

12 October 2022



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your Official Information Act (OIA) request to the Department of Conservation, received on 13 September 2022 in which you asked for:

- 1. The processes for disposing of the bodies of pests (eg goats, deer etc) that are killed by DoC or DoC contractors*
- 2. The number of pests killed by DoC or contractors in the past five years broken down by year, species, region, and method of pest control*
- 3. The number of pest bodies disposed of by DoC in the same timeframe broken down by year, region, and species*

Our Landscapes Manager Predator Free 2050, Peter Morton, sought to connect with you by phone on 27 September to clarify or refine your request. We have not however received a response to his resulting message. Based upon your first question's reference to "goats, deer etc.", we have interpreted your questions as being focused on official control by us (by our staff or contractors) of wild animal species controlled under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977, including wild goats, deer, feral pigs, tahr and chamois. Predator species such as rats and stoats have, therefore, not been included in the scope of this response.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. "The processes for disposing of the bodies of pests (eg goats, deer etc) that are killed by DoC or DoC contractors".

In most instances, the bodies of wild animal species controlled by us are not recovered and are allowed to decompose naturally. Where practical, we continue to consider possibilities around utilising the meat from controlled wild animals. The logistics of efficiently incorporating recovery within official control however are challenging, particularly where reaching the animals would involve long flight distances and remote and difficult terrain. This is for instance where recovery may not be physically possible or would create significant risk to health and safety. We facilitate commercial meat recovery by providing permits for wild

animal recovery operators to work on public conservation land. However, the same challenges mentioned above also apply to commercial operators, and factors such as these, as well as the current market for wild animal meat, can affect recovery and processing costs per kilogram of meat.

2. “The number of pests killed by DoC or contractors in the past five years broken down by year, species, region, and method of pest control”

This request, as it relates to wild animals ,other than deer, goats, and tahr after 2018, is being refused under section 18(f) of the OIA as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. The information related to deer, goats, and tahr from 2018 is publicly available (see below).

There is no central database for information on the numbers of wild animals controlled by us throughout the country. Establishing where such details may have been collected over the past five years, as well as confirming and collating any such records, would require significant time and resource.

We do however run an annual programme of deer and goat management where delivery is reported annually as hectares treated. The results of this measure are publicly available in our annual reports, which can be accessed via the links below for 2017 through to 2021:

- 2017- <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/corporate-publications/annual-reports-archive/annual-report-for-year-ended-30-june-2017/>
- 2018 - <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/corporate-publications/annual-reports-archive/annual-report-for-year-ended-30-june-2018/>
- 2019 - <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/corporate-publications/annual-reports-archive/annual-report-for-year-ended-30-june-2019/>
- 2020- <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/corporate-publications/annual-reports-archive/annual-report-for-year-ended-30-june-2020/>
- 2021 - <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/corporate-publications/annual-reports-archive/statement-of-intent-2021-2025-and-the-annual-report-for-the-year-ended-30-june-2021/>

We also run a national programme for tahr management. This includes annual control operations led by us in the tahr management units and outside the tahr feral range. Aerial control operational activity using helicopters is the main method of tahr control used by us, with effort expressed in hours of control undertaken. Since 2018, data on tahr controlled by official operations has been made publicly available through our website. Links to the relevant webpages for sourcing this information have been included below:

- 2018 - <https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/what-to-hunt/tahr/tahr-control-operations/tahr-sightings-maps/past-himalayan-tahr-sightings-and-control-maps/>
- 2019 - <https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/what-to-hunt/tahr/tahr-control-operations/tahr-sightings-maps/tahr-sighting-maps-2019/>
- 2020 - <https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/what-to-hunt/tahr/tahr-control-operations/tahr-sightings-maps/tahr-maps-2020/>
- 2021 - <https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/what-to-hunt/tahr/tahr-control-operations/tahr-sightings-maps/tahr-sighting-maps-2021/>



- 2022 - <https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/what-to-hunt/tahr/tahr-control-operations/tahr-sightings-maps/> (still underway)
3. The number of pest bodies disposed of by DoC in the same timeframe broken down by year, region, and species”

This request is being declined under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. As discussed above, there is no central database for information on the numbers of wild animals controlled by us throughout the country and, in most instances, the bodies of wild animal species controlled by us are not recovered. Establishing where variations in approach may have occasionally been utilised, as well as confirming and collating any such records, would require significant time and resource. In making my decision, I have borne in mind sections 18A and 18B of the OIA but concluded that use of either provision would not assist in this case.

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 OIA.

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



Nāku noa, nā



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