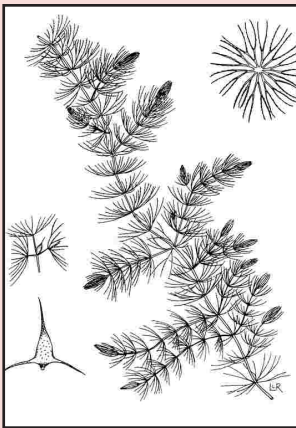


## Waterway weed wars



*Ceratophyllum demersum* -  
Common Hornwort

Environment Canterbury is asking waterway users to keep their boats free of waterweed this summer, as they move around the country.

to prevent the spread of two major waterweeds which have become established in the region - Egeria and Lagarosiphon, Environment Canterbury staff also want boaties' help to stop another threatening weed from becoming established. "The new threat is hornwort," said

Christchurch Biosecurity Team Leader Rob McCaw. "It is already established in Nelson and we are asking for travellers' co-operation in preventing its spread further south. The best way to help us prevent waterweed spread is to check all parts of the boat which are in contact with the water, particularly engines and oars but also trailers, water skis and fishing equipment. Even if the plant appears dry and dead it may still survive and start a new infestation. It only takes a small piece of one plant to grow into a whole new infestation," said Rob.

***If you are unsure about the identity of a water plant, contact a biosecurity officer at Environment Canterbury phone (03) 365-3828 or visit [www.ecan.govt.nz/weeds.html](http://www.ecan.govt.nz/weeds.html)***

## RHD keeps working

RHD (rabbit haemorrhagic disease) continues to have a significant impact on rabbits in Canterbury.

The largest reduction of rabbits has occurred in the region's most rabbit prone area - the Mackenzie, Omarama and Kurow pest districts where spotlight counts remain below 1.7 rabbits per kilometre. The most variable reduction of rabbits is in North Canterbury where traditional control is still needed in many areas. Surveys in isolated areas with high rabbit populations in North Canterbury show that up to 80% are immune to RHD. Surveys in the Mackenzie basin show that 10% - 30% of rabbits are immune - a level that has not changed since the surveys began in 1998.

A significant reduction in rabbit numbers in the Ashley and Amuri pest districts has happened without traditional control intervention in the past financial year. This information is based on joint research with Landcare Research into the effects of RHD on rabbits at seven sites in Canterbury. The results have been published in the report "Epidemiology of Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD) in New Zealand, 1997-2001".

***For more information about the report please contact Graham Sullivan, Biosecurity Manager on (03) 353-9009 extn 8835 or (03) 688-9069 extn 8835.***

## Outstanding contribution award to Ron Paulin

Environment Canterbury's former biosecurity manager has moved from land-based work to sea-based activity.

Ron Paulin retired at the end of November. He and his wife Dianne will spend the next two years in Niue working for VSA (Volunteer Service Abroad). Ron will help with the management of coastal fisheries, and Dianne will teach mathematics. "It's a bit of a change in direction", said Ron, "after 26 years in the soil conservation field then another ten in the biosecurity area."

Ron has spent about seven years each, working as a soil conservator for catchment boards in Otago, East Cape and South Canterbury. He continued this role when the South Canterbury Catchment Board became part of the Canterbury Regional Council in 1989. Ron became land inspection manager in 1993 - a role which later became known as Biosecurity Manager.

Council Chairman Richard Johnson presented an Outstanding Contribution Award to Ron at the council's November meeting. Both he and Cr Bill Penno, who was Chairman of the South Canterbury Catchment Board for much of Ron's service there in the 1980s, paid tribute to his dedication and the respect in which he was held throughout the region.

Ron's contributions to managing wind erosion, high country land use, rabbit control, and development of the first Regional Pest Management Strategy were particularly noted by the Council. Cr Penno said it is no exaggeration to say that Ron truly has left his mark on the landscape. Ron said he is looking forward to putting his resource management skills to good use in a different field.



*Ron Paulin receives his award from Chairman Richard Johnson and Cr Bill Penno*

## The purple peril - purple loosestrife

One of the worst environmental and agricultural weeds in the United States - purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) has become a pest in parts of New Zealand, and pest control agencies in Canterbury are out to make sure it doesn't become permanently established in the region.

Environment Canterbury is to undertake a small-scale management programme to eradicate this unwanted organism in partnership with the Department of Conservation, Christchurch City Council, Timaru District Council and Ngai Tahu. Environment Canterbury approved the programme, to be run over

the next three years, after hearing that it is considered technically feasible that purple loosestrife can be eradicated from the Canterbury region within three years.

This financial year the focus of the eradication programme - called the "Purple Peril Campaign" - is on South Canterbury. Newspaper and magazine articles and displays will promote public awareness of the plant and encourage people to report sightings. It is present in very few places in the wild in Canterbury, but as it has traditionally been planted as a garden perennial it is likely to be in some gardens. Purple loosestrife grows up to three metres tall. Each plant has many stems, which have a square cross-section. Over summer, long

spikes of pink-purple flowers appear before the stems die-off in winter. Purple loosestrife thrives in damp places and can form dense infestations beside rivers and ponds, producing millions of seeds, destroying habitats and blocking access.

**If you would like more information on purple loosestrife and how to identify it please contact Biosecurity Team Leader Rob McCaw on (03) 353-9009 extn 7262.**



## Pest control help for communities - did you know?

Environment Canterbury assists self-help community and land occupier groups to destroy possums, mustelids, feral cats, feral deer, feral goats, feral pigs and wasps. Among the forms of help are technical advice, development of work programmes, mapping and global positioning technology, supervision and equipment.

Financial grants are not part of the assistance. Priority for help depends on the threat posed by pests and the benefits to biodiversity from their control, as well as commitment from the community.

## Last rooks - the persistent few

Rooks in the region now number just 21, but getting rid of the last few is proving to be quite a challenge for Environment Canterbury's pest management team. Despite no rook chicks apparently being born in Canterbury in the last five years, a new colony in Waikari district has been found.

The rookery near Waikari, established in the 2001/02 year by rooks from outside Canterbury, contains five birds. Two nests were built during the spring but were destroyed by north-westerly gales. The birds did not re-nest. There have been no rooks on Banks Peninsula for three years. Nests built by a new group of rooks in Kaikoura were poisoned, resulting in the death of the chicks and one adult bird. The small population of birds in Ashburton and the Selwyn/Plains districts hasn't changed significantly.

## Mackenzie - fifth year without control

For the fifth year in a row, no rabbit control work using 1080 poison was needed in the Mackenzie basin. This represents an estimated saving of over \$1.5 million to local landholders. As well as the financial benefit, there are also production and ecological benefits, but the downside is that the numbers of woody weeds, hares and possums are rising.

**For more information on these three articles please contact Graham Sullivan, Biosecurity Manager on (03) 353-9009 extn 8835 or (03) 688-9069 extn 8835.**

## Wallabies on high

Canterbury's wallaby population is on the rise.

Although confining wallabies to the area bounded by the Waitaki and Rangitata Rivers and east of the Tekapo River has been reasonably successful, Environment Canterbury's Biosecurity Manager Graham Sullivan says the population growth within the containment area is alarming.

"Environment Canterbury carried out inspections on 30 properties in the wallaby containment area. Ten properties had wallaby densities that exceeded the requirements. In all but one of these cases the land occupiers agreed to control work being carried out to reduce numbers. The number of properties and the area containing wallaby densities approaching the maximum level has increased significantly," Graham said.

There have been five reports of wallabies outside the containment area. These were at Danseys Pass, Lindis Pass, near Kurow, at Killermont Station (near Omarama) and on the Pukaki-Mt Cook highway. The Pukaki-Mt Cook sighting has been confirmed.

Land occupiers are responsible for the controlling wallabies in the containment area, and outside this area Environment Canterbury responds to sightings.

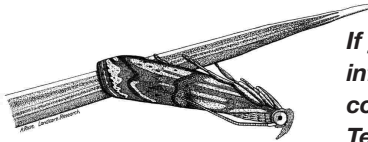
**For more information about wallaby control please contact Graham Sullivan, Biosecurity Manager on (03) 353-9009 extn 8835 or (03) 688-9069 extn 8835.**

# Gorse colonial hard shoot moth

The first public collection and distribution of the gorse colonial hard shoot moth happened in October last year. Populations of the biocontrol agent have built up sufficiently to allow a field day for farmers to collect them from the mass-rearing site at Barnett Park in Christchurch, for redistribution on their properties. The caterpillars have now been released from Kaikoura to South Canterbury.

Colonial hard shoot caterpillars spin fine webs close to gorse stems, often at the base of current growth. The webs are closer-in to the gorse stem and therefore less visible, than the very common gorse spider mite web. The webs have balls of sawdust-coloured droppings (frass) inside, rather than red spider mites. A close look may also reveal green and brown striped caterpillars inside the web.

The caterpillars feed on spines, leaves, buds, shoots and flowers, causing the foliage around the web to turn brown and die. The damage is most obvious in spring.



**If you would like more information please contact Biosecurity Team Leader Rob McCaw on (03) 353-9009 extn 7262.**

Colonial hard shoot moth

# Ant wars

This summer Environment Canterbury will rejoin its allies, the Christchurch City Council and the Department of Conservation to continue the war against an unwanted migrant from South America - the Argentine ant (*Linepithma humile*). This invader is a threat to Canterbury's biodiversity, and left unchecked, will become a major household and garden pest.

Last summer, Environment Canterbury worked with the Christchurch City Council and the Department of Conservation as part of a nationwide programme to test a new ant bait at two sites in Christchurch: near Riccarton Bush, and in an industrial area of Sockburn. The bait, which does not appear to have any adverse effects on humans, pets or bees was successful in killing most of the Argentine ants, as well as the similar-looking Darwin's ants. This summer Environment Canterbury will re-bait the two known sites, and investigate and control any other Argentine ant infestations that may show up.

It is important that Argentine ants are not confused with other ants. Argentine ants are a translucent honey-brown colour and about 2-3mm long. They are not black ants, or the small Darwin's ants, which give off a strong odour when squashed. On warm days Argentine ants can be seen walking quickly in trails, about 2-3 ants wide, on flat surfaces near the ground, like paths, kerbs and fence palings.

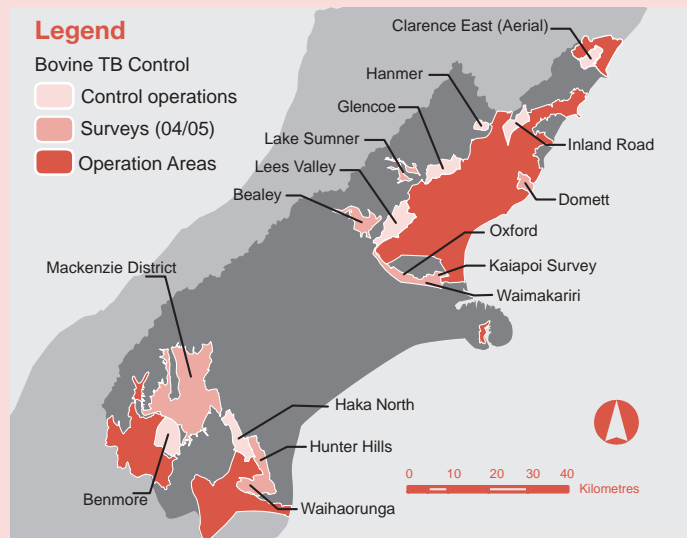
**If you see something suspicious, please contact Graham Sullivan, Biosecurity Manager on (03) 353-9009 extn 8835 or (03) 688-9069 extn 8835 or visit: [www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/pests-diseases/animals/argentine-ant](http://www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/pests-diseases/animals/argentine-ant)**

# Bovine Tb update

**Hunters Hills operation fast-tracked to 2003-04 financial year.**

Following two herd breakdowns in the Waimate District last year a "buffer" operation has been initiated to start in March 2004.

There is no conclusive evidence of Vector infection in the district. However due to the close proximity to the Hakataramea Valley, where there have been herd breakdowns over a number of years, this operation has been instigated to protect the large numbers of herds present on the eastern plains. Domett operation in north Canterbury (see map) has also been bought forward to this financial year due to a budget surplus. Twenty possum control operations have been completed for the year so far (2003/04) and another four operations are underway. Ferret control is due to start in January 2004. Environment Canterbury is awaiting approval from the Animal Health Board (AHB) of its plans for control operations in the 2004/05 year. Surveys to test vectors for signs of Tb for this financial year will be carried out in the upper catchments of the Waimakariri and Hurunui rivers, Lake Sumner, Waimakariri South (plains), Waihaorunga (South Canterbury), Oxford/Kaiapoi, and the Hanmer and Mackenzie Basins.



## Bovine Tb Infected herds June 2003

Vector Risk Area	Cattle	Deer	Total
Kaikoura	7		7
Conway-Waiiau	7	2	9
Waiiau-Hurunui	7		7
Hurunui-Waipara	8	10	18
Waipara-Ashley	4	1	5
Ashley-Waimakariri	1	1	2
Banks Peninsula	1	0	1
Tai Tapu	0	0	0
Mackenzie Basin	0	0	0
Upper Waitaki	4	1	5
			54
Vector Free Area	Cattle	Deer	Total
	6	1	7
Total	45	16	61

## Results of 2002-2003 surveys:

Mackenzie	2 positive ferrets
Waihaorunga	All clear
Leeston	All clear
South Waimakariri	All clear
Oxford/Kaiapoi	All clear
Upper Waiiau	2 positive ferrets
Glencoe	3 positive pigs, 1 positive ferret

**For more information please contact Environment Canterbury's Bovine Tb and Contracts Manager, Kevin Gallagher on (03) 353-9009 extn 7320.**

## Nassella tussock checks underway

Environment Canterbury's biosecurity staff in North Canterbury have carried out nassella tussock inspections on over 400 properties. Biosecurity team leader Laurence Smith said the results were looking a lot better than last year. "There has been some really great work done by land occupiers and contractors this year." A combination of aerial and ground-based checks is carried-out prior to the early summer season when nassella tussock begins to seed.

*For more information please contact Northern Area Biosecurity Team Leader, Laurence Smith in Amberley on (03) 314-8014 or (03) 353-9009 extn 9581.*

## Look out for giant buttercups

Farmers in North Canterbury are being advised to keep a lookout for a plant known as giant buttercup, which has become a major problem in some dairying areas in the North Island. While the plant, which has yellow flowers about the size of a daisy, is not established in the South Island, there is concern that some landowners may not recognise that it has the potential to become a problem.

*For more information please contact Northern Area Biosecurity Team Leader, Laurence Smith in Amberley on (03) 314-8014 or (03) 353-9009 extn 9581.*

## Pest management liaison committee representatives

Pest management liaison committees in the region advise and work with Environment Canterbury's pest management staff on local pest issues. Here is a list of the chairpersons of pest management liaison committees in the region.

Ashley	Ian Ford	(03) 312-9700
Waikari	Graeme Gibb	(03) 314-3872
Amuri (acting)	Hamish Roxburgh	(03) 315-6049
Hurunui Nassella	Errol Monk	(03) 314-4087
Kaikoura	Bob Todhunter	(03) 575-8681
Ashburton	Robin Bruce	(03) 307-0008
Selwyn	Roger Gilbert	(03) 324-3648
Banks Peninsula	Paul de Latour	(03) 304-8518
Kurow	Peter Reid	(03) 436-0216
South Canterbury	Ian Jefferis	(03) 689-5565

*For more information on the functions of pest management liaison committees please contact Biosecurity Team Leader Rob McCaw (03) 353-9009 extn 7262 or Cr Robert Johnston, Pests and Biosecurity Portfolio Chairman (03) 312-4166 fax (03) 312-3085.*

## Pest management people at Environment Canterbury

**Pest Portfolio Chairman:** Cr Robert Johnston, phone (03) 312-4166, fax (03) 312-3085. Robert is also a member of the Regional Animal Health Advisory Committee and a director of Target Pest Enterprises.

**Portfolio Manager, Biosecurity / Pest Management:** Rob Phillips is responsible for co-ordinating overall portfolio activities including advising council and ensuring the achievement of outputs and outcomes.

**Planning and policy formulation:** Christchurch-based Senior Resource Management Planner Ray Maw is responsible for policy advice on biosecurity issues.

**Bovine Tb:** Kevin Gallagher is the Bovine Tb and Contracts Manager. He is responsible for managing the Tb vector control programme as part of the national pest management strategy within Canterbury. He is based at the Christchurch office, (03) 353-9009 extn 7320.

**Biosecurity Manager:** Responsible for implementing the regional pest management strategy. The new Biosecurity Manager is Graham Sullivan. Phone (03) 688-9069 extn 8835.

**The biosecurity section is organised into three teams:** The Northern Area Team Leader is Laurence Smith in **Amberley**. Amberley Biosecurity Officers are Terry Charles, Lance Smith, Peter Morgan and Jan Crooks, (03) 314-8014.

**Cheviot** Biosecurity Officers are Noel Crump and Tom Kirkwood, (03) 319-8614.

The **Kaikoura** Biosecurity Officer is Peter Adams (duties combined with river engineering), (03) 319-5781.

The Central Area Team Leader is Rob McCaw in **Christchurch**.

Christchurch Biosecurity Officers are Jenny Williams, Stephen Brown and John Thacker, (03) 365-3828.

The **Darfield** Biosecurity Officer is Errol Barnes, (03) 318-8155.

The **Little River** Biosecurity Officer is Jock Bulman, (03) 325-1103.

The Southern Team Leader position in **Timaru** is currently vacant. Timaru Biosecurity Officers are Terry Broughton, Phil Crotty and Brent Glentworth, (03) 688-9069.

Target Pest Enterprises Ltd is an Environment Canterbury owned company that provides pest control services throughout the Canterbury region. Paul Ash is its General Manager, (03) 353-9001 (Christchurch).

### Pay us an e-visit

Copies of this and past issues of this newsletter are available on Environment Canterbury's website at [www.ecan.govt.nz](http://www.ecan.govt.nz). If you would like to see more information on this site about animal and plant pest management, please phone Portfolio Manager, Biosecurity/Pest Management, Rob Phillips on (03) 353-9009 ext 7069.

[www.ecan.govt.nz](http://www.ecan.govt.nz)