

DRAFT



**ALEXANDRA PARK
DOTTEREL**

Shaun Lee, January 2015



Ten endangered New Zealand Dotterel have been nesting in the center of the Alexandra Park racecourse. This report shows how these displaced birds have triumphed in this new oasis not 5km from the CBD of New Zealand's biggest city.

How was this information collected?

Site visits, once a week. Observations from a distance then usually a walk around the track where nests were inspected and eggs/chicks/adults counted. Threats were also observed.

What is being done at present?

The Track Manager Wayne Thomas (029 773 0442) pegs nest locations with a Pigtail Standard. This has two functions 1) Helping him steer the grass mower around the nests 2) Stops the public (in cars or by foot) from squashing the eggs. He also poisons rabbits and rats.

The observers have tried their best to not interfere with the current management, although Shaun did peg several nests and Alison Staines helped fence two nests.

How are we going (12th Jan 2015)

5 Breeding Pairs (*started with 5, but one pair left*).
14 nests, 34 eggs, 9 chicks, 3 fledglings

This gives us a productivity rating of 0.6 (*Productivity = average number of chicks fledged per breeding pair*). Management is considered effective if productivity values are greater than 0.5 for three consecutive years or longer (*Dowding & Davis, 2007*). If the three existing chicks fledged the productivity rating will rise to 1.2!

What can we do better now?

1. Divert parking and foot traffic from the east end of the inner field where 76% of the nesting and all the chick rearing happens.
2. Keep motorised and foot traffic off the inner track. 42% of the nests occur on the very edge of the inner track.
3. Fence off nesting areas.

What can we do better next year?

4. Send ground keeper(s), parking attendants and someone from management to the 2015 Dotterel Management course in Miranda.
<http://www.miranda-shorebird.org.nz/events-and-courses>
5. Fill any puddles next to NNZD nests. Splashes chill, wash away and bury nests.
6. Look at creating a wet area that adults might keep their chicks near.
7. Trial chick shelters to manage avian predation.
8. Use game cameras and monitoring tunnels to check for mammalian predators. Start trapping.

What is a Dotterel?

Northern New Zealand Dotterel (NNZD) are endemic to New Zealand which means they are found no where else in the world. They are classified as 'Nationally Vulnerable' which means they are threatened with extinction.

Since the rival of humans their population has been in step decline, however in recent years with intensive management the population has begun to recover. These birds are conservation dependent. There are 10 times more Kiwi than NNZD left in the world.

Why are they at Alexandra Park?

As beaches around New Zealand fill with people they are losing breeding habitat and looking elsewhere. Alexandra park sits between two huge feeding grounds on the east and west coast. The short grass and sand and shell create great habitat for NNZD who have been feeding, mating and nesting in Alexandra Park for more than three years. NNZD are incredibly site faithful returning to the same location year after year even if reproducing was unsuccessful.

Why has this report been written?

Auckland is full of bird enthusiasts, Shaun Lee who looks after NNZD at Point England noticed the Alexandra population in May 2014 while on the way to the boat show. He decided to monitor the breeding season to see how things were going before making any uninformed management recommendations. He wanted to know how the site is currently being shared (by humans, cars, horses, NNZD, pets and pests) site productivity and threats before making management recommendations. Shaun is a member of the Ornithological Society, he has worked with various threatened species as a volunteer and has completed the NNZD Management Course.

Whats the long term vision for these birds?

NNZD live for more than 30 years. It's likely these same birds will still be attempting to reproduce here in 2040. In Appendix 3, a car park is proposed in the NNZD nesting ground. This is a big problem. There is a unique opportunity to position Alexandra Park as a place for animal lovers and conservation.

Development threats

- 1. Sports:** Converting the inner track into a rugby training ground is likely to impact on the birds. The author helped organise the Non Beach Breeding Dotterel Forum in May 2014 – none of the experts from Council, OSNZ, DoC or various environmental consultancies mentioned NNZD breeding in sports fields.
- 2. Apartments:** Any development that increases foot traffic or adds additional car parking to the inner track will disturb the Dotterel. Disturbing a nesting bird leaves the eggs vulnerable to predators and temperature extremes. Any additional housing on the block will bring pets. Cats eat eggs chicks and adult birds, the male NNZD are especially vulnerable as they sit on the nest at night.
<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/native-animals/birds/birds-a-z/nz-dotterel-tuturiwhatu/>
- 3. Car parking:** Converting the inner track into a car park will destroy the NNZD breeding grounds (by sealing the surface or increasing traffic).

Although they are very site faithful, development is likely to drive the NNZD away. It is unlikely they will find another site that has the right elements to keep successfully breeding. Note the author has actively managed a similar sized NNZD population on a coastal site in Point England for two years with a productivity of 0.

Can we move the birds?

I don't know, it could be very costly in terms of habitat creation and there is a high chance of failure. However Cornwall Park is very close, world expert John Dowding would be the best person to ask <http://dmconsultants.co.nz>

Authors recommendation

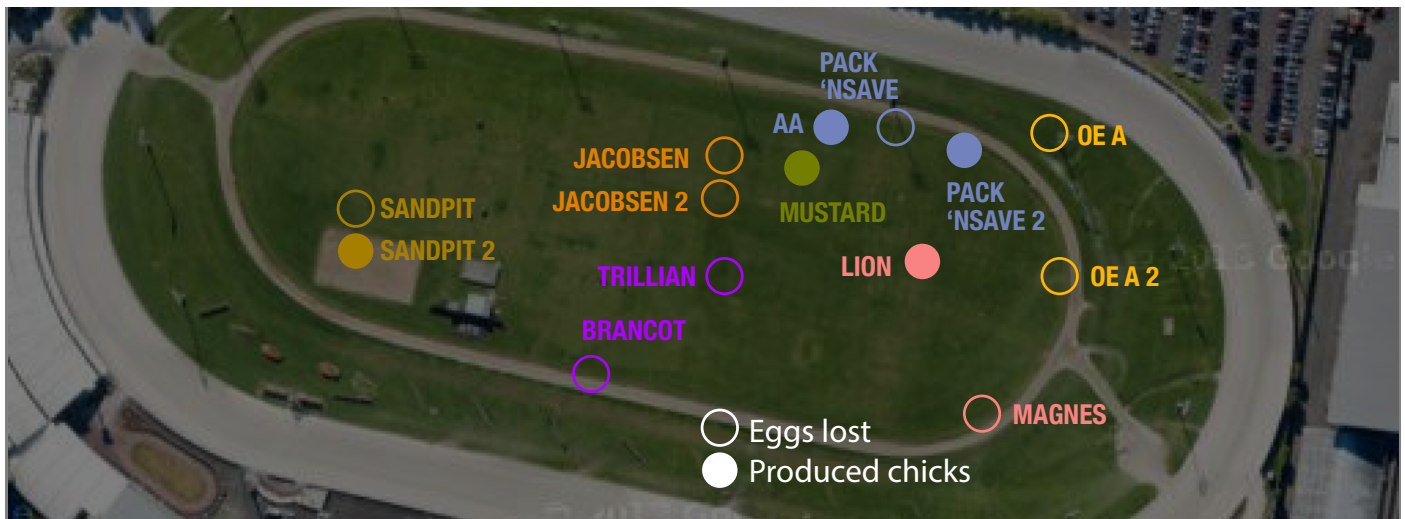
Don't develop the inner track. Use the Dotterel to help build the Alexandra Park brand as a remarkable place with real heart. If the development rewards are really high then mitigation measures should be put in place to offset the loss to a species which is threatened with extinction.

What else would we like to know?

Where do these birds feed? There has only been one observation of a NNZD leaving the area, heading east. Where do these birds flock (the sudden increase in numbers on the 27th Dec suggests it could be a flocking site)? Is the shell track important for them?



TOTALS Jan 12th 2015



Nest/Eggs/Chicks/Fledglings:

Brancot: 3e
 Lion: 3e / 2c / 1f
 Mustard: 1e / 2c (assume from this nest)
 Trillian: 2e
 AA: 3e / 2c
 OEA: 1e
 OEA #2: 3e
 PacknSave: 2e
 PacknSave #2: 3e / 2c / 2f
 Jacobsen: 2e
 Jacobsen #2: 3e
 Sandpit: 3e
 Sandpit #2: 3e / 1c
 Magnes: 2e

14 nests

34 eggs

9 chicks

3 fledglings

4 unhatched eggs

2 pecked eggs

19 eggs lost to unknown causes

Nests near side of track:

Brancot
 PacknSave
 OEA #2
 PacknSave #2
 AA
 Magnes

Unhatched eggs:

1 OEA
 1 Mustard
 1 Lion
 1 Jacobsen 2

Known losses:

Brancot, 2eggs Spur Winged Plover
(Disturbance creates opportunities for avian predation)

Unknown losses:

19 eggs lost to unknown causes *(foot traffic, predation, mowing?)*

APPENDICES

Apendix 1

All the notes (*sorry they are huge, no one needs to read them all*).

Apendix 2

Circus dates, *gives an idea for parking/ disturbance pressure.*

Apendix 3

NZ Herald article on Alexandra Park development plan

Apendix 4

Case study, *Newmont Waihi and the Establishment of NZ Dotterel Watch*

Apendix 5

Case study, *NZTA and the Shoal Bay Dotterel*

Apendix 6

Case study, *Motat move event for Dotterel*

APENDIX 1

Note the nests are named after the nearest sign.

May 18 2014

Stumbled upon 10 Adult Northern New Zealand Dotterel in Alexandra Park.

9 Aug Midday

5 Pairs at low tide (east coast).
- Brancot 10M 1 egg.



22 Aug 5:30pm

- Brancot 10M 3eggs, Adult on nest
- Lion 50M 3eggs, Adult on nest
- Outside East A 1egg suspect abandoned
- Outside East B 4eggs suspect SWP
- Mustard 70M 1 egg suspect abandoned

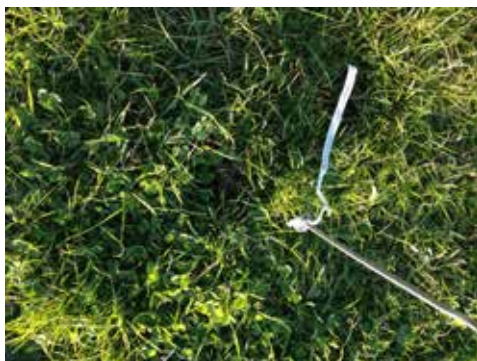
7:00 First cars arrive.
7:20 First walkers cross the center of the course.
7:30 Lots of cars driving on the track, Brancot nest undisturbed.
7:45 Peak pedestrian traffic.
7:50 Six distressed Dotterel (and two SWP), no birds on nests. Lion, OEA, OEB, Mustard.
8:00 Event start.
8:00 Two Dotterel chicks and parents (performing broken wing displays) near OEA.
8:15 The odd walker, 1 car. Counted 250 cars parked on the track.



Public crossing grass and walking on inside track



Brancot



Outside East A 1egg suspect abandoned



Lion 50M 3eggs

24 Aug 1:30pm

Same amount of cars on track.

- Brancot 10M 3eggs, Adult on nest (even while a couple walked past on inside track).
- Lion 50M 3eggs, Adult on nest.
- New SWP nest found by SE manholes.
- Outside East B Adult SWP on nest.
- Walkers causing Adults and chicks distress.
- SWP attacking adult Dotterel and chicks, 3 contacts between SWP and chicks. SWP eggs promptly removed from two nests.
- Northern end: Dotterel limping, SWP attacks SWP chick.
- Southern end: SWP no longer attacking chicks, 1 chick limping but keeping up with 2 Adults and sibling.



Chicks



Attacked



Limping adult



Limping chick

Sibling
and
adult

Adult

31 Aug 12:50

No chicks. 6pairs.

- Bird disturbed of new nest 2 eggs) PacknSave for 40 mins. Car on inner track.
- More cars.
- Lion and Brancott, 3 eggs.
- Another new nest Jacobsen, moved stake from abandoned nest - OEA.
- SWP egg at Manhole nest (after we removed 3 last week)

(Kaye Smith also observed a 3 egg nest, pretty sure it was Lion and called DoC.)

6 Sept 3pm

13 adults. <10 cars.

- Brancot. Adult on nest. 3 eggs
- Lion. Adult on nest. 3 eggs
- Pack'nSave. Adult on nest. 2 eggs
- Mustard. 1egg suspect abandoned
- Jacobsen. Adult on nest. 2eggs.
- 2 of the 3 pairs of SWP seem to have abandoned this site.
- Light showers. All birds except Brancot off nest at 3:20, show due to start 4:30



Rabbits



Dots not bothered by cars



But when disturbed by people do move into the track and oncoming traffic.



Disturbed off nest



Walkers passing by nests

11 September

Alison Stanes (experienced Dotterel Minder)

Inner is a sea of cars, both for the home show and the circus. At the west end where there were less cars were four bewildered dotterel. One pair kept sweeping over the cars so I figured there was a nest. It is marked with a cone and a pigtail post and no space at all, so cars and people are just going right by. The birds probably have not been on the nest yesterday and today. If only they could have fenced off more space.



Two nests fenced (Jacobson & Lion) because yesterday the one nest I found the birds were off the nest the whole time I was there. This is the nest furthest east. They were flying back and forth over it but the cars and people were too close for it. I wrote the nest off but during the night I thought maybe I should see if that pair are still incubating and they were. Fortunately yesterday there were periods of warm sunshine so the eggs may have survived.

The nest beside the inner road was too hard to fence.

Three quarters of the central area is just a sea of cars. I would think the birds have been off the nest too long to save it. There is no where to shift it. Only way would be to fence off an area of about ten car parks with signage.

13 Sept

Alison Stanes (experienced Dotterel Minder)

Just visited Alexandra park early this morning to check that the pig tail fencing survived the storm. Only looked with my binoculars and everything is OK. Even the nest I did not fence 'Brancot' has had more cones and some chairs from the nearby stage put beside it to keep cars and people back. Most likely put there by Wayne.



13 Sept 1pm. So many cars, mowed

Brancott 2eggs Adult on Nest Chairs and cones placed around nest
 Lion Adult on Nest Fenced 10M radius 1 chick hatching, 2eggs
 PacknSave gone, washed out by cars driving through puddle
 Mustard gone, assume pigtail removed for mowing
 Jacobsen 2eggs Fenced 7M radius, adult pair nearby but did not move to nest in the 30mins I was observed.
 Limpy pair and others on Roofs (note Limpy discernible when flying as well, leg hangs down).
 9 Adult NNZD observed



Brancot



Lion



PacknSave (lost)



Jacobsen

14 Sept

1 NNZD flying east parallel with Green Lane West Rd.
 Lion Adult on Nest 1 chick, 2e one pipping.
 Jacobsen Adult on Nest.
 Brancot, no adult chairs moved. 2e.
 4 BBG circling.



Lion



Brancot

17 Sept

Brancot Adult off nest, 2e
Lion, 1e (abandoned) 1 chick nearby
Jacobsen, Adult on nest. 2e
12 adults observed.



Lion Chick



Brancot



Jacobsen



BBG and NNZD



Tracks near nests

24 Sept 1pm

No cars
Brancot. Abandoned, 1e pecked
(suspect SWP)
Jacobsen Abandoned/ could not find/
fence removed but not by Alison
Lion, fence removed by Alison
1 Chick
5 SWP
1 SWP nest in sand pit 1e
Alison pegged two new nests (24 Sept)
- OEA2 3e Adult on nest
- PacknSave 2 Adult on nest
Both right next to the track.



OEA2



Lion Chick 24 Sept

Shaun back from South Island

Oct 5 4pm. No cars (Noel leanings sale on).

OEA 2 bird off nest. Gone!

PacknSave 2 Bird on Nest. 3e.

Recent mowing.

2 cars on outside track, entered west side.

1 big chick.

Limpily still unproductive.

SPW sand nest failed.

2 eggs 6M east. Outside sandpit.



Oct 15 1:30

No cars, 6 birds inc chick which looks very much like an adult.

The two new eggs were Limpies!

Sandpit 3eggs

PacknSave 2 Bird on Nest. 3eggs

Trillian 2e nest in middle, 2nd egg laid whilst I got a peg!

12 birds when I left! Came from west? Tide coming in west side.



Limpies nest



PacknSave 2



Trillian. Second egg laid whilst I got a peg!

27 Oct 1:30pm

Armageddon. 200 cars parked on track / grass.
11 Adults
PacknSave 2 nest gone (hatched)
2 new chicks counted (expect from PacknSave 2)
Trillian nest gone
SWP nest gone
Limpy nest gone
4 Pigtales lifted because of event? 3 nests lost?



Cars



Chicks

2 Nov 12:30pm. No cars

Pair scrapping in sandpit (Limpy)
6 birds observed from a distance, 11
observed after walk in
2 Chicks (Same clutch)
3 Black Back Gulls
Dotterel egg shell found
No nests found



In carpark!



Nest making, Limpy on RHS

Mother pecks chick to tell it to hide from
Photographer

9 Nov 9:30am Big boys toys (no cars yet)

7 adults

3 BBG

Minors and Magpies attacking fledgling blackbird.

Mauled pigeon

1e nest Sandpit

Eggshell

SWP nest removed

Marked nest site w no eggs

Two chicks!



Sandpit nest



Another egg shell



Chicks

15 Nov 3pm No cars

Sandpit 3eggs Adult on nest

Jacobsen 2 3eggs

9 Adults assume one was fledgling

2 Chicks



Sandpit



Jacobsen 2

22 Nov 12:15 Horses racing

Sandpit, Limpy in nest 3 eggs

Jacobsen 2 3eggs

AA new nest 3 eggs

9 Adults 2 chicks



AA



29 Nov 3pm No cars

Sandpit Limpy on nest 3eggs dying bird display.

Jacobsen 2 Adult off nest. No displaying birds.

AA adult on nest, 3 eggs.

2 fledglings!

11 Dots total.

No photos, just took
Binoculars

7 Dec 10am no cars

- 1 new chick
- 11 adults
- Sandpit 3e AON
- Jacobsen 2. 2e
- AA 3e
- Magnes 2e (new nest).



Magnes



Fledgling

17 Dec 12:pm

- Sandpit empty
- Limpy nearby with one chick
- 2 chicks near center
- Destroyed SWP nest (Canam)
- Jacobsen2 1e abandoned
- 2 fledglings
- AA gone
- Magnes 2e



Fledgling



Limpy's chick



Limpy's chick

I think these chicks are from AA. Jacobsen 2 had 2eggs and still has one. Limpy was clearly with the single chick. AA must have been earlier than I recorded it. Its likely a Jacobsen 2 chick was hatched and lost.

27 Dec 6pm no cars

19 Adults!
3 chicks (2+1)
Magnes 2e



Chick



Thoroughbreds



Adult and chicks

8 Jan 5pm Trillian Trust fair

(day 1 ending)
Fair taking up entire track
2 chicks and some adults at east end
Chicks hiding in outside lip
8 adults eventually emerged as people left 5:30pm.
Magnes gone, no peg.
3 more days to go.



Dog

12 Jan 9:30am

(Trillian Trust Fair Finished, packing up)

6 adults/ fledglings
3 chicks!
15 red billed gulls and 4 extra BBG
(probably for trash).



Chicks and adults running fleeing from cars on both tracks.



1 of the 3 chicks that survived!

Appendix 2

Circus dates

Fri 22 Aug 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Sat 23 Aug 2014, 4:30pm–7:00pm
Sat 23 Aug 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Sun 24 Aug 2014, 1:30pm–4:00pm
Sun 24 Aug 2014, 5:00pm–7:30pm
Tue 26 Aug 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Wed 27 Aug 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Thu 28 Aug 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Fri 29 Aug 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Sat 30 Aug 2014, 4:30pm–7:00pm
Sat 30 Aug 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Sun 31 Aug 2014, 1:30pm–4:00pm
Sun 31 Aug 2014, 5:00pm–7:30pm
Tue 2 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Wed 3 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Thu 4 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Fri 5 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Sat 6 Sep 2014, 4:30pm–7:00pm
Sat 6 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Sun 7 Sep 2014, 1:30pm–4:00pm
Sun 7 Sep 2014, 5:30pm–8:00pm
Tue 9 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Wed 10 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Thu 11 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Fri 12 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Sat 13 Sep 2014, 4:30pm–7:00pm
Sat 13 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Sun 14 Sep 2014, 1:30pm–4:00pm
Sun 14 Sep 2014, 5:00pm–7:30pm
Wed 17 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Thu 18 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Fri 19 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Sat 20 Sep 2014, 4:30pm–7:00pm
Sat 20 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Sun 21 Sep 2014, 1:30pm–4:00pm
Sun 21 Sep 2014, 5:30pm–8:00pm
Tue 23 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Wed 24 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Thu 25 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Fri 26 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Sat 27 Sep 2014, 4:30pm–7:00pm
Sat 27 Sep 2014, 8:00pm–10:30pm
Sun 28 Sep 2014, 1:30pm–4:00pm
Sun 28 Sep 2014, 5:30pm–8:00pm

Hundreds of pedestrians
and cars everyday for a
month.

Alex Park plan gains pace

By [Anne Gibson](#) @Anne Gibson
5:00 AM Tuesday Dec 2, 2014

Sales of apartments in the 231-unit Alexandra Park project will start early next year.

Dominique Dowding, Alexandra Park's chief executive, said apartments would be for sale from February and she predicted occupation of the Green Lane West Rd places by the end of 2016.

On Friday, the Auckland Trotting Club announced plans for units and a big new shopping precinct on part of its carpark and Dowding said issues around traffic had been dealt with.



An artist's impression shows how the planned 231 units and shopping centre development on Auckland Trotting Club land is expected to look.

"The project team has fully consulted with Auckland Council and Auckland Transport to ensure that the traffic corridor is managed responsibly and we will continue to work with this team throughout this development to ensure we have the best outcomes for Green Lane West.

"With respect to large shows, there is always a problem for the area when 40,000 to 50,000 people attend a show at ASB Showgrounds. The club will continue to support our ASB Showgrounds/neighbours via the parking that we will continue to make available on Campbell Cres, the Auckland Trotting Club site itself – where we will be expanding our car parking by a further 300 to 400 car parks in the not too distant future – and within our track," she said.

Transportblog's Patrick Reynolds said the site was on frequent bus routes linking directly to train stations. Those bus routes would soon get more bus lanes and even better service, he said.

"There is only one carpark per two- to three-bedroom apartment. This is both in its design and placement a good thing for reducing congestion in a growing city. Aucklanders are now choosing the improving public transport in increasing numbers, especially for weekday travel when congestion is worst. This kind of development right next to high-quality services is the best way for the city to grow and mitigate congestion."

Albert-Eden Local Board chairman Peter Haynes said the board backed intensification but "two major arterial roads meet almost at the front door", he said, referring to Manukau Rd and Green Lane West Rd.

"What would be the impact on traffic flows that are already problematic? Is the developer going to contribute to improvements at the intersection, for example?

"Parking is also an issue, especially since the proposed development is on the site of a carpark that gets good use when large events are happening at the race track or the ASB Showgrounds," Haynes said.

A new organisation, the Public Transport Users Association, was launched in Auckland yesterday, with the logo "improving the moving".



[Environment](#) » [Biodiversity projects](#) » The NZ dotterel

The New Zealand dotterel

What have a threatened New Zealand bird species and a hard rock gold mine got in common?

The New Zealand dotterel is a threatened (Category B) species endemic to New Zealand. The population consists of two small groups, one in the North Island and the other on Stewart Island. The total population is around 1700 - 2000 individuals. The preferred environment of these birds is sandy beaches, usually near river mouths where food is plentiful. Dotterels eat a wide variety of food, most of which is found in the intertidal area.

The decline of the New Zealand dotterel is due to several factors, but in particular, introduced predators such as cats, stoats and ferrets. Because their nesting areas are popular with beach goers, many dotterel nests also get trampled by people, dogs, and trail bikes.

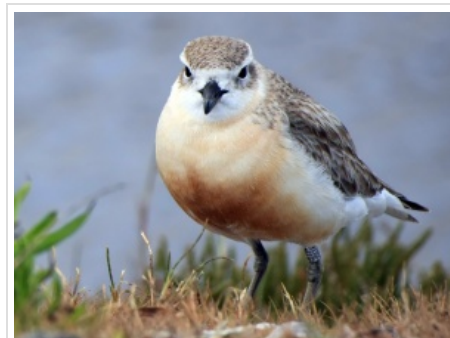
New Zealand dotterels at Waihi

New Zealand dotterels have been attracted to Waihi's tailings storage areas to nest. In recent years nesting pairs have been found. During winter dotterels can be seen at the tailings storage areas searching for suitable nest sites for the breeding season. In summer nests are often located.

Nests in active construction zones have had eggs removed by specialists in the field and put into incubation with other New Zealand dotterel eggs as part of a captive breeding programme.

The broken wing act

If a predator comes too close to a dotterel nest the sitting adult will try to draw the predator away from the nest by feigning a broken wing. Once the predator is some distance from the nest, the dotterel will fly back to sit on the eggs.



New Zealand dotterel - *Charadrius obscurus*
Photo © Chris Gin / Wikipedia.

Partnership with DoC

The NZ DotterelWatch Partnership is an initiative with the Department of Conservation (DoC) and Newmont Waihi Gold, focused on assisting the survival of the threatened NZ dotterel.



It started in 1995 when workers at the Martha Mine observed dotterels nesting on the waste rock embankment's haul road. Since its inception, we have provided DoC funding and a vehicle. DoC uses the funding to provide a ranger who oversees an education programme, assisted by volunteer minders who keep an eye on dotterel breeding sites throughout Coromandel Peninsula beaches. The funding also assists in the provision of signage to alert the public and raise awareness of the plight of the NZ dotterel. The annual cost of the programme is around \$45,000.





Dotterels make motorway carpark home

[MARYKE PENMAN](#) Last updated 09:02 16/08/2011

Workers at a busy Northcote office park are having to dodge endangered birds.

About 50 of the rare dotterels have begun to roost daily in a carpark in Warehouse Way by the northern motorway.

It is thought the birds come from their usual feeding ground at Northcote's Shoal Bay to breed in the carpark and surrounding grass areas in winter.

About \$60,000 was spent building shell nests in Shoal Bay for eight dotterels in 2003 which were displaced by construction of the \$32 million Esmonde Rd interchange.

Controversy surrounded the spending and delays to the project ordered by the regional council to allow breeding to finish.

Birds still use the shell nests but some build nests in the grass near Warehouse Way.

The motorway is believed to be stopping some predators from getting to breeding sites near the water.

North Shore Forest and Bird chairman Richard Hursthouse says dotterels come up from the beach at high tide.

"It could also be to get away from people walking their dogs and to find a safer place to breed.

"They then retreat back down to the beach to feed on the mudflats at low tide," Hursthouse says.

Workers have been warned to give the dotterels, both New Zealand and banded species, their space, as would be expected in other shoreline breeding areas.

Hursthouse says it is likely they have been breeding in the area for years and have just continued to do so despite the construction of a carpark.

The birds are highly endangered because of rats and stoats, but also domestic animals like cats and dogs.

The New Zealand Transport Agency has been funding work to rid the area of pests since 2004 in a bid to preserve the native birds that live alongside.

"Every pest we get rid of means a chance for another egg to hatch and another chick to survive to adulthood," NZTA ecologist Carol Bannock says.

Residents are also asked to keep their cats inside at night to reduce the threat to endangered birds such as the dotterel.

- North Shore Times

The New Zealand Herald



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Patrice Dougan

Patrice Dougan is a NZME. News Service reporter based in Auckland.

Motat shifts live military show after rare dotterels set up nest



Working with Auckland Zoo, the museum has taken a number of measures to protect the birds. Photo / Brett Phibbs

A pair of nesting rare birds has forced an Auckland museum to move a live action event in order to protect the endangered chicks.

The protected dotterels - of which there are only 1700 left in the world - have made a home for themselves in the Museum of Transport and Technology's aviation and military site in Motions Rd, Western Springs.

Because the birds are a protected species, Motat has had to move its Military Live Day on December 21 to another part of the site, and close off the area where the dotterels have set up camp with their eggs.

"The Military Live Day will be entertaining, as always," Motat chief executive Michael Frawley said.

"The only difference will be the relocation of activities to another part of the site and of course the inclusion of two extra visitors."

The situation itself is also quite rare, he said, as dotterels usually nest near water.

Working with Auckland Zoo, the museum has taken a number of measures to protect the birds, Mr Frawley said.

These included cordoning off the nesting area, halting lawn mowing in the area, putting in place predator control measures, and the relocation of the Military Live Day to another part of the site.

The changes will be in place for about two months, to allow the eggs time to hatch and the newly formed bird family to leave.

"We'll be doing all we can to make sure they are well looked after over the next couple of months," Mr Frawley said.

- NZME.

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Thanks to:

Wayne Thomas for pegging so many nests.
Alison Stanes and Jeannie Preddey.
Gwenda Pulham and John Dowding for their guidance.



ALEXANDRA PARK DOTTEREL JANUARY 2015