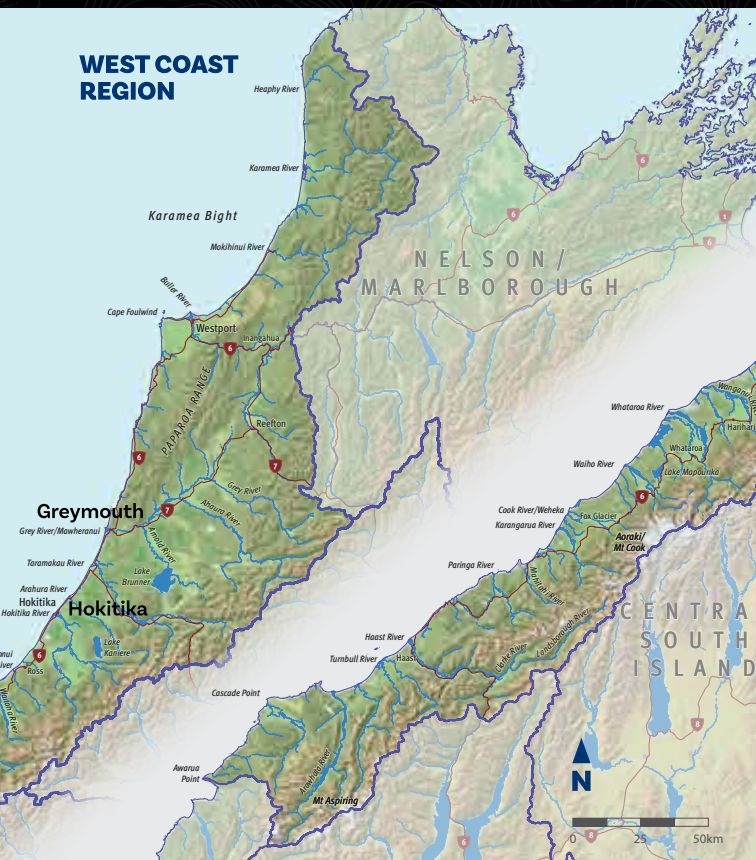


WEST COAST

Game Bird Hunting Regulations 2026/2027



West Coast Office: Airport Drive, Hokitika

Postal Address: 2 Bert Mercer Drive Hokitika 7810

Phone: (03) 755 8546

Email: westcoast@fishandgame.org.nz



SCAN FOR
ALL REGIONS
REGULATIONS

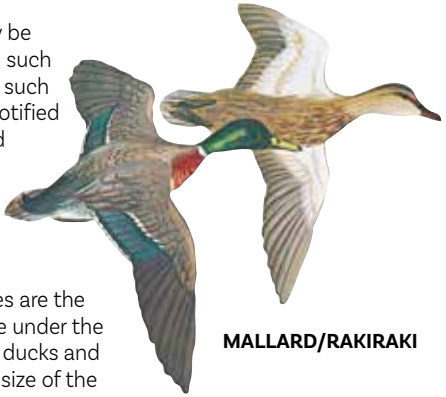
NEW ZEALAND DUCK SPECIES

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.

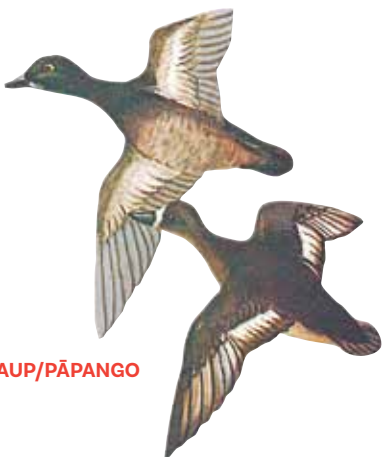
DO NOT TARGET



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 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

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. 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 game¹. The purpose of the Habitat Stamp Programme is to raise funds for habitat enhancement. Five dollars (\$5)² 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.



¹ Section 19A(1) of the Wildlife Act 1953

² 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

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 ³

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).

³ 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.⁴ 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 1983,⁵ other than in the:

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

⁴ Section 17 of the Wildlife Act 1953.

⁵ 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: ⁶

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

⁶ 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 1953.⁷

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

⁷ 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

WEST COAST FISH AND GAME REGION⁵

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	Aggregate bag 15	All areas
NZ shoveler duck	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	2	All areas
Paradise shelduck	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	15	All areas
	27 Feb to 21 Mar 2027	15	Locations 200 metres or more from open water
Pūkeko	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	20	All areas
	1 Jan to 21 Mar 2027	20	All areas
Black swan	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	4	All areas
	27 Feb to 21 Mar 2027	4	All areas
Cock Pheasant	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	2	All areas

2 Shooting Hours

6.30am to 6.30pm (May to July inclusive).

5.00am to 10.00pm (January to March inclusive).

3 Decoy Limit

No limit.

4 Special conditions

No person may hunt or kill game birds, as specified, within the West Coast region with any magazine shotgun of a bore smaller than 10 gauge unless the shotgun:

- (a) has a magazine of any type adjusted with a one-piece filler which is incapable of removal without

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

disassembling the gun; or

- (b) the magazine is pinned in accordance with Regulations made under this Act;

so that the magazine shotgun is incapable of holding more than 4 shells in the magazine, with no more than 5 shells in the magazine and chamber combined, at any one time.

Hunting On The West Coast

The primary attractions for game bird hunters on the Coast are the diversity of habitat, providing for a range of species, but mainly grey and mallard ducks or hybrids. Shoveler, paradise shelduck and pukeko are also widespread throughout the region.

In general, developed valleys with improved pasture and open drains offer the best waterfowl hunting – particularly for mallards, pūkeko and shelduck – however riverbeds, bush ponds and coastal wetlands – most of which are on Department of Conservation (DOC) administered land – also provide excellent opportunities.

Some relatively unexploited hunting opportunities remain in South Westland river valleys south of Harihari.

Anyone planning a trip to hunt the West Coast can contact the Fish and Game Council for advice on key landowners to contact.

Hunters always need permission from the land administrator to hunt. DOC administered Public Conservation Land is no different. DOC requires hunters to have a Gamebird Hunting Permit which are issued via email through Western South Island District Offices. Currently the best way to contact relevant office is via the district email addresses listed on the DOC website: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/>. Hunters wishing to shoot at Lakes Rotokino, lanthe, Arthur, Swan and Lady, or Saltwater Lagoon must request a permit from DOC before the end of March. Please note: Many riverbed and adjacent pasture areas administered by DOC are also licenced to neighbouring farmers for grazing. A DOC permit provides permission to hunt these areas; however, Fish & Game advises hunters to inform the grazing licence holder of their intentions.

Please note that it is unlawful to use or possess lead shot when hunting waterfowl within 200 metres of any open water wider than 3 metres.

Paradise Duck Hunting

A phone call to one of the contacts listed below will be of great assistance for visitors seeking shelduck hunting opportunities.

Some recommended spots are the Ahaura/Lake Haupiri and

Fish & Game Regions

Lake Poerua/Taramakau catchments and the Wanganui, Waiho, Waitaha and Whataroa valleys in South Westland. It is so important to do it right the first time, and to this end, the following advice is important;

- Phone a local contact below to locate birds. If possible, observe their movements for a day or two before hunting.
- Construct a hide with minimum disturbance and use natural vegetation where available. Paradise ducks will usually avoid a paddock that looks different from the previous visit.
- Use plenty of decoys - facing into the wind.
- Use camouflaged clothing and keep movement to a minimum.
- Often, it's best to let an incoming mob land, then flush and shoot.
- Although they look like they're moving slowly, paradise shelducks can fly at up to 80km/hr. If you are not hitting them, increase your lead by swinging through the target more quickly.

Most private landowners will react favourably to reasonable requests for access to hunt. The contacts listed below are recommended for hunters seeking new areas, particularly to hunt parries. It is essential to phone the landowner before visiting and respect any reasons they may have for limiting access.

Area Property Contact Phone number

Area	Property Contact	Phone number
Ahaura	M Bray	732 3576
Ahaura	R Becker	732 3879
Ahaura	G Paterson	732 3140
Arahura	P Clement	027 646 4677
Atarau	A Becker	732 3576
Atarau	C Brake	732 3080
Atarau	A Berry	732 3856
Atarau	C Van der Geest	732 3718
Atarau	J Liddell	732 3747
Atarau	M Mills	732 3001
Atarau	P Berry	732 3856
Atarau	R Little	732 3034
Atarau	D Kennedy	027 632 7795
Barrytown	George Coates	731 1805
Haupiri	C Egan	738 0188
Haupiri	H Temple (G.C.C)	(G.C.C) 738 0224

Ikamatua	G Prendergast	732 3518
Ikamatua	R Lemon	732 3525
Ikamatua	B McLennan	027 759 8825
Karamea	N Simpson	0272053365
Karamea	R Anderson	782 6762
Kokiri	D Bradley	762 5798
Kokiri	ANZCO	762 5055
Rotomanu	H Raymond	027 477 7247
Rotomanu	M Donehue	027 420 1283

Tips For Hunting On The West Coast

The key to success in all hunting is to be observant and recognise that game bird movements and feeding patterns change in response to the time of year and the food available. In the case of shelduck, feeding patterns are largely dictated by the location of preferred pasture. Prevailing weather patterns also have a significant influence on where birds congregate at certain times. For example, during wet periods in June/July, intensively grazed paddocks are favoured by mallards seeking high protein in the form of worms and grubs.

Seed from fed out hay and baleage is also a favoured food source. During frosty periods, drains and wet areas with willow (pig) weed infestations may be popular. Observant hunters will notice that birds alter their daily habits and flight patterns in response to the length of daylight hours, prevailing weather and the level of disturbance.

Fish & Game Regions

Waterfowl generally avoid large open water bodies during rough, windy weather, preferring sheltered swampy margins and farm drains. Similarly, during extended frosty periods, there is often good hunting in small running creeks and small ponds with a bush canopy.

Many hunters become frustrated by large congregations of ducks – predominantly mallards – loafing in open paddocks after the first week or two of the season when ducks become more wary. These birds are often difficult to hunt, but for those prepared to chance the odd unsuccessful outing, success is more likely to improve later in the season, especially on rough days and at first and last light.

Late in the season birds are preparing for breeding and require extra protein in the form of aquatic invertebrates and terrestrial insects. At this time small creeks, farm drains and wet paddocks often provide favoured feeding habitat. During this period, it is often possible to call in ducks that earlier in the season were simply not interested. In intensively farmed areas, the daily routine heavily influences hunting opportunities. Look for concentrations of birds near stock feed-out pads and, particularly in the case of shelducks, on saved pasture and green crops.



Organised Hunts

Complaints about concentrations of game birds such as pūkeko and paradise shelduck indicate problem areas that hunters can be directed to. Pūkeko and shelduck hunting success often depends on a team of hunters working together.

Organised hunts have become increasingly popular on the West Coast as access to good hunting becomes more difficult in other regions. Contact our West Coast Office to register your interest in organised hunting.

Enjoy your hunting on the 'Coast', comply with the few rules we have, and please show respect for landowners and your fellow hunters.



CHECK ON YOUR MATES

Need support?
Text/free call 1737
anytime anywhere



Or contact your GP or Health
Improvement Practitioner



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

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



Te Tari Pūreke
Firearms Safety Authority