

1 February 2024



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 5 January 2024, in which you asked:

We've heard from a couple of marine biologists in Auckland and Tauranga that they're seeing a lot of jetskiers and boaties getting very close to marine animals around both towns.

- Has the Department of Conservation received many complaints about this? How many?*
- What have been the results of these complaints? Have any charges been laid, or any other enforcement action?*
- Could you offer any comment on people doing this? I would assume DoC would condemn this sort of behaviour and would want people to stick to the rules?*

On 5 January 2024, Principal Investigation Officer Matt Davis provided you information regarding the third bullet point.

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

On 10, 15, and 23 January 2024 we contacted you to clarify your request including the timeframe you were interested in but did not receive a response. In light of this, we have interpreted the remainder of your request as follows:

- 1. How many complaints has the Department received about jetskiers and boaties getting very close to marine mammals this summer, compared to the previous two summers?*
- 2. What have been the results of such complaints?*
- 3. Have any charges been laid, or other enforcement action taken with regards to these complaints?*

We are interpreting summer as November to March to capture the warmer months when people are more likely to be engaging in recreation activities on the ocean. The numbers

provided in our responses below do not include complaints/offences from other parts of the year.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *How many complaints has the Department received about jetskiers and boaties getting very close to marine mammals this summer, compared to the previous two summers?*

The Department has a record of seven complaints so far this summer. The summer of 2022/23 we had 11 complaints, and the summer of 2021/22 we had 12. These may not all be unique reports, as more than one person might complain about a certain incident. Keep in mind we are only three months into the five-month period assessed for the current summer.

2. *What have been the results of such complaints?*

Nine of the complaints over all three summers have been recorded in the Compliance and Law Enforcement (CLE) database: three for this summer, four for last summer, and two from the summer before. This means the complaint has been confirmed to be an offence and has been investigated by a compliance officer.

3. *Have any charges been laid, or other enforcement action taken with regards to these complaints?*

Out of the nine lodged offences, two resulted in advocacy, either verbally or via letter; one received an infringement notice; one is still under investigation; and the remaining had no further action taken due to being unable to identify the offenders.

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 this letter (with your personal details removed) may be published on the Department's website.

Nāku noa, nā

Kirstie Knowles
Director Biodiversity System and Aquatic
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai