

Oparure Quarry South-Western Pit: Bird Management Plan

✦ Prepared for

Graymont (NZ) Ltd

✦ July 2026



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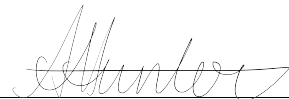
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Limitations:

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Executive Summary

This Bird Management Plan has been prepared for the proposed Oparure Quarry South-Western Pit ('SW Pit') at Oparure Road, Te Kuiti. The development of the SW Pit site involves the clearance of pasture, scattered indigenous trees and karst features which may directly and/or indirectly impact habitat for Highly Mobile Fauna ('HMF'). These effects on HMF are managed under the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB) and the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (Objectives ECO-P1 and P2). While recent amendments to the NPSIB have suspended the requirement to identify new Significant Natural Areas ('SNA'), obligations to avoid, remedy, or mitigate adverse effects on biodiversity remain in effect.

To the west of the SW Pit, two SNAs were identified by Graymont for ecological enhancement and connection through restoration work, including 2.5 hectares of native planting karst habitat. These efforts support regional biodiversity goals by improving habitat quality and connectivity for HMF.

The objective of this Bird Management Plan is to manage activities that may adversely affect the HMF populations within the SW Pit site so that any adverse effects on threatened birds are avoided in the first instance, or otherwise minimised during the operation and development of the SW Pit. Avifauna surveys have recorded a range of common native and exotic bird species, including HMF that use the site. The Threatened – Nationally Increasing New Zealand bush falcon (*Falconidae novaeseelandiae*) has been observed on site. Falcon habitat comprises karst features, native dominated bush remnants and open pasture areas but they mainly roost on rocks and karst features.

If no falcons are present, vegetation and karst features can be cleared. If non-breeding falcon are present, the site ecologist will disturb the bird(s) by walking in a zig-zag pattern towards them, to encourage them to relocate to another area outside the SW Pit's footprint (e.g., the SNA area outside the quarry footprint). This can be undertaken safely from February until July.

If nesting falcon with nestlings are located, then works will need to cease within 200 m of the nesting site and an exclusion zone established around active nests until nesting finishes (usually in March) or nestlings are independent.

To date only one falcon has been recorded in the SW Pit footprint, with sporadic sightings between 2019 and 2022. No falcon activity has been recorded since 2022.

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1.0 Introduction

This Bird Management Plan ('BMP') has been prepared for the Oparure Quarry South-Western Pit ('SW Pit') at Oparure Road, Te Kuiti.

This BMP relates to the creation of the SW Pit adjacent to Graymont's existing operational Oparure Quarry (Figure 1). The SW Pit covers a total area of approximately 60 ha and requires the clearance of pasture, some native bush remnants, and karst features.

Avifauna surveys have recorded a range of common native and exotic bird species, including HMF that use the site. The only HMF to be observed on site has been the Threatened – Nationally Increasing New Zealand bush falcon (*Falconidae novaeseelandiae*). Falcon habitat comprises karst features, native dominated bush remnants, and open pasture areas but they mainly roost on rocks and karst features. One falcon was recorded occasionally in the SW Pit's footprint between 2019 and 2022.

The SW Pit's vegetation cover is more than 80% pasture and there is minimal roosting or nesting habitat for falcon within the footprint. The potential area for HMF bird species (bush falcon) covers less than 4 ha.

1.1 Regulatory Framework

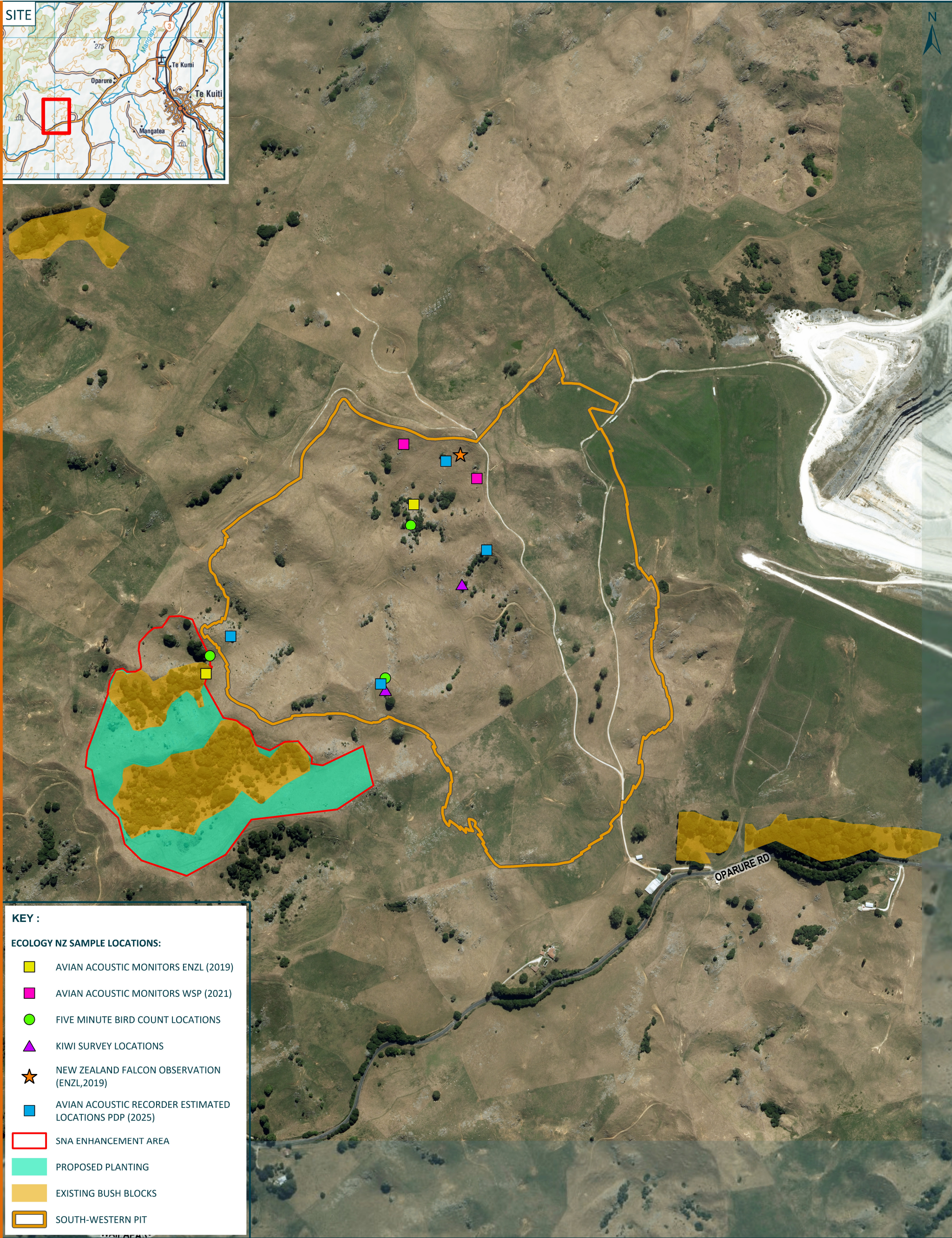
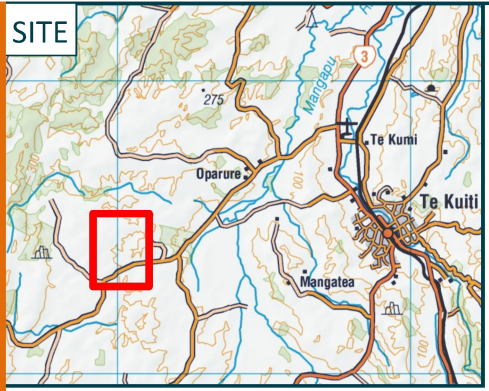
The protection of indigenous bird species, including HMF like the New Zealand bush falcon, is governed by national and regional biodiversity policies.

Two Significant Natural Areas (SNAs), identified in the Waitomo District Plan (Waitomo District Council, 2009), include ecologically valuable karst and remnant native vegetation. These areas are to be restored and linked as part of ecological betterment initiatives to be undertaken by Graymont in relation to the SW Pit and will serve as important habitat for mobile bird species.

Under the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB) (MoE, 2025), species like the bush falcon require specific management regardless of SNA designation. While new SNA identification is currently on hold, obligations to manage impacts on indigenous biodiversity—especially mobile species—remain in effect.

Regionally, the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (Objectives ECO-P1 and ECO- P2) (Waikato Regional Council, 2016) supports the protection of significant habitats and the use of biodiversity offsets to counterbalance any residual adverse effects.

The occasional presence of the bush falcon within the project area underscores the need to assess and manage impacts across both the development site and the wider landscape. Restoration of the SNAs aims to improve habitat quality and connectivity in line with policy requirements.



KEY :

ECOLOGY NZ SAMPLE LOCATIONS:

- AVIAN ACOUSTIC MONITORS ENZL (2019)
- AVIAN ACOUSTIC MONITORS WSP (2021)
- FIVE MINUTE BIRD COUNT LOCATIONS
- KIWI SURVEY LOCATIONS
- NEW ZEALAND FALCON OBSERVATION (ENZL,2019)
- AVIAN ACOUSTIC RECORDER ESTIMATED LOCATIONS PDP (2025)
- SNA ENHANCEMENT AREA
- PROPOSED PLANTING
- EXISTING BUSH BLOCKS
- SOUTH-WESTERN PIT



0 100 200
METRES

SCALE : 1:10,000 (A4)

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GRAYMONT

FIGURE

FIGURE 1: SOUTH-WESTERN PIT FOOTPRINT, BIRD MONITORING LOCATIONS AND PROPOSED SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREA RESTORATION

PROJECT

GRAYMONT SOUTH-WESTERN PIT BIRD MANAGEMENT PLAN

2.0 BMP Objective

The objective of this BMP is to ensure that works associated with developing and operating the SW Pit do not adversely affect HMF bird species, particularly the New Zealand bush falcon on-site (Table 1), thereby supporting broader regional biodiversity goals, specifically, so that:

- a. There will be a no net loss of indigenous avifauna biodiversity at a regional scale;
- b. There will not be an overall decline in the size or viability of the indigenous avifauna populations; and
- c. There will not be an overall reduction in the ability for indigenous avifauna to occupy restored and protected habitat in the region.

2.1 Strategies to Achieve Objectives

In order to achieve the objectives outlined in section 2, the following strategies shall be used:

- ✧ Avoiding the generation of adverse environmental effects by:
 - Ensuring that habitat clearance works are carried out in the falcon non-breeding season of New Zealand bush falcon (i.e., March – August) (if falcon are present).
 - Should nesting/breeding New Zealand bush falcon be detected, nests, and fledglings are left undisturbed within a 200 m exclusion zone.
- ✧ Managing (via minimising, remediating, and offsetting) all other adverse environmental effects to the extent that they are minor or less (being the magnitude of the adverse effects predicted in the report entitled *Oparure Quarry South-Western Pit: Terrestrial and Subsurface Ecology Assessment* dated 26 May 2026) (PDP, 2026).

To achieve these outcomes, adverse effects will be managed by the implementation of minimising, remediation, or offsetting (which includes restoration and/or enhancement) measures.

2.2 Bird Management Plan Implementation

The implementation of this BMP will be led by a certified project ecologist and/or ornithologist who holds the necessary experience in identifying native birds and their nests and Department of Conservation (DOC) Level 2 Bird handling certification.

Table 1: Highly Mobile Fauna On-site (2019 and 2021)

Common Name	Scientific Name	Threat Status ¹	Highly Mobile Fauna ²	Nearest Location ³
Kārearea/New Zealand bush falcon	<i>Falco novaeseelandiae</i>	Threatened – Nationally Increasing	Yes	On site
Pekapeka/central short-tailed bat	<i>Mystacina tuberculata rhyacobia</i>	At Risk (Declining)	Yes	On site (addressed in Bat Management Plan)
Notes: 1. DOC 2026 2. NPS-IB 2023 3. eBird data.				

3.0 Avifauna On-site

Ecology New Zealand Limited ('ENZL') identified a total of 21 bird species using the site, several of which are native and exotic bird species common to the Waikato region and were seen and/or heard during site visits or noted through the analysis of bird monitoring data collected on-site.

Kārearea/ New Zealand bush falcon (Threatened – Nationally Increasing) was confirmed to occur on-site through visual and acoustic monitoring. However, only a single New Zealand bush falcon has been observed during approximately 100 person-hours on-site. It was not observed breeding. It appears that the observed falcon is occasionally using this area for roosting. Observations were made on-site by ENZL and WSP during fauna surveys in 2020-21.

Pekapeka management is addressed in a separate Bat Management Plan.

Pīhoihoi/New Zealand (NZ) pipit has not been observed on-site but has been recorded 5 km to the east of the SW Pit. Their typical habitat is rough open land from the coast to subalpine shrublands. They may establish in the land cleared for the SW Pit if rough vegetation establishes following New Zealand bush falcon habitat clearance and active quarrying. This cannot be avoided, is likely to occur outside their breeding season, and is unlikely to adversely affect the regional pīhoihoi population and HMF diversity.

4.0 Bird Management Protocols

The karst rock formations (some of which are proposed for removal) offer potential roosting and nesting habitat for New Zealand bush falcon. The following protocols will be in place to avoid and/or minimise potential adverse effects of the SW Pit's development and operation.

1. In the January/February period (8 weeks duration) prior to any proposed karst feature removal and/or vegetation clearance within the works footprint, four acoustic recorders will be placed as detailed in Figure 1, within the works footprint to detect any falcon roosting or nesting in the proposed clearance area.
2. If the project ecologist certifies, after the completion of the acoustic monitoring, the absence of bush falcon, then karst features can be safely removed.
3. If non-breeding bush falcon are present, karst feature removal can proceed in February to March when non-breeders usually disperse from their natal site. To reduce the likelihood of mortality, the project ecologist will oversee the disturbance of any bush falcon to move them off any karst formations and vegetation prior to clearance or karst feature removal.
4. If breeding bush falcon are detected from the acoustic recorders or visually observed by the project ecologist, then a 200 metre 'no disturbance zone' will be established around any nesting bush falcon. Karst and vegetation removal can proceed outside the exclusion zone.
5. Removal of karst features or vegetation can proceed inside the exclusion zone once adult bush falcon and fledglings have left the site (likely in February and March) as confirmed by the project ecologist.

The above procedures are diagrammatically represented in Figure 2.

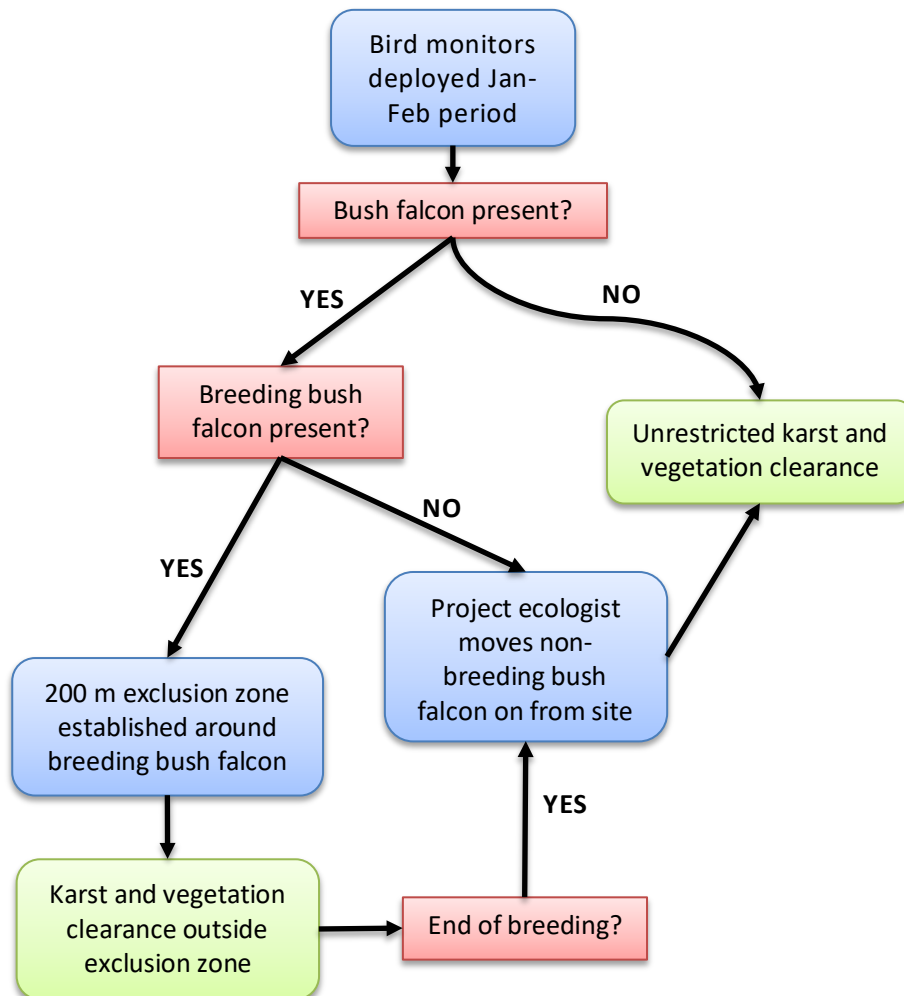


Figure 2: Falcon Management Protocols – Process Flow.

5.0 Incidental Protocols

Should any injured or dead birds protected under the *Wildlife Act*, 1983 including damaged bush falcon eggs, be encountered during karst feature or vegetation removal works, the certified ecologist will contact DOC immediately and the following management actions are to be undertaken:

- ∴ Any live birds found will be taken to a veterinarian immediately for assessment. Transport of birds to the veterinarian will follow the recommendation and guidelines provided by DOC. If unable to contact the approved veterinarian, the animal will be taken immediately to Hamilton Zoo for inspection.

- ✧ The site manager or Environmental Manager and DOC will be contacted no later than two hours after an injured or dead native animal is found or if damaged native bird eggs are found.

Any dead or injured birds protected under the *Wildlife Act, 1983* and subsequently euthanised will be returned to: DOC Waikato District Office, 4 Northway Street, Te Rapa, Hamilton. Birds that are declared fit for release by the veterinarian will be transported back to site at the expense of the consent holder and they will be released by the ecologist in suitable habitat. All costs associated with the treatment of an injured New Zealand bush falcon will be paid by the consent holder.

6.0 Reporting

During the staged development of the SW Pit, when Bird Management Protocol 3 (in section 4, above) is triggered for active roost or nesting sites for bush falcon, an annual report of the bird management results will be prepared by the project ecologist by 30 June and forwarded to DOC in a completion/compliance report memorandum. This BMP may undergo recurrent reviews and amendment when and if required.

The report will outline:

- ✧ The bush falcon detection methods at the clearance site
- ✧ The absence or presence of bush falcon
- ✧ Whether any falcon detected were non-breeders or breeding birds
- ✧ The results of falcon that may have been detected at the quarry footprint site
- ✧ Improvement to the Bird Management Plan or parts thereof.

7.0 References

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