



11 February 2025



Tēnā koe [redacted]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 23 December 2024, in which you asked for information regarding the compliance incident involving a gull colony in Belfast being run over with a bulldozer by the property owner.

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

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *Was this gull colony out Belfast being monitored by doc prior to it being run over with a bulldozer by the property owner?*  
No, DOC was not monitoring the colony on the site where the incident took place. DOC had worked with an adjacent landowner the previous year.
2. *How many nests were compromised by the digger?*  
More than 50 nests.
3. *Is there any video footage of the digger operator driving over the nesting site.*  
There is CCTV footage from a neighbouring building which shows a limited view of a utility vehicle and a digger being driven through a flock of gulls in the background. Nests, eggs and chicks cannot be seen in the footage. A series of screen shots from the CCTV footage has been released to you at the end of this letter. Due to the quality of the footage, some images may appear unclear, but they are provided as an example of what the evidence looks like.
4. *Regarding this incident, did spca contact doc or doc contact spca to address the Animal welfare concerns which are a part of the Animal welfare act?*  
No. DOC investigated breaches of the Wildlife Act 1953. DOC does not administer the Animal Welfare Act.
5. *Why was this Criminal only given a small \$6000 fine for committing such a serious breach of the wildlife act and why was he not put behind bars?*  
That was the Court's decision – it is not appropriate for DOC to comment on Court decisions.



6. *Have the gulls returned to this site to nest this season?*

No, the gull colony has not re-established nests on the site this season.

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

If you would like to discuss this response with us, please contact Mailee Stanbury by email to [mstanbury@doc.govt.nz](mailto:mstanbury@doc.govt.nz).

Nāku noa, nā



**Jo Macpherson**  
Director Regional Operations, Eastern South Island  
Department of Conservation *Te Papa Atawhai*

Encls.



**Supplementary images from CCTV footage**





