

4 October 2024

s9(2)(a)

REF: OIA-16384

Dear s9(2)(a)

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 3 September 2024 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). I will respond to each part of your request in turn as follows:

I am doing a research project on animal crossings. One part of this is to widely explore the impact of roads on animals. I was hoping you could tell me some more about the main issues that relate to the impacts of roads on animals.

Information regarding the impacts of roads on ecosystems is available on our and other websites as follows:

- *Research Report 692 Road edge-effects on ecosystems* can be downloaded by scrolling to the bottom of the webpage at:
<https://nzta.govt.nz/resources/research/reports/692>
- Ecological resources and the effects of state highways, including research reports and other resources, is available at:
<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/about-us/about-nz-transport-agency-waka-kotahi/environmental-and-social-responsibility/protecting-the-natural-environment/ecological-resources/>
- A publication on the ecological effects of new roads is available on the Department of Conservation's website at:
<https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/science-and-technical/sfc084.pdf>
- While not related to New Zealand, a *Smithsonian Magazine* article regarding animals crossing roads may be of interest and is available on its website at:
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/what-happens-when-animals-cross-road-roadkill-crossings-180984176/>

I also need to gather information and statistics about road related animal deaths.

NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) does not hold information regarding other road-related animal deaths, as we do not record information on the injury outcome to animals involved in traffic incidents. I am therefore required to refuse this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

However, to provide reasonable assistance, statistics on crashes where an animal is identified as being involved is outlined in the following document:

- Attachment 1 – Data regarding road-related animal deaths 2014-2024 – 23 Sept 2024 (*spreadsheet*).

The data in this spreadsheet should be considered in conjunction with the caveats provided on the first tab of the spreadsheet.

NZTA also manages fur seal incidents along State Highway 1 (SH1), Kaikoura. A fur seal incident is when NZTA staff need to remove a fur seal (alive or dead) from the road. Information about this is outlined in a scientific paper titled *Post-earthquake highway reconstruction: Impacts and mitigation opportunities for New Zealand pinniped population*, which is available on ScienceDirect's website at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0964569123003769>

And if you are doing anything to prevent or drop roadkill rates in NZ-if not I think it would be a good idea!!

There are barriers and fences along many stretches of roads in New Zealand to keep animals safe from vehicles. A media release regarding the installation of barriers to protect fur seal pups in Kaikōura is available on our website at:

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/media-releases/fur-seal-pups-and-motorcyclists-benefit-from-more-guardrail-in-kaikoura/>

Information regarding a fence to protect penguins on the West Coast of the South Island is available on the West Coast Penguin Trust's website at:

<https://www.westcoastpenguintrust.org.nz/projects/pahautane-penguin-fence/>

With regard to animal welfare, motorists are required to slow down and not sound their horns when approaching stock on rural roads (for instance, when a farmer is moving a herd of sheep between paddocks). Motorists are also required to show consideration if encountering riders of horses alongside roads. This information is available on the following Road Code webpages:

- <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roadcode/heavy-vehicle-road-code/road-code/about-driver-responsibility/responsible-driving/>
- <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roadcode/general-road-code/about-other-road-users/sharing-the-road/sharing-the-road-with-horse-riders/>

At the same time, horse riders are required to ensure the safety of themselves and their horses while riding alongside roads. Information for horse riders is also available on our website at:

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roadcode/general-road-code/about-other-road-users/information-for-other-road-users/information-for-horse-riders/>

Also could you advise me of any animal crossings designed or built in New Zealand.

Various wildlife passes have been incorporated into road design to help animals get around without crossing roads. The Northern Gateway (SH1), between Orewa and Puhoi, has an eco-viaduct to protect native birds and other wildlife.

Other information regarding shared and off-road paths, including horse riders, is available on our website at:

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roads-and-rail/traffic-control-devices-manual/part-5-traffic-control-devices-for-general-use-between-intersections/cycling-facilities/shared-paths-and-off-road-paths/>

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to refuse part of this request. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

In line with NZTA policy, this response will soon be published on our website, with personal information removed.

If you would like to discuss this reply with NZTA, please contact us by email to official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Vanessa Browne
National Manager, Portfolio and Standards