



# Fish & Game New Zealand General Public Views - quantitative report

April 2023

# Executive summary

- The Fish & Game New Zealand roles that appeal most to New Zealanders are the ones to do with protecting and enhancing the environment.
- New Zealanders are much more likely to consider that freshwater fishing is an important activity to promote and protect in New Zealand than they are for game-bird hunting.
- The majority of New Zealanders who think it is important to promote and protect freshwater fishing mainly do so for sustainability reasons for protecting the resource, followed by recreation and enjoyment and for environmental protection reasons.
- The minority of New Zealanders who think it is important to promote and protect game-bird hunting mainly do so for sustainability of the resource and population control of game birds.
- Current participation and interest in participating more is much higher among New Zealanders for freshwater fishing than for game-bird hunting.
- Across the demographics Māori and younger (under 30 years) New Zealanders are more likely than the general population to both be participating in freshwater fishing and game-bird hunting and express an interest in wanting to take up these activities.
- From a range of positive outcomes that could be linked to freshwater fishing or game-bird hunting New Zealanders are much more likely to agree that they apply to freshwater fishing. Older New Zealanders (60 years plus) and Canterbury residents were most likely to agree with the positive outcomes that could be linked to these two outdoor activities while Aucklanders were least likely to agree.
- We asked survey respondents what they considered to be a fair price for a range of different licence options across both freshwater fishing and game-bird hunting. In all cases, what these New Zealanders felt was a fair price was either similar to the actual prices or higher.

# Contents

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1. Main findings

---

2. Research objectives & methodology

---

3. Overall perceptions of freshwater fishing and game-bird hunting

---

4. Freshwater fishing experience

---

5. Game-bird hunting experience

---

6. Attitudes towards freshwater fishing and game-bird hunting

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7. Licensing

---

8. Conclusions and suggestions

# 1. Main findings

# Main findings

## Perceptions of freshwater fishing and game-bird hunting

- Less than half (42%) of New Zealanders declared awareness of Fish & Game New Zealand. South Islanders at 52% and males at 49% were more likely to declare knowledge of the organisation.
- From a list of seven Fish & Game New Zealand roles that we tested the two roles that New Zealanders thought were most important were:
  - ‘Protecting riverbanks and waterways’ (79% important)
  - ‘Monitoring and researching the natural environment to help improve freshwater health and species health’. (78%)
- Half (51%) of New Zealanders thought it was important to protect and promote ‘freshwater fishing’ in New Zealand. One third (34%) thought it was important to do the same for ‘game-bird hunting’.
- The three main reasons for those who said it was important to protect and promote ‘freshwater fishing’ were:
  - ‘Sustainability and conservation’ reasons (36%)
  - ‘Recreation and enjoyment’ reasons (24%)
  - ‘Environmental protection and health’ reasons (23%).
- The two main reasons for those who said it was important to promote and protect ‘game-bird hunting’ were:
  - ‘Sustainability and population control’ reasons (35%)
  - ‘Environmental protection’ reasons (26%).

## Experiences of freshwater fishing

- Sixteen percent of New Zealanders say they normally go freshwater fishing at least once a year or more, Māori at 27% were more likely to say they do this at least once a year or more.
- Around one quarter (23%) of those who are not currently freshwater fishing say they would like to start this activity.
- Among those who would like to take up Freshwater fishing the top three barriers identified were:
  - ‘The cost of fishing gear’ (40%)
  - ‘The cost of the licence’ (38%)
  - ‘Busy doing other things’ (37%).

## Experiences of game-bird hunting

- A small minority (7%) of New Zealanders say they normally go game-bird hunting at least once a year or more, Māori at 12% were more likely to say they do this activity once a year or more.
- A minority (10%) of New Zealanders not currently undertaking game-bird hunting expressed interest in taking up this activity, Māori were more likely at 18% to show interest.
- Among those who would like to take up game-bird hunting the standout barrier was ‘gun licensing processes including costs’ at 44%. The next closest barrier identified by those who would like to start game-bird hunting was, ‘the cost of the licence at 29%.

# Main findings (cont.)

## Attitudes towards freshwater fishing and game-bird hunting

- A slim majority (55%) of New Zealanders agreed that ‘hunting and fishing is an important part of New Zealand’s outdoor heritage’, strong majorities of both Canterbury residents and older New Zealanders also agreed.
- Over one third (38%) of New Zealanders agreed that overall ‘activities like freshwater fishing and game-bird hunting have a positive impact on local communities and economies’.
- A majority of New Zealanders agreed that river and lake fishing is:
  - ‘A great way to put food on tables for some families’ (57%)
  - ‘An activity for all kinds of people (55%)
  - ‘A good activity to do together with family and friends (54%)
  - ‘Good for improving mental and physical health’ (52%).
- Across all statements tested to measure New Zealanders’ views about game-bird hunting level of agreement was much lower. Well less than half of New Zealanders agreed that game-bird hunting:
  - ‘Is useful for helping with pest control’ (41%)
  - ‘Helps to promote healthy outdoor activity’ (35%)
  - ‘Is a good activity to do with family and friends’ (24%)
  - ‘Is good for improving mental and physical health’ (29%).

## Licensing

- After prompting, a majority of New Zealanders declared that they were previously aware of requiring a licence for both ‘freshwater fishing’ (57% aware) and game-bird hunting (55% aware), older New Zealanders were much more likely to be aware of this fact.
- On average what New Zealanders considered to be a fair price (\$36) for a one-day adult freshwater fishing licence was \$13 higher than the actual price of \$23.
- On average what New Zealanders considered to be a fair price (\$146) for a full-season adult freshwater fishing licence was almost identical to the current the price of \$145.
- On average what New Zealanders considered to be a fair price (\$40) for a one-day game-bird hunting licence was \$15 higher than the actual price of \$25.
- On average what New Zealanders considered to be a fair price (\$215) for a full-season adult game-bird hunting licence was much higher than the current the price of \$107.

## 2. Research objectives & methodology

# Quantitative research methodology



The findings detailed in this report are based upon questions asked in a Primary Purpose online survey. To help ensure the questions asked were relevant and made sense to the target population the question design was heavily based on three focus groups that were first conducted among the target population. The findings of these initial focus groups have already been reported on.



The survey was in the field from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2023.



The survey is made up of a nationally representative sample. Quotas were set for age, gender and region based on the most recent StatsNZ Census data. The achieved sample consisted of n=1032 New Zealanders 18 years and over. For this sample size the margin of error at the 95% confidence level for a 50% figure is  $\pm 3.1\%$ .

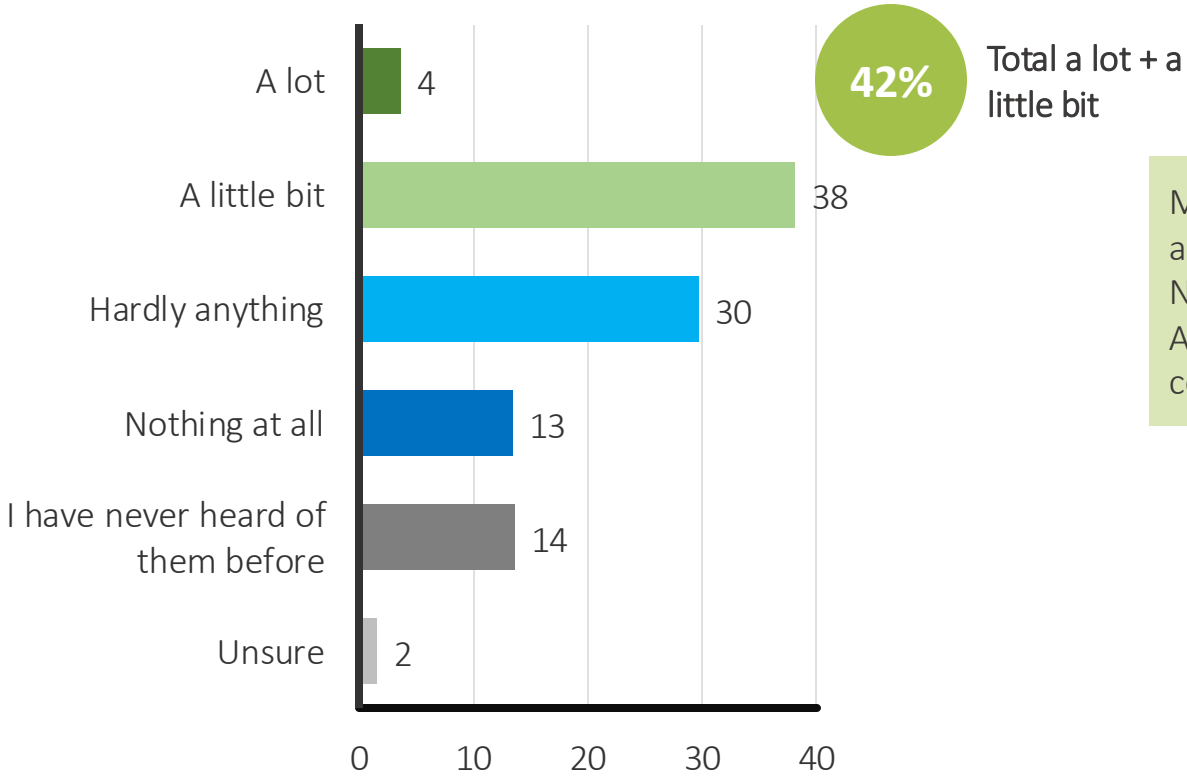


To help improve the representativeness of the results the sample was weighted to age and region bands as well as ethnicity.

### 3. Overall perceptions of freshwater fishing and game-bird hunting

# Both males and South Islanders were more likely to declare knowledge of Fish & Game New Zealand

Q. How much would you say you know about Fish & Game New Zealand? (%)

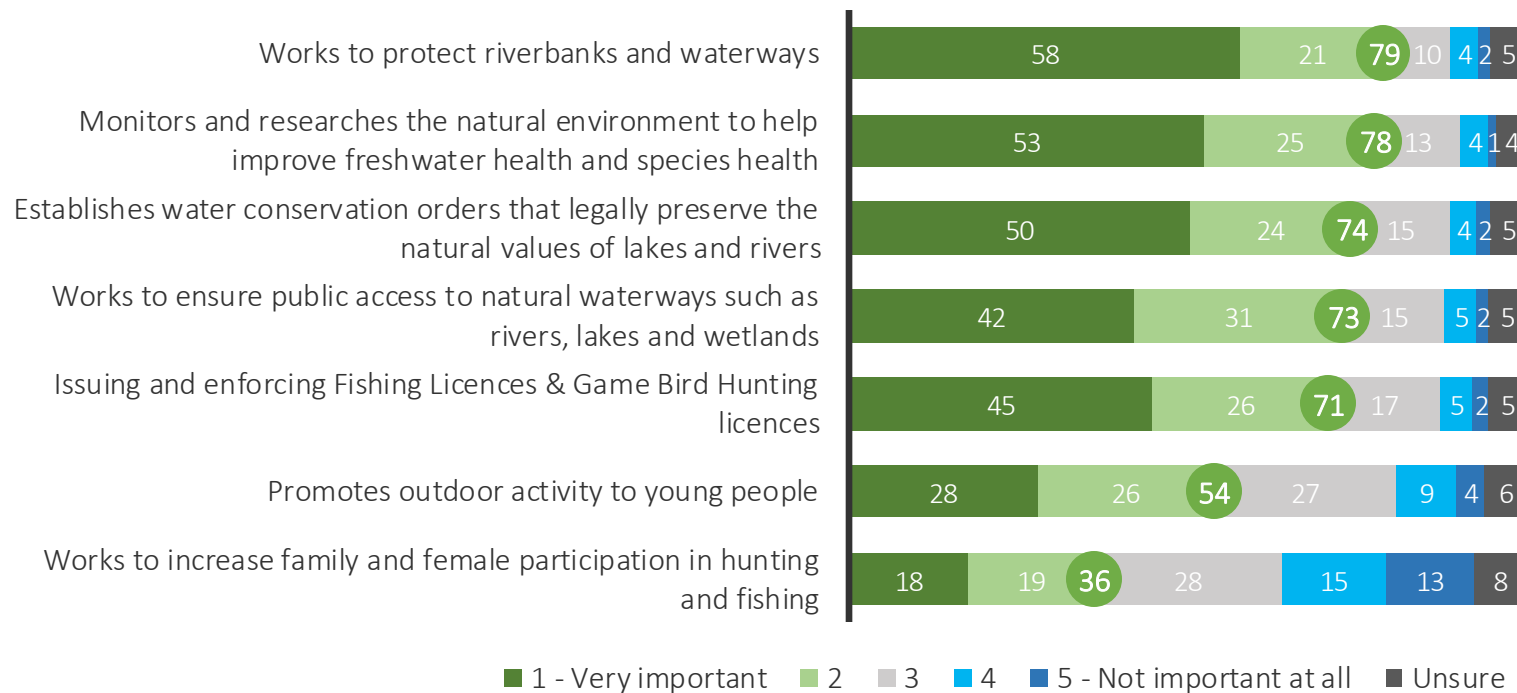


Males were more likely to claim a lot or a bit of knowledge about Fish & Game New Zealand (49%) than females (35%). As were South Islanders (52%) compared to North Islanders (39%).

Base: All respondents (n=1032)

## New Zealanders thought the most important roles for Fish & Game New Zealand to focus on included ‘protecting riverbanks and waterways’ and ‘monitoring and researching the natural environment to help improve freshwater and species health’

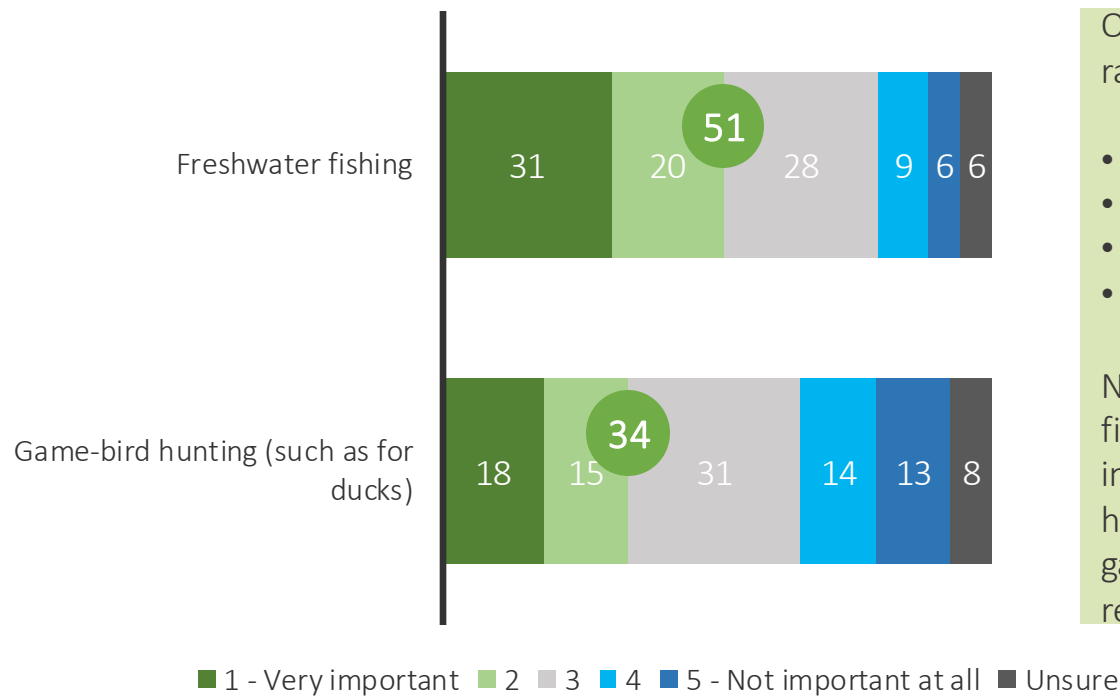
Q. As you may be aware, Fish & Game New Zealand is the organisation who manages New Zealand’s fresh water (lakes and rivers) sports fishery and game-bird hunting resource, and advocates for healthy freshwater habitats including wetlands. How important do you think it is that an organisation like this undertakes the following activities? (%)



Base: All respondents (n=1032)

# Half of New Zealanders believe it is important to protect and promote 'freshwater fishing', while a third believe the same for 'gamebird hunting'

Q. How important do you think it is that as a country we work to protect and promote the following recreational activities in New Zealand? (%)



Older New Zealanders were more likely to rate both as 'very important':

- Under 30: 36% fishing / 23% hunting
- 30-44: 50% / 33%
- 45-59: 49% / 36%
- 60+: 67% / 41%.

New Zealanders who have been freshwater fishing were more likely to rate both as important (57% fishing / 39% game-bird hunting) as were those who have been game-bird hunting (57% and 48% respectively).

Base: All respondents (n=1032)

## The main reasons for those who said it was important to protect and promote freshwater fishing were ‘sustainability and conservation’, ‘recreation and enjoyment, and ‘environmental protection and health’

Q. What are your main reasons for indicating it is important that we promote and protect freshwater fishing in New Zealand? (%)

REASONS FOR INDICATING WHY IT IS IMPORTANT THAT NEW ZEALAND PROMOTES AND PROTECTS FRESHWATER FISHING	%
<b>Sustainability and Conservation:</b> <i>Protecting fish populations and stocks, preventing overfishing, ensuring availability for future generations, maintaining balance in the ecosystem</i>	36%
<b>Recreation and Enjoyment:</b> <i>Supporting outdoor activities and hobbies, promoting family bonding and experiences, encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle</i>	24%
<b>Environmental Protection and Health:</b> <i>Keeping waterways clean and pollution-free, ensuring healthy and clean fish, protecting native species and habitats, managing invasive species</i>	23%
<b>Food and Nutrition:</b> <i>Providing a source of healthy, fresh food, encouraging self-sufficiency and local food production, ensuring food resources for the future</i>	10%
<b>Economic Benefits:</b> <i>Supporting local businesses and employment, boosting tourism revenue, ensuring affordable fishing opportunities for citizens</i>	7%
<b>Cultural Significance and Pride:</b> <i>Preserving a part of New Zealand's identity, promoting traditional fishing skills and knowledge</i>	7%
<b>Education and Awareness:</b> <i>Promoting responsible fishing practices, teaching the next generation about conservation, connecting people with nature and the environment</i>	4%
<b>Regulation and Licensing:</b> <i>Ensuring fairness and sustainability, monitoring and controlling pest species, protecting against illegal fishing activities, maintaining recreational fishing opportunities</i>	4%
<b>Unsure</b>	8%

Base: Those who said it is important protect and promote freshwater fishing (n=532)

## The main reasons for those who said it was important to promote and protect game-bird hunting were, ‘sustainability and population control’, ‘Environmental protection’ and the ‘promotion and protection of the hunting tradition’

Q. What are your main reasons for indicating it is important that we promote and protect game-bird hunting (such as for ducks) in New Zealand? (% coded)

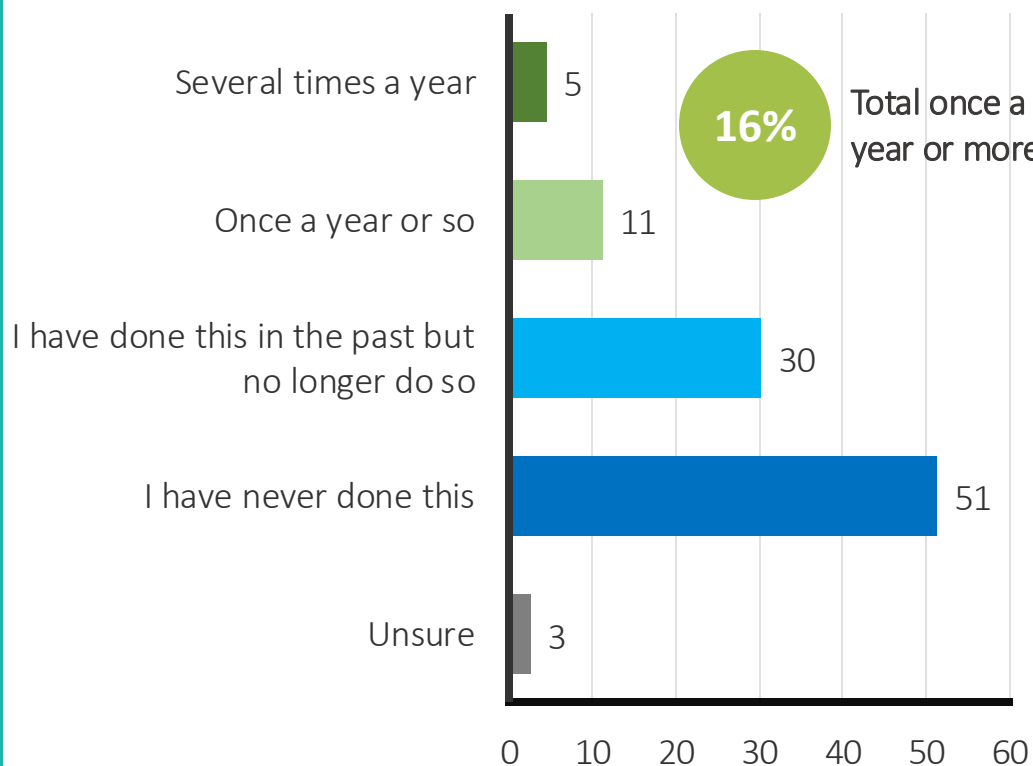
REASONS FOR INDICATING WHY IT IS IMPORTANT THAT NEW ZEALAND PROMOTES AND PROTECTS GAME-BIRD HUNTING	%
<b>Sustainability and Population Control:</b> <i>Maintaining balance in the ecosystem, culling to prevent overpopulation, regulating duck populations, preventing extinction of certain species</i>	35%
<b>Environmental Protection:</b> <i>Reducing water pollution, managing non-native species, preserving habitats and ecosystems</i>	26%
<b>Promotion and Protection of the Hunting Tradition:</b> <i>Cultural and historical significance, encouraging outdoor activities, ensuring availability for future generations, contributing to tourism</i>	17%
<b>Personal Enjoyment and Recreation:</b> <i>Providing a fun and engaging outdoor activity, contributing to sports and pastimes, offering recreational opportunities for tourists</i>	14%
<b>Regulation and Licensing:</b> <i>Preventing overhunting, protecting against illegal activities, ensuring safety and responsible practices, restricting participant numbers</i>	9%
<b>Food and Nutrition:</b> <i>Providing a source of healthy fresh food, encouraging self-sufficiency and local food production, ensuring food resources for the future</i>	6%
<b>Education and Awareness:</b> <i>Teaching the next generation about responsible hunting, promoting a better understanding of the environment, encouraging responsible and sustainable practices</i>	4%
<b>Economic Benefits:</b> <i>Supporting local businesses and employment, attracting tourism revenue</i>	2%
<b>Unsure</b>	9%

Base: Those who said it is important protect and promote game bird hunting (n=347)

## 4. Freshwater fishing experience

## Sixteen percent of New Zealanders say they normally go freshwater fishing at least once a year or more, Māori (at 27%) were more likely to say they go freshwater fishing this often

Q. How often would you say you normally go freshwater fishing (includes lakes and rivers) in New Zealand for trout and salmon? (%)



Māori were also more likely to go freshwater fishing once a year or more (27%) as were males (19%).

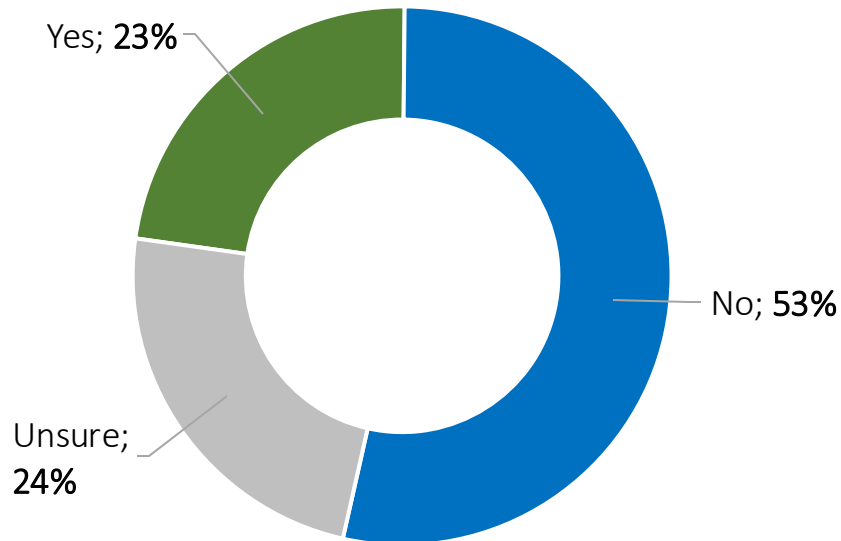
Younger New Zealanders were more likely to go freshwater fishing once a year or more:

- Under 30: 25%
- 30-44: 21%
- 45-59: 12%
- 60+: 8%

Base: All respondents (n=1032)

# Around one quarter of those who are not currently freshwater fishing say they would like to start this activity

Q. Would you like to start doing this type of fishing? (%)



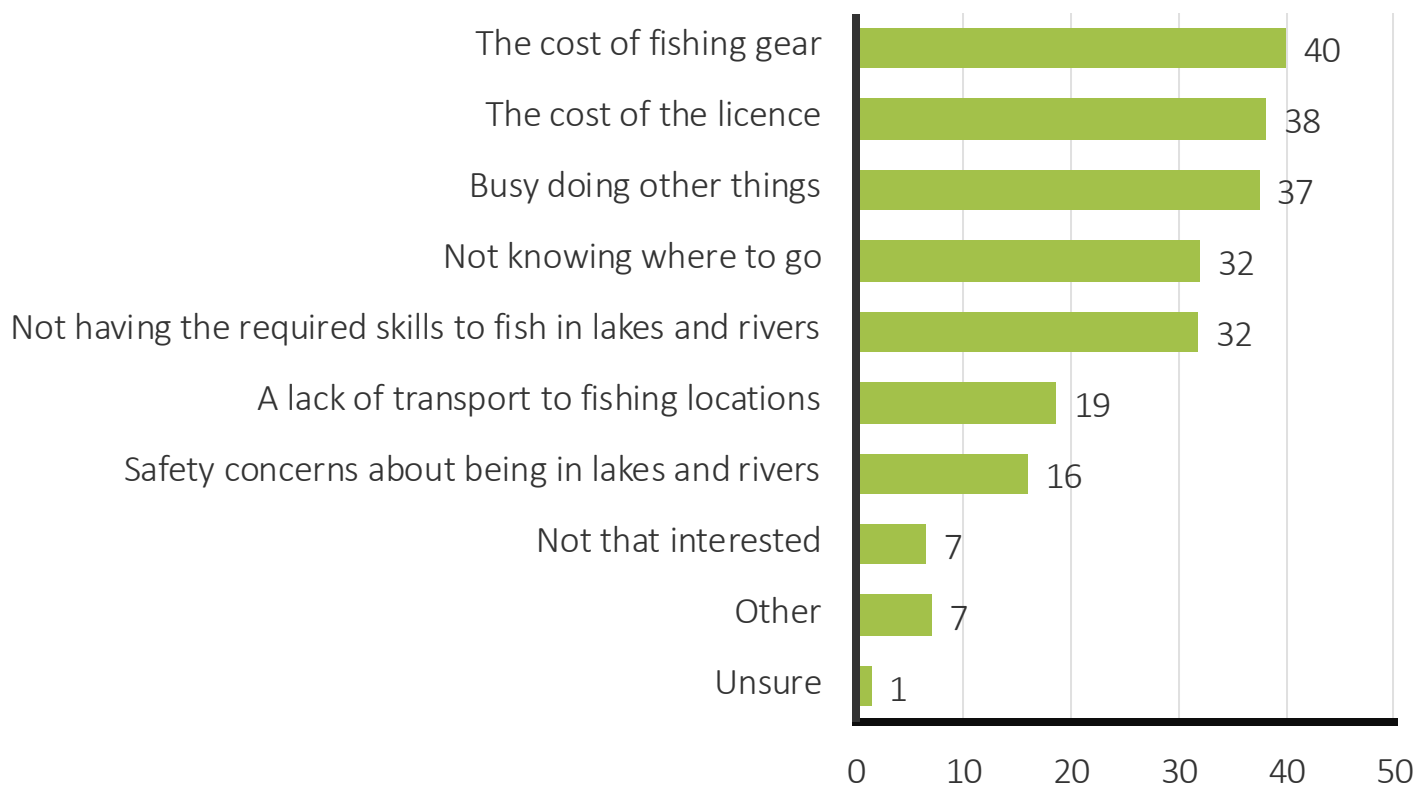
The following demographics were more likely to say they want to start:

- Māori: 32%
- Aged 30-44: 31%
- Have dependent children: 31%
- Males: 28%.

Base: Those who said they don't currently freshwater fish (n=853)

## The top three barriers to taking up Freshwater fishing were, ‘the cost of fishing gear’, ‘the cost of the licence’ and ‘busy doing other things’

Q. Which of the following are barriers to you fishing in lakes and rivers? (%)

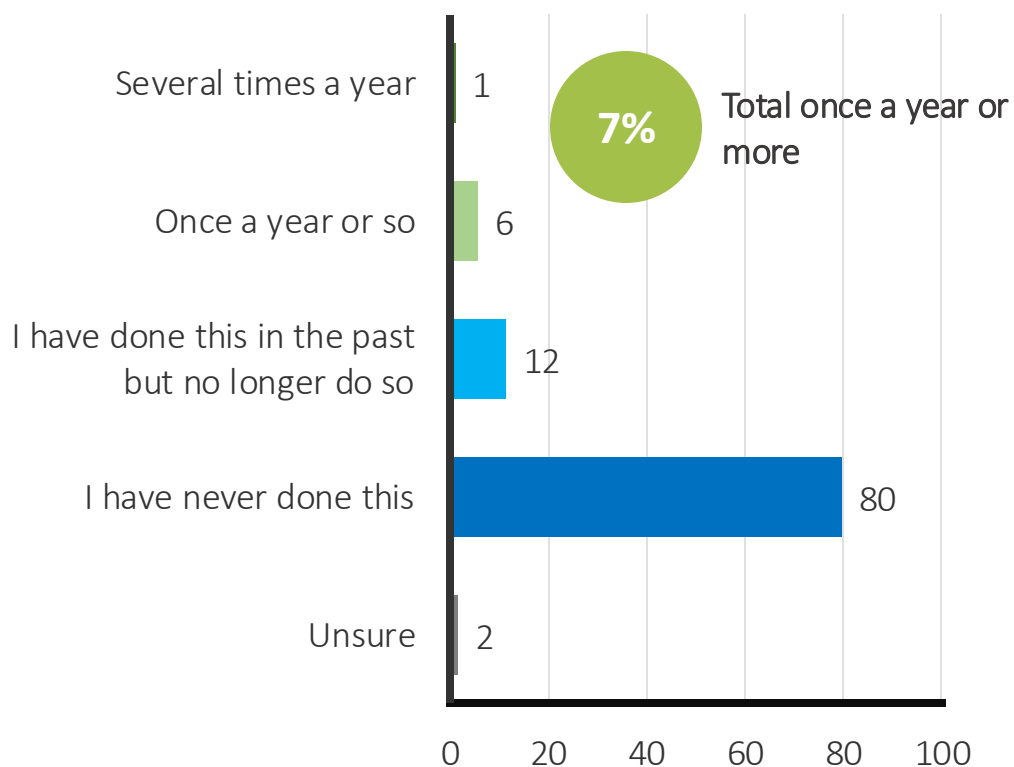


Base: Those who said they would like to start fishing or fished once a year (n=302)

# 5. Game-bird hunting experience

## A small minority (7%) of New Zealanders say they normally go game-bird hunting at least once a year or more, Younger New Zealanders (aged under 30 years) at 14% and Māori at 12% were more likely to do this

Q. How often would you say you normally go game-bird hunting (such as for ducks) in New Zealand? (%)



Younger New Zealanders were more likely to go game bird hunting once a year or more:

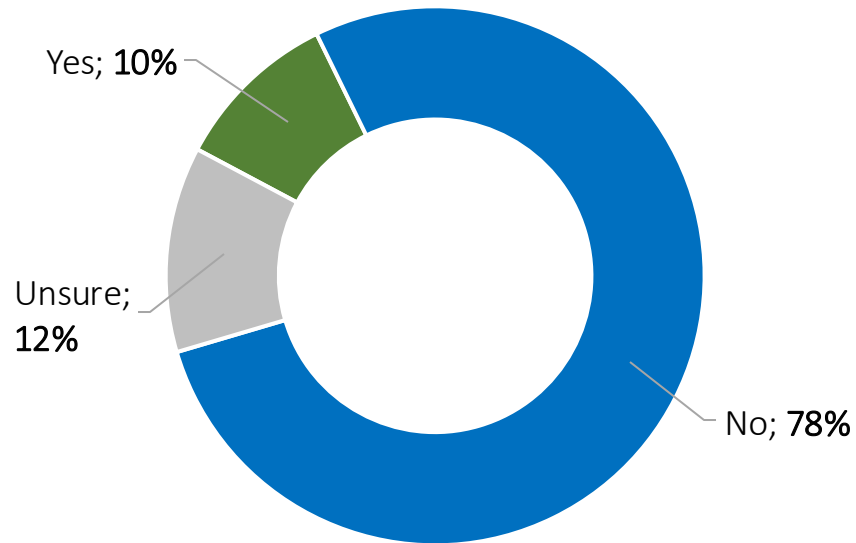
- Under 30: 14%
- 30-44: 9%
- 45-59: 4%
- 60+: 1%

Māori were also more likely to go game-bird hunting once a year or more (12%) as were males (9%).

Base: All respondents (n=1032)

# A minority (10%) of New Zealanders not currently undertaking game-bird hunting expressed interested in taking up this activity, younger New Zealanders (aged under 30 years) and Māori were more likely than average to want to start

Q. Would you like to start doing this type of hunting? (%)



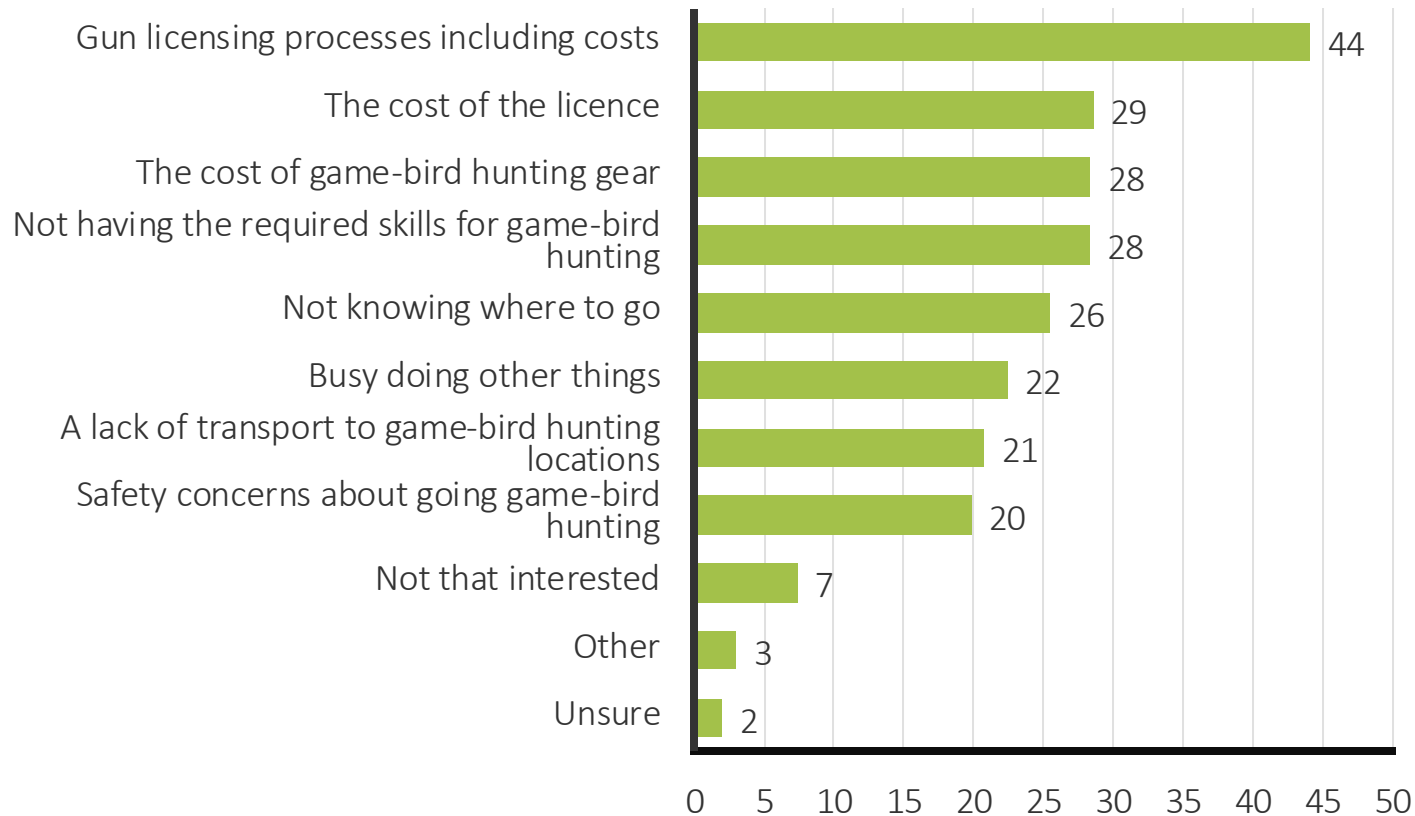
The following demographics were more likely to say they want to start:

- Aged under 30: 19%
- Māori: 18%
- Have dependent children: 16%
- Males: 15%.

Base: Those who said they have don't currently game bird hunt (n=951)

## The standout barrier to game-bird hunting was ‘gun licensing processes including costs’

Q. Which of the following are barriers to you to go game-bird hunting? (%)

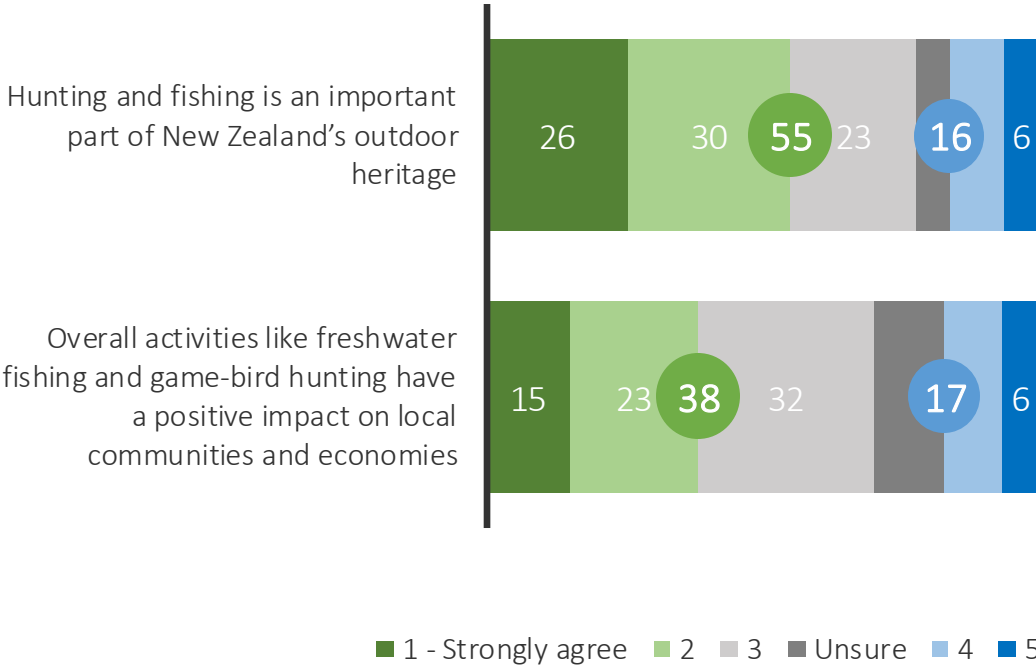


Base: Those who said they would like to start game-bird hunting or have hunted once a year or so (n=143)

# 6. Attitudes towards freshwater fishing and game-bird hunting

# A slim majority of New Zealanders agree that ‘Hunting and fishing is an important part of New Zealand’s outdoor heritage’, strong majorities of both Canterbury residents and older New Zealanders also agree

Q. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following in relation to recreational fishing and hunting? (%)



Older New Zealanders were more likely to agree hunting and fishing is part of our heritage:

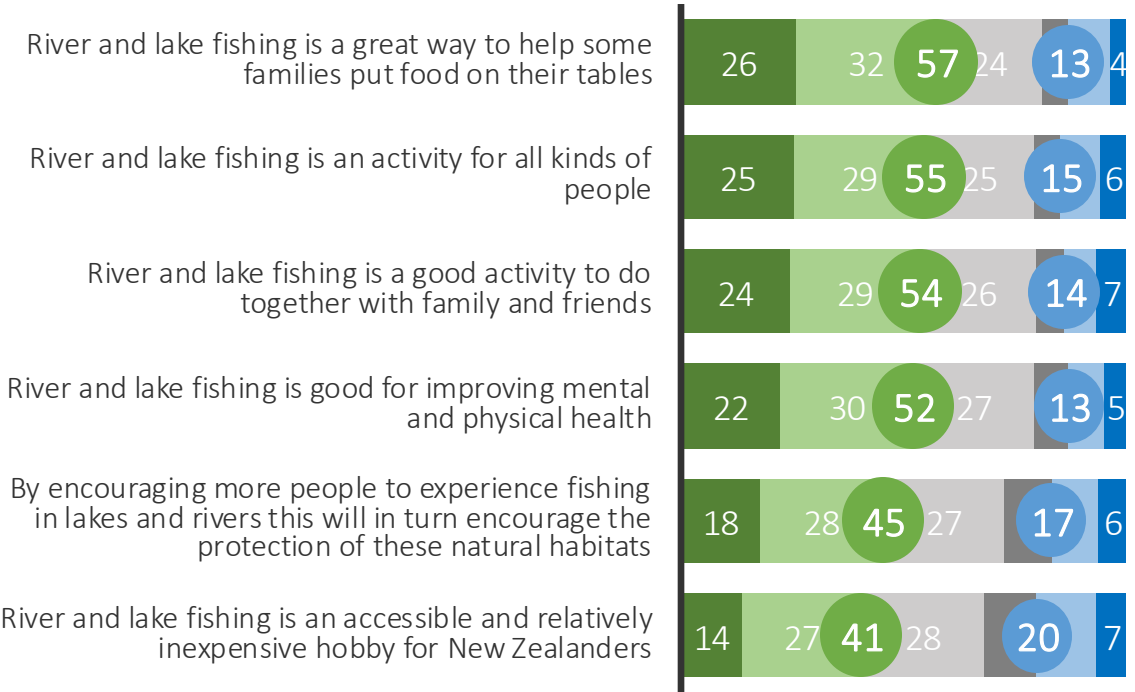
- Under 30: 45%
- 30-44: 51%
- 45-59: 56%
- 60+: 66%

Canterbury residents were more likely to agree hunting and fishing is part of our heritage (70%) Compared to Wellington and Auckland residents (47% each). Agreement in the rest of New Zealand was 59%.

Base: All respondents (n=1032)

# A majority of New Zealanders agree that river and lake fishing is: ‘a great way to put food on tables for some families’, ‘is an activity for all kinds of people’, ‘is a good activity to do with family and friends’ and ‘is a good activity for improving mental and physical health’

Q. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following in relation to recreational fishing and hunting? (%)



Older New Zealanders were more likely to agree to all these statements:

- Under 30: 31-46%
- 30-44: 40-59%
- 45-59: 36-57%
- 60+: 54-68%.

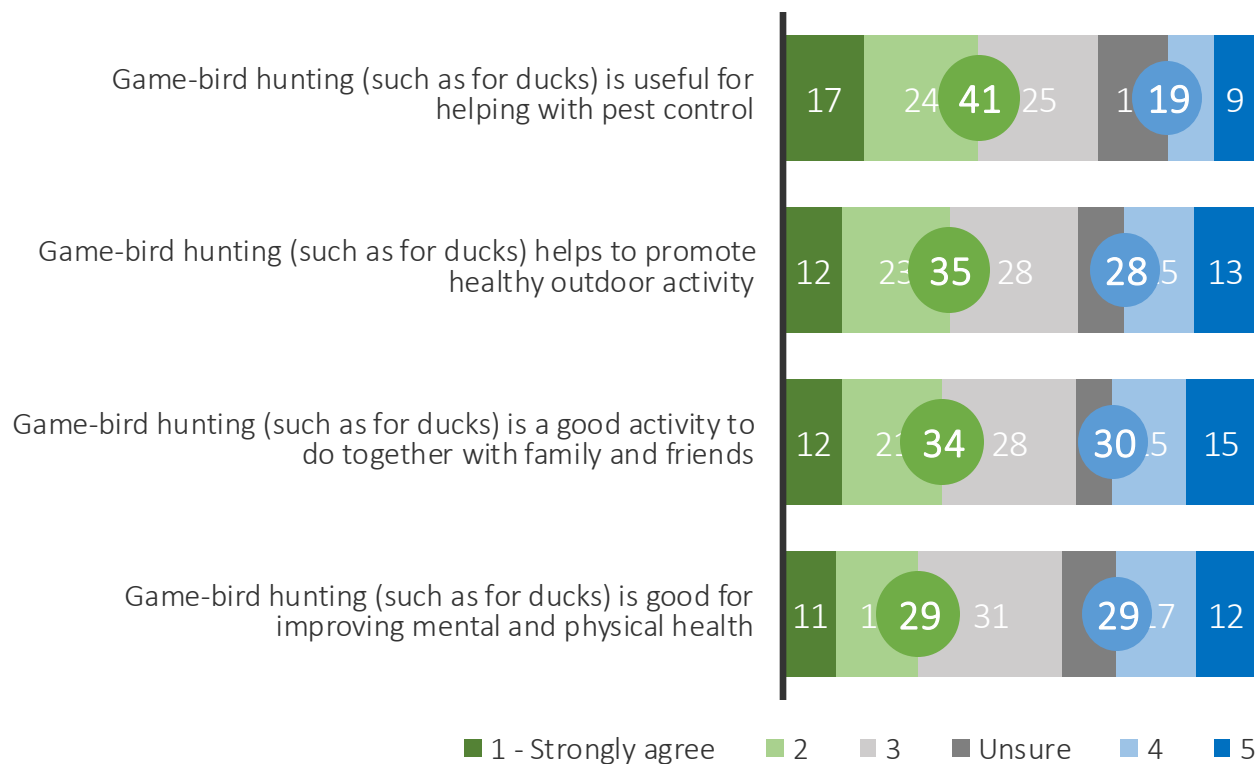
1 - Strongly agree 2 3 Unsure 4 5 - Strongly disagree

Base: All respondents (n=1032)



## New Zealanders are much less likely to agree that these positive statements can be associated with game-bird hunting, when compared to freshwater fishing as reported on the previous page

Q. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following in relation to recreational fishing and hunting? (%)



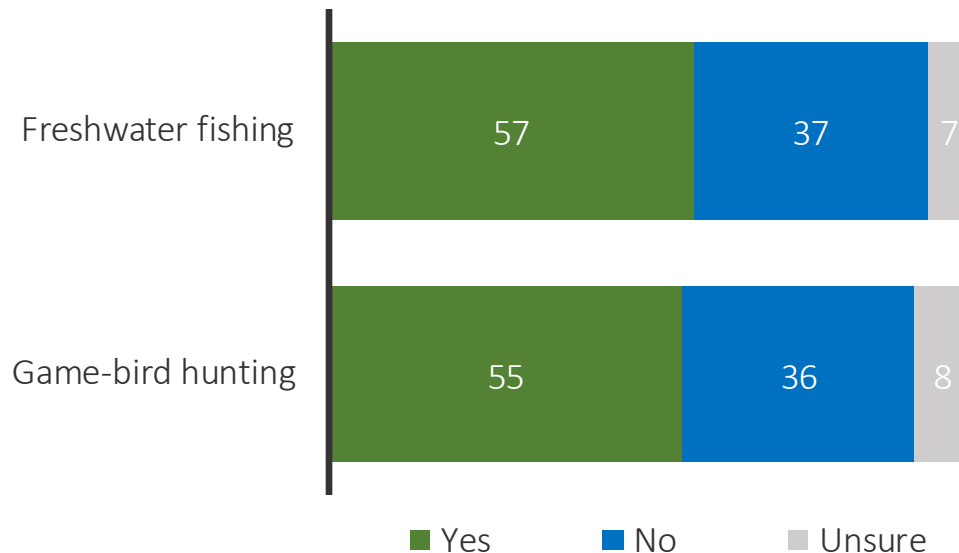
Males were more likely to think game-bird hunting is good for health (33%) and a good family activity (39%) than women (25% and 29% respectively).

Base: All respondents (n=1032)

# 7. Licensing

## After prompting, a majority of New Zealanders declared that they were previously aware that a licence for both freshwater fishing and game bird hunting is required, older New Zealander were much more likely to be aware of this fact

Q. As you may be aware: To be able to fish in freshwater lakes and rivers and go game-bird hunting you are legally required to obtain a licence. This licence helps to ensure that those who wish to use the resource also pay for the managing and sustaining of it. When purchasing a licence (usually online or at a fishing and hunting store), people also hear or read about the rules that cover the activity. Were you previously aware that such a licence is required for? (%)



Older New Zealanders were more likely to declare awareness:

- Under 30: 38% fishing / 46% hunting
- 30-44: 50% / 50%
- 45-59: 57% / 54%
- 60+: 78% / 69%.

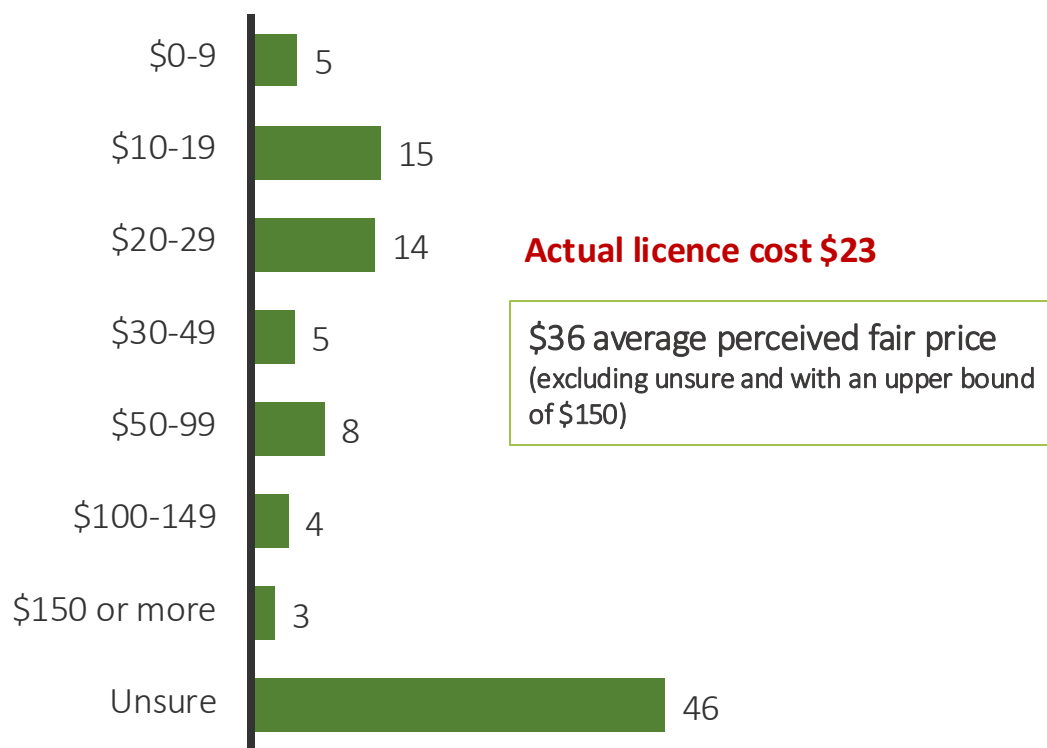
South Islanders were more likely to be aware of the need for a fishing licence (77%).

Amongst those who have been freshwater fishing, 69% said they were aware of the licence. Amongst those who have been game-bird hunting, 64% said they were aware of the need of a licence.

Base: All respondents (n=1032)

## On average what New Zealanders considered to be a fair price for a one-day adult freshwater fishing licence was \$13 higher than the actual price

Q. Given all the activities Fish & Game New Zealand undertakes to help ensure a sustainable freshwater fishing resource, what would you consider to be a fair price for a one-day adult freshwater fishing licence? (%)



Younger New Zealanders were more likely to give a higher cost:

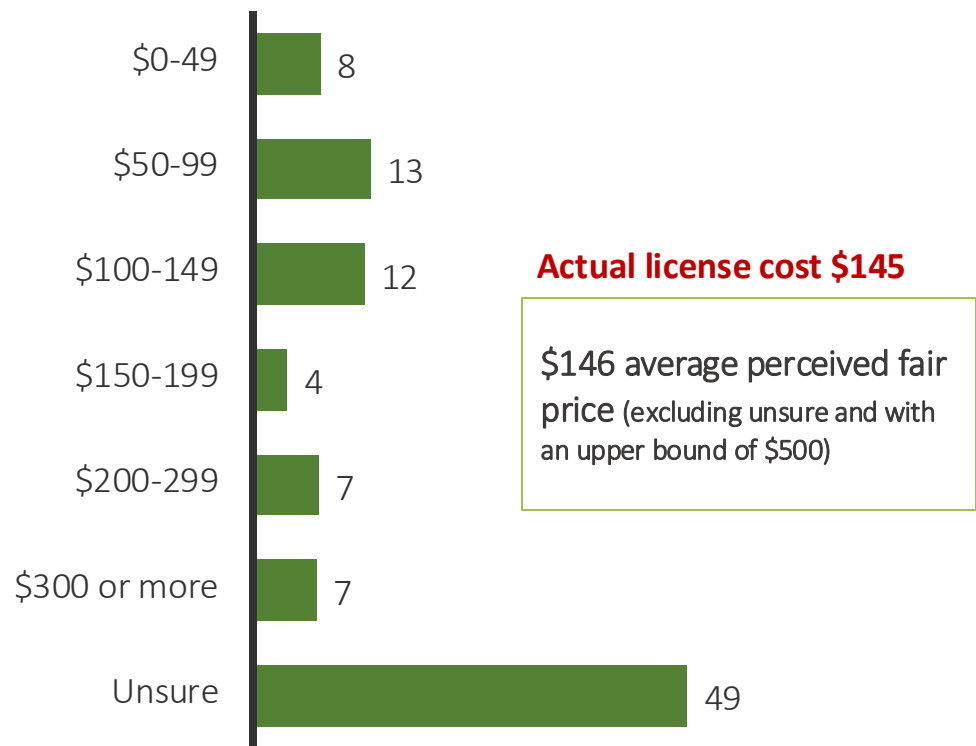
- Under 30: \$50 average
- 30-44: \$42
- 45-59: \$29
- 60+: \$25.

Aucklanders gave a higher average (\$44).

Base: All respondents (n=1032)

## The average price that New Zealanders considered to be a fair one for a full-season adult freshwater fishing licence was almost identical to the current price

Q. Given all the activities Fish & Game New Zealand undertakes to help ensure a sustainable resource, what would you consider to be a fair price for a full-season adult freshwater fishing licence? (%)



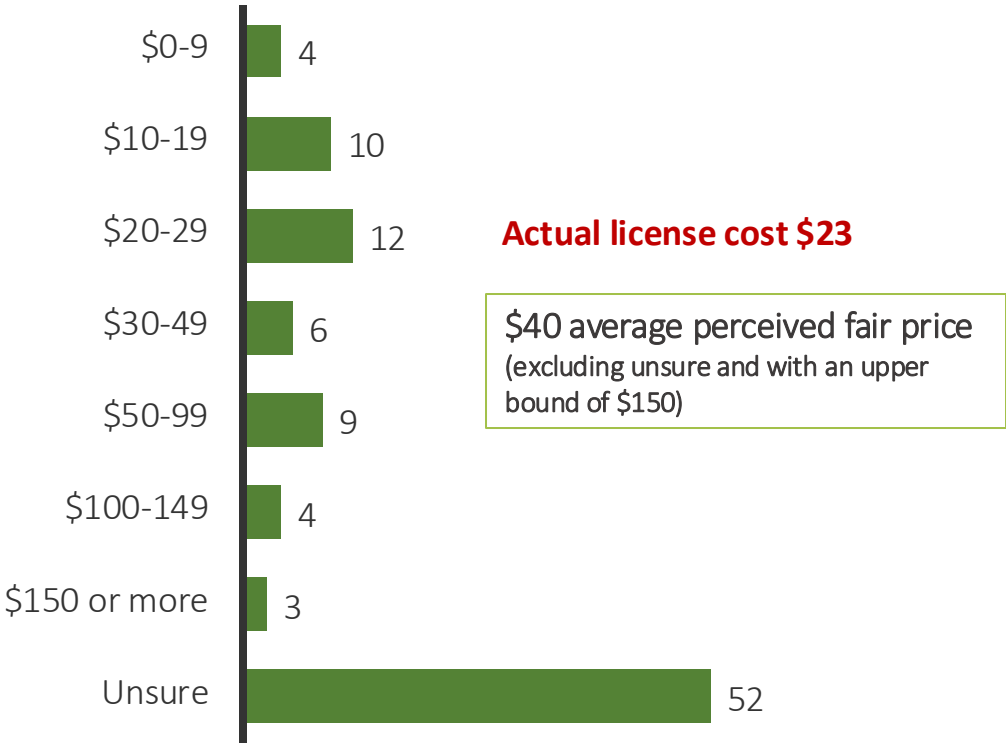
Females were more likely to give a higher cost (\$160 average) compared to males (\$132).

Aucklanders also gave a higher average (\$177) as did those who have never been freshwater fishing (\$183).

Base: All respondents (n=1032)

# On average what New Zealanders considered to be a fair price for a one-day game-bird hunting licence was \$17 higher than the actual price

Q. Given all the activities Fish & Game New Zealand undertakes to help ensure a sustainable resource, what would you consider to be a fair price for a one-day game-bird hunting licence? (%)



Younger New Zealanders were more likely to give a higher cost:

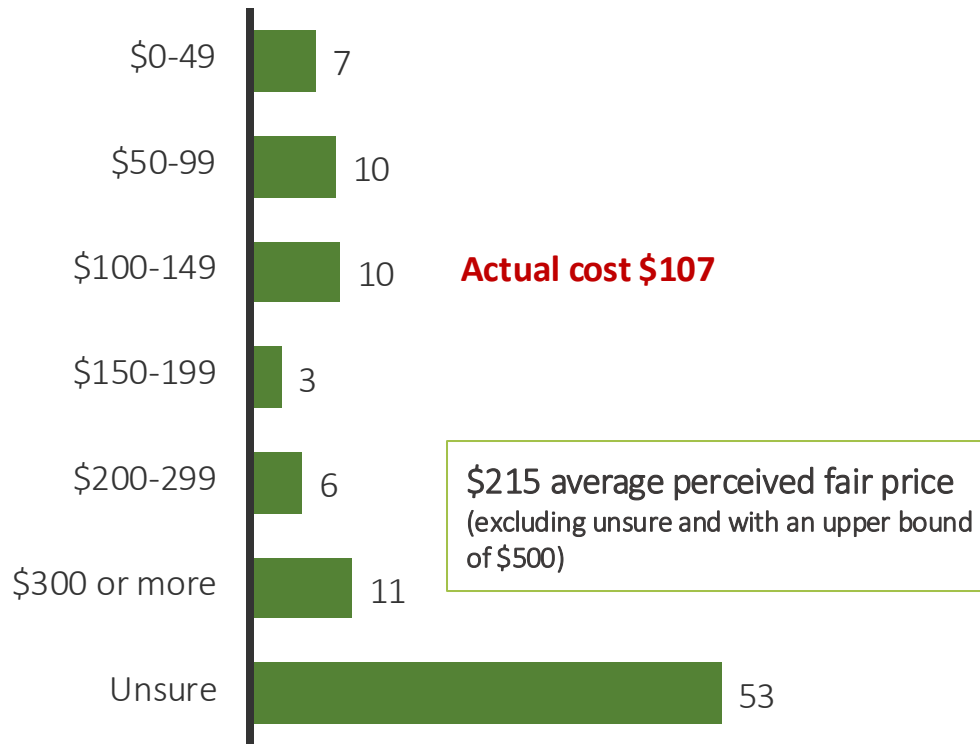
- Under 30: \$50 average
- 30-44: \$45
- 45-59: \$37
- 60+: \$30

Aucklanders gave a higher average (\$52).

Base: All respondents (n=1032)

## The average price that New Zealanders considered to be a fair one for a full-season adult game-bird hunting licence was much higher than the current price

Q. Given all the activities Fish & Game New Zealand undertakes to help ensure a sustainable resource, what would you consider to be a fair price for a full-season adult game-bird hunting licence? (%)



Males were more likely to give a higher cost (\$240 average) compared to females (\$189).

Aucklanders also gave a higher average (\$320) as did those who have never been game-bird hunting (\$234).

Base: All respondents (n=1032)

# 8. Conclusions and suggestions

# Conclusions and suggestions

- This research suggests that a useful way to position Fish & Game New Zealand positively among the wider New Zealand public is to promote the environmental roles of the organisation, particularly around protecting and enhancing the environment and improving water quality and the health of fish species.
- Given the greater warmth New Zealanders expressed in the research towards freshwater fishing compared to game-bird hunting, it will also make sense to lead any communications with the aspects of Fish & Game New Zealand that relate more to the former activity.
- When talking about freshwater fishing there are benefits to using the messages that this activity is:
  - A great way to help some families put food on their tables
  - An activity for all kinds of people
  - A good activity to do together with family and friends
  - Good for improving mental and physical health.
- When creating messaging about the positive outcomes of game-bird hunting, there are less options to work with, however framing it as a useful way to help with pest control may help.
- There is likely to be value in positioning Fish and Game New Zealand as supporting activities that are an important part of New Zealand's outdoor heritage. This message resonates most strongly with older New Zealanders and Canterbury residents and those living outside the main centers of Auckland and Wellington.
- What New Zealanders stated was a fair price for a range of licences for both freshwater fishing and game-bird hunting was either similar or much higher than the actual price. This suggests there is at least some head room for Fish & Game New Zealand to review the price of their licences. The licence-holder research will also help to provide direction on this topic.
- This research shows that when it comes to freshwater fishing and game-bird hunting Māori are more likely than the general population to participate in these activities and express a desire to take them up in the future.
- In response to a ministerial review, Fish & Game New Zealand are in the process of developing and implementing a new strategy (which has engaging with Māori as a key focus area). During this process it will make sense to not only think of Māori as a critical partner in how the fishing and hunting resource is managed but also as key participants of the New Zealand freshwater fishing and game-bird hunting community.



Primary  
Purpose