

29 January 2021

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Tēnā koe ██████

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation, received on 10 December 2020 in which you asked for:

*Can I please request this information under the Official Information Act:*

- 1. How many GoodNature traps does DoC have in its trapping network?*
- 2. What is the cost of buying and operating GoodNature traps (A24 & A12), compared to the regular traps (DOC 150 & DOC 200 as well as a common equivalent to the A12)?*
- 3. How many Kiwi have been killed or seriously injured by all styles of trap? provided as number of killed/injured in GoodNature traps, number of killed/injured in other traps. If we could get this per year for the last five years. Both killed/seriously injured on DOC land, and deaths/injuries reported by members of the public.*
- 4. How many native birds have been killed or seriously injured in traps on DOC land in the past 12 months?*

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

- 1. How many GoodNature traps does DoC have in its trapping network?*

There is no single centralised record of the purchase of traps and related equipment or of traps in use. Decisions of tools to use and equipment purchases are generally made at the District Office level, rather than nationally.

The following numbers are sourced from the DOC Trapping App, which while not universal, captures data from a significant proportion of both DOC and community trapping effort on Public Conservation Land – 412 projects and 105 215 trap locations.

The App holds locations for 1219 A12 possum traps and 8438 A24 rat and mustelid traps.

In comparison, 1315 Trapinator and 5316 Sentinel traps (the 2 most widely used tree mounted conventional traps for possums), and 55 716 DOC150 and DOC200 traps in

various configurations (predominantly targeting stoats and weasels but also an effective rat trap) are also recorded.

2. *What is the cost of buying and operating GoodNature traps (A24 & A12), compared to the regular traps (DOC 150 & DOC 200 as well as a common equivalent to the A12)?*

Indicative single unit costs as of December 2020 (unit prices for all are likely to reduce for larger quantities and may vary between suppliers):

Goodnature A24 \$169 (lure and gas included, source: Goodnature website)

Goodnature A12 \$185 (lure and gas included, source: Goodnature website)

Single set stainless steel DOC150 in best practice trap box \$79 (source for all: Haines Pallets website)

Double set stainless steel DOC150 in best practice trap box \$126

Single set stainless steel DOC200 in best practice trap box \$86

Double set stainless steel DOC200 in best practice trap box \$145

Trapinator possum trap \$53.50 (lure included, source Trapinator website)

Sentinel possum trap \$39.95 (source traps.co.nz)

Operational costs will be highly variable depending on factors including size and terrain of operational area, trap density, and service frequency. The resetting traps currently available will be more expensive to purchase and to service compared to conventional traps that target the same species, however potential savings arise from fewer services and lower deployment costs. Goodnature traps require re-luring (\$9.50 to \$11.50 per trap) and re-gassing (\$7.50 per trap) 3-4 times per year, servicing costs for conventional traps will be significantly less but are more frequent. How this balances out will vary between operations for the reasons listed above.

The relative costs will be among many things considered when deciding which predator control tools are used to achieve a particular outcome. Often a variety of traps and/or toxins will need to be used together at a site to protect natural ecosystems.

3. *How many Kiwi have been killed or seriously injured by all styles of trap? provided as number of killed/injured in GoodNature traps, number of killed/injured in other traps. If we could get this per year for the last five years. Both killed/seriously injured on DOC land, and deaths/injuries reported by members of the public*

Goodnature traps:

There are no known fatalities to kiwi from either the A24 nor A12 Goodnature traps.

We know of 5 bill injuries to kiwi that were likely to have been caused by Goodnature A24s (location of injuries along length of bill was similar to the distance between trigger and striking mechanism of an A24). Three of these injuries required veterinary treatment, all recovered. These occurred in 2018 and were all captive reared rowi (Ōkārito brown kiwi) that had been released at Kaipupu Point Wildlife Sanctuary. At the time at least some of the traps at Kaipupu were set 20-50cm above ground level, higher than the manufacturer's instructions to mount traps at 12cm. However captive brown kiwi and captive reared rowi at close to adult size have since been observed accessing disarmed traps mounted at 12cm.

There are no known injuries to any kiwi from A12 traps. One kiwi with a bill deformity has been found at a site on Stewart Island where A12s had historically been used but the highly

selective triggering system of this trap means that kiwi would be unlikely to be able to set one off.

A review of A24 use in kiwi habitat nationwide in response to the injuries at Kaipupu found 11 sites with a significant number of A24 traps and where at least some kiwi were regularly handled. Only two further bill injuries were reported from any of these sites, neither of which could be attributed to A24s (one was to the very tip of the bill, while the other was seen on a bird that was recovered dead and had degraded to the point that type and location of original injury could not be determined).

The only kiwi known to have been injured by, or observed interacting with, A24 traps were captive reared. DOC now requires these traps to be installed at least one metre above ground level in specified scenarios where there is a high probability that captive reared kiwi could encounter them. These are at 'kiwi creche' sites (where captive reared kiwi of any species are initially released under a high standard of protection until large enough to fend off stoats) or in any rowi or Haast tokoeka habitat (as the wild populations of these kiwi species include a high proportion of captive reared birds). In light of the evidence available to date, at other sites we regard the risk of kiwi injury as extremely low, not requiring the introduction of performance standards that may compromise effectiveness of the traps.

All other traps:

We know of 4 kiwi captures in other traps. A Haast tokoeka was killed in a DOC 200 trap in the 2007/08 summer. This was in a 'standard' trap box, many but not all of the DOC series traps within the Haast tokoeka management area have since been replaced with a design that reduces kea and weka access. There are a very large number of DOC series traps in use in kiwi habitat around the country, so a single known fatality represents an extremely rare event. A North Island brown kiwi chick was killed in a Fenn trap at a private sanctuary in 2019/20. A southern tokoeka was captured in a cage trap set for cats on Stewart Island in 2017 (likely to have only sustained minor injuries so released), while another southern tokoeka captured in a leg-hold trap also on Stewart Island in late 2018 was euthanised as was likely to have sustained significant injuries.

Reporting of non-target captures in predator traps has improved over time so while this list will not capture all incidents the small number in recent years indicates that kiwi captures in any traps are very rare. While historically there have been many captures of kiwi in leg-hold traps (prior to any central collation of data, so no numbers available) this has almost ceased as these traps should now not be used at ground level where kiwi are present.

4. *How many native birds have been killed or seriously injured in traps on DOC land in the past 12 months?*

In 2020, 271 captures of native birds were recorded in the DOC Trapping App Database. Again, this needs to be seen as a sample and more may have occurred in operations that don't use the Trapping App, however referring back to the figures given in response to the first question it should be seen that this is a very large sample and can be treated as representative of how significant the risks actually are relative to overall trap effort.

These include:

146 weka (30 of these were on the Chathams where they don't occur naturally)

93 robins

10 tūī

7 penguins

And 3 or less captures of a further 9 species

These were mostly in kill traps of 11 different kinds. Of potentially non-fatal captures, 2 birds (1 gull, 1 paradise duck) caught in leg holds would have sustained injuries but may have been released alive, while 7 penguins, 4 weka and 2 shearwaters caught in cage traps will have been released without serious harm.

In the same period there have been 17 captures recorded simply as 'bird', any of these may also have been native species, and 10 instances where 'native non-target' has been recorded with no further detail.

In comparison, the Trapping App database contains for the same period records of:  
62 708 rat captures (all 3 species)  
7 967 stoats  
3 320 possums  
988 feral cats, among other invasive species targeted in trapping programmes.

The use of any tool for predator control comes with some risk, including to non-target species. The collation of data such as those presented here is an important step towards managing these risks. They enable us to identify where there are priorities that could be managed by improving the standards around the use of a tool and give us a baseline which we can measure improvements against. We also need to consider the benefit that successful predator control provides to native species and natural ecosystems. Where the risks cannot be completely eliminated without compromising the effectiveness of the predator control, the benefits provided should outweigh any losses to native species. The department would not knowingly continue with any operation where that was not the case.

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 Nic Gorman on [REDACTED] or by email [ngorman@doc.govt.nz](mailto:ngorman@doc.govt.nz).

Nāku noa, nā



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