

Minutes of the BRaid General Meeting held on Friday October 6, 2023, 2.00 pm at DOC office, 31 Nga Mahi Road, Sockburn, Christchurch

The Chairman, Nick Ledgard, welcomed those present: Frances Schmechel, Edith Smith, Sue Mardon, Sonny Whitelaw, Ailsa and Ted Howard (virtual).

Apologies: Val Clemens, Peter Howden, Jim Jolly, Donna Field. Nick / Sue Carried

Minutes of the last GM (Sept 16th 2022) were confirmed as a true and correct record. Nick/Sue Carried

Matters Arising: Action items from Sept 16, 2022 – all addressed below.

Correspondence. All dealt with electronically.

Financial. Sue presented the Income and Expenditure report for 1/07/23 to 5/10/2022

Income \$5306.85; Expenditure \$23,814.27, giving an excess funding/spending of -\$18,507.42.

Opening Bank Balance: \$38,527.09 Closing bank balance: \$16,416.26

Resolved: 'That the financial accounts be received'

Sue/Frances. Carried

'That the retrospective amounts totaling \$28,017.57 be approved for payment'

Sue/Frances. Carried

An application for funds to pay Manager has been made to the Waitaha Action fund. Until outcome of the Waitaha application is known, payment for the Manager can be taken from accumulated funds.

Membership. We currently have 298 persons on our email list, 146 of which are registered with contact details.

Subscriptions are no longer required, but donations are welcomed. Between June 30 2022 to June 3 2023, 16 members donated \$580. Those who donate become 'members'. It was agreed that donations be promoted in Newsletters.

Action: *Sonny to promote the giving of donations in our Newsletters.*

Outreach / Manager's report. Sonny presented her 2-page report, which is available on the website. Its acceptance was moved by Nick and seconded by Frances. Carried. Nick moved a vote of sincere thanks to Sonny for her work, without which BRaid would not exist.

July 5 2023 Seminar. This was a great success, with almost 200 attendees listening to 16 presentations (all available on our website). Since then the organizing committee has met to review the event. Aspects discussed were how often to organize seminars (continue with annual while interest remains high), length of presentations (increase to allow time for questions), topics and posters (call for speakers well in advance), the virtual Teams option (big problems this year, needs prior organizing and IT specialist on site), and costs (options of charging for attendance and reduced catering, importance of sponsors). The organising committee will be meeting before the end of the year to further these discussions. Major thanks are due to Sonny Whitelaw for the organizing this year's symposium, and to the Waitaha Action Fund, ECan, DOC, and Rakaia Catchment Environmental Enhancement Fund for the funding

Biodiversity / climate change update. There is no current funding available, but Sonny continues in her own time preparing material for this website.

Upper Waimakariri riverbed weeds project. Nick reported that this project focuses on corridor weeds (highway, railway and Waimakariri riverbed), and that the current major operational effort would be in the riverbed. The contractual work is currently carried out by Boffa-Miskell, with oversight by ECan.

ECan / DOC Braided River projects. Frances reported that this work is carried out alongside DOC and LINZ, although funding from the latter is diminishing, which will affect progress. Project work is ongoing in the Clarence/Waiiau-toa

(analysing levels of predator control) and Waiau-upha (Sharks Tooth site maintenance only), lower Waimakariri and Ashburton (tracking of SBBG movements by Wendy Fox), Ashburton (updating strategy by Nicky McArthur), upper Rakaia and Rangitata (weeds and predators – more use of trail cameras) and in the Cass river (food webs being studied by Holly Harris).

Monitoring

- Determining bird productivity / breeding success. Nick raised the matter of promoting productivity goals for rivercare groups, as number of chicks fledged / breeding pair is a measure which amateurs can monitor reasonably accurately. This is not the case with other essential measures such as fledgling and adult survival, which can often only be addressed by professionals. Discussion felt that there should be datasets which could indicate actual and desired productivity levels. Ailsa said they would be looking at this relative to their Kaikoura birds, and that she would write to John Dowding for his thoughts.
Action: Ailsa to explore availability of bird productivity measures with John Dowding, and from their Kaikoura BD data.
- Standardising braided river bird database and access. Miles Burford, working for ECan, has accessed all past DOC data and initiated good work on this, with the intention of getting his system more widely adopted.
Action: Chair to write to Miles Burford thanking him for his work on this important matter, and promoting its appropriate completion.
- SBBG control in upper Waimakariri. Nick reported further discussion on this matter, but no action is intended in the near future.
Action: Nick to keep the matter alive.
- River reports
 - Waiau / Hurunui. BFT breeding success last season at the Sharks Tooth demonstrated the worth of good weed-free islands. The NIWA island site was not utilized by birds. There is funding to maintain the Sharks Tooth site this 2023-24 season. The Waiau-upha bird survey is planned for the week of Nov 6-10.
 - Waipara. ECan has removed willows from the lower reaches. Local activity is ongoing but currently dominated by motorized vehicle problems in the riverbed.
 - Waimakariri. No bird survey this year.
 - Ashley-Rakahuri. Annual survey is on Nov 18. The breeding season has got off to a slow start, with the major challenge ahead being how to deal with rat predation. A UC student continues her 2-year study of birds breeding around the estuary, funded by the local Zone Committee.
 - Ashburton. Annual survey will be over 2 days in November. Edith updated on current situation.
 - Orari. No-one present to update in detail.
 - Opihi / Opuha. There will be a survey of the Opihi in November.
- **General Business**
 - Shingle extraction. Ailsa/Ted raised the issue of consent conditions especially relative to bird presence. Agreed that the best person to consult on this is Grant Davey, as on behalf of ARRG, he liaises closely on this topic with ECan.
 - Bird arrival times – are they changing with the climate? Ailsa/Ted proposed that there should be data-sets which would answer this, and are analysing their BD data accordingly.
 - Lowering BRaid C imprint. Frances suggested that we do as much as we can in this area, especially associated with the seminar. Agreed.
 - Meeting frequency. Discussion felt that there was only need for 2 meetings a year, as mid-year BRaid seminar assured public awareness and information transfer.
- **Date for next meeting.** Planned for February, 2024.
Action: Nick / Sonny to organise
- **Close of Meeting.** 3.15pm.

Action items.

1. **Donations:** Sonny to promote the giving of donations in our Newsletters.
2. **Bird breeding productivity:** Ailsa to explore availability of bird productivity measures with John Dowding, and from their Kaikoura BD data.

3. **Standardising braided river database and access.** *Nick to write to Miles Burford thanking him for his work on this important matter, and promoting its appropriate completion.*
4. **SBBG control in upper Waimakariri.** *Nick to keep this matter alive.*
5. **Next meeting.** *Nick/Sonny to organize for February, 2024.*