

Threats to braided river birds



John Dowding

Overview of threats

- Loss of habitat
- Water abstraction
- Flooding
- Predation
- Weeds
- Disturbance
- *Threats interact and are additive*



- Collision



Threats vary in time and space

- Timing and intensity of floods vary
- Weed density varies
- Predator guilds and densities vary
- Commercial and recreational activities vary





Ecological features

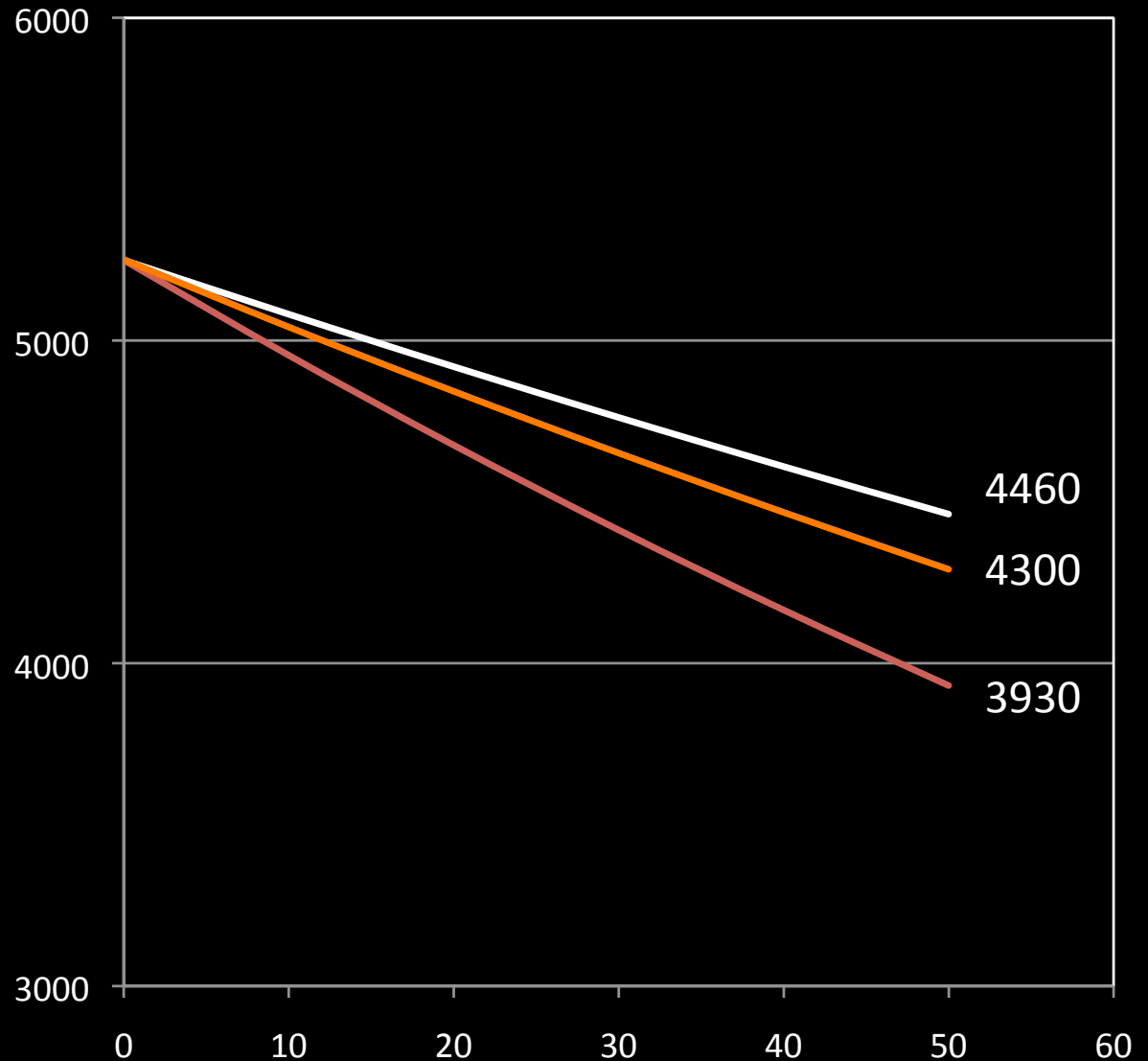
- Strongly *K*-selected
- Impacts on adult survival have a disproportionate effect
- Variation in breeding season
- Some breed at low density
- Some species move between breeding sites annually

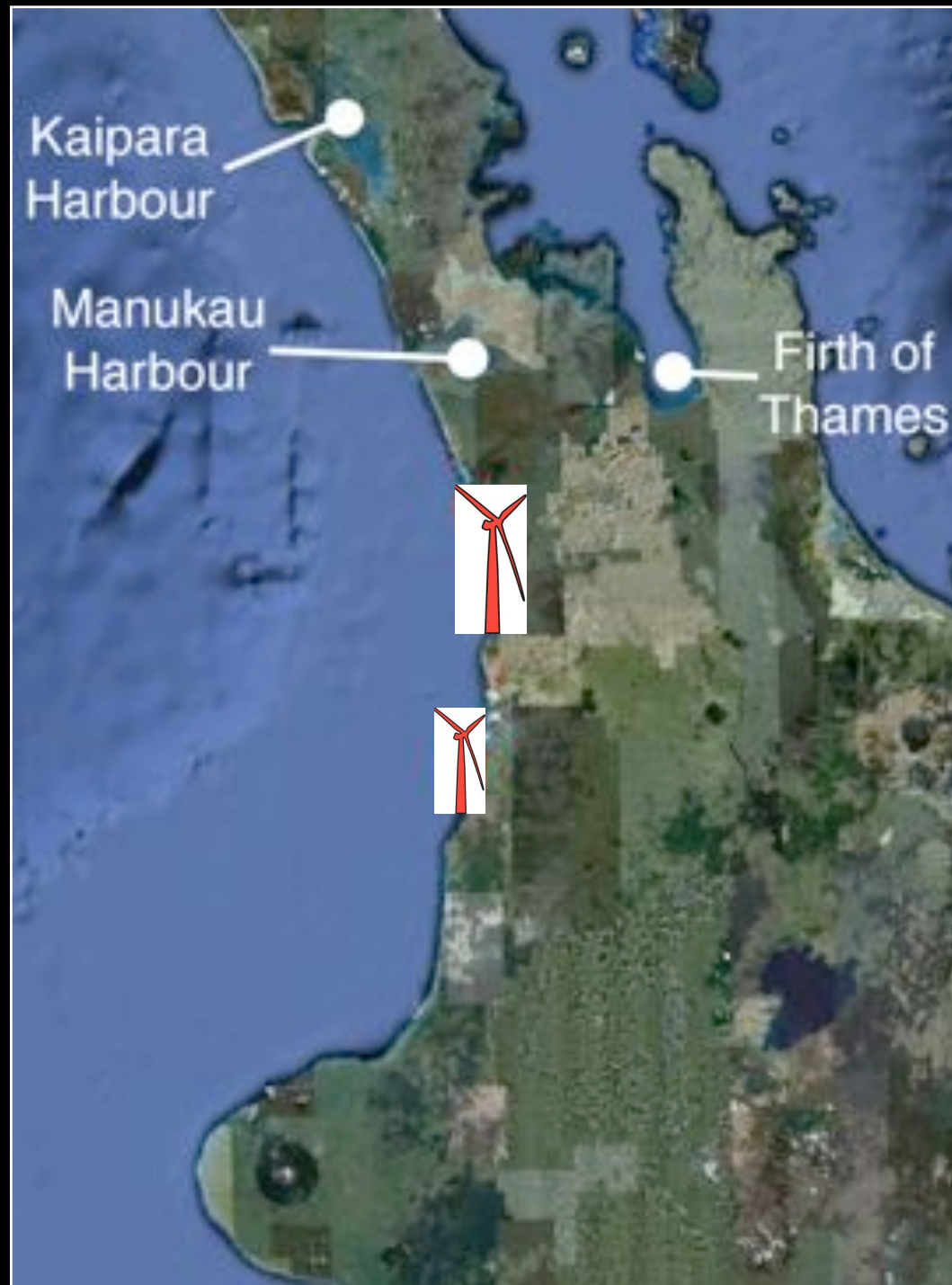
Sensitivity to increase in adult mortality

Impact of removing an additional 10 wrybills per year

Chicks (orange)

Adults (red)





Threats outside riverbeds

- Most shorebird species leave riverbeds
- Predation at wintering sites
- Loss/degradation of habitat at wintering sites
- Collision on migration and at wintering sites
- These affect survival



Management of threats

- Can't manage some (flooding)
- Conflicts (commercial, recreational, flood control)
- Consent process not always helpful
- Lack of resources (conservation management)



Summary of main points

- Relative importance of threats varies spatially and temporally
- There are threats to braided river birds outside riverbeds
- Predation probably the most important threat currently
- Threats interact and many are additive
- Life-history characteristics important
- Communication is important



Advocacy on behalf of wildlife in braided rivers is vital and urgent



Lynley Cook