

Developing best practice guidelines for the conservation of the black-fronted tern | tarapirohe in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Braided Rivers Conference

8 July 2026

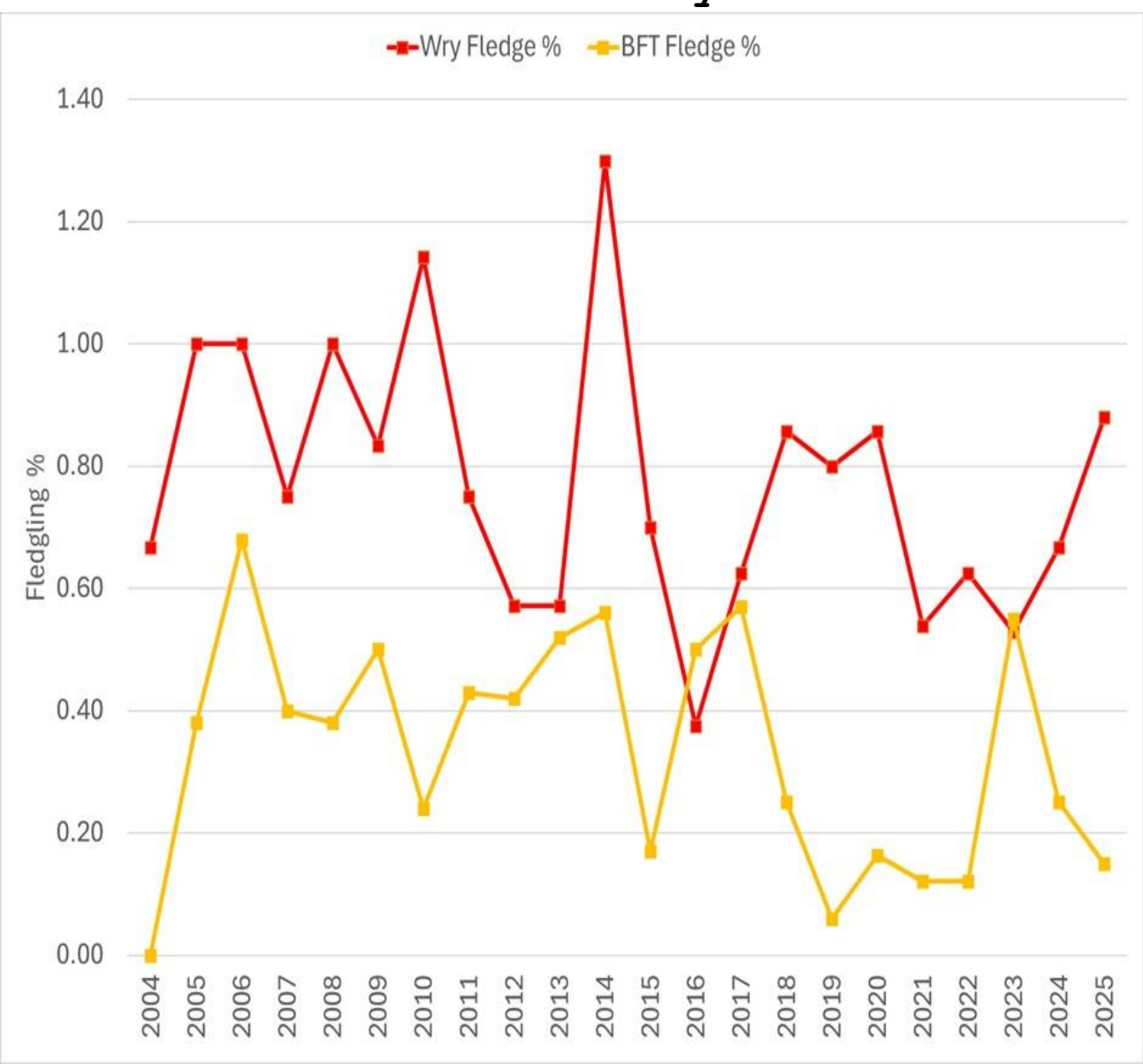


Why the black-fronted tern | tarapirohe matters

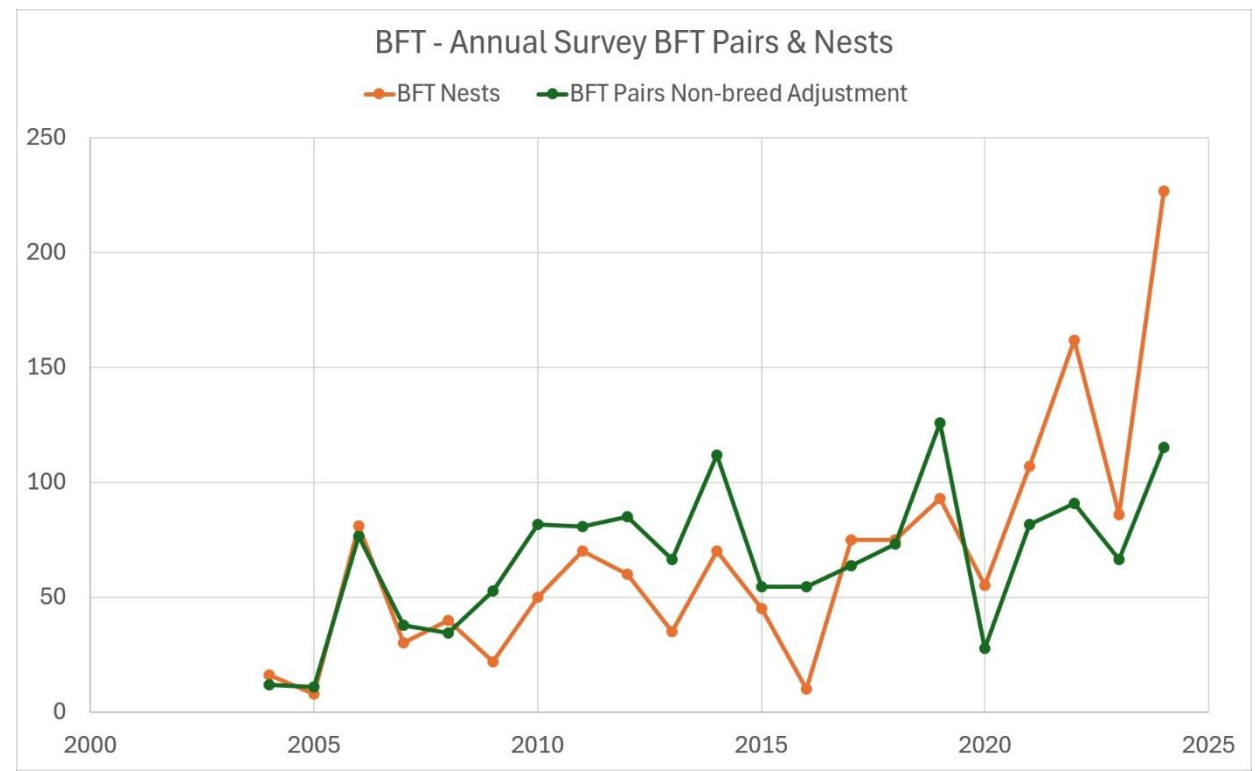
- Endemic species - NZ only
- Nationally Endangered
- An icon of South Island braided river ecosystems
- Cultural significance
- At significant risk of further population decline
- Substantial to-date conservation investment

On the Ashley-Rakahuri river BFT have struggled over the years...

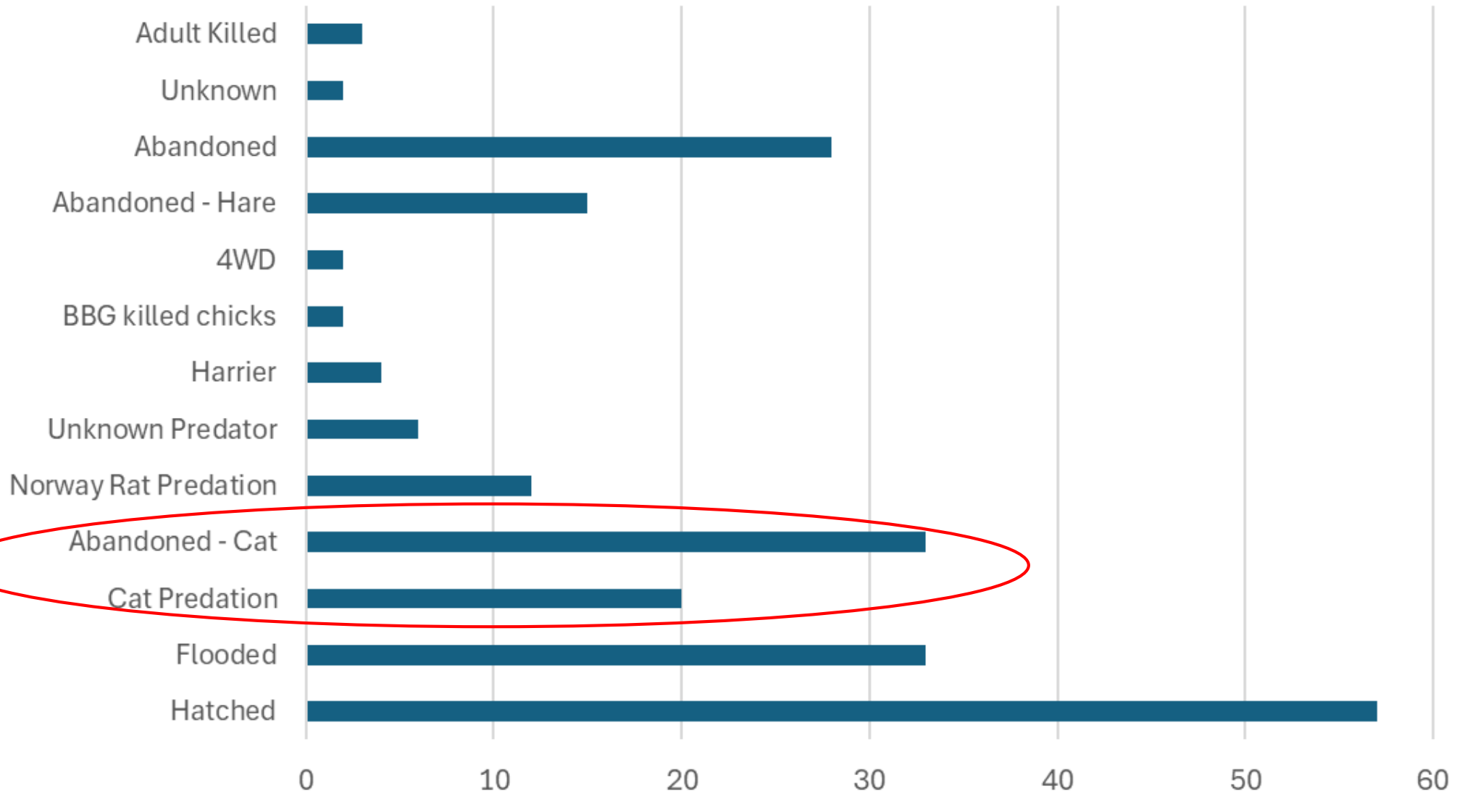
Productivity



BFT productivity in 2025 was 0.15, with significant losses to predators. In comparison, wrybill productivity was 0.8



2024 - 2025 BFT Nest Outcomes



On the Ashley-Rakahuri river. Cats are probably now the most prolific predator - replacing Norway rats

No overall clear BFT best management approach – a gap that needs filling

- No standard methods for
 - Predator control regimes
 - Habitat enhancement techniques/approaches
 - Monitoring and breeding success metrics
 - Across-project and/or catchment coordination

Leads to

- Inefficient use of resources
- Poor targeting of key threats
- Difficulty scaling successful interventions
- Reduced conservation impact

Decision point - relative to developing best practise guidelines

Tarapirohe black-fronted tern working group

On July 11, 2025,
30 participants met at ECan
to discuss BFT management



Photo: Steve Attwood

Agreement that

- o Best practice guidance should be developed

Producing the guidelines – those involved and the approach being taken?

- The core production team consists representatives of:
 - DOC
 - Environment Canterbury
 - Ashley Rakahuri Rivercare Group
 - Braided River Aid (BRaid)

The approach

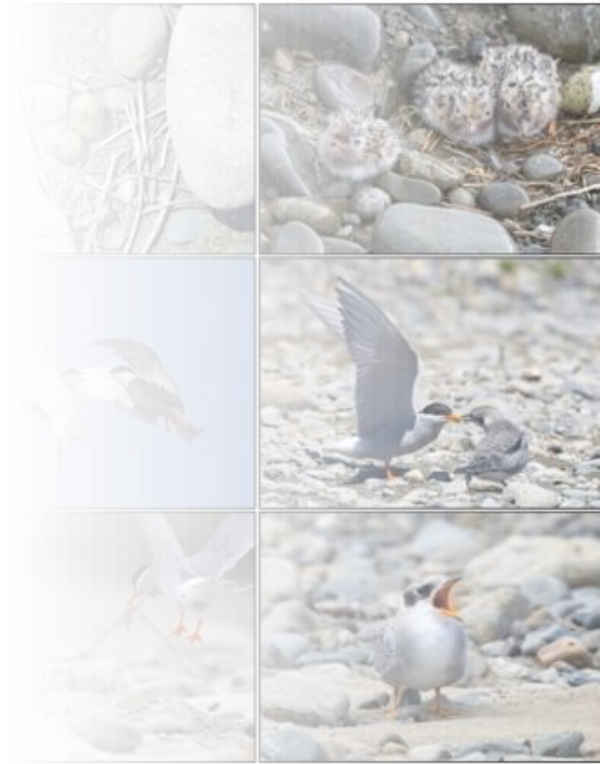
- Core production team produces draft document
- Subject matter specialists (including workshop participants) asked to comment on draft
- Draft finalised and made available to public

Progress to date – and expected completion timeline

- An initial draft is 50% complete
- Finalise draft by 30 September and send around for broader comment
- Produce guidelines by 31 December, 2026

Stay tuned!

Contorted Tern | Tarapirohe Conservation – A Best Management Practice Manual



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