

Avifauna

Technical Discussion

1. This Technical Discussion statement relates to expert discussion on the topic of Avifauna.
2. This statement relates to the Fast-track consent application lodged by Genesis Energy Limited under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 for a water permit to divert, take and use water and a discharge permit to discharge water and associated contaminants, all associated with the operation of the Tekapo Power Scheme (referred to in this document as the “**Tekapo PS**”)
3. The technical discussion was held by Teams conference call on 27 June 2025.
4. Attendees at the conference were:

Person	Organisation	Role
Leigh Bull (“ LB ”)	BlueGreen Ecology Limited	Advice to Genesis regarding avifauna matters
Jean Jack (“ JJ ”)	Canterbury Regional Council (“ CRC ”)	Advice to CRC regarding avifauna matters
Susannah Black (“ SB ”)	CRC	Advice to CRC regarding planning matters
Richard Matthews (“ RM ”)	Mitchell Daysh Limited (“ MDL ”)	Advice to Genesis regarding planning matters

5. The scope of the issues discussed included:
 - a. Discussions regarding matters raised by CRC.
 - b. Confirmation of areas of agreement/disagreement.
 - c. Discussions regarding draft consent conditions.
 - d. Any other matters we considered relevant.
7. The matters discussed and the positions reached are summarised in the following table:

Issue	Comments / Discussion
<p>Will spills relating to gate testing have an impact on nesting birds and if so, to what extent would this impact be?</p>	<p>LB clarified her understanding that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Spills arise from lake inflows, operational activities and gate testing; and (b) Operational and gate testing spills are primarily limited to the upper Takapō River. <p>LB noted that the operational and gate testing flows are summarised in section 4.1.2 of her “Tekapo Power Scheme Reconsenting: Assessment of Ecological Effects – Avifauna” reports (Appendix Q for the Tekapo PS Fast-track application and the effect of the spill regime is discussed in section 5.1.2 of the report.</p> <p>SB noted that the extent to which effects associated with inflow driven spills may be considered is a point of difference between Genesis and CRC and not a matter that could be resolved in this discussion. As such focus of discussions related to ‘operational releases’.</p> <p>JJ questioned whether all releases via Gate 16 for gate testing, recreational flows and other operational matters are returned to the Tekapo Canal via Gate 17 and do not result in spills below the Lake George Scott weir.</p> <p>RM clarified that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) There are differences between the Genesis and Meridian infrastructure meaning that the effect of spill flows will differ for both. (b) Spill flows downstream of Lake George Scott are driven by lake inflows rather than scheme operation. (c) Releases via Gate 16 for gate testing, recreational flows and other operational matters are returned to the Tekapo Canal via Gate 17 and do not result in spills below the Lake George Scott weir. (d) The Genesis hydrological advice discussed on 26 June is that spill flows below the Lake George Scott weir are unlikely to change under the consents sought by Genesis. <p>JJ indicated that she considered that the upper Takapō River (i.e. between Gate 16 and the Lake George Scott weir) is generally unsuitable for bird nesting and that her primary concern relates to spills / flows downstream of the Lake George Scott weir.</p>

Issue	Comments / Discussion
Where there is likely to be an effect, is the following condition useful in mitigating effects on nesting birds?	RM noted that given that spill flows downstream of Lake George Scott are driven by lake inflows rather than scheme operation and are difficult to predict, Genesis considers that the condition provided is unnecessary.
<p>Relating to IBEP:</p> <p>(a) Instream island creation and location;</p> <p>(b) Scheme contribution to ongoing bird population declines; and</p> <p>(c) Potential effect of mammalian predation on freshwater avifauna at the Takapō Lake edges.</p>	<p>SB, JJ, RM and LB noted that matters related to the IBEP are subject to a separate process.</p> <p>JJ noted that island creation as part of a Project River Recovery / IBEP project needed to be in appropriate locations and should take account of matters should a high flow spills.</p> <p>LB noted that island creation should have positive benefits for birds in the catchment.</p> <p>JJ accepted that:</p> <p>(a) LB's Avifauna report identified the key types of effects for the Tekapo PS.</p> <p>(b) Isolating the key effects from the scheme is a complex matter but should be able to identify where effects are more likely to occur and target those areas.</p> <p>(c) A program such as Project River Recovery or the IBEP can be used in respect of potential bird effects, especially where those effects cannot be directly associated with a particular scheme operation.</p> <p>(d) A catchment approach to addressing effects is appropriate but it must focus on relevant effects so content of the IBEP is important.</p> <p>LB noted that the objectives and outcomes for the IBEP / Kahu Ora (and reflected in the proposed consent conditions) are important.</p> <p>JJ/LB noted that it is important to consider what can be done in respect of the decline in the wrybill population in the catchment, noting that the reason for the decline is not clear. They also recognised the complexity of ecosystem interactions and the challenges in determining the extent to which the scheme may be contributing to the pressure on the birds.</p> <p>JJ noted that much has been learnt from Project River Recovery (PRR), including the intensity of management required to achieve a positive outcome for birds and noted this level of intensity would need to be replicated if outcomes for wrybill or other species are to be attained.</p>

Issue	Comments / Discussion
	JJ asked LB how climate change may impact freshwater birds of the WPS in the future. LB considered it difficult to predict.

No further actions (other than IBEP discussion) with respect to avifauna matters were identified during the discussion.

Confirmed by email:

Leigh Bull

Email dated 3/6/25 10:08 am.

Susannah Black

Email dated 2/6/25 2:56 pm.

Jean Jack

Email dated 2/6/25 11:12 am.

Richard Matthews

