

18-E-0797 / DOC-5596003

7 November 2018

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Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Minister of Conservation, dated 3 October 2018. Your request has been referred to me as Director, National Operations, Department of Conservation (DOC) for reply. Your request, and our response is below:

You requested the following in relation to 1080: *“details and maps of the proposed drop areas, details and documents relating to the material used in determining numbers, including the flight path plans that were used to determine these numbers.”*

Both ground-based and aerially applied pesticides, including 1080, are currently in use across many areas of public conservation land for biodiversity protection. Toxins may be applied by approved handlers working on behalf of DOC, community conservation groups, OSPRI New Zealand (for the control of bovine tuberculosis) and other approved handlers. DOC maintains an open-access mapping app, the Pesticide Summary, which shows the locations of all current and planned (confirmed) pest control operations using toxins (including 1080) on public conservation land. This app is updated daily and contains information as to what toxin is applied, how, by whom and the likely dates it is to be used.

See: <http://maps.doc.govt.nz/mapviewer/index.html?viewer=pesticidesummary>

The target species in most 1080 drops are possums, rats (Norway and ship rat) and all mustelid species (particularly stoats) by way of secondary poisoning (through consuming rats). Aircraft are not used to determine numbers of these target species so flight path plans that determine this do not exist.

The possum population is usually estimated using the Residual Trap Catch (RTC) method, which is a standardised method for estimating population densities. It is expressed as a percentage of trap-nights on which a possum was captured. Target densities for operations can vary, depending on locally present species and their sensitivity to predators. The target RTC for possums to meet conservation outcomes for many threatened flora species is 3%. Research on kokako breeding indicates that possum relative abundance needs to be 1%.

Small mammal tracking tunnels are used to detect the presence of rodents and mustelids with the percentage of tracks on which animal prints are recorded used to create an index of population density.

Again, thank you for your information request to the Department of Conservation and obvious concern for our environment.

I'm sure you will be aware that New Zealand is facing a biodiversity crisis, with urgent action required to halt the decline of our native species. Results from ongoing research into pest control techniques show that both trapping and 1080 are hugely beneficial for our native wildlife. 1080 is ideally suited for use in New Zealand because introduced mammals are extremely vulnerable to the poison but monitoring shows most native species are not at significant risk.

Please visit the websites below for further information:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/battle-for-our-birds/>

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

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

Yours sincerely

Hilary Aikman
Director, National Operations