**BRaid Managers report July 2017**

**Braided River Partnership Project**

A few potential new partners, but nothing definite at this stage. Now working to consolidate and reinforce existing partnerships, continue outreach, education, and support, and closer ties /affiliations and sharing of information with other stakeholders such as Predator Free NZ and NIWA, as per funding agreements. These are outlined below.

**Braided Rivers Seminar 2017**: see <http://braid.org.nz/seminar-2017/> for links to download the papers presented.

**Presenters**

Canterbury, Lincoln, and Otago Universities

NIWA

Ecology Consultants

Department of Conservation

Environment Canterbury

Landcare Research

Wildlife Consultants

Conservation groups

**Participants**

Regional Council (nearly all ECan): 21

Department of Conservation: 15

Canterbury, Lincoln and Otago Universities +NIWA: 14

Ecology consultants: 3

NGOs: 2

Trusts, Govt. Departments, and Museums: 1 each

Total salaried professionals: 58 (44%)

Others: 73 (56%)

Radio NZ

Approximately 25 people arrived and left at different times; a head count just before lunch was 151 people in the room.

**Sample feedback:**

‘*Was stoked to hear coverage on National Radio on my way home (black billed gulls nesting on farmland). Brilliant outcome! Thanks so much for all of your hard work, and dedication. My highlights (aside from my awesome students, I’m so lucky!) was Richard’s talk.’*

* Dr Tammy Steeves. Senior Lecturer in Conservation and Evolutionary Genetics, Canterbury University

*‘It was a great seminar. Will recommend it to more people next year.’*

* Pete Caldwell,Biosecurity Consultant, Boffa Miskell

*‘Thanks for organising another wonderfully interesting and informative seminar. Pleased to see the 2018 in there too – is so good to see all the interest and activity across the region and country.’*

* Dr Frances Schmeckel, Senior Biodiversity Officer, Environment Canterbury

*‘…a big thank you for the fantastic conference yesterday. The content was outstanding and I know I personally gained a lot of new ideas and information from attending. Well done.’*

* Courtney Popenhagen, Environment Canterbury Regional Park Ranger

*‘It is great hearing of all the amazing work being done to protect our vulnerable birds.’*

- Karen Talbot, volunteer, South Island Wildlife Hospital

*‘Awesome seminar - best yet & learnt heaps.’*

- Penny Wright, Conservation volunteer

**The Flock project**

* Arts in Oxford community art project 30 May to mid-July " From the River to the Shore” and "Flyways Print Exchange”, followed by public discussion panel on braided rivers to be held at Arts in Oxford 3pm Saturday 15 July.
* Conservation Week: Botanical Gardens Walking Festival - self-guided

**Education/outreach/support**

Further to weed issues and island creation, drone footage of several rivers was taken last week and is available for multiple purposes including education, outreach, and as a baseline record of existing conditions. The raw video footage was shot in 4K ultra high definition and consequently each file is large: between 1-4Gb/file. Single image photos can be taken, frame-by-frame, from each video. We have tested these and they can be enlarged and printed to at least A1 without loss of defintion. If anyone would like copies, they will need to get them off me directly as they are too large to Dropbox or add to most USBs.

Over the next week I will be adding edited (to a point, I will leave most clips in even with the odd camera shudder and jerky gimbal movement) footage to Youtube in 1080p HD resolution (not 4K as the files are too large). Please feel free to download and use this footage for any purpose; just credit BRaid – just be sure to download the full HD version, not the default low res version Youtube plays, or if you happen to read this before tomorrow’s meeting, bring a laptop and I’ll bring a portable hard drive with the files.

1. Orari River at Burdon St, showing the work done by Fulton Hogan, and also how weeds have forced the river to become incised, not braided: <https://youtu.be/NQ1qYTUFT6M>
2. Waitaki River: island formation work (Ann-Kathrin Schlesselmann’s PhD work): <https://youtu.be/PWFz38pStH0>
3. Wilkins confluence with Makarora towards Lake Wanaka: <https://youtu.be/g242GDSweiA>
4. Tasman River where Kaki are released and trapping is underway: not yet completed video, but 47 photos x 5Mb each were amalgamated into one single 360 degree view from 120m height (if you do not subscribe to Facebook, just ignore the popup message and click the image. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10213887409398143&set=a.10201542287897821.1073741826.1195842888&type=3&theater>
5. Tasman River – to come
6. Ashburton River – to come
7. Makarora River– to come
8. Upper Waimakariri River near the railway crossing – to come

**Matters Arising from previous meeting**

**2. See correspondence**

**3. Encroachment of farmland into braided rivers**

Presentation at seminar indicates the situation has not improved. However, ECan are currently working to identify exactly what defines a braided river, and also ownership and responsibility.

**5. Trapping workshops**

Currently in discussion with Predator Free New Zealand to utilise their networks to run a trapping workshop similar in style to the seminar, with expert presentations on species such as hedgehogs, black-backed gulls, cats, and mustelids. Suggested that while expertise may come from DOC, ECan etc, were a re likely to get more buy-in from farmers if it is led by NGO and held in community halls. PFNZ may be able to support the cost of hiring a hall and also providing specialist speakers, as well as advertising the event/s in different South Island locations.

**6. Awareness signage**

Content for Coleridge Habitat signs now complete. The structural design is still being discussed.

* The template and content for the sign has been made available to DOC for possible (partial) use in Balmoral reserve.
* No word yet from Waimakariri DC –would prefer to wait until ARRG and Council are in agreement. Suggest this is best led by ARRG.
* Enquiry from ECan re using similar concept sign

**7. Calicivirus**

The release will now be in the Autumn of 2018. Note that this is the same time when traditional 1080 poisoning would take place, which replicates the predator prey relationship.

* The timing of the release is important because:
* It has to be outside of the breeding season (young rabbits have immunity up to 12 weeks of age)
* It has to be when rabbits will accept carrot as food. Note the virus is to be applied to this bait.
* It has to be when UV levels are lower. UV kills the virus.
* It has to be when insect vectors such as flies are still around.
* Note that this is the same time when traditional 1080 poisoning would take place which replicates the predator prey relationship.

I have been unable to confirm reports that in Australia, the new strain (RHDV1 K5) released in February is infecting foxes. If true, this has implications for other species and thus the planned release here in NZ. (A vaccine is available).

**Correspondence**:

* Routeburn Dart Wildlife Trust: we are in contact with them as they plan to extend their work to braided rivers; they now have access to out educational and information materials.
* Nathan Guy (lupins) – responded by referring us to ECan regional pest management plan
* Subsequently made submission made to Canterbury Regional Pest Management plan
* Informal letter from Predator Free New Zealand outlining what they may be able to offer if BRaid organizes trapping workshops
* Tranz Alpine –submitted generic braided river formation and bird information for use in commentary
* Formal thanks to Rakaia Environmental Enhancement Society for funding the Seminar

**Monitoring:**

**Upper Waimakariri:** report now available on the website: <http://braid.org.nz/braided-rivers/waimakariri-river>

**Lower Waimakariri:** ECan’s black-billed gull breeding season report: <http://braid.org.nz/braided-rivers/waimakariri-river>

**Hurunui/Waia**: ongoing meetings/discussions with HWZC

**Wilberforce/Harper**: On-going liaison with Trustpower/possible BRaid-managed bird survey this year