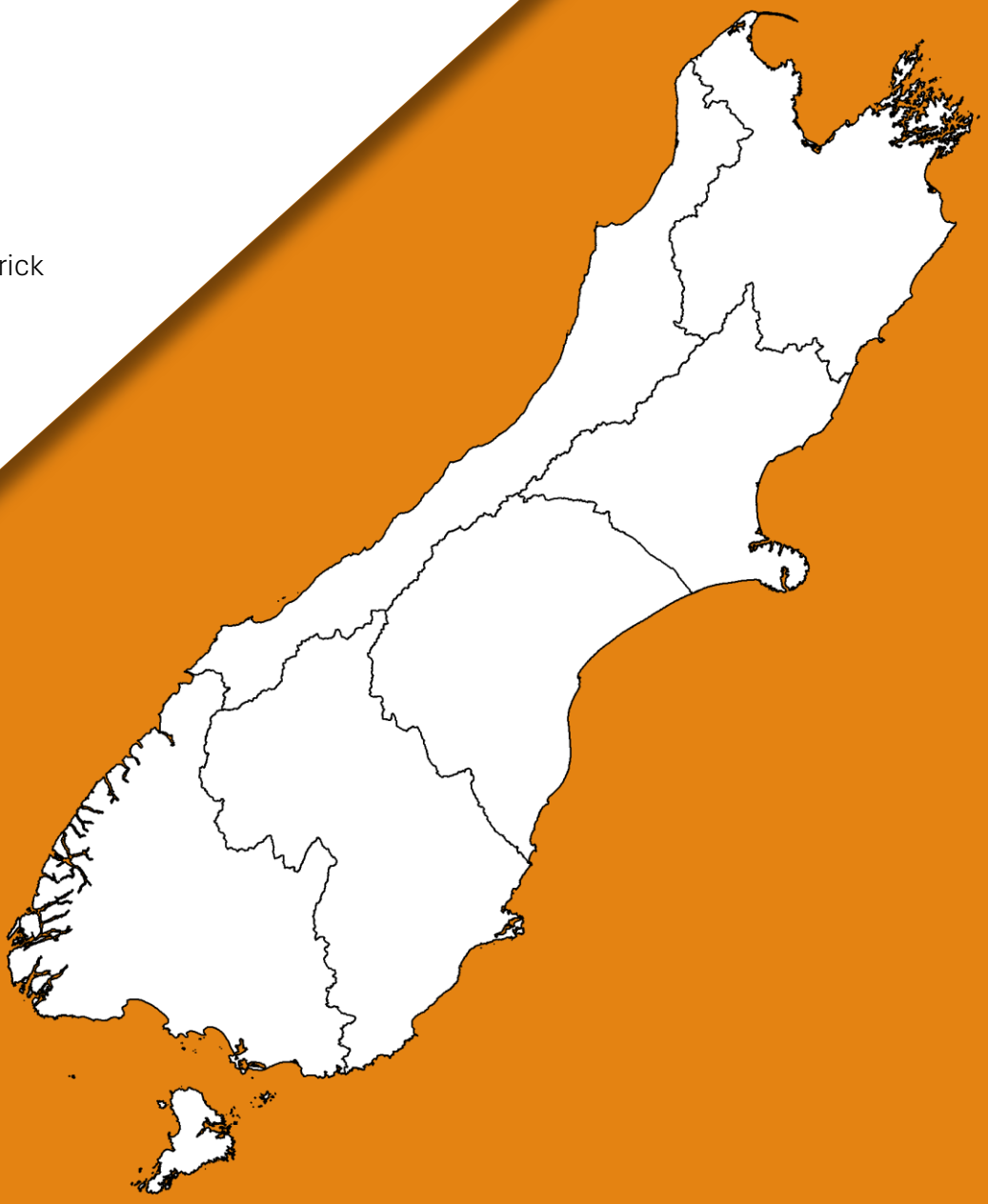
South Island Hunter Harvest Report

2025

M.J. Garrick & H. Sanders Garrick



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South Island

Hunter Harvest Report

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

During the 1993 game bird season, Fish and Game initiated a coordinated telephone harvest survey of full season game bird licence holders to estimate game bird harvest and activity in New Zealand. Each Fish and Game region is responsible to conduct their own surveys of licence holders at set intervals throughout the game bird season. This report represents the third an annual publication outlining hunter harvest and activity estimates from data collected from hunter harvest surveys conducted throughout the South Island. These results are presented at both a regional and an island wide level.

By extrapolating the data from individual surveys, Fish and Game staff estimate the number of birds harvested in each region and the number of days hunters spend afield, or hunter days. See Appendix I for more details on the data analysis process.

In this report, we detail hunter activity and waterfowl harvest for hunters across the South Island of New Zealand, and for each South Island region of Fish and Game. This report is specific to South Island hunters, and does not include data from hunters from the North Island.

Game species included in this report are mallard (rakiraki), grey ducks (pārera), paradise shelducks (pūtangitangi), Australasian shovelers (kuruwhengi), pūkeko, and black swans (kakīānau). For the purposes of this report, mallards and grey ducks are combined and are referred to as greylards.

In 2025, Fish & Game staff recorded data from

2,596 hunt days

over the course of

5,667 surveys

SOUTH ISLAND

Hunter Days

During the 2025 season, hunters reported spending 49,086 days afield hunting waterfowl.

Hunter days in 2025 were similar to the 2024 season.

The long-term average is 54,018 hunter days, with a slight declining trend since 2015.

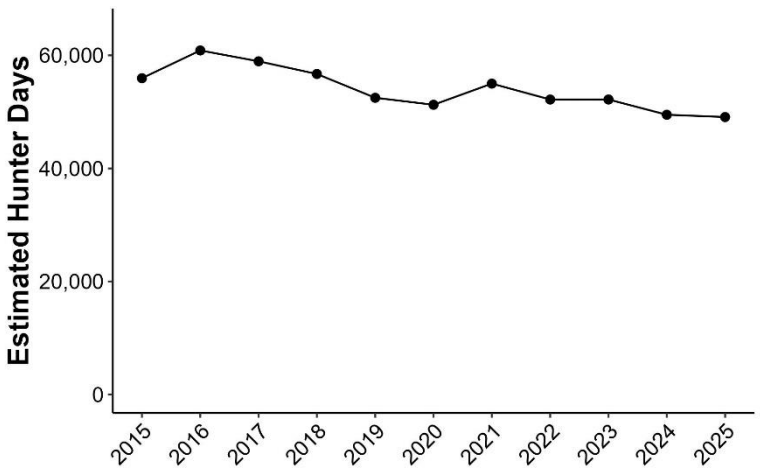

Figure 1. The number of estimated hunter days by year for the South Island of New Zealand, 2015-2025.

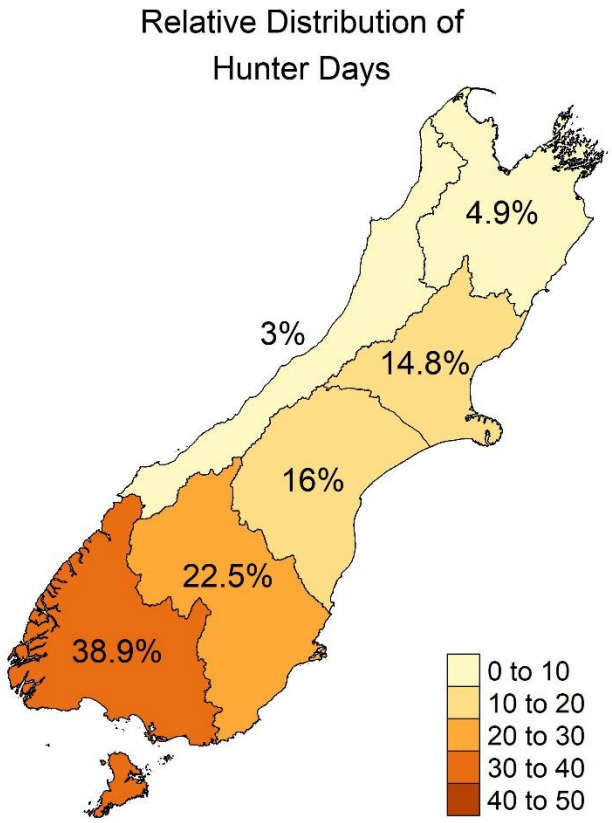

Figure 2. The percent of total days hunted on the South Island that were recorded in each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 43% of total hunter days across the South Island during the 2025 game bird season.

The majority of hunter days were spent in Southland (39%), followed by Otago (23%), and Central South Island (16%).

The relative distribution of hunter days in 2025 was largely similar to the long-term average for each region.

Harvest

Greylards

During the 2025 season, hunters harvested an estimated 254,159 greylards across the South Island.

This represents, roughly, a 27% increase from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of greylards harvested annually is 249,053. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in greylard harvest.

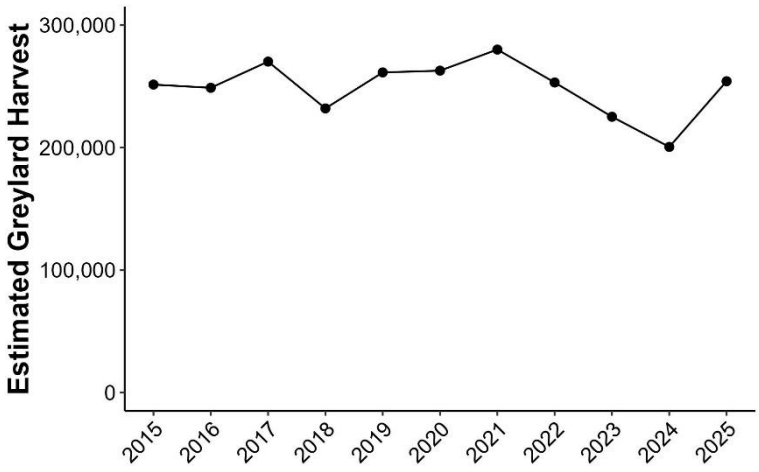

Figure 3. The number of estimated greylards harvested by year on the South Island of New Zealand, 2015-2025.

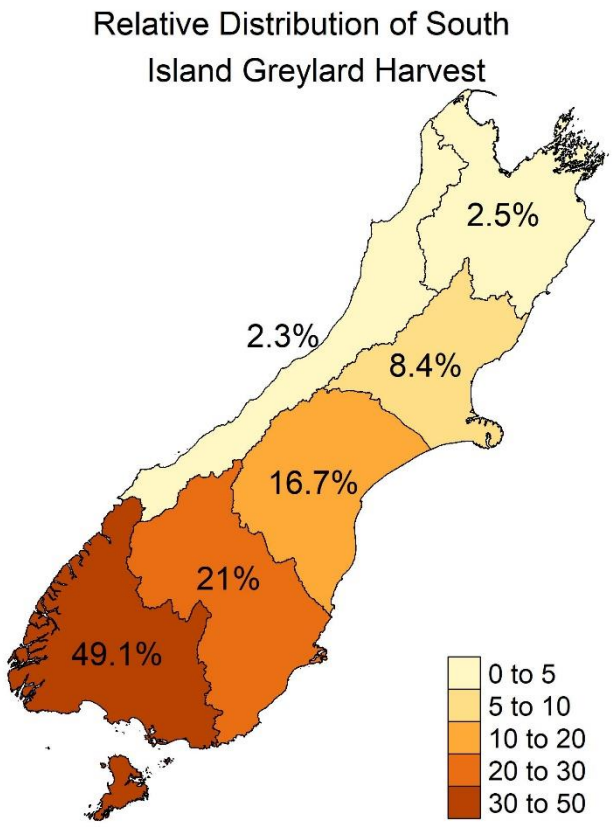

Figure 4. The percent of total greylards harvested on the South Island that were harvested in each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 55% of total greylard harvest across the South Island during the 2025 game bird season.

The majority of greylards were harvested in Southland (49%), followed by Otago (21%) and Central South Island (17%).

While the proportion of greylards harvested varies by a few percentage points year to year, the relative distribution of greylard harvest across the South Island has been largely similar since 2015.

Harvest

Paradise Shelducks

During the 2025 season, hunters harvested an estimated 59,787 paradise shelducks across the South Island.

This represents, roughly, a 4% increase from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of paradise shelducks harvested annually is 52,941. There is an increasing trend in paradise shelduck harvest since 2015.

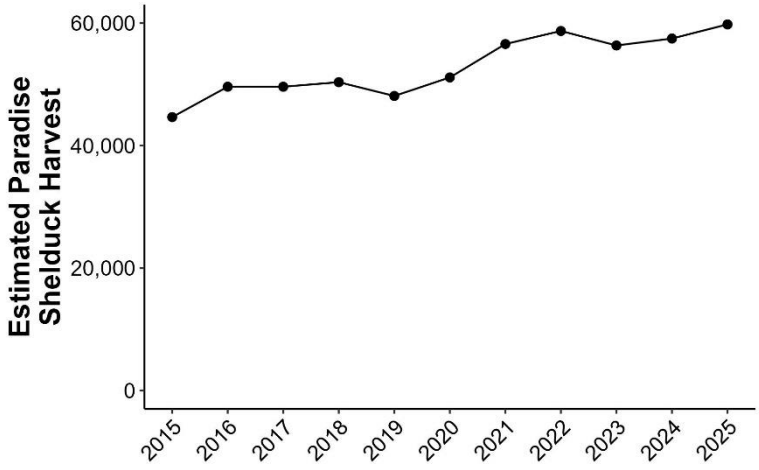

Figure 5. The number of estimated paradise shelducks harvested by year on the South Island of New Zealand, 2015-2025.

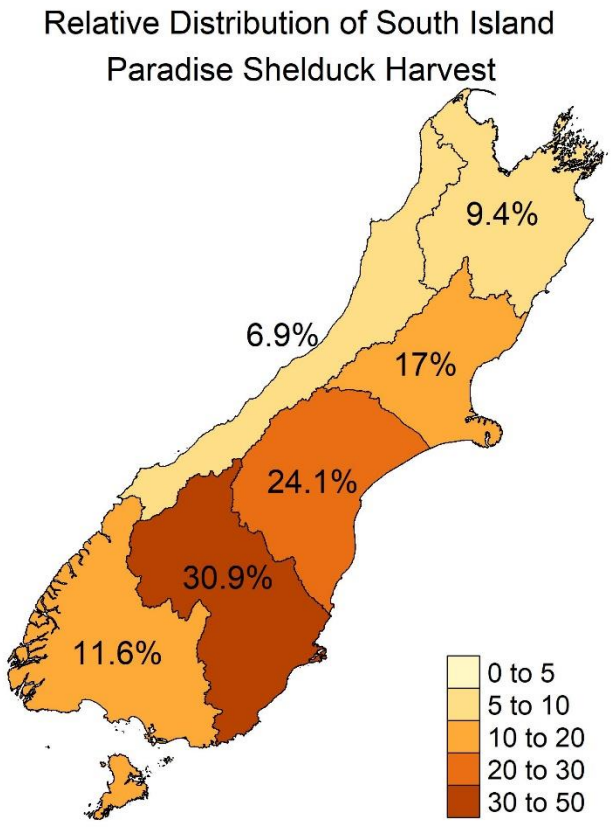

Figure 6. The percent of total paradise shelducks harvested on the South Island that were harvested in each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 51% of total paradise shelduck harvest across the South Island during the 2025 game bird season.

The majority of paradise shelduck harvest occurred in Otago (31%), followed by Central South Island (24%) and North Canterbury (17%).

Proportionally more paradise shelduck harvest occurred in the Otago by 11%, marking the second consecutive year of increase.

Relative harvest has decreased in North Canterbury by 6% and in Nelson/Marlborough by 3.5% relative to the 2024 season.

Harvest

Australasian Shoveler

During the 2025 season, hunters harvested an estimated 1,576 shoveler across the South Island.

This represents roughly a 34% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of shovelers harvested annually is 3,184. Regulations introduced in 2023 to reduce shoveler harvest in Southland and Otago have resulted in a significant reduction to South Island shoveler harvest.

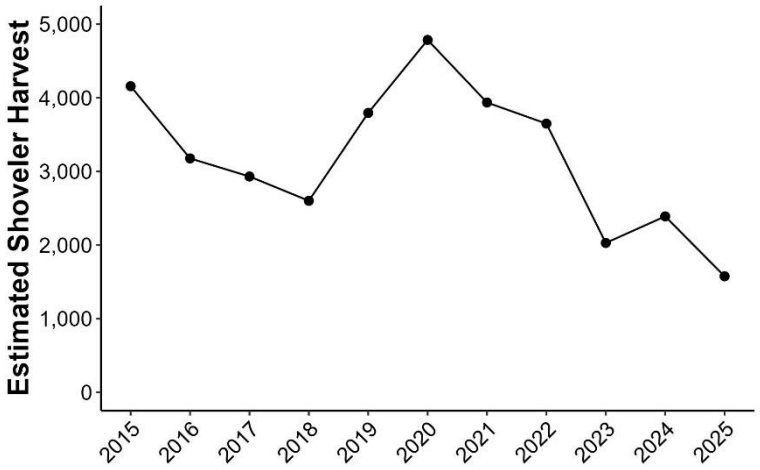

Figure 7. The number of estimated Australasian shoveler harvested by year on the South Island of New Zealand, 2015-2025.

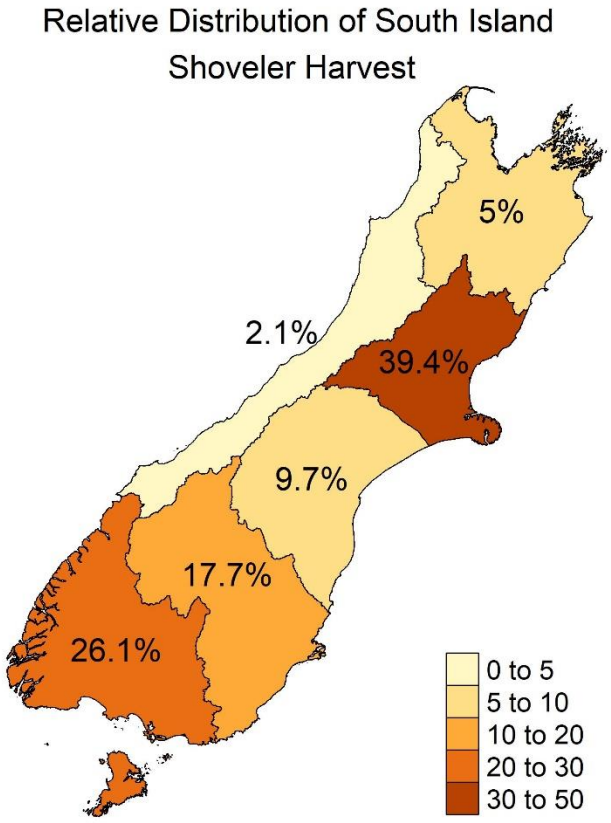

Figure 8. The percent of total Australasian shoveler harvested on the South Island that were harvested in each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 48% of total shoveler harvest across the South Island during the 2025 game bird season.

The majority of shoveler harvest occurred in North Canterbury (39%), followed by Southland (26%) and Otago (18%).

Compared with the 2024 season, relative shoveler harvest has increased by 12% in North Canterbury and 8% in Southland. Relative shoveler harvest decreased by 12% in Central South Island, 5% in Nelson/Marlborough, and 2% in Otago.

Harvest

Black Swans

During the 2025 season, hunters harvested an estimated 3,778 black swans across the South Island.

This represents roughly a 30% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of black swans harvested is 3,413. There is weak evidence of an increasing trend in black swan harvest since 2015.

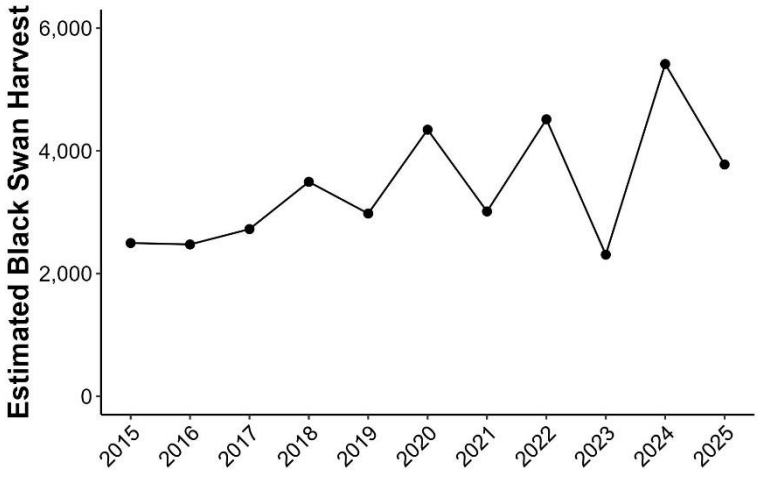

Figure 9. The number of estimated black swans harvested by year on the South Island of New Zealand, 2015-2025.

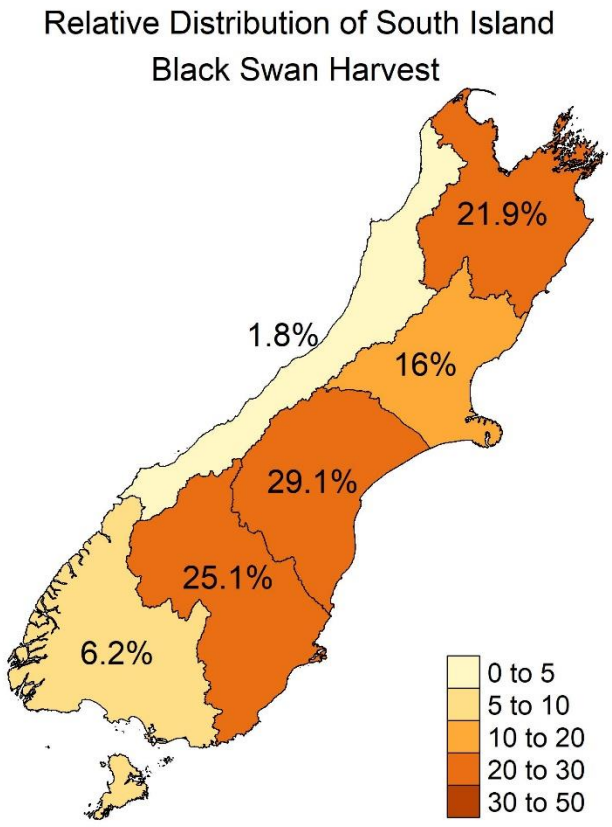

Figure 10. The percent of total black swans harvested on the South Island that were harvested in each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 51% of total black swan harvest across the South Island during the 2025 game bird season.

The majority of black swan harvest occurred in Central South Island (29%), followed by Otago (25%) and Nelson/Marlborough (22%).

Compared with the 2024 season, relative black swan harvest has decreased in Southland by nearly 15% and in Otago by 8%. Relative harvest has increased in Nelson/Marlborough by 16% and in Central South Island by 8%.

Regional black swan harvest varies substantially each year, with no evident long term trends in harvest distribution.

Harvest

Pūkeko

During the 2025 season, hunters harvested an estimated 1,411 pūkeko across the South Island.

This represents roughly a 43% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of pūkeko harvested annually is 2,485. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in pūkeko harvest.

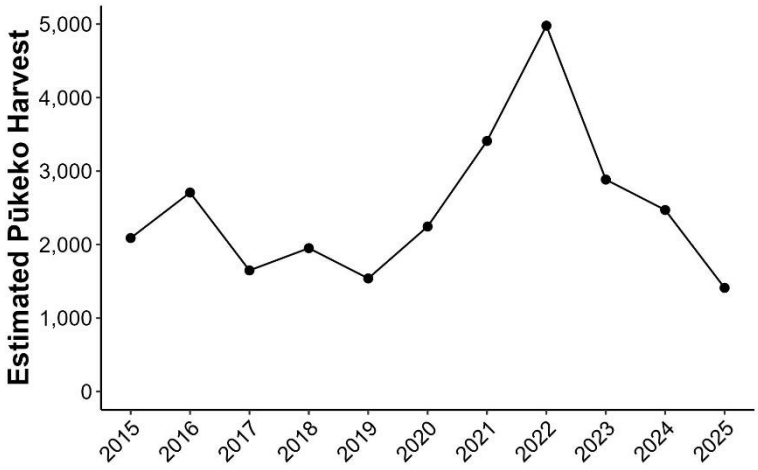

Figure 11. The number of estimated pūkeko harvested by year on the South Island of New Zealand, 2015-2025.

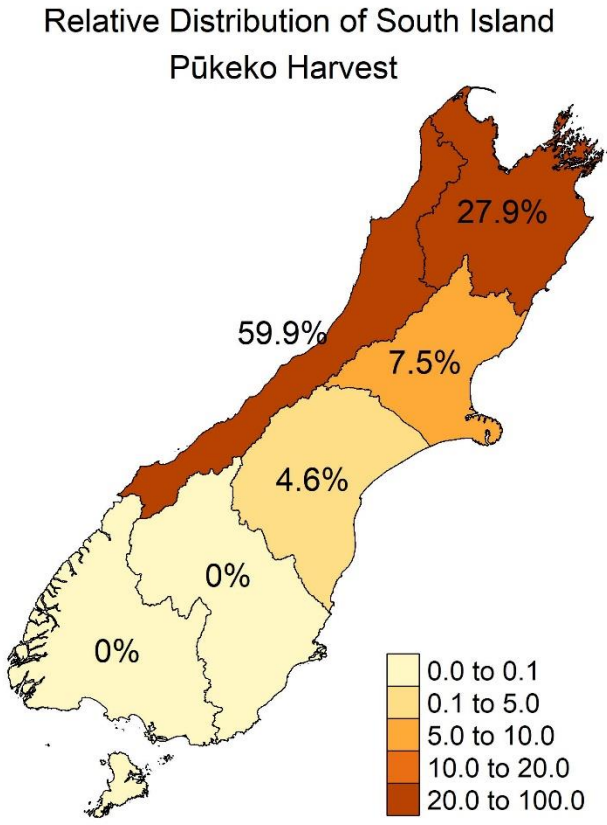

Figure 12. The percent of total pūkeko harvested on the South Island that were harvested in each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 37% of total pūkeko harvest across the South Island during the 2025 game bird season.

The majority of pūkeko harvest occurred in the West Coast (60%), followed by Nelson/Marlborough (28%), and North Canterbury (8%).

Compared to the 2024 season, relative harvest has increased in Nelson/Marlborough by 8%, while relative harvest decreased in the West Coast by 13%. Central South Island, which reported no pūkeko harvest in 2024, reported a relative harvest similar to the 2023 distribution.

NELSON/MARLBOROUGH

Hunter Days

During the 2025 season, hunters spent an estimated 2,392 hunter days hunting within the Nelson/Marlborough region.

Hunter days decreased by about 29% relative to the 2024 season.

The long-term average is 3,455 hunter days, with a slight declining trend since 2015.

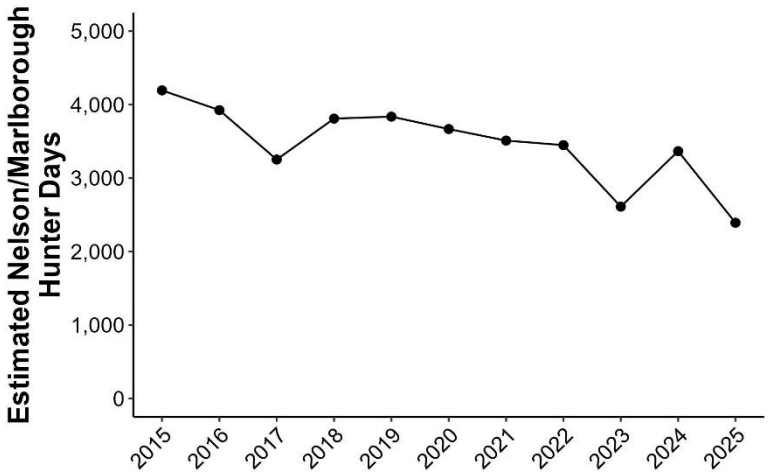

Figure 13. The number of estimated hunter days by year for the Nelson/Marlborough Region, 2015-2025.

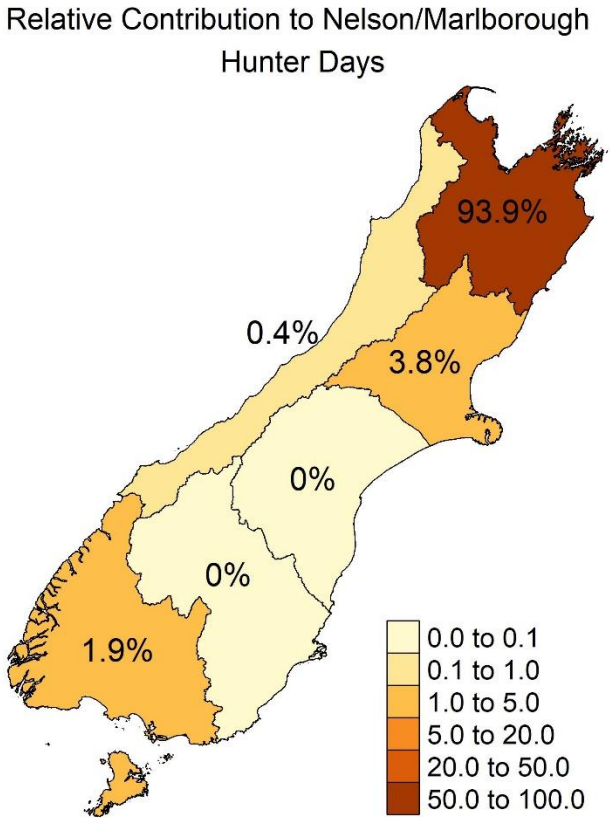

Figure 14. The percent of total days hunted in the Nelson/Marlborough region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 40% of total hunter days in Nelson/Marlborough during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Nelson/Marlborough accounted for 94% of estimated hunter days, followed by 4% from North Canterbury, 2% from Southland, and <1% from the West Coast.

Hunters from Nelson/Marlborough accounted for 8% of estimated hunter days in the West Coast, 2% in North Canterbury, and <1% in Central South Island, Otago and Southland.

Harvest

Greylards

During the 2025 season, an estimated 6,297 greylards were harvested in the Nelson/Marlborough region.

This represents, roughly, a 10% increase from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of greylards harvested annually is 7,536. There is no evidence of a long term trend in greylard harvest.

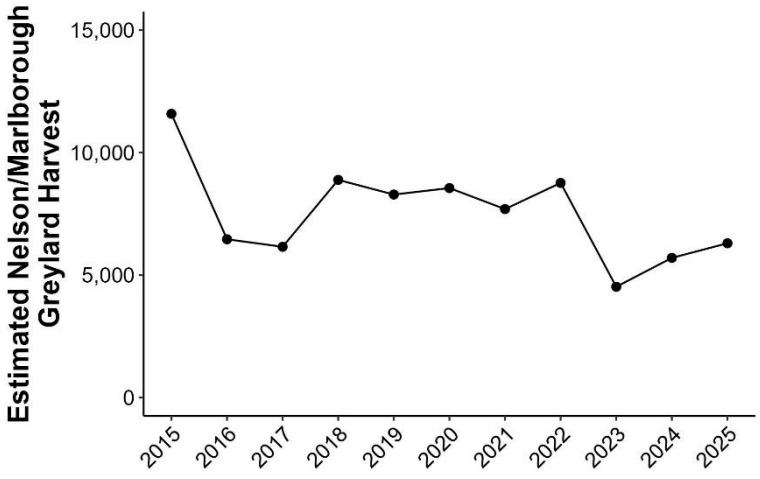

Figure 15. The number of estimated greylards harvested by year in the Nelson/Marlborough region, 2015-2025.

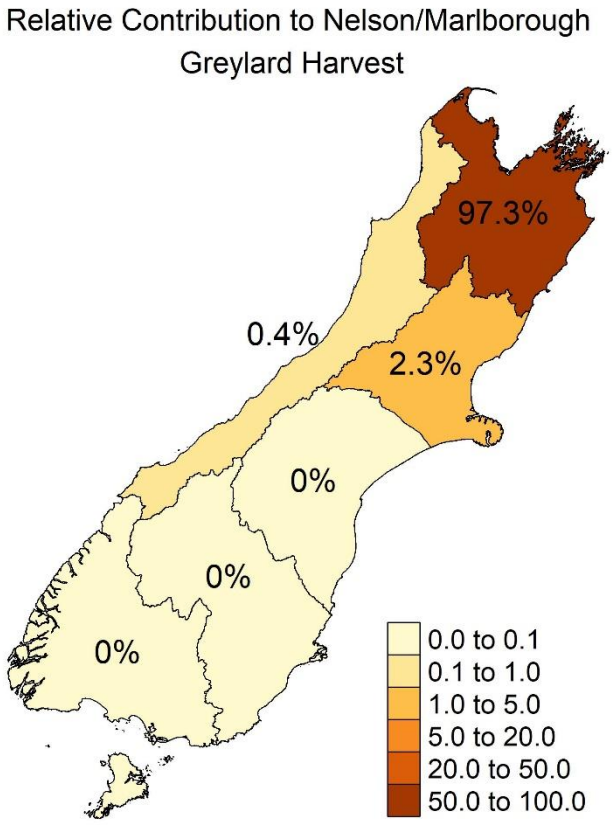

Figure 16. The percent of greylards harvested in the Nelson/Marlborough region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 46% of total greylard harvest in the Nelson/Marlborough region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Nelson/Marlborough were responsible for 97% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 2% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from North Canterbury, and <1% was attributed to hunters from the West Coast.

Hunters from Nelson/Marlborough were responsible for 4% of the estimated greylard harvest in the West Coast, 3% in North Canterbury, and < 1% in Central South Island, Otago, and Southland.

Harvest

Paradise Shelducks

During the 2025 season, hunters harvested an estimated 5,634 paradise shelducks in the Nelson/Marlborough region.

This represents, roughly, a 24% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of paradise shelducks harvested annually is 6,519. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in paradise shelduck harvest.

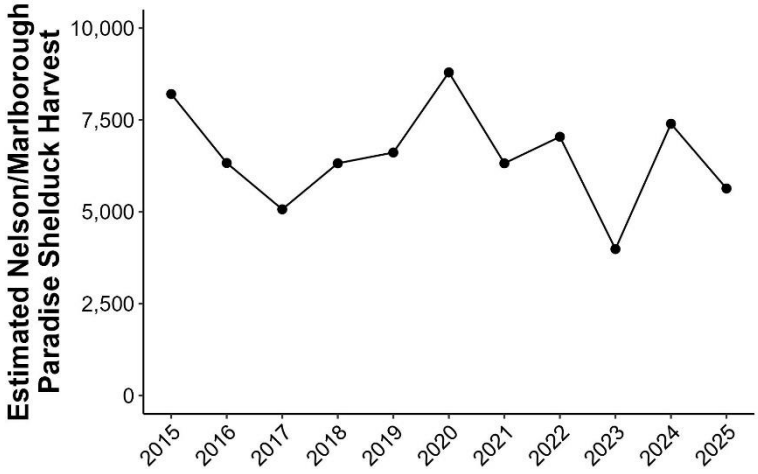

Figure 17. The number of estimated paradise shelducks harvested by year in the Nelson/Marlborough region, 2015-2025.

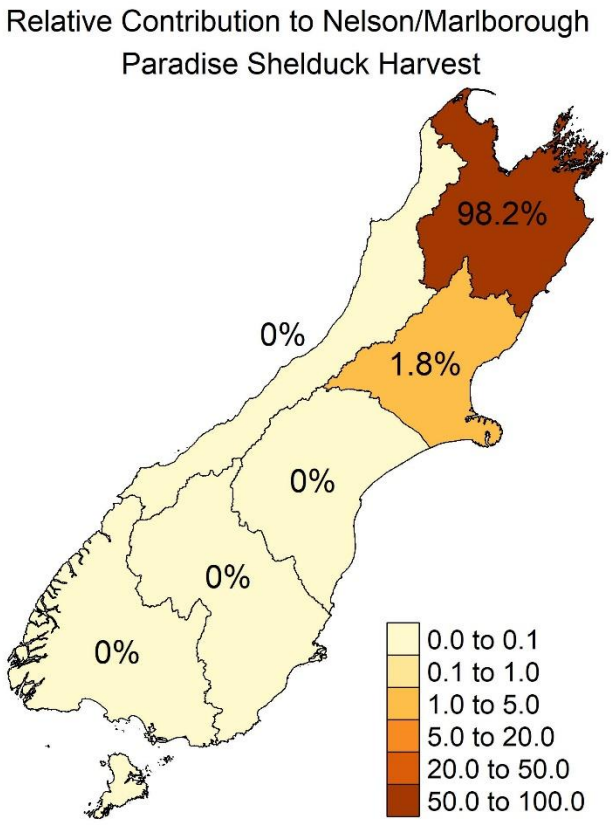

Figure 18. The percent of total paradise shelducks harvested in the Nelson/Marlborough region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 51% of total paradise shelduck harvest in the Nelson/Marlborough region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Nelson/Marlborough were responsible for 98% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 2% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from North Canterbury.

Hunters from Nelson/Marlborough were responsible for 10% of estimated paradise shelduck harvest in the West Coast, 5% in North Canterbury, 2% in Central South Island, and 1% in Otago and Southland.

Harvest

Australasian Shovelers

During the 2025 season, an estimated 79 shovelers were harvested in the Nelson/Marlborough region.

This represents, roughly, a 68% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of shovelers harvested annually is 172. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in shoveler harvest.

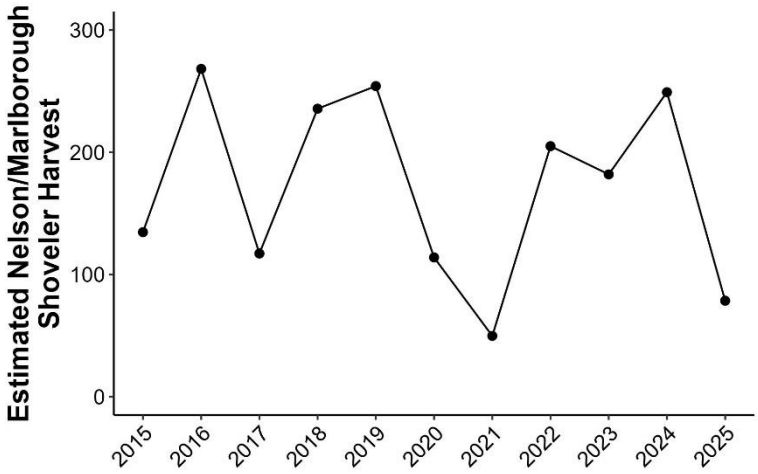

Figure 19. The number of estimated shovelers harvested by year in the Nelson/Marlborough region, 2015-2025.

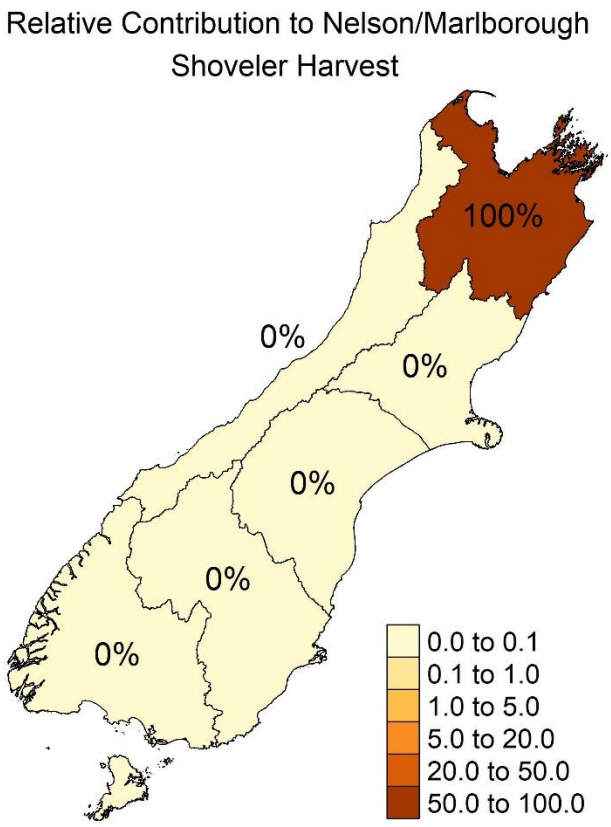

Figure 20. The percent of total shovelers harvested in the Nelson/Marlborough region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 50% of total shoveler harvest in the Nelson/Marlborough region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Nelson/Marlborough were the only hunters that reported harvesting shovelers in the Nelson/Marlborough region.

Hunters from Nelson/Marlborough were responsible for 4% of estimated shoveler harvest in Otago, but did not report harvesting shoveler in any other region.

Harvest

Black Swans

During the 2025 season, an estimated 827 black swans were harvested in the Nelson/Marlborough region.

This represents roughly a 160% increase from the 2024 season harvest, the largest black swan harvest in Nelson/Marlborough since 2015.

The long-term average number of black swans harvested annually is 312. The 2025 harvest constitutes a substantial departure from the previous trend.

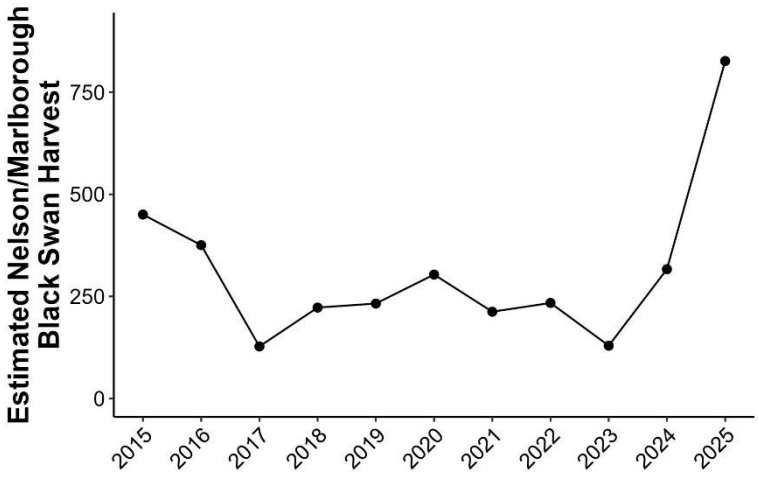

Figure 21. The number of estimated black swans harvested by year in the Nelson/Marlborough region, 2015-2025.

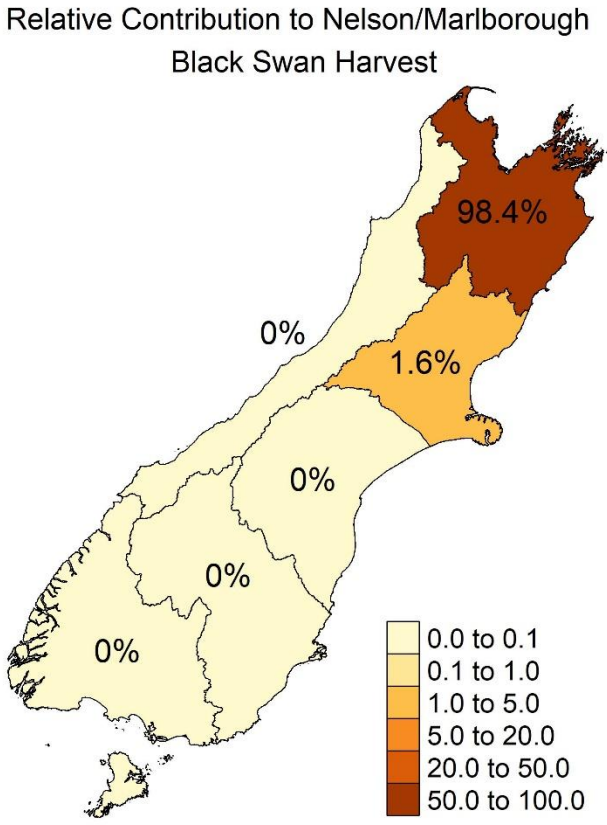

Figure 22. The percent of black swans harvested in the Nelson/Marlborough region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 56% of total black swan harvest in the Nelson/Marlborough region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Nelson/Marlborough were responsible for 98% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 2% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from North Canterbury.

Hunters from Nelson/Marlborough were responsible for 7% of the estimated black swan harvest in Otago, 3% in Central South Island, and 2% in North Canterbury.

Harvest

Pūkeko

During the 2025 season, an estimated 394 pūkeko were harvested in the Nelson/Marlborough region.

This represents roughly a 20% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of pūkeko harvested annually is 602. There is no evidence of a long term trend in pūkeko harvest.

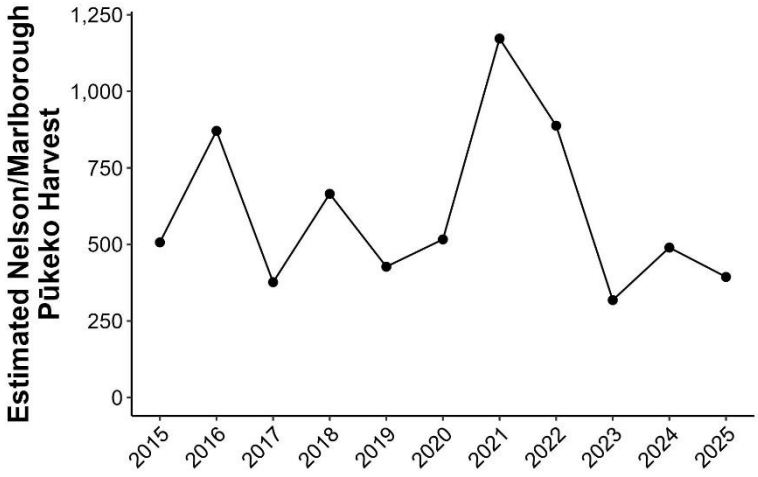

Figure 23. The number of estimated pūkeko harvested by year in the Nelson/Marlborough region, 2015-2025.

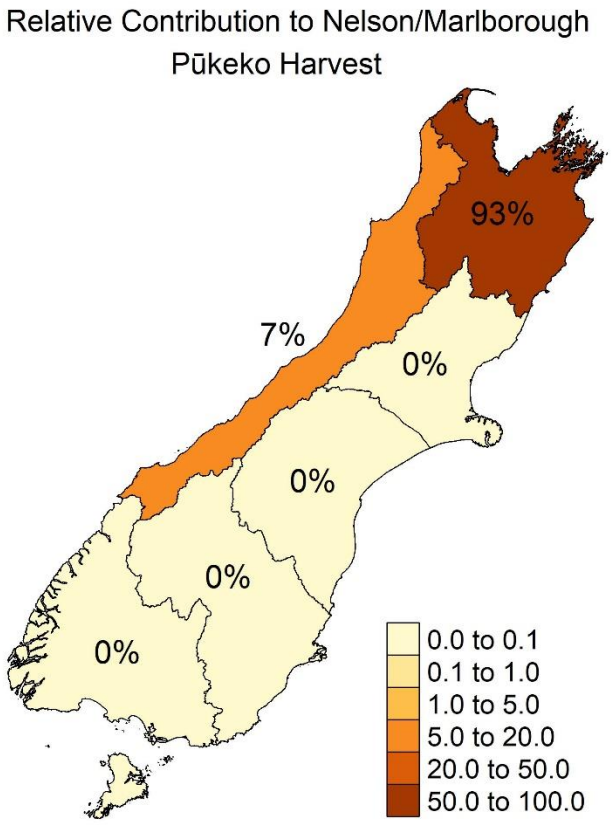

Figure 24. The percent of pūkeko harvested in the Nelson/Marlborough region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 34% of total pūkeko harvest in the Nelson/Marlborough region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Nelson/Marlborough were the responsible for 93% of estimated pūkeko harvest in the region. An additional 7% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from the West Coast.

Hunters from Nelson/Marlborough were responsible for 7% of estimated pūkeko harvest in the West Coast.

NORTH CANTERBURY

Hunter Days

During the 2025 season, hunters spent an estimated 7,271 hunter days hunting within the North Canterbury region.

Hunter days declined in 2025 by about 3% relative to the 2024 season.

The long-term average is 7,579 hunter days, with no evidence of a long term trend.

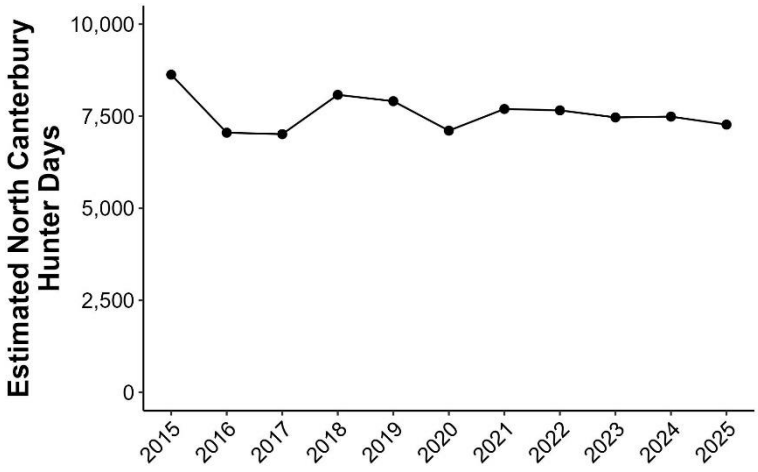

Figure 25. The number of estimated hunter days by year for the North Canterbury Region, 2015-2025.

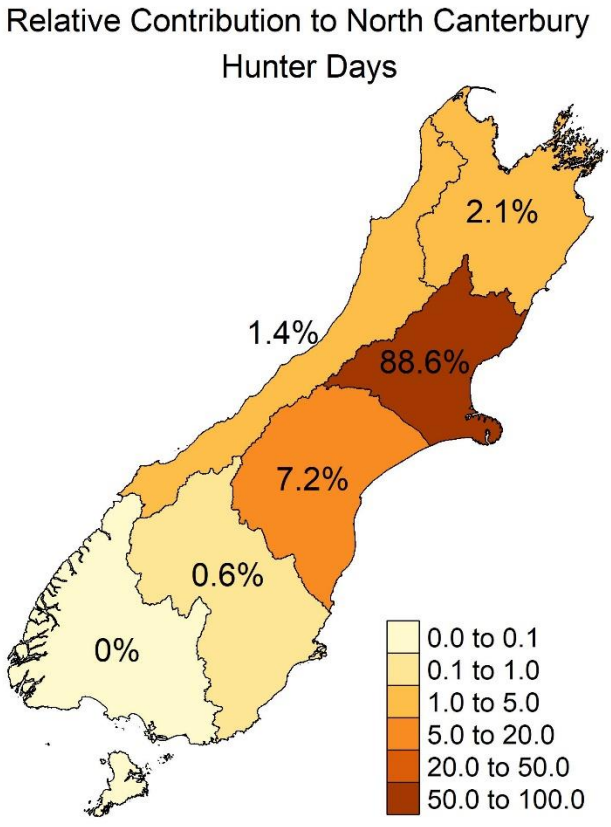

Figure 26. The percent of total days hunted in the North Canterbury region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 28% of total hunter days in North Canterbury during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from North Canterbury accounted for 89% of estimated hunter days in the North Canterbury region. An additional 7% of hunter days were attributed to hunters from Central South Island, 2% from Nelson/Marlborough, 1% from the West Coast, and <1% from Otago.

Hunters from North Canterbury accounted for 29% of estimated hunter days in the West Coast, 16% in Central South Island, and 4% in Otago and Nelson/Marlborough, and 2% in Southland.

Harvest

Greylards

During the 2025 season, an estimated 21,342 greylards were harvested in the North Canterbury region.

Harvest in 2025 was similar to the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of greylards harvested annually is 25,785. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in greylard harvest.

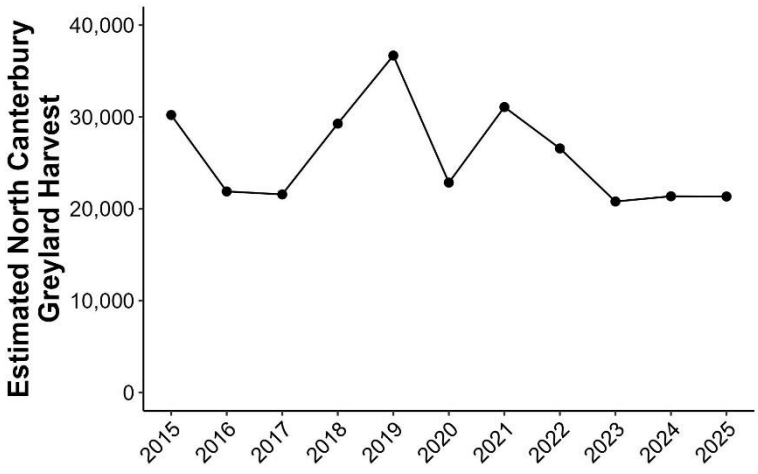

Figure 27. The number of estimated greylards harvested by year on the North Canterbury region, 2015-2025.

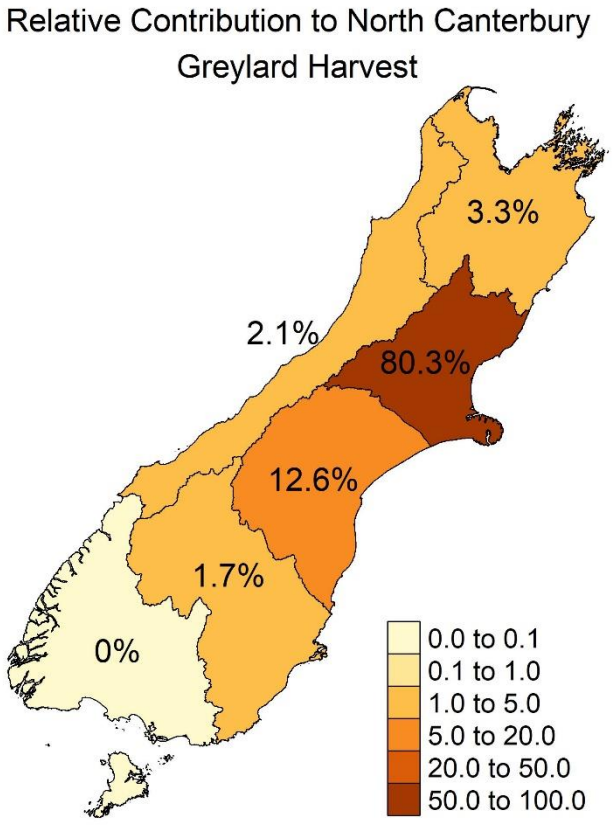

Figure 28. The percent of greylards harvested in the North Canterbury region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 46% of total greylard harvest in the North Canterbury region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from North Canterbury were responsible for 80% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 13% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from Central South Island, followed by 3% to hunters from Nelson/Marlborough, and 2% to hunters from the West Coast and Otago.

Hunters from North Canterbury were responsible for 33% of the estimated greylard harvest in the West Coast, 14% in Central South Island, 3% in Otago and Southland, and 2% in Nelson/Marlborough.

Harvest

Paradise Shelducks

During the 2025 season, hunters harvested an estimated 10,176 paradise shelducks in the North Canterbury region.

This represents, roughly, a 22% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of paradise shelducks harvested annually is 8,072. There is an increasing trend in paradise shelduck harvest since 2015.

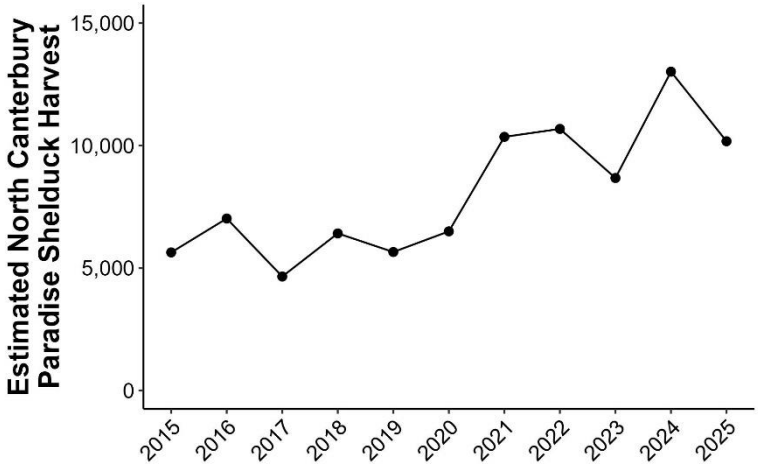

Figure 29. The number of estimated paradise shelducks harvested by year in the North Canterbury region, 2015-2025.

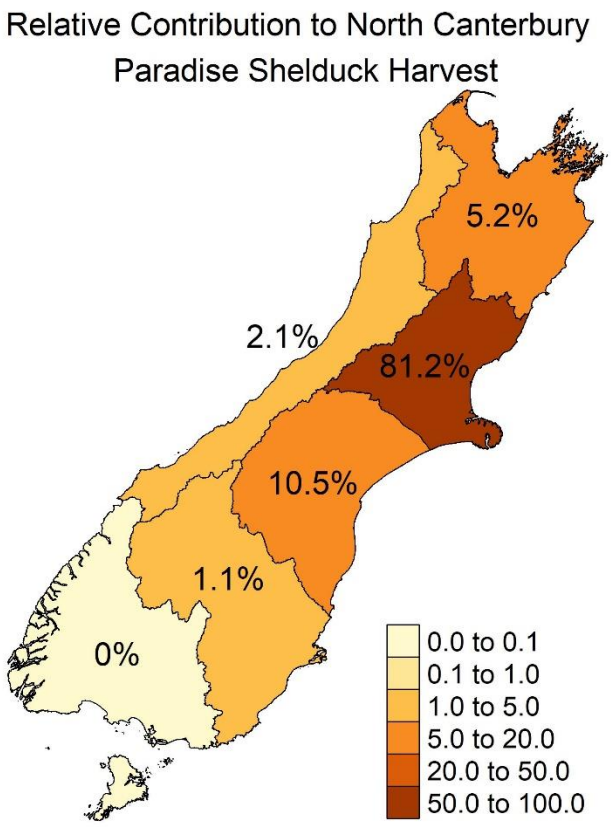

Figure 30. The percent of total paradise shelducks harvested in the North Canterbury region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 36% of total paradise shelduck harvest in the North Canterbury region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from North Canterbury were responsible for 81% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 11% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from Central South Island, 5% to hunters from Nelson/Marlborough, 2% to hunters from the West Coast, and 1% to hunters from Otago.

Hunters from North Canterbury were responsible for 22% of estimated paradise shelduck harvest in the West Coast, 19% in Central South Island, 6% in Otago, 5% in Southland, and 2% in Nelson/Marlborough.

Harvest

Australasian Shovelers

During the 2025 season, an estimated 622 shovelers were harvested in the North Canterbury region.

This represents, roughly, a 6% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of shovelers harvested annually is 552. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in shoveler harvest in North Canterbury.

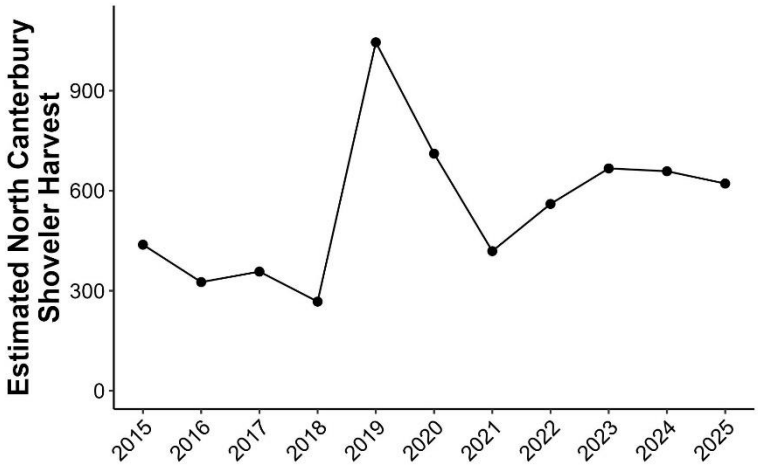

Figure 31. The number of estimated shovelers harvested by year in the North Canterbury region, 2015-2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 31% of total shoveler harvest in the North Canterbury region during the 2025 game bird season.

Only hunters from North Canterbury reported harvesting shoveler in the region.

Hunters from North Canterbury were responsible for 9% of estimated shoveler harvest in Central South Island and Otago, and 7% in Southland.

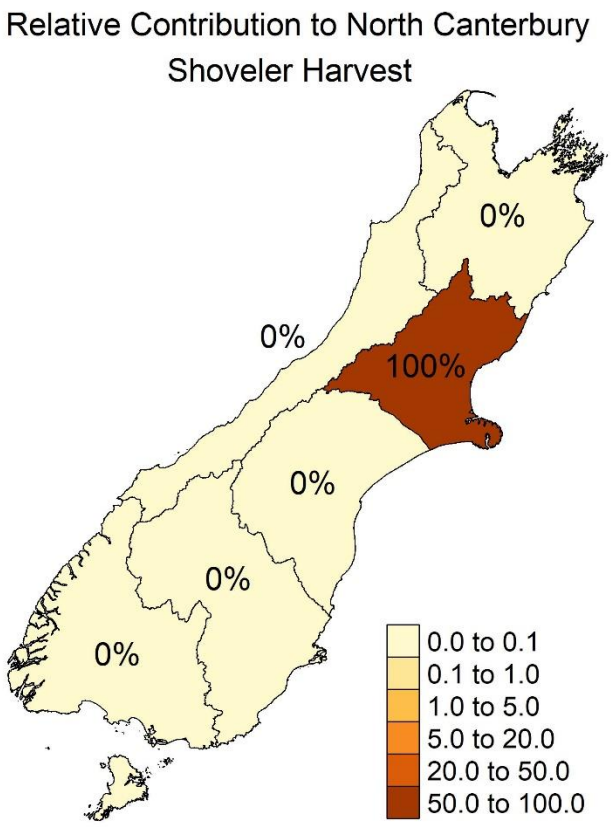

Figure 32. The percent of total shovelers harvested in the North Canterbury region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Harvest

Black Swans

During the 2025 season, an estimated 604 black swans were harvested in the North Canterbury region.

This represents roughly an 8% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of black swans harvested annually is 726. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in black swan harvest.

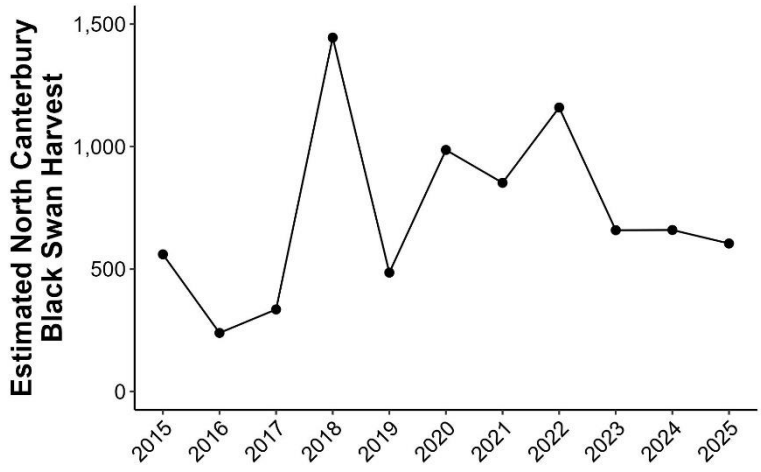

Figure 33. The number of estimated black swans harvested by year in the North Canterbury region, 2015-2025.

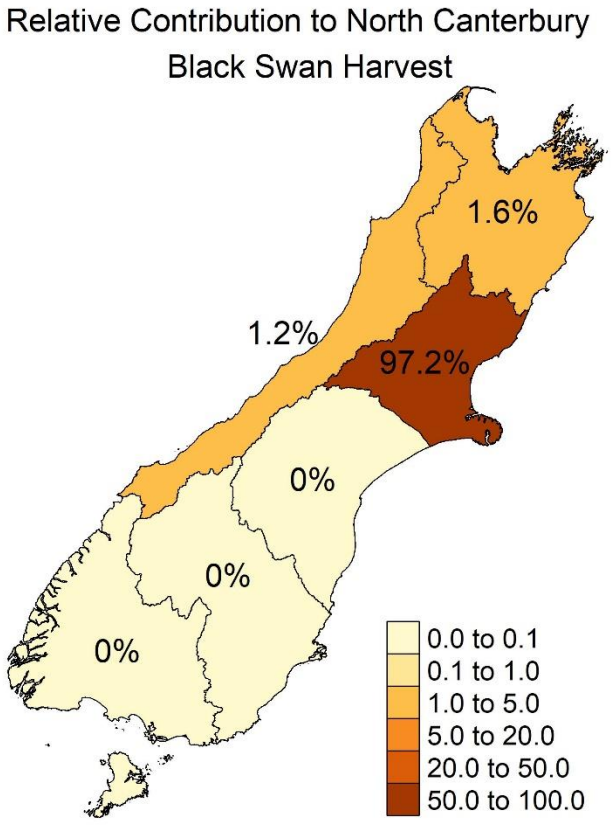

Figure 34. The percent of black swans harvested in the North Canterbury region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 15% of total black swan harvest in the North Canterbury region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from North Canterbury were responsible for 97% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 2% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from Nelson/Marlborough, and 1% to hunters from the West Coast.

Hunters from North Canterbury were responsible for 21% of estimated black swan harvest in Central South Island, 20% in the West Coast, 11% in Southland, 3% in Otago, and 2% in Nelson/Marlborough.

Harvest

Pūkeko

During the 2025 season, an estimated 106 pūkeko were harvested in the North Canterbury region.

This represents roughly a 36% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of pūkeko harvested annually is 135. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in pūkeko harvest.

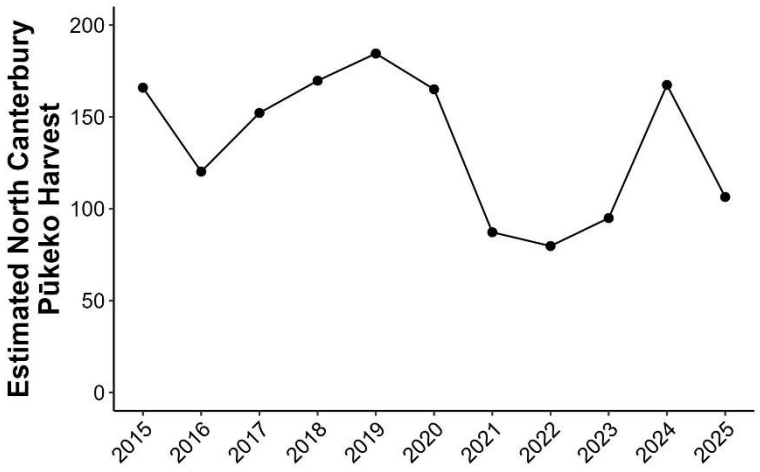

Figure 35. The number of estimated pūkeko harvested by year in the North Canterbury region, 2015-2025.

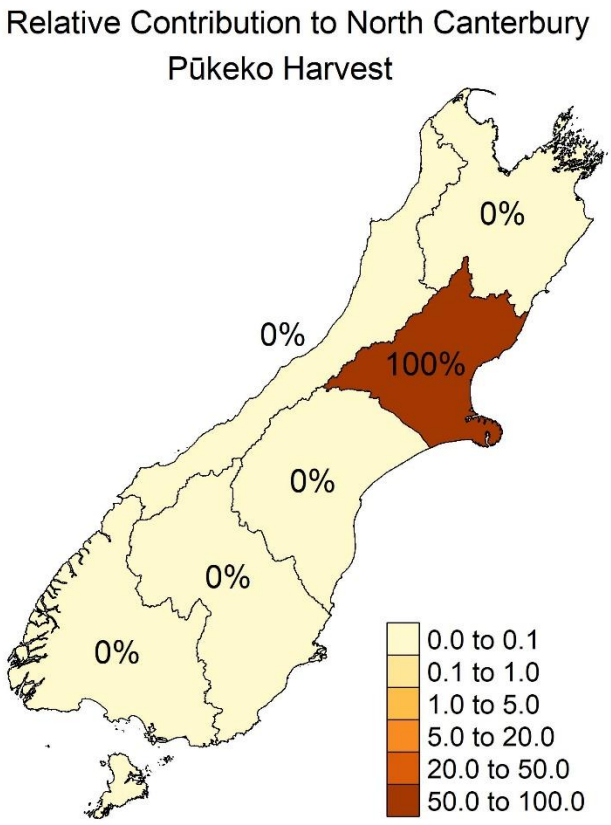

Figure 36. The percent of pūkeko harvested in the North Canterbury region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 61% of total estimated pūkeko harvest in the North Canterbury region during the 2025 game bird season.

Only hunters from North Canterbury reported harvesting pūkeko in the region.

Hunters from North Canterbury were responsible for 100% of estimated pūkeko harvest in Central South Island 38% of the estimated pūkeko harvest in the West Coast.

WEST COAST

Hunter Days

During the 2025 season, hunters spent an estimated 1,452 hunter days hunting within the West Coast region.

Hunter days declined in 2025 by about 25% relative to the 2024 season.

The long-term average is 1,996 hunter days, with evidence of a declining trend since 2015.

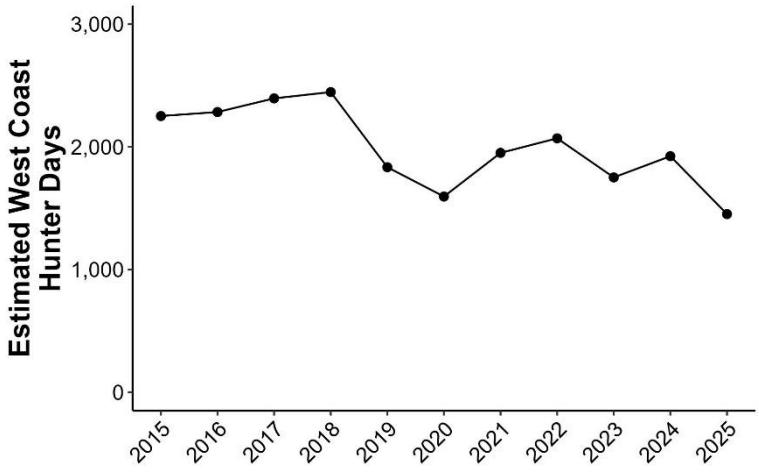

Figure 37. The number of estimated hunter days by year for the West Coast Region, 2015-2025.

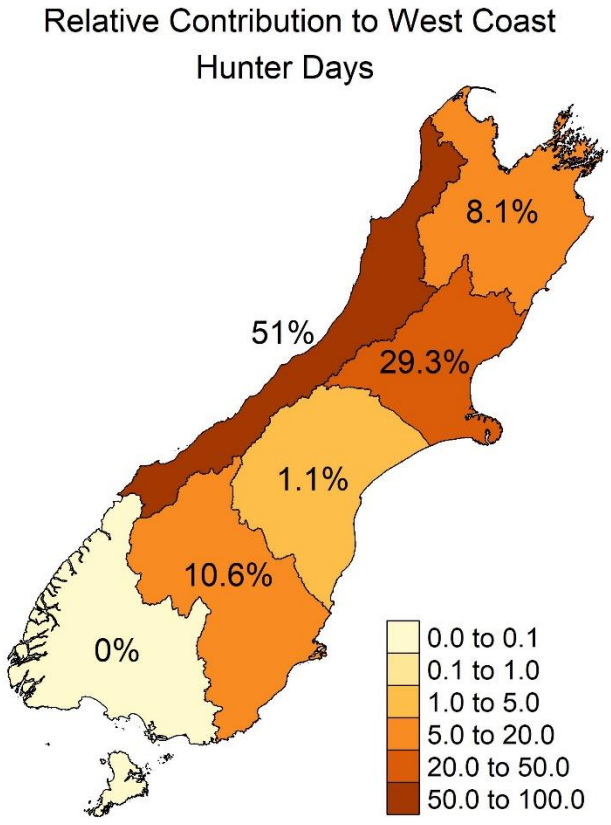

Figure 38. The percent of total days hunted in the West Coast region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 43% of total hunter days in the West Coast during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from the West Coast accounted for 51% of estimated hunter days in the region, followed by 29% from North Canterbury, 11% from Otago, 8% from Nelson/Marlborough, and 1% from Central South Island.

Hunters from the West Coast accounted for 1% of estimated hunter days in North Canterbury, and <1% of estimated hunter days for each other region.

Harvest

Greylards

During the 2025 season, an estimated 5,846 greylards were harvested in the West Coast region.

This represents, roughly, a 4% increase from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of greylards harvested annually is 5,867. There is weak evidence of a declining trend in greylard harvest since 2015.

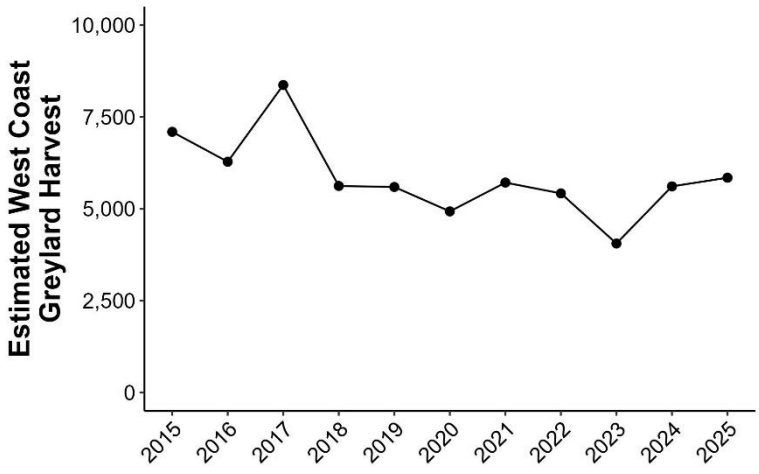

Figure 39. The number of estimated greylards harvested by year on the West Coast region, 2015-2025.

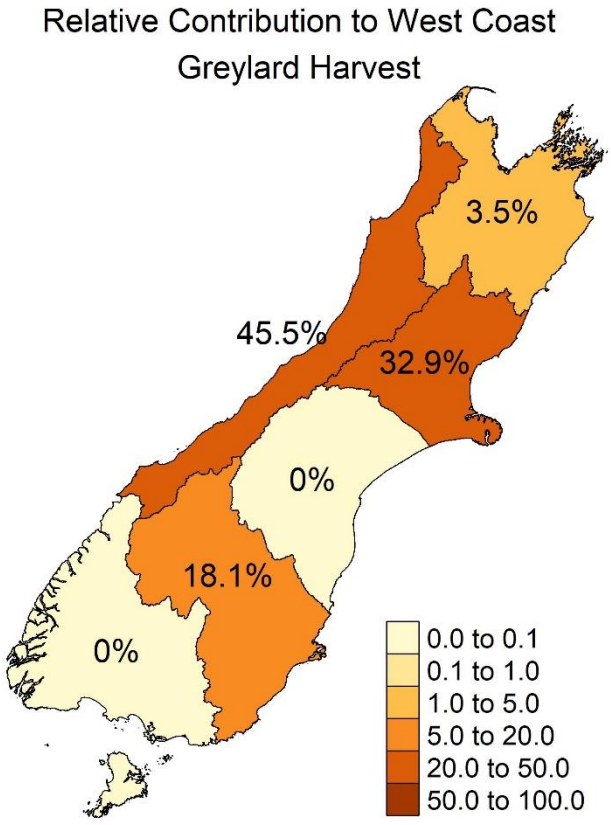

Figure 40. The percent of greylards harvested in the West Coast region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 44% of total greylard harvest in the West Coast region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from the West Coast were responsible for 46% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 33% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from North Canterbury, followed by 4% to hunters from Nelson/Marlborough, and 18% to hunters from Otago.

Hunters from the West Coast were responsible for 2% of estimated greylard harvest in North Canterbury, and <1% of estimated greylard harvest in each other region.

Harvest

Paradise Shelducks

During the 2025 season, an estimated 4,135 paradise shelducks were harvested in the West Coast region.

This represents, roughly, a 19% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of paradise shelducks harvested annually is 4,091. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in paradise shelduck harvest.

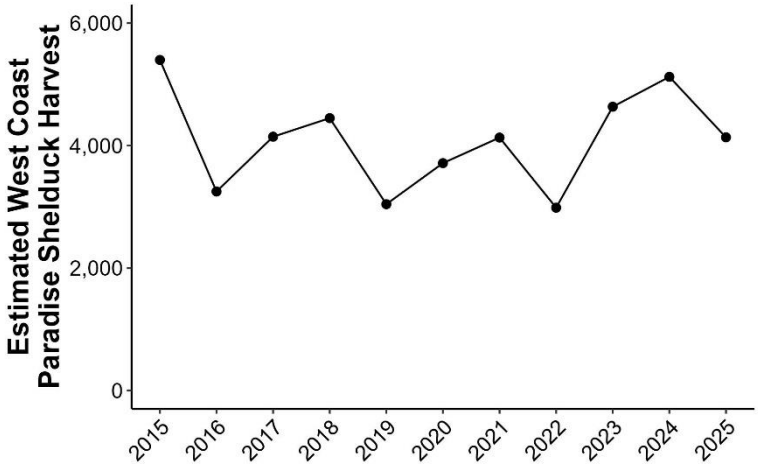

Figure 41. The number of estimated paradise shelducks harvested by year in the West Coast region, 2015-2025.

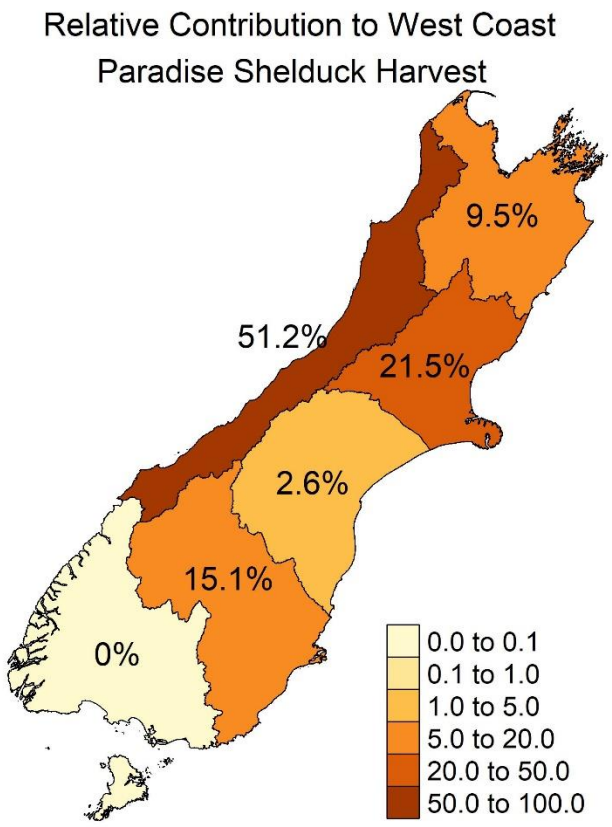

Figure 42. The percent of total paradise shelducks harvested in the West Coast region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 54% of total paradise shelduck harvest in the West Coast region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from the West Coast were responsible for 51% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 22% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from North Canterbury, 15% to hunters from Otago, 10% to hunters from Nelson/Marlborough, and 3% to hunters from Central South Island.

Hunters from the West Coast were responsible for 2% of estimated paradise shelduck harvest in North Canterbury, and <1% in each other region.

Harvest

Australasian Shovelers

During the 2025 season, an estimated 33 shovelers were harvested in the West Coast region.

This represents, roughly, a 30% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of shovelers harvested annually is 76. There is a decreasing trend in shoveler harvest since 2015.

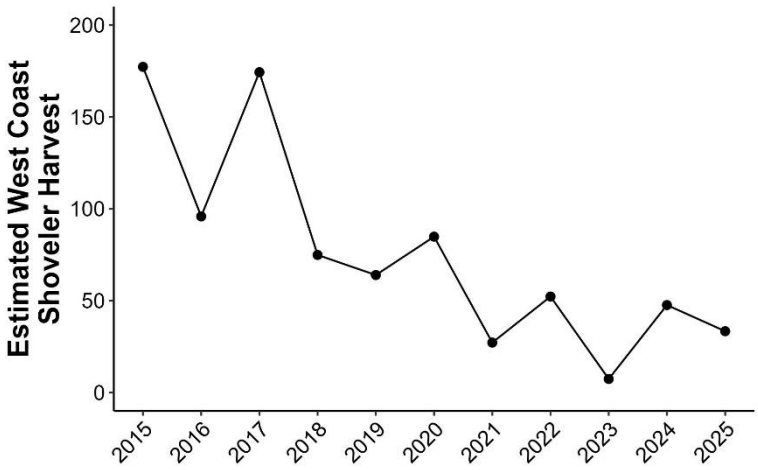

Figure 43. The number of estimated shovelers harvested by year in the West Coast region, 2015-2025.

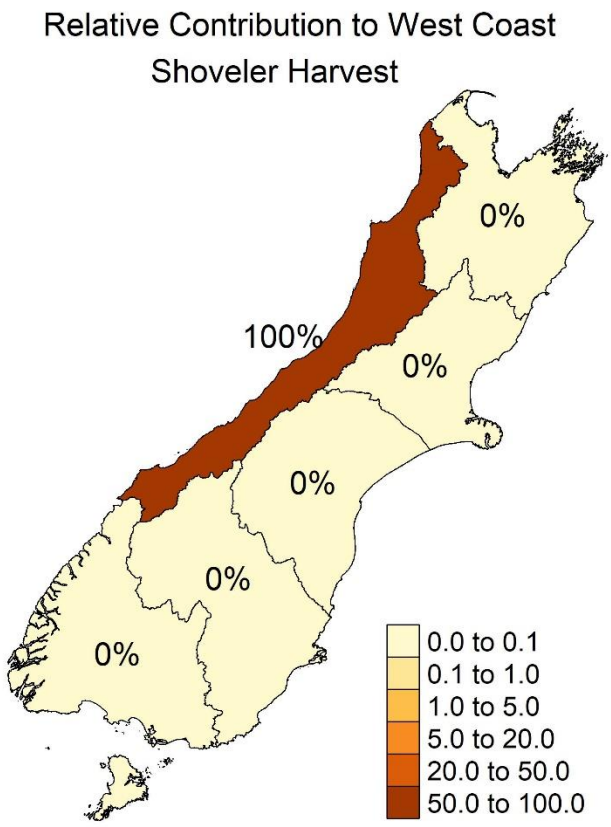

Figure 44. The percent of total shovelers harvested in the West Coast region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 20% of total shoveler harvest in the West Coast region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from the West Coast were the only hunters who reported harvesting shovelers on the West Coast.

Hunters from the West Coast did not report harvesting shovelers in any other region.

Harvest

Black Swans

During the 2025 season, an estimated 68 black swans were harvested in the West Coast region.

This represents roughly an 80% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of black swans harvested annually is 178. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in black swan harvest.

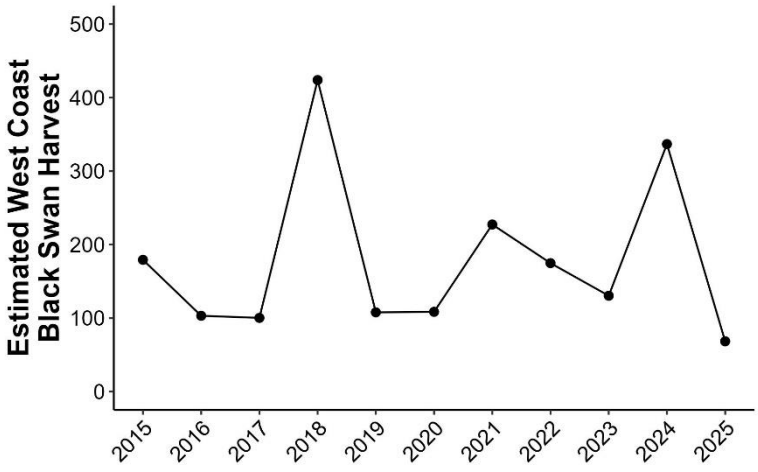

Figure 45. The number of estimated black swans harvested by year in the West Coast region, 2015-2025.

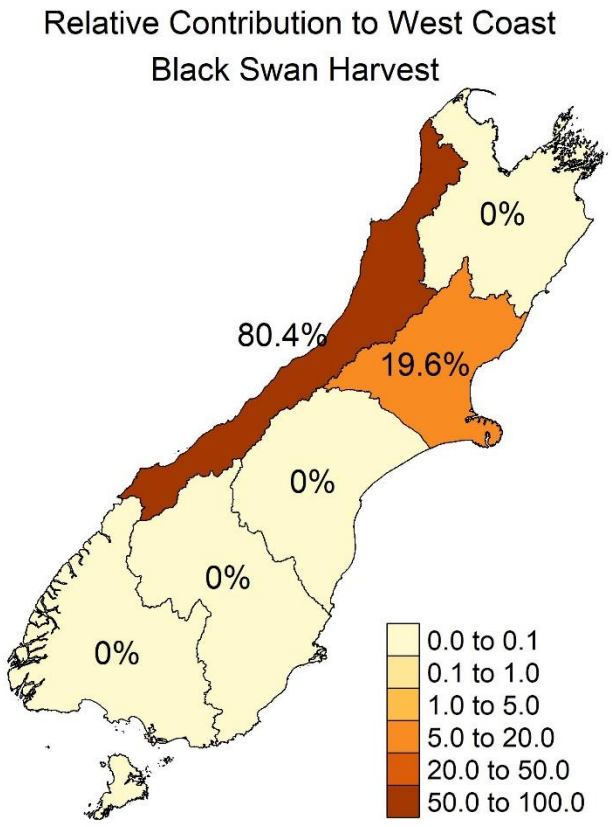

Figure 46. The percent of black swans harvested in the West Coast region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 20% of total black swan harvest in the West Coast region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from the West Coast were responsible for 80% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 20% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from North Canterbury.

Hunters from the West Coast were responsible for 3% of estimated black swan harvest in Southland and 1% in North Canterbury.

Harvest

Pūkeko

During the 2025 season, an estimated 845 pūkeko were harvested in the West Coast region.

This represents roughly a 53% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of pūkeko harvested annually is 1,619. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in pūkeko harvest.

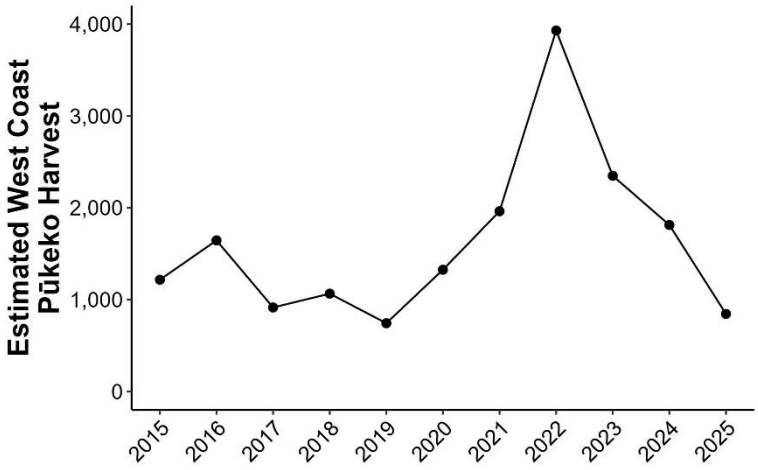

Figure 47. The number of estimated pūkeko harvested by year in the West Coast region, 2015-2025.

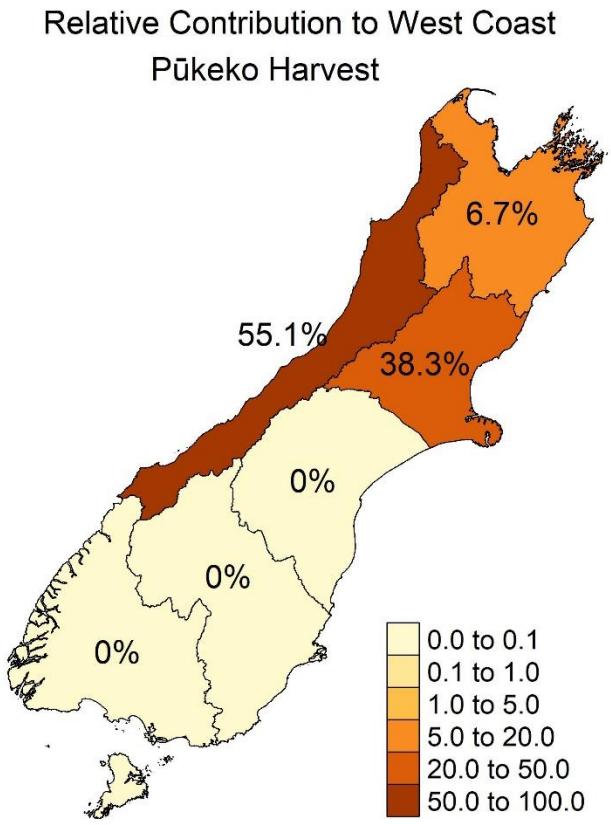

Figure 48. The percent of pūkeko harvested in the West Coast region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 30% of total pūkeko harvest in the West Coast region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from the West Coast were responsible for 55% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 38% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from North Canterbury and 7% to hunters from Nelson/Marlborough.

Hunters from the West Coast were responsible for 7% of estimated pūkeko harvest in Nelson/Marlborough.

CENTRAL SOUTH ISLAND

Hunter Days

During the 2025 season, hunters spent an estimated 7,842 hunter days hunting within the Central South Island region.

Hunter days decreased in 2025 by about 4% relative to the 2024 season.

The long-term average is 8,305 hunter days, with no evidence of a long term trend.

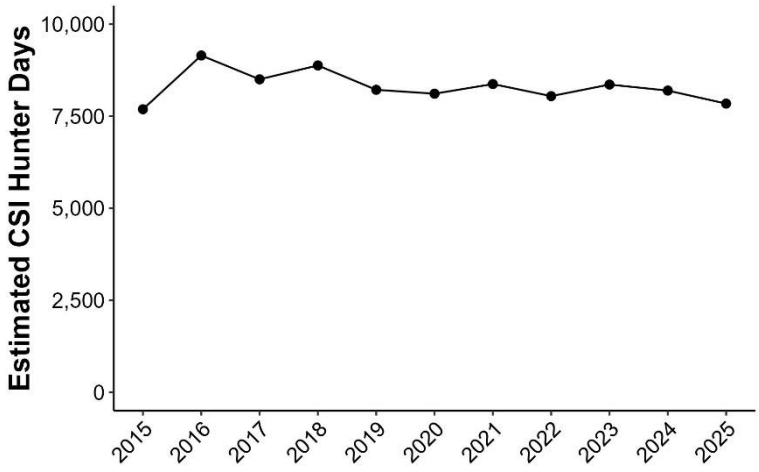

Figure 49. The number of estimated hunter days by year for the Central South Island Region, 2015-2025.

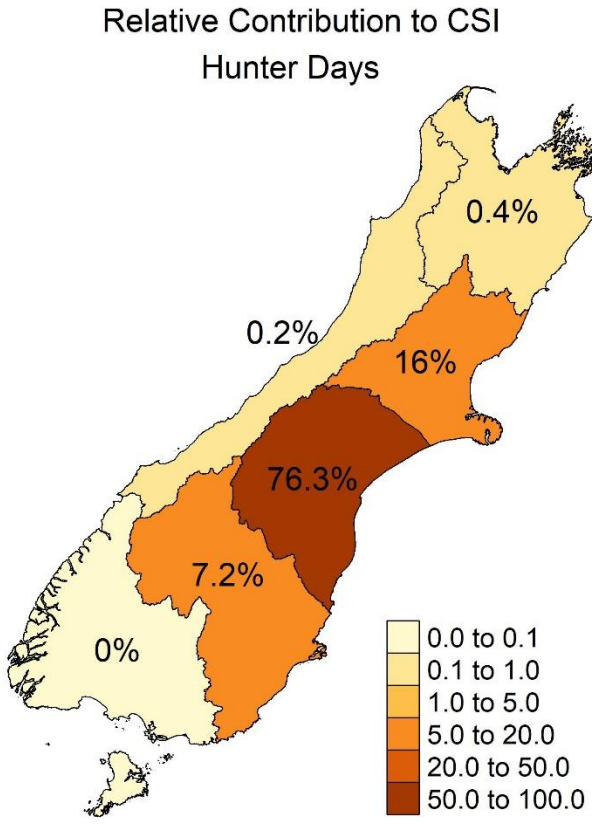

Figure 50. The percent of total days hunted in the Central South Island region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 50% of total hunter days in Central South Island during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Central South Island accounted for 76% of estimated hunter days in the region, followed by 16% from North Canterbury, 7% from Otago, and <1% from Nelson/Marlborough and the West Coast.

Hunters from Central South Island accounted for 7% of estimated hunter days in North Canterbury, 5% in Otago, 2% in Southland, and 1% in the West Coast.

Harvest

Greylards

During the 2025 season, an estimated 42,390 greylards were harvested in the Central South Island region.

This represents, roughly, a 4% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of greylards harvested annually is 50,425. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in greylard harvest.

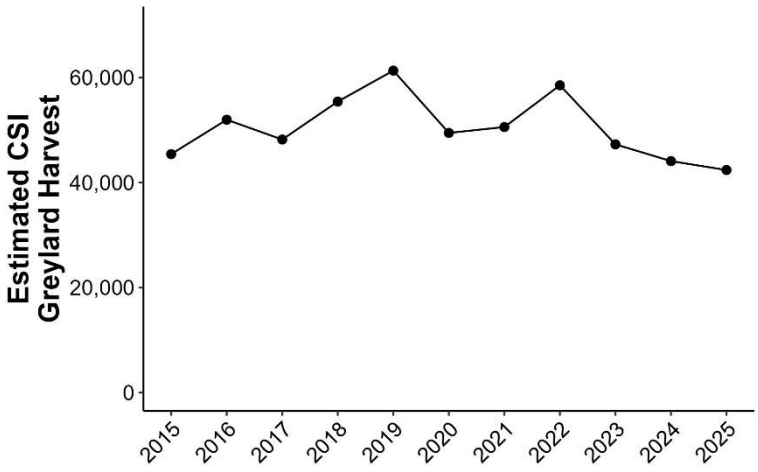

Figure 51. The number of estimated greylards harvested by year on the Central South Island region, 2015-2025.

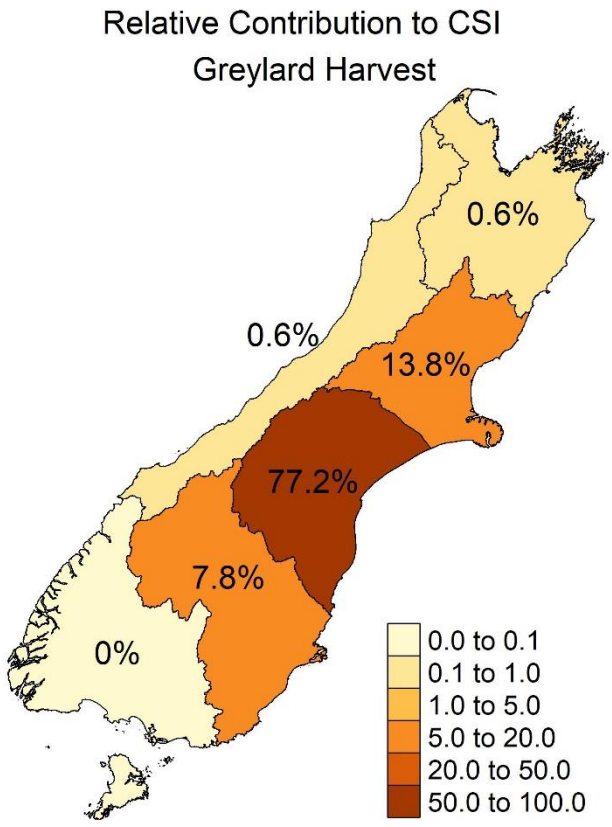

Figure 52. The percent of greylards harvested in the Central South Island region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 54% of total greylard harvest in the Central South Island region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Central South Island were responsible for 77% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 14% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from North Canterbury, followed by 8% to hunters from Otago, and <1% to hunters from Nelson/Marlborough and the West Coast.

Hunters from Central South Island were responsible for 13% of estimated greylard harvest in North Canterbury, 3% in Otago, and 2% in Southland.

Harvest

Paradise Shelducks

During the 2025 season, an estimated 14,436 paradise shelducks were harvested in the Central South Island region.

This represents, roughly, a 4% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of paradise shelducks harvested annually is 12,206. There is an increasing trend in paradise shelduck harvest since 2015.

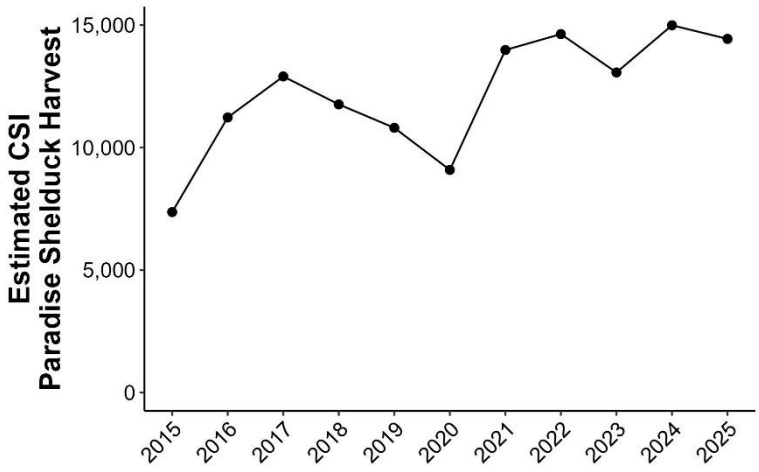

Figure 53. The number of estimated paradise shelducks harvested by year in the Central South Island region, 2015-2025.

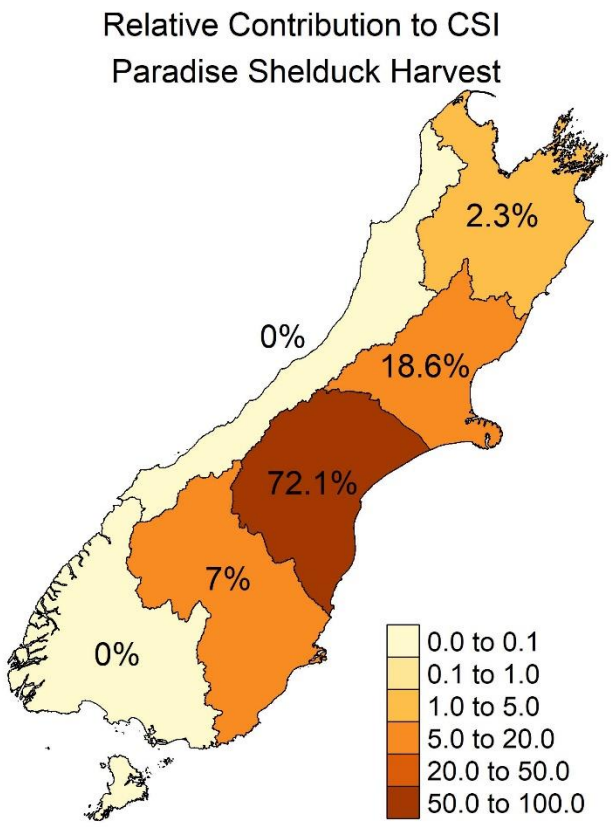

Figure 54. The percent of total paradise shelducks harvested in the Central South Island region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 56% of total paradise shelduck harvest in the Central South Island region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Central South Island were responsible for 72% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 19% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from North Canterbury, 7% to hunters from Otago, and 2% to hunters from Nelson/Marlborough.

Hunters from Central South Island were responsible for 11% of estimated paradise shelduck harvest in North Canterbury, 3% in the West Coast, and 2% in Otago and Southland.

Harvest

Australasian Shovelers

During the 2025 season, an estimated 153 shovelers were harvested in the Central South Island region.

This represents, roughly, a 71% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of shovelers harvested annually is 384. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in shoveler harvest.

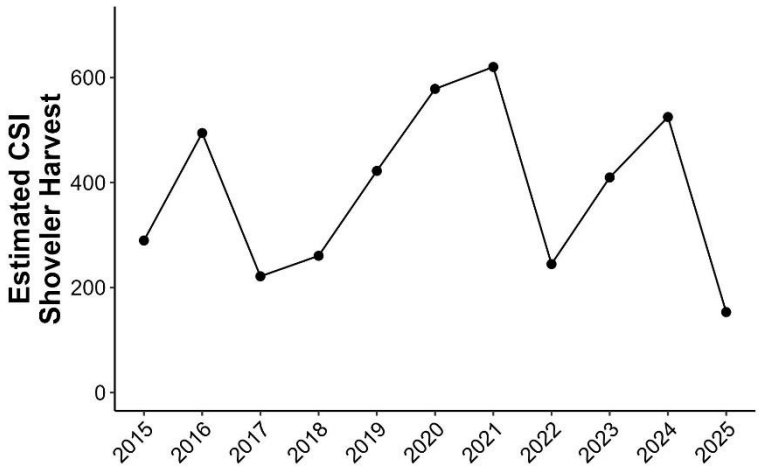

Figure 55. The number of estimated shovelers harvested by year in the Central South Island region, 2015-2025.

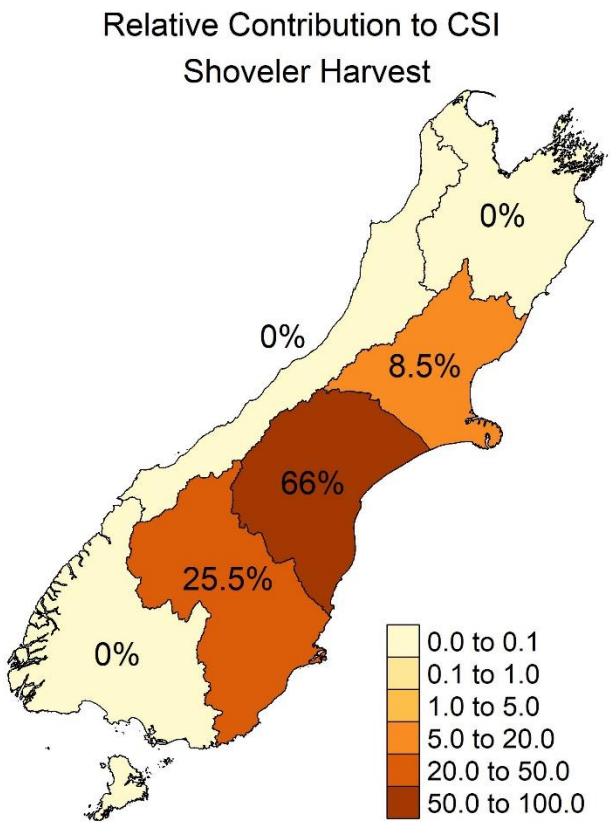

Figure 56. The percent of total shovelers harvested in the Central South Island region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 49% of total shoveler harvest in the Central South Island region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Central South Island were responsible for 66% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 26% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from North Canterbury, and 9% to hunters from the West Coast.

Hunters from Central South Island were responsible for 11% of estimated shoveler harvest in Otago.

Harvest

Black Swans

During the 2025 season, an estimated 1,098 black swans were harvested in the Central South Island region.

This represents roughly a 6% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of black swans harvested annually is 708. The last two seasons constitute a substantial increase in black swan harvest relative to the previous trend.

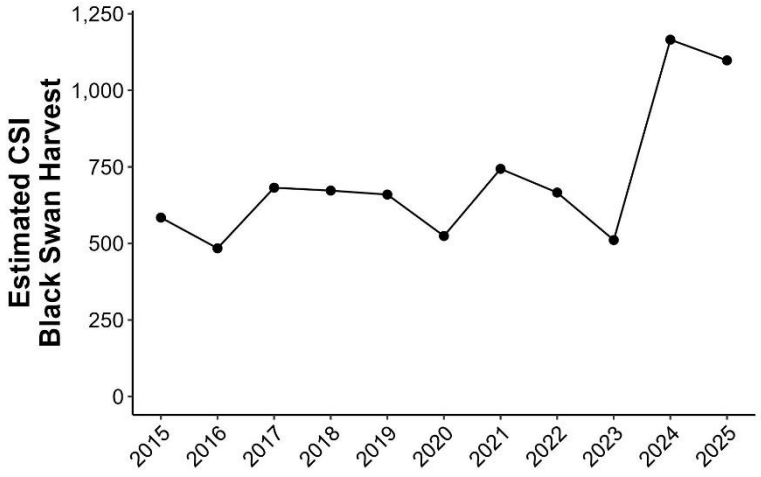

Figure 57. The number of estimated black swans harvested by year in the Central South Island region, 2015-2025.

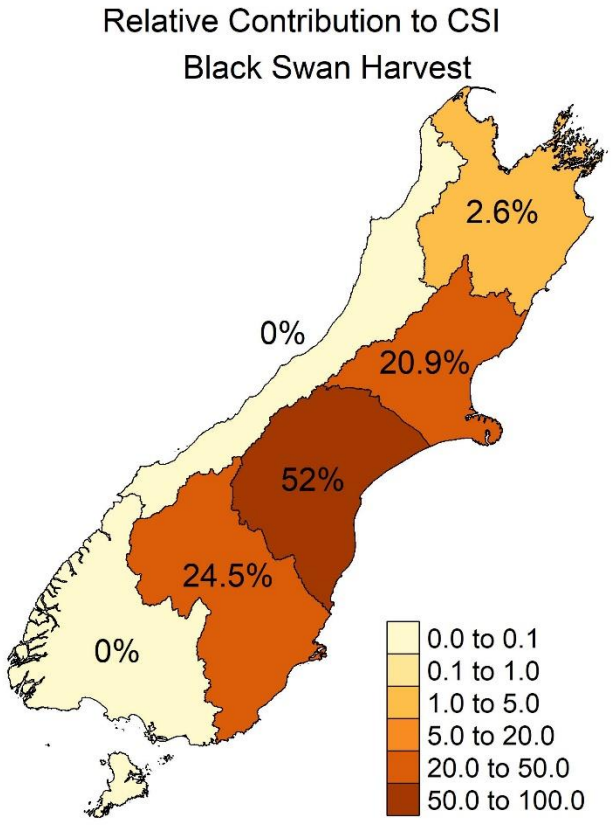

Figure 58. The percent of black swans harvested in the Central South Island region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 67% of total black swan harvest in the Central South Island region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Central South Island were responsible for 52% of estimated swan harvest in the region. An additional 25% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from Otago, 21% to hunters from North Canterbury, and 3% to hunters from Otago.

Hunters from Central South Island were responsible for 17% of the estimated black swan harvest in Otago.

Harvest

Pūkeko

During the 2025 season, an estimated 65 pūkeko were harvested in the Central South Island region.

There was no reported pūkeko harvest in Central South Island during the 2024 season. The 2025 estimated harvest is approximately half the 2023 estimate.

The long-term average number of pūkeko harvested annually is 128. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in pūkeko harvest.

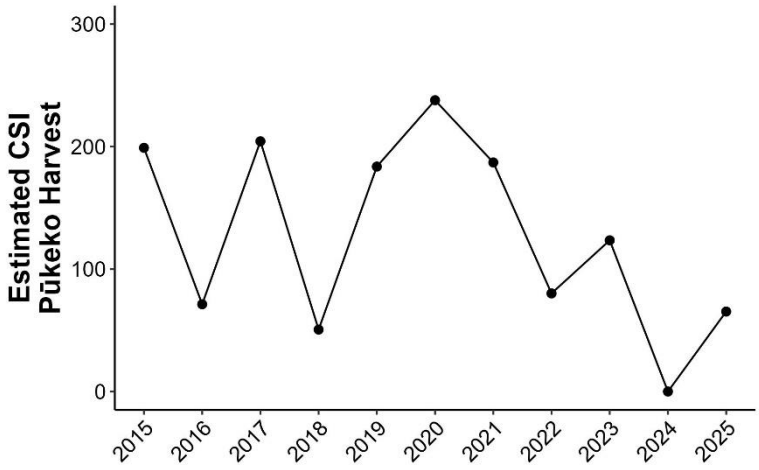

Figure 59. The number of estimated pūkeko harvested by year in the Central South Island region, 2015-2025.

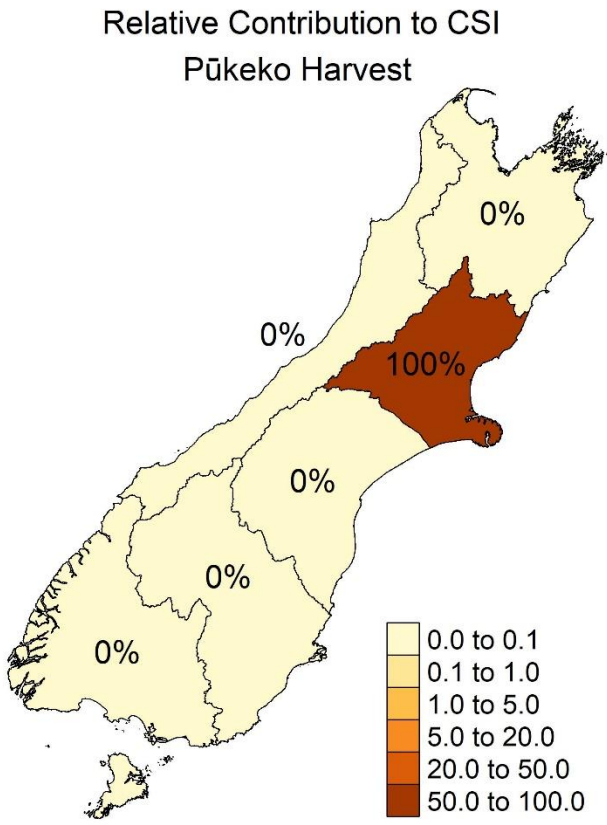

Figure 60. The percent of pūkeko harvested in the Central South Island region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 100% of total pūkeko harvest in the Central South Island region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Central South Island did not report any pūkeko harvest in the region. All estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from North Canterbury.

Hunters from Central South Island did not report hunting pūkeko in any other region.

OTAGO

Hunter Days

During the 2025 season, hunters spent an estimated 11,045 hunter days hunting within the Otago region.

Hunter days increased in 2025 by about 8% relative to the 2024 season.

The long-term average is 11,173 hunter days, with a slight declining trend since 2015.

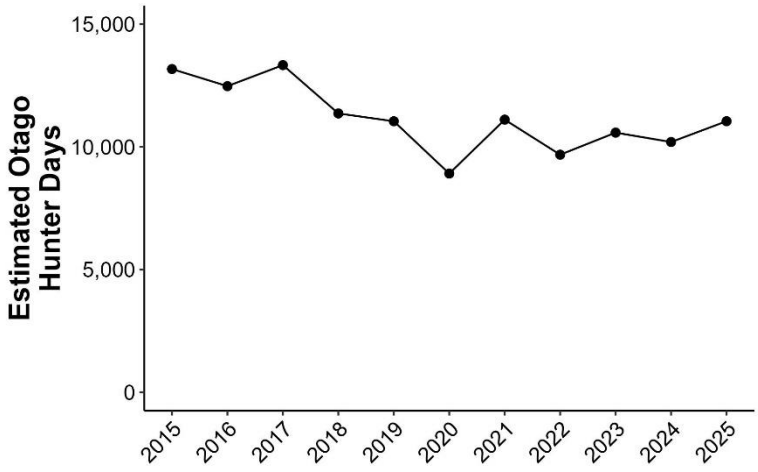

Figure 61. The number of estimated hunter days by year for the Otago Region, 2015-2025.

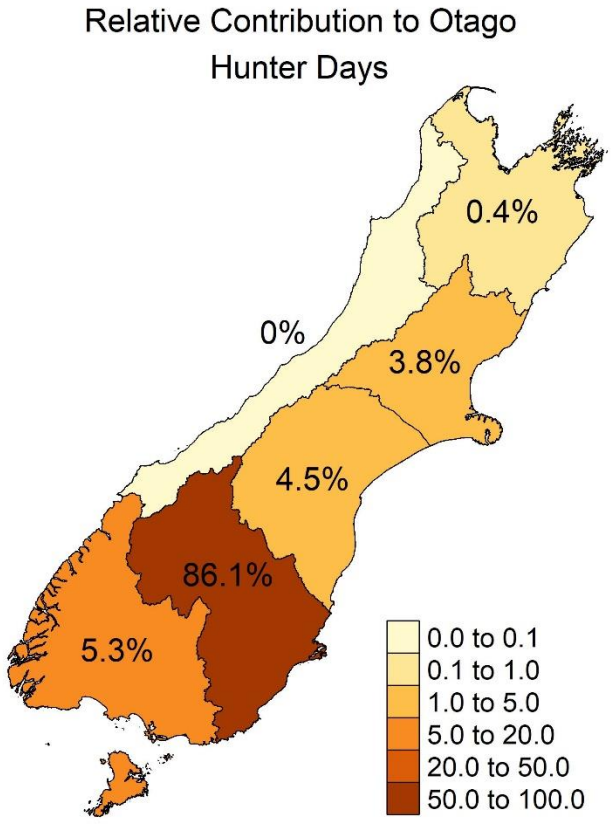

Figure 62. The percent of total days hunted in the Otago region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 50% of total hunter days in Otago during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Otago accounted for 86% of estimated hunter days in the region, followed by 5% from Central South Island and Southland, 4% from North Canterbury, and <1% from Nelson/Marlborough.

Hunters from Otago accounted for 19% of estimated hunter days in Southland, 11% in the West Coast, 7% in Central South Island, and <1% in North Canterbury.

Harvest

Greylards

During the 2025 season, an estimated 53,409 greylards were harvested in the Otago region.

This represents, roughly, a 43% increase from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of greylards harvested annually is 48,895. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in greylard harvest.

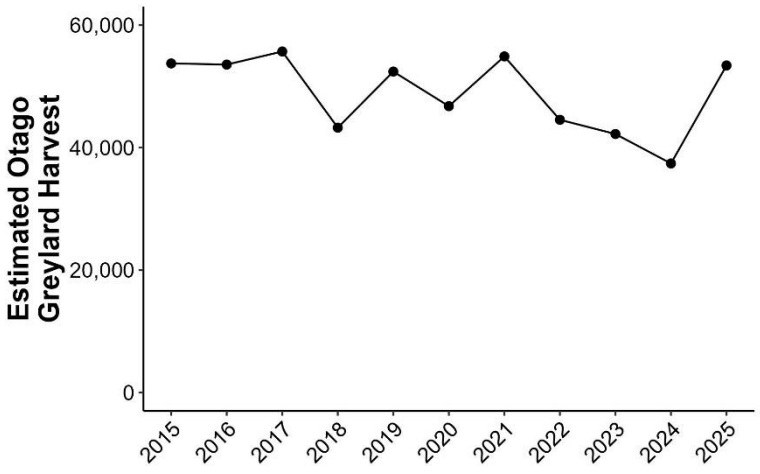

Figure 63. The number of estimated greylards harvested by year on the Otago region, 2015-2025.

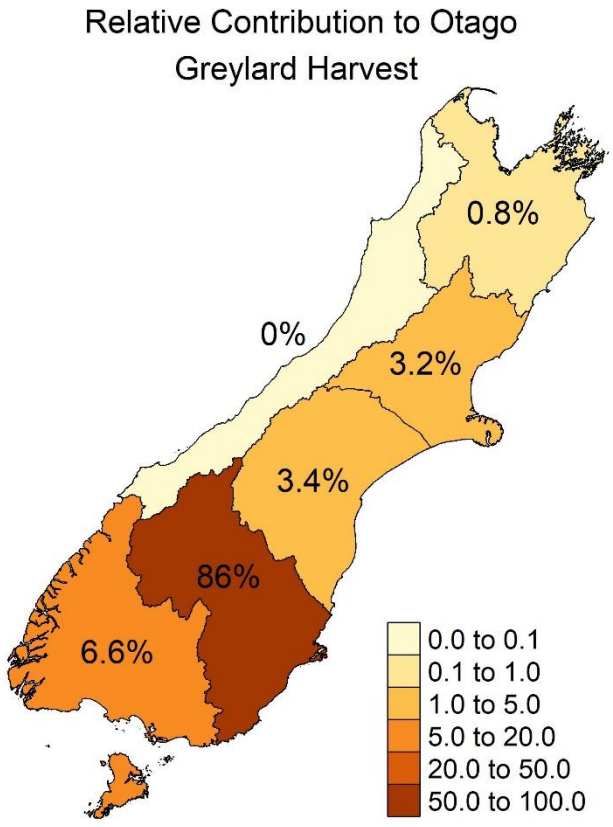

Figure 64. The percent of greylards harvested in the Otago region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 65% of total greylard harvest in the Otago region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Otago were responsible for 86% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 7% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from Southland, 3% to Central South Island and North Canterbury, and <1% to hunters from Nelson/Marlborough.

Hunters from Otago were responsible for 23% of estimated greylard harvest in Southland, 18% in the West Coast, 8% in Central South Island, and 2% in North Canterbury.

Harvest

Paradise Shelducks

During the 2025 season, an estimated 18,478 paradise shelducks were harvested in the Otago region.

This represents, roughly, an 60% increase from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of paradise shelducks harvested annually is 13,244. The long-term trend in paradise shelduck harvest since 2015 has been largely stable, however this season represents a substantial increase relative to previous years.

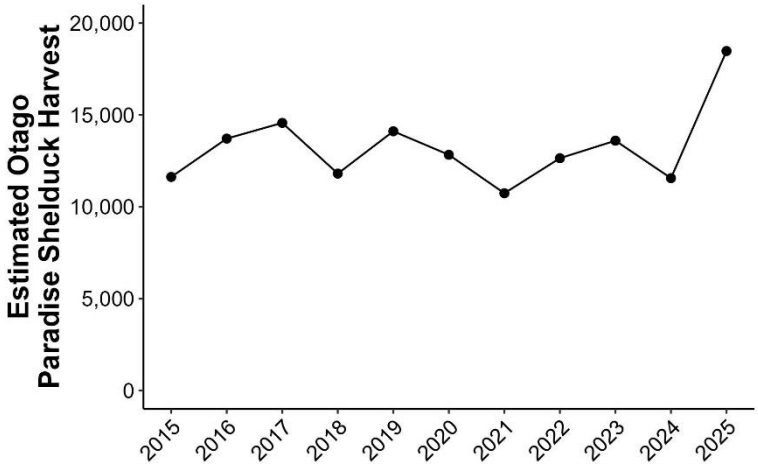

Figure 65. The number of estimated paradise shelducks harvested by year in the Otago region, 2015-2025.

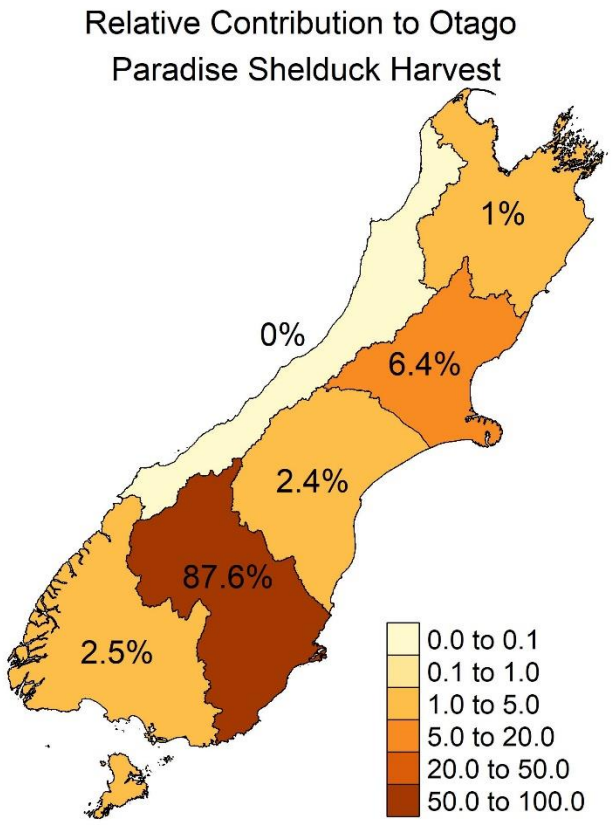

Figure 66. The percent of total paradise shelducks harvested in the Otago region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 47% of total paradise shelduck harvest in the Otago region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Otago were responsible for 88% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 6% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from North Canterbury, 3% from Southland, 2% from Central South Island, and 1% from Nelson/Marlborough.

Hunters from Otago were responsible for 20% of paradise shelduck harvest in Southland, 15% in the West Coast, 7% in Central South Island, and 1% in North Canterbury.

Harvest

Australasian Shovelers

During the 2025 season, an estimated 279 shovelers were harvested in the Otago region.

This represents, roughly, a 42% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of shovelers harvested annually is 1,090. There is a declining long-term trend in shoveler harvest.

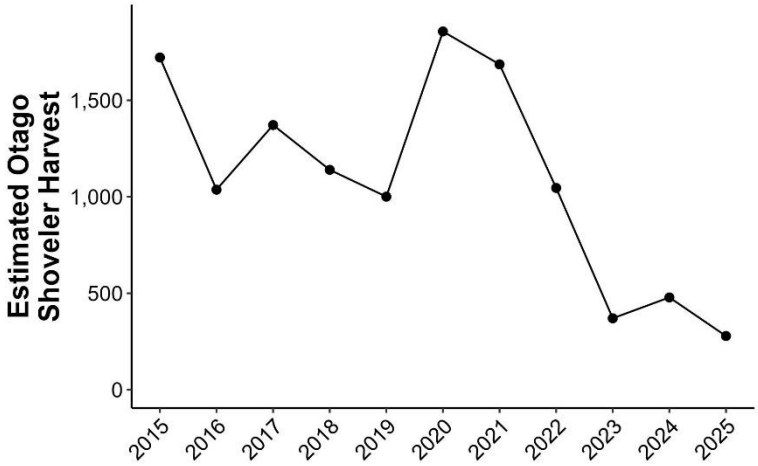

Figure 67. The number of estimated shovelers harvested by year in the Otago region, 2015-2025.

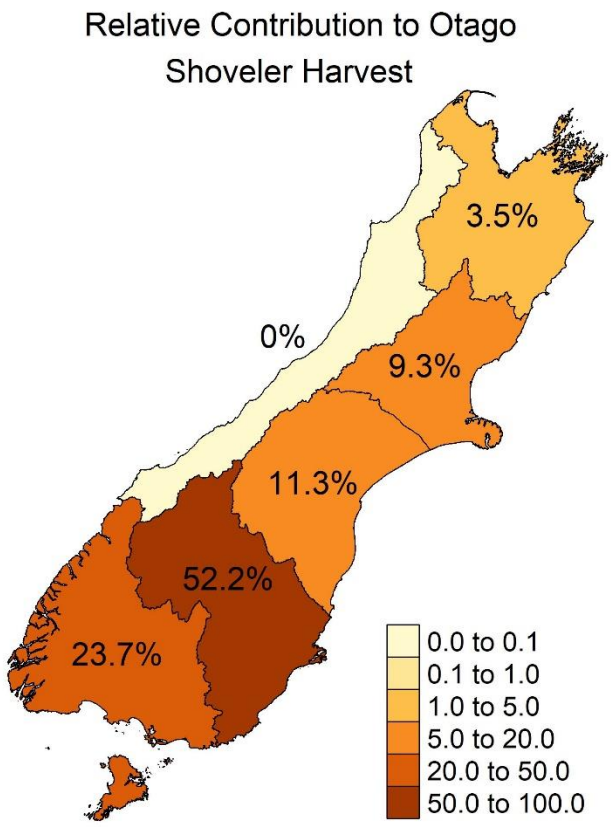

Figure 68. The percent of total shovelers harvested in the Otago region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 84% of total shoveler harvest in the Otago region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Otago were responsible for 52% of estimated shoveler harvest in the region. An additional 24% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from Southland, 11% from Central South Island, 9% from North Canterbury and 4% from Nelson/Marlborough.

Hunters from Otago were responsible for 26% of estimated shoveler harvest in Central South Island and 6% in Southland.

Harvest

Black Swans

During the 2025 season, an estimated 947 black swans were harvested in the Otago region.

This represents roughly a 48% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of black swans harvested annually is 863. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in black swan harvest.

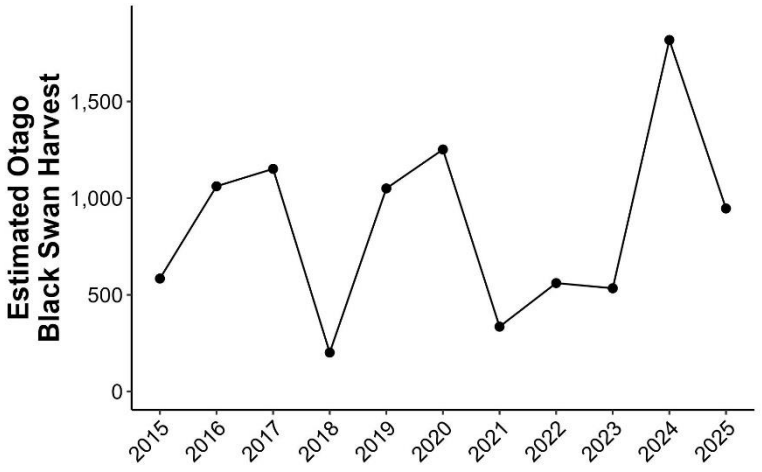

Figure 69. The number of estimated black swans harvested by year in the Otago region, 2015-2025.

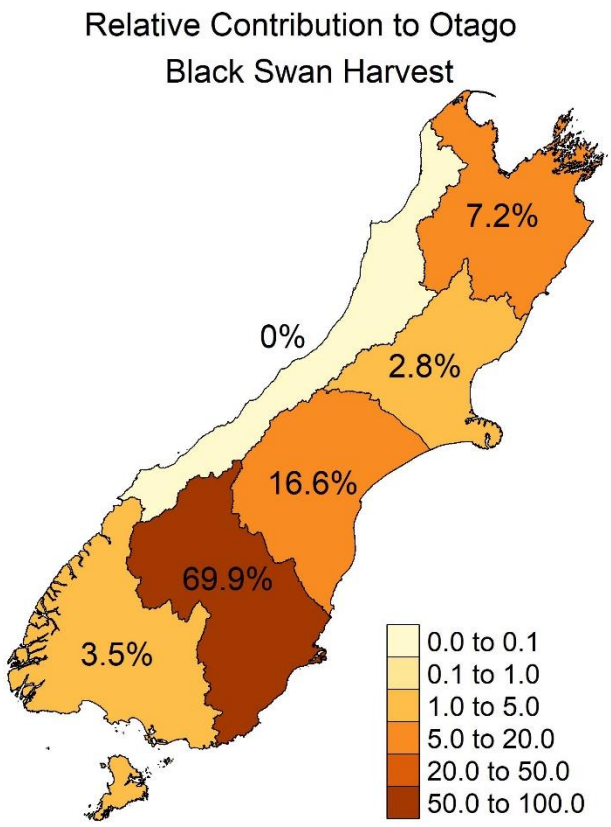

Figure 70. The percent of black swans harvested in the Otago region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 57% of total black swan harvest in the Otago region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Otago were responsible for 70% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 17% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from Central South Island, 7% from Nelson/Marlborough, 4% from Southland, and 3% from North Canterbury.

Hunters from Otago were responsible for 25% of estimated black swan harvest in Central South Island and 15% in Southland.

SOUTHLAND

Hunter Days

During the 2025 season, hunters spent an estimated 19,083 hunter days hunting within the Southland region.

Hunter days increased in 2025 by about 4% relative to the 2024 season.

The long-term average is 21,509 hunter days, with weak evidence of a declining trend since 2015.

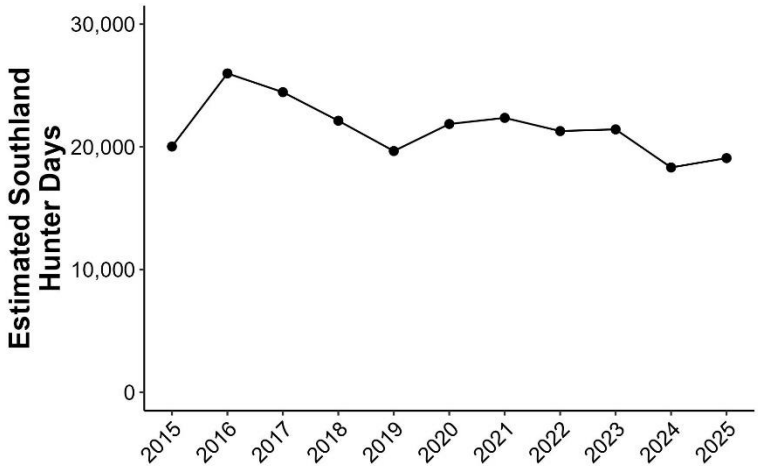

Figure 71. The number of estimated hunter days by year for the Southland Region, 2015-2025.

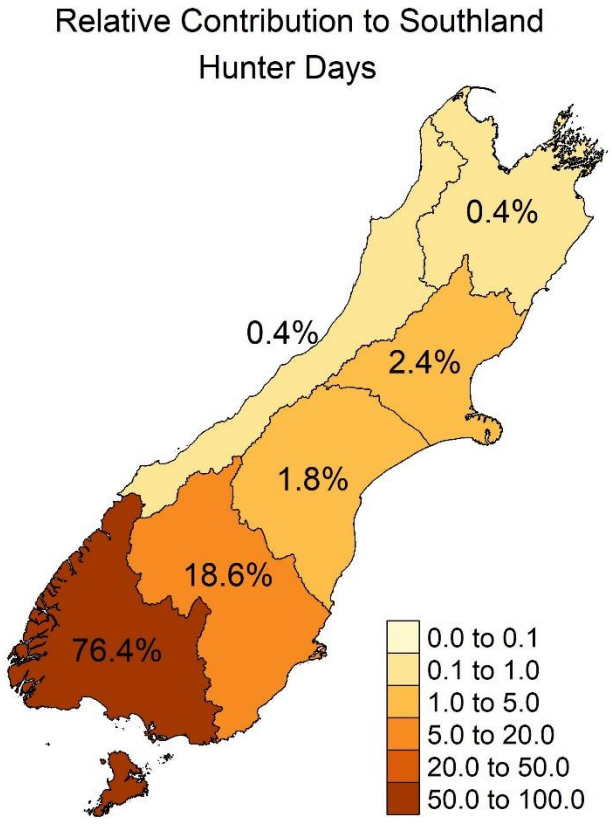

Figure 72. The percent of total days hunted in the Southland region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 43% of total hunter days in Southland during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Southland accounted for 76% of estimated hunter days in the region, followed by 19% from Otago, 2% from North Canterbury and Central South Island, and <1% from Nelson/Marlborough and the West Coast.

Hunters from Southland accounted for 5% of estimated hunter days in Otago and 2% in Nelson/Marlborough.

Harvest

Greylards

During the 2025 season, an estimated 124,875 greylards were harvested in the Southland region.

This represents, roughly, a 45% increase from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of greylards harvested annually is 110,545. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in greylard harvest.

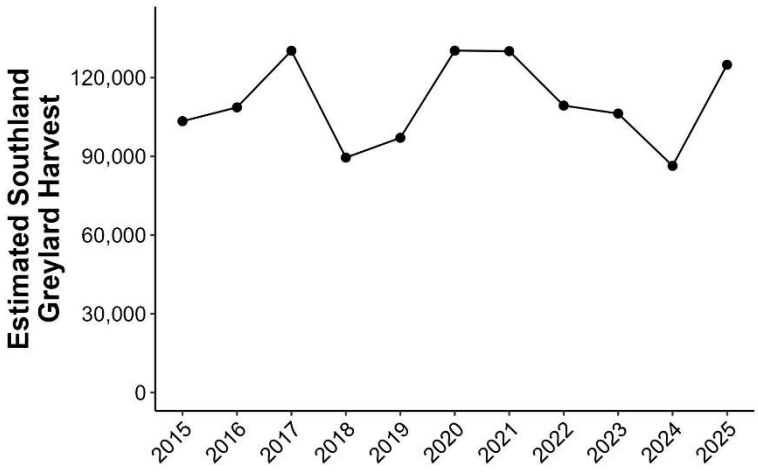

Figure 73. The number of estimated greylards harvested by year on the Southland region, 2015-2025.

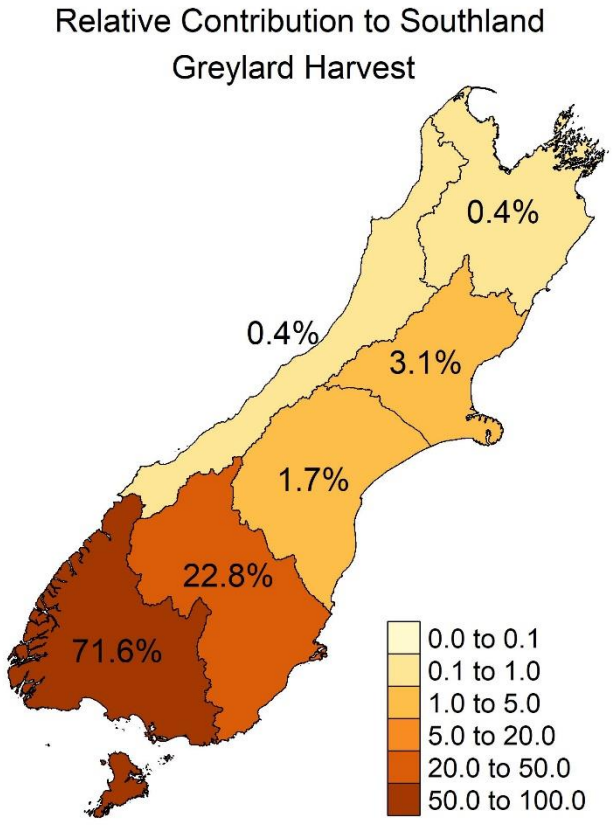

Figure 74. The percent of greylards harvested in the Southland region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 56% of total greylard harvest in the Southland region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Southland were responsible for 72% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 23% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from Otago, followed by 3% from North Canterbury, 2% from Central South Island, and <1% from the Nelson/Marlborough and the West Coast.

Hunters from Southland were responsible for 7% of estimated greylard harvest in Otago.

Harvest

Paradise Shelducks

During the 2025 season, an estimated 6,928 paradise shelducks were harvested in the Southland region.

This represents, roughly, a 29% increase from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of paradise shelducks harvested annually is 8,809. There was an increasing trend in paradise shelduck harvest between 2015-2023. The past two seasons represent a departure from the previous trend.

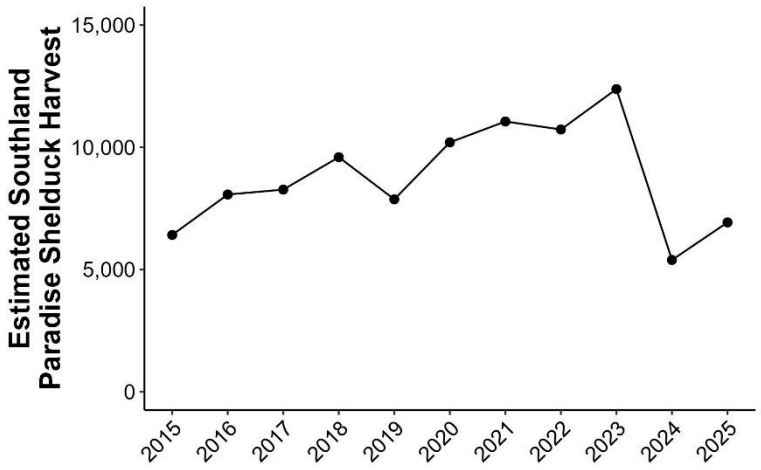

Figure 75. The number of estimated paradise shelducks harvested by year in the Southland region, 2015-2025.

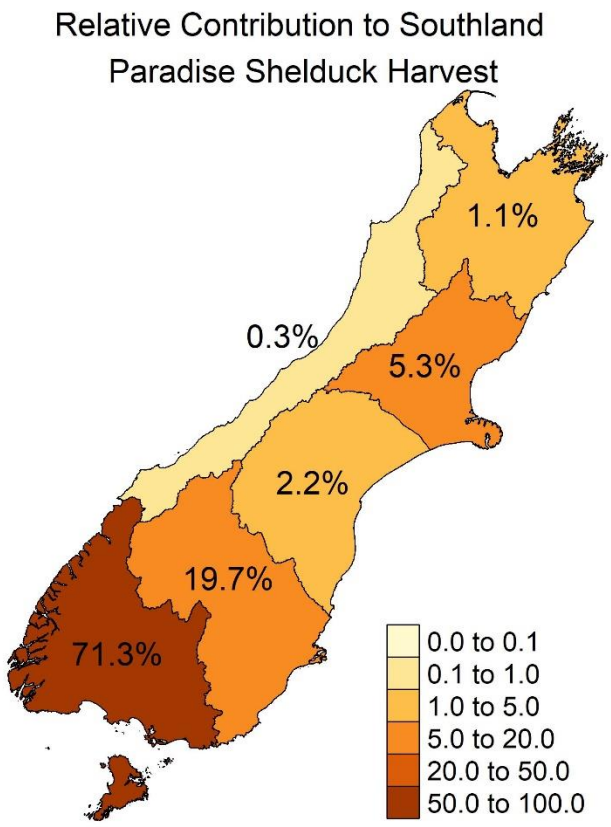

Figure 76. The percent of total paradise shelducks harvested in the Southland region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 72% of total paradise shelduck harvest in the Southland region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Southland were responsible for 72% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 20% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from Otago, 5% from North Canterbury, 2% from Central South Island, 1% from Nelson/Marlborough, and <1% from the West Coast.

Hunters from Southland were responsible for 3% of estimated greylard harvest in Otago.

Harvest

Australasian Shovelers

During the 2025 season, an estimated 411 shovelers were harvested in the Southland region.

This represents, roughly, a 5% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of shovelers harvested annually is 911. While there is no evidence of a long-term trend in shoveler harvest, the past three seasons represent a substantial departure from harvest in previous years.

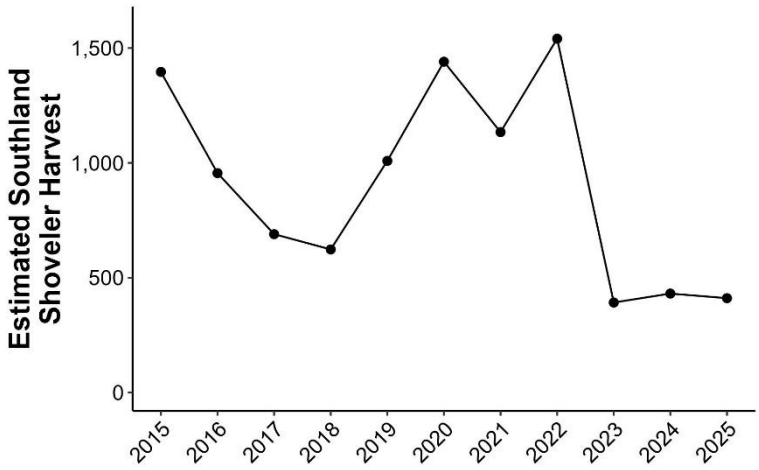

Figure 77. The number of estimated shovelers harvested by year in the Southland region, 2015-2025.

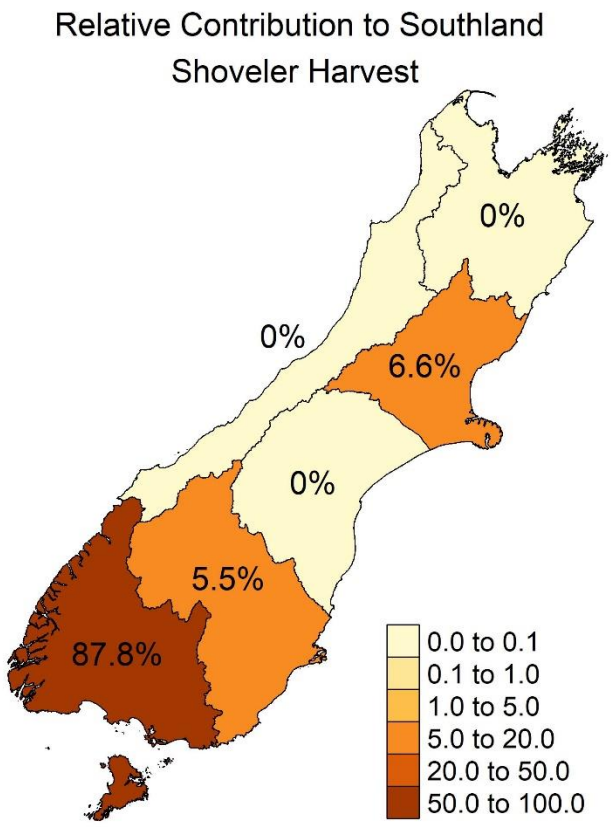

Figure 78. The percent of total shovelers harvested in the Southland region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 49% of total shoveler harvest in the Southland region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Southland were responsible for 88% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 7% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from North Canterbury and 6% to hunters from Otago.

Hunters from Southland were responsible for 24% of estimated shoveler harvest in Otago.

Harvest

Black Swans

During the 2025 season, an estimated 234 black swans were harvested in the Southland region.

This represents roughly an 80% decrease from the 2024 season harvest.

The long-term average number of black swans harvested annually is 625. There is no evidence of a long-term trend in black swan harvest.

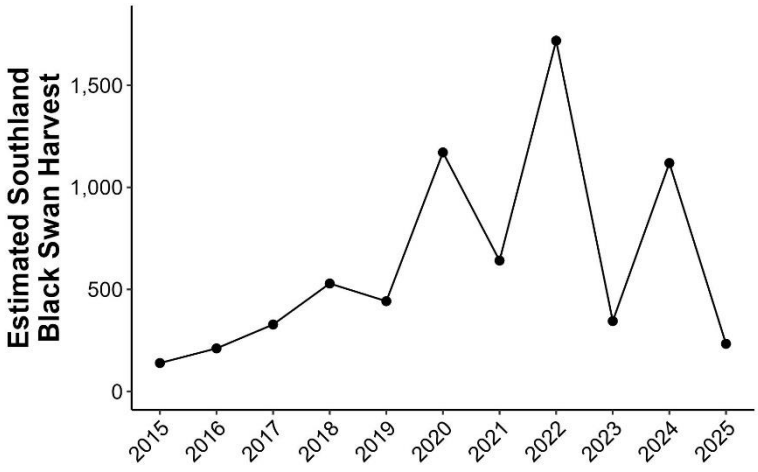

Figure 79. The number of estimated black swans harvested by year in the Southland region, 2015-2025.

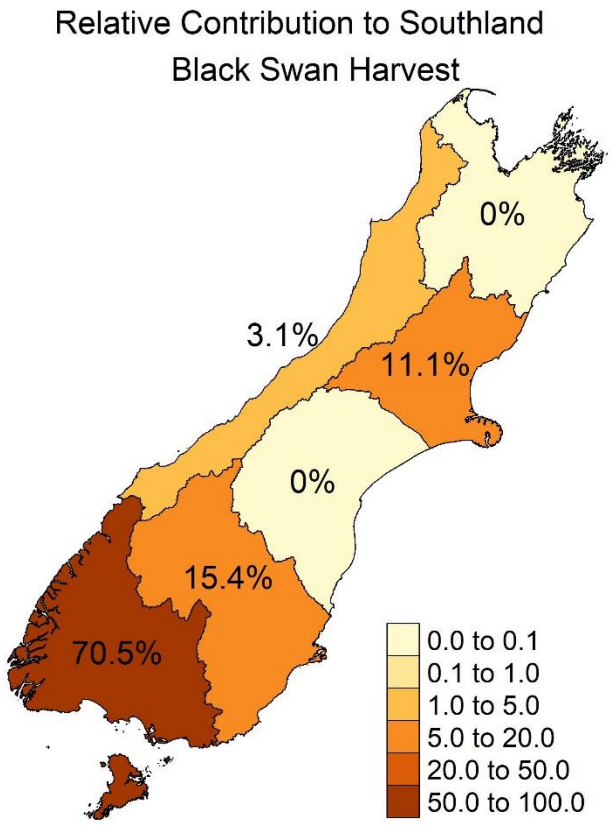

Figure 80. The percent of black swans harvested in the Southland region that were attributed to hunters from each region in 2025.

Opening weekend accounted for 33% of total black swan harvest in the Southland region during the 2025 game bird season.

Hunters from Southland were responsible for 71% of estimated harvest in the region. An additional 15% of estimated harvest was attributed to hunters from Otago, 11% from North Canterbury, and 3% from the West Coast.

Hunters from Southland were responsible for 4% of estimated black swan harvest in Otago.

Data Analysis Methods

Estimating Hunter Days

Methods for estimating hunter days followed those described by Stoffels and Unwin (2023) in the 2021/22 National Angler Survey.

The total number of game bird licence holders was gathered from the Fish & Game national licence holder database. Both adult and junior whole season licence holders were included in the total number of hunters. Child licences and day licence holders were not included, as neither group is contacted as a part of the national harvest survey.

The hunter days of region i ($i \in \{1,2,\ldots,6\}$) during period j ($j \in \{1, 2,\ldots,7\}$) by a hunter holding a licence associated with region p ($p \in \{Nelson/Marlborough, North\ Canterbury,\ldots,Southland\}$) (there are m = 6 regions for this analysis) E_{ijp} was:

$$E_{ijp} = N_{jp} \times \bar{D}_{ijp}$$

where N_{jp} denotes the number of active licences in region p (licence of purchase) during period j (in this case, because >90% of all game bird licences are purchased prior to the start of season, N_{jp} was the total licences purchased in region p during that year);

and $\bar{D}_{ijp}$ denotes the mean number of days per respondent spent hunting in region i during period j, for region (of licence purchase) p:

$$\bar{D}_{ijp} = \left(\frac{1}{n_{jp}}\right)\sum_{i=1}^{n_{jp}} D_{ijpl}$$

Where

n_{jp} is the number of hunters surveyed for period j within region p; and

D_{ijpl} is the number of days spent hunting in region i during period j, by respondent l from region p.

Because regions experience hunting activity from hunters from multiple licence purchase regions, there will be numerous estimates of $Eijp$ (one for each licence-holder region, p). The total hunter days of region i within period j is obtained via a summation across regions of licence-holders:

$$\hat{E}_{ij} = \sum_{p=1}^{m} E_{ijp}$$

Estimating Species Harvest

The number of birds harvested of species k in region i ($i \in \{1,2,\ldots,6\}$) during period j ($j \in \{1, 2,\ldots,6\}$) by a hunter holding a licence associated with region p ($p \in \{Nelson/Marlborough, North Canterbury,\ldots,Southland\}$) (there are m = 6 regions for this analysis) E_{ijp} was:

$$E_{kijp} = N_{jp} \times \bar{D}_{kijp} \times P_{ijp}$$

where N_{jp} denotes the number of active licences in region p (licence of purchase) during period j (in this case, because >90% of all game bird licences are purchased prior to the start of season N_{jp} was the total licences purchased in region p during that year year);

$\bar{D}_{ijp}$ denotes the mean number of birds harvested per hunter who reported actively hunting in region i, during period j, for region (of licence purchase) p:

$$\bar{D}_{kijp} = \left(\frac{1}{a_{ijp}}\right)\sum_{i=1}^{n_{jp}} D_{kijpl}$$

Where

a_{ijp} is the number of hunters surveyed for period j within region p who actively hunted in region i; and

D_{kijpl} is the number of birds of species k harvested in region i during period j, by respondent l from region p;

and P_{kijp} denotes the participation rate of species k, in region i, during period j, by hunters from region p:

$$P_{kijp} = \frac{a_{ijp}}{n_{jp}}$$

Where

n_{jp} is the number of hunters surveyed for period j within region p.

Because regions experience hunting activity from hunters from multiple licence purchase regions, there will be numerous estimates of $Ekijp$ (one for each licence-holder region, p). The total birds of species k harvested in region i within period j is obtained via a summation across regions of licence-holders:

$$\hat{E}_{kij} = \sum_{p=1}^{m} E_{kijp}$$

Estimating Error

To provide the most consistent estimate of error in harvest estimates and hunter days, this report utilised bootstrapping to produce all estimates (Efron & Tibshirani 1986). For each survey region p (p ∈ {1,2,...,6}), we selected random hunter surveys from period j ($j \in \{1, 2,...,7\}$) with replacement equal to the number of total hunter surveys completed for region p period j. An estimate of hunter days and harvest were calculated from the bootstrapped sample as described above. This process was repeated for a total $B = 10{,}000$ iterations.

Estimates of hunter days and harvest were derived from bootstrapped samples as:

$$Z_i = \frac{\sum \hat{E}_{ij}}{B}$$

in which $\hat{E}_{ij}$ represents the estimate at the indicated level of summation (i.e. within a hunt region or across the South Island).

The 95% confidence interval is produced from the distribution of estimates from the bootstrapped samples (i.e., the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles), and presented in Appendix II.

Literature Cited

Efron, B, R. Tibshirani. 1986. Bootstrap methods for standard errors, confidence intervals, and other measures of statistical accuracy. Statistical Science, 1:54-77.

Stoffels, R, M. Unwin. 2023. Angler usage of New Zealand lake and river fisheries: Results from the 2021/22 National Angler Survey. National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research Ltd. Pp. 142.

Appendix II

Supplementary Tables

Region	Metric	Estimate	Lower CI	Upper CI
South Island	Hunter Days	49,086	46,761	51,437
	Greylard Harvest	254,159	234,305	275,158
	Paradise Shelduck Harvest	59,787	53,157	66,845
	Shoveler Harvest	1,576	1,173	2,026
	Black Swan Harvest	3,778	2,877	4,794
	Pukeko Harvest	1,411	723	2,308
Nelson/ Marlborough	Hunter Days	2,392	2,044	2,760
	Greylard Harvest	6,297	5,019	7,686
	Paradise Shelduck Harvest	5,634	4,294	7,089
	Shoveler Harvest	79	10	167
	Black Swan Harvest	827	455	1,280
	Pukeko Harvest	394	148	700
North Canterbury	Hunter Days	7,271	6,443	8,147
	Greylard Harvest	21,342	17,928	24,961
	Paradise Shelduck Harvest	10,176	8,003	12,597
	Shoveler Harvest	622	393	875
	Black Swan Harvest	604	383	860
	Pukeko Harvest	106	0	274
West Coast	Hunter Days	1,452	1,146	1,818
	Greylard Harvest	5,846	3,765	8,623
	Paradise Shelduck Harvest	4,135	2,969	5,512
	Shoveler Harvest	33	6	71
	Black Swan Harvest	68	14	140
	Pukeko Harvest	845	266	1,679
Central South Island	Hunter Days	7,842	7,067	8,642
	Greylard Harvest	42,390	35,184	50,881
	Paradise Shelduck Harvest	14,436	10,991	18,269
	Shoveler Harvest	153	39	295
	Black Swan Harvest	1,098	583	1,702
	Pukeko Harvest	65	0	196
Otago	Hunter Days	11,045	9,841	12,301
	Greylard Harvest	53,409	44,613	63,285
	Paradise Shelduck Harvest	18,478	14,268	23,199
	Shoveler Harvest	279	131	452
	Black Swan Harvest	947	458	1,569
Southland	Hunter Days	19,083	17,254	21,023
	Greylard Harvest	124,875	108,154	143,049
	Paradise Shelduck Harvest	6,928	4,484	9,755
	Shoveler Harvest	411	163	712
	Black Swan Harvest	234	64	461

Opening Weekend Harvest per Hunter

Hunt Region	Species	Mean Harvest	Standard Error
Nelson/Marlborough	Greylards	4.72	0.55
	Paradise Shelducks	4.64	0.75
	Shovelers	0.06	0.04
	Black Swans	0.73	0.24
	Pukekos	0.22	0.12
North Canterbury	Greylards	5.40	0.55
	Paradise Shelducks	2.77	0.43
	Shovelers	0.13	0.05
	Black Swans	0.07	0.03
	Pukekos	0.04	0.04
West Coast	Greylards	5.70	0.75
	Paradise Shelducks	4.67	0.70
	Shovelers	0.02	0.02
	Black Swans	0.04	0.04
	Pukekos	0.70	0.29
Central South Island	Greylards	9.47	0.75
	Paradise Shelducks	3.31	0.48
	Shovelers	0.03	0.02
	Black Swans	0.27	0.08
	Pukekos	0.03	0.03
Otago	Greylards	9.13	0.65
	Paradise Shelducks	2.48	0.29
	Shovelers	0.06	0.02
	Black Swans	0.18	0.07
Southland	Greylards	14.73	0.89
	Paradise Shelducks	1.04	0.24
	Shovelers	0.04	0.02
	Black Swans	0.02	0.01

Table 2. The mean harvest on opening weekend per hunter that reported hunting within each region for each species, based on raw harvest survey data.