

26 January 2026

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

6011

doc.govt.nz

Ref: OIAD-5948

Tēnā koe

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 12 December 2025, in which you asked for:

“...the information DOC used in making its recent decision to add feral cats to the PF2050 target species list”

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

You outlined six principles of eradication which DOC uses to guide the feasibility of eradication. Please note, these principles are used to determine eradication feasibility at a site-by-site basis and provide a framework which allows DOC to assess eradication potential at an operational level.

The inclusion of feral cats on the Predator Free 2050 target list is a strategic direction-setting step to enable national coordination, investment and research to work towards Predator Free 2050 goals. It is not a declaration that nationwide eradication is feasible everywhere today. Several principles are met or being substantially progressed in defined contexts (e.g., islands and large managed landscapes), while national-scale feasibility continues to be advanced through research and operational programmes.

The Minister’s decision to add feral cats to the Predator Free 2050 target species list was informed by a combination of evidence, ecological risk, and public feedback. Feral cats are identified as a major predator causing significant harm to native birds, bats, lizards and invertebrates, and their inclusion enables national coordination of management and improves access to funding for research and control tools.

The Predator Free 2050 Strategy Review consultation process reinforced this need, with overwhelming public support—over 90% of the 3,398 submissions—calling for feral cats to be included or for stronger, more consistent cat management at a national scale. Submitters, including local government and statutory bodies, highlighted the ecological impacts of unmanaged feral cats, the limitations of fragmented local approaches, and the importance of aligning national policy with scientific advice.

The collective evidence of the strength of public sentiment and the significant biodiversity gains expected from nationally coordinated action on feral cats shaped DOC’s recommendation of inclusion of feral cats as a target species of Predator Free 2050.

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