



**Briefing to
the Incoming
Minister**



30 November 2023



Minister McClay

Todd.McClay@parliament.govt.nz

Kia ora Minister McClay,

Congratulations on your Portfolio Appointments - Including the New Hunting & Fishing Portfolio.

We are excited by the opportunity having a Minister dedicated to the work we and others do for fishing and hunting across New Zealand and welcome your appointment.

I have sent the attached Briefing to the Incoming Minister to yourself and the Minister of Conservation, given you both have interests and responsibilities relating to our work.

While your portfolio is a new one, we know from our previous interactions that you have an understanding and passion for our work and of others in the sector. We see this portfolio as an important development that recognises a sector of incredible value to New Zealand's economy and its people.

Since taking on the role of Chief Executive Officer for Fish & Game, I have been working to build strong relationships across the sector, including by working with the Game Animal Council to set up a group of key influencers. We warmly invite you to use this group as a source of expert advice from knowledgeable people on the ground across New Zealand.

We are also here for you. Our team are experts, scientists, planners, and lawyers, as well as field and compliance officers, and administration officers who spend their time talking to people out in our beautiful country and communities. They work on the ground in our 12 regions nationwide, and many spend their free time out hunting and fishing.

We can support you to make decisions that set a national direction in a way that is practical and makes sense to the communities they affect. One of our key skill sets is being able to develop approaches that both reduce bureaucracy while increasing impact. We understand this is a goal shared by your administration.

The attached briefing paper provides an overview of Fish & Game New Zealand and our mahi. We will be focused on progressing these issues over the short to medium term and look forward to working with you on them.

We would like to propose that our first meeting with you includes Fish & Game New Zealand Council Chairperson Barrie Barnes and myself before Christmas. We would also like to host you at a full Council dinner and/or attend a New Zealand Council meeting during 2024.

Nāku iti noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Corina Jordan'.

Corina Jordan

Chief Executive

New Zealand Fish & Game Council CEO



Briefing to the Incoming Minister

Contents

Vision and Purpose	04
Who we are:	05
• Our Legislation	09
• Our Values	10
• Our Role and Structure	11
• Our Regions	11
• Game Bird Habitat Trust	13
Working with you	20
Appendix 1 - Update on the Ministerial Review	21
Appendix 2 - Our Species	23
Appendix 3 - Manifesto <i>(attached)</i>	
Appendix 4 - Organisational Strategy <i>(attached)</i>	

A fisherman wearing a blue cap, sunglasses, and a grey vest is standing in a river, casting a fishing rod. The rod is curved in a high arc. The background shows lush green trees and a cloudy sky.

Vision

Our vision is a New Zealand where freshwater habitats and species flourish, where hunting and fishing traditions thrive, and all Kiwis enjoy access to sustainable wild fish and game resources.

Purpose

Fish & Game New Zealand maintains and enhances sports fish and game birds and their habitats, ensuring access for current and future generations of New Zealanders.

Who we are

At Fish & Game, we know that what's good for anglers and hunters is good for all New Zealanders – healthy waterways and thriving wetlands, sustainable sources of kai, and access to the great outdoors all contribute to our wellbeing.

We are New Zealand's environmental guardian – we have an outstanding record of achievements in protecting and enhancing the environment over the past decade, in particular:

- Creating, restoring and protecting wetlands for game bird hunting and conservation
- Securing Water Conservation Orders which recognise and protect the outstanding values of our lakes and rivers for angling, recreational, and conservation
- Advocating for and protecting access to our wild places and spaces for everyone including our hunters and anglers
- Pushing for regional and national policies which sustainably manage the environment including setting robust bottom lines for healthy waters
- Being an insights-driven organisation researching species, their habitats, and game bird hunting and anglers values along with wider public perceptions
- We not only focus on valued introduced species but also help protect indigenous non-game bird and freshwater fish species
- Run events and create resources to promote game bird hunting and angling including kids' events and adult education.

Fish & Game staff conducting electric fishing as part of species management work



Fish & Game New Zealand manages, maintains and enhances sports fish and game birds and their habitats in the best long-term interests of present and future generations of anglers and hunters.

A not-for-profit organisation with formal statutory powers, it is funded by fishing and hunting licences. It is run by councils elected by people who pay licence fees, totalling around \$12 million a year. Licence fees cover the management of the fish and game resource in the following areas:

- Species management
- Habitat protection
- Access and participation
- Public awareness
- Compliance
- Licensing
- Council
- Coordination and planning

Fish & Game operates under the Conservation and Wildlife Acts. It has a regional presence through 12 regional councils. The New Zealand Fish & Game Council coordinates the functions of the regions, and advises the minister on the setting of fishing and hunting licences.

The National Council also has a statutory function which includes advising the Minister on issues relating to sports fish and game; advocating nationally in statutory planning process in the interests of Fish & Game.

Fish & Game New Zealand speaks directly for 300,000 people and in any one year, 150,000 game bird hunting and fishing licence holders. Our licence holders value the traditions of trout and salmon fishing and game bird hunting, the skills associated with these pursuits and the recreational opportunities and time outdoors they afford.



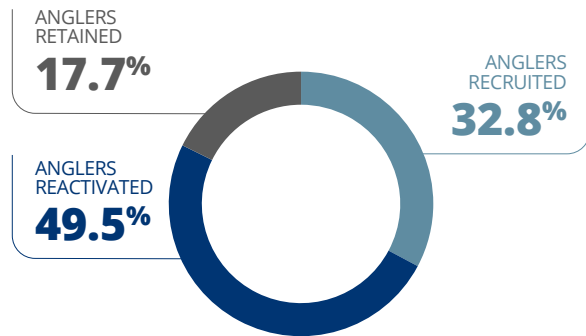
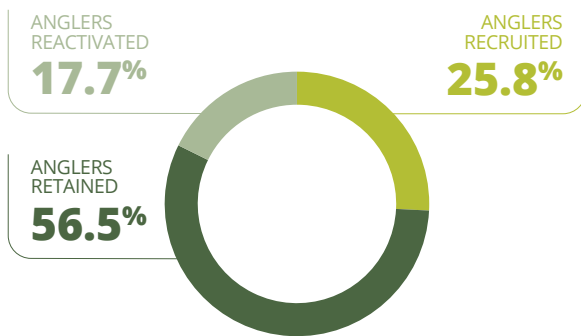
Who our licence holders are

Fishing Licences		
	2021/22 Season ¹	2022/23 Season
Individual Anglers ²	86,158	92,295
Licences Purchased	94,018	103,098
Licence Income ³	\$9,530,059	\$10,743,555

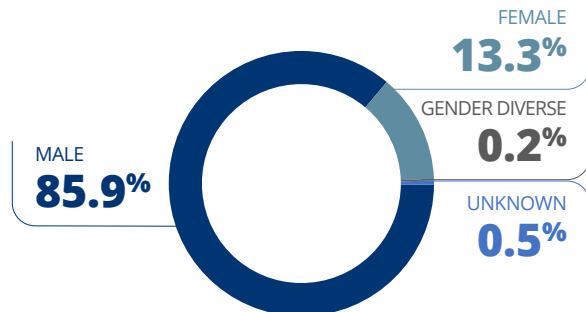
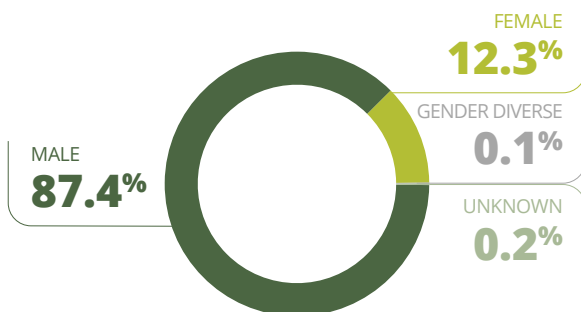
2021/22 Season¹

2022/23 Season¹

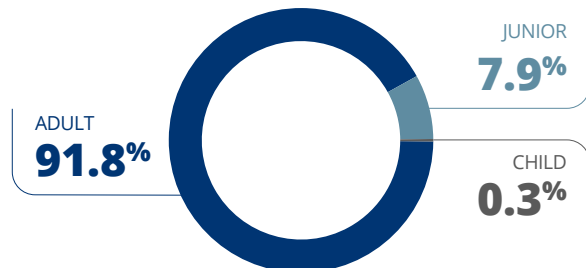
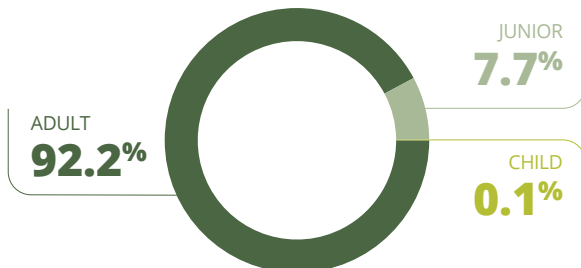
R3 Figures



By Gender



By Age⁴

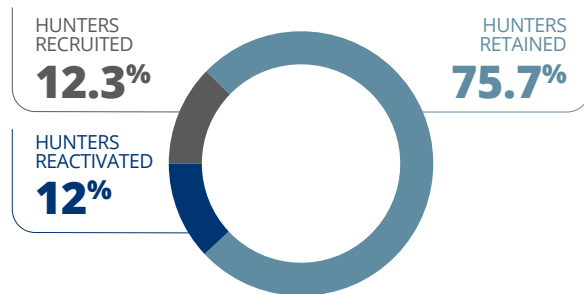


Game Bird Licences		
	2022 Season ⁵	2023 Season
Individual Hunters	36,058	35,950
Licences Purchased	36,279	36,207
Licence Income	\$3,227,096	\$3,416,321

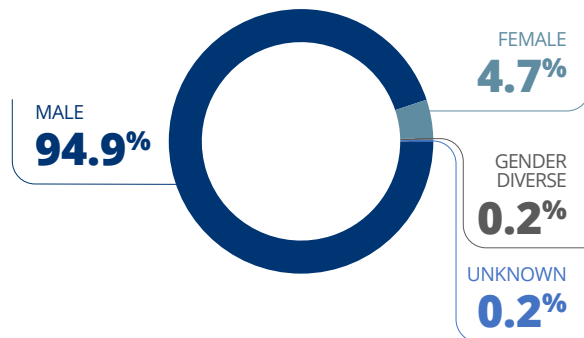
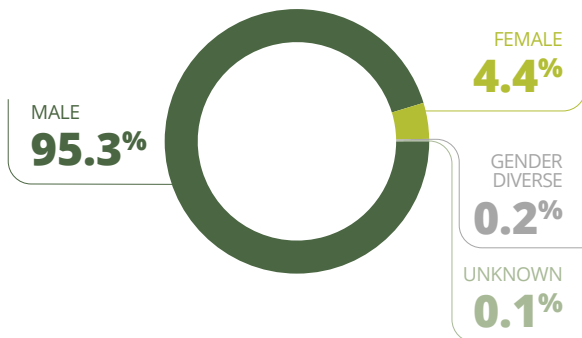
2022 Season⁵

2023 Season

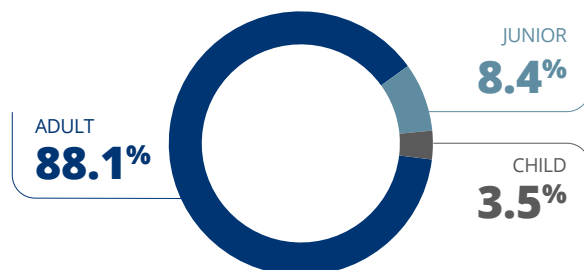
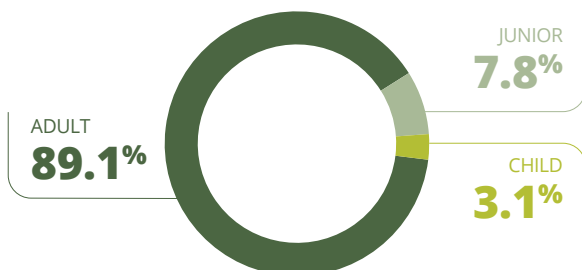
R3 Figures



By Gender



By Age



Our Legislation

The Conservation Act 1987 sets out the main functions and responsibilities of the NZ Council and regional Fish & Game Councils.

In addition, other functions and responsibilities are detailed in the Wildlife Act 1953, the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983, the Wildlife Regulations 1955, the Fish and Game Council Election Regulations 1990 and the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Stamp Regulations 1993.

Fish & Game New Zealand's interests are also explicitly provided for in the Resource Management Act 1991, the Overseas Investment Act 2005 and the Walking Access Act 2008.

Fish & Game Councils are required to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi per Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987.

All Councils report annually to the Minister of Conservation and are audited by the Office of the Controller and Auditor-General in accordance with the requirements of the Public Finance Act.





TRUST

We are trusted as consistent and capable providers of service to Fish & Game stakeholders and Mana Whenua.

INCLUSION

We recognise and respect the diverse range of perspectives and cultural interests of our stakeholders.

Our values

SERVICE

We are enthusiastic, professional, kind, and accountable to each other and our communities.

CONNECTION

We are deeply connected, understanding the needs of anglers, hunters, regulators and public interest groups.

Our Role and Structure

Regional Fish & Game Councils are elected every three years by current holders of adult whole-season sports fishing and hunting licences. Up to twelve people are elected to each council. The next Fish & Game election is scheduled for October 2024.

Each of the 12 regions nominates one of their councillors as an appointee to the NZ Council. They are not representatives of their region (as they have to take a national overview in their deliberations). As NZ Councillors, they are required to represent nationally the interests of anglers and hunters and coordinate and manage the business of Fish & Game New Zealand, including the development of any relevant national policies to achieve its coordination purpose.

We are exploring options as an organisation for increasing iwi representation. We are in the process of employing Te Ao Maori advisors to strengthen our cultural competencies and to fulfil our obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.



OUR REGIONS

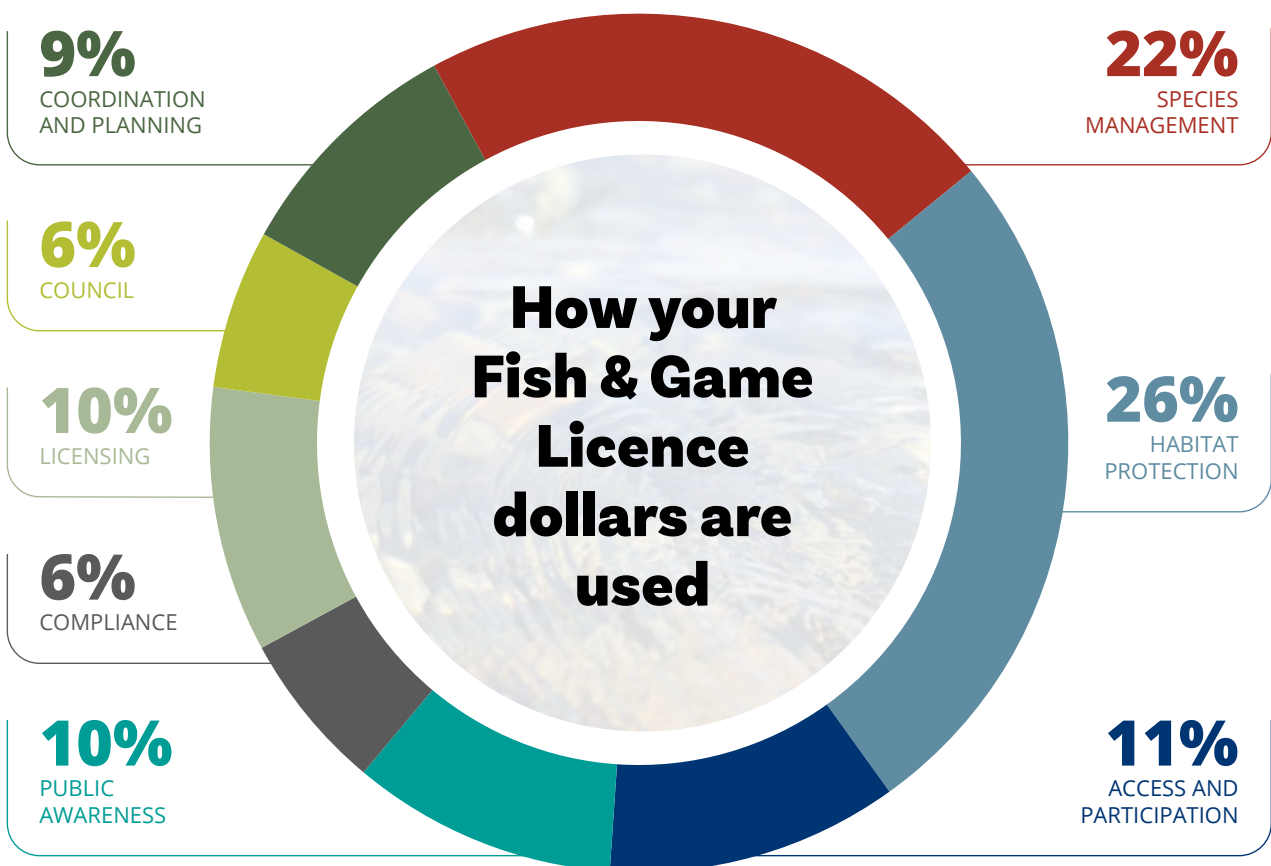
- NORTHLAND
- AUCKLAND/ WAIKATO
- TARANAKI
- WEST COAST
- SOUTHLAND
- EASTERN
- HAWKE'S BAY
- WELLINGTON
- NELSON/ MARLBOROUGH
- NORTH CANTERBURY
- CENTRAL SOUTH ISLAND
- OTAGO

Councils employ professional staff to carry out the work, with approximately 73 staff members across the organisation. There are also 50 warranted rangers and 150 unpaid honorary rangers who assist us with our enforcement work.

The main function of the New Zealand Council is to represent nationally the interests of anglers and hunters, provide coordination of the management, maintenance and enhancement of sports fish and game and directly advise the Minister on issues relating to sports fish and game birds.

NZC will provide annual recommendations to the Minister of Conservation for setting appropriate fees for hunting and fishing licences, details about the anglers' notice and the conditions under which a licence holder may fish, conditions under which a licence holder may hunt for game birds, and form the game bird habitat stamp to be affixed to every game bird hunting licence.

Regional Fish & Game Councils have a local role with key functions including assessing and monitoring sports fish and game populations, assessing the degree of satisfaction of anglers and hunters, and noting the condition and trend of ecosystems as habitats for sports fish and game.



NZ Game Bird Habitat Trust

New Zealand game birds face the threat of decreasing habitat. As statutory manager of these species, it is Fish & Game New Zealand’s responsibility to ensure there is adequate habitat to ensure their survival. In 1993, the “Game Bird Habitat Stamp” programme was initiated to collect funds for habitat protection. All game bird hunters contribute to the fund when they buy their annual hunting licence because \$5 goes directly to the programme.

Hunters and the general public can also purchase stamp art products. These include a first-day cover and Limited Edition Artist Print, and the money from purchases goes to the fund. The stamps are marketed by New Zealand Post.

The importance of the stamp programme and the Trust Fund

Game birds and native bird species are threatened by diminishing habitat such as wetlands and scrub lands. New Zealand now has less than 10% of the wetland that was present in pre-European times. Wetlands were once seen as “swamps” and drained for agricultural, commercial and housing development.

Today, wetlands are recognised as vital ecosystems and bird habitats. The Game Bird Habitat Trust Board helps ensure their ongoing protection. Grants used to purchase wetlands and other habitat transform the areas into quality game bird habitat. This benefits hunters, indigenous species and game birds.

NZ game bird hunters have long played a vital role in protecting, enhancing and creating wildlife habitat in New Zealand. For example, in the 2022/23 hunting season, hunters contributed \$157,808 from game licences sold to be distributed by the NZGBHT as habitat grants. Since its inception in 1993, the NZGBHT has provided \$2.4 million in grants to nearly 300 projects with some 2,000 hectares of habitat that has been either created, enhanced or re-instated.



2024 Game Bird Habitat Stamp

Fish & Game has been responsible for

securing 12 of the 16 WCOs

(Water Conservation Orders) currently in place for 13 rivers and three lakes across the country.



Public Good Work

- Fish & Game is 100% funded by licence fees, which total around \$12 million annually.
- Fish & Game employs in the order of 73 staff nationwide. Many staff have deep institutional knowledge after working for the organisation for more than ten years. We manage sports fish and game birds in a sustainable way.
- The habitat of trout and salmon, and game bird populations is extensive throughout New Zealand. We are developing online access information to fishing spots, and in the future, we will create similar information for game bird hunting spots.
- We employ an effective compliance team to ensure that hunting and fishing licences are purchased, and regulations are complied with.
- Each year, most fish and game regions comment on over 20 resource consent applications and submit on plan processes in their advocacy function to protect habitat. Fish & Game also advocates for the interests of hunters and anglers including for habitat protection and enhancement at a national level.
- Key advocacy projects that we will be involved in over the next few years include conservation law reform, including the Wildlife Act, and plan changes relating to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM 2020).

Earlier this year, Fish & Game staff equipped with snorkelling gear drifted and glided down hundreds of kilometres of rivers across the country, recording the health of these rivers, including water quality, the health of both the trout fishery and native fish, and of insect life, which is key to all species.



The divers monitor over

100 different
rivers throughout
the country.

Advocacy Work

Valued introduced species for which Fish & Game New Zealand has a statutory mandate to manage, are not the only species that Fish & Game New Zealand protects with its dedicated environmental work. Its defence and restoration of rivers, lakes and wetlands, and the habitat they provide, ensures protection for endangered indigenous species like bittern, fernbirds, marsh and spotless crake, mudfish, eels and galaxiids.

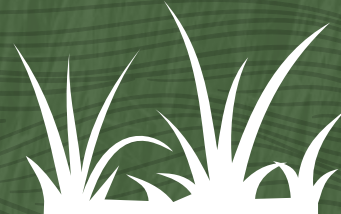
Throughout the country, Fish & Game New Zealand devotes time, resources and funds attempting to ensure local government properly protects waterways and complies with the Resource Management Act.

Fish & Game New Zealand has been responsible for funding and securing the vast majority of Water Conservation Orders (12 out of 16) to protect our valuable rivers and lakes better. Water Conservation Orders are recognised as the equivalent of national parks for waterways.

Fish & Game presented an expert case to the select committee on the National Built Environment Act and led a public campaign highlighting problems with the proposals. This resulted in changes to the legislation recognising the protection of the habitat of trout and salmon and wider recreational values for fresh water.

Approximately **\$22 million**

has been invested so far in restoring wetlands, mainly on private rural land, in partnership between hunters and landowners.



Over the past year, we have been involved in a number of national policy projects including renewable electricity, amendments to the stock exclusion regulations, amendments to the Emissions Trading Scheme for farmed animals, and NPS Highly Productive Land. We are also working on new permitted activity rules for wetland restoration and maintenance with a view to amending the National Environmental Standard for Freshwater (NES-F) to make it easier for landowners to maintain and restore wetlands.

Each region reviews relevant resource consent applications and regional plan changes, and other local policy that is relevant to sports fish and game birds. Policy advocacy projects include the Water Conservation Order on the Rakaia River and regional plan changes in Wellington, Otago, Southland and Auckland. Before Christmas, we will be submitting on the Tasman and Marlborough regional plan changes and, in March, to Northland Regional Council.

More than **10,000**
international anglers



took to the water in pursuit of New Zealand's renowned wild trout during the recent fishing season.

ReWild Campaign

On November 7th, Fish & Game successfully launched the ReWild campaign, an initiative dedicated to highlighting our community's role in protecting and enhancing our natural environment and hooking more Kiwis onto fishing and hunting.



This campaign aligns with our collective goals of sustainable hunting and angling while ensuring the well-being of the environment, our valued introduced species, and their habitats.

This campaign has the following key goals:

- Help New Zealanders understand that fishing and hunting are not only sources of physical and mental well-being but also an escape from the daily grind.
- Highlight the benefits – hunting and fishing help build bonds with family and friends, teach essential skills, nurture environmental conservation, and foster independence.
- Bring our fishing and hunting communities together through shared messages, where we work to promote our traditions so they are something future generations can enjoy.
- Build recognition of what Fish & Game does, including our environmental work, so the public supports us.

What have we achieved in the first month?

So far, we've served **3,090,811** impressions across all channels.

Stuff and NZ Herald have served the majority of these impressions at **2,390,831**, amplifying awareness and credibility of our campaign across New Zealand.

Facebook has reached **253,098** people in our target audiences of Hunters, Fishers and Families, across both our static and video ads. We have received **68,293** video plays on our video ads, with **53%** of people watching these to completion. Our Families audience is the most engaged with a **63%** video completion rate. We have reached more males (**66%**) with our static ads; yet more females (**59%**) are watching our video ads to completion.

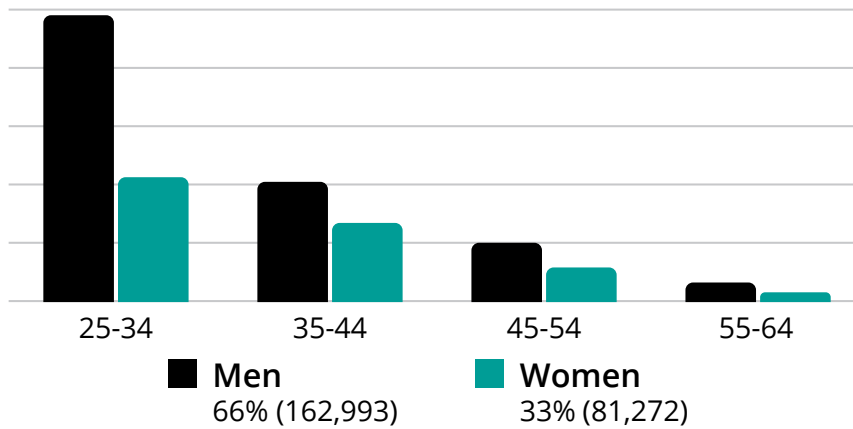
On YouTube we have served **143,530** impressions amongst our target audience of males 25-64. This is a strong channel for non-skippable messaging and our video ad has been played to completion **92%** of the time.



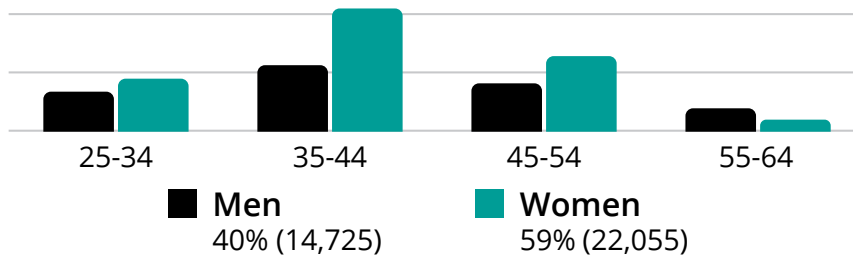
Overall Metrics

<p>IMPRESSIONS 3.1mill Ad views</p>	<p>COMPLETE VIDEO VIEWS 166.8k # of times our video ads have been watched to completion</p>	<p>WEBSITE USERS 4.1k # of users on our campaign website</p>
---	---	--

Facebook Age & Gender Distribution by Reach (Static Ads)



Facebook Age & Gender Distribution by Video Completions



Hunting & Angler Influencers

In July last year collaboratively with the New Zealand Game Animal Council we held our inaugural Hunting & Anglers Influencers meeting. Together the group discussed various topics crucial to the hunting and angling community, including conservation efforts, regulatory changes, and strategies to encourage younger Kiwis to take up fishing and hunting.

We are currently consulting with the group on a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) outlining our collective commitment to promoting and preserving angling and hunting in New Zealand. This MoU between Fish & Game New Zealand, New Zealand Game Animal Council, and others focuses on unity, attracting and retaining enthusiasts, acknowledging Māori perspectives, shaping public perception, and maintaining a healthy environment.

Fish & Game is increasingly connected across the sector and is rebuilding relationships with stakeholders in the primary sector. We seek to make positive change through constructive and pragmatic relationships, bring people and communities together, and work with them to identify our shared values and experiences. We will continue to build on these relationships.



Working with you

Areas of focus

Areas we hope to work with government on include:

1. Support to enable Fish & Game to keep doing its work by maintaining the organisation's mandate when reforming conservation laws.
2. Strong and effective measures to safeguard the health of New Zealand's rivers and lakes.
3. Strong protection for wetlands – maintaining and enhancing existing wetlands and backing landowners to create new wetlands for the benefit of all New Zealanders.
4. Work with communities, sectors, and iwi to collaboratively develop solutions for the benefit of our communities and treasured freshwater.
5. Enable New Zealanders to continue to get out in nature and enjoy their hunting and fishing heritage, including ensuring access to the natural environment, and sports fish and game alongside indigenous species in our ecosystems.
6. Support Fish & Game's leadership across the hunting and fishing sector collaboratively with the Game Animal Council.
7. Consider the fishing and hunting sector's views in a range of areas from gun law reform, access, research and innovation to RMA reform.

Approvals

Each year, we will be asking you to make decisions on the following:

1. February - Game Bird Hunting Regulations

Fish & Game will submit its proposed game bird hunting regulations for your approval. The approved regulations are then published in the Game Notice.

2. June - Licence Fees, Categories and Game Bird Habitat Stamp

Fish & Game will submit its proposed sports fishing and game bird hunting licence fees and categories, and the fee for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp for your approval. The approved fees are then published in the Sports Fish Licences, Fees and Forms Notice (typically published in August) and the Game Bird Licences Fees and Forms Notice (typically published in March).

3. July - Sports Fishing Regulations

Fish & Game will submit its proposed sports fishing regulations for your approval. The approved regulations are then published in the Anglers' Notice.

4. Our regions are managed under 10 year Sports Fish and Game Management Plans (SFGMP) and annual operational work plans. Some SFGMP have expired, so new management plans will come to you for approval in due course. We are also working on new guidelines for the consultation and production of these plans.

Appendix 1 - Ministerial Review into Fish & Game - Update

In February 2021, a report was prepared for the Minister of Conservation, “Review of the Governance of Fish & Game New Zealand and the Regional Fish & Game Councils”. This report includes a list of 36 recommendations. Some of the recommendations require amendments to the laws that Fish & Game operate under, so meeting all of those recommendations will not be possible until this has occurred.

After the review was published in April 2021, the Department of Conservation (DoC) initiated a steering group to implement its changes. In October 2022 regional Fish & Game Chairs asked the New Zealand Council to implement all non-legislative recommendations from the report, and the next month the Council instructed Fish & Game’s Chief Executive Officer to implement those.

Rec#	Summary	Status
16	NZFGC establish a programme of professional development for elected members, such as IoD or AICD accredited training.	In progress
17	NZFGC adopt a full suite of governance and corporate policies which are binding on itself and all councils. Completed: remuneration, performance management, staff code of conduct, NZC conflicts of interest policy. Out for consultation: governance code of conduct, national health and safety, drug and alcohol, prevention of bullying and harassment, fatigue management. In progress: managing poor performance and misconduct, managing sick leave and long-term illness, protected disclosures policy, recruitment policy, lone worker and staff scholarship.	4 are completed and 5 out for consultation and 5 are in progress
18	NZFGC adopt and implement a robust conflict of interest policy which reflects good practice as set out in the AOG’s 2020 Guidance.	In progress
19	Sets out specific requirements relating to the conflict-of-interest policy in recommendation 18.	In progress
20	NZFGC to produce a consolidated annual report for the Minister covering its own and all FGC activities.	In progress
23	NZFGC to establish a standing advisory panel on Treaty issues and engagement with Māori.	In progress
26	Fish and Game initiate dialogue with Māori with a view to developing a national policy governing a system of consultation with Māori to ensure all relevant Treaty concerns are addressed by Fish and Game in the conduct of its business.	1st & 2nd phase complete
27	Hold a national hui (to begin work on recommendation 26) in conjunction with DOC.	1st phase complete
29	NZFGC review eligibility requirements for voting in respect of type of licence held.	Completed
32	Don’t allow a councillor or Chair to simultaneously be an employee (while Fish and Game could refuse to employ a current councillor, it could not prevent an employee from running for office, unless it was in their contract).	In effect
33	NZFGC should build on its existing programmes to build its licence holder base and attract a broader demographic.	1st & 2nd stage completed
34	NZFGC should develop guidelines to guide a process for community input for FGCs to follow in developing management plans. Draft guidelines to be considered by NZFGC in February 2024.	1st & 2nd stage completed
35	A KPI for the CE should be to develop a community and stakeholder relationship strategy.	Completed
36	NZFGC should assure itself that the duty set out in s 17M2(ii) (which requires the FGC to give notice of the draft management plan to various stakeholders) has been adequately discharged. Draft guidelines to be considered by NZFGC in February 2024.	1st & 2nd stage completed

It is important to note, that the first stages in addressing the overarching challenges raised in the review were to develop from the ground up an Organisational Strategy, shared Values, and alignment in the implementation of the Strategy across the organisation. This work commenced when the current CEO joined the organisation in August 2022. Cultural and leadership training programmes are being implemented to create high-performing teams and modernise the leadership styles across the organisation. All of organisation 'Resilience' training has been completed (a series of three webinars at two hours each, with an additional two webinars at 1hr each), and the first of what will be ongoing cross organisational communications and engagement has started with a Designated Waters all of Staff Webinar which ran on August 3rd.

Despite only starting implementation of the specific review recommendations in late November 2022, as evident from the table above, Fish & Game is making significant progress on the recommendations, with a number entering into phase 2 or 3 of implementation. These steps have been achieved through the dedication and collaboration of Fish & Game staff and councils throughout the organisation, supported by external expertise.



Appendix 2 – Our Species



Black Swan
Kakianau



California Quail
Koitareke



Mallard
Rakiraki



Paradise Shelduck
Pūtakitaki



Pheasant
Peihana



Pūkeko



Shoveler
Kuruwhengi



Chukar



Grey Duck
Pārera



Brown Trout



Rainbow Trout



Chinook Salmon



Sockeye Salmon



Brook Trout



Tiger Trout



Perch



Tench



Level 2, Dominion Building, 78 Victoria Street, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 25055 Wellington 6146
04 499 47 67 | nzcouncil@fishandgame.org.nz | fishandgame.org.nz