**BRaid Managers report February 2018**

**Braided River Partnership Project**

1. The relationship with Karikaas is now firmly established. While BRaid will continue to facilitate this, ARRG will be the recipient of a percentage to the sales, and so they will continue to directly foster the relationship
2. The application for funding to the Otago Regional Council for Project Makarora was approved.
3. The application for trapping along the Dart River was approved
4. Amuri Jet has been awarded a Bronze Accreditation Award for their support in monitoring birds on the Waiau River. We have also supplied them with marketing material to support their new ‘Wilderness Tour’ featuring braided river birds, and rekindled an ongoing relationship with DOC, with the aim of more direct o-site action including weed clearing. This type of relationship with tour operators on braided rivers was one of the key goals in the Partnership Project.
5. Currently in discussion with Amuri Irrigation (Bianca Sullivan) re potential commercial benefits of the Partnerships Project. Good potential for all parties.
6. No on-farm partnerships this past season as no reports came in to indicate birds were attempting to breed on farms. Very likely this is because weeds were scoured from several rivers following freshes/floods. This highlights an ongoing hurdle with creating and fostering long-term relationships with ‘partners’, as birds may not appear in the same locations from year-to-year so it is more difficult to develop and foster the necessary emotional investments in protecting them.

The 3-year project is in its final year this year. A full report of the outcome will be made available online as well as to the primary funding agencies, DOC and DIA in December 2018.

**Trapping workshops**

The September 28 workshop at Woodend was attended by some 77 people. The primary goal was to create a trapping group to fill in trapping ‘gaps’ between ECan, AARG, and Tuhaitara Coastal Park trapping around the Ashley Rakahuri estuary, with the ultimate goal of fulfilling the necessary requirements to re-introduce Kaki. This was successful insofar as a new trapping group has been formed.

Feedback from the workshop format was so positive, we decided to run a trapping ‘Roadshow’ in February this year. Uptake for this idea was much slower than hoped for, however, in spite of support from Predator Free NZ and DOC. Next trapping workshop will be in Ashburtong, Saturday 24 February.

**Education/outreach/support**

1. Submitted to the **Canterbury Pest Management Strategy on Russell lupins** with the aim of having Russel lupins re-classed from an ‘organism of interest’, to a ‘pest organism’. The CRPMP is being changed to fit with a larger pest/biosecurity framework so the final wording may vary, but the outcome was positive insofar as Russel lupins are now covered by Plan Rule 6.4.22, 6.4.23, and 6.4.24 in the Interim Draft Canterbury Regional Pest Management Plan 2017- 2037 (Nov 2017, page 58-59: **extract attached**.

2. **Rangiora High School River Studies** in October went extremely well, as did a follow up in-school session a few weeks later. They now have a solid baseline of invertebrate sampling on the Ashley River near Cones Road Bridge that they can build on each year to create a long-term monitoring project.

**3. The Flock** there is no intention or capacity to direct the same amount of effort into The Flock as we undertook in the first year, however all of the necessary resources are now available on the website; we continue to offer support to schools and community groups wishing to take up The Flock. The Wild Eyes online educational resources has also adopted the Flock as an online project, and to this end, the Botanical Gardens hosted The Flock during Conservation Week. This is a high profile location and uptake was excellent, so we will definitely look at doing the same again in 2018.

4. **The website** is proving to be key resource, with 40-60 unique views/day, and social media a useful secondary resource for more immediate news, especially news with a short life span. Facebook attached between 350-5,000 views per post, depending on the subject matter. This also garners some international attention (albeit not generally of direct use to BRaid). The 2018 Calendar is up to date – please send me your events so I can add them.

**Correspondence**

1. **Fish & Game:** letter sent 21 December to Otago, Southland and Canterbury reminding them that any recovery operations of fish (in drying rivers) must still take into account potential negative ecological impacts and concurrent legal ramifications, with recommendation how to avoid these, including contact details of local rivercare groups and DOC offices to check for breeding river birds

2. Letter plus certificate sent to **Bernie Calder** thanking him for the $1,000.00 donation towards control of black-backed gulls.

**Matters Arising from previous meeting**

Encroachment of farmland into braided rivers - nothing new since last meeting, but this is ongoing by ECan.

**Awareness signage**

* Coleridge Habitat signs will hopefully be installed early this year
* The template and content for the sign has been made available to DOC for possible (partial) use in Balmoral reserve as one of a series of signs.
* Warning sign provided to DOC Rotorua (attached)
* Currently in discussion with ECan to co-ordinate signs along the Ashely River

**Calicivirus**

Government considering ECan’s application to be released. A decision is due this month.

**Monitoring:**

* Hurunui/Waiau: ongoing discussions with HWZC
* Wilberforce/Harper: to be discussed. Jim Jolly has been asked to quote, but will need to scope the area, first.
* Test drone flight over the BBG colony on the Ashley Rakhuri demonstrated the efficiency of the use of drones to count colony nesting birds. To date, neither black-billed gulls nor black-fronted terns have reacted negatively to the sight or sound of the drone, however a nesting SIPO did react (triggering the proximity alert) once the drone dropped below 60m. The SIPO’s reaction in turn briefly (seconds only) disturbed the nesting BBG. More work with drones is being planned for the 2018-2019 breeding season, and the data will again be made publically available.
* All reports and monitoring sent to me are forwarded to Andy Grant at DOC.

**Bird of the Year**

We aim to promote the Wrybill and will work on a strategy in the coming months

**Managing Southern Black Backed gulls**

Meeting next month with DOC and ECan to determine what role BRaid might take. This is a global problem. Our role may largely be communications with some volunteer co-ordination for collecting dead birds.

Proposed test site: remove small colonies in the upper Waimakariri, as there is sufficient data (bird counts) to test the efficacy.

<http://tearai.kete.net.nz/documents/0000/0000/0069/nest_enc.pdf>

Cages for plovers:

<https://www.friendsofpresquile.on.ca/News/news.inc.php?ID=693&command=miniViewArticle&lang=EN>

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/05/100509202650.htm>

<http://plattebasintimelapse.com/ed/chapter/nests-eggs-chicks/>

<http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-endangered-piping-plover-charadrius-melodus-adult-on-a-nest-in-a-cage-91739171.html>

<https://bioenv.gu.se/english/research/evolutionary-biology-and-systematics/evolutionary-ecology/behavioural-and-population-genetics/dynamics--genetics-and-survival-of-small-populations>