

MANGERE MATTERS



Pied stilts and bar-tailed godwits take flight from one of the shell-bank roosting areas along the Watercare Coastal Walkway.

The birds return

Spring is the perfect time of year to visit Watercare's picturesque coastal walkway, which is home to one of the world's most significant wading bird sanctuaries.

Come September, wading birds from as far away as Siberia, Mongolia, China and Alaska will embark on their annual migrations to the Manukau Harbour, settling in – among the vulnerable New Zealand dotterel – to the four roosting areas along the Watercare Coastal Walkway.

Some of the foreign visitors, who will fill up on the plentiful crabs, worms and cockles hiding beneath the foreshore, include the greater sand plover (large sand dotterel), eastern curlew, bar-tailed godwit, whimbrel and curlew sandpiper.

It has been more than a decade since the oxidation ponds were removed from the harbour and processes shifted to the land-based Mangere

Wastewater Treatment Plant; this has enabled the restoration of coastal tidal flats and the rehabilitation of some 13 kilometres of coastline.

One of the multiple roles of Watercare operations technician Chris Garton is to maintain the seven-kilometre walkway from Ambury Regional Park to the Otuataua Stonefields.

“A lot of people think of Manukau as a dirty harbour but it's really clean now. I feel that it's part of my job to help people reconnect with this harbour and enjoy the incredible wildlife here.”

More recently, Mr Garton says, there has been a shift in the ecology near the treatment plant discharge point from pollution-tolerant worms to more-pollution-sensitive bivalve molluscs such as cockles and pipi.

“It means the water we discharge is really clean and not causing harm to this beautiful harbour.”

INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

THE
BAR-TAILED
GODWIT
FLIES AN
ASTONISHING

12,000
KILOMETRES

FROM ALASKA
TO BASK IN OUR
SUMMER SUN



VISIT NZBIRDSONLINE.ORG.NZ

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE BIRDS

Ambury Farm Day: Sunday, 4 October 2015

Come along and see us; we'll have a stall where children can make bugs from plasticine and everyone can hydrate with high-quality water from our water tanker.



Pictured above: Watercare engineer Bojan Jovanovic monitors geotechnical investigations on the Manukau Harbour. A series of 120mm-wide boreholes is being drilled 45 metres below the seabed along the proposed tunnel route.

Central Interceptor strategy commended



Over the past two years, Environmental Defence Society executive director and chairman Gary Taylor has been observing Watercare's resource consent application to construct the Central Interceptor. He shares his thoughts:

The Central Interceptor is a new wastewater tunnel proposed to run for 13 kilometres between Western Springs and the Mangere Wastewater Treatment Plant at an average depth of around 30 metres. It was first proposed when I was a director of Watercare in the 2000s.

The existing pipe collects wastewater from more than 25 per cent of the population serviced by the Mangere Wastewater Treatment Plant. It is reaching the end of its life. Growth projections indicate that the pipe will reach full capacity in 10 to 15 years from now. Unless something is done, there will be more wastewater overflows into our harbours.

The overall network has more than 200 emergency overflow points into the Waitemata Harbour and 14 into the north-eastern part of the Manukau. In heavy rain or when there are pumping failures or outages, contaminated wastewater – essentially diluted raw sewage – discharges at these points. This is not good.

So, in addition to conveying wastewater to the treatment plant to remove contaminants, the Central Interceptor will function as a large linear storage tank, helping to manage peak flows by buffering them in the big pipe. This function will reduce overflow volumes by at least 80 per cent.

These factors all led Watercare to conclude that action is required now to make provision for Auckland's growing population and to avoid environmental harm.

But the company has gone further than just the essential improvements. Its strategy includes significant upgrades to the Mangere Wastewater Treatment Plant, the diversion of wastewater from west Auckland to the North Shore wastewater treatment plant and, in conjunction with Auckland Council, environmental enhancement work on the streams into which wastewater overflows have discharged for the past 100 years.

Watercare has considered alternatives to the Central Interceptor, including further separation of stormwater from the system and the construction of separate storage tanks. Watercare's studies of these alternatives indicated that none will provide the benefits of the Central Interceptor. The independent commissioners appointed to hear and determine the consent application agreed with this conclusion.

The willingness of communities and their infrastructure agencies to replace and upgrade their networks in a timely way is crucial to ensuring that we protect and enhance our environment. The Waitemata and Manukau Harbours are resources that are cherished by the people of Auckland and its visitors. This is made possible only by having a world-class collection and treatment system for urban wastewater.

Watercare is to be commended for taking the initiatives it has towards ensuring Auckland achieves its aim of becoming the world's most liveable city.

CENTRAL INTERCEPTOR TIME LINE



TUNNEL FAST FACTS

200 MILLION LITRES
is the approximate total storage capacity

NO MEASURABLE EFFECT ON
Manukau Harbour's water quality

For more information on the Central Interceptor project, visit www.watercare.co.nz and click on 'Work in your area'.

CONTACT US

Mangere Matters is your newsletter. If you would like to talk to us about any stories from this edition or your ideas for future issues, we'd love to hear from you. To be in touch, please phone our communications team on (09) 442 2222 or email info@water.co.nz

