

Dr Matt Baber

Principal Ecologist/Director



Matt has 24 years' national and international experience as an ecologist, working in academia, local government, and consulting.

He is an expert in Assessments of Ecological Effects and in the development and implementation of Environmental Management Plans, including biodiversity offsetting and compensation. His expertise extends across a range of projects and sectors.

He currently serves on expert panels and as a technical expert for applicants, regulatory authorities or submitters on several Fast Track Applications and in Council Hearings, Environment Court or Boards of Inquiry on numerous occasions. Matt is certified as an independent hearings commissioner by the Ministry for the Environment.

Professional experience (selected)

The Point Solar Farm and Haldon Solar Farm Projects for the Environmental Protection Agency.

Expert Panel member for the Fast Track Approvals applications

King's Quarry Expansion Project for King's Quarry Ltd (2024 – 2025). Peer review ecologist for the Fast Track Approvals Application.

Kaihiku Wind Farm for Lochindorb Wind Limited Partnership (2023 – ongoing): Terrestrial ecology expert (vegetation, lizards and invertebrates) for the Fast Track Approvals application.

Buller Plateau Project for Bathurst Resources Ltd (2023 – ongoing): Lead herpetologist and offset/compensation expert for the Fast Track Approvals Application.

Oceana Gold Waihi North Project for Hauraki District Council (2023 – 2025): Co-lead ecologist representing Hauraki District Council for the Fast Track Approvals Application.

Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project for Santana Minerals Ltd (2023 – ongoing): Lead ecologist for the Fast Track Approvals application.

38 Rawene Avenue helicopter application for Quiet Sky Waitematā (2023 – 2025): Lead expert witness (coastal birds) through hearing process.

Huia Water Treatment Plant Project representing Auckland Tree Council (2022-2023): Terrestrial ecology expert in Environment Court mediation.

Brynderwyn emergency works for NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (sub-consulting to WSP Limited)(2023 – 2024): Lead herpetologist overseeing the development and implementation of fauna salvage and relocation operations.

Beachlands South plan change application for Beachlands South Limited Partnership (2022 – 2024): Lead terrestrial ecologist and expert witness.

Pakiri sand mine resource application for Auckland Council (2022 – 2024): Environment Court expert witness in relation to coastal birds (including fairy tern /tara iti).

Water discharge resource consent renewal project for New Zealand Steel (2022 – ongoing). Lead terrestrial and wetland ecologist through the application stage and council hearing process.

Muriwai Downs Golf resort project for Auckland Council (2023). Lead coastal bird expert through the council hearing process.

Aupōuri Aquifer Water Permits for Aupōuri Aquifer Water User Group (2022): Environment Court expert witness on ecology matters.

Peacocke Structure Plan (Plan Change) 5 for Hamilton City Council (2022 – 2023): Council reviewer and expert witness for terrestrial offset and compensation matters.

Manawatū Tararua highway for NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (2020 – 2022): Lead terrestrial and wetland ecologist for the Assessment of Effects and offsetting/compensation.

Auckland Regional Landfill for Waste Management New Zealand (2018 – ongoing): Lead terrestrial and wetland ecologist, and Environment Court expert witness.

Mt Messenger Bypass Project for NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (2017 – 2018): Ecology Lead for the Multi-Criteria Analysis phase.

Hamilton Section, Waikato Expressway for NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (2018 – ongoing):

Lead terrestrial ecologist for the construction phase, including the development of ecological management plans. Expert witness.

Huntly Bypass, Waikato Expressway, for NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (2011–2015):

Lead ecologist for the effects assessment phase, including engagement with regulatory authorities and iwi. Expert witness at Council hearings.

State Highway 1, Puhoi to Warkworth motorway for NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, 2015 – 2016): Ecology Lead through the tender, financial close and implementation phases, including overseeing consent compliance and stakeholder and iwi engagement on ecological matters.

Lower Waikato Flood Control Scheme Project for Waikato Regional Council (2014–2015): Lead wetland ecologist for a Section 128 review of consent to discharge water from Lake Waikare outlet into Whangamarino Wetland.

Transmission Gully for the Department of Conservation (2012): Expert witness for terrestrial ecology matters in the Board of Inquiry.

Regional Biodiversity Monitoring Programme, Auckland, New Zealand, Auckland Regional Council (2009 – 2010). Project managed the development and implementation of Auckland's regional lizard monitoring programme.

Recent publications (selected)

Baber et al., 2025. The Biodiversity Compensation Model: a framework to facilitate better ecological outcomes. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 49(1) 3591.

Markham, J, Baber, M et al. 2022. Assessing limits to biodiversity offsetting in Aotearoa: a proposed framework. *Resource Management Journal*, November, 2022.

Quinn, Baber et al. 2021. Defining mitigation: an ecology perspective. *Resource Management Journal*, August 2021.

Baber et al. 2021. Wetlands and prohibited activity status: too blunt an instrument? *Resource Management Law Association News Brief* May 20, 2021.

Baber et al. 2021. The use of modelling for terrestrial biodiversity offsets and compensation: a suggested way forward. *Resource Management Journal*, April 2021.

Baber et al. 2021. A Biodiversity Compensation Model for New Zealand – A User Guide and Calculator Tool (Version 1). Prepared by Tonkin & Taylor Limited. Project number 1017287.0000P.

Previous employment

Tonkin + Taylor (2011 – 2019)

Project Director/ Technical Director (Ecology) (2019)
Group Manager (Ecology) (2017 – 2018)
Team Leader (Ecology) (2016)
Principal Ecologist (2014 – 2015)
Senior Ecologist (2011 – 2013)

Auckland Council (2010 – 2011)

Team leader Biodiversity

Auckland Regional Council (2007 – 2010)

Natural Heritage Scientist

Ecovision (2004 – 2007)

Principal Ecologist/ Director

University of New Hampshire (2001 – 2004)

Postdoctoral Research Associate

Qualifications

- **PhD** (Ecology) 2001 from Florida International University
- **MSc** (Hons) Conservation Ecology 1996 (University of Auckland)
- **BSc** 1993 (University of Otago).

Certifications and memberships

- Certified Hearings Commissioner (since 2018)
- Department of Conservation lizard permit holder (63519-FAU)
- Environmental Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ)
- New Zealand Ecological Society (NZES)
- Ornithological Society of New Zealand (OSNZ)
- Society for Research on Amphibians and Reptiles in New Zealand
- National Wetland Trust