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## Westmere Weekend Fish Tragedy



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### Westmere Weekend Fish Tragedy

**8 March 2004**

ARC pollution control officers pulled out more than 40 banded kokopu (native trout) and 10 eels from a Westmere stream this morning, after concrete slurry burned their gills causing them to suffocate to death.

Pollution control officer Allan Wright was called to Notley Street on the Motions Creek side of Westmere midday on Sunday after local resident Paul Adshead reported what looked like paint in the small stream.

Mr Wright followed the discharge to its source and found highly concentrated concrete slurry from the construction of a retaining wall on a nearby property on Saturday. A channel had been bulldozed from the retaining wall to the stream to drain water from the site.

"Concrete is extremely toxic to fish because it has a high pH," said Mr Wright. "My message to everyone who buys a bag of cement is: make sure no waste water gets into any stormwater drain or waterway. It can mean instant death to local fish."

Even though Motions Creek is pretty degraded, it still has eels and kokopu living in it. "I'd like to thank Mr Adshead for calling the pollution hotline. While we have a tragedy with the eels and kokopu that have died, it was thanks to Paul's help that we've managed to stop more pollution occurring," said Mr Wright.

The builders of the retaining wall were "extremely remorseful" when they found out what impact their actions had caused, said Mr Wright. They assisted the ARC to clean up and will have to cover the costs.

The ARC has contacted many cement retailers and concrete companies to request that they provide information to all of their customers about how to dispose of concrete slurry safely.

30% of all fish kills in the Auckland region are caused by concrete-related activities. Last August, the hotline found a similar concrete discharge from a retaining wall in Titirangi, and in February 2003, 1000 eels were killed by what is believed to have been concrete slurry in a Pakuranga stream.

"Please call the water pollution hotline if you see anything suspicious in your streams or in roadside drains - phone 377 3107," said Mr Wright.

#### For more information please call

Pollution control officer Allan Wright 366 2000 x 8115  
Communications Jo Mackay 366 2000 x 8114

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