

17 February 2025

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[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 20 January 2025, in which you asked for:

I wish to enquire as to why the use of shotguns on DOC land has been so heavily regulated in respect to standard hunting permits available via the DOC website.

- 1. Can you please provide a copies of the advice given as to the reasons why shotguns are not deemed to be suitable for hunting other than gamebird or small game on doc land. These copies should provide the information used by DOC to come to their decision.*
- 2. Given that the hunting permit system is going under review, can DOC also provide any internal communications as to whether or not the de facto ban of shotguns on open area hunting permits will be changed?*
- 3. Can DOC also please provide similar information as to why rimfire rifles are banned for use on animals such as wallaby and goats?*
- 4. Has there been consideration about moving wallaby and goats to a small game permit?*
- 5. Can DOC also confirm whether or not the ability to hunt animals such as deer, goat, and wallaby with shotguns can be obtained via a Restricted Hunting Permits? Have there ever been permits issued for such as purpose? Is there any official policy in relation granting or not granting permits of this nature? If there is official policy to not grant these permits, or conditions on the issuing of these restricted hunting permits, could please outline the details of the conditions, or the reasons as to why DOC does not grant these permits.*
- 6. If not the same as the above documents can you please provide the primary source internal docs that give the reasons as to why DOC adopts these conditions on issuing Restricted Hunting Permits, and/or prohibition on issuing these*

Before responding to your request, I would first like to provide some background information on the Open and Restricted Hunting Permit conditions. These conditions were not developed by DOC, but were inherited from historic government departments (the New Zealand Forest Service, the Park Service, and the Wildlife Service). The drivers for the original settings were

animal welfare, wildlife protection, poaching and compliance. DOC has never reviewed the conditions, as in most cases the rationale is still appropriate.

However, as you are aware DOC is currently reviewing the open area hunting permit system. Once this is complete the next step will be to consider restricted permits and ballots, as well as scoping small game permits and hunting dogs. During that process we will consider whether a review of the standard hunting permit conditions is merited. If we were to undertake a review, we would complete both a wildlife and animal welfare risk assessment, which would likely consider many of the questions you raise.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *Can you please provide a copies of the advice given as to the reasons why shotguns are not deemed to be suitable for hunting other than gamebird or small game on doc land. These copies should provide the information used by DOC to come to their decision.*

As explained above, the policy position on the use of shotguns was inherited rather than developed by DOC, and would have been generated between 1960 and 1980. DOC does not hold any records relating to that process, and I must therefore refuse your request under section 18(g) of the OIA as we do not hold the information you have requested. However, as noted above, the drivers for the original settings were animal welfare, wildlife protection, poaching and compliance.

2. *Given that the hunting permit system is going under review, can DOC also provide any internal communications as to whether or not the de facto ban of shotguns on open area hunting permits will be changed.*

DOC has not made a decision to review its position on shotguns or rimfire rifles; this is not part of the open hunting area permit review. There has been no discussion on whether the condition prohibiting the use of shotguns should be changed, and I must therefore refuse your request under section 18(e) of the OIA as the information does not exist.

3. *Can DOC also please provide similar information as to why rimfire rifles are banned for use on animals such as wallaby and goats?*

As explained above, the policy position on the use of rimfire rifles was inherited rather than developed by DOC. DOC does not hold any records relating to that process, and I must therefore refuse your request under section 18(g) of the OIA as we do not hold the information you have requested. However, as noted above, the drivers for the original settings were animal welfare, wildlife protection, poaching and compliance.

4. *Has there been consideration about moving wallaby and goats to a small game permit?*

There has not been any consideration of moving wallabies and goats to a small game permit, and this is not part of the open hunting area permit review.

5. *Can DOC also confirm whether or not the ability to hunt animals such as deer, goat, and wallaby with shotguns can be obtained via a Restricted Hunting Permits? Have there ever been permits issued for such as purpose? Is there any official policy in relation granting or not granting permits of this nature? If there is official policy to not grant these permits, or conditions on the issuing of these restricted hunting permits, could please outline the details of the conditions, or the reasons as to why DOC does not grant these permits.*

Restricted hunting permits are currently assessed at a Department of Conservation District level on a case-by-case basis, for situations where the area or intended activity involves special circumstances – most commonly to allow hunting in restricted areas. Restricted permits should contain the [standard hunting permit conditions](#), which prohibit the use of shotguns.

A search of DOC's electronic file system shows there are no records of any restricted hunting permits allowing the use of shotguns having been granted, however we cannot be certain that a one-off permit has not been issued by a District office at some point. To confirm this, we would be required to conduct a search of all District office records, which would amount to substantial collation and research. We must therefore refuse this part of your request under section 18(f) of the OIA.

6. *If not the same as the above documents can you please provide the primary source internal docs that give the reasons as to why DOC adopts these conditions on issuing Restricted Hunting Permits, and/or prohibition on issuing these.*


As explained above, restricted hunting permits should contain the standard conditions; I therefore refer you to my response to question one above.

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

Nāku noa, nā



Ben Reddiex
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Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai