[redacted]

Conservation House
18-32 Manners Street
Te Aro, Wellington, 6011
doc.govt.nz

Ref: OIAD-6118

20 March 2026

Tēnā koe [redacted]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 20 February 2026, in which you asked for:

> *"Please kindly provide:*
> *1 A copy of the advice and decision to 1080 Stewart island . Please include the reasons for the use if 1080, all legal and operational risk assessment including under health and safety, animal welfare, environmental harm and steps to avoid or mitigate all such harm and all alternatives considered.*
> *2 A copy of all research, monitoring and reports relevant to the risk of poisoning White Tailed Deer or other non target species with 1080 and actual non target species deaths from this and prior similar 1080 operations. Please include the research report referred to in the attached article.*
> *3 Please provide any post poison analysis of learning and what might be done differently in future to avoid bykill or other risks to people, other animals and/ or the environment."*

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982.

New Zealand is facing a biodiversity crisis, with about 80% of our bird species at risk of extinction. The biggest threat to our wildlife is introduced mammalian predators such as rats, stoats, possums, and feral cats. For many years the Department of Conservation (DOC) has run ground-based predator control operations on Rakiura / Stewart Island to protect breeding pukunui / Southern New Zealand dotterel from feral cat predation. While this has provided some relief, ground-based methods have not been able to operate at a sufficiently large scale to protect all the breeding habitat. Feral cats are known to travel significant distances to secure their prey, meaning that predator control efforts must take place over much larger areas to ensure success. Pukunui also breed in small numbers, scattered across large areas of the island, making the work logistically and practically challenging. These facts, alongside Stewart Island's rugged and remote location, and impenetrable scrub areas, have informed DOC's decision to urgently investigate a change in the predator control approach.

Aerial applied 1080 is the best tool currently available for use across large areas in environments like Stewart Island. This is because it can be applied at a landscape scale quickly, making the most of short weather windows. Bait can be applied evenly within the home range of all target species, despite the challenges that terrain and vegetation can present. This method also removes the need to service and maintain an extended network of tracks, traps, and associated infrastructure.

DOC monitors native species to measure the effectiveness of our predator control. Over 20 years of studies and peer reviewed research demonstrate that one aerial 1080 operation every few years can effectively reduce predator numbers to enable the survival and breeding success of our native species. Below are some publicly available resources on the use of 1080 operations for predator control in New Zealand:

You can read about how 1080 operations have supported our native species' survival on the Department's website at:
https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/1080/proof-that-1080-is-protecting-our-species/

Recently the Predator Free Rakiura group convened a panel of experts (including a toxicologist, freshwater scientist, conservation scientist,) to share information on 1080 and its use with the Stewart Island community. The presentations were recorded and provide a wealth of information on 1080 – how it works, what happens to it in the environment, and its use. You can find the recording here: https://www.predatorfreerakiura.org.nz/about-us/stories/1080-information-sessions/

Previous OIA responses and proactive releases about 1080 operations on Rakiura can be found here: Predator control on Rakiura: OIA responses and proactive releases

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *A copy of the advice and decision to 1080 Stewart island. Please include the reasons for the use if 1080, all legal and operational risk assessment including under health and safety, animal welfare, environmental harm and steps to avoid or mitigate all such harm and all alternatives considered*

   For copies of these documents, please refer to previous OIA responses and proactive releases which can be found here: Predator control on Rakiura: OIA responses and proactive releases

   You will find copies of the following publicly released documents which answer your questions:
   - The rationale for using 1080 on Rakiura in OIAD-4941.
   - The application to use 1080 in 2025, the Decision Support Document that evaluated the application, and the DOC and Ministry of Health permissions that were granted for the operation in OIAD-5262.
   - The Pukunui 1080 Operational Plan in OIAD-5357.

2. *A copy of all research, monitoring and reports relevant to the risk of poisoning White Tailed Deer or other non target species with 1080 and actual non target species deaths from this and prior similar 1080 operations. Please include the research report referred to in the attached article*

   I am sharing with you (see Table below) the report on the impact of aerial 1080 on white tailed deer on Rakiura prepared by the Bioeconomy Science Institute.

   I am also sharing with you Rakiura white tailed deer study fact sheet and pukunui operation monitoring results released by DOC.

   There have been no prior similar operations on Rakiura. I must therefore refuse your request for any research, reports, or monitoring for similar operations under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the information requested does not exist.

3. *Please provide any post poison analysis of learning and what might be done differently in future to avoid bykill or other risks to people, other animals and/ or the environment*

   DOC is working with the Rakiura community and the hunting sector to evaluate the white tailed deer monitoring results from 2025 and early 2026. As that dialogue has only just begun, no additional analysis exists beyond the publicly available report on the impact of aerial 1080 on white tailed deer on Rakiura prepared by the Bioeconomy Science Institute.

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	Feb 2026	Impact of aerial 1080 on white tailed deer on Rakiura prepared by the Bioeconomy Science Institute	Released in part
2	2025	Rakiura white tailed deer study fact sheet	Released in full
3	2025	Pukunui operation monitoring results released by DOC	Released in part

I have decided to release the documents listed above, subject to information being withheld under section 9(2)(g)(ii) to protect employees from improper pressure or harassment.

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 that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

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

Nāku noa, nā

Ben Reddiex
Director Biodiversity National Programmes
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai