

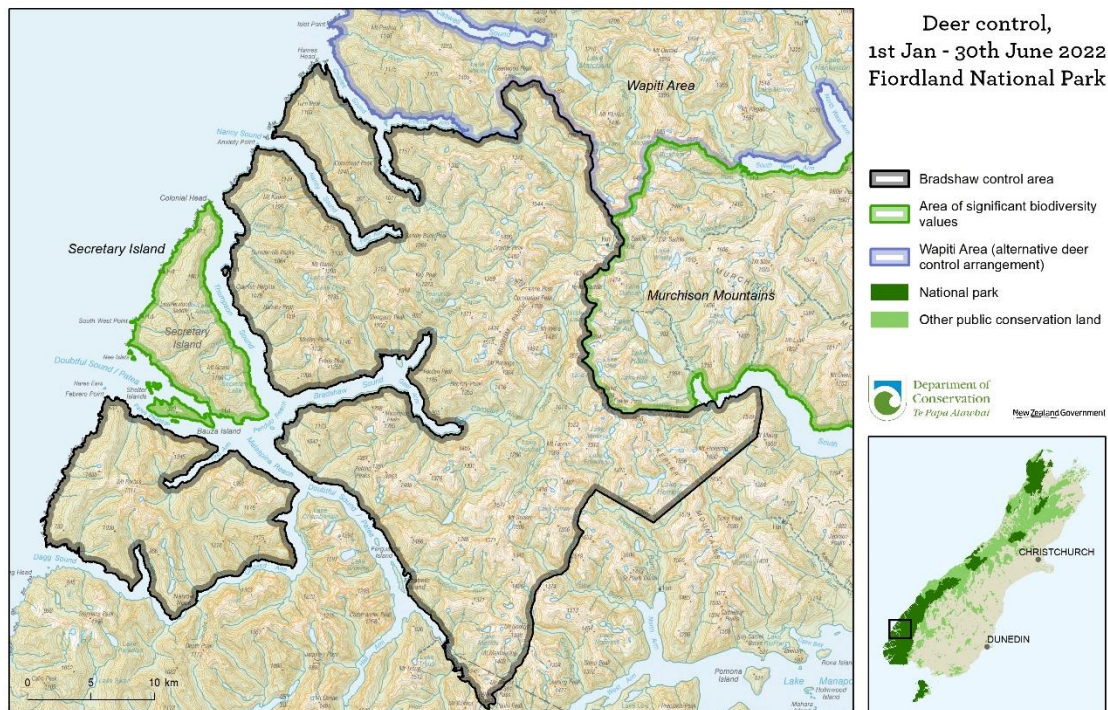
## Media Statement

12 August 2022

### Successful deer management in Fiordland

A jointly-developed management project has successfully removed 432 female deer from Fiordland National Park.

The project, which was implemented by the Department of Conservation, with input from the Game Animal Council (GAC) and Fiordland Wapiti Foundation (FWF), removed the female deer (hinds) from sensitive conservation areas in western Fiordland around Kaikiekie/Bradshaw Sound.



"Begun in February 2022, the operation protected sensitive alpine vegetation and reduced the likelihood of deer incursions into the Murchison Mountains and Secretary Island during a downturn in commercial helicopter hunting," DOC Technical Advisor George Ledgard says.

The DOC-led management operation was additional to commercial helicopter hunting during the 2021-22 season, which had removed 319 deer (male and female) from the management area.

"This means we exceeded what our monitoring data indicated would be required as a minimum to reduce impacts on sensitive alpine species, making the whole project a resounding success from an operational point of view," George Ledgard says.

"The operation also let us know more about the effectiveness of this type of selective management."



Game Animal Council General Manager Tim Gale says that the operation specifically targeted hinds because, as the breeding animals, they have by far the biggest impact on the future population and in this area are less likely to be harvested by hunters.

"This project is another example of positive collaboration between the hunting sector and DOC when it comes to game animal management," Tim Gale says.

"Well-designed management like this, applied in areas highly valued by hunters, can achieve fewer but better-quality animals in an improved ecosystem which is a better outcome for all."

According to Fiordland Wapiti Foundation President Roy Sloan the operation has supported existing management efforts undertaken by the FWF and provides buffer control at the southern boundary of the Wapiti Area.

"As well as the recreational harvest, each year the Foundation and its members pay to remove around 900-1200 red and hybrid deer from in and around the Wapiti Area.

"This has reduced impacts on alpine vegetation and improved the quality of the wapiti hunting," Roy Sloan says.

"I'm also pleased that we can continue to support the local helicopter industry, which has been doing it tough during the pandemic."