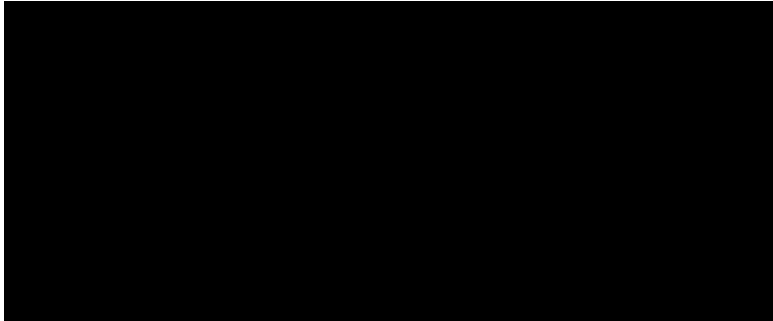




17-E-275

27 July 2017



Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation, dated 23 June 2017 and apologies for the delay in responding. You requested the following:

- 1) Any pre-monitoring done in this area, recent or historic (if historic include date) of all native species.*
- 2) Any pre-monitoring done in this area, recent or historic (if historic include date) of all pest species*
- 3) Will the Department of Conservation be doing any post-operation monitoring of either native species (which ones) or predators (which ones)? If so which method of data collection will be used?*
- 4) If DoC is not conducting the post-monitoring and it is to be done by ZIP, will DoC be overseeing that monitoring and how?*
- 5) What are the qualifications of the people who have conducted or will conduct monitoring for this operation?*

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

To put the trial into perspective to help understand the rationale for the operation, I have included supplementary information.

ZIP is undertaking a trial investigating the potential of using a modified prescription of aerially applied 1080, to completely remove rats and possums from large mainland areas of New Zealand, within the context of the 'Remove and Protect' model. The objective of this specific trial is to determine whether a modified prescription of aerial 1080 can result in the complete removal (functional extinction) of rats and possums from the 2000 hectare area of the trial.

If success is achieved with this new technique, it could reduce the need for repeated toxin aerial use; and provide a tool for progressing New Zealand towards its Predator Free 2050 goal.

1. *Any pre-monitoring done in this area, recent or historic (if historic include date) of all native species*

This operation is different to regular pest control operations carried out by DOC on mainland New Zealand.

The 2000 hectare of the Arawhata ZIP trial is a very small area relative to the surrounding forests. The area has been subject to intensive vegetation monitoring since the early 1990's as it was one of the last areas in New Zealand invaded by possums.

The Department of Conservation has been able to track the steady decline of both fuchsia and mistletoe on the site of the ZIP trial, which is directly attributable to possum browse. Currently, according to the most recent monitoring, possums are at about holding capacity for the forest which is in a depauperate state because of pest incursions.

In the forests between the Waita and Paringa Rivers to the north of here, there has been intensive monitoring of a full range of forest birds until recently, and where 1080 has been used, there has been monitored benefits.

There has also been longer term studies in Cascade region south of the site and closer to the ZIP site, there is the intensive operation around the tokoeka kiwi site across the river on the true right of the Arawhata. This area has also shown benefit from the use of 1080 for pest control.

In back-country areas such as the Arawhata with little contact with people, kea are unlikely to be killed in 1080 operations and the number of resident adult kea in the small block is almost certainly very low. Even so, a precautionary approach to the ZIP operation was taken in case there were any concentrations of juvenile kea passing through the area. An independent survey of kea was undertaken immediately prior to the operation to determine potential kea risk factors and if necessary, cancel or postpone the 1080 operation.

Please find provided some monitoring information from the Jackson River area for Mistletoe and Morepork as detailed in Appendix 1.

The release of historic monitoring of native species is declined as the search, collation and copying of these records would involve substantial collation and research. This refusal has been made in terms of section 18(f) Official Information Act.



- 2) *Any pre-monitoring done in this area, recent or historic (if historic include date) of all pest species*

The levels of pest species on the trial site are well documented over time and will be similar in density and distribution to adjacent areas that have been monitored over many years. The Department holds many years of intensive records used to do analysis of possum, rat and stoats in the area from Paringa to the north and south to the true right bank of the Arawhata in the Haast kiwi site immediately adjacent to the ZIP trail area. ZIP has an intensive post-operational pest monitoring programme planned.

Please find some monitoring from the Jackson River area for Deer pellet counts, trend monitoring and foliar browsing indices, and rat monitoring, as detailed in Appendix 1.

The release of historic monitoring of pest species is declined as the search, collation and copying of these records would involve substantial collation and research. This refusal has been made in terms of section 18(f) Official Information Act.

- 3) *Will the Department of Conservation be doing any post-operation monitoring of either native species (which ones) or predators (which ones)? If so which method of data collection will be used?*

The Department will not be doing any post-operational monitoring of either native species or predators.

- 4) *If DoC is not conducting the post-monitoring and it is to be done by ZIP, will DOC be overseeing that monitoring and how?*

The Department will not be overseeing monitoring being carried out by ZIP, but will have access to the results when the trial is completed .

- 5) *What are the qualifications of the people who have conducted or will conduct monitoring for this operation?*

The Department is not privy to personal information of ZIP personnel. DOC is confident in the leadership and direction of ZIP to carry out the work and has no reason to question the qualifications of their staff.

Appendix 1 contains a list of additional documents that are enclosed with this response, as they fall within the scope of your request.

I have borne in mind sections 18A and 18B of the Official Information Act, but concluded that use of either provision would not assist in this case.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act.

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.

Yours sincerely



Mark Davies
Director Operations
Western South Island



Appendix 1

OIA Jackson River FBI June 2006
OIA Jackson River FBI 2006
OIA Arawhata Pellet count 2013
OIA Jackson River FBI 7 March
OIA Jackson River FBI 2011
OIA Jackson River FBI February 2005
OIA Jackson River FBI August 1999
OIA Jackson River FBI May 2011
OIA Jackson River FBI November 2005
OIA Jackson River FBI July 2017
OIA Jackson River FBI 2010
OIA Jackson River FBI 2008
OIA Jackson River FBI July 2007
OIA Jackson River FBI July 2015
OIA Jackson River FBI February 2004
OIA Jackson River FBI September 2004
OIA Jackson River Trend Monitoring 14 July 2017
OIA Mistletoe trial 14 July 2017
OIA Morepork presence abundance 2001
OIA Mistletoe condition August 2000
OIA Mistletoe and possum relationships May 2000
OIA Kea survey June 2017
OIA Jackson Rat monitoring graph pdf
OIA Jackson Rat monitoring data pdf
OIA Jackson River Raised Set efficiency trial 2008
OIA Jackson River Trend Monitor 2005
OIA Jackson River Trend Monitor Dec 2010