

16 September 2022



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 27 July 2022 in which you asked:

“I refer to a memo dated 10/9/20, released under OIAD-1803. It mentions: the Greg Lind review of the Antipodean Albatross field work 19/20; the Drew Coleman¹ review of the 19/20 subantarctic season; and the subantarctic research strategy². Please provide copies of each of these. Also, the NZ sea lion threat management plan 2017 will reach the end of its first five-year period this year. Regarding work for the next period, presumably five years or a different period, please provide the relevant material (perhaps from a task assignment), including meeting minutes, briefings, and notes, spanning the last 12 months. This material might relate to, but not be limited to, goals/aims/monitoring expectations for the next period of the TMP, but also look back at what’s been achieved since 2017.”

On 10 August 2022 we extended the timeframe to respond to your request to 9 September 2022 due to the consultation necessary to complete the request.

To structure a response to your request, I have laid it out as four parts listed below. Each of these are addressed in the accompanying table and where required, additional context is also provided below.

1. Greg Lind review of the Antipodean Albatross field work 19/20

This document is withheld in full under 18(a) of the Official Information Act, by virtue of section 9(2)(f)(iv) as this report is under the active consideration of the DOC Senior Leadership Team.

¹ Drew Coleman was task assigned to undertake this review on behalf of the Business Assurance Director. It has incorrectly been referred to in the past as the Drew Coleman review. However, it is more appropriately, a Business Assurance Review.

² You’ve referred to this as the subantarctic research strategy, but as this has not been completed, the most relevant document that shows progress towards this is the Research Priorities in the Subantarctic Region which is an internal working document for DOC.

2. Business Assurance review of the subantarctic field season 19/20

This document is provided in full. DOC is progressing the implementation of recommendations made in the Business Assurance review to improve effective operations and deliver priority work and research in the subantarctic.

3. Research Priorities in the Subantarctic Region – internal working document

This document is released in full, noting the following context.

A research strategy for the subantarctic islands was published in 2005 (and is available on the DOC website) and the Southland Murihiku Conservation Management Strategy includes policies that refer to this strategy.

A revised subantarctic research strategy is required to better reflect the current context, including changes in environmental pressures and research needs in this region since publication of the first strategy in 2005.

While some progress was made within DOC to begin to identify research needs, a revised research strategy has not been finalised. The intention is to develop the research strategy in tandem with our Treaty Partner. At the time of initiating the review, various constraints mean that DOC and Ngāi Tahu were unable to engage to the extent that both parties desired. In the interim DOC took the opportunity to develop an internal working document of our research priorities to facilitate discussion with our Treaty partner and external research providers to develop an updated research strategy. The research strategy is on hold but will be completed at a time when both DOC and Ngāi Tahu are able. The document also requires further work to align with the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy Te Mana o te Taiao.

4. Material relevant to the review of the NZ sea lion Threat Management Plan

This part of your request is refused under section 18(d) of the Official Information Act as the information that exists on this matter is already publicly available. For more context, the NZ sea lion Threat Management Plan (TMP) has been reviewed annually since its inception during the TMP stakeholder Advisory Group and Forum meetings; minutes from these meetings are available on a publicly accessible ftp server and linked to the DOC webpage at <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/marine-mammals/seals/new-zealand-sea-lion/research-and-fieldwork/>.

The planned review of the TMP has been delayed to allow space for proper engagement with tangata whenua at the outset. The framework for this consultation is being built with support from Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and the Aukaha consultancy, ensuring the next iteration of the TMP has a firm grounding in mātauranga Māori. When a timeline for the review is confirmed, it will be shared along with other documentation as the review progresses on the DOC website.



As noted above I am releasing the following two documents to you.

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	Undated	Business Assurance review of the subantarctic field season 19/20	Released in full
2	Undated	Research priorities in the subantarctic region – interim working document	Released in full

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 Official Information Act.

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

Nāku noa, nā



Kirstie Knowles
Director Aquatic
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai