

The Kaiapoi and Waimakariri River Rowing Area

Considerations for Rowers

The Kaiapoi and Waimakariri River areas can get very busy, particularly if there are other rowing clubs out training and also during the fishing season. Tide and weather influence the area significantly from one period to another, as do the seasons. Rowers and coaches must be aware of prevailing and forecast weather conditions, as well as the tide. Coaches should make sensible calls on going out based on:

1. Good understanding of the river hazards
2. Potential users at any one time
3. Knowledge of the weather and tide, and
4. Experience of the crews going out.

River Users

Users include fishermen in boats - stationary and moving, other users of powered craft including jet skis. Also, fishermen along the banks, white baiters, kayakers and other paddlers. Periodically, also people in sailing boats.

Other Rowing clubs likely to be on the water include:

- St Margaret's College – boats will travel downstream from the other side of William's Street Bridge and will stay on the Kaiapoi River if Waimakariri River conditions are poor.
- St Bedes' College – from Stewart's Gulley
- Southern RPC – from Stewarts Gulley

The club identifies that sharing this information with other river users is useful in supporting good safety practices of all those that use the waterways.

Weather and Tide Considerations

- Heavy rain in the Southern Alps will bring the Waimakariri down in flood. Expect water levels to rise very quickly following onset of nor-west weather. Overnight rain in the Alps will see the river flood by lunchtime the following day.
- A southerly change will hit the main river very quickly and can cause sudden, very difficult conditions.
- Persistent north easterly winds that build during the day in summer are problematic.

The Hazards

Identified problem areas of the river are numbered on table below and referenced on an accompanying map.

The nature of the environment lends itself to temporary but significant hazards such as underwater snags.

Hazards are assessed on a regular basis. Any new hazards that present are noted on a large map in the Club lounge.

Hazard Summary

Area	Map ref.	Hazard description	What rowers can do to mitigate risks
Directly off boat ramp at club	1	<p>Congestion due to the following, compounded at low tide :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Moored boats in river and on opposite bank/off pontoons · Rowers from other clubs rowing up or downstream at same time as Cure boats are launching, turning, returning to club · Motorised craft causing excessive wash onto launching ramp 	<p>BE AWARE of river traffic at all times. Hold off launching or berthing if busy. Turn boats on land & launch directly downstream during busy hrs. Stay on correct side of the river. Know what to do if in danger of being pushed up onto ramp (boat wash).</p>
Askeaton boat ramp	2	<p>Fisherman's launching ramp – can have a number of boats waiting to come in. Situated on double bend of river. Becomes congested at periodically such as public holidays and in the white bait and salmon fishing seasons.</p>	<p>BE AWARE of potential for congestion. Stay on the correct side of the river. Hold back if a backlog of boats are waiting to get off the water. Ask to get through (coxswain or stroke).</p>
Confluence of the Kaiapoi and Waimakariri Rivers.	3	<p>Major moored boat fishing area. In season can have up to 25 boats moored across the span of the Waimakariri. On a curve of the main river, the rowing channel becomes very narrow at lower tides. Fishermen also line the downstream side of the river.</p>	<p>STAY ON CORRECT SIDE of river. Be alert, as the fishermen move. No power rowing through area. Consider staying on upper or lower reach of river – no travelling through.</p>
Mackintosh's Hole	3	<p>Directly to the downstream side of the mouth of the Kaiapoi River. Very deep with dangerous currents, particularly on an outgoing tide.</p>	<p>No stopping– enter main river and move upstream a good 50 m before pausing. Start and finish work pieces outside of area. DO NOT PARK IN AREA</p>
Shallow area on low tide	4	<p>Directly upstream from the mouth of Kaiapoi River. Can force boats travelling upstream into centre of river for 50 - 100 m or more. All navigable channels narrow significantly at low tide. Potential for congestion and crashes.</p>	<p>Coach to make a call on whether there is sufficient water in main river to be safe. Move outward of shallow water BUT ALWAYS STAY ON CORRECT SIDE of centre. BE AWARE of boats coming downstream. BE AWARE of boats coming upstream.</p>
Shallow water/bar (low tide)	5	<p>Long stretch of shallow water in centre of the river between mouth of Kaiapoi River and Stewart's Gulley Yacht Club at low tide. Upstream rowers should stay to the true left of the bar. Downstream rowers should stay to the true right.</p>	<p>STAY ON CORRECT SIDE of centre.</p>

Sand /shingle bank at top of rowable stretch of river	6	Bank starts in centre of river approximately 150 m upstream of Stewart’s Gulley Yacht Club and continues to widen further upstream. Low tide up-river rowing is significantly restricted. Low tide congestion can occur if more than one club on water.	All rowers should be aware of what tide they are rowing on. STAY ON CORRECT SIDE of centre. Don’t travel up beyond point of where skiff can no longer row directly across river to turn around. Turn quickly and move off to side before resting so that other boats can finish their pieces.
Kairaki Boat Club	7	The furthest downstream point for rowers. Care must be taken in unfavourable weather and tide conditions. A sudden southerly can cause capsize and with outgoing tide can push boats out onto the bar.	Be aware of the weather forecast and pay attention to immediate conditions.
Across both rivers		White baiters with equipment in the river, fishermen with lines off boats and banks, boat and jet ski wakes, floating debris, snags. (see map for identified areas of bank and boat locations)	Be aware of other users. The river is a shared resource. Don’t assume all users understand the river or use river protocols. Always be on lookout for debris, snags. Warn others if you come across anything potentially hazardous.

