

Going...going...almost gone...



FOREVER

Black-billed gulls & black-fronted terns are found only in New Zealand where they breed in

**BRAIDED
RIVERS**

but they are nearing

EXTINCTION



You can help save them

Braided Rivers Partnership Project

www.braid.org.nz/brpp

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BRAID

Braided Rivers Partnership Project

**Together we can help some of the most endangered birds in New Zealand
from becoming extinct**

Goal

To halt the decline in braided river bird species by enabling stakeholders, whose interests and activities involve braided rivers, to assist in their protection.

Overview

Braided rivers are the only ecosystem in the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) to have its own set of targets. One of these targets is to implement actions to correct the decline in usable braided river bird habitats.

Globally, there is an increasing demand for sustainable and environmentally friendly products. Businesses that can meet this demand have a competitive market edge. Hence, gaining accreditation for environmental stewardship is simply good business.

The Braided River Partnerships Project (BRPP), supported by Environment Canterbury and funded by DOC and the Department of Internal Affairs, is working with commercial and recreational river users who, through their normal operations, can help reverse habitat decline through a range of strategies tailored to suit your situation.

Your involvement, whether as a business or on a personal level, can be as little as reporting the presence of braided river birds during the breeding season, to, with technical and material support, creating and managing an area where rare and endangered colony birds nest.

Commercial operators include but are not limited to:

- Tourism, such as jetboat, kayak and rafting operators, offroad, eco, and adventure tourism operators, fishing & hunting guides, farmstays & wilderness lodges
- Irrigation companies/co-operatives
- Gravel extractors
- Farms

How your business can gain environmental accreditation

You can enhance braided river bird habitats through a slight change in operations, often at little or no short-term economic cost to your business. Through the Braided Rivers Partnership Project, we can assist by offering technical expertise and material support. We can also offer accreditation that, where applicable, will help your business to meet environmental and biodiversity components in your existing or planned Environmental Management System (EMS).

For farmers, if you live or work beside a braided river, this project can help tick some of the biodiversity requirements in farm management and farm environment plans (see the Canterbury Land & Water Regional Plan).

Tourism

You can benefit by introducing value-added components to your business. Aligning with the '100% Pure' marketing brand, we can provide marketing materials and strategies to promote the unique nature of New Zealand braided rivers, the birds and their cultural significance as taonga species, what your business is doing to help these rare and endangered species, and how your clients might also help. Involving customers in your conservation efforts, even at a very basic level such as counting birds, has proven to be a very effective marketing strategy.



For example Clarence River Rafting is involving their guests in bird counts on the 5-day rafting trips down the Clarence River.

BRaid offers different levels of accreditation to organisations and commercial operators according to their level of participation. We will also be working with Tourism NZ to align our accreditation system with elements of the Qualmark Green Awards.



How can individuals and organisations help?

One of the biggest problem facing braided river birds is that there simply aren't enough eyes on the ground to locate colony nesting sites on braided river beds during the breeding season (August-February). If we know where the birds are, working with DOC and ECan Biodiversity teams, we can develop strategies to help protect them. **This is where you come in.** Jet-boaters, canoeists, rafters, hunters, trampers, walkers, campers, and all use braided rivers. Our goal is to create a network of observers across the South Island and where possible, gain access to nesting colony birds in hard to reach places. How you can help will depend on your individual or organisational resources.

For example, members of Jetboating New Zealand are helping to monitor 3 black-fronted tern colonies (70 nests) and predators on 15 islands in the Lower Waitaki.

Implementation

The BRPP is being rolled out in stages according to the different levels of interest and involvement of participants.

- **Stage 1: Identify** commercial and recreational braided river users who may be interested in participating (*currently underway*)
- **Stage 2: Introductory meetings** to explain the project in detail (*currently underway*)
- **Stage 3: Provide resources** (see below) to report bird sightings (*currently underway*)
- **Stage 4: Provide resources** (see below) to actively help protect nesting colony birds using a toolkit of resources and strategies tailored to each circumstance (*in progress*)

Resources and toolkits

Stage 3 Resources

- *Life on a Braided River* poster (*design in progress; completed by mid-2016*)
- Gallery quality photographic prints of braided river birds (photos by Steve Attwood (*ready for distribution*))
- A set or sets of laminated ID cards for use in the field, to identify birds/colonies and how to report sightings. While this project is focused on colony nesting birds - black

fronted terns and black billed gulls - the ID cards will help distinguish these from other birds (*in progress; completed by mid-2016*)

- Brochures that explain each bird, their cultural meaning as taonga species, the aim of Braided River Partnerships Programme and how you, as a participant, are helping to protect New Zealand's iconic braided river birds and their habitats (*in progress; completed by mid-2016*)

Stage 4 Resources

Developed with assistance from DOC's Braided River Technical Group and ECan biodiversity (in Canterbury) in conjunction with each partner (business, organisation, or individual) to suit their operations and level of involvement. *Available on a case-by-case basis as needed*, these include tools and resources for:

- Habitat improvement (weed control, island creation) in and around breeding sites
- Predator trapping (plans, training, and DOC 200 and Timms traps)
- Minimising human disturbance through signage and controlling access
- Monitoring results
- Raising broader community awareness and buy-in through
 - Education and marketing strategies (including website and social media)
 - Educational and promotional materials
 - Material to ensure the sustainability of the Project through sponsorships, donations, and 'adopt-a-bird' programmes



If you are interested in becoming involved in this Project, or would like to discuss any of the details, please contact manager@braid.org.nz or phone 0226378931.

Funded by:



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai