

**Otinga Kōrero Final Results Report For: LEH-2016-25747**

For: Lottery Environment and Heritage

Report ID: 7027 Due at: 7/12/2018

BRAID INCORPORATED

**OTINGA KŌRERO RESULTS REPORT****BENEFITS OR OUTCOMES ACHIEVED**

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**What happened?**

## Background

The aim of the project was, broadly, to engage braided river users (iwi, tourism, farming, assisting with the monitoring and protection of two endemic braided river bird species: the black billed gull and nationally endangered black fronted tern, with the goal of better breeding taonga species. The project was to generate a positive outcome for these birds as 'flags of opportunity' to gain understanding that there would be wide-ranging collateral benefits for (a) other specialist species including nationally endangered invertebrates and reptiles, (b) the ecological role of braided rivers as specialist habitats and, (c) their hydro-geomorphological function and in creating rare landscapes.

## What happened

Stages 1 and 2 (communications/marketing strategy and establishing a contacts' database of stakeholders (river users) to establish interest in protecting the birds. We simultaneously set benchmarks and accreditation awards (Stage 3) to encourage businesses to participate. It became evident that these birds and braided river ecosystems (a) suffered an identity crisis and (b) were decimated by uncontrolled encroachment of intensive agriculture plus weed (introduced species). Both impacts were on a sufficiently large scale to alter the hydrology of rivers, effectively by converting them into single channel 'normal' rivers with little to no biodiversity values. Hence, while pursuing the partnership project, we simultaneously enhanced our efforts to expand public awareness of the birds and their habitats, and break down the silo effect between river managers, and river users.

We ran two seminars each attended by over 150 people including senior DOC staff and university students and 2 Crown research institutes, plus ECan councillors, which enabled us to promote the Project across multiple sectors. We also ran trapping workshops specific for braided rivers (which differ to forest and urban predator guilds) and collaborated on more workshops with DOC groups, designed dozens of signs; worked with businesses, local government bodies, DOC

to develop and implement several 'partner' projects to protect and enhance birds; design off-the-shelf bird ID kits; produced educational resources for schools (PDF and iPad res: <http://braid.org.nz/the-flock/teaching-resources> ); built and maintain a 350-page web site as the 'go-to' site for 'all things braided river'; reach up to 8,000 people through Facebook examples: facebook.pdf) and lobbied local government and councils to recognise and protect ecosystems through a range of strategies. We also distributed around 1,000 fridge magnet birds. These magnets appear in the most diverse locations, including the dashboards of used by gravel extractors on riverbeds (apparently so drivers can ID birds).

### Who participated or benefitted?

Braided river birds and braided river ecosystems primarily in Canterbury and Otago benefited.

The community as a whole, young and old, also benefitted and participated through learning about birds and ecosystems and being given the opportunity to participate in wide ranging and contribute to their awareness and protection.

### What was achieved?

We developed productive relationships with multiple businesses and organisations, awarded environmental management accreditation to 8 of these (2 farms, 2 gravel extractors/roading contractor, power company and a cheese making company. See attached: Accreditation.pdf), and developed collaborative relationships with many others who were not eligible for awards as they were third sector groups tasked with environmental protection; the purpose of the accreditation is to encourage businesses to participate in positive environmental actions. Our signs (some temporary) are now used by DOC, ECan, and community groups along rivers and lakes (see attached: examplesigns.pdf). Educational materials are now used in some schools and community outreach/community art project 'The Flock'. Rangiora High School is actively monitoring School raises funds annually for braided river bird protection (not by killing pests though nesting dotterels using 'nesting exclosures': see <http://braid.org.nz/ecology/nesting-cage> and video blog of the experiment here:

<https://www.facebook.com/BandeddotterelstudySBay/videos/1641572235921856/>

We successfully lobbied for Russell lupins, an invasive pest species smothering river bank species, significantly expanded the number of bird counts now being undertaken across the region (added to the website by river name as they come), raised the profile of the impact of lupins (and their culling in some Canterbury rivers) and strongly lobbied to halt the conversion of braided river scale agricultural lands.

Sharing this information on social media and website enables ready access to information and problems can be discussed openly, resources shared, and comparisons of bird population time can be made (critical to understanding actual bird populations). Significantly more funding directed towards specific projects to protect and/or restore braided river bird habitats and the community of their significance to our natural and cultural heritage.

### Key achievements by river/catchment

#### Ashley Rakahuri River

Experiments with island formation on the lower Waitaki (drone footage here: <http://braid.org.nz/rivers/waitaki/lower-waitaki> ) and research into social attractants to encourage black-fron gulls to nest on managed islands were showcased at the 2016 Braided Rivers Seminar (<http://braid.org.nz/about-braid/workshop-2016/>). With this information in hand, extensive

of the Ashley River for weeds led to the first really robust correlation between weed clearance and the preferred breeding sites for river bird species. The value of these findings cannot be overstated as a key finding to developing and implementing robust (cost effective) management protocols presented at the 2017 Seminar: <http://braid.org.nz/seminar-2017> )

- Taggarts (gravel extractors): awarded a Silver Accreditation for their work in assisting with weed removal
- Waikuku Beach Farm: exemplar of the Partnerships Programme. Due to weeds, black-billed gulls on the river in 2016, so they tried to nest in a paddock on an adjacent farm. Without intervention they have unquestionably failed, trampled by a herd of cows. Working with the owner and the gull colony went off without a single hitch. The outcome: an estimated 600-800 birds successful to fledging; virtually an unprecedented outcome for this species in modern times.
- Following weed clearing (funded by the Waimakariri Zone Committee) and floods (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHAhzyjL228>), the birds returned to breed on the river. Currently (Nov. 2018) estimated to be some 2,500 birds, the largest seen in the river in nearly 100 years. Titled 'Ashley black billed gull colony 2016-2018.pdf).
- A new estuary trapping group set up following one of our free trapping workshops in October 2017 (with 120 traps for them) with the goal of reintroducing kaki/black stilt in the next few years. The trapping location outside the Mackenzie Basin that this critically endangered bird (just 120 left in the world) was first introduced (see attached photo essay: Ashley Estuary trapping story.pdf)
- Karikaas Cheese partnered with us to produce a line of award winning 'braided river bird' cheese. This has raised the public profile of the birds across New Zealand (<http://www.karikaas.co.nz/shop/Karikaas+Cheese/Braid+Series.html>). Karikaas also donates profits to the local Ashley Rakahuri Rivercare Group. They were awarded Bronze Environmental Award 2018 (see their feedback to the Partnerships Project in the attached: karikaas.pdf).
- Rangiora High School senior year students are now undertaking a regular analysis of water quality and overall biodiversity values. This has been designed as a long term (decadal) scientific study of and changes to the river. The information is shared with the local rivercare group to enhance their understanding of some drivers that attract birds to certain areas and/or nesting outcomes (e.g. water quality, temperatures etc).

#### Waiau and Hurunui Rivers

- Amuri Jet, a commercial tour operator, assisted in a trapping programme on the Waiau River. We developed tours that year specifically to take tourists to see black-fronted terns in two locations, allowing them to check traps at one location during the tour. Amuri Jet also heavily disseminated the surveys. Awarded Bronze Accreditation.
- Working with other stakeholders (including ECan and DOC), following floods that inundated the Waiau, a rationale to protect specific braided river bird breeding habitats along both the Waiau and Hurunui-Waiau Zone Committee in 2016-2017. With established research in hand, some weed clearing and building islands on locations most likely to attract nesting colonies. (The 'Ashley backed gulls' project was also undertaken by Wildlife International Management). Community awareness of and engagement in this process is very high (see attached: Facebook post).
- Bird counts are now being undertaken regularly by WIML, DOC, and ECan along with local rivercare groups.
- Several farmers expressed interest in helping to protect birds, 3 reported seeing what they thought were black-billed gull colonies but to date, none have been found.

#### Upper Waimakariri

- A bird count was undertaken in 2016 by BRaid volunteers. This builds on the picture of the damage raised the alarm that Russell Lupins were encroaching on breeding habitats. This, along with research showing the damage lupins are doing to the hydro-geomorphology of braided rivers, was presented to the Canterbury Regional Pest Management Plan meetings. Russell lupins 'are a major threat to the health of the river and its wildlife'.

declared a 'pest species'.

- In November 2018, volunteers working with DOC spent a week in Arthur's Pass working on Lupins' weed-clearing campaign.

#### Ashburton River

- Two tier signs designed by BRaid are now used to (tier 1) inform people about the birds in the area (included in attached: examplesigns.pdf)

#### Wilberforce and Harper Rivers

- Following willow clearing of the Harper River delta, Trustpower intended to re-vegetate with native species. However, the delta was prone to flooding and this made it an ideal 'natural' habitat for native birds to breed. We recommended it be kept plant free, with gravel scraped of weeds during the winter months. As this was less costly for Trustpower to maintain, it was a win-win. They also funded a programme and paid for the cost of printing signs educating visitors about birds.
- This in turn led to a broader relationship with the Coleridge Habitat Enhancement Trust (Trustpower). That in turn resulted in a large scale signage framed by outdoor art, significantly increasing awareness to visitors to the area.

#### Orari River

- Fulton Hogan was awarded a Bronze Environmental Accreditation Award for their work on the Orari River black-fronted terns. Annual bird surveys are being undertaken, but the scale of the weed problem on the Orari, unfortunately acts as a cautionary tale and example of what other braided rivers would be like if unmanaged (drone footage shows the extent of weed infestation and island cleared with DOC and the Orari River Protection Society: <http://braid.org.nz/braided-rivers/orari-river/>)

#### Makarora and Wilkin Rivers

- With support from BRaid, the Mount Aspiring Biodiversity Trust is now up and running, with excellent partnerships, with an excellent trapping and monitoring programme in place (<http://aspiringbiodiversity.co.nz/braided-river> ). They also have developed a partnership with the Mount Aspiring Jets using BRaid resources and accreditation. This new Trust and their ability to develop a partnership with a tour operator and local school is an exemplar of a successful partnerships programme that has been supported by BRaid as an umbrella organisation, but functions entirely independently using local volunteer resources. Their feedback to the Partnerships Project in the attached: [Aspiring Biodiversity Trust.pdf](#)

#### **What other community benefits or outcomes were achieved? :**

The Flock project was an enormously successful community art project devised as part of the Mount Aspiring Biodiversity Trust. Along with the 600-odd birds made by mid-Canterbury volunteers, we estimate that at least 1000 birds were made in schools and men's sheds, art galleries and libraries, from Makarora to the West Coast. We lost count of the number of locations they were displayed and volunteer hours put in (many schools quickly adopted the idea and downloaded our resources (<http://braid.org.nz/the-flock/>)). A school holiday programme to make and display the Flock, Christchurch Airport hosted the real migratory birds back to Canterbury, and councils everywhere display the Flock outside their offices and inside halls, along with signs explaining what it was about. Other organisations such as Mount Aspiring Biodiversity Trust and several schools have now adopted The Flock project as an annual event (see attached: [Makarora Flock.pdf](#) and [Welcome Back the Birds.pdf](#)). This project is a fundraiser for nesting 'exclosures' in Kaikaoura. PredatorFree2050 goals notwithstanding, the project empowers primary school children can help 'save' native animals rather than 'killing' pest animals.

The value of community art projects is well understood. In this instance, it also empowers people to get great grandparents into creating a collective work of art to draw attention to braided rivers.

These activities led to greater volunteerism and the outcomes have provided communities their unique environmental heritage and crucially, the tools to help protect and celebrate help, generates an enormous sense of satisfaction and achievement, especially when late these initially appear overwhelming or even hopeless.

### **Is there anything else you would like to tell us?**

Setbacks and failures serve an important lesson.

One aim was for the project to become economically sustainable through tactical partnerships with river tourism operators and iwi, who might benefit from developing tours to see the birds in context. However these birds are not iconic like kiwi or kakapo, yet are arguably at great risk as they are migratory and do not necessarily return to the same sites, or even the same river only a scant few tour operators encounter them. So there was and remains little incentive for operators or iwi to develop a business model around taking tourists to see the birds, to provide and little visible reason for tourists to donate towards making BRaid financially self-sustaining.

Some setbacks were unavoidable. Clarence River Rafting undertook a bird survey using iwi during their 5-day 2016 trips. It was an ideal situation, until the Kaikoura earthquake devastated tourism businesses as a whole.

Engagement success depends entirely on the willingness and interest of key personnel. Trustpower, for example, worked well until middle-management was replaced with someone supporting a volunteer staff-run trapping programme. While some trapping is still being carried out, it still value in that, insofar as heavy plant operators are now aware of, and sensitive to the risks. The initial relationship led to the broader relationship with the Coleridge Habitat Enhancement project and subsequent signage mentioned above.

Finally, while restoring braided river bird habitats is one of the ten top priorities in the Canterbury Strategy (CWMS), collaborative community approach to enact the CWMS has and continues to face economic drivers: primarily irrigation for dairy farming. We had limited resources to compete with (including the Canterbury District Health Board and district councils) whose interests in the region are entirely on water quality and quantity, not in protecting fragile cryptic habitats and a hanc knew about. It was certainly difficult to develop partnerships with farmers who want braided rivers converted into 'productive' agricultural land irrigated by centre pivots, especially when some blame the birds, not cows, for the high nitrogen level in rivers.

On a positive note, in just these past few months Environment Canterbury have allocated funding to braided rivers as not just water but also as complex ecosystems (see <http://braid.org.nz/bridge-project> ). In spite of strong pushbacks from farmers, we have presented (and will continue to present) an argument to protect what remains of braided river habitats, buoyed by the significant increase in additional resources from DOC, ECan, and some district councils now being directed to braided rivers. With funding that Lotto has just awarded BRaid, we are reasonably confident that by 2021 braided river habitats will be much better acknowledged and understood, key breeding habitats will be protected and braided river systems will be fully recognised as crucial, globally rare ecosystems like the sea.

## **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

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### **How did you use the grant?**

Primarily project co-ordination as outlined in the project plan. Secondly for the purchase were deployed. Please see the xls spreadsheet for this project. This project was funded Department of Conservation. A breakdown of the proportional contributions is included in

**Did you use the entire grant? :** Yes

## REPORTING DOCUMENTATION

*Please upload a statement of income and expenditure which summarises what happens presented with your request. The grant LEH-2016-25747 and any other grants or income in this summary, along with all the expenses incurred.*

Required documents:

1. Statement of income and expenditure is **Required**.

Refer to Community Matters

CUSTOMER REPORT DOCUMENTS	
	Grant LEH-2016-25747 budget report.xlsx <b>statement of income and expenditure (OK)</b> Added by Sandra Whitelaw at 10:02 AM on 4 December 2018
	Welcome Back the Birds.pdf <b>Additional Information (OK)</b> Added by Sandra Whitelaw at 11:27 AM on 21 November 2018
	Makarora Flock.pdf <b>Additional Information (OK)</b> Added by Sandra Whitelaw at 11:27 AM on 21 November 2018
	Karikaas.pdf <b>Additional Information (OK)</b> Added by Sandra Whitelaw at 11:07 AM on 21 November 2018
	Aspiring Biodiversity Trust.pdf <b>Additional Information (OK)</b> Added by Sandra Whitelaw at 11:07 AM on 21 November 2018

## CUSTOMER REPORT DOCUMENTS



Accreditation.pdf

**Additional Information (OK)**

Added by Sandra Whitelaw at 11:07 AM on 21 November 2018



facebookposts.pdf

**Additional Information (OK)**

Added by Sandra Whitelaw at 10:59 AM on 21 November 2018



Karikaas.pdf

**Additional Information (OK)**

Added by Sandra Whitelaw at 10:59 AM on 21 November 2018



Aspiring Biodiversity Trust.pdf

**Additional Information (OK)**

Added by Sandra Whitelaw at 10:59 AM on 21 November 2018



examplesigns.pdf

**Additional Information (OK)**

Added by Sandra Whitelaw at 6:57 PM on 20 November 2018



Ashley black billed gull colony 2016-2018.pdf

**Additional Information (OK)**

Added by Sandra Whitelaw at 6:36 PM on 20 November 2018



Ashley Estuary trapping story.pdf

**Additional Information (OK)**

Added by Sandra Whitelaw at 4:55 PM on 20 November 2018

**Is there anything else we need to know about the financial statement in relation to**

The project was also funded in part by DOC. We assumed at the outset that to ensure a of Braid's financial contributed might need to be re-directed to different aspects of the pr budgeted. To this end, some BRaid funds were re-allocated to printing brochures and sig

03/12/2018

## Community Advice and Grants

covered by the Lotto funding; some signs were jointly funded in part by DOC, ECan, and the proportionate number of TIMMS and DOC 200 traps varied due to local predator typ

Finally, during the course of the project, (seminars, bird counts in the upper Waimakariri with DOC's Braided River Technical Advisory Group) we re-allocated approx. \$2,200.00 earmarked for traps to instead be used to control of predatory southern black-backed gu planned for 2018 but the expertise needed to carry this out (WIML) was tied up doing the River (see above in reference to the Hurunui River). It is now scheduled to be carried ou

### CONFIRMATION

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**this report is true and correct for this grant:** Yes