

## Seabird Behaviour Online Programme

### Student Worksheet Part Two – Shag Behaviour and Comparison Table

Compare the breeding cycles of the two species of shags that breed on Taiaroa Head using the following resources:

Seabird Behaviour Videos - [Otago shag](#) (previously Stewart Island shag) and [Spotted shag](#)

Seabird Behaviour Information Cards – [Shags](#)



Annual Cycle of the Otago Shag



Annual Cycle of the Spotted Shag

1. Compare the breeding activity of each species – what is happening at this time of year?

Why would it benefit the two species to have slightly different breeding cycles?

2. How are their courtship displays different?

3. How does their nesting habitat differ?



Spotted Shag

4. What is the benefit for Spotted shags to nest on a cliff?

5. Why is their egg incubation length shorter than albatross? Think of the size of the birds.



Otago Shag

## Comparative Behaviours

Use the following resources to fill in the table below:

[Albatross Video](#)

[Otago Shag Video](#)

[Spotted Shag Video](#)

Royal Cam – [Livestream of Albatross Chick](#)

Seabird Behaviour Information Cards – [Albatross](#), [Shags](#)

**Pair bond - parent arrives to nest:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWONPM46j1U&t=295s>

**Courtship display:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6m1HambghwM>

**Chick defense:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mH3lZFiCnrg>

**Unexpected visitor:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7suk7eKw\\_gA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7suk7eKw_gA)

**Predator spotted near nest:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgnTT1Mx3Lk>

**DOC predator control:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNF\\_U0xd1Po](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNF_U0xd1Po)

Research on Royal Albatross – [Life of the Royals](#)

## Comparative Behaviours:

Behaviour	Royal Albatross Adult	Albatross Chick	Otago Shag	Spotted Shag
Communication: Courtship Display	Which behaviours are involved in their courtship dance?	How does this courtship increase chances of mating successfully?	Which displays do you notice in the video? e.g. head wave	How does the Spotted shag displays differ from Otago shags?
Communication: Pair Bond Display	Which pair bond behaviours are displayed? e.g. sky call	How do chicks communicate with their parents?	Did you observe any mutual head lowering?	Spotted shags display mutual darting and bowing – how does this differ to Otago shag pair bond display?
Competition: (Intraspecific) Nest Territory	How might nest territory differ on the Chatham Islands? Why defend a territory?	What nest materials are used?  Are nests spaced evenly?	Are they aggressive towards other adults near their nest?  Are nests spaced evenly?	Are they aggressive to other adults near their nest?  How do albatross and shag nests differ?
Competition: (Interspecific) Predators	Name the predators of adult albatross:  What forms of defense do adults have?  Do they compete with any other species for space or nest sites?	Name the predators of eggs and chicks:  What forms of defense do chicks have?	How do they defend themselves?  Do Otago shags compete for nest sites with other species?  What is the benefit of nesting in a colony?	What is the benefit of nesting on a cliff?  How does DOC control predators on the headland?