

Banded dotterel

Charadrius bicinctus bicinctus

20 cm

NEW ZEALAND NATIVE, GRADUAL DECLINE

Banded dotterels are small plovers with grey-brown upperparts; they are white underneath except for two bands across the neck and breast, which vary depending on age, sex and time of year. Breeding adults have a thin black band on the upper breast and a broad chestnut band below this, which is broader and darker in the male. Banded dotterels of the Chatham Islands are assumed to be the same subspecies as those on the North and South Islands. They breed on Chatham and Pitt Islands, and occasionally on Rangatira. Banded dotterels are found in areas of low vegetation known as 'Clears' on both Chatham and Rangatira, and also around Te Whanga Lagoon, in swampy pasture and in coastal areas. The total population in the Chatham Islands is estimated to be in the order of 200-300 birds. The banded dotterel population in New Zealand is partially migratory, with many birds migrating to northern New Zealand or Australia after the breeding season. However, banded dotterels on the Chatham Islands are apparently non-migratory. During winter, dotterels form small flocks, then from August onwards, they defend separate territories. Nests are usually built in open areas, providing the incubating bird a clear all-round view.

Male banded dotterel
on nest.

Photo: Dick Veitch (DOC).

