



# **Conservation Management of Seabirds**

A Biology Programme for  
Secondary Students  
at the **Royal Albatross Centre**

**Student Work Sheets**

**2020**

# Conservation Management of the Northern Royal Albatross

Programme Focus

– to look at the 3 main concepts of conservation management.

**Protection** = aspects that minimize detrimental human effects

**Enhancement** = aspects that improve on nature

**Monitoring** = regular checks to monitor bird health and determine long-term trends

What are the threats facing albatross?

Why is Taiaroa Head an important site for the Northern Royal Albatross ?

## **Monitoring**

### **– regular checks to determine long term trends**

Department of Conservation Rangers monitor the Royal Albatross at Taiaroa Head - **LOOK OUT THE WINDOW AND RECORD WHAT YOU SEE.**

Date:	Time:	Observer:
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Weather % cloud cover: _____ Wind direction: _____ Wind Speed: _____ Precipitation: _____ Temperature: _____
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<b>Nest number</b>	<b>Chick age and behaviours observed</b>	<b>Adults present (identify colour bands) and behaviours observed</b>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Notes (eg. other wildlife observed, traps for pest species observed):
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**LOOK AT THE DOC MONITORING CHART ON THE WALL AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW...**

How many pairs returned to this side of the headland to breed this year?

What are the weights of the chicks?

How old is the oldest breeding bird?

How old is the youngest breeding bird?

What animals are being trapped and why?

DOC's main objective is to increase the number of chicks fledging. Good conservation management depends on good baseline data. What are the problems associated with collecting extensive baseline data on Royal Albatross?

Research programmes in combination with the monitoring activity is very important to help the survival of the Albatross. Look around for evidence of a research project that is presently being carried out.

One of the ways that the DOC rangers monitor the health of the chicks is to weigh them - two to three times per day during the guard stage to once a week until fledging (chick permitting).

**Weight the chick models to find out what the average weight is for the different stages of growth.**

**Albatross Growth**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Weight (grams)</b>
Chick - Newborn	
Chick - 2 weeks	
Chick - 5 weeks	
Chick - 3 months	
Adult – feeding a 3 month chick	

**Enhancement – aspects that improve on nature**

1. Use lines to match up the intervention method with the effect of that technique. **There maybe more than one answer for each method.**

<i>Intervention Methods</i>	<i>Effect of these Methods</i>
1. Dummy Eggs	A. Used to reduce disturbance during courtship / egg laying
2. Revegetation	B. Used as training tool for birds who break eggs
3. Incubator	C. Hand removal of maggots before they enter the body
4. Hand Rearing	D. Birds that do not succeed in their first flight and are unhurt are returned to the colony for a second try
5. Fostering	E. Mint added to the nest is effective in repelling flies about the hatching period - preventing fly strike on young.
6. Flight Rescue	F. Fog spraying of water over sitting birds to raise humidity and reduce temperature through evaporation
7. Supplementing Nesting Material	G. Used to hold pairs at nest, after something has happened to their egg, to provide natural foster parents when needed.
8. Trapping	H. Hay bales around the nest to protect very young chicks from foul weather and shade for young chicks in hot weather.
9. Security Fence	I. Used to control bronchial infections, treat fungal and bacterial infections, and wounds from bites.
10. Restricted Viewing	J. Deserted eggs or chicks are placed in the nest of pairs who have lost their offspring or are better parents.
11. Window tinting	K. Chicks are hatched in an environment where the membranes are kept moist and there is no fear of fly strike.
12. Banding	L. Used to control or eradicate introduced pests (blowflies) and predators (cats, stoats) that affect survival of eggs and young
13. Drug Treatment	M. Introduction of native plants could increase the moisture in soil and shade and increase the nesting material available.
14. Manual Treatment	N. Chicks fed by wildlife rangers when parents do not return
15. Microhabitat Manipulation	O. Used to reduce visual disturbance to nesting birds ( <i>evident in long term data set which showed a change in where juveniles were displaying</i> )  P. Used to keep a reliable record of bird presence, breeding attempts, family history and immigrants to the population.  Q. Used to control access of humans and canines to the nesting area

**1. Outline any negative aspects to these management techniques?**

**2. How can the rangers tell if the birds are stressed?**

**3. Do you think these enhancement techniques should be used to increase the fledging rate of Royal Albatross at Taiaroa Head?**

- *Management has increased the fledging rate by ~20%*
- *75% of non managed offspring survive to 5 years, only 60% of those that are managed survive to 5 years*

**2.**

## What would happen if?

### Protection = aspects that minimise detrimental human impacts

Method:

1. In groups of 2 or 3 people review the “What would happen if...” scenarios you have been given. Record them in the first column of the table below and the complete.
2. Report you ideas to the class during discussion.

What would happen if...	Impact	Management Techniques	How can YOU help prevent it happening or help with the management of the situation?