamp.
- Willows/woody pest species along the Acheron River from lake Lyndon to the weir.

Australasian Crested Grebe nesting platform

Floating platforms for Crested Grebes have been successful in Wanaka by providing safer nesting sites. The platforms could offer the same benefits in our catchment – particularly better protection from mammalian predators and from changing lake levels.

The CHET Coordinator refurbished the platform, and it was put in the same location in the sheltered harbour outside the Murchison baches at the south-east end of Lake Coleridge. Signs informing people who see it what it is for will be erected nearby. It is easily seen from Te Araroa's Lake Hill Track.

No Grebes have yet to nest on the platform so modifications/improvements will be undertaken to try and address this.

Eel protection

Manawa Energy are running a Tuna Heke pilot with NIWA this migration season (netting and releasing migrating eels as there is no clear pathway out of lake Coleridge for them). More information will follow following the initial pilot.

New CHET Grants process

CHET Trustees established a new process for issuing grants this year. CHET's Trust Deed already clearly guides funding decisions and allows for bulk sums to be awarded to outside bids. But CHET now has a very clear framework for applicants who are interested in applying for grants. It will also enable easier promotion by CHET of its funding for environmental protection work in the catchment.



Events attended

- Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy stakeholder workshop.
- Webinar – *The Future of Conservation Land*.
- 12-month reviews of Rakaia River Weeds and Pest Management Strategies.

CHET Trustee Representatives

Below are the people who represented Trustee organisations during the 2023-24 year:

- Selwyn District Council - Councilor Bob Mugford (Chairperson)
- Manawa Energy –Ryan Kane
- Department of Conservation – Ronan Grew
- Landowners – Rebecca Rose
- Fish & Game – Matthew Garrick
- Forest & Bird – Donna Field
- CHET Coordinator – Andrew Welsh
- CHET Secretary – Judith Pascoe

Thank you to farm managers and volunteers

Along with generous ongoing support from landowners and farm managers, several individuals voluntarily help with trapping and have done so for many years. Special thanks for this ongoing voluntary work to Rosalie Snoyink, David Anderson, Brian Lancaster and David Murchison.

Thank you to the farm managers and owners, local authority representatives and environmental professionals that the Trust has worked and engaged with. Your views, advice and consideration are much appreciated.

For more information:

Coleridge Habitat Enhancement Trust webpage:

www.lakecoleridge.co.nz/habitat-enhancement.html

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