

## Helena Hejnova

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**From:** Environment Canterbury <no-reply@wufoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, 12 June 2017 10:20 AM  
**To:** Mailroom Mailbox  
**Subject:** Proposal for the Canterbury RPMP Plan [#13]

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**Please tick those that apply** I do wish to be heard in support of my submission; and if so, I would be prepared to consider presenting my submission in a joint case with others making a similar submission at any hearing

Attach any supporting documents here.



[braid\\_lupin\\_crpmp.docx](#) 1.23 MB · DOCX

05 June 2017

## Threat of Russell lupins in braided rivers

### Summary

It is vitally important that **Russell lupin be re-classed from an Organism of Interest** (p103 of the Proposal for the Canterbury Regional Pest Management Plan 2017-2037) **to a Pest Organism**, or at the very least, **an Unwanted Organism** to prevent its sale, propagation, and distribution.

### Background

We submit as the Chair and Manager of BRaid (braided river aid) Inc. The aim of BRaid is to reduce the decline in braided river ecosystems and assist the success of rare and endangered native birds that breed on these rivers.

Braided rivers are rare in the world, but in New Zealand they are well represented, with 59% of the country's braided river area in Canterbury. In recognition of their importance and value, **braided rivers are the only ecosystem in the ten broadly targeted areas to have its own set of targets in the Canterbury Water Management Strategy. One of the CWMS targets under 'Natural Character of Braided Rivers' is to implement actions to correct the decline in useable braided river bird habitat.**

Braided rivers are recognised as a special place in its own right in the Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy 2014-2024.

Braided river bird species are taonga species that form a fundamental part of the cultural identity and heritage of Ngāi Tahu. These endemic species include, amongst others, the kāki/black stilt (nationally critical) the tarāpuka/black-billed gull (nationally critical), tarapirohe/black-fronted tern (nationally endangered), ngutu pare/wrybill (nationally vulnerable), and turiwhatu/banded dotterel (nationally vulnerable).

Populations of these bird species are at risk in good part because of introduced predators and **weed species**. The impact of weed species on these birds is recognised in the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment report: *Taonga of an island nation: Saving New Zealand's birds* (pp76-77):

*In terms of the impact on birds, the most destructive plant invaders are almost certainly the lupins, broom, willow, poplar, and gorse that have become established on the braided riverbeds and adjoining drylands of the eastern South Island.... The weeds that have invaded the braided riverbeds crowd out nesting sites and provide perfect cover for feral cats and other predators to creep up on nests. These weeds can also stabilise river islands and force water into fewer and deeper channels, reducing the shallow rifles where wading birds feed.*



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Source: Nicholas Head

**Figure 8.4 Lupins in a South Island braided river. Although they look beautiful for a month or so, they make it more difficult for the inland wading birds to find somewhere to nest, and provide perfect cover for feral cats, ferrets, and other predators.**

Weed invasion also alters the hydro-geomorphology of the rivers so that they are no longer braided, leading to increased erosion and risk from flooding. The main invaders are broom, gorse and **lupins**.

Russell lupin is worse than the more common yellow lupin in that Russell lupin has a deeper, more extensive root system and is therefore more persistent and much harder to remove (by floods or by hand). There is ample evidence that the Russell lupin is capable of significantly reducing the extent of the shingle areas and the multiple channels or 'braids' that wander through them, which are equally necessary for the birds adapted to feeding in their shallow margins, as cited above.

Probably the worst affected rivers are in the upper Waitaki catchment, where for example, bird nesting habitat in the lower Ahuriri river has been significantly reduced by the invasion of this pest species.

Right now, **Russell lupin is steadily moving down the upper Waimakariri River, where recent bird surveys have confirmed that healthy but remnant populations of riverbed birds are breeding.** If Russell lupin is allowed to continue to spread, which it will do so naturally if unchecked, these remnant bird populations will inevitably vanish. As there is no Biodiversity Protection Programme in place for the river in this area, the decline in braided river bird habitat and concurrent decline in endangered endemic bird numbers will continue, **in contravention to one of the key CWMS targets.**

Russell lupin seed is still sold commercially in New Zealand, for example:

<http://www.kingsseeds.co.nz/shop/Flowers/Alpha+Search/Flowers+H+to+L/Lupin+Russell+mixed.html>

Hence, it is vitally important that **Russell lupin be re-classed from an Organism of Interest** (p103 of the Proposal for the Canterbury Regional Pest Management Plan 2017-2037) **to a Pest Organism**, or at the very least, **an Unwanted Organism** to prevent its sale, propagation, and distribution.

This is particularly relevant in terms of Russell lupin being promoted as a farm fodder species, particularly in high country upper catchments. This will lead to its invasion of braided rivers, where it will threaten the characteristic hydro-geomorphology and unique flora and fauna indigenous to these dynamic ecosystems.

A protocol for the existing use of Russell lupin needs to be well written, rigorously implemented, and

equally rigorously policed so that the cost of cleaning up breaches are born by the user. This would not be hard, as the species is such an obvious plant that its spread is readily detected, its origins easily traced, and rates of invasion predictable.

Yours faithfully



Nick Ledgard and Sonny Whitelaw

Chair and Manager, BRaid (braided river aid) Inc