



19-E-0160  
docCM: 5912678

29 April 2019

GT Potaka  
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Dear GT Potaka

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation, dated 10 March 2019.

On 26 March 2019 we extended your request to 19 April 2019 due to the consultation necessary.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *What is the current legal status of the Wild Kaimanawa Horse Herd?*

This horse herd has no legal protection. Protection was removed in 1996 to facilitate management of the herd around the Department of Conservation's principal concern over the physical impacts of the horses on the area's unique assemblage of threatened plants and habitats.

2. *If the Kaimanawa Wild Horse herd has no legal protection any more are they able to be hunted on DOC lands?*

Yes, on the condition that hunters hold a DOC hunting permit. However, the department is not currently aware of any of these horses within Kaimanawa Forest Park.

3. *What happened to the 37 horses (30 adults and 7 juveniles) documented in the Northern Zone 2017 count?*

These horses were discussed with the Kaimanawa Wild Horse Advisory Group (KWHAG). As these horses were in the total control zones where even a single horse will impact on ecological values or posed a safety concern to SH1 the decision was made to remove these horses.

4. *Were these shot? If so was this carried out by DOC staff or were private contractors engaged?*

Yes, a total of 22 horses were euthanised. DOC staff aerially surveyed the bands of horses to be controlled first and then the control operation was undertaken by an approved aerial operator under the supervision of an equine veterinarian. The other horses had moved onto private land prior to the operation.

5. *How many horses from the Kaimanawa herd were shot with DOC knowledge or consent in - a) 2015, b) 2016, c) 2017 d) 2018*

Other than the aerial control operation mentioned above, the number of horses and reason for euthanising are broken down by year:

- 2015 Nil
- 2016 1 x injured horse
- 2017 1 x broken leg, 1 x hit by motorbike, 9 x Safety issue State Highway 1
- 2018 1 x starving, April/June musters x 7 unfit for rehoming due to injuries.

6. *When was the latest Kaimanawa Wild Horse "count" carried out and what was the official number recorded a) In Northern Zones and b) in Southern Zones?*

The last count was performed on 11 and 12 February 2019. The count information is below:

- Horse count blocks 304 Adults, 70 Juveniles – a total 374 horses
- Northern Zones 8 horses total. (These were found in the area where horses were surveyed but not controlled in the previous aerial control operation. These would not be targeted as a one-off operation unless there were other horse bands to control at the same time).

7. *Which specific areas or zones are the 16 plant species listed as endangered found? (I request a map with detailed distribution of the affected plants)*

Please see attached maps.

8. *What documented detrimental effects have other introduced animals (Hares, Pigs, Deer) had on the endangered plant species and what interventions have been employed to mitigate or eliminate these effects.*

As this is NZ Defence Land, the Department does not monitor the detrimental effects of other introduced animals on the endangered plant species. The department has an agreement with NZ Defence to support the Horse monitoring and muster. Other work to preserve the endangered plant species is led by NZ Defence.

The Department is aware NZ Defence undertake the following work:

- Control of hare numbers by aerial shooting;
- Reduction of deer numbers to low levels by allowing recreational hunting.

9. *What studies and counts have been undertaken of deer and pigs in the same areas as the Kaimanawa Wild Horses and the effects on the endangered plant species? Please give numbers and dates.*

The department has not undertaken any studies or counts and is not aware of any studies or counts undertaken by other parties.

10. *Why are the annual counts not made public and why is the Kaimanawa Wild Horse Management Plan not up to date?*

Annual counts are made public via media releases post surveys. This is what rehoming groups use as a basis for rehoming. The 1995 Kaimanawa Wild Horse Management Plan (KWHMP) has not been superseded. An operational plan has been developed to support the KWHMP which focuses on managing the herd at a sustainable level which minimises the impact on the protected areas.

The current working plan can be found <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/science-publications/conservation-publications/threats-and-impacts/animal-pests/kaimanawa-wild-horses-working-plan-2012-2017/introduction/>

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Damian Coutts', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Damian Coutts, Director Operations  
Central North Island Region