

NELSON/MARLBOROUGH

Game Bird Hunting Regulations 2026/2027



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SCAN FOR
ALL REGIONS
REGULATIONS

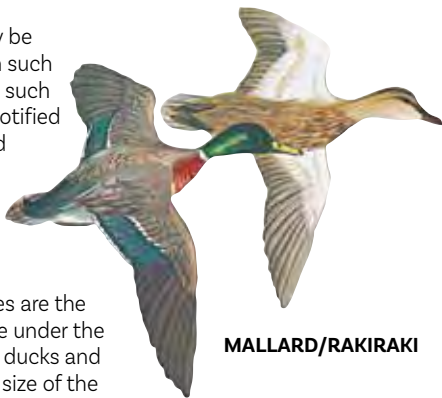
NEW ZEALAND DUCK SPECIES

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.

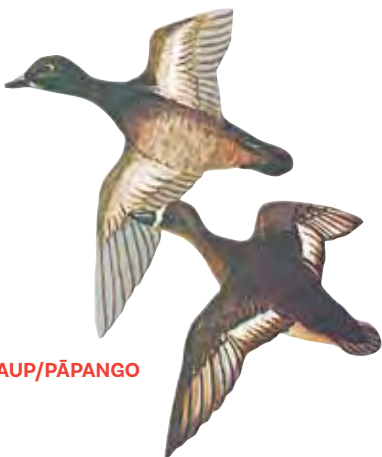
DO NOT TARGET



BROWN TEAL/PĀTEKE



GREY TEAL/TĒTĒ-MOROITI



SCAUP/PĀPANGO

Regulations

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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

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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

NELSON MARLBOROUGH FISH AND GAME REGION ⁵

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	8	All areas
NZ shoveler duck	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	2	All areas
Paradise shelduck	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	10	All areas, except Tasman/Golden Bay area
	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	15	Tasman/Golden Bay area
Pūkeko	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	10	Except East Coast/Kaikoura & Tasman/Golden Bay area
	2 May to 25 Oct 2026	20	Tasman/Golden Bay area
	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	2	East Coast/Kaikoura area only
	2 Jan 2027 to 21 Feb 2027	20	Tasman/Golden Bay area only
Black swan	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	10	All areas
	8 Aug to 30 Aug 2026	10	All areas
California quail	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	10	All areas

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

Fish & Game Regions

Species	Season Duration (dates inclusive)	Daily Bag Limit	Hunting Area
Cock pheasant	2 May and 3 May 2026	1	All publicly administered land
	30 May to 1 Jun 2026	1	
	20 and 21 Jun 2026	1	
	18 and 19 Jul 2026	1	
Cock pheasant	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	1	All privately owned land including Crown Forest Land
Chukar	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	2	All areas

2 Definition of Areas

2.1 Wairau Lagoons: That area defined as all open waters, islands and the peninsula between Chandlers Lagoon and Big Lagoon, south of the Wairau River mouth, including Te Aropipi Channel and south to the White Bluffs.

2.2 Tasman/Golden Bay area: The area west of the Bryant/Gordon Range, north of State Highway 63 from St Arnaud to Kawatiri Junction encompassing Tasman & Golden Bays.

2.3 East Coast/Kaikoura Area: The area to the south of the Awatere Valley/Molesworth Road and the Redwood Pass Road.

3 Shooting Hours

6.30am to 6.30pm during May, then 6.45am to 6.15pm until 25 August 2024. For the remaining pūkeko season, sunrise to sunset.

4 Decoy Limit

No limit.

5 Special Conditions

5.1 All permanent hunting stands/maimais used for the purposes of hunting of game on the Wairau Lagoons must be situated above the mean high-water level.

5.2 Moored camouflaged boats are permitted for hunting or killing game in the Wairau Lagoons, but shall not be within 200 metres of any other hunting stand.

Hunting Opportunities In Nelson/ Marlborough

Tasman/Golden Bay/Murchison

Populations of mallard duck occur throughout this area, including coastal estuaries and lower country farm ponds. While most of the ducks are a mallard/grey (greylard) cross, there are reasonable populations of grey-type ducks in Golden Bay and the Murchison/ Maruia area. Paradise shelduck can be found throughout this area in good numbers, especially on dairy farms in Golden Bay, Tasman and the Murchison area. Hunters are encouraged to approach owners of farms who are often willing to allow access in order to reduce the shelduck population. Black swans are in large numbers around Western Golden Bay, including Westhaven Inlet. There are high populations of pukeko in the Tasman/Golden Bay areas, and as a result of increases in the population and crop damage complaints in the past few years, the pukeko season length and area have been extended to try to alleviate the problems in Nelson/Tasman/Golden Bay only. There are balloted hunting opportunities for Kainui Dam and Gibbs Road – please apply to the Richmond office.

With a cycleway nearby, those hunting the Pearl Creek and Neiman Creek on the Waimea Estuary and the mouth of the Riuwaka River are advised to use caution.

Hunters are advised not to hunt the area between Pugh Road and Brightwater, and the Waimea Park fishing facility and wetland, due to safety issues with high public use of these areas.

Upland game

Limited numbers of pheasant can be found scattered throughout orchards, foothills, forestry edges and river bermlands, particularly in the Waimea, lower Motueka plains and the Moutere. Populations of quail exist on bush/forestry margins, recently felled forest areas and rough land in the warm drier country throughout the district. This hunting is often challenging due to the thick scrub that makes any follow-up (after the initial flush) very difficult. NMF&G has an access agreement with forest management companies Tasman Pine Forests Ltd and OneFortyOne – contact the Richmond office for details.

Marlborough

The many rivers, streams, flats, estuaries, wetlands, and Marlborough Sounds offer excellent hunting opportunities.

Fish & Game Regions

Mallards occur throughout the region, and paradise shelduck can be found in good numbers on farms with improved pasture or crops, including estuary margins and rivers adjacent to these farms. Black swans occur in moderate numbers in estuarine reaches. Two excellent public land waterfowl hunting areas close to Blenheim are the Wairau Lagoons and Para Wetland (see below). Top Valley Wetland is also available for balloted hunting opportunities.

Hunting The Wairau Lagoons

The Wairau Lagoons cover about 2000 hectares of saline marsh and mud flats between the Wairau River mouth and the Vernon Estate to the south. Besides the obvious main channels in the northern part of the lagoons and Te Aropipi Channel, which runs along inside the seaward Boulder Bank, few parts of the lagoons are more than a metre deep. The mud in some areas can be very deep, and care should be taken in unfamiliar areas. There is a large population of protected grey teal, and hunters must take care to positively identify their target. Access can be gained via the end of Hardings Road, off Redwood Pass Road (via permit only with strict access conditions - apply to Vaughan Lynn for gate code and access rules), or from the Wairau Bar using a boat. A permit is required to hunt this area, which is now issued through the Richmond Fish & Game office on behalf of DOC Renwick. An access and information pamphlet is available from either Fish & Game office.

Para Wetland

Para Wetland is a Fish & Game owned wetland with several balloted hunting sites within the wetland. Hunters who wish to hunt the wetland on Opening Weekend are invited to make an application on a ballot form available from the Blenheim office before 31 March. Para Wetland is being developed to improve game bird hunting opportunities, and new sites are becoming available with time.

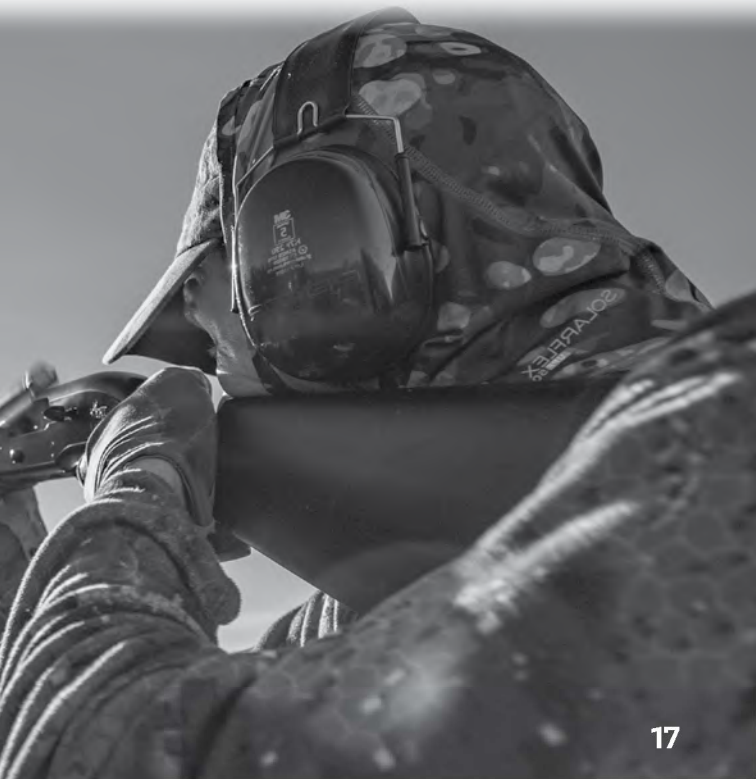


Upland game

The Marlborough high country offers some of the country's prime quail hunting, although much of this is on private land and requires permission from the landowner. Populations of quail can also be found scattered throughout most riverbeds, notably the Awatere, Wairau and Waihopai catchments, where broken cover and scrublands exist. Marlborough District Council generally allow quail hunting in the Wairau above the Waihopai, but please check out maps on the Walking Access Commission website for private land boundaries before hunting. NMF&G have negotiated weekend access to some OneFortyOne forest blocks in Marlborough; contact the Richmond office.

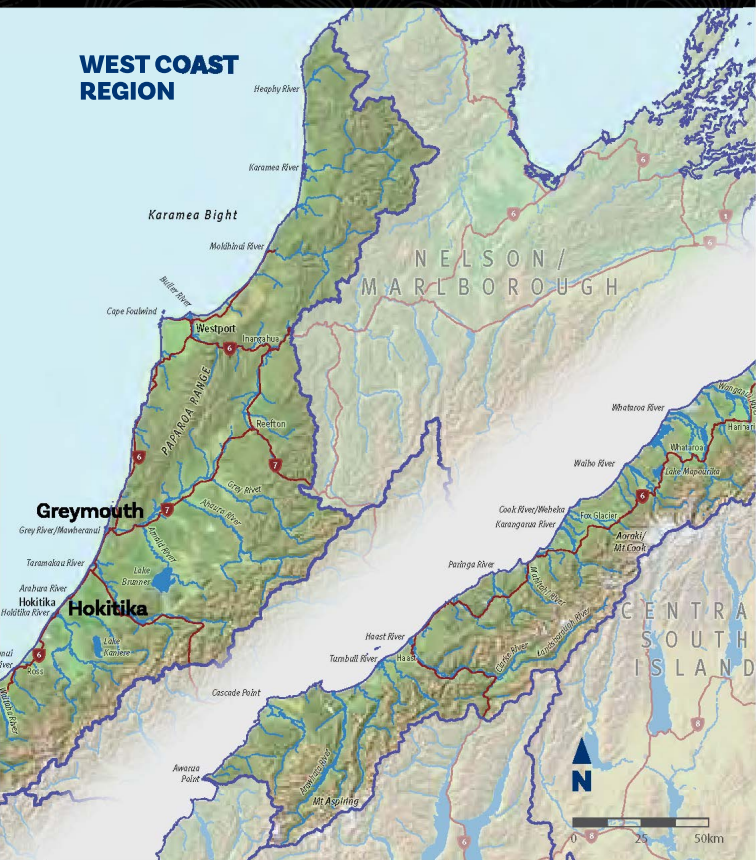
Public land chukar hunting is available on Molesworth Station for a limited period, contact the Fish and Game Council office in Richmond for more information.

Farmers who hunt their own property under section 19 of the Wildlife Act 1953 are allowed to do so without having to purchase a licence, although they are subject to this notice and the Regulations. Those farmers who wish to do so can receive a current copy of the regional newsletter and national magazine. Contact the Nelson Fish and Game Council office to place your address on the mailing list.



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



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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 Pocrua/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

Fish & Game Regions

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.

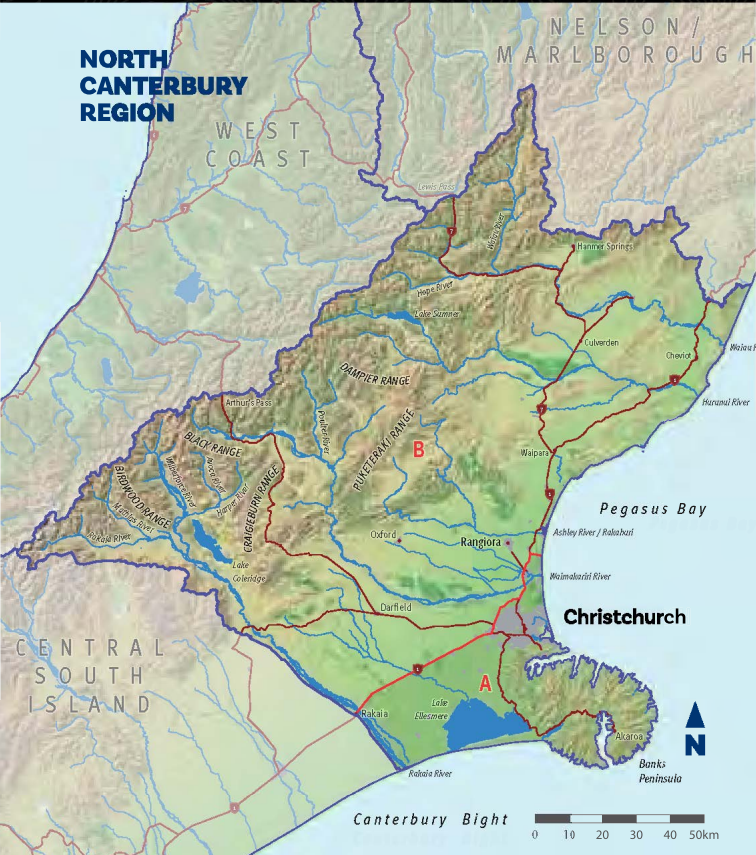
Organised hunts have become increasingly popular on the West Coast as access to good hunting becomes more difficult in other regions. Contact our West Coast Office to register your interest in organised hunting.

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



NORTH CANTERBURY

Game Bird Hunting Regulations 2026/2027



North Canterbury Office: 595 Johns Road,
Harewood, Christchurch 8051

Postal Address: PO Box 50, Woodend 7641

Phone: 03 366 9191

Email: northcanterbury@fishandgame.org.nz



SCAN FOR
ALL REGIONS
REGULATIONS

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.

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- 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.

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- (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



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SCHEDULE 2

Hunting Conditions Applicable To Particular Fish And Game Regions

NORTH CANTERBURY 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 and any hybrid of those species	2 to 3 May 2026	20	All Areas
	4 May to 26 Jul 2026	15	All Areas
	6 to 7 and 13 to 14 Feb 2027	10	Area B, Only over agricultural grain crops and green feed paddocks and more than 200 metres from any water body.
NZ shoveler duck	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	2	All Areas
Paradise shelduck	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	15	All Areas
	6 Feb 2027 to 14 Mar 2027	15	Area A, Only over agricultural grain crops and green feed paddocks and more than 200 metres from any water body.
	6 Feb 2027 to 14 Mar 2027	20	Area B, Only over agricultural grain crops and green feed paddocks and more than 200 metres from any water body.
Pūkeko	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	5	All Areas
Black swan	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	2	All Areas

⁵ Reference to description: *New Zealand Gazette*, 24 May 1990, No. 83, at page 1861, as amended by the *New Zealand Gazette*, 3 September 1992, No. 141, at page 2958.

Fish & Game Regions

California quail	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	10	All Areas
Cock pheasant	30 May to 1 Jun, 4 to 5 Jul, 1 to 2 Aug 2026 (three weekends only, including King's Birthday)	1	All Areas
Chukar	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	2	All Areas

2 Definition of Areas

2.1 Area A: That area east of State Highway 1 from the Rakaia River in the south to Woodend Beach Road in the north.

2.2 Area B: The remainder of the region excluding "Area A".

3 Shooting Hours

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

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

4 Decoy Limit

No limit.

5 Special Conditions

No person shall wilfully leave on the hunting ground the body or a part of the body of any game bird shot in this region.

6 Refuges and Closed Game Areas

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

Wildlife Refuges

6.1 Lake Grasmere Wildlife Refuge

Location

Waimakariri Catchment

Lake Pearson Wildlife Refuge

Waimakariri Catchment

Closed Game Areas

Location

St Anne's Lagoon

West of SH1 about 3km north of Cheviot

Rakaia Lagoon

Lagoon area north of Boat Creek marked by signage.

Ahuriri Lagoon

Along Huritini/Halswell River, near Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere)

Hunting In North Canterbury

North Canterbury offers some of the best waterfowl hunting in the country. The North Canterbury Fish & Game Region stretches from the south bank of the Rakaia to the headwaters of the Waiau Uwha, from the Southern Alps to the sea. Habitats range from coastal dunes to shallow wetlands, wide riverbeds, high country lakes, and mountain valleys. Mallard ducks are the most abundant and widespread game bird in the region. They have adapted well to the developed agricultural land which dominates the North Canterbury landscape. Paradise shelduck (pūtakitaki) is the next most popular species among local hunters and, like the mallard, also does well in developed land. The region also sustains a reasonable black swan (kakīānau) population, mostly found on coastal wetlands. Grey (pārera) and shoveler (kuruwhengi) ducks are found in the region but do not favour open, developed land and tend to be concentrated in wet, swampy areas and irrigation storage ponds.

Upland game birds are less prolific than in some other Fish & Game regions, but reasonable California quail numbers are present in the lower and middle reaches of the braided riverbeds. Several smaller pheasant populations are also present, and there are three weekends open during the June - August period for cock pheasant hunting in the North Canterbury region.

Pheasant hunters need to be clear on the exact location of the boundary between the North Canterbury and Central South Island Fish & Game regions, as there are differing regulations for season length and daily bag limits.

A number of hunters have been caught in breach of the North Canterbury rules, thinking they were hunting in the Central South Island region. To clarify, the North Canterbury boundary with the Central South Island region is the Acton Road, which runs from Rakaia Township east to the sea and the Rakaia Barr Hill Road, which runs from the township west towards the Rakaia Gorge. The entire Rakaia riverbed and its southern margins extending to the main parallel roads are in the North Canterbury region. Thus, North Canterbury Fish & Game Council regulations apply.

Most of the public land in North Canterbury is administered by Environment Canterbury and the Department of Conservation (DOC). Either of these organisations or the North Canterbury Fish & Game Office will be able to assist you with any access inquiries relating to public land hunting.

The Major Hunting Areas

Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere

is the jewel in the waterfowl hunting crown of New Zealand, a 20,000-ha wetland of national and international significance and the primary public land game bird hunting area in the region. It's such a good hunting area that hunters make annual pilgrimages from around the country to hunt the lake. Mallard ducks are the most popular quarry during the traditional hunting months of May, June and July. Black swans, paradise, and shoveler ducks are also present. It is important to note that Te Waihora is home to a large grey teal population, which are protected wildlife. Hunters must always allow time to properly identify their target, especially during periods of low light. The best time to hunt Ellesmere is during a strong southerly wind. The rough conditions push off birds that usually roost in the middle of the lake and tend to fly to the downwind shore. The lake can also shoot well during strong northwest or northeast winds; once again, the downwind shoreline is the best place to hunt. Te Waihora has many maimais around the shoreline, and most Ellesmere regulars have one.

However, any hunter is free to use any maimai sited on public land that has not been occupied by 7:30 am. This is an excellent option for new or inexperienced hunters who want a taste of open-water game bird hunting without having to commit to the time and expense involved in constructing their own maimai.

Please note that a hunting permit is required to hunt on DOC-managed land on the shores of Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere. These are available from DOC by calling 03 379 4082 or e-mail christchurchvc@doc.govt.nz

Maimais On Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere

Require hunters to obtain permission and get a maimai registration tag from Fish & Game before being built. To do so, contact the office with GPS coordinates of your maimai. The construction of permanent maimais on public land and Ngāi Tahu lakebed at Te Waihora is subject to several conditions. Approved maimai construction techniques are available on the North Canterbury page of the Fish & Game website -<https://fishandgame.org.nz/assets/Hunting/Where-to-Hunt/Regional-info/North-Canterbury/DOCDM-1376692-Te-Waihora-maimai-construction-standards-March-2014-w-AS-TC.pdf>. We encourage hunters to refurbish an unused existing maimai first. Hunters with existing maimais that have not been registered should contact the Fish & Game office to obtain a maimai registration tag. There is no charge for these services.

The Braided Riverbeds

The Rakaia, Selwyn/Waikirikiriri, Waimakariri, Ashley/Rakahuri, Hurunui, and Waiau Uwha rivers are also popular hunting locations. Many of these rivers have large tidal lagoons, which provide good hunting opportunities. Further upriver, ducks can be targeted using traditional decoy setups in open water areas. Good duck hunting is also available in places by flush hunting small springs and ponds, which are often found on the margins of major riverbeds. Licenced game bird hunters can hunt in most North Canterbury braided riverbeds except parts close to population centres. The Waimakariri AND Ashley/Rakahuri River Regional Parks, administered by Environment Canterbury, recognise game bird hunting as a legitimate activity and have specifically designated areas for such use. More information and access maps are available at: <https://fishandgame.org.nz/northcanterbury/game-bird-hunting-in-new-zealand/where-to-hunt-game-birds/public-land-hunting-opportunityguidelines-in-north-canterbury/>; <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/your-region/living-here/regional-parks/waimakariri-river-regional-park/hunting-and-shooting/> AND <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/your-region/living-here/regional-parks/ashley-rakahuri-regional-park/>.

Please do not shoot outside these areas, which may put the future of game bird hunting at risk. Hunters need to be aware of rabbit poisoning operations in Canterbury riverbeds. While poison operations are of little threat to humans or to the safe consumption of any game birds killed, it is of real concern to hunters' dogs, which are susceptible to 1080 poison found in carcass remains for some months after a poisoning operation.

High Country Lakes

Some of the region's high-country lakes offer good game bird hunting opportunities. In some cases, hunting can be pursued without the owner's permission, but it is highly recommended that you put in the effort and talk to the farmer or manager concerned in advance. Please note that **lakes Grasmere and Pearson are wildlife refuges, and all hunting is prohibited.**

Private Land

Private land also offers good game hunting opportunities, but the owner's permission needs to be sought in advance.

Boggy Creek Game Bird Hunting Area

The Boggy Creek Game Bird Hunting Area is located at the end of Colletts Road on the western shore of Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere. DOC now owns the property; however, annual ballots are held by the North Canterbury Fish & Game Council for shooting stands in this area, and the ballots are open to all

Fish & Game Regions

licensed hunters. Contact the North Canterbury Fish & Game office for details.

CLOSED GAME AREAS AND WILDLIFE REFUGES

Hunting is prohibited in the following areas:

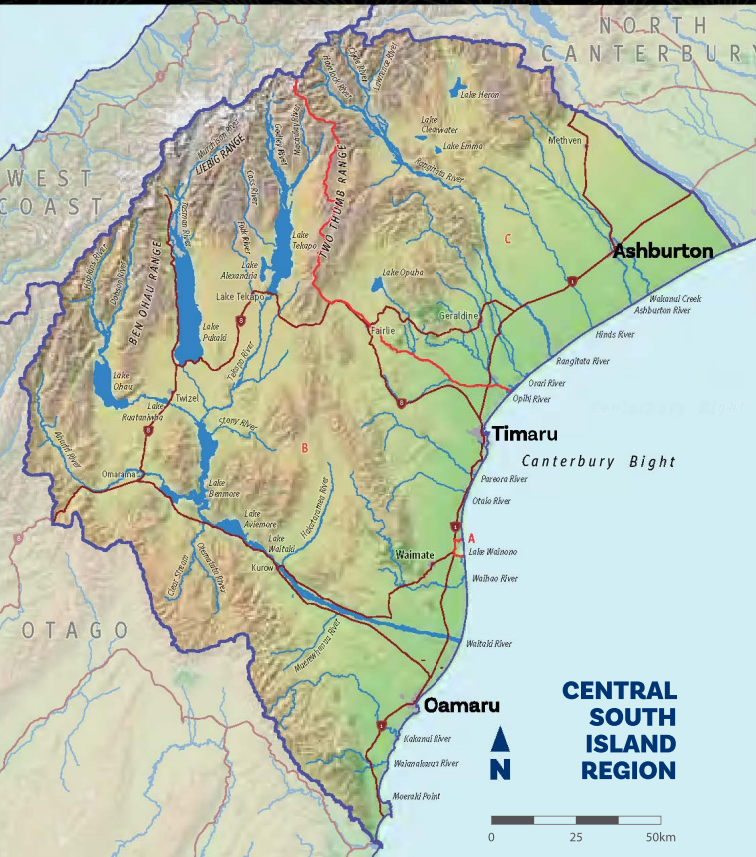
- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Lake Grasmere | Waimakariri Catchment
Wildlife Refuge |
| Lake Pearson | Waimakariri Catchment
Wildlife Refuge |
| St Anne's Lagoon | West of SH1 about 3km north of
Cheviot |
| Rakaia Lagoon | Lagoon area north of Boat Creek
marked by signage. |
| Ahuriri Lagoon | Along Huritini/Halswell River,
near Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere) |

Please see the North Canterbury Fish and Game website for more information and the exact locations of wildlife refuges and closed game areas.



CENTRAL SOUTH ISLAND

Game Bird Hunting Regulations 2026/2027



Central South Island Office: 32 Richard Pearse Drive, Temuka

Postal Address: PO Box 150, Temuka 7948

Phone: (03) 615 8400 **Email:** csi@fishandgame.org.nz

Chief Executive: Steve McKnight

Office Manager: Bernadette Dolan

Environmental Officer: Graeme Clarke

Fish & Game Officers: Hamish Stevens, Rhys Adams, Nikki Dellaway, Blake Harper, Jase Van Beers



SCAN FOR
ALL REGIONS
REGULATIONS

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



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SCHEDULE 2

Hunting Conditions Applicable To Particular Fish And Game Regions

CENTRAL SOUTH ISLAND 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
<i>Grey, mallard and shoveler duck: A maximum total aggregate bag not exceeding 50 birds for all those species including hybrids combined, except that within the aggregate bag a limit of 5 grey duck and 2 shoveler duck applies.</i>			
Grey/mallard duck and any hybrid of those species	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	50	All areas
	6 to 7 and 13 to 14 Feb 2027	10	Area C
NZ shoveler duck	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	2	All areas
Paradise shelduck	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	25	All areas
	27 Jul to 27 Sep 2026	25	West of State Highway 1
	6 to 7 and 13 to 14 Feb 2027	15	Area B
Pūkeko	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	10	All areas
Black swan	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	5	All areas
Bobwhite (Virginian) quail	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	No limit	All areas
California quail	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	10	All areas
Chukar (subject to clause 5 for this region)	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	10	All areas
Cock pheasant	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	4	All areas

2 Definition of Areas

2.1 Area A: All that part of the region encompassing Lake Wainono and Wainono Reserve and bounded to the north by Hook Beach Road, the west by State Highway 1, the south by Poingdestres Road and the east by the Pacific Ocean.

2.1 Area B: That part of the region not included in Area A.

⁵ Reference to description: *New Zealand Gazette*, 24 May 1990, No. 83, page 1861, as amended by *New Zealand Gazette*, 29 August 1991, No. 129, page 2786, and as further amended by the *New Zealand Gazette*, 3 September 1992, No. 141, at page 2958.

2.3 Area C: That part of Area B north of the Opihi River only over agricultural grain crops and green feed paddocks and more than 200 metres from any water body.

3 Shooting Hours

6.45am to 6.30pm (May to September inclusive).

5.30am to 10.00pm (February).

4 Decoy Limit

No limit.

5 Chukar Hunting:

A person hunting chukar at any time of the season must, within a month of the end of the season, provide the Central South Island Fish and Game Council with particulars of: the dates and locations where they hunted chukar; the number of guns in the hunting party; the hours they commenced and ceased hunting each day; the number of birds taken each day; the number of coveys seen each day; an estimate of the average covey size seen each day; and whether or not they hunted with a dog.

Hunting In Central South Island (CSI)

Public Lands

Many of Central South Island's larger riverbeds and lakes are public lands. It is still important to advise the adjoining landowner when you wish to hunt these areas. This common courtesy often results in the farmer providing useful information and better access.

Game bird hunting on Department of Conservation managed land is available in certain areas, and to hunt there, you require a DOC game bird hunting permit. Unlike big game hunting permits, DOC game bird hunting permits are unavailable from the website. Instead, you must obtain them and any other localised information by contacting or visiting the relevant DOC office. The permits detail unique restrictions and conditions to the DOC district issuing the permit. Be sure to abide by these conditions, as this will ensure hunting continues to be available on DOC land in future.

DOC District Office Contacts:

- Raukapuka / Geraldine District Office: ph. 03 6931010, e-mail esienquiries@doc.govt.nz
- Te Manahuna / Twizel District Office: ph. 03 4350802, e-mail esienquiries@doc.govt.nz

Northern Regional Boundary

The Rakaia Riverbed is not within the CSI Fish and Game Region. The region's northern boundary adjacent to the Rakaia River extends along Acton Road, Rakaia Barrhill Methven Road and Rakaia River Road.

Rangitata Diversion Race

Hunting along the Rangitata Diversion Race is possible but strictly with permission from RDR Management Ltd (ph. 03 3080828) and the adjoining landowners.

Wainono Lagoon

Wainono Lagoon is near the township of Waimate and some 35 km south of Timaru. Adjacent to the coastal shingle beach barrier, the lagoon (lake) at its normal water level (1m above sea level) covers about 350 hectares. The beach barrier, lagoon, and surrounding wetlands provide habitat for some 57 different bird species, many resident and others migratory. Wainono Lagoon is a 'Conservation Area' managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Hunting is permitted and DOC game bird hunting permit is required. This can be obtained free of charge by phoning 03 6931010 or esienquiries@doc.govt.nz. There is no ballot system for the lagoon and many of the existing stands are reserved for traditional hunters. Other than possibly during Opening Weekend, there is still plenty of opportunity for visiting hunters

Access to the lagoon:

- North side - via Hook Beach Road and then a 4WD track along the beach
- Middle - via Wainono Lake Road; a track opposite Waimate turnoff on SH1
- South side - via Foleys Road and then Poindestres Road over the Dead Arm Bridge to the beach and then a rough four-wheel drive or a walking track along the beach past Maori Lake and the Wainono Wetland Reserve.

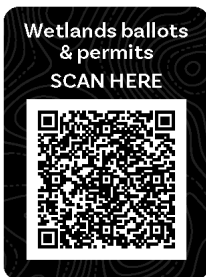
Balloted Stands

Depending on water levels, CSI Fish and Game has between 11 and 15 stands available for hunting the Opening Weekend on wetlands it owns or manages. Ballot information, maps and application forms are available on the CSI page of the www.fishandgame.org.nz website, or by contacting the CSI Fish and Game Office in Temuka. Ballot applications are accepted from 1 February to 1 March and the ballot is drawn on the next working day.

WETLAND PERMITS

Any game bird licence holder wishing to hunt Fish & Game managed wetlands after Opening Weekend is required to obtain a permit from the Central South Island Fish and Game Office in Temuka. Permits can be obtained from www.fishandgame.org.nz (Central South Island page) or by contacting the CSI office in Temuka. Obtaining a permit will ensure you have up-to-date information on access requirements and rules.

Scan here to link to our Managed Wetlands ballots & permits webpage (<https://fishandgame.org.nz/centralsouthisland/game-bird-hunting-in-new-zealand/where-to-hunt-game-birds/managed-wetlands-ballots-and-permits/>)



Wainono Wetland Reserve

Wainono Wetland Reserve adjoins Wainono Lagoon at its southern end and is separated by a stop bank. CSI Fish and Game Council owns the reserve and administers a ballot for nine hunting stands each Opening Weekend. To hunt this wetland after Opening Weekend you must obtain a permit from CSI Fish and Game. Access to the Wainono Wetland Reserve from State Highway 1 is via Foleys Road, Hannaton Road and then Poindestres Road over the Wainono Lagoon outlet creek bridge to the beach and then a rough four-wheel drive or walking track heading northwards.

All Day Bay Lagoon / Ōrore

This small coastal lagoon, 11 ha in area, is located 15 km south of Oamaru on the Kakanui-Waianakarua coastal road. The area was purchased by CSI Fish and Game in 1989. A natural sandbar acts as a weir and provides a small lagoon habitat for both waterfowl and wading birds. The sandbar forms and washes away with changing environmental conditions. At times the lagoon is drained and will only refill once the natural sand bar reforms. The lagoon and its birdlife are readily observed from the road. Visits from the occasional white heron or royal spoonbill are not uncommon and add to the scenic attraction of the area. All Day Bay Lagoon is also protected by a QE II National Trust Open Space Covenant. Three hunting stands are balloted annually by CSI Fish and Game Council for Opening Weekend. To hunt this wetland after Opening Weekend you must obtain a permit from CSI Fish and Game.

Devil's Bridge Wetland / Oāmaru

Owned by the Meikle Family Trust, this 15-ha lake and associated wetland is situated on Devil's Bridge Road some 6 km north west of Oamaru. By agreement between the owner and CSI Fish and Game, the area is managed by the Devil's Bridge Management Committee. Three stands are balloted each year by CSI Fish and Game for Opening Weekend. To hunt this wetland after Opening Weekend you must obtain a permit from CSI Fish and Game and contact the Trust representative Aaron Meikle Ph 0274 989 703 or aaron.meikle@gmail.com

Mid Summer Duck Season

In February 2005, a two-weekend summer duck hunting season was trialled, on condition that it was monitored to ensure there was no adverse impact on the traditional May duck season opening. The season is now well established and provides opportunities to hunt mallards and paradise shelduck that congregate around grain and green feed crops in February.

On or near Public Land

When hunting on or near public land be aware of two relevant sections of the Arms Act 1983. Section 45 states "Every person commits an offence who, except for some lawful, proper, and sufficient purpose carries; or is in possession of...any firearm." And "...the burden of proving the existence of some lawful, proper, and sufficient purpose shall lie on the defendant." Section 48 states "Every person commits an offence ... who, without reasonable cause, discharges a firearm ... in or near:

- (a) a dwelling house; Or
- (b) a public place, - so as to endanger property or to endanger, annoy, or frighten, any person."

The message is clear – be careful and considerate around other people and their property.

Chukar Hunting

To assist hunters in complying with clause 5 of the CSI Regulations, Hunting Diaries are available on request from the Fish and Game Office in Temuka, phone 03 615 8400.

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OTAGO

Game Bird Hunting Regulations 2026/2027



Mosgiel Office: 5 Hazlett Road, North Taieri, Mosgiel 9092

Phone: (03) 477 9076

Email: otago@fishandgame.org.nz



SCAN FOR
ALL REGIONS
REGULATIONS

Regulations

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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

OTAGO 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	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).

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

Fish & Game Regions

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:

Refuges	Location
6.1 Lake Hayes	Queenstown/Arrowtown highway
6.2 Hawksbury Lagoon	Waikouaiti - East Otago
6.3 Finegand	Balclutha
Closed Game Areas	Location
6.4 Tomahawk Lagoon	Dunedin
6.6 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) for advice, brochures on hunting or wetland creation.



SOUTHLAND

Game Bird Hunting Regulations 2026/2027



SOUTHLAND REGION



Southland Offices: 17 Eye Street, Invercargill
Wildlife Park, Manapouri Road, Te Anau

Postal Address: PO Box 159, Invercargill 9840

Phone: (03) 215 9117

Email: information@southlandfishgame.co.nz



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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

SOUTHLAND 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
Grey/mallard duck and any hybrid of those species	2 May to 3 May 2026	20
	4 May to 26 July 2026	10
NZ shoveler duck	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	2 drakes
Paradise shelduck	2 May and 3 May 2026	10
	4 May to 26 Jul 2026	6
Pūkeko	Closed season	0
Black swan	2 May to 26 Jul 2026	5
California quail	30 May to 30 Aug 2026	5
Cock pheasant	30 May to 30 Aug 2026	5
Chukar	Closed season	0

2 Shooting Hours 7.00am to 6.30pm.

3 Decoy Limit No limit.

4 Special Conditions

- 4.1 Shooting from boats is prohibited during all of May 2026 on the Mataura River and all its navigable tributaries.
- 4.2 Shooting from unmoored boats is prohibited below the Dunn's Road bridge on the Oreti River.
- 4.3 In the Southland Fish and Game Region, no person shall in or on a public place, or in or on private land without the consent of its occupier, deposit or leave any litter (including any shotgun cartridge case and/or any body or part of any body of shot game).
- 4.4 No hen shoveler ducks may be taken.

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

5 Closed Game Areas

The following closed game areas are closed to hunting:

- (1) Area 1 and Area 2 shown on the diagram below.



Hunting in southland

Mallard Duck

The Southland region provides some of the best mallard duck hunting in New Zealand. Much of the hunting is carried out on private wetlands although public water bodies, estuaries in particular, provide good hunting opportunities during the opening weekend and on rough weather days.

Paradise Shelduck

Although widespread across the province, northern Southland provides the best paradise shelduck hunting in the region. Paradise shelduck provide hunting opportunities throughout the season and they are generally a lot easier to hunt than mallards. Once a mob is found they can be chased off, and then decoys put out, suitable camouflage arranged, and the birds shot when they return (see our YouTube channel for a how-to).

Other Species

Shoveler duck and black swan provide limited hunting experiences and are taken incidentally to the more common species. Black swan numbers are healthy, so hunters are encouraged to harvest a swan or five if the opportunity presents. Hunting of pukeko is no longer permitted in Southland. Canada geese remain abundant although they are no longer classified as a game bird, they remain valued by hunters.

Wetland creation

Southland Fish and Game staff are actively involved in surveying sites for the construction of wetlands on private land. Demand continues to grow each year and excellent

hunting opportunities are frequently developed. In some circumstances a subsidy may be available and/or appropriate plants may be supplied. The service is free, so please enquire if you are interested.

More information

Visit the Southland pages of the Fish & Game New Zealand website for more information, our Facebook page or contact Fish & Game's Southland Office (information@southlandfishgame.co.nz).



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

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



Te Tari Pūreke
Firearms Safety Authority