

5. CORRESPONDENCE

5.1 STUDY OF CATS BEHAVIOUR AND IMPACTS ON WILDLIFE AT TRAVIS WETLAND

The following letter was received from Shelley Morgan requesting financial assistance with her current study:

"I am in the second year of undertaking a Master of Science degree at Lincoln University. My thesis research is an investigation on the movements and hunting activities of domestic cats at Travis Wetland Nature Heritage Park in Burwood, Christchurch.

This study has been in part funded by the Christchurch City Council who has contributed with the purchase of equipment and an assistant needed for the study. Unfortunately, despite this help, unexpected changes in my student allowance entitlements mean that at present I do not have sufficient funds to complete this project.

I am, therefore, writing to ask if it might be possible for you to provide some financial support to assist in completing my thesis.

With population pressure increasing on our urban landscape there is a real need to conserve and restore native areas such as Travis Wetland within our city boundaries. Travis Wetland is considered as an asset, as it represents an ecosystem not only scarce in Christchurch and New Zealand, but globally as wetlands are now the most endangered habitats in the world.

Travis Wetland is significant to Canterbury as the largest remnant wetland left in the region, supporting 77% of all native wetland bird species that occur in lowland Canterbury (Crossland 1996). Unfortunately overseas research has shown that in urban areas, wildlife populations in remnant habitats like Travis Wetland are likely to be at risk of depredation by domestic cats. It is therefore important that any potential risk domestic cats may have on Travis Wetland wildlife be assessed.

To assess the risk, my research involves studying the prey selection of 98 domestic cats living near the wetlands. In addition, the movements of 22 radio-collared cats are being monitored by telemetry to determine their use of the wetlands and increase the little knowledge of domestic cat ecology in New Zealand.

Outputs to data:

- CTV interview March 2000.
- TV3 6 o'clock news interview March 2000.
- Pamphlet summarising prey caught by cats from November 1999 to April 2000.
- Presentation for South Canterbury Forest and Bird August 2000.
- Talk at the New Zealand Animal Companion Council Conference August 2000.
- Presentation for Travis Wetland Trust AGM October.

Funding I need to complete my work

To complete my research at Travis Wetland I require funding for living costs and data collection for the duration of my study. With another 10 months until the completion of my thesis the expiry of my student allowance has made supporting myself and my research difficult. Continuation of current funding by the Christchurch City Council of a radio-tracking assistant is uncertain, due to the end of the assistant's contract in November 2000.

I am therefore seeking funding to cover:

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| 1. | Living costs of \$150 per week until the completion on my thesis in July 2001 | \$6,000 |
| 2. | Radio tracking assistance for 12 hours over 2 weeks in November, December and January \$12 X 36 hrs | \$432 |

Total \$6,432

Any contribution towards this total would be very much appreciated. If there is any possibility that you could contribute to my study, I would be pleased to discuss my work with you in more detail."

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the Board allocate \$432 of Project and Discretionary funds to assist with the costs of the study of cats behaviour at Travis Wetland.

5.2 TRIAL GABION STABILISATION AT WAIROA RESERVE

At the request of the Board, Paul Dickson (Drainage Engineer) has sought comment from the Bexley Residents' Association on the trial gabion stabilisation. The following letter was received from Michael Knight, President of the Association:

"Thank you for your letter of the 14th. I have been able to canvas the opinion of half the members of our committee and know from hearsay the feeling of others. We believe the trial at Wairoa Reserve has worked very well and have no objection to extending the trial further.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment."

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the information be received and passed onto the Lower Avon River Working Party.

5.3 PROPOSED RELOCATION OF MAIREHAU HIGH SCHOOL

The following response has been received from the Minister of Education to the Board's letter informing him of the Board's support, in principle, for the proposed relocation of Mairehau High School to the east of Marshland Road.

"Thank you for your letter of 19 October 2000 concerning the possible relocation of Mairehau High School.

The Ministry of Education is working towards a view on the possible relocation of the school, a process that will include consultation with other local schools and the wider community. As a first step, a meeting is to be arranged between the Ministry, Council and the school's Board of Trustees to discuss not only the community consultation process, but also to explore the potential for any partnerships in terms of such things as joint school/community facilities.

Thank you for informing me of the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board's support for the proposal."

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the information be received.