

LKCA – “Birds for Life” aims and principles

Introduction

Birds for Life is a long-term programme of the Lake Kaniere Community Association (LKCA). It is open to all members of the Association and anyone else passionate about Lake Kaniere and rebuilding the breadth of species and numbers of native birds at the lake.

This document outlines the aims of Birds for Life and the principles, organisation and ways of working to achieve those aims. It provides guidance for those putting together annual action plans but is not itself an action plan.

Aims

LKCA – Birds for Life aims to:

- Increase the numbers of native birds thriving in the Lake Kaniere catchment and, in the long, see the return of some species such as Kaka and Kiwi
- Create a safe breeding habitat for native birds in the areas around the Hans Bay, Landing and Sunny Bight settlements at the north end of Lake Kaniere by:
 1. **Trapping** - Reducing and keeping low the numbers of rats and stoats in those areas
 2. **Planting** - Encouraging the use of native plants in residential areas most suited as a food and nesting resource for birds
 3. **Weed control** - Minimising the presence of weed plants that compete with native plants
- Achieve this through wide and sustained local community involvement, education and awareness

Principles

The LKCA will apply the following principles to the organisation and operation of its Birds for Life programme:

- **Long game:** The LKCA recognises that the growth of introduced predator species and corresponding decline in native bird species and numbers at the lake has been 200 years in the making. We expect our actions will only have small and incremental effects over many years and will not on their own lead to a completely predator free environment in the Lake Kaniere catchment. We are optimistic though that our sustained effort focussed in and around our settlements at the north end of the lake

will provide a safer breeding habitat for native birds that will help replenish and sustain bird life across the whole Lake Kaniere catchment.

- **Simple with options:** The LKCA will keep it simple for members of the community to contribute to the programme, including providing a range of options for different levels of involvement.
- **Wider Community:** Our definition of community in the context of the Birds for Life programme extends to all those with an interest in the Lake Kaniere environment. It is not limited to members of the LKCA.
- **Broad engagement and involvement:** The LKCA will design, organise and communicate about the programme in ways to keep the wider community engaged and involved. It will avoid concentrating knowledge and effort in just a small handful of enthusiastic individuals. This is to ensure the sustainability of the programme over many years as the enthusiasm and ability of individuals to contribute varies over time.
- **Safe:** The LKCA will ensure that practical steps are taken to avoid unnecessary safety risk in relation to any activity performed by members of the community as part of the Birds for Life programme.
- **Targeted and compliant:** The LKCA will ensure that any predator control activities organised or supported as part of the Birds for Life programme are designed and managed to impact only the target species and eliminate bi-catch i.e. don't kill the wrong things such as Weka, Kea and family pets.
- **Fun, educational and inspiring:** The LKCA will seek ways to make the Birds for Life programme fun, educational and inspiring for the wider community.
- **Partnership:** The LKCA will maintain a special relationship with the Department of Conservation which shares our aims, and within whose Scenic Reserve some of our activities may occur. This includes complying with the terms of a 'community agreement' with DOC. The LKCA will also be open to partnerships with sponsors and other parties that wish to support the aims of our Birds for Life programme.

Organisation

The organisation of the Birds for Life programme may change over time. It is currently organised into three broad functions:

1. **Contributors:** Everyone in the wider community is potentially a contributor. Contributors might do any one or more of the following:
 - Be part of a flexible roster of people checking, clearing, and baiting traps
 - Place and monitor tracking tunnels that literally fingerprint what's running around our bush
 - Contribute to bird counts and monitoring
 - Agree to have a trap in their backyard (maintained by themselves or others)
 - Donate towards the costs of trap materials and maintenance

- Look out for and report weeds
 - Pull out weeds
 - Help others deal with weeds
 - Make coffee
2. **Specialists:** A smaller group of people with a strong interest in the programme can be trained as specialists. Specialists are people able to help, advise, and sometimes supervise contributors on any one or more of the following:
- Setting and baiting traps
 - Using tracking tunnels and interpreting animal fingerprints
 - Conducting reliable bird counts
 - Recording trapping and monitoring data in Trap.NZ, and reporting from it
 - Managing a roster
 - Building and restoring traps
 - Advising on and assisting with weed control
 - Advising on bird-friendly native planting
3. **Organiser:** A group of three individuals comprises the organising committee. They:
- Plan the year's programme
 - Ensure the programme stays focussed on its aims and principles
 - Recruit contributors and specialists
 - Organise training and refreshers for specialists
 - Maintain relationships with DOC, partners and sponsors
 - Secure funding and manage the budget
 - Track and manage the programme's assets
 - Stand for re-election every year as part of the LKCA annual meeting
 - Are not remunerated, but are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses

Birds for Life in action

- **Scenario 1:** A property owner is happy to make a \$100 p.a. donation towards the cost of traps and maintenance and to have one in their backyard but doesn't want to be responsible for looking after it. This property owner is by definition a Contributor. The Organisers arrange for a Specialist to buddy up with the property owner and to install and look after the backyard trap. The trap remains the property of the LKCA. The trap is regularly cleared and baited by someone on the roster.
- **Scenario 2:** Someone wishes to contribute to the Birds for Life programme by going on the roster to clear and bait traps. The organisers arrange for a Specialist to train them on how to do the task, and to put them on the roster based on their availability. The roster is monthly, with all traps in the Birds for Life programme being checked and maintained on the same day to make it a social activity.
- **Scenario 3:** It's trap checking day and all six people rostered for that month's event have turned up. They've already been trained by a Specialist and there are some

experienced and new people in the group. A specialist runs through the safety check list with them all, supplies them with the kit for the maintenance job, puts them into three pairs with each pair having a list of traps to check, and sends them on their way. Each pair locates the traps and records what they find on Trap.NZ as they go. They also look out for weeds and either deal with them immediately or report them for follow-up later by others. Ninety minutes later everyone meets up to compare finds, share stories, and have a coffee.

- **Scenario 4:** A property owner at Lake Kaniere is thinking about creating a new garden or enhancing an existing one to attract and support native birds. They check the LKCA website for guidance and, if needed, can also contact a Specialist for further advice.

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