



**4 December 2025**

Email response to: Transport and Infrastructure Subcommittee, [Life Jackets for Children and Young Persons Bill - New Zealand Parliament](#)

Link to submitting on line: [Life Jackets for Children and Young Persons Bill 143-1 \(2025\), Members Bill – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Consultation closing 11 December 2025

Regarding: [Life Jackets for Children and Young Persons Bill](#)

**Summary:**

Fish and Game New Zealand supports the Life Jackets for Children and Young Persons Bill as notified. It is noted that some other agencies are recommending that the mandatory use of lifejackets should be required for all persons on all recreational craft, whenever the vessel is underway.

Fish and Game represents a sector of boat users that are typically fishing for trout in freshwater environments (lakes), spending large portions of the day anchored (either physically, or using gps assisted electric anchoring systems), drifting slowly, or motoring very slowly (less than 2 knots) while trolling for trout. It is considered that in most circumstances these activities are extremely low risk and it would be unnecessary to require adults to wear lifejackets when engaging in these activities.

Fish and Game would be comfortable with the expansion of the scope of the legislation to include adults on recreational boats under 6m while underway, providing this would exclude adults engaging in the activities outlined above. As such, we recommend that “while underway” does not include low risk activities such as electric anchoring, drifting, or moving at very slow speeds under 2 knots.

### **Recommended Scope of Legislation**

We are comfortable with amending the scope of the legislation for recreational vessels 6m or less for everyone on board, while underway:

- Must wear a life jacket
- The lifejacket must be securely fastened
- The lifejacket must be appropriate size for the wearer.

### **While Underway Definition**

We recommend that “while underway” exclusion include low risk activities on inland lakes such as:

- drifting
- motor powered vessels moving at very slow speeds under 2 knots or
- the use of electric anchoring.
- We note other suggested exclusions such as while the anchor is down or while sleeping on board.

Unpowered vessels under 6m length would not fall under the above exclusion and therefore we support wearing of lifejackets while underway for both adults and children.

### **PFD vs Lifejacket Terminology**

We do not oppose the change to the universal term of “life jacket” but only providing this refers to the Personal Flotation Devices listed in the bill.

### **Application of Bill**

We note that under the Maritime Transport Act 1994 provisions apply to New Zealand waters —

- (a) the territorial sea of New Zealand; and
- (b) the internal waters of New Zealand; and
- (c) all rivers and other inland waters of New Zealand

Therefore the provisions apply to our licence holders using boats under 6m in length angling or game bird hunting on lakes, rivers, wetlands and other inland waters.

### **Offences**

The information provided with the consultation does not state what the offence is in relation to not wearing life jackets. There needs to be penalties set out to ensure that people wear life jackets and comply with the law once enacted. During the phase in of the legislation It would be sensible to waive the fine if proof of purchase of lifejackets is provided within a certain time period.

## **Safe Boating Advice**

Maritime NZ's advice for safe boating is:

- *Ensure everyone wears a life jacket that fits for the whole trip, even the skipper*
- *Always take two waterproof ways to call for help*
- *Check the marine weather forecast before heading out on the water.*

If one of your communication devices is not waterproof, ensure that you have it stored in your lifejacket pocket in a dry bag.

Fish and Game support safe boating advice so that our licence holders get out fishing and game bird hunting whilst enjoying our water bodies.

We are available to discuss the content of this submission further if you have any questions.

## **Contact Details**

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on behalf of  
Richie Cosgrove, COO  
New Zealand Fish and Game Council

## **Attachments**

Attachment 1 – About Fish and Game

## About Fish and Game

- 1.1 Fish and Game is the statutory manager for sports fish and game, with functions conveyed under the Conservation Act 1987. The organisation is an affiliation of 12 regional Councils and one national Council. Together, these organisations represent approx. 130,000 anglers and hunters.
- 1.2 The sports fish and game resource managed by Fish and Game are defined and protected under the Conservation Act and the Wildlife Act 1953. The species within include introduced sports fish and a mix of native and introduced waterfowl and upland game<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.3 Our vision, purpose and values are illustrated below:

<b>OUR VISION</b> 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.	<b>OUR PURPOSE</b> 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.	<b>OUR VALUES</b> <b>TRUST</b> <b>INCLUSION</b> <b>CONNECTION</b> <b>SERVICE</b>
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- 1.4 Fish and Game is entirely funded by licence holder fees and private contributions, meaning the delegated function of managing the species for the public good is funded entirely by the users. It is a democratic '*user pays, user say*'s organisation. Using this system, Fish and Game funds public good research to ensure fisheries and game populations are managed sustainably; undertakes compliance with the licencing system; and contributes to public planning processes to ensure that hunters and anglers values are recognised and provided for.
- 1.5 In relation to planning, Fish & Game have the statutory function to advocate for hunters and anglers values and ensure that the habitats of gamebirds and sports fish are provided for. At any one time we may have around 150,000 licence holders, and a larger number (approximately 300,000) that are transient licence holders. The habitat we specifically advocate for includes lakes and rivers that contain trout and salmon (and other sports fish) and wetlands where game bird hunting occurs.

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<sup>1</sup> Most New Zealanders refer to these species as 'game birds', distinguishing them from other types of large game, such as deer or pigs. The Wildlife Act 1953 defines these birds simply as 'game' and this phrase is used in the context of this submission.

## **Fish and Game in Resource Management**

- 2.1 Fish and Game works to provide for the ongoing enjoyment of hunting and freshwater fishing assets, the maintenance (or enhancement) of public access to rivers, lakes, and wetlands for hunting and fishing, and the protection of the habitat of trout and salmon.
- 2.2 Hunting and angling require legal and physical access both to habitats and the resource itself. Maintenance and enhancement of access is critically important to the pursuits of our licence holders. The maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along lakes and rivers is listed in the RMA 1991 as a matter of national importance.
- 2.3 We see the opportunity for proposals to be required to provide improved access both to their sites and other nearby areas that involve hunting or fishing values as a form of mitigation for any loss of values on site. We seek that Fish and Game are consulted as an expert advisor where gamebird and or sports fishery values could be impacted. We can work with government officials to ensure outcomes that achieve both economic imperatives, along with recognising and providing for hunting and fishing values.
- 2.4 We specifically seek the protection of:
  - i. habitat of trout and salmon.
  - ii. maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes, and rivers where sports fishing and game bird values exist.
  - iii. preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, lakes and rivers and their margins where sports fishing and game bird values exist.
  - iv. Recognition and provision for freshwater angling/game bird hunting and amenity values.



# What does Fish & Game do?

**Who are we?** Fish & Game New Zealand manages, maintains and enhances sports fish and game birds and their freshwater habitats in the best long-term interests of anglers, hunters and all New Zealanders.

## Our vision

A New Zealand where freshwater habitats and species flourish, where game bird hunting and fishing traditions thrive and all New Zealanders enjoy access to sustainable wild fish and game resources.

**Together, let's ensure a thriving future for fishing and game bird hunting!**

## What we do

- Manage fishing and hunting regulations
- Conduct research to monitor fish and game bird populations
- Collaborate with communities to protect natural habitats
- Provide educational programmes and resources
- Advocate for valued habitats and species
- Negotiate and maintain access for anglers, hunters and all New Zealanders

[fishandgame.org.nz](http://fishandgame.org.nz)

**#ReWild**



## What does Fish & Game do?

**Species management:** We monitor and survey species populations; set season regulations; and sustainably manage pressure on the resource.

**Habitat protection:** Advocate and take action to protect and enhance lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands; and secure 'national park' status to important rivers through Water Conservation Orders.



**Access and participation:** Negotiate and advocate so all New Zealanders can access our natural places; maintain access signage, information and brochures; organise fishing and hunting events and classes.

**Public awareness:** Maintain public advocacy; schools programmes; website and newsletters; community liaison; promote the right of licensed anglers and game bird hunters to pursue their chosen pastime.



**Compliance:** Recruit, train, equip and coordinate warranted rangers, to educate and enforce regulations to ensure the fish and game resource is sustained.

**Licensing:** Provide a nationwide licensing system with a range of licence categories and sales channels that makes it easy to buy a licence. We are solely funded by licence holders.



**Council:** Hold public meetings of elected licence holders to approve regulations and budgets, set policies and provide governance for the Fish & Game system.

**Coordination and planning:** Provide research, planning and reporting; financial management and general coordination across Fish & Game New Zealand.



[fishandgame.org.nz](http://fishandgame.org.nz) #ReWild

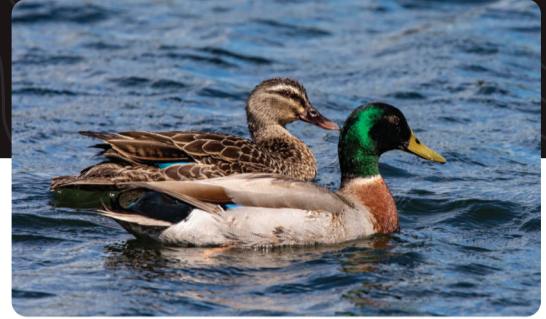
# Species we manage



Black Swan Kakianau



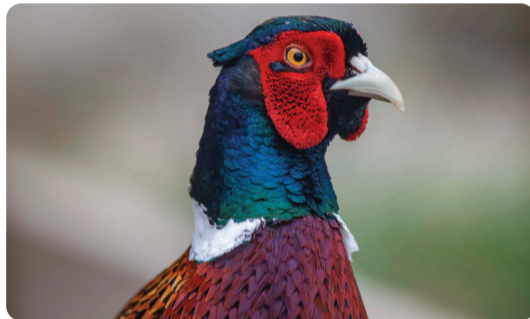
California Quail Koitareke



Mallard Rakiraki



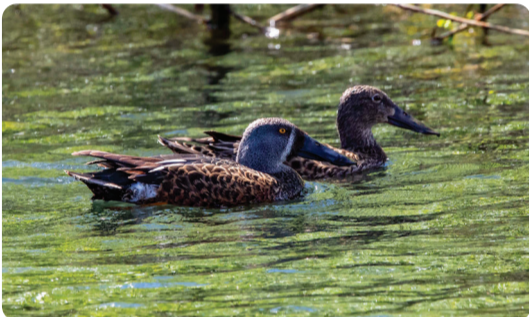
Paradise Shelduck Pūtakitaki



Pheasant Peihana



Pūkeko



Shoveler Kuruwhengi



Chukar



Grey Duck Pārera



Brown Trout



Rainbow Trout



Chinook Salmon



Sockeye Salmon



Brook Trout



Tiger Trout



Perch



Tench