

Guidance for applying for a wildlife approval under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

The authorised person for a listed project or referred project may apply to the Environmental Protection Authority for a wildlife approval under section 42(4)(h) of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 as part of a substantive application.

This guidance will help you in providing the required information to apply for a wildlife approval.

Before lodging an application

Substantive applications under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) are lodged with the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). Before lodging a referral application, or a substantive application for a listed project, you must notify DOC.

DOC also encourages applicants to engage with DOC before lodging a substantive application for a referred project.

This is an opportunity to discuss your proposed application, the type of information, and the level of detail you will need to provide in your application.

You can contact us by email: fasttrackapplicationenquiries@doc.govt.nz

Seeking a wildlife approval

Under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 you can apply for a wildlife approval as part of a substantive application.

Wildlife approvals authorise acts that would otherwise be an offence under the Wildlife Act 1953, including to:

- Catch and handle wildlife on site (including wildlife sampling and wildlife salvage)
- Take samples from wildlife
- Take or destroy the eggs of wildlife
- Attach identification bands to wildlife
- Mark, tag, or attach other scientific apparatus to wildlife
- Catch and temporarily hold wildlife in captivity (less than 3 months)
- Transfer captive wildlife from one holding facility to another holding facility
- Kill wildlife
- Hunt, disturb, kill or catch alive protected wildlife that are causing damage
- Translocate wildlife
- Capture to liberate, or liberate wildlife

All relevant species must be identified as part of applying for a wildlife approval.

Information you need to provide

The information required for a wildlife approval is prescribed in clause 2 of schedule 7 of the Act. Your application must include the information required, which is listed on the EPA application form available on the EPA website.

The information you provide in your application for a wildlife approval must be specified in sufficient detail to enable a panel to seek comments on and, with the addition of those comments, any further information requested, and the related reports, decide on your project. Where information requirements specified under the Act are not met, or the information is not specified in sufficient detail, the EPA must return the application to you.

As part of your application for a wildlife approval you must specify the purpose of the proposed activity, identify the actions you wish to carry out involving protected wildlife and where they will be carried out, whether they are on or off public conservation land.

The application must state whether authorisation is sought to temporarily hold or relocate wildlife. Please specify the start and end dates you would like your wildlife approval to cover and explain why this term is sought. To make the information contained in the application easy to manage, please clearly label each document and separate electronic documents into small files less than 30MB, including any maps or plans. Please provide text-searchable pdfs.

Location of the proposed activities

Your application must include the location (or locations) the activity will be carried out including a map. NZTM GPS coordinates are helpful and can assist with identifying the locations accurately. You must also provide this information for any locations to be used in relocation of wildlife.

If the activity is taking place on public conservation land or requires access through conservation land, your application should include the land block name and status (e.g. reserve purpose) as recorded on DOC GIS under the 'Public conservation areas' layer. [DOC Maps](#) can assist you to identify the name and status of any public conservation land. You may also require a concession for carrying out your activity on PCL.

If the activity is taking place on private land, it is your responsibility to arrange access to the land, including landowner consent for the activity on that land.

Purpose of the Wildlife Act

As part of your application, you must include an assessment of the activity and its impacts against the purpose of the Wildlife Act 1953 – wildlife protection.

Recording species information

In your application you must list the wildlife species protected under the Wildlife Act 1953 that are known or predicted to be in the area and where possible, the numbers of wildlife present and numbers likely to be impacted. Wherever possible provide information about the local, national, and global populations of each species and the estimated number that will be affected by the activity.

Your application must outline the impacts on threatened, data deficient, and at-risk wildlife species using the [New Zealand Threat Classification System](#). Please include the common and scientific name for each species and its NZ threat classification. It may be helpful to present this information together in a table in your

application.

Description of methods

You must describe the methods to be used to safely, efficiently, and humanely catch, hold or kill the animals and identify any relevant animal ethics processes, and how you will ensure best practice standards are met.

Including evidence of Animal Ethics Committee approval in your application, if relevant, will assist us to understand your proposal.

Where applicable this will include sampling methods that clearly stipulate the interaction with wildlife, and the volume and methods of any samples to be taken, and list exactly what samples are to be taken (e.g. blood, DNA, feathers, etc). Where applying to hold wildlife in captivity, please include detailed information of the holding cage and location.

Use of VHF Radio Transmitters

An application may include tracking various species of wildlife that may be impacted (monitored and/or translocated) as part of the activity. Furthermore, some construction activities may cause radio interference and therefore impact on DOC's ability to track animals in that area using VHF radio transmitters.

For VHF Radio frequencies:

- Radio transmitter frequencies 160.6 MHz to 161.11 MHz (channels 48-99) must not be operated unless the Authority Holder is in possession of a separate sub-licence issued by the Department of Conservation. For information on obtaining a sub-licence, contact the bandingoffice@doc.govt.nz.

For Banding or Microchipping (PIT tag, Transponders), other marks (GPS etc.) on birds or bats:

- All operators (including trainees) capturing or marking birds or bats need to be registered with the New Zealand National Bird Banding Scheme. Information on bird banding is available on the DOC website [Bird banding: Our work](#). The requirements for capturing and marking birds and bats is available on our website here: [Bird Marking Conditions](#).

Effects of the proposed activity and mitigation

In your application list all actual and potential wildlife effects (adverse or positive) of the proposed activity, including effects on the target species, other indigenous species, and the ecosystems at the site.

Where adverse effects are identified, state the significance of any adverse effects, what methods will be used to avoid and minimise those effects, and any offsetting or compensation proposed to address unmitigated adverse effects. This may include steps taken before the project begins, such as surveying, salvaging, and relocating wildlife protected under the Wildlife Act.

Wildlife surveying, which includes the catching, handling, marking or tagging of wildlife, should not include the killing of wildlife.

Wildlife salvage, which includes applications to catch and relocate wildlife, may include an incidental kill aspect.

Examples of quality expected in an application around management of effects and mitigation is in the table below.

| Effect | Management Method |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Removal of vegetation and/or seawall structure that could potentially provide habitat | <p>Activities will be in accordance with management plans that include best practice protocols surrounding pre-work checks, incidental finds, salvage and relocation, and limits on working hours.</p> <p>To ensure vegetation outside the clearance area is not mistakenly removed or damaged, the extent of vegetation clearance will be clearly physically delineated and replanted following completion of works.</p> |
| Potential disturbance, injury, and/or mortality as a result of vegetation clearance and construction activities | <p>A kororā management plan will be implemented, including an exclusion zone and fencing, kororā surveys with a protected species dog prior to works, and monitoring of the kororā in burrow by suitably qualified ecologist to ensure no welfare impacts.</p> <p>Lizard relocation will be undertaken using standard salvage and relocation methods.</p> |
| Wildlife may be killed on site, become stressed, risk of injury | <p>Kiwi will be handled in accordance with the Department of Conservation “Kiwi Best Practice Manual 2020”. Kiwi will be located by a certified kiwi dog with an approved kiwi handler during daylight hours, in dry to damp conditions, with a moderate to strong breeze outside the breeding season. Kiwi will be removed from the burrow/site location, weighed, measured, health-checked, transmitter-checked and/or changed, microchip scanned and/or placed before release. Only the accredited kiwi handler will take any morphological measurements, attach/change a transmitter, or place a microchip.</p> |

Surveying

The purpose of a wildlife survey is for research and information gathering. It may include catching and handling of wildlife for the purpose of identification and collecting data or undertaking research. Some surveying/monitoring involves attaching transmitters. Please use the specific frequencies for any radio transmitters.

For any surveying for lizards, the current best practice for surveys includes catch and handle to accurately identify species (as opposed to identifying without handling). More information on undertaking a lizard survey can be found on the DOC website here: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/science-and-technical/inventory-monitoring/im-toolbox-herpetofauna-sytematic-searches.pdf>

For other wildlife, the biodiversity inventory and monitoring toolbox provides a useful resource for undertaken a survey. The toolbox can be found here: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/biodiversity-inventory-and-monitoring/>

Salvaging

Wildlife salvage is to protect wildlife that would otherwise be harmed by activities such as construction and vegetation clearance. It should include a catch and handle aspect to relocate wildlife. It may include an incidental kill aspect.

New Zealand’s native lizards and frogs are protected under the Wildlife Act. Before any development can begin on land where they’re found, you must develop a plan to ensure wildlife protection and have a

Wildlife Act Authorisation. Development projects that may require these include work to clear vegetation, landscaping, any construction or road building.

Useful guidance for lizard salvage and transfer is available on the DOC website at the following link: [Key principles for lizard salvage and transfer in New Zealand](#). The Biodiversity inventory and toolbox provides methods for biodiversity inventory and monitoring for activities that may affect lizards and frogs. More can also be found here: [Applying to develop land with native lizards and frog species: Run a project](#)

We recommend you discuss any surveying, salvaging and relocating protected wildlife with us during any initial consultation.

Translocation

A wildlife translocation introduces a species to an area where they historically resided or supplement a wild population. A guide to moving live animals or indigenous plants from one location to another is available here: [Translocation: moving animals and plants](#)

Consultation undertaken and expert advice obtained

As part of your application please include details of any consultation undertaken, including with hapū or iwi, specific to the wildlife impacts included in the application.

If any written expert views, advice, or opinions have also been obtained these are also to be included in our application.

Information about you

Please include your details as the authorised person making the application including your full contact details (including postal address and email) and any contact details for a consultant submitting the application on your behalf. If the authorised person is a company also include the company name and NZBN number.

In your application you must state whether any company director, trustee, partner or anyone else involved in the application has been convicted of any offence under the Wildlife Act 1953 or has any current criminal charges under the Wildlife Act pending before a court. For any pending charges you may wish to discuss with the EPA about withholding this information prior to the application being available on the EPA fast-track website.

What fees are to be paid?

For work pre-lodgement, DOC will recover the costs from you. Information on cost recovery during pre-lodgement and DOC's cost recovery policy is available on DOC's website [Fast-track: Permissions](#).

The EPA will recover from you the actual and reasonable costs incurred in respect of the wildlife approval and any other approvals sought as part of your substantive application.

An initial application fee (deposit) and levy must be paid to the EPA before lodging a substantive application. Information on cost recovery for substantive applications is available on the EPA fast-track website [Fast-track](#)