

Gorge Gazette - April 2023

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and streams



Abbreviations:

WCC	Wellington City Council	OHS	Onslow Historical Society
GW	Greater Wellington Regional Council	WW	Wellington Water
TPG	Trelissick Park Group	CVNZ	Conservation Volunteers New Zealand

A montbretia conundrum



In summer our stream banks are transformed to orange splendour. Wordsworth would have had a field day.

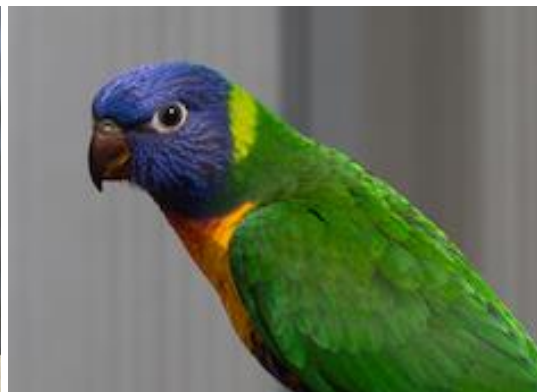
However, montbretia corms and rhizomes multiply rapidly and it also grows from fragments. Normally we dig out the corms to take them to the landfill, along with the flowers.

But excavation right next to the stream exposes the bank to erosion. It would be a huge job to immediately replace all the removed montbretia

Crocsmia x crocosmiiflora with deep-rooted natives. Also, the stream bank would suffer from erosion until the natives take hold.

A reprieve for streamside montbretia... But see [Streambank Bioengineering Guide](#) for protection ideas.

Any sightings?



Australian king parrot

Rainbow lorikeet

Eastern rosella

The 'Conversation' of 25 January refers to the pet trade spurring a wave of companion bird imports. Some of these are leading to the escape or even

deliberate release of new bird species into the wild. See [escaped-pet-parrot threats](#).

A snippet

Our January *Gorge Gazette* referred to a trout survey in Kaiwharawhara Stream, because improving fish passage might introduce a trout problem upstream. Naively we envisaged

someone fishing for trout. But no! GW's *Jakob Lechner* advises that they leave identifying traces in the water, captured by DNA sampling.

Science knows no bounds.

From the rat-world

Bill Hester advises that our rats consumed about 150 kg of block bait since 2016. He says an

interesting theory is that poisoned rats help keep down stoats as well as any intruding possums.

Kaka fledgling



Andrew Cutler reports hearing squawking by the stream near bridge 7. A kaka fledgling was climbing in the rangiora above the stream. 'Ma or Pa was up in the trees calling, and over five minutes it climbed and struggled its way up the scrub. It was definitely a fledgling by the white ring around its eye. Proof of breeding in the valley for everyone to celebrate! And to cap things off, a large tuna was swimming right underneath.'

For the first week after leaving the nest kaka fledglings cannot fly. Curious off-leash dogs are a big worry. Hopefully they are too enthralled by the stream to be distracted.



Photo: Sciencelearn.org.nz

The festoons of Ngaio Gorge Road

Patient motorists, queuing at the upper traffic lights, are rewarded by looking aloft at the wonderful floral displays of old man's beard. This emanates from the road reserve below the properties above. TPG is about to deal with the

What on earth is the hyporheic zone?

Our past newsletters are awash with stormwater problems. We supported the submission on the WW Draft Stormwater Management Strategy lodged by Cat Ayres of Zealandia's Sanctuary to Sea project. See Appendix for what we said.

Cat subsequently referred to an [interview with Erica Gies](#) on RNZ about her book 'Water always wins'. This looks at the concept of slow water and how to prevent drought and flooding, including the influence of the hyporheic zone under and beside the streambed.

More snippets

Blue tradescantia – To be avoided: it has just been sprayed.

Wadestown Fair – Crowded on a perfect day. TPG's display: often visited.

\$500 donation from The Hugo Group - Donated to TPG following a talk to the Hugo Group's members by MP Nicola Willis. She kindly nominated us as recipient. We are now considering spending options.

A seat at the south end of bridge 7 – Coming soon. More details in the next edition.

more accessible outbreaks, in consultation with the landowners and [ombfree.nz](#).

Angus Napier has recorded the spread of seedlings below the road into the park on [inaturalist.org](#). Another murdering job...

In a world-first example in Seattle, it was found that by reinstating the hyporheic zone in an urban stream it no longer flooded, as water was moving underground, the biodiversity increased, and the pollutants were reduced significantly. More information on that project is [here](#).

She thinks it could have exciting longer-term inspiration for actions from Trelissick Park down into the lower catchment, beset by flooding and scouring.

The coming of the corporates



Upper photo: from Cogo, <https://www.cogo.co.nz>, recruited by Cat Ayres (second from right) of Zealandia's Sanctuary to Sea project. She is leaving for the UK in May – our best wishes to her.

Clearing tradescantia upstream of bridge 7 is not very exciting, but they worked with great enthusiasm, enjoying the break away from the office on a beautiful day.

Lower photo: from Axenic <https://www.axenic.co.nz>, recruited by Ann Thomson of Volunteer Wellington. Vast quantities of tradescantia were cleared by this amazing team below entrance 3 and near bridge 2.



See our Facebook page for more group photos:

8 February: CVNZ, after releasing weeds and collecting rubbish from around the plantings below the Oban Street houses, hosted by *Angus Napier*.

There is much more restoration needed for this slope, right down to Kaiwharawhara Stream.

Trelissick Park history

Our website 'History' page provides links to the two booklets we wrote in conjunction with OHS: *The History of Trelissick Park Group 1991-2013*. The first booklet also covers fascinating earlier

A donation - looking for suggestions

We have just received a 'reasonably large' donation. *Jonathan Anderson* is thinking of a 400 m² tōtara/mataī grove on the south flat upstream of bridge 7 or repairing the historic stone walls. What else?

26 February: Wellington Interfaith Group, who cleared around the 51 trees to commemorate the mosque shooting victims. The area is next to Kaiwharawhara Stream down from bridge 6.

Some trees suffered from the boggy conditions and stream bank erosion. Kahikatea to replace them are coming from WCC in May.

history from 1842 up to the 1980s. Hard copies of these are available from OHS at \$20 for the two at 86 Khandallah Road – open on Sunday afternoons.

Northern rātā

Metrosideros robusta is an epiphyte, but those supplied to us have been grown from seed, eventually to become 25-40 m tall. The brilliant red flowers appear in profusion from November to January (but not always).

doc.govt.nz says, 'Native birds such as the tūī, bellbird and kākā all benefit from the presence of



rātā trees in the forest. Native bees, honey bees, bats and lizards also feed on the flower nectar. Old trees provide potential roosts for bats.

'All rātā species are currently listed as *Threatened* partly due to the potential threat from myrtle rust.'

The one in the photo is next to the road reserve at the lower end of Hanover Street, just down from entrance 1, thriving in full sunshine.

There are three smaller ones looking healthy above the stream bank upstream of bridge 2.

Jonathan Anderson says there is one above the lower sewer tunnel and two of the three rātā in the lower valley beside the curving meadow flowered this year. A small tree on the sunny side of Wightwick's Field flowered heavily for the second year running.



inaturalist.nz

Introduced Wasps – Debbie Hawker (WCC)

Why are they a problem?

Wasps cause problems by competing with our native nectar feeding species (such as hihi/stitch bird, korimako/bellbird, and tūī) as well by preying on our native invertebrates. Wasps have even been shown to predate on young chicks! Zealandia have lost several hihi chicks due to invasive wasps.

Wasps can fly up to 4 km from their nests in search of food. This means that a wasp feeding in Zealandia could be nesting as far away as Te Ahumairangi, Mt Victoria, Makara Peak, and Te Kopahou.

This year, a large proportion of the wasp nests found in Wellington have been in the areas surrounding Zealandia. To control these nests and protect our local wildlife, we would like to install some Vespex bait lines in this area.

Vespex baiting

This runs for two or three months each year. It involves monitoring, then placing bait in the bait stations and removing the remaining bait a week later. Monitoring of the wasp behaviour is to assess the proportion of wasps consuming protein. This is done by placing dishes of tuna out, watching for an hour (once per week during Feb/March weather permitting) and counting the number of wasps feeding at the dishes.

Once we see enough wasps feeding on the protein then we know it's time to put out the (protein based) bait. It is placed in bait stations, left for a week, and then remaining bait is retrieved. The wasps take it back to the nest, feed it to the larvae, and the nest is wiped out almost overnight.

Contacts

CVNZ are managing the Wasp Wipeout project in Wellington. So, if you are keen to help with Vespex baiting (and/or the monitoring) please email *Miranda* and *Joe* at waspwipeout@cvnz.org.nz. If you have any questions, also feel free to contact *Debbie* at WCC: debbie.hawker@wcc.govt.nz.

More information

[Wasp Wipeout: buzz off for good \(Stuff\)](#)

[Wasp Wipeout: regional partners \(DoC\)](#)

[Volunteer for Wasp Wipeout: \(DoC\)](#)

[Volunteering for Wasp Wipeout \(Stuff\)](#)

[Wasp Wipeout: why some take bait \(Stuff\)](#)



PS: TPG's *Jenny Lewis* has volunteered to do some wasp monitoring.

What's in store for planting season?

Marilyn Hester's Trelissick Crescent verge - looking fabulous. Soon to be enhanced with more grasses.

Waikowhai Street verge north of the park entrance - by TPG working bees.

Upstream of the magazine building – surely 100-200 plants will fit there. We hope the 2020 mulch heap there can be reincarnated.

Canopy tree infill – Includes ten from our WCC allocation (tōtara and kahikatea), two large tōtara from *Flo de Ruiter* (see photo) and more from WCC

ordered by *Jonathan Anderson*. He says, 'After reading Philip Simpson's 'Totara' I've been inspired to try to recreate a tōtara dominated forest on the river flats in Trelissick Park. While limited in area it is prime habitat of fertile alluvial soils (or similar man-made deposits below the gorge), good drainage and high light levels. It's not quite the river terraces of the Hutt Valley but there is enough ground to grow a few good stands of tall trees.'

Contacts

trelissickgroup@gmail.com

[Trelissick Park Group website](#)

[Trelissick Park Group | Facebook](#)

WCC: (04) 499 4444 or [WCC Fix-It](#)

GW pollution hotline: 0800 496 734

Appendix

TPG comments on WW Draft Stormwater Management Strategy

- Tunnel daylighting possibilities along Korimako Stream (although expensive/disruptive)
- Infill planting and Churchill Reserve restoration
- Vegetated swales, filter strips, infill trenches, sand filters, treepits/planter boxes, and pervious pavements
- Community mobilisation, volunteering, public education and clever communication
- More emphasis on flooding/scour/sediment control, which also affects water quality
- Need for more than stormwater run-off neutrality in new developments, particularly for infill housing.

TPG are concerned that in a few decades the catchment will be all houses and no bush.

Thanks to all our volunteers, supporters, WCC staff and weed control contractor Kaitiaki o Ngahere.

Membership drawn from Highland Park Progressive Association Inc., Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents' Association Inc., Onslow Historical Society Inc., Private Landowners' Group, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Inc. (Wellington Branch), Wellington Botanical Society Inc., Wadestown Residents' Association.

