

# CANTERBURY

## NEWSLETTER, MARCH 2019

### Wildlands Christchurch latest news

**Des Smith** is currently developing an Avian Monitoring and Management Plan for University of Canterbury's UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle or drone) research site, on Kaitorete Spit. This plan aims to prevent UAVs disturbing birds using the Spit. Des is also developing the scoping study and strategy for the Pest Free Banks Peninsula 2050. Des has recently been assisting Rachel McClellan (Wildlands Wellington Office) with development of a King Shag Research Plan, which describes methods for assessing how king shags interact with mussel farms in the Marlborough Sounds.

**Melissa Hutchison** and **Brian Patrick** have continued their ongoing work on the Sumner Road Re-opening Project, which involves assisting Christchurch City Council (CCC) and lead contractor McConnell Dowell with implementation of the Ecological Management Plan for the project.

Melissa has been working closely with a CCC landscape architect to develop planting plans with multiple purposes (rock-fall arrest, remediation of disturbed sites, and ecological restoration), monitoring of At Risk plants, and supervising planting contractors. Earlier in the year Melissa carried out an ecological assessment of Te Kinga near Lake Brunner for Department of Conservation, as part of a community-initiated pest control programme. Melissa, Peter, and Melanie are currently developing a plan for Department of Conservation to plant 200,000 trees at Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere as part of the Government's One Billion Trees programme.



The new species of *Aspilapterix* first found on *Teucrium* in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.



Canterbury mudfish

### Taniwha ecological restoration

An ecological restoration plan has been developed by **Peter Heenan** for a limestone bluff and valley system with Maori rock art on limestone near Opihi in South Canterbury. The site is well-known for the Taniwha rock art, but the indigenous vegetation is degraded with remnant tī kōuka and kōwhai, plus a few other woody species persisting around the limestone bluff edges.

In September our Christchurch Restoration Team planted 3,400 plants in the wetland between the bluffs, on the dry sunny north facing slopes, and the damper, shaded south facing slopes. Natural springs in the area provide a year round supply of moisture. The planting involved volunteers from Department of Conservation and Ngāi Tahu Māori Rock Art Trust.

### A New Zealand First!

The Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens and City Council combined to fund an insect survey, concentrating on the butterflies and moths, of the city's botanic gardens following **Brian Patrick's** surprising discovery of a brand new moth attached to *Teucrium parvifolium* during a lunchtime walk in the gardens. The insect survey of the gardens, a New Zealand first for a botanic garden, found 132 insect species with some surprises of uncommon species.

In another New Zealand first, six specialist moth species have been translocated from the closest natural population to plantings of the Canterbury endemic tree daisy *Olearia adenocarpa* at two locations - Rakaia Island and West Melton. This ground-breaking experimental management was funded by Environment Canterbury.

### Fish relocation success

**Helen McCaughan** has captured and relocated nearly 4,500 fish from waterways in Canterbury during construction works. Individuals from six different species have been moved, including the Threatened Nationally Critical Canterbury mudfish. She has really enjoyed working with construction crews, showing them some of our special creatures and why relocation needs to be done.

This work developed into co-presenting with Downer New Zealand to environmental industry groups, about how fish relocation work can be better integrated into projects. Helen has also been assisting the Department of Conservation by training staff to carry out pest fish surveillance.

Beyond her freshwater work she has arranged revegetation at a couple of construction sites, using biodegradable cardboard plant guards instead of the plastic ones.

Wildlands: providing outstanding ecological services to sustain and improve our environments



## Meet our newest team member

Melanie Lapointe has recently joined Wildlands as an Ecologist. Originally from Canada, she moved to New Zealand in 2017. In 2008, she obtained a MSc degree in biological sciences for her studies on underplanting techniques to restore disturbed and browsed deciduous forests. Since completing her Masters, Melanie has worked as an ecological consultant in Canada on a wide range of projects. Melanie has more than 10 years of experience in vegetation surveys, habitat restoration, and ecological assessments. Melanie is very interested in habitat and ecosystem restoration and invasive species management and fascinated by New Zealand's unique ecology.

## WHY WILDLANDS?

- Expert technical knowledge of ecology, habitats, flora, and fauna.
- Excellent communication of relevant, accurate information.
- Recognition of the needs of people and the environment.
- Effective solutions, credible advice.
- Extensive experience across all habitats.
- Collaboration and relationships with a wide range of organisations and groups.
- Impartiality.
- Friendly, approachable staff.

## OUR SERVICES:

- Freshwater and terrestrial ecological surveys.
- Assessment of environmental effects and solutions.
- Ecological restoration and implementation plans.
- Identification of mitigation options.
- Geospatial representation and analysis.
- Plant, bird, lizard, bat, and terrestrial and aquatic invertebrate survey, assessment and monitoring.
- Pest animal and weed impact assessments and management.
- RMA Section 6 (c) significance assessments.
- Threatened plant and fauna management.
- Council and Environment Court hearings.
- Statistical analysis.

## THE CHRISTCHURCH TEAM



**Des Smith** – Principal Fauna Ecologist, Christchurch Manager (PhD Zoology)

**Specialist Skills:** Wildlife management, pest management and ecology, threatened fauna management and ecology, fauna surveys, pest mammal monitoring and mitigation, data analysis.  
[des.smith@wildlands.co.nz](mailto:des.smith@wildlands.co.nz)



**Brian Patrick** - Senior Ecologist

**Specialist Skills:** Expertise covering 14 orders of insects including freshwater groups, insect-plant interactions, vegetation surveys, systematics of butterflies and moths, biogeography, restoration and monitoring of invertebrate habitat, MCI scores for waterbodies, hearings.  
[brian.patrick@wildlands.co.nz](mailto:brian.patrick@wildlands.co.nz)



**Melissa Hutchison** - Senior Ecologist (PhD Ecology)

**Specialist Skills:** Vegetation surveys, significance assessments, restoration and management plans, threatened plant monitoring, weed surveillance and management, pest impact assessments, cost-benefit analyses, permanent plots.  
[melissa.hutchison@wildlands.co.nz](mailto:melissa.hutchison@wildlands.co.nz)



**Helen McCaughan** – Freshwater Ecologist/Restoration Specialist (MSc Biology)

**Specialist Skills:** Freshwater ecology, invasive fish control and monitoring, native fish monitoring, environmental education, weed control and monitoring, animal pest control and monitoring, habitat restoration.  
[helen.mccaughan@wildlands.co.nz](mailto:helen.mccaughan@wildlands.co.nz)



**Peter Heenan** – Principal Botanist (PhD Botany)

**Specialist Skills:** Indigenous and naturalised flora, vegetation surveys, habitat restoration and management plans, threatened species survey and management, weed assessment and eradication, plant systematics, biogeography.  
[peter.heenan@wildlands.co.nz](mailto:peter.heenan@wildlands.co.nz)



**Melanie Lapointe** – Ecologist (MSc Biology)

**Specialist Skills:** Vegetation surveys, wetland creation and restoration, habitat restoration, weed surveillance and management, herpetofauna surveys.  
[melanie.lapointe@wildlands.co.nz](mailto:melanie.lapointe@wildlands.co.nz)