

19-E-0533 DOC-6048227

28 August 2019

Tracy Livingston
Via fyi.org

Dear Ms Livingston

I refer to your official information request of 5 August 2019 seeking information on the recent 1080 operation in the Hunua Ranges.

Our letter of 14 August 2019 advised that we have transferred part of your request to Auckland Council. This letter forms the Department's response.

Translocation of kōkako

1) about the number of kokako that have been moved from a breeding facility to the Hunua Range after 1080 aerial poisoning. This pertains particularly to the most recent poison operation last year, but if there have been other times that kokako have been moved from one rohe to the Hunua Range after other drops, please include those in this information request.

As part of the Kōkako Recovery Plan, kōkako have been translocated between forests, including into the Hunua Ranges. These translocations are listed in the attached document *Kōkako Survey Report Hunua 2018*. Note that no kōkako have been translocated from 'breeding facilities'.

The donor forests of the translocated kōkako are also managed with 1080. The ongoing expansion of those kōkako populations as a result of low predator numbers following 1080 operations allows the translocation of some kōkako out of these areas to boost existing kōkako populations elsewhere, or seed new ones.

We have withheld the names of individuals and identifying information from the document we are providing, under sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(g) of the Official Information Act 1982 to protect their privacy and to prevent any improper pressure or harassment of officials or employees. In making this decision, we have taken into account the public interest considerations set out in section 9(1) of the OIA.

Rationale for use of aerial 1080 in the Hunua Ranges

3) In addition, could you please explain DoC and Auckland Council rational of why the Hunua Range, being easily traversed terrain and so close to a large population, was poisoned instead of using ground control management of pest species.

And please explain the cost comparison between the aerial poison operation and what it would cost if a land-based pest management system, and if DoC/Council had put that to public tender?

Our letter of 14 August 2019 advised that we transferred this part of your request to Auckland Council.

However, we would also like to explain that, although the kōkako management area of approximately 2,000 hectares has used intensive trapping and bait stations for many years, this has not maintained rodent, possum and mustelid numbers within this relatively small area at the target level that will allow kōkako to breed.

Even if these methods were more successful in the kōkako management area, to treat the full 20,000 hectare of the operational area using traps and bait stations would not be possible. Many parts of the Hunua Ranges are steep and access is difficult. Bait stations or traps would need to be set in a grid with 100-metre spacing for possums and 50 metres for rodents, requiring many hundreds of kilometres of tracks to be cut into the bush. Not only would this network be physically unfeasible to build and maintain, but it would also have a significant, negative impact on the flora and fauna. For example, the risk of introducing kauri dieback through root disturbance would be increased.

The issue, therefore, is not simply one of cost but also feasibility and effectiveness.

Monitoring in the Hunua Ranges

4) In addition, could you please tell me, if any, what post-1080 poison operation ecological testing DOC and Auckland Council have carried out on the Hunua Range that pertains to invertebrate numbers and health, soil health - including worms, soil fungi and bacteria, fluoride concentrations in the soil, leaf litter decomposition, and so on. (thinking about how the "Wood Wide Web" would be affected such as this <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2019/05/wood-wide-web-underground-network-microbes-connects-trees-mapped-first-time>)

While not related to 1080 operations, the Department conducts a kōkako survey in the Hunua Ranges every four years. As explained above, we are providing you with the document *Kōkako Survey Report Hunua 2018*, which comprises the results of this survey. Note that it is only coincidental that the survey took place in the same year as a 1080 operation, and the surveying took place both before and after the operation. The previous kōkako survey took place in 2014, and the previous 1080 operation in 2015.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact me at this email address.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents may be published on the Department's website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hilary Aikman', with a stylized, cursive script.

Hilary Aikman
Director, National Operations

Document schedule

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	7 January 2019	Kōkako Survey Report, Hunua 2018	Released in part