

Jodie Bruning
jodie@bruning.net.nz

Ngāmotu / New Plymouth Office
55A Rimu Street
New Plymouth 4312
doc.govt.nz
Ref: OIAD-9589

14 September 2026

Tēnā koe Jodie

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 18 August 2026, in which you asked for information relating to the Department's programme to vaccinate native birds to help protect them when H5 bird flu arrives in New Zealand, including the vaccine trial.

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

The Department of Conservation's H5 bird flu vaccination trial tested the safety and efficacy of the vaccine in five native bird species. None of the birds have shown any adverse reaction to the vaccine and all five species showed a strong initial antibody response to vaccination. Four of the species had a response which lasted for at least 6 months in most individuals, however in kakī the levels dropped at 3 months. These results show that the vaccine is effective and safe, and the vaccine could be a useful tool to help protect some threatened species from H5 bird flu in New Zealand.

For further information on the Department's H5 bird flu vaccine trial and vaccination programme, please review the regularly updated information on our Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza response webpage at: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/wildlife-health/avian-influenza/#vaccine>. This includes vaccination trial work (The vaccination trial report is available at: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/our-work/wildlife-health/h5-avian-influenza-vaccine-trial-report.pdf>), the assessment of threatened species for inclusion in the H5 bird flu vaccination programme and the vaccination programme itself. This page also contains links to additional resources that are relevant to your areas of enquiry and provides answers to aspects of your questions.

Information regarding parts 3 and 4 of your request are held by MPI. I am aware you have made a similar request to MPI for this information. Under ordinary circumstances we would transfer these aspects of your request. However, as you have already raised these matters directly with MPI, we do not consider a transfer to be necessary in this instance.

We are satisfied that the remaining information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research, and that responding to the combined request would require an unreasonable diversion of the agency's resources from its other operations. We have therefore decided to refuse the request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decisions by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) may be published on the Department's website.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Tim Bamford
Director Terrestrial Biodiversity
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai