



**Briefing to
the Incoming
Minister**





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A fly fisherman in a grey waders and a blue cap is standing in a river, casting a blue fly. The river is surrounded by lush green trees and a cloudy sky. The word "Vision" is written in a large, white, serif font with a thin white arc above it.

Vision

Our vision is a New Zealand where freshwater habitats and species flourish, where hunting and fishing traditions thrive, and all Kiwis enjoy access to sustainable wild fish and game resources.

A dark background with a white topographic map pattern of concentric lines. The word "Purpose" is written in a large, white, serif font with a thin white arc above it.

Purpose

Fish & Game New Zealand maintains and enhances sports fish and game birds and their habitats, ensuring access for current and future generations of New Zealanders.



TRUST

We are trusted as consistent and capable providers of service to Fish & Game stakeholders and Mana Whenua.

INCLUSION

We recognise and respect the diverse range of perspectives and cultural interests of our stakeholders.



Values

THAT GUIDE HOW WE WORK

CONNECTION

We are deeply connected, understanding the needs of anglers, hunters, regulators and public interest groups.

SERVICE

We are enthusiastic, professional, kind, and accountable to each other and our community.

About us

At Fish & Game, we know that what's good for anglers and hunters is good for all New Zealanders – healthy waterways and thriving wetlands, sustainable sources of wild kai, and access to the great outdoors all contribute to our wellbeing.

Fish & Game New Zealand manages, maintains and enhances sports fish and game birds and their habitats in the best long-term interests of present and future generations of anglers and hunters.

A not-for-profit organisation with formal statutory powers, Fish & Game is funded by fishing and hunting licences.

There are 12 regional Fish & Game Councils, elected by people who pay licence fees, totalling around \$12 million annually. At a national level, the New Zealand Fish & Game Council coordinates the functions of the regions and provides advice to the Minister. There's more detail about our structure and statutory function below.

Fish & Game is an insights-driven organisation, basing our actions on research into species, their habitats, and game bird hunting and anglers' values along with wider public perceptions.

Fish & Game New Zealand speaks directly for 300,000 people and, in any one year, 150,000 game bird hunting and fishing licence holders.

Our licence holders tell us they value the traditions of trout and salmon fishing and game bird hunting, the skills associated with these pursuits, their connections to our wild places, and the recreational opportunities and time outdoors they afford.

Fish & Game staff conducting electric fishing as part of species management work



We also know fishing and hunting are great for physical and mental wellbeing.

Fishing and hunting offer opportunities to connect with whānau and friends while teaching children valuable skills, fostering independence, and instilling a deep respect for the environment.

Hunters and anglers are passionate about conserving our wild places, driving Fish & Game's strong legacy in environmental protection, enhancement, and restoration. Over the past decade, in particular Fish & Game has:

- Created, restored and protected wetlands for game bird hunting and conservation.
- Secured 12 of 16 Water Conservation Orders currently in place which recognise and protect the outstanding values of our lakes and rivers for angling, recreational, and conservation use.
- Advocated for and protected access to our wild places and spaces for everyone, including our hunters and anglers.
- Pushed for regional and national policies which sustainably manage the environment, including setting robust bottom lines for healthy freshwater, while working with farmer catchment groups to improve water quality.
- While our mandate is to manage valued introduced species and indigenous game birds, our work has a broader impact, helping protect the habitats of indigenous bird and freshwater fish species.



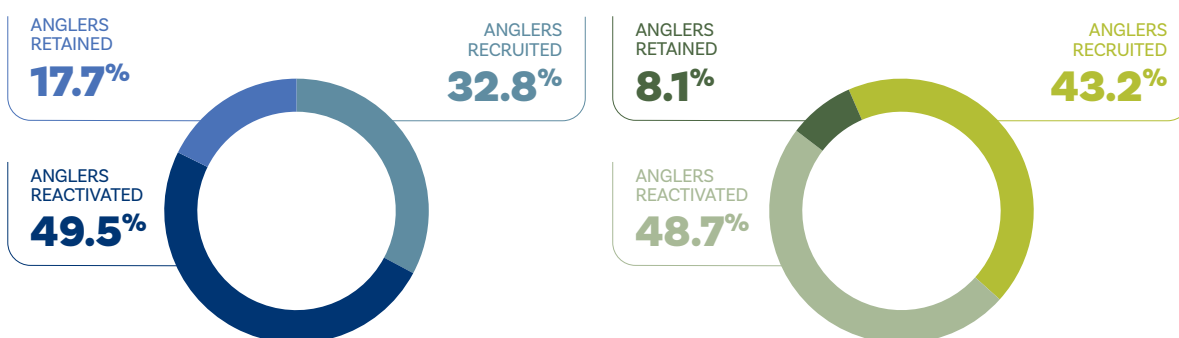
Who our licence holders are

Fishing Licences		
	2022/23 Season	2023/24 Season
Individual Anglers	105,876	108,997
Licences Purchased	116,801	122,414
Licence Income	\$10,800,658	\$11,187,150

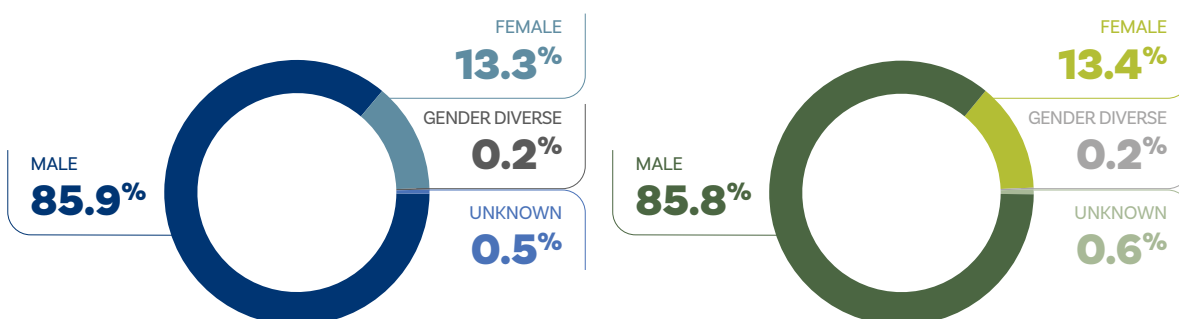
2022/23 Season

2023/24 Season

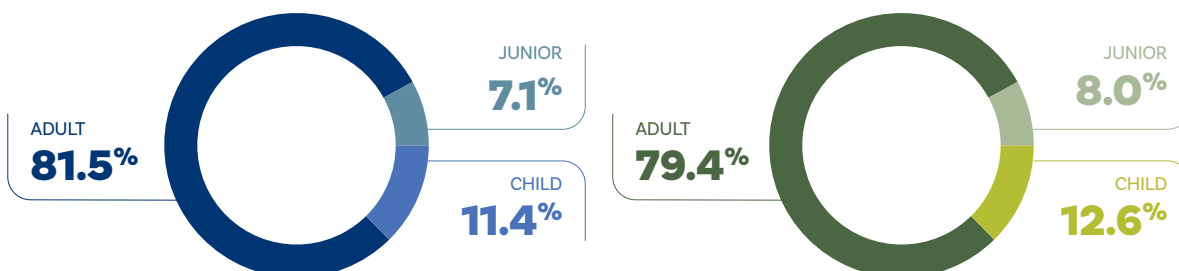
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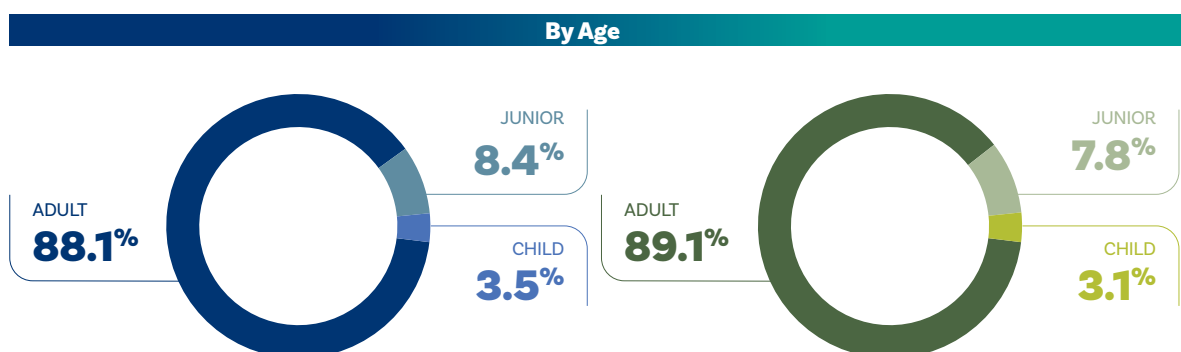
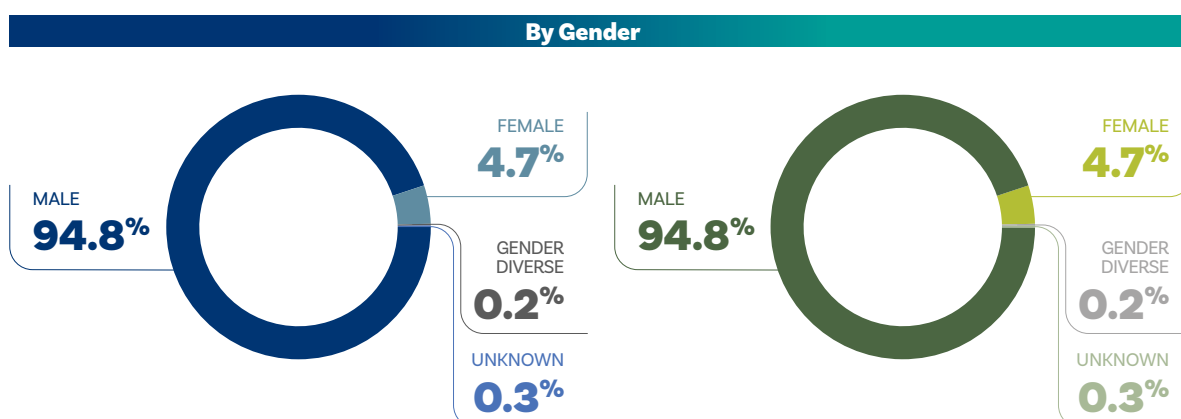
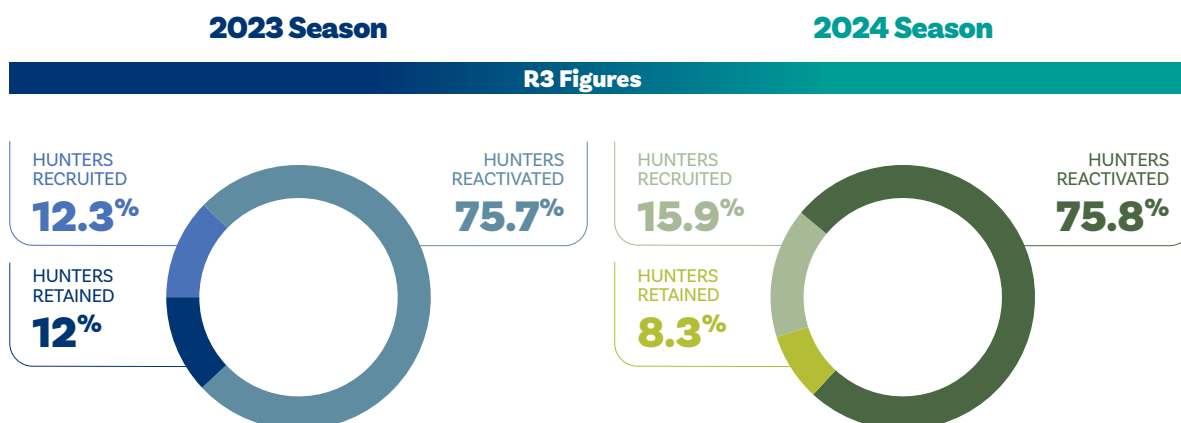
By Gender



By Age



Game Bird Licences		
	2023 Season	2024 Season
Individual Hunters	36,518	35,938
Licences Purchased	36,348	35,819
Licence Income	\$3,410,206	\$3,516,334



The legislative framework we work within

The Conservation Act 1987 sets out the main functions and responsibilities of the New Zealand Council and regional Fish & Game Councils.

In addition, other functions and responsibilities are detailed in the Wildlife Act 1953, the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983, the Wildlife Regulations 1955, the Fish and Game Council Election Regulations 1990 and the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Stamp Regulations 1993.

Fish & Game New Zealand's interests are also explicitly provided for in the Resource Management Act 1991, the Overseas Investment Act 2005 and the Walking Access Act 2008.

Fish & Game Councils are required to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi per Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987.

All Councils are audited by the Office of the Controller and Auditor-General in accordance with the requirements of the Public Finance Act, and report annually to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing.



Our structure, statutory functions and strategy

Regional Fish & Game Councils are elected every three years by current holders of adult whole-season sports fishing and hunting licences. Up to 12 people are elected to each council. The last Fish & Game election was held in October 2024.

Each of the 12 regions nominates one of their councillors as an appointee to the New Zealand Council. They are not representatives of their region, as they have to take a national overview in their deliberations.

National

The main function of the New Zealand Council is to represent nationally the interests of anglers and hunters, provide coordination of the management, maintenance and enhancement of sports fish and game and directly advise the Minister on issues relating to sports fish and game birds.

We are exploring options as an organisation to increase iwi representation. We are in the process of employing Te Ao Māori advisors to strengthen our cultural competencies and to fulfil our obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. A number of the South Island Fish & Game Regions have Ngāi Tahu representation on their Councils as part of the Ngāi Tahu Settlement Act.

Nationally, we represent the voice of anglers and hunters to Government. Key advocacy projects that we will be involved in over the next few years include conservation law reform, including the Wildlife Act, and plan changes relating to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM 2020).

Regional

Regional Fish & Game Councils have a local role with key functions including:

- Assessing and monitoring sports fish and game populations including the condition of habitats and hunters and anglers' success rate and satisfaction.
- Maintaining resources including hatchery and breeding programmes.
- Issuing licences.
- Promotion and education.
- Representing the interests and aspirations of anglers and hunters in the statutory planning process.

Councils employ professional staff to carry out the work, with approximately 73 staff members across the organisation. There are also 50 Staff rangers and 150 unpaid Honorary Rangers who assist with compliance, to ensure that hunting and fishing licences are purchased and regulations are complied with.

The habitat of trout, salmon, and game bird populations is extensive throughout New Zealand. We are developing online access information to fishing spots and, in the future, we will create similar information for game bird hunting spots.

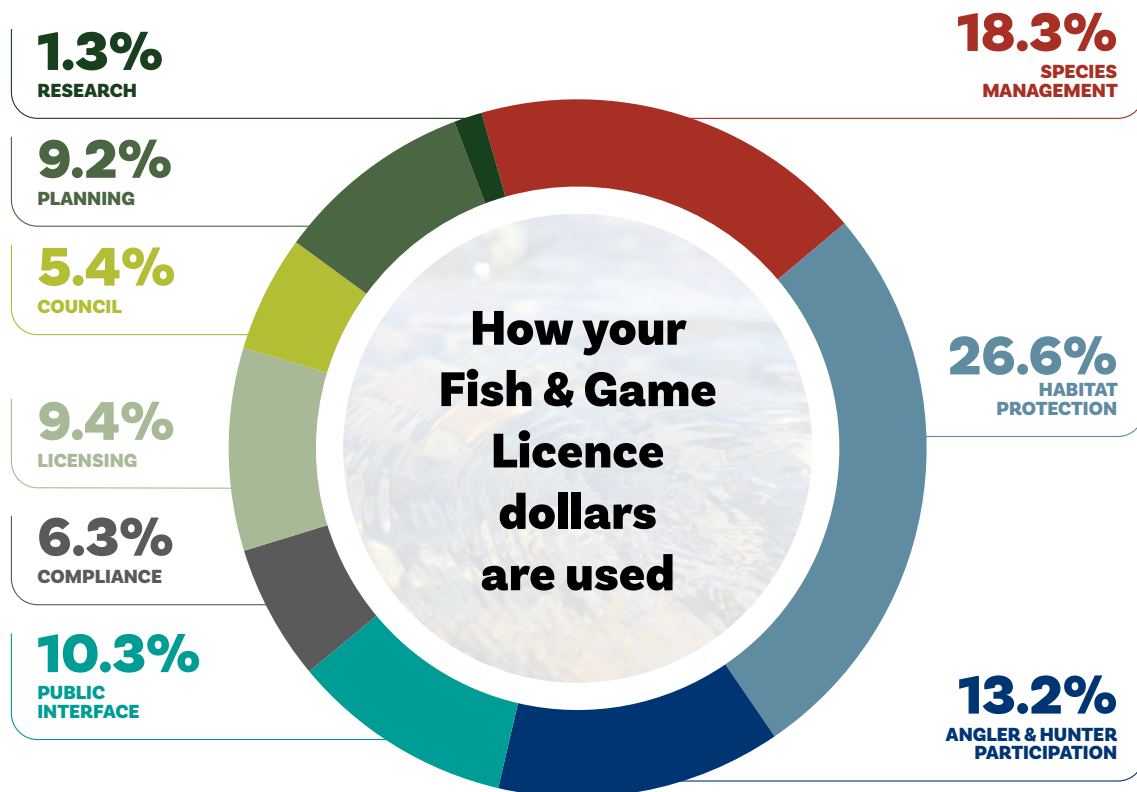
Each year, most Fish & Game regions comment on resource consent applications and submit on plan processes in their advocacy function to protect habitat.



Funding

Licence fees (approximately \$12 million per annum) cover the management of the fish and game resource, providing for:

- Species management
- Habitat protection
- Access
- Public awareness
- Compliance
- Licensing
- Council
- Coordination and planning
- Events and resources to promote game bird hunting and angling, including events for children and adult education.



Organisational strategy

For the first time, New Zealand Fish & Game has a national strategy with a unifying vision, priorities and deliverables. This was developed in 2022, working with staff and managers across New Zealand as well as council members.

Our organisational strategy 2023 – 2028



Fish & Game oversees the management of New Zealand's sport fish and game resources. Fish & Game New Zealand is a not-for-profit public entity with statutory powers and is funded through licence fees.

This strategy was developed in 2022 following a ministerial review conducted in 2021 which noted that Fish & Game New Zealand plays an important role in environmental advocacy and stewardship. The review also noted that the organisation is relatively unchanged since establishment in 1990 and identified significant opportunity to strengthen governance and good management practice.

The strategy outlined here is intended to provide a strengthened, fit-for-purpose organisation more connected with licence holders, wider stakeholders, and Mana Whenua, to sustainably manage fresh water fish and game, to protect and enhance freshwater habitats and the values precious to all New Zealanders.

OUR VISION

Our vision is a New Zealand where freshwater habitats and species flourish, where hunting and fishing traditions thrive and all Kiwis enjoy access to sustainable wild fish and game resources.

OUR PURPOSE

Fish & Game New Zealand maintains and enhances sports fish and game birds, and their habitats, ensuring access for current and future generations of New Zealanders.

OUR VALUES



TRUST



INCLUSION



CONNECTION



SERVICE

Our priorities and objectives

What success looks like for our strategic priorities



UNIFIED & ENDURING ORGANISATION

A national and regionally cohesive organisation built on a culture of shared values, trust and engagement. Delivering on vision and purpose for stakeholders and Mana Whenua. Maintaining the statutory mandates that enable effective service delivery.



ATTRACT & RETAIN LICENCE-HOLDERS

Deliver well-valued and cost-effective experience for licence holders by understanding their needs, providing simple and effective communication, making fishing and game bird hunting more attractive to a wider group of future participants.



MANA WHENUA CONNECTED

Māori values are understood and reflected within Fish & Game with aligned advocacy and a positive collaborative approach that builds upon Te Tiriti obligations defined in the Conservation Act.



PUBLIC PERCEPTION & LEGITIMACY

Understanding and reshaping public perception of Fish & Game New Zealand, angling and game bird hunting through positive messaging of natural environment protection, wild food harvesting and well-being through outdoor recreation.



HEALTHY SPECIES, HABITATS, & ECOSYSTEMS

Sport fish and game bird habitats are healthy. Species are monitored and maintained and sustainable wild harvest opportunities are secured for future generations.

How we make a difference – examples of our work

To achieve our vision, we deliver a number of programmes nationally and regionally. In this section, we highlight the difference we are making day to day, to protect species habitat and to retain, recruit and reactivate licence holders.

NZ Game Bird Habitat Trust

Game birds and native bird species are threatened by diminishing habitat such as wetlands and scrublands. New Zealand now has less than 9% of the wetland that was present in pre-European times. Wetlands were once seen as “swamps” and drained for agricultural, commercial and housing development.

Today, wetlands are recognised as vital ecosystems and bird habitats.

The New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust (NZGBHT) helps ensure their ongoing protection. Grants are used to purchase wetlands and other habitat to transform the areas into quality game bird habitat.

The trust is funded by the “Game Bird Habitat Stamp” programme, initiated in 1993.

All game bird hunters contribute to the fund when they buy their annual hunting licence because \$5 goes directly to the programme.

Hunters and the general public can also purchase stamp art products. These include a first-day cover and Limited Edition Artist Print; money from purchases goes to the fund. The stamps are marketed by New Zealand Post.

In the 2023/24 hunting season, hunters contributed \$157,808 from game licences to be distributed by the NZGBHT as habitat grants. Since its inception in 1993, the NZGBHT has provided \$2.4 million in grants to nearly 300 projects with some 2,000 hectares of habitat that have been created, enhanced or re-instated.



2024 Game Bird Habitat Stamp

ReWild campaign

The ReWild campaign is an initiative dedicated to highlighting our community's role in protecting and enhancing our natural environment and hooking more Kiwis onto fishing and hunting. The campaign was launched in 2023 and is continuing.

This campaign aligns with our collective goals of sustainable hunting and angling while ensuring the well-being of the environment, our valued introduced species, and their habitats.

This campaign has the following key goals:

- Help New Zealanders understand that fishing and hunting are not only sources of physical and mental well-being but also an escape from the daily grind.
- Highlight the benefits – hunting and fishing help build bonds with family and friends, teach essential skills, nurture environmental conservation and foster independence.
- Bring our fishing and hunting communities together through shared messages, where we work to promote our traditions so they are something future generations can enjoy.
- Build recognition of what Fish & Game does, including our environmental work, so the public supports us.



What have we achieved from November 2023 – January 2025

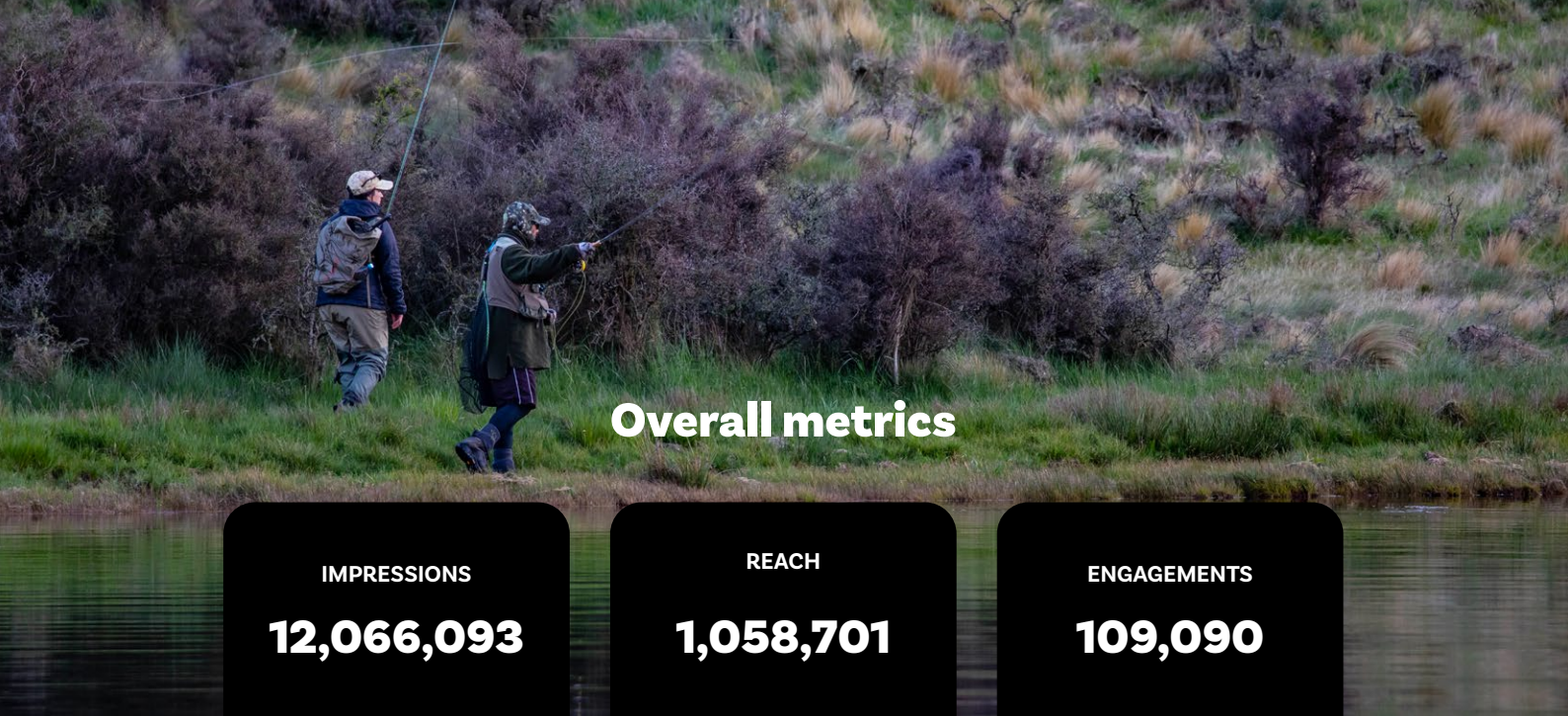
Since launching the campaign in November 2023, we've served **12,066,093** impressions across all media channels.

Our messaging has been seen on Stuff and NZ Herald **2,390,831** times, amplifying awareness and credibility of our campaign across New Zealand.

On Facebook and Instagram, we have reached **1,056,352** unique people on average 6.5 times each. When compared to the previous period, our reach on Facebook has trebled and engagements on our Facebook and Instagram pages have increased by **38%**.

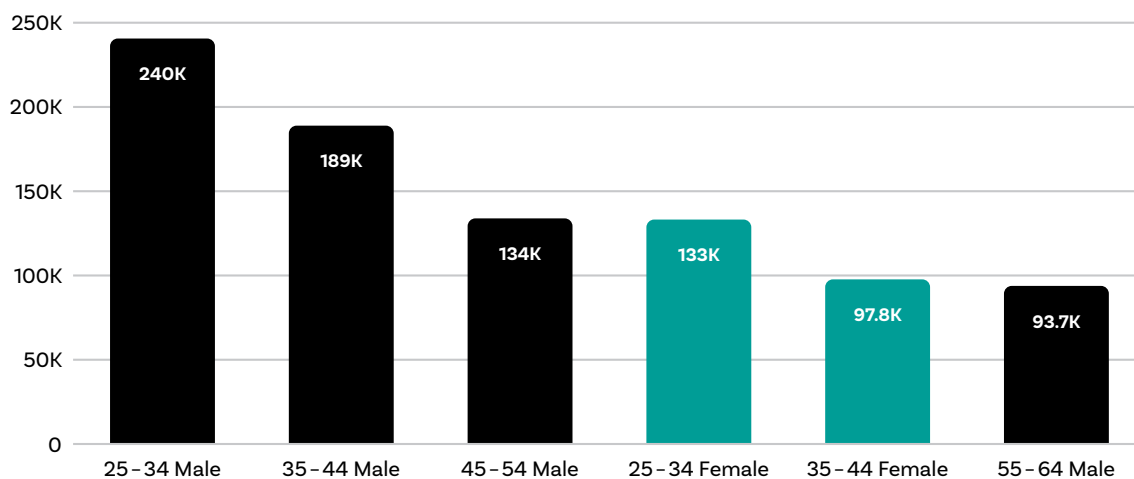
On YouTube, our videos were watched **469,818** times, with **93%** of viewers watching them to completion – helping to embed our ReWild messaging.

We have been flooded with support from Kiwis who share our love of wild places and now back our work.



Facebook/Instagram age and gender distribution by reach

1 November 2023 – 21 January 2025



Extension programme

Fish & Game New Zealand is introducing an extension programme designed to educate and empower anglers and hunters while enhancing connections with licence holders.

This initiative is focused on providing tailored resources and support to grow and sustain participation in fishing and hunting.

Aligned with Fish & Game's strategy to retain, recruit and reactivate licence holders, the programme aims to deliver valued and cost-effective experiences. It will address challenges such as the high dropout rate among young licence holders and the need to convert firearm owners into game bird hunters.

The programme components include:

- Resource development: high-quality resources like fact sheets, videos, podcasts, and webinars created in collaboration with experts.
- Education and training: workshops, field days, and online materials covering safety, conservation, and techniques.
- Engagement and outreach: community and stakeholder engagement to ensure relevance and promote the programme via media and partnerships.
- Safety and conservation: modules on river navigation, sustainable practices, and habitat protection.
- Diversity and inclusion: special resources for women and beginners to lower barriers to participation.



New access charter

In 2024, Fish & Game New Zealand played a pivotal role in the development of a new charter designed to improve access to public conservation land for fishing and hunting.

Launched at the Sika Show in Hamilton by then Minister for Hunting and Fishing, Hon. Todd McClay, the charter establishes principles to guide the Department of Conservation (DOC) in providing clear and consistent access decisions, a significant step forward for anglers and hunters nationwide.

Access has been a longstanding priority for Fish & Game, as it is the most significant challenge for licence holders.

Recognising this, Fish & Game collaborated with DOC, Herenga ā Nuku, and Land Information New Zealand to shape the charter, ensuring it reflects the needs of the fishing and hunting community.

Fish & Game contributed its expertise to ensure the charter addressed practical challenges and included measures to support inclusivity.

For example, Fish & Game has developed wheelchair-accessible maimais, fishing platforms, and maps showcasing locations suitable for people with mobility impairments. These efforts align with Fish & Game's vision of making the outdoors accessible to all New Zealanders.

The charter represents a significant achievement in safeguarding New Zealand's fishing and hunting traditions.

By ensuring that public conservation land remains accessible, Fish & Game continues to support sustainable outdoor recreation while promoting healthy ecosystems and thriving freshwater habitats.



Supporting Women on the Fly New Zealand

Fish & Game New Zealand is proud to support Women on the Fly New Zealand, an initiative dedicated to encouraging women to take up fly fishing and fostering a supportive community for female anglers.

This collaboration aligns with Fish & Game's commitment to increasing diversity and participation in fishing, ensuring the sport is welcoming and accessible to everyone.

Through partnerships with Women on the Fly New Zealand, Fish & Game provides resources and expertise to assist in delivering workshops, events, and mentoring opportunities. These events focus on introducing women to fishing and skill development, from casting techniques to reading water and selecting the right gear, giving participants the confidence to fish independently.

Fish & Game also helps to promote Women on the Fly New Zealand events through its communication channels, reaching new audiences and growing the network of female anglers.

Fish & Game contributes to developing educational materials tailored specifically for women, addressing common barriers such as a lack of knowledge or confidence in a traditionally male-dominated activity.

www.womenonthefly.nz

Collaborating for firearms safety

Fish & Game New Zealand is actively working with the Firearms Safety Authority (FSA) to ensure hunters can continue to participate in their sport safely, responsibly, and with minimal barriers.

This partnership reflects Fish & Game's commitment to supporting game bird hunters while aligning with broader efforts to promote public safety and responsible firearms ownership.

Fish & Game plays a vital role in educating hunters about firearm laws, safe handling practices, and compliance with regulatory requirements.

By providing clear and accessible information through workshops, publications, and online resources, Fish & Game helps ensure hunters remain informed and confident in their obligations.



Strengthening connections

We collaborate with the New Zealand Game Animal Council and other stakeholders in the hunting and angling community, discussing various topics, including conservation efforts, regulatory changes, and strategies to encourage younger Kiwis to take up fishing and hunting.

Fish & Game is increasingly connected across the sector and is rebuilding relationships with stakeholders in the primary sector.

We seek to make positive change through constructive and pragmatic relationships, bring people and communities together, and work with them to identify our shared values and experiences. We will continue to build on these relationships.

Advocacy work

Valued introduced species for which Fish & Game New Zealand has a statutory mandate to manage are not the only species that Fish & Game New Zealand protects with its dedicated environmental work.

Its defence and restoration of rivers, lakes and wetlands, and the habitat they provide, ensures protection for endangered indigenous species like bittern, fernbirds, marsh and spotless crane, mudfish, eels and galaxiids.

Throughout the country, Fish & Game New Zealand devotes time, resources and funds attempting to ensure local government properly protects waterways and complies with the Resource Management Act.

While this has at times brought us into conflict with water users, we remain committed to fulfilling our statutory responsibility.

We support regulation that is proportionate to risk, and enables sustainable land use while protecting valuable habitats. We do not believe all farmers should require a resource consent to farm.

For example, Fish & Game New Zealand has been responsible for funding and securing the vast majority of Water Conservation Orders which are recognised as the equivalent of national parks for waterways.

We have been involved in a number of national policy projects, including renewable electricity, amendments to the stock exclusion regulations, amendments to the Emissions Trading Scheme for farmed animals, and NPS Highly Productive Land.

We are also working on new permitted activity rules for wetland restoration and maintenance with a view to amending the National Environmental Standard for Freshwater (NES-F) to make it easier for landowners to maintain and restore wetlands.

Earlier this year, Fish & Game staff equipped with snorkelling gear drifted and glided down hundreds of kilometres of rivers across the country, recording the health of these rivers, including water quality, the health of both the trout fishery and native fish, and of insect life, which is key to all species.



The divers monitor over

**100 different
rivers** throughout
the country.

Approximately **\$22 million**
has been invested so far in restoring
wetlands, mainly on private rural land,
in partnership between hunters and
landowners.



More than **10,000**
international anglers



took to the water in pursuit of
New Zealand's renowned wild trout
during the recent fishing season.

Working with you

Areas of focus

Areas we hope to work with the Government on include:

1. Support to enable Fish & Game to keep doing its work by maintaining the organisation's mandate when reforming conservation laws.
2. Strong and effective measures to safeguard the health of New Zealand's rivers and lakes.
3. Strong protection for wetlands – maintaining and enhancing existing wetlands and backing landowners to create new wetlands for the benefit of all New Zealanders.
4. Work with communities, sectors, and iwi to collaboratively develop solutions for the benefit of our communities and treasured freshwater.
5. Enable New Zealanders to continue to get out in nature and enjoy their hunting and fishing heritage, including ensuring access to the natural environment and sports fish and game alongside indigenous species in our ecosystems.
6. Support Fish & Game's leadership across the hunting and fishing sector collaboratively with the Game Animal Council.
7. Consider the fishing and hunting sector's views in a range of areas, from gun law reform, access, research and innovation to RMA reform.

Approvals

Each year, we will be asking you to make decisions on the following:

1. February – Game Bird Hunting Regulations

Fish & Game will submit its proposed game bird hunting regulations for your approval. The approved regulations are then published in the Game Notice.

2. June – Licence Fees, Categories and Game Bird Habitat Stamp

Fish & Game will submit its proposed sports fishing and game bird hunting licence fees and categories, as well as the fee for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp, for your approval. The approved fees are then published in the Sports Fish Licences, Fees and Forms Notice (typically published in August) and the Game Bird Licences Fees and Forms Notice (typically published in March).

3. July – Sports Fishing Regulations

Fish & Game will submit its proposed sports fishing regulations for your approval. The approved regulations are then published in the Anglers' Notice.

4. Our regions are managed under 10-year Sports Fish and Game Management Plans (SFGMP) and annual operational work plans. Some SFGMP have expired, so new management plans will come to you for approval in due course. We are also working on new guidelines for the consultation and production of these plans.

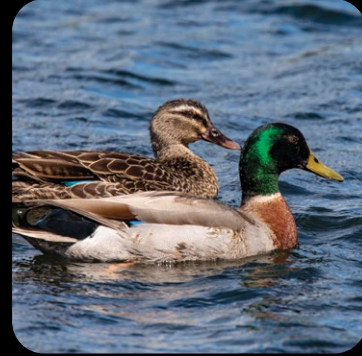
Our species



Black Swan
Kakianau



California Quail
Koitareke



Mallard
Rakiraki



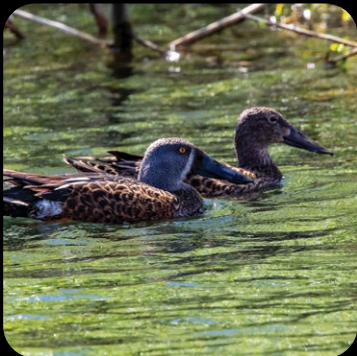
Paradise Shelduck
Pūtakitaki



Pheasant
Peihana



Pūkeko



Shoveler
Kuruwhengi



Chukar



Grey Duck
Pārera



Brown Trout



Rainbow Trout



Chinook Salmon



Sockeye Salmon



Brook Trout



Tiger Trout



Perch



Tench



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