

11 August 2021

Anna Goodwin

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Tēnā koe Anna

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation, received on 16 July 2021 in which you asked for:

A summary of the results of any research conducted by DOC or its affiliated stakeholders related to any tagging initiatives or other research conducted by DOC to address the survival and outcomes of whales which are refloated after mass stranding events in New Zealand.

It is standard practice within the Department to photograph or document physical features of a whale or dolphin following a refloating attempt. This provides a means to track whether the animal re-strands or is sighted alive, or dead, later. It is, of course, an imperfect system but given that strandings can occur anywhere around New Zealand at any time, the approach offers a pragmatic method to assess the effectiveness of a stranding response.

To date there has not been any tagging initiatives to investigate the survival of stranded whales. The Department is working with Massey University on several projects related to animal welfare at whale strandings via the Cetacean Ecology Research Group. I understand you have been in contact with the appropriate people at Massey University over this work.

If you wish to discuss this with the Department, please contact Ian Angus, Manager Marine Species at iangus@doc.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



Elizabeth Heeg
Acting Director Aquatic
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai