

January falcon news Coastal Otago

It's mid-January and falcons are starting to slow down (nesting action, not dive-bombing speed). Many are done raising their chicks now. Shiny chocolate juveniles like the one at right are parked throughout the forestry – still chasing up the parents for food sometimes, but mostly independent now. Only four still have chicks in the scrape, fat and grey or down-feather combos looking scraggly until the feathers replace the down (middle photo).

Overall we've been following 35 pairs this season, all in forestry. Of 29 nests, there's been 13 nest failures (45%) – five by predation (stoats, ferrets and cats), four failed at the same time as forestry operations got close, and four failed without leaving clues why. There will have been more than 13 failed nests, though, since failed nests are harder to find than active ones.

Ten falcon pairs nested near harvesting, landprep and roading work. You've kept us well informed on what work had to continue, and where. Because of that, four of the failures added real data to the growing pool of info on what operations falcons can't put up with. And the three pairs that successfully kept raising their chicks added to the info on what they can cope with. (The other three nests got munched by predators, after ignoring operations nearby).

Almost all the chicks have been banded now, with 27 chicks banded at 12 nests. Our thanks to those who came to help – 37 more falcon converts, we hope!

Please still keep an eye out for those bands.. we're just as interested in falcon movements outside the breeding season. Hope you had a restful holiday and a good start to the new year,

- Kalinka and Graham



A Martin



C Anderson



Red 111 : metal



White-green : metal



J Haase