

Braided River Character

Braided rivers are iconic features of the Canterbury landscape. The braided river floodplain, or braidplain, comprises both the active channels, less recently disturbed islands and lateral areas with more mature vegetation. The active riverbed includes the network of braided channels, islands and river margins that are inundated during flood events. There are a number of programmes underway to assist with maintenance of the braided rivers.

Targets

From 2010:

Maintain the braided character of all Canterbury's braided rivers by:

Target 1: Maintaining the upper catchments of Canterbury's alpine braided rivers as largely natural ecosystems and landscapes.

Target 2: Maintaining the extent of active floodplains, flow variability and sediment flow processes including when undertaking river protection works, land-use change or deliberate vegetation stabilisation.

Target 3: Supporting the dynamics of river mouths and coastal processes.

Target 4: No new dams on the main stem of major alpine braided rivers.

By 2020:

Canterbury's braided rivers show the dynamic, braided nature typical of such rivers.

Progress to 2020

Progress to 2020	Not started	Started ^{T1,2}	Progress ^{T3}	Good progress	Achieving ^{T4}
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Target 1: Monitoring in the upper catchments of braided rivers indicates vegetation clearance and land use intensification is occurring. ▪ Plan Change 4 of the Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) has strengthened the rules for stock grazing and vegetation clearance in braided rivers and on-farm activities. ▪ A group of agencies managing publicly owned land and including Fish & Game NZ, Land Information New Zealand, the Department of Conservation, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Forest & Bird and Federated Farmers, is focussing on the consistent management of all land in, and on, the margins of Canterbury's braided rivers. ▪ Weed control is undertaken on the upper Rangitata, Rakaia and Clarence rivers to maintain natural character. This work is funded through the Immediate Steps programme. More work is needed across the region to control pests and weeds in and around braided rivers, see fig 25. ▪ Continued significant ongoing work on weed and predator control, construction of wetlands, and research and monitoring programmes through Project River Recovery in the upper Waitaki Basin. 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Target 2: Flow variability for floodplain morphodynamics is routinely considered by Environment Canterbury when setting flows in all regional plans and in the assessment of consent applications to abstract water. ▪ Environment Canterbury manages flood defence work and gravel extraction considering potential impacts of changes to channel morphology, vegetation cover and sediment supply. ▪ Target 3: As of 2017 Environment Canterbury's monitoring has indicated only natural variability in the dynamics of river mouths and coastal processes. ▪ Works such as the Waihao Box repairs enable permanent access for water from the Waihao River and Wainono Lagoon to the ocean, maintaining coastal processes necessary to aid in the restoration of a significant coastal lagoon. ▪ The management of river mouths to control water levels is funded by some rating districts. There is an increasing awareness of the need to manage river mouths for other values including water quality, mahinga kai, salmon spawning and maintaining biodiversity values. The coastal plan does not provide for Environment Canterbury to carry this work out or to maintain its river protection infrastructure. ▪ Target 4: Damming of water in riverbeds of alpine rivers is prohibited under the LWRP.