

# OTAGO

## Game Bird Hunting Regulations 2026/2027



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SCAN FOR  
ALL REGIONS  
REGULATIONS

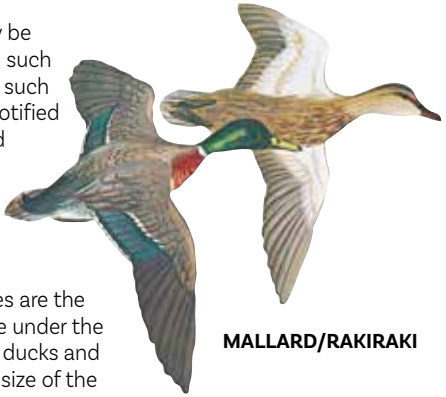
## NEW ZEALAND DUCK SPECIES

### GAME SPECIES

(NAMED IN BLACK)

These species may be hunted, but only in such regions and during such open seasons as notified in the New Zealand Gazette each year by the Minister for Hunting and Fishing.

NOTE: Important recognition features are the large areas of white under the wings of the game ducks and the smaller overall size of the protected ducks.



**MALLARD/RAKIRAKI**



**PARADISE SHELDUCK/  
PŪTAKITAKI**



**SHOVELER/  
KURUWHENGI**



**GREY DUCK/PĀRERA**

## PROTECTED SPECIES

(NAMED IN RED)

These species are absolutely protected at all times.

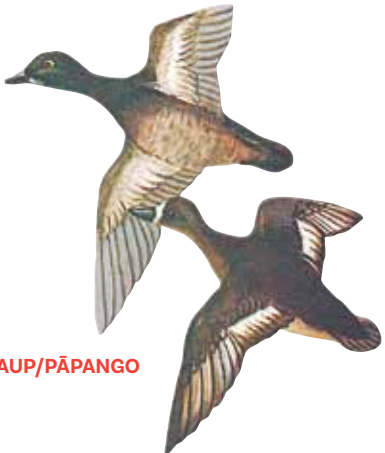
**DO NOT TARGET**



**BROWN TEAL/PĀTEKE**



**GREY TEAL/TĒTĒ-MOROITI**



**SCAUP/PĀPANGO**

# Regulations

The regulations printed in this guide booklet are subject to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing's approval. A copy of the published game notice in the New Zealand Gazette is available on [www.fishandgame.org.nz](http://www.fishandgame.org.nz) along with further information on game bird hunting.

## GAME BIRD HUNTING Code Of Conduct

Fish and Game New Zealand actively promotes responsible and ethical hunting practices. As game bird hunters we all have the following responsibilities, as detailed in the Game Bird Hunting Code of Conduct:

### Hunt Humanely

- Shoot only within the effective range of our firearm and our capabilities, and only when a quick, clean kill is likely
- Retrieve all shot birds promptly and dispatch wounded game birds quickly and humanely
- Respect the resource, value our game birds and eat what we shoot

### Protect Game Bird Resources And Our Hunting Traditions

- Understand and observe all hunting regulations and licensing requirements
- Support game bird management and habitat enhancement activities
- Take no more than our immediate needs
- Share our knowledge and foster ethical attitudes and behaviour in hunting companions and youth

### Care For The Environment

- Remove all rubbish from the hunting area and dispose of offal and carcasses responsibly
- Use non-toxic shot and biodegradable products.
- Use established tracks and roads

### Respect The Rights Of Others

- Respect private property and always obtain access permission
- Be considerate of non-hunters
- Be aware of our safety and the safety of others when hunting

- Comply with the Arms Act 1983 and always follow the 7 Firearms Safety Rules:
  1. Treat every firearm as loaded
  2. Always point firearms in a safe direction
  3. Load a firearm only when ready to fire
  4. Identify your target beyond all doubt
  5. Check your firing zone
  6. Store firearms and ammunition safely
  7. Avoid both alcohol and drugs when handling firearms

For further guidance about responsible game bird hunting read the full Code of Conduct at [www.fishandgame.org.nz](http://www.fishandgame.org.nz)

## Stop The Spread Of Aquatic Pests

Protect our waters: **CHECK, CLEAN, DRY.** Check dogs, boots, decoys, boats and their trailers before you leave the area.

## Hunting Licence Valid Nationwide

All game bird hunting licences can be used in all Fish & Game New Zealand regions. Day licences are valid only on or after the second Monday of the new season. It's important to note that if you're hunting in other regions you need to read up on the local regulations at [www.fishandgame.org.nz](http://www.fishandgame.org.nz). Fish & Game New Zealand sports fish and game licences are issued online, are processed electronically and comply with the Electronic Transactions Act 2002. Licences are issued centrally by a person authorised to issue licences on behalf of each Fish and Game Council.

## Game Bird Habitat Stamp

A game bird habitat stamp must be displayed on every licence to hunt or kill game<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of the Habitat Stamp Programme is to raise funds for habitat enhancement. Five dollars (\$5)<sup>2</sup> of the game licence fee is assigned to the stamp as income for the programme.

If you own or help manage suitable game bird habitat including wetlands, you are welcome to apply for funds raised from the habitat stamp programme. To apply see the Game Bird Habitat Trust website <https://fishandgame.org.nz/environment/protecting/protecting-nz-game-bird-habitats/the-nz-game-bird-habitat-trust> for details. Applications close June 30.



<sup>1</sup> Section 19A(1) of the Wildlife Act 1953

<sup>2</sup> Section 72(3A)9e) of the Wildlife Act 1953

## Shotguns And Use Of Non-Toxic Shot

Game bird hunting can only be undertaken with a shotgun of a 10 gauge or smaller (including 12, 16, 20, 28, .410). Mandatory use of non-toxic shot applies to all waterfowl hunting, (C15, Hunters Notice)).

This ban is mandatory across all lands (public and private) whilst hunting waterfowl within 200 metres of all waterways and wetlands.

For more information refer below or to [www.fishandgame.org.nz](http://www.fishandgame.org.nz)

## Wildlife Act 1953

The hunting of game is governed by the provisions of the Wildlife Act 1953. The Minister for Hunting and Fishing declares an open season for game annually in the New Zealand Gazette (see below). Some important provisions of the Wildlife Act are covered here. The Act and its companion Wildlife Regulations 1955 can be viewed in full online: <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/>

## Wildlife Declared To Be Game <sup>3</sup>

Hunters are reminded that only the following lists of species are game birds that they are permitted to hunt and kill.

### Waterfowl

- Kakiānau/black swan (*Cygnus atratus*) (except on Chatham Islands).
- Duck:
  - Pāpera/grey duck (*Anas superciliosa*) and any cross of that species with any other species, variety, or kind of duck (except on Chatham Islands).
  - Rakiraki/Mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and any cross of that species with any other species, variety, or kind of duck (except on Chatham Islands).
  - Pūtakitaki/paradise shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*). Putangitangi
  - Kuruwhengi/Australasian shoveler duck (New Zealand shoveler) (*Spatula rhynchotis*).
- Pūkeko (*Porphyrio melanotus*) (except on Chatham Islands).

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<sup>3</sup> Schedule 1 Wildlife Act 1953

## Upland Game

- Chukar (*Alectoris graeca chukar*).
- Red-legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa rufa*).
- Pheasant (any bird not being a domestic bird, of the genus *Phasianus* and any cross of any such bird with any other species, variety, or kind of pheasant).
- Quail:
  - Australian or brown quail (*Synoicus*). *Synoicus ypsilophorus*
  - Californian quail (*Callipepla californica*).
  - Virginian or bobwhite quail (*Colinus virginianus*).

## Restrictions On The Taking Of Game

### (S18, Wildlife Act 1953)

No person shall use more than one shotgun or any live decoy.

## Use Of Lead Shot Ammunition Over Water

### (C15, Hunters Notice)

It is an offence to possess, or hunt waterfowl with 200 metres of open water using lead shot ammunition.

## Licence To Hunt Or Kill Game

### (S19, Wildlife Act 1953)

It is an offence to hunt or kill game unless the person holds a current game licence, except in some circumstances where that person is a resident occupier as defined in the Wildlife Act.

## Occupier of Any Land

### (S19(3), Wildlife Act 1953)

“...the occupier of any land, and the spouse or partner and any one son or daughter of the occupier, may, during an open season, hunt or kill on that land without a licence (but subject to all other restrictions imposed by game regulations.” The occupier of the land is normally the owner if she/he personally resides on the land, but this privilege can be transferred to farm manager or sharemilkers by a written statement indicating such to Fish and Game if the owner does not personally reside on the land. Note that the Act allows for hunting by three people; the occupier, his/her wife/husband/civil union partner or de facto partner and one son or daughter on that land - but no other land. Except a run-off farmed in conjunction with that land.

## **Shooting Of Game Not In Flight Prohibited**

***(S22, Wildlife Act 1953)***

It is an offence for a person to shoot or attempt to shoot at any game bird not in flight except where a game bird is already wounded by shooting.

## **Obstructing Rangers**

***(S40, Wildlife Act 1953)***

It is an offence to obstruct a ranger. The maximum penalty is 2-years imprisonment and/or \$100,000 fine.

## **Taking Protected Wildlife**

***(S67A, Wildlife Act 1953)***

It is an offence to hunt or kill protected wildlife. The maximum penalties for hunting or killing absolutely protected wildlife is up to two years imprisonment or \$100,000 fine.

## **Game Hunting Exclusion Areas**

Closed game areas means a part of a region that is for the time being excluded from the open season in the region, but does not include a wildlife sanctuary or a wildlife refuge or any area in which the shooting or hunting or killing of animals is prohibited under or pursuant to paragraph (j) of subsection (2) of this [Wildlife] Act or any other Act. There is no open season for game birds on property in a closed game area. It remains legal to have a dog or a gun on such land, but not to use them to hunt game birds (which also applies to the landowner). (s2. Wildlife Act 1953). Each closed game area is administered by a Fish and Game Council.

## **Wildlife Refuges**

It is illegal to take a dog or a gun onto Wildlife Refuge land, unless specifically permitted in writing to do so, or to harm or disturb any wildlife including game birds on that land (s14(3) Wildlife Act 1953). Wildlife Refuges are administered by the Department of Conservation.

The remainder of this hunting guide is made up of regional details and hunting conditions contained in the Gazetted Game Notice. These conditions are set out in the:

## SCHEDULE 1

### Hunting Conditions Common To All Fish And Game Regions

#### 1 Bag limits

- 1.1** No person shall take or kill, on any one day, more than the number of game birds specified as the daily bag limit for the Fish and Game Region in which the game is taken.
- 1.2** No person shall possess, on any one day, more than the number of game birds specified as the daily bag limit for the Fish and Game Region in which the game is taken, except on Sunday 3 May 2026, when that person may have in their possession twice the number of game birds specified as the daily bag limit for Saturday 2 May 2026.
- 1.3** A person may possess more game than specified in clause 1(2) of this Schedule, if all such game is labelled with the following details:
- (a) The name and address of the person by whom the game was taken;
  - (b) The number of the licence to hunt or kill game held by the person by whom the game was taken;
  - (c) The name of the Fish and Game Region by which that licence was issued;
  - (d) The name of the Fish and Game Region in which the game was taken; and
  - (e) The date on which the game was taken.

#### 2 Waiver of Restrictions on Baiting for Waterfowl

A person may hunt or kill game of the family Anatidae (waterfowl) during the open season for game in all Fish and Game Regions, except Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Region, where food has been cast, thrown, placed or planted any time during the year.<sup>4</sup> In the Second Schedule, Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Region, Special Condition 4(10), applies to restrictions on baiting.

#### 3 Magazine Shotguns

A person may hunt or kill game birds, as specified, in any Fish and Game Regions with any magazine shotgun of a calibre 10 gauge or less, which includes magazine extensions that comply with the Arms Act 1983,<sup>5</sup> other than in the:

- (a) Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Region;
- (b) Eastern Fish and Game Region;

<sup>4</sup> Section 17 of the Wildlife Act 1953.

<sup>5</sup> Amended notification to section 18(1)(c) (iii) and (v) of the Wildlife Act 1953 as authorised by the Minister of Conservation under section 18(1) of that Act.

- (c) Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Region;
- (d) Wellington Fish and Game Region;
- (e) West Coast Fish and Game Region.

For these five Regions the special conditions in Schedule 2 apply.

## 4 Shot Size

No person shall use, in any shotgun used for the purposes of hunting and killing game, any cartridge containing any shot size having a larger retained, per-pellet energy at 90 metres than BB.

## 5 Use of Lead Shot Prohibited

**5.1** No person may possess lead shot, or use lead shot, while hunting or killing waterfowl within 200 metres of open water with any gun. Non-toxic alternative shot must be used, such as steel.

**5.2** For the purposes of this requirement, "waterfowl" means any of the following game species:

- Black swan (*Cygnus atratus*);
- Grey duck (*Anas superciliosa*) and any cross of that species with any other species, variety, or kind of duck;
- Mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and any cross of that species with any other species, variety, or kind of duck;
- Paradise shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*) also known as Paradise duck;
- Australasian shoveler duck (New Zealand shoveler) (*Spatula rhynchotis*);
- Pūkeko (*Porphyrio porphyrio melanotus*).

**5.3** For the purposes of this requirement, "open water" means either:

- (a) any area of land or seabed covered permanently or seasonally by water wider than 3 metres; or
- (b) any area which is temporarily covered by water wider than 3 metres at the time of such possession or use, and that is contiguous to an area referred to in paragraph (3)(a).

## 6 Camouflaged Rowboats

A person may hunt or kill game within the following Fish and Game Regions, from unmoored camouflaged rowboats, subject to the excluded periods for the regions specified below: <sup>6</sup>

- **Northland** - no excluded period
- **Auckland/Waikato** - excluding 2 and 3 May 2026 for

<sup>6</sup> Section 18(1)(f)(vi) of the Wildlife Act 1953.

the whole Auckland/Waikato region and excluding 2 to 4 May and 9 and 10 May 2026 for the Waikato River north of the boat ramp at the confluence of the Mangawara Stream

- **Eastern** – excluding 2 and 3 May 2026
- **Hawke’s Bay** – excluding 2 and 3 May 2026
- **Taranaki** – no excluded period
- **Wellington** – excluding 2 and 3 May 2026
- **Nelson/Marlborough** – no excluded period
- **West Coast** – no excluded period
- **North Canterbury** – excluding 2 and 3 May 2026
- **Central South Island** – excluding 2 and 3 May 2026
- **Otago** – excluding Clutha River 2 to 10 May 2026 inclusive
- **Southland** – excluding 2 and 3 of May 2026, and the Mataura River downstream of the State Highway 1 Bridge at Gore for the month of May, and that part of the Oreti River below the Dunn’s Road bridge for the whole season.

## 7 Restriction on Taking of Game

No person shall use any vehicle propelled by mechanical power (including motorised watercraft) to chase or kill game, except in such circumstances and at such times as authorised by the Conservation Act 1987 and Wildlife Act 1953.<sup>7</sup>

## 8 Mark-up Day

- 8.1** Stand claimants who claimed and occupied a stand during the 2025 Game Season may claim that stand at any time prior to Mark-up Day (up to 10.00 a.m. on 29 March 2026) following the purchase of the 2026 game licence. If you are in the Auckland/Waikato Region, then the above mentioned applies **only to Adult Whole-Season Licence Holders** and does not apply to Junior Licence Holders as it does in all other Fish and Game Regions.
- 8.2** Otherwise, unclaimed stands can only be claimed any time after 10.00 am on 29 March 2026 in all Fish and Game Regions.
- 8.3** A stand may be claimed by planting on it a stake having either a board or identifying label attached, plainly identifying the name of the claimant and the number of his/her licence. The hunting stand claim tag provided with the licence must be completed with

<sup>7</sup> Section 18(1)(f)(v) of the Wildlife Act 1953.

# Regulations

the name of the claimant and affixed to the board or identifying label.

- 8.4** The licence holder claiming a stand must be present in person at the stand when marking it up.
- 8.5** No one can claim more than one stand.
- 8.6** A stand cannot be claimed closer than 90 metres to a stand already claimed by another person without that person's consent.
- 8.7** Any stand not occupied by the claimant within one hour after the opening hour of hunting, on any day, can be occupied by another licence holder for the remainder of the day.

## 9 Conditions

These conditions will expire at the end of the open season for game.

# PROTECT OUR WATERWAYS

## STOP THE SPREAD OF FRESHWATER PESTS



CHECK



CLEAN



DRY

## SCHEDULE 2

### Hunting Conditions Applicable To Particular Fish And Game Regions

#### OTAGO FISH AND GAME REGION<sup>5</sup>

#### 1 Game That May be Hunted or Killed –Duration of 2026/2027 Season

Species	Season Duration (dates inclusive)	Daily Bag Limit	Hunting Area
Grey/mallard duck and any hybrid of those species	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	25	All areas
NZ shoveler duck	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	1 drake	All areas
Paradise shelduck	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	15	All areas
	6 Mar to 14 Mar 2027	15	All areas (refer to clause 5(4) for this Region)
Pūkeko	Closed season	0	All areas
Black swan	Closed season	0	Area A
	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	10	Area B
California quail	30 May to 30 Aug 2026	10	All areas
Chukar	30 May to 30 Aug 2026	2	All areas
Cock pheasant	30 May to 30 Aug 2026	5	All areas

#### 2 Definition of Areas

**2.1 Area A:** The Clutha River catchment upstream from the Clyde Dam.

**2.2 Area B:** The Clutha River catchment downstream from the Clyde Dam; the Taieri River catchment and all the coastal catchments between Shag Point and The Brothers Point on the east coast of the South Island.

#### 3 Shooting Hours

**3.1 Area A:** 7.00am to 6.45pm May to August inclusive

**3.2 Area B:** 7.00am to 6.30pm

**3.3 All Areas:** 5.30am to 10.00pm (March).

<sup>5</sup> Reference to description: New Zealand Gazette, No. 83, of 24 May 1990, at page 1861.

## 4 Decoy Limit

No limit.

## 5 Special Conditions

**5.1** No person shall use or cause to be used on any water within the region for the hunting or killing of game, any fixed stand, pontoon, hide, loo or maimai, except within a distance of 10 metres from the water margin in non-tidal waters, or from the low water mark in tidal waters, or from the outside edge of the raupo growth where raupo abounds, without the prior consent of the Otago Fish and Game Council.

**5.2** No person may leave on the hunting ground the bodies or parts of bodies of black swan or other game shot in the Otago Fish and Game region.

**5.3** Shooting from a boat is prohibited on the Clutha River from 2 May to 10 May 2026 inclusive (refer to First Schedule clause 6).

**5.4** The special paradise shelduck season is open from 6 March to 14 March 2027 inclusive. Hunting is restricted to locations 200 metres or more from open water.

**5.5** No hen shoveler ducks may be taken.

## 6 Refuges and Closed Game Areas

The following wetland refuges and closed game areas are closed to hunting:

<b>Refuges</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>6.1</b> Lake Hayes	Queenstown/Arrowtown highway
<b>6.2</b> Hawksbury Lagoon	Waikouaiti - East Otago
<b>6.3</b> Finegand	Balclutha
<b>Closed Game Areas</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>6.4</b> Tomahawk Lagoon	Dunedin
<b>6.6</b> Kawarau River outlet	From Lake Wakatipu downstream to the Shotover River confluence

## Hunting In Otago

Otago is a game bird hunters' paradise. The region offers hunters a wide variety of different experiences – from decoying mobs of mallards over coastal wetlands, to flushing quail in high country scrubland.

## More Information

Visit the Otago pages of the Fish & Game New Zealand website for more information or contact Otago Fish and Game's Mosgiel Office ([otago@fishandgame.org.nz](mailto:otago@fishandgame.org.nz)) for advice, brochures on hunting or wetland creation.





Photo: Barry Harcourt



## BLUE DUCK - WHIO, A THREATENED SPECIES.

In parts of the country whio (blue duck) populations are increasing in response to predator control, and birds are being seen from time to time on farmland in the vicinity of forested streams. They commonly do low level flights up and down streams in early morning and evening meaning a quick shooter can easily mistake them in low light. This threatened species is fully protected, and apart from setting conservation efforts back a step, killing one can mean a \$100,000 fine.

**Please take care to identify your target beyond all doubt so whio, along with all of our other protected birds, are not mistakenly shot.**

# CHECK ON YOUR MATES

Need support?  
Text/free call 1737  
anytime anywhere



Or contact your GP or Health  
Improvement Practitioner



**Public access to your  
next special spot?**



# Pocket Maps

Offline public access maps of Aotearoa.  
Anytime. Anywhere.



# Keep your ducks in a row.



This duck season remember  
to always handle firearms safely,  
wear hearing protection and save  
the drinks till after the hunt.

For more information on hunter safety  
head to [firearmssafetyauthority.govt.nz](https://firearmssafetyauthority.govt.nz)

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**PLAN** > **ACT** > **STAY**  
**SAFE** > **SAFE** > **SAFE**

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**Te Tari Pūreke**  
Firearms Safety Authority