

14 September 2018

Peter Wilson
Federated Mountain Clubs

Dear Peter and Jan

Proposal for Reducing Tahr Population

Thank you for your organisation's participation in the Tahr Liaison Group meeting on 29 August 2018.

As you are aware, the increased population of Himalayan tahr is causing concern for the health of the indigenous vegetation of the alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems.

The purpose of the meeting was to seek the group's input on a proposed approach as to how stakeholders and the Department of Conservation can work together to address that concern, by bringing tahr numbers down to within limits set in the Himalayan Tahr Control Plan 1993 (HTCP).

Following the meeting, an amended approach that takes into account matters raised by stakeholders was discussed with the Director General of Conservation.

In recognition of stakeholders' commitment to assist achieving the targeted reduction in tahr numbers on public conservation land, the Director General agreed that we follow the amended approach.

Proposal to the Tahr Liaison Group

The amended approach and proposal to stakeholders involves:

- **NZDA, Safari Club International and Game Animal Council** work together with their members to remove at least 2,500+ tahr from public conservation land and provide evidence and data
- **WARO operators** to remove 3,000 tahr from public conservation land and provide evidence and data
- **AATH operators** to remove 1,500 tahr from public conservation land using offsets and provide evidence and data
- **Professional Hunting Guides** to remove 500 tahr from public conservation land and provide evidence and data

Control by the Department

Over the same period, the Department will remove 10,000 animals (excluding Westland/Tai Poutini and Aoraki Mt Cook National Parks) from above 305 meters (1,000 feet) before the breeding starts mid November 2018 from Management Units 1 (Rakaia-Rangitata) and Unit 3 (Gammack-Two Thumb). More specifically:

- The 10,000 animals DOC will remove, will be made up of 3,000 male tahr and 7,000 “other” tahr which will be a mix of nannies, juveniles and kids (excluding animals removed from the Westland/Tai Poutini and Aoraki Mt Cook National Parks)
- DOC control operations will target highest density areas in MU 1 & MU 3 as per the tactical plan before the breeding season starts in mid November 2018
- DOC will not undertake control operations in any management units between the 15th of November 2018 and 15th of January 2019. DOC will undertake control operations in the Northern and Southern exclusion zones and risk zones over this period and all tahr will targeted in these zones
- DOC will resume aerial control operations after 15th January 2019 as per the tactical plan if they have not achieved their target of 10,000 animals (excluding animals removed from the Westland/Tai Poutini and Aoraki Mt Cook National Parks)
- All tahr will be targeted in the Westland/Tai Poutini and Aoraki Mt Cook National Parks as per the 1993 plan.
- DOC will stop control operations in the Wilderness Areas by the 30th of March 2019.

We are planning to commence this control work before 30 September 2018.

Review in April 2019

While we are keen to see the tahr reduction target achieved through the approach outlined above, the department is committed to having the overall target achieved, whether or not stakeholders are successful with their contributions.

The contribution from recreational hunting groups (NZDA, TIG, SCI and GAC) is expected to result in the removal of at least 2500 tahr from public conservation land.

During April 2019, the department will assess the data provided by stakeholders and undertake whatever further control operations we consider necessary to take out any shortfall of animals not achieved. That is, if by the 1st of May 2019 the 2500 target has not been reached by recreational groups, the department will remove the shortfall.

Tahr cull information

To monitor our overall progress toward the tahr reduction target, the department will need cull information from participating stakeholders.

We are asking that you work together to provide monthly cull figures from each group that has a target as set out earlier, and that you provide the information by the first Friday of each month (an email address will be forwarded to you shortly).

The information will need to include the GPS location for each animal removed from public conservation land. It will not need to include what the split of ‘male’ and ‘other’ tahr concerned.

Monthly updates of progress will be posted on the DOC website.

Once the tahr population has been brought back down within the limits of the HTCP, the department will work with stakeholders to set a future level of control per year (and how to achieve it), so the population does not exceed the HTCP limits

I would appreciate your feed back on this amended approach and whether or not your organisation will participate in it.

Yours sincerely



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cc – Jan Finlayson – jan.finlayson@fmc.org.nz