

New Zealand Dotterel Watch



Coromandel Peninsula



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



Introduction

- Nicki Miller – Department of Conservation
NZDW ranger
- New Zealand Dotterel Watch – 6th consecutive
year





The Maori name for New Zealand dotterel is tuturiwhatu pukunui

tuturiwhatu = pebble turner, which refers to their habit of turning over pebbles and seaweed to look for nutritious sand-hoppers and insects beneath

pukunui = big belly

-The scientific, or latin name is *Charadrius obscurus*, referring to the brilliant camouflage of the birds while on beaches-

History of Protection for NZ dotterel on Coromandel Peninsula

- Intensive management of the NZ Dotterel on the Coromandel peninsula, involving annual monitoring of NZD breeding and mammalian predator control, was first implemented at Opoutere in 1986/87
- Monitoring of NZD breeding across the peninsula was achieved in 1998/99
- The partnership established between DOC and Newmont Waihi enabled greater coordination of NZD protection and monitoring over the entire peninsula, and a ranger position was implemented in the 2003/04 Season. In conjunction with the minder/volunteer network, it is collectively known as the NZ Dotterel Watch Programme (NZDW)
- This is the 12th season of the NZDW

Now covers from Whiritoa on the East Coast – up to Fletchers bay, and down Thames Coast.



Results since the start of NZDW Programme



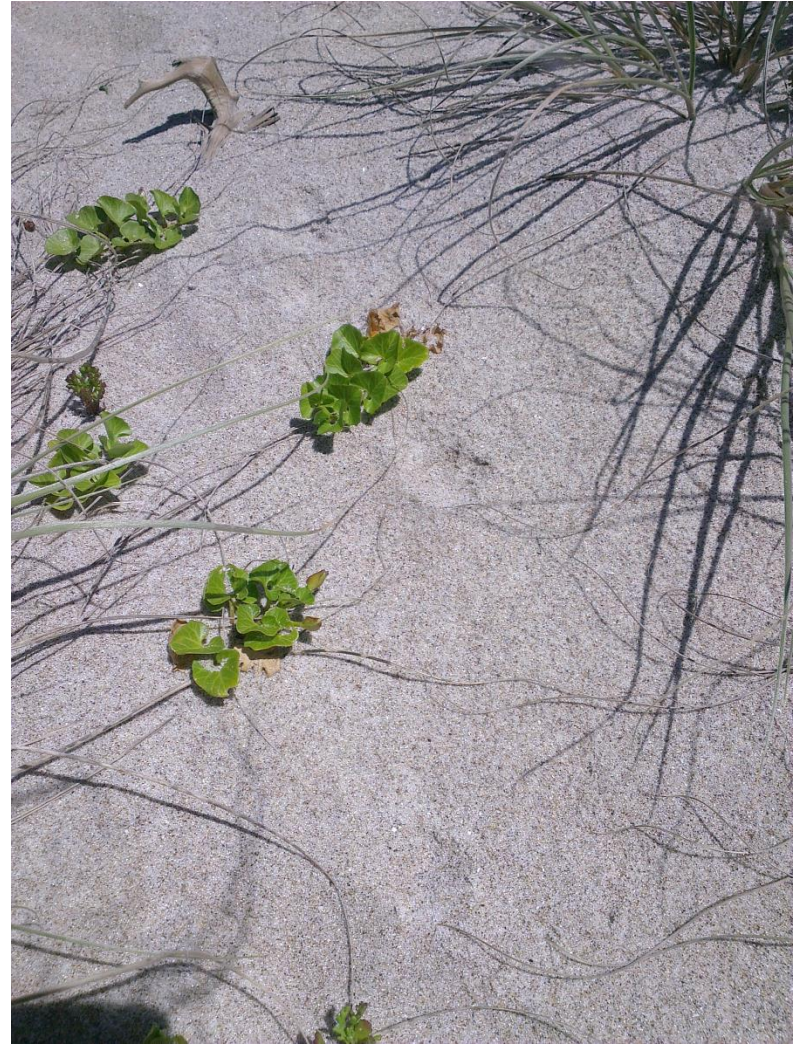
Report Results												
Season	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
sites	56	43	45	41	41	43	46	48	51	48	52	51
pairs	92	126	126	129	129	143	150	162	192	184	185	187
fledged	62	101	75	93	82	78	103	120	100	93	111	83 + 11 chicks still on the ground
p=	0.68	0.8	0.59	0.64	0.6	0.52	0.65	0.73	0.51	0.43	0.60	?

Threats

- Small mammalian predators – rats, mustelids, hedgehogs,
- Cats and dogs
- Storms, flooding, spring/king tides
- Vehicles
- Development
- Human disturbance



Cat Predation



Monitoring and Protection

- 1x lead ranger to monitor most of Peninsula
- 1x secondary ranger – either based at Opoutere or to cover smaller area
- Fencing and signage
- Trapping for predators
- Nest protection during large swell, flooding, and high tides
- Information boards
- Public advocacy



Northern NZ dotterel

SPECIES

Northern NZ dotterel
(*Charadrius obscurus*)

STATUS

Endemic, endangered shorebird which
is only found in northern New Zealand

NUMBER LEFT IN NZ

Around 2175

NUMBER LEFT ON THE COROMANDEL

Around 450

HABITAT

Sand spits and gravel
beaches with sparse
driftwood cover, dunes, shell
banks and bare areas near
estuaries and river
mouths.

HOW DO WE MANAGE THE NZ DOTTEREL?

DoC 200 traps are set to help protect breeding sites from pests. Nests are fenced off and signed posted to reduce trampling and disturbance. Our minder network play a key role in nesting and breeding success, providing excellent volunteer support by maintaining fences, monitoring nesting sites, predator trapping as well as being advocates for the birds.

BREEDING AND BEHAVIOUR

The breeding season for the NZ dotterel runs from August to March each year. Adults return to the same location to nest in open sites near the high tide line. Thanks to their wonderful camouflage, nests are very difficult to spot. Chicks usually fledge six to seven weeks after hatching, though continuous disturbance reduces feeding activity and therefore increases the length of time before chicks are strong enough to fledge. This means more time that chicks remain vulnerable to predation, as well as being at risk of starvation.

THREATS

NZ dotterel eggs and chicks are very susceptible to predation (stoats, hedgehogs, rats as well as pet cats and dogs). Nests are easily destroyed by storms and tides, careless feet and off-road vehicles. Disturbance keeps the adult dotterels off the nest in defence of their eggs. This leaves the eggs prone to overheating, cooling or predation.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Stay out of fenced areas.
- Watch out for nesting birds and give them space.
- Keep your dogs on a lead.
- Keep your cats inside at night.
- Keep vehicles off beaches and areas where NZ dotterels are nesting.

Thank you



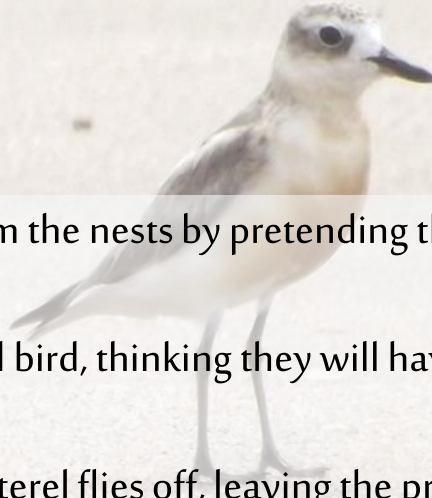
 **nzdottrelwatch**
A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN

 Department of Conservation
Te Papa Ihirangi

 **NEWMONT.**

Sneaky tactics

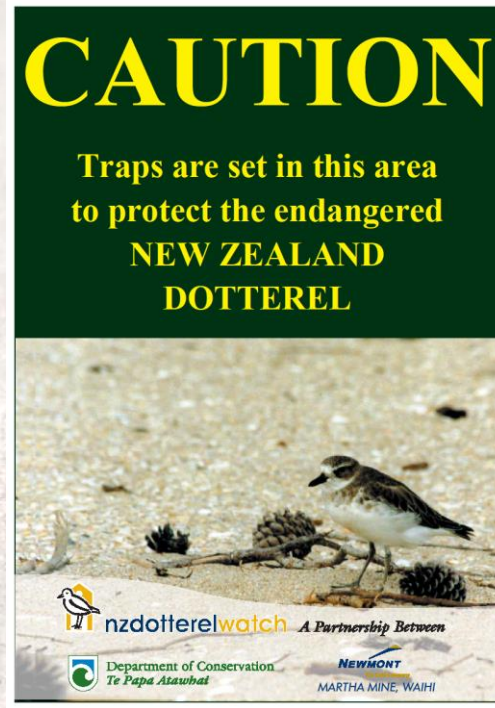
- Adult dotterel lure predators away from the nests by pretending they have a broken wing
- Predators follow the seemingly injured bird, thinking they will have an easy meal
- Just before the predator strikes the dotterel flies off, leaving the predator a long way from the vulnerable nest, or chicks



Predator Control



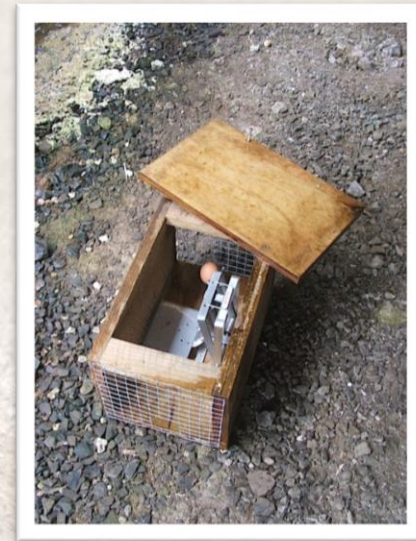
Mission accomplished!! Vicious stoats can demolish an entire nest full of eggs in one night



Humane traps are set near dotterel breeding sites to help protect nesting birds, chicks, and eggs



Amazing Helpers



NZ dotterel Watch volunteers, known as minders, help protect nests, trap for pests, and monitor nesting success of the birds. These people give their time very generously and without their support we would have far too much work to do on our own!

