

Gear List



Interested in waterfowl hunting and want to know how to get started? This factsheet will help you understand the essential equipment needed. Having the right gear is crucial for both success and safety in the field. This guide is part of Fish & Game's complete resource collection for new hunters. Visit our website Fishandgame.org.nz for more information.

Shotgun

A 12 or 20-gauge shotgun. Semi autos are the most common. Over/under and pump shotguns are used - as with other gauges. Crucially, get a gun that fits you. The gun should fit nicely between your elbow and your wrist. Don't hesitate to ask staff in the shop to help you, a spacer should be provided with your shotgun.

Ammunition

Non-toxic shot shells (typically steel). The shot size will be dependent on the waterfowl you are hunting. Number 4, 2¾ inch shells are suitable for mallards in most close hunting situations (less than 25m). Number 3, 3 inch shells are better for mallards 25-35m.



Choke tubes

Different chokes for varying shot patterns and distances. For steel, half, quarter and skeet chokes are to be used. Obtain the Fish & Game pattern sheets to practice and learn from.

Decoys

Ten to 12 floating mallard decoys at a minimum. Big water or competitive hunting spots will require more decoys. New is good but older decoys cleaned or re-painted work well. Obtain a sack, slotted or backpack bag to easily carry them.

Calls

To mimic the sounds of waterfowl and encourage them into your decoy spread. Obtain and practice well before the hunting season.

Camo/natural coloured clothing

Waterproof and warm clothing, including jacket, pants, gloves, and cap/beanie depending on conditions. Don't forget your dog will need gear to keep warm too. Ensure your face is either covered or concealed with camo paint.

Waders

Chest waders to keep you dry when hunting and for setting decoys and retrieving ducks. Make sure you get a wading belt.

Dog

A retriever dog trained for waterfowl hunting (optional but very useful).

Bag

A hunting bag or backpack to carry your gear (lunch, drinks, ammo, toilet paper etc).

Bird carrier

You can carry your harvested waterfowl by hand but a game strap or bird carrier to transport your birds makes life easier.

Headlamp

For getting to and from your hunting location and setting decoys early in the morning and retrieving them after dark in the evening, plus finding shot birds (buy quality as using in wet conditions).

Thermos

Having a hot beverage is a great way to pass time between birds and to help warm you up in cold conditions.

Safety gear

Ear protection (earmuffs/plugs), first-aid kit, wading belt and if you are using a boat/kayak to access your hunting spot, a life jacket.

Knife

Always have a knife in your bag, plus some heavy string; for those little fix it jobs.

Spare clothes

Always have a towel and spare clothes in the car - in case you get wet!!