

Summary of consultation on effects, Pukunui 2025 operation

Dates	Consultation actions	Public documents / information
July-December 2024	Initial discussions around proposal to protect pukunui held with Te Rūnunga o Ngāi Tahu, papatipu rūnaka ō Murihiku, Rakiura Māori Lands Trust, Predator Free Rakiura Engagement and Advisory Group, hunters and hunting representatives and wild catch and marine farming industries.	
January-February 2025	<p>Public hui held in Oban, signalling proposed operation to protect pukunui ahead of 2025 breeding season.</p> <p>Information circulated to the community about the status of the pukunui population.</p> <p>Public hui held in Oban with a panel of 1080 experts from around the country.</p> <p>Further discussions held with a wide range of affected and interested parties both on Rakiura and further afield.</p> <p>Discussions supported by sharing scientific studies on various topics.</p>	<p>The Plight of the Pukunui document</p> <p>Presentations and Q&As from community hui 30-1-25</p> <p>PFR Project Update 10-2-25</p> <p>Presentations and Q&As from community information sessions 17-2-25</p>
March-May 2025	<p>Period of consultation on effects with stakeholders, affected parties, potentially affected parties and interested parties.</p> <p>Factsheets on proposed operations circulated widely to the community through direct email, PO boxes and community noticeboards.</p> <p>Two public hui held in Oban to present and discuss details of the operational proposal.</p> <p>Public drop-in sessions in Oban.</p> <p>Regular emails sent to a wide group of potentially affected parties requesting input on the proposal and sharing additional information emerging from ongoing engagement.</p> <p>Information and updates shared in each edition of the Stewart Island News.</p> <p>Ongoing direct discussions with adjacent landowners, Te Rūnunga o Ngāi Tahu, papatipu rūnaka ō Murihiku, Rakiura Māori Lands Trust, Predator Free Rakiura Engagement and Advisory Group, hunters and hunting</p>	<p>Key facts sheet: consultation on effects</p> <p>Information hub on ZIP website</p> <p>Presentations and Q&As from community hui 25-3-25</p> <p>Community update and event invitation 8-5-25</p> <p>DOC updates in the March + May editions of Stewart Island News</p> <p>Key fact sheet: notification</p>

	representatives, wild catch and marine farming industries, concessionaires and a wide range of the local and extended Rakiura community.	
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Consultation Summary: Operation to Protect Pukunui

Consultation will continue throughout the delivery of this operation. From our initial consultation conversations a wide range of views were expressed:

- Concerns were raised about potential market perception risks for the wild catch and marine farming industries.
- Hunters and tourism operators voiced concerns about potential impacts on Rakiura's valuable white-tailed deer population.
- Some participants questioned potential risks to native species and to human health, leading to additional sharing of peer-reviewed science, the invitation of external experts to hui, and a decision to include kiwi monitoring in the operational plan.
- Some people and community groups expressed opposition to the proposed operation, primarily in relation to the proposed method.
- Many people and community groups expressed support for the protection of Pukunui, most alongside requests that we manage potential effects—such as the use of deer repellent and environmental monitoring (e.g. water sampling for 1080 residues).

Feedback received throughout the consultation period informed several changes to the proposed operation, including:

Hunting blocks will stay open for bookings throughout operations, with appropriate communication with hunting parties and recommendations in place not to consume meat until caution periods are lifted.

Deer repellent will be used within bookable hunting blocks only. This aims to mitigate the impact on white-tailed deer hunting opportunities in areas where hunters are most likely to be. Non-deer repellent bait will be used in the open hunting zone, including across Pukunui breeding grounds.

Deer repellent will also be used in buffer zones around certain higher value hunting blocks, recognising that deer home ranges may extend beyond the hunting blocks.

The deer monitoring areas have moved to the Doughboy Bay area and will be used to understand the impact of a standard predator control operation on white-tailed deer with and without deer repellent. This has changed the location of the 1080 to Zero trial area.

The treatment area boundaries have changed on the eastern side of the original operational area to completely avoid some of the bookable hunting blocks.

Waterways will be tested within the operational area for sodium fluoroacetate. Multiple samples will be taken at two sites from source to confluence to give an accurate representation of entire water catchments. These locations are the South West Arm and Doughboy Creek.

Bait will not be sown directly into the ocean. By using a 'safeline' approach, all bait will be applied above the mean high water springs (MWHS) tidal level to prevent bait from entering the marine coastal environment.

Loading site: The operation will be carried out from a land-based loading site in the Mason Bay area. No bait loading or helicopter refuelling will take place on vessels at sea.

Summary of Risk Disclosures: Operation to Protect Pukunui

Throughout the consultation process, clear and transparent information was shared with the Rakiura community about the potential risks associated with both taking action and doing nothing.

The most serious risk disclosed is the imminent threat of extinction for the pukunui/southern New Zealand dotterel. With fewer than 105 birds remaining, and high levels of predator-related nest failure, the population is declining rapidly. Without urgent intervention to reduce predation pressure during the upcoming breeding season, the species could become extinct. This risk formed the primary basis for proposing the aerial predator control operation.

Risks associated with the use of 1080 bait were also identified and communicated. These include:

- **Potential non-target impacts**, such as accidental poisoning of dogs or native wildlife.
- **Environmental risks**, including concerns about water quality and potential impact on marine and freshwater ecosystems.
- **Reputational risks** raised by the wild catch and marine farming industries, particularly around consumer perception and market access.

These risks were clearly presented as *potential* risks — not inevitable outcomes.

The operation will only proceed because it is subject to extensive regulatory oversight and risk assessment at all levels of planning and delivery. This includes approvals and monitoring by:

- The Department of Conservation (DOC)
- The Ministry of Health (MOH)
- The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)
- WorkSafe New Zealand
- The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)
- Local authorities (Environment Southland, Southland District Council)

These agencies apply robust standards to ensure that all known risks are mitigated through layers of safeguards. As part of this:

- MOH assessed the proposed operation and determined that the risk to public health is low and can be safely managed.
- DOC assessed the proposed operation and determined that the risk to non-target species is low and can be effectively managed.
- Guidance on safe behaviour, including caution periods for hunting was provided in the fact sheet and discussed at community meetings.

These risks and mitigations were shared with the community through fact sheets, hui and drop-in sessions, email updates, articles in the *Stewart Island News*, and via the Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP) and Predator Free Rakiura websites.