

Trapping is cost effective

Director General
Department of Conservation
P O Box 10420
Wellington 6143

26 July 2017

Dear Lou Sanson,

We wish to correct a misunderstanding that trapping is not is cost effective.

SUCCESSFUL TRAPPING PROJECTS

Project 1. Trapping without poisons proven to work for kiwi chick survival on the Kuaotunu peninsula. For eight years from 1996—2007 a community group working alongside the Hauraki Conservancy of DOC, ran a successful trapping project on the Kuaotunu peninsula. The project enhanced the kiwi chick survival rate by around 50 percent per annum. This was achieved using trapping without aerial 1080, and without ground poisons. (DOC holds a record of the cost structure for this project.)

Project 2. Possum trapping without poisons proven to work at Harataunga/ Kennedy Bay. During 2000—2002 tangata whenua, funded by Nga Whenua Rahui (DOC), and using their method of choice: trapping with cyanide only, reduced possum numbers in a forest block at Harataunga/ Kennedy Bay to below 5 percent, which is DOC's benchmark. Three trappers being paid a day-rate maintained possum control over around 2000 ha. Possum fur was harvested. (DoC holds a record of the cost structure for this project.)

Project 3. Kuaotunu Environment Action Inc (KEA). From 2008—2013 KEA succeeded in a predator control program on the Kuaotunu peninsula using a trapping maintenance regime with cyanide. The KEA trapping project got support from DOC in 2007 – 2008 when John Gaugrodger was managing the Hauraki area office. In 2009 he wrote, "Re Kuaotunu Environmental Action Group. The Department of Conservation, Hauraki area, recommends this initiative as having both a regional and national benefit."

COSTS OF TRAPPING V AERIAL 1080

Three costing exercises by Department of Conservation in 1995, Hudson in

2004, and an audit for Cabinet in 2010 independently demonstrate that trapping is cheaper than aerial operations.

- ☒ In 1995 Department of Conservation concluded that the average cost per hectare for aerial 1080 control was \$22.86, whereas for ground-base control was \$9.94/ha (in 1993 dollars). Aerial cost was more than double. The kill rates were comparable.
- ☒ In 2004 Hudson calculated the cost of the Hokonui aerial 1080 drop at \$56.40/ha, compared with a quote from hunters and trappers of \$16/ha for ground-based predator control. The cost at \$56.40/ha did not include the costs of helicopter hours, stand-by helicopter, digger and 2 graders to upgrade road, freight on baits, 24 hour security patrol, Insurance, resource consents hearing, administration by three bodies, consultation meetings and hui with locals (Hokonui Aerial Costs, below).
- ☒ In 2010 an audit of Animal Health Board for Cabinet, costed aerial 1080 at around \$57/ha (Bovine Tb Strategy Review of Costs, July 2010, Table 3.4, p.21) of which \$35/ha was control + survey (p.22).

An estimate by Manu Waiata of all costs involved in the Moehau aerial 1080 operation in June 2013 (landing construction, helicopter contract, baits, transport, police time, DOC staff time, public notification and liaison, monitoring, applications, post operational reports), suggests a cost of \$70-\$80 per ha for aerial predator control.

In 2016 a survey commissioned by DOC found that 34% of New Zealanders support aerial 1080, 89% support hunting, and 90% support trapping as the preferred method of pest control. (IPSOS, Survey of New Zealanders, 2016, p. 8). Aerial 1080 carries an unknown cost of public disaffection with DOC policy.

SOCIAL LICENCE

We ask DOC to adopt these two policies in its relationship with Coromandel communities:

"Where communities have demonstrated opposition to the use of aerial poisoning operations, DOC will support trapping and hunting."

"Where bee keepers, practioners of rongoa Maori, and pig hunters use native forests, DOC will support trapping without poisons."

Yours faithfully,

Wendy Pond, Secretary
Manu Waiata Restoration & Protection Society
2225 Wyuna Bay R D 1

Coromandel 3581. Ph 07 866 8581

Hokonui Aerial Costs (provided by AHB) for 1080 drop 23rd & 24th July 2004

“The cost per hectare for helicopter services = \$10.00 /ha per application”

“The cost of RS 5 feed bait per kilogram = \$ 1.56 per kilo”

“The cost of RS 5 toxic bait per kilogram = \$ 2.16 per kilo”

The quantity of bait to the hectare (according to the Conditions Schedule) was to be 5 kilos/ha.

Feed bait (x 2 applications) = \$ 1.56 x 2 (\$3.12) x 5 = \$15.60 per hectare

Toxic bait (1 application) = \$ 2.16 x 5 = \$10.80 \$10.80 per hectare

Helicopter/ha per application (x 3 applications) = \$10.00 x 3 = \$30.00 \$30.00 per hectare

Total = \$56.40 per

hectare

The above costs exclude the following added costs, all part of the operation but not included by AHB. There could have been other costs not included in this list.

Excludes: Target Pest Contracting (sub-contracted by Environment Southland to organise the drop)

Helicopter hours (monitoring, dropping men off to check for baits outside the drop zone)
(Environment Southland personnel to oversee operation)
(Helicopter tour of Hokonuis prior to operation taking place etc)

Spare Helicopter (On ‘stand-by’ at site in case of sabotage of helicopters by protesters)

‘Hi-Mac’ Digger (To upgrade road to site for helicopter landings)

2 x Graders (To upgrade road & tow freight trucks to site with containers of baits)
(Spreading gravel to upgrade road)

Freight (From factory to Winton for pre-feed and toxic baits)

Freight (From Winton Depot to sites at Wilson Road and Dunsdale)

‘Securitas’ Firm (Days and nights on patrol on sites at Wilson Road and Dunsdale)

Public Liability (Insurance for entire operation)

Resource Consent (Hearing costs, as well as cost of Independent Commissioner for day)

Administration (Environment Southland/Animal Health Board/Dept. of Conservation)

Consultation (Pre-hearing at Environment Southland, several Hui with Iwi & scientists)
(Numerous woolshed meetings with affected farmers and local people)

The report title is: “Overcoming Possum Control Problems in the Hokonui Hills” Project No: R-10573 (LC0203/107) and cost \$77,738.00, prepared and paid for by AHB. Date: August 2003

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To gain the Consent for the aerial drop the AHB relied on the findings of a Landcare Research experiment carried out in the Hokonui Hills prior to the Hearing. This was to prove the Hokonui possums were not “bait-shy” as claimed by the ground operators and local community. The report title is: “Overcoming Possum Control Problems in the Hokonui Hills” Project No: R-10573 (LC0203/107) and cost \$77,738.00, prepared and paid for by AHB. Date: August 2003

On examination of the scientific report, it can be seen that the experiment was fundamentally flawed as there was no toxin in the baits which were fed out in an attempt to prove the possums were not bait-shy. The feed baits instead contained rhodamine dye, which was able to be seen on the possums after they had been trapped and killed by a local possum contractor. The experiment only proved that the Hokonui possums would eat feed baits containing dye – there was no proof of them dying from toxic baits in the bush.

Discussions with a local possum contractor who was prepared to control possums by a ground operation instead of an aerial 1080 drop provided a firm quote of \$16.00 per hectare. This offer was ignored by the authorities and the much more costly aerial took place.

Manu Waiata Restoration & Protection Society
2225 Wyuna Bay Road, Coromandel 3581