

ACT

ACT provided its responses against the questionnaire's question list. Its answers are reproduced here under the full section and question structure exactly as submitted.

1. Public Access to Rivers, Lakes and Wetlands

1. Will your party ensure public access to rivers and lakes is preserved and enhanced when land is subdivided, sold to an overseas owner, and conservation land is reclassified?

Public access to rivers and lakes matters enormously to New Zealanders and we take that seriously. The vast majority of major rivers and lakes are already publicly owned, which means access is the default. When the land is privately owned, we strongly believe in property rights and that owners have a right to manage who comes onto their property. Of course, we hope that private land owners can work with fishers and hunters to allow for access. This is the same when it comes to the sale of land, including to overseas buyers, the rights and responsibilities attached to land don't change simply because of who owns it. Existing access mechanisms such as marginal strips, esplanade reserves and legal roads continue to apply regardless of ownership, and the Overseas Investment regime already allows public-access conditions to be placed on the sale of sensitive land.

2. How will your party support the work of the Outdoor Access Commission, including getting new and restored public access for fishing and hunting?

ACT is a strong supporter of hunting and fishing, and we recognise that access to land is fundamental to that. We want to see hunters and anglers able to get into the bush and onto the water without unnecessary barriers. We've also been working to ensure the voices of hunters and fishers are better represented in the institutions that make decisions affecting them, including through proposed changes to the New Zealand Conservation Authority.

2. Fishing and Game Bird Hunting Traditions

3. Does your party value our fishing and game bird hunting traditions and the benefits they bring to Kiwis - and what policies do you have to support people to go fishing and hunting?

Absolutely, we do. Hunting and fishing are part of who New Zealanders are. They connect people to the land, support rural and provincial communities, and deliver real environmental benefits through the conservation work hunters and anglers do every day.

ACT has also pushed for changes to give hunters great representation on the New Zealand Conservation Authority, recognising the important and enormous voluntary contribution they make.

We want to keep making it easier for New Zealanders to fish and hunt, and to ensure future generations can enjoy those traditions.

4. Will your party ensure freshwater frameworks continue to recognise and protect valued introduced species like trout and salmon, as well as game birds?

The Government is currently consulting on new freshwater national direction, and we support ensuring frameworks properly recognise and provide for the management of these species and their habitats. Fish and Game's mandate to manage sports fish and game birds remains intact, and we are committed to ensuring that legislative and planning frameworks support that work.

5. Does your party think valued introduced species like trout and salmon should be provided for in legislation defining ecosystem health?

ACT understands the value of introduced species. We supported strengthening the Herds of Special Interest and that is something that could be extended further.

Recognising the role of value introduced species play in our current ecosystem is important for both environmental and economic outcomes. We support ensuring this role is recognised.

6. What is your party's position on recognising the importance of trout and salmon habitats when setting environmental thresholds?

Trout and salmon are sensitive to water quality, so protecting their habitat is in many ways a proxy for protecting the health of our rivers and streams more broadly.

We support environmental thresholds that are grounded in science and reflect the needs of both native and valued introduced species. Getting freshwater settings right matters for anglers, farmers, and communities alike, and we want a framework that is practical and achievable while delivering real environmental outcomes.

3. Wetland Protection and Restoration

7. What is your party going to do to support the protection, restoration and creation of wetlands?

ACT supports practical, outcomes-focused approaches to wetland protection and restoration. We believe the best results come from partnerships between landowners, hunters, and conservation organisations, and we want to make it easier for those partnerships to work. We support removing unnecessary red tape that can slow down genuine restoration work.

ACT supports voluntary nature markets, which allow for private money to fund projects such as wetland restoration. This term ACT Minister Andrew Hoggard announced that the Government would support the expansion of a Voluntary Nature Credits Market in New Zealand, including a number of pilot projects and a government pathway to accredit credible schemes. This gives investors confidence that the projects they fund, such as wetland restoration, riparian planting and pest control, are real and credible. By connecting landowners and community groups with private investors who want to support conservation, this kind of market can unlock new, non-taxpayer funding for wetland protection, restoration and creation, complementing the work hunters, anglers and landowners already do on the ground.

8. What is your party's position on permitted activities for wetland maintenance, restoration, and creation?

We support ensuring the rules around wetland work are practical and don't create unnecessary barriers for people genuinely trying to restore or maintain wetland habitat. Good consenting frameworks should make it easy to do the right thing, and we support permitted activity pathways that allow legitimate maintenance, restoration, and creation work to proceed without excessive compliance costs.

9. What funding and/or support would your party provide for wetland restoration and creation programmes, including those delivered through Fish & Game and hunter-landowner partnerships?

As with Question 7 ACT supports voluntary nature markets, which allow for private money to fund projects such as wetland restoration.

4. Sports Fish and Game Management Plans

10. What is your party's position on having regard to Sports Fish and Game Management Plans in plan-making and consenting decisions under resource management legislation?

ACT is committed to ensuring that we have a resource management system that is based on property rights and delivers real environmental outcomes.

11. What is your party's position on consulting Fish & Game in the preparation of policy, standards and frameworks that may affect the habitat of trout, salmon and game birds?

See above.

12. What is your party's position on Fish & Game New Zealand's status as an affected party in resource management plan-making and resource consent processes?

See above.

5. Water Conservation Orders

13. Will your party retain Water Conservation Orders and, if so, how will you ensure they are complied with?

Existing Water Conservation Orders are being preserved in the new resource management legislation.

ACT also acknowledges the concerns of the primary production sector that WCOs can impose significant restrictions on irrigation, water storage, farming, horticulture, rural infrastructure, and food and fibre production. WCOs should not be used as a broad or blunt tool to lock up water resources without proper regard to costs, trade-offs, existing lawful uses, property rights, and regional economic impacts.

14. What is your party's position on the process for establishing new Water Conservation Orders?

ACT supports a more disciplined process for new WCOs. They should be evidence-based, targeted, proportionate, and focused on genuinely outstanding values. Compliance should be achieved through clear legal effect, regional planning instruments, consent and permit decisions, and council monitoring and enforcement. The goal is to protect truly exceptional water bodies while ensuring WCOs remain practical, fair, and workable for communities and productive water users.

6. Fish & Game's Statutory Role

16. What is your party's position on Fish & Game's statutory mandate to manage sports fish and game birds in the interests of anglers and game bird hunters?

ACT's commitment is to anglers and game bird hunters and the traditions they value. ACT is open to looking at how that mandate is exercised and whether it remains fit for purpose.

17. What is your party's position on Fish & Game's freshwater advocacy role?

ACT values constructively working with Fish & Game to deliver good outcomes for anglers, hunters and the freshwater habitats they depend on.