



24 October 2025

Whare Kaupapa Atawhai/
Conservation House 18
Manners Street Te Aro,
Wellington

6011
doc.govt.nz

Ref: OIAD-5722

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 1 October 2025, in which you asked for:

*“... what was the cost and how many man hours did it take
to eliminate the nine deer (7 sika and 2 rusa) in the Hauturu, Waikato District?”*

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

The Department of Conservation undertook a targeted operation in the Hauturu area of the Waikato District to eliminate an incursion of sika and rusa deer. These species are managed under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977, which DOC administers. Both sika and rusa deer have gazetted ranges, and their presence outside these areas, particularly in deer-free zones like Hauturu poses significant ecological and biosecurity risks.

Sika deer are among the most challenging introduced deer species to control. Their potential spread from the Taupō region raises serious concerns.

DOC's Policy Statement on Deer Control (2001) supports the prevention of deer range expansion and prioritises the eradication of newly naturalised populations.

Operation Overview

The Hauturu sika and rusa incursion operation aimed to:

- Engage local landowners and farmers to enable access and surveillance.
- Deploy camera and acoustic monitoring across approximately 20,000 hectares.
- Eradicate any sika or rusa deer identified during the operation.

Resources and Results

- Personnel: 14 professional hunters were deployed.
- Effort: A total of 572 hours of surveillance and ground hunting was conducted.
- Cost: The operation incurred a total cost of \$40,458.
- 9 deer removed (7 sika and 2 rusa).
- 5 additional deer (4 sika and 1 rusa) detected via surveillance.
- Other animals removed: 149 goats, 4 fallow deer, and 7 pigs - supporting landowner conditions for access.

The operation was further supported by NZ Carbon Farms, who contributed voluntary efforts within their own blocks, though these were not costed.

The operation was a success in its first year, significantly reducing the presence of sika and rusa deer in the Hauturu area. It demonstrated strong community support and effective cross-agency collaboration, including contributions from Nga Whenua Rāhui, QEII, and NZ Carbon Farms. The

results affirm the value of early intervention and coordinated surveillance in preventing the establishment of invasive deer populations.

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 OIA.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) may be published on DOC's website.



Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben Reddiex".

Ben Reddiex
Director National Programmes
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai