

1 April 2025

Tēnā koe

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 04 March 2025, in which you asked for:

*“detailed information regarding the number of female or women wild animal hunters/cullers/control officers and field staff employed or engaged by Department of Conservation to kill wild animals (i.e. deer, tahr, chamois, pigs and goats), including those engaged through contractors and subcontractors, within New Zealand.”*

*“For clarity, this request pertains only to field-based staff actively engaged in operational wild animal management activities (e.g., hunting, trapping, monitoring, or pest control in the field) and explicitly excludes office-based or administrative staff. If certain data is unavailable or held by another government agency (e.g., Ministry for Primary Industries, regional councils, or others), please advise me of this and, where possible, redirect my request to the appropriate entity under section 14 of the OIA.”*

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

In order to respond to your request, we have undertaken a search of our employee information in our Payroll system as at 28 February 2025, and as at 31 December 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 for any staff in roles with a role title relevant to wild animal control, e.g. deer and goat aerial culler.

As of 28 February 2025, our most recent reporting date, the Department does not employ any female staff solely for the purpose of wild animal management. However, there are staff in more generic roles such as Rangers, for whom this work is a (sometimes significant) part of their job. Before being permitted to undertake either ground or aerial hunting work, all DOC staff must undertake an internal competencies process and we have used that data to provide information about female DOC staff who may undertake wild animal control work as a part of their role.

For the delivery of wild animal control work through contractors, the Department has a panel of suppliers who meet the criteria to be included in the Wild Animal Ground Control National Panel.

The scope of the Wild Animal Ground Control National Panel is for the control of deer, chamois, tahr, pigs, rabbits, goats, possum and wallaby using hunting techniques, primarily shooting with or without dogs, either during daylight or darkness, using tools to hunt at night including but not limited to thermal aids, spotlighting, night vision. It also includes trapping techniques for the following listed species - deer, goats, tahr, chamois and pigs.

This Wild Animal Ground Control National Panel does not cover the ground control of small mammals (rabbits, possums and wallabies) using poisoning, leg-hold trapping, kill trapping and small mammal cage traps.

The Department also contracts aerial control work as part of its management activities and these operators must be members of the Department's National Helicopter Panel.

We have used this information to complete the answers to your questions and our responses listed below.

**1) Total Number of Female Field Staff:**

- a) *The total number of female or women wild animal hunters and field staff directly employed to shoot wild animals by your wild animals team as of the most recent data available (e.g., as of 31 December 2024 or the latest practicable date).*
- b) *A breakdown of these staff by specific roles (e.g., hunters, trappers, pest control operatives, field technicians, or other operational fieldwork roles related to wild animal management).*
- c) *A breakdown by region or operational area within New Zealand, if applicable.*

Please see Appendix 1 for answer to Question 1 - a, b and c.

**2) Contractors and Subcontractors:**

- a) *The total number of female or women wild animal hunters and field staff engaged through contractors or subcontractors working on behalf of DOC as of the most recent data available.*
- b) *A list of all contractors and subcontractors currently engaged by DOC for wild animal management or pest control fieldwork, including the number of female field staff each contractor/subcontractor employs or engages for these purposes.*
- c) *A breakdown of these female contractor/subcontractor staff by role (e.g., hunters, pest control operatives, etc.) and by region, if available*

A list of contractors and subcontractors currently engaged by DOC for wild animal management fieldwork is provided in Appendix 2.

The Department does not require members of either the Helicopter or Ground control panel to submit staffing details for their employees/sub-contractors. As this information is not readily

available to us, and it is not possible to obtain it without substantial collation or research, the specifics of this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(f).

**3) Scope of Wild Animal Management:**

- a) *A clear definition or list of the wild animal species targeted by DOC's field staff, contractors, and subcontractors (e.g., possums, deer, goats, pigs, rabbits, etc.), to contextualise the roles included in this request.*
- b) *Confirmation of whether the data provided includes staff involved in both eradication/control programs and recreational or commercial hunting activities overseen or funded by DOC.*

A definition for the Wild Animal Ground Control National Panel has been provided in the context section above and applies for both eradication and control programmes. Recreational and commercial hunting are outside the scope of the Panel.

**4) Historical Data:**

- a) *The number of female wild animal hunters and field staff (both directly employed and via contractors/subcontractors) for each of the past five years (e.g., 2020–2024), to identify any trends or changes over time.*
- b) *Any notes or explanations for significant fluctuations in these numbers, if applicable.*

As at 31 December 2023, the Department employed one female staff member as a deer and goat aerial culler, but there were no female staff employed in such roles for the other dates covered by your request (31 December 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021).

In terms of historical data from staff competency information (to capture staff who are in more generic ranger-type roles and may undertake wild animal control as part of their role), the information we hold is limited and we are unable to provide information as at a particular date.

In relation to the information held by contractors and subcontractors, we refer you to our response to your Question 2.

**5) Demographic and Employment Details:**

- a) Where available, a breakdown of the female field staff by age group (e.g., 18–25, 26–35, 36–45, 46–55, 56+).
- b) Whether these female staff are employed on a full-time, part-time, casual, or seasonal basis.
- c) Any information on training or qualifications specifically required for female staff in these field roles (e.g., firearms licenses, pest control certifications).

Please see Appendix 1 for answer to part a and b of your question.

A firearms licence is required for all staff to obtain DOC internal competencies for ground or aerial hunting, along with internal training and assessment processes – there are no requirements specific to female staff.

**6) Gender Equity and Recruitment:**

- a) *Any policies, initiatives, or programs DOC has in place to encourage or support the recruitment, retention, or advancement of female wild animal hunters and field staff.*
- b) *Any data or reports on the gender balance within field-based wild animal management roles, including comparisons between male and female participation rates.*

The Department does not have specific programs regarding the recruitment, retention, or advancement of female wild animal hunters and field staff, or reports on gender balance within field-based wild animal management roles. Therefore, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(d), as any document/s that contain the information requested do not exist. DOC's wider programmes relating to closing gender and ethnic pay gaps can be found on our website<sup>1</sup>.

**7) Funding and Allocation:**

- a) *The proportion of DOC's budget allocated to field-based wild animal management activities that involve female staff, contractors, or subcontractors, if this data can be isolated.*
- b) *Any specific funding streams or projects that exclusively or predominantly employ female field staff for wild animal hunting or management.*

The Department does not isolate the budget allocated to field-based wild animal management activities that involve female staff, nor record specific funding streams that predominantly employ female field staff. Therefore, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(g), as the information requested is not held.

**8) Additional Context:**

- a) *Any reports, studies, or internal documents held DOC that discuss the role of women in wild animal hunting, pest control, or field operations, including challenges, successes, or barriers to participation.*
- b) *Any statistics or commentary on the proportion of female field staff relative to the total field workforce in wild animal management.*

There are no such documents or statistics held by the Department. Therefore, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(e).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/corporate-publications/gender-maori-and-ethnic-pay-gap-action-plan/>

**9) Lastly, if you do not have any females in such roles, why not?**

DOC does not currently employ any female staff that undertake wild animal hunting, as shown in our response to your Question 1.

You have asked that if certain data is unavailable or held by another government agency (e.g., Ministry for Primary Industries, regional councils, or others), that we should redirect your request to the appropriate entity under section 14 of the OIA. The Department is not aware of any other Government agencies which may hold the information you seek for redirection of this request.

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) may be published on the Department's website.

If you would like to discuss this response with us, please contact Mike Perry, Wild Animals Manager by email to [mperry@doc.govt.nz](mailto:mperry@doc.govt.nz)

Nāku noa, nā



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

**Appendix 1- Female DOC staff who hold either a Ground or Aerial Hunting Competency as at 14 March 2025.**

Relevant to your Questions 1 and 5, this table includes the female staff who (as at 14 March 2025) hold either a Ground or Aerial Hunting Competency, and therefore are employed to shoot wild animals as part of their role. It also includes a breakdown of these staff by their role title and physical location, as well as their employment category and age group.

Position title	Employment category	Physical Location	Age group
<b>Ranger Biodiversity Monitoring</b>	Fixed Term	Invercargill	20 - 29
<b>Ranger</b>	Casual Employee	Rangiora	30 - 39
<b>Ranger</b>	Permanent Employee	Mahaanui	30 - 39
<b>Ranger Biodiversity</b>	Permanent Employee	Queenstown	30 - 39
<b>Ranger Biodiversity</b>	Permanent Employee	Picton	30 - 39
<b>Ranger Biodiversity</b>	Permanent Employee	Te Anau	30 - 39
<b>Ranger Biodiversity</b>	Permanent Employee	Twizel	40 - 49
<b>Ranger Biodiversity</b>	Fixed Term	Rangiora	40 - 49
<b>Ranger Community</b>	Permanent Employee	Great Barrier Island	50 - 59

## ***Appendix 2- Members of the Wild Animal Ground Control National Panel***

There are 57 Contractors who are members of the Wild Animal Ground Control National Panel. These are listed below however six individuals were trading under their personal names and these have been withheld under section 9(2)(a) – to protect the confidentiality of the individuals.

Watershed Shoot Predator Free  
Bushcraft Contracting Limited  
Rugged Country Contracting Limited  
Mainland Vector Contracting Ltd.  
Trap and Trigger Limited  
On Target Hunting Limited  
Waipara Hills Helicopter Limited  
Downer New Zealand Limited  
Vector Control Services  
Wai Ora River Care Limited  
Back Country Contracting Limited  
Tongariro Contracting Limited  
Mana Tahuna Charitable Trust  
Killshot Contracting  
Taiao ora Contracting Limited  
Summit Contracting Limited  
Silver Bullet Contracting Limited  
Kiwi Field Crew Limited  
Calibre Contracting Limited  
Drabble Pest Control  
Contract Wild Animal Control (NZ) Limited  
Cornerstone Conservation  
Otago Pest Services Limited  
Wild Balance  
Goneoutwest Contracting  
Not Even Limited  
Contract Pro NZ Limited  
Thompson Twins Contracting Limited  
Coast and Country Pest Control Limited  
Drought Limited  
Supplejack Contracting Limited  
Landcare Services Limited  
DOC Livestock Limited  
Hakituri Limited  
Stay Put Limited  
Rentokil Initial Limited T/A High Country Contracting  
Mana Wild Game Solutions Limited

Kahurangi Contracting Limited  
Good Wood Aotearoa Limited  
Longridge Contracting NZ Limited  
Pestmasters NZ  
Feral Goat Control Limited  
Back Country Solutions Limited  
Animal Pest Solutions Limited  
River to Ridge Limited  
Strictly Hunting Limited  
Shoot Trap Poison Limited  
O'Neill Contracting  
The Heading Limited  
Back Country Enterprises  
Wai Wildlife Management Limited