



19-E-0416 / DOC 6005553

17 July 2019

Hannah Enderby

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Dear Ms Enderby

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation dated 20 June 2019. You requested the following:

*It has come to my attention that dozens and maybe hundreds of protected Native birds namely Kaka, were seen falling out of trees following a 1080 poison operation on Pukaha Mt Bruce. Please send me all photographs, test results and other information you hold relating to these crimes.*

We note that you have not provided any dates in relation to the event you have referred to and seem somewhat vague about even the number of kākā you understand to have been involved.

We have been unable to locate any information that would suggest that any kākā fell out trees at Mt Bruce following a 1080 operation and we have no evidence or reason to believe this occurred.

Indeed, the scientific evidence we have establishes that the aerial application of 1080 dramatically improves the chances of kākā survival in the face of predation. We have set out some examples and explanation below before providing our response to your request.

### **Waitutu's kākā 'back from the brink' after Fiordland 1080 operation**

An endangered population of kākā in the Waitutu Forest in Fiordland, was boosted by a record breeding season following a pest control operation with 1080 toxin. In 2010, the Department carried out an aerial possum control operation over Waitutu Forest using cereal pellet baits with 1080.

Field teams made several monitoring trips into the area since the 1080 operation and found that possum, rat and stoat numbers plummeted. Possum numbers reduced by 99.5% within the treatment area and the number of rodents and stoats reduced to a level where they were no longer detectable with standard monitoring methods.

Field teams also found that female kākā that were radio-tracked prior to the operation were thriving, with nests full of healthy chicks.

### **South Island kākā monitoring**

The Department has studied the effects of predator control using aerial 1080 on South Island kākā. Nesting in tree holes, female kākā and chicks are vulnerable to attacks by stoats and possums. The Department's scientists monitored kākā nests in breeding seasons from 2010 to 2015 after aerial 1080 treatment and in an area where 1080 had never been used.

Results show that on average 55% of kākā nests were successful up to a year after 1080 treatment but less than 2% of nests produced chicks in the comparison area. This result meant that 30 times as many kākā chicks were produced in the area after 1080 treatment, compared to the area where no 1080 was used. Adult birds also had a much higher survival rate in the area where predators were controlled with 1080.

### **Information about 1080 generally**

There is a large amount of information available on the internet about the important role 1080 plays in the predator control programmes that are undertaken in New Zealand.

The DOC website contains extensive information about how and why we use 1080 to control predators.

Extensive scientific evidence about the use of 1080 is also available on the 1080: the facts website which is a joint Federated Farmers – Forest and Bird initiative and can be found at the following link: <http://www.1080facts.co.nz/research.html>.

### **Fake 1080 news**

There is also a lot of misinformation and fake news on social media about the use of 1080 in our predator control programmes. One such example can be seen here in relation to kiwi that people claimed were killed by 1080 but which had actually died of other causes:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/1080/fake-1080-news/>

It appears as though the information you have received about kākā falling out of trees at Mt Bruce is also fake 1080 news. It is unfortunate that sometimes people make things up to suit their own needs. We prefer to rely on evidence-based science and research and hope that the information we have provided has assisted your understanding of these issues.

### **Your OIA request**

We are not aware of any incidents which involve kākā falling out of trees in the Pukaha Mt Bruce area following a 1080 operation and do not hold any photographs, test results or any other information to that effect. Therefore, we are refusing your request under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of this response by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Yours sincerely



Amber Bill  
Director Threats Biodiversity  
for Director-General