

17 October 2024

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Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 19 September 2024, in which you asked for more information regarding Zero Invasive Predator's (ZIP) role in working towards Predator Free Rakiura.

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 and note that these are supplementary questions to your original request on 11 September, addressed to [REDACTED], Senior Ranger Biodiversity, Rakiura District Office.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *Does this mean that it has already been decided who shall poison?*

ZIP is leading the implementation stage of the Predator Free Rakiura programme. However, no application has been submitted to DOC for a vertebrate pesticide permission at this stage. This is because the detailed design of the operation is still being worked out.

2. *Where is the local input?*

Consultation is currently taking place with affected parties around aspects of the design and will continue for several months to come. This includes mana whenua, landowners and hunting interests. Other relevant parties will also be contacted during this period.

3. *How can residents and landowners have a say?*

Bookable drop-in sessions took place on 15 and 16 October. Further engagements are being planned for residents and landowners to hear and voice their thoughts about the project. These will be communicated by ZIP and the Te Puka Rakiura Trust shortly.

4. *Who will be establishing a benchmark prior to poisoning?*
5. *How will this be done?*
6. *Can you describe how and when monitoring will be done? Also, who will do it?*

ZIP is responsible for monitoring the relative abundance of target predators prior to predator control being undertaken. The exact methods will be made available online soon. DOC is currently developing an outcome monitoring programme for native species.

7. *The Department of Conservation has accepted up to 30% of monitored Kea, what does the Department estimate the loss of Kākā, a very similar bird to Kea?*

As part of planning for initial predator removal operations, ZIP will take steps to understand and minimise the risk to native birds. ZIP has experience in developing approaches to minimise risks for native species through their operations, including at Predator Free South Westland. You can read more about ZIP's work to protect kea through aerial 1080 operations here: <https://zip.org.nz/helpingkeathrive>

DOC has studied the effects of predator control using aerial 1080 on South Island kākā. Scientists monitored kākā nests in breeding seasons from 2010 to 2015 after aerial 1080 treatment and in an area where 1080 had never been used. Results showed that adult birds had a much higher survival rate in the area where predators were controlled with 1080. You can read more about DOC's research on the impact of aerial 1080 on kākā here: [South Island Kākā Monitoring following 1080 use](#)

8. *As cats appear to be a major problem on the Island, can you explain how they will be killed?*

Feral cats are a significant predator and are therefore one of the target species. Cat specific baits are being developed by DOC at present. ZIP's work in South Westland has shown that secondary poisoning (e.g., where poisoned rats are eaten by predators) is an effective tool to eliminate carnivorous predators like stoats. Trials on Rakiura (using 1080 in bait bags for possums) and elsewhere have shown that secondary poisoning can be an effective tool for removing feral cats.

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