

*Tiakina ngā manu tā ia ripanga, tā ia ripanga*

Saving the birds (and bats) one spreadsheet at a time

Michelle Bradshaw, Sandy Taylor and Jamie Cooper

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## Ask AI...

When Jamie decided to dabble in AI-generated art, he had a very specific vision for a Level 1 certification picture: “*Make an image of a Giant L and a 1 with a bird band draped over it*”

Asking AI to make a picture is a bit like asking a mischievous genie a wish. I never quite got what I wanted but in the end I got something close, I’m sure those with a keen eye will see the discrepancies! My description for the final product was very long, but for you dear banders I will simply caption it as: *A Black Robin (karure/ kākāruia) perched on giant bird band with the L1 behind it*



## Banding Scheme turns 75



This year, the New Zealand National Bird Banding Scheme proudly marks 75 years of formal operation, following its establishment in 1950 by the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (OSNZ, now Birds NZ). Since 1987, the scheme has been administered by the New Zealand Department of Conservation (DOC), in alignment with DOC's statutory role in overseeing wildlife marking. We work actively to forge strong links with our international counterparts, sharing records of banded birds that cross our boundaries as well as following International best practices in managing all the complexities of a Bird Banding Scheme.

A formal Memorandum of Arrangement between the Chinese National Bird Banding Center and the New Zealand National Bird Banding Scheme (facilitated by Bruce McKinlay) is designed to promote the exchange of bird banding data for the conservation of migratory shorebirds and seabirds. We have had a series of online meetings after Bruce and David Melville met with our counterparts in person in Beijing. Yoyo Zhou, the DOC data analyst that was instrumental in the data migration of historic records into the FALCON database, has kindly assisted us as Mandarin interpreter during these meetings. In addition to working on sharing shorebird and seabird banding data, the CNBBC have shown great interest in our [FALCON Bird Banding Database](#).

「鳥類標識調査101周年、誠におめでとうございます。」 We recently extended our congratulations to our Japanese counterparts on reaching the remarkable milestone of 101 years of bird banding. Their extensive dataset—comprising over 6.5 million birds across 504 species—stands as Asia's largest archive of banding and recovery records and represents an invaluable asset for guiding conservation efforts and ecological research. There are several species of seabirds and migratory shorebirds that regularly fly between New Zealand and Japan, as records of banded birds have shown.

The French Banding Scheme are developing a new Bird Ringing Information System and reached out to enquire as to the timeframes and cost of developing FALCON. They were interested in whether we had the same functionalities available as they were hoping to build into their system, and upon receiving details responded with: "*Wouaouh, we found the gold mine!*"

The Canadian Bird Banding Office contacted us to learn about our approach to managing projects, permits, operator competency, bands, and data. We shared details about FALCON and gave a demo during a scheduled 1-hour meeting—which extended to 2.5 hours, only ending when it was dinner time in Canada! We were also surprised to learn that Lesley Howes has led the office for 23 years.

## Jamie Cooper joins the Banding Office team

I am delighted to be temporarily joining the banding office team in the Technical Administrator role. It's been busy, diving into the backlog of certification applications to get them ready for assessment by the Banding Advisory Committee and Banding Officer. I'm also looking after the Banding Office shop, so feel free to reach out if you need anything.



I've been a bird bander for the past 14 years, so stepping into this role is an interesting change—especially after years of conversing with the Banding Office as both a bander and a programme manager. My career has taken me from working as an animal keeper on a privately owned wildlife reserve to academic research, including a master's project on black-fronted terns, and leading threatened species programmes for DOC on the Chatham Islands.

As a bander, I progressed from Level 1 trainee to Level 2 and 3 across several species and groups. I have helped test various new techniques for removing colour bands and weldable bands as well. I am a supporter of training and mentoring new banders, having organised bird banding monitoring and training programmes for DOC staff and volunteers on the Chathams. Most recently, I was based in Twizel with DOC, where I supported the assessment and endorsement of several staff members to Level 2 and 3 in their respective species. Looking forward to working with you all and supporting the banding community!



## *There are legends among us*

The art, intricacies and technicalities of capturing and marking birds are best learnt from experts—indeed, the Banding Certification System relies on a process of learning-by-doing-while-being-supervised. The Level 3 experts that oversee and guide trainees are the real heroes of the Banding Scheme. And whereas it would be hard to record all such training events, we would like to highlight just one such Legend: Peter Reese.

The FALCON System lists over 35,000 records associated with Peter's name over 32 years. He is one of the most diligent submitters of banding data, often ensuring that records are submitted the same day! He has supervised at least 60 trainees over the past 5 years in Christchurch and Queenstown, and countless more since 2000 when setting up regular bird banding sessions at the Wellington Zoo. Every bird and every bander that have had the privilege of passing through Peter's banding station have been touched by a legend and are part of his enduring legacy.

If you have been inspired, taught or guided by Peter—or any other bird banding legend—then join us in raising a glass (or a flask) in a toast of thanks, and 'pay it forward'.

Head over to [New Zealand Bird Banding & Banders](#) to delve into Peter's fascinating photos and stories sprinkled with snippets of wisdom and humour from as far back as 2012.



## *Calling all Level 3 operators involved in projects*

We're looking to make it easier for aspiring Level 1 and Level 2 operators to connect with experienced trainers. This is a great opportunity for expert Level 3 operators to share their skills, uphold strong handling and marking ethics, and help shape the next generation of operators.

If you're keen to support and train L1 or L2 operators, please get in touch at [bandingoffice@doc.govt.nz](mailto:bandingoffice@doc.govt.nz) with your **name and location**. For now, we'll connect you directly with trainees. In the near future, we'll be creating a **trainer directory on our website**, allowing operators to reach out independently for guidance. You can opt out and have your name removed from the list at any time.

Trainee operators wanting to gain experience are encouraged to have a look at the [Projects page on FALCON](#) and search for projects in their area that they can become involved with. The Banding Office can facilitate communication with Project Managers. We are also working towards setting up specific training hubs, so watch this space.

Thanks for helping build a stronger, more connected banding community!

## Jo Hiscock joins the Banding Advisory Committee



We would like to warmly welcome Jo Hiscock to the Banding Advisory Committee as DOC Operations Representative. Jo brings practical and hands-on experience as well as a training focus.

The Banding Office will be working closely with Jo to provide a national overview of training requirements and certification assessments for DOC staff. Jo's role as Field Skills Advisor, together with her own banding and mist-netting experience place her in a good position to provide advice.

This role will also act as liaison with DOC staff to provide insight into how the Certification System and FALCON Bird Banding Database can support Operations work.

## The other AI

When we hear "AI" nowadays, we generally assume it refers to Artificial Intelligence; however, please keep on your radar a much older form of "AI": Avian Influenza—particularly the highly pathogenic variety, "HPAI". This highly contagious viral disease has been in existence around the world for many years, and a new form emerged in 2021 that has caused millions of deaths of both wildlife and domestic birds and mammals. With outbreaks continuing and migratory birds returning to New Zealand's waters and shores during spring, it is important to be vigilant.



# Report Avian Influenza

Avian influenza (AI) is a contagious viral disease that can affect both domestic and wild birds. The AI virus of concern for New Zealand is high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI). HPAI causes severe clinical signs and high mortality rates in birds. New Zealand has never had a case of HPAI. If HPAI arrived here, it could severely impact a variety of bird species, including our native birds.

### Clinical signs

The most obvious sign of HPAI is several dead birds. Other signs vary, depending on the affected bird species. These include:

#### In wild birds:

- lethargy or a reluctance to move, droopy head, paralysis, or incoordination (neurological signs);
- coughing, panting, and nasal secretions;
- severe diarrhoea.



#### In poultry:

- unusual or unexpected drop in egg production;
- reduced appetite;
- darkened and/or swollen comb/wattle;
- lethargy;
- severe diarrhoea.



For more information, go to [Avian influenza \(HPAI\) fact sheets and reports | NZ Government](#)

If you find 3 or more dead birds, or notice birds displaying symptoms of respiratory or neurological distress, *do not handle the birds*, and ring the Biosecurity New Zealand (MPI) exotic disease hotline immediately: **0800 80 99 66**



## Oldest Known Taiko - Dave Boyle

In a story that highlights the resilience and mystery of one of the world's rarest seabirds, a male Chatham Island Taiko (*Pterodroma magentae*), banded as E-127207, holds the longevity record as the oldest known individual of his species.

The Chatham Island Taiko was officially rediscovered on New Year's Day 1978, when two birds were spotlighted in the Lower Tuku Valley after nearly a decade of searching by renowned conservationist David Crockett and his dedicated Taiko Expeditions volunteers.

On the night of 9 October 1982, at 23:30, Reg Cotter and David Wahl were manning the lights when a bird flew along the ridge, circled above the trees, and crash-landed into Reg's boots. That bird was banded the next day as E-127207—only the seventh Taiko ever banded—before being released the following evening and disappearing into the night. And that was it, or so it seemed for nearly 20 years!

During those years, conservation efforts intensified. David Crockett ran Taiko Expeditions most years and more birds were caught. A significant portion of the remaining bush in southwest Chatham Island was gifted to the Crown by Manuel and Evelyn Tuanui to protect the species. In November 1987, the first burrow was discovered deep in the Tuku Nature Reserve by Geordie Murman, aided by radio tracking introduced by Mike Imber. Yet, there was no further sign of E-127207.

Then, in January 2001, while John Ballantyne led a team searching for burrows in the Tuku Valley, Mike Bell found a possible burrow just outside the Tuku Nature Reserve—now known as EF3. Though Steve Sawyer's dog, Gus, showed little interest, a burrowscope revealed an incubating adult. A chick from the burrow fledged that season, but the adults remained unidentified until the following year. During an annual roll call of adults at known burrows, Graeme Taylor war-whooped a banded bird out of EF3—the first reappearance of E-127207 in 19 years!

As with all Chatham Island Taiko, E-127207 remained loyal to his burrow, raising eight chicks in 12 breeding attempts with his first known partner. When she failed to return in the 2012/2013 season, he quickly paired again (unusual at the time), raising nine more chicks in 11 breeding attempts with his new partner. His final disappearance came in March 2022, during a chick provisioning trip—39 years and five months after his initial capture.

We now know that Taiko caught at the lights in early October are at least three years old, meaning E-127207 was born no later than the 1978/1979 season. So, at his disappearance, he was a minimum of just over 43 years old - although, he may have been significantly older when first caught.

What he did during his 20-year absence remains a mystery. He likely lived in burrow EF3 all along, attempting to breed but failing until trapping efforts expanded across the Upper Tuku Valley. With age came experience—his chicks were consistently the fattest of the season. Three chicks with his first known partner have returned and bred, although unfortunately they did not seem to inherit the long-life genes and two of them only lasted a couple of seasons. Three chicks from his second partner also returned, with two females now breeding in the predator-proof colony at Sweetwater. This is very exciting as their



Evelyn Tuanui holding E-127207

mother, the second known EF3 female, was the only known female carrying her haplotype. Ensuring as much genetic diversity as possible survives is key to the long-term health of the species.

E-127207's remarkable life not only sets a longevity record for the critically endangered Chatham Island Taiko, but also highlights the enduring value of long-term monitoring, habitat protection, and individual tracking in understanding species ecology and informing conservation efforts.



### *Godwit Y-13477 – Jim Norris*



A banded Bar-tailed Godwit has frequented the Whanganui River estuary every year since at least 2022. Jim Norris monitored and photographed this bird at the estuary on 8 December 2024 and on 12 December, a birding colleague, Paul Gibson, managed to get an image that enabled him to confirm that it has band Y-13477 on the left tibia. This bird was banded at Foxton, 30 October 2008, aged 3+, making it at least 20 years old.



## Global Spotlight on Pacific Seabirds

April 2025 marked a milestone for seabird conservation in the Pacific, as Auckland University hosted the first-ever international symposium dedicated to the region's seabirds.

More than 150 delegates from across the Pacific met in Auckland for the inaugural Oceania Seabirds 2025 Symposium, an event aimed at strengthening regional collaboration, sharing research, and celebrating the cultural and ecological importance of seabirds. The event was organised by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), with major support from the European Union through SPREP's Pacific BioScapes Programme, and the Government of France via the Fonds Pacifique.



The symposium brought together a diverse mix of scientists, conservationists, Indigenous knowledge holders, and policymakers, all united by a shared commitment to protecting seabird populations and their habitats. The programme featured a wide array of presentations and panel discussions, covering topics such as: the cultural significance of seabirds to Pacific communities; traditional ecological knowledge and its role in seabird conservation; seabird bycatch in fisheries and mitigation strategies; emerging threats to seabird populations; and the health of the ocean environment and its impact on seabird ecosystems.

In her opening remarks, Easter Chu Shing, Deputy Director General of SPREP, emphasized the broader vision of the gathering: "Our goal is to conserve seabirds and their habitats, recognising the traditions and aspirations of the peoples of the Pacific Ocean and islands."

The Banding Office was invited by Karen Baird (SPREP Threatened and Migratory Species Adviser) to host an exhibition table which provided a great opportunity for networking and knowledge exchange. Attendees showed strong interest in NZNBBS's certification programme, the importance of resightings, and the development of educational materials for bander training. Discussions also highlighted the desire to establish bird banding schemes in Pacific nations currently without them and raised concerns about the threat of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).



The event highlighted how important seabirds are—not just for marine ecosystems, but also for the traditions and livelihoods of Pacific Island communities. It also served as a platform to showcase ongoing and planned conservation initiatives, many of which involve community engagement and cross-border collaboration. Looking ahead, organisers expressed hope that the momentum generated in Auckland will continue, with possibly another conference in 2027.

## *Farewell to a Legend: PAP the Banded Dotterel*



Photo by Parker Jones

In past newsletters, we've shared the remarkable journeys of a very special Banded Dotterel, affectionately known as PAP—named for his distinctive white flag (metal band CP-11617). PAP was first banded as an adult male on 20 October 2017 at Eastbourne, Wellington by [MIRO](#).

What made PAP extraordinary was his annual migration to New Caledonia, a journey spanning thousands of kilometres. He was first sighted there on 9 July 2020, and just weeks later, he was back at Eastbourne on 2 August 2020. This epic round trip became a yearly routine, highlighting the resilience and navigational prowess of these small shorebirds.

PAP consistently nested in the same area at Eastbourne each season, claiming the largest territory and defending it with determination. Since 2020, he had been paired with a female known as PEY. The pair engaged in repeated nesting attempts and produced several chicks. However, over a five-year period, only one offspring is known to have fledged successfully and was banded with white flag ZAC. It was hoped ZAC might follow in his father's migratory path. Sadly, ZAC has not been sighted since the 2023–2024 season.

PAP was last seen at Eastbourne in April 2024. Since then, PEY has been observed with a new mate, and after years of reliable returns and sightings, we now believe PAP has passed away.

PAP's story is a powerful reminder of the wonders of bird migration and the invaluable insights gained through banding. His legacy lives on in the data he's helped us gather and in the inspiration he continues to provide for our conservation efforts.

Thank you to Parker Jones for providing information on this remarkable bird.

### *Quote me*

*"Bird banding is a universal and indispensable technique for studying the movement, survival and behavior of birds."*

[Citizen Science: Bird Banding | HPPR](#)



## Tape That Lasts

A banded Subantarctic Skua (*Stercorarius antarcticus lonnbergi*) has been resighted at Sandy Bay, Enderby Island—nearly eight years after it was first marked. While the longevity of skuas is well known, what makes this sighting stand out is the enduring condition of the reflective tape used on the bird's metal band.



First banded in February 2017 as part of a summer research project led by Sarah Michael, the skua—identified by band number M-85034—was one of 44 birds banded to investigate their potential role in transmitting bacterial pathogens to New Zealand sea lion pups. To facilitate identification from a distance and avoid repeated captures, Sarah applied a distinctive combination of reflective tape (in this bird's case, light orange/light orange/yellow) to each band. Have a look at previous *BirDBanD* articles from [Aug 2017](#) and [April 2018](#).

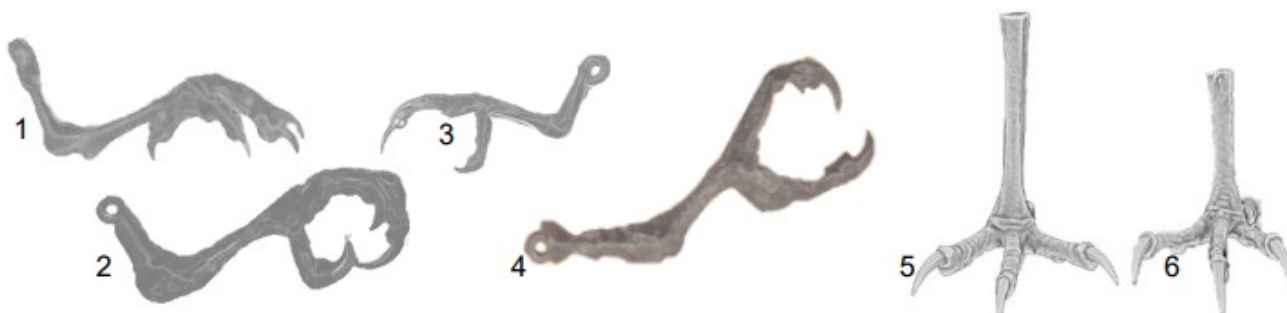
In December 2024 Lydia Uddstrom reported a resighting of M-85034, complete with photographic evidence. The tape, made from lightweight 3M™ Scotchlite™, remains intact and highly visible, defying the harsh subantarctic conditions and the skua's active, and often messy, lifestyle. This unexpected longevity not only validates the effectiveness of the marking method but also adds valuable data to wildlife monitoring efforts.

The Banding Office was very happy to receive this resighting; however, Lydia (DOC's veterinary advisor) was not on Enderby Island to photograph banded skua. This resighting coincides with broader surveillance efforts for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in New Zealand and its territories. A collaboration between various agencies, including the University of Otago, Ministry of Primary Industries, Department of Conservation and the Ministry of Health involved wild aquatic birds—including skuas—being sampled using oral and cloacal swabs. These samples are analysed to detect the presence of avian influenza viruses. Although to date there is no evidence of HPAI in New Zealand, ongoing monitoring remains a critical part of NZ's biosecurity strategy.



Note: We can no longer source 3M Scotchlite tape from our original supplier so if anyone knows where this tape, or something similar, is available—especially in a range of colours—please contact the Banding Office.

## Puzzled: answers to “whose leg is this?”



1. Ruru; 2. Kererū; 3. Kākāriki; 4. Kākā; 5. Kahu; 6. Kārearea

## A Quick Guide to Metal Bird Bands



The type of metal used for bird bands depends on the bird's size, lifespan, and environment. Here's a basic breakdown of the most common materials in bands sold by the Banding Office:

### Aluminium or Aluminium Alloy bands

- **What they're made of:** Mostly aluminium, with small amounts of other metals like manganese, silicon, copper, or zinc.
- **Key features:** Lightweight and resistant to corrosion, but not as strong or heat-resistant as other metals. They are easy bands to close.
- **Best for:** Small (where band weight is a significant factor) or short-lived birds, especially those that live on land and aren't exposed to harsh conditions.
- **Shape:** Usually 'C' shaped.
- **Prefixes:** AA/AE/AX, A, AP, B, BP, C

### Incoloy Bands

- **What they're made of:** A mix of nickel, iron, and chromium, plus elements like molybdenum and titanium.
- **Key features:** Very strong, heat- and corrosion-resistant. Holds its shape well and is less prone to 'spring back' (gradually coming open after being placed on a bird).
- **Best for:** Long-lived birds or those in tough environments like coastal areas.
- **Shape:** Often 'V' shaped for easier and better closing.
- **Prefixes:** CP, CX, DP, YP, EP, T

### Stainless Steel Bands

- **What they're made of:** Steel with added chromium for corrosion resistance.
- **Key features:** Extremely durable, resistant to rust and heat, and biocompatible (doesn't cause any harmful reactions to a bird's body). However, it can spring back, so proper technique is needed to close it securely.
- **Best for:** Long-lived birds, birds with strong beaks, or those living in wet or salty environments.
- **Shape:** Usually 'C' shaped, but we do stock oval shaped and clip bands for particular species.
- **Prefixes:** B, C, D, Y, E, H, K, S, L, V, W, M, O, R, RO, RC, RA, X, Z, 27, 13/23, 19/29, P, J

No band is immune to wear particularly in extreme environments such as braided riverbeds. In certain situations, placing the band on the tibia rather than the tarsus may be more appropriate. With any marking of wildlife, it is essential to follow Best Practice Guidelines. If there is any uncertainty about which metal band type or size to use, then consult the Banding Office or a Level 3 banding expert for the relevant species.

## Updated Price List and Order Form

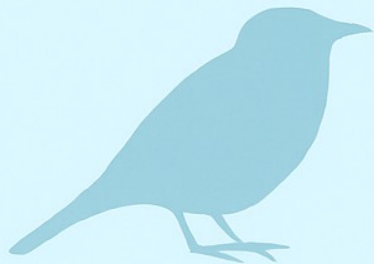
Please refer to our updated [Price List](#) and [Order Form](#), available for download from the [DOC Banding Office website](#).





## DOC Banding Office Update

# Level 1 Certification Simplified



### What's Changing?

- **Old System:** Trainees selected from 15 species groups during registration
- **New System:** One unified L1 trainee category – no need to specify species groups



### What You Need to Know

- L1 trainees must work under a Level 3 trainer certified for the relevant species
- All current NZNBBS operators are now L1 certified for all species groups
- Level 2 and 3 certifications remain unchanged and are still species-specific



### Key Requirement

- Trainees must be registered and have an Operator ID before starting any bird or bat capture or marking



**Goal** Simplify onboarding for new trainees and make supervision easier for L3 trainers

## Skua surprise – Michelle Bradshaw

While visiting the Antarctic Centre in Christchurch recently with my sister's family, we came across a display of two taxidermy specimens of Antarctic Skua in a glass case and were delighted and intrigued to find that both birds were wearing bands! Alas, there was no information associated with the display to explain anything about the significance of the bands, nor the history of the birds. We asked one of the staff, Lyndsay McKerrow, but he said that in the 32 years he had been working at the Antarctic Centre no-one had ever mentioned the bands on the birds, though he often wondered what they meant.



Lyndsay McKerrow, Dax and Mieke Nel showing off the tools required to read the band number on a skua

We could read one band number fairly easily, but unfortunately, the numbers on the other bird's metal band were hidden from view—how frustrating! With Lyndsay's help and encouragement, the two teenagers (both Level 1 banders and equally keen and intrigued) managed to use a mirror, a torch, a clothes hanger, a few elastic hair bands and a mobile phone to read the other bird's band.

I was then able to look up the history of these birds on the FALCON database. Both birds were banded in Antarctica at Cape Bird, Ross Island.

- **L-10435** was banded 16 Dec 1974 and was resighted in 1975, 1978, 1979, 1980 and 1981, after which we have no more records.
- **L-28407** (white/metal; white/white) was banded on 28 Dec 1989.

So even though these birds have been diligently guarding eggs in a glass case for over three decades and will continue to do so, it is likely that they never met in real life.

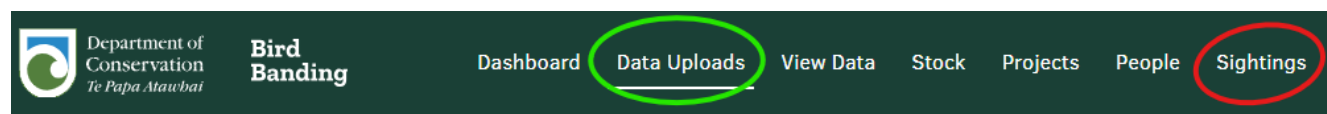
Lyndsay was so delighted on hearing the histories of the birds that he welled up with tears, hugged me and said he's going to open a bottle of champagne...





## FALCON Registered Users: Important Resighting Guidelines

If you're a FALCON registered user submitting bird resightings or recaptures, it's essential to use the correct form and follow the appropriate procedures to ensure data accuracy and integrity. Here's what you need to know:



When to Use the [Single Upload Form](#) or [Spreadsheet](#) (the tab circled in green)

You should **only** upload resighting records via Data Uploads if:

- You are a **team member** of the project that first banded the bird
- and you are 100% sure that the record **belongs to the specific project**.

If the bird is **not part of a project you're involved in**, please:

- Use the public [Sightings form](#) (used by the general public, the tab circled in red), or
- Email the details to the Banding Office at [falcon@doc.govt.nz](mailto:falcon@doc.govt.nz)

### Key Fields to Fill Out Correctly

#### Field 2. Banding Event – Registered Project Name

This should be the name of the project that submitted the **first marking record** for the bird.  
*Do not enter the name of one of your own banding projects unless it was the original project.*

#### Field 7. People Involved – L3/Provider

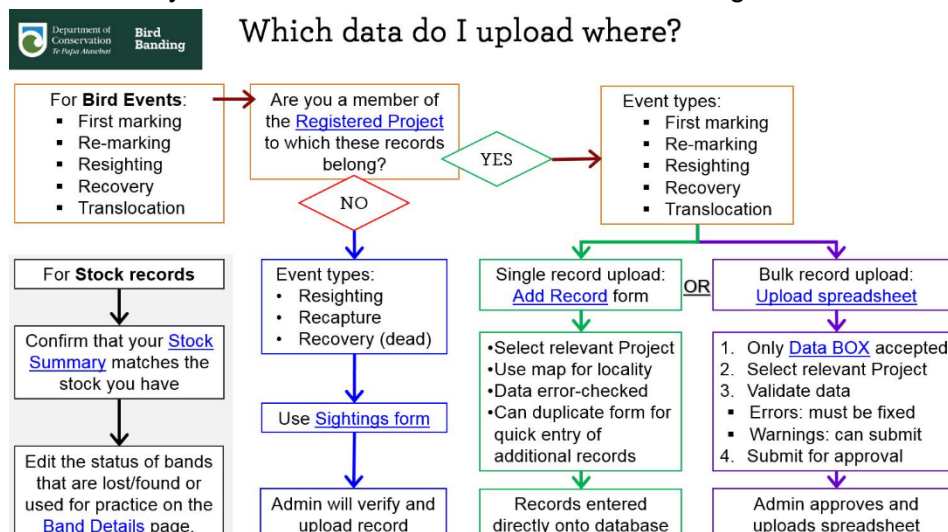
This refers to the **L3 bander responsible for the bird when it was first marked**.  
*Even if you are an L3, do not enter your own name unless you were the original L3/bander.*

### Why it matters

Attributing a resighting to your own project and/or listing yourself as the L3 and bander—when you were not involved in the bird's original marking or are not a team member of the relevant Project—disconnects the record from the original project and dataset. This prevents the initial project team and L3/bander from seeing the resighting, resulting in incomplete data and potentially skewed analyses in population studies, movement tracking, and project reporting.

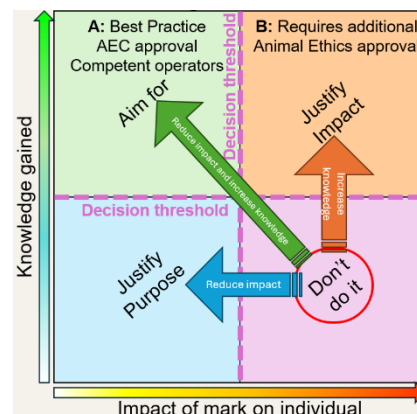
Please note that records submitted via the Single Upload form are not reviewed by Banding Office staff. They are uploaded directly to the database without verification. This differs from the Sightings form and the Spreadsheet Upload process, both of which undergo thorough checks by the Banding Office.

Following these guidelines helps maintain the integrity of our marking data and ensures that sightings are correctly attributed. If you're ever unsure, reach out to the Banding Office for clarification.



## Marking Decision Tool

The Marking Decision Tool plots the impact of a mark versus the knowledge gained (not volume of data). Obviously, we would like to aim for the least impact and maximum knowledge. There is a Decision Threshold between the “A” column (Animal Ethics Committee approved Best Practice) and the “B” column (not Best Practice, requires separate AEC approval); similarly, a Decision Threshold assesses the knowledge gained from a particular mark type. Of course, this is influenced by the number of individuals that need to be marked and the length of deployment of a particular mark.



We start with the first rule of marking: **don't do it**. Unless: you can *reduce the impact* (**justify purpose**) or *increase the knowledge gained* (**justify impact**) – even better if you can do *both*, which is what we **aim for**.

It works in reverse too... if we learn that something previously accepted as Best Practice actually has a greater impact than we thought (that decision threshold is triggered), then that impact needs to be justified, otherwise that marking technique drops into the pink “don't do it” box. If any marks (bands, transmitters, loggers, trackers, tags, transponders, or any other mark or device) or their attachment (harness etc.) require adjusting, removal or replacement due to actual or potential adverse effects (such as injury, infection, entanglement, loss of mark, death), details must be reported to the Banding Office ([bandingoffice@doc.govt.nz](mailto:bandingoffice@doc.govt.nz)) as soon as possible upon discovery to improve Best Practice.

A recent application of this Decision Tool was when reviewing the potential impact of neck insertion of microchips (Passive Integrated Transponder) in Yellow-eyed Penguin Hoiho, following x-ray reports indicating migration into the body cavity and near vital organs. A temporary suspension is in place while we are investigating risks, alternatives and improvements. The precautionary decision was based on welfare concerns of potential adverse effects – this is a penguin-specific issue due to the presence of air sacs and the birds' deep-diving activities. We have obtained Animal Ethics Committee approval to pursue testing of leg implantation and various temporary external marks for dual-marking studies to ensure that the Hoiho monitoring programme can continue. Microchipping of Crested and Little Penguins are not currently impacted, though we will also be investigating whether microchip migration may be an issue in these species.

## Bird of the Year 2025 is taking flight!

Forest & Bird's legendary avian showdown is back, and New Zealand's native birds are fluffing their feathers for fame. Campaign managers are already chirping up a storm, rallying support for their feathered favourites. Voting opens on 15 September, so sharpen your beaks and get ready to vote!



Here's how the Banding Office flock is voting:



- Sandy's backing the **Wrybill**—because Keith Woodley (Pūkoro Miramira Naturalists' Trust) made a very persuasive pitch at the Birds NZ conference. Honestly, she didn't stand a chance, and once you promise Keith, there's no flying away from it.
- Jamie's all in for the **Kākī**—sleek, stylish, and full of Twizel nostalgia. It's not just a vote, it's a love letter.
- Michelle's going rogue with the **Giant Petrel**—list or no list, she's voting with her heart.
- But the Banding Office overall? We support all native birds—and bats too!

So, fluff up your feathers, pick your champion, and join us in celebrating our incredible native wildlife. Discover all the voting details and bird profiles here: [Bird of the Year > Forest & Bird](#)