

NZ Falcon Identification and Management Summary

New Zealand Falcon Identification

The New Zealand Falcon is a protected species which is present in this forest. Ernslaw One Ltd is currently undertaking to reduce impacts of our operations on this species and ultimately protect and enhance our populations of this species.



Figure 1: New Zealand Falcon



Figure 2: Dive Bombing Falcon

(Photos courtesy R Seaton)

The Falcon differs from the much larger Australasian Harrier, common throughout New Zealand, in that it is about half the size and has angular wings (rather than fanned wings; Figure 3), falcons are fast fliers with rapid wing beats rather than the gliding of harriers, they catch other birds on the wing, and seldom eat carrion.



Figure 3: Silhouette of a Falcon (left) and a Harrier Hawk (right) in flight.

The main threat posed to Falcons by our operations is the disruption of nests during the **September to March** breeding season of these birds.

Nests are usually on the ground in the cut-over (less than 4 years old), however recent experience has shown that Falcons will nest on the ground in mature stands. They are easily located by the presence of “dive-bombing” and vocal parents usually occurring within 50 m of nest.



Figure 4: Falcon nest on ground, with eggs (left) and chicks (right).
(Photos courtesy R Seaton)

New Zealand Falcon Management

If workers or vehicles/machinery are dive bombed by falcons, or if a Falcon nest is found or suspected:

- Do not approach any closer
- Estimate a 200 m buffer zone around the nest where no operations can continue.
- Cease operations within the buffer zone.
- Notify Ernslaw staff

Subsequent Management by Ernslaw

- When the nest location is identified a 200 metre buffer zone will be setup around the nest.
- Identification of the chick stage by the person who discovered the site is vitally important in estimating age and period where exclusion of operations should continue. Confirmation of age is also important in any possible reduction of the buffer zone.
- The area within the zone should then be left undisturbed until after the Falcon breeding season, upon which operations can continue.
- When nests are identified covered kill traps should be temporarily placed. The number of these and locations should be in consultation with local experts (i.e DOC).
- These pest control measures should be monitored and reset regularly over the period where fledglings are vulnerable.