



Canterbury Matuku /
Australasian bittern Project

DOC Mahaanui

Te Waihora Living Lake Symposium, 9-10 November 2017, Lincoln University

www.doc.govt.nz

Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

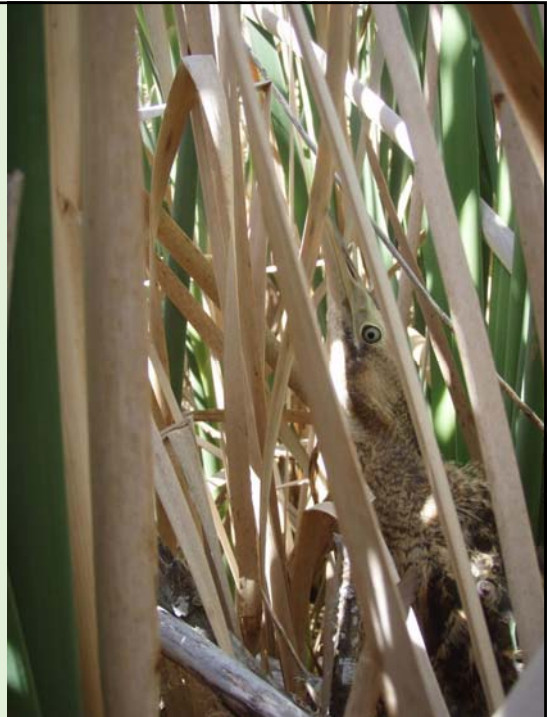
Acknowledgements

- Environment Canterbury – particularly Frances Schmechel, Greg Stanley & Mark Parker
- Christchurch City Council – particularly Kenny Rose & John Skilton
- Peter Langlands
- Travis Wetland Trust
- DOC – particularly Anita Spencer & Colin O'Donnell
- Dr Emma Williams
- Local landowners, particularly Russell Skilling, Colin & Valmai Patterson and Duncan & Leigh-Anne Jefferis

Matuku / Australasian Bittern

- Critically endangered wetland bird
- Highly cryptic
- Specialist feeder: stalk, eyeball, stab!

Photo credit – Graeme Bell, Travis Wetland



What's the problem?

- Wetland loss & degradation
- Starvation
- Predation – full suite of predators in wetlands
- Human impacts – sensitive to disturbance
- Often use a network of wetlands as conditions change
- Lack of knowledge - bitterns are extremely cryptic and difficult to monitor



What are we doing about it?

- Predator control
- Willow control
- Habitat enhancement



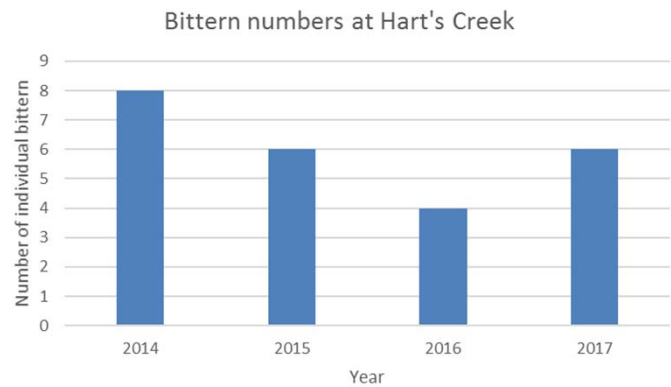
What are we doing?

- Acoustic Recording Devices (ARD's)
- Manual listening
- Attaching GPS satellite transmitters

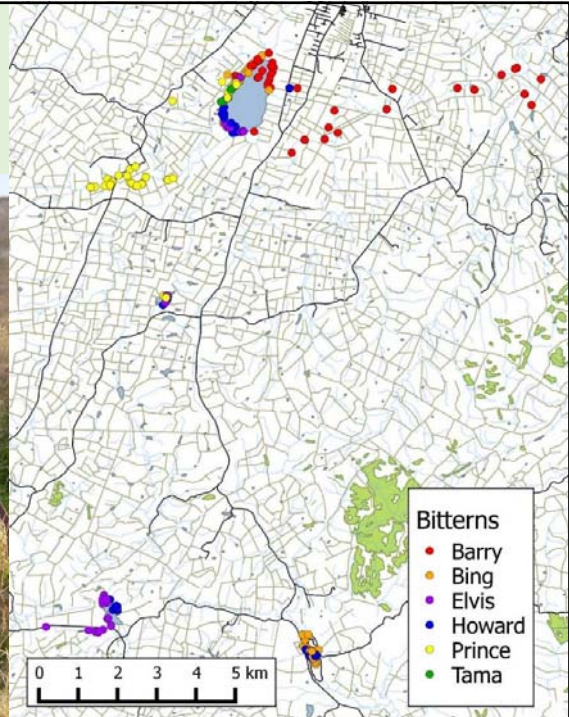


What have we found out so far?

- Call monitoring shows variability during breeding season
- Birds may be moving between sites as conditions change



National research



Where to next?

- Monitor tagged birds
- Expand predator & weed control
- Link in with national findings
- Use information gathered from call monitoring and tagged birds to target our management efforts = make more bitterns





Key messages

- Bitterns are awesome!
- Bitterns are critically threatened
- Bitterns are sneaky – let us know if you see one
- Ongoing research & adaptive management is needed to learn how to best protect them

