



Tiakina ngā manu tā ia ripanga, tā ia ripanga
Saving the birds (and bats) one spreadsheet at a time

Updated Banding Office timeframes.....	1
Fun FALCON fact.....	1
Birds of a feather, flock together: the Tauhou trio team	2
That's a wrap!	2
Banding Office out-and-about – Michelle Bradshaw	2
Data out depends on data in: do your bit for FALCON	3
Birds NZ Conference – come along and meet the Banding Office team!	3
Resightings Holy Grail	4
The shoulders we stand on: Friedrich-Carl Kinsky (1911-1999).....	4
Keep an eagle eye out for banded birds.....	5
From the Archives – Angus Fordham.....	5
A precious bird	6
A familiar face	6
Feats beyond amazing – Paul Gibson	7
Farewell to a true-blue bird.....	7
Banding Office out-and-about – Annemieke Hamilton.....	8
New Zealand's oldest known long-tailed bat	9
New Zealand dotterels on Auckland's West Coast – Adrian Riegen.....	10
Wandering Waikato kākā – Neil Fitzgerald	11
Marked birds tell us about the good, the bad, the sad and the shag – Matt Rayner.....	12
Native bird whakatauki.....	12
“He aha tēnei?” / “what is this?”: bands without hyphens	13
Answer to: “He aha tēnei?” – Metal Alphanumerics	13
Puzzled: Lingo Bingo	13
Puzzled: Answers to Put it on the bill.....	13

Updated Banding Office timeframes

Please note that in order to balance workload and stakeholder expectations, we have adjusted some timeframes and turnaround times in the Banding Office as follows:

- Level 1 certification applications: 1 month
- Level 2/3 certification applications: 6 weeks once application documents are complete
- Processing equipment and band orders (note new [Price List](#) and [Order Form](#)): 1 month

Fun FALCON fact



@mieke_masterpieces

Pōpokatea Whiteheads are only found in the North Island and are the only North Island host for long-tailed cuckoo. According to the [FALCON database](#), 1380 individuals have been marked, and there are 153 resighting records and no recovery (dead bird) records! The earliest first marking event for whiteheads in FALCON is from 7 November 1967 at the Orongorongo Research Station, and the most recent marking event was 5 December 2022 at Taranaki Regional Park.

If you have any whitehead marking data, and you are unsure if it is in FALCON please get in touch! bandingoffice@doc.govt.nz

Birds of a feather, flock together: the Tauhou trio team

In the Banding Office we say that every band tells a story. Well, imagine the delight when three bands all tell the same story! Three Tauhou ([Silvereye](#)) were caught in the same net at the same time on 29th March 2023 at Matuku Link, and each given a unique band (AP-31201, AP-31202, and AP-31203). Not particularly unusual. However, on the 7th August 2023 again at Matuku Link three tauhou were caught on the same day at the same time. Imagine the surprise of the banders on site when all three birds were extracted from the mist-net and found to be in chronological band order! It's interesting to wonder if they are just good friends, family members, or if it is just a random coincidence – what are the chances? The good news is that with their bands we were able to know this time, and we'll be able to know next time if all three turn up in the same net again too!

That's a wrap!

The Banding Office will no longer offer the service of wraparound band making. Alternatives to wraparound colour bands include alphanumeric bands or flags – note that these need to be purchased from reputable overseas suppliers such as [Colour-Rings EU](#) but that you still need to check with the Banding Office regarding colour and letter/number combinations to prevent overlap with other projects. Another alternative is adding a colour to numbered or blank metal bands. The Banding Office can supply the bands; however, you need to make your own arrangement to have these anodised (if aluminium) or powder-coated (stainless steel). Some projects have successfully used reflective or other tape to add a colour to an existing metal band. Please get in touch with the [Banding Office](#) if you have any queries or suggestions in this regard.

Banding Office out-and-about – Michelle Bradshaw

Administering a Banding Scheme is largely a desk-based operation, but from time to time, Banding Office staff have the opportunity to join bird banding field trips. This allows us to “get our hands dirty”, observe the practical application of Best Practice and learn from experts alongside trainee banders. We can follow the ‘data trail’ all the way from the bird to the notebook and the spreadsheet to data submission onto the [FALCON Bird Banding Database](#). The best bit is connecting with banding operators and finding ways to better support their work.

Wader catching at the Motueka sandspit involves lots of health and safety paperwork, an early start, a good couple of kilometres of walking, and the possibility of close-up views of Orca while waiting for the tide and godwits to line up for a catch attempt. Participating in research such as pathogen sampling (led by Janelle Wierenga (School of Veterinary Sciences, Massey University; Department of Microbiology and Immunology, University of Otago), satellite tracking (Bart Kempnaers, Max Planck Institute for Ornithology) and learning ever-more about the fascinating world of moult patterns (David Melville and Rob Schuckard, Birds NZ) provides insights into the importance of marking individual birds for research.



Image credit: Michelle Bradshaw

Data out depends on data in: do your bit for FALCON

It is great to see the [FALCON database](#) being used by bird banders to submit their marking data, whether that be first marking details and/or resighting records. As a reminder to project managers and team members, you should regularly check that the data listed within your projects is accurate. This includes making sure that banders are correctly attributed to their banding records, adding missing records, and making sure that erroneous or inaccurate records are fixed. If this is not something that can be done by yourself, then please contact the Banding Office for assistance.

Band resightings are a hugely valuable addition to any bird marking dataset and the Banding Office is very appreciative of every report that is submitted. If you are a certified operator then you have access to some of FALCON's functionality, including open records. If you sight a marked bird, or you know of a resighting via another forum (Facebook, eBird, iNaturalist etc), and the bird is not part of your project, then [please report it to the Banding Office](#), even if you have found 'the answer', and can provide the first marking details to all. Please bear in mind that not all the data in FALCON, particularly the older data, has been cleaned, as this is a work in progress, so some details may not be complete or accurate. Also, you may think you have struck gold when doing a search, but there are hidden traps – ***banders, birds, and bands can be tricky!***

If a resighting is not reported to the Banding Scheme, this has various impacts:

- The bander may not be aware of the resighting, which isn't fair given that they have often gone to a lot of time and expense in marking a population for their research project. The Banding Office contacts project managers if a resighting for their project has been received.
- The bird is wearing a band for a purpose – to contribute to research. If the resighting is not verified or collated using a proper process then the effort of both the bander and the bird is wasted.
- The future will need reliable datasets. One day the data that we are all working on will be classed as 'historical'. Let us make sure that it is considered valuable due to its accuracy and completeness.

By all means share data on social media and websites, but also consider the wider banding community, which includes the NZNBBS. If you have located the first marking of a bird on FALCON that you have resighted (or you are searching on behalf of someone else) then ***please share this resighting event by reporting it to the Banding Office so that it can be verified***, possibly disseminated to others, and stored safely in a centralised data repository. The record may be crucial to someone's research, a new longevity record for the species, a previously unknown location for a particular species, or a 'historical gem' for a future database searcher.

Update: Avian influenza

Find out about High pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI), the risk to New Zealand, and the actions we'll take if it is detected here: [High pathogenicity avian influenza and the risk to NZ](#). Note that ***we may need to restrict or suspend bird capture and marking activities with immediate effect***.

Please report any suspected cases of HPAI to MPI's Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline at **0800 80 99 66**.

Birds NZ Conference – come along and meet the Banding Office team!



The next [Birds NZ Conference](#) is fast approaching and will be held 1-3 June in Nelson. Registrations close on 10 May, so you can still grab a spot to attend!

The Banding Office will host a "Banding Gathering" meeting and have an exhibitor table with our usual array of 3-D printed legs, puppets, bands, equipment, and other banding goodies. Come along and have a chat to Michelle Bradshaw (Banding Officer), Sandy Taylor (Resightings Officer), Annemieke Hamilton (Technical Administrator) or Jon Thomas (DOC manager & "Puzzled: Lingo Bingo" judge). Also keep an eye out for a poster on the longevity of New Zealand birds, based on banding data – betcha there will be something there you didn't know.



Resightings Holy Grail

So, you have seen a live banded bird – that’s terrific! But before you race to [FALCON’s Sighting Form](#), try and get a few details first. Noting the species is helpful but failing that please provide a description or even better, a photo (it does not have to be magazine quality perfection). The date seen and accurate location is required (latitude and longitude are appreciated, but a known street, beach, river, suburb etc is acceptable – the Sightings form has a useful zoom-and-click map). Any context is nice to have, e.g., in middle of road feeding on roadkill, wandering amongst rock pools, sitting on my deck, have seen bird before at my feeder, in a flock of 30 godwits, etc.

The most important thing of all to get right, or as right as conditions allow, is the band(s). If colour banded, what are the colours, and on which leg (left and/or right – not as easy as it sounds to determine particularly if the bird is moving, in a tree, or at a distance)? The holy grail is the metal band number. Do not try and capture a bird simply for the sake of reading the band number unless you have the required [competency and permission](#) to do so. In general, wild birds find being handled by humans to be highly stressful and an unpleasant experience. Thankfully, binoculars and/or the zoom functionality on modern phones/cameras are sometimes capable of revealing just enough of the band number to be able to identify the individual bird.

With some patience and skill, Angus Fordham provides a good example of this:

“As I walked around this area [Wellington’s waterfront] I spotted the gull and noticed that it had a leg band. I have seen a bird here about a month ago which I thought might have a leg band, but it flew away before I could photograph it. But on this occasion I was able to take photos of the bird and see the band with my binoculars. The bird is a healthy-looking adult.”

The bird Angus saw is a Southern Black-backed Gull, S-73673 (right tarsus), which was banded as a juvenile on 30/12/2008 at Matiu/Somes Island, Wellington. Sixteen years old and counting. Nice to see both the metal band and the bird are holding up well.



Image credit: Angus Fordham.

Of course, the same principles apply to dead banded birds in terms of the resighting details required – it’s just easier to read their bands and take their photo!

The shoulders we stand on: Friedrich-Carl Kinsky (1911-1999)

The New Zealand bird banding scheme officially started in 1950 with the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (OSNZ) & R. A. Falla (Director of Dominion Museum) using a 1947 government grant of £50 to purchase bands from America. One of the first to use these bands was F. C. Kinsky who banded black-backed gull chicks at Baring Head from 1951-1953. Kinsky later became the convener of the Banding Scheme on 1 April 1956, significantly contributing to the scheme’s data collection, and creating comprehensive annual reports of banding operations (by species, locality, and operator) and recoveries. The number of active banders, fostered by his encouragement, grew from 22 to 55. The average number of birds banded per year almost quadrupled, from fewer than 4000 during the early years, to almost 16,000. Each year that Kinsky was the Scheme’s convenor (except 1957) a new record was set for the number of birds banded. Numbers of annual recoveries and repeats also grew from 362 to 4581. He became the curator of birds at the Dominion Museum in 1963.

For those interested in further reading his obituary, it was published by [Notornis](#) (the New Zealand ornithological journal of [Birds NZ](#)) and can be downloaded at: [Friedrich-Carl Kinsky \(1911-1999\); His life and contributions to bird study in New Zealand \(birdsnz.org.nz\)](#)

Keep an eagle eye out for banded birds

The Timaru Courier, June 1, 2023, had a nice article showcasing the work of the New Zealand Raptor Trust and indicating how important bands are to identify raptors and owls when they were released after rehabilitation.

“The message we want to get across is for people to report to Doc or us if they see a band or a bird with a band, whether it is alive or dead, as we want to know what the birds are up to and where they go.”



Please keep an eagle-eye out for banded birds, and report them to the Banding Office using the online [Sightings Form](#) – photographs will also help in identification and double-checking band numbers and colours.

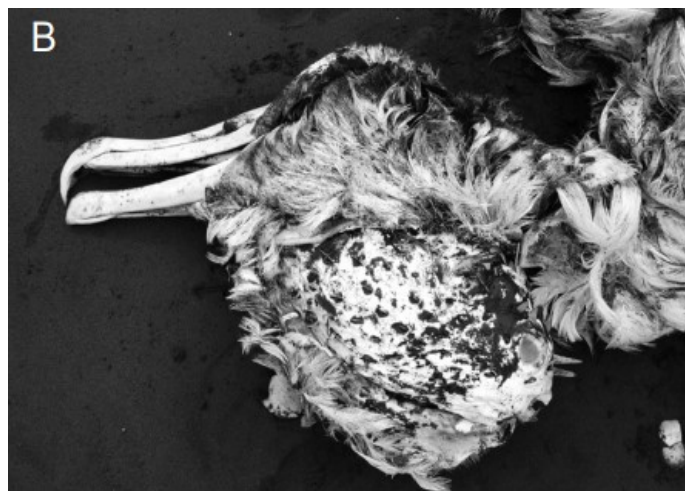
Rehabilitated . . . One of the wild hawks that was caught and rehabilitated shows off the silver Doc band and the Canterbury red band people can look out for.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

From the Archives – Angus Fordham

Sometimes the birds outlive their bands, and so several bands tell a story. This was the case for Southern Royal Albatross (R-48543 & RA-2321). Banded as a chick on Campbell Island (R-48543) on 29 September 1996, re-banded with a new band (RA-2321) and found dead on 12 November 2006 in Auckland having choked to death from attempting to consume a puffer fish! An unusual report to stumble across!

For those wondering, yes this resighting did become a [Notornis article](#).



A Southern Royal Albatross recovery for you.

Banded right tarsus, RA-2321

Found 12/11/2006 by Phil Battley & Sue Moore Kariotahi Beach, South Auckland Perhaps only a matter of days old (slightly smelly but flesh still OK around neck). Abdomen opened and empty. Wings flexible. No maggots. Choked to death on a 27 cm puffer fish! The fish was visible in the throat (photos to follow later).

The wings, head and right tarsus + band were kept and are going to Brian Gill on Monday. It'd be good if you could give me the banding details before the Sth Auck OSNZ meeting on Tuesday.

I might put a note into Southern Bird with photos of the fish, or should this go on record somewhere more serious like Notornis?

Cheers, Phil

R 48543 + RA2321

A precious bird

“Deceased, on observation you could tell it had been killed by getting hooked on a big game fishing hook. The line stuck in the albatross looked like it had swallowed it and had been cut free by the fishermen and the bird must have died at sea and washed up a shore. The line and hook are still in albatross. We retrieved the metal tag from the bird’s right leg, but we left the white plastic tag attached. The tags don’t look very old at all, and we roughly estimated that the bird may have been there for two weeks.” So wrote Lynlee Stout and Mitchell Gilpin who found this bird on 2/04/2024 at Makaka Bay, Huia, Manukau Harbour entrance, West Auckland.



The metal band this bird wore indicated it was Australian banded and the first marking details were duly forwarded by the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS). This Wandering Albatross (*Diomedea exulans*) was banded on 12/10/2021 - metal band 140-52506 (right tarsus) and white alphanumeric band 267 (left tarsus) - at Macquarie Island (-54.50, 158.92) as a nestling, sex unknown.



Image credit: Lynlee Stout and Mitchell Gilpin

The Wandering Albatross population on Macquarie Island is the only one in the Pacific and it is small. According to the *National Recovery Plan for albatrosses and petrels (2022)*, Commonwealth of Australia 2022, p 99, the number of breeding pairs over recent years has ranged from a low of three to a high of 13. This is a vulnerable population that struggles to successfully breed and get its offspring to the fledging stage, so a real shame to have this young bird lost in such a cruel manner. The Banding Office is grateful to Lynlee and Mitchell for reporting this bird as its story will contribute to research on fishing bycatch. Lynlee says, “We are so glad we have been able to help, especially if it has potential to help prevent further injury or death to these precious birds.”

A familiar face

‘White’, the Khandallah Kererū, is still making herself known to the neighbours. This bird featured in our [January 2017 newsletter](#) when Peter Stevens reported that a banded Kererū was a frequent visitor to his property at Amapur Drive, Wellington. ‘White’, was banded on 8 May 2009 with a metal band (S-53676) and a white jess (because short, feathered legs tend to hide bands) in Ngaio, Wellington. She had been taken to a rehabilitation facility as a juvenile and successfully cared for and released by Karin Wiley.



Well, Amapur Drive continues to be White’s favourite place in the world. Rebecca recently sent a report to the Banding Office giving us an update. “We first saw this bird back in 2019 when we moved into our home. She returned often (sometimes daily) and is very tame. We have many photos of her over the years and enjoy seeing her immensely. We had not seen her for almost a year so thought she must have passed away given her age. That was, until today (7 April 2024). I recognised her face first and then saw the white jess on her left leg so am certain it is her. I thought you might be keen to know that she is still alive and thriving in the hills of Khandallah/Ngaio. We are very spoilt and have many native birds around our home including Tūī, Korimako, Piwakawaka and Kākā but she is definitely my favourite! I’ll be sure to update you every now and then and hope that she continues to visit for some time to come.”

Image credit: Rebecca



Feats beyond amazing – Paul Gibson

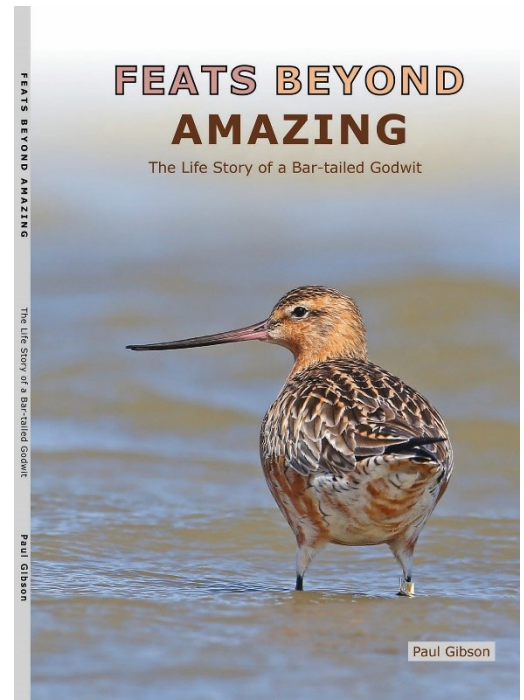
Here is a recent picture of AJD, colouring up nicely and looking in a very healthy condition, despite his advancing age.

AJD usually migrates on 25 March at 5 pm; this year was his 16th departure from the Whanganui Estuary.

I have been following him for 16 years and we are now like old friends. I recently wrote a book on him, “Feats Beyond Amazing”, that has been sold worldwide.

Below is a brief overview of my book – if it was not for the flag on his leg, we would not know him from any other bird – hence the value of banding.

FEATS BEYOND AMAZING - After years of observation, a clear picture has emerged of a creature so incredible, that its feats are beyond amazing. A male bar-tailed godwit, that carries a white flag engraved with the black letters, AJD, completes a 30,000 km round trip each year to nest in north-west Alaska. These epic trips are proof of their navigation skills and endurance, earning the species a place in Guinness World Records, for the longest non-stop journey of any creature on earth. Even more incredible, AJD migrates north each year, often at the same time, on the same day, and from the same spot. This book tells, for the first time, the close relationship between this wild bird and the book’s author, a connection that to date has spanned sixteen years.



Kahurangi the kōkako. Image credit: Annemieke Hendriks

Farewell to a true-blue bird

Kahurangi (the kōkako from Pūkaha Mount Bruce) featuring in articles from [Feb 2022](#) and [Dec 2021](#) was discovered dead on 2 December 2023.

Kahurangi was the only captive kōkako ambassador and enabled many visitors to see a kōkako up close.

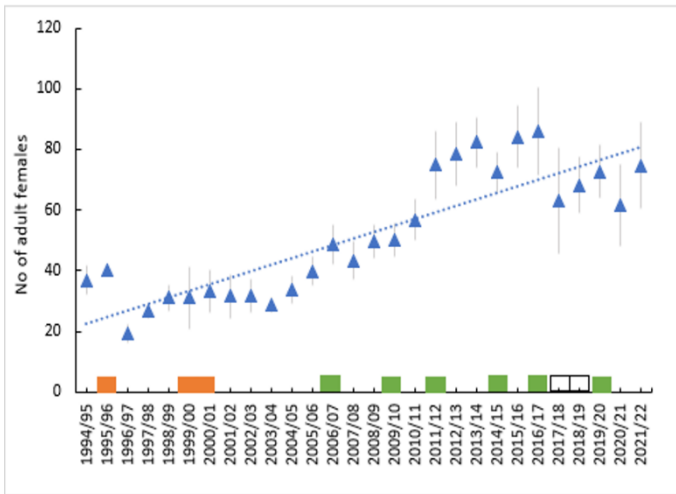
Being a known age bird hatched around January 2005, we know that she was therefore 18 years and 11 months old. Her legacy will live on as one of the most photographed and one of the oldest known kōkako, with a wolf whistle second to none.

Banding Office out-and-about – Annemieke Hamilton

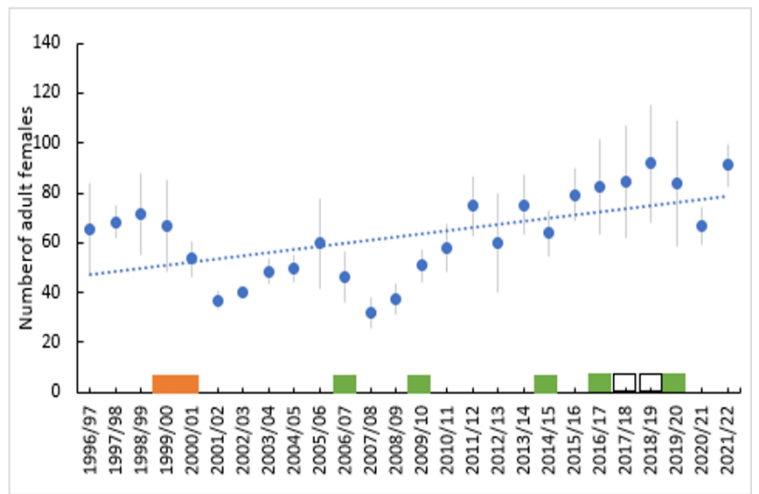
I can confirm, working with bats is “fang-tastic”. From 1-12 February I was fortunate to be involved as part of the annual Eglinton Valley bat monitoring. Eglinton Valley is one of the only sites in the South Island with both known extant species of New Zealand bat (Long-tailed and Lesser short-tailed).

While I had previously seen one Lesser short-tailed bat on Whenua Hou during a Kākāpō breeding season stint, I had never seen a Long-tailed. On this trip however, I didn’t have long to wait as during the first night of fieldwork (using free standing harp traps) we came across not 1 but 20+ Long-tailed bats, an unexpected result, even for the bat project leaders. Over the course of my trip, our team of bats operators (Rose Lanman, Dane Simpson, Sina Sibler, Fredrik Hjelm - Biosense, Kirsty Myron - Auckland Council, Ian Davidson Watts – Davidson Watts Ecology) saw hundreds of Long-tails and caught 2 Lesser short-tailed bats too. It is no wonder that Eglinton Valley is considered a Mecca trip for bat operators in New Zealand. Eglinton Valley is a predator-control success story for long-tailed bats; in 25 years of monitoring the Long-tailed bat population has turned around from decreasing at 5% to increasing 4% per year.

Walker Creek colony



Mackay Creek colony

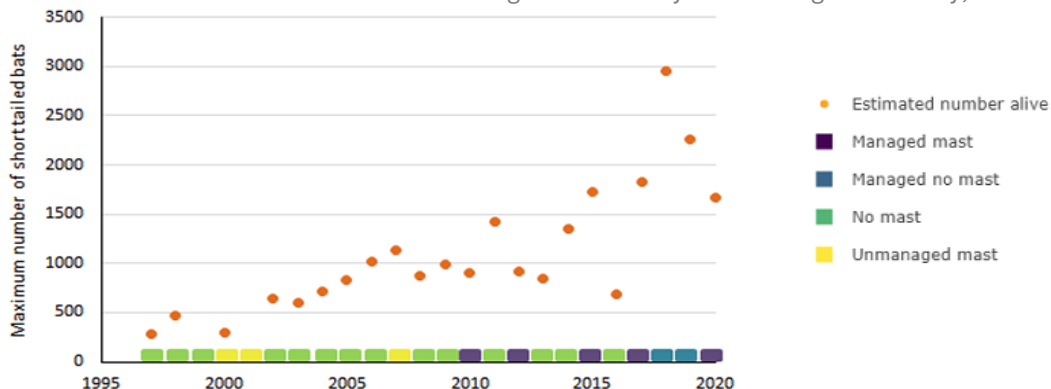


Mast not treated Mast treated No mast-site treated Graphs show minimum number of breeding females alive each year

Response of Long-tailed bats to management, Eglinton Valley – Colin O’Donnell

It’s also been a similar success story for Lesser short-tailed bats there too. The Eglinton Valley population has grown from about 300 to 4000+. In fact, the status of the species moved from ‘threatened’ to recovering in March 2018.

Maximum number of short-tailed bats leaving a roost each year in the Eglinton valley, Fiordland



Maximum number of short-tailed bats by adding counts from different roosts from the same night. Green bars show no mast, yellow is an unmanaged mast, purple is a managed mast and blue is managed but no mast.

It was a real treat to go out with our non-bird marking operators, get a taste for bat work and better understand how we can cater to bat workers. New Zealand also has one other bat species the Greater short-tailed bat. Call me crazy (batty even), but the rumours of potential Greater short-tailed bats persisting on Big South Cape Island does flavour one’s imagination. I have my fingers crossed that just like their New Zealand buddies (e.g. the Takahē, or Pitt Island Stag Beetle) these bats will surprise us and be re-discovered one day too!

New Zealand's oldest known long-tailed bat



Colin O'Donnell & T-7787.
Image credit: Keith Barber

Known only as 'T-7787', the tiny flying mammal was caught in a harp trap in February 2024, given a quick health check, then released to rejoin her colony at Walker Creek in the Eglinton valley, where she's lived her entire life.

DOC Principal Scientist Colin O'Donnell, who leads the bat monitoring work, says T-7787 is officially the oldest known long-tailed bat in Aotearoa New Zealand.

"I first caught her when she was a young mother in 2000 and again this month, making her at least 26 years old but possibly as old as 28."

"She's going a little grey but still appears in good health, although signs are she's stopped breeding.

"We don't know how long our bats live for so it's exciting to get this record and know they can live for up to 26 years if conditions are right."

T-7787, who weighs just 10.5g (about the same as a AAA battery), has produced a pup every year for 20 years. With female bats able to breed from two years old, she will now be the matriarch of many bat generations.

Long-tailed bats are threatened with extinction, having declined dramatically since pre-human times because of habitat loss and predation by introduced pests.

Colin O'Donnell says the bat's long breeding life bodes well for its recovery and potential to increase towards pre-human population levels when bats were abundant.

In the Eglinton valley, long-term monitoring of both long-tailed and short-tailed bats has shown a steady increase in bat numbers in response to large-scale predator control using trapping, bait stations and aerial 1080 to target rats, stoats, and possums.

Prior to 2000, the long-tailed bat population was declining by 5% per year but that has been reversed and is now growing by 5% showing the benefits of DOC's multi-pronged predator management.

Bat monitoring is labour-intensive with teams of volunteers working alongside DOC experts over six weeks each summer. It involves finding bat roosts in cavities high up in trees and setting up harp traps during the day near where bats will leave the roost in the evening. The team then returns at night to process the captured bats – measuring and weighing them and recording their tags before releasing them.

While most bats never leave their colony, they do shift roosts most nights, presenting a daily challenge for the monitoring team to find the new roosts.

The previous oldest long-tailed bat, recorded and last seen in 2015, was another female, A-78806, in the Walker colony who was 25.

Most of the 1400 bat species around the world live between six and 20 years on average, although a small number are known to live more than 30 years. For their small body size, bats are relatively long-lived mammals, which is of interest to scientists.



Close-up of T-7787 (Greying gracefully).
Image credit: Keith Barber

New Zealand dotterels on Auckland's West Coast – Adrian Riegen

Since the 1980s I have been monitoring New Zealand Dotterels (NZD) on Auckland's west coast (as well as Variable Oystercatchers). NZD populations have remained low but stable, with usually 2-3 pairs in the Whatipu Scientific Reserve from Paratahi Island south to Pararaha Stream, and lower numbers at Piha, Anawhata and Bethells (Te Henga). The breeding success of NZDs on these west coast beaches is also low, compared to the east coast beaches, despite the greater human population pressure there. Is this due to human disturbance, predation, low food supply, or some other factors such as the wild west coast weather and hot black sand? Without doubt the early establishment of community groups on many eastern beaches helped considerably, putting fences round nesting birds and undertaking predator control and educating the public. However, Bethells, Anawhata, Piha and Karekare now have community groups led by some wonderfully dedicated people to help protect these birds.

To find out what is happening on the West Coast, we instituted a banding programme, so that individual birds can be monitored over their lifetime (20-plus years). Initially we attached an engraved metal band to the legs of young birds, but the numbers on the bands proved difficult to read. Since 2018, we have started to fit them with a small engraved 'flag' (white with three black letters), which can be read more easily, either with binoculars or with a camera. This flagging protocol is approved by the Department of Conservation (DOC), who issue banding licenses. The flag means individual birds can be tracked without disturbing them or the need to recapture them. We normally band the young birds at about four weeks old, as they have a better chance of surviving from that age. They can usually fly at least short distances from about five weeks old.

Since 2018 we have put flags on 5 adults and 50 chicks on the west coast from Bethells to Karekare. Of the chicks, 22 were banded at Karekare, 14 at Piha, 7 at Anawhata, and 7 at Bethells. Since then, at least 42 people have reported sightings of the 55 birds flagged - 37 have been seen at least once, with CHR seen the most, 101 times.

Sightings further up and down Auckland's West Coast:

Of the 50 chicks banded on the west coast, most sightings (outside of the home beaches) have been further south on the West Coast. Seven birds have been seen at Port Waikato, mostly during autumn and winter, and two a little further north at Kariotahi Beach. A further nine birds have been seen at sites on the southern Manukau Harbour and one has been seen at Whatipu. JAJ, banded at Karekare December 2021 was seen in March and June 2022 at Clarks Bay, South Manukau Harbour, and then again on Te Motu in Kawhia Harbour in July 2023. Perhaps it has settled there now - Te Motu is rarely visited by birders.

To the north, two have been seen briefly at Muriwai. I was expecting many of the birds to join the autumn non-breeding flocks in the Kaipara Harbour but only one has been seen there - CHR.

Sightings on Auckland's East Coast:

Five west-coast-flagged birds have been seen on the east coast of the Auckland region. CLH, banded at Piha in January 2018, was seen at Shoal Bay, Waitemata Harbour in April 2018 and then from January to September 2019 at Whitford, east Auckland but not seen since then. CNU, banded at Piha in December 2020 was seen at Omaha between February and August 2021. Many non-breeding NZD gather in autumn at Omaha before dispersing again to breeding sites.

Most interesting are the three birds that have been seen between Kaiua and Pūkorokoro Miranda on the Firth of Thames, a distance of at least 80 km from their banding sites. JAB, banded at Piha as a chick in December 2021, was seen on the Firth of Thames in June 2023 and then returned to Karekare in January 2024.

Westie birds returning to breed:

Of the 37 chicks banded on the four west coast beaches since 2018, only two have been recruited back to these beaches as parents, with a third breeding further south on the Manukau. Likely more will return, since they generally do not breed until at least two years old.



JAW – a Northern New Zealand Dotterel

Of these returning birds, none are breeding at the same beach where they hatched. Returning locals are:

- CHR, banded at Piha February 2019 and seen 101 times up and down the West coast. It has bred in the scientific reserve at Karekare beach each year since 2021 and two of its chicks, JAW & JAX, were banded in February 2023.
- CNZ, banded at Karekare February 2021 has been seen at North Piha regularly since July 2022 and has been breeding with HAB (a banded adult) since then.
- CHT, banded Piha February 2019, is now resident at Big Bay, Awhitu Peninsula and is breeding there.

Do Easterners ever come west?

Of interest is the fact that 95 NZD have been banded and fitted with flags at other sites around Auckland since 2011. Not one of these has been seen on the west coast as yet.

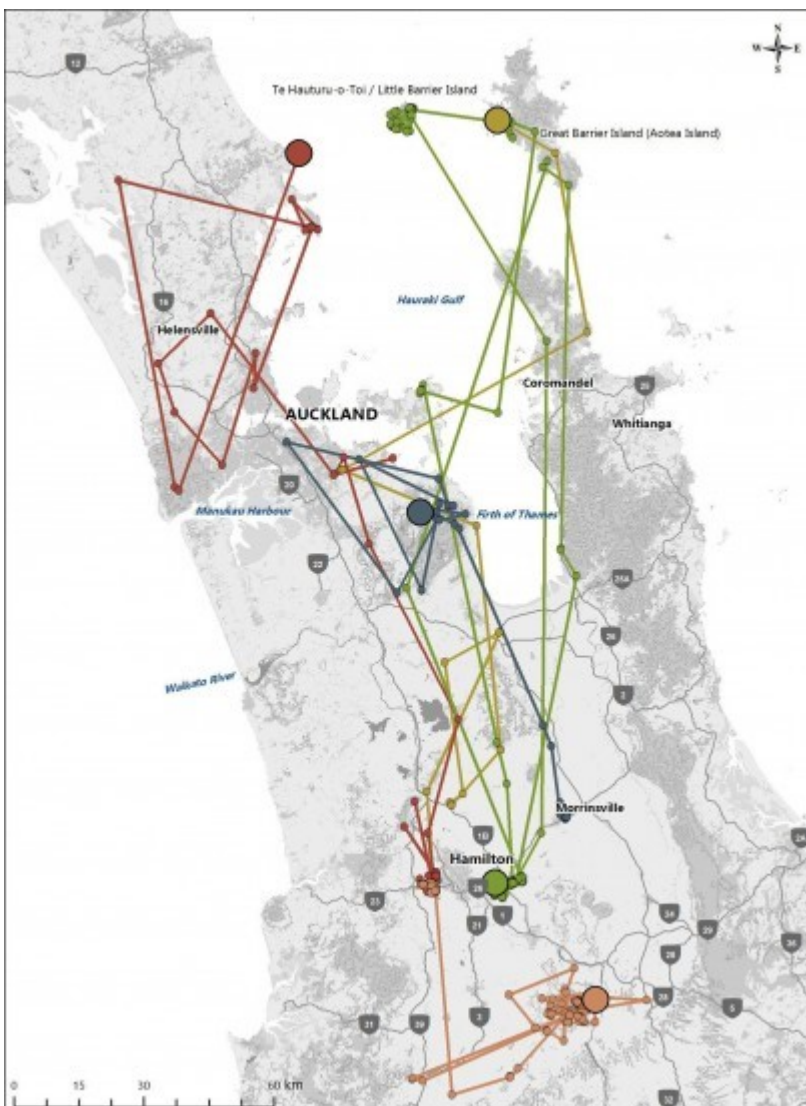
It is still very early days in the NZD banding project, and we expect to learn much more over the coming years. A big thank you to everyone helping to protect the dotterels and to those who submit sightings.

Seen a marked dotterel? Don't forget to report it: <https://app.birdbanding.doc.govt.nz/sightings>

Wandering Waikato kākā – Neil Fitzgerald

The kākā is one of our largest, loudest, and most iconic taonga, but where do they go?

During September 2020 and July 2021 a team from Landcare Research Manaaki Whenua and Department of Conservation fitted GPS and VHF tags to 25 kākā near Morrinsville and the outskirts of Hamilton.



In a period of 19 weeks, one of these birds travelled well over 1,000 km! They flew Hamilton to Great Barrier Island, back to Hamilton, then to Little Barrier Island before returning to Hamilton!

When they weren't flying, the tracked kākā spent a lot of time within dense tree canopies - showing the importance of protecting and restoring the ngāhere.

I'm continuing this research, with support from Waikato Regional Council, specifically looking at where kākā chicks go once they've hatched, and the report will be out soon!

You can read more [here](#).

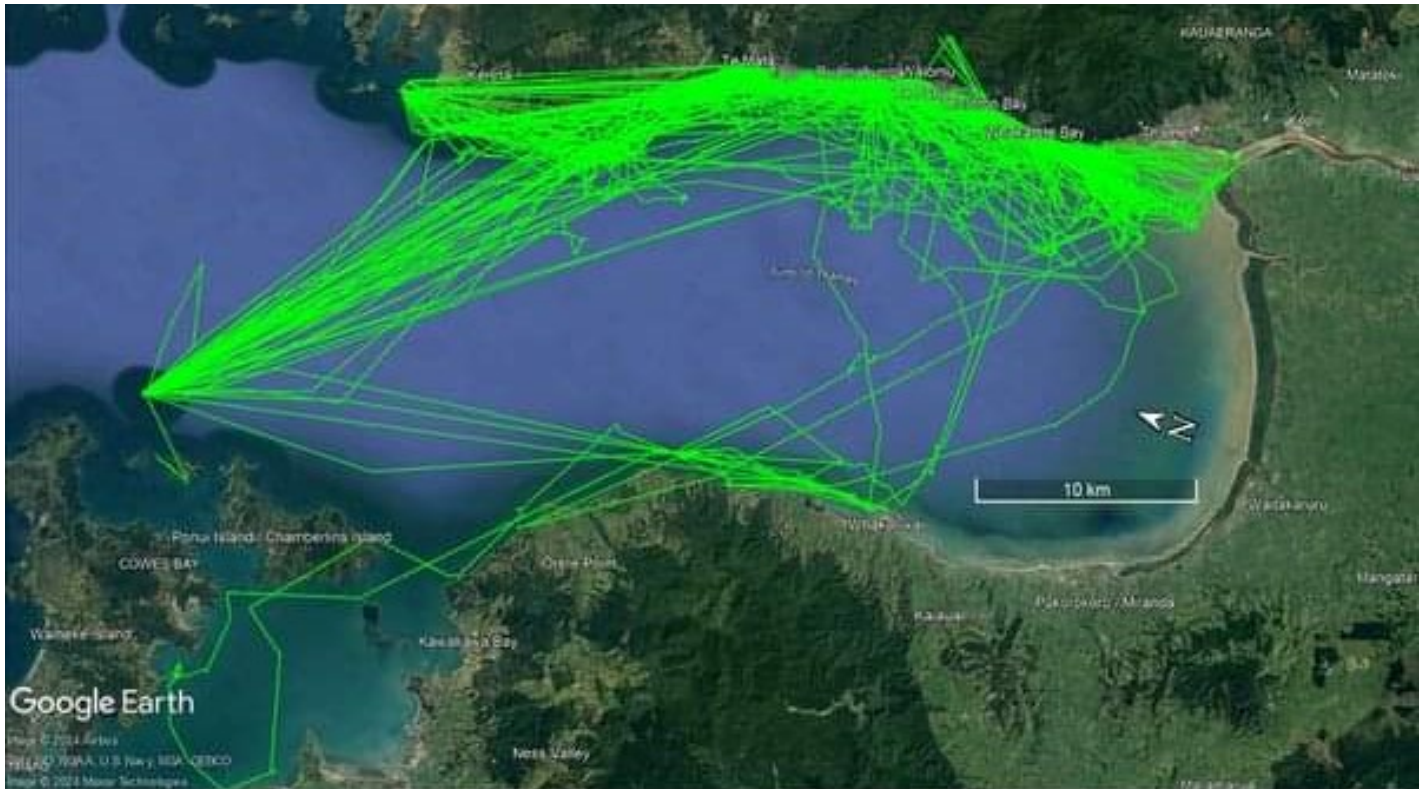
Left: Long-distance movement of Hamilton GPS-tagged North Island kākā marked between 2020 – 2021.

Right: Neil fitting a GPS tag to a kākā captured near Hamilton. Image credit: Emma Williams



Marked birds tell us about the good, the bad, the sad and the shag – Matt Rayner

Terrible Christmas news for our spotted shag number 224976 (aka M-85079) who we have been tracking for 108 days. During this time hardworking little 224976 travelled huge distances around the Firth of Thames making thousands of recorded dives in pursuit of fish. This all came to an end on Christmas eve when the tag on 224976 began to tell us a sadder tale. She was drowned in a net about 200 meters off the coast of the Te Puru River mouth North of Thames. Her body was then immediately taken to a boat ramp in the Waitakaruru River near Waitakaruru in the Hauraki Plains. Her numbered DOC leg band was ripped off (leaving a massive gash on her leg) and her body dumped four kilometers inland in a farm ditch. I was able to recover her body thanks to the still transmitting tag.



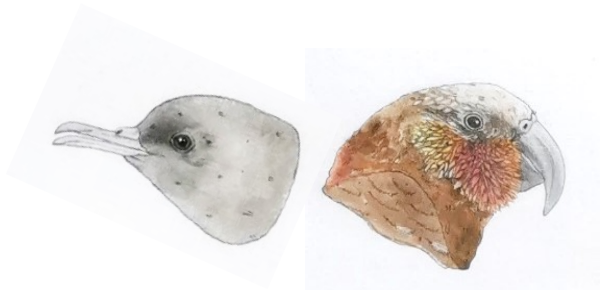
224976 has told us so much about Hauraki Gulf spotted shags; where they go, what are their important foraging habitats all important data to understand what the birds need and help address the ongoing decline in their small genetically distinct population of only 250 breeding pairs. But in death her last lesson may be her most valuable. We have been concerned for some time about the impact of set nets on spotted shags in the Firth and it now appears these concerns are warranted and are being documented more widely in the gulf. It's time to have a conversation about whether this destructive practice should be allowed to continue.

Native bird whakatauki

“Ka tangi te tītī, ka tangi te kākā, ka tangi ko ahau.

The literal translation of this whakatauki (saying) is: The seabird will cry out, the kākā will cry out, I will cry out.

This whakatauki is referring to acknowledging one's presence, participation, and group involvement. It is a common tauparapara (opening chant) used as part of a formal introduction. It is widely used on marae and inspired by the action song 'Ka tangi te tītī' by the Taniwharau haka group.



@mieke_masterpieces

“He aha tēnei?” / “what is this?”: bands without hyphens

The mysteries continue. Perhaps you know why. Some bands (old ones in particular) start with numbers and don't have hyphens! Do you know why? All will be revealed in the next newsletter.

Answer to: “He aha tēnei?” – Metal Alphanumeric

Historically the M-sized aluminium alphanumeric bands were used on gannets. Unfortunately, the aluminium was not very long lasting making the mark difficult to read, therefore these bands ceased to be used on gannets.

Puzzled: Lingo Bingo

Bird (and bat) “nerds” use some interesting bird lingo. Below is a list of some. How many squares can you explain or know the word for, enough for a bingo? Prize available at 2024 Nelson OSNZ conference for the first person to find Jon Thomas (Banding Office’s manager) and relay a bingo of the below lingo to him. Next newsletter will include the answers to each square and who won the prize.

Pulli/ Pullus	Big Year	Pellet (raptor-related)	The 2023 Bird of the Century (in te reo) and name one of the courtship displays they do. Bonus point for a demonstration.	Describe two things called ‘Notornis’
Twinkle/ twinkling/ twinkled	Twitching/ twitcher	eBird checklist and NZ Atlas	Catastrophic moult and an example of one species who has this	Harp trap (bats)
Nulliparous and parous (bats)	1+ (one-plus)	FALCON (Banding Office related)	Gastrolith	Aberrant/ leucistic/ melanistic
Web/ webbing (penguins)	Oology/ oologist	Merganser	Jess	Pip
Crown	Robotit/ Tombin	The collective noun for a group of flamingos	The name for the expanding part of a Pelican’s throat	OFP/OFK, YCP/YCK & BBG

Puzzled: Answers to Put it on the bill

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Generalist | 10. Scything |
| 2. Insect catching | 11. Probing |
| 3. Grain eating | 12. Filter feeding |
| 4. Coniferous-seed eating | 13. Aerial fishing |
| 5. Nectar feeding | 14. Pursuit fishing |
| 6. Fruit eating | 15. Scavenging |
| 7. Chiselling | 16. Raptorial |
| 8. Dip netting | |
| 9. Surface skimming | |