



Whare Kaupapa Atawhai/
Conservation House 18
Manners Street Te Aro,
Wellington
6011
doc.govt.nz

Ref: OIAD-5257

24 June 2025

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 23 May 2025, in which you asked:

"In 2018 we know that 75 kg of 1080 was dumped by contractors in Rakiura National Park.

We were told that studies were to be carried out on the effects.

Please can you provide full details of the studies that were carried out.

If not studies were carried out -why not?"

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

The Department of Conservation was made aware that a possum control contractor had partially buried approximately 75kg of unused 0.15% 1080 cereal pellets on 11 July 2018. The burial site was cleaned up the following day, 12 July 2018, by removing and packaging the degraded 1080 pellets for disposal off site through an approved waste management company.

Two rounds of 1080 residue sampling, each consisting of four samples, were taken at the 1080 burial site's immediate surrounds as follows:

- 13 July 2018
 1. WT1 – Toxin burial site – wet mud
 2. WT2 – Surface water puddle – still water
 3. WT3 – Surface water puddle on walking track (Rakeahua to Fred's Camp track)
 4. WT4 – Sample from edge of Rakeahua River.

The initial sampling results are available in toxicology reports from July 2018 which I am sharing with you. Please note that these reports are redacted under section 9(2)(g)(ii) – to protect Ministers, officials, or employees from improper pressure or harassment.

A second round of sampling was completed due to concerns around accidental cross-contamination of samples in the first round. The second sampling round was completed on 19 July 2018 at the same sites, with results available in report T6826. These samples were retrieved to support an assessment of whether a risk to human health or wildlife existed and technical advice was sought.

Expert advice highlighted that there was a technical risk to human health if someone were to drink sufficient amounts of contaminated water from areas where the 1080 concentration was greater than 0.0035mg/L. In both sampling rounds the only area where the 1080 concentration was greater than 0.0035mg/L was at the precise burial site. The chance of someone ingesting water from the burial site was considered very unlikely because the site was off-track, highly localised, and consistency was wet mud (after being dug out during the site clean-up).

The risk to birds was considered negligible, given the infeasibility of birds drinking enough water to risk a lethal effect from the burial site, as well as the highly localised area of increased 1080 concentration. Dogs are known to be very sensitive to 1080 poisoning but are not allowed in the operational area as it is a National Park.

Warning signage was in place. The area was already a publicly notified pesticide operational area.

It is important to note that 1080 burial is a legitimate disposal method provided certain criteria are met. The issue in 2018 was that those criteria were not fully met and more importantly, the contract with DOC specifically excluded that option, requiring all unused toxin to be removed from the site for disposal.

Item	Document description	Decision
1	Toxicology reports from 17 th July 2018	<i>Released in part</i>
2	Toxicology reports from 20 th July 2018	<i>Released in part</i>

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

Nāku noa, nā



Ben Reddiex
Director National Programmes
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai