

## Kaikōura Water Zone Committee (KWZC)

### Meeting summary and update June 2019

The KWZC met on Wednesday 5 June. The meeting had a briefing and action plan on the Waiau Toa/Clarence riverbed weed control strategy, and updates on the Waiau Toa/Clarence predator control, zone delivery and the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) Regional Committee. Read on to hear about projects happening in the Waiau Toa River area.

[See the full agenda and meeting papers here.](#)

### Waiau Toa River Weed Control Strategy

In May 2016, the Kaikōura Water Zone Committee (KWZC) committed \$250,000 of [Immediate Steps biodiversity funding](#) to protecting indigenous biodiversity in the Waiau Toa River catchment through ongoing weed control and management. This funding was allocated for a five year period and is a part of a strategy developed to deliver outcomes and milestones that reflects the appreciation and enhancement of the unique wilderness and undeveloped character of the Waiau Toa River.

The KWZC funded three projects in the lower and upper Waiau Toa River in 2015, with a total of \$148,000 of funding committed. From 2016-2020, KWZC plan to commit another \$50,000 per year, totalling the \$250,000. The aim for projects in this work stream is to protect braided river habitat from the threat of weeds and wildlife from predators, to ensure that the native flora and fauna can continue to thrive.

### Waiau Toa Predator Control Programme

Predators kill upwards of [25 million native birds](#) every year and are the most damaging mammalian predators that threaten New Zealand's natural taonga. Today, [some 4000 native New Zealand species](#) are considered to be at some kind of risk. Around a quarter of these are in real danger of extinction.

Part of the [Immediate Steps biodiversity funding](#) has been towards predator control in the Waiau Toa River catchment. Targeted predators are the Southern Black-Backed Gull/Karoro.

Karoro are abundant birds that tend to congregate in areas where food scraps, offal and other organic waste can be obtained. In Canterbury, an estimated 30,000 pairs (so over 60,000 birds) predominantly breed on braided rivers like the Waiau Toa. They are significant predators of birds that depend on braided rivers for breeding grounds and food, such as the Black-fronted Tern. The gulls steal the eggs and chicks which pose risks to breeding and infant success for these, and other endangered bird species.

Over 2010 and 2011, and then 2015 and 2016, a total of \$171,375 has been committed to managing Karoro numbers in the Waiau Toa River. When the project started in 2015/2016, only one egg per 10 nests of Black-fronted Terns survived. In 2017/2018, one egg per two nests survived. This shows how



<http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/black-fronted-tern>



<http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/southern-black-backed-gull>

well the combination of predator trapping, weed control and habitat enhancement have a positive impact for these birds. This project will continue until 2020.

#### Useful links

- [History of Predator Free 2050 \(DOC\)](#)
- [Protecting Waiau Toa River's Black-fronted Terns](#)
- [Southern black-backed Gull](#)
- [Black-fronted Tern](#)