

Canterbury's braided rivers are home to more than 25 different endangered, threatened and vulnerable wetland bird species, including the endangered Black Stilt, Black-fronted Tern and Black-billed Gull, the threatened or vulnerable Wrybill, White-fronted Tern, Caspian Tern and Banded Dotterel.

Environment Canterbury works closely with many different organisations and groups to help protect these birds and their surrounding environment, particularly during nesting season.

## Here's how you can help...

- Pay attention to signage identifying nesting areas.
- Stick to formed tracks when 4-wheel driving, biking, walking or running.
- Look out for concentrations of birds sitting on the ground – this could signify the presence of a nesting area.
- Watch the behaviour of the birds – if they are loudly calling at you or acting agitated, they may be trying to draw you away.
- If you do end up near a nest, leave as quickly and carefully as possible – if an incubating bird takes more than 10 minutes to return to its breeding territory, the eggs will chill and die.
- Prevent dogs chasing nesting or flocking birds, and ensure that dogs are not permitted to seek out nests and chicks by “scent-tracing”.

**Take a look inside for more information about these unique birds.**

Wrybill



All bird and nest photos © Andrew Crossland

## What you can do!

As the riverbed birds feed, roost, sleep, nest and raise chicks on the ground, there could be hundreds of nests around the spot where you're fishing! Common sense and a basic knowledge of where and when nesting birdlife may be present can go a long way to reducing the potentially negative impacts of fishermen, vehicles and dogs.

- Look out for concentrations of birds sitting on the ground, particularly birds that become excitable and agitated when approached. This could mean the presence of a nesting colony, or a flocking or roosting site.
- Drive as far away from the river edge as possible, closer to the river banks, on formed tracks.
- Be aware that raised areas are more likely to be nesting areas, as they are less likely to be washed out in floods.

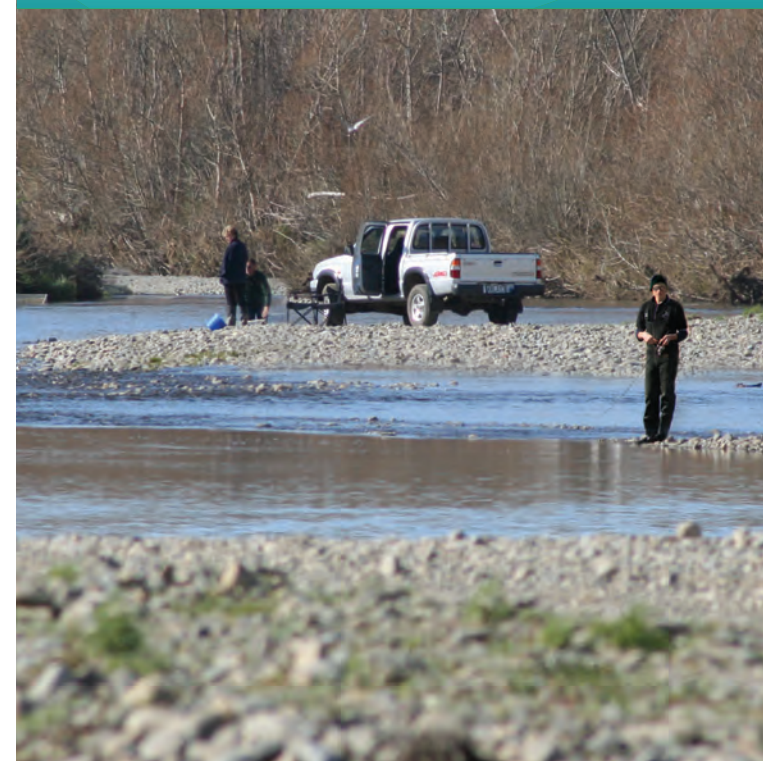
*Thank you for treading carefully along Canterbury's braided rivers and helping us to protect these unique and endangered birds.*

**Please contact Environment Canterbury's Customer Services for further information:**

**Phone (03) 353 9007 or 0800 324 636 (0800 EC INFO)**  
**Email [ecinfo@ecan.govt.nz](mailto:ecinfo@ecan.govt.nz)**

# Tread carefully!

**Reduce your impact on nesting  
birdlife while enjoying our rivers.**





## Riverbed birds live on the ground

Many people think birds are songbirds that feed, roost and nest high up in the trees. This only applies to about one in three of the bird species found in Canterbury; the other two-thirds are mainly coastal and wetland species, who spend most of their time on the ground or on water.

The birds feed, sleep, nest and raise their young on shorelines, riverbanks and waterways, making them highly vulnerable to disturbance and nest damage.

***Look out for nesting areas  
and avoid disturbing them***

## Our riverbed birds are unique

Riverbed wildlife has evolved to make the most of a stony, highly changeable environment, which can offer nesting sites and food aplenty, but can destroy a whole season's breeding effort in a single big flood.

There are more than 25 wetland bird species regularly found on some or all of Canterbury's braided riverbeds. Most nest as solitary pairs but others nest in colonies or loose clusters

## Recreational users can cause unintentional damage and disturbance

Many people enjoy Canterbury's rivers for a range of recreational activities. People can unintentionally damage riverbed birds, particularly during the breeding season (August-February). Nests can be destroyed by vehicles, motorcycles or by people walking on nests or chicks.

## A big problem is riverbed users not leaving the bird's territory quickly

Incubating birds respond to the approach of an intruder by getting off the nest and moving well away without being noticed, or by approaching the intruder closely, calling and flustering about to draw the intruder away.

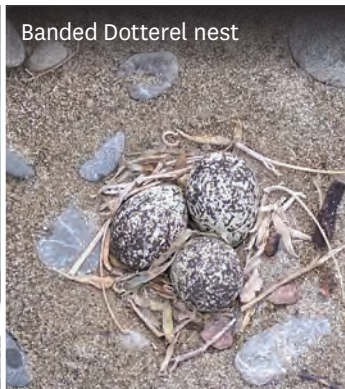
It is important to leave the area quickly because you are in the birds' breeding territory, with eggs and/or chicks somewhere on the ground, and the birds are trying to attract you away from their nest or chicks. Retreat quickly and carefully until the parent bird's aggressive behaviour subsides.

If you take more than 10 minutes to leave the breeding territory, the parent bird's return to the nest will usually be too late and the eggs will chill and die. If the nest and eggs aren't outwardly undamaged, the parent bird will continue incubating and thus waste a season's reproductive effort.

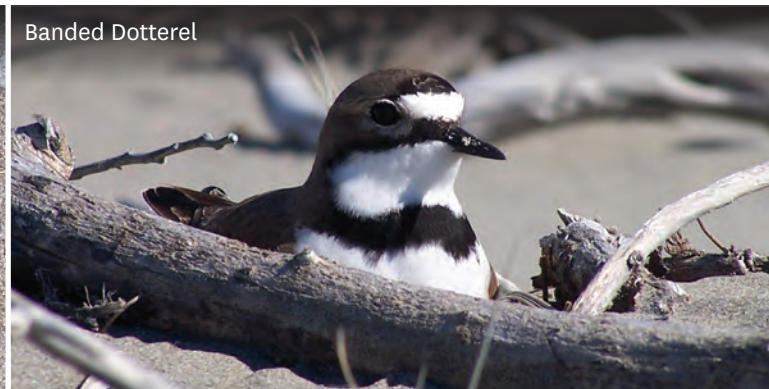
White-fronted Tern



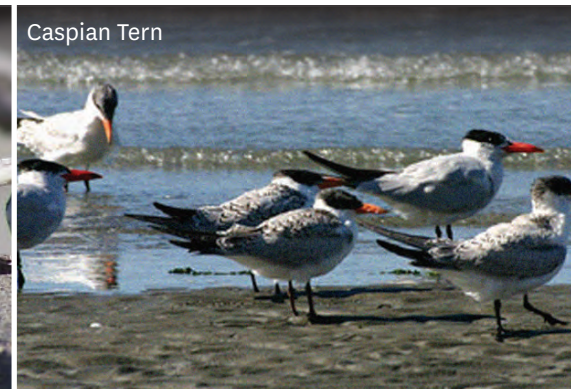
Banded Dotterel nest



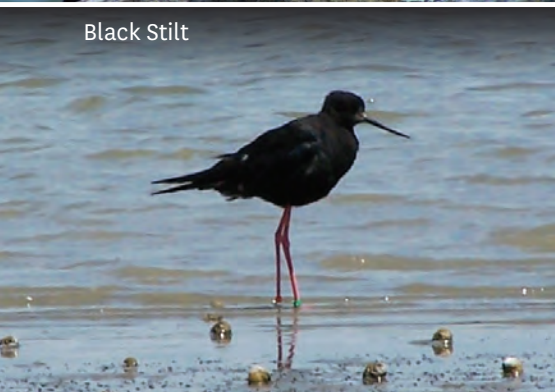
Banded Dotterel



Caspian Tern



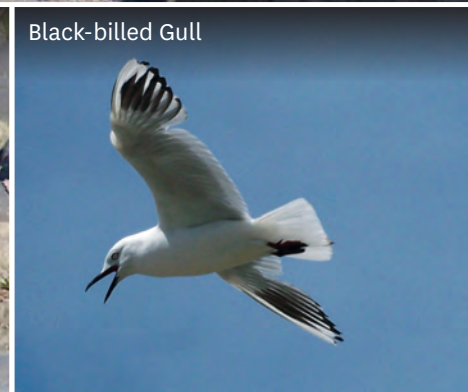
Black Stilt



Black Fronted Tern



Black-billed Gull



Can you spot the Wrybill egg?

