



# New Zealand National Bird Banding Scheme NZNBBS

**Banding Newsletter 23**



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

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

Michelle Bradshaw; Sandy Taylor; Delia Small  
(Annemieke Hendriks is on secondment to another team)

Banding Office end-of-year closure .....	1
Updated Banding Office timeframes.....	1
Introducing Delia Small.....	2
Tara iti front page news – Tony Beauchamp.....	3
Tara iti smart egg – Tim Prebble and Stu Cockburn.....	3
There and back again – Sandy Taylor.....	4
Banded Dotterels in Eastbourne, Wellington – Shane Cotter.....	5
Memorandum of Arrangement with Chinese National Bird Banding Centre.....	6
Who is that bird? Chris Robertson .....	7
A synopsis of game bird banding in New Zealand to year 2000 - Murray Williams .....	9
Celebrating contributions to bird conservation.....	9
2025 Duck Banding opportunities.....	10
From the Archives – Angus Fordham.....	10
“Where does all the data go?”; “Pick one and get on with it”; “Be deliberate” .....	10
Found a stash of bands? Please return these to the Banding Office .....	11
Kiwi Conservation Club – Michelle Bradshaw .....	11
Puzzled: Answers to Lingo Bingo.....	12

## **Banding Office end-of-year closure**

What a year it has been! We are looking forward to taking a break but want to ensure that the banding community won't be unduly affected by Banding Office closures. As we head into the summer holidays, please keep in mind the following dates:

The Banding Office itself will be **closed from 25 December to 6 January**, during which time only emails marked as URGENT will be attended to where necessary.

The **shop will be shut from 9 December to 6 January** – please submit any urgent orders for bands and equipment *this week!* Orders received after 9 December will only be processed in January. We updated the [Price List](#) and [Order Form](#) in September; please ensure you use the latest version. You will also note that we have some new items available, including a bird leg gauge 'donut' and 3-D printed legs!

## **Updated Banding Office timeframes**

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

- Level 1 certification applications: 1 month
- Level 2/3 certification applications: 2 months
- Processing orders for bands and equipment: 1 month



## Introducing Delia Small...



...who has recently rejoined the Banding Office after 12 years. Delia is fulfilling the role of Technical Administrator within the Banding Office while Annemieke Hendriks is on secondment.

I have a conservation background in both the field and office capacity and have worked for various NGO and government conservation organisations. As a keen birder I have banded a range of birds through my involvement in both island and mainland birding projects as a DOC biodiversity ranger, volunteer, and through my Master's thesis, the translocation of the North Island Robin from Kāpiti Island to Zealandia. I also enjoy spending time in South Taranaki as a co-founder of the Mt Hiwi Charitable Trust, which is dedicated to preserving 411 ha of native forest in that district.

I am very excited to be working back with the Banding Office team and seeing the advancement of the FALCON banding and recovery database from when I was involved in the TFBIS funded digitisation project to migrate the physical banding and recovery data into the DOC BioWeb back in 2011. I am looking forward to being involved with the Banding Certification process that was in its conception when I was the secretary for the Birds NZ Council from 2014-2017. During this time, I gained a broader perspective of the value of the New Zealand National Bird Banding Scheme especially the contribution of community citizen science projects.

Locally, I was the Birds NZ Regional Recorder for Wellington over a 2-year period and have been involved in Greater Wellington Regional Council bird surveys covering shore, river, and public reserve environments. I am keen to be engaging with conservation minded people once again and particularly in the birding world. Outside of work I spend time exploring the Southern Coast of Wellington with my partner where we live in our off-grid container home.



DAVE HANSFORD

**BANDED BUT FREE:** Victoria University researcher Delia Small puts an identification band on a young North Island robin at Karori Wildlife Sanctuary.

Robins were once common around New Zealand, but have disappeared from many regions, victims of predators including stoats, ferrets, weasels and cats.

Forty adult robins from Kapiti Island were freed into the sanctuary last May, and staff have found eight nests containing eggs or chicks and believe there are many still to be found.

Ms Small, who is studying the birds' success to compare with robins in other protected areas, says they breed from

September till March, and can raise up to three broods in a season.

Karori Sanctuary with its predator-proof fence makes an ideal study site, she says. She is encouraged that robins are doing so well there, because they are a good indicator of the forest's health.

Staff are feeding the birds mealworms

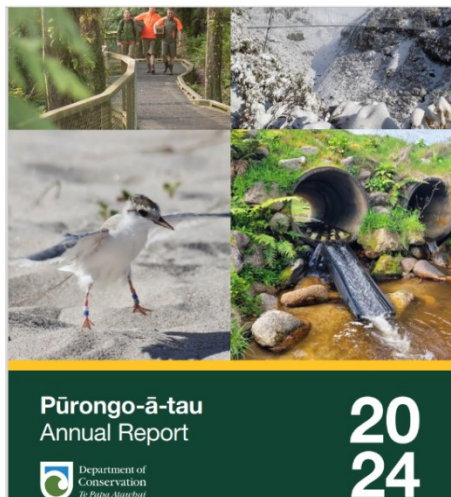
as an extra boost while they are raising chicks.

Sanctuary conservation manager Raewyn Empson is delighted that most of the freed robins are still in the valley. "The fact that they're breeding this early is marvellous". Another 40 robins will be transferred to the sanctuary next year.

*Banding North Island Robins as part of research on "Survival, breeding success and habitat selection of North Island robins *Petroica australis longipes* translocated to the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary – 2021".*

## Tara iti front page news – Tony Beauchamp

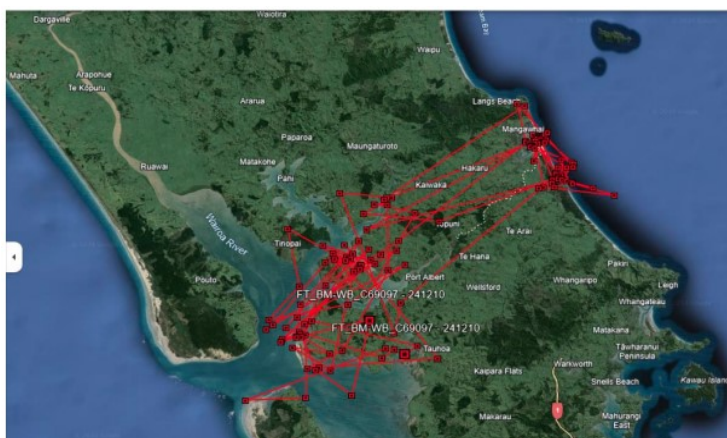
DOC Annual Report has a lovely photo of Tara iti (fairy tern) chick C-69097.



The Tara iti programme is working with Auckland Zoo to develop a method for captive rearing and release of Tara iti, as part of the long-term goal of improving persistence. In the 2023-24 period we modified the method of release of captive hatched and reared young to a pen release design. This allowed the young birds to exit and enter the pen as soon as they were able to fly and allowed the development of foraging skills while being supported with supplementary feeding in the pen.

Three birds weighing 55-59 g were fitted with VHF radio tag transmitters and one bird over 60 g was fitted with a satellite transmitter. The tagging was done by Troy Makan and Ilse Corkery on 9 January 2024, when the four captive-reared birds were 19-20 days old.

The bird with the satellite transmitter – the Annual Report cover bird, identified as C-69097 (colour bands: BM-WB) – often returned to the supplementary food at the release pen at Te Arai until he was 50 days old. He then moved to the Kaipara Harbour, and back to the east coast to Mangawhai to roost. He returned to the mid Kaipara Harbour and used the area that is known as the Tara iti's general foraging range. However, he was detected more to the north in the mid harbour than historic records had indicated. The satellite tag stopped working on 7th March 2024, but he was later seen with other Tara iti at Manukapua on 10 April 2024. Unfortunately, he has not been seen since.



Map showing C-69097 movements as recorded between 5-26 February 2024.

Two of the VHF carrying transmitted birds were also detected in the Kaipara 4 and 5 days after leaving Te Arai. One was never seen, while the other has been frequently detected with the nine wild-reared first-year birds of the 2023-2024 year and the adults. She is currently with eight of these birds in Waipu as of late October 2024.

## Tara iti smart egg – Tim Prebble and Stu Cockburn

Understanding species behaviour is integral to species conservation. The Department of Conservation (DOC) electronics team has utilized miniature electronics and 3D printing technologies to produce accurate egg dataloggers. These devices are designed to help understand the incubation turning rates and temperature of the Tara iti/New Zealand fairy tern.

Developed in collaboration with technical advisor Dr. Ilse Corkery, the Tara iti egg was designed, 3D printed, and then hand-painted by an artist to closely mimic a real Tara iti egg. Inside, it houses a tiny electronic board capable of logging gravity readings in the X, Y, and Z axes, as well as temperature, every three seconds for up to five days.

A custom computer application has been developed to download and visualize the collected data. This data is crucial for understanding the frequency and extent of egg rotation during the early days of natural incubation. The insights gained will guide DOC species experts and the Auckland Zoo's artificial incubation program, enhancing efforts to conserve this critically endangered species.



## There and back again – Sandy Taylor

When a seabird ventures out to sea, there is no guarantee it will safely return to its colony. Seabirds encounter numerous dangers and are often attracted to the vast fishing fleets, which can lead to their demise. While there are many tragic stories, this is not one of them.



Johannes Fischer (Marine Science Advisor, DOC) received news from his South American contacts that a banded Northern Royal Albatross had been caught in a Patagonian toothfish snood off the coast of Valdivia, Chile, on 18 March 2024. The metal band was removed to be kept as a souvenir, and the bird was apparently released alive.

Large stainless-steel bird bands are tough. They can be removed from a bird's leg safely, but it takes care. There are horror stories about how birds are dealt with by fishers, so I assumed that this bird had likely suffered a nonsurvivable injury.

Sharyn Broni, a long-time ranger at [Pukekura/Taiaroa Head](#), provided a detailed history of R-35558. Metal banded as a chick on 17/07/2010 at the Taiaroa Head colony, he successfully fledged and returned to the colony during the 2014/15 season when he was colour banded with Lime Green/White/Green. Since then, he was a regular at the colony turning up in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2022. A valued male breeder, who had successfully fledged two chicks in previous years, he was last seen in February 2023 when his third chick fledged.

Sharyn said at the time: "It will be a shame if he does not come back as R-35558 and his mate have been shaping up to be a productive pair".

And so, it was a waiting game to see if he would return around October/November this year. Amazingly he has.

On 20 October 2024, Sharyn emailed to say that LWG was back on his same nest spot at Pukekura, with his colour bands intact but no stainless-steel band. "He does not even seem to be too agitated." There is no sign of injury to his leg.

Julia Reid, a DOC ranger at Pukekura, took a beautiful photo on October 23 during routine nest checks. Sharyn updated that a fertile egg was laid by LWG's mate on November 11, and they have been incubating it since. All going well, their egg will hatch around the end of January.

You would hope this bird has learned his lesson and will steer clear of fishing boats in the future. Perhaps he has, as he seems to have successfully navigated through fishing fleets to return once more. Many birds aren't as fortunate. This one was lucky making LWG's safe return a remarkable and heartwarming event.

Thank you to everyone who took part in this happy story, especially those who reported the band number to the Banding Office.

## *Banded Dotterels in Eastbourne, Wellington – Shane Cotter*

On 20 November 2024, while monitoring banded dotterel nesting at the Wainuiomata river mouth near Baring Head, Wellington, I came across this dead banded dotterel chick. On closer examination, it had very fine fishing line looped around its middle toe with the other end caught on vegetation. Clearly it couldn't move away, and it likely died of starvation. On checking the legs for bands, sure enough, I had banded this chick with a metal band on the 23rd of October 2024 approximately 50 metres away. At that stage it didn't have any wing feathers just pins. When it died, the wing measured 85 mm. Fledgling banded dotterels can fly with wings measuring around 94-96mm, so this chick was only days away from fledging when it died.



## *Update: Avian influenza*

-  **1** Record the precise location of birds, e.g. address or GPS coordinates
-  **2** Record the estimated numbers affected, those unaffected and possible species.
-  **3** Take clear photos or videos of sick and dead birds
-  **4** Call 0800 80 99 66

Please ensure that you keep informed regarding Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) - if this is detected in New Zealand, we *may need to restrict or suspend bird capture and marking activities with immediate effect.*

Biosecurity New Zealand (Ministry of Primary Industries) has primary responsibility for exotic disease surveillance and investigation of unusual mortality clusters in animals. For more information see: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/how-to-find-report-and-prevent-pests-and-diseases/surveillance-programmes/>

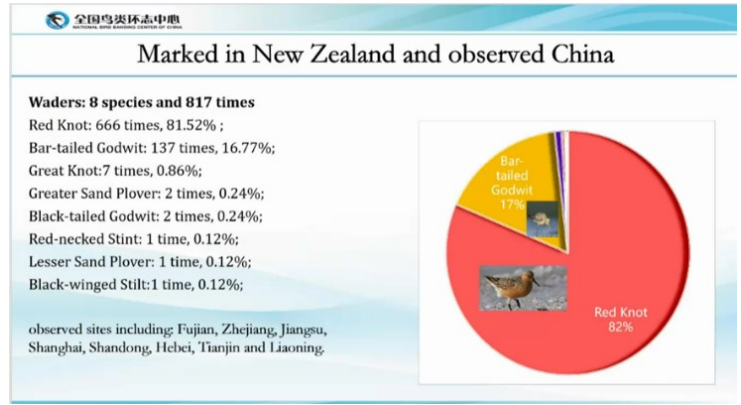
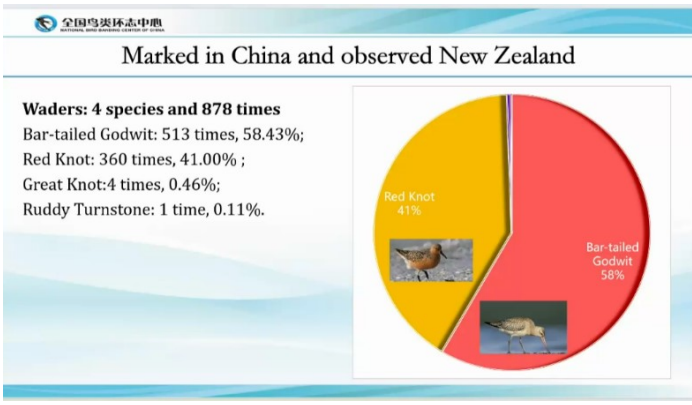
If you find 3 or more dead birds, or notice birds displaying symptoms of respiratory or neurological distress, **ring the exotic disease hotline for advice: 0800 80 99 66**

# Memorandum of Arrangement with Chinese National Bird Banding Centre

A formal Arrangement on the cooperation to promote the exchange of bird banding data for migratory shorebirds and seabirds has strengthened the relationship between the Banding Office and our Chinese counterparts. This is very important as it underpins a range of other work on these species.

This Memorandum of Arrangement was signed earlier this year during the visit of China’s premier Li Qiang to NZ. It was signed by His Excellency Wang Xiaolong, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to New Zealand and DOC’s Sia Aston, and witnessed by His Excellency Li Qiang, Premier of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China and New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon.

Bruce McKinlay was instrumental in initiating and facilitating this and he was able to visit Professor Jiang Hongxing and Dr. Chen Lixia in Beijing in October together with David Melville. Following this, the Banding Office staff (Michelle, Sandy and Delia) were supported by Yoyo Zhou, who served as an interpreter, in an online meeting to further discuss data sharing. The meeting was very cordial, and we are looking forward to working with, and learning from, one of the largest banding schemes in the world.



## ABBBS and NZNBBS catch-up – Annemieke Hendriks

I’m one of those people where holidays and time off look suspiciously similar to work and tend to still have a strong nature and wildlife theme. My recent trip to Australia was no different and I ensured that I made time to engage with both the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS), and a group of Australian bird banders in the field. Catching up with Emma Barkley and Nathan Perring (ABBBS) in Canberra was valuable to both schemes, and a good chance for us to meaningfully interact, discussing our challenges in common and sharing insights from our respective sides of the ditch. It is great for the New Zealand National Bird Banding Scheme to have these international connections with overseas marking schemes, and it is so important to ensure that we foster and build these relationships. It was a particular pleasure to get into the field to observe Australian bird banding practice in action, engage with local Australian banders and participate, despite the ticks and possible snakes to mind out for!



Nathan, Annemieke and Emma

## Who is that bird? Chris Robertson

C.J.R. (Chris) Robertson was the Banding Officer from 1964 to 1981 - Chris was handling the banding administration at the Dominion Museum and moved with the Scheme when it was taken over by the Wildlife Branch (later renamed the NZ Wildlife Service) in 1967. This article was published in *Airline Review* in 1968.



*Banding a duck.*

## Who is that Bird?

Have you ever seen a bird wearing a metal or coloured plastic band on its leg? Millions of birds the world over wear such 'jewellery'. Students of bird life, be they young or old, use 'rings' or 'bands' to aid their studies into the intricate habits of their subjects. Each band has a serial number belonging to that individual, and like the soldier's 'dog tag', it tells exactly who that bird is.

### Ancient Practice

The idea of marking individual birds is very old. The Greeks and Romans, knowing that swallows and pigeons would return to their homes, used this knowledge to send information by tying coloured threads and messages to the birds' legs. Marco Polo wrote of falcons in China about 1300 AD 'Each bird belonging to the Sovereign and the Barons has a tablet of silver on its feet so that wherever caught it can be returned to him.' During the 19th century various naturalists used strings, coloured threads, silver wire and 'indelibly' marked birds to identify individuals under study.

However, it was not until 1899 that the systematic marking of birds for the scientific study of habits and movements was started. A Danish schoolteacher, Christian Mortensen, used numbered zinc leg bands on starlings. Other countries soon developed national schemes and today more than five million birds are banded each year.

In New Zealand the growing demand for an organised scheme led to the Ornithological Society of New Zealand establishing a banding scheme for non-game birds in 1950. This scheme was eventually transferred to the Dominion Museum in 1962 when the organisation became too great for honorary workers. Game birds were banded by the Wildlife Service, Department of Internal Affairs, in a separate scheme. A National Banding Scheme was formed in 1967 when the banding of all birds for scientific study was placed under the control of the Wildlife Service.

All kinds of people like to watch birds. Although bird-banders may be highly trained conservation and management workers, or enthusiastic and unpaid amateurs doing individual studies, a co-ordinated national scheme not only provides a central clearing house for information, but enables the collation of material for broader investigation of long-term trends. Apart from its purely scientific value, such knowledge is essential for the effective conservation of native and rare species, for management of the annual crop of game birds, and to help devise methods of control for those considered pests.

### Banding Operators

There are currently some 120 registered banding operators in New Zealand working individually or in groups. They include Government Departments, Museums, Acclimatisation Societies, senior university students and staff, and men and women from all walks of life doing studies in their spare time. All prospective banders have to show that they wish to undertake some kind of study on a species or group within a specified area. It is important that they can identify their birds accurately and are prepared to complete the paper work associated with the recording of data. Trapping methods vary according to the species and, are designed to prevent any harm to the bird. Sea birds are often caught by hand as chicks before

*Walk-in trap for catching waterfowl.*



they can fly, while small garden birds may be caught in cage traps or mist nets. The mist net is a fine-meshed nylon net which is set up to catch birds in flight. The birds do not see the net and fly into it, becoming entangled in the long pockets built into the net.

### 'Name and Address' for Birds

Having caught the bird the operator may band it by a variety of methods. Metal numbered bands were originally made of aluminium. However, this proved unsatisfactory for many birds as it wore through, or the number became worn off and the bird was no longer identifiable. The change to monel metal (copper-nickel alloy) and stainless steel has enabled most of these problems to be overcome, though the harder bands are not as easy to apply.

Because birds have different leg sizes and shapes there are many different sizes ranging in diameter from two millimetres to 22 millimetres. Generally the bands are round in shape but some oval sizes are included to cater for birds with flat legs. Penguins have short legs covered by body feathers so a long flat band is used on the hard bony flipper, which has replaced the wing.

Colour bands, leg and neck streamers, wing tags and clips are used in some studies to help observation. It is difficult to recapture some birds regularly and colour markers are used to enable the observer to recognise the bird from a distance. A bird with a red band on its left leg is always recognisable as different from a bird with a green band on its left leg. By using combination of colours – red over green, blue over yellow – it is possible to mark a large number of birds for individual recognition in the field.

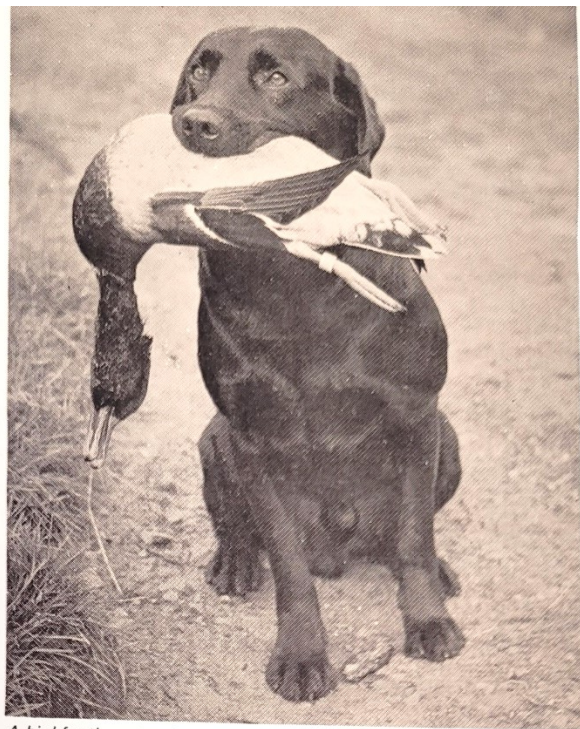
All metal bands used have two items of information recorded on them. A number made up of an alphabetic or numeric prefix and a series of digits, e.g. R-13940 or 17-00173; and an address. It is important to have an unambiguous address to prevent confusion to the finder.

One story relates that in the early days of banding in America the band address was 'WASH, BIOL. SURV.' (Washington Biological Survey). A member of the public wrote, 'I shot a rook and followed the instructions on its leg. I washed it, boiled it and served it. It tasted awful. Would you please not misguide us with your instructions.'

### Banding Recoveries

In New Zealand there are two addresses – 'Send Dominion Museum, N.Z.' and 'Send Wildlife Branch, Wellington, N.Z.', and these may be lengthened or abbreviated according to the size of the band. Even if the finder copies only what is on the band onto an envelope, the recovery will reach the banding office.

Having banded their birds the operators return the information on schedules to the banding office giving the species, place and date of banding. This provides the basic data for all future research work and dispersal of information.



*A bird for the pot, a band for the Banding Scheme.*

Band returns come in three main categories – dead, sight and recapture. Most dead recoveries are sent in by members of the public from birds shot, run over, picked up on beaches, caught by cats or just found dead. Each year some 3,000 bands and reports are received from people not connected with actually banding birds. Sight and recapture records come mainly from banding operators who see colour banded birds, read the band numbers with binoculars, or recapture birds during their studies. About 7,000 recoveries of this type are added to the collection each year. All people who recover bands are notified by the Banding Scheme of the history of the bird they have found and some of the history of the scheme.

Some 500,000 birds have now been banded in New Zealand, and this figure is growing by up to 45,000 per year. Recoveries of banded birds illustrate that some species cover long distances. A royal albatross banded at Campbell Island was recovered in Argentina, 4,900 miles away; a sooty shearwater banded in Cook Strait was recovered in Japan, 7,000 miles away; a harrier hawk banded in Hawkes Bay was recovered at Invercargill, 600 miles distant; and a common house sparrow banded in Upper Hutt turned up in Reparoa, 200 miles away.

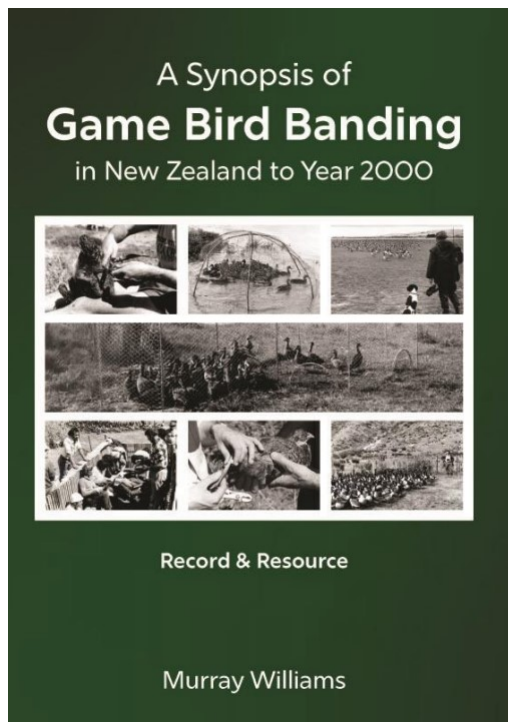
Many recoveries bring the banding office into contact with interesting people – a Red Indian from Canada, a Lighthouse Keeper from Australia, a French biologist from Antarctica, a Russian whaler, a cook on an Argentinian fishing vessel, a visiting Springbok Rugby player, to mention but a few.

Significant data on dispersal, seasonal movements, ecology and behaviour, survival, mortality, and longevity has been obtained on many native and introduced birds, and as studies continue much surprising and unusual information comes to light.



## ***A synopsis of game bird banding in New Zealand to year 2000 - Murray Williams***

Murray Williams has made significant contributions to gamebird research. His latest publication is a remarkable achievement in data gathering, analysis, and writing, serving as a crucial resource for researchers.



**Abstract:** The organised banding in New Zealand of birds seasonally hunted as game commenced in 1947 when wild grey ducks (*Anas superciliosa*) and mallards (*A. platyrhynchos*) were captured in Manawatu. From 1950, California quail (*Callipepla californica*) were caught and banded in central Otago and near Taupo as field studies of other game birds by Department of Internal Affairs Wildlife Branch staff commenced. At the same time, captive-raised mallards and common pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) were banded at release by acclimatisation societies, pre-empting a later legal requirement for banding of all released captive-raised game birds. By year 2000, approximately 150,000 of five species of introduced upland game birds (Galliformes) had been banded in New Zealand, including chukar partridge (*Alectoris chukar*), grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*), and red-legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa*), the latter two species ultimately failing to acclimatise. From this total, 7,267 were reported shot. By year 2000, approximately 370,000 of six species of wetland game birds — black swan (*Cygnus atratus*), Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*), paradise shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*), Australasian shoveler (*Spatula (Anas) rhynchotis*), grey duck, and mallard (and their hybrids) — had been banded. From this total, 62,566 were reported shot. Banding records, and details arising from the reported recoveries of banded birds, were initially administered by the Wildlife

Branch, Department of Internal Affairs 1947–66, after which records were amalgamated with the nascent Ornithological Society of New Zealand’s bird ringing scheme for all other species, to form the New Zealand Bird Banding Scheme. Administered 1967–87 by the Wildlife Service, the scheme has been managed thereafter by the Department of Conservation. This narrative summarises the scales, locations, and durations of bandings of each game bird species, quantifies the recovery records for each, and reports on all published outcomes arising from the banding activities. Tabulated recovery arrays (banding year by recovery year) are provided for each species of wetland game bird to preserve historic records and encourage belated appraisal of much unprocessed band-recovery information.

Williams, Murray. 2024. *A synopsis of game bird banding in New Zealand to year 2000*. Ornithological Society of New Zealand Occasional Publication No. 3, Nelson: Ornithological Society of New Zealand (e-version)/ Paekakariki: the author (printed version).

This valuable resource is expected to be published online at [Occasional Publications - Birds New Zealand](#). A hardcopy has been deposited in the National Library of NZ collection.

### ***Celebrating contributions to bird conservation***

[Murray Williams](#) has also received recognition for his contribution to wildlife science and conservation as a recipient of the New Zealand Order of Merit in this year’s [King’s Birthday Honours List](#), alongside fellow birders [Paul “Scratch” Jansen](#), [Colin O’Donnell](#), [Lisa Whittle](#), [Dianne John](#), [Stephen Emil](#) and [David Laughlin](#).

Similarly [Graeme Elliott](#), accepted becoming an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) in this year’s New Year honours for services to wildlife conservation.

## 2025 Duck Banding opportunities

[Download](#) the Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game 2025 duck banding programme.

For those new to banding or working towards your banding certification, this is a great opportunity to get some practice. Remember to record your handling and banding experience using the [Bander Training Log](#) – print this and take it along for the Level 3 trainer to sign. We usually finish each day with a BBQ and some cold refreshments.

There are six sites/weekends to choose from. If you are keen to assist, please RSVP where/when you can help out so we can keep you in the loop if plans change. RSVP is particularly relevant this year as there is a risk that HPAI (bird flu) could reach New Zealand. The current likelihood is low, but we will keep close tabs on this. The worst-case scenario is that the risk is too high, and we must stop banding. If this happens, we would like to be able to let you know as soon as possible.

The organisation this year will be a bit different from previous ones, with new officers Dani and Beau joining the F&G team. If you have any questions or want to RSVP, their contact details are:

Dani Le Lievre: email [dlelievre@fishandgame.org.nz](mailto:dlelievre@fishandgame.org.nz) or phone 0212688929

Beau Jarvis-Child: email [bjarvis-child@fishandgame.org.nz](mailto:bjarvis-child@fishandgame.org.nz) or phone 0212405693

## 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 porcupine fish! An unusual report to stumble across!

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

## *“Where does all the data go?”; “Pick one and get on with it”; “Be deliberate”*

These are some of our favourite quotes from Sharon Alderson, (Director of the Banding Office), who has recently departed from DOC after 18 years of dedicated service. As a data champion and albatross enthusiast, Sharon has always provided excellent interaction and support to the Banding Office. To commemorate her departure, the Banding Office team presented Sharon with a toy albatross wearing the band RA-2204 as part of her farewell gift.



Sharon Alderson

The band's history: it was attached to an adult male Southern Royal Albatross on January 6, 2005, on Campbell Island by Peter Moore. The bird had previously been banded with R-45561 on January 13, 1995, making it at least 10 years old when RA-2204 was applied.

According to the FALCON database, this albatross was resighted on December 5, 1996, and January 15, 1998, on Campbell Island. Band RA-2204 was removed on February 7, 2009, and replaced with a Trovan transponder (PIT-000668951F). Unfortunately, the bird has not been seen since. While its current status is unknown, we remain hopeful that it will be resighted (sometimes they do turn up 'out of the blue'), and its story updated.

We wish Sharon all the best in her future endeavours and look forward to catching up with her again soon.

## Found a stash of bands? Please return these to the Banding Office 😊

Returning band stashes, whether used or unused, is crucial for maintaining proper stock inventory, ensuring efficient resource use, and potentially solving data mysteries. Here's how you can help:

1. **Unused Bands:** If you find unwanted or forgotten bands in an office drawer, cupboard, or box, please return them to the Banding Office. We will assess their usability and reallocate them as needed.
2. **Used Bands:** If you come across used bands and are unsure if they have been properly reported, return them to the Banding Office. We can ensure they are correctly accounted for in our data system and disposed of properly.

**Send to:** The Banding Office, Department of Conservation, PO Box 108, Wellington 6140. Please include any information you have about the bands, even if it's as simple as "cleaning out storage cupboard at Hokitika office and found this envelope of metal bands."

## Kiwi Conservation Club – Michelle Bradshaw

A huge thank you to Chris Turton for arranging a bird banding workshop for a group of children from the [Kiwi Conservation Club](#) in October. Wakapuaka sandflats in Nelson echoed with bird calls both natural and mimicked, as each participant acted out the bird species they chose for the day and shared interesting bird facts with one another. A demonstration using puppets and various banding equipment triggered many questions, with even some curious passers-by pausing to learn. The "first rule of bird banding" was the easiest to remember: "Don't do it!" Unless... you have a Purpose, competent People, a Permit and you Provide the data (Please) 😊

After ensuring that everyone knew how to tell which is the left or the right leg of a bird (or a buddy), and that colour bands are reported left leg, top-to-bottom, then right leg, top-to-bottom, the real fun started! Strips of cardboard were used to create unique combinations of colour bands on legs both small and large (even the adults joined in!). Various games embedded the concept of how to read and report colour bands.

The pink feedback forms that Chris dropped off at the DOC office confirmed that everyone enjoyed it and learnt something and reinforces the value of taking the time to invest in the next generation of conservationists. Apparently, some 'birds' were reluctant to remove their colour bands at the end of the day...hopefully they will long remember the interesting bird facts, and how to report banded birds!



## Puzzled: Answers to Lingo Bingo

<p>Pulli/ Pullus</p> <p>baby bird not yet able to fly</p>	<p>Big Year</p> <p>a year in which a birder attempts to see as many different wild bird species as possible</p>	<p>Pellet (raptor-related)</p> <p>nugget of indigestible bits of prey items (e.g. bones, keratin, feathers etc.)</p>	<p>The 2023 Bird of the Century te reo name &amp; one of the 3 interesting names courtship displays they do</p> <p>Pūteketeke (weed dance, ghostly penguin, cat display)</p>	<p>Describe 2 things called 'Notornis'</p> <p>the bird (takahē), the OSNZ journal</p>
<p>Twinkle/ twinkling/ twinkled</p> <p>the act of moving a certain number of waders into the capture zone while cannon-netting</p>	<p>Twitching/ twitcher</p> <p>someone who watches birds</p>	<p>Ebird checklist</p> <p>list of bird species seen or heard and reported to ebird</p>	<p>Catastrophic moult &amp; an example of one species who has this</p> <p>all feathers shed at once, any penguin</p>	<p>Harp (bats)</p> <p>part of the trap with strings, the bats hit the harp strings, and fall down into the catch bag</p>
<p>Nulliparous &amp; parous (bats)</p> <p>Non-breeding (did not give birth) &amp; breeding (gave birth). Information collected when monitoring adult female bats</p>	<p>1+ (one-plus)</p> <p>a bird older than 1 year, not necessarily an adult</p>	<p>FALCON (Banding Office related)</p> <p>National database of all marking of NZ bats &amp; birds</p>	<p>Gastrolith</p> <p>gizzard/ stomach stone held in gastrointestinal tract used to break down food</p>	<p>Aberrant/ leucistic/ melanistic</p> <p>usually referring to colouring, leucistic a lack of pigment (individuals often white) and melanistic is darkened pigment (individuals often darker)</p>
<p>Web/ webbing (penguins)</p> <p>soft tissue between toes</p>	<p>Oology/ oologist</p> <p>egg expert</p>	<p>Merganser</p> <p>an extinct seaduck group from Auckland &amp; Chatham Islands</p>	<p>Jess</p> <p>a leg attachment – often related to raptor training</p>	<p>Pip</p> <p>the process of the chick breaking through egg layers when hatching</p>
<p>Crown</p> <p>part of the front of the head of a bird</p>	<p>Robotit/ Tombin</p> <p>a hybrid between a robin and a tomtit</p>	<p>The collective noun for a group of flamingos</p> <p>flamboyance</p>	<p>The name for the expanding part of a Pelican's throat</p> <p>pouch</p>	<p>OFP/OFK, YCP/YCK &amp; BBG Orange-fronted parakeet/ kākārīki, Yellow crowned Parakeet/ kākārīki, Black-backed Gull</p>

## Puzzled: whose leg is this?

3D printed bird legs have become such a popular training tool that we are now selling these (see [Price List](#)). Do you know which species were scanned to produce these? Note that the pictures are not to scale.

