

# SPCA rescue dog killed by 1080 poison in Taupo Forest

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Buster died after eating 1080 poison on a walk near his property.

A beloved rescue dog was dead within hours after ingesting 1080 poison on an afternoon walk in a Taupo forest last week.

Buster's owners Stacy and John Lewis are angry about the lack of notification about the drop in Motouapa's Hatepe forest and say signs were not in place warning of the poison danger.

They said it was every dog owners nightmare- to watch them die in pain.

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Stacy Lewis says signs were not erected in the area before the 1080 drop and the tracks are littered with poison.

"He started by peeing inside, which was unusual." Stacy said.

"Then he went outside for another big pee and starts screaming and running around the house in a blind panic.

"We tackled him and took him outside where he has his first seizure."

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A pellet of 1080 poison found in the Hatape forest near the walkways.

Being a volunteer at SPCA Turangi, Stacy had the vet on speed dial.

But when Buster was assessed, euthanasia was the only choice left to ease his suffering.

Stacy said Buster would be greatly missed, especially at the SPCA where he assisted.

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Stacy Lewis volunteers at Turangi SPCA. She stands in the Hatape forest near five pellets of 1080 poison found near the trails.

"He used to help look after kittens that didn't have a mother.

"We also used him as a puppy companion to teach manners to dogs.

"It's sad that my dog is gone but its about raising awareness for holiday makers and ratepayers who weren't warned."

Stacy said the last letter they got from OSPRI, which organises 1080 drops to manage Bovine Tuberculosis, was dated October 19 for a poison drop in October and November 2015.

She said warning signs were not installed at the forest entrance the January morning they took Buster for a walk.

"John went out to take the dogs for a walk in the morning [of the 14th] and there were no signs up," Stacy said.

John said when he went for a second walk about 5 o'clock he noticed a warning sign posted on the entrance but this was dated for January 13.

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Screenshot of GPS Tracker used to pinpoint signs which OSPRI says shows the sign was erected on January 13.

"I put the dogs on the lead by then but he must have hoovered one," John said.

"It just takes one lick."

An OSPRI flier about the operation showed a "no 1080" zone near Kiko Rd to Waimarino Rd, where they were walking.

OSPRI North Island Programme Manager Alan Innes said the operation was on private land so there was

no requirement to clear walkways.

"It is important that the public ensure they are allowed to access the area and also contact the land owner to see if there are any pest control activities in the area," he said.

Innes said signs were in place on January 13. He provided a screen shot of a GPS tracker device they used to pinpoint warning signs in the area as proof.

"Signs were then put up by the pest control contractor before the operation began on January 13.

"It is important that the public adhere to the instructions on these warning signs which will remain in place until carcass monitoring shows that bait and carcass breakdown has been achieved which may take up to six months."

Innes said it was unfortunate that the incident occurred and they were committed to working with the SPCA to mitigate the effect of drops as much as possible.

The Lewis family said they walked the same track every day and would have noticed the signs if they'd been there.

"I miss him," she said.

"It's hard having no one to walk. I just don't want to see this happen to someone else.

"It was day one, and my dog's dead. It could happen to anyone. It's too close to a residential area."

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