

BANDED DOTTEREL NESTING CAGES

Thank you for your interest in the development of nesting cages to enable our ground nesting banded dotterels to hatch their eggs.

This approach came from a desperate situation in our previous nesting season where despite healthy numbers of nesting pairs on our beach, by half way through the season it was looking unlikely that any pair would be able to successfully reproduce. Our greatest predator threats at South Bay appear to be cats, dog disturbance and hedgehogs though we are yet to see the response of hedgehogs to cages as none were seen in the camera footage accompanying our cage trials. Cams have shown hedgehogs are a significant threat when cages are not used.

Cages are still in the development phase. We used readily available materials. Here are the dimensions of our most recent model. The requirements are twofold – to keep predators out, while allowing the adult bird incubating the eggs to easily escape and lure the predator away. The cage has an additional advantage of providing the nest with some protection from human activities.

We are planning to trial a different design that is easily modifiable and will make the cage more durable in the marine environment. Ted, who has been making the cages has a significant elbow injury at the moment so we haven't got any further with development but I am hoping to have a community cage making day shortly.

Here is a photo of what we are currently using. All measurements are in mm.



Materials

664 Rebar 150mm squares with wire tied half way to make it difficult for cats to enter.

15mm wire netting on top to protect from predatory birds.

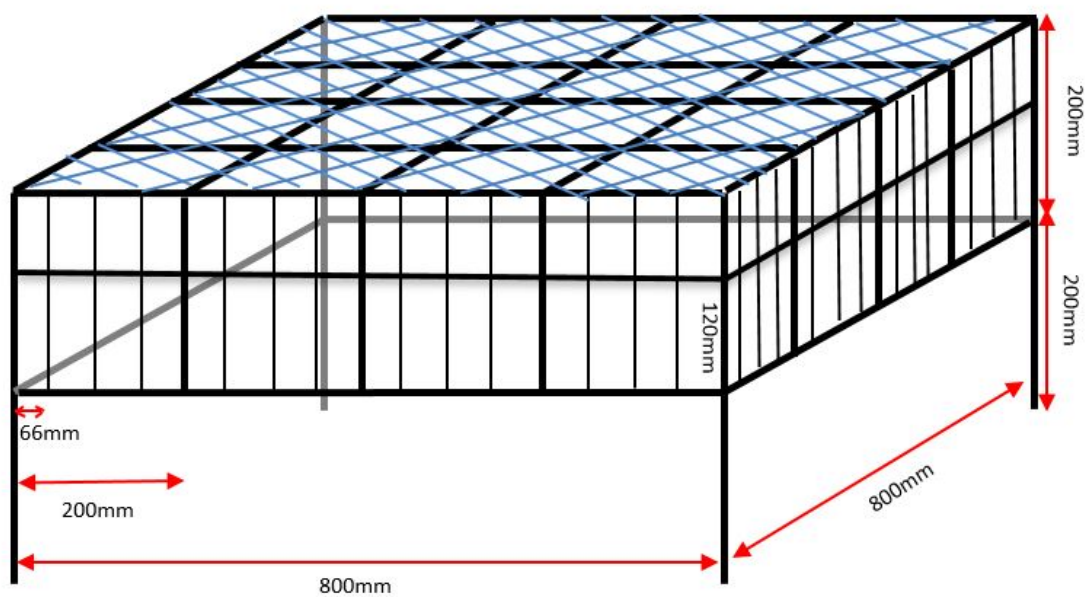
The cage is put over the nest, pushing the bottom rebar into the gravel for stability of the cage (see pic below).

The cage is labelled "Endangered Banded Dotterel Nest. Please keep at least 10m away."



Allanah Purdie of DOC has been doing some good trials at Kaitorete. This cat was able to access a cage (though others were kept out), so modifications have been made as follows (pictures from Allanah).





We will trail cages again at South Bay, randomly allocating them to half our nests as a control.

Please feel free to use these details, with modifications if required, on any sites that may be appropriate. I would appreciate any feedback and results you are able to share.

Best of luck using this approach. Feel free to contact me any time.

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