

Department of Conservation Mobile Terrestrial Threatened Species Research Programme: Collaborative Research Agreement

Project title
Mapping landscape scale movement networks and survival of Tōrea/South Island pied oystercatchers

Purpose of Department of Conservation’s Mobile Terrestrial Threatened Species (MTTS) Workstream
To develop national management plans/prescriptions for terrestrial birds and bats (46 threatened species) that spend crucial parts of their annual cycles outside of DOC’s network of protected ecosystem and species management units. Because mobile species use habitats across multiple rohe and territorial jurisdictions, strong collaborative approaches are needed to develop agreed national management prescriptions.

MTTS Workstream Theme that this collaboration applies to:					
		✓		✓	
Wetland	Forest and open	Coastal	Mātauranga Māori	Developing technologies	Developing monitoring/prescriptions

Organisations/Parties involved
Director-General of Conservation (DOC) and The Ornithological Society of New Zealand Inc. (OSNZ)

Organisation Contacts	
DOC Emma M. Williams (MTTS Workstream Lead)	OSNZ Ian Armitage (Vice President)

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Background/Rationale
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New Zealand's network of representative managed ecosystems (Ecosystem and Species Management Units or EMUs & SMUs) appears insufficient to sustain many mobile threatened species that use habitats at regional and national scales, particularly wetland, forest and shore birds, braided river birds, some freshwater fish and perhaps bats. Lack of knowledge on flyways, migration routes, key stopover points (including moulting sites), wintering sites, threats and pressures on those routes, and best practise management actions to deal with those threats are all current, significant impediments to designing protective landscape scale networks for many mobile species. 2. To enable DOC to better address these concerns, research on vital rates and movements is needed to improve understanding of factors causing species declines and the drivers of movement patterns. 3. DOC's MTTTS Workstream wishes to work with collaborators to identify sites and flight paths of importance. This will involve tracking the movements of several New Zealand bat and bird species and trialling a range of new tracking technologies, depending upon what is appropriate for the different species. 4. Ultimately, the information gained from tracking mobile threatened species will help improve conservation outcomes for mobile species by identifying landscape scale habitat networks for which effective management prescriptions can be developed. This work has been identified as a priority as part of DOC's Mobile Terrestrial Threatened Species Workstream (DOC-6230839) and, as such, is part of DOC's Mobile Workplan (DOC-6207205). 5. The overarching aim of DOC's workstream is to develop effective management prescriptions/plans for mobile threatened species. 6. The relevant objectives of OSNZ in respect of this Agreement are to: 1) encourage, organise and promote the study of birds and their habitat use,

particularly within the New Zealand region, 2) foster and support the wider knowledge and enjoyment of birds generally, 3) promote the recording and wide circulation of the results of bird studies and observations. 4) produce a journal and any other publication containing matters of ornithological interest, 5) effect cooperation and exchange of information with other organisations having similar aims and objects, 6) assist the conservation and management of birds by providing information from which sound management decisions can be derived, and 7) promote the archiving of observations, studies and records of birds particularly in the New Zealand region.

7. OSNZ has an existing research project (since the early 2000s) marking South Island Pied Oystercatchers in the Nelson/Tasman region. OSNZ already holds the appropriate authorisation, under the Wildlife Act 1953, to handle birds for the purposes of carrying out that research.

Agreement between Workstream Leads

Intent:

8. DOC and OSNZ (the Parties) have a common interest in collaborating on research projects (the research programme) with the objective of improving New Zealand's understanding and protection of mobile bird species across the landscape.
9. The parties wish to document their agreement to collaborate on the research programme in this Mobile Terrestrial Threatened Species Research Programme: Collaborative Research Agreement.
10. The parties intend to contribute resources to aligned research projects and to share the knowledge and understanding gained from those projects as described below.

Duration:

11. This agreement commences on the date the last party affixes its signature and continues until terminated by mutual agreement or by one party giving the other party at least 1 months' notice of its intention to terminate its involvement in this collaboration.
12. This agreement does not preclude the involvement of other parties.
13. Both parties acknowledge that a comparable agreement exists between DOC and Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research (MWLR) and that the

intent of this agreement is to support the existing agreement between DOC and MWLR (DOC-6390115). In order to represent this relationship, and to acknowledge it formally, DOC has included at least one MWLR team member from Agreement DOC-6390115 as team member in this agreement in the section ‘Project description and the vested interest of each party’.

14. Both parties agree that this agreement shall be reviewed, and if necessary, amended by mutual agreement, at any time if circumstances change that materially affect the Intent, Project purpose, and Collaborative research principles.

Proposed projects

15. The research programme will start with two complementary studies of Tōrea/South Island Pied Oystercatcher (a declining endemic inland migrant species), led and funded by DOC and OSNZ, respectively.
16. Tōrea have been selected as a ‘model’ coastal species by the Mobile Terrestrial Threatened Species Workstream because of their ability to carry next-generation GPS trackers that will identify details of specific flyways. Data will inform the first steps towards identifying significant movement networks requiring management. As GPS tracking units become smaller, the intent is to apply them to smaller, more threatened species. Tōrea are known to use similar wintering sites to other threatened shorebirds.
17. OSNZ has an existing, ongoing project marking Tōrea/South Island pied oystercatchers. It can therefore provide support to DOC’s mobile species project as well MWLR’s ‘vital rates’ project (e.g. by providing re-sightings of birds that are of interest as part of the DOC and MWLR projects, thus providing survivorship and longevity data over a longer timeframe).

Collaborative research principles

18. The same data may be used by both parties but for different purposes as described below under the heading “Project description and the vested interest of each party”.
19. Each party is responsible for the funding, design, implementation, writing-up and dissemination of the results of its own projects.

20. Each party will:

- Liaise openly and regularly with the other party.
- Include researchers from the other party on its project team to ensure that shared objectives are reflected in decisions.
- Obtain any permitting and ethics approvals needed for their own work, but may also submit permit and ethics applications together, if appropriate.
- Apply common research standards and protocols.
- Share technical know-how.
- Share bird movement/tracking data.
- Share specific data collected in its project with the other party, in accordance with project descriptions.
- Acknowledge the other party's contributions by offering co-authorship of publications to researchers from the other party where appropriate, including in the OSNZ scientific journal, 'Notornis'.

Permitting

21. No additional permits are required as part of this collaboration.
22. The GPS tracking aspect of this project is led by DOC and approved by DOC's Animal Ethics Committee (AEC No. 363).
23. Capturing, banding and marking is registered and permitted through the DOC Banding Office (Colin O'Donnell, Level 3 Banding Manager), as well as being covered the Wildlife Act authorisation 48320-FAU issued to the Ornithological Society of New Zealand.

Project leadership

24. Emma Williams has overall leadership of DOC's projects under DOC's Mobile Terrestrial Threatened Species Workstream (DOC-6230839), as part of DOC's Southern Terrestrial Science portfolio led by Ash Murphy.
25. OSNZ's Tōrea/South Island pied oystercatcher research project is managed by David Melville and Rob Schuckard as part of OSNZ's shorebird research programme.

26. Each project will have a project team leader (see below) and a project team.

Project description and the vested interest of each party		
Organisation	DOC	OSNZ
Research interests	Flyways, networks and nodes of inland migrant species	Distribution and survival of and threats to Tōrea
Project aim and approach	<p>Map flyways and nodes of inland migrants to establish their importance; develop and test the requisite technology. The team will attach transmitters to Tōrea and follow birds to breeding sites and back to determine as many different flyways and nodes as possible.</p> <p>Develop and, where possible, test hypotheses about reasons for movements and identify threats requiring management in the movement network.</p> <p>This research will add to the sum of knowledge about survival at different stages in the annual cycle.</p>	<p>The aims of OSNZ in respect of this Agreement are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) encourage, organise and promote the study of birds and their habitat use, particularly within the New Zealand region, 2) foster and support the wider knowledge and enjoyment of birds generally, 3) promote the recording and wide circulation of the results of bird studies and observations, 4) produce a journal and any other publication containing matters of ornithological interest, 5) effect cooperation and exchange of information with other organisations having similar aims and objects, 6) assist the conservation and management of birds by providing information from which sound management decisions can be derived, and 7) promote the archiving of observations, studies and records of birds particularly in the New Zealand region.

Project Leads	Emma Williams (DOC)	David Melville (OSNZ) Rob Schuckard (OSNZ)
Project team members	DOC: Colin O'Donnell and DOC's Science Advisor - Coastal species (once appointed). MWLR: Anne Schlesselman OSNZ: David Melville, Rob Schuckard.	OSNZ: Active OSNZ members DOC: Emma Williams, Colin O'Donnell and DOC's Science Advisor - Coastal species (once appointed).
Sharing	<p>Data obtained from the capture and banding of Tōrea will be shared by both parties, i.e. life history traits, re-sightings, and recaptures. Both parties will include Level 3 banders who are team members and can access banding and resight/recapture data via the banding FALCON database.</p> <p>Moult data will be shared with a PhD student at the University of Capetown, as per a prior arrangement between OSNZ and that student.</p> <p>Experienced OSNZ members will share skills with other parties, particularly banding skills and capture methods (i.e., cannon netting). Where possible, catching and banding opportunities created as part of this collaboration will be used as training opportunities so that skills are being shared across multiple organisations and younger generations have opportunities to learn from senior DOC/OSNZ staff/members.</p>	
Benefits of collaboration	<p>The parties' approaches are strongly complementary.</p> <p>The DOC study will provide support and opportunities for OSNZ to expand its existing Tōrea banding and marking programme to include new sites and enable research outcomes that will be nationally applicable.</p> <p>Working together will increase the reach of study outcomes, leading to greater buy-in of management implications. Both organisations also have the ability to reach, and therefore influence, different audiences, which is also advantageous and complementary.</p> <p>An increase to New Zealand's national pool of qualified banders (particularly L2 and L3 banders) and registered cannon-netters.</p> <p>The OSNZ study will deepen DOC's understanding and knowledge of flyways and nodes and provide context on the</p>	

	<p>importance of flyways and node for Tōrea populations (i.e. proportion of population that relies on each flyway/node).</p> <p>Collectively, this work will help reveal where and when different management interventions could result in population increases and contribute directly to the management prescriptions that DOC aims to develop.</p>
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Resource contributions	
	<p>27. Each of the parties will contribute the resources required for the projects it leads, subject to availability on a year-by-year basis. Both parties are in agreement that the voluntary assistance of suitably experienced members of OSNZ may be invited where it is expected that such participation will improve the achievement of the project’s aim and benefits, and will expand the knowledge and widen the capability of OSNZ members.</p>

Health and Safety	
	<p>28. Each organisation is responsible for managing Health and Safety associated with the projects and research it leads. On occasions where members from both parties are working together, each team member must comply with the Health and Safety protocols of their own organisation and must also comply with the Health and Safety directions of the project leader. To facilitate this, each party agrees to brief the other party on Health and Safety matters prior to undertaking any joint work.</p>

Value exchange	
	<p>29. The principal value being shared as part of this collaboration is mutual sharing of skills and data.</p>

Communicating results and making announcements	
	<p>30. Each party acknowledges that it may have access to information that is confidential and of value to the other party. To this end, any information that is disclosed by one party (Disclosing Party) to the other party (Recipient Party) during discussions or other correspondence relating to the Project will be protected and kept strictly confidential by the Recipient Party.</p> <p>31. The confidentiality obligations imposed by this clause do not apply to any information which:</p>

- (a) is in the public domain;
- (b) subject to the Official Information Act;
- (c) was already known by the Recipient Party at the time at its disclosure;
- (d) the Recipient Party has received from a third party not owing an obligation of confidentiality to the Disclosing Party in respect of the same; or
- (e) is required to be disclosed by law.

32. Neither party will make any public announcements relating to this agreement or the activities contemplated by this agreement without first informing the other party about the content and timing of any such announcement.

Dispute resolution

33. If there is any dispute concerning the subject matter of this collaborative agreement, the parties will endeavour to settle such dispute by full and frank discussion and negotiation.

Signed for **Department of Conservation**



13 April 2021

Ash Murphy
Southern Terrestrial Science Manager

Signed for **The Ornithological Society of New Zealand Inc.**



9 March 2021

Ian Armitage
Vice-President