

11 August 2023

Ryan
fyi-request-20181-1688805f@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe

Thank you for your Official Information Act (OIA) request to the Department of Conservation (the Department), received on 13 July 2023 in which you asked for information concerning the Habitat Tuatēawa possum and rat control operation.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *The funding application provided under the act, states support from Ruakatauri Huarere, please supply the documented evidence this support exists and is current and Habitat Tuatēawa have consent and permission to claim support for the purposes of funding.*

The Department has not received any funding application from Habitat Tuatēawa. I am therefore refusing your request under section 18(e) of the OIA as the that the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist. If you are also interested in funding provided by entities other than DOC, Waikato Regional Council may be able to assist you with obtaining this information.

2. *On 10th July 2023 in a meeting was arranged by Department of Conservation representative Nick Kelly and Sue Saunders acting for Habitat Tuatēawa Incorporated and I was invited to attend, plans were announced of a progressive end to poison over the next years and a trapping only trial to take place - accordingly - please supply the proposal along with all information such as maps, traps to be donated to the community by DoC and all details relevant to the project including but not limited to the consent necessary and already obtained by adjacent affected land owners as well as the last 24 months trapping data from monitoring of the trap network with how many traps are being serviced already and the catch rates to show how this has been managed to date with the funding already supplied and to ascertain the feasibility of the proposal.*

I have decided to release the requested document in part, as listed in Table 1 (Item 1).

We are however not responsible for the recording of data associated with the trap lines noted. Community Groups will often record their data in an online system called TrapNZ. This system is not owned, operated, or controlled by the Department. To date, we have not had any reason to collect the data you have requested. I am therefore refusing your request under section 18(g) of the OIA because the information requested is not held.

3. *During the July 10th meeting, Department of Conservation manager Nick Kelly suggested those against the poison should produce evidence that the pig population has been poisoned by diphacinone and accordingly I remind DoC of the stipulations within the consent application in which monitoring is a compulsory requirement of the parties contracted and it is not the responsibility of anyone else to prove how the rotting corpse of a dead pig may have perished*



- accordingly - please supply all the Habitat Tuatēawa monitoring data following the 2021 and 2022 toxic baiting using diphacinone and cholecalciferol so that we may assess the adequacy of the monitoring in place.

I refer you to our previous response to OIAD-2374 dated 11 October 2022. Questions three and four of this response provided all information held by the Department around monitoring data and requirements on this matter.

4. *During the 10th July meeting, a document Affirming the Truth, was supplied to Department of Conservation operations manager Nick Kelly, in relation to evidence held showing diphacinone D Block extreme both inside and outside the Habitat Tuatēawa Inc bait stations as grazed by possums and on tracks amidst pig sign in the first weeks of September 2022 both before and during the 2022 Habitat Tuatēawa baiting season when there is compulsory stipulation that Diphacinone may not be used where pig numbers were high and as evidenced that they were - please supply copy of this document affirming the truth under the official information act.*

It is my understanding that this document “affirming the truth” was provided by yourself to the Department and as such, you will already have this document available. However, if you no longer have a copy of your document, we can locate this and email it to you.

5. *Following the meeting on 10th July, Habitat Tuatēawa and subcontractors were present on Whanake with chainsaws cutting tracks and nailing new plastic to trees and in on 11th & 12th of July were present spray painting fluorescent pink crosses, stripes and spots over hundreds of native trees whilst slashing at the native saplings and walking past a decaying corpse of a small rat present for at least 3 months in a Habitat Tuatēawa trap and then crashing through private property as thoroughfare just after 3pm on 11th July - Accordingly - please provide proof of consultation and consent with all land owners adjacent to this activity which is deemed a breach of the peace and offensive for an incorporation push their way in despite these objections, to paint poison and nail plastic to native trees whilst slashing their way through.*

Marking and maintaining tracks for trapping is consistent with Habitat Tuatēawa’s current management agreement with the Department. Adjacent landowner consent is not required. This follows best practice and remains consistent with the Predator Free 2050 Best Practice trapping guide which can be accessed in the public domain at:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/threats-and-impacts/pf2050/pf2050-trapping-guide.pdf>

6. *Additionally, please provide all 2023 information in relation to the consents current and their applications for Habitat Tuatēawa in relation to their intention to again poison our forest park which is evidenced and affirmed as an offence to the peace under section 200 of the Crimes Act 1961.*

I have decided to release the requested documents, as listed in Table 1 (Item 2).



Table 1 – Schedule of documents

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	24 July 2023	OIAD-3223 – Document 1 for release - Habitat Tuatēawa rodent trapping trial	Released in full
2	24 July 2023	OIAD-3223 – Document 2 for release - DOC Application Form to Use Pesticides 2023	Released in part

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed above, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Official Information Act, as applicable:

- personal contact details of officials, under section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act and determined there are no public interests which outweigh the grounds for withholding.

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

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

If you wish to discuss this with the Department, please contact Nick Kelly, Operations Manager on 027 540 6165 or by email nkelly@doc.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā

Tinaka Mearns
Director Operations Hauraki Waikato Taranaki
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai