AGENDA

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

29th November 2025

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held at the Waikato Deer Stalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton, on Saturday 29th November 2025 commencing at 11:30 a.m.

AGENDA

* Denotes attachments

** Denotes the need for council to make a decision.

G Annan,
Interim Chair

10/09/2025

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at Deer Stalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton.
Saturday the 27th September 2025 commencing at 11.00am

PRESENT:

Chairman:	G. Annan
Councillor's present in person:	S. Smith, M. Barker, E. Williamson, O. Kent, P. Dell., T. Clarke, A. Sapich, A. Brown
Staff:	D. Klee, D. Lelievre, A. Daniel
Members of the Public:	P. Hardy (DOC representative)

1. APOLOGIES:

G. Dickey, N Juby, D. Cocks, B. Jarvis-Child, It was moved;

that apologies be accepted.

Smith/Williamson– CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

Nil.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE 26th July 2025:

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meetings of the 26th July 2025 be accepted as true and correct records.

Dell/Smith– CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Council noted that there had been positive feedback on the region's access initiatives, particularly the mapping project led by Mr Jarvis-Child. Councillor Williamson suggested that staff prepare a short YouTube video to highlight the new functionality and features of the mapping system.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

5.1 Bi-monthly Chief Executives Report

Shoveler Counts: Councillor Smith noted that there appeared to be large numbers of shoveler around parts of the Kopuatai. The Chief Executive advised that good numbers had also been counted around Whangamarino, where favourable water levels coincided with this year's count.

Lake Arapuni Spawning Surveys: The Chair requested an update on this year's surveys. Mr Daniel reported that results were similar to last year, with approximately one third of the fish identified as hatchery origin.

Councillor Sapich joined the meeting at 11.15am

Infringement System

The Chief Executive advised that a further document had been provided by NZC for regional consultation; however, this was received after the agenda for the meeting had been finalised and sent to Councillors. The Chief Executive confirmed that a reply had been sent to Richie Cosgrove to ensure NZC was still operating on the basis of a two-meeting cycle timeframe for regional councils to provide feedback. The consultation document will be included in the next agenda.

Bethels Wetland Rates

Councillor Barker noted that Council is paying rates on the wetland and questioned whether rates relief may be available. The Chief Executive advised that enquiries had been made following the successful application for remission on the Stone Jug Road property and confirmed he would follow this up again, as no response had yet been received.

6. 2025/2026 BUDGET AND OWP CONFIRMATION

Council discussed the updated 2025/26 Budget and Operational Work Plan. Concerns were raised about the ongoing low level of general reserves, with forecasts showing reserves falling below the 20% threshold by 2026 despite recent budget reductions. Members noted that levy payments had redirected savings away from reserves and highlighted the risk of cashflow pressures given the timing of licence income.

Council agreed to approve the updated Budget and OWP, and requested that the Chief Executive write to NZC seeking clarification of the levy structure, a reduction in levy payments, and deferral of payments until after the game bird season.

7. It was moved;

That Council approve the 2025/26 Operational Work Plan and Budget, and that the Chief Executive write to NZC highlighting concerns regarding Council's low reserve levels, negative equity, and the issues outlined in the Chief Executive's report to Council. Further, it was resolved that Council seek an adjustment to levies to ensure it is not reliant on restricted reserves for cashflow.

Brown/Williamson – CARRIED

8. OUTGOING COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Letters to Minister Meager and NZC Governance Advisor Graeme Nahkies: Letters to Minister Meager and to NZC Governance Advisor Graeme Nahkies were added to the agenda for inclusion in the public record. It was noted that the letters had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and that Council's approval had been confirmed by email resolution before they were sent.

INCOMING COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Letter of Response from Graeme Nahkies: Council discussed its contents and noted disagreement with some of the assertions contained within. Councillor Williamson provided an overview of the discussions at the NZC meeting that related to the letter.

It was moved;

That the incoming correspondence be accepted.

Brown/Williamson – CARRIED

9. CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL REPORTING

Council discussed the consultation document, noting that it may be difficult for all regions to provide the metrics requested. Councillors observed that the proposed quarterly reporting timeframes appeared onerous and that the proposal could duplicate existing annual regional reporting requirements. It was suggested that the document be further workshopped with regional managers to ensure the metrics sought are available. Councillor Barker noted that some of the proposed metrics were not informative and provided little context for licence holders. Councillors agreed that the CAR should be outcome-focused to provide maximum relevance and clarity.

It was moved;

That the CE provides feedback to NZC requesting the CAR document is further workshopped at the upcoming managers meeting and remains outcomes focused to provide maximum context for licence holders.

Brown/Williamson – CARRIED

The meeting broke for lunch at 12.30pm and reconvened at 1.08pm

10. GENERAL BUSINESS

DOC AERIAL SURVEY WORK

Councillor Barker expressed concern regarding the helicopter work conducted by the Department of Conservation (DOC) during the duck shooting season. He questioned whether the month of May could be excluded from such operations in future. The Chief Executive advised that staff had been consulted on the proposed operation and had requested that the activity be delayed until after the season, however, this did not occur.

It was moved:
That the Chief Executive writes to the DOC Area Manager seeking to ensure that helicopter operations are avoided during the dabbling duck season in Whangamarino.

Barker/Williamson – CARRIED

GAME REGULATION REVIEW

The upcoming tri-annual game regulation review was discussed. The CE explained that remits were currently being considered and that staff were drafting the report for Council. Councillor Clarke noted that licence holders had been in touch with him regarding some of the existing regulations, particularly around pond feeding. The CE advised that any proposed changes should be submitted through the formal remit process to ensure they are properly considered within the national review framework.

AUSTRALASIAN TAXIDERMY CHAMPIONSHIP

The Chair noted that the Australasian Taxidermy Championships were being held in Taupō and mentioned that any Councillors who were in the area may wish to visit the exhibits.

11. OSH REPORT

The Chief Executive provided an update on the ongoing work he and Ms Lelievre were undertaking to improve the Health and Safety Plan and associated systems. He advised that National Chief Operating Officer Richie Cosgrove has a further meeting scheduled with the 'Get Home Safe' providers. As Council is aware, the Chief Executive has been advocating for a national single enterprise account for Fish & Game that regions can opt into. Council agreed that this approach appeared to be a more efficient method, enabling improved consistency and shared learning between regions.

The Chief Executive also summarised the previous Health and Safety (OSH) report, noting that there had been no notifiable incidents or injuries since the last meeting. Routine maintenance and site inspections had been completed across all managed wetlands, with

minor corrective actions undertaken. Staff training records had been updated, with refresher training scheduled for first aid and chainsaw certification later in the year. The Health and Safety hazard and incident registers were reviewed and updated to reflect recent field operations, and the monthly Health and Safety calendar continues to be used to track training, audits, and equipment checks.

It was moved;
that the OSH report for September 2025 is accepted.

Dell/Barker – CARRIED

12. NZC UPDATE

Councillor Williamson provided an update on recent New Zealand Council meetings he had attended. He explained the rationale for re-appointing Corina Jordan as Interim Chief Executive while Fish & Game continues to navigate the reform process.

Councillor Williamson also expressed ongoing concerns regarding the New Zealand Council's financial systems and budgeting practices. In his view, there remains a lack of financial oversight and limited clarity around how funds are being allocated and expended by the NZC and the national office

PUBLIC EXCLUDED MOTION

It was moved;

That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, pursuant to the provisions of Section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, on the grounds below.

Grounds Under LGOIMA: Section 7(2)(a) (to protect the privacy of natural persons, including staff), and Section 7(2)(f)(i) (to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between members or officers). Section 7(2)(c)(ii) (to avoid prejudice to measures protecting the health or safety of members of the public), and Section 7(2)(f)(i) (to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between members or officers).

Annan/Barker – CARRIED

2025 Tri-annual Gamebird Regulation Review

Beau Jarvis-Child

Dani Lelievre

2025/2026

1 COUNCIL POLICY

Council has the following polices that may affect the setting of the game season regulations:

1. Following 2012 F&G election, game season regulations set in accordance with staff recommendations shall be for three-year duration, subject to any material extraneous circumstances that might occur during that period (set 8 October 2011 and reaffirmed 15 October 2022).
2. Dabbling duck season to be from 1st Saturday in May.
3. Pukeko are included as a target species during any special shoot.
4. Thresholds set for the special paradise shelduck season in the King Country.
5. Criteria adopted for Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions.
6. Approval for applications for Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions is delegated to the Chief Executive.
7. The season length for partridge on Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions be from 4th April to the last Sunday in August.

2 SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Regulation	**Staff Recommendation**
Mallard and Grey Duck Season Length	Council considers and votes on options A, B or C.
Mallard and Grey Duck Bag limit	No change
Baiting	No change
Paradise shelduck Season Length and Bag Limit	Paradise shelduck limit north of Auckland increases to 25. No other change
Red-legged partridge April season	Council change policy on upland game property season length and remove the April season for red-legged partridge.

3 MALLARD AND GREY DUCK SEASON LENGTH

3.1 STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend council consider and vote upon the three broad regulatory pathways (A, B and C) outlined below.

3.2 STAFF COMMENT

In 2013, after several years of increasingly restrictive regulations, the Auckland/Waikato grallard season was reduced to four weeks in response to concerns over declining population size. At the time, hunters generally supported these measures. The key premise was that limiting the season length would reduce hunting pressure, lower total grallard harvest, and consequently allow more birds to survive into the breeding season, thereby contributing to future population recovery. Reducing season length may also prevent hunting encroaching into the start of the breeding season and promote increased productivity.

The results of the Gamebird Harvest Assessment, however, suggest that current season regulations have been relatively ineffective at reducing harvest rates (Auckland/Waikato Gamebird Harvest Assessment, 2025). Despite more than a decade under the current regulation framework, there has

been no sustained increase in population size, and current estimates remain well below those observed in the early 2000s (Grallard Population Report, 2025). Over this period, hunter sentiment has gradually shifted, with many now expressing a preference for a longer season.

Hunters provided the following reasons for preferring longer seasons:

- Limited hunting opportunities and therefore lower value for money compared to other regions. A restricted time frame also puts pressure on hunters' other commitments to family, work commitments and other hobbies.
- Less return on investment (e.g., wetland conservation, maintaining maimais, keeping a dog etc).
- The current four-week season often misses optimal weather and water conditions.
- Some hunters believe bird numbers are healthy enough to allow a longer season.

While many hunters stated they would be happy with a later season to align with the wetter weather in June, it is a council policy and a long-term tradition for the waterfowl season to start on the first weekend of May, meaning council policy would need to change before this is considered.

3.2.1 Hunter Perception

To gauge licence holder perception towards season length and bird numbers, we randomly surveyed 438 full-season 2025 licence holders as part of periods 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Gamebird Harvest Survey. We asked two questions:

- In your opinion, should next year's Auckland Waikato mallard season length be shorter, the same, longer, or don't know?
- How would you rate the number of mallards in your hunting area — from 1 (not enough mallards) to 5 (more than enough mallards)?

The hope here was to assess what a random portion of licence holders wanted regarding season length as well as their perception of the relative number of birds in their hunting area (enough vs not enough).

We found that of the 438 respondents;

- 50% (95% CI between 45.3% and 54.7%) felt that next year's mallard season length should be **longer**.
- 38.1% (95% CI between 33.7% and 42.8%) felt that next year's mallard season length should stay **the same**.
- 9.1% were **not sure**, or did not care (95% CI between 6.8% and 12.2%)
- 2.7% felt it should be **shorter** (95% CI between 1.6% and 4.7%)

Regarding the number of mallards in their hunting area, the average score was 3.42, just above 3 - the middle value on the scale, with 1 being "not enough mallards" and 5 being "more than enough mallards".

Binomial regression[1] indicates that individuals who voted for a longer season were more likely to be active hunters (β = 0.41, SE = 0.20, z = 2.08, p = .038). On average, individuals who wanted a longer season also felt that bird numbers were greater compared to those who did not want a longer season (β = 0.25, SE = 0.09, z = 2.71, p = .007). However, the latter is likely driven by an enthusiastic few who

[1] With longer (1) or not longer (0) season as the dependent variable, and hunted (during that period) age and perceived number of birds as independent variables.

felt there were more than enough birds[2] and wanted a longer season. Figure 1 shows the distribution of perceptions on the number of birds in a random selection of hunters' hunting areas based on whether they supported a longer season. Overall, the pattern is quite similar – for the most part, people's perception of the number of birds in their hunting area does not appear to be a significant factor in determining whether they want a longer season.

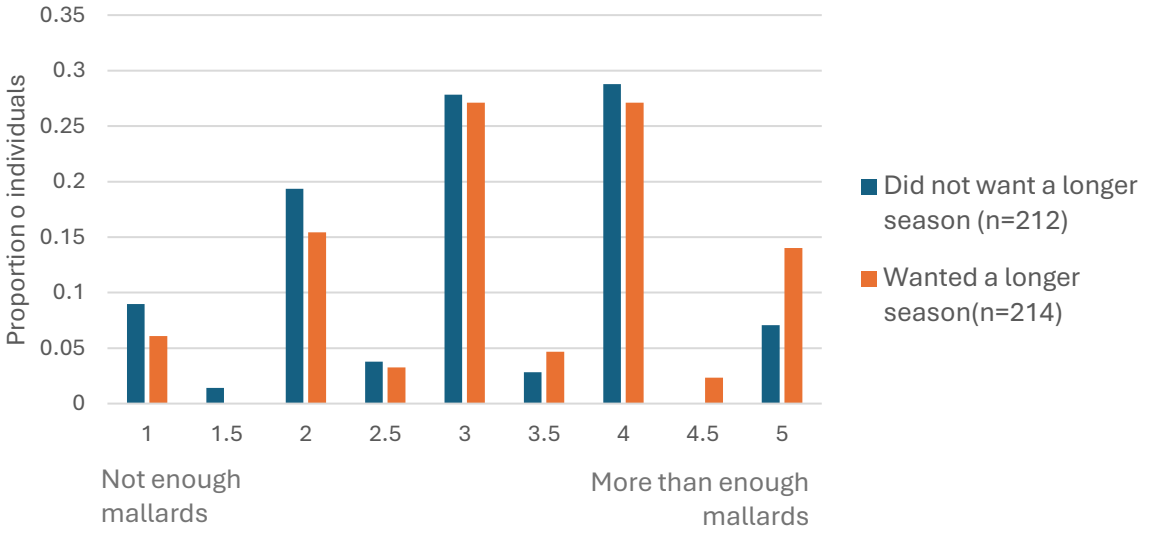

Figure 1: the distribution of hunters perceptions on the number of mallards in their hunting area (1 = not enough, 5 = more than enough) based on whether they wanted a longer season or not (combining same, shorter, and not sure).

3.2.2 Effectiveness of season length at reducing harvest

In New Zealand we hunt relatively sedentary populations of grallards and a high proportion of our total season harvest is constrained to the first two weeks of the hunting season with opening weekend being particularly important. Season length needs to be viewed in that context, acknowledging that even under relatively restrictive conditions, season length may not constrain hunter effort and will therefore have minimal impact on overall harvest in any given season.

Recent analysis shows that the decline in hours hunted observed in Auckland/Waikato post-2009 is not significantly different from that seen in neighbouring regions such as Taranaki and Northland, where season lengths have remained liberal (Harvest Report, 2025). There are general national trends of reduced hunter effort, regardless of season regulations across the country and hunter effort in the Auckland/Waikato may have declined to similar levels regardless of the more restrictive season length.

This is not to say that season length cannot be effective at reducing hunter effort (and therefore harvest, given they are closely linked), but rather that the decline in hunter effort we observe coinciding with season length may well have occurred regardless. This is backed up by our estimates of harvest rate, which, for the most part, have remained stable since 2002 (Grallard Population Report, 2025).

[2] If you remove 5 as an option, the effect of "perception of number of birds" is no longer significant.

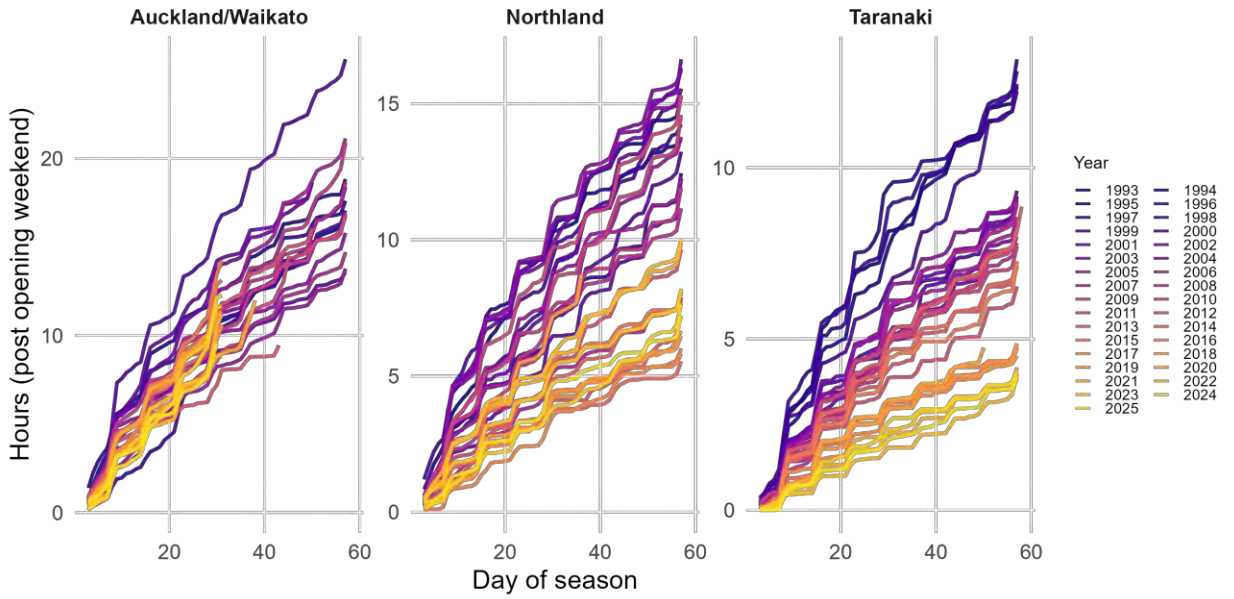

Figure 2: Cumulative daily mean hours spent hunting waterfowl per licence holder from 1993-2025, excluding opening weekend in the Auckland, Waikato, Northland and Taranaki regions. As shown in the 2025 Harvest Report.

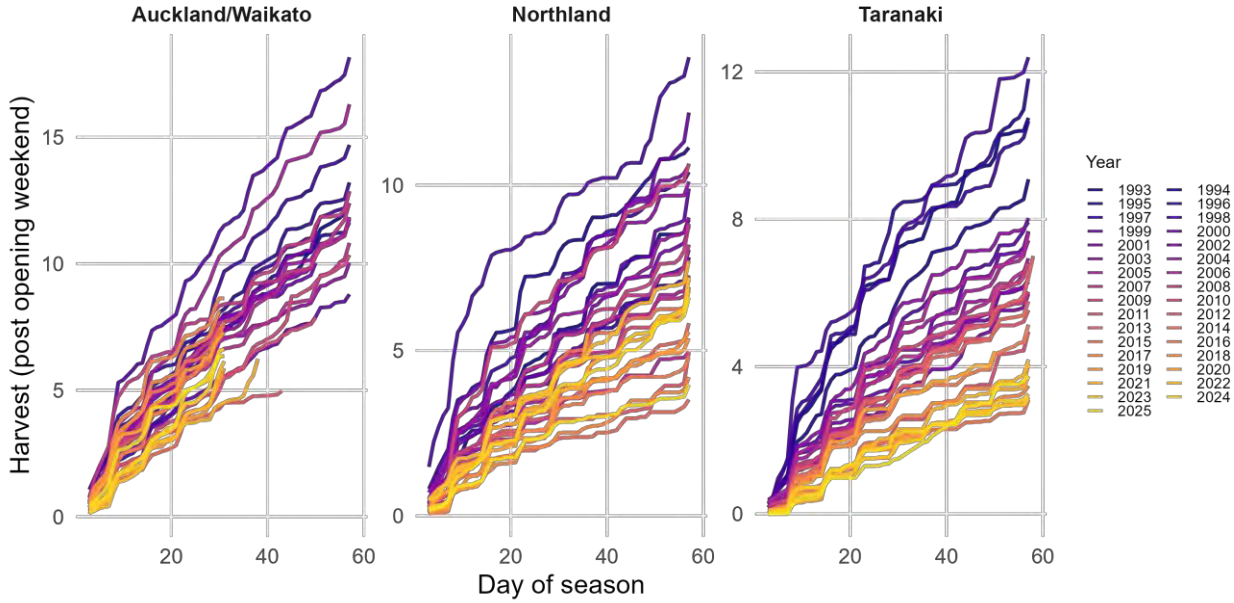

Figure 3: Cumulative daily mean grallard harvest per licence holder from 1993-2025, excluding opening weekend in the Auckland, Waikato, Northland and Taranaki regions. As shown in the 2025 Harvest Report.

These findings indicate that, under current population conditions, season length may not meaningfully limit hunter effort/harvest beyond what would occur under more liberal regulations. For example, a shift to a six-week season would likely yield a similar harvest. The Eastern Region's recent regulatory change illustrates this. Following an increase from a four to a six-week season in 2025, mallard harvest estimates rose only modestly from 23,922 (2023) and 22,639 (2024) to 25,603 in 2025 (Table 1).

Table 1: Estimates of total hours hunting waterfowl and total mallard harvest in the Eastern region in years with a four-week season (2021-2024) and, more recently, a six-week season (2025).

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total hours	47,796	45,553	54,270	45,436	54,337
Total mallard	22,114	20,953	23,922	22,639	25,603

We also observe this in harvest rates, which have remained relatively constant for the last two decades (Grallard Population Report, 2025). In this sense, while we are shooting fewer birds than we did 20 years ago we continue to harvest the same proportion of a smaller population.

3.3 OPTIONS A, B AND C

Staff recommend that the council consider and vote on three broad regulatory pathways, acknowledging there may be some trade-offs between setting highly restrictive harvest regulations that would be required to achieve a reduction in the number of birds shot and encouraging ongoing participation in the sport by providing sufficient hunter opportunity.

Option A: Status quo (No change)

Maintaining the status quo of a four-week season will likely continue trends in harvest and harvest rates as we have observed for the preceding 10 years. While links between harvest and population size are uncertain, we should expect the grallard population to remain reasonably stable, albeit with a slight downward trend. Hunter satisfaction is expected to be lower, given the strong desire for a longer season. There is a risk here that we continue to significantly restrict hunter opportunity without any meaningful reduction in harvest.

Option B: Mild liberalisation (Six-week season)

A six-week season will align with the preference of many hunters who desire a longer season to increase opportunity and take less pressure off competing interests (family, other hobbies etc). If trends in hunter effort match those in our neighbouring regions, we would expect the increase in total harvest to be minimal. Six weeks would also put us in line with our close neighbours at Eastern.

Option C: Ultra restrictive (2-day season)

While acknowledging that the link between harvest and population dynamics is largely unknown, we have likely never had sufficiently restrictive regulations to test it in our region. An ultra-restrictive regulation structure would allow us to test this. For example, a harvest rate of approximately 10% may allow us to observe if a lower harvest has a positive impact on population growth (although the exact rate at which harvest comes at a detriment to the population is unknown). However, to achieve this, we would need to reduce the total harvest by around 50%. This could potentially be done through ultra-restrictive regulations, such as a two-day season with a normal bag limit. However, we anticipate that ultra-restrictive regulations would be highly unpopular with hunters (less than 3% supported a shorter season, let alone ultra-restrictive regulations), and that such a change would be detrimental to compliance, participation, and sentiment towards F&G.

3.4 REMITS

Four-week season: Steve Dickson.

Five-week season: Bruce Inwards.

Six-week season: Jed Claude, Trent Robertson, Henry Van Hellemon.

Six-week season (with reduced bag after opening, or in the latter part of the season): Daley Jones, Ian Bailey, Eric Best, Tony Schuller.

Eight-week season: AJ Buttimore, Gary Edwards, Lance, A E Buttimore.

Eight-week season (with reduced bag after opening weekend): Blythen Wetland Pondholders.

Split season (i.e., close gamebird hunting for 12 days over Mother's Day): Bruce Inwards.

4 MALLARD AND GREY DUCK BAG LIMIT

4.1 STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Retain a bag limit of 8 mallard/grey duck to signal that the population is low.

4.2 STAFF COMMENT

In 2022, the Auckland/Waikato Council reduced the mallard/grey bag limit from ten to eight birds. The intent was not to substantially reduce harvest but to signal to hunters that populations were low and that sustainability should remain at the forefront of their minds.

Recent analyses support this rationale. At current population levels, bag limits have limited influence on total harvest unless they are highly restrictive. Even a substantial reduction to two birds per hunter would likely only decrease total harvest by approximately 50% (Harvest Report, 2025). Some remits suggested that lower bag limits could offset a longer season.

Bag limits are most effective at constraining harvest during opening weekend, when hunting success is highest. As a result, they disproportionately affect hunters who only participate at this time. For these individuals, a lower bag limit may be perceived as reduced value for money, especially compared with frequent hunters who pay the same licence fee. Trade-offs between season length and bag limits, therefore, need to be assessed not only in terms of their biological effectiveness but also their social implications.

Complex regulations—such as an "eight-bird opening limit followed by a six-bird limit"—add confusion without delivering meaningful conservation benefits. After opening weekend, only a small proportion of hunters reach the bag limit, meaning further reductions do little to affect overall harvest.

Overly restrictive limits may also create compliance issues, as hunters may view them as unreasonable. By contrast, moderate restrictions, such as shifting from 10 to 8 birds, can still play a valuable role. While their direct effect on total harvest is small, they communicate that the resource is under pressure and reinforce a conservation mindset. Unpublished work by M. Garrick (North Canterbury) also suggests that more "realistic" bag limits may positively affect hunter satisfaction by aligning expectations with typical harvest outcomes.

4.3 REMITS

Mallard bag limit of 10: Trent Robertson

5 BAITING

5.1 STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend continuing to exclude the Auckland/Waikato Region from the Waiver of Restrictions on Baiting for Waterfowl, especially if the season is extended.

5.2 STAFF COMMENT

Staff recommend that the Auckland/Waikato Region continue to be excluded from the Waiver of Restrictions on Baiting for Waterfowl. This means that baiting, i.e., casting, throwing, or placing food near water to attract ducks, will remain prohibited within 100 metres of any water body for the 30 days preceding and during the hunting season.

Historically, the exemption allowing baiting was introduced in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when mallard numbers were high. At that time, there was concern that the growing population could cause damage to crops and even lead to mallards being classified as a pest species. Baiting was therefore permitted to increase harvest pressure and help control numbers. However, the situation has since changed substantially. Mallard populations are now low, and the original justification for allowing baiting no longer applies. Continuing to prohibit baiting aligns with the current population status and the broader goal of supporting sustainable waterfowl management.

Feeding or baiting waterfowl before or during the season also raises ecological and ethical concerns. Artificial feeding can alter bird behaviour, making ducks less wary and more vulnerable to harvest. It can also allow some hunters, particularly those more likely to be able to afford the extra cost of grain, to monopolise local game bird populations. There is also evidence that feeding contributes to pest or vermin issues around feeding sites. From a welfare perspective, baiting blurs the distinction between hunting as a sport and simply managing for higher harvest. While some hunters argue that feeding improves bird condition, the benefits are likely limited. Feeding is still allowed for most of the year, and birds require high-protein diets from natural sources, especially before the breeding season, meaning grain feeding during autumn and winter is unlikely to be beneficial.

Despite some opposition, staff conclude that continuing to prohibit baiting remains the most appropriate course of action. It also provides a practical compliance advantage, as it can be monitored before opening weekend. If hunters are found feeding ponds in contravention of the regulation, an abatement notice can be issued before the season.

From a research perspective, it would be advantageous to adjust season length and baiting regulations at different times so their individual effects can be identified in the harvest data. In other words, if both baiting and a longer season were introduced in the same year and harvest increased, we would be unable to determine which change was responsible.

5.3 REMITS

Remove restriction on pond feeding: Henry Van Hellemon, AJ Buttimore, Blythen Wetland Pondholders, Eric Best, A E Buttimore, Steve Dickson

6 PARADISE SHELDUCK BAG LIMIT & SEASON LENGTH

6.1 STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That bag limit for the main paradise shelduck season north of Auckland is increased to 25 to match Northland. Season length and summer season regulations to stay the same.

6.2 STAFF COMMENT

6.2.1 North of Auckland

As shown in the 2025 Trend Count Report[3], estimates of relative abundance for paradise shelduck north of Auckland have increased considerably over the last 10 years. While there is no significant demand to liberalise bag limit restrictions, there is some logic in increasing the bag limit to match Northland as (1) the boundaries between the two regions intersect where a number of people hunt and (2) there is nothing separating the two regions that would mean they are separate "populations" either side of the border. Tables 2 and 3 show the 2025 regulations for Northland and Auckland/Waikato.

Table 2: Auckland/Waikato 2025 Gamebird regulations for paradise shelduck

Paradise shelduck	3 May to 29 Jun 2025	10	The region south of Auckland Harbour Bridge
	3 May to 29 Jun 2025	20	The region north of Auckland Harbour Bridge
	14 Feb to 15 Feb 2026	15	The region north of Auckland Harbour Bridge

Table 3: Northland 2025 Gamebird regulations for paradise shelduck

Paradise shelduck	3 May to 27 Jul 2025	25
	14 Feb 2026 to 22 Feb 2026	25

Looking at the last 5 seasons, it is clear that a few, albeit a small proportion of Northland hunters, shoot 20 or more in a day (Figure 4). On the other hand, Auckland/Waikato had almost none (11 out of 3251 surveyed hunts resulted in more than 10 paradise shots). In this respect, an increasing bag limit is unlikely to have a realised impact on harvest.

The special summer season in February should remain the same, as (1) the aim is primarily to disperse the birds that are causing issues with crops, and (2) we do not collect harvest data for this period, so we cannot say how much the bag limit is restricting harvest.

[3]https://www.fishandgame.org.nz/assets/DMS/About-us/FG-Regional-Councils/Auckland-Waikato/Staff-Reports/Game-Reports/2024-2025/Trend-Count-Report-2025.pdf

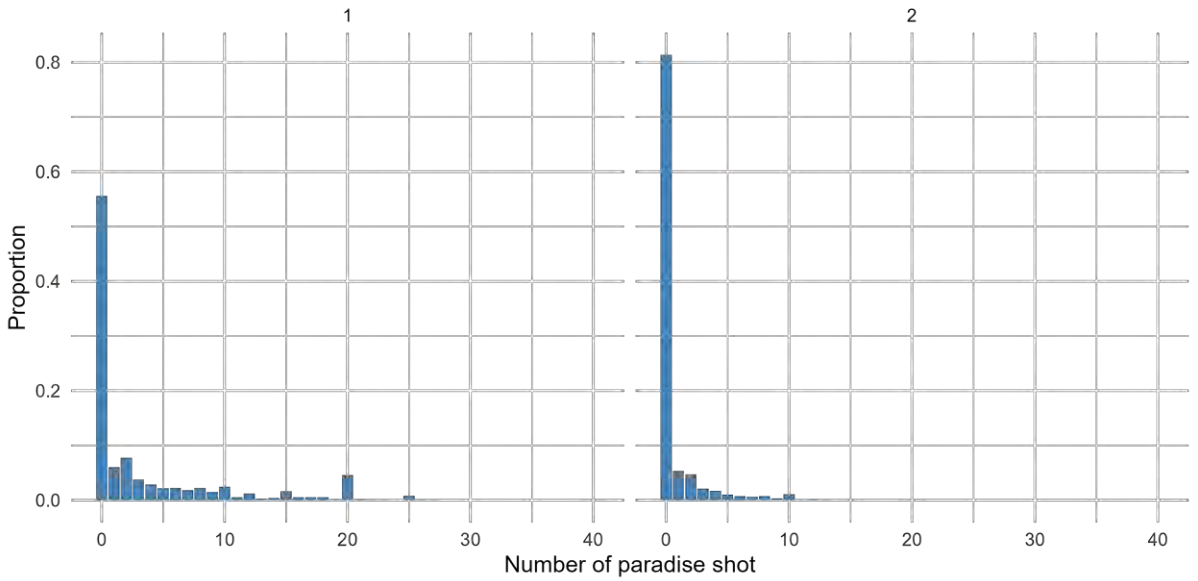

Figure 4: Distribution of paradise shot in Northland (left) and Auckland/Waikato (right) during the main season from 2020 to 2025.

6.2.2 South of Auckland

Analysis of trend count data (Trend Count Report, 2025) for paradise shelduck in the King Country indicates that the population declined from levels in the early 2000s but has been reasonably stable in recent years (2010-2025). Given that counts have been below the threshold for a summer season for the last three years, there is little justification for increasing bag limits or season length, as this is the first step in managing a growing population. If farmers are having issues with birds, they can request permits to disturb or cull them out of season.

6.3 REMITS

Extend paradise season to the end of June: Eric Best, Steve Dickson

7 RED LEGGED PARTRIDGE APRIL SEASON

7.1 STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Council change the policy "The season length for partridge on Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions is from 4th April to the last Sunday in August" to exclude April.

Remove the April season for Red-legged Partridge on Upland game properties (Lighthouse Station and Glen Massey).

7.2 STAFF COMMENT

Neither registered release site in our region wish to maintain an April season. Issues with the timing of our regulations have also been raised by NZC staff and therefore removing these regulations is straightforward.

8 REMITS

First off just want to say thanks and what great work you all do for us. I personally help and got to see some for you people while doing the banding in Parakai last year was super cool to meet your cool people and the work that yous do. The banding program is very cool and would love to see that continue.

I would love to see Mai mais on fish and game land have a 5 year ballot allocation. This would allow more people more chance to experience shooting in the waikato not just reserved for a selected few. Also allow the people to move to different spots around the area to try.

I think our season in auckland waikato could be longer to... I feel after opening weekend it's few and fair between to have lots of people shooting. If the season was 2 weeks longer it would be better. Even if duck limits were lower on the last 2 weeks.

That's all.
Thanks for reading.
Have a great day.
Daley Jones

I believe the season length should be extended to 6 weeks at least

My reasoning is as follows.
There is a common attitude developing of the lack of value of participation due to the short season, a lot of people only get out once or twice after opening weekend.

I believe mallard numbers are healthy and that your harvest study data isn't an accurate representation of what we are seeing in the field. From a quick read there are many issues with harvest data that suggest it shouldn't be the sole factor in determining season length.

One of the major issues with the short season is the lack of suitable weather in may. After opening weekend weather can be the biggest factor in the success of a hunt.

I believe the majority of licence holders will support a longer season and not appreciate being dictated to in contradiction of what they are seeing in the field
Regards,
Jed Claude

Hi there,

Please see below my recommendations for changes in the Auckland/Waikato region.

Duck movement depends on weather, not region. We already have the shortest season, yet the recent banding studies show that ducks move widely based on conditions. For example, many birds were taken in the Far North at the start of the season when flooding pushed them there. Ducks are very mobile, so limiting Auckland/Waikato hunters to such a short window doesn't reflect how the birds actually move. For example the first weekend after the season finished there were thousands of ducks gathered because the water had finally come up in the swamp.

The short season also puts l pressure on specific areas, with only a few weeks available, hunters crowd into specific spots regardless of whether conditions are right. This puts pressure on certain areas and the birds.

Young hunters are less likely to spend $120 on a license if they only get a handful of opportunities to shoot, once work and other commitments are factored in. If we want to attract new people into the sport, we need to give them a fair opportunity.

Increase the limit to 10 as there are more than enough ducks, if the conditions are right the ducks will come. People assume there are barely any ducks when they are shooting the same place every time and the weather isn't right - this is caused by the short season as mentioned above.

Effort put into maintaining habitats and wetlands are sometimes wasted. Hunters put significant time and money into maintaining swamp blocks, but if the weather doesn't line up in a short four-week season, those efforts don't get rewarded. A longer season would help ensure this isn't wasted.
Thank you,
Trent Robertson

Hello David.

I'm writing this out of sheer frustration and deep disappointment.

Duck shooting has always been a cornerstone of my family's way of life – and by extension, that of our close friends as well.

We've been fortunate enough to own land dedicated solely to this tradition, which speaks volumes about how important this has been to us over the years.

We live in suburban Auckland and originally had a block in Kumeu, just 20 minutes from home, where we'd stay and shoot. That land now borders a housing subdivision, and being mindful of safety and the changing environment, we made the call to stop shooting there.

About 12 years ago, we bought a new block in South Head, Helensville – the one you and I met at a few seasons back.

Our land is part of the dune lake system that runs parallel to Woodhill Forest. For most of the time we've owned it, the lakes were dry. But over the past 18 months, nearby logging in Woodhill Forest

has caused the water table to rise. Now, for the first time, we've got open water and a thriving wetland taking shape.

Last year was my first season shooting at the block – and while we had ducks, the infrastructure left a lot to be desired. This year, I've put in serious time and money to improve things. Ironically, the ducks didn't show up. But that's how it goes.

What matters most is that our family now has a place to return to – a reason to come together, share a few laughs and steaks, crack a beer, and give each other a bit of grief over old and new antics. It's more than just shooting. It's connection, its tradition, and it's ours.

I apologise if the above seems long-winded, but I felt it necessary to paint a full picture to explain my deep frustration and disappointment.

Around 10-12 years ago, the waterfowl season in the Auckland/Waikato region was cut from two months down to one. At the time, many of us agreed with the decision—we'd noticed a drop in duck numbers and accepted the shorter season in good faith, assuming Fish & Game would reassess and possibly reinstate a longer season when conditions improved.

That never happened.

And while I'm sure there are sound ecological or regulatory reasons for this, the reality is that this change has caused real issues for families like mine—ones who've built traditions and made long-term commitments to this pastime.

Back when the season ran for two months, we'd shoot opening weekend, then pick three or four other weekends to head out. It allowed us to balance family life, work, and our passion for duck shooting.

Now, with only a single month to work with, our flexibility is gone. We're forced into a very narrow window, and the pressure on that time is enormous. It's genuinely affected our ability to enjoy and justify the effort—something that's spanned three generations in my family.

Take the current season layout as an example:

- **Opening weekend in early May** – Fantastic. No calendar clashes. It's now a firmly locked-in date for our family.
- **Second weekend: Mother's Day** – This is where it gets tough. I might not fuss over Father's Day, but ignoring Mother's Day is a fast track to trouble. It's not just the wife—it's also the mother, the mother-in-law, and now apparently the expectation of a nice lunch out, or at least a well-thought-out afternoon tea. Like it or not, that weekend is off the table unless you're single, divorced, or socially reckless.
- **Closing weekend: King's Birthday long weekend** – On paper, a great time to go shooting. In practice, if you're married with kids, it's a minefield. With weekend sports and family plans, the idea of duck shooting for three straight days is unrealistic. For most of us, it's reduced to a single rushed night, which feels like a poor return on what used to be a key weekend in the calendar.

This limited season doesn't just reduce the time we can spend in the field—it also erodes the sense of *value* that duck shooting once had.

I'm 44. And I'm finding it increasingly difficult to convince my mates to join in. Sure, they come along—but it's my gear, my dog, my guns, my land. Last season, I even paid for my best mate's licence. This year, when I invited another mate, his first complaint was the cost of the licence—he wasn't convinced it was worth buying.

What I'm seeing – and feeling – from my own group of mates is a real lack of value.

The value just isn't there for them. It's a sharp contrast to the older generation I grew up shooting with—those blokes had their own gear, pitched in, and made some big effort. They saw value because they had *opportunity*.

Even my father, a lifelong shooter, has given up. No licence. No dog. He used to renew his licence out of principle, even on his own land. Now? Lost interest, reduced opportunity, lack of value.

To me, the real value of duck shooting lies in bringing people together, getting outdoors, and maintaining a connection with our environment. Sure, more ducks would help—but in over 30 years, I've never come close to shooting a full bag. My best day? Probably five birds.

So, it's not about the numbers. It's about time, access, tradition, connection, opportunity.

Right now, we're losing that. And if nothing changes, I worry that I can't justify this to myself and will quietly drift away. And I'm a lucky one with private land access and financial means.

Over time, a few ideas have come up within our group that we believe could help improve the duck shooting experience in a realistic and meaningful way:

1. Shift the season end date so it doesn't fall on King's Birthday weekend.
Even just extending the season by one additional week would make a world of difference. It would decouple the closing weekend from a key family/public holiday and give shooters more flexibility.

2. Introduce a split season.

For example, start with a nationwide opening weekend, then close the Auckland/Waikato region for about 12 days over Mother's Day. Reopen for the third weekend of May, giving us a second 'opening weekend' feel. Then close the season the weekend *after* King's Birthday.
This format creates more defined and manageable windows for shooters to plan around, while also reducing clashes with important family commitments.

3. More ducks.

Yes, I know, send some more birds my way please. In my experience, the bigger issue isn't the number of birds—it's the *opportunity* to get out there and enjoy the experience without sacrificing family goodwill.

Frankly, points 1 and 2 are far more highly relevant and quite achievable and would go a long way toward improving participation and satisfaction.

Simply moving the season's closing weekend would instantly improve the perceived value for every licence holder in the Auckland/Waikato region. It's a small change with a significant impact—it gives shooters a better shot at fitting their passion into modern family life.

In my case, it would absolutely reduce the stress levels in our household. I've got three energetic daughters and a wife who's fully involved in weekend sport. Finding time to shoot without upsetting the balance is increasingly difficult. Even my daughters' schools have aligned with Kings Birthday and have allocated Friday as Teacher Only Day. And because of the long weekend my wife's family organised a Family Reunion.

We're not asking for miracles—just a bit of flexibility that reflects the reality of life today, because at its core, this is about much more than regulations or bag limits.

I've held a game licence most of my life, except for the few years I was living overseas. But as far as I know, there's never been any proper discussion beyond the committee level about this. So the question is – what would it take to raise this issue formally? Because right now, the gap between continuing and walking away feels very small.

Just the other week, I spent three full days – dawn to dusk – building bridges just to reach our two maimais, after rising water levels went over the top of our gumboots. Then, last weekend, after Saturday sport, I shot up to the block to throw together a platform – all because my old man decided to come up for the first time. His interest has faded over the years, but now he's suddenly keen and talking about getting his mates up too. Great. Except there's only one weekend left as Mum expects him at the family bach for Kings Birthday Long weekend….

Our family has put over a million dollars toward our block. And what is the return? Four solid days a year, if we're lucky – with low duck numbers. From a return-on-investment point of view, it's hard to justify. From my wife and kids' perspective, I'd be better off packing it in altogether.

But then I think about the memories – the good times, the tradition, the mate ship. That's what keeps me hanging on, stubborn as ever. But maybe I'm just clinging to the glory days.

-Or maybe those days are still worth fighting for. But honestly, it's bloody disappointing, especially of late watching my old man's interest decreasingly fade. He was invited barramundi fishing across Opening Weekend this year. And went. Historically that invitation would have been heartily declined.

My apologies again for the length of my ramblings but I hope you endeavour to review the issues I have outlined above. I also extend my previous invitation for you to return and have a hunt on our block in the foreseeable future.

Kind regards

Bruce Inwards

Hey there, you guys rang me a few weeks ago for feedback on the Auckland/ Waikato region. And one piece of feedback from me and everyone I talked to is that the season should be extended for 15 days longer for mallards, shovelers, and greys. Because a lot of the time we don't get any good weather (rain and wind) in may and if the season gets extended it allows more time for the weather to come in june.

Another common piece of from people from our area is not being able to feed in April, when other regions can feed whenever. Feeding in a region keeps the ducks in the area and if we aren't feeding and other people are the ducks go to other regions

Yours sincerely

Henry Van Hellemon

I wish to submit the following remit for the game bird regulations

The Grey / Mallard season length run from the first Saturday in May until the last Sunday in June

- Drier conditions in May have meant the Whangamarino has not flooded properly until the last weekend of the Mallard season 6 out of the last 10 seasons (wouldn't have flooded at all in Covid year if it was a standard season)
- Reduced season length has resulted in less people committing to game bird shooting, F&G are selling a product by reducing season length it reduces incoming to expand our sporting options
- Families with children have sports on Saturdays making Sunday the only possible hunting option
- Bird numbers have been healthy last season and observing this breeding season numbers are in good shape again
-

Feeding of Waterfowl

- Auckland Waikato should allow feeding of Waterfowl through the whole of the season, We are the only region in the country that doesn't permit this activity
- It can create flights of birds on days when they are not moving
- Feeding does not necessarily guarantee shooting opportunities but gives the birds better conditioning

Thank you
AJ Buttimore

Thank you for the opportunity to make the following submission to the 2025 review of the gamebird hunting regulations.
That the hunting season for grallards be extended in length by 2 weeks, with a daily bag limit of 8 birds/day for opening weekend and 6 birds/day thereafter.
I consider the bird numbers experienced last season, combined with the number of breeding birds we are currently observing, are more than sufficient to justify lengthening the hunting season, especially when combined with a reduced bag limit after opening. This will give enhanced hunting opportunities for licence holders and more time to include junior hunters and introduce mates to the sport. We should be encouraging the use of dogs for hunting, and an added bonus will be an extra 2 weeks work for the dogs, further justifying the expense of keeping them for the rest of the year.
Ian Bailey

2025 F&G Auckland/Waikato Submission #1

Thank you for the opportunity to make the following submission to the 2025 review of the gamebird hunting regulations. Our submission represents the unanimous agreement of the UPWMA committee and represents over 130 F&G license holding members.

We wish to submit the following:

That the Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game council properly debates and evaluates all submissions and does not rubber stamp the assessment of them done by management, and that no vote is taken until the advertised meeting to consider them.

In 2022 we put in submissions at the 3 yearly hunting regulations review and indicated our willingness to speak to them at the relevant council meeting. At the start of the meeting our two representatives were informed by the chairman that management had done an assessment on all submissions, and that their recommendations would be adopted. In other words our representatives were wasting their time. We elect councillors to represent us as license holders and expect them to be given the chance to do so, by having open and minuted discussion after all opinions have been heard. We expect democracy, not bureaucracy.

Mike O'Donnell

Secretary
Upper Piako Wetlands Management Association

The Blythen Wetland Pond Holders wish to make the following submission:

1. *EXTENDED SEASON – we wish to propose extending the season to 8 weeks and below are the points we currently have to motivate our submission:*
    a. *We recommend an 8-bird limit per day on the Saturday and Sunday of opening weekend, then to reduce to a 5-bird limit per day for the rest of the 8-week season. Motivation:*
        i. *Weather conditions are not suitable in the first 6 weeks from the beginning of the season.*
        ii. *If extended to 8 weeks, more people will not shoot fine weekends, but pick a weekend more suitable later in the season, when historically we get the better shooting weather in June*
        iii. *Families with young kids are tied up with weekend sports. By extending the season, it will provide more opportunities to involve young hunters in the sport*
        iv. *More opportunity can create more license sales, especially in this economic climate. License sales have been dropping.*
2. *FEEDING AT PONDS*
    a. *We recommend that feeding be done throughout the year, as per other regions. Motivations:*
        i. *Due to having to cease feeding one month prior to opening weekend, ducks are being pushed to farmers, on private properties, for feeding*

ii. *By feeding the ponds throughout the season, the birds will be kept in the high-quality water areas.*
iii. *This may also keep them away from high-risk botulism areas*
iv. *We are the only F&G area that ceases feeding of ponds a month out from opening season*

Sincerely
Martin Bester
Blythen Wetland Pond Holders

POND FEEDING:
Pond feeding should be allowed all year round.
Reason : To bring us into line with the rest of the North Island.
Why is it People can shoot on freshly cut maize paddocks, without fear of prosecution, yet I can be fined and prosecuted for shooting with maize present with in 100 meters of my pond.
Hardly a level playing field under current regulations.

SEASON LENGTH:
I would like to see the season extended by 2 weeks, with 8 bird (Mallard) limit per person, for opening weekend, and then the limit reduced to 6 birds (Mallard) per day for the duration of the season.
Reasons:

- It is becoming the norm now for a lot of ponds and swamps in particular to be dry for most of the season, only getting water towards the end of our current season's dates
- A lot of hunters have children who are committed to Saturday sport. This only gives them, limited opportunities to hunt, when we need to be encouraging younger people to remain active and engaged in our sport, or we risk losing them.

PARADISE DUCK SEASON LENGTH:
Extend to the end of June.
Reason: Extended hunting opportunities and keeping farmers happy who sometimes have large flocks congregating on paddocks needed for stock feed though out the winter months.

Regards
Eric Best

I live in Auckland and would like the duck season to be extended for another 4 weeks to the end of June
The reason for this is towards the end of May it starts to rain and the weather is better for Duck hunting
The last two years in the Whangamarino Swamp it has been Dry and we could only hunt it the last week of the season

Also if we have a longer season I would have more time to take my kids out hunting so they can get into the sport
Regards
Gary Edwards

Hi All

I hope this note find you all well as we move into the longer days of spring.
I would like to put a remit in for next season. With the modern day work patterns and family commitments it is not easy to get out over the season for duck hunting. Last season I got out 6 times and mostly week days after opening weekend.
I would like to suggest an 8 week season with a daily bag limit of 7 to 8 ducks.

Cheers Lance

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1. I support an 8 week waterfowl season.

Reasoning : with the weather patterns changing April and May are now mostly dry months and a number of major popular hunting swamps in the AWFG region remain dry going into the opening day and have remained that way for most of the current 4 week seasons with only a few days at the end of the season getting enough rainfall to maintain even marginally levels of water to attract waterfowl and be shootable.

Hunters who have stands in these swamps are continually marking up, maintaining them, predator control and trapping for no opportunities to shoot them within the current 4 week season. There is also weekend work, kids sports etc which restricts when hunters can partake in their chosen sport.

Also we are seeing less young people taking up hunting and particularly game bird hunting and this must be a worry for AWFG. One way to offset that is to offer a Game Season that gives value and time to participate.

2. I fully support Game Bird Feeding before and during the Hunting Season.

Reasoning : The Game Bird Limit is the limit and not everyone wants to / or has to shoot their limit and does not mean more ducks will be shot.

Feeding restrictions is not a problem in any other F & G Region in NZ !! Are we the only F & G Region that is doing the right thing or are we one that is out of step with the rest of NZ ?

More importantly in my opinion feeding ducks gives them a better chance of growing up healthy, strong and being able to have bigger clutches.

A duck that is strong and healthy has a better chance of warding off predators. I also think you will find dedicated hunters will feed throughout the year, although some will only feed before and during the season, is this a bad thing ? ....ducks that have been fed on a pond won't stay around once the shooting starts.... they will disperse to other wetlands in the area for other hunters to get the benefit. I have noticed in dry years / seasons the ducks in our region leave totally and it can take weeks for them to return after water levels get back. Feeding on permanent wetlands during these times, including closed game areas, would tend to hold birds in the region for licence holders' benefit.

Thank you

A E Buttimore

Please find my submission below for your consideration.

POND FEEDING :

I believe pond feeding should be allowed all year round.

Reason: To bring us into line with the rest of the North Island

SEASON LENGTH:

Keep the status quo, same season length with 8 bird per day limit.

PARADISE DUCK SEASON LENGTH:

Extend to the end of June.

Reason : Extended hunting opportunities and keeping farmers happy who sometimes have large flocks congregating on paddocks needed for stock feed though out the winter months.

Regards

Steve Dickson

As far as changes go, I would like to see Auckland Waikato season start date either delayed or our season extended into the month of June so we have a chance of some decent wet weather and the public waterways we shoot on get some water flows into them to attract game.

I have hunted ducks for well over 50yrs now in this area and generally May is a lot Drier than years ago, we have not used our opening weekend Whangamarino Wetland pond for probably 5 years now due to lack of water in the month of May.

I would rather have an extended season into June, maybe a reduced bag after opening weekend if game bird numbers were low.

I am also in favour of keeping the 3 shot maximum capacity.

Regards

Tony Schuller

Mallard and Grey Duck Population Status

Beau Jarvis-Child 2025/2026

1 SUMMARY

Grallards, the hybrid form of mallard and grey duck, remain the most popular gamebird species in the Auckland/Waikato region. This report updates population estimates from 2002–2025 using band-return data, harvest estimates from the Game Bird Harvest Survey, and improved estimates of band-reporting rates. The intent is to better understand long-term population trends, how confident we can be in these estimates, and what steps are needed to ensure robust monitoring for future management decisions.

1.1 CURRENT STATUS

The current population is considerably lower than in the early 2000s, with a decline occurring around 2009. Since that decline, the population appears to have stabilised at a reduced level, with year-to-year fluctuations of moderate magnitude. The 2025 estimate is among the lowest recorded in the last decade and similar to levels observed in 2019, 2021, and 2022. However, the drivers behind this recent drop require careful interpretation.

In particular, the 2025 estimate is strongly influenced by data from Aka Aka, a banding site in the Waikato River delta where birds have exhibited consistently high harvest rates. As Aka Aka contributed a large proportion of banded birds in 2025, and because harvest rates there were high (around 35%), the regional harvest-rate estimate increased noticeably. When this single site is removed from the calculation, the 2025 population estimate increases by approximately 115,000 birds. This does not necessarily imply that Aka Aka data is incorrect, rather, it highlights the sensitivity of the population estimates to where birds are banded and the importance of spatial representativeness in sampling.

1.2 INFLUENCES ON THE ESTIMATES

Long-term spatial analyses show that hunting effort and harvest intensity are concentrated in a handful of familiar hotspots such as the Waikato River delta, Whangamarino Wetland, the Waipa River, and the Hauraki Plains. Due to the significant time and financial constraints associated with carrying out banding programmes, banding is limited to five or six sites maximum per year. Therefore, there is a risk that a pooled estimate of harvest rate may not always be representative of the population.

Another factor that influences harvest-rate estimates is age structure. Juveniles consistently make up the majority of banded birds, largely due to how and when traps are set. Juveniles are generally more vulnerable to harvest than adults, and an overrepresentation of juveniles in the banding sample can inflate harvest-rate estimates and therefore underestimate population size. A sensitivity analysis showed that adjusting for this imbalance would have increased population estimates by more than 100,000 birds in around half of the years modelled. In the past few years, however, the influence of age bias appears minimal because adult and juvenile harvest rates have been similar.

Environmental variables such as seasonal rainfall, drought indices, and soil moisture did not explain annual changes in population estimates. Even during years with severe drought, no detectable population response was observed in this dataset. This does not rule out the influence of climate as environmental effects may operate over different spatial scales or in ways that are not captured by the indicators available. Population trends in the neighbouring Eastern Fish & Game region closely match those seen here, suggesting that large-scale environmental forces are shared across regions.

1.3 Interpretation and Implications

The findings show a population that remains depressed relative to 20 years ago, but has not experienced an additional major decline. The 2025 decline appears to reflect a combination of high harvest rates at a single banding site and sampling imbalance rather than a sudden shift in region-wide population dynamics.

The elevated harvest rate observed at Aka Aka warrants continued attention. If similar harvest pressure occurs in other parts of the region, we may be underestimating the scale of potential overharvest. Conversely, if Aka Aka represents a uniquely productive local hotspot, its influence on regional harvest-rate estimates should be weighted accordingly.

1.4 Recommendations

Future work should focus on refining how banding data is used so it is representative of the local population. In particular, a weighting framework for harvest rate may improve how we account for uneven banding effort and annual changes in catch rate across the region. As with the 2025 Harvest Report, collaboration with other banding regions will likely be key to improving the broader understanding of the Auckland/Waikato population.

2 Introduction

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and grey duck (*Anas superciliosa*) are well distributed throughout New Zealand and are the dominant gamebird species in the Auckland/Waikato region. Hybridisation between the two species now means that the population consists of a hybrid form, referred to here as grallard.

Despite having the potential to be a highly productive species (large clutch sizes, early sexual maturity), the Auckland/Waikato population has been trending downwards. Many factors may impact this, including, but not limited to, nest predation, duckling survival, habitat loss, harvest mortality, adult female survival, and environmental factors such as drought.

A recent study in the Waikato found that duckling survival is the most influential factor affecting population growth of mallards in New Zealand (Sheppard, 2017). Furthermore, the study found that a stable population is unlikely to be obtained by increasing breeding and non-breeding (i.e., harvest) survival of females alone (i.e., duckling survival would have to increase simultaneously), and that non-breeding survival rates would need to reach close to 0.9, which is not realistic for a game species (Sheppard, 2017).

To monitor the grallard population, the Auckland/Waikato region has run a banding program since 2002 and conducted harvest surveys since 1993. This report uses this data to estimate the Auckland/Waikato grallard population size from 2002 to 2025. In addition, investigate how changes in harvest rate, banding location, age composition, and environmental conditions affect these population estimates.

3 METHODS

3.1 ESTIMATING THE GRALLARD POPULATION

Grallard population size ($\widehat{N}$[1]) is calculated for each year using the Lincoln estimate (Lincoln, 1930), which states that if the proportion of the population harvested (harvest rate $\hat{h}$), and the total harvest $\widehat{H}$ are known, then the total population can be estimated by dividing $\widehat{H}$ by $\hat{h}$. This is more commonly written as:

$$\widehat{N} = \frac{b\widehat{H}\hat{\rho}}{r}$$

Where b is the number of newly banded birds, r is the number of newly banded birds shot in the preceding season (also called first-year returns), $\widehat{H}$ is the estimate of the total grallard harvest, and $\hat{\rho}$ is the probability of band reporting.

Estimates of total harvest are informed by data generated from the Game Bird Harvest Survey (GBHS), which runs over several survey periods that span the gamebird season. Within each period, a minimum of 120 full-season licence holders are phoned and questioned about how many ducks they harvested over that period. We estimate the average grallard harvest per person for each period. The sum of all periods represents the average harvest per person throughout the season. This can be multiplied by the number of licence holders to get an estimated total harvest for the year.

Values for b and r are known; however, because not all bands get reported, non-reporting each year is corrected by estimating the non-reporting rate ($\hat{\rho}$). Previously, data to estimate $\hat{\rho}$ was collected as part of the GBHS, and a three-year average was used due to estimates having high uncertainty and fluctuating considerably from year to year. In 2024 and 2025, a SMS survey was conducted with the aim of improving estimates (SMS Band Reporting Rate Pilot, 2024). The report found that the verified reporting rate in 2024 was approximately 52%. Given that this may be the least biased estimate of $\hat{\rho}$ this rate was extrapolated to all previous years estimates. There are naturally limitations to this. However, it is worth noting that:

1. No significant trend was observed over time based on the GBHS data.
2. Eastern's verified reporting rates[2] are also consistent over time, albeit a bit higher at around 58%.

Reporting rates for 2024 and 2025 (which had boosted reporting as a side effect of the SMS survey) were 56% and 58.8%, respectively.

It is also worth noting that $\widehat{H}$, $\hat{h}$ and $\hat{\rho}$ have their associated uncertainty, which needs to be included in the estimate of $\widehat{N}$. More details on this are found in the paper by Alisauskas et al. (2014).

The data was cleaned so that hand-reared birds were excluded from the analysis due to concerns that they were not representative (hand-reared birds are more likely to be harvested and more or less likely to be reported – depending on the site). Bands returned outside of the hunting season were also

[1] The "hat" notation signifies an estimated quantity.
[2] Which are also calculated in a way which means previous years data are used towards the current years estimate. Specifically a Bayesian approach with previous years estimates as priors.

excluded due to representing non-harvest mortality. Likewise, for birds banded outside of the region, but that appear in Auckland/Waikato banding database.

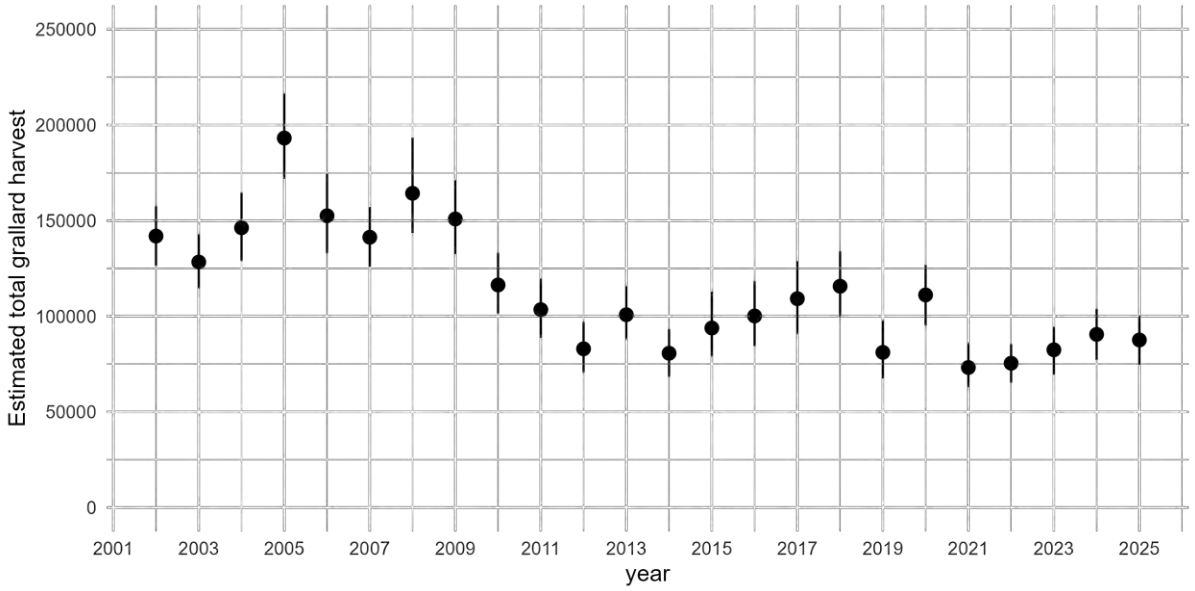

Figure 1: Auckland Waikato total grallard total estimated harvest $\widehat{H}$ from 2002 to 2025 (the years we have a banding programme) with 95% confidence intervals.

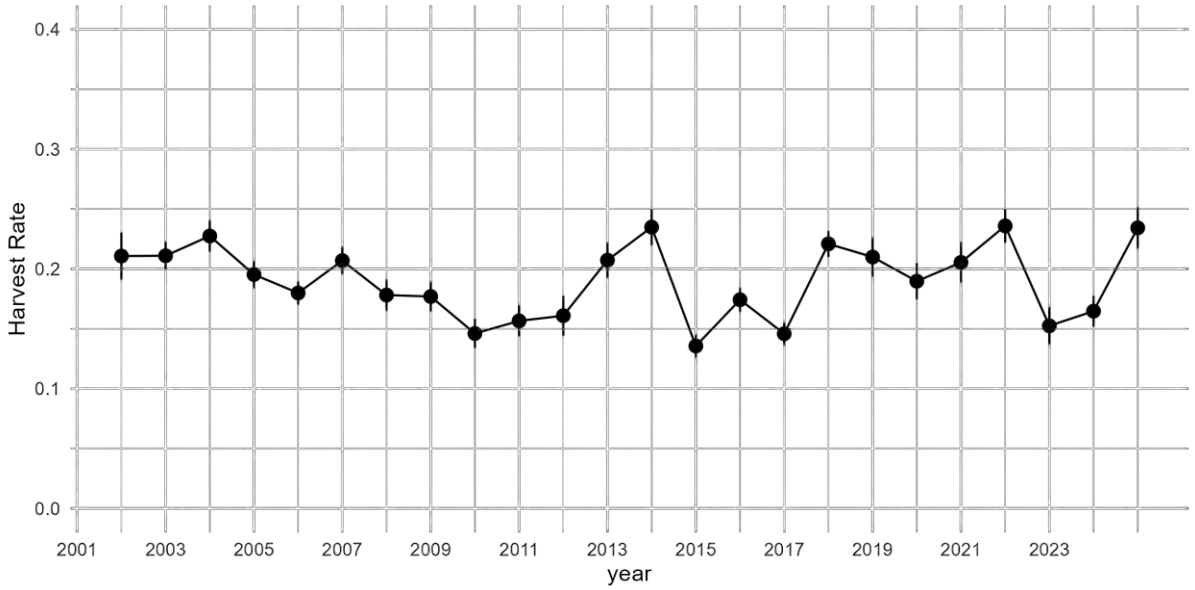

Figure 2: Estimates of grallard harvest rate $\hat{h}$ from 2002 to 2025. Harvest rates reflect the proportion of banded birds harvested within the first year and, assuming they are representative of the population, the proportion of the population that is harvested each year. Harvest Rates are corrected for verified non-response, which is estimated at 52% for years 2002-2023, 56% for 2024, and 58.8% for 2025, based on the 2024 and 2025 SMS survey results.

3.2 EXPLORING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE GRALLARD POPULATION ESTIMATES

To better understand the factors that influence or potentially bias grallard population estimates, several complementary analyses were carried out. These analyses examined how harvest rate varies across demographic groups and banding sites, whether a potential overrepresentation of juveniles or

early-season band recoveries could bias estimates, and how environmental or spatial factors might help explain variation in population size through time. Together, these investigations provide a framework for understanding the robustness of grallard population estimates and identifying where improvements in data collection or modelling could reduce uncertainty.

3.2.1 Harvest Rate

Because much of the year-to-year variation in population size is driven by changes in the estimate of harvest rate, harvest rate was calculated by age, sex and banding site area. There have been many different banding sites over the years, with some in very close proximity to each other. To examine trends over time in similar banding areas, sites within 15 km of each other were grouped together (Figure 19). The number of birds banded was quantified by banding site to examine how this may contribute to overall estimates of harvest rate. Additionally, the median distance travelled is estimated to indicate how far birds travel before being harvested.

Understanding differences in age, sex and banding site area are essential, as a pooled estimate of harvest rate may bias population estimates if it is made up of data that is not representative of the Auckland/Waikato population.

3.2.2 Estimating spatial patterns in harvest and hunter effort

As harvest rate is central to the Lincoln population estimator, spatial variation in hunting pressure can introduce bias if banding effort is uneven across the region. To evaluate this, spatial patterns in harvest and hunter effort across the Auckland–Waikato region were modelled using data from the Game Bird Harvest Survey (GBHS). This allowed the identification of areas that contribute disproportionately to overall harvest and assessment of whether the distribution of banding sites aligns with where most harvest occurs.

The region was divided into 25 km hexagons, with each respondent assigned geographic coordinates based on their most frequently reported hunting location during each survey period. As it is not known where non-hunting respondents would have hunted, participation at the hexagon level can not be estimated. Instead, daily participation rates were modelled at the regional level as a function of survey day and year, while spatial variation in harvest and hunting effort was modelled at the hexagon level.

A mixed-effects models is used to estimate these components. A binomial generalised linear mixed model (GLMM) was fitted to estimate the daily probability of hunting (participation), with season day as a fixed effect and year as a random effect. For respondents who hunted, a negative binomial GLMM estimated the expected number of grallard harvested per day, with random intercepts for both year and hexagon to account for spatial and temporal heterogeneity in harvest intensity. Predicted values from these models were combined to estimate the expected number of birds harvested per hunter per day.

Total days hunted and total grallard harvest per hexagon were then estimated by multiplying:

- the region-level daily participation probabilities,
- the number of licensed hunters in that year,
- the proportion of respondents assigned to each hexagon, and
- the hexagon-level mean.

Daily estimates were summed across the duration of the hunting season to generate annual totals for each hexagon. Results were averaged across all available years to describe spatial patterns in mean hunting effort (days hunted) and harvest intensity (grallard shot) across the Auckland–Waikato region.

3.2.3 Investigating an overrepresentation of juveniles and an unequal distribution of band returns

To assess the potential influence of age structure on harvest-rate and population estimates, a sensitivity analysis was conducted in which juvenile and adult harvest rates were given equal weighting. First, juvenile and adult harvest rates were estimated separately using standard band-recovery methods. The two estimates were then averaged, assuming a 1:1 juvenile-to-adult ratio in the population. The new harvest-rate estimate was used to recalculate grallard population size with the same Lincoln–Petersen framework used for the primary analysis. Finally, weighted population estimates were compared with the original (unweighted) estimates to evaluate the magnitude of any potential bias caused by disproportionate juvenile banding. This sensitivity test does not assume the 1:1 ratio is accurate; instead, it provides an upper-bound scenario to determine whether age-structure imbalance could meaningfully affect inference.

In addition, having observed that a high proportion of bands are returned early in the season relative to harvest[3] (i.e., around 51% of bands are returned on opening weekend, while opening weekend typically accounts for only about 40% of the total harvest), this patterns influence on the population size estimates was investigated. The Lincoln estimator assumes that all individuals have an equal probability of being harvested (equal catchability). However, because band recoveries appear to be concentrated on the opening weekend while total harvest continues to accumulate throughout the season (particularly in longer seasons), this assumption is violated. Consequently, there is a risk that the Lincoln estimates may be inflating population size in longer seasons, as harvest increases but few additional bands are recovered. To standardise this across years with long and short seasons, the Lincoln estimate using total harvest estimates and harvest rates from the first two weeks of the season was used. These estimates were scared to allow for trend comparisons over time between the two methods. A simple linear model was also fit to the scaled data to determine if the trends differed over time by method.

3.2.4 Environmental predictors

Efforts to date have looked at correlations between grallard population size, growth rate and harvest rate with seasonal rainfall, seasonal SPEI (drought index), and seasonal soil moisture deficit. Relevant seasons include the preceding winter, spring, and summer (e.g., using a 3-month average), as well as 3-, 6-, and 12-month averages for SPEI. Relationships post-2010 were also tested to examine more recent trends.

4 RESULTS

4.1 GRALLARD POPULATION ESTIMATES

The Auckland/Waikato grallard population, despite dropping from greater levels pre-2012, appears relatively stable across the last 10 years (albeit with a slight downward trend). The 2025 estimate indicates a decline from the previous two years, putting it in line with lows also estimated in 2019, 2021 and 2022.

[3] Potentially due to the high proportion of juvenile birds in trap samples, which are naïve and therefore harvested at a higher rate compared to adult birds, especially earlier in the season.

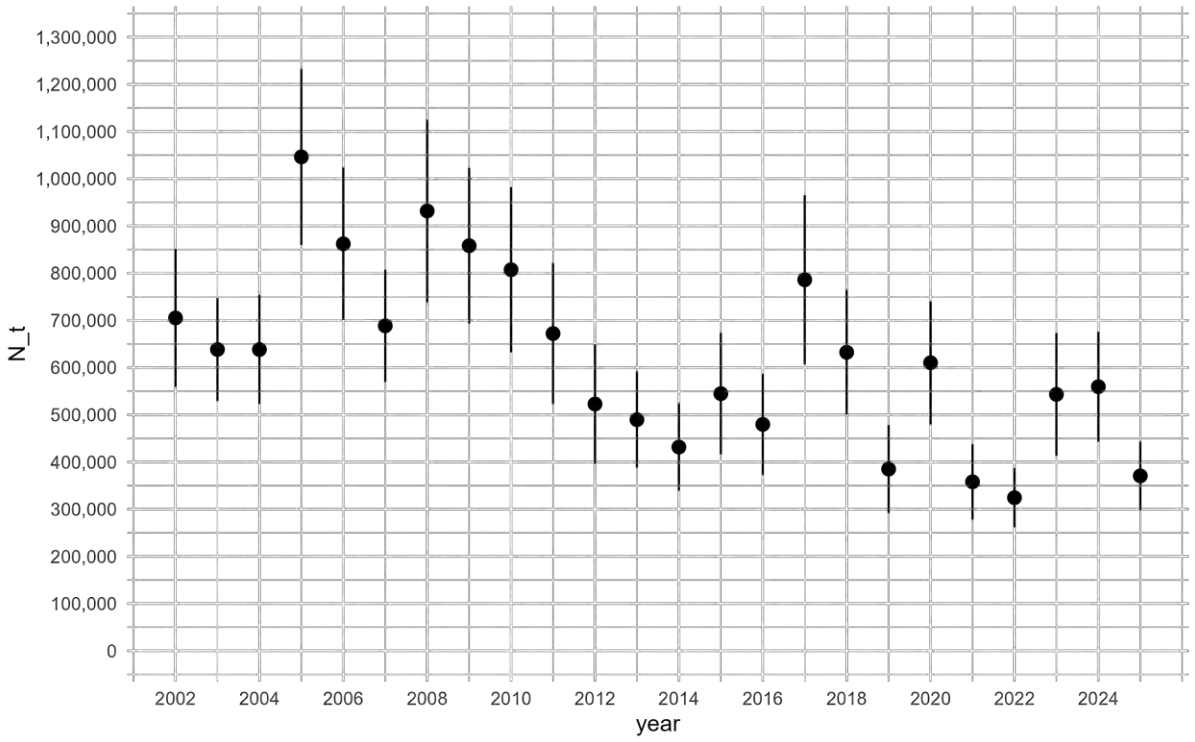

Figure 3: Auckland Waikato grallard population estimates $\widehat{N}$ from 2002 to 2025.

4.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING POPULATION SIZE

4.2.1 Harvest rate

Harvest rates were broadly similar between males and females and followed comparable trends over time (Figures 4–5). Adults generally show higher harvest rates than juveniles, and these two groups show different patterns year to year. Since banding began, the proportion of juvenile birds caught in traps has remained consistently high (Figure 6), suggesting that the banding sample may overrepresent young birds.

Harvest rates also varied noticeably among banding site areas (clusters), both in their long-term averages and in how they changed over time. Helensville and Wellsford had the lowest average harvest rates (0.14 and 0.135 from 2002–2025), both showing a gradual decline. Pipiroa/Turua (Hauraki Plains, near the mouth of the Waihou), Opuatia, and Ohaupo had higher, more stable average rates (0.204, 0.183, and 0.188, respectively). Aka Aka shows the highest average harvest rate (0.252 across years with data), with several years exceeding 0.30, particularly in recent seasons. While harvest rates across most sites were relatively stable, Aka Aka appears to show an upward trend in recent years.

The distribution of birds captured (i.e., banding effort/success) has also shifted over time (Figure 8). The Opuatia/Whangape and Pipiroa/Turua sites, which once contributed most of the banded birds in the early 2000s, now represent a smaller proportion, while Aka Aka/Glenbrook, Helensville, and Ohaupo/Kerepehi have become more prominent. Wellsford, by contrast, has consistently had low catch rates throughout the period.

Median distance travelled by first-year birds also varied among banding sites but has been generally consistent through time (Figure 9). Most birds were recovered within 10–20 km of their banding sites, though the specific distances varied by area. For example, birds from Aka Aka, Ohaupo, and Wellsford were typically recovered closer to their respective banding sites (within 10 km), while those from

Opuatia and Pipiroa were typically recovered farther away (10–20 km). Helensville was an exception, showing higher median distances and greater variability overall. This suggests that while movement patterns differ among sites, they have remained relatively stable over time.

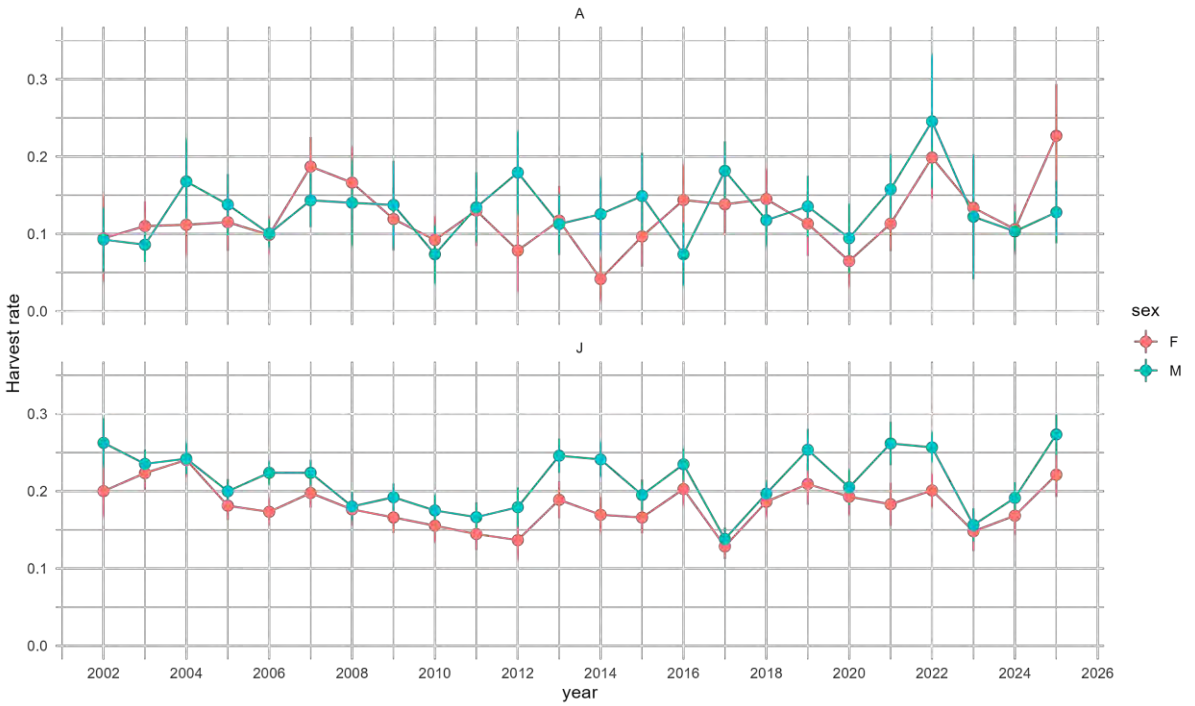

Figure 4: Estimates of grallard harvest rate $\hat{h}$ from 2002 to 2024 by sex (M = male, F= female) and age (A= adult, J= juvenile). Harvest rates reflect the proportion of banded birds harvested within the first year and, assuming they are representative of the population, the proportion harvested each year. Harvest Rates are corrected for verified non-response, which is estimated at 52% for years 2002-2023, 56% for 2024, and 58.8% for 2025, based on the 2024 and 2025 SMS survey results.

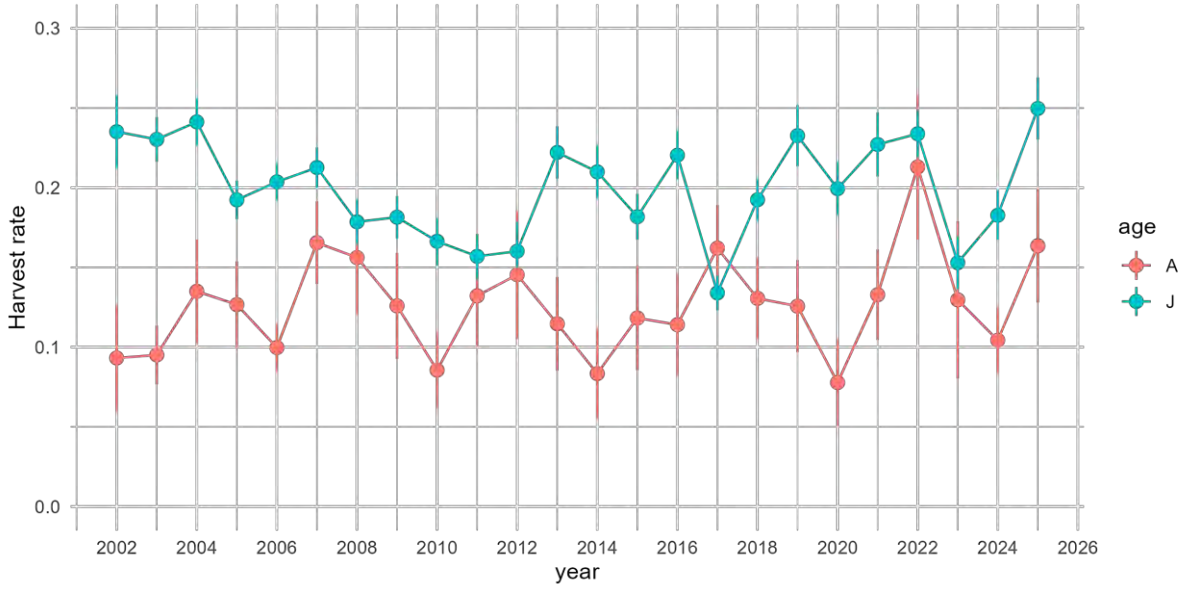

Figure 5: Estimates of grallard harvest rate $\hat{h}$ from 2002 to 2024 by age (A= adult, J= juvenile). Harvest rates reflect the proportion of banded birds harvested within the first year and, assuming they are representative of the population, the proportion harvested each year. Harvest Rates are corrected for verified non-response, which

is estimated at 52% for years 2002-2023, 56% for 2024, and 58.8% for 2025, based on the 2024 and 2025 SMS survey results.

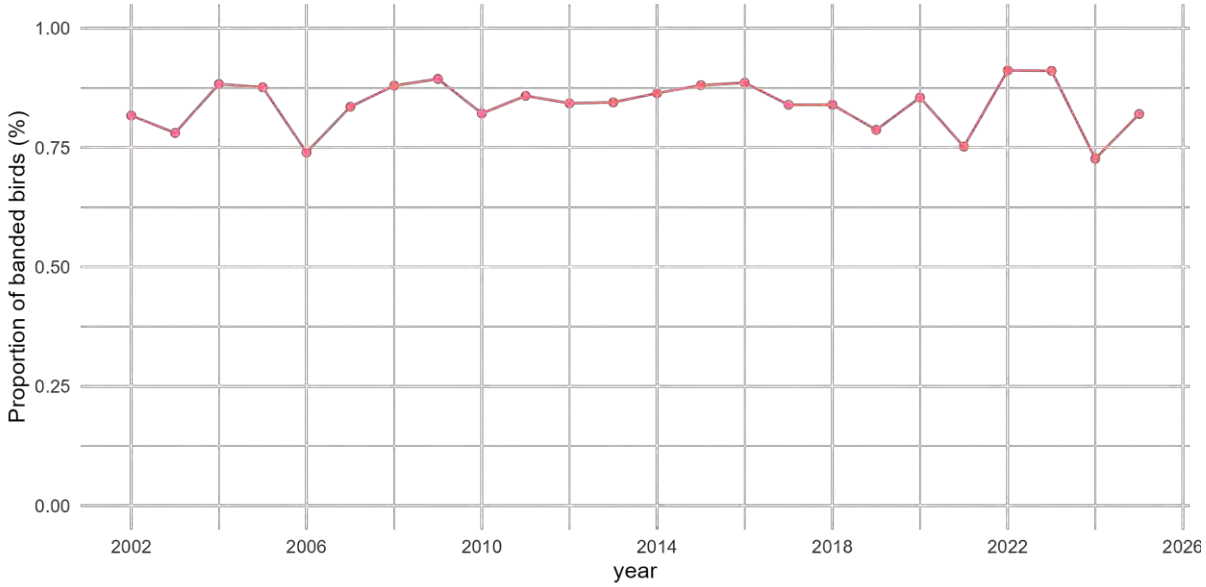

Figure 6: Proportion of banded birds that are juveniles from 2002 to 2025.

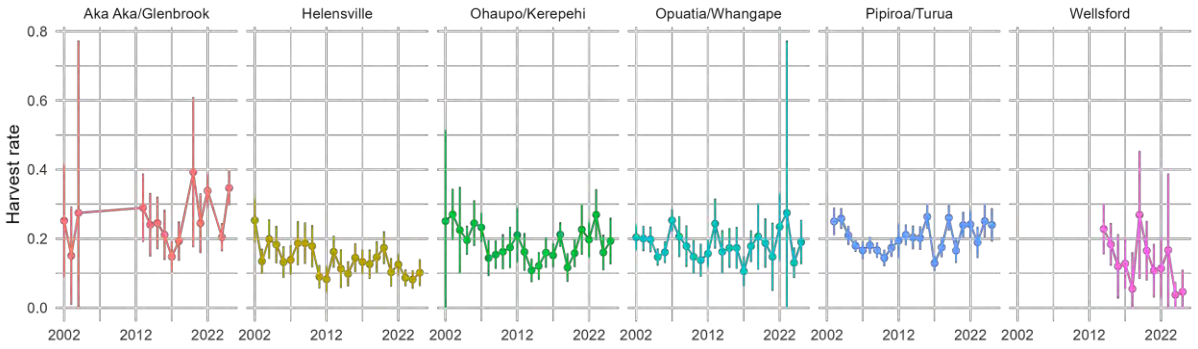

Figure 7: Estimates of grallard harvest rate $\hat{h}$ from 2002 to 2025 by banding site location (where banding sites within 15km of each other are grouped and those with less than five years of data are excluded). This illustrates how harvest rates differ over time based on where the birds are banded. Harvest Rates are corrected for verified non-response, which is estimated at 52% for years 2002-2023, 56% for 2024, and 58.8% for 2025, based on the 2024 and 2025 SMS survey results.

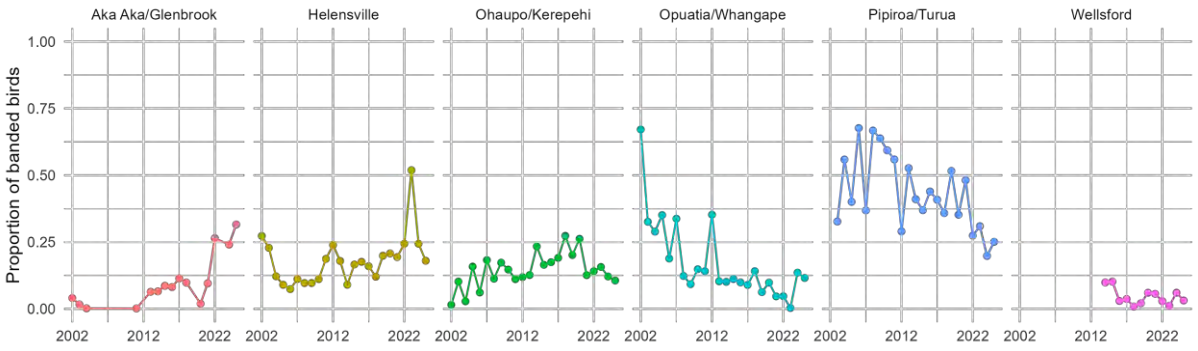

Figure 8: Number of birds banded from 2002 to 2025 by banding site location (where banding within 15km of each other are grouped and those with less than five years of data are excluded). This illustrates how banding effort (or success) has been distributed across the region over time.

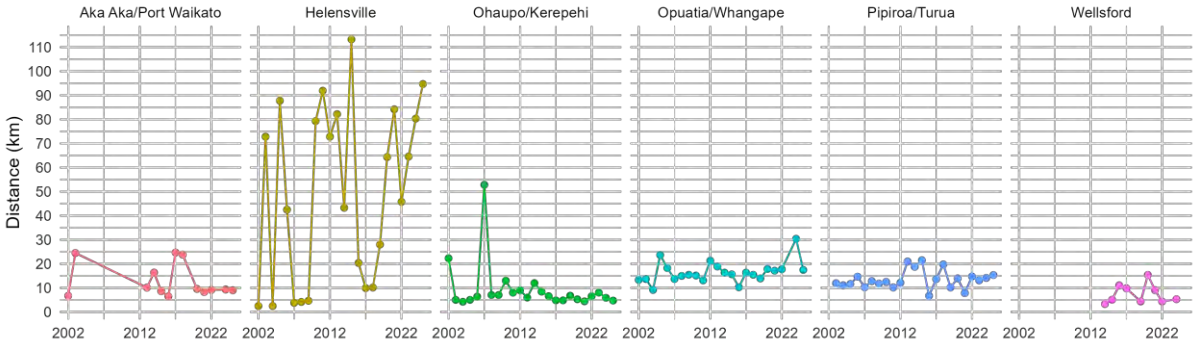

Figure 9: Median distance travelled by first year returns by banding site location (where banding sites within 15km of each other are grouped and those with less than five years of data are excluded). This illustrates that the distance birds typically travel before being harvested is often consistent over time but varies by banding site.

4.2.2 Spatial patterns in harvest and hunter effort

Spatial estimates of harvest and hunter effort for 2015 to 2025 combined show similar patterns (Figures 10 and 11). These are primarily driven by the distribution of where licence holders hunt throughout the region. The areas of the Waikato River, Whangamarino, Waipa River and Hauraki plains remain key areas of hunter activity and therefore harvest/effort.

In more recent years (2024 and 2025), harvest follows a similar pattern, with a significant proportion around the Waikato River Delta, Whangamarino, and Morrinsville/Te Aroha area (Figure 12).

Spatial estimates of grallard per hour from 2015 to 2025 are more uniform (Figure 13), with the Pipiroa area standing out with slightly higher estimates of grallard per hour. In comparison, 2025 shows a very consistent spread of success (grallard per hour) across the region (Figure 13).

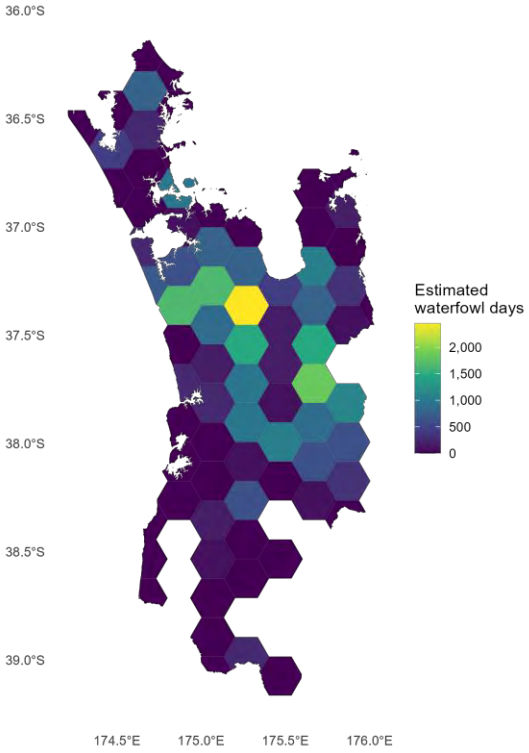

Figure 10: Spatial estimates of total days hunting waterfowl (average of years 2015 to 2025) in the Auckland Waikato region, highlighting areas of high hunter activity. Years are combined as individual years give weak spatial coverage.

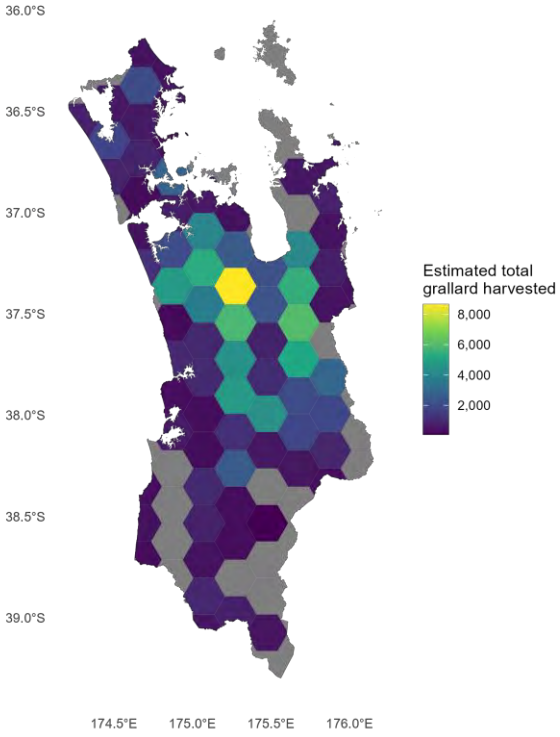

Figure 11: Spatial estimates of total grallard harvest (average of years 2015 to 2025) in the Auckland Waikato region, highlighting areas of high harvest across this period. Years are combined as individual years give weak spatial coverage.

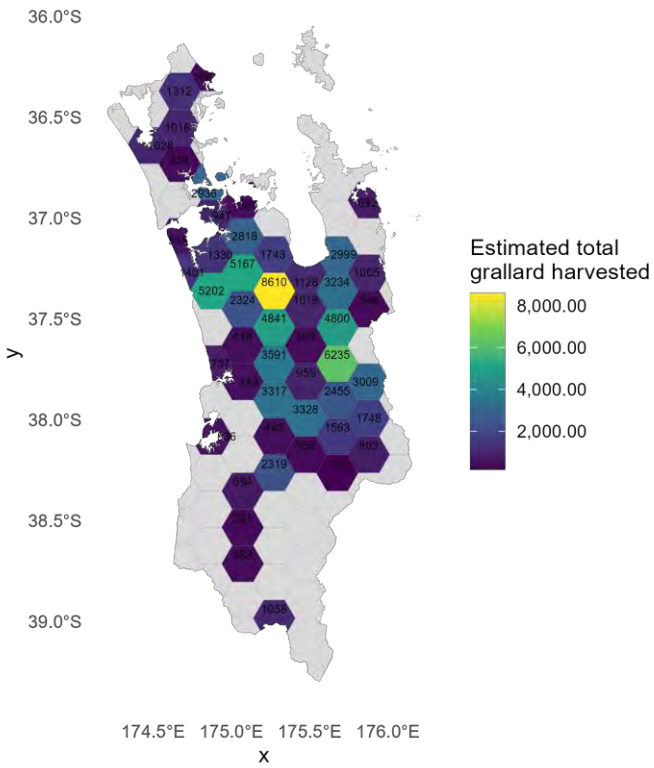

Figure 12: Spatial estimates of total grallard harvest (average of years 2024 to 2025) in the Auckland Waikato region, highlighting areas of high harvest across recent years.

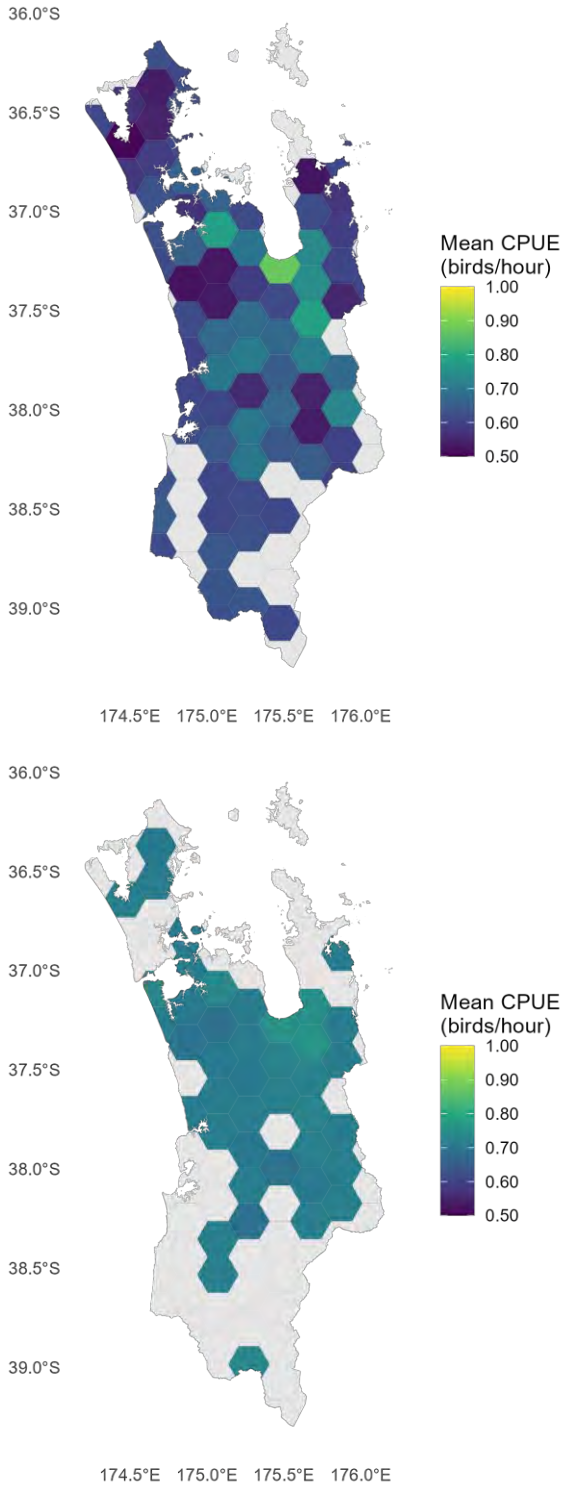

Figure 13: Spatial estimates of grallard per hour in the Auckland Waikato region 2015 to 2025 (top) and in just 2025 (bottom), highlighting areas of high hunting efficiency (which can be interpreted as a proxy for available birds/hunting success).

4.2.3 Imbalance in harvest and harvest rates

The proportion of bands returned in the first two weeks of the season has consistently been greater than the proportion of harvest from 2002 to 2025 (Figure 14). However, when the Lincoln estimate is applied to this data (i.e., using harvest and band returns from the first two weeks), the trend does not differ significantly compared to the regular estimates (Figure 15).

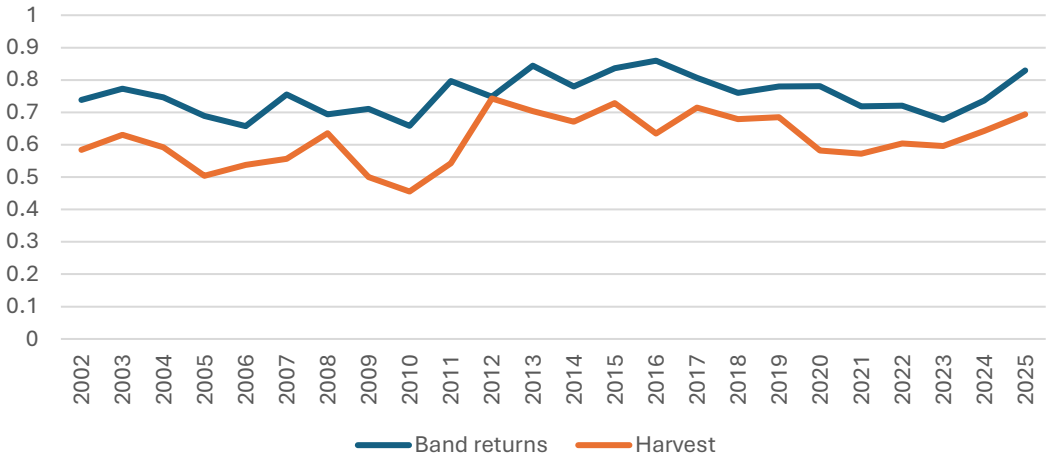

Figure 14: The proportion of harvest (orange) and band returns (blue) that occur within the first two weeks of the season from 2002 to 2025. The proportion of bands returned is consistently higher than harvest, indicating that the probability of harvesting a banded bird may not be equal throughout the season.

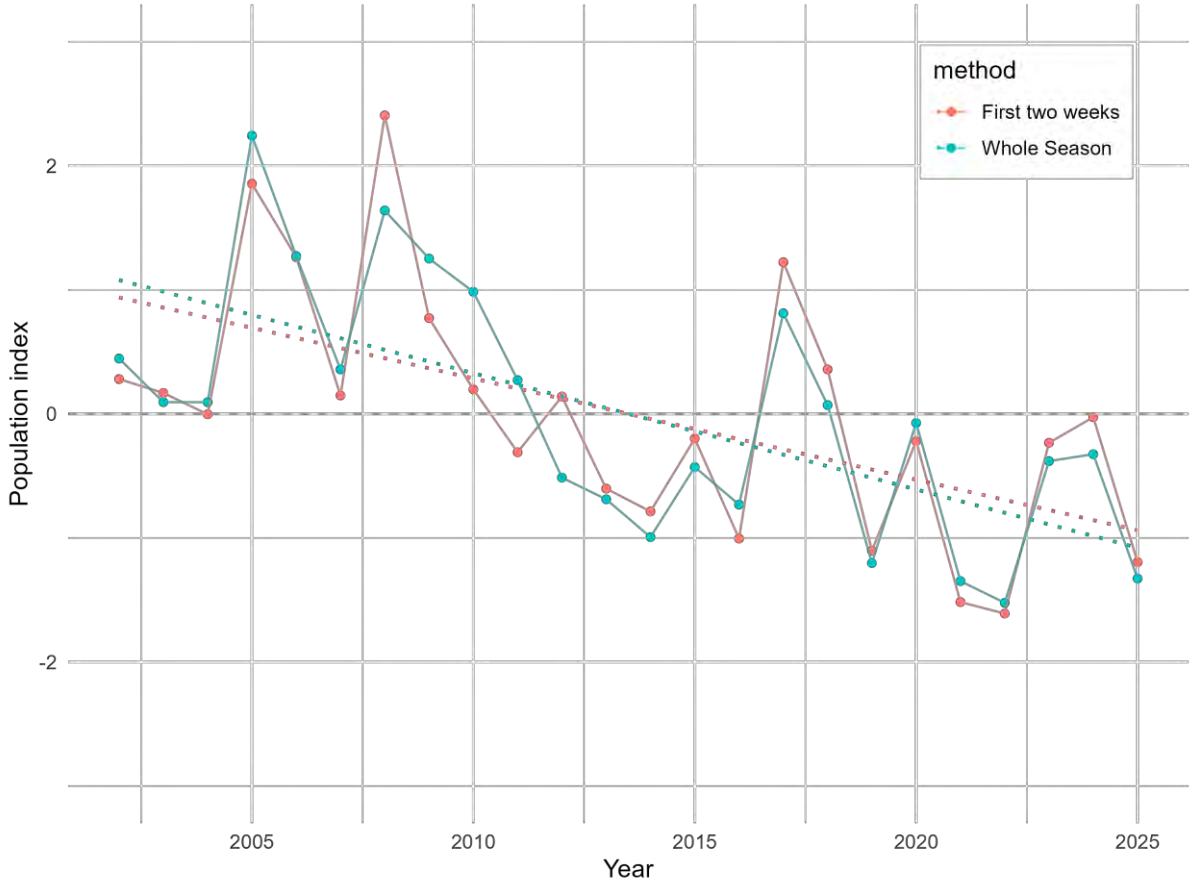

Figure 15: Estimates of the grallard population index (population estimate scaled for comparison in trends) based on harvest and band return data from all days in the season (blue) and from the first two weeks (red). Dotted lines are the linear trends.

4.2.4 Environmental predictors

As reported in the 2024/2025 harvest report, no statistically significant correlations were found between grallard population size, growth rate, and harvest rate with environmental variables. However, as this report shows that harvest rates vary by banding site area, it may be worthwhile to assess these factors while controlling for this variable.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 2025 POPULATION ESTIMATES

Estimates of the 2025 grallard population size (Figure 3) indicate a decline from the previous two years, returning to levels last seen in 2019, 2021, and 2022, among the lowest in the past two decades. Given that total harvest has been relatively stable over the last five years (Figure 1), the downward shift in 2025 is primarily explained by a higher estimated harvest rate (Figure 2).

The 2025 harvest-rate increase appears to be driven by one banding site, Aka Aka, which is located near the Waikato River Delta. Birds banded at Aka Aka yield a site-specific harvest rate of 35.6% (assuming a 58.8% band-reporting rate), similar rate to the 34.5% observed there in 2022 (assuming a 52% reporting rate). The impact of this is significant as when including Aka Aka yields, the 2025 population estimate is 370,632 (95% CI: 310,922–430,342); however, when excluding all bands from the Aka Aka site the 2025 population estimate is 486,132 (95% CI: 393,661–578,602) - a difference of approximately 115,500 birds.

This raises questions around sample representativeness. If banding effort is not proportional to the true spatial distribution of the population (or to exposure to harvest pressure), overall harvest-rate estimates can be biased. Over-banding in lower-harvest areas pushes the overall harvest rate estimate down, while over-banding in higher-harvest areas pushes it up.

Figure 7 shows that banding sites around Aka Aka have experienced high harvest rates intermittently since 2020, but the proportion of birds banded[4] at this site has increased considerably since 2022 (Figure 8). This means that the influence of this higher harvest rate has only more recently had a greater impact on the overall estimate of harvest rate. Given that 50% of first-year birds are shot within 9km of the Aka Aka banding site, it is also reasonable to consider that this harvest rate may represent a highly localised area (Figures 9 and 17).

This is not to say that the harvest rates at Aka Aka are inaccurate or an outlier. The Waikato Delta is a popular hunting spot, with anecdotal evidence that this season was productive. Rather, the question is how much weight we should give to it. For example, if this area is representative of much of the Auckland/Waikato region (i.e., it is expected there are similarly high harvest rates in areas with less banding effort, such as the Whangamarino Wetland), there is considerable reason for concern. Conversely, if this represents a high-harvest hotspot, it may be incorrectly assumed that harvest is high across the entire Auckland/Waikato region, when it is only the case for a small, concentrated area (where a high proportion of birds happen to have been banded in 2025). In other words, may have

[4] Banding effort has remained consistent, but catch rates have increased.

"over-banded" a localised high-harvest area relative to its share of the regional population, thereby biasing the regional harvest rate upward and, in turn, the Lincoln estimate of population size for 2025 downward.

The spatial estimates of harvest indicate that although total harvest and hunting activity around Aka Aka have been high in recent years (2024–2025), these values are broadly consistent with the long-term average from 2015 to 2025 (Figures 12 and 13). This suggests that, while Aka Aka remains a popular hunting area, recent harvest patterns have not changed markedly over time, nor is it an area of high hunter success, both in 2025 specifically or across the last 10 years (Figure 13).

This highlights the need to understand both the spatial variation in harvest rates and whether the current banding distribution reflects the true distribution of birds and exposure to harvesting. Hierarchical modelling approaches and spatial weighting schemes may offer practical pathways for quantifying site-level variability in harvest and ensuring that regional estimates are appropriately weighted. However, due to limited staff, banding efforts rely heavily on volunteers (and therefore are only able to be carried out on weekends), and efforts are constrained to a limited number of banding sites, and as such a conscious effort has been made to distribute these sites across the region, with sites in the Hauraki plains, Te Awamutu, Opuatia, Aka Aka and Wellsford.

Despite considerable year-to-year variability (i.e., from 2024 to 2025), there remains strong evidence of a large-scale population collapse circa 2009. This decline likely reflects a combination of factors, including more restrictive season regulations introduced in response to declining numbers and potential environmental pressures such as drought[5]. Because these factors occurred concurrently, it is not possible to separate the extent to which the post-2009 decline in harvest reflects a true reduction in population size versus the influence of regulatory change. Furthermore, without experimental controls—which are not feasible in this context—the influence of unmeasured factors such as changes in data collection, reporting rates, or hunter behaviour cannot be quantified.

Taken together, the 2025 estimates do not yet indicate a clear population shift, but rather emphasise the importance of accounting for spatial sampling imbalance before drawing strong conclusions about regional status or required management action.

5.2 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE GRALLARD POPULATION (OR THE ESTIMATE OF IT)

Based on the estimates of $\widehat{N}$, it appears that the grallard population size has changed significantly over the last 22 years. Much of the year-to-year variation is driven by harvest rates.

Firstly, it is shown that adult harvest rates do not vary significantly by sex. For juveniles, harvest rates for males are often higher than for females, but this is not consistent for all years. The most significant difference is between adults and juveniles, shown separately in Figure 5.

[5] "A drought event lasted from November 2007 to April 2008, during which the Waikato experienced its driest January in a century. A shortage of feed caused by the drought increased the price of silage to four times its normal rate. The cost of the drought was believed to be $1.5 billion to the Dairy sector alone. The economic effect of the drought was one of the factors that threw New Zealand's economy into recession by mid-2008. Waikato had dry springs in 2009 and 2010, which resulted in a double drought. The drought led to the owners of the Waikato River hydro scheme, Might River Power, announcing a 10 per cent drop in hydro production for the December quarter. Dairy farmers were estimated to have lost an average $100,000- $150,00 in income over the previous three years due to consecutive drought events." https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/services/regional-hazards-and-emergency-management/drought/

It is not particularly surprising that juvenile harvest rates are often higher than those of adults, as juveniles are more naïve and therefore easier to target, particularly on opening weekend. Interestingly, harvest rates for adults and juveniles do not seem to follow the same pattern (unlike sex). For example, in 2014, when juvenile harvest rates peaked, adult harvest rates were near their lowest (Figure 5).

Most birds banded in the Auckland/Waikato region are juveniles (Figure 6). While the true juvenile–adult ratio in the population is unknown, trapping locations and timing (late summer/early autumn) are believed to oversample juveniles. If this is the case, and juveniles are more vulnerable to harvest than adults, the harvest-rate estimates may be inflated, leading to an underestimation of population size.

To explore this, alternative population estimates were generated under a hypothetical scenario in which juveniles and adults occur in equal proportions (1:1). Under this assumption, juvenile and adult harvest rates contribute equally to the overall harvest rate estimate, rather than being dominated by juveniles (~90% of the band sample). This weighting frequently increased the population estimate relative to the unweighted approach. In 11 of 23 years, the population estimate increased by over 100,000 birds. However, in the most recent four years, the weighted and unweighted estimates are nearly identical due to similar juvenile and adult harvest rates.

This suggests that while age-structure biases may have influenced historical estimates, they are unlikely to explain recent changes in population size. However, properly correcting for this effect would require reliable estimates of juvenile-to-adult ratios in pre-season population information, which is not currently available.

The proportion of bands returned in the first two weeks of the season is disproportionately high compared to harvest. Figure 10 shows that across most years, there is a clear pattern of higher band-return proportions than harvest proportions, indicating that the probability of shooting a banded bird is higher at the start of the season. While there is likely a small effect whereby years with longer seasons have an estimated population size bias upwards (Figure 11), the effect is small enough that it is probably not worth worrying about.

5.2.1 Environmental factors

While some of the year-to-year variability in harvest rates may be explained by differences in age, sex and location (and how representative these are in the band sample), large drops in estimated population size may likely be caused by factors outside of control. The current hypothesis is that climatic conditions primarily drive annual changes in the grallard population. International literature has found strong links between droughts and mallard populations. However, there is no available evidence in the data that supports drought (i.e., rainfall, soil moisture deficit, etc.) as a predictor of grallard population size, despite there being some significant events in recent years. This may, in part, be due to variables such as rainfall being indirect and, therefore, blunt substitutes for the environmental factors that affect waterfowl. The lack of a relationship between population size and environmental conditions can be seen in comparing the population estimates with the drought index for Hamilton (Figure 17), by looking at the population size in a given year and the environmental conditions the preceding year. Given the scale of the Auckland/Waikato region, environmental conditions should likely be considered at more local scales, for which data are not always available.

Given the lack of a clear link between population size and environmental conditions, it is reassuring to observe similar trends in estimated population size with the Eastern region estimates, which are collected and analysed independently from the Auckland/Waikato Region. As with the Auckland/Waikato population estimates, Eastern Fish & Game observed a peak in numbers around

2005, a decline between 2010 and 2014, a large jump in 2015, and a relatively stable plateau at a reduced population from 2018 onwards (Figure 18). Similarities in population trends between neighbouring regions (with different harvest regulations) lend weight to the hypothesis that large-scale climatic patterns are the primary driver of changes to the grallard population. A combined analysis of banding data for North Island regions may improve the understanding of how environmental conditions impact the grallard population, and allow the development of an adaptive management system.

6 STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall, the grallard population in the Auckland/Waikato region remains low. However, recent fluctuations may reflect the sampling approach rather than a real decline. Regardless, there is little doubt that the Auckland/Waikato population is depressed relative to the levels observed in the early 2000s. In addition, the high harvest rate at Aka Aka an important factor that needs to be monitored.

Understanding factors that impact the estimate of population size are improving, however, further work is required to understand how harvest rates may be weighted to reflect hunter pressure. In addition, more deliberate work could be done to determine whether banding-trap samples allow better understanding of adult–juvenile ratios, or the effect that the disproportionate number of bands being returned early in the season has on population estimates. For both cases, it would likely be beneficial to collaborate with other regions that have banding programmes.

7 REFERENCES

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Lincoln, F. (1930). Calculating waterfowl abundance on the basis of banding returns. *U.S. Dept. of Agriculture*.

Sheppard, J. L. (2017). *Breeding Ecology and Productivity of Mallards and Mallard-grey Duck Hybrids in New Zealand*.

8 APPENDIX

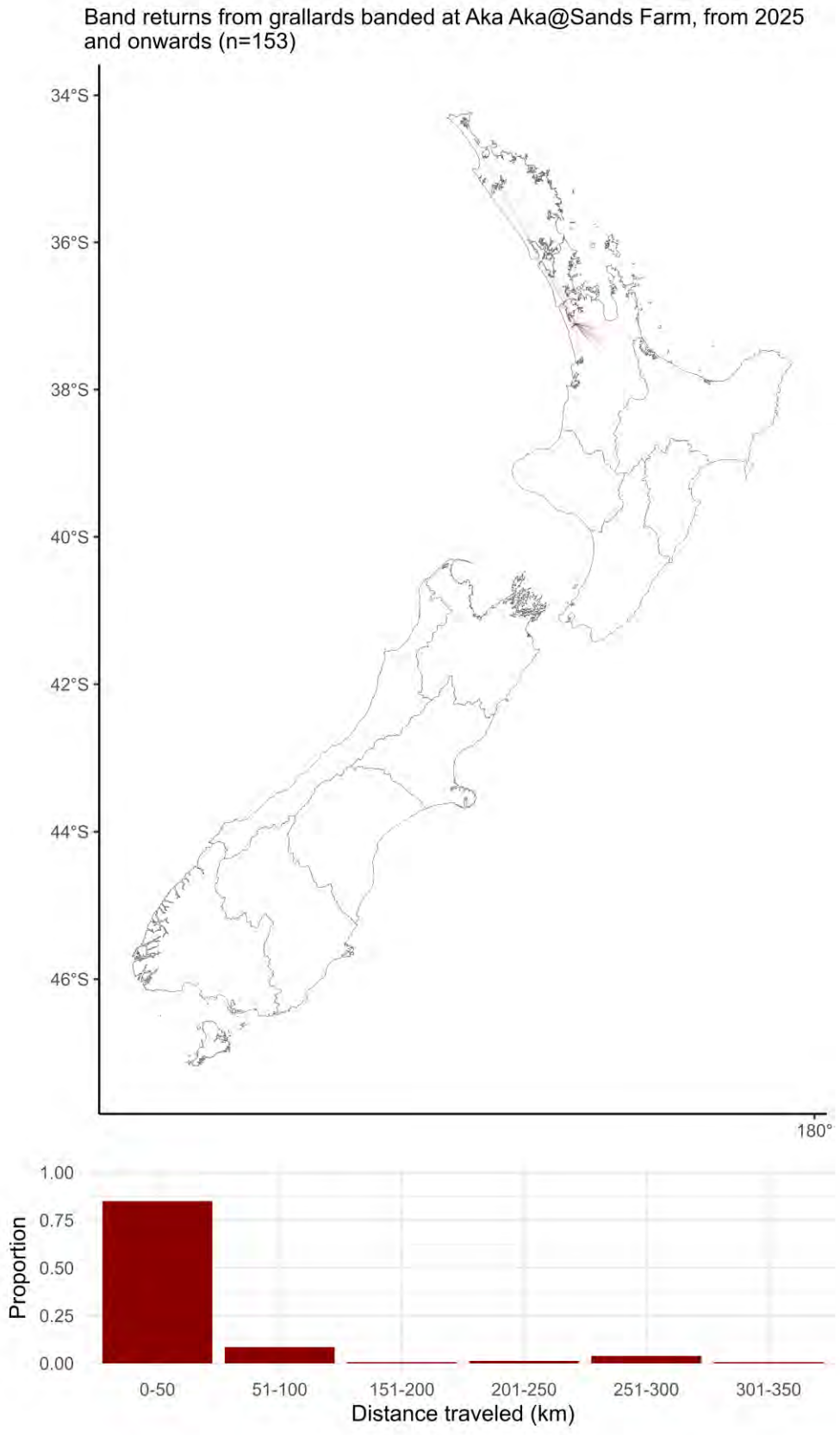
Band returns from grallards banded at Aka Aka@Sands Farm, from 2025 and onwards (n=153)
34°S
36°S
38°S
40°S
42°S
44°S
46°S
180°
1.00
0.75
0.50
0.25
0.00
Proportion
0-50
51-100
151-200
201-250
251-300
301-350
Distance traveled (km)

Figure 16: Distances travelled by birds banded at the Aka Aka banding site in 2025. 50% of the birds were shot within 9.0 km of the banding site, while 90% were shot within 56.7km of the banding site.

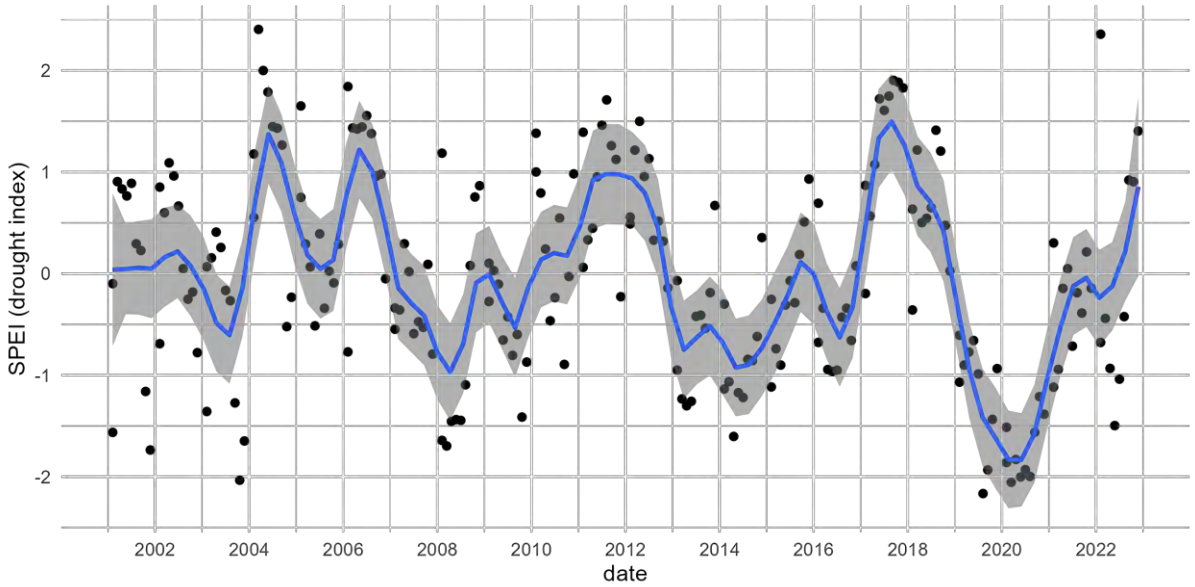

Figure 17: Standardised Precipitation Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI) for Hamilton 2002-2023. Here, values between -1 and 1 represent normal conditions, while values above 1 represent wet conditions and values below -1 represent dry conditions. Each point represents how wet or dry the previous 6 months were compared to the average. While 6-month averages may not best represent the temporal scale of environmental conditions that impact waterfowl, it is helpful to understand large-scale patterns over time.

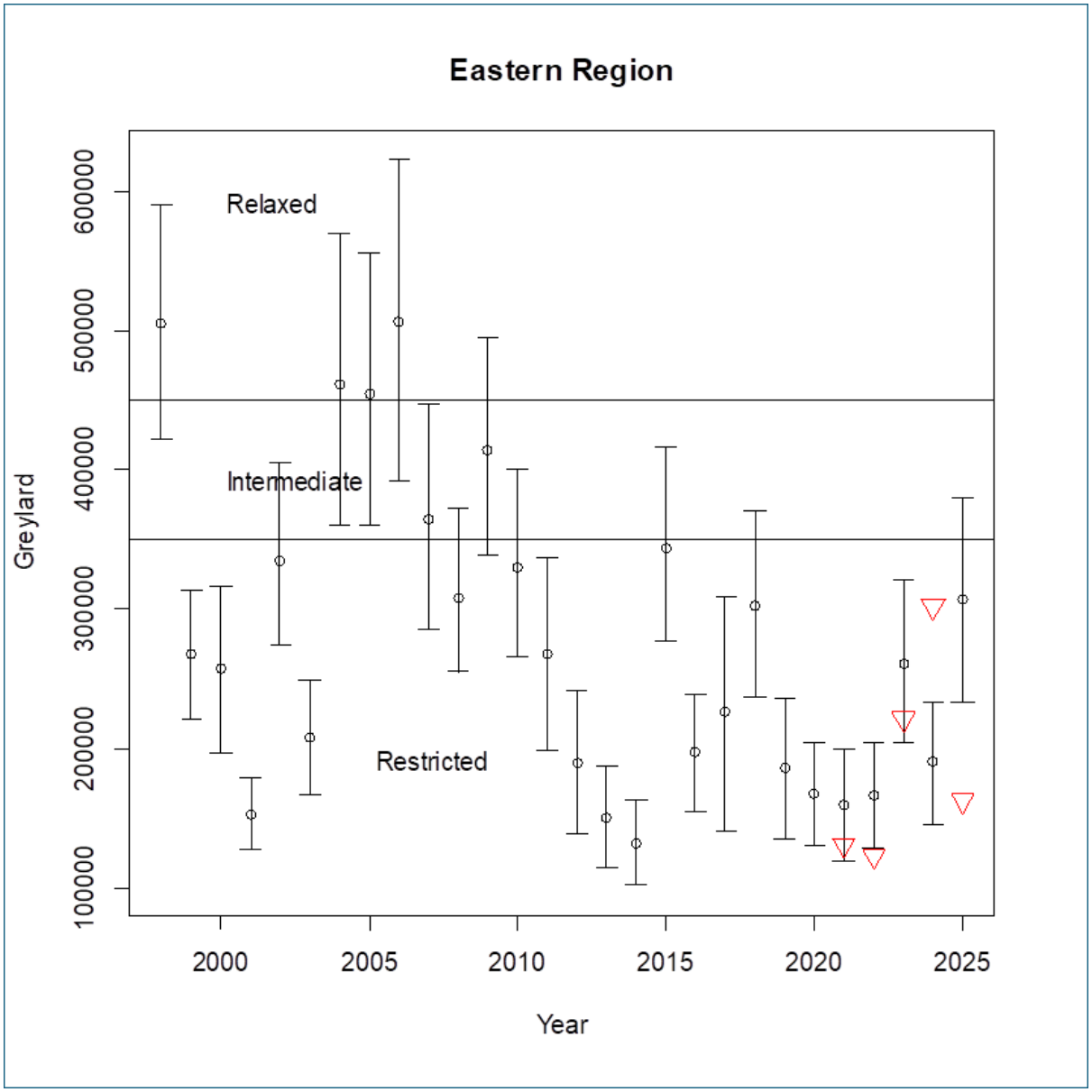

Figure 18: Grallard population estimates $\hat{N}$ from 1998 to 2025 for the Eastern Fish & Game region.

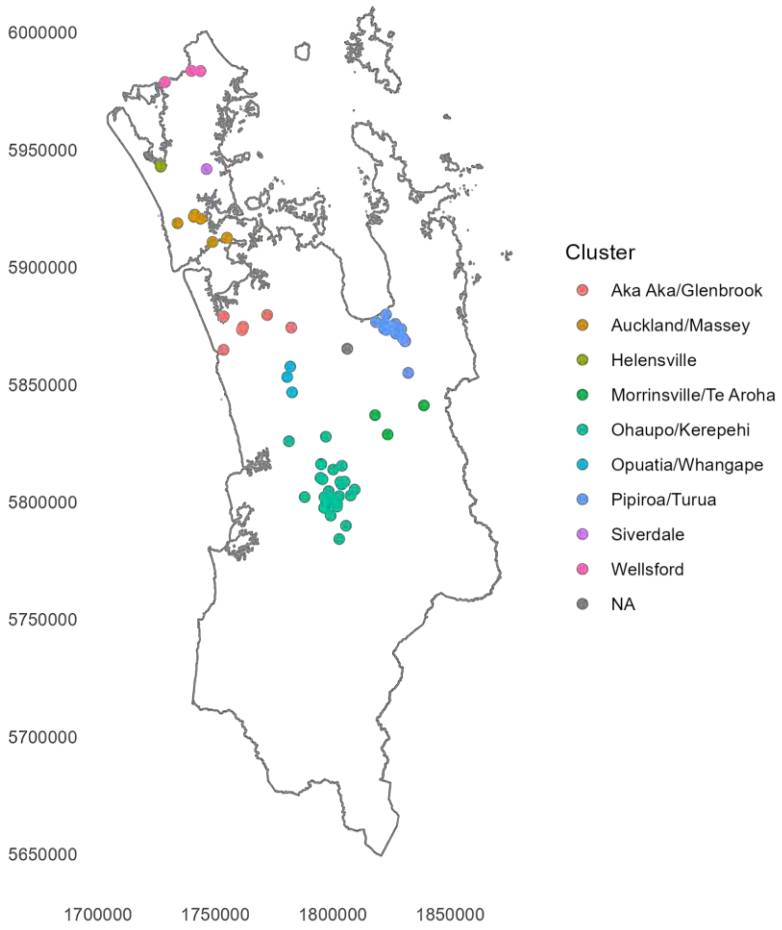

Figure 19: Auckland/Waikato banding sites coloured by their allocated banding cluster.

Auckland/Waikato Gamebird Harvest Assessment

Beau Jarvis-Child 2025/2026

1 SUMMARY

The primary objective of this report is to estimate the mallard/grey harvest based on the Gamebird Harvest Survey (GBHS). As a secondary objective, the effect of season regulations on harvest and hunter activity is explored, along with other estimates, such as survival rates. Estimates of harvest for other species are also presented in the appendix.

In the Auckland/Waikato region, a decrease in hours hunting waterfowl and grallard harvest coincides with more restrictive regulations. This increases the difficultly in determining whether recent declines in harvest are due to the regulations or if there are other factors that have led to reductions in hunter effort.

Estimates of cumulative hours hunting waterfowl suggest trends are similar for short and long seasons when excluding the opening weekend. Trends in harvest were compared with Northland and Taranaki, the two neighbouring regions which have maintained consistently longer seasons. This allows exploration into whether the observed decline in harvest is unique to the Auckland/Waikato region (and therefore driven by season length), or is consistent across all three regions. Trends in hours hunting waterfowl were found to be similar across the three regions, and the decline in hours hunting waterfowl post-2009 was consistent. While regions are not directly comparable for several reasons, this provides strong evidence for the hypothesis that external factors (e.g., population size) are the primary drivers of the observed reduction in hours hunting (and consequently in harvest) in recent years. Furthermore, a similar pattern (i.e., a drop in harvest and more people shooting zero birds) is observed on opening weekend, which would not be expected to result from season length.

Bag limits have the most impact on opening weekend as they restrict harvest for only a small proportion of hunters during the rest of the season. Given that around 40% of harvest occurs on opening weekend, highly conservative bag limits, e.g. 2, could be very effective at reducing harvest; however, this is highly likely to impact hunter satisfaction and compliance.

Grallard harvest per hunter per hour appears to cycle up and down between 1993 and 2025, possibly linked to climatic conditions. However, the overall trend is downwards.

Survival estimates based on band return data show that survival is consistently lower for juvenile birds compared to adults, while sex differences are minimal. Further work is required to investigate whether environmental factors or regulations are impacting survival.

Harvest estimates for swan, pukeko, paradise shelduck, pheasant and quail indicate relatively stable patterns in harvest over the last two decades.

2 METHODS

2.1 GAMEBIRD HARVEST SURVEY DESIGN

The Gamebird Harvest Survey is designed to estimate how many waterfowl are harvested each year. Due to recall bias (i.e., people forgetting), the survey was designed to break the dabbling duck hunting season into survey periods based on the season length to improve accuracy (Barker, 1991). In each survey period, a random selection of at least 120 adult and junior full-season licence holders are phoned (i.e., the survey excludes children, day licence holders, landowner occupiers, and those who hunt without a licence). In period 1, randomly selected hunters are asked about the opening weekend harvest. In period 2 and onwards, randomly selected hunters are asked about their hunting in the

preceding two weeks. Data is collected from hunters regarding the regions they hunt in, the number of hours they have hunted, and how many birds of each species they shoot during that survey period. From this data, key metrics such as total harvest (necessary for population estimates), average hours spent hunting waterfowl (to gauge hunter engagement) and harvest per hunter per hour (an index of hunter success) are collected. As a random selection of hunters are surveyed each period, estimates are first calculated at the period level (e.g., average opening weekend harvest) and then combined for whole season estimates. In some instances, daily estimates are calculated and aggregated. While this benefits accuracy (i.e., reduces recall bias), it limits the ability to test whole-season effects, as the data is aggregated[1].

The current report expands on the previous iteration by including data from all North Island Fish & Game regions. As a result, the total harvest in the Auckland/Waikato region now includes hunters from other "survey regions" who hunt in the Auckland/Waikato region. This is akin to what is presented on the Fish & Game harvest website and is how the data was designed to be used.

When mean values are presented, they are generated from Auckland/Waikato licence holders who hunt in the Auckland/Waikato region. This differs from the website/database, which estimates average harvest/hours as the total (i.e., sum of all regions) divided by the number of licence holders in that region. The updated approach ensures that mean estimates more accurately reflect the region's hunter population.

2.2 ESTIMATING TOTAL HARVEST, HOURS HUNTED AND DAYS HUNTED

Methods for estimating total harvest/days/hours follow the 2024 South Island Hunter Harvest Report[2] (i.e., taken from the angler used study by Stoffels and Unwin or, or based on how total harvest/hours were defined originally). However, calculations were made at the day level rather than by survey period. To generate day-level data, the survey region and hunting district were imputed per hunter using the last/next observation carried forward; remaining NAs were set to default codes to avoid dropping records.

For hunters licensed in region *p*, hunting in region *i* on day *d*, the total estimated quantity (E_{idp}) was calculated as the product of the number of active licence holders (N_p) and the mean value per respondent ($\bar{X}_{idp}$):

$$E_{idp} = N_p \times \bar{X}_{idp}$$

where $\bar{X}_{idp}$ represents:

- mean hours hunted ($\bar{H}_{idp}$) for total hours,
- mean birds harvested per active hunter multiplied by participation rate ($\bar{H}_{idp} \times \bar{P}_{idp}$) for total harvest, or
- participation rate alone ($\bar{P}_{idp}$) for total days hunted.

Participation rate was defined as:

[1] Limitations include (1) loss of individual-level variation (e.g., modelling the effect on average harvest vs on harvest), (2) reduced statistical power (e.g., more challenging to detect differences with a smaller "aggregated" sample size), (3) limit on potential covariates (e.g., you could not include hunter age in a model with aggregated data), and (4) "Ecological fallacy" whereby relationships observed in aggregated data do not match those found at the individual level.

[2] By M.J. Garrick & H. Sanders Garrick

$$\bar{P}_{idp} = \frac{a_{idp}}{n_p}$$

where a_{idp} is the number of surveyed hunters from licence region *p* who reported hunting in region *i* on day *d*, and n_p is the total number of surveyed hunters from that region.

Because hunting regions receive effort from hunters licensed in multiple regions, daily totals were obtained by summing across all licence regions:

$$\hat{E}_{id} = \sum_{p=1}^{m} E_{idp}$$

Where *m* is the number of licence regions.

Uncertainty around estimates was quantified using bootstrap resampling, similar to the 2024 South Island Hunter Harvest Report[2]. Bootstrapping repeatedly resamples the original data, with replacement, to create many new "pseudo-datasets." The variation in results across these resamples gives an estimate of uncertainty, such as standard errors and confidence intervals. Here, the survey period structure was kept fixed, reflecting the original sampling design. Within each licence region, year, and period, respondents were resampled with replacement to capture variability in hunter behaviour (200+ iterations). For each bootstrap sample, daily estimates were recalculated and aggregated to seasonal totals. The 95% confidence intervals were obtained from the empirical distribution of the bootstrap estimates.

2.3 INVESTIGATING POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF BAG LIMIT AND SEASON LENGTH

2.3.1 Season length

To investigate patterns in waterfowl hunter effort and grallard harvest, daily GBHS data from 1993–2025 were used to estimate the cumulative mean number of hours hunted, days hunted, and grallard harvested per licence holder. These estimates were used to identify hunting effort and harvest accumulation over the course of each season.

Regional comparisons focused on the Auckland/Waikato, Northland, and Taranaki Fish & Game regions. Auckland/Waikato has experienced shorter seasons since 2011, whereas Northland and Taranaki have maintained longer, more stable season lengths. To investigate whether declines in hunter effort and harvest were specific to Auckland/Waikato or reflected a broader inter-regional trend, linear models were fitted with mean annual hours hunting waterfowl as the response variable and region, period (pre-2009 vs post-2009), and using the interaction as predictors. A non-significant interaction term was interpreted as evidence of consistent temporal trends across regions.

2.3.2 Bag limit

Daily survey data from 1993–2025 were used to estimate the proportion of hunts in which more than five grallard were harvested. Estimates were calculated separately for the Saturday and Sunday of opening weekend and the rest of the season to assess how bag limits influence harvest behaviour over time.

For recent years (2022–2025), when the mallard bag limit was eight, the proportion of hunters reaching this limit was estimated, and expected proportions under hypothetical lower limits (e.g., six birds), assuming consistent hunter behaviour, were modelled.

2.4 SURVIVAL RATES

To estimate annual survival rates for age and sex combinations, survival rates are modelled via R MARK as an interaction between the three variables using a Burnham Live-Dead model. Combinations of other parameters were tested, and the most weight was given to the model defined as S(sex*age*time) p(~1) r(sex*age) F(~1).

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 ESTIMATING TOTAL HARVEST, HOURS HUNTED, AND DAYS HUNTED

3.1.1 Grallard harvest

Trends from 1993-2025 indicate that grallard harvest in the Auckland/Waikato region is decreasing, which could be due to several factors, namely the number of hunters, hours hunted (hunter interest/season length), environmental conditions, population size and bag limits.

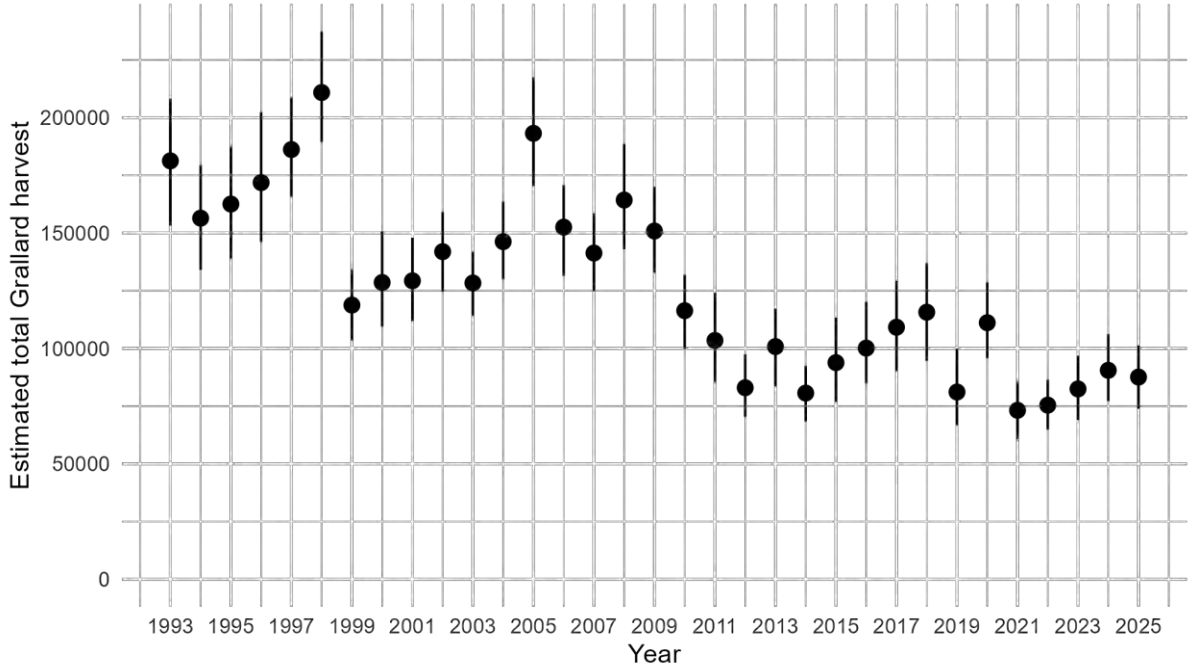

Figure 1: Total estimated grallard harvest in the Auckland/Waikato region from 1993-2025. Annual averages are calculated as the sum of daily totals, and 95% quantile confidence intervals are generated from bootstrapping.

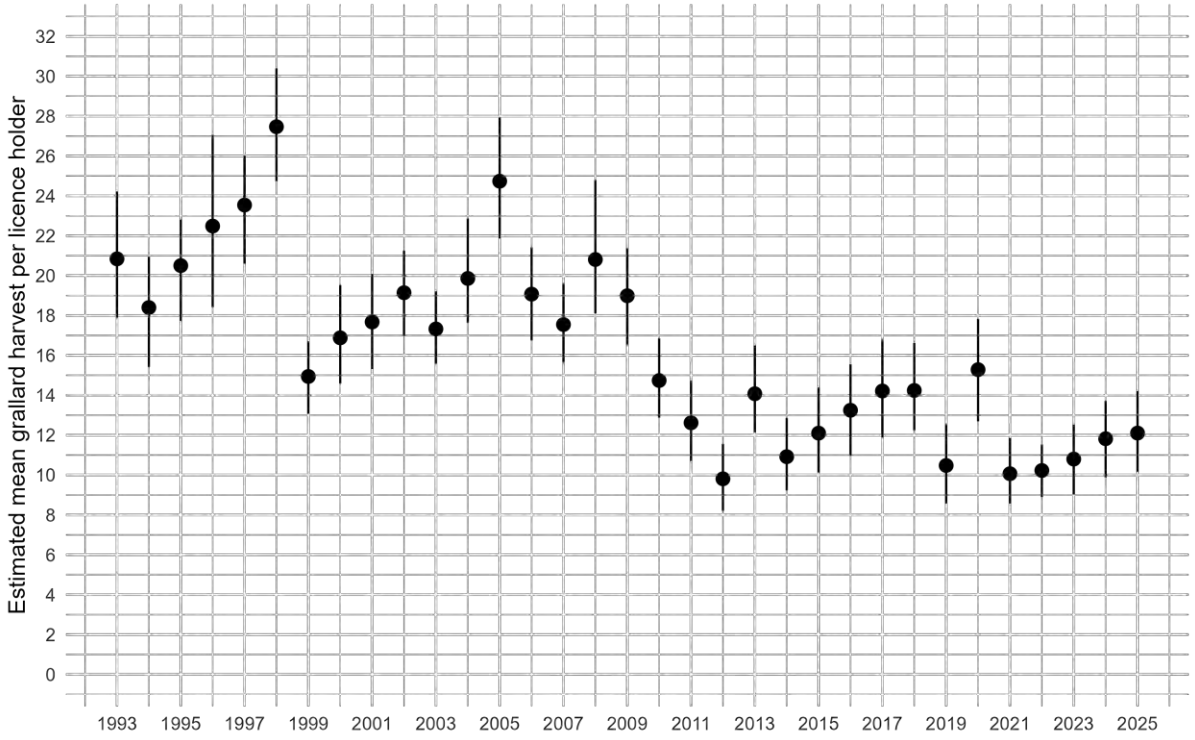

Figure 2: Estimated mean whole season grallard harvest per licence holder hunting from 1993-2025. Annual averages are calculated as the sum of daily averages, and 95% quantile confidence intervals are generated from bootstrapping.

A decrease in average and total harvest (Figures 1 and 2) was observed around 2009. Around the same time, hunting regulations were made more conservative, going from an 8-week season to 4 weeks, and a 10 bird limit to 6 (see Appendix, Figures 22 and 23). The cause of the lower harvest may be influenced by either, or a combination of the more restrictive regulations or other factors that reduced effort such as lower population levels.

Average harvest on opening weekend shows a similar pattern which would not be expected to be impacted by season length (Figure 3).

There are several potential theories as to what may have caused this. One may be that the drop aligns with the hypothesis that the population decreased due to back-to-back drought events around 2009. It has also been suggested that this drop in harvest may be a result of a decline in hunter effort. Additionally, it has been suggested that the survey implementation changed around this time (e.g., before 2009, the selection of surveyed hunters may not have been perfectly random, and some group totals were entered (D. Klee, personal communication)[3]. While randomisation cannot be determined from the data, outliers were checked for (e.g., group counts), with only a few being identified.

[3] The structure of the survey also changed around this time (i.e., the format of the database). However, considerable time has been dedicated to investigating whether this may have resulted in some inconsistency with nothing found. It is reassuring to note that other regions also experienced this change but did not observe a change in their estimates (e.g., Southland).

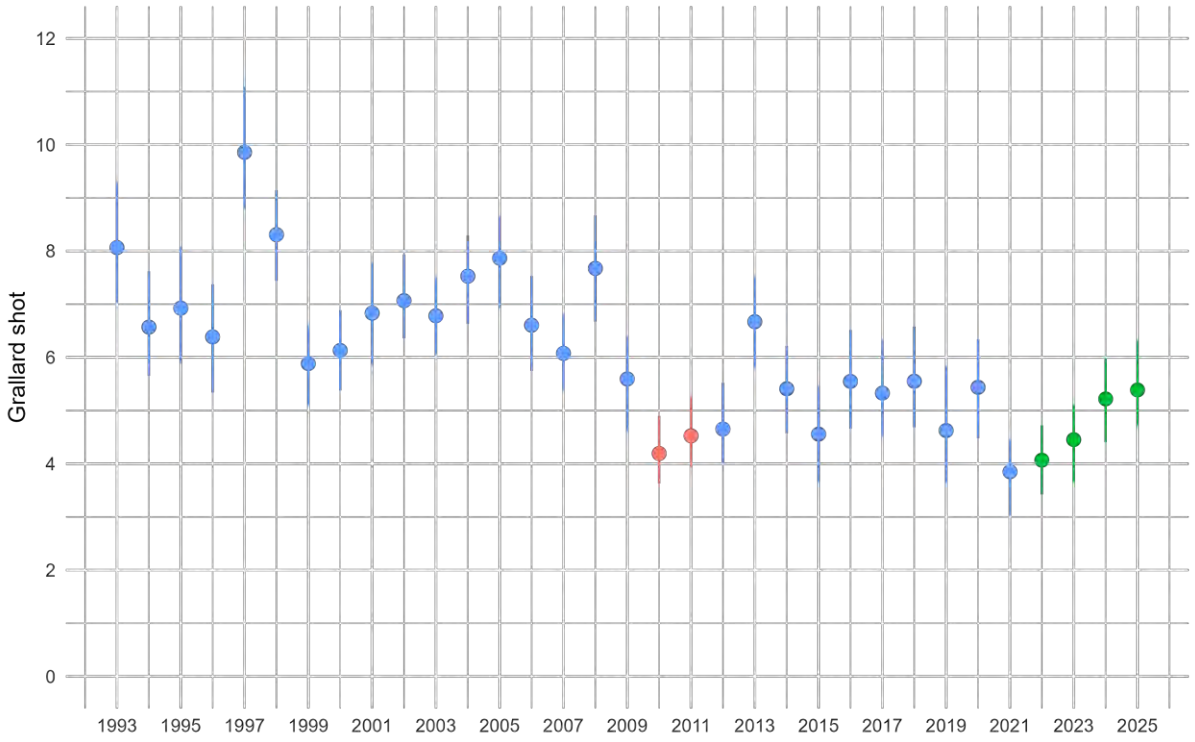

Figure 3: Estimated mean Auckland/Waikato opening weekend grallard harvest per licence holder from 1993-2025. Estimates are based on only AW surveys. Years are coloured by mallard limit. Blue = 10, Green = 8, Orange = 6. Opening weekend averages are calculated as the sum of daily averages, and 95% quantile confidence intervals are generated from bootstrapping.

3.1.2 Hours spent hunting waterfowl

How long people spend hunting provides a good indication of social trends in waterfowl hunting and the potential effect of regulations. By reducing the season length, the aim is to reduce the time spent hunting (and, in turn, harvest). Total hours hunting waterfowl in the Auckland/Waikato region shows a drop around 2009, with a decreasing trend since then (Figure 4). The average amount of hours spent hunting waterfowl follows a similar trend (Figure 5).

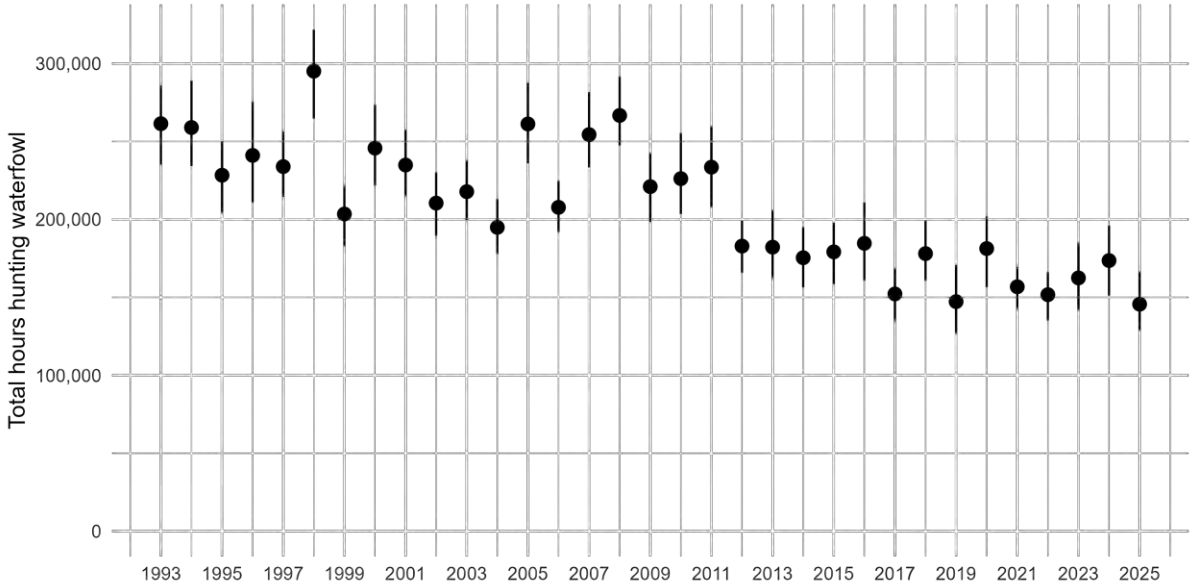

Figure 4: Total estimated hours hunting waterfowl in the Auckland Waikato region from 1993 to 2025. The estimate is based on hunters from all North Island regions.

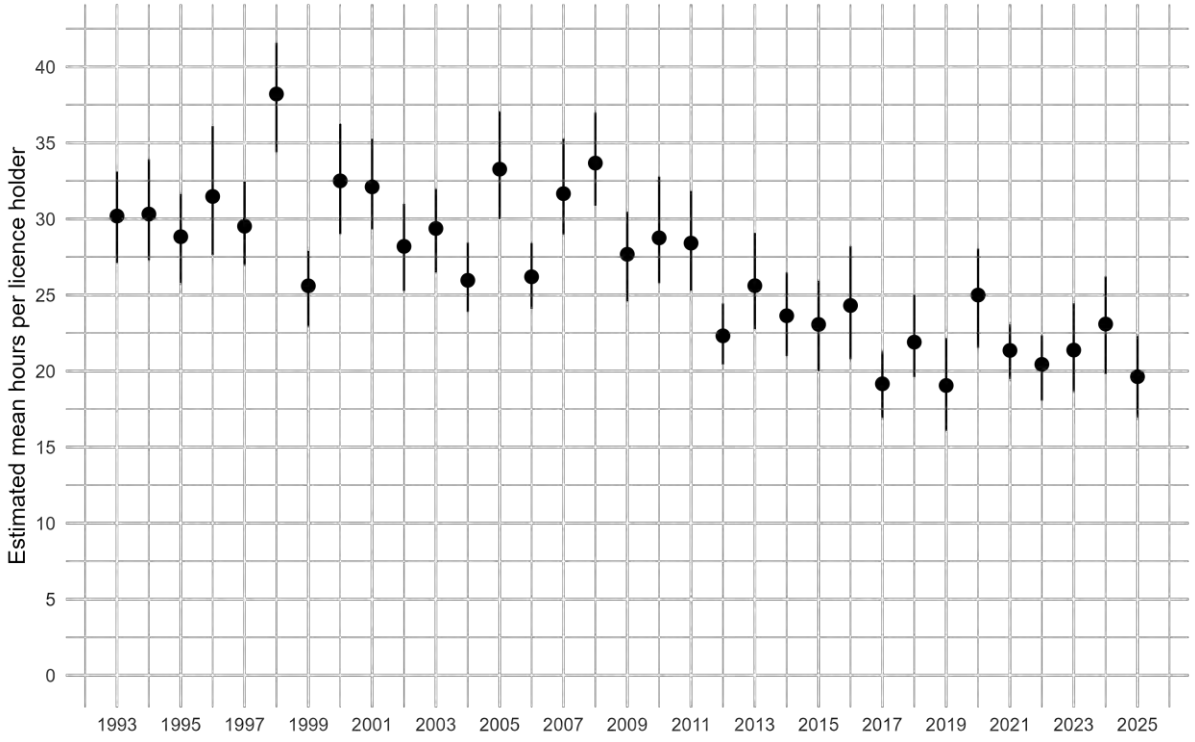

Figure 5: Average estimated hours hunting waterfowl per licence holder in the Auckland/Waikato region from 1993-2025. The estimate is based on Auckland/Waikato survey data only. Annual averages are calculated as the sum of daily averages, and 95% quantile confidence intervals are generated from bootstrapping.

3.1.3 Days spent hunting waterfowl

The number of days spent hunting waterfowl allows a different perspective into how hunter effort has changed over time, and the potential effects of season length. It has been hypothesised that a reduction in season length would mean that hunters would hunt for a similar number of total days, just in a more condensed period.

Figure 6 shows the estimated total days of waterfowl hunting in the Auckland Waikato region follows a similar drop post 2009, and has been trending downwards since.

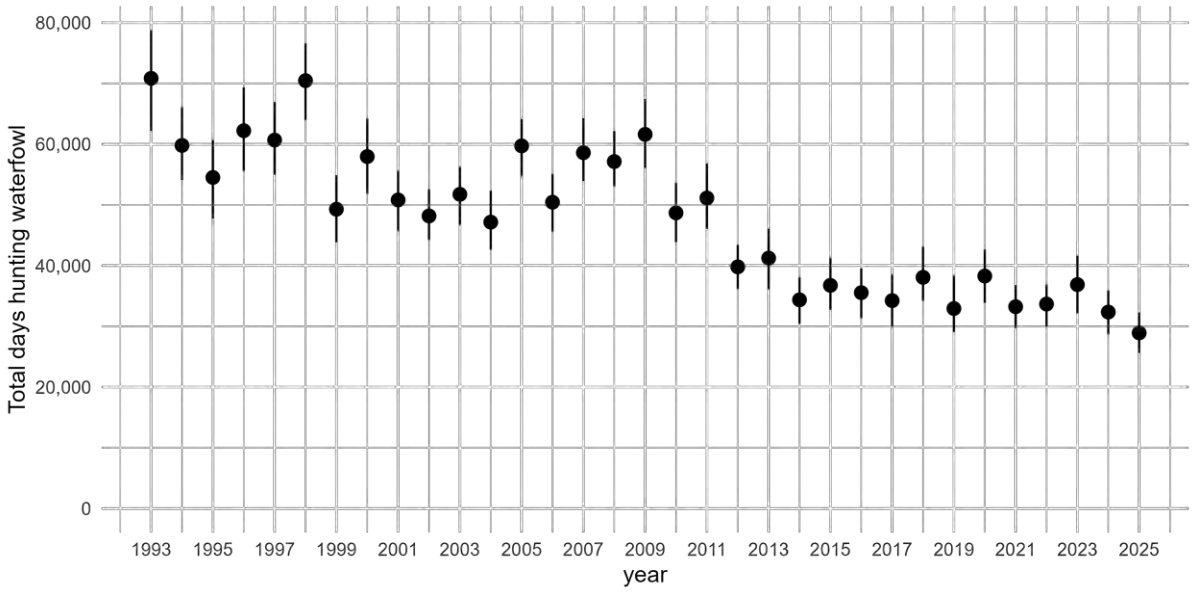

Figure 6: Total estimated days hunting waterfowl in the Auckland Waikato region from 1993 to 2025. The estimate is based on hunters from all North Island regions, and 95% quantile confidence intervals are generated from bootstrapping.

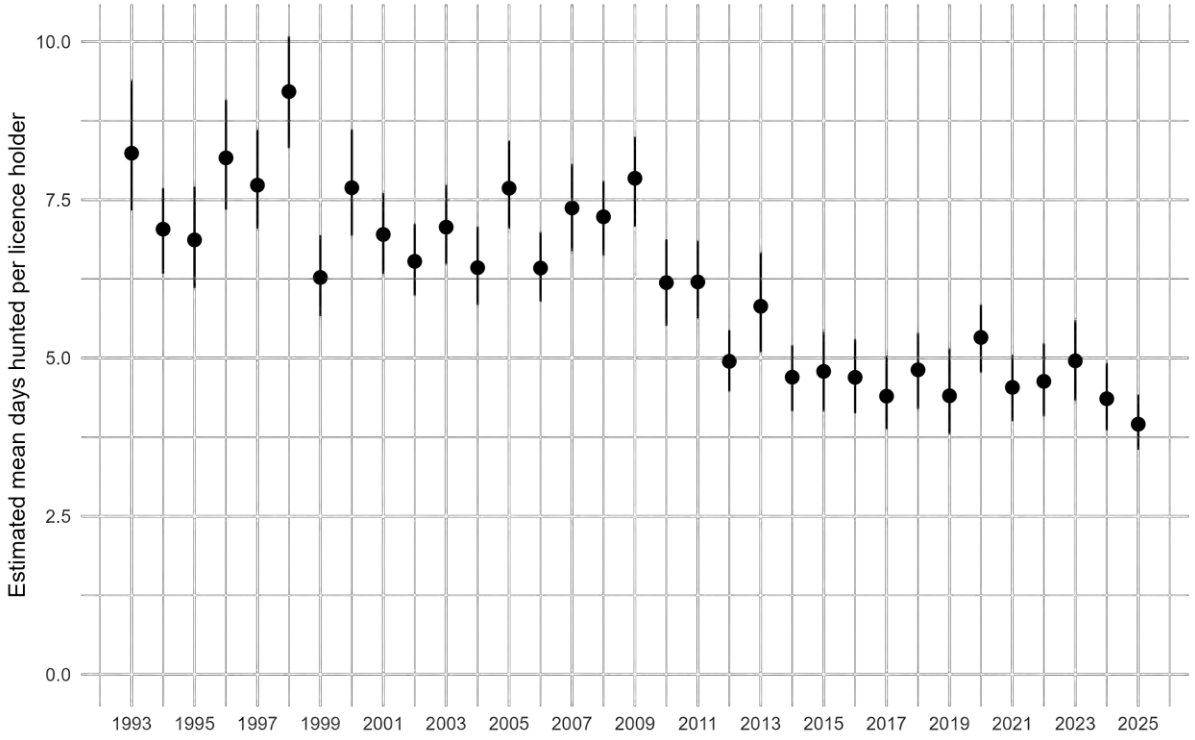

Figure 7: Average estimated days hunting waterfowl per licence holder in the Auckland/Waikato region from 1993-2025. The estimate is based on Auckland/Waikato survey data only. Annual averages are calculated as the sum of daily averages, and 95% quantile confidence intervals are generated from bootstrapping.

3.1.4 Grallard per hour

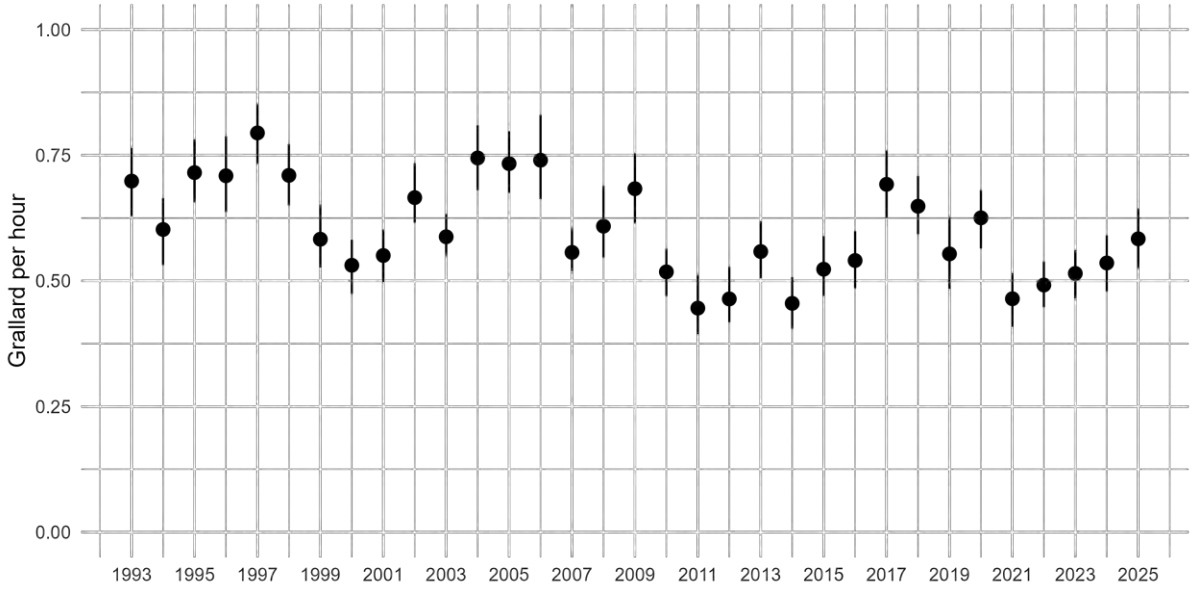

Figure 8: Estimates of average grallard harvest per hunter per hour in the Auckland/Waikato region from 1993-2025. The estimate is based on Auckland/Waikato survey data only. Annual averages are calculated as the sum of daily averages, and 95% quantile confidence intervals are generated from bootstrapping.

Grallards per hunter per hour seems to fluctuate between 1993 and 2025. On the whole, this cycle is trending slightly downwards over time (p=0.0013). Grallard per hour has been shown to correlate with

estimates of population size; however, this should be interpreted with caution, given that it is derived from the same harvest data.

3.2 INVESTIGATING POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF BAG LIMIT AND SEASON LENGTH

3.2.1 Season length

3.2.1.1 Most hunter effort and harvest occur on the opening weekend, and subsequent weekends and patterns in harvest and effort are similar in long and short seasons.

Patterns in the average number of hours spent hunting waterfowl in the Auckland/Waikato region indicate that much of hunter effort (Figure 9), and consequently harvest (Figure 10) occurs on opening weekend, and in subsequent weekends. This can be observed in the jump in the first two days and the step-like pattern in cumulative harvest/effort for the rest of the season (i.e., harvest and effort jump up on weekends but remain flatter during the weekdays). In this respect, it may be better to consider season length in terms of the number of weekends (e.g. a four-week season is actually a five-weekend season).

When opening weekend is included (the left plot in Figures 9, 10 and 11), it is apparent that in more recent years (i.e., in years with shorter seasons and lower estimates of population size) patterns in cumulative harvest are generally lower compared to more historic years with longer seasons and higher estimates of population.

However, when opening weekend is excluded (the right plot in Figures 9, 10 and 11), patterns in hunter effort and harvest are much more comparable, indicating the rate of harvest or effort does not differ between long and short seasons. In the previous report, it was hypothesised that this could be a result of two scenarios;

1. **Season-length-driven reduction:**

Shorter seasons directly reduce cumulative hunter effort (hours/days) and harvest simply by ending earlier. Hunters maintain similar behaviour regardless of season length, so the cumulative harvest and effort curves for short and long seasons follow similar trajectories; shorter seasons are just truncated versions of longer ones.

2. **Behavioural-and-population-driven:**

Declines in hunting effort and harvest reflect broader, longer-term changes such as a reduction in waterfowl population size, rather than the direct effect of season length. Hunters may respond to shorter seasons by concentrating their activity, hunting more intensely within the available days, making total harvest appear similar even though overall effort has declined.

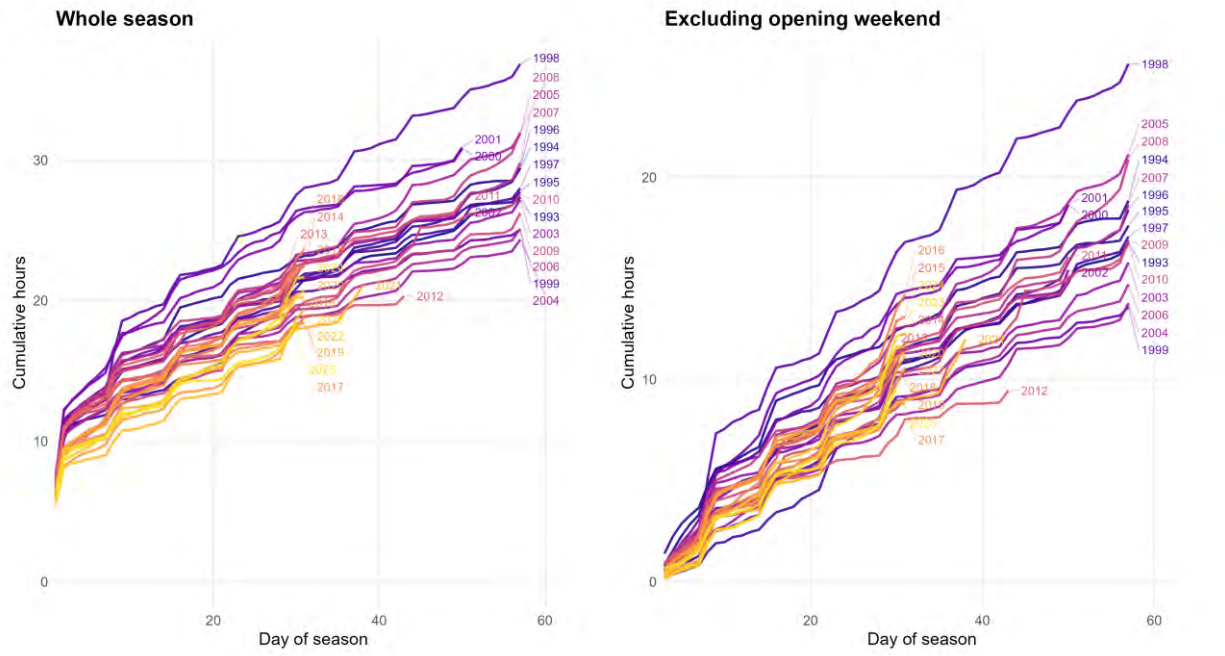

Figure 9: Cumulative daily mean hours spent hunting waterfowl per licence holder from 1993-2025 for the whole season (left) and excluding opening weekend (right). Where each year's line ends corresponds to the average hours per person in a season.

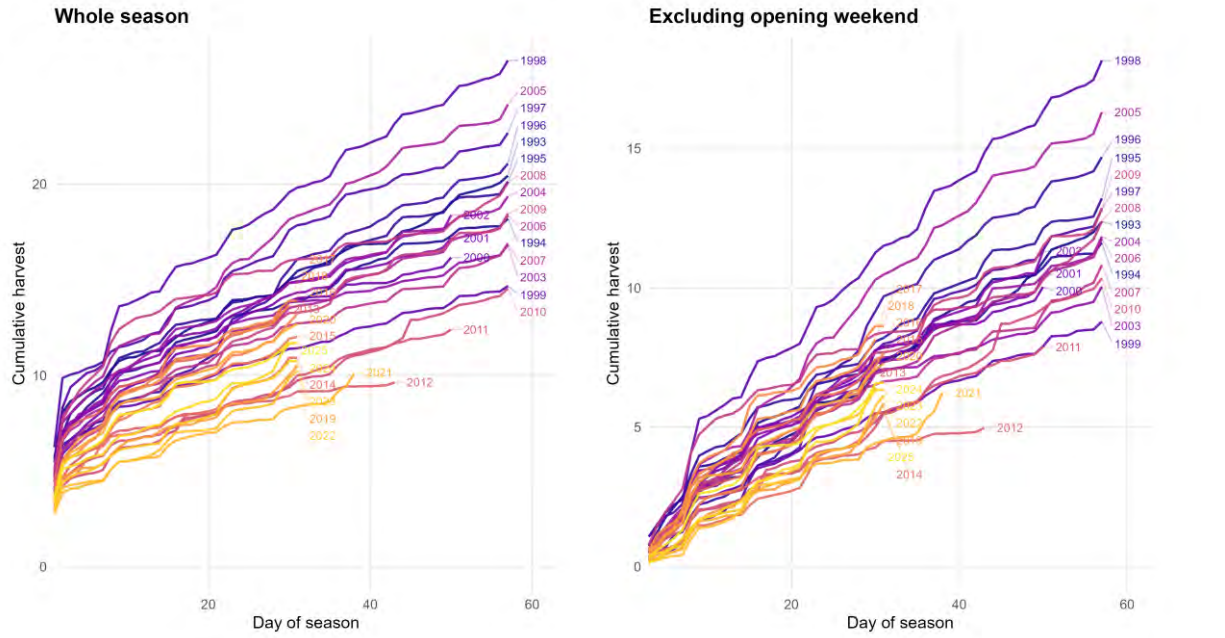

Figure 10: Cumulative daily mean grallard shot per licence holder from 1993-2025 for the whole season (left) and excluding opening weekend (right). Where each year's line ends corresponds to the estimated average grallard shot per person in a season.

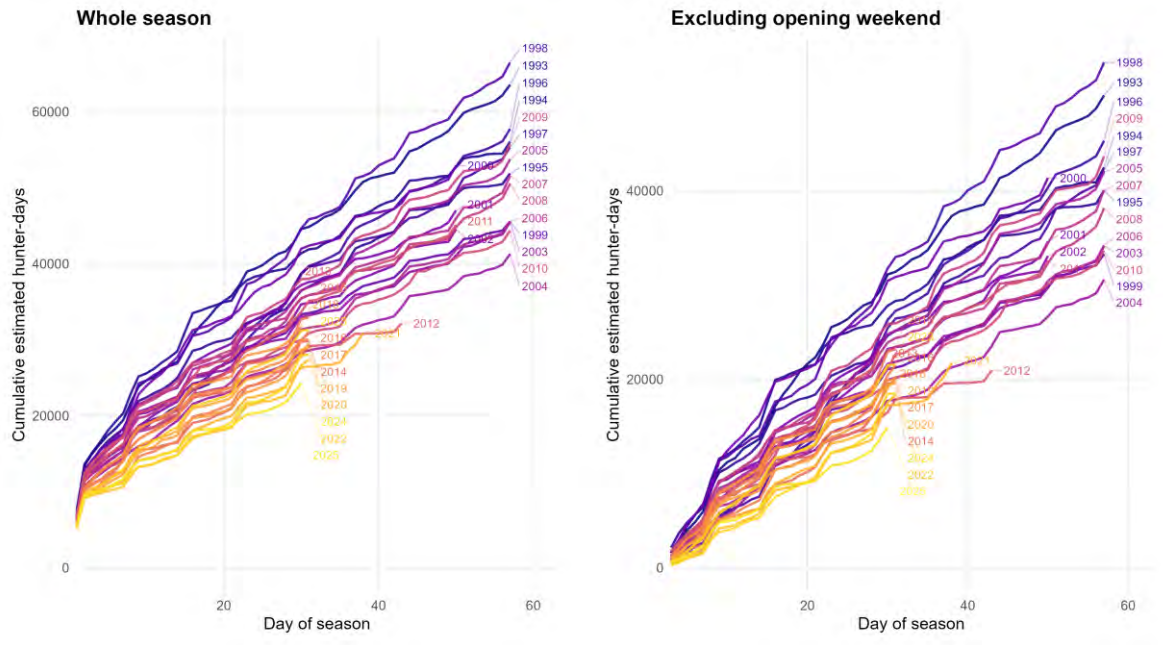

Figure 11: Cumulative mean days hunted per licence holder from 1993-2025 for the whole season (left) and excluding opening weekend (right). Where each year's line ends corresponds to the estimated average days hunted per person in a season.

3.2.1.2 Patterns of effort in neighbouring regions indicate that recent declines in hunter effort (post 2009) may not be driven by changing regulations and may instead reflect more general societal or population trends.

By comparing patterns in hunter effort (hours/days) and harvest between Auckland/Waikato (which have had reduced season lengths since 2011) and neighbouring regions, Northland and Taranaki (which have had more consistently long seasons), these two hypotheses are further investigated. The analysis focuses on hours hunted, as this is what is expected to be primarily influenced by season length. Naturally, each region differs in external factors (e.g. climatic, economic), so it cannot fully infer causation. To isolate the effect of season length, the opening weekend is excluded (which may be more impacted by factors such as bag limits).

Hours hunted in Northland and Taranaki show remarkably similar patterns post-opening weekend. Despite consistently longer seasons, both regions have observed a decline in hunter effort starting around 2010. Figure 12 clearly shows that for Northland and Taranaki, the cumulative hours hunting after the opening weekend are higher in earlier years (shown in purple) compared to more recent years (shown in yellow). This pattern is similarly observed in harvest (Figure 13).

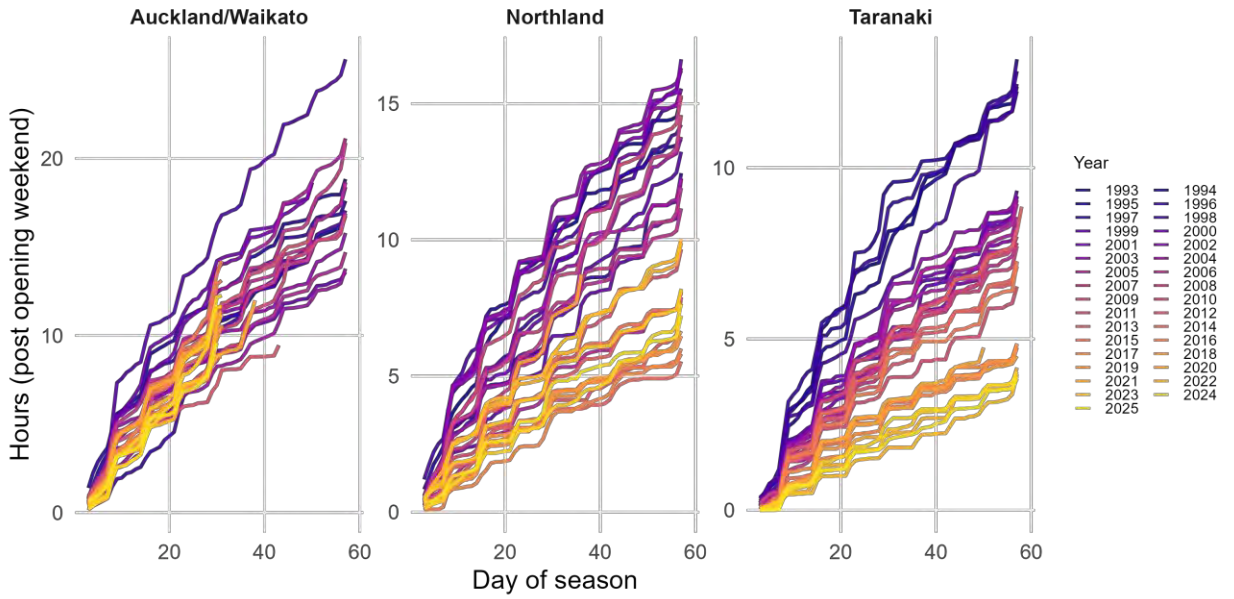

Figure 12: Cumulative daily mean hours spent hunting waterfowl per licence holder from 1993-2025, excluding opening weekend in the Auckland, Waikato, Northland and Taranaki regions.

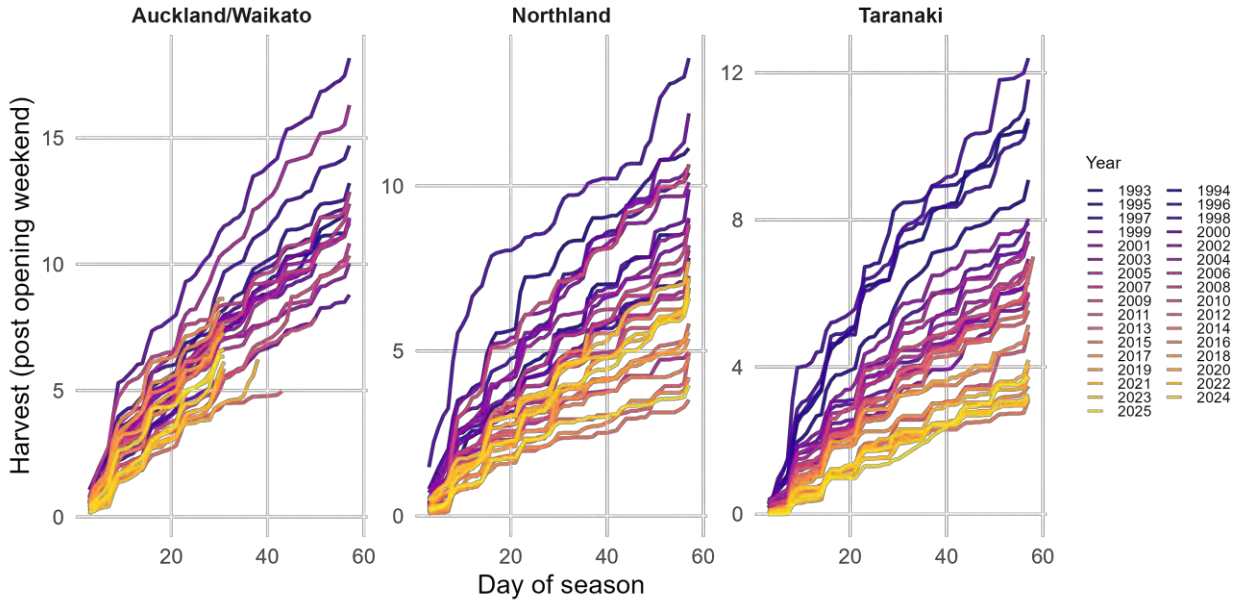

Figure 13: Cumulative daily mean grallard harvest per licence holder from 1993-2025, excluding opening weekend in the Auckland, Waikato, Northland and Taranaki regions.

From 1993 to 2025, all three regions followed a similar trend in the mean number of hours hunted after the opening weekend, with the mean hours hunted dropping around 2010 (Figure 14). This drop in hunting hours is not significantly different between the three regions. Specifically, a linear model testing the change in mean harvest between years 1993-2009 and 2010-2025 found no significant interaction between region and pre/post 2009 mean harvest (p =0.277). I.e. the drop in harvest observed between 1993-2009 and 2010-2025 is consistent between the three regions, despite Auckland/Waikato having shorter season lengths (most of which were four weeks) in the latter period. This is further illustrated in the interaction plot (Figure 15), where the parallel lines indicate no interaction between region and period. This implies all regions experienced a similar decline in mean

annual harvest over time, suggesting the post-2009 reduction was not region-specific. This lends considerable weight to the hypothesis that declines in hunting effort reflect broader, longer-term changes, rather than the direct effect of season length.

Several specific factors could be driving a recent decline in hours hunted. It has been hypothesised that competing hobbies and interests may contribute to a decline in hunter effort. A reduced grallard population (and therefore potentially lower grallard per hour) may also contribute to a reduction in hunter effort, as hunting is now more challenging or less rewarding. Environmental factors are also worth considering, with drier conditions in May, hunters may increasingly experience less avaiable "hunting habitat" than historically.

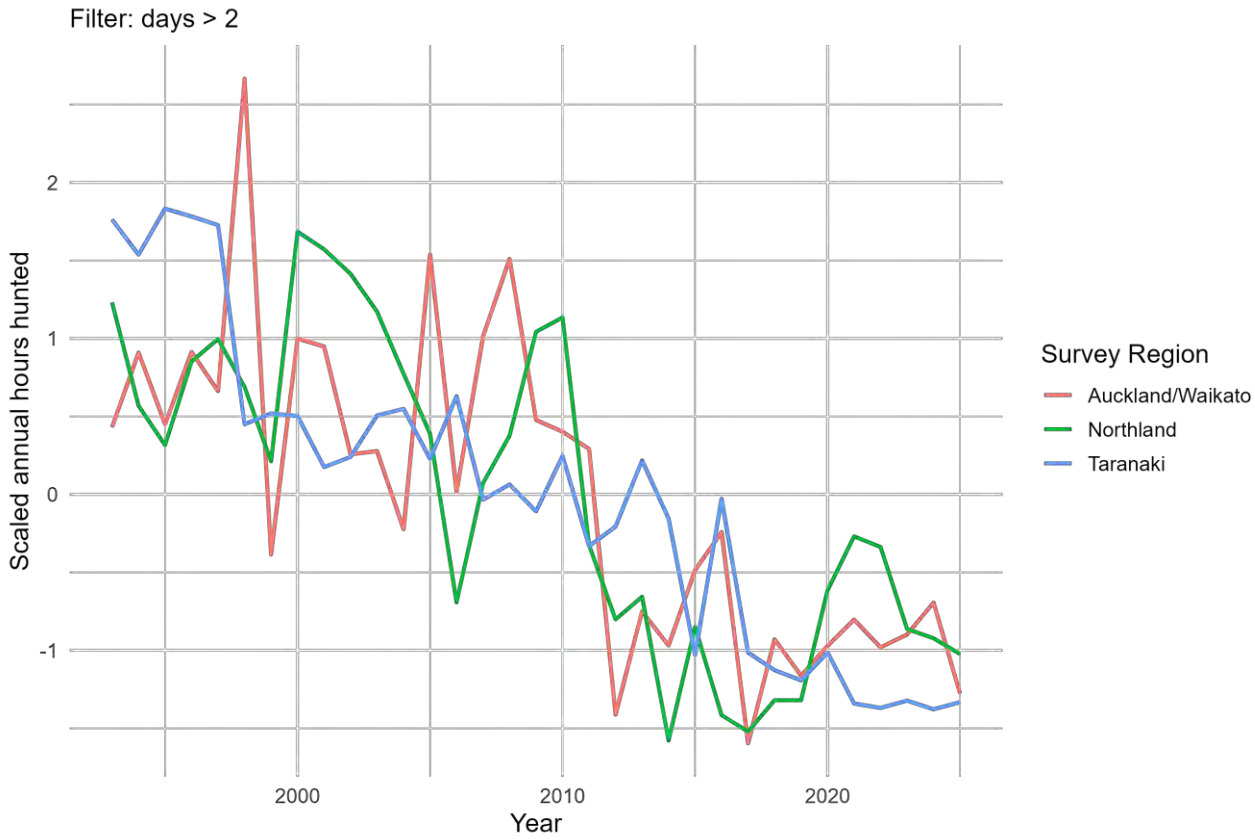

Figure 14: Trends in mean hours hunted per licence holder (excluding opening weekend) from 1993-2025 in the Auckland, Waikato, Northland and Taranaki regions. Here, the mean hours are scaled (subtracted from the regional mean and divided by the standard deviation) to allow for comparisons in trends between regions.

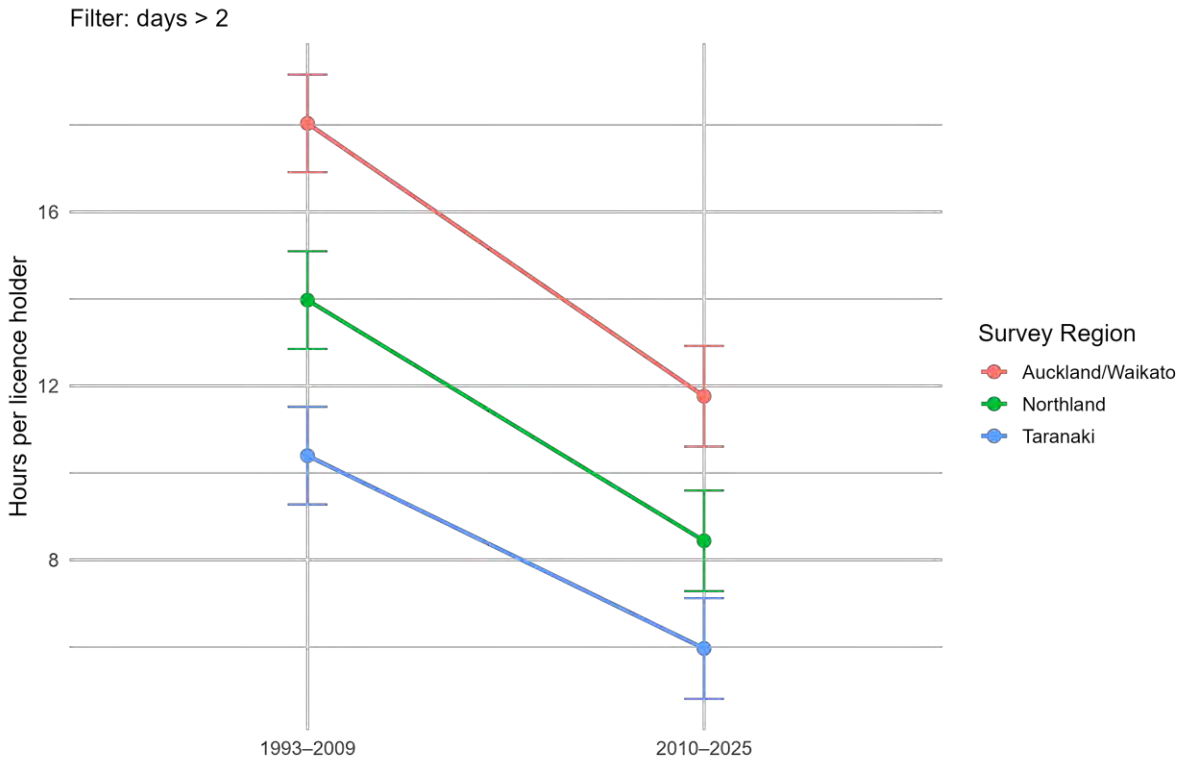

Figure 15: Change in the estimated mean annual hours hunting water (± SE) between 1993–2009 and 2010–2025 across Auckland/Waikato, Northland, and Taranaki post opening weekend. Parallel lines indicate no interaction between region and period, meaning the drop in mean harvest before and after 2009 is consistent across the three regions.

3.2.2 Bag limits

3.2.2.1 Bag limits are more effective when the population is higher.

The proportion of hunters shooting more than 5 birds a day provides an indication of how impactful bag limit reductions are. Figure 16 shows that, for the Saturday of opening weekend (and to a much lesser extent, Sunday as well), this proportion has decreased over time. This matches the pattern in population size, indicating that for the opening weekend, bag limits will impact more people when the population is higher (i.e., in the 2000s). In contrast, this proportion appears to be reasonably stable over time after opening weekend (i.e., “Rest of season”), at just over 10%.

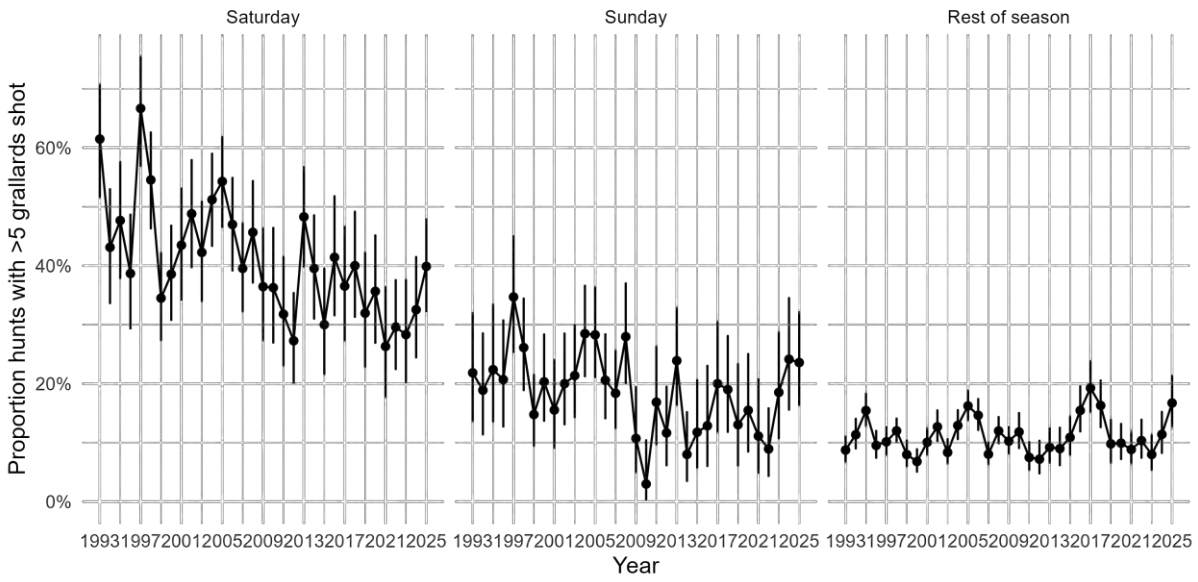

Figure 16: Estimated proportion of hunts in which more than five grallards are harvested from 1993 to 2025. Estimates are given for the Saturday (left) and Sunday (middle) of opening weekend, and the rest of the season (right).

3.2.2.2 Bag limits are most effective on opening weekend.

Given that the effect of bag limits varies depending on the population size (i.e., when there are lots of birds, it is more common to harvest more), data was limited to the most recent years (2022 to 2025), which have had a mallard limit of 8 and likely a more comparable population size than that of the early 2000s.

Figure 17 shows that in recent years, around 19% of hunters reached their limit of eight on the Saturday of opening weekend. On Sunday, this drops to 10%, and for the rest of the season, on average, 5.5% of hunts will result in the hunter getting their limit.

If this distribution were to hold (i.e., assuming hunter behaviour stays consistent), it is expected that a 6-bird limit would result in around 34% of hunters making their limit on the Saturday of opening weekend. On Sunday, this drops to 17% and for the rest of the season, on average, 10% of hunts will result in the hunter getting their limit (Figure 18).

However, it is expected the hunter behaviour would change with bag limits. Most likely, the distribution would be shifted to the right. For example, someone who might typically shoot five birds might hold out an extra hour for the satisfaction of getting their limit (if the bag limit is 6). Estimates of expected harvest under these hypothetical scenarios may therefore be better thought of as “at best” reduction.

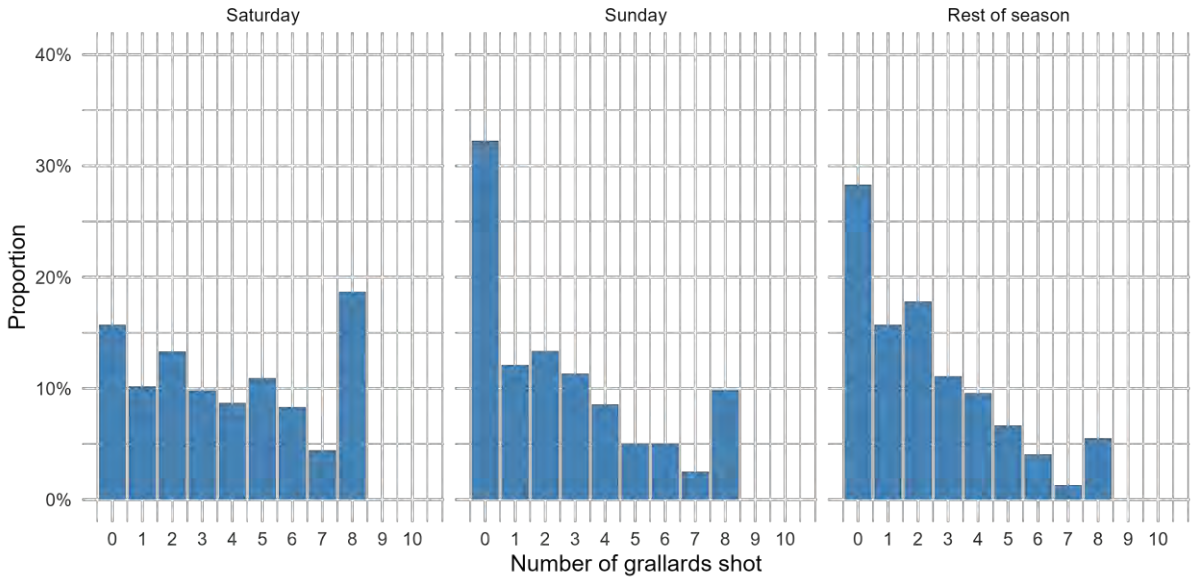

Figure 17: The distribution of grallard shot per day for years 2022 to 2025 (all with a bag limit of 8) for Saturday (left) and Sunday (middle) of opening weekend, and the rest of the season (right).

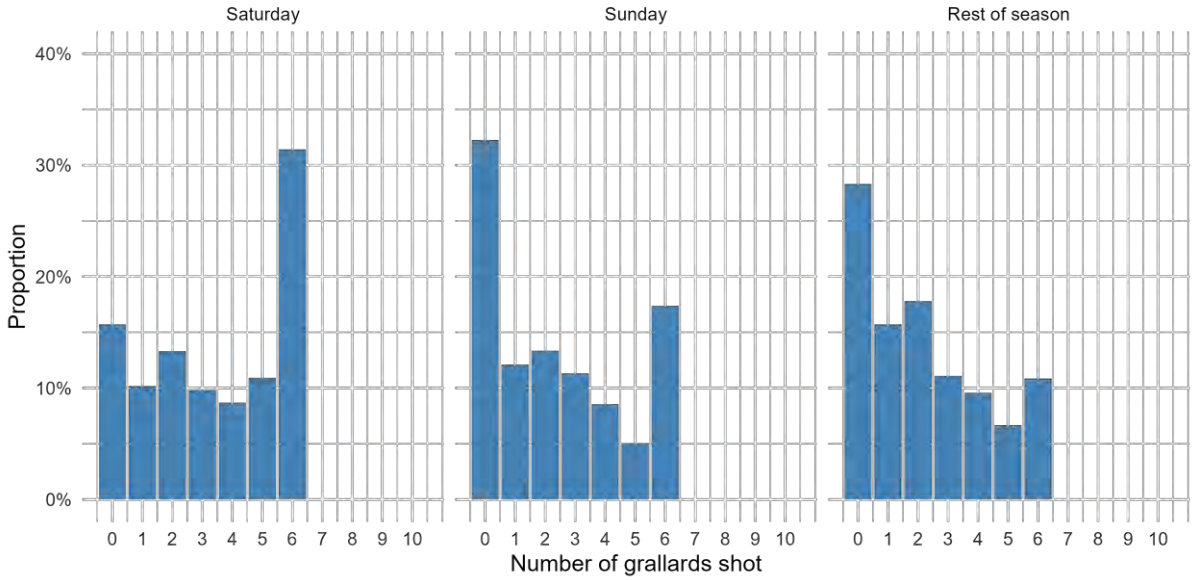

Figure 18: The distribution of grallard shot per day for years 2022 to 2025 (all with a bag limit of 8) by opening weekend (left) and the rest of the season (right) under a hypothesised six-bag limit (i.e., data is mutated so that those who shot more than six are assumed to get their limit of 6).

3.2.2.3 Expected reductions in harvest likely only occur when bag limits are highly restrictive.

Figures 17 and 18 illustrate how imposing a bag limit of six compresses the upper tail of the distribution of birds shot. However, because the distribution is truncated rather than shifted downward, the reduction in total harvest is likely smaller than it appears, as demonstrated below.

Table 1: Estimated percent reduction in harvest using data from 2022 to 2025.

Bag limit	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Percent reduction in total harvest	100.0	72.2	49.7	33.6	21.5	12.8	7.0	3.1	0

Table 1 shows the estimated percent reduction in harvest under different bag limit scenarios, calculated using data from 2022 to 2025. For example, to achieve a 33% reduction in harvest, a 3-bird limit would be necessary. This reduction in harvest has a greater effect on opening weekend (Figure 19) and can be expected to differ by year (Figure 20). Figure 20 highlights the annual effects of bag limit on total harvest for years 2018 to 2025, where years 2018 to 2021 had a bag limit of 10.

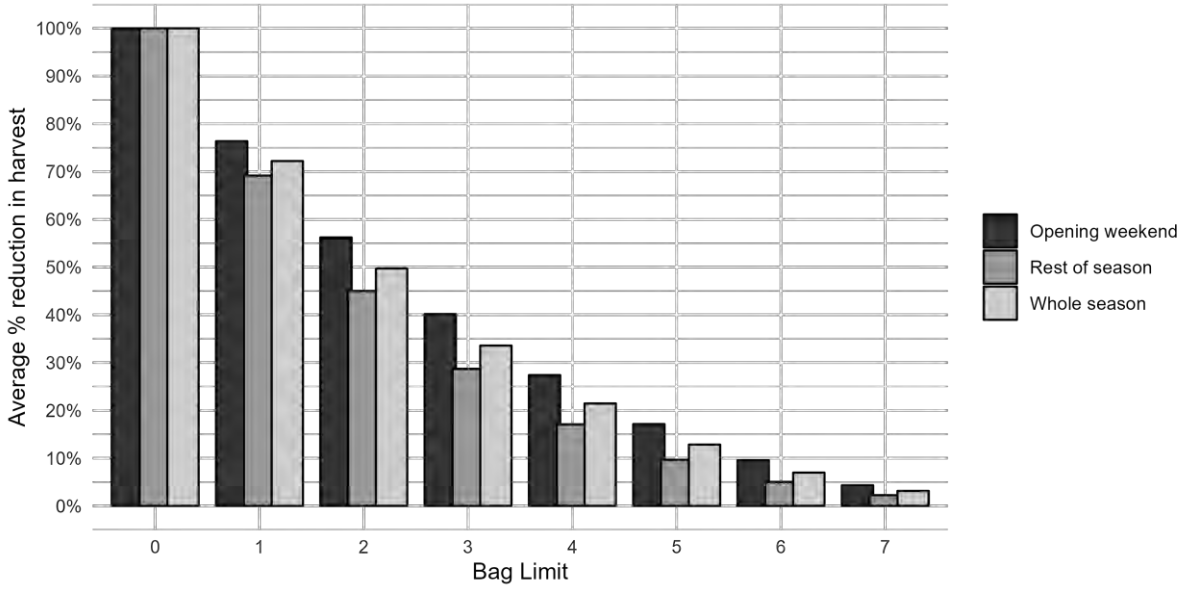

Figure 19: Estimated reduction in harvest under different bag limit scenarios (based on 2022 to 2025 data). Here, harvest data is mutated so that those who shot above the scenario bag limit now shoot that value.

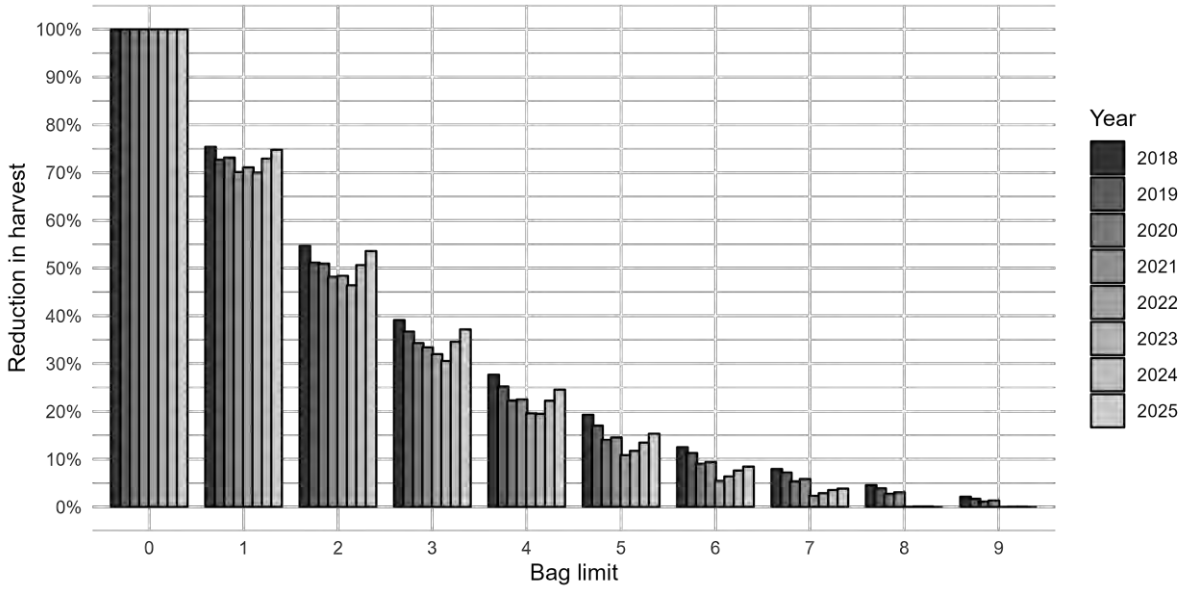

Figure 20: Estimated reduction in harvest under different bag limit scenarios for years 2018 to 2025. Highlighting the expected reduction in harvest for years with a limit of 10 (2018 to 2021) and 8 (2022 to 2025).

3.3 SURVIVAL RATES

Annual survival rates are calculated from banding data and represent the proportion of the population that survives from one year to the next. In some contexts, annual survival is separated into breeding survival and non-breeding survival[4]. It is assumed that breeding survival is dependent on factors such

as predation, food availability, etc, while non-breeding survival is dependent on these factors plus harvest.

From 2002 to 2025, the long-term average survival rates are estimated as:

- Juvenile females = 0.323 (95% CI: 0.302 – 0.344)
- Juvenile males = 0.425 (95% CI: 0.404 – 0.445)
- Adult males = 0.606 (95% CI: 0.595 – 0.617)
- Adult females = 0.49 (95% CI: 0.47 – 0.618)

Juvenile survival rates are here shown to be lower than those of adults, and that female survival rates are lower than those of males.

Figure 21 shows that while there are some annual fluctuations in survival rate, it is generally stable over time.

Estimates of survival rates may remain stable during a hypothetical population collapse because duckling survival is understood to be the single most important variable governing population growth[4] which is not captured in the survival estimates. Environmental effects and seasonal regulation can be included as predictors in the Burnham live-dead model, but further work is required to explore this fully.

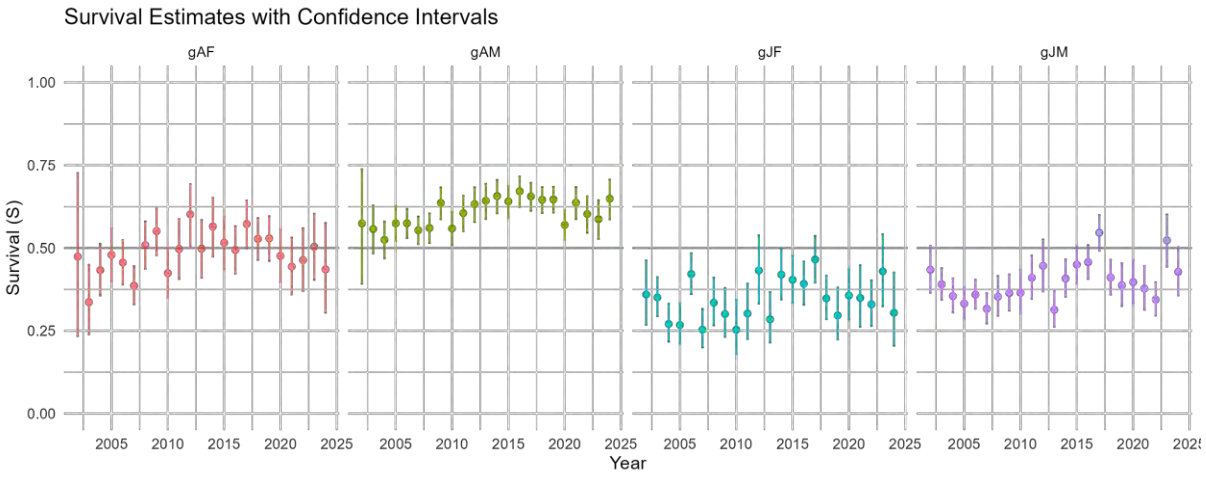

*Figure 21: Estimates of survival (S) from 2002 to 2024 based on a Burnham live–dead model. AF (orange) = Adult females, AM (Green) = adult males, JF (blue) = juvenile females, JM (purple) = juvenile males. Distinct estimates of survival for sex and age classes over time are generated from an S(sex*age*time) p(~1) r(sex*age) F(~1) model. The most recent year is excluded from the plots because it cannot be reliably estimated.*

[4] J. Sheppard (2017). Breeding Ecology and Productivity of Mallards and Mallard-grey Duck Hybrids in New Zealand.

4 APPENDIX A: SUPPLEMENTARY FIGURES

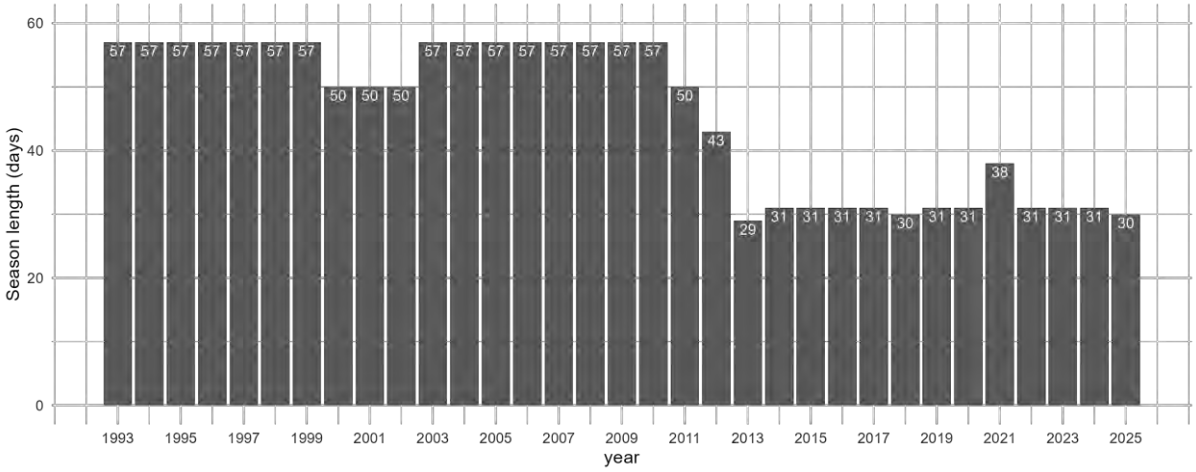

Figure 22: Auckland Waikato season length (days) 1993-2025.

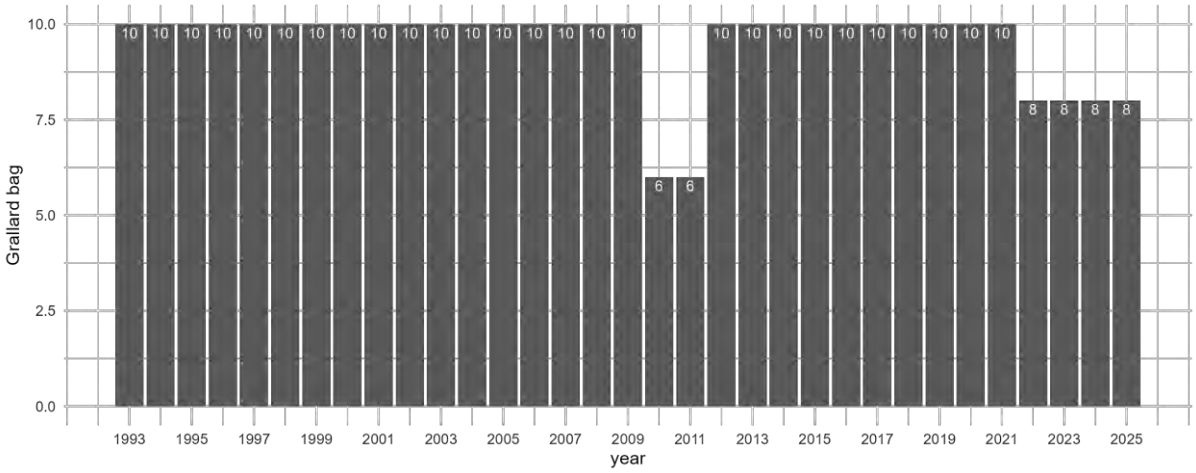

Figure 23: Auckland Waikato mallard bag limit 1993-2025.

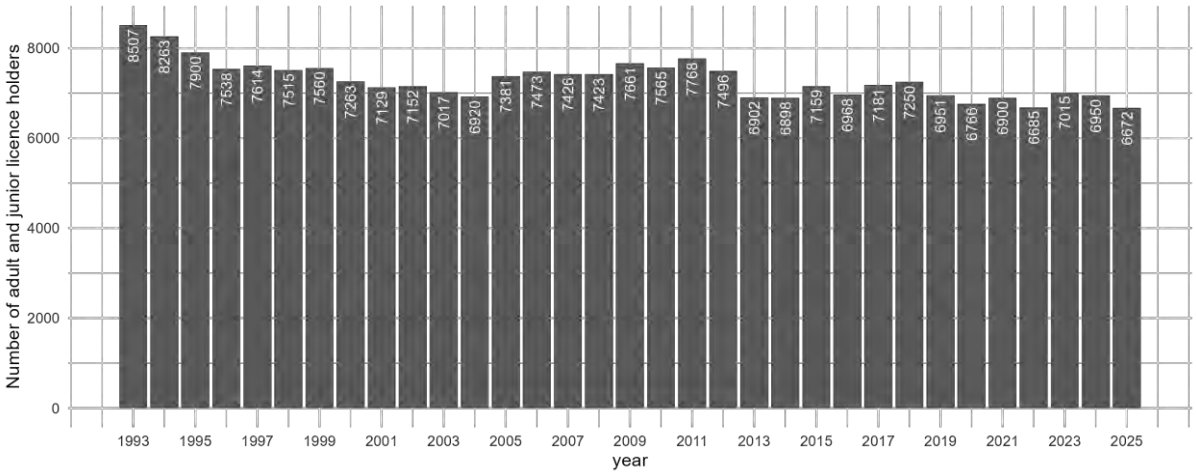

Figure 24: Auckland Waikato adult and junior full-season licence holders 1993-2025. Note that for 1995, the number of licence holders is unknown, and the average of the two surrounding years is imputed.

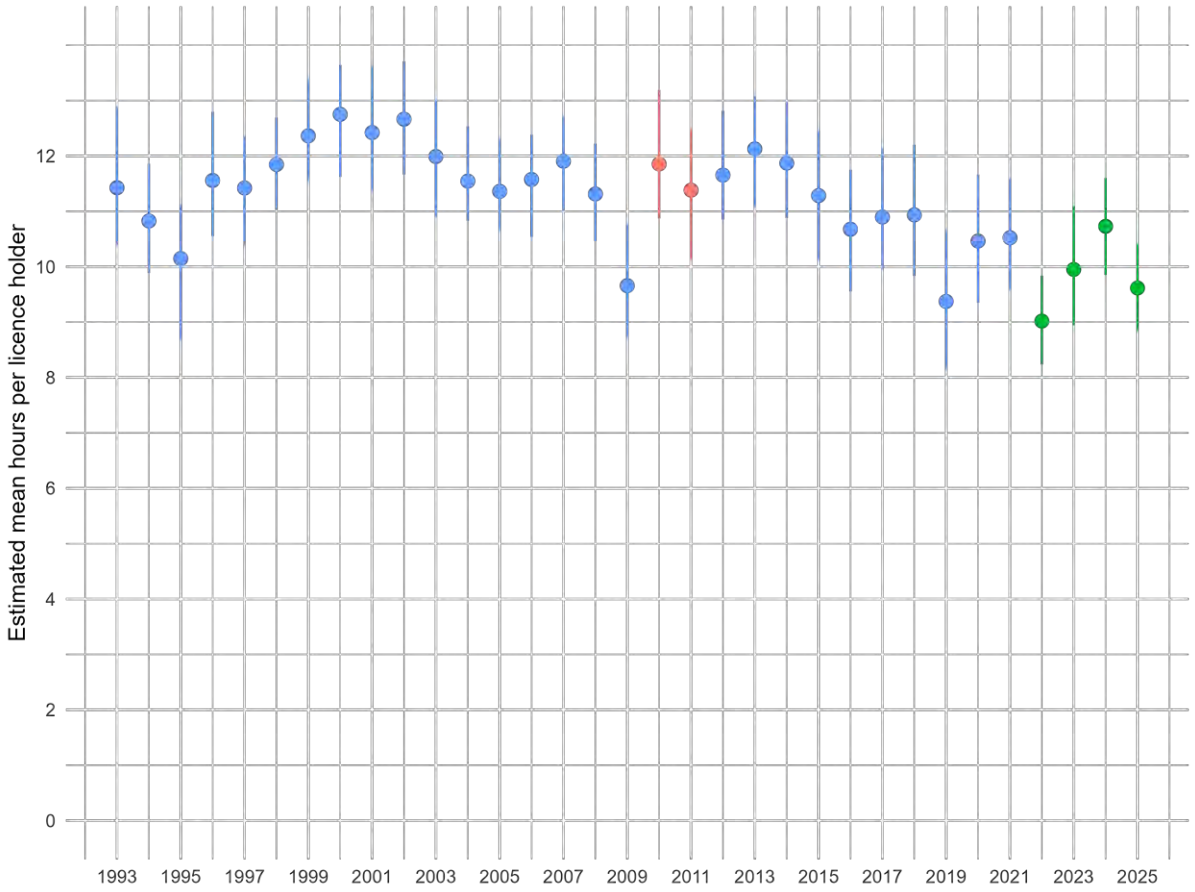

Figure 25: Estimated mean opening weekend grallard hours hunting waterfowl per licence holder from 1993-2024. Years are coloured by mallard limit. Blue = 10, Green = 8, Orange = 6. Opening weekend averages are calculated as the sum of daily averages, and 95% quantile confidence intervals are generated from bootstrapping.

5 APPENDIX B: HARVEST OF OTHER SPECIES

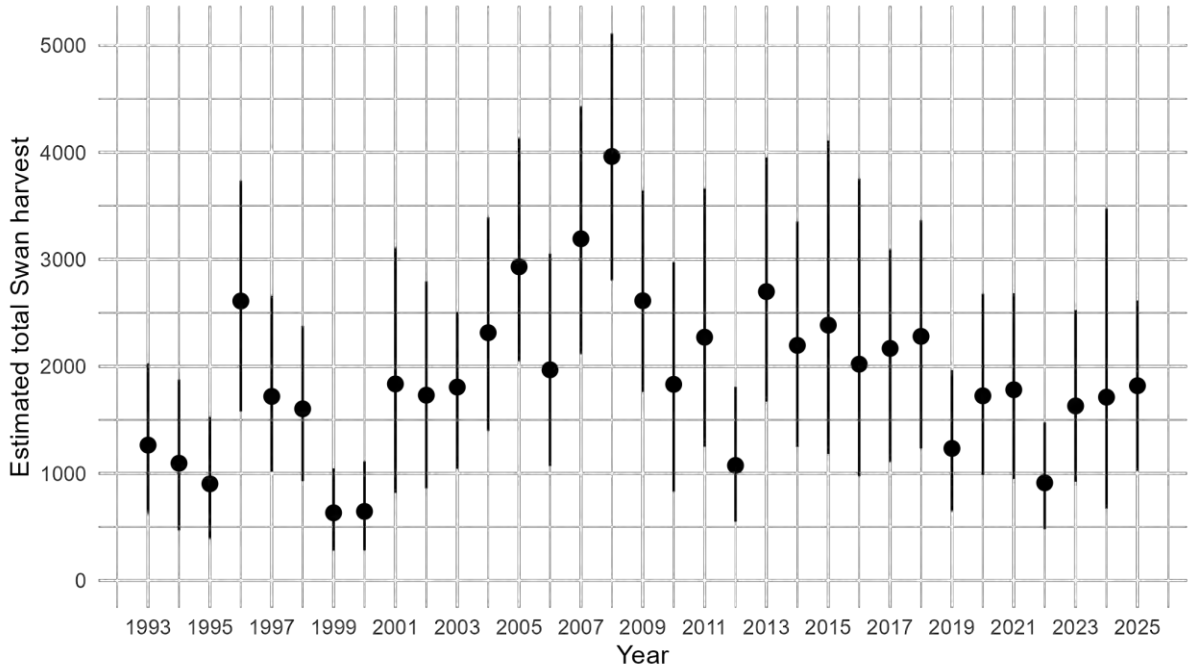

Figure 26: Total estimated black swan harvest in the Auckland/Waikato region from 1993-2025. Annual averages are calculated as the sum of daily totals, and 95% quantile confidence intervals are generated from bootstrapping.

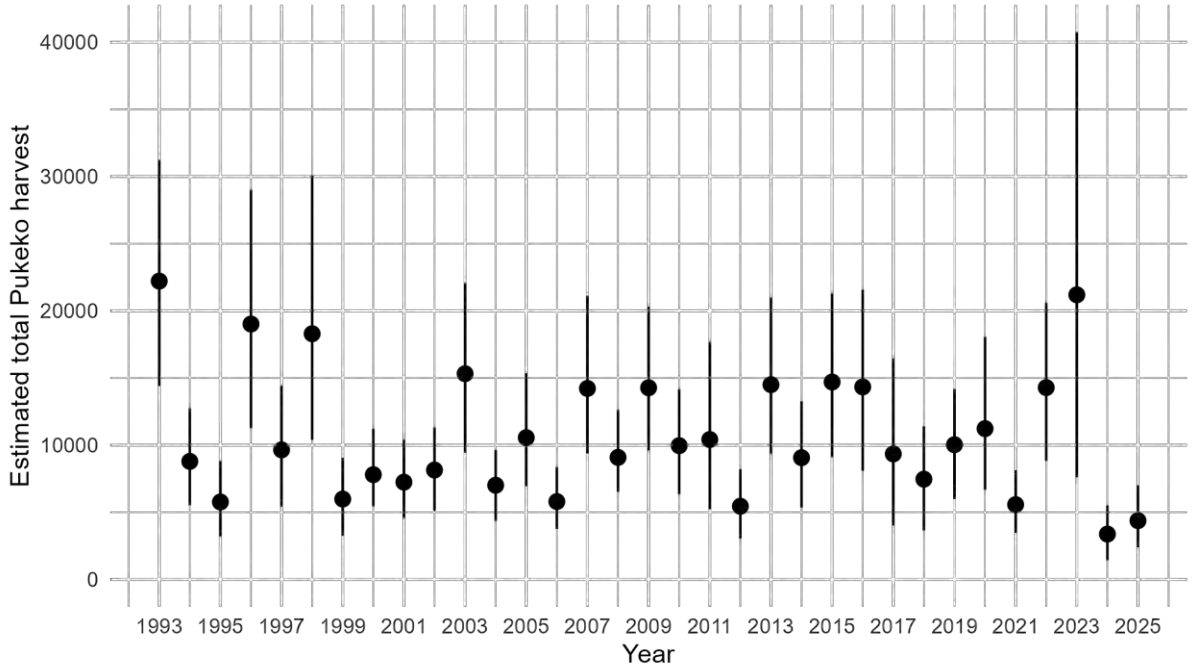

Figure 27: Total estimated pukeko harvest in the Auckland/Waikato region from 1993-2025. Annual averages are calculated as the sum of daily totals, and 95% quantile confidence intervals are generated from bootstrapping.

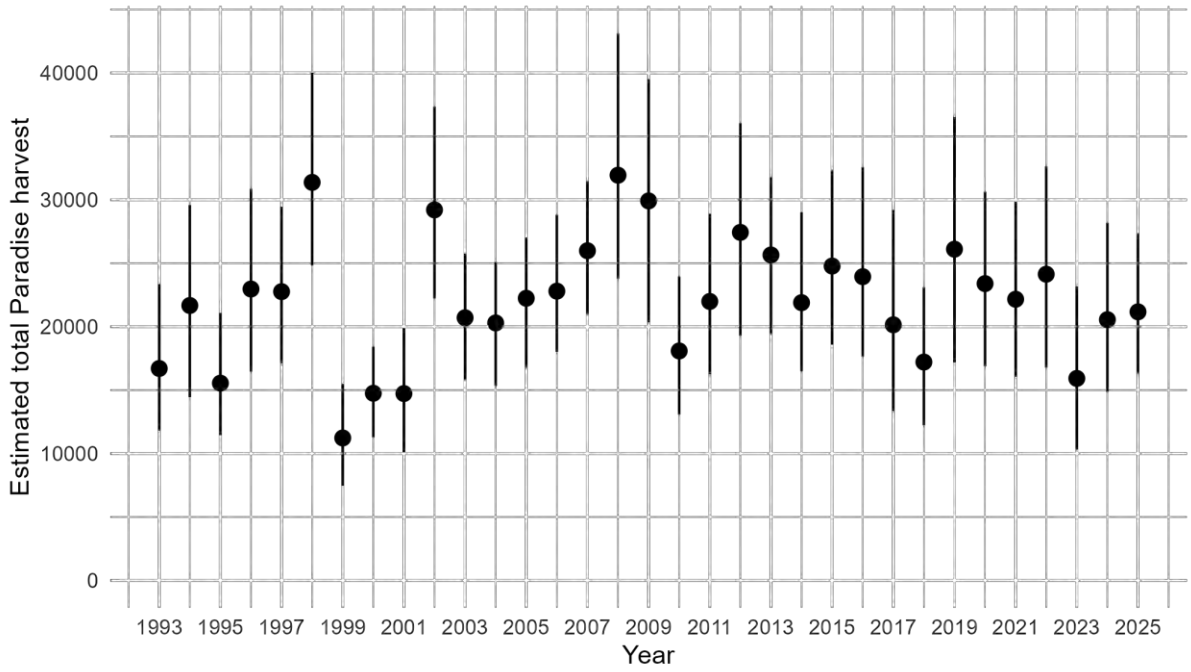

Figure 28: Total estimated paradise shelduck harvest in the Auckland/Waikato region from 1993-2025. Annual averages are calculated as the sum of daily totals, and 95% quantile confidence intervals are generated from bootstrapping.

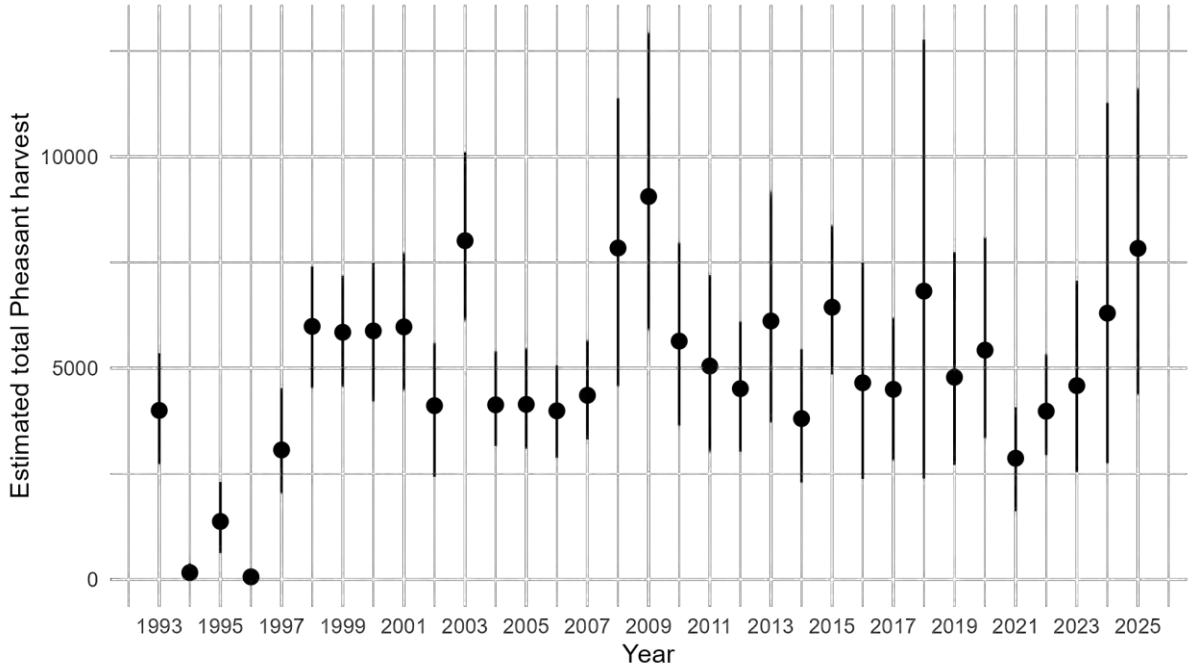

Figure 29: Total estimated pheasant harvest in the Auckland/Waikato region from 1993-2025. Annual averages are calculated as the sum of daily totals, and 95% quantile confidence intervals are generated from bootstrapping.

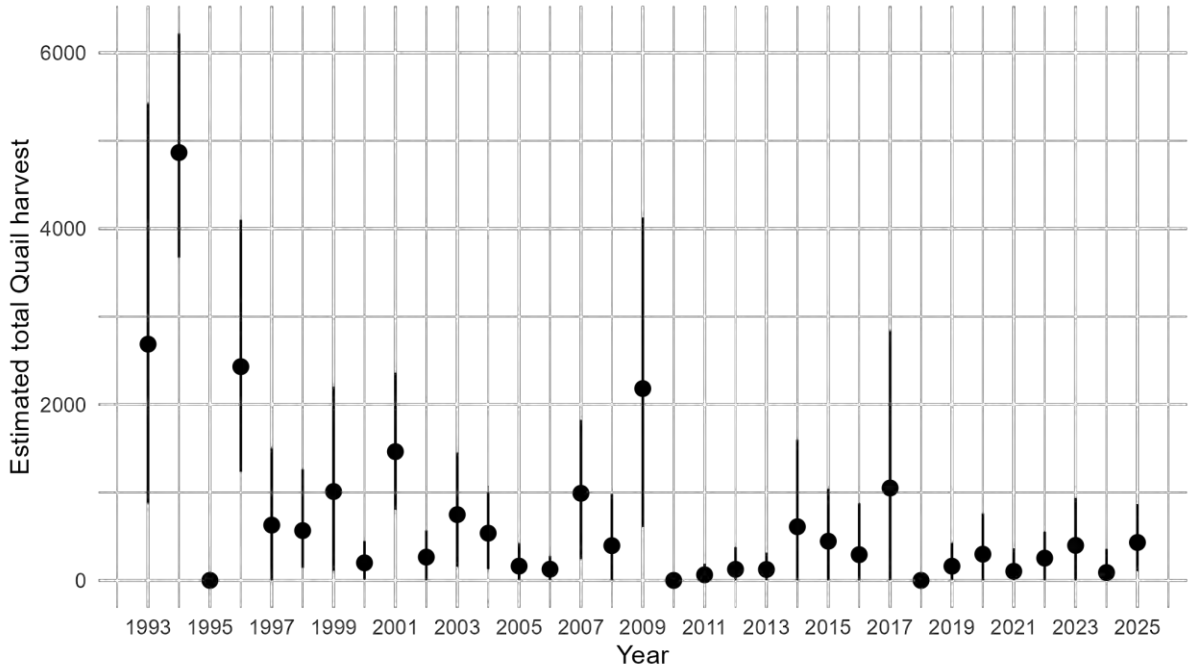

Figure 30: Total estimated quail harvest in the Auckland/Waikato region from 1993-2025. Annual averages are calculated as the sum of daily totals, and 95% quantile confidence intervals are generated from bootstrapping.

Trend Count Report for Paradise Shelduck, Black Swan, and Canada Geese

Beau Jarvis-Child 2025

1 SUMMARY

Auckland Waikato Fish & Game Council monitor paradise shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*), black swan (*Cygnus atratus*) and Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*) via aerial surveys of known moult sites at set times each year. Specifically, paradise shelduck are monitored in the King Country and north of Auckland via two separate surveys[1], while swan and geese are monitored in the Waikato lakes and harbours.

This report focuses primarily on estimating the population index and trends for paradise shelduck in the King Country and swan in the central Waikato lakes and harbours. North Auckland paradise shelduck and swan are also included (despite more limited data), as are Canada geese (despite no longer being managed by Fish & Game).

We employed hierarchical models (similar to route regression) to estimate an annual population index for each species, accounting for missing data and differences across locations. From these estimates, trends are calculated to determine the trajectory of the species in long-term and short-term scenarios.

Estimates of population index and associated trend indicate that:

- The King Country paradise shelduck population has decreased slightly in the last 10 years and seems to be following a downward trend of -1.35% annually since 1983.
- The central Waikato lakes and harbours' black swan population index appears relatively stable from 1986 to 2025.
- The central Waikato lakes and harbours Canada geese numbers have increased exponentially at a rate of 8.5% annually from 1986 to 2025.
- The North Auckland paradise shelduck population was reasonably stable from 2001 to 2016 and has increased significantly in the last decade.
- The North Auckland black swan population has declined slightly across the study period when counts of the Manukau harbour based on Auckland Airport and Bird NZ data are included. Trends appear to have remained stable over the last 10 years, but may have increased in recent years. When Manukau harbour counts are excluded, F&G counts indicate a drop in population, which, when coupled with Auckland Airport data, indicate that a number of swan have shifted from the Kaipara Harbour to the Manukau due to shifts in available food sources, resulting in concerns for aviation safety.

2 INTRODUCTION

The Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Council uses aerial trend count surveys to estimate trends in populations of several game bird species, notably paradise shelduck and black swan. Although Canada geese are no longer managed by Fish & Game, we continue to monitor this species as these counts coincide with swan surveys.

These species congregate in areas for different annual phases, such as moulting or post-moult recovery, which results in a high proportion of birds being concentrated. Trend counts are timed to match the moult/moult recovery periods (around mid-January) and to coincide with a high tide event. Trend counts are not a full population count, even if, in some cases, a high proportion

[1] To date Northland have included the North Auckland paradise counts as part of their arial monitoring survey.

of the population is counted. It does, however, provide a "snapshot" of how the local population may be trending – either up or down. The underlying assumption is that the counts of the sample of sites (normally major sites) reflect what is happening to the local population as a whole.

3 METHODS

3.1 SURVEY METHOD

The counts are conducted from a fixed-wing aircraft (often a Cessna) at an altitude of approximately 150 metres (500 feet) with one or more observers. Observers count the number of birds at each site (or count one species each). Photographs are also taken to ground-truth the counts and verify observer accuracy[2].

3.2 FLIGHT SURVEYS

Three separate flights/surveys are conducted. Specifically:

1. The King Country, paradise shelduck flight.
2. The Central Waikato lakes and harbours, swan and Canada geese flight.
3. The North Auckland paradise shelduck and swan flight[3].

Maps of the sites are shown in the appendix.

3.3 DATA CLEANING

In some years, counts for specific sites are not made and are represented as NA values. It is unclear how the data was recorded in earlier years. For example, in the King Country Paradise counts, there are 25 sites in total; however, in 1983, only eight sites had non-zero counts. The concern here is that zero values are incorrectly assigned to sites instead of NA. We considered manipulating the data to change these counts to NA values until a non-zero count is observed. However, we instead opted to exclude data prior to 1988, as this is when many sites started reporting non-zero counts.

In some instances, sites with consecutive zero counts are excluded from the survey and are considered "lapsed". In the analysis, lapsed sites were removed because they contribute little data (i.e., a few counts over a 20-year period). In addition, all sites with sub-counts are combined to represent a single location.

Counts of paradise shelduck and swan north of Auckland are limited to a few sites and include significant missing data, especially in earlier years. To mitigate this, we included an additional eight sites from the Northland count data, which were identified as being close to the border and therefore constitute data from the same sub-regional population. Combining these counts is appropriate, in particular for swan, as large flights of birds are known to move between the Auckland Waikato region and the Northland region (Williamson, 1980, 1977).

For the North Auckland swan counts, data from Auckland Airports' swan surveys in Manukau Harbour were included. However, this monitoring began in 2014, meaning it does not provide

[2] To reduce observer error, observers also practice estimating aerial counts using resources such as https://www.fws.gov/waterfowlsurveys/forms/countingtest.jsp?menu=counting.test
[3] Historically conducted by the Northland Fish & Game region as part of their lower Northland survey.

information towards the long-term trend of this population. To account for this, we (1) estimated a population index for swan that excluded the Manukau Harbour, and (2) when including Manukau Harbour counts, we imputed counts for years prior to 2014 based on data trends from the Birds NZ National Waterbird Census. The Bird NZ counts indicated that fewer than 500 swan were observed on the Manukau Harbour between 2001 and 2014, and we imputed values of 500 for these counts.

For the Central Waikato lakes and harbours swan and goose counts, overlap in non-zero counts were investigated to determine if there were patterns in birds being recorded (i.e., sites being surveyed). However, there was no clear evidence of a significant change in sites monitored over time, so all zero values were retained (see Appendix Table 4). Swan data for 1984 and 1985 were excluded because the goose surveys began in 1986, and it is unclear whether all sites were surveyed in these years.

3.4 Modelling

If no data is missing, then the total count of birds can be used to make comparisons between years. Although this total count does not enable us to estimate the population size, we can assess its relative trend over time, provided we have reasonable coverage of ponds in the region. When missing data is present, statistical models can be used to account for this.

Historically, Fish & Game councils have used route regression to analyse trend count data. However, hierarchical models have been proposed over route regression due to their easy implementation, ability to address missing data, improved precision (smaller confidence intervals), and potential application of covariates Sauer (2011)[4].

We, therefore, model bird counts using a generalised linear mixed model (GLMM) via the *glmmTMB* package in R. Where Y_{ij} the bird count at site i in year j is modelled as a negative binomial distribution[5]:

$$Y_{ij} \sim \text{Negative Binomial}(\mu_{ij}, \theta)$$

Where μ_{ij} is the expected bird count and θ is the overdispersion parameter of the negative binomial distribution. The log expected bird count is then estimated as a linear function:

$$\log(\mu_{ij}) = \beta_0 + \beta_j Year_j + u_i$$

$$u_i \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$$

Where β_0 is the overall intercept, $\beta_j Year_j$ represents the fixed effect of year, and u_i represents the random effect of site.

This model includes year as a fixed effect to allow for explicit estimation of the annual variation in bird counts. Treating year as a categorical variable (i.e., factor) rather than a continuous variable ensures that the population index is estimated for each year, enabling the detection of nonlinear patterns over time. Year could be treated as a random effect following Sauer (2011); however, results were similar, and a marginal effect of year was deemed more intuitive to interpret.

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[4] Hierarchical models can be implemented under the Bayesian or frequentist framework. Here, the frequentist method is used.

[5] Due to it being count data, where the variance exceeds the mean.

A random intercept for site was incorporated to account for differences in bird abundance across different locations. By doing this, the model ensures that the estimated effect of year (the trend over time) is not biased by differences in the absolute number of birds at each site. Without this adjustment, a lake with naturally high bird counts could influence the year effects disproportionately, resulting in misleading conclusions about population trends. Essentially, the random effect for lake helps separate spatial variation (differences between lakes) from temporal variation (changes over years), improving the accuracy of the estimated trend. The inclusion of a random intercept for sites is particularly useful in handling missing data. Here, partial pooling helps estimate missing observations based on patterns observed in other years and other lakes.

For some models, the area (km^2) of the survey site was included in the model (either as a covariate or offset term) to account for the effect of pond size if it was deemed to improve model fit (measured via AIC).

Predictions are generated using the ggpredict() function in R. Predictions represent the expected bird count for each year, considering only the fixed effect of year while ignoring lake-specific variability. These predictions provide a generalised population-level estimate rather than site-specific estimates by excluding random effects.

3.5 Estimating trends

Sauer (2011) proposes that trends are estimated and expressed in two ways. Trends can be estimated as a consistent long-term population change by plotting a regression through the indices, or a more interval-specific estimate of the trend can be calculated based on the endpoints.

The first method looks at how the population has changed over time by drawing lines through the data. Here, the data is the annual estimates of the population index. These lines help show whether the population is generally increasing, decreasing, or staying stable.

- We draw one line that covers all the available years (shown in blue), which gives a big-picture view of the long-term trend.
- We also draw lines just for the last 10 years (red) and the last 5 years (orange). These help us determine whether recent trends differ from the long-term pattern.

To estimate the percentage change over time (per year), log-linear models were used to determine the rate of exponential change, which is then converted into a percentage. When plotting trends, log-linear estimates were back-transformed. The added benefit is that if there is an exponential pattern in population growth, it will be better captured by the model.

The second method estimates how much the population changes from one point in time to another. For example, if the estimated population index is 100 in 2010 and 200 in 2025, this method calculates the average annual growth rate over that period based on the counts of these two years. This helps show whether the population has increased or decreased over this time period. We apply this approach to the full-time span (from the first to the last data point), as well as to the most recent 10-year and 5-year periods. This provides the expected average percentage change in population index from one year to the next for each of those timeframes. Specifically, Sauer (2011) defines this as:

$$\text{Trend} = 100 \times \left(\left(\frac{marginal\ effect\ [\text{Max}\ t]}{marginal\ effect\ [\text{Min}\ t]} \right)^{\frac{1}{Max\ t - Min\ t}} - 1 \right)$$

4 RESULTS

4.1 KING COUNTRY PARADISE SHELDUCK POPULATION INDEX

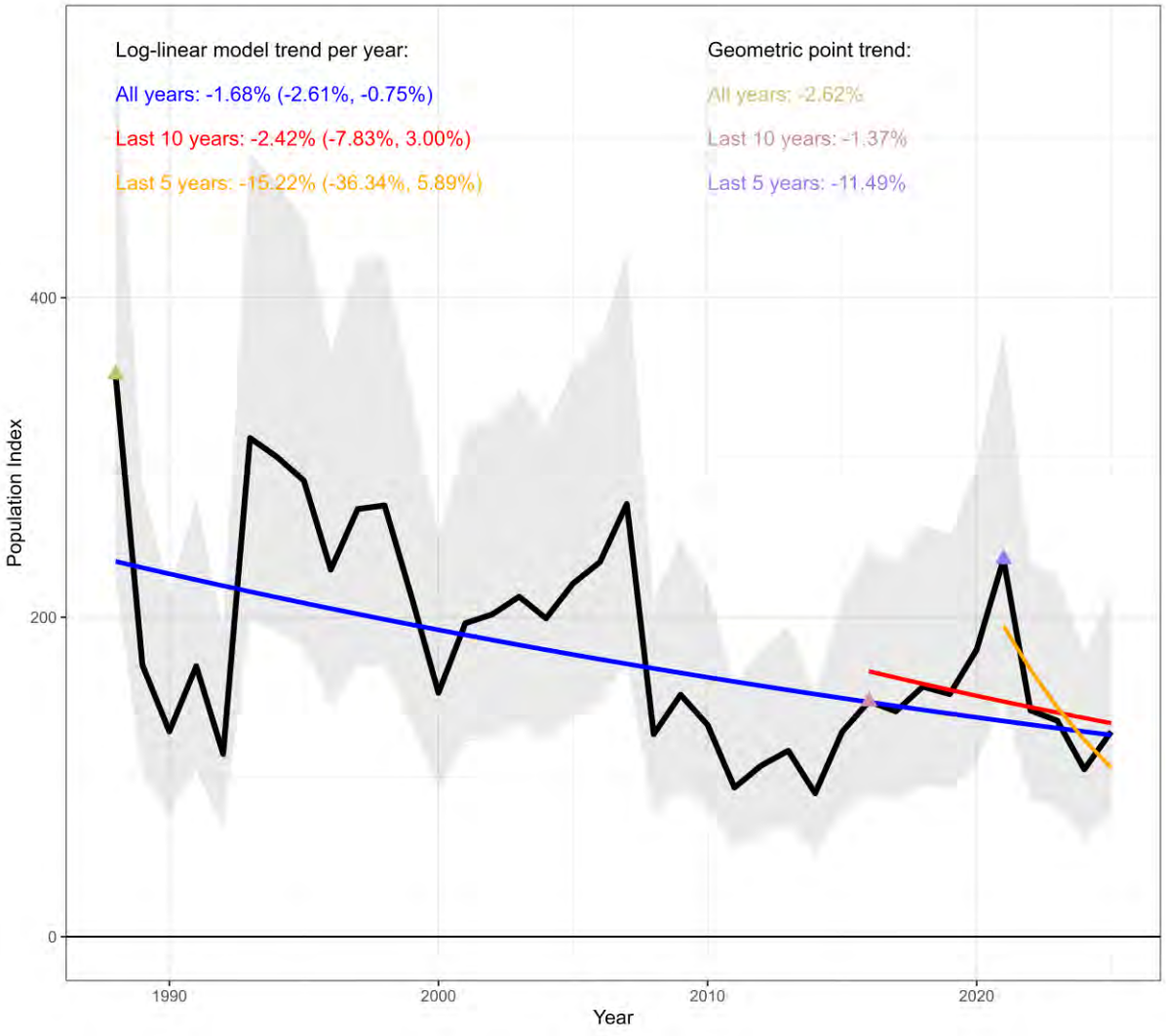

Figure 1: Estimated population index for paradise shelduck based on the King Country counts (black line) and associated confidence intervals (light grey). Log-linear models illustrating trends in indices for all years (blue), prior 10 years (red) and prior 5 years (orange) are also shown with corresponding estimates of percent annual change and 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. Geometric trends are also presented for all years (gold), the prior 10 years (pink) and the prior 5 years (purple). The starting points for these periods are represented by a coloured triangle.

4.2 CENTRAL WAIKATO LAKES AND HARBOURS SWAN POPULATION INDEX

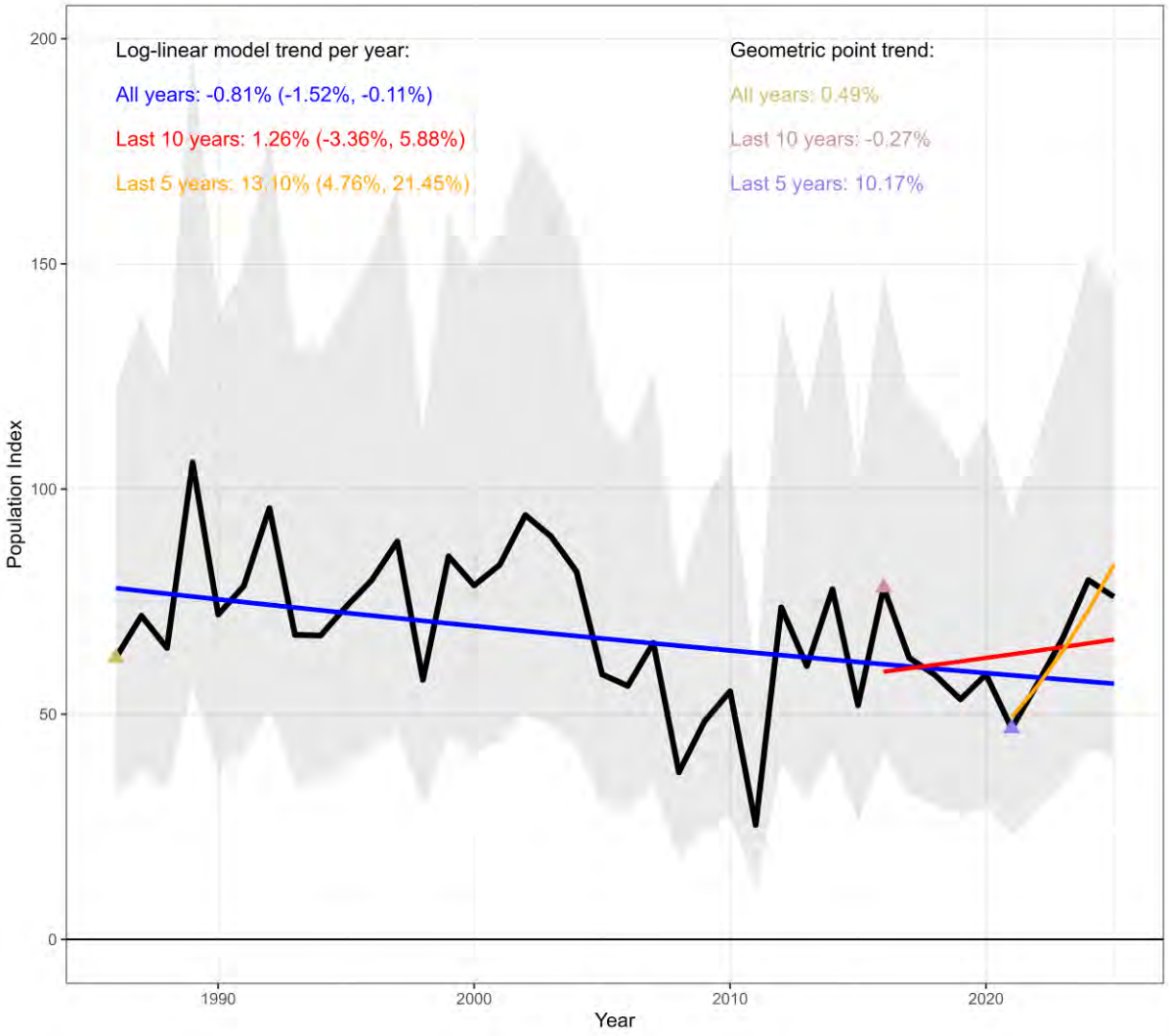

Figure 2: Estimated population index for black swan based on the Central Waikato lakes and harbours counts (black line) and associated confidence intervals (light grey). Log-linear models illustrating trends in indices for all years (blue), prior 10 years (red) and prior 5 years (orange) are also shown with corresponding estimates of percent annual change and 95% confidence intervals in parentheses Geometric trends are also presented for all years (gold), the prior 10 years (pink) and the prior 5 years (purple). The starting points for these periods are represented by a coloured triangle.

4.3 CENTRAL WAIKATO LAKES AND HARBOURS CANADA GEESE POPULATION INDEX

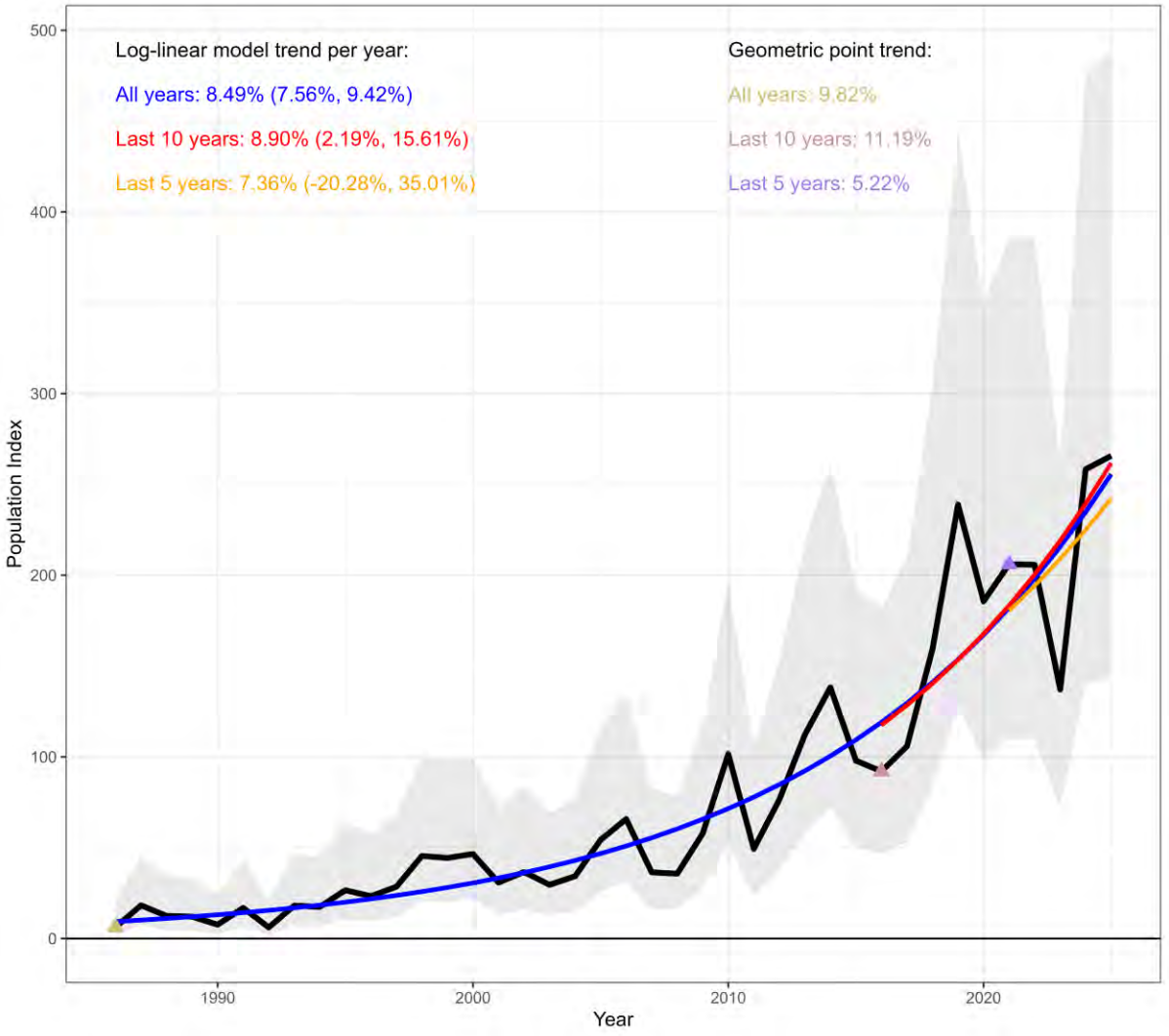

Figure 3: Estimated population index for Canada geese based on the Central Waikato lakes and harbours counts (black line) and associated confidence intervals (light grey). Log-linear models illustrating trends in indices for all years (blue), prior 10 years (red) and prior 5 years (orange) are also shown with corresponding estimates of percent annual change and 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. Geometric trends are also presented for all years (gold), the prior 10 years (pink) and the prior 5 years (purple). The starting points for these periods are represented by a coloured triangle.

4.4 NORTH AUCKLAND PARADISE SHELDUCK POPULATION INDEX

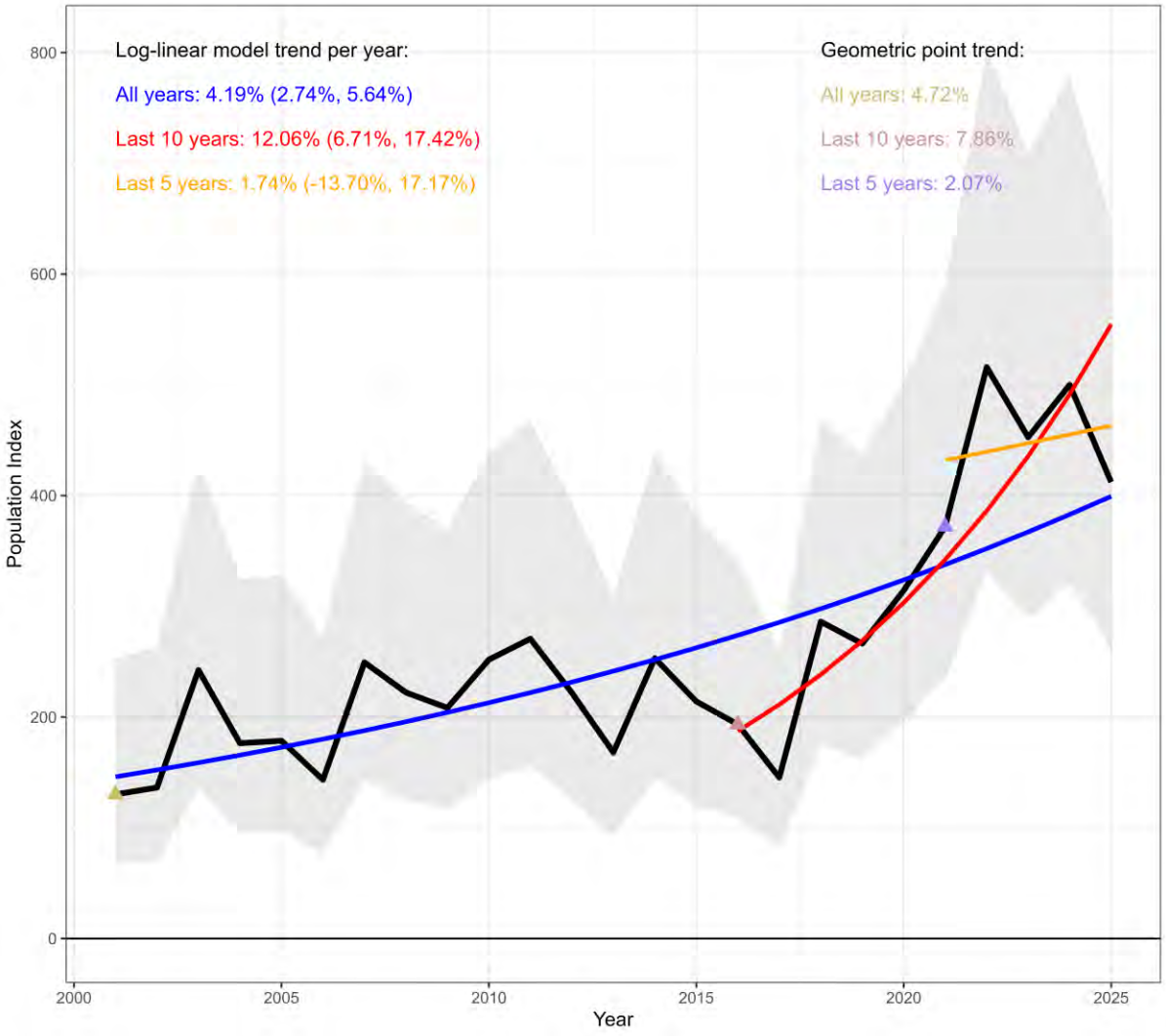

Figure 4: Estimated population index for paradise shelduck based on the north Auckland counts (and nearby Northland sites) (black line) and associated confidence intervals (light grey). Log-linear models illustrating trends in indices for all years (blue), prior 10 years (red) and prior 5 years (orange) are also shown with corresponding estimates of percent annual change and 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. Geometric trends are also presented for all years (gold), the prior 10 years (pink) and the prior 5 years (purple). The starting points for these periods are represented by a coloured triangle.

4.5 NORTH AUCKLAND BLACK SWAN POPULATION INDEX

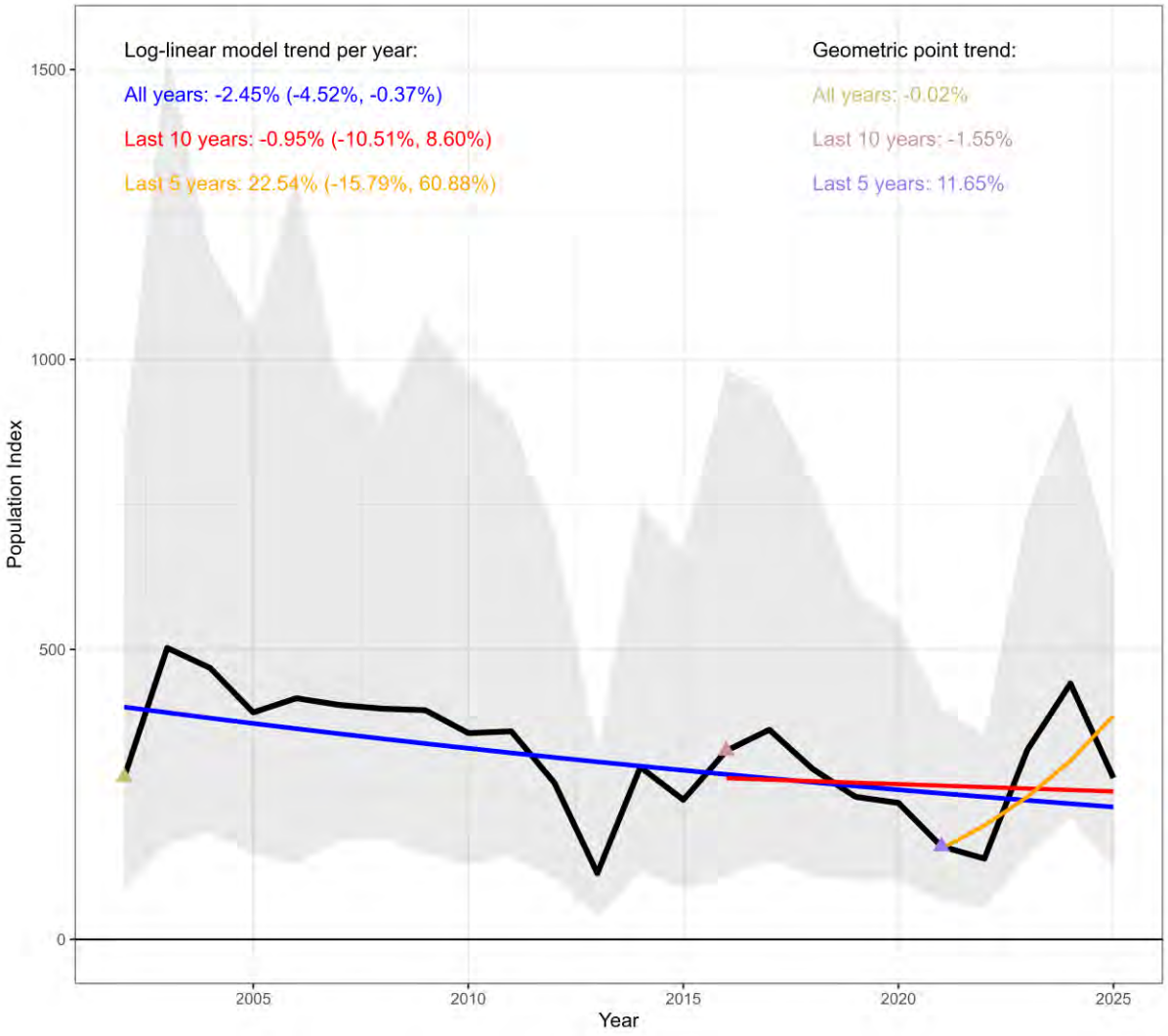

Figure 5: Estimated population index for black swan based on the north Auckland counts (and nearby Northland sites) and Auckland Airport counts of Manukau Harbour (black line) and associated confidence intervals (light grey). Here, Auckland Airport counts of the Manukau harbour prior to 2014 are imputed with values of 500 based on data from the Birds NZ National Waterbird Census. Log-linear models illustrating trends in indices for all years (blue), prior 10 years (red) and prior 5 years (orange) are also shown with corresponding estimates of percent annual change and 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. Geometric trends are also presented for all years (gold), the prior 10 years (pink) and the prior 5 years (purple). The starting points for these periods are represented by a coloured triangle.

5 Discussion

Data for the King County paradise shelduck survey have good spatial coverage and complete records dating back to the early 1990s. Model estimates and associated trends indicate that the paradise population in the King Country is decreasing from 1988 to 2025 with a long-term linear decline of -1.68% (95% CI from -2.61% to -0.75%) per year. Over the last 10 years, the population has exhibited a similar decreasing trend; however, in more recent years, the decline appears to have accelerated (-15.22%, with a 95% CI that overlaps zero), albeit from a relatively high estimate circa 2021.

The Central Waikato lakes and harbours' black swan surveys also benefit from more complete data and longer temporal coverage. Estimates and associated trends indicate that the black swan population at these sites has declined slightly from 1986 to 2025 at a rate of -0.81% (95% CI from -1.52% to -0.11%) per year. In recent years, the population appears to have increased. However, this increase coincides with population estimates similar to those of the period between 1990 and 2000. In other words, the population may have recently returned to similar levels as observed in the 90s, after dropping around 2010.

Canada geese estimates based on data from the survey of Central Waikato lakes and harbours indicate that the population follows a pattern of exponential growth. From 1986 to 2025, the population increased at a rate of 8.49% (95% CI from 7.56% to 9.42%) per year. Trends based on estimates of the prior 10 and 5 years show no evidence that this is slowing down.

The North Auckland paradise shelduck survey includes counts from 11 sites in the Auckland/Waikato region[6] and eight sites in the Northland region close to the region's border. Including the Northland sites allowed us to extend the temporal coverage of our estimates and provided more data in the earlier years where estimates had high uncertainty. Model estimates and associated trends indicate that the paradise population north of Auckland is increasing over the period from 2001 to 2025, with a long-term linear trend increase of 4.19% (95% CI from 2.74% to 5.64%) per year. Over the last 10 years, the population has experienced a dramatic increase of 12.06% (95% CI: 6.71% to 17.42%) per year. However, in more recent years, the population growth appears to have stabilised (1.74% population increase, with 95% CI overlapping zero).

The North Auckland swan survey includes counts from 11 sites in the Auckland/Waikato region and eight sites in the Northland region, near the regional border. Counts of the Manukau Harbour based on Auckland Airport monitoring post 2014 are also included, with counts prior to 2014 imputed at 500 swans based on data from Bird NZ National Waterbird Census[7]. If counts before 2014 are not imputed, estimates suggest a significant population decline, which does not align with expert opinion. When comparing estimates of swan excluding the Manukau Harbour (Figure 11) with Manukau Harbour counts (from Auckland Airport and Birds NZ), it becomes apparent that one decreases while the other increases. This pattern would suggest a redistribution of birds, i.e., from Kaipara to Manukau. Overall, model estimates and associated trends indicate that the black swan population around and north of Auckland may be decreasing across the period from 2001 to 2025, with a long-term linear trend of -2.45% (95%

[6] Estimates and associated trends of paradise north of Auckland based on just the Auckland Waikato F&G sites are presented in the appendix.

[7] Estimates and associated trends of swan north of Auckland, excluding the Manukau Harbour, are presented in the appendix.

CI from -4.52% to -0.37%) per year. Over the last 10 years, it appears stable, with a slight increase of 0.41% (95% CI overlap zero: -9.02% to 9.84%) per year. However, in more recent years, the population growth appears to be significantly greater, with an estimated annual growth rate of 23.90% (with a 95% CI that overlaps zero). It is worth reiterating, however, that these estimates are based on data from multiple sources (with varying survey methodologies) as well as imputations. This means that while they may provide a more accurate representation of the broader population, they are not without their limitations.

Future efforts in monitoring bird numbers in these areas should focus on the current sites used in this analysis. While including new sites is always advantageous, it is more important to have long-term data on specific sites. Furthermore, excluding sites because they are no longer holding birds does not align with a structured monitoring programme. Estimates of black swan North of Auckland would also benefit from non-imputed counts in the Manukau Harbour before 2014.

5.1 Management Implications

- King Country Paradise: retain current bag limits and season durations. Decreasing counts may result in fewer special seasons if this decreasing trend continues.
- Swan: Retain current bag limits and season durations.
- North Auckland Paradise: an increasing trend may allow for more liberal harvest regulations for the gamebird season and special season North of the Auckland Harbour Bridge. For example, bag limits could be increased to match Northland's limits of 25. This will be considered in the upcoming regulation review.

6 References

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7 Appendix

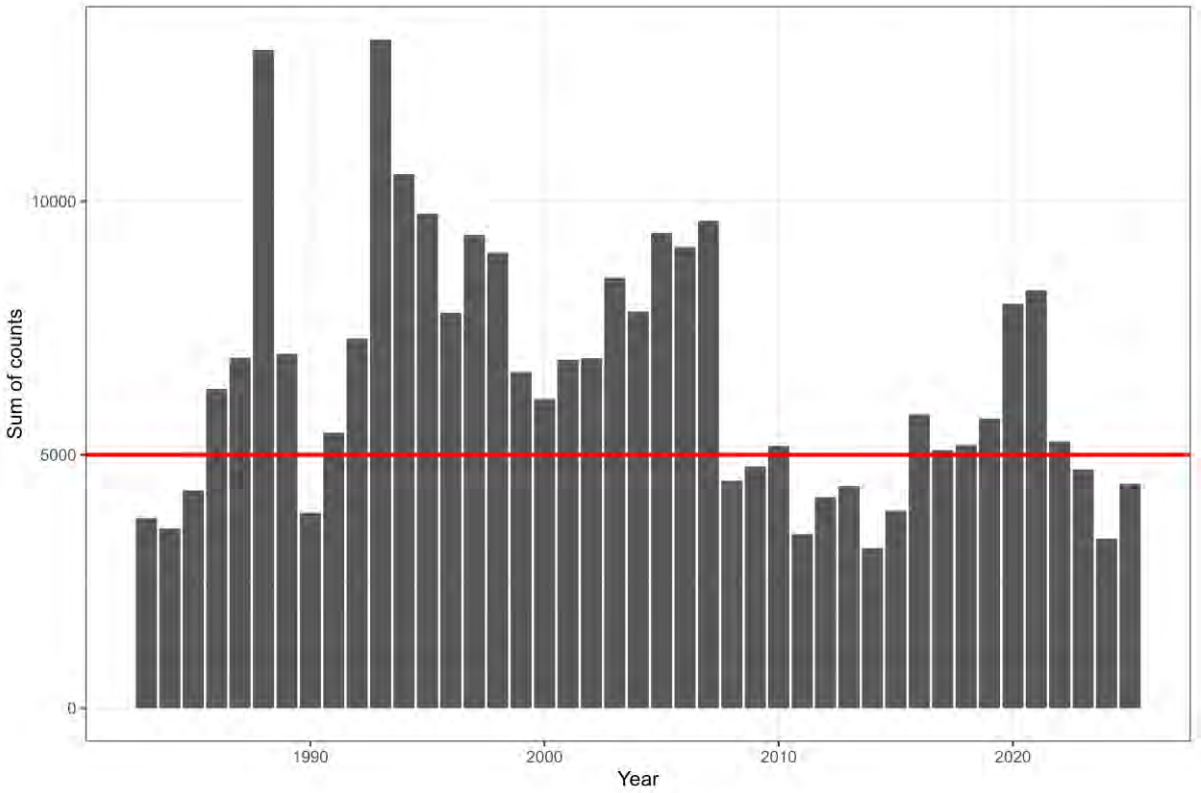


Figure 6: Sum of counts of King Country paradise shelduck. Because most sites are counted each year the total across all sites has historically been used to estimate relative change in the population over time. Further, a total of 5,000 birds across the sites is used as a threshold for hosting a "special season" in summer (red line).

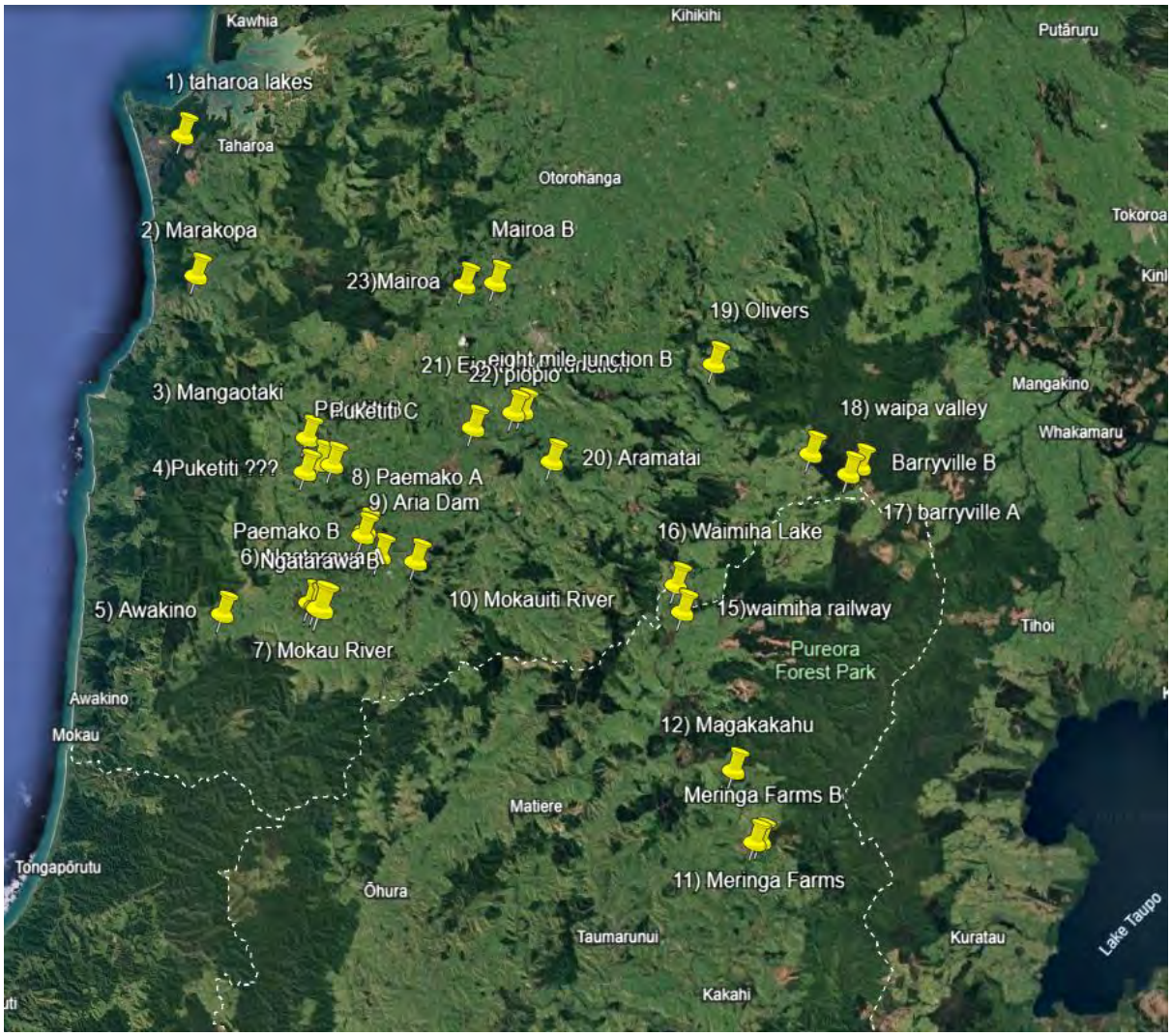


Figure 7: King Country Paradise sites.

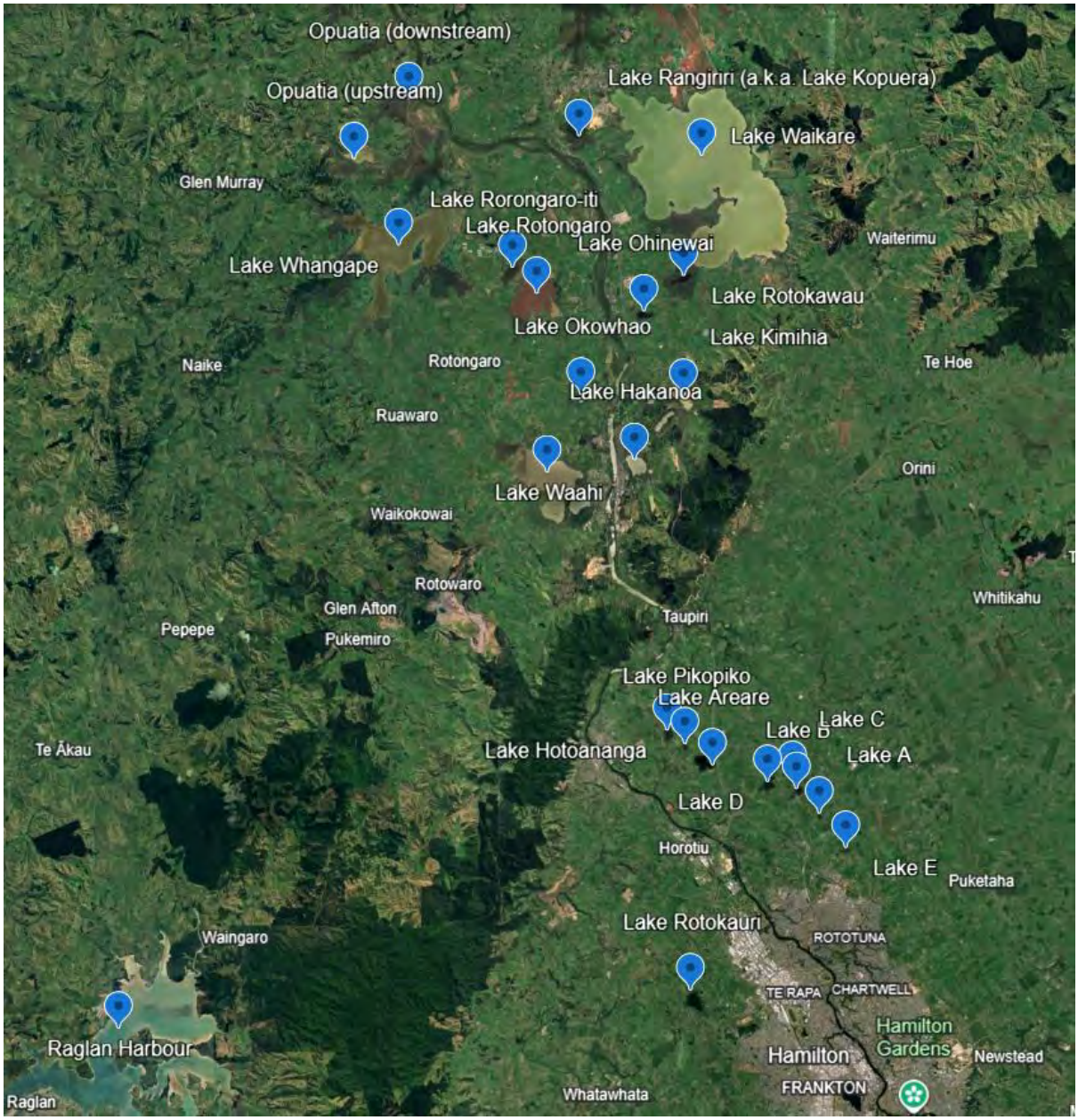


Figure 8: Central Waikato lakes and harbours black swan and geese sites (1 of 2).

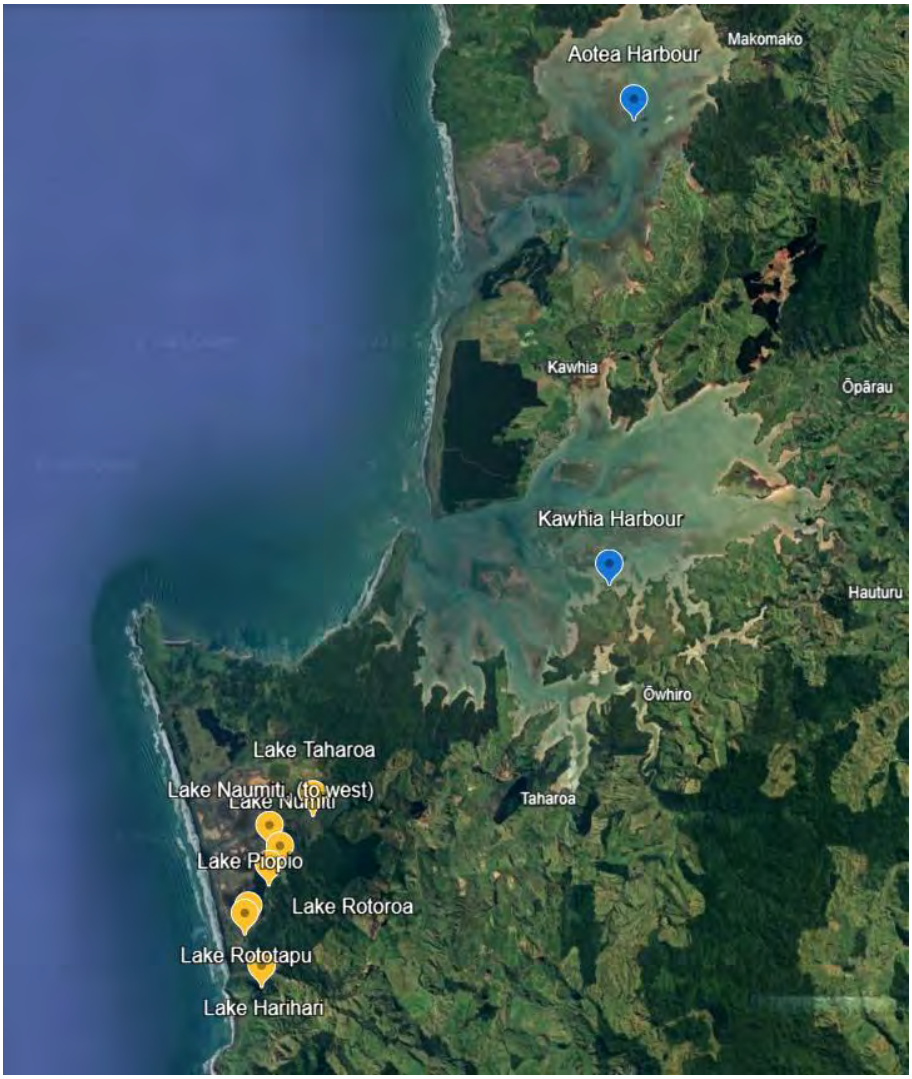


Figure 9: Central Waikato lakes and harbours black swan and geese sites (2 of 2).

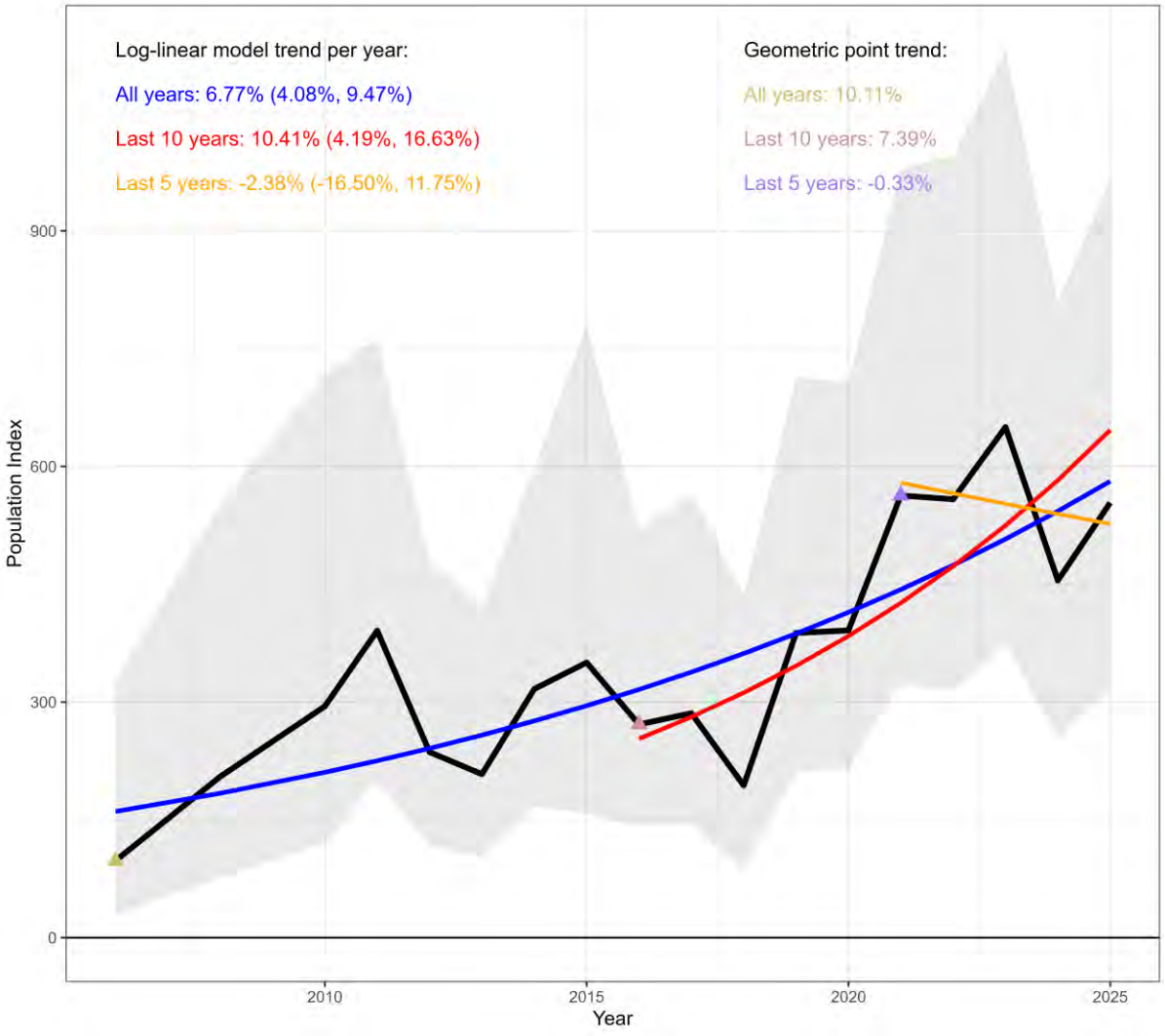


Figure 10: Estimated population index for paradise shelduck based on the north counts ***in the Auckland Waikato region only*** *(black line) and associated confidence intervals (light grey). Log-linear models illustrating trends in indices for all years (blue), prior 10 years (red) and prior 5 years (orange) are also shown with corresponding estimates of percent annual change and 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. Geometric trends are also presented for all years (gold), the prior 10 years (pink) and the prior 5 years (purple). The starting points for these periods are represented by a coloured triangle.*

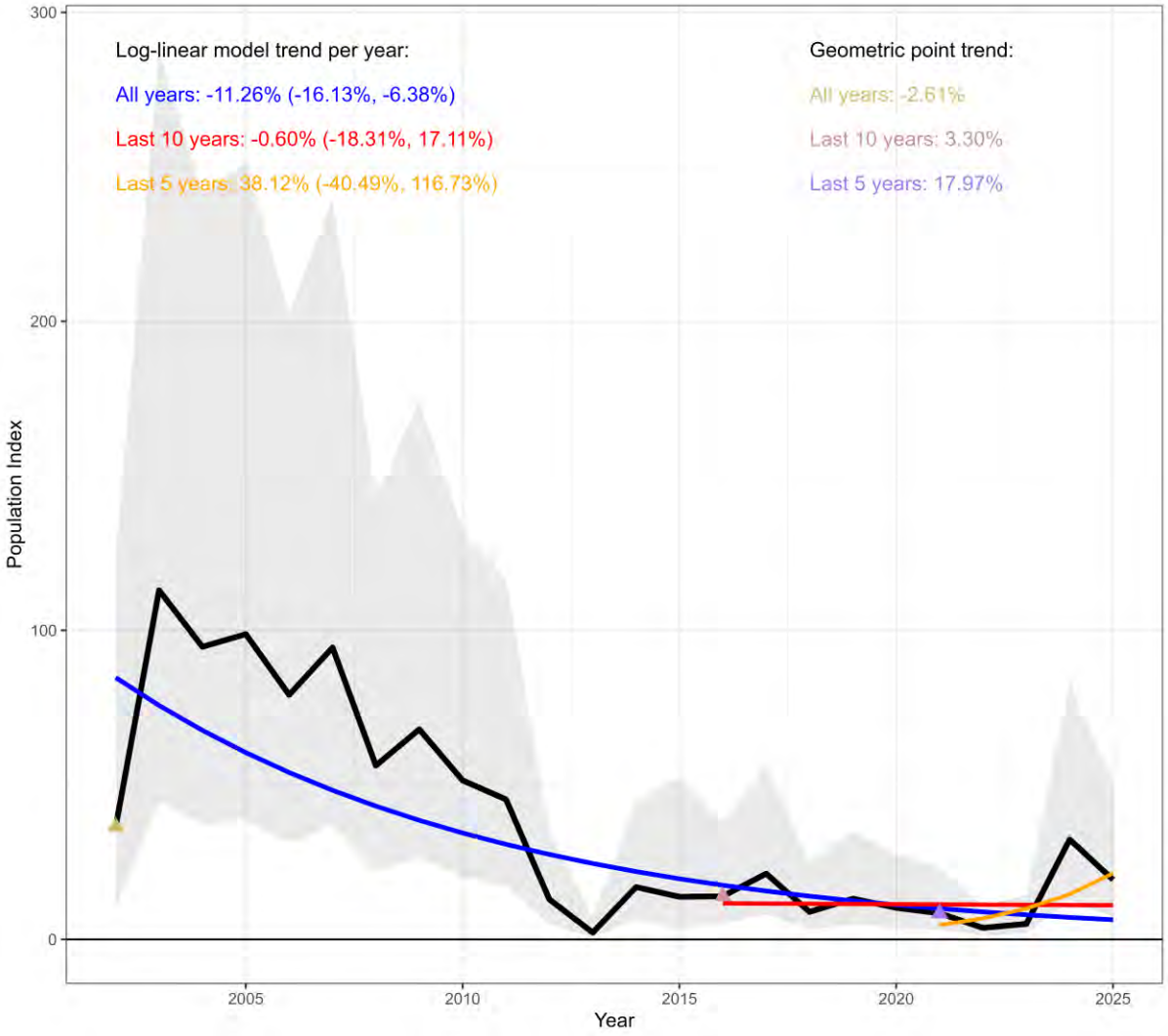


Figure 11: Estimated population index for black swan based on the North Auckland counts (and nearby Northland sites). ***Auckland Airport counts of the Manukau Harbour are excluded.*** *Log-linear models illustrating trends in indices for all years (blue), prior 10 years (red) and prior 5 years (orange) are also shown with corresponding estimates of percent annual change and 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. Geometric trends are also presented for all years (gold), the prior 10 years (pink) and the prior 5 years (purple). The starting points for these periods are represented by a coloured triangle.*

Table 1: Raw counts for King Country paradise.

Lake	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Taharoa Lakes	1020	1350	610	1139	1198	1000	825	250	270	82	20	80	130	142	52	50	60	30	260	280	530	130
Marakopa River Flats	210	0	200	90	0	130	154	50	70	300	350	350	360	350	380	490	260	280	360	130	30	180
Mangaotaki	600	475	590	150	780	1438	0	60	490	400	1550	850	600	470	440	350	350	380	910	950	750	950
Puketiti	0	0	345	920	850	752	220	40	300	100	250	300	360	300	70	100	150	70	110	50	70	20
Awakino River	0	0	0	0	0	325	300	520	290	0	75	70	75	90	80	200	40	10	40	140	290	170
Ngatarawa Rd	0	0	0	0	0	112	300	35	45	0	260	300	550	60	870	590	680	770	820	780	1150	1650
Mokau River	0	0	0	0	0	158	120	270	22	0	100	150	355	300	370	160	100	520	135	120	230	80
Paemako Ponds	0	0	0	0	0	118	380	140	220	0	10	100	345	210	110	150	195	360	240	175	350	350
Aria Dam	0	0	660	110	120	460	175	20	25	1	20	20	20	2	70	10	20	0	1	2	0	5
Mokauiti River	0	0	0	0	50	50	15	20	90	0	480	500	325	200	260	100	50	40	60	10	200	50
Meringa Farms	0	0	0	0	320	650	450	60	340	180	850	750	650	900	450	510	300	280	250	130	250	50
Mangakahu Pond	200	345	380	102	60	934	550	400	370	450	800	800	850	600	925	450	350	320	470	340	400	350
Waione	0	0	0	0	0	112	0	0	70	80	150	100	25	1	10	5	20	0	0	10	0	0
PiroPiro	0	0	0	0	180	554	15	40	15	12	20	40	30	50	6	5	2	0	0	0	0	0
Waimeha Railway	490	328	240	470	310	900	460	200	50	3	220	100	15	70	215	90	180	110	80	50	60	40
Waimeha Lake	0	0	0	0	0	641	290	500	300	550	1200	850	700	700	650	850	600	620	650	400	620	520
Barryville	800	568	765	2200	1870	2826	1040	350	800	2000	2200	1800	1600	1200	1740	1650	1350	940	1000	1400	950	1300
Waipa Valley	0	0	0	0	0	0	265	130	380	87	669	450	220	115	120	110	20	0	20	20	15	10
Oliver's Pond	0	0	0	18	130	115	235	290	200	400	550	350	248	455	460	300	550	320	300	260	10	60
Aramati	230	235	140	180	130	285	380	300	270	350	250	180	100	380	70	600	120	320	250	350	190	250
8 Mile Junction	200	245	295	700	690	1080	580	125	400	500	800	500	600	180	100	350	80	10	10	200	280	200
PioPio	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	740	200	70	20	190	220	250	10	20	60	112	160
Mairoa	0	0	70	220	226	351	240	55	120	200	180	200	330	120	640	350	100	60	240	50	900	200
Te Kuiti Ox Pnd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	1300	1100	1200	850	850	1000	1200	800	650	650	1000	1100	1100
Otorohanga OX Pond	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	300	350	300	350	40	60	100	5	0	0	0	5	0

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
410	655	510	450	495	575	310	517	585	440	236	71	69	108	273	309	240	245	223	79	179
156	380	240	180	220	191	220	20	87	480	550	713	354	705	1356	1242	1504	778	833	491	631
1200	1070	1250	750	790	680	450	460	840	60	370	595	790	367	372	818	1210	720	120	522	438
900	770	570	100	280	300	15	355	315	200	260	314	296	196	439	430	287	60	390	404	235
60	110	290	40	20	40	20	55	42	15	2	74	489	150	64	159	154	596	195	154	185
1090	980	890	400	415	870	250	310	110	130	350	443	664	97	450	180	530	200	450	154	340
180	210	580	80	72	0	30	15	135	40	228	70	20	302	112	212	106	250	210	147	225
490	495	560	270	235	120	55	45	70	20	5	6	24	18	4	0	69	6	80	66	223
0	5	40	20	115	50	0	55	60	50	90	89	27	30	0	2	92	10	12	30	0
150	150	150	60	5	0	0	0	0	20	30	0	5	0	0	25	170	0	192	0	0
240	200	250	220		40	10	220	190	130	120	291	296	729	428	380	375	43	158	92	155
550	420	350	100	100	60	100	150	220	120	180	448	287	297	383	200	285	180	198	180	180
0	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	90						0		0
0	0	0	0	0	20	150	2	0	0	0	0							0		8
20	30	80	0	17	50	10	40	2	4	10	7	36	40	85	120	65	25	12	40	0
800	800	300	20	100	60	300	200	50	80	120	160									
1300	1400	1250	650	340	560	355	170	470	500	420	1092	1039	1227	807	1610	1804	900	687	161	695
0	10	20	0	8	70	1	0	0	0	0		0	8	0	2	12	0	0	0	6
10	120	280	150	475	450	20	0	10	0	40		24	0	0	0	24	15	30	0	6
600	350	290	160	250	180	140	150	30	20	90	0	80	93	98	3	18	68	22	134	120
30	10	50	60	90	90	0	20	2	0	100	87	37	45	136	153	230	170	200	136	100
300	220	530	200	110	150	380	320	220	420	180	250	351	308	159	52	35	12	0	0	0
70	20	180	220	135	20	10	30	520	190	70	336	2	87	173	82	85	36	85	80	90
820	700	950	360	495	550	610	1030	420	200	400	750	110	355	360	2000	950	950	613	470	612
0	0	10	0	5	0	0	0	10	40	45	0	0	30	16	0	0	0	0	4	0

Table 2: Raw counts for Central Waikato lakes and harbours black swan.

Lake	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Lake Rotokauri	18	56	210	220	340	197	230	110	206	120	180	190	230	170	0	10	0	3	10	0	0
Lake E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	84	0	0	7	0	0	6	8	10	0	0	0
Lake A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	20	0	0	0
Lake C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0
Lake D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Areare	0	0	10	6	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	8	0	0	10	0	0	0	0
Lake Pikopiko	0	0	5	5	0	2	0	0	36	0	0	54	10	0	0	0	10	10	0	0	0
Lake Hotoananga	0	0	11	9	54	80	60	15	7	0	40	0	40	20	40	10	10	10	0	0	0
Lake Hakanoa	0	0	0	12	55	20	12	0	26	0	2	2	10	20	15	10	20	10	10	10	40
Lake Kimihia	0	0	2	0	31	15	4	0	10	0	0	1	5	0	10	10	10	5	10	10	10
Lake Ohinewai	0	0	0	7	11	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Rotokawau	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	120	5	5	5	10	5	10	20
Lake Kopuera	0	0	0	6	0	4	0	8	1	0	0	0	0	40	10	0	10	450	50	10	20
Opuatia Lower Wetland	0	63	80	0	65	35	1	1	2	12	8	4	0	3	2	4	2	10	30	5	0
Lake Whangape	5780	5330	3494	11337	900	3160	900	870	1880	1000	500	900	1790	3235	4700	4800	4330	4440	5880	3950	3010
Lake Waikare	60	203	201	133	145	225	153	261	283	200	80	200	320	134	20	130	90	70	130	80	450
Lake Rotongaro	55	0	269	89	110	52	30	80	65	100	70	142	10	5	25	10	10	10	80	20	220
Lake Rotongaroiti	0	0	0	0	0	90	12	8	13	12	5	6	10	75	0	20	0	0	30	50	0
Lake Okowhao	0	0	0	9	85	50	390	40	82	34	60	70	50	0	50	50	50	10	10	30	10
Lake Waahi	40	205	129	160	100	50	0	110	126	112	400	140	260	540	150	450	50	300	290	260	1600
Raglan Harbour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	0	20
Aotea Harbour	0	53	761	467	470	1580	1450	1210	1072	690	1230	870	1325	1262	510	1660	1010	810	1060	1920	1460
Kawhia Harbour	0	75	469	429	313	1570	1300	1025	1260	940	960	1290	534	361	365	1570	300	400	760	1650	750
Taharoa Lakes	9980	1280	1014	1497	2200	2000	1900	1940	2240	3060	1850	1100	1920	2920	1200	510	1570	2060	1910	1300	1170

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
0	10	10	0	2	0	0	3	16	2	0	24	0	0	40	0	0	0	5	4	4
0	0	5	0	5	5	0	0	0	6	0	4	0	5	0	0	0	2	5	0	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	2	0	0	10	4	0	0	9	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
0	0	0	10	25	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	10	0	0	0	8	3	8	18	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	10	10	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
0	20	20	0	5	5	0	7	2	15	19	14	12	0	3	13	0	20	0	0	1
8	0	10	0	0	5	0	27	80	7	5	5	0	6	2	20	4	13	20	17	15
0	0	0	0	5	0	0	2	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	12	50
4	50	30	0	0	5	18	12	7	30	0	9	3	0	36	5	21	33	41	109	60
0	0	10	0	5	0	0	110	10	20	14	138	10	35	13	6	15	18	56	50	120
0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	10	5	5	5	12	6	0	0	0	3	30	2	6
270	130	230	110	75	85	36	155	80	81	80	44	79	218	117	75	66	135	157	115	310
60	490	190	240	140	147	65	105	227	132	200	265	314	315	208	302	316	593	1,100	451	364
50	10	50	30	10	28	110	90	5	4	0	35	9	25	4	10	7	70	79	8	90
80	5	20	10	0	20	0	60	30	22	20	18	24	62	0	60	0	0	18	3	65
10	5	10	10	0	0	0	35	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0
120	80	50	0	65	245	0	50	35	12	35	158	73	10	24	42	16	33	10	102	89
30	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	20	12	15	47	7	12	0	0	1	12	0	12	3
1090	630	850	760	1210	2695	886	1725	1190	1502	1330	2112	1308	1917	1563	2198	1647	1,894	1,956	1765	1071
1230	590	570	820	1550	1605	1165	760	1415	1705	1272	1781	2674	2018	914	1506	2114	1,108	929	3125	1629
2130	2210	1280	1140	735	710	670	660	571	600	732	683	860	592	1252	725	491	291	622	1189	924

Table 3: Raw counts for Central Waikato lakes and harbours Canada geese.

Lake	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Lake Rotokauri	0	15	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
Horsham Down Lake E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Horsham Down Lake A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Horsham Down Lake B	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	20
Horsham Down Lake C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	400
Horsham Down Lake D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Areare	10	27	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	130	50	50
Lake Pikopiko	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	120	0
Lake Hotoananga	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	10	0	0	0	0
Lake Hakanoa	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	20	34	100	30	40	20	10	0	0	0
Lake Kimihia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	5	10	10	5	0	0	0
Lake Ohinewai	0	24	0	22	100	140	32	10	0	150	610	570	140	150	280	500	80	0	500
Lake Rotokawau	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	180	0	0	0	15	0	30	0	0	0	0
Lake Rangiriri	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	320	10	10	0	0	600	0	0	500
Opuatia Lower Wetland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Whangape	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	110	200	65	260	560	910	620	70	440	390	470	1180
Lake Waikare	250	340	500	138	180	550	620	1140	700	980	865	780	1025	1060	1170	315	710	1160	410
Lakeside Te Kauwhata																			
Lake Rotongaro	0	61	29	80	0	170	0	0	4	500	0	80	680	365	200	160	540	150	50
Lake Little Rotongaro	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	65	0	6	0	0	10	120	30	0	360	10	0
Lake Okowhao	0	0	0	7	340	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0
Lake Waahi	200	210	390	350	0	380	0	220	140	145	320	385	75	700	130	210	140	80	80
Raglan Harbour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aotea Harbour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kawhia Harbour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tahoroa Lakes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
0	0	0	0	0	20	0	2	0	4	0	10	0	0	77	250	150	120	160	110	60
0	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
0	0	0	0	0	30	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	10	60	60	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	20	20	0	17	50	35
0	0	0	15	20	20	22	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	0	0
0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	9	0	0	23	0	180	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	40	0	0	0	45	410	10	160	260	280	50	195	0	530	256	165	220	300	300	80
50	50	20	20	60	5	0	45	0	30	0	0	0	50	110	8	50	0	15	21	32
0	0	0	20	0	0	0	25	20	30	0	10	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	21	42
10	10	0	20	0	20	0	0	120	70	120	110	0	80	307	106	130	310	260	105	220
5	20	0	0	5	10	0	0	170	250	30	0	20	42	5	0	0	3	130	30	90
140	180	450	0	80	130	160	40	30	35	50	68	33	18	189	200	45	160	30	120	470
0	0	0	300	25	10	290	65	30	50	25	5	268	60	7	70	50	50	45	60	230
100	60	80	20	65	5	0	95	120	550	250	194	331	340	600	268	128	540	60	320	375
60	10	40	0	20	25	0	0	20	30	30	20	8	40	0	21	38	12	10	40	60
990	170	946	50	135	410	55	630	500	472	270	308	909	2499	1431	987	992	1,558	145	1420	1467
220	1820	1050	490	745	665	840	315	1040	811	315	629	2002	1561	3175	874	1040	2,867	732	3129	2336
																	450	0	188	
1300	240	0	300	540	700	510	250	480	460	280	948	1215	1915	694	1266	2966	276	740	1680	790
650	10	1325	160	200	80	400	395	50	650	450	125	160	100	1591	220	1633	2,230	240	460	520
0	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	20	0	0	90	70	50	72	0	0	30
270	800	180	0	55	125	165	255	370	120	240	0	419	820	1082	885	1250	496	350	870	611
0	0	0	160	0	0	0	0	185	336	370	1049	1075	1281	1955	637	1233	1,361	687	1158	1673
0	0	0	0	0	12	0	125	40	15	65	60	41	130	516	450	410	605	607	1037	1263
0	40	0	0	0	35	12	132	220	270	250	1009	0	1067	1525	1046	1447	1,342	1,123	1800	1500
0	0	0	0	0	86	0	15	16	90	300	221	41	204	610	888	369	706	627	920	1635

Table 4: Raw counts for North Auckland paradise shelduck. Note: Lapsed ponds (AWx) were excluded from the analysis. Sites in the Northland region near the border were also included (Region = NL).

SITE	Region	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Wellsford Oxidation Ponds	AW	250	250	450	400	350	500	600	550	300	700	800	550	800	900	700	650	800
Tapora/Journeys End/Kaipara Harbour	AW																	
Gibbs Farm	AW																	250
Helensville Oxidation Ponds	AW																	
Parakai ponds x 2	AW																	
Lake Ototoa and surrundings	AW																	
Snells Beach oxidation pond	AW																	
Tongue Farm pond	AW																	
Omaha Beach Oxidation Pond	AW																	
Tomarata , Slipper, Spectacle lake	AW															80	0	0
Irrigation Pond Te Hana (silver hill)	AW	140	150	440	300	390	60	550	380	500	700	500	700	120	550	1000	1230	1000
Wayby Flats pond near pines	AWx											100	8	6				
Tapora Peninsula wetlands	AWx														350		300	
Kaipara Harbour environs	AWx																60	400
Pond just north Riverhead Forest	AWx											70	0					
Woodcocks Rd old & new pond	AWx											80						
Tawharanui Peninsula	AWx														255			
Snells Beach pond	AWx														400			
Pond north-west of Tomarata lakes	AWx												150					
Mangawai WWTP Northland border	AWx												800	830			1250	750
Ruakaka/Waipu Oxidation + Wilsons Dam+ Mountfield	NL	190	90	440	286	185	400	462	385	470	620	502	290	355	320	410	435	660
Brynderwyn Pond	NL							300	250	90	120	150	180	150	150	120	150	100
Mangawahi Oxidation + Worsfold ponds	NL																1100	800
Bald Rock Dams x2	NL	130	192	330	60	270	230	320	380	230	60	380	740	830	800	680	12	45
Topuni CHH	NL				100	30	40	200	200	75	100	12	0	4	25			
Kaiwaka Railway Pond and oxidation pond	NL	350	350	175	120	60	85	280	150	350	200	150	50	300	44	0	25	100
Maungaturoto Oxidation	NL	80	190	370	150	200	150	150	150	200	300	375	350	180	400	150	250	250
Taipuha(Waalkens)	NL	300	550	400	350	380	280	100	150	135	100	440	300	30	200	500	120	0

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
975	600	700	1727	1098	460	1050	1060
942	640	600	870	1265	1150	1123	846
1320	600	970	650	2200	1960	2200	2000
	70	50	24	0	6	0	12
		200	35	30	4	320	128
		154	230	365	178	110	83
		200	414	350	300	280	260
		12	162	280	440	620	80
		480	435	600	130	180	680
170	150	380	573	480	1490	800	641
930	1100	1100	2393	1950	1720	2400	2210
				0			
				50	0	0	0
							1
725	500	550	630	925	954	1330	882
200	200	300	120	410	260	600	760
750	600	650	650	1218	940	860	400
122	40	50	120	68	580	44	18
				70	190	40	40
50	150	275	250	650	410	260	55
350	350	400	400	750	580	720	1030
6	300	300	80	550	560	580	260

Table 5: Raw counts for North Auckland black swan counts. Note: Lapsed ponds in the Auckland Waikato region are not shown and were excluded from the analysis. Sites in the Northland region near the border were also included (Region = NL), as well as Auckland Airport counts of the Manukau Harbour.

SITE	Region2	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Wellsford Oxidation Ponds	AW		0						0					0	2	6		
Silver hill Irrigation Pond Kaiwaka/Wellsford	AW		0					6	30					0	0	0		
Kaipara Harbour Sth Tapora	AW			10000	8500	9000	7000	9000	5000	6000	4500	4000	1000	100	1450		1200	1800
Gibbs Farm	AW																	
Ponds to north/west of Parakai airstrip	AW																	
Lake Ototoa and suroundings	AW																	
Tomarata Lakes	AW																	
Ruakaka/Waipu Oxidation + Wilsons Dam+ Mountfield	NL	0	30					14	60	45	90	25	20	10	4	2		20
Brynderwyn Pond	NL								0					0	0	0	0	
Bald Rock Irrigation Dams	NL		16					2	30				10	2	14	5	6	45
Topuni CHH	NL				12	6		8	20			5	2	0				
Kaiwaka Railway Pond and oxidation	NL		120		30	25		30	30	100	40	20		44	14	12		10
Maungaturoto Oxidation	NL		0		6	0			4					0		0		
Taipuha(Waalkens)	NL		40						10			50	40	0		0		
Manukau Harbour	AW/NL														3050	1885	3884	2147

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
	0	0	0			11	0
	25	0	0	8	14	50	30
714	1300	839	800	241	150	3058	1400
60	36	88	60	26	120	160	1200
		2	0	6	28	40	49
		20	26	0	11	20	0
		3	3	0	65	25	10
32	3	36	0	7	94	20	30
	0	0	0	0	6	2	0
10	0	0	4	0		0	9
			0	0	10	5	0
	8	20	14	4	35	60	20
	3	8	0	0		0	0
	0	0	0	0	10	4	0
3946	4612	5156	4390	2822	7385	9388	6729

Table 6: Distribution of non-zero counts of black swan and geese for the Central Waikato lakes and harbours survey. Values of 1 (green) indicate that both the black swan count and the goose count were equal to zero. If there were long periods at sites where zero birds were counted, we may have reason to suspect that these sites were not surveyed. No evidence of this is found.

Lake	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Lake Rotokauri	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake E	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
Lake A	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lake B	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Lake C	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Lake D	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lake Areare	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Pikopiko	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Lake Hotoananga	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Lake Hakanoa	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Kimihia	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Ohinewai	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Rotokawau	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Kopuera	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Opuatia Lower Wetland	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Whangape	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Waikare	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Rotongaro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Rotongaroiti	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Okowhao	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Lake Waahi	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Raglan Harbour	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aotea Harbour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kawhia Harbour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Taharoa Lakes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Bi-Monthly Chief Executive's Report
November 2025

OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Project 1111: Drift diving

The 2025 drift diving report was completed and submitted for review. There are no immediate concerns from staff on the state of the monitored fisheries. However, the Awakino Rive trout population was likely impacted by the October floods that matched the rivers highest ever recorded flow. In previous floods the trout population was impacted, and the river was temporarily closed. Staff will visit the river and evaluate the damage as soon as possible.

Project 1115: Population Surveys

Lake Arapuni Spawning Survey
The 2025 Lake Arapuni Spawning Report has been completed and submitted for review. No significant concerns were detected aside from a high proportion of hatchery fish spawning in Tributary C. The finding reinforces the council's decision to pause stocking of the lake due to the potentially negative impacts of hatchery fish spawning in the wild on the overall population.

Project 1121: Fish Harvest Survey

Wild and hatchery tag returns
Wild tag returns have started to trickle in with the season opener and Ollie Bassett has agreed to continue tagging when he is guiding on the Whakapapa. Articles have been written for the magazine and spring flyer to remind anglers to report fish tags in an attempt to increase return rates.

Project 1161: Trout Releases

Potential Kids Fishing Pond
Adam has had two meetings with the management of the Tamahere Country Club (a new luxury retirement village near the airport) about potentially releasing fish in a newly constructed pond on the property. The location is an ideal kids fishing pond complete with a BBQ area and pontoon for handicap access. The owner of the facility is "a huge fan of Fish & Game" and would love to have trout in their pond. The pond is a water feature and stormwater pond with no drain or outlet. Due to the depth and lack of flowing water it would only be suitable for holding trout in the winter. The owners are happy to hold one or two kids fishing events annually and are happy to have people fish when the village gates are open. If the council approved going forward with a trial release Adam will put a proposal together. To release fish an approval from the Minister of Conservation (Conservation Act 26ZM) will be require. An assessment of the existing fish (there are none) and consultation with iwi (the pond is not natural and has no drain so this should be straight forward) will be required prior to applying to the minister.

Project 1173: Regulation

Regulation Change Feedback
There has been minimal feedback on the regulation changes considering the extensive revisions for the 2025/2026 season. The only comments received by staff were confusion as to the location of the new Whakapapa River and Kaniwhaniwha Stream fly fishing only areas. After receiving the feedback staff have added maps of the two fly fishing only areas to the spring flyer and Reel Life. Staff also installed a sign on the Whakapapa River indicating the beginning of the fly fishing only zone. Anglers will be surveyed in September 2026 to record angler feedback and satisfaction with the new regulations.

OUTPUT 2: HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

Project 1211: RMA

Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council – Outcomes on the Proposed Coastal Plan
Mischa submitted on several key provisions of the Waikato Regional Council's Proposed Coastal Plan, focusing on habitat protection, water quality, and the management of activities that may impact fish and game resources. The decisions were largely favourable, with many of Auckland/Waikato Fish and Games recommendations accepted or partially adopted.

Key outcomes include stronger recognition of ecological and freshwater values within the coastal environment, with new policy wording requiring that discharges and reclamations avoid adverse effects on habitat, biodiversity, and water quality. Rules for coastal structures now place greater emphasis on avoiding impacts to estuarine and wetland ecosystems, aligning more closely with Fish & Game's advocacy for habitat protection and sustainable management.

Definitions of natural character and sensitive areas were refined to better reflect ecological significance, while the plan now includes stronger links to regional freshwater objectives under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM).

Some Successes include:

- **Ecological Protection:** The Panel confirmed that biodiversity and natural character protection remain central to the Plan, reinforcing Fish & Game's conservation objectives.
- **Definitions:** Broadened to better reflect restoration and biosecurity purposes, indirectly supporting Fish & Game's activities.
- **Recreation and Access:** Recreational fishing and hunting recognised within general recreation provisions, maintaining public access.

Island Block Pump Station Replacement Consent Application
David and Clare have reviewed the consent proposal draft to replace the Island Block South Pump Station and divert its discharge into the northern wetland via a new northern pump station. While the proposal suggests only minor increases in water level and contaminants from the discharge, it raises significant concerns for the Whangamarino Wetland's water quality and ecology. The existing southern pump station includes treatment ponds that provide some sediment and contaminant removal before discharge. The new northern system has no equivalent treatment.

Baseline monitoring shows both northern and southern drainage systems are highly nutrient-enriched and turbid, with several parameters exceeding ANZG guideline values and transferring additional contaminated water north will further burden an already degraded system. Given the wetland's flat gradient, even small increases in water level can alter hydrology and affect waterfowl habitat, fish passage, and vegetation and the modelling assumptions may underestimate these localised and cumulative effects.

Waikato Regional Council Biodiversity Strategy
Clare attended the Waikato Regional Council Biodiversity Strategy workshop which was held in Thames. The workshop was focused on developing a long-term, collaborative approach to reversing biodiversity loss in the region. The discussion emphasised that meaningful progress requires collective commitment from iwi, landowners, agencies, communities, and individuals. Developed in 2024, the Waikato Biodiversity Accord was recognised as a key first step toward this strategy. The Council is seeking feedback to ensure the strategy reflects iwi and community aspirations, while responding to the needs of the Waikato region.

Perch discovered in Lake Karapiro
John Carey caught a perch in Lake Karapiro 12 October 2025. Subsequent research revealed that there was an online post of multiple perch being caught in Lake Karapiro in February of 2025 that went unnoticed. DOC and the regional council were informed by staff but to date there has not been a response or official media release.

There are multiple ways perch could have entered Lake Karapiro including an illegal release or eggs carried by a boat trailer. Local coarse angling clubs do not often fish the lake due to the excessive boat traffic, so staff feel it is unlikely to be an intentional release by the traditional coarse fishing community. Aquatic plants on trailers can carry fish eggs but this would be a very rare event requiring plants with eggs on them to be immediately transported from below the dam to above. Considering the small population of perch below the dam this is highly unlikely.

During 2016 and 2019 maintenance workers opened a passage from below Karapiro Dam that appear to have allowed at least one koi carp and likely other fish to enter Lake Karapiro. The dam maintenance could have allowed perch and other fish into the lake. A single koi carp was recovered by the University of Waikato in 2019 subsequently. There is no way of knowing how long perch have been in the lake or how they got there but staff believe they have established a viable population requiring extra vigilance when cleaning boat trailers to prevent further spread.

Perch have likely established a significant population that will negatively impact the trout population of the lake. Although fishing pressure has declined form 4,800 (1994/95) to below 800 angler days (2021/22) the fishery is still significant with similar use to the Waipa River. However, lake Karapiro will likely be a good perch fishery and is well suited for the species with shallow warm backwaters.

Collaborative Science Advisory Group
Adam and David have attended Collaborative Science Advisory Group meetings being held for the next iteration of the Waikato Regions Freshwater Plan Change. Despite the impending RMA legislative changes, WRC consider it is important to from a collaborative group to provide scientific rigour to the process. This plan change will have a wider scope than PC1 which was constrained to only addressing 4 contaminants in the Waikato catchment.

Free Authorizations
Staff issue free permits for electrofishing, fish sampling and fishing contests. Over the Last two months seven permits have been issued or modified. There may be some scope for cost recovery as DOC and other Fish & Game Regions charge for permits.

Project 1221: Council Land

F&G Wetland works update:
As part of our wetland maintenance consent, Fish and Game are required to provide an annual wetland maintenance plan to Waikato Regional Council for the coming year with details of all proposed wetland maintenance in or around the vicinity of F&G Wetlands. A request for this information was sent out to all pond holders in mid-September with all proposed works under our consent required to be sent back no later the Friday 31st October 2025.

Any work that falls under our consent can only be carried if they had been included in this report and had been approved by staff. The letter also reinforced the conditions of any approved works, and the Health & Safety requirements for all works on our wetlands.

The report is due into WRC by the 31st of November, so Dani and Clare will be working through this during November, collating all the information required. The report must include;

- A description of the nature of the works and receiving environment;
- Identification of who is responsible for each operational area;
- A topographic map identifying the boundaries of each operational area;
- The description of the maintenance works for each wetland;
- Expected date (or expected range of dates) in which the maintenance is to occur for each wetland, consistent with the 'Timing Schedule';
- The location of any sensitive areas within or adjacent to the operational area and the procedures to be employed to avoid adverse effects on the sensitive areas identified;
- Details of any site-specific mitigation. Including biosecurity measures where appropriate (i.e. works where pest plant species are known to occur).

We will let the wetland user groups know what works have been approved early December, along with what F&G funds have been allocated for what wetland works.

OUTPUT 3: PARTICIPATION

Project 1311: Access Negotiation

Stone Jug Road
The easement survey and wording have been completed and signed copies submitted to the Ruapehu District Council. I am hopeful that after a somewhat convoluted process, we will be able to finalise it before Christmas.

Toa Bridge Access
There has been renewed interest in the Toa Bridge access to the Waipa River due to complaint from the public to DOC and Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa. It appears an existing access strip, and easement could provide access upriver of the bridge. To progress the project we may need to hire a contractor to search the property title records to determine the designation and or ownership of what appears to be an unclassified paper road. A quote was previously supplied for $500 in 2021, however this did not go ahead at the time.

Upper Waipa River Access
Adam has been working with Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa to improve access at the Templeton Farm. An easement exists but does not follow any established farm track and there is dangerous stock on the property preventing safe access. Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa staff have advised the farmer must “manage risks created by their own business operations or undertakings”. Adam will set up a meeting with the farm owners to discuss how to safely enable anglers to cross the farm.

Project 1361: User group

Spring Flyer
The Spring Fishing Flyer is nearing completion and scheduled to go out in October. The goal of the flyer is to prepare anglers for the summer fishing season and to let them know what staff are spending their time on.

Lower Waikato Fishing Competition Talk
Adam attended the Lower Waikato Fishing Competition and gave a talk to the participants. There were 54 entries in total, and the average fish size was 1.15 kg. During the last 15 competitions fish size has ranged from 1.11 kg to 1.50 kg and there has been an average of 54 entries.

OUTPUT 5: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Project 1511: Ranging

Fishing Opening Weekend Ranging Effort

Three groups of rangers were out for opening weekend including two staff members with voluntary rangers. The Pirongia area, Mangatutu and Whakapapa were targeted due to high use on opening day. No citations were issued but one angler who was found to have a bait rod in his vehicle in a fly fishing only area was verbally warned.

The ranging teams closer to Hamilton only found a handful of anglers whilst the team on the Whakapapa encountered significantly more, highlighting the concentration of licence holders in this area around the start of the fishing season. Staff also used the opportunity to meet landowners to negotiate access and ground truth access points for our mapping system.

I also met with Libby O'Brien, new DOC Operations manager for the Tongariro District. Libby is a keen fly fisher and we plan to hold a joint meeting with all interested parties prior to Christmas to see if there is any opportunity to work together on restoring access to the upper Whakapapa, given that all other efforts appear to have stalled.

Family licence violations

The family licence was intended to encourage parents or grandparents to take kids fishing but the discounted licence was also used to reduce the cost of a couple purchasing a licence. A rule change in 2025 requiring family licence holders to list their children has led to several potential violations. The extra $109 per couple has not been well received and several licence holders have provided false details to continue receiving the discounted licence. To date Roslyn has discovered that at least seven licence holders who have provided false details to receive the discounted licences without having children or grandchildren. As noted in the financial report family licence sales are also well down this year.

Project 1531: Legal

Prosecutions

Clare has continued to progress several cases, with a number of recent court appearances resulting in guilty pleas and fines being issued, along with diversions completed. It has become evident that presiding judges are beginning to question the level of fines sought. To help reduce costs, Clare has begun engaging junior lawyers from Hamilton Legal for straightforward court matters.

OUTPUT 8: PLANNING REPORTING

Project 1841: National liaison

Gold clam compliance

Adam conducted visits of three agencies (report in draft) in the USA using the NZC Staff Scholarship. The learning from vising US agencies impacted by aquatic invasive species were passed on to government and industry experts in a series of webinars. Adam presented four

webinars including Biosecurity NZ staff, The Gold Calm Enforcement Working Group, Freshwater Biosecurity Partnerships Working Group and Fish & Game staff. In total the webinars reached about 70 industry experts, stakeholders and staff. The key findings were that New Zealand is at high risk of other invasive species entering the county without changes to border security and the current enforcement for the gold clam outbreak is insufficient to prevent further spread posing a significant risk to Fish & Game.

Contributed to the annual report including drift dive monitoring, regulation review, angler access fund, fish stocking and invasive species updates.

OUTPUT 9: ADMINISTRATION

Project 1912: Administration

Maritime

Boat repair

A leak in the lower unit of the boat prompted an early annual service to replace a seal in the sump. During the repair a chunk of metal believed to be a piece of the decompression lever was found. The engine has been running fine, and there shouldn't be any issues with its continued use according to the repairers, but it will be harder to start. The outboard should be replaced in the next few years with an electric start when the budget permits.

D. Klee
Chief Executive

It was moved;
The following motion, formulated in the public-excluded session, be adopted in open meeting:

That the Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council resolves to:

Instruct the Chief Executive to obtain an independent legal opinion regarding:

- The legal status and validity of current employment contracts;
- The extent to which the Council may delegate employment functions to the Chief Executive under the Conservation Act 1987; and
- The circumstances, if any, under which it is appropriate for Council to seek access to individual employment agreements, and the legal responsibilities of councillors for maintaining staff privacy and confidentiality; and delegation framework, and employment arrangements.
- Any associated implications for the Council's governance, delegation framework, and employment arrangements.

Request that the legal opinion be provided to the Council Chair and circulated to all councillors once received.

Note that this action is intended to provide clarity and assurance to both councillors and staff, and to ensure that the Council's employment practices remain consistent with current legislation while the reform process proceeds to formalise and codify current practice.

Smith/Barker – CARRIED

The meeting closed at 2.38pm

Financial Report for November 2025 Meeting

Licence Sales

Fish: Fish licence sales have been slow across all regions this year. The Auckland Waikato region is currently 0.8 percent below the same period last year, which still makes us the second best performing region behind Taranaki. Given that most of our angling activity occurs in rivers and that the region has experienced several large flood events since opening day, I had anticipated sales could be well down, so overall I am cautiously optimistic about how licence sales are tracking. Nationally, sales are 6.3 percent below this time last year which appears to be due to the large decline in family licence sales. At this stage the family licence sales are around 1600 below this time last year which equates to over $300,000.

Licence sales receipts for the Auckland/Waikato region for September to October 2025 totalled $148,818.51, comprising $91,682.86 through AOL, $57,040.87 through POL, and $94.78 in direct office sales.

Game: The game licence season was not active in this period, with only residual sales of $96.52 processed via POL.

Other Revenue (September–October 2025)

Access Negotiation Income: $1,590.03 reimbursement from Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa.
Mitigation Income: $47,171.31 received from Genesis Energy Limited as part of the 2025 mitigation funding.
Legal Funding (NZC): $4,785.50 received from NZC for Tipu Whenua, Kahu Environment, and S J Ongley reimbursements.
Interest: $2,437.26 credited across Westpac accounts.
Game Bird Habitat Stamp: $4.35 from Eyede Solutions.
Salmon and Designated Waters Endorsements: $112.23.
Prosecution Fines: $495.04 collected through the Ministry of Justice.

Expenditure (September–October 2025)

Annual Report and Audit: $2,000.00 (Coastal Accounting Limited).
Bank Charges: $20.00 (Westpac – Certificate of Balance).
Commission on Licence Sales: $2,629.52 (Eyede Solutions).
Council Meeting Expenses: $477.96 (Roslyn Simmonds courier, Great River Catering Ltd).
Access Negotiation: $127.51 (Digital Ocean subscription, Annex Group signage).
Banding/Shoveler Study: $855.72 (One NZ MultiTXT).
Fish Releases: $129.50 (BOC Limited – oxygen).
Habitat Works (F&G Land): $132.83 (electric fence items and Cartrack subscription).
OSH: $178.63 (first aid and safety supplies).
Trees/Seeds: $6,883.78 (NativeAwa Limited and Hamilton Fish & Game Association).
Field Equipment Maintenance: $104.34 (Garmin satellite subscriptions).
Legal and Court Prosecutions: $260.00 (Secure Collections).

RMA/Planning Services: $9,269.60 (S J Ongley, Kahu Environment, Resourced AF Ltd).
Office General: $807.77 (Survey Monkey, OpenAI, Adobe Systems, Xero, Arlo, and kitchen supplies).
Office Maintenance: $11,126.03 (building maintenance, security, and lawn services).
Office Power: $365.97 (Meridian Energy).
Office Rates and Water: $836.82.
Office Purchases (under $2,000): $363.04 (minor office equipment).
Photocopier: $245.19 (Canon).
Postage: $29.37 (courier and mail costs).
Public Liability Insurance: $1,170.00 (Crombie Lockwood).
Public Online Sales Fees (excl GST): $1,104.03 (Eyede Solutions).
Public Online Sales Fees (incl GST): $104.27 (Eyede Solutions).
Ranging and Field Gear: $32.93.
Telephone and Internet: $1,962.82 (Spark, One NZ, PureLink, staff reimbursements).
Vehicle Fuel and RUC: $2,483.53 (Z Energy, fuel, and RUC payments).
Vehicle Maintenance: $4,820.59 (repairs, servicing, and tyres).
Vehicle Registration: $261.43 (NZTA registration renewals).

David Klee

Chief Executive

BUDGET 2025/26					ACTUAL 2025/26 (as of 31/10/2025)			
Project	**Expenditure**	**Income**	**Net Cost**		**Expenditure**	**Income**	**Net Cost**	**Variance**
SPECIES MANAGEMENT								
POPULATION MONITORING								
Drift diving	3,520	1,500	2,020					(2,020)
Banding/shoveler study/wetlands stud	16,500		16,500		856		856	(15,644)
Aerial transects	-		-					-
Trend counts	7,500		7,500					(7,500)
Fish surveys	2,000	2,000	-					-
Gamebird Research					-			
HARVEST ASSESSMENT								
Gamebirds					220		220	220
RELEASES								
Fish	16,000	7,300	8,700		130		130	(8,570)
CONTROL								
Gamebirds (zon guns)	1,000	1,500	(500)					500
HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT								
RESOURCE MAN. ACT								
R.M.A	5,000	-	5,000		9,270	4,786	4,484	(516)
FISH & GAME PROPERTIES								
Council Land-maint,grass,fence,spray	26,500	21,000	5,500		39,289		39,289	33,789
Rates	1,000		1,000		$ -		-	(1,000)
NON COUNCIL LAND								
Non Council Land	100,000	100,000			24,136		24,136	24,136
MRP & Genesis mitigation monies	75,000	75,000				47,171	(47,171)	(47,171)
Trees	10,000	8,000	2,000		6,884			(2,000)
ASSESSING & MONITORING								
Assessment & Monitoring	1,000	-			-		-	-
PARTICPATION								
ACCESS								
Access negotiation					128	1,590	(1,462)	(1,462)
Signs/tracks etc	2,500		2,500					(2,500)
NEWSLETTERS								
Magazine/Newsletters	-		-					-
OTHER PUBLICATIONS								
Pamphlets	200		200					(200)
PUBLIC PROMOTIONS								
Displays/promotions/PR	500		500		$ -		-	(500)

BUDGET 2025/26					ACTUAL 2025/26 (as of 31/10/2025)			
Project	**Expenditure**	**Income**	**Net Cost**		**Expenditure**	**Income**	**Net Cost**	**Variance**
COMPLIANCE								
RANGING								
Ranging	500		500		33		33	(467)
RANGER TRAINING								
Training	500	500	-					
COMPLIANCE								
Legal	20,000	6,000	14,000		991	495	496	(13,504)
COUNCILS								
COUNCIL MEETINGS								
Meeting costs	3,000		3,000		478		478	(2,522)
PLANNING/REPORTING								
REPORTING/AUDIT								
Annual Report/Audit	14,000		14,000		2,000		2,000	(12,000)
NATIONAL LIAISON								
National Liason								
ADMINISTRATION								
SALARIES								
Salaries	577,843		577,843		18,103		18,103	(559,740)
STAFF EXPENSES								
ACC Levy	2,300		2,300					(2,300)
Super/KS	36,000		36,000		5,567		5,567	(30,433)
Fringe Benefit Tax	7,000		7,000					(7,000)
Staff Training	4,950		4,950					(4,950)
Clothing	500		500					(500)
Reimb allowances	10,000		10,000					(10,000)
OFFICE PREMISES								
Rent	-		-				-	-
Rates	1,420		1,420		837		837	(583)
Maintenance	25,000		25,000		11,126		11,126	(13,874)
Insurance (includes off equipment)	7,000		7,000					(7,000)
Power	2,000		2,000		366		366	(1,634)
OFFICE EQUIPMENT								
Purchases (Under $2,000)	2,500		2,500		363		363	(2,137)
Asset Replacement Funding								
Eqpmt Maintenance	1,500		1,500					(1,500)
COMMUNICATIONS/CONSUMABLES								
Telephone/fax	15,000		15,000		1,963		1,963	(13,037)
Postage	200		200		29		29	(171)
Courier								
Stationery	5,000		5,000		327		327	(4,673)
Photocopying	1,000		1,000		245		245	(755)

	BUDGET 2025/26				ACTUAL 2024/25 (as of 31/10/2025)			
Project	**Expenditure**	**Income**	**Net Cost**		**Expenditure**	**Income**	**Net Cost**	**Variance**
GENERAL								
Donations								
Bank Charges (Interest calc by NZC)					20		20	20
General Office expenses	5,500		5,500		808		808	(4,692)
Insurance - General								
Legal - General	1,350		1,350				-	(1,350)
Public Liability insurance	3,000		3,000		1,170		1,170	(1,830)
GENERAL EQUIPMENT								
Purchases (Under $2,000)	5,000		5,000				-	(5,000)
Asset Replacement Funding								
Equipment Maintenance	1,500		1,500		104		104	(1,396)
Equipment Insurance	-		-					-
Equipment Hire/rental/running expenses							-	-
VEHICLES								
Vehicle Maintenance	20,000		20,000		4,821		4,821	(15,179)
Vehicle Insurance	17,000		17,000					(17,000)
Vehicle Registration	1,000		1,000		261		261	(739)
Vehicle Fuel & RUC	36,000		36,000		2,484		2,484	(33,516)
	1,095,783	**222,800**	**871,983**		**133,009**	**54,042**	**78,967**	**(793,016)**

National Fish Licence Sales YTD to 22 October

	Channel	FWF	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FWIA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWC	FWNC	FDNC	SRSE	DWLR	DWLN	Total Fish	Fish LEQ	Fish Var	Fish $	Inc/Dec		
Northland	Public Online	14	41	17	10	7	0	0	3	12	9	7	1	4	0	18	0	0	0	0	0	143						
	Agency Online	6	22	2	5	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	42					Budget	
2024-2025	**Total**	**20**	**63**	**19**	**15**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**14**	**9**	**8**	**1**	**4**	**0**	**20**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**185**	**148**		**$20,062**		618	$83,833
	Public Online	9	42	18	7	5	0	0	2	6	7	11	1	4	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	122					24/25 Sept	$327
	Agency Online	5	32	1	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	50					23.8%	$19,940
2025-2026	**Total**	**14**	**74**	**19**	**12**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**6**	**7**	**11**	**1**	**4**	**0**	**10**	**0**	**0**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**172**	**147**	**-0.6%**	**$19,940**	**-$122**	Var to budget	($63,566)
Auckland Waikato	Public Online	173	441	30	138	42	0	1	26	77	27	96	4	18	3	160	0	0	0	0	0	1,236						
	Agency Online	88	270	6	82	30	0	2	25	34	0	25	0	3	0	20	0	0	14	19	0	618					Budget	
2024-2025	**Total**	**261**	**711**	**36**	**220**	**72**	**0**	**3**	**51**	**111**	**27**	**121**	**4**	**21**	**3**	**180**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**19**	**0**	**1,854**	**1,430**		**$193,924**		3838	$520,633
	Public Online	126	422	32	117	29	0	1	10	73	56	103	2	28	2	155	1	0	0	0	0	1,157					24/25 Sept	$4,339
	Agency Online	106	333	8	87	34	0	1	8	18	5	39	0	2	0	25	0	0	9	20	0	695					37.0%	$192,420
2025-2026	**Total**	**232**	**755**	**40**	**204**	**63**	**0**	**2**	**18**	**91**	**61**	**142**	**2**	**30**	**2**	**180**	**1**	**0**	**9**	**20**	**0**	**1,852**	**1,418**	**-0.8%**	**$192,420**	**-$1,504**	Var to budget	($323,874)
Eastern	Public Online	688	491	23	232	291	0	5	96	280	35	107	1	55	2	293	0	3	0	0	0	2,602						
	Agency Online	603	458	10	195	557	0	1	27	86	32	72	1	9	1	19	0	0	26	19	0	2,116					Budget	
2024-2025	**Total**	**1291**	**949**	**33**	**427**	**848**	**0**	**6**	**123**	**366**	**67**	**179**	**2**	**64**	**3**	**312**	**0**	**3**	**26**	**19**	**0**	**4,718**	**3,892**		**$528,025**		9005	$1,221,548
	Public Online	494	528	27	216	285	0	3	99	264	65	119	1	43	1	284	2	0	0	0	0	2,431					24/25 Sept	$6,821
	Agency Online	550	545	6	191	661	0	0	22	70	6	71	1	6	1	20	0	2	18	23	0	2,193					41.7%	$508,906
2025-2026	**Total**	**1044**	**1073**	**33**	**407**	**946**	**0**	**3**	**121**	**334**	**71**	**190**	**2**	**49**	**2**	**304**	**2**	**2**	**18**	**23**	**0**	**4,624**	**3,752**	**-3.6%**	**$508,906**	**-$19,119**	Var to budget	($705,821)
Hawke's Bay	Public Online	97	314	35	86	40	0	3	11	53	7	86	0	10	0	119	0	0	0	0	0	861						
	Agency Online	68	209	5	97	35	0	0	8	20	17	39	1	2	0	18	0	0	4	15	0	538					Budget	
2024-2025	**Total**	**165**	**523**	**40**	**183**	**75**	**0**	**3**	**19**	**73**	**24**	**125**	**1**	**12**	**0**	**137**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**15**	**0**	**1,399**	**1,075**		**$145,846**		3010	$408,313
	Public Online	58	252	26	76	41	0	2	13	38	19	94	1	8	0	125	0	0	0	0	0	753					24/25 Sept	$1,858
	Agency Online	60	266	1	106	28	0	0	12	5	9	66	0	1	0	12	0	0	6	8	0	580					32.7%	$133,657
2025-2026	**Total**	**118**	**518**	**27**	**182**	**69**	**0**	**2**	**25**	**43**	**28**	**160**	**1**	**9**	**0**	**137**	**0**	**0**	**6**	**8**	**0**	**1,333**	**985**	**-8.4%**	**$133,657**	**-$12,190**	Var to budget	($272,799)
Taranaki	Public Online	34	118	19	33	8	0	0	5	13	13	28	0	12	0	92	0	0	0	0	0	375						
	Agency Online	17	97	0	44	7	0	0	0	1	0	18	0	0	0	16	0	0	3	5	0	208					Budget	
2024-2025	**Total**	**51**	**215**	**19**	**77**	**15**	**0**	**0**	**5**	**14**	**13**	**46**	**0**	**12**	**0**	**108**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**5**	**0**	**583**	**409**		**$55,444**		1217	$165,089
	Public Online	32	113	27	32	6	0	1	5	17	27	30	5	4	2	149	1	0	0	0	0	451					24/25 Sept	$1,297
	Agency Online	27	105	0	41	13	0	0	5	5	0	23	0	1	0	23	0	0	6	4	0	253					36.7%	$60,547
2025-2026	**Total**	**59**	**218**	**27**	**73**	**19**	**0**	**1**	**10**	**22**	**27**	**53**	**5**	**5**	**2**	**172**	**1**	**0**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**704**	**446**	**9.2%**	**$60,547**	**$5,103**	Var to budget	($103,245)
Wellington	Public Online	120	390	12	142	55	0	0	3	29	5	102	0	6	0	172	0	0	0	138	0	1,174						
	Agency Online	77	310	3	127	49	0	0	0	11	0	89	0	1	0	70	0	0	20	48	1	806					Budget	
2024-2025	**Total**	**197**	**700**	**15**	**269**	**104**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**40**	**5**	**191**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**242**	**0**	**0**	**20**	**186**	**1**	**1,980**	**1,342**		**$182,034**		2846	$386,066
	Public Online	74	352	6	129	42	0	0	5	18	1	75	0	10	0	81	0	0	0	148	4	945					24/25 Sept	$817
	Agency Online	72	339	3	127	34	0	2	0	4	5	56	0	0	0	55	0	0	15	26	0	738					42.5%	$164,182
2025-2026	**Total**	**146**	**691**	**9**	**256**	**76**	**0**	**2**	**5**	**22**	**6**	**131**	**0**	**10**	**0**	**136**	**0**	**0**	**15**	**174**	**4**	**1,683**	**1,210**	**-9.8%**	**$164,182**	**-$17,852**	Var to budget	($221,067)
Nelson/Marl	Public Online	186	329	56	124	54	0	0	5	33	38	78	3	16	1	151	3	0	0	531	19	1,627						
	Agency Online	204	432	31	184	46	0	0	2	13	9	57	1	1	0	52	0	0	113	566	13	1,724					Budget	
2024-2025	**Total**	**390**	**761**	**87**	**308**	**100**	**0**	**0**	**7**	**46**	**47**	**135**	**4**	**17**	**1**	**203**	**3**	**0**	**113**	**1097**	**32**	**3,351**	**1,813**		**$245,943**		4136	$561,057
	Public Online	128	283	41	117	37	0	0	8	23	38	62	1	9	0	136	0	0	0	524	16	1,423					24/25 Sept	$1,724
	Agency Online	180	417	7	191	36	0	0	1	5	16	47	1	7	0	25	0	0	94	593	3	1,623					37.4%	$210,092
2025-2026	**Total**	**308**	**700**	**48**	**308**	**73**	**0**	**0**	**9**	**28**	**54**	**109**	**2**	**16**	**0**	**161**	**0**	**0**	**94**	**1117**	**19**	**3,046**	**1,549**	**-14.6%**	**$210,092**	**-$35,851**	Var to budget	($349,241)
North Canterbury	Public Online	427	757	54	247	40	0	3	16	98	34	174	2	61	2	609	1	2	1,031	881	41	4,480						
	Agency Online	832	1,370	25	587	25	0	0	7	24	2	139	0	9	0	84	0	0	1,708	1,144	4	5,960					Budget	
2024-2025	**Total**	**1259**	**2127**	**79**	**834**	**65**	**0**	**3**	**23**	**122**	**36**	**313**	**2**	**70**	**2**	**693**	**1**	**2**	**2739**	**2025**	**45**	**10,440**	**4,770**		**$647,102**		10180	$1,380,939
	Public Online	294	650	41	242	32	0	0	15	61	32	152	1	19	1	402	0	1	754	800	8	3,505					24/25 Sept	$5,044
	Agency Online	632	1,558	23	656	18	0	0	5	18	11	156	1	1	0	42	1	0	1,433	1,149	0	5,704					43.4%	$599,988
2025-2026	**Total**	**926**	**2208**	**64**	**898**	**50**	**0**	**0**	**20**	**79**	**43**	**308**	**2**	**20**	**1**	**444**	**1**	**1**	**2187**	**1949**	**8**	**9,209**	**4,423**	**-7.3%**	**$599,988**	**-$47,114**	Var to budget	($775,907)
West Coast	Public Online	143	192	23	63	36	0	0	8	22	25	35	0	7	0	84	0	0	0	378	19	1,035						
	Agency Online	34	60	1	42	15	0	2	1	2	21	17	0	1	2	2	0	2	18	28	0	248					Budget	
2024-2025	**Total**	**177**	**252**	**24**	**105**	**51**	**0**	**2**	**9**	**24**	**46**	**52**	**0**	**8**	**2**	**86**	**0**	**2**	**18**	**406**	**19**	**1,283**	**685**		**$92,943**		2200	$298,435
	Public Online	90	159	43	58	26	0	1	6	16	22	34	0	3	0	79	0	0	0	385	4	926					24/25 Sept	$1,302
	Agency Online	33	69	0	35	18	0	0	3	5	3	22	0	6	0	4	0	0	18	28	0	244					27.4%	$81,647
2025-2026	**Total**	**123**	**228**	**43**	**93**	**44**	**0**	**1**	**9**	**21**	**25**	**56**	**0**	**9**	**0**	**83**	**0**	**0**	**18**	**413**	**4**	**1,170**	**602**	**-12.2%**	**$81,647**	**-$11,297**	Var to budget	($215,486)

	Channel	FWF	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FWIA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWC	FWNC	FDNC	SRSE	DWLR	DWLN	Total Fish	Fish LEQ	Fish Var	Fish $	Inc/Dec		
Central South Is	Public Online	557	642	107	241	117	0	0	47	223	68	160	2	58	2	393	1	1	984	0	0	3,603						
	Agency Online	738	773	7	482	191	0	2	34	73	28	148	1	20	1	109	1	3	1,041	146	0	3,798					Budget	
2024-2025	**Total**	**1295**	**1415**	**114**	**723**	**308**	**0**	**2**	**81**	**296**	**96**	**308**	**3**	**78**	**3**	**502**	**2**	**4**	**2025**	**146**	**0**	**7,401**	**4,329**		**$587,216**		12366	$1,677,475
	Public Online	403	622	101	222	91	0	1	58	142	102	141	4	26	0	268	2	0	742	0	0	2,925					24/25 Sept	$19,610
	Agency Online	608	815	12	496	241	0	2	15	69	60	179	1	10	11	99	1	0	810	80	0	3,509					32.3%	$542,219
2025-2026	**Total**	**1011**	**1437**	**113**	**718**	**332**	**0**	**3**	**73**	**211**	**162**	**320**	**5**	**36**	**11**	**367**	**3**	**0**	**1552**	**80**	**0**	**6,434**	**3,997**	**-7.7%**	**$542,219**	**-$44,997**	Var to budget	($1,115,646)
Otago	Public Online	742	1,016	96	270	95	0	0	24	227	158	250	5	43	9	461	2	4	0	907	34	4,343						
	Agency Online	1,089	1,373	20	609	53	0	0	15	44	37	192	5	6	4	9	0	1	254	893	0	4,604					Budget	
2024-2025	**Total**	**1831**	**2389**	**116**	**879**	**148**	**0**	**0**	**39**	**271**	**195**	**442**	**10**	**49**	**13**	**470**	**2**	**5**	**254**	**1800**	**34**	**8,947**	**6,042**		**$819,561**		15479	$2,099,760
	Public Online	605	951	107	291	91	0	1	21	150	182	243	2	17	10	414	1	10	0	834	36	3,966					24/25 Sept	$12,542
	Agency Online	984	1,489	10	661	66	0	2	14	36	58	194	2	2	6	21	0	9	228	918	0	4,700					37.8%	$792,883
2025-2026	**Total**	**1589**	**2440**	**117**	**952**	**157**	**0**	**3**	**35**	**186**	**240**	**437**	**4**	**19**	**16**	**435**	**1**	**19**	**228**	**1752**	**36**	**8,666**	**5,845**	**-3.3%**	**$792,883**	**-$26,677**	Var to budget	($1,294,335)
Southland	Public Online	362	381	124	98	59	0	2	20	61	68	166	0	7	5	277	0	1	0	583	22	2,236						
	Agency Online	783	964	5	370	59	0	0	10	46	12	239	2	5	0	14	1	0	87	645	0	3,242					Budget	
2024-2025	**Total**	**1145**	**1345**	**129**	**468**	**118**	**0**	**2**	**30**	**107**	**80**	**405**	**2**	**12**	**5**	**291**	**1**	**1**	**87**	**1228**	**22**	**5,478**	**3,683**		**$499,661**		8080	$1,096,070
	Public Online	232	348	144	75	49	0	1	18	43	92	165	5	4	1	213	1	4	0	558	11	1,964					24/25 Sept	$2,606
	Agency Online	698	934	4	413	46	0	0	5	18	11	254	3	0	0	11	1	1	84	624	0	3,107					41.7%	$457,407
2025-2026	**Total**	**930**	**1282**	**148**	**488**	**95**	**0**	**1**	**23**	**61**	**103**	**419**	**8**	**4**	**1**	**224**	**2**	**5**	**84**	**1182**	**11**	**5,071**	**3,372**	**-8.5%**	**$457,407**	**-$42,254**	Var to budget	($636,057)
TOTAL	Direct	3,543	5,112	596	1,684	844	0	14	264	1,128	487	1,289	18	297	24	2,829	7	11	2,015	3,418	135	23,715	**13,551**		$1,838,200			
	AOL	4,539	6,338	115	2,824	1,067	0	7	129	356	158	1,036	11	57	8	415	2	6	3,290	3,528	18	23,904	**16,067**		$2,179,562		Budget	
2024-2025	**Total**	**8,082**	**11,450**	**711**	**4,508**	**1,911**	**0**	**21**	**393**	**1,484**	**645**	**2,325**	**29**	**354**	**32**	**3,244**	**9**	**17**	**5,305**	**6,946**	**153**	**47,619**	**29,618**		**$4,017,762**		72975	$9,899,217
	Direct	2,545	4,722	613	1,582	734	0	11	260	851	643	1,229	23	175	17	2,316	8	15	1,496	3,249	79	20,568	**11,691**		$1,585,971		24/25 Sept	$58,287
	AOL	3,955	6,902	75	3,009	1,197	0	7	90	253	184	1,107	9	36	18	337	3	12	2,726	3,473	3	23,396	**16,055**		$2,177,917		38.0%	$3,763,888
2025-2026	**Total**	**6,500**	**11,624**	**688**	**4,591**	**1,931**	**0**	**18**	**350**	**1,104**	**827**	**2,336**	**32**	**211**	**35**	**2,653**	**11**	**27**	**4,222**	**6,722**	**82**	**43,964**	**27,747**		**$3,763,888**		Var to budget	($6,077,043)
																							-1,872	-6.3%	-$253,874	*-$253,874*		

National Variance against 2024/2025 YTD

2025-26 Summary YTD Actual vs Total Budget

2025-26 Annual Budget	**72,975**	**100.0%**		**$9,899,217**
2025-26 YTD Actual	**27,747**	**38.0%**		**$3,763,888**
Variance to Budget	**-45,228**	**-62.0%**		**-$6,135,329**

Term Deposits						
			Term	Start Date	Matures	Interest paid
~~0086~~	~~$300,000.00~~	~~5.20%~~	~~12 months~~	~~15 Dec 22~~	~~15 Dec 23~~	$15,600.00
~~0087~~	~~$100,000.00~~	~~5.20%~~	~~12 months~~	~~17 Jan 23~~	~~17 Jan 24~~	$5,250.00
~~0088~~	~~$200,000.00~~	~~5.40%~~	~~6 months~~	~~24 May 23~~	~~24 Nov 23~~	$5,444.38
~~0089~~	~~$200,000.00~~	~~5.70%~~	~~12 months~~	~~24 May 23~~	~~24 May 24~~	$11,431.23
~~0090~~	~~$300,000.00~~	~~5.75%~~	~~8 months~~	~~13 Jun 23~~	~~13 Feb 24~~	$11,578.77
~~0091~~	~~$200,000.00~~	~~5.74%~~	~~8 months~~	~~13 Jul 23~~	~~13 Mar 24~~	$7,674.30
~~0092~~	~~$300,000.00~~	~~6.10%~~	~~8 months~~	~~11 Dec 23~~	~~11 Aug 24~~	$12,233.42
~~0093~~	~~$200,000.00~~	~~6.00%~~	~~6 months~~	~~18 Dec 23~~	~~18 Jun 24~~	$6,016.44
~~0093~~	~~$300,000.00~~	~~6.05%~~	~~8 months~~	~~18 Jun 24~~	~~18 Feb 25~~	$12,182.88
~~0094~~	~~$200,000.00~~	~~5.95%~~	~~6 months~~	~~25 Jul 24~~	~~25 Jan 25~~	$5,998.90
~~0095~~	~~$200,000.00~~	~~4.60%~~	~~4 months~~	~~13 Aug 24~~	~~13 Dec 24~~	$3,075.07
~~0096~~	~~$200,000.00~~	~~5.75%~~	~~8 months~~	~~13 Aug 24~~	~~13 Apr 25~~	$7,752.45
~~0095~~	~~$200,000.00~~	~~5.25%~~	~~6months~~	~~13 Dec 24~~	~~13 Jun 25~~	$5,235.62
~~0097~~	~~$200,000.00~~	~~4.80%~~	~~6months~~	~~3 Feb 25~~	~~3 Aug 25~~	$4,760.55
~~0098~~	~~$200,000.00~~	~~4.40%~~	~~4months~~	~~19-Feb-25~~	~~19-Jun-25~~	$2.794.52
~~0099~~	~~$300,000.00~~	~~4.10%~~	~~6months~~	~~1 May 25~~	~~1 Nov 25~~	$6,200.55
~~0098~~	~~$200,000.00~~	~~3.50%~~	~~4months~~	~~19 Jun 25~~	~~19 Oct 25~~	$2,339.73
0097	$200,000.00	3.90%	6months	3-Aug-25	3-Feb-26	

Aged Receivables Summary

Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council
As at 30 November 2025
Ageing by due date

CONTACT	< 1 MONTH	1 MONTH	2 MONTHS	3 MONTHS	OLDER	TOTAL
Eyede Solutions	58,485.05	-	-	-	-	58,485.05
Game Bird Habitat Trust	-	-	-	-	2,379.86	2,379.86
Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa	1,828.53	-	-	-	-	1,828.53
New Zealand Fish & Game Council	7,588.97	540.50	-	-	-	8,129.47
Total	**67,902.55**	**540.50**	**-**	**-**	**2,379.86**	**70,822.91**
Percentage of total	**95.88%**	**0.76%**	**-**	**-**	**3.36%**	**100.00%**

Transaction List

Mastercard Business Card - 5474-33**-****-*520

Current Balance as at 04/11/2025: $883.67 DR

Payment Date	Description	Reference	Debit	Credit
31/10/2025	NEW ZEALAND POST WELLINGTON NZL	993110	$6.17	
30/10/2025	ADOBE ADOBE DUBLIN IRL	993010	$33.70	
29/10/2025	Adobe com Saggart Dubl IRL	992910	$21.90	
29/10/2025	NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY EC PALMERSTON NO NZL	992910	$247.71	
22/10/2025	Everyday Eatery Hamilton Ham	992210	$27.00	
21/10/2025	Garmin Eastern Creek AUS	992110	$20.00	
21/10/2025	NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY EC PALMERSTON NO NZL	992110	$52.94	
19/10/2025	DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENT			$1,053.86
16/10/2025	Garmin Eastern Creek AUS	991610	$20.00	
16/10/2025	Garmin Eastern Creek AUS	991610	$20.00	
10/10/2025	XERO NZ INV 10441822 WELLINGTON WEL	991010	$123.05	
08/10/2025	ARLO 408 638 3750 IRL	990810	$14.99	
05/10/2025	OPENAI SAN FRANCISCO CA	990510	$40.57	
03/10/2025	The Bakehouse Cafe Taumarunui NZL	990310	$18.36	
02/10/2025	DIGITALOCEAN COM AMSTERDAM NH	990210	$12.23	
02/10/2025	SURVEYMONK T 47166167 DUBLIN 2 CO	990210	$49.00	
30/09/2025	ADOBE ADOBE DUBLIN IRL	992909	$21.90	
30/09/2025	ADOBE ADOBE DUBLIN IRL	992909	$33.70	
28/09/2025	Challenge Naylor St Hamilton NZL	992809	$6.50	
24/09/2025	SAFETY ONLIN O 19745 TAIRUA NZL	992409	$144.14	
21/09/2025	Garmin Eastern Creek AUS	992109	$20.00	
19/09/2025	DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENT			$3,071.32
18/09/2025	NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY TO PALM NTH NZL	991809	$10.10	
16/09/2025	Garmin Eastern Creek AUS	991609	$20.00	
16/09/2025	Garmin Eastern Creek AUS	991609	$20.00	
16/09/2025	The Warehouse Statione Auckland Auc	991609	$48.00	
13/09/2025	PB TECHNOLOGIES HAMILT HAMILTON NZL	991309	$240.38	
13/09/2025	WOOLWORTHS NZ 9282 TE RAPA NZL	991309	$25.00	
12/09/2025	XERO NZ INV 10331886 WELLINGTON WEL	991209	$95.45	
08/09/2025	ARLO 408 638 3750 IRL	990809	$14.99	
04/09/2025	OPENAI SAN FRANCISCO CA	990409	$40.36	
03/09/2025	SURVEYMONK T 47087086 DUBLIN 2 CO	990309	$49.00	
02/09/2025	DIGITALOCEAN COM AMSTERDAM NH	990209	$12.01	
02/09/2025	Whatawhata Bakery Hamilton Ham	990209	$27.83	

Account Transactions

Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council
For the period 1 September 2025 to 31 October 2025

Date	Description	Debit	Credit
Accrued salaries and wages			
Opening Balance		**0.00**	**10,878.29**
01 Sep 2025	Reversal: Accrue 5 days salaries 31/8/25 - Accrue 5 days salaries	10,878.29	0.00
Total Accrued salaries and wages		**10,878.29**	**0.00**
Closing Balance		**0.00**	**0.00**
Annual Leave & Time in lieu			
Opening Balance		**0.00**	**74,684.38**
01 Sep 2025	Reversal: Accrued Leave 31-8-25 - Accrued Leave 31-8-25	74,684.38	0.00
Total Annual Leave & Time in lieu		**74,684.38**	**0.00**
Closing Balance		**0.00**	**0.00**
Annual Report/Audit			
30 Sep 2025	Coastal Accounting Limited	2,000.00	0.00
Total Annual Report/Audit		**2,000.00**	**0.00**
Bank Charges			
10 Sep 2025	Westpac - Certificate of balance	20.00	0.00
Total Bank Charges		**20.00**	**0.00**
Business On Line Saver			
Opening Balance		**262,693.93**	**0.00**
Closing Balance		**262,791.46**	**0.00**
Cheque Account			
Opening Balance		**582,492.72**	**0.00**
Closing Balance		**695,744.52**	**0.00**
Commission on Sales Fish			
30 Sep 2025	Eyede Solutions - Commission - Fish	2,629.52	0.00
Total Commission on Sales Fish		**2,629.52**	**0.00**
Council Meeting Expenses			
11 Sep 2025	Roslyn Simmonds - Agenda - courier	142.96	0.00
23 Sep 2025	Great River Catering Ltd - Lunch 27 September	315.00	0.00
23 Sep 2025	Great River Catering Ltd - Delivery	20.00	0.00
Total Council Meeting Expenses		**477.96**	**0.00**
Expense - Access Negotiation			
01 Sep 2025	Digital Ocean - Usage charge	10.44	0.00
17 Sep 2025	Annex Group - Sign - Fly fishing only	106.44	0.00
01 Oct 2025	Digital Ocean - Server sub	10.63	0.00
Total Expense - Access Negotiation		**127.51**	**0.00**
Expense - Banding/Shovler Study			
23 Sep 2025	one.nz - Mobiles - MultiTXT	855.72	0.00
Total Expense - Banding/Shovler Study		**855.72**	**0.00**
Expense - Fish Releases			
30 Sep 2025	BOC Limited - Oxygen	129.50	0.00
Total Expense - Fish Releases		**129.50**	**0.00**
Expense - Habitat Works F & G Land			

13 Sep 2025	Electric Fence items Dean Block	117.83	0.00
30 Sep 2025	Cartrack NZ - Tracking app	15.00	0.00
Total Expense - Habitat Works F & G Land		**132.83**	**0.00**

Expense - OSH			
23 Sep 2025	First Aid Online - First aid items	125.34	0.00
29 Sep 2025	Danielle Lelievre - Mitre 10 MegaOSH items	53.29	0.00
Total Expense - OSH		**178.63**	**0.00**

Expense - Trees/Seeds			
01 Sep 2025	NativeAwa Limited - Supply natives as per xl supplied	6,140.30	0.00
08 Sep 2025	Hamilton Fish & Game Assn - Trees	743.48	0.00
Total Expense - Trees/Seeds		**6,883.78**	**0.00**

Field Equipment Maintenance			
14 Sep 2025	Garmin - David Klee - Satellite sub	17.39	0.00
14 Sep 2025	Garmin - Adam Daniel - Satellite sub	17.39	0.00
14 Sep 2025	Garmin - Beau Jarvis-Child - Satellite sub	17.39	0.00
14 Oct 2025	Garmin - David Klee - Satellite sub	17.39	0.00
14 Oct 2025	Garmin - Adam Daniel - Satellite sub	17.39	0.00
19 Oct 2025	Garmin - Beau Jarvis-Child - Satellite	17.39	0.00
Total Field Equipment Maintenance		**104.34**	**0.00**

Fish Licence Sales - Office			
22 Oct 2025	Richard Atkinson - Adult Fishing licence	0.00	94.78
Total Fish Licence Sales - Office		**0.00**	**94.78**

Fish Licence Sales – AOL			
01 Sep 2025	Reversal: Income in Advance	0.00	38,309.00
30 Sep 2025	Eyede Solutions - Fishing licences 24/25	0.00	432.17
30 Sep 2025	Eyede Solutions - Fishing Licences 25/26	0.00	52,941.69
Total Fish Licence Sales – AOL		**0.00**	**91,682.86**

Fish Licence Sales – POL			
30 Sep 2025	Eyede Solutions - Fish Licences 24/25	0.00	3,906.96
30 Sep 2025	Eyede Solutions - Fish Licences 25/26	0.00	53,133.91
Total Fish Licence Sales – POL		**0.00**	**57,040.87**

Game Bird Habitat Stamp			
Opening Balance		**0.00**	**0.00**
30 Sep 2025	Eyede Solutions - Habitat Stamp	0.00	4.35
Total Game Bird Habitat Stamp		**0.00**	**4.35**
Closing Balance		**0.00**	**4.35**

Game Bird Harvest Surveys			
09 Sep 2025	Kymberly Le Lievre - Kymberly Le LievreGamebird surveys7th hai	120.00	0.00
09 Sep 2025	Travis Kendall - Travis KendallGamebird surveys7th harvest surve	100.00	0.00
Total Game Bird Harvest Surveys		**220.00**	**0.00**

Game Licence Sales - POL			
30 Sep 2025	Eyede Solutions - Game licences 25	0.00	96.52
Total Game Licence Sales - POL		**0.00**	**96.52**

Income - Access Negotiation			
30 Sep 2025	Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa - Reimbursement for survey	0.00	1,590.03
Total Income - Access Negotiation		**0.00**	**1,590.03**

Interest Accrued & Prepayments

Opening Balance		**6,183.84**	**0.00**
01 Sep 2025	Reversal: Bank Interest accrued 31/8/25 - Bank Interest accrued	0.00	6,183.84
Total Interest Accrued & Prepayments		**0.00**	**6,183.84**
Closing Balance		**0.00**	**0.00**

Interest Income

30 Sep 2025	Westpac - Interest	0.00	64.77
19 Oct 2025	Westpac - Interest	0.00	2,339.73
31 Oct 2025	Westpac - Interest	0.00	32.76
Total Interest Income		**0.00**	**2,437.26**

Legal Funding Received NZFGC

08 Sep 2025	New Zealand Fish & Game Council - Reimbursement:Tipu Whenu	0.00	1,645.00
08 Sep 2025	New Zealand Fish & Game Council - Reimbursement:Kahu Enviro	0.00	470.00
17 Sep 2025	New Zealand Fish & Game Council - Reimbursement:S J Ongleyl	0.00	2,200.50
07 Oct 2025	New Zealand Fish & Game Council - Reimbursement:Kahu Enviro	0.00	470.00
Total Legal Funding Received NZFGC		**0.00**	**4,785.50**

Legal/Court Prosecutions

04 Oct 2025	Secure Collections & Investications - Service feeRonald Brouwer4	260.00	0.00
Total Legal/Court Prosecutions		**260.00**	**0.00**

Mitigation Income MRP Genisis, Winstones

26 Sep 2025	Genesis Energy Limited - Mitigation Funding - 2025	0.00	47,171.31
Total Mitigation Income MRP Genisis, Winstones		**0.00**	**47,171.31**

Office Fish Sales to Eyede

30 Sep 2025	Eyede Solutions - Adult Fishing Licence Family - Resident	353.04	0.00
30 Sep 2025	Eyede Solutions - Adult Fishing Licence Whole Season - Residen	542.61	0.00
Total Office Fish Sales to Eyede		**895.65**	**0.00**

Office General

01 Sep 2025	Whatawhata Bakery - Supplies for meeting	24.20	0.00
02 Sep 2025	Survey Monkey - Monthly plan	42.61	0.00
04 Sep 2025	OpenAI - ChatGPT Plus Sub	35.10	0.00
08 Sep 2025	Arlo - Camera sub	13.03	0.00
08 Sep 2025	Roslyn Simmonds - Kitchen items	60.30	0.00
12 Sep 2025	Adam Daniel - AliExpress12/09/25Vacuum battery	43.35	0.00
12 Sep 2025	Xero (NZ) Limited - Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council. Mon	83.00	0.00
12 Sep 2025	Woolworths - Drinks	21.74	0.00
24 Sep 2025	David Klee - Coffee	8.70	0.00
27 Sep 2025	Challenge - Meeting supplies27/9/25	5.65	0.00
28 Sep 2025	Adobe Systems Software - Acrobat Standard	21.90	0.00
28 Sep 2025	Adobe Systems Software - Acrobat Pro	33.70	0.00
28 Sep 2025	Eastern Fish and Game Council - Xero - Part payment before cha	25.34	0.00
29 Sep 2025	Roslyn Simmonds - Woolworths29/09/2025Kitchen items	61.24	0.00
30 Sep 2025	Allied Security - Alarm monitoring	46.68	0.00
02 Oct 2025	Survey Monkey - Subscription	42.61	0.00
05 Oct 2025	OpenAI - ChatGPT Plus Sub	35.28	0.00
08 Oct 2025	Arlo - Camera sub	13.03	0.00
10 Oct 2025	Xero (NZ) Limited - Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council. 6 Ac	24.00	0.00
10 Oct 2025	Xero (NZ) Limited - Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council. Mon	83.00	0.00
13 Oct 2025	Clare Robertson - Kitchen items	29.63	0.00
17 Oct 2025	Roslyn Simmonds - New World17/10/25Milk	8.30	0.00
22 Oct 2025	Everyday Eatery - Meeting	23.48	0.00
28 Oct 2025	Adobe Systems Software - Acrobat standard	21.90	0.00
Total Office General		**807.77**	**0.00**

Office Maintenance

11 Sep 2025	Gold Lawn Mowing - Lawn Mowing 1. Line trim the perimeter or th	78.26	0.00
23 Sep 2025	Gold Lawn Mowing - Lawn Mowing 1. Line trim the perimeter or th	78.26	0.00
30 Sep 2025	J L Connolly Ltd - Building repairs	10,200.00	0.00
07 Oct 2025	Gold Lawn Mowing - Lawn Mowing 1. Line trim the perimeter or th	78.26	0.00
15 Oct 2025	Allied Security - Alarm system service	214.30	0.00
21 Oct 2025	Gold Lawn Mowing - Lawnmowing	78.26	0.00
22 Oct 2025	Mitre 10 Mega - Downpipe adaptor for house	16.35	0.00
28 Oct 2025	Switched On Electrical Trust - Find fault with no hot water.Mon 20	382.34	0.00
Total Office Maintenance		**11,126.03**	**0.00**

Office Power

06 Sep 2025	Meridian - Power	198.90	0.00
06 Oct 2025	Meridian - Power	167.07	0.00
Total Office Power		**365.97**	**0.00**

Office Premises Rates (inc Water)

10 Sep 2025	Waikato Regional Council - Rates - 156 Brymer Road	719.30	0.00
23 Sep 2025	Hamilton City Council - Metered Water - 156 Brymer Road	117.52	0.00
Total Office Premises Rates (inc Water)		**836.82**	**0.00**

Office Purchases (Under 2,000)

23 Sep 2025	Roslyn Simmonds - Powerboard	13.04	0.00
25 Sep 2025	Fire Security Services - Fire extinguishers	350.00	0.00
Total Office Purchases (Under 2,000)		**363.04**	**0.00**

Photocopier

19 Sep 2025	Canon - Photocopoer	203.27	0.00
19 Oct 2025	Canon - Photocopier	41.92	0.00
Total Photocopier		**245.19**	**0.00**

Postage

08 Sep 2025	Clare Robertson - Courier9/9/25	24.00	0.00
30 Oct 2025	NZ Post - Brochures and hats to Pirongia school	5.37	0.00
Total Postage		**29.37**	**0.00**

Prosecutions Fines

25 Sep 2025	Ministry of Justice - Ridgeway/Kevin/Philip	0.00	135.02
25 Sep 2025	Ministry of Justice - Shelley/Joshua	0.00	108.00
23 Oct 2025	Ministry of Justice - Ridgeway/Kevin/Philip	0.00	108.02
23 Oct 2025	Ministry of Justice - Shelley/Joshua	0.00	144.00
Total Prosecutions Fines		**0.00**	**495.04**

Public Liability Insurance

01 Sep 2025	Aon New Zealand - Special risk liability insurance	1,170.00	0.00
Total Public Liability Insurance		**1,170.00**	**0.00**

Public Online Sales Fees Excl GST

30 Sep 2025	Eyede Solutions - Licence Bank Fees	1,104.03	0.00
Total Public Online Sales Fees Excl GST		**1,104.03**	**0.00**

Public Online Sales Fees Incl GST

30 Sep 2025	Eyede Solutions - Licence DPS Fee	104.27	0.00
Total Public Online Sales Fees Incl GST		**104.27**	**0.00**

Ranging & Field Gear

29 Sep 2025	Danielle Lelievre - The bakehouse cafe1/10/25	16.96	0.00
02 Oct 2025	The Bakehouse Cafe - Ranging lunch	15.97	0.00
Total Ranging & Field Gear		**32.93**	**0.00**

RMA

17 Sep 2025	S J Ongley - Plan Change 1All attendances since the date of my l	2,200.50	0.00
30 Sep 2025	Kahu Environment - Planning services	470.00	0.00
31 Oct 2025	Resourced AF Limited - Review Whangamarino Weir	3,675.00	0.00
31 Oct 2025	S J Ongley - Plan change 1: Attendance - healthy rivers	2,924.10	0.00
Total RMA		**9,269.60**	**0.00**

Salmon/Designated Waters Endorsement

Opening Balance		**0.00**	**0.00**
30 Sep 2025	Eyede Solutions - Designated waters	0.00	83.13
30 Sep 2025	Eyede Solutions - Salmon endorsement	0.00	29.10
Total Salmon/Designated Waters Endorsement		**0.00**	**112.23**
Closing Balance		**0.00**	**112.23**

Stationery

12 Sep 2025	PB Tech Hamilton - 2 x External HDD	209.03	0.00
15 Sep 2025	Roslyn Simmonds - Art tube for prints - Richie CosgroveNational (	19.13	0.00
15 Sep 2025	Warehouse Stationery - Posters for Richie	41.74	0.00
26 Sep 2025	OfficeMax - Stationary	57.26	0.00
Total Stationery		**327.16**	**0.00**

Telephone/fax/internet

01 Sep 2025	PureLink - Voice services	69.00	0.00
07 Sep 2025	one.nz - Broadband - Broadband	118.00	0.00
08 Sep 2025	Clare Robertson - Inv:185155284BroadbandAugust 2025	43.48	0.00
10 Sep 2025	Spark - 0800 - 0800 Phone	20.00	0.00
12 Sep 2025	Beau Jarvis-Child - BroadbandInv:653406660Aug-Sept	83.48	0.00
17 Sep 2025	one.nz - A Daniel - Broadband	106.36	0.00
18 Sep 2025	Danielle Lelievre - Inv:69563526VoyagerBroadband	104.35	0.00
19 Sep 2025	David Klee - BroadbandStarlink - Sept to Oct 2025	138.26	0.00
22 Sep 2025	Clare Robertson - Inv:186818625BroadbandSeptember 2025	43.48	0.00
23 Sep 2025	one.nz - Mobiles - Mobiles	295.41	0.00
29 Sep 2025	Danielle Lelievre - BroadbandSept 2025	104.35	0.00
02 Oct 2025	PureLink - Voice service	69.00	0.00
07 Oct 2025	one.nz - Broadband - Broadband	118.00	0.00
10 Oct 2025	Spark - 0800 - 0800 Phone	20.00	0.00
12 Oct 2025	Beau Jarvis-Child - Inv:654339093October 2025Broadband	83.48	0.00
17 Oct 2025	one.nz - A Daniel - BroadbandAdam Daniel	108.85	0.00
19 Oct 2025	David Klee - INV-DF-NZL-2063507-78961-29BroadbandOct-Nov 2	138.26	0.00
23 Oct 2025	one.nz - Mobiles - Mobiles	299.06	0.00
Total Telephone/fax/internet		**1,962.82**	**0.00**

Vehicle Fuel & RUC

07 Sep 2025	NZ Transport Agency - Toll PaymentQDK979	8.78	0.00
30 Sep 2025	Z Energy Limited - Beau Jarvis-ChildDiesel	111.66	0.00
30 Sep 2025	BP Oil New Zealand Limited - Adam Daniel	581.60	0.00
30 Sep 2025	BP Oil New Zealand Limited - David Klee	256.30	0.00
30 Sep 2025	BP Oil New Zealand Limited - Beau Jarvis-Child	184.86	0.00
30 Sep 2025	BP Oil New Zealand Limited - Danielle Le Lievre	144.44	0.00
31 Oct 2025	BP Oil New Zealand Limited - Adam Daniel	404.35	0.00
31 Oct 2025	BP Oil New Zealand Limited - David Klee	359.71	0.00
31 Oct 2025	BP Oil New Zealand Limited - Beau Jarvis-Child	94.06	0.00
31 Oct 2025	Z Energy Limited - Beau Jarvis-Child	120.50	0.00
31 Oct 2025	Z Energy Limited - David Klee	217.27	0.00
Total Vehicle Fuel & RUC		**2,483.53**	**0.00**

Vehicle Maintenance

02 Sep 2025	F C Boats - Propeller and lock	313.03	0.00

12 Sep 2025	B Select Te Rapa - Service belowQKG972	380.44	0.00
30 Sep 2025	New Zealand Fish & Game Council - Seaflux Monthly Charge- Se	60.00	0.00
06 Oct 2025	Adam Daniel - Burnsco6/10/2025Boat airhorn	18.26	0.00
06 Oct 2025	B Select Te Rapa - LABOUR ASSESS VEHICLE FOR RATTLE A	60.00	0.00
06 Oct 2025	B Select Te Rapa - LABOUR TO TIGHTEN EXHAUST BRACKET	120.00	0.00
10 Oct 2025	B Select Te Rapa - WARRANT OF FITNESS STD CAR	65.00	0.00
10 Oct 2025	B Select Te Rapa - SERVICE KIT INC OIL AIF FUEL AND CABIN	620.58	0.00
10 Oct 2025	B Select Te Rapa - 265/65R17 SUPERCAT	1,144.72	0.00
10 Oct 2025	B Select Te Rapa - WHEEL ALIGNMENT STANDARD CAR	65.00	0.00
13 Oct 2025	F C Boats - Annual service	1,235.63	0.00
22 Oct 2025	B Select Te Rapa - Vehicle service QDK979 - Adam Daniel	737.93	0.00
Total Vehicle Maintenance		**4,820.59**	**0.00**

Vehicle Registration

20 Oct 2025	NZ Transport Agency - Registration - 17Q92	46.03	0.00
28 Oct 2025	NZ Transport Agency - Registration - QYY362Danielle Le Lievre	215.40	0.00
Total Vehicle Registration		**261.43**	**0.00**

7 October 2025

Mr Richie Cosgrove
Chief Operating Officer
Fish & Game New Zealand

Email to; rcosgrove@fishandgame.org.nz

Subject: Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council Consultation Feedback – 2025/26 Budget and Levy Structure.

Dear Richie,

At its meeting on 27 September 2025, the Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council considered and approved its 2025/26 Budget and Operational Work Plan (OWP). In doing so, Council resolved to highlight several ongoing concerns regarding the current levy structure and its effect on regional financial stability, particularly in relation to maintaining the mandatory 20 per cent reserve threshold and managing seasonal cashflow.

Council noted that, despite significant budget reductions and cost-containment measures in recent years, savings have largely been redirected into levy payments rather than retained to strengthen regional reserves. The Council's approved 2025/26 budget is now approximately $45,000 lower than it was three years ago, reflecting ongoing efforts to operate efficiently and within constrained funding levels.

Under the current forecast, Auckland/Waikato's general reserve is projected to fall approximately $36,000 below the required 20 per cent threshold by the end of the 2026 financial year, even if expenditure remains within approved budget levels. Council considers that it would be unsound financial management to knowingly allow regional reserves to fall below the 20 per cent threshold, particularly when this outcome is a direct result of the current levy structure rather than local overspending.

For this reason, Council seeks first and foremost that levy payments be reduced, and that future payment schedules be deferred until after the game-bird season, to safeguard regional liquidity and prevent reserves from dropping below the mandatory level.

Council further observed that the national budget deficit of $67,563 will be apportioned proportionally across all regions and NZC/National Office, notwithstanding that Auckland/Waikato and Nelson/Marlborough both required reserve top-ups this year and are each forecast to fall below the 20 per cent threshold. Meanwhile, NZC's own general reserves have increased, though the rationale for this increase has not yet been fully explained, particularly given the levy increases and regional budget constraints that have been applied.

Auckland/Waikato faces additional risk because the majority of its income is received during the game-bird season, which occurs late in the financial year. This seasonal timing results in extended periods

where operating cash is limited. If levy payments continue at current levels and are required early in the financial year, the Council could face short-term negative equity and may need to draw temporarily on restricted reserves to meet day-to-day operating expenses. Such reliance is inconsistent with the purpose of those reserves and could expose the region to compliance and audit risks.

Finally, Council resolved that any current or projected budget deficits be met from the excess general reserves accrued by NZC during the last financial year, to ensure equity between regions and to promote sustainable and transparent financial management across the organisation.

Yours sincerely,

Grant Annan, Chairperson
Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council

8 October 2025

Mr Richie Cosgrove
Chief Operating Officer
Fish & Game New Zealand

Email to; rcosgrove@fishandgame.org.nz

Subject: Council feedback on Consolidated Annual Reporting consultation document

Kia ora Richie,

Following our recent Council meeting, I am writing to provide Auckland Waikato Fish and Game's formal feedback on the Consolidated Annual Reporting (CAR) consultation document.

Council supports the intent to improve transparency and consistency, but noted several practical concerns:

• Council notes that the consolidated annual report will likely become a requirement following the reforms and considers it more practical to wait until guiding legislation is available before determining the exact content of the document.
• It may be difficult for all regions to provide the full set of metrics requested, given current systems and resourcing.
• The consolidated annual report should not create a duplicative process alongside existing annual reports or impose onerous quarterly reporting timeframes that add unnecessary administrative burden to regional councils.
• Several of the proposed metrics are not particularly informative and provide limited context or value to licence holders.

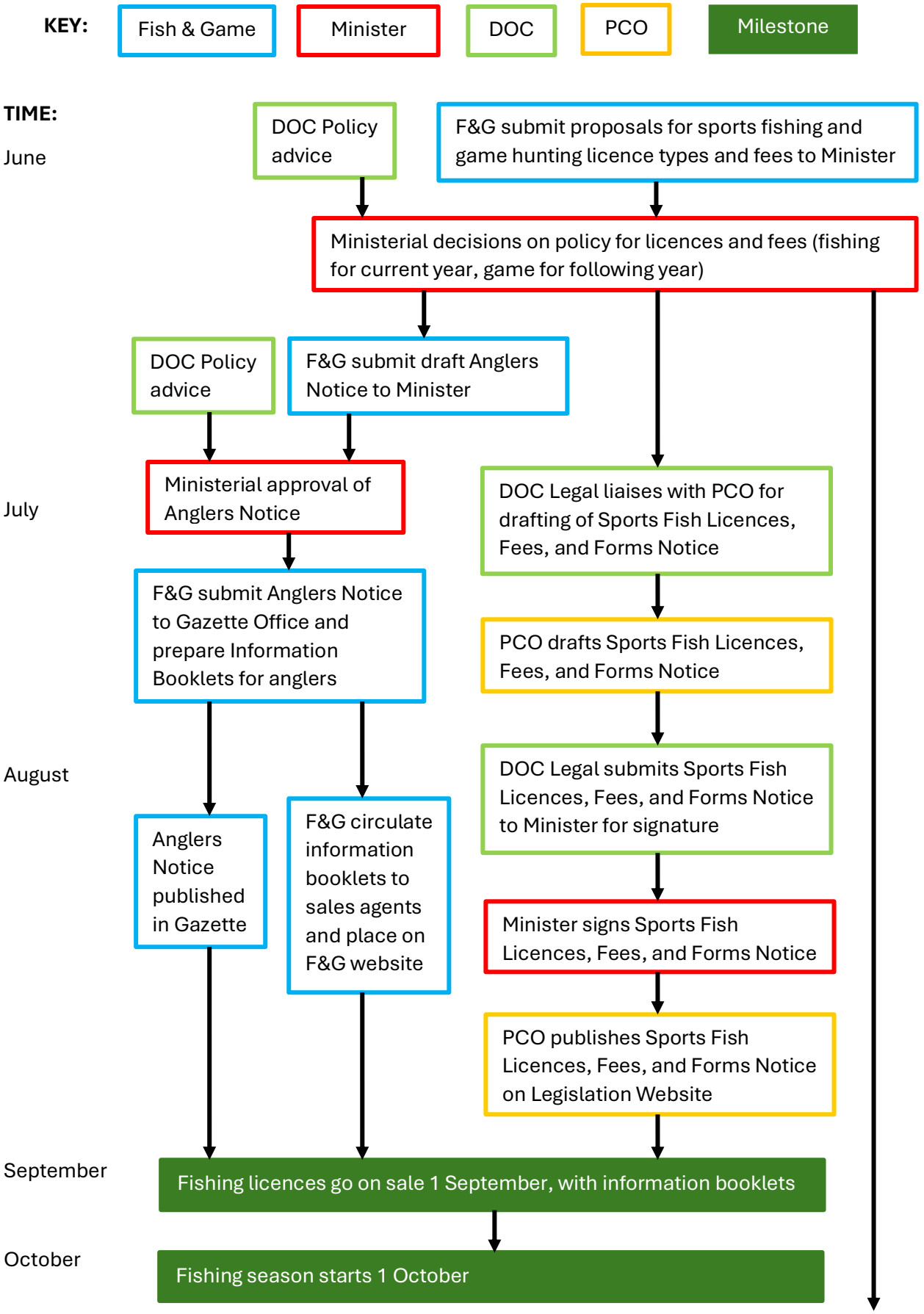
Council's view is that the Consolidated Annual Reporting framework should remain outcome focused, ensuring that reporting is meaningful, comparable across regions, and genuinely useful to licence holders.

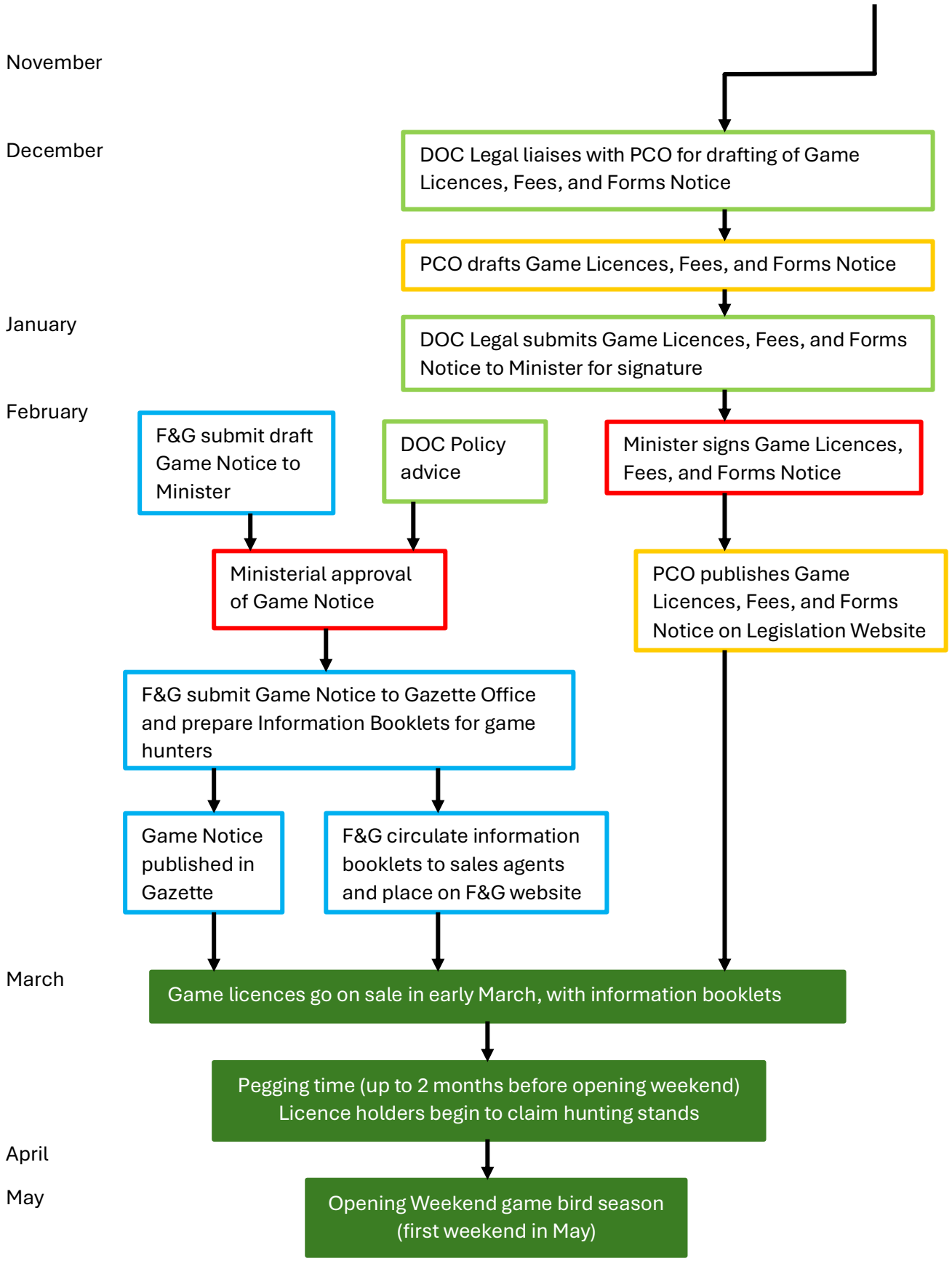
Accordingly, we request that NZC schedules time to workshop the Consolidated Annual Reporting framework with regional staff, once the new Fish and Game Act has been publicly released, with a view to confirming a practical set of metrics and realistic reporting timeframes.

Yours sincerely,

Grant Annan, Chairperson
Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council

Annual Timeline for Fish and Game Processes




November
December
January
February
March
April
May
DOC Legal liaises with PCO for drafting of Game Licences, Fees, and Forms Notice
PCO drafts Game Licences, Fees, and Forms Notice
DOC Legal submits Game Licences, Fees, and Forms Notice to Minister for signature
F&G submit draft Game Notice to Minister
DOC Policy advice
Minister signs Game Licences, Fees, and Forms Notice
Ministerial approval of Game Notice
PCO publishes Game Licences, Fees, and Forms Notice on Legislation Website
F&G submit Game Notice to Gazette Office and prepare Information Booklets for game hunters
Game Notice published in Gazette
F&G circulate information booklets to sales agents and place on F&G website
Game licences go on sale in early March, with information booklets
Pegging time (up to 2 months before opening weekend)
Licence holders begin to claim hunting stands
Opening Weekend game bird season
(first weekend in May)

NZC 2025-26 Annual Budget & Meeting Schedule - DRAFT

Month	Date	Meeting/Activity	Location	Notes
Sep-2025	**Monday 1 Sep**	Fish & Game New Financial Year Fishing licences go on Sale		
Oct-2025	**Wednesday 1 Oct**	Sports Fishing Opening		
	Thursday 16 Oct	**Reg Managers/CEs Meeting(feed into NZC 176 Dec Meeting)**	**Wellington**	
	Friday 17 Oct	*Held over 2 days*	**Wellington**	
	Monday 27 Oct	**Labour Day**		**Items to Discuss**
Nov-2025	**Saturday 1 Nov**	High Country Sports Fishing Opening (CSI & NC 1st Sat Nov)		**PD for Staff online...**
	Thursday 6 Nov	**Reg Managers/CEs Meeting(feed into NZC 27/11)**	**Online**	**Manger inperson meeting**
Dec-2025	**Friday 5 &**	**NZ Council Meeting (Held over 2 days)**	Wellington	
	Saturday 6 Dec	*(2025/26 Strategy)*		
	Friday 19 Dec	Variance Reports & Reserves Schedules sent to CFO		
	Thursday 25 Dec	**Christmas Day**		
	Friday 26 Dec	**Boxing Day**		
	Wednesday 31 Dec	All Regional Council 2024 Meetings to be complete/held		
Jan-2026	**Thursday 1 Jan**	**New Year's Day**		
	Friday 2 Jan	**New Year's Day Observed**		
	Friday 23 Jan	Variance Reports & Reserves Updates Distrubuted		
	Friday 30 Jan	Licence Working Party Licence Sales Forecast		
	Friday 30 Jan	Regulation Details Due for Game Notice *(From all Regional Councils)*		
Feb-2026	**Sunday 2 Feb**	World Wetland Day/Release of 2025 Habitat Stamp		
	Monday 3 Feb	Draft Game Notice Submission to DOC for comment		
	Wednesday 5 Feb	Variance reports Final Circulation back to Managers		
	Thursday 6 Feb	**Waitangi Day**		
	Monday 9 Feb	Game Regulation Guide Content Due to NZC Office		
	Monday 17 Feb	Game Notice & Submission to MOC & Gazette Office		
	Friday 21 Feb/or the following week	Publish Game Notice in NZ Gazette		
	Friday 28 Feb	**NZ Council Meeting (Day 1 of 2)**	Wellington	
Mar-2026	**Sunday 1 Mar**	**Governors Forum - Regional Chairs & NZC** *(Planning)*	Wellington	
	Monday 2 Mar	**NZ Council Meeting (day 2 of 2)**	Wellington	
	Monday 16 Mar	**Regional Managers/Ces Meeting**		
	Friday 13 Mar	Game Bird Hunting Licences on Sale *(2nd Thursday)*		
	Saturday 14 Mar	**Draft Budgets Applications Due to CFO** **Staff Development Grant Applications Close**		
	Tuesday 17 Mar	Game Magazine Released		
Mar-2026	**Satuday 28 March**	Budgets, Budget Summaries Applications Circulated back to Regions		date Agenda needs to go out!
Apr-2026	**Friday 3 April**	**Good Friday**		
	Monday 6 Apr	**Easter Monday**		
	Monday 6 Apr	Mark-up/Pegging Day *(4 weekends before opening)*		
	Saturday 11 Apr	**NZ Council Budget meeting**	Wellington	as in May!
	Sunday 12 Apr	**NZ Council Meeting**	Wellington	One day or 2?
	Thursday 16 April	Licence Fee Consultaion doc distributed to Regions (3 working days after NZC meeting)		ALL REGIONS MUST HAVE A MEETING WITHIN THIS PERIOD
	Friday 25 Apr	**Anzac Day**		
May-2026	**Sunday 3 May**	Game Bird Season Opening		
	Saturday 30 May	Regional responses to Licence Fee proposals, Anglers Notice & SFLFFN DW/sea run salmon Due to NZC Office		
	Monday 1 June	**King's Birthday**		
	Wed 17 June &	**NZ Council Meeting (6pm -8pm)**	Online	

Month	Date	Meeting/Activity	Location	Notes
Jun-2026	**Thu 18 June**	*(Consider Licence Fee, Anglers Notice & SFLFFN)*	6pm-8pm	
	Tuesday 23 June	Licence fee, Anglers Notice & SFLFFN submission to MOC		
	Friday 26 June	**GBHT Grant Applications Close**		
Jul-2026	**Thursday 9 July**	**GBHT Grant Applications Distributed to Board**		
	Friday 10 July	**Matariki**		
	Friday 17 July	Anglers Notice Published in NZ Gazette		
	Tuesday 28 July	**GBHT Board Meeting (11am)**	Online	
Aug-2026	**Thursday 13 Aug**	**Regional Managers/CEs Meeting (feed into NZC 29/8)**	**In person TBC**	South Island Compliance
	Friday 14 Aug	***(held over 2 days)***	**In person TBC**	South Island Compliance
	Saturday 22 Aug	**GBHT Field Trip**	Hamilton	
	Sunday 23 Aug	**GBHT Board Meeting**	Hamilton	
	Tuesday 25 Aug	Fishing Magazine Released		
	Saturday 29 Aug	**NZ Council Meeting (Held over 1 or 2 days)**	Wellington	Could this just be 1 day!
	Sunday 30 Aug	**Query if can be 1 day?**		
	Monday 31 Aug	Fish & Game End of Financial Year		
Sep-2026	**Thursday 1 Sept**	Fishing licences go on Sale		
	Thursday 1 Oct	Start of new financial year		
Oct-2026		Sports Fishing Opening		
	Monday 26 Oct	**Labour Day**		
Nov-2026	**Sunday 1 Nov**	High Country Sports Fishing Opening (CSI & NC 1st Sat Nov)		
	Friday 6 Nov	**Reg Managers/CEs Meeting(feed into NZC 27/11)**	**Online**	
	Saturday 28 Nov &	**NZ Council Meeting (Held over 2 days)**	Wellington	
	Sunday 29 Nov	*(2026/27 Strategy)*		
Dec-2026	**Saturday 19 Dec**	All Variance & Reserves Schedules to CFO		
	Thursday 31 Dec	All Regional Council 2025 Meetings to be complete/held		

KEY

- Public Holiday
- NZ Council Meeting
- Regional Managers/CEs Meeting
- GBHT Board Meeting
- Governors Forum (Regional Chairs & NZC)

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME
2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

SATURDAY MEETING SCHEDULE

11.00am - 1.00pm Council meeting
1.00pm - 2.00pm Lunch
2.00pm - 3.00pm Council meeting

WEEKDAY MEETING SCHEDULE

5.30pm - 6.00pm Dinner
6.00pm- 9.00pm Council meeting

14 FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEETING

- Waitangi Day 6th
- Game Regulation guide content due on the 9th.
- NZ Council Meeting 26th & 28th.
- Variance Report to CFO
- Draft Operational Work Plan set for 2025/26.
- Fish Regulation Review and Remits.

14 MARCH COUNCIL MEETING

- Governors Forum 1st.

APRIL

- Mark up day 6th of April
- NZ Council Budget Meeting 11th – 12th.
- 16th Licence fee consultation doc distributed to Regions.

21 MAY THURSDAY EVENING COUNCIL MEETING (6pm – 9pm)

- Primary purpose of meeting to provide budget feedback.
- Opening Day 2nd May
- Regional responses to licence fees/budgets by 30 May.

JUNE

- NZ Council Meeting 17th -18th.
- 23 June, licence fee/angler notice submissions to MOC

25 JULY COUNCIL MEETING

- NZ Council Meeting 18th & 19th.
- Angler notice published in Gazzette 17th July

AUGUST

- NZ Council meeting 27th -29th.

26 SEPTEMBER COUNCIL MEETING

- Following NZF&GC review of 2026/27Budget and OWP.
- if necessary, Council reconsiders Budget/OWP approved at March meeting.
- Governance/Policy Review.
- OSH Review.

OCTOBER

- Labour Day 26th

NOVEMBER

- NZ Council Meeting 28th – 29th of November

5 DECEMBER COUNCIL MEETING & AGM

- Set next years meeting schedule.

Council meeting to incorporate Public Annual General Meeting

- **11.00am - 11.30am Annual General Meeting**
- **11.30am - 1.00pm Council Meeting**
- **1.00pm - 2.00pm Lunch**
- **2.00pm - 3.00pm Council Meeting**

Budgeting

Procedure

- Council reviews strategic objectives sets draft 2025/26 Operational Work Plan at its February meeting.
- Information sent to National Office immediately after Council meeting.
- NZF&GC considers budgets in April and provides regions with licence fee consultation document by mid-April.
- Regional responses for licence fee and budgets must be with NZC by 30 May. This is a tight turnaround necessitating a meeting in late April or May.
- At its September meeting following NZF&GC review of OWP's Council reconsiders its OWP if necessary – dependent upon Minister approving licence fees.

Infringement Notice Compliance and Enforcement Policy

CONTENTS

1 Purpose

This policy is in accordance with the requirements of Section 26HA of the Conservation Act 1987, which relates to:

- The authorisation of specified Fish & Game rangers to issue infringement notices under Section 51W(2) of the Conservation Act 1987 and Section 70V of the Wildlife Act 1953;
- The procedure to be followed by authorised Fish & Game Ranger to issue infringement notices under Section 51W(2) of the Conservation Act 1987; and Section 70V of the Wildlife Act 1953; and
- The exercise of other powers of Fish & Game rangers used to enforce, or ensure compliance with, the Conservation Act 1987 and / or the Wildlife Act 1953, including any regulations made under those Acts.

In order for Fish & Game NZ regions to issue infringement notices this policy must be approved by the Minister of Conservation by notice in the Gazette. On approval of this policy by the Minister the Director of the New Zealand Fish & Game Council may authorise trained and approved Fish & Game rangers to issue infringement notices under the Conservation Act.

This policy includes:

- Training of specific Fish & Game rangers to issue infringement notices;
- Matters around exercise of other Conservation and Wildlife Act powers; and
- Training of Fish & Game rangers in regard to powers and procedures; and
- Annual reporting requirements.

The policy sets out the principles and guidelines which Fish & Game Regions will follow when assessing offences for resolution action and specifically around resolution of offences by issuing of infringement notices. The policy is to ensure that action taken by regions is:

a. Consistent;
b. Transparent;
c. Fair; and
d. Complies with best practice.

2 About this document

2.1 Amendments

Amendment date	Amendment details	Version	Amended by
27/02/2018	Draft -guidelines		AVD
Feb. 2019	Draft -I.N CLE policy		A van Dorp & J
Mar 2019	Format & edits	(2)	Smyth
05 August 2019	Following peer review	(3)	R Sowman A van Dorp
May 2024	Review and updates	(4)	A van Dorp

2.2 Terminology and definitions

CDG Compliance Decision Group

Made up of the Regional Manager, Region Compliance Coordinator, and National Compliance Coordinator, as required, and any other technical or legal expert as required. The NZ Council Director (CEO) has a role as an arbiter in cases where a decision is unable to be reached by the CDG. The purpose of a CDG is to ensure consistency across regions as to how more complex or serious offences are dealt with, including recidivist offending.

I.N Infringement Notice

Note: An infringement notice may only be issued by a Fish & Game employee (ranger) who is warranted specifically to do this - this is a separate warrant from those held by a Fish & Game officer or ranger.

Director

Means the Chief Executive of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council

Fish & Game NZ

The collective name given to the NZ Fish and Game Council and 12 regional Fish & Game Councils.

Fish & Game Council

Means a Fish & Game Council established under Section 26 P of the Conservation Act 1987.

3 Process

3.1 Offence detected.
3.2 Offence extremely minor or trivial – no action or a warning and education may be appropriate.
3.3 Offence suitable for formal processes and further action; Fish & Game offence notice issued in field. This is the notification to the offender of the alleged offence(s) committed and a receipt for any seized gear (as distinct and different from an 'Infringement notice').
3.4
3.5 Offence file documentation provided to Region Compliance Coordinator by Fish & Game ranger.
3.6 National database checked, offence and offender entered in database.
3.7 Compliance coordinator recommends appropriate course to follow to Regional Manager, options include: warning and education, I.N, or consider prosecution, with or without diversion.
3.8 Regional Manager authorises I.N in straightforward and minor matters, as determined by the CDG offence checklist (attachment 1).
3.9 -More complex matters go to a Compliance Decision Group (CDG) for decision/peer review to determine whether the matter should be dealt with by issuing an I.N or whether a prosecution is the appropriate action to take.

4 Infringement System Guidelines

4.1 Infringement offences

a. I.N's are intended as a means of dealing with offending which is not serious enough to warrant a full summary prosecution which may result in a criminal conviction.

b. I.N's sit between warnings / education and prosecutions, so are considered to be an intermediate resolution in the enforcement toolkit.

c. The use of I.N's and set infringement fees allows Fish & Game Regions (F&G) to quickly and simply resolve minor breaches of the law, while the seriousness of breaching the law is still conveyed to the offender, ensuring future compliance in many cases.

d. The Conservation Act 1987 following amendment by the Conservation (Infringement System) Act 2018 provides for an infringement system to apply to the primary Acts the Department of Conservation (DOC) administers; and to the regulations, bylaws, and notices made under those Acts. This includes the Conservation Act 1987, the Wildlife Act 1953, Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983, Wildlife Regulations 1955, and the associated Angler and Hunting Gazette notices relevant to Fish and Game Councils.

4.2 Background on infringement offences

4.2.1 What is an infringement offence?

a. Infringement offences are offences in respect of which an I.N can be issued.

b. Infringement offences are listed within the Conservation Act 1987 and The Wildlife Act 1953.

c. When an offence is detected, an I.N is a potential response to the offence. No action may be taken, a warning may be issued, an I.N may be issued, or the offence may be proceeded with summarily through the Court where court prosecution is warranted, either where the offence is of a type where an I.N does not apply as an option or where an I.N could apply to the offence type but in the circumstances an I.N is not the most appropriate outcome.

d. I.N's are not to be issued to anyone under the age of 18 years old. (from 1 July 2019 the youth justice age – definition of Young Person- changed so that persons aged under 18 years old will be dealt with in Youth Court as Youth Offenders pursuant to the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989).

e. Youth Offenders (those aged under 18 years as of 1 July 2019) are to be warned unless due to the seriousness of the offence and the nature and number of previous offences a warning is clearly inappropriate (Section 209 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989). Where a warning is clearly inappropriate, advice is to be taken as to appropriate resolution action.

4.2.2 Infringement fees

a. Infringement fees for particular offences are set at prescribed levels pursuant to regulations made under the Conservation and Wildlife Acts.

b. The fees cannot be altered or changed from that set for each offence by Regulation.

c. If a defendant wishes to dispute the fee payable, a hearing must be held at a Court, and any money payable becomes a normal Court fine. A defendant who disputes the standard infringement fee payable is also likely to incur Court costs in addition to any fine imposed by the Court.

d. Any financial penalty imposed by the Court (for example if the infringement offence is proceeded with summarily or an I.N is disputed) is called a fine rather than a fee.

e. Infringement fees resulting from notices issued by warranted employees of Fish and Game Councils that have enforcement functions under the Conservation Act 1987 and Wildlife Act 1953 are payable into the Crown consolidated fund bank account.

4.3 Compliance/enforcement consistency

a. The response to the level of offending must always be reasonable, transparent and proportionate and Fish & Game regions must act consistently and generally treat like cases alike.

b. Where action more serious than warning/education is deemed necessary in regard to an alleged infringement offence, the issuing of an I.N is the first level of response and is to be the action taken unless there is reason not to..

c. Reasons not to issue an I.N, but to consider filing charge(s) and pursue court prosecution include considerations as required by the Solicitor Generals Prosecution Guidelines including :

- Seriousness of the offence;
- That the offending involved actual or threatened violence against a Fish & Game ranger acting in the course of his or her duty;
- The extent of any loss, harm or damage resulting from the offence;
- Premeditation on the part of the offender and, if so, the level of premeditation involved;
- The number, seriousness, date, relevance and nature of any previous relevant offending, including matters for which the offender is being sentenced or otherwise dealt with; and
- Where it is necessary in the circumstances to seek a court order for forfeiture of the gear used in the commission of the offence; and
- Commercial motivation for offending.

d. If a matter proceeds to court prosecution that in itself does not prevent the possibility of offering the offender diversion in appropriate cases. Refer to the National Prosecution policy – diversion.

e. Prosecution even with the option of diversion is not to be used in preference to issuing an I.N unless the intervention of the court is necessary **and** it is deemed that the I.N penalty in the circumstances is too low, and / or an order of forfeiture of seized gear is required.

f. For non-infringement offences, the response and possible outcomes will be education / warning, or prosecution (with diversion consideration as appropriate).

g. While every effort will be made to treat like cases alike, there will be situations where different responses may be appropriate. There will be occasions where the circumstances of a situation warrant no action being taken (e.g. the incident is reasonable or excusable in the circumstances and doesn't warrant compliance action). Decisions should be based on sound policy, and defendable judgments, and be in accordance with the Solicitor General's Prosecution Guidelines and the Fish & Game NZ National Prosecution policy. All matters considered for

prosecution (including issuing an infringement notice) must meet the Solicitor-Generals Prosecution Guidelines test for both evidential sufficiency **and** public interest in a prosecution.

4.4 Deciding the level of compliance/enforcement response

Fish & Game New Zealand has a range of options available to resolve situations where offences have been committed.

4.4.1 Advocacy, Education and Warnings

a. Advocacy & Education

- This type of response is appropriate for incidents of very minor non-compliance. The purpose of this response is to advise the alleged offender that non-compliance has been detected and promote the need for compliance to be observed in future and inform them of legal requirements. Resources such as leaflets or brochures may play a significant role in ensuring future compliance.

- Education is a valid and useful tool for use in minor matters where non-compliance was unintentional and / or trivial and educating the offender will achieve a desired outcome without the need for other compliance action. Education may extend to advising of the rules relating to the activity, providing alleged offenders with some understanding of the potential effects resulting from their actions.

b. Warnings

- There may be occasions when non-compliance has been detected but it is not appropriate to issue an I.N. This may occur where there has been a single instance of non-compliance, which was accidental, unforeseen or of a minor nature, but where there is a possibility of future non-compliance if some action is not taken by Fish & Game. A written formal warning advises the offender that they are in breach of the Act, regulation, or notice. It states what section of the Act, regulation, or notice has been breached and advises that no further enforcement action will be taken at this stage, but that the warning will be taken into account should they be involved in further offending against legislation enforced by Fish & Game New Zealand. For the avoidance of doubt, warnings should not be provided either orally and / or 'informally', i.e. all warnings should be formally issued in writing and a record made of it in the national compliance database. Warnings should only be issued where there is clear evidence of an offence having taken place, i.e. 'prima facie' evidence exists.

- A written formal warning is a document recording the non-compliance that can be taken into account by a Court should future non-compliance that results in court action occur.

4.4.2 Formal Options of Infringement Notice and Prosecution

The following options will be appropriate when an alleged offence has occurred, and there is a need to take action to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects, ensure compliance, or provide deterrence and/or accountability. These options should also be accompanied by education and advocacy measures where practicable.

a. Infringement Notice

- An I.N is written notice that an offence is believed on reasonable grounds to have been committed. The I.N requires payment of an infringement fee within 28 days.
- A person subject to an I.N may; elect to pay the fee, write in to Fish & Game seeking withdrawal of the I.N, or dispute the alleged offence or the amount of the fee and seek to have the matter dealt with by a Court hearing.
- The use of I.N's and set infringement fees allows Fish & Game to quickly and simply resolve minor offending. The consequences of such offending are conveyed to the offender in a proportionate and efficient manner, and this will encourage future compliance in many cases.
- The infringement process is described in more detail in Appendix 1.

b. Prosecution

- Prosecution may be appropriate for more serious offending, or for repeat offenders.
- Any potential prosecutions must meet the Solicitor-Generals Prosecution guidelines test in that there must be a reasonable prospect of a conviction, and the prosecution is in the public interest.

4.5 Deciding what option to take?

Covering every contingency is difficult but the following factors will typically be taken into account in deciding on the response to offending:

a. Seriousness of offending, including premeditation on behalf of the offender and if so, the level of premeditation involved;

b. Purpose of offending – commercial, recreational, customary etc;

c. The extent of any loss, damage or harm resulting from the offence;

d. Explanation by the alleged offender;

e. Degree of co-operation, remorse, contrition etc by the offender;

f. Need for forfeiture of seized gear as a deterrent and or to remove illegal equipment and prevent re-use. (Forfeiture of seized property would not be a consequence of an I.N)

g. Prevalence of the offending;

h. Public interest factors in sending a deterrent message to the offender and like-minded individuals;

i. Fish & Game's previous dealings with the offender, e.g. prior warning letters, prior infringement notices, and / or the offender's previous convictions.

4.6 Should an infringement notice be issued?

4.6.1 Warning/infringement notice/prosecution?

When making the decision whether to file a charging document, issue an I.N, or issue a formal warning the following issues will be considered:

a. Is there credible, sufficient and admissible evidence that an offence has been committed by an identifiable individual?

b. The degree of seriousness of this offending?

c. The extent of any loss, damage or harm resulting from the offence?

d. Has the person previously come to the notice of Fish & Game or other agencies for offences against the Conservation Act 1987 and / or Wildlife Act 1953, including any regulations made under those Acts?

e. The nature of any explanation as to why they offended.

f. Was the person co-operative and/or remorseful for their offending?

g. Is forfeiture of seized property warranted for the offence?

h. Is a prosecution or issuing an I.N in the public interest?

i. Is the level of infringement fee for the circumstances appropriate?

j. Is there anything else that may be relevant?

4.6.2 Infringement notice or prosecution?

When making the decision to issue an I.N rather than bringing a summary prosecution the same questions will be asked:

a. Within the range of offending is the offence at the less serious end?

b. Is the person a first offender or a recidivist offender?

c. Has the person given an explanation of why they offended?

d. Is the person co-operative and contrite?

e. Is forfeiture of seized gear necessary for deterrence or to ensure illegal equipment is not able to be re-used?

f. Is there anything else that may be relevant?

It may still be appropriate and preferable to issue an I.N in many cases, even if it is not a first offence that is being dealt with.

4.6.3 Scoring Processes

A numerical scoring system (appendix 2) has been devised that will give an indication of the severity of the offending, and assist decision making. If the score is low consideration may be given to either warning or issuing an infringement notice. If the score is mid-way, it may be appropriate to issue an infringement notice. If the score is high, it may be appropriate to take a prosecution. The scoring process should be seen as a guide only to assist decision making.

4.7 Who makes the decision?

4.7.1 Decision making roles

a. Designated warranted Fish & Game employees who have received training in the infringement notice system and relevant legislation and have qualified may receive a further warrant to issue infringement notices for offences. This warrant will be issued by the Director of the New Zealand Fish & Game Council. In most cases this will include the Region Compliance Coordinator, the Regional Manager, and may also include some senior experienced compliance staff as required to ensure the region has adequate capacity to issue infringement notices when required. NB: only a limited number of trained Fish & Game staff will be able to issue infringement notices or authorise the issuing of infringement notices.

b. In general, the procedure for dealing with offences in the field will not change; whether offences are dealt with by honorary rangers or by Fish & Game staff rangers. Suspected offending will be reported in the usual manner to the relevant Regional Compliance Coordinator following detection of an alleged offence.

c. Honorary Fish & Game rangers cannot be warranted to issue infringement notices; that is specifically excluded by section 51W(3) of the Conservation Act 1987.

d. I.N's will not be issued in the field.

e. The decision as to how to proceed; whether to take no action, issue a written warning, issue an I.N or commence a prosecution, will be made by the Regional Manager in consultation with the Region Compliance Coordinator, with input from the Compliance Decision Group, as appropriate, particularly in more complex or serious matters. When deciding how to process offences the CDG checklist should be referred to ensure consistency.

4.7.2 The Compliance Decision Group ("CDG")

a. The CDG is made up of:

- The Fish & Game Compliance coordinator of that Fish & Game region;
- The Regional Manager of that Fish & Game region;
- The National Compliance coordinator; and
- If the offence involves technical or legal issues, an appropriate expert who can address these. This may be a Fish & Game staff member with legal or compliance expertise, or external legal advice.

The Director of the NZ Fish and Game Council has a role as an arbiter if the CDG is unable to reach a decision as to appropriate resolution action.

b. A CDG guideline is attached in Appendix 3. It sets out what needs to be done and the procedures. Note: CDG meetings may be held by phone or other networking systems, such as Skype / Zoom. CDG meetings are also useful to peer review decisions made at a Regional Manager level.

c. When a decision has been reached by the CDG, the Regional Manager shall be responsible for signing it off and the Region Compliance officer or staff member responsible for prosecutions shall be responsible for implementing it. A written record of the decision shall be kept on the offence file.

4.8 Seizure of property

a. If a Fish & Game ranger has reasonable cause to suspect that an offence has been or is going to be committed, they may seize items of property which they believe is or will be used in the commission of that offence, such as fishing and hunting gear. Property which has been seized under the Conservation Act 1987 and / or Wildlife Act 1953 must be securely stored by Fish & Game and held until the matter is resolved.

b. Upon full payment of the infringement fee or completion of enforcement action, and at which time the seized gear is no longer required to be held for investigative or evidential purposes, the seized and impounded property must be returned to the offender or person entitled to possession of it, subject to compliance with any statutory requirements, including the Arms Act 1983.

c. Items seized which have been taken illegally, e.g. unlawfully taken sports fish or game birds, are not returned to the offender on payment of the infringement fee.

4.9 Training and authorisation to issue Infringement notices

Employee rangers who are warranted to issue infringement notices must be trained to ensure:

- That they are familiar with this policy.
- That all alleged offences are assessed in accordance with the Fish & Game NZ national policy on prosecutions.
- That all alleged offences are assessed in accordance with the Solicitor General's Prosecution guidelines, i.e. offences meet the requirements of evidential sufficiency **and** that prosecution or issuing an I.N is found to be in the public interest. All offences must be assessed as if they are going to be dealt with in court in a defended hearing- full and complete evidence must exist and a prosecution must be in the public interest.

4.10 National Compliance Database

All Fish & Game regions have access to the Fish & Game New Zealand National Compliance Database. This database records details of all offenders and offences dealt with by Fish & Game Councils including resolution action and outcomes.

The Privacy Act 1993 controls how agencies collect, use, disclose, store and give access to personal information. Information is collected for lawful purposes of compliance, law enforcement, and prosecution functions of Fish & Game NZ, and the collection and holding or storing of the information is necessary for those purposes.

Information held will not be accessed or used for any purposes or in any manner that is incompatible with those purposes with which the information was collected and is held.

When dealing with offenders and considering resolution options the database shall be checked to determine if the offender in question has previously had a history of offending for Fish & Game matters.

To enable accurate information to be obtained from the database all Fish & Game regions shall enter offender and offence information into the database as soon as is practical after dealing with an offender. Once the matter is resolved the database is to be updated to show the outcome.

Updates should be done as soon as possible when offences are resolved and no later than monthly.

4.11 Exercise of other Conservation Act and Wildlife Act Powers Training and Reporting

- All Fish & Game rangers shall be fully trained in the exercise of rangers' powers under the Conservation Act 1987, the Wildlife Act 1953 and regulations made under those Acts. Those powers include in particular:

- Powers pursuant to Section 40A of the Conservation Act 1987, and Section 66A of the Wildlife Act 1953 which are powers to require an offender to supply information including name, address, and date of birth and verification – as each is applicable.
- Powers pursuant to Section 39 of the Wildlife Act 1953, and Section 40 of the Conservation Act 1987, which relate to powers of entry to property, of search, and of seizure of items used or intended to be used in breaches of those Acts, and in seizure of fish and game or other wildlife which has been unlawfully taken.
- Powers pursuant to Section 61 of the Wildlife Act 1953 which relates to persons in pursuant of game to produce licence, along with production of game and equipment used, and pursuant to Regulation 20 of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 which relates to the obligation of anglers to produce licence, provide details and produce catch (bag) for inspection.
- All Fish & Game rangers shall receive regular training on powers and field procedures, with refresher training conducted at least annually. Differences in the nature of powers between the Conservation Act and Wildlife Act shall be emphasised, along with the application of those powers to staff and honorary rangers.
- Fish & Game NZ shall maintain and update as necessary a training manual and guide known as the 'Ranger Guide and health and safety manual'. This shall be distributed to all rangers as a training and field procedure guide.
- Use of powers must be proportionate, reasonable and necessary to enable Fish & Game rangers to carry out compliance and law enforcement functions, in particular powers of search, seizure, and of entry to property.
- The exercise of powers by Fish & Game rangers must be necessary to investigate suspected offences, apprehend offenders, and to ensure angler and hunter compliance with the Conservation Act and Wildlife Act.
- Where Fish & Game rangers exercise powers of search, seizure of property, and entry onto private property they must advise their regional compliance coordinator of the exercise of those powers as soon as possible in a report summarising their actions, the circumstances, and the necessity to exercise those powers.

4.12 Annual Reporting

In accordance with Section 26I of the Conservation Act 1987, the NZ Fish & Game council shall report annually to the Minister including:

- A summary of powers exercised during the year by Fish & Game rangers to enforce or ensure compliance with the Conservation Act or the Wildlife Act (including any regulations made under those Acts);
- Identify any complaints received in relation to exercise of those powers;
- A summary of action taken in response to any complaints; and
- Specify whether any powers were exercised in a manner inconsistent with this policy.

To enable the above Regional Fish & Game Councils will provide a summary of the information detailed above in annual reports.

Appendix 1 - Infringement system

1 Issuing of notices

a. I.Ns shall be issued no later than 3 months after the date of the offence. This is due to the matter that if an I.N fee is not paid a reminder notice must be filed with the court no later than 6 months after the date of the offence, as is required by the Summary Proceedings Act 1957 Section 21.

b. I.N's shall be posted to the offenders last known postal address / place or residence or usual address.

c. When a Fish & Game ranger detects an infringement offence the ranger must report the offence to the Fish & Game Compliance Co-ordinator of that Fish & Game region.

d. I.N's may be issued to international visitors by posting it to their last known postal address / place of residence or usual address in their country of residence.

2 Reminder notices

If the offender has not paid the fee or requested a hearing within 28 days after service of the I.N a reminder notice shall be issued.

3 The reminder notice gives another period of 28 days for the fee to be paid or for the offender to request a court hearing.

4 Payment

Infringement fees shall be paid to a Crown Bank account (consolidated fund); the information relating to that will be on the I.N. Infringement fees cannot be paid directly to Fish & Game regions, i.e. Fish & Game regions **should not** receive any payments for I.N's from offenders. In some cases where fees are however paid by offenders to Fish & Game instead of to the Crown account the funds can be held in a Trust account and then paid by Fish & Game to the Crown Bank account.

Payment of infringement fees must be made in full; partial payment or instalment payments will not be accepted. In total offenders have 56 days to pay infringement fees (time period of the initial infringement notice, plus the reminder notice period).

When an Infringement fee is paid, offenders shall produce evidence of payment in full to the relevant Fish & Game region to seek return of any seized and impounded gear.

When the Infringement fee is paid in full the file in relation to the matter shall be finalised and closed.

If the wrong fee amount is paid (under or over payment) offenders will be notified in writing and either refunded the excess or requested to pay the outstanding amount.

Underpayments that are not corrected will be liable for reminder notices and or referral as an unpaid fee to the District Court.

5 Other options and defended hearings

Adjudication letters

a. Offenders who receive an I.N have the right to submit to the relevant Fish & Game region an explanation in defence of the alleged offence.

b. Offenders may send an adjudication letter to the relevant Fish & Game region, outlining why they should be excused from paying the fee.

c. When an adjudication letter is received, it shall be considered by the relevant Regional Fish & Game Manager. Before making a decision, the Regional Fish & Game Manager may consult with the Fish & Game officer who issued the I.N and with any other relevant technical/legal experts that may be required to properly assess the offender's explanation, including the CDG to ensure consistency across regions in how adjudications are dealt with.

d. The Regional Fish & Game Manager shall:

- Decide whether to accept the explanation and waive/withdraw the I.N or, reject the explanation and proceed with the I.N process; and

- Advise the offender in writing of his / her decision in relation to the above.

- In a case of the Regional Managers decision being challenged refer the matter to the CDG for review and a decision and then advise the offender in writing of that decision.

To avoid 'undue delay', adjudication letters should be considered and adjudicated on as soon as reasonably practical, wherever possible within a time period of 10 working days.

Defended hearing requests

a. Offenders may dispute the I.N and request a defended hearing in Court. The offender must do this by writing to Fish & Game within 28 days of a reminder notice being served.

b. The request is passed to the relevant Regional Fish & Game Manager, who shall review the file and decide whether to proceed with the defended hearing or withdraw the I.N. If it is decided to proceed with the hearing, the relevant forms shall be prepared and filed in Court.

c. When it is decided to proceed with a defended hearing the file is assigned to the relevant Fish & Game region's prosecuting lawyer and/or compliance officer responsible for prosecutions, who shall prepare the case for Court.

d. The Court will notify both the offender and the relevant Fish & Game region of the hearing date.

e. Full disclosure under the Criminal Disclosure Act 2008 is required as soon as reasonably practicable after an offender has requested a defended hearing.

Hearing as to penalty requests

a. Offenders may also request a hearing on penalty only. The offender may write to Fish & Game accepting liability for the offence and request a hearing as to penalty. Again, the relevant Fish & Game Regional Manager shall review the file and decide whether to proceed with the hearing or waive the I.N. If the I.N is not waived, forms for submission to Court must be prepared. Requests for hearings on penalty only in respect of an I.N are dealt with by way of written submission to the Court only.[1]

b. When it is decided to proceed with a hearing as to penalty the file is assigned to the relevant Fish & Game region's prosecuting solicitor and/or compliance officer.

c. Disclosure under the Criminal Disclosure Act, unless specifically requested, is not required for a non-defended hearing.

6 Non-payment – collection referrals

If the offender has not paid the infringement fee or submitted a hearing request within 28 days of service of the reminder notice; Fish & Game shall file a copy of the reminder notice, which may be an electronic copy, with the District Court together with proof of service details. Referral to the Court must be within 6 months of the offence being committed.

[1] See *Adam v Wellington City Council* (2 April 1998) HC Wellington AP 18/98 unreported.

7 Withdrawal

I.N's can only be withdrawn with approval from the appropriate Regional Manager. I.N's can be withdrawn at any time, even after a notice has been referred to the Court for collections (in which case an Application to Withdraw will need to be completed and filed in Court).

It is important that any decision to withdraw an infringement notice is recorded on the file, including the reason for withdrawal, for transparency of the process and to ensure the decision was justified and nationally consistent.

8 Invalid notices

Occasionally I.N/s may be invalid. This can occur in situations where they have been issued to underage offenders, or if evidence subsequently comes to light that the I.N should not have been issued at all – for example, evidence showing the offence did not actually occur or that the I.N was issued to the wrong person. The I.N shall be invalidated on the instruction of the relevant Regional Fish & Game Manager.

In cases where there is a significant error in the I.N, but it remains appropriate to issue an I.N, the notice shall be invalidated and reissued under a different infringement number. The new I.N shall be sent to the offender with a letter explaining the previous error and supplying the new notice. Any such errors must be rectified promptly for the benefit of the offender, and in recognition of the tight timeframes for processing I.N's in the Court.

Appendix 2 - CDG Scoring

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Deliberate action or lack of due care		Unintentional		Lack of due care		Negligence		Deliberate			Deliberate to make $$$
Failure to act on prior instruction; advice; notice	No					Verbal advice Has the person been spoken to before on the same or similar issue?		Prior Warning	Prior Warning letter	Prior - asked to desist	Prior I.N / previous prosecution
Fish or game taken/ impact or effect on resource	Nil taken	Low take				Moderate take		Moderate to high- limit or exceeds limit			Multiples of limit
Cooperation	Proactively cooperative	Fully cooperate		Somewhat cooperative		Reluctant			Non-cooperative		Aggressively Non-cooperative
Degree of deterrence needed	No deterrence required				All offences require some form of deterrence						Full deterrence required

Number Guide for assessing whether an Infringement is needed.

Fish/Game take issues	**Low number** = nil to low end of bag limit.	**Moderate =** mid bag limit	**High** = bag limit and above

<15 consider I.N.
15 to 20 Consider I.N possible prosecution
>20 Consider prosecution

Appendix 3 - Compliance Decision Group

Compliance Decision Group Meetings

1 Role of the CDG

a. The purpose of the CDG is to decide, in an objective and consistent manner, what action should be taken regarding non-compliance with legislation, regulations, and notices that a Fish and Game Council operates under. Most decisions in relation to straight forward matters will be made by the relevant Regional Fish & Game Manager, e.g. simple fish without licence, or hunt without licence matters. However, more complex matters involving multiple offences, and recidivist offenders will be decided by CDG process, which shall peer review the decision and process, and ensure as far as is possible consistency between regions in outcomes.

b. At the meeting, the non-compliance shall be discussed in terms of the various factors set out in more detail below. The action to be taken is then agreed upon.

2 When to have a CDG meeting?

A CDG meeting could be held when there is a reliable and admissible evidence of a breach of the Conservation Act 1987 and / or Wildlife Act 1953, including any regulations made under those Acts, by an identifiable offender **and** there is any of the following:

a. Previous offending, incidents or non-compliance;

b. A potential and /or significant effect on the fish or game resource;

c. Multiple offences; or

d. Offences of technical or serious nature.

Also consider the degree of cooperation of offender, remorsefulness, and if forfeiture of gear is desired.

3 Pre-CDG checklist

a. To assist in ascertaining whether a CDG process is needed, complete the Pre - CDG checklist (attachment 1).

b. Before organising a CDG, check whether any Fish & Game Region is currently taking enforcement action against the offender, or has previously been dealt the offender with for an offence. To do this check the National Compliance Database.

If the offending does not meet the criteria for a CDG decision, the Regional Fish & Game Manager may authorise proceeding with issue of an I.N.

If the offending meets the criteria for a CDG, that course of action shall be proceeded with.

4 Preparation - What to do?

a. Complete the CDG form (attachment 2), which includes:

- Offenders details;
- A brief outlined summary of the offence(s);
- Previous enforcement action - check national data base);
- The relevant Act and section/s breached;
- Previous non-compliance by the offender and any enforcement action taken;
- The outcome desired; and
- The recommended action to reach that outcome.

b. Provide the CDG form to the group with sufficient time for the matter to be considered prior to discussion.

5 The meeting

Using the CDG checklist, the CDG form, and the file, the group works through the sections of the CDG form (attachment 2) and makes a decision on the action to be taken. This may be one or more of the following:

a. Formal written warning;

b. Infringement notice (I.N); and / or

c. Prosecution.

6 What is considered during the meeting?

Factors taken into account will include:

a. What is the desired outcome?

b. Whether Fish & Game or any other agency has previously dealt with the offender for offending against the Conservation Act 1987 and / or Wildlife Act 1953, including any regulations made under those Act;

c. The seriousness of the offending and actual / potential effect on sports fisheries / game bird resources / habitat;

d. The attitude of the offender; and

e. The degree of deterrence required.

The offending can be scored using the CDG scoring system to ensure consistency between decisions.

7 The outcome

a. All warning letters and I. N's should be issued within 14 days of the CDG decision.

b. I.Ns shall be sent by domestic post to the offenders last known postal address / place or residence or usual address, and relevant copies shall be placed on the file, and for processing as an I.N.

8 Records

Ensure all records are kept on file,, and details entered into the National Compliance Database.

Attachment 1 - CDG Checklist

Offence(s):

Subject Name:

Is there:

1. Clear and sufficient evidence of an offence?
   Y/N

and

2. any of the following:

- Previous incidents/offending/non-compliance by the person Y/N
- A potential and/or significant effect on the fish or game resource Y/N
- Multiple offences Y/N

- Offences of technical or serious nature Y/N

If yes to 1 only, no CDG is needed and Regional Manager can authorise I.N.

If yes to 1, & 2, CDG consultation is implemented.

Also consider the degree of cooperation of offender, remorsefulness, and if forfeiture of gear is desired.

Before completing CDG form:

- Check all previous enforcement action,
- Peruse the file,
- If offender is a company (rare for Fish & Game matters), check details on www.companies.govt.nz
- Google the person or business to see what is found,
- If there is any current enforcement action against the person? Check National database.

Complete the CDG form including:

- Responsible party/parties identified and verified, addresses and contact persons,
- Summary of offence,
- Previous enforcement action,
- Act/Sections breached,
- The outcome you want,
- Recommended action to reach the desired outcome,

Email all people involved in the CDG a copy of the CDG form, preferably at least one day before CDG.

Notes:

Attachment 2 - CDG Form

CDG meeting/consultation

Location of incident/offence(s).

Subject name: **Date of birth:**

Address:

Offence(s).

Summary of incident.

Act and section(s) breached.

Previous enforcement history.

Outcome desired.

Evidential test is met.

Prosecution or issue of I.N is in the public interest.

Result of CDG consultation/meeting.

Recommended action.

Outcome.

Infringement Notice – Prosecution Flow Chart

Offence detected, field work carried out including offence notice issued and gear seized as appropriate

- Report to regional CLE/prosecution staff for assessment as to resolution options

Education/Warning/I.N/Prosecution -including diversion.

Solicitor General's Guidelines tests

- Evidential sufficiency, AND
- Public interest in prosecution (including for an I.N)

Yes.

- Assess appropriate resolution of I.N, or prosecution action with or without diversion

No.

- Consider Education as resolution.
- Formal warning as appropriate (must meet elements of offence)

Offence is an Infringement offence.

- Less serious scale
- First offence or few previous offences
- Level of I.N fee is appropriate
- Forfeiture of gear not required

Offence is serious.

Not an I.N offence

Or: Is an I.N offence, BUT:

- Serious offending
- Recidivist offender
- Level of I.N deemed too low in circumstances
- Forfeiture of gear required to be sought

Issue I.N recommended/actioned

Prosecution, with diversion if appropriate

Process for the enactment of the Anglers Notice and Game Bird Notice

New Zealand Fish and Game Council Meeting 176: 29TH & 30th August 2025

Prepared by: Ros Connelly, Governance and Policy Advisor, NZ Fish and Game Council

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Kōrero taunaki - Summary of considerations

Purpose

The purpose of the report is to advise the New Zealand Fish and Game Council on the process for the passage of the Anglers Notice and the Open Season for Game Notice (Game Notice).

Financial considerations

☒ Nil ☐ Budgetary provision / ☐ Unbudgeted

Risk

☒ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐ Extreme

Ngā taunaki – Recommendation

That the New Zealand Council:

1. Note the contents of this report and
2. Distribute to Regional Councils for information

Executive Summary - Whakarāpopoto

1 Regulations are an essential tool for preserving and advancing public interest. That said, the importance of regulation needs to be balanced against the importance of personal choice. The power to set and enforce regulations is a privilege which comes with obligations to follow good law-making processes – including consultation, options analysis and cost-benefit analysis.

2 The New Zealand Fish & Game Council has the function to coordinate the preparation of the Anglers Notice and Game Bird Notice, to recommend these to the Minister for approval, to advise the Minister on these notices and to arrange for their publication.

3. The process for enacting these Notices is: each region determines a set of Angling and Game Bird hunting rules and provides it to the New Zealand Council, along with evidence of their decision-making process and considerations. NZC Staff review these documents and determine whether the process meets the standard required. A set of staff recommendations is put to the New Zealand Council based on whether there is evidence of a good law-making process behind each of the proposals. NZC agrees on the set of recommendations to take to the Minister.

4. NZC staff then advise the Minister on NZC's conclusions and provide all the supporting evidence. Once the Minister's approval has been obtained, NZC staff work with Doc staff and the New Zealand Gazette to publish the notices.

Background - Takenga mai

5. Two of the most important functions of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council are the development of the Anglers Notice and the Game Bird Notice.

6. The Conservation Act explains at 26C that the function of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council includes:

   (ba) In relation to Anglers Notices and notices for game seasons -

   - To coordinate their preparation and recommendation to the Minister for approval
   - To advise the Minister
   - To arrange for the publication under the Legislation Act 2019

7. In terms of timing, fishing licences go on sale on 1 September, with combined regulation and information booklets, and Game licences go on sale in early March, also with combined regulation and information booklets. This means that the work that underpins the Anglers Notice typically occurs in the first half of the calendar year, with NZC deciding on what to recommend to the Minister in June. While the work that underpins the Game Notice occurs in the second half of the calendar year with the NZC decision occurring at the February NZC meeting.

What is the purpose of the Anglers Notice and the Game Notice?

8. Under 26B of the Conservation Act, the purpose of the New Zealand Fish and Game is to represent nationally the interests of anglers and hunters and provide co-ordination of the management, enhancement and maintenance of sports fish and game.

9. While Fish & Game has other tools to achieve these aims (e.g. advocacy, events, etc), setting regulations is a key mechanism to manage, enhance and maintain hunting and fishing resources. By creating rules (and enforcing those rules through our compliance function), we can influence the population of fish and game birds and gather essential data to help inform future regulatory interventions.

What are the steps required to develop the Anglers Notice

10. Fish and Game's constituting legislation does not provide much guidance as to the steps required to develop the Anglers and Game notices. However, in 2023, Minister McClay provided advice that Fish and Game regulatory changes should be based on:

- Evidence based assessments of game [fish and] bird populations
- Licence holder preferences and expectations
- Long-term sustainability outcomes

11. There are also a number of general guidance documents that we can look at to guide the development of regulation. For instance, the Australian Taskforce on Reducing Regulatory Burdens on Business identified the following six principles of good regulatory process :

i. Governments should not act to address 'problems' until a case for action has been clearly established. – This should include establishing the nature of the problem and why actions additional to existing measures are needed, recognising that not all 'problems' will justify (additional) government action.
ii. A range of feasible policy options (including self-regulatory and co-regulatory approaches) need to be identified and their benefits and costs (including compliance costs) assessed within an appropriate framework.
iii. Only the option that generates the greatest net benefit for the community, taking into account all the impacts, should be adopted.
iv. Effective guidance should be provided to relevant regulators and regulated parties in order to ensure that the policy intent of the regulation is clear, as well as the expected compliance requirements.
v. Mechanisms are needed to ensure that regulation remains relevant and effective over time.
vi. There needs to be effective consultation with regulated parties at all stages of the regulatory cycle.

12. Alongside the work required to develop new angling or hunting rules, NZC staff ask that regional staff enter the wording for the new regulations into a master notice document. This is just the notice from last year saved in the file structure so that regions can make this years' changes directly into their portion of the document. This part of the process is prone to errors, and NZC are working to introduce an additional quality control step into this process. When all regions have entered their changes, NZC staff tidy up the document for formatting, etc.

What New Zealand Fish & Game expects from the regions

12. The Conservation Act requires the New Zealand Fish and Game Council to advise the Minister on the Anglers Notice and Game Notice, as well as make recommendations. This creates an obligation on NZC to judiciously assess the notices recommended by the regions. We are not discharging our responsibility under the Act if we simply rubber-stamp regional decisions.

13. However, New Zealand Councillors have often pointed out that it is difficult for them to assess other regions' recommendations given a lack of local knowledge and context. There is a natural tendency to trust that each region is the expert in terms of its own sport fish and game resources and not to interfere.

14. The NZC staff resolve this difficulty by assessing the decision-making process rather than the decision itself.

15. NZC staff look for evidence that 1) robust population monitoring has been undertaken, 2) a problem has been identified, 3) multiple options for addressing the problem have been considered, 4) the costs and benefits of all the options have been considered, 5) consultation with anglers and hunters and other interested stakeholders have been considered, 5) based on the information a logical recommendation has been reached and 6) there is a plan to assess the impact of the changes.

16. In the instances where NZC staff have not supported adoption of a region's recommendations, it has been because one or more of these process steps have been missing. Typically, there have been shortcomings in the population monitoring component (although we are looking to standardise this), the consultation has been non-existent or insufficient, or a new option has been supported at the decision-making table without any analysis or consultation.

17. The absence of these required process steps makes it more likely that the wrong outcome will be reached and also opens the decision up to challenge.

18. NZC does not have to support staff recommendations, but in order to meet our obligations under the Act, staff must continue to scrutinise regional recommendations. The result of staff analysis, as well as the final NZC decisions, are then provided to the Minister along with a summary briefing.

What happens after the NZC recommendation goes to the Minister?

19. The Minister and his officials will review all the information provided. Currently, the Minister can either approve an Anglers Notice or return it (via the NZC) to the relevant Fish & Game Council for further consideration. The Minister cannot amend anything in the notice.

20. Upon receiving a draft Game Notice, the Minister may either approve the notice, or require the notice to be amended in any way the Minister may specify before approving it.

21. Under the reform proposals approved by Cabinet, the Game Notice situation will apply to Anglers Notices after the new legislation is enacted by Parliament. This will prevent any stand-offs between the Minister and FGCs close to the start of the fishing season.

22. Finally, the New Zealand Council staff upload the approved Notice to the New Zealand Gazette. At this point, there is no further opportunity to amend the notice.

Considerations for decision-making - Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga

Financial Implications

10. There are no direct financial implications arising from this paper, except to note that there is considerable staff resource (at both NZC and a regional level) involved in the development of these regulations. Any changes to the process would have to consider the ability of staff to support.

Legislative Implications

11. As a law-making body, Fish & Game has an obligation to follow due process when making regulations. Even after a notice has been promulgated, there is potential for review by the Regulations Review Committee. The Regulations Review Committee (a Parliamentary subcommittee) examines all regulations, investigates complaints about regulations and examines proposed regulation making powers in bills for consistency with good legislative practice. The committee reports to the House and other committees it identifies. The House can ‘disallow’ a regulation, meaning it no longer has force.

Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities

12. Consultation with iwi Māori should be part of any regulation making process. There is considerable scope for improvement in this space, although much of this is contingent on the development of enduring relationships, which will take time.

Policy Implications

13. none

Risks and mitigations

14. There are considerable risks to Fish & Game in not delivering good regulatory practice. Our licence to operate is contingent on following due process and being able to justify restrictions on people's rights.

Next actions - Ngā mahinga e whai ake nei

It is recommended that the New Zealand Council:

1. Note the contents of this report and
2. Distribute to Regional Councils for information

National Policy on Prosecutions Amended May 2024

Purpose

1. The purpose of this Policy is to set out principles and guidelines that Fish and Game Councils will follow in making the decision to initiate criminal proceedings, including infringement notice processes, and when considering appeals against Court decisions arising from prosecutions. This policy should be read together with:
   a. The *Solicitor-General's Prosecution Guidelines* 2013;
   b. The *Solicitor-General's Guidelines for Diversion Schemes* 2021;
   c. The *Solicitor-Generals Guidelines for the Use of Warnings* 2021; and
   d. The *Solicitor-General's Guidelines for Payments connected to Plea Arrangements or Diversion* 2021.

Accountability

2. This Policy must be adhered to by all Fish & Game New Zealand staff involved in the preparation and conduct of all prosecutions, including infringement notice processes. It applies in conjunction with the Fish & Game New Zealand Infringement Notice Compliance and Enforcement Policy.

Scope

3. This Policy applies to all prosecutions and potential prosecutions arising from enforcement action and investigations by Fish and Game Councils under legislation, including regulations, anglers' notices and game bird season notices applicable to Fish & Game New Zealand, and / or that Fish and Game Councils may deal with breaches of, or consider acting in relation to.

Conflicts of Interest

4. Fish and Game Councils and staff with duties or accountability under this Policy must act fairly, promptly, without any actual or potential conflict of interest and in accordance with the law.

5. Any person involved in the investigation, preparation or conduct of a prosecution who may have any actual or potential conflict of interest whatsoever must disclose the matter of concern immediately to their Regional Manager or Chief Executive.

Prosecution Decisions

6. The decision to prosecute – or not to prosecute- will be based on the following factors:

   a. The Solicitor - General's Prosecution Guidelines. This Policy adopts the Solicitor – General's Guidelines and it must be read in conjunction with those guidelines;[1]

   b. The purpose of the legislation which Fish and Game Councils are seeking to enforce by a proposed prosecution;

   c. The resources available to Fish and Game Councils relative to the public interest in a prosecution proceeding; and

   d. Whether another prosecuting agency has or will bring criminal proceedings in relation to the same subject matter and the potential Fish & Game New Zealand prosecution.

Test for Prosecution

7. Prosecutions, including infringement notice processes, will be initiated only if both requirements set out in the Solicitor - General's Prosecution Guidelines can be met, these are:

   a. The evidence that can be adduced in court is sufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction – the Evidential Test; **and**

   b. Prosecution is required in the public interest - the Public Interest Test.[1]

[1] See Appendix 1 – The 'Public Interest' test

8. Staff with accountabilities under this Policy must separately consider and be satisfied that each aspect of the above test is met before a decision to prosecute or if applicable, to issue an infringement notice, is made. The evidential sufficiency of a proposed prosecution must first be satisfied before the public interest is considered. All the evidence and information available must be analysed and evaluated in a through and critical manner. The evidence available must be capable of reaching the standard of proof required, i.e., beyond reasonable doubt.

9. If the conclusion is reached that there is insufficient evidence or that it is not in the public interest to prosecute (which includes issue of an infringement notice), a decision of "no prosecution" will be taken. A decision of "no prosecution" does not preclude any further consideration of a case, if new and additional evidence becomes available, or a review of the original decision is required.

Decision Making Procedures

10. Decisions to prosecute must be made in accordance with the Solicitor - General's Prosecution Guidelines. The ability to commence prosecutions comes from the Criminal Procedure Act 2011, which applies to all charges and provides that:
    a. "Any person may commence a proceeding";[2] and
    b. A criminal proceeding in respect of an offence is commenced by filing a charging document in the District Court.[3]

    Section 26S(7) of the Conservation Act 1987 provides an authority for Fish & Game Councils to appear before courts in relation to matters affecting the Councils functions.

11. A recommendation by a region's Compliance Coordinator or other person dealing with a matter, to commence a prosecution, or take an alternative course of action, must be approved by the Regional Manager or Chief Executive. To achieve this, the following procedures must be followed:

[2] Section 15 of the Criminal Procedure Act 2011.
[3] Section 14(1) of the Criminal Procedure Act 2011.

Recommendation to prosecute/not prosecute

12. When rangers / Fish and Game Officers investigate a suspected breach of any Act, including the Conservation and Wildlife Acts, Regulation, Angler Notice, or Game Bird hunting Notice, a file must be produced containing:
    a. All relevant evidence; and
    b. A covering report, including a recommendation as to what action, if any, maybe appropriate.

13. The person within each region responsible for prosecutions must forward the file to the Regional Manager or Chief Executive for review and for consideration as to how the matter is progressed and / or resolved.

14. Resolution for any alleged offences may include the following:
    a. No action;
    b. Warning letter;
    c. Youth warning with parental follow up;
    d. Issuing an Infringement Notice; or
    e. Prosecution (with or without diversion as appropriate).

15. The Regional Manager or Chief Executive receiving the file, report, and accompanying recommendation must promptly assess and consider the matter in accordance with this policy **and** in accordance with the processes outlined within the Fish & Game New Zealand Infringement Notice Compliance and Enforcement Policy.

16. The decision as to how to proceed; whether to take no action, issue a written warning, issue an infringement notice, or commence a prosecution, will be made by the Regional Manager in consultation with the Region Compliance Coordinator, with input from the Compliance Decision Group (CDG), as appropriate, particularly in

more complex or technical matters. The processes involved are outlined in the Infringement Notice Compliance and Enforcement Policy as is the make-up of the CDG.

17. The Regional Manager or Chief Executive may consider seeking legal advice and/ or refer the matter back to the Compliance Coordinator and / or investigating officer for further enquiries or to ensure the file is to a satisfactory standard.

18. The Regional Manager or Chief Executive reviewing the file must in accordance with this policy assess the appropriate level of action to be taken in relation to the file.

19. The following must be reviewed in relation to each file:
    a. Thoroughly assess any proposed prosecution or infringement notice action in accordance with this policy, the Infringement Notice Compliance and Enforcement Policy, and the Solicitor - General's guidelines on prosecutions, diversion, and warnings.
    b. Request any necessary further enquires or investigations, if further information is required, or the file is not to a satisfactory standard.
    c. Check the offenders previous conviction history and any previous history of Fish & Game offending.
    d. Authorise if prosecution is to proceed and note the file with reasons for this.
    e. If authorising prosecution determine the number and nature of charges to be filed in Court.
    f. In complex or technical matters refer the file to the Compliance Decision Group for assessment and decision.
    g. If prosecution is authorised assess if diversion of charge(s) is appropriate as a resolution option. In making this assessment the factors outlined in the section titled 'Diversion' must be considered.

20. Proceedings begin by notifying the defendant of the prosecution, the charges, and details of the prosecuting agency. A defendant is usually notified of a prosecution by the prosecuting agency serving him / her with a summons to appear.

21. A summons may be issued before or after a charging document is filed and no more than 2 months before the required court appearance. The summons must include:
    a. the particulars of the defendant; and
    b. the particulars of the charge; and
    c. the court and date and time at which the defendant is required to appear; and
    d. any other information required by rules of court.
22. If a summons is served before filing a charge, the case must be reviewed as soon as practicable under this policy. If any deficiencies are found, the summons must be cancelled and the offender notified.[4]
23. If a charging document is not filed before serving a summons, it must be filed as soon as reasonably possible afterward. The above case review will inform whether it is appropriate to file a charge.
24. If a summons is issued before filing a charging document, and the issuer decides that:
    a. No charge will be filed, or
    b. A different charge will be filed than the one for which the summons was issued,

    the issuer must promptly notify the defendant of this decision before the required court date.

25. Summonses should not be served in the field at the time of the offence unless there are exceptional circumstances. This may be necessary if the offender is transient, hard to locate later, and the offence is serious.

When Prosecution is authorised

26. When prosecution is authorised:
    a. Refer the file to a prosecuting staff member of Fish and Game; or

[4] The Criminal Procedure Act 2011 and the Criminal Procedure Rules 2012 set out the administrative requirements for prosecutions. Non-compliance may lead to costs being ordered against either the prosecution or defence.

b. If an external solicitor is to be engaged with conducting the prosecution, forward the file to that solicitor with a request to conduct prosecution, and reasons for this.

When Prosecution with diversion is authorised

27. Ensure that the processes set out in the section titled 'Diversion' are followed.

28. If the Regional Manager or Chief Executive or Fish and Game prosecutor or solicitor engaged to conduct a prosecution does not endorse the proposed prosecution, the following procedure is to apply:
    a. The matter shall be referred to the Compliance Decision Group (CDG) for further consideration.
    b. The Compliance Decision Group shall take all steps to resolve the matter, which may include seeking legal and / or other expert advice.
    c. A decision must be in accordance with the Solicitor - General's Prosecution Guidelines for prosecutions and for diversion schemes, or use of warnings.

Responsibility of Prosecutors

29. Once a decision to prosecute is made, accountability for the legal issues in connection with the prosecution passes to the Fish and Game staff member responsible to act as prosecutor, or to the external solicitor engaged to conduct the prosecution for Fish and Game. This includes:
    a. Determining correct charges and wordings;
    b. Ensuring the prosecution file is prepared to an appropriate standard;
    c. Preparing a summary of facts;
    d. Compliance with the Criminal Procedure Act 2011 and the Criminal Disclosure Act 2008;
    e. The Prosecutor representing Fish & Game New Zealand with competency and to the ethical standards expected of prosecutors and by the Solicitor – General;

f. Consulting with the regional manager or chief executive and staff about any developments that may affect the conduct of the prosecution; and

g. Advising the Regional Manager or Chief Executive about any media interest in a prosecution.

Diversion

30. Diversion is a prosecution process where an offender charged with offence(s), is summonsed, and appears in Court, but the prosecution makes available to the defendant a means to remedy the wrong by an alternative resolution, and when that is completed the charge(s) are dismissed by the Court. Therefore, the defendant does not receive a conviction and is not subject to a Court imposed penalty. The intent is, however, to still address the public interest factors leading to the decision to prosecute.

31. Diversion can involve the offender paying a donation to Fish & Game along with a contribution to the prosecutions costs or could be another outcome, such as volunteer work.

32. If the defendant does not complete – or rejects- the diversion offer or conditions, the Court process continues, and the Court will deal with the matter as any other Court prosecution.

33. Diversion is a process recognised by the Criminal Procedure Act 2011[5] and is used routinely by most prosecuting agencies. The purposes of diversion are typically to:

a. Address offending behaviour that has resulted in charge(s);
b. Balance the needs of victims, the offender and their communities;
c. Give an offender an opportunity to avoid conviction; and
d. Reduce re-offending.

[5] See sections 147 and 148 of the Criminal Procedure Act 2011.

34. If a decision is made to prosecute an offender rather than issue an infringement notice, that does not mean that the offender cannot be considered for diversion.

35. Diversion must only be offered to a defendant, after the prosecution decision has been made and once a charge is filed. The reason for this is that prosecution instead of issuing an infringement notice must be for reasons around the seriousness and circumstances of the offence, **and** the need for judicial intervention. Having an offender summonsed to appear in Court reinforces the seriousness of the offending and the unsuitability of resolving it by an out of Court action by way of infringement notice.

Diversion eligibility

36. To be eligible for consideration to be offered diversion an offender:

a. Should have no previous convictions or history of Fish & Game offences, including written warnings for offences against the Conservation and Wildlife Acts and / or any notices / regulations made under those Acts; and

b. If the offender has previous convictions or history of Fish & Game offences that those matters are either not recent, or the convictions or previous offence history is not relevant to the current offending and charge(s).

c. Has committed an offence that is of low to moderate seriousness. Generally, this will include Fishing or Hunting without a licence, Anglers Notice breaches, and Game Notice breaches.

d.

More serious offences, like obstruction or providing false details / information, may be eligible for diversion if the overall level of wrongdoing is relatively minor and other factors apply. This includes factors such as the absence of prior or relevant prior convictions, the offenders' remorse and acceptance of responsibility, efforts to correct any harm caused, and the belief that the consequences of a conviction would outweigh the seriousness of the offence. In such cases, diversion will be seen as a suitable alternative to pursuing court prosecution.

e. All offences must be *considered* for eligibility for resolution by diversion, with regard given to the circumstances of the offence/offending. Note the file if diversion is not appropriate and the reason(s) why this is the case.

Approach to diversion

29. The following principles apply to operation of the diversion scheme:

a. The existence of the diversion scheme must not be mentioned to potential defendants during an active investigation to avoid it becoming a factor in the decision to prosecute;

b. The existence of the diversion scheme (or any other resolution options) must not be taken into consideration until a decision to prosecute has been made;

c. The diversion decision maker must be distinct from the person who investigated the offence and who recommended a prosecution – this provides the necessary independence and detachment for the decision; and

d. Reasons for making an offer of diversion must be recorded in writing by the diversion decision maker.

Diversion processes

30. The processes involved in operating diversion are set out in the attached appendix 2 titled 'Diversion Guidelines'. This sets out the processes to follow in running a diversion process and in then notifying the court when diversion is complete and having the charge(s) dismissed.

Diversion conditions: donations

31. When a condition of diversion is a donation to Fish & Game within a reasonable time period, the level of donation should be set at a level consistent with an infringement fee for the same or similar offence (Infringement fees are set by Regulation, see table attached). If the offence being diverted is not an infringement offence, a decision as to fee level should be made considering infringement offences fee levels, and the overall circumstances of the offending.

32. In some circumstances Fish & Game regions may set the diversion donation fee at levels relevant to court-imposed penalties for similar offending.

Diversion conditions: contribution to costs of prosecutions

33. When a condition of diversion is a contribution to the prosecutions costs, this should be set at a level which is fair, reasonable, transparent, and consistent with other similar matters and in consideration of the circumstances of the matter and the actual costs incurred by Fish & Game.

Use of warnings

34. The public interest test of the test for prosecution recognises that not all behaviour that may amount to criminal conduct requires a prosecution response. Whether a warning is appropriate depends on the circumstances of the case, including the behaviour, the intended purpose of the warning and the evidence available to support the warning.
35. The warning decision maker must be distinct from the person who investigated the offence and who recommended a warning – this provides the necessary independence and detachment for the decision.
36. Reasons for issuing a warning must be recorded in writing by the warning decision maker.
37. Use of warnings must recognise and comply with the Solicitor-Generals Guidelines for the use of warnings.

Sufficiency of evidence when issuing warnings

38. Warnings should only be issued where the alternative is to prosecute and there is credible evidence that meets the evidential test of the test for prosecution.

Range of behaviour for warning

39. A warning may be issued for a range of behaviour where it is supported by the evidence. Whether a warning is appropriate depends on the circumstances of the case, including an assessment of the public interest considerations against

prosecution – see paragraph 4 of Appendix 1. It is intended that warnings will be issued as a one-off response rather than repeatedly.

Content of warning

40. A warning should be issued in writing and include the following matters:

a. The context for issuing the warning, including:

i. Accurately setting out the key facts leading to the issuing of the warning, including any explanation, response or admission provided by the person; and

ii. The reasons for issuing the warning.

b. The consequences related to the warning, including:

i. Where the warning will be held and for how long;

ii. How the warning will be used; and

iii. Any consequences if, in the future, the person engages in similar behaviour.

c. The person's rights in relation to the warning, e.g., the right to have the warning reviewed within a certain period.

d. Any response of the person to the proposed warning.

Appeals

41. Any Fish and Game prosecution, which results in consideration for an appeal will be:

a. Discussed by the Regional Manager or Chief Executive with the prosecutor involved, and any other relevant staff; and

b. Discussed with the NZ Fish and Game Council CEO.

Any appeal to be lodged will require:

a. A legal opinion assessing the matter and suitability for appeal; and

b. The Solicitor - General's approval obtained in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Act 2011.

Appendix 1 - The 'Public interest' test[6]

1. Once a prosecutor is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction, the next consideration is whether the public interest requires a prosecution. The Solicitor - General's Guidelines in relation to the public interest test should be referred to in conjunction with this appendix.

2. The following section lists some public interest considerations for prosecution which may be relevant and require consideration by staff when determining where the public interest lies in any case. The following list is illustrative only.

Public interest considerations for prosecution:

a. The predominant consideration is the seriousness of the offence. The gravity of the maximum sentence and the anticipated penalty is likely to be a strong factor in determining the seriousness of the offence;
b. Whether the offence involved violence;
c. Where there are grounds for believing that the offence is likely to be continues or repeated, for example, where there is a history of recurring conduct;
d. Whether the defendant has relevant previous offending . Check for previous convictions, diversions and / or cautions / warnings;
e. Where the offence is prevalent;
f. Where the offender was a ringleader or an organiser of the offence;
g. Where the offence was premeditated;
h. Where the offence was carried out by a group;
i. Where the offender has created a serious risk of harm;
j. Where the offence has resulted in financial loss to Fish and Game;
k. Where the offence was committed against a person carrying out a statutory function, for example a Fish and Game ranger;
l. Where there is an element of false or misleading behaviour / conduct.

[6] Solicitor – General's Prosecution Guidelines – As at 1 July 2013: http://www.crownlaw.govt.nz/uploads/prosecution_guidelines_2013.pdf

3 For example, regional Fish and Game Councils decided to initiate prosecutions in the following cases:

a. An honorary Fish and Game ranger approached and spoke to two lake shore anglers, who were both found to be spin fishing without current fishing licences. As the ranger spoke to the two unlicensed anglers a licenced companion of theirs approached the ranger and acted in an obstructive manner, threatened to physically injure the ranger, refused to provide the ranger with his name and details, displayed his bare buttocks at the ranger and threw stones at the ranger's boat as he retreated following the exchange. In response to the principal offender's behaviour, one of the unlicensed anglers refused to provide the ranger with his name and address or surrender his fishing equipment for seizure and displayed his bare buttocks at the ranger as he retreated. As a result of the incident the ranger seriously considered surrendering his warrant as an honorary Fish and Game ranger; and

b. An angler was found by a Fish and Game ranger fishing on a lake trolling for trout without a current fishing licence. The angler had been convicted in the District Court approximately 3 months earlier for fishing without a licence during the same season.

4. The following section lists some public interest considerations against prosecution which may be relevant and require consideration when determining where the public interest lies in any case. The following list is illustrative only. Again, the Solicitor - General's Guidelines should be referred to.

Public interest considerations against prosecution:

a. Where the Court is likely to impose a very small or nominal penalty;

b. Where the loss or harm can be described as minor and was the result of a single incident, particularly if it was caused by an error of judgement or genuine mistake;

c. Where the offence is not of any test of a serious nature, and is unlikely to be repeated;

d. Where there has been a long passage of time between an offence taking place and the likely date of hearing such as to give rise to undue delay or an abuse of process unless:

   i. the offence is serious; or

   ii. delay has been caused in part by the offender; or

   iii. the offence has only recently become known; or

   iv. the complexity of the offence has resulted in a lengthy investigation.

e. Where a prosecution is likely to have a detrimental effect on the physical or mental health of a victim or witness;

f. Where the offender is elderly;

g. Where the offender is a youth;

h. Where the offender has no previous convictions;

i. Where the offender was at the time of the offence or hearing suffering from significant mental or physical ill-health;

j. Where the offender has rectified the loss or harm that was caused (although defendants should not be allowed to avoid prosecution simply because they pay reparation / compensation);

k. Where any proper alternatives to prosecution are available

5. For example, regional Fish and Game Councils decided to not initiate a prosecution in the following cases:

a. An honorary Fish and Game ranger found a middle-aged male spin fishing for trout on a local river. The angler claimed to be employed and have recently brought a fishing licence from a local licence agent, which he could not find in his fishing bag. The ranger issued the angler with a failure to produce notification requiring him to produce his fishing licence, none was forthcoming. Initial enquiries by Fish and Game revealed that the angler did not have a current fishing licence as claimed. Prima facie evidence was available of the offender fishing without a licence (a strict liability offence, which meant that there was no need to prove the offender intended to

commit the offence) and providing the ranger with false / misleading information.

Subsequent enquiries by Fish and Game revealed that:

i. The offender had a diagnosed intellectual disability, which meant that he could not read or write, had limited insight into his actions and was inclined to make things up; and

ii. The offender received on-going assistance from community support services and worked in a local workshop for people with intellectual disabilities. Evidence was provided to Fish and Game by the offenders' support worker with respect to the nature and severity of the offender's intellectual disability.

In addition, after speaking with the ranger the offender's support worker assisted the offender with purchasing a fishing licence for the remainder of the season. Accordingly, a decision was made to explain to the offender the relevant rules and regulations and need for a fishing licence rather than prosecute.

b. In another case a regional Fish and Game Council decided not to prosecute two middle aged males who were found by a ranger fishing without licences. The facts of the case were that the two were residents of a drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility and had been sent off trout fishing for the day to occupy them. It was evident that neither knew they had to have a trout fishing licence and were new to fishing, having borrowed spin rods. Enquiries found one of the two had suicidal tendencies when stressed, and their care giver had overlooked the fact that licences were required. Accordingly, a decision was made to explain to the offenders, and their carers the relevant rules and regulations and need for fishing licences for any future excursions.

Another (hypothetical) situation also illustrates this point. A person is found walking in a trout spawning stream and in so doing disturbing the spawning grounds of freshwater fish, during the spawning season. The person claims to be there to gather

watercress and is found in possession of freshly picked water cress and there is no evidence whatsoever that they are there to take trout. There is prima facie evidence of an offence against Section 26ZJ of the Conservation Act 1987, in that the ingredients or elements of the offence can be made out, and the offence is strict liability in that the prosecution does not need to prove that the defendant intended to commit the offence.

In considering the first part of the Solicitor - General's Prosecution Guidelines requirements – the Evidential Test, the evidential test may well be fulfilled, in that all elements of a charge are met. However, in considering the second part, the Public Interest Test, an examination of the matter may well result in the public interest test not being met. Particularly if any harm was minor, caused by an error of judgement or genuine mistake, and unlikely to be repeated. In such a case a decision can correctly be made of 'no prosecution.' Conversely in the same scenario, if the person can be shown to be reckless, caused much damage, and had no remorse, i.e., is likely to repeat the offence, then public interest may well dictate a prosecution is justified.

6. These considerations are not comprehensive or exhaustive. The public interest considerations which may properly be considered when deciding whether the public interest requires prosecution will vary from case to case. In Fish and Game prosecutions, which are often of a regulatory nature, relevant considerations will include:
   a. Fish and Game's statutory objectives and enforcement priorities;
   b. The effect of a decision not to prosecute on public opinion;
   c. The obsolescence or obscurity of the law; and
   d. The prevalence of the alleged offence and the need for deterrence.

7. Cost is also a relevant factor when making an overall assessment of the public interest.

8. None of the above factors are necessarily determinative in themselves; all relevant and applicable public interest factors must be weighed.

9. A decision whether or not to prosecute must not be influenced by:
   a. The race, ethnic or national origins, sex, marital status, religious, ethical, or political beliefs of the offender; or
   b. The prosecutor's personal views regarding the victim or the offender; or
   c. Possible political advantage or disadvantage to Fish and Game; or
   d. The possible effect on the personal or professional reputation or prospects of those responsible for the prosecution decision.

Appendix 2 - Diversion

How to use diversion as a process.

1. Offence meets the criteria for prosecution, i.e., meets prosecution guidelines tests for evidential sufficiency **and** prosecution is in the public interest.

2. Obtain an up-to-date criminal history for the defendant.

3. Check defendant is eligible for diversion – no previous relevant convictions (note that the point of diversion is generally to prevent a person getting a first conviction, although if previous convictions are old, or unrelated to the current offence, diversion may still be considered).

4. File charging document(s) in Court as per usual commencement of a prosecution in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Act 2011. Summons in accordance with Criminal Procedure Rules 2012 and initial disclosure package in accordance with Criminal Disclosure Act 2008 is served on the defendant.

5. Diversion can be offered once the defendant has appeared in Court at first appearance which is usually in Registrars List in the District Court. This can have the advantage of the process being seen to have more judicial oversight. Having an offender appear in Court reinforces the seriousness of the offending and the unsuitability of resolving it by an out of court action, including by way of an infringement notice(s).

6. When diversion is offered at first court appearance the matter would be remanded off to another date to allow the defendant and prosecution to arrange diversion conditions and to allow time for the defendant to complete them.

7. Alternatively, the diversion offer can be made in writing to the defendant along with the summons and initial disclosure package. The advantage of this approach is that the process is streamlined, and in many cases the matters can be resolved prior to

the date of first appearance in court, therefore in most circumstances negating the need for any court appearances by either the prosecution or the defendant. (Note: some courts may insist on a prosecutor appearing in Court to seek to have the charge dismissed in open court, although most courts will agree to dismiss charges administratively following written application).

8. Diversion conditions should include:

   a. A contribution to summons service and prosecution costs. This should be set at a level which is fair, reasonable, transparent, and consistent with other similar matters and in consideration of the circumstances of the matter and the actual costs incurred by Fish & Game.

   b. The diversion agreement conditions do not have to be negotiable; the offer and conditions can be put to the defendant, although overall circumstances of the offending and the offender should be considered.

   c. A donation to an identifiable cause. For example, junior angler and hunter programmes, angler / hunter access, wetland development programmes. The level of donation should be set at a level consistent with an infringement fee for the same or similar offence. If the offence being diverted is not an infringement offence, a decision to fee level should be made considering infringement offences fee levels, and the overall circumstances of the offending.

   d. Diversion can include surrender of gear for disposal, e.g., ammunition / fishing gear where there is good reason for this to happen.

   e. A written apology may be required to demonstrate the defendant's acceptance of responsibility and remorse.

   f. In some cases, diversion can include a donation to another external charity.

9. When the diversion conditions are met, the prosecution must ensure that the court is advised in writing that diversion is completed, and request the Court dismisses the charge(s). This is a requirement of Section 148 of the Criminal Procedure Act 2011. This can be done by the prosecutor at the next court date, or administratively by written application to the Court which is the most efficient process if diversion is

completed prior to the date of first appearance. For sake of transparency the court can be advised in this application what the diversion conditions were, although this is not a requirement. When advising the Court that diversion is complete an application should be also made for the charge(s) to be dismissed pursuant to Section 147 of the Criminal Procedure Act 2011.

10. If diversion is not completed by the agreed date the prosecution will proceed as per any other non-diversion prosecution, or an extension of time could be granted by the Court to complete diversion if the prosecution seeks an extension.

11. When diversion is completed, the defendant can be advised that they do not need to appear in Court at the next Court date, as the matter is being dismissed. If represented by a lawyer, the Criminal Procedure Act does not require the defendant to appear in court if they have already been excused.

Conservation (Infringement Offence) Regulations 2019
Schedule 2 Penalties for infringement offences under Conservation Act 1987

rr 4, 5

Section	Description of offence	Infringement fee ($)	Maximum fine ($)
51B(2)	Taking sports fish in contravention of Anglers Notice	400	800
51C(3)	Taking sports fish without licence	400	800
51D(2)	Possessing sports fish taken unlawfully	400	800
51E(3)	Establishing, managing, or operating fish hatchery for sports fish in breach of regulations	800	1,600
51F(3)	Failing to comply with section 51F(1) (which relates to unauthorised conduct in relation to spawning fish)	800	1,600
51G(2)	Failing to comply with restrictions on fishing	800	1,600
51H(2)	Transferring or releasing live aquatic life	800	1,600
51I(2)	Fishing in closed season	600	1,200
51J(3)	Buying or selling sports fish for purpose of sale contrary to Act	800	1,600
51K(2)	Possessing certain kinds of fish without approval	800	1,600
51L(3)	Using hazardous substances, etc, to take or destroy fish	800	1,600

Wildlife Regulations 1955
Schedule 5 Penalties for infringement offences under Wildlife Act 1953

r 47

Schedule 5: inserted, on 3 February 2020, by regulation 120 of the Conservation (Infringement Offences in Regulations) Amendment Regulations 2019 (LI 2019/326).

Section	Description of offence	Infringement fee ($)	Maximum fine ($)
70B(2)	Hunting during close season	600	1,200
70C(5)	Hunting without licence during open season	400	800
70D(2)	Contravening terms of open season notification	400	800
70E(3)	Hunting wildlife in contravention of conditions prescribed by Minister	400	800
70F(3)	Failing to produce licence on demand	200	400
70G(2)	Hunting or killing any absolutely protected wildlife	800	1,600
70G(2)	Hunting or killing any partially protected wildlife	600	1,200
70G(2)	Hunting or killing any game	400	800

Section	Description of offence	Infringement fee ($)	Maximum fine ($)
70G(2)	Buying, disposing of, or possessing any absolutely protected wildlife	600	1,200
70G(2)	Buying, disposing of, or possessing any partially protected wildlife	400	800
70G(2)	Buying, disposing of, or possessing any game	400	800
70G(2)	Buying, disposing of, or possessing any skin, feathers, or other portion, or any egg, of any absolutely protected wildlife	600	1,200
70G(2)	Buying, disposing of, or possessing any skin, feathers, or other portion, or any egg, of any partially protected wildlife	400	800
70G(2)	Buying, disposing of, or possessing any skin, feathers, or other portion, or any egg, of any game	400	800
70G(2)	Robbing, disturbing, destroying, or possessing the nest of any absolutely protected wildlife	800	1,600
70G(2)	Robbing, disturbing, destroying, or possessing the nest of any partially protected wildlife	600	1,200
70G(2)	Robbing, disturbing, destroying, or possessing the nest of any game	400	800
70H(3)	Taking game in contravention of Act or notification	400	800
70I(3)	Failing to comply with condition of authority to take or kill wildlife	400	800

Prosecutions only to be initiated or continued if the test for prosecution is met

Test for prosecution met if:

1. Evidence which can be adduced in Court is sufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction – the Evidential Test; **and**
2. Prosecution is required in the public interest – the Public Interest Test.

Each aspect of test must be considered separately and satisfied before a decision to prosecute is made. Evidential test must be satisfied before public interest test is considered.

The Evidential test – Step 1

Reasonable prospect of conviction exists if there is reliable and admissible evidence which prosecution can adduce before a Court and an impartial Judge or jury could reasonably be expected to be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that individual prosecuted has committed an offence – Consider each of the following elements:

- Evidence of an offence by an identifiable individual
- Evidence reliable and credible
- Evidence legally admissible
- What offence(s) have been committed? Consider elements of the evidence against the ingredients which establish each offence
- Evidence capable of reaching required standard of proof – beyond reasonable doubt
- Reasonable prospect of conviction based on evidence – anticipate and evaluate likely defences

Is the evidential test satisfied?

No

Decision of "no prosecution" taken if evidential test not met. Does not preclude further consideration of case if new and additional evidence becomes available, or a review of original decision is required (rare step)

Yes – also consider the public interest test

The public interest test – Step 2

Does the public interest require a prosecution?

Public interest considerations for prosecution (list is illustrative only):

- Seriousness of the offence – predominant consideration;
- Violence / threats involved;
- Prevalence of offence and need for deterrence;
- Defendant has relevant previous convictions and / or reparation / warnings for similar offences;
- Offence premeditated or carried out by a group;
- Defendant ringleader or organiser of offence;
- Offence resulted in financial loss / risk of harm;
- Offence committed against a Ranger serving the public;
- Offence involved false or misleading behaviour;
- Effect decision not to prosecute.

Public interest considerations against prosecution (list is illustrative only):

- Court likely to impose small / nominal penalty;
- Offence minor and unlikely to be repeated
- Loss or harm minor and result of a single incident, especially if judgment error or genuine mistake;
- Obscurity of the law;
- Age – youth / elderly;
- Physical / mental health of offender;
- No previous convictions;
- Offender rectified loss / harm caused – but shouldn't be able to buy way out of prosecution;
- Proper alternatives to prosecution available;
- Cost of prosecution.

No

Decision of "no prosecution" taken. Does not preclude consideration of alternatives to a prosecution if evidential test met., e.g., warning letter, youth warning with parental follow up.

Yes

Decision of "prosecution" taken – Charging document(s) laid within statutory timeframe. File should be reviewed regularly. **Diversion** offered is appropriate.

OSH Report for November 2025 Council Meeting

I have begun trailing the system. Richie Cosgrove has had further meetings with providers to establish eh prospect for a national contract that regions can opt into. The main differences of having a single enterprise account are outlined below.

Functionality

With Enterprise, all of existing regional accounts sit under one parent structure. This provides:

- **Central oversight:** The Admin user can view trips, alerts, and users across all regions from a single dashboard, without logging in and out of multiple accounts.
- **Consistent safety management:** You can apply standard settings and escalation rules across all teams, ensuring everyone operates to the same company policy.
- **Simplified inReach device management:** Devices can be shared or reassigned between regions without reconfiguration, and billing can be consolidated for easier administration.
- **Organisation wide reporting:** Enterprise allows consolidated reporting and compliance data across all regions, something that isn't possible when each operates independently.

This structure makes it much easier to manage growth, maintain compliance, and ensure every region operates under the same safety framework.

Privacy

Each regional organisation still controls its own users, trips, and alerts. Enterprise simply gives higher-level visibility to overall safety performance and compliance, not individual private data. Access remains permission-based, and privacy settings continue to protect user information exactly as they do now.

Cost

There is no increase in cost to move to the Enterprise setup.

Minutes of a Staff Meeting

on Monday 6th October 2025 commencing at 9:00am.

PRESENT: D. Klee, J, D. Lelievre, B. Jarvis-Child, R. Simmonds, A. Daniel, C. Robertson

Apologies: Danielle Le Lievre, Mischa Davis

H&S matters arising from previous meeting:

- Propeller has been replaced.
- Chainsaw mitt has been installed, and new chaps are not needed as existing ones are up to code.
- Tailgate forms are being filled in.
- Fire extinguisher training completed.

Accidents or near misses recorded since last meeting; *Nil*

If an accident does occur notification needs to be done straight away. The accident form needs to be filled in. If a near miss this needs to be added to the register.

Health & Safety system documents – the risk register needs to be updated regularly with any new equipment.

Discussed the use of the newly developed H&S calendar and the need for this to be updated by all staff regularly.

Upcoming Actions and Events

Item	Date due	Name
Health & Safety documentation to be filled in	Before Xmas	All
Fire extinguisher – check to see if it needs to be bolted in in a vehicle.	ASAP	Adam
Boat to be taken for service – still leaking	6 Oct	Adam
Emergency drill to be done	Before Xmas	All
Foghorn for front desk needed	Before Xmas	Adam

Completed tailgate forms since Previous Agenda.

Date	Activity
1 October	Dani and Dave Malcom opening day ranging.
1 October	Adam and Tom Millo opening day ranging.
1-2 October	Beau and David opening day ranging and access.

David Klee
Chief Executive
04/11/2025