**BRaid Managers report June 2018**

**Braided River Partnership Project**

1. Karikaas has been awarded a Bronze Accreditation Award for their work in promoting braided rivers birds across the community. Their ‘wrybill’ braided river bird Gouda recently won a gold medal and is now sold in both islands by Countown. I have notified Miranda Shorebird Trust as this is also an opportunity for them to capitalize on the publicity
2. Following the approval for funding, Project Makarora, now named ‘Mt Aspiring Biodiversity Trust’ (MABT), is well underway; an excellent map showing their river bird distribution and where traps were deployed a few weeks ago: <http://braid.org.nz/braided-rivers/makarora/aspiring-biodiversity-trust-makarora-trapping-plan/> .More generic information is here: <http://aspiringbiodiversity.co.nz/>
3. Though MABT, Wilkin River Jet have been awarded a Bronze Accreditation Award for their work in promoting braided rivers birds in their community and for tourists. They have set up a donation box specifically to help fund MABT trapping programmes. This kind of ‘targeted donation’ is proven to be more effective than non-specific donations
4. Following funding approval for traps along the Dart River, the trapper, Russell Varcoe, reported catching 105 mustelids and 160 rats so far (it’s only been a few months). I have yet to see a full trapping report (ie trap nights/locations/types) as I’m not sure how they’ve structured it, but it’s a solid result nonetheless
5. I have not followed through with Amuri Irrigation as they are seeking to delay the implementation of the ZIP by as much as 7 years. The situation in the Hurunui District has multiple complicating factors, something I have mentioned in the current newsletter (<http://braid.org.nz/2018/06/braid-newsletter-38-01-june-2018/> ). The island-building and black-backed gull control work (more on this below) being planned for the Hurunui and Waiau Rivers via Immediate Steps funding, includes relationship building with adjoining landowners, with the potential for identifying and working with those landowners who would like to do more (including monitoring and trapping) to ensure better outcomes.

The 3-year Partnership 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. While it has been highly successful in many ways, it has not been able to be financially self-sustaining.

The question now is, where to from here?

**Trapping workshops**

Following the trapping workshop last year, Nick secured funding specifically for traps in the Ashley Estuary as part of a long-term strategy to reintroduce Kaki. As I was away during the trapping ‘Roadshow’ in February, I can’t personally speak to their success, however I understand uptake was excellent. I have since been working with DOC to promote the same format for several trapping workshops across Canterbury. While not all are specifically BRaid related, attendance and interest has been well above expectation.

**Education/outreach/support**

1. Submitted to **Environment Canterbury Long Term plan**
2. Submitted to **Environment Southland Long Term Plan** (largely written by Nick)
3. **Rangiora High School River Studies** follow up with their Year 13 Blue Planet group min-May. The Ashley River was river was flowing high and muddy, but within few seconds of demonstrating how to catch invertebrates, tiny mayflies and reasonably sized galaxids were netted. The aim is for senior students to teach younger students the ‘what’, ‘how’, and ‘why’ of invertebrate sampling, ensuring continuity over time.
4. **The Flock**. As per the last report, we will look at doing this again at the Botanical Gardens during Conservation Week.
5. **The website** and Facebook continues to be our key resource and communications tool respectively.
6. **Black-backed gull management.** ECan have contracted Wildlife Management International Ltd (WMIL) to develop a Canterbury Southern Black-backed Gull Strategy. We are actively supporting this through a range of initiatives, primarily to raise public awareness and respond to questions. WMIL will be looking at controlling several colonies around the Hurunui (and depending on time frames and human resources) possibly the Waiau River this year as part of the above programme. We (BRaid) are in the process of planning to remove small colonies in the upper Waimakariri, as there is sufficient data (bird counts) to test the efficacy. We will also be inviting BRaid members and others (anyone really, who wants to help put) to assist in collecting carcasses.
7. **Encroachment of agricultural lands onto Braided River beds:** ECan are holding key stakeholder meetings to determine the extent of the ‘river bed’ in braided rivers in order to manage for the multiple values (environmental, economic, cultural, and social) in particular through RMA regulation. It’s not as simple as drawing lines on maps, something I’ve touched on here: <http://braid.org.nz/2018/06/braided-rivers-the-bridge-project/> following the first of these meetings at Spotswood last Wednesday. The key questions are: **what do we value about braided rivers**, and **why.** BRaid’s key values are the ability of the rivers to support healthy bird populations; the ‘why’ is environmental, which in turn supports cultural imperatives and ultimately underpins social and economic values. There will be contention around this issues, especially as farmers already are under pressure at multiple levels. There is also common ground, however: removing weeds, especially willows, in the fairways will improve everyone’s perceived values.

**Correspondence in:**

1. **ECan** letter acknowledging submission to LTP

**Matters Arising from previous meeting**

* **Case for better management of smaller rivers – OTOPZC**. Detailed information: <https://apps.canterburymaps.govt.nz/OTOP/otop.html> These are not in relation to braided river bird habits, but instead are focussed on nitrogen hotspots, sediment loss, water quality, and stormwater impacts on Waitarakao/Washdyke Lagoon.
* **Encroachment of agricultural lands onto Braided River beds:** ECan are holding key stakeholder meetings to determine the extent of the ‘river bed’ in braided rivers in order to manage for the multiple values (environmental, economic, cultural, and social) in particular through RMA regulation. It’s not as simple as drawing lines on maps, something I’ve touched on here: <http://braid.org.nz/2018/06/braided-rivers-the-bridge-project/> following the first of these meetings at Spotswood last Wednesday. The key questions are: **what do we value about braided rivers**, and **why.** BRaid’s key values are the ability of the rivers to support healthy bird populations; the ‘why’ is environmental, which in turn supports cultural imperatives and ultimately underpins social and economic values. There will be contention around this issues, especially as farmers already are under pressure at multiple levels. There is also common ground, however: removing weeds, especially willows, in the fairways will improve everyone’s perceived values
* **Historic reports of bird counts** – I have had no responses from anyone. Once Anne-Kathryn Schlesselmann has completed her PhD thesis, I’ll go through her literature review to see what might be mined from that. Some point that have arisen during my investigations:
  + No one has the time/incentive/obligation to go looking through pre-digital archives for unpublished much less published reports and submissions to Councils
  + Zone Committees are primarily focused on water quality and quantity, not bird numbers
  + Thousands of files stored in Canterbury by some landscape architects (contracted by councils) were lost during the earthquakes
  + There are references (mostly non-digital) to historic bid counts in most braided rivers in New Zealand, in Forest & Bird’s ‘Important Areas for New Zealand Seabirds/ Sites on Land: Rivers, estuaries, coastal lagoons, and harbours: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/1peovqp4k9p8103/IBARiversEstuariesLagoons.pdf?dl=0>
  + The above has been broken into separate chapters for each of the following rivers on our website: <http://braid.org.nz/the-flock/teaching-resources/> **Awareness signage**
* Coleridge Habitat signs are now being printed
* The Balmoral reserve signs have been delayed due to issues mentioned above in relation to Amuri Irrigation
* ECan are organising signs on the Ashley River
* Lake Lynden signs (not related to braided rivers)

**Calicivirus**

The RHDV1-K5 strain was released in March and April in central Otago and has anecdotally been reported in Eyrewell (vets have been alerted). More information is available here: <https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/science/plants-animals-fungi/animals/vertebrate-pests/biological-control-of-rabbits/faq>

A second, RHDV2 strain has also been found in one wild rabbit in Nelson/Malborough. This strain is new to NZ (information not available on Landcare Research or MAF).

**Monitoring**

* Grant Davey will be contracted to monitor key colonies this season
* Wilberforce/Harper: to be discussed. Jim Jolly has been asked to quote, but will need to scope the area, first.
* All reports and monitoring sent to me are forwarded to Andy Grant at DOC.

**General Business**

* NIWA failed to receive funding for its research proposal
* **Bird of the Year** : we aim to promote the Wrybill and will work on a strategy in the coming months