

Project Reports for Taranaki Fish and Game Council for the 2025/2026 Financial Year

A compendium of operational project reports is presented for activities undertaken in each of the functional areas in the Taranaki Fish and Game region in the 2025/2026 financial year.

Reports on species management, habitat and resource management, hunter and angler participation (including recruitment and access), communication (to licence holders and the wider public), compliance and ranging, management of licence sales, and other specific activities required to meet legislation requirements and responsibilities.

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

September 2026



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Sports Fish Population Monitoring in the Taranaki Region 2025/26

Purpose of the Project

Obtain relevant and robust data to inform and enable effective management decisions to maximise opportunities and satisfaction while ensuring the sustainability of sports fish populations across the region.

Strategic Outcome

Supports the Taranaki Fish & Game Strategic Outcome:
Healthy Species, Habitats, and Ecosystems.

Strategic Monitoring Plan

Undertake surveys on a catchment basis.

Allen Stancliff

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

August 2026



Sports Fish Population Monitoring in the Taranaki Region 2025/26

Overview of Results

- Carried out electric fishing at 8 sites in the Waiaua River in November 2025 with a report prepared for Council's 15th August 2026 meeting;
- Carried out electric fishing at 10 sites in the Tokiāhuru Stream catchment and one site in the Mangawhero River catchment in December 2025 with a report prepared for Council's 17th October 2026 meeting;
- Carried out electric fishing at 10 sites in Kapuni Stream in October 2025 on behalf of Ballance Agri-Nutrients Kapuni Ltd. and Todd Petroleum Mining Company Ltd.
- Angler diaries were sent to 16 anglers for the start of the 2025/26 fishing season, with 6 returned and information collated;
- Trout spawning surveys conducted in Lake Mangamahoe tributaries and Mangorei Stream.

Key Catchment Findings

- Few juvenile trout were found in the Waiaua River in the November 2025 survey, although the habitat was in good condition and anglers report good numbers of adult trout present;
- Densities of rainbow trout fry found in Kapuni Stream in late October 2025 were some of the highest found so far in ringplain streams, indicating another good year of recruitment;
- Headwater tributaries of the Whangaehu River, including Tokiāhuru, Waitaiki and Mangaehuehu streams support abundant populations of stunted brown and rainbow trout, that likely contribute to the downstream fishery;
- Angling diarists reported good catch rates in the Manganuioteao and Hangatahua (Stony) rivers, but there was insufficient information to draw conclusions about other waters.

Statement of Service Performance

Planned Result:

1. Assess and report on juvenile trout recruitment in the Tokiāhuru / Waitaiki Streams to compare with baseline information from other catchment surveys.
2. Undertake a resource inventory of the Manganui River catchment to determine current status of the trout fishery and identify threats and opportunities (yr 2 of 2).
3. Undertake an electric fishing survey in Kapuni Stream.
4. Monitor and report information on the status of the region's trout fisheries sufficient to measure overall angler success (through a diary scheme), set effective regulations and inform management directions.

Performance Measures:

Reports produced on the status of the region's trout fisheries and including;

- Angler catch rates across the region;
- Juvenile recruitment in the Tokiāhuru / Waitaiki streams;
- Manganui River resource inventory report;
- Kapuni Stream electric fishing report.

Actual Result:

- Angling diarists reported good catch rates in the Manganuioteao and Hangatahua (Stony) rivers, but there was insufficient information to draw conclusions about other waters.
 - Juvenile recruitment was assessed 10 sites in the Tokiāhuru Stream catchment and one site in the Mangawhero River catchment in December 2025 with a report prepared for Council's 17th October 2026 meeting;
 - Information was assembled for the Manganui River resource inventory, but the report was not finalised;
 - A Kapuni Stream electric fishing survey was undertaken and report prepared for Ballance Agri-Nutrients Kapuni Ltd. and Todd Petroleum Mining Company Ltd.
 - An unbudgeted Waiaua River electric fishing survey was undertaken and report prepared for Council's 15th August 2026 meeting;
 - Trout spawning surveys were conducted in Lake Mangamahoe tributaries and Mangorei Stream.
 - A summary of fieldwork results was reported to Council on 17th October 2026 – Stancliff, A. 2026.
- Project Report 1111 Sports Fish Population Monitoring 2025/26.***

Budget Variance

	Budget (\$)		Actual (\$)	
External	500		3,185	
Internal	19,671	200 hours	38,850	395 hours
Income	4,000		4,508	
Total	16,171		37,527	

Comments:

- Additional unbudgeted work resulted in additional hours spent.

TARANAKI FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

The Chairman
Taranaki Fish and Game Council

2025/26 Fishery Monitoring Report

Angler diary scheme

The Species Management section of the Council's 2025/26 Annual Plan has a planned result to "Monitor and report information on the status of the region's trout fisheries sufficient to measure overall angler success (through a diary scheme), set effective regulations and inform management directions."

The 2025/26 season was the tenth season (since 2017/18) that a voluntary angler diary scheme has been used across the Taranaki Fish & Game region.

In 2025/26 only six anglers returned diaries from the 16 that were sent out. This compared with 12 anglers returning data in 2024/25, 9 anglers in 2023/24, 19 anglers in 2022/23, 21 anglers in 2021/22 and 2020/2021, 22 in 2019/2020, 16 in 2018/2019 and 23 in 2017/18. The data provided a record of 63 angling trips greater than 15 minutes duration, compared to 117, 115, 139, 227, 207, 249 and 188 angling trips in the preceding seven years.

In the following analysis, the average catch rate was calculated by first determining the catch rate for each individual angler trip (number of fish caught / divided by how long the angler spent fishing) then averaging all these catch rates for the particular river or lake. This ensures each trip received equal weighting and therefore the average catch rate is a more appropriate measure of what an angler experienced on average. In this way the catch rate can also be used as one measure of angler satisfaction.

However, with this approach it is necessary to limit the analysis to trips longer than 15 minutes, otherwise unrealistic individual catch rates may be obtained which in turn skew the overall average calculated. The catch rates (cpue) listed in Tables 1 & 2 below represent the catch of trout larger than 30cm in length per hour of fishing effort. For example, a cpue of 0.5 equals half a trout per hour or one trout for every two hours fishing.

Table 1 highlights that while the number of hours spent fishing rivers declined substantially, the average catch rate for rivers increased to 0.71 fish/hr. The average catch rate for lakes (0.43 fish/hr, Table 1) was an improvement on the previous season, with the data reflecting one angler's visits to Lake Mangamahoe.

Catch rate data for some of the larger, more popular river fisheries is presented in Table 2. Data has not been presented for some of the smaller streams in accordance with an undertaking not to identify diarist's favourite small stream fisheries which can be vulnerable to overharvest. With small sample sizes, the average catch rate can be strongly influenced by the results of one or two trips, and this can be misleading.

Highlights include that the **Hangatahua/Stony River** remained stable over the entire season, with 11 large hatchery rainbows caught in the five trips reported by diarists. Diarists also reported catching one small hatchery rainbow and two small brown trout, which was the first time brown trout had been reported for some years. It wasn't confirmed whether the brown trout were wild or of hatchery origin, although a photo of one fish suggested it was wild.

Diarists also reported catching 18 large rainbows and three large brown trout in 23 hours of fishing effort in three trips to the **Manganuioteao River**, including its tributary Orautoha Stream. Diarists also caught four small rainbows and three small browns during those three trips.

The ongoing small number of diary returns has had an impact on the accuracy of the information and how it can be interpreted. It is common for diary schemes to start off with high returns and then decline over time as anglers get tired of recording their effort or reduce their fishing activity and it becomes hard to find new anglers to take their place. Diaries were sent to 16 anglers for the start of the 2025/26 season and following two email reminders, only six diaries were returned. The diaries that are returned provide valuable information on a range of fisheries, but with the current low return rate it is questionable whether it's worthwhile continuing.

Table 1: Hours of angling effort and average catch rate (trout > 30cm/hr) by water type for Taranaki F&G Region as recorded by diarists during the 2021 – 2025 seasons.

	Trips recorded					Total hours					% of total angling effort					Average trip length (hrs)					Average catch rate				
Season	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Lakes	23	22	17	24	52	29	24.5	22	31	94	20.8	9.8	10.9	17.3	16.1	1.26	1.11	1.28	1.30	1.81	0.43	0.18	0.46	0.64	0.32
Rivers	47	95	98	115	175	110.4	224.6	179	239	490	79.2	90.2	89.1	82.7	83.9	2.35	2.24	1.82	2.08	2.8	0.69	0.32	0.43	0.55	0.52

Table 2: Number of trips recorded and average catch rate (trout per hour) of large (> 30cm) rainbow, brown and all trout combined by water for the 2020 – 2025 seasons.

Water	Trips recorded						CPUE large rainbow trout						CPUE large brown trout						CPUE large trout					
	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Kaupokonui Stream	3	7	12	11	6	3	0.33	0.36	0.53	0.53	0.25	0.24	0.00	0.14	0.21	0.21	0.13	0.00	0.33	0.50	0.74	0.75	0.38	0.24
Patea River Upper	2		4	7	24	36	1.0		0	0.54	0.13	0.15	0.00		0.18	0.46	0.20	0.45	1.0		0.18	1	0.33	0.60
Patea River Lower			1	1	7				0	0.50	0.29				0	0	0.17				0	0.50	0.47	
Stony River	5	11	6	3	17	30	0.56	0.72	0.63	1.2	0.75	0.56	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.56	0.72	0.63	1.2	0.75	0.56
Waiaua River	2		2	6	0	7	0.7		0	0	0	0.04	0		0	0	0	0.23	0.7		0	0	0	0.27
Waingongoro River	4	22	6	7	9	9	0.25	0.64	0	0	0.70	0.31	0	0.04	0.35	0.33	0.15	0.05	0.25	0.68	0.35	0.33	0.85	0.36
Waiwhakaiho River	9	4	10	10	25	32	0	0	0	0	0.02	0	0.28	0.38	0.40	0.17	0.16	0.35	0.28	0.38	0.40	0.17	0.17	0.35
Manganui o Te ao River	3	7	3	9	27	14	0.8	0.71	0.87	0.45	0.58	1.49	0.1	0.20	0.10	0	0.08	0.11	0.9	0.91	0.97	0.45	0.67	1.60
Mangawhero River		2	0	0	2			0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0.50			0	0	0	0.50	
Manganui River	1	6	4	13	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.10	0	0.39	0.22	0.23	0	0.10	0	0.39	0.22	0.23
Lake Mangamahoe	23	16	13	19	51	32	0.34	0	0.15	0.51	0.30	0.15	0.09	0	0.21	0.17	0.04	0.07	0.43	0	0.37	0.68	0.34	0.22

Tokiāhuru River Fishery Investigation

The Species Management section of the Council's 2025/26 Annual Plan has a planned result to "Assess and report on juvenile trout recruitment in the Tokiāhuru / Waitaiki Streams to compare with baseline information from other catchment surveys".

Ten sites in the headwaters and headwater tributaries of Tokiāhuru, Waitaiki and Mangaehuehu streams in the Whangaehu River catchment were surveyed by electric fishing in early December 2025, along with one site in Mangateitei Stream in the Mangawhero River catchment near Ohakune (Table 3, Figure 1).

Trout were present at all 11 sites surveyed, with brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) found at eight sites and rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) at four sites. Brown and rainbow trout were found together at only one site. All trout caught in the Tokiāhuru, Waitaiki and Mangaehuehu catchment streams were small (28 – 250mm), apart from one larger adult fish seen in an unnamed tributary of Waitaiki Stream. The small size of fish is consistent with the findings of earlier studies that these headwater trout populations consist of stunted resident fish, with larger fish being much older than their size would indicate. An examination of trout otoliths would help to resolve the issue of how old these fish are.

The presence of trout fry (28-33mm) indicates that there had been successful spawning in winter / spring 2025. It is likely that larger, mature trout from downstream in the Tokiāhuru and Waitaiki streams move upstream to the headwaters to spawn, but this has not been confirmed. It is also likely that trout fry from the headwaters grow normally when they move to downstream reaches, as they do in the Hangatahua (Stony) River on the Taranaki ringplain. Electric fishing surveys carried out in the Taranaki Fish & Game Region to date indicate that headwater tributaries of the Whangaehu River support some of the highest densities of juvenile trout found in the region.

There is relatively little information available on the downstream fishery in Tokiāhuru and Waitaiki Streams. National angler survey results indicate that they receive only a modest level of angler use. Access may be an issue, but anecdotal reports indicate there are large high-quality trout present.

In Mangateitei Stream, brown trout were found both upstream and downstream of a bed control structure associated with a north island main trunk railway bridge. It is likely that this structure restricts the upstream passage of trout to times when it is inundated in floods. Mangateitei Stream provides important trout spawning and juvenile rearing habitat for brown trout from the Mangawhero River and it is recommended that winter trout spawning surveys are carried out upstream and downstream of the bed control structure to assess its effect on fish passage. More importantly, the structure needs full remediation to allow passage for all fish species.

No native fish were seen or caught at the 10 Tokiāhuru / Waitaiki / Mangaehuehu catchment sites electric fished in this study, although longfin eels (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*) were found in a Tokiāhuru tributary, Te Unuunukapua te Ariki Stream, in December 2024 and in Mangateitei Stream in the Mangawhero River catchment in the current study. The paucity of migratory native fish is consistent with the results of earlier studies and relates to the impacts of the highly acidic nature of the Whangaehu River on fish migration.

Table 3. Map references for sites electric fished on 1-2 December 2025.

Site	Stream	Map Reference
1	Omarae	E 1816510 N 5630541
2	Waitaiki	E 1816535 N 5630486
3	Waitaiki left bank tributary	E 1816560 N 5630483
4	Waiharakeke Stream	E 1817895 N 5628783
5	Tokiāhuru Stream	E 1818048 N 5629100
6	Waiharuru un-named tributary	E 1815305 N 5634476
7	Waiharuru Mainstem	E 1814952 N 5634486
8	Mangaehuehu River	E 1813915 N 5635361
9	Waiākeke un-named tributary	E 1812520 N 5632314
10	Waiākeke mainstem	E 1812971 N 5631906
11	Mangateitei Stream	E 1810336 N 5633919

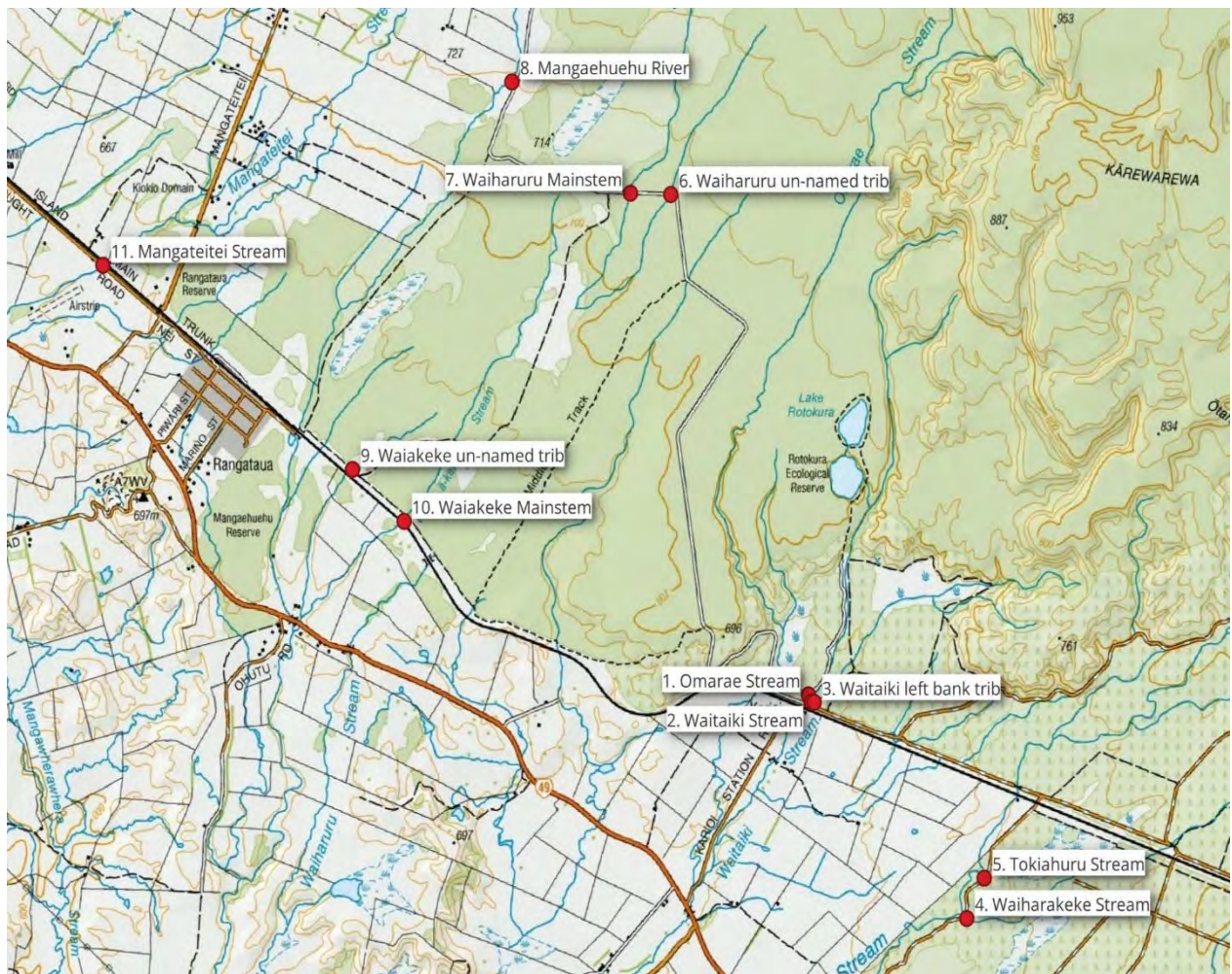


Figure 1. Survey sites in the Tokiāhuru Stream catchment (Sites 1 – 10), and Mangateitei Stream (Site 11) that were electric fished on 1st and 2nd December 2025.

Kapuni Stream Electric Fishing Survey

An electric fishing survey of 10 sites in Kapuni Stream was carried out on 25th October 2025 for Ballance Agri-Nutrients Kapuni Ltd. and Todd Petroleum Mining Company Ltd.

Running since 1982, the electric fishing programme is a voluntary initiative by these companies to assess whether habitat in Kapuni Stream remains satisfactory for fish and to enable detection of catastrophic declines in fish abundance. Taranaki Fish & Game carried out the surveys in 2024 & 2025.

153 “fish” (131 trout, 8 koura, 6 eels, 5 koaro and 3 redfin bullies) were recorded with a density of 30.3 fish per 100 m², which was the third highest density since measurement of fishing effort commenced in 1996 (Figure 2). Fish were recorded at nine of the ten sites electric fished, with no fish recorded at Site 7 located off lower Palmer Road.

Trout fry were caught at eight of the 10 sites fished, with an average density of 2.16 fry per minute of machine time. This was more than double the 1.0 fry per minute found in the October 2024 survey and is the highest density recorded in any river surveyed so far on the ringplain. Of the 131 trout fry caught, all were judged to be rainbow trout. The results in Figure 3 below are expressed as catch per unit effort per 100 m² for comparison with previous data.

Commencing in 1984, an influx of sand from headwater erosion was judged to have adversely affected habitat quality in Kapuni Stream, including a reduction in trout spawning success. However, since 2015 good numbers of trout fry (mainly rainbow fry) have been recorded in October by electric fishing (Figure 3), which suggests that conditions are improving.

There is nothing to indicate that the activities of the petrochemical industry at Kapuni have had significant adverse impacts on fish communities in Kapuni Stream.

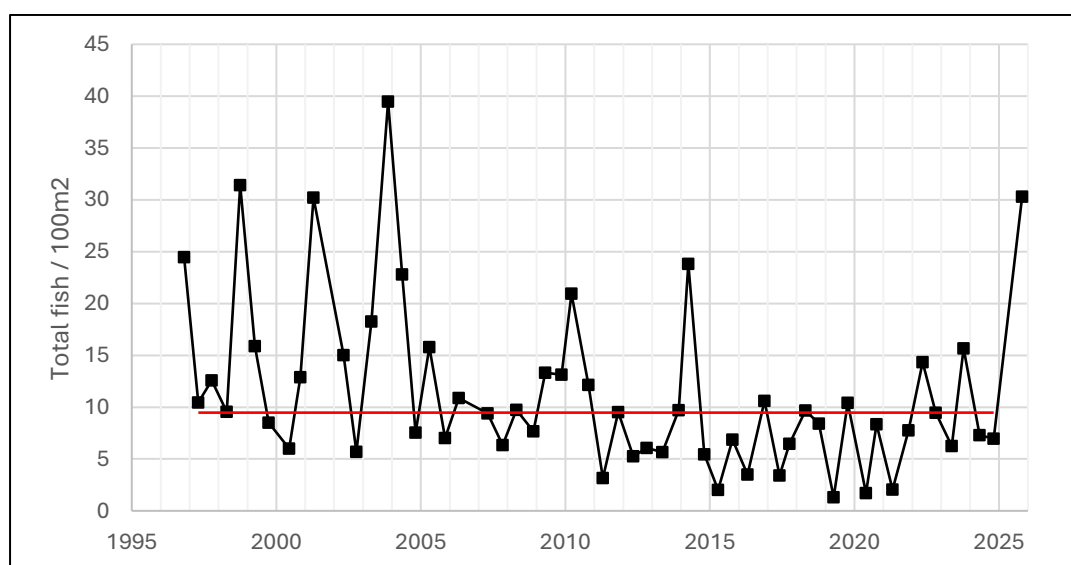


Figure 2. Total numbers of fish per 100 m² electric-fishing in the Kapuni catchment (1996 – 2025). The red line denotes the median density.

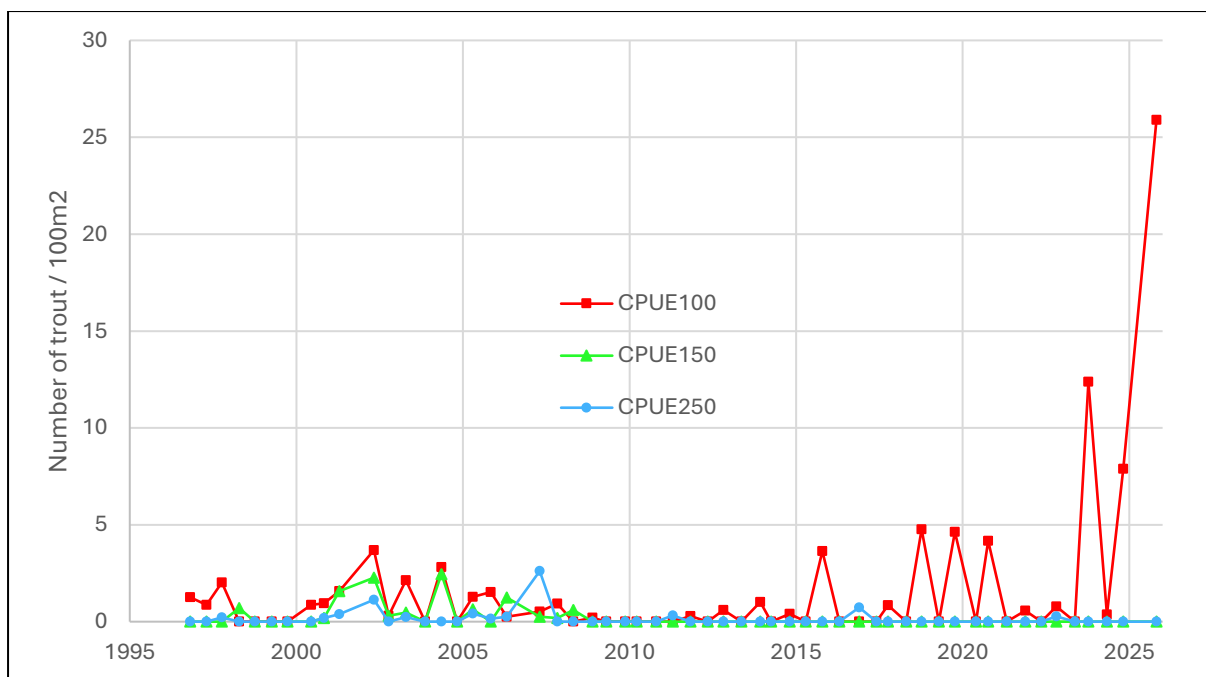


Figure 3. Number of trout in three size classes per 100 m² electric-fished in the Kapuni catchment.

“CPUE100” refers to trout fry.



Photo 1. Rainbow trout fry caught in Kapuni Stream adjacent to the Todd Energy Gas Treatment Plant, 25th October 2025.

Waiaua River electric fishing survey

Eight sites in the Waiaua River near Opunake were electric fished on 21st November 2025 in a follow-up to a similar survey in February 2022, to provide information on juvenile trout recruitment and the river's recovery from a July 2021 headwater erosion event.

Brown trout fry were found at only two of the eight sites and their density was the lowest recorded in surveys in the region to date. While anglers have reported good numbers of adult trout in the river in the last two seasons, the fishery appears to be one based on only low levels of natural recruitment.

Longfin eel and redfin bully were found in a range of size classes throughout the river, which indicates that these species can negotiate the 4.5m Opunake hydro weir located at SH45, 2km from the river mouth. The freshwater shrimp (*Paratya curvirostris*) which is a good climber, was also found upstream of the weir. A single juvenile galaxiid was found immediately upstream, while inanga and torrentfish were found only downstream. With the hydro scheme shut down since 1 June 2018 and the fish pass no longer operational, the weir presents a significant barrier to the upstream migration of native fish with poor or moderate climbing ability, as well as trout.

While the Opunake hydro scheme was granted new consents in 2022, it has not yet resumed operation. A build-up of sand and gravel at the river intake and sand ingress into the inlet race and Opunake Lake remains an issue. Even when the scheme was operating, variable flows in the fish pass and high water velocities in the race inlet culverts were less than ideal for upstream fish passage.



Photo 1. A brown trout fry caught in the Waiaua Fork Stream tributary of Waiaua River, 21st November 2025.

Lake Mangamahoe Trout Spawning Survey

Lake Mangamahoe is a 24ha hydro reservoir located near New Plymouth. It supports a fishery based on wild brown trout, supplemented with the annual release of around 300 hatchery rainbows. Hatchery brown trout were also released into the lake in 2024 (50 fish) and 2025 (100), all with an adipose fin-clip. Wild brown trout natural recruitment stems from spawning in Mangamahoe Stream and from juveniles entrained in water diverted from the Waiwhakaiho River via the lake inlet tunnel. The fishery is restricted to fly fishing only, has been so since its inception in 1933, and is one of the most popular in the region.

Spawning surveys of Mangamahoe Stream have been carried out since 1990 (Figure 4) in a 1.5km section between SH3 and a waterfall. The reach is mainly used by brown trout, with numbers of fish and spawning redds fluctuating over time. In 2026, an initial survey was undertaken on 12th June following a series of freshes in early June (Figure 5). Surprisingly, no trout were seen. Four potential spawning sites in the lower section were enhanced by digging over the gravels and removing large rocks and cobbles.

A survey of the lower Mangamahoe Stream between the lake and the SH3 motorway Armco culvert was undertaken with Opunake High school student Wyatt Dobbin on 29th June to see if there were any impediments to fish passage. Two adult trout (1 brown, 1 rainbow) and a large longfin eel were seen near the lake. Three brown trout, including one pair, were seen just below the motorway culvert. There are several rock ledges in this section that restrict fish passage during low flows (Photo 2), but they've been there since at least 1990, and trout can negotiate them during freshes. The SH3 motorway road culvert (Photo 3) was relatively clear of debris and trout would have been able to move upstream.

A repeat survey on 21st July after the peak in spawning and following four minor freshes (Figure 5) found five spawning redds (2 large, 1 medium, 2 small), two adult brown trout jacks and one dead spent brown hen. Three large spawning redds, but no trout, were also seen in the lake inlet downstream of the Waiwhakaiho River diversion tunnel outlet on 21st July. However, spawning and fry production in the inlet is unlikely to contribute significantly to the Lake Mangamahoe fishery, as the flow is swift and deep and there is little rearing habitat for fry.

Figure 4 below indicates that counts of trout and spawning redds in Mangamahoe Stream are cyclic and currently at a relatively low level. It is not known just how much successful spawning is needed to fully utilise the rearing habitat in Mangamahoe Stream and a summer electric fishing survey is planned to provide more information.



Photo 2. A rock ledge in the lower Mangamahoe Stream that trout must negotiate to access spawning areas upstream of the SH3 road culvert.



Photo 3. Wyatt Dobbin at the upstream end of the Mangamahoe Stream SH3 road culvert.

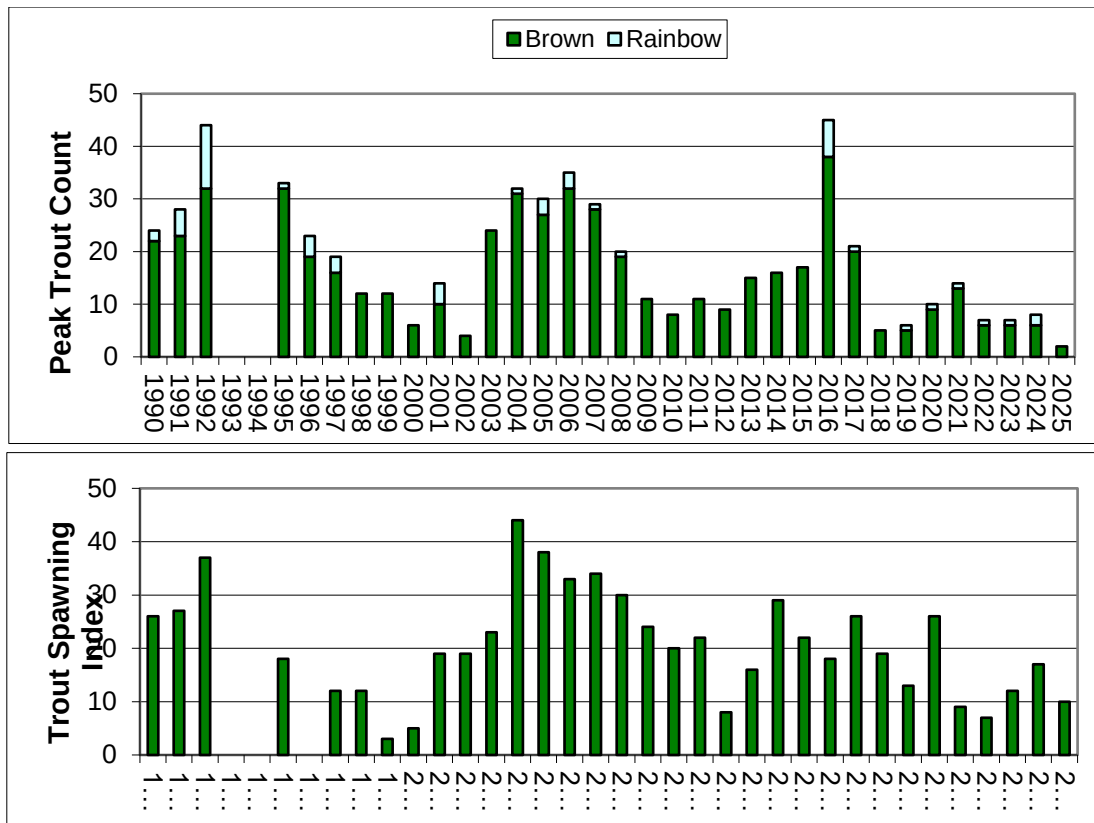


Figure 4. Peak counts of spawning trout in Mangamahoe Stream (top) and spawning indices derived from the number and size of spawning redds seen (bottom).

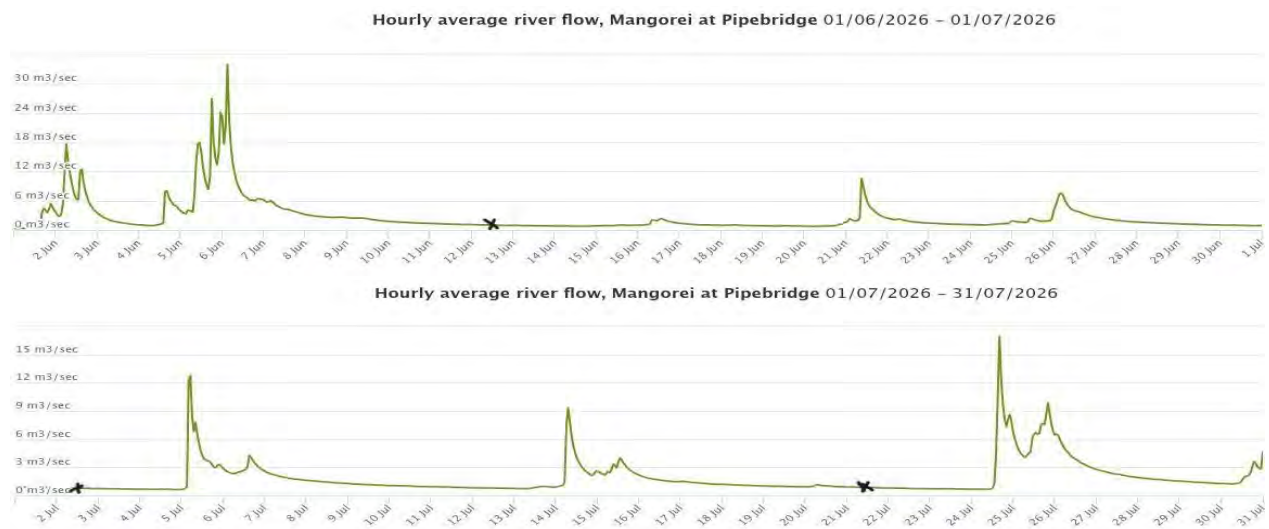


Figure 5. Hourly average flow in Mangorei Stream at SH3: 1 – 30 June and 1 – 31 July 2026. Spawning surveys were conducted in Mangamahoe Stream on 12th June and 21st July 2026 and in Mangorei Stream on 2nd July 2026 (Data courtesy of Taranaki Regional Council).

Mangorei Stream Trout Spawning Survey

A trout spawning survey was conducted in Mangorei Stream on 2nd July 2026. Two large and two small spawning redds, but no trout, were seen. One of the large redds looked to be dug some time ago, probably during the early June freshes, while the other large redd (Photo 4) was more recent. Results were similar to Mangamahoe Stream, in that counts of spawning redds and trout were at a relatively low level (Figure 6).

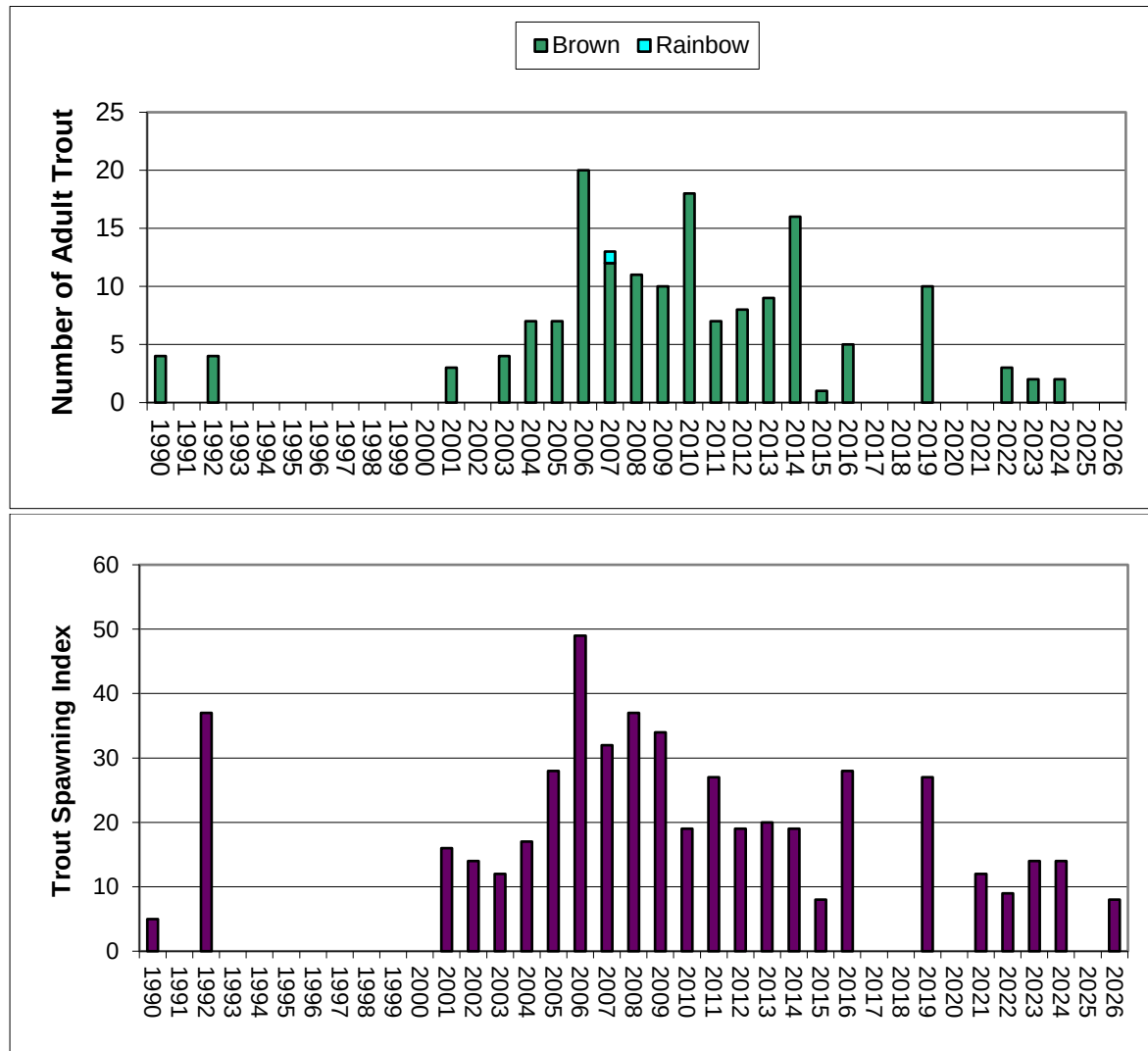


Figure 6. Peak counts of spawning trout in Mangorei Stream (top) and spawning indices derived from the number and size of spawning redds seen (bottom). No survey was conducted in 2025, owing to high river flows and gravel movement that would have obscured redd profiles.



Photo 4: Wyatt Dobbin beside a recently completed trout spawning redd in Mangorei Stream, 2nd July 2026.

RECOMMENDATION:

- THAT THE 2025/26 FISHERY MONITORING REPORT BE RECEIVED.

Allen Stancliff

3rd September 2026



Kapuni Biomonitoring Electric-Fishing Survey (23 October 2025)





Cover Photograph: Kapuni Stream at Eltham Road 23 October 2025.



Kapuni Biomonitoring Electric-Fishing Survey

(23 October 2025)

Allen Stancliff & Jack Harland

Prepared for
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Introduction

The Kapuni biological monitoring programme, undertaken on behalf of Ballance Agri-Nutrients Kapuni Ltd and Todd Petroleum Mining Company Ltd (previously Vector Ltd), has included electric-fishing in or around April and October each year. These surveys indicate whether habitat remains satisfactory for fish and they enable detection of catastrophic declines in fish abundance.

Running since 1982, the electric-fishing programme has been a voluntary initiative and not one required by Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) water consents for the operation of Ballance Agri-Nutrient Kapuni Ltd's Ammonia-Urea Plant and Todd Petroleum Mining Company Ltd's Gas Treatment Plant. Following a review of the programme in 2024, it was decided to retain the survey but reduce its frequency to once a year in spring. A spring (October) survey was chosen because there are generally more fish caught in spring than in autumn. In conjunction with the macroinvertebrate biomonitoring programme (which is required by TRC consent conditions), the survey has provided valuable information on habitat quality and fish populations in Kapuni Stream, changes over time, and whether there are any significant adverse effects from the operation of the Ammonia-Urea Plant and the Gas Treatment Plant in the Kapuni catchment.

The surveys were previously undertaken by the Cawthron Institute (1981 – 2007), Stark Environmental Limited (2007 – 2021) and Riverwise Consulting (2021 – 2024). Fish & Game NZ (Taranaki Region) agreed to carry out surveys in October 2024 and 2025.

Single-pass electric fishing is a relatively quick procedure but seldom captures all fish present in the area fished and does not provide accurate fish density estimates. Therefore, the data should be interpreted bearing the following in mind:

- Fish species recorded only as one or two individuals at any site can be termed 'rarely encountered'.
- If a fish species is not recorded at a site, it does not necessarily mean it was not present.
- Approximate relative abundance estimates might need to differ by a factor of 10 or more to suggest real changes in abundance at sites over time.

More intensive sampling, such as triple-pass electric fishing with large stop nets, or fishing 150m of stream at each site in accordance with the NZ Freshwater Fish Sampling Protocols (Joy *et. al*, 2013) would provide more accurate estimates of fish presence-absence and numbers. However, it would also be considerably more time-consuming to undertake. Since TRC does not require fish monitoring to be undertaken (although it is specified in the respective management plans for the Ammonia-Urea Plant and the Gas Treatment Plant), there is no requirement to undertake it in a more rigorous (and costly) manner.

This report presents the results of electric fishing undertaken on Thursday 23rd October 2025 by Allen Stancliff and Jack Harland of Taranaki Fish & Game.

Methods

Sampling sites and methods

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the locations of the monitoring sites in the Kapuni Stream catchment. On Thursday 23rd October 2025, 10 sites between Opunake Road and Kokiri Road were electric fished. Unfortunately, it began raining heavily as the team prepared to sample the 11th site at Normanby Road and this site was not fished for health & safety reasons.

Electric fishing was undertaken using a Smith-Root battery-powered backpack machine, with a single pass at each site. Fish were caught after being stunned and swept downstream into a hand-held stop net. They were then identified, counted, measured and released. The area of streambed sampled at each site was recorded (Appendix 1).

Table 1 Location of monitoring sites in the Kapuni Stream mainstem, 23rd October 2025.

Site name	NZTM Coordinates
Kapuni mainstem sites (upstream to downstream order)	
Opunake Road	1699395E 5640390N
Upper Palmer Road	1700755E 5637740N
Eltham Road	1701300E 5635250N
Site 9 (upstream “control” site for regular monitoring)	1701435E 5630740N
Site 11	1701045E 5629620N
Site 12	1700865E 5629395N
Site 10 (Skeet Road)	1700805E 5628945N
Site 6	1700540E 5627370N
Site 7	1700245E 5627260N
Kokiri Road	1699446E 5625860N

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kapuni Stream had a stable flow of approximately 1.50 m³/s during the survey on Thursday 23rd October 2025 (Figure 2). The Kapuni was subject to several minor (5 m³/s) freshes in the 30 days prior to sampling, including a 5.3 m³/s fresh on 21st October 2025, but these would have been unlikely to influence the results of the survey.

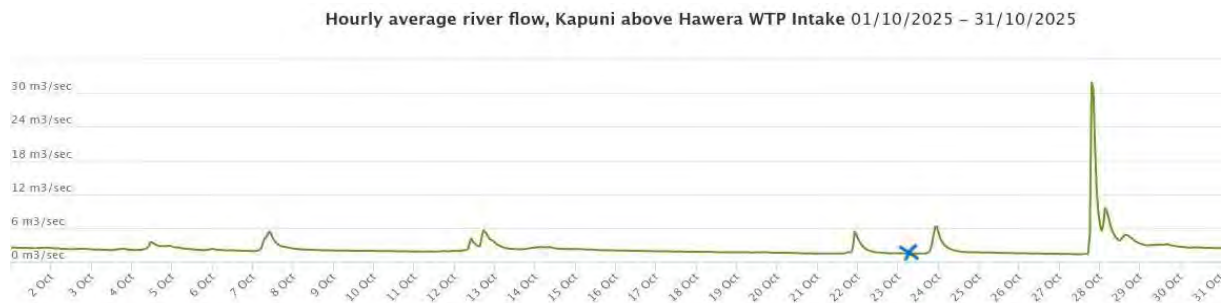


Figure 2. Kapuni Stream flow record for October 2025 showing minor freshes prior to sampling on 23rd October 2025 (data courtesy of TRC).

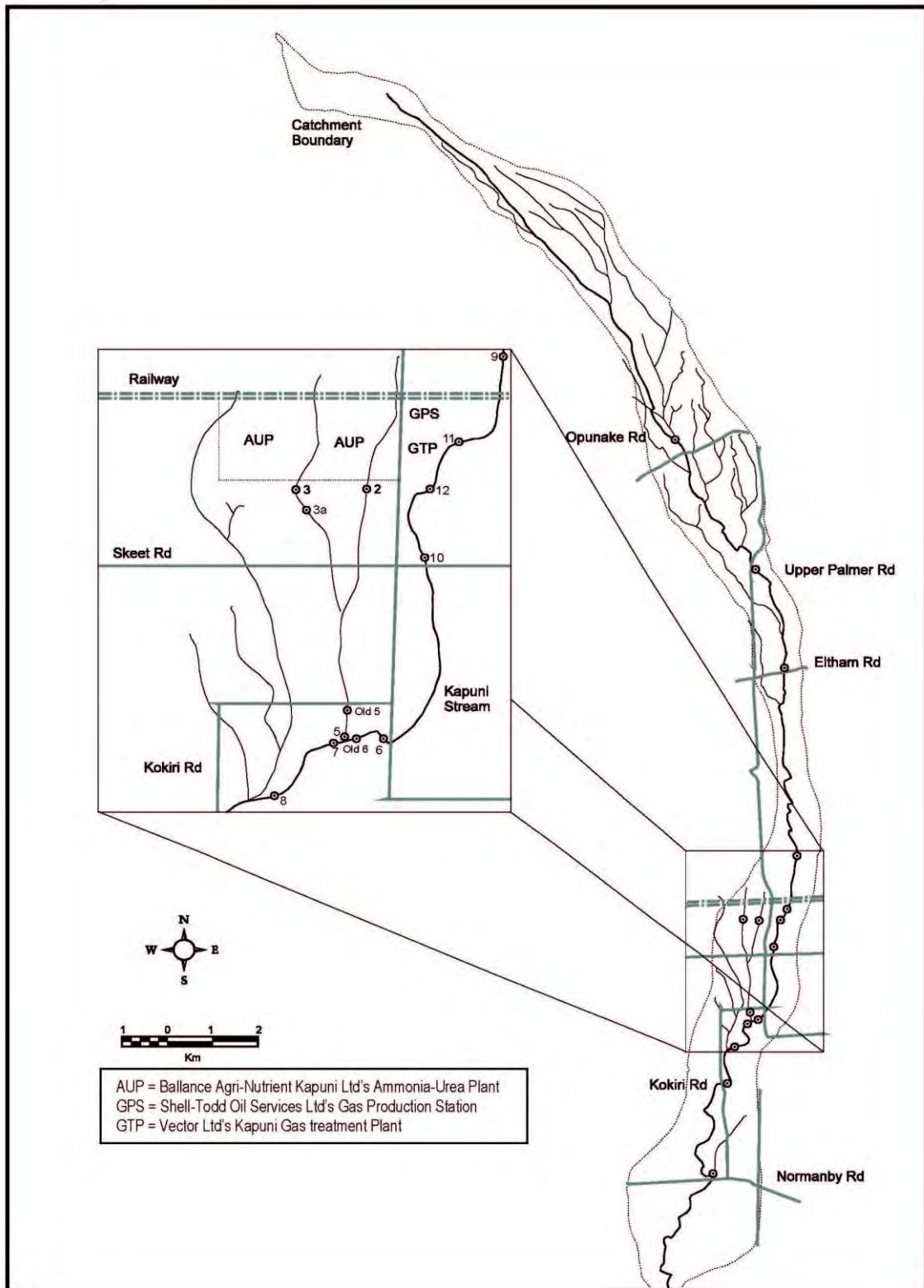


Figure 1 Locations of sampling sites in the Kapuni Stream catchment.

Table 2 Total numbers of fish and koura recorded from the Kapuni Stream in autumn (-A: April – May) and spring (-S: September – November) 1982 – 2026. A = Abundant (>20), C = Common (5-19), R = Rare (1-5). + indicates under-estimate of counts due to relative abundances being recorded at some sites/times.

2025-S	10	131	3	-	-	-	5	-	-	6	-	8	153	5
2024-S	10	39	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	14	2	11	71	6
2024-A	7	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	-	6	20	5
2023-S	11	49	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	5	62	6
2023-A	7	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	2	12	3
2022-S	11	4	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	23	-	6	36	5
2022-A	7	-	10	-	-	-	1	-	-	21	-	7	39	4
2021-S	11	2	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	20	-	1	27	4
2021-A	7	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	5	3
2020-S	11	16	5	-	-	-	3	-	-	2	-	5	32 ¹	5
2020-A	7	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	4	3
2019-S	11	16	11	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	-	-	36	4
2019-A	7	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	3
2018-S	11	17	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	7	-	4	30	4
2018-A	7	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	15 ²	2
2017-S	11	3	11	-	-	-	1	-	-	7	-	1	23	5
2017-A	7	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	2	11	3
2016-S	9	3	5	-	-	-	4	-	-	25	-	6	43	5
2016-A	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	1	12	2
2015-S	11	18	2	-	-	-	4	-	1	9	-	-	34	5
2015-A	7	-	5	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	7	3
2014-S	11	2	3	-	-	-	3	-	3	14	-	2	27	6
2014-A	7	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	21	48	-	1	75	4
2013-S	11	5	5	-	-	-	9	-	2	23	-	4	48	6
2013-A	7	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	-	2	18	4
2012-S	11	3	7	-	-	-	4	-	7	9	-	-	30	5
2012-A	7	-	6	-	-	-	1	-	3	8	-	-	18	4
2011-S	11	1	6	-	-	-	5	-	3	19	-	-	34	5
2011-A	7	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	10	4
2010-S	11	-	16	-	1	-	6	-	4	32	-	4	63	6
2010-A	7	-	6	-	-	-	8	-	10	42	-	-	66	4
2009-S	11	-	8	-	-	-	14	-	5	38	-	-	65	4
2009-A	7	-	5	-	-	-	2	-	7	28	-	-	42	4
2008-S	11	1	5	-	-	-	6	-	2	23	-	1	38	6
2008-A	8	2	3	-	-	-	2	-	8	16	-	1	32	6
2007-S	12	6	3	-	-	-	3	-	6	13	-	3	34	6
2007-A	8	14	1	-	-	-	1	-	4	16	-	-	36	6
2006-A	8	7	3	-	-	-	1	-	2	27	-	4	44	6
2005-S	12	11	3	-	-	-	3	-	3	26	-	-	46	5
2005-A	8	12	5	-	-	-	3	-	19	30	-	5	74	7
2004-S	11	-	2	-	-	-	3	-	4	27	-	2	38	5
2004-A	8	15	8	-	-	-	8	-	13	17	-	4	65	6
2003-S	8	-	15	-	-	-	-	1	1	54	-	3	74	5
2003-A	8	12	2	-	-	-	4	-	25	32	-	2	77	6
2002-S	12	4	4	-	-	-	3	-	4	20	-	2	37	6
2002-A	8	25	4	-	-	-	-	-	2	19	-	3	53	5
2001-A	7	9	7	-	-	-	-	-	17	43	-	1	77	5
2000-S	12	7	13	-	-	-	1	-	12	32	-	3	68	6
2000-A	9	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	8	6	-	-	21	4
1999-S	12	-	3	-	-	-	2	-	6	18	-	3	32	5
1999-A	8	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	17	22	-	1	44	4
1998-S	12	-	39	-	-	-	12	-	1	61	-	7	120	5

¹ Total includes one unidentified bully.

² Total includes one unidentified fish and one unidentified bully.

Table 2 continued.

Year	No. of sites	Trout	Redfin bully	Goldfish	Bluegill bully	Common bully	Koaro	Inanga	Torrentfish	Eels	Lamprey	Koura	Individuals	No. of taxa
1998-A	8	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	2	10	-	1	19	6
1997-S	12	10	10	-	-	-	1	-	1	25	3	6	56	7
1997-A	8	2	6	-	-	-	1	-	1	13	-	1	24	6
1996-S	9	3	6	1	-	-	1	-	2	42	3	3	61	8
1996-A	7	3	7	-	-	-	-	-	10	9	2	-	31	5
1995-S	12	4	6	1	-	-	4	-	1	43	1	33	93	8
1995-A	6	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	-	-	9	3
1994-S	12	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	30	-	17	54	5
1994-A	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	25	6	2	36	5
1993-S	8	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	-	-	10	3
1993-A	7	13	13	-	-	-	-	-	8	32+	10+	17	93+	6
1992-S	12	23	11	-	-	-	-	-	1	71	-	15	121	5
1992-A	7	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	12	-	-	18	3
1991-S	11	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	18+	-	4	25+	4
1991-A	6	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	43+	3	1	49+	4
1990-S	11	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	34+	-	18	60+	4
1990-A	6	2	4	-	-	2	-	-	3	38+	-	4	53+	6
1989-S	11	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	62+	-	2+	71+	4
1989-A	6	3	9	-	-	-	-	-	2	63+	15	9	101+	6
1988-S	7	2	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	92	-	3+	111+	4
1988-A	6	3	13	-	-	-	-	-	8	38	9	8	79	6
1987-S	7	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	5	41+	-	15	69+	5
1987-A	6	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	1	49	16	9	82	6
1986-S	6	-	R+	-	-	-	-	-	R	5+	-	R	8+	4
1985-S	6	5	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	68	3	13	106	5
1984-S	6	37	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	114	14	30	221	5
1983-S	5	15	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	97	13	2	149	5
1982-S	5	14	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	-	5+	39+	4
1982-A	5	35	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	A+	-	-	60+	3
Total		573	501+	2	1	3	127	1	253+	2008+	112+	332+	3840+	

The results from electric fishing at 10 sites in the Kapuni catchment on 23rd October 2025 are presented in Appendix 2, together with all electric fishing data collected from the Kapuni Stream since monitoring began in 1982. Table 2 above summarises the data.

Brown and Rainbow Trout (*Salmo trutta* & *Oncorhynchus mykiss*)

Trout appear irregularly and in variable abundance in the Kapuni Stream. They have been recorded on 56 of the 82 sampling occasions but mostly in spring surveys and particularly since 2011 (Table 2, Appendix 2). Over the years, most trout recorded from the Kapuni Stream are likely to have been brown trout. However, rainbow trout fry (0⁺ young of the year) comprised most of the catch in the October 2023 and October 2024 surveys and when comments from anglers are included it appears that rainbow trout have become the dominant salmonid species in Kapuni Stream in recent years. This was also the case in the October 2025 survey, when all 99 trout fry caught were rainbow trout. An additional 32 trout fry were seen

but not caught and all of these were also likely to be rainbow trout, bringing the total to 131 trout fry. It could be that two large floods in early July 2025 (115 m³/s and 119 m³/s on 3rd and 11th July 2025 respectively) damaged spawning redds laid down by brown trout and allowed later spawning rainbows to thrive. Rainbow trout fry averaged 32 mm in length (20 – 46.5 mm; n=45).

Redfin bullies (*Gobiomorphus huttoni*)

Redfin bullies are common in lowland reaches of most New Zealand streams. They have seldom been found in high numbers in Kapuni Stream, but usually have been found at three or more sites, and on all but five of the 82 sampling occasions. On 23rd October 2025, redfin bullies were recorded only at Site 10 (Skeet Road, 3 fish) (Appendix 2). Redfin bullies prefer quieter water towards the edge of stony streams where there is cover between and under the cobbles. Unfortunately, the sand in the bed of the stream has degraded their preferred habitat.

Common bullies (*Gobiomorphus cotidianus*)

Despite their name, common bullies are not the most common bullies in New Zealand streams, and this certainly is true of the Kapuni Stream. They have been recorded on only two of 82 occasions: at Site 10 on 6 April 1990 and at Site 9 on 12 May 1986 (Appendix 2).

Bluegill bullies (*Gobiomorphus hubbsi*)

A bluegill bully was recorded from the Kapuni Stream only once (22 October 2010) in 43 years of monitoring. A single individual was recorded from Site 12 (Table 2, Appendix 2). Bluegill bullies are widespread in New Zealand especially in the west, but the NZ Freshwater Fisheries Database holds records only for the Hangatahwa (Stony), Maketawa, Te Henui, and Waiwhakaiho rivers on the Taranaki ringplain.

Goldfish (*Carassius auratus*)

In the Kapuni catchment, goldfish were present in the stormwater catch basins when Vector owned the Gas Treatment Plant, which was the most likely source of fish found in the wild. Single goldfish were recorded when electric-fishing the Kapuni Stream on two occasions: 13 October 1995 at Site 12 and 24 October 1996 at Site 7 (Appendix 2). Both of these sites were downstream of the discharge of the stormwater catch basins. Brightly-coloured goldfish would not last long in the wild with large eels and trout around!

Koaro (*Galaxias brevipinnis*)

The koaro is one of New Zealand's native whitebait species, and the one most able to overcome steep waterfalls and penetrate far inland. They have been recorded in Kapuni Stream on 35 of 53 occasions since (and including) October 1995 (but not prior to that date) during this biomonitoring programme. In the Kapuni catchment koaro normally would be expected to occur in swift riffle habitat within Te Papa-Kura-o-Taranaki (formerly Egmont National Park) where the stream flows through forest and also at sites on the upper ringplain

near the park boundary. Their presence at sites nearer the coast is most likely due to displacement from their usual habitats by floods, elevated flows, or habitat degradation due to sand in the riverbed, or juveniles recently migrated from the sea. Five koaro were recorded on 23rd October 2025, two at the Opunake Road site (70mm & 120mm in length) and three at Upper Palmer Road (80 – 100mm in length) (Appendix 2).

Torrentfish (*Cheimarrichthys fosteri*)

During the day torrentfish are found most commonly among cobble and boulder substrates in swift riffles and rapids. Unrestricted access from the sea is essential for their distribution. In Kapuni Stream, torrentfish have only been found previously as far upstream as Site 11, but most commonly at Kokiri Road. Torrentfish have quite specific habitat requirements – very swift riffles/rapids – that are not always present at the monitoring sites or they can be too swift and difficult to sample at higher flows. The riffle at Kokiri Road is not such good torrentfish habitat as it was some years back because it has reduced in swiftness as the stream channel has altered. A better picture of torrentfish distribution throughout the Kapuni catchment, including assessment of the effectiveness of weir removal, would be obtained by targeting torrentfish habitat at selected locations along the length of the stream, rather than confining electric-fishing to the established monitoring sites. No torrentfish were recorded in the 23rd October 2025 survey (Appendix 2).

Lamprey (*Geotria australis*)

In the Kapuni Stream, only the juvenile form (ammocoetes) of these migratory fish has been recorded in the past during biomonitoring surveys, usually during the autumn monitoring surveys at Sites 6 and 7. They occur in organic-rich silt/sand habitat at river margins. Monitoring data suggest that lamprey ammocoetes may have been adversely affected by the influx of sand into the streambed, which first occurred in late 1984 with the impact still evident today. However, five lamprey ammocoetes were recorded from suitable habitat at the Normanby Road site in the October 2023 survey and two were found there in the same habitat on 24th October 2024 (Appendix 2). This confirms that lamprey spawning is occurring in the Kapuni Stream catchment and that more ammocoetes are likely to be found if suitable habitat is targeted. Unfortunately, the Normanby Road site was unable to be fished on 23rd October 2025.

Eels (*Anguilla australis* and *A. dieffenbachii*)

The eels recorded in these monitoring surveys include both shortfin (*A. australis*) and longfin (*A. dieffenbachii*) eels, with the latter being predominant. Most have been small (<300 mm) including a large proportion of elvers (juvenile eels in the process of migrating up the river from the ocean). Eels have broad habitat preferences and are widespread in the Kapuni catchment. Eels have been recorded on every sampling occasion and comprise 53% of the fish recorded from the Kapuni stream by electric fishing. On 23rd October 2025, 6 eels were recorded (Table 2), of which 5 were longfin, and one was an unidentified elver. One small longfin was present at the upper Palmer Road site, one small and one large longfin at Site 9,

one small longfin at Site 12, one medium longfin at Site 6 and one unidentified elver at Opunake Road (Appendix 2).

Koura (*Paranephrops planifrons*)

Koura have been recorded on 60 of the 82 monitoring occasions but the numbers have varied considerably. Representation of koura at different sampling sites has also been inconsistent (Appendix 2). Koura inhabit crevices under banks and around logs, large cobbles, and aquatic vegetation. They are likely to have been adversely affected by sedimentation of the streambed. On 23rd October 2025, eight koura were recorded, two at Eltham Road, two at Site 9 and four at site 6 (Appendix 2).

Inanga (*Galaxias maculatus*)

New Zealand's most common galaxiid (whitebait) species has only been recorded from the Kapuni catchment twice during this monitoring programme. A single adult male inanga was captured in a hand net on 13 April 2000 when collecting the macroinvertebrate sample from Site 5 in the gully within 3 m of the confluence with the Kapuni Stream, and another individual (115 mm long) was recorded at Site 11 on 12 November 2003. Inanga inhabit coastal or lowland streams and may be more common in the lower reaches of the Kapuni Stream downstream of Normanby Road. The Normanby Road site is the most downstream of all of the monitoring sites but is still nearly 6 km from the sea in a straight line, and considerably further along the meandering lower reaches of the Kapuni Stream.

Catch per unit effort (CPUE)

On 23rd October 2025, a total of 505 m² of streambed was fished at 10 different sites (*cf.* 185 – 649 m² on previous occasions: Appendix 1).

A total of 153 fish (including koura) were recorded, with a mean density of 30.3 fish per 100 m². This fish density ranks 3rd of the 56 occasions since measurements of fishing effort commenced in 1996 (Figure 3). The lowest was 1.30 fish per 100 m² in autumn 2019 and the highest was 39.46 fish per 100 m² in spring 2003.

The catch of trout per unit effort since October 1996 is summarised in Figure 4. Trout have been assigned to three size classes corresponding to fingerlings or young-of-the-year (<150 mm standard length), yearlings (150–250 mm), and adults (>250 mm). All the 131 young-of-the-year trout recorded on 23rd October 2025 were judged to be rainbow trout, with no brown trout seen or caught. The mean density of 25.9 trout fry per 100 m² was the highest on record, with highest numbers at Eltham Road and Sites 9, 10, 11 and 12, adjacent to the Gas Treatment Plant down to Skeet Road.

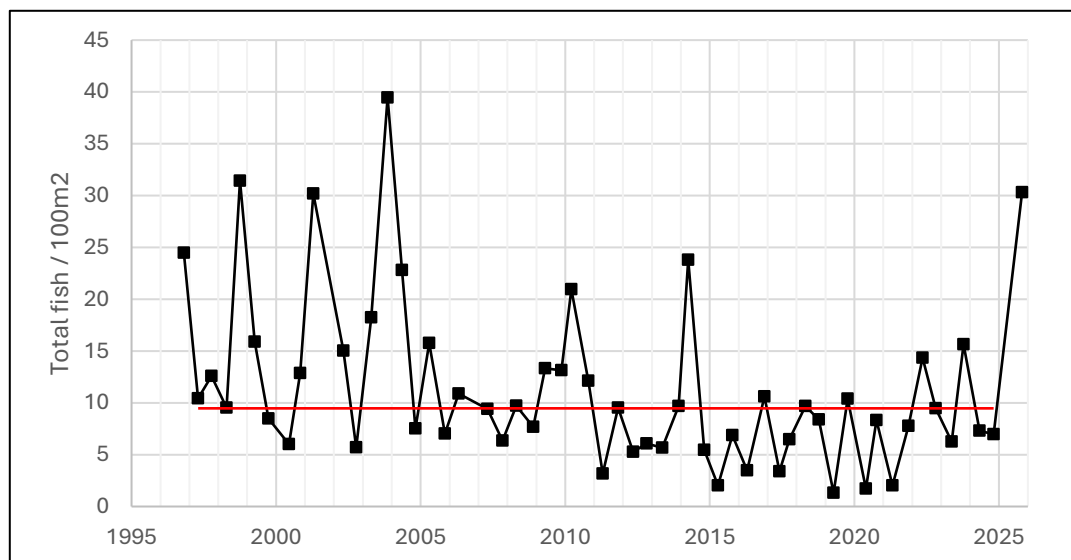


Figure 3. Total numbers of fish per 100 m² electric-fishing in the Kapuni catchment (1996 – 2025), the red line denotes the median.

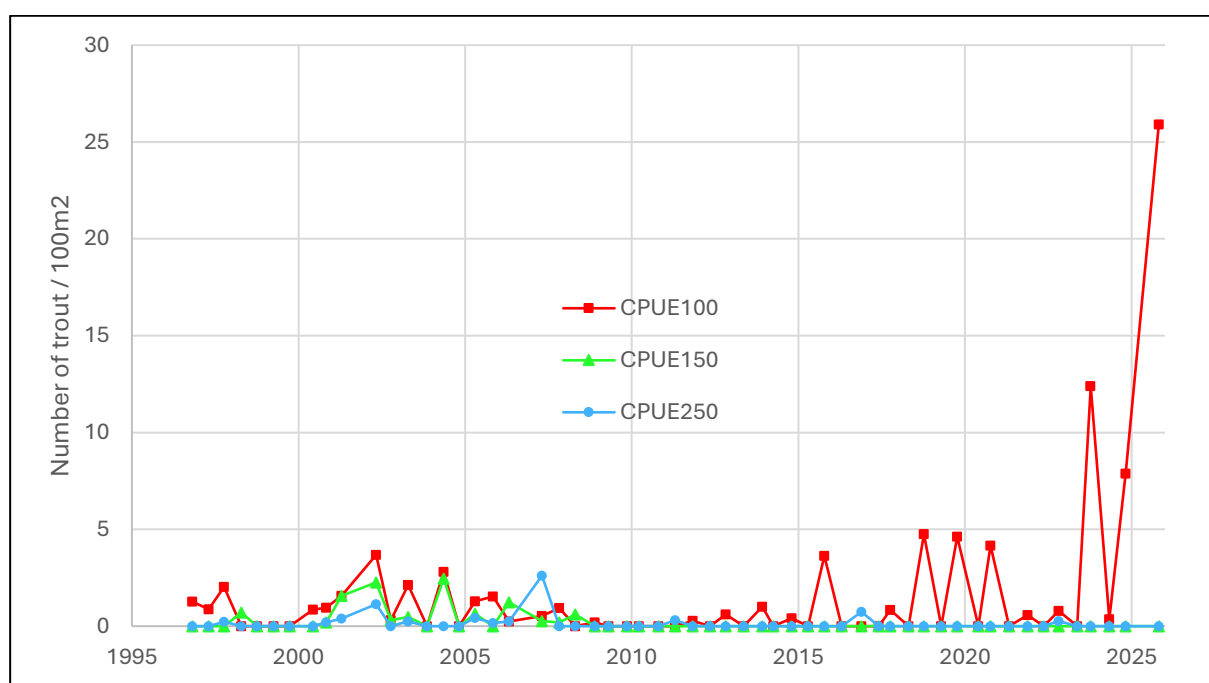


Figure 4. Number of trout in three size classes per 100 m² electric-fished in the Kapuni catchment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Electric fishing was undertaken in the Kapuni Stream on Thursday 23rd October 2025 when the river flow was approximately 1.5 cumecs. Kapuni Stream was subject to several minor (5

m³/s) freshes in the 30 days prior to sampling, including a 5.3 m³/s fresh on 21st October 2025, but these would have been unlikely to influence the results of the survey.

153 fish (*i.e.*, 131 trout, 8 koura, 6 eels, 5 koaro and 3 redfin bullies) were recorded with a density of 30.3 fish per 100 m², which is the third highest density since measurement of fishing effort commenced in 1996. Fish were recorded at nine of the ten sites in the Kapuni Stream that were electric-fished, with no fish recorded at Site 7 located off lower Palmer Road.

It is impossible to compare the catch per unit effort of trout over the entire period of monitoring because the area fished has been recorded consistently only since October 1996. Furthermore, the assessment is complicated by changes in method (from mains-powered to battery-powered electric fishing machines), numbers, and locations of sampling sites, and variation in the area of streambed fished at each site over the years. However, in 1982 – 1983 when only five sites were electric-fished on three occasions (*i.e.*, 15 site-times) an average of 4.27 (range 2.8 – 7.0) brown trout per site was recorded. Following the sand influx, which commenced in 1984, the numbers of brown trout recorded per site has been only 0.57 (*i.e.*, 382 trout/666 site-times). Although this analysis is rather simplistic, a reduction of this magnitude (*i.e.*, 7-fold) is likely to be significant and almost certainly indicative of a decline in habitat quality. This decline was most likely due to the inundation of the streambed by sand and is unrelated to the activities of the industries at Kapuni. However, since 2015 much higher numbers of trout fry (mainly rainbow trout fry) have been recorded in October by electric fishing, which suggests that conditions are improving.

Sand remains a prominent feature of the bed of the Kapuni Stream and has degraded the quality of the stream habitat for fish (and invertebrates). Since the removal of Vector's weir in April 2008 single torrentfish have been recorded from Site 11 (upstream of the former weir location) on five occasions (April 2009, October 2011, May & October 2012, October 2015). On only one other occasion (April 2007) prior to the weir removal had torrentfish been recorded upstream of the weir location since monitoring commenced 43 years ago. This suggests that weir removal may have improved access for torrentfish, although their presence further upstream would best be assessed by targeted electric-fishing of their preferred torrential riffle habitat rather than simply fishing the established monitoring sites.

The presence of a disused concrete farm access ford (Photo 1, Appendix 3), located 150 m downstream of Opunake Road was noted during the survey. The perched nature of the ford is an obvious impediment to fish passage. The location of the ford has been brought to the attention of the TRC several times over the years but, to date, no action has been taken. However, this is a relatively easy fix.

This survey found there is nothing to suggest that the activities of the petrochemical industry at Kapuni have had significant adverse impacts on fish communities.

The next electric-fishing survey of the Kapuni Stream is due in October 2026.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Area of streambed electric-fished at monitoring sites in the Kapuni Stream (shaded cells denote 'Not sampled'). The area fished was not recorded prior to October 1996.

Sampling Date	O	P	E	9	11	12	10	6	7	8/K	N	2	5	Total Area (m ²)
23-Oct-25	70	50	60	40	40	45	50	50	50	50				505
24-Oct-24	40	52	55	40	38	50	50	50			60			495
1-May-24				40	38	42	38	39	38	39				274
11-Oct-23	36	38	34	38	32	38	36	34	34	36	40			396
15-May-23				30	27	15	30	30	30	30				192
25-Oct-22	32	36	32	32	38	36	32	36	32	40	34			380
12-May-22				37	36	40	42	45	36	36				272
17-Nov-21	30	34	32	32	30	32	32	34	32	30	30			348
28-Apr-21				38	34	36	35	34	32		36			245
6&7-Oct-20	39	44	38	40	30	32	32	30	30	33	36			384
27-May20				33	30	33	33	34	35	34				232
8-Oct-19	30	30	30	30	32	32	30	30	30	32	40			346
15-Apr-19				35	32	30	31	33	31	38				230
9-Oct-18	36	36	33	32	32	33	30	32	30	33	30			357
24-Apr-18				30	31	30	32	32	30	30				155
4-Oct-17	33	30	30	30	30	30	33	33	33	33	39			356
1-Jun-17				48	45	45	45	45	45	51				324
23-Nov-16	45	45	45	45			45	45	45	45	45			405
19-Apr-16				45	45	45	45	45	45	45				315
14&15-Oct-15	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45			495
16-Apr-15				48	48	45	60	48	48	48				345
22&23-Oct-14	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45			495
3-Apr-14				45	45	45	45	45	45	45				315
3-Dec-13	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45			495
11-May-13				45	48	45	45	45	45	45				318
26-Oct-12	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45			495
7-May-12				54	54	48	45	45	51	45				342
31-Oct/1-Nov-11	30	36	30	30	45	36	30	30	30	30	30			357
21-Apr-11				45	45	45	45	45	45	45				315
21&22-Oct-10	54	51	45	51	45	45	45	48	45	45	45			519
21-Mar-10				45	45	45	45	45	45	45				315
13-Nov-09	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45			495
22&23-Apr-09				45	45	45	45	45	45	45				315
22-Nov-08	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45			495
24-Apr-08				45	45	48	45	48	48	48			2	329
30&31-Oct-07	48	54	51	51	45	51	45	42	51	48	45		5	536
23-Apr-07				50	50	50	60	50	60	60			3	383
27-Apr-06				60	70	50	60	60	60	70			4	444
3-Nov-05	50	60	70	60	60	50	60	60	60	60	60		4	654
19-Apr-05				70	70	60	70	60	60	75			4	469
27&28-Oct-04	45	45	45	45	51	45	45	45	45	48	45			504
11-May-04				40	40	40	40	40	40	40			5	285
12-Nov-03					25	25	25	30	25	25	25		5	185
17-Apr-03				60	60	60	60	60	60	60			2	422
10&11-Oct-02	63	63	63	63	60	33	48	60	60	63	63		10	649
30-Apr-02				50	50	50	50	50	50	50			3	353
17-Apr-01				42	33	36	39	36	36	33				255
1-Nov-00	60	60	60	54	48	42	48	39	39	39	39			528
11-May-00				51	54	48	51	33	36	54		20	3	350
28-Sep-99	30	30	45	36	30	33	36	33	36	33	30		5	377
6-Apr-99				48	45	36	42	36	36	30			4	277
3-Oct-98	30	40	36	40	30	30	30	26	30	40	40		10	382
15-Apr-98				36	54	36	39	36	42	40				283
6&7-Oct-97	30	40	50	40	50	40	40	20	25	45	50		15	445
22-Apr-97				48	45	30	30	24	15	33			5	230
24-Oct-96				30	24	30	32	16	30	35	30		10	237

Appendix 2. Fish and koura recorded from monitoring sites in the Kapuni catchment³.

Trout	Sampling Date	O	P	E	9	11	12	10	6	7	8/K	N	5
	23-Oct-25	-	12	12	14	34	21	25	9	-	4		
	24-Oct-24	-	-	2	5	6	7	9	5		2	3	
	1-May-24				-	-	-	-	1	-	-		
	11-Oct-23	-	2	4	10	3	7	16	2	1	2	2	
	25-Oct-22	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	17-Nov-21	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	6&7-Oct-20	-	-	1	5	5	1	1	-	2	-	1	
	8-Oct-19	-	-	3	3	4	1	-	-	-	1	4	
	9-Oct-18	-	-	-	3	5	2	2	-	-	-	4	
	4-Oct-17	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	
	23-Nov-16	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	
	14&15-Oct-15	-	-	-	-	5	1	-	1	-	1	10	
	22&23-Oct-14	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	3-Dec-13	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	
	26-Oct-12	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	
	31-Oct/1-Nov-11	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	21-Apr-11				-	-	1	-	-	-	-		
	22-Nov-08	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	24-Apr-08				-	-	-	-	-	1	1		
	30&31-Oct-07	1	-	-	-	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	
	23-Apr-07				4	1	1	2	5	-	-		1
	27-Apr-06				2	2	2	-	1	-	-		-
	3-Nov-05	-	2	-	1	6	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
	19-Apr-05				2	2	1	2	3	-	1		-
	11-May-04				1	2	1	6	1	4	-		-
	17-Apr-03				4	2	3	2	-	1	-		-
	10&11-Oct-02	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
	30-Apr-02				10	9	5	1	-	-	-		-
	17-Apr-01				2	3	2	1	-	-	1		
	1-Nov-00	1	-	-	2	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-
	11-May-00				-	1	1	-	-	-	-		1
	15-Apr-98				2	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	6&7-Oct-97	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	8	1
	22-Apr-97				-	-	-	1	-	-	-		1
	24-Oct-96				-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
	25-Apr-96				-	2		-	-	1	-		-
	13-Oct-95	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	17-Apr-95				-			-	-	-	-		-
	28-Oct-94	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	1-Apr-94				1	-		-	-	-	-		-
	1-Oct-93				-			1	1	1	-	-	-
	23-Apr-93				2	-		2	-	2	7		-
	14&19-Oct-92	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	9	2	4	2	4
	21-Apr-92				-	-		-	-	-	-		-
	26-Sep-91	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	1	-	-
	4-Apr-91				-			-	-	-	-		-
	28-Sep-90	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	4	-	-
	6-Apr-90				-			1	-	1	-		-
	2-Oct-89	1	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-	-
	26-Apr-89				-			-	-	3	-		-
	27-Oct-88				-			-	-	-	2		-
	6-May-88				2			1	-	-	-		-
	2-Oct-87				-			-	2	-	-		3
	9-Apr-87				-			-	-	1	-		-
	20-Oct-86				-			-	-	-	-		-
	12-May-86				-			-	-	-	-		-
	14-Nov-85				1			2	2	-	-		-
	28-Oct-84				11			8	12	4	2		-
	3-Oct-83				10			3	-	2			-
	26-Oct-82								2	8	-	4	-
	4-May-82				33				-	1			1

³ Shaded cells denote 'Not sampled'. VA = very abundant, A = abundant, C = common, R = rare, P = present. Only dates when fish were recorded are listed in the appendix tables for each species.

Redfin bully	Sampling	Site											
	Date	O	P	E	9	11	12	10	6	7	8/K	N	5
	23-Oct-25	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
	24-Oct-24	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-
	1-May-24	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	3	-	-
	11-Oct-23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	15-May-23	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	25-Oct-22	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	12-May22	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	4	-	4	-	-
	28-Apr-21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-
	6&7-Oct-20	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	-
	27-May-20	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	8-Oct-19	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	3	2	-	2	-
	15-Apr-19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	24-Apr-18	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	-	2	1	-	-
	4-Oct-17	-	-	-	2	1	3	-	1	1	2	1	-
	1-Jun-17	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	2	-	-
	23-Nov-16	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	2	-	-	-
	14&15-Oct-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
	16-Apr-15	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	2	-	-
	22&23-Oct-14	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	3-Apr-14	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	1	-	-	-	-
	3-Dec-13	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	-	-	-	-
	11-May-13	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	4	1	1	-	-
	26-Oct-12	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	1	-	1	-
	7-May-12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	1	-	-
	31-Oct/1-Nov-11	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	2	-	-	1	-
	21-Apr-11	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	1	-	-	-
	21&22-Oct-10	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	4	5	1	1	-
	21-Mar-10	-	-	-	1	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	13-Nov-09	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	3	3	-
	22&23-Apr-09	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
	22-Nov-08	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	2	-
	24-Apr-08	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	30&31-Oct-07	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-
	23-Apr-07	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	27-Apr-06	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
	3-Nov-05	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
	19-Apr-05	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	-	-	-
	27&28-Oct-04	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
	11-May-04	-	-	-	4	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	-
	12-Nov-03	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	2	-	-	3	-
	17-Apr-03	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
	10&11-Oct-02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-
	30-Apr-02	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-
	17-Apr-01	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	1	1	1	-	-
	1-Nov-00	-	-	-	-	3	5	-	2	-	1	2	-
	11-May-00	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	28-Sep-99	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
	6-Apr-99	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	-
	3-Oct-98	-	-	-	-	6	1	4	1	6	17	4	-
	15-Apr-98	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
	6&7-Oct-97	-	-	-	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
	22-Apr-97	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
	24-Oct-96	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	3	-
	25-Apr-96	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	1	-	3	-	-
	13-Oct-95	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	2	-	1	-
	17-Apr-95	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	28-Oct-94	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	23-Apr-93	-	-	-	-	7	-	3	2	1	-	-	-
	14&19-Oct-92	-	-	-	1	7	-	-	-	-	1	2	-
	21-Apr-92	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
	26-Sep-91	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
	4-Apr-91	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	28-Sep-90	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	-
	6-Apr-90	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
	2-Oct-89	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	-
	26-Apr-89	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	4	2	-	-	-
	27-Oct-88	-	-	-	4	-	-	4	1	4	1	-	-
	6-May-88	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	2	7	-	-	-
	2-Oct-87	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
	9-Apr-87	-	-	-	5	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
	20-Oct-86	-	-	-	R	-	-	-	R	R	-	-	-
	14-Nov-85	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	8	2	1	-	-
	28-Oct-84	-	-	-	4	-	-	3	15	4	-	-	-
	3-Oct-83	-	-	-	8	-	-	7	4	3	-	-	-
	26-Oct-82	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	4-May-82	-	-	-	C	-	-	-	R	R	-	-	-

Common bully	Sampling Date	Site											
		O	P	E	9	11	12	10	6	7	8/K	N	5
	6-Apr-90				-			2	-	-	-		-
	12-May-86				1			-	-	-	-		-
Bluegill bully	Sampling Date	Site											
		O	P	E	9	11	12	10	6	7	8/K	N	5
	21&22-Oct-10	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	
Goldfish	Sampling Date	Site											
		O	P	E	9	11	12	10	6	7	8/K	N	5
	24-Oct-96				-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	13-Oct-95	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Koaro	Sampling Date	Site											
		O	P	E	9	11	12	10	6	7	8/K	N	5
	23-Oct-25	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	24-Oct-24	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-		
	25-Oct-22	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	12-May-22				1	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	17-Nov-21	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
	28-Apr-21				-	1	-	-	-	-		-	
	6&7-Oct-20	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	9-Oct-18	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	4-Oct-17	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	23-Nov-16	1	3	-	-			-	-	-	-	-	
	14&15-Oct-15	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	16-Apr-15				1	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	22&23-Oct-14	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	3-Dec-13	4	3	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	26-Oct-12	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	7-May-12				-	-	-	-	1	-	-		
	31-Oct/1-Nov-11	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	21&22-Oct-10	4	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	21-Mar-10				5	3	-	-	-	-	-		
	13-Nov-09	2	8	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	
	22&23-Apr-09				1	-	-	-	-	1	-		
	22-Nov-08	1	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	24-Apr-08				-	2	-	-	-	-	-		
	30&31-Oct-07	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	23-Apr-07				1	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	27-Apr-06				-	-	-	-	1	-	-		
	3-Nov-05	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	19-Apr-05				3	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	27&28-Oct-04	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	11-May-04				8	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	17-Apr-03				4	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	10&11-Oct-02	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	1-Nov-00	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	28-Sep-99	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	3-Oct-98	10	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	6&7-Oct-97	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	22-Apr-97				1	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	24-Oct-96				-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	
	13-Oct-95	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	
Inanga	Sampling Date	Site											
		O	P	E	9	11	12	10	6	7	8/K	N	5
	12-Nov-03					1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	13-Apr-00					-	-	-	-	-	-		1

Lamprey	Sampling Date	Site											
		O	P	E	9	11	12	10	6	7	8/K	N	5
	24-Oct-24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	2	
	11-Oct-23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	
	6&7-Oct-97	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
	24-Oct-96				-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
	25-Apr-96				-	-		-	-	2	-		-
	13-Oct-95	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
	1-Apr-94				-	-		-	-	6	-		-
	23-Apr-93				-		-	-	A	10	-		-
	4-Apr-91				-		-	-	-	3	-		-
	26-Apr-89				-			3	7	5	-		-
	6-May-88				4			1	2	2	-		-
	9-Apr-87				3			2	-	3	8		-
	12-May-86				1			-	1	10	-		-
	14-Nov-85				-			-	-	3	-		-
	28-Oct-84				2			1	1	10	-		-
	3-Oct-83				-				3	10			-

Torrentfish	Sampling Date	Site											
		O	P	E	9	11	12	10	6	7	8/K	N	5
	1-May-24				-	-	-	-	-	1	-		
	8-Oct-19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	
	14&15-Oct-15	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	22&23-Oct-14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	
	3-Apr-14				-	-	-	2	7	11	1		
	3-Dec-13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	
	26-Oct-12	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	1	1	-	
	7-May-12				-	1	-	-	-	-	2		
	31-Oct/1-Nov-11	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	
	21-Apr-11				-	-	-	2	-	-	-		
	21&22-Oct-10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	
	21-Mar-10				-	-	2	-	-	2	6		
	13-Nov-09	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	1	
	22&23-Apr-09				-	1	-	-	4	1	1		
	22-Nov-08	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	
	24-Apr-08				-	-	-	4	2	-	2		-
	30&31-Oct-07	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	3	-
	23-Apr-07				-	1	1	1	-	-	1		-
	27-Apr-06				-	-	-	-	-	-	2		-
	3-Nov-05	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-
	19-Apr-05				-	-	2	4	5	4	4		-
	27&28-Oct-04	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	1	
	11-May-04				-	-	-	-	5	2	6		-
	12-Nov-03					-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	17-Apr-03				-	-	-	6	6	7	6		-
	10&11-Oct-02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	-
	30-Apr-02				-	-	-	-	1	1	-		-
	17-Apr-01				-	-	-	4	5	4	4		-
	1-Nov-00	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	8	1	1	-
	11-May-00				-	-	-	2	2	2	2		-
	28-Sep-99	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4	1	-
	6-Apr-99				-	-	3	3	1	5	5		-
	3-Oct-98	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
	15-Apr-98				-	-	-	1	-	-	1		-
	6&7-Oct-97	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	22-Apr-97				-	-	-	-	-	-	1		-
	24-Oct-96				-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
	25-Apr-96				-	-		-	-	-	10		-
	13-Oct-95	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	17-Apr-95				-			-	-	-	1		-
	28-Oct-94	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	1-Apr-94				-	-		-	-	-	2		-
	1-Oct-93				-			-	-	-	1	-	-
	23-Apr-93				-	-	-	-	-	3	5		-
	14&19-Oct-92	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	21-Apr-92				-	-	-	2	1	-	-		-
	6-Apr-90				-			1	-	1	1		-
	26-Apr-89				-			1	-	1	-		-
	6-May-88				-			6	-	-	2		-
	2-Oct-87				-			2	-	1	2		-
	9-Apr-87				-			-	-	-	1		-
	20-Oct-86				-			-	-	-	R		-
	12-May-86										2		-
	3-Oct-83				-			-	3	-	2		-

Eels	Sampling Date	O	P	E	9	11	12	Site 10	6	7	8/K	N	5
	23-Oct-25	1	1	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
	24-Oct-24	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	5	-
	1-May-24	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	1	1	-	-
	11-Oct-23	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
	15-May-23	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	4	-	-	-
	25-Oct-22	-	4	-	3	1	-	2	4	3	2	1	-
	12-May-22	-	-	-	3	1	1	2	4	3	7	-	-
	17-Nov-21	-	-	1	1	2	-	1	4	4	4	3	-
	28-Apr-21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	6&7-Oct-20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
	27-May-20	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	8-Oct-19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	2	1	-
	15-Apr-19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	9-Oct-18	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	1	2	-	-
	24-Apr-18	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	3	-	-
	4-Oct-17	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	-
	1-Jun-17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
	23-Nov-16	-	-	2	2	-	-	2	6	2	11	-	-
	19-Apr-16	-	-	-	5	1	1	2	2	-	-	-	-
	14&15-Oct-15	-	1	-	2	2	1	-	1	-	1	1	-
	16-Apr-15	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	22&23-Oct-14	-	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	-
	3-Apr-14	-	-	-	1	4	4	7	13	4	15	-	-
	3-Dec-13	-	1	1	1	4	1	3	5	-	7	-	-
	11-May-13	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	2	-	-
	26-Oct-12	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	2	2	-
	7-May-12	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5	1	1	-	-
	31-Oct/1-Nov-11	1	-	2	3	2	-	-	1	3	4	3	-
	21-Apr-11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
	21&22-Oct-10	-	-	1	2	1	2	1	9	5	3	8	-
	21-Mar-10	-	-	-	6	7	7	2	5	7	8	-	-
	13-Nov-09	-	4	2	4	2	2	-	15	4	3	2	-
	22&23-Apr-09	-	-	-	8	3	1	1	7	6	2	-	-
	22-Nov-08	-	-	3	-	4	-	2	3	6	3	2	-
	24-Apr-08	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	9	-	3	-	-
	30&31-Oct-07	-	-	-	2	1	-	2	2	-	2	1	3
	23-Apr-07	-	-	-	2	7	2	-	2	-	1	-	2
	27-Apr-06	-	-	-	4	9	1	-	1	3	9	-	-
	3-Nov-05	-	1	1	4	1	1	-	3	5	4	2	3
	19-Apr-05	-	-	-	3	4	2	2	3	5	10	-	1
	27&28-Oct-04	-	-	-	5	-	1	-	-	2	3	16	-
	11-May-04	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	7	5	3	-	1
	12-Nov-03	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	25	5	1	8	-
	17-Apr-03	-	-	-	16	2	-	-	5	3	4	-	-
	10&11-Oct-02	-	3	1	1	1	1	-	6	2	1	3	1
	30-Apr-02	-	-	-	-	4	2	1	4	-	6	-	2
	17-Apr-01	-	-	-	7	9	2	1	6	6	12	-	-
	1-Nov-00	-	2	-	2	5	3	1	4	1	7	6	1
	11-May-00	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
	28-Sep-99	1	-	6	-	3	-	1	1	1	5	-	-
	6-Apr-99	-	-	-	1	2	2	1	4	3	9	-	-
	3-Oct-98	-	-	3	5	1	2	2	7	4	11	12	15
	15-Apr-98	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	2	1	4	-	-
	6&7-Oct-97	1	-	-	5	-	7	-	-	-	2	2	8
	22-Apr-97	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	8
	24-Oct-96	-	-	-	1	4	6	3	2	5	7	6	8
	25-Apr-96	-	-	-	4	2	-	-	-	2	1	-	-
	13-Oct-95	-	1	1	2	10	4	5	-	4	8	7	1
	17-Apr-95	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	2
	28-Oct-94	-	3	4	1	2	1	1	5	4	1	6	2
	1-Apr-94	-	-	-	2	8	-	4	1	3	4	-	3
	1-Oct-93	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	-
	23-Apr-93	-	-	-	5	8	-	6	3	6	4	-	P
	14&19-Oct-92	-	1	5	13	10	-	4	-	6	13	11	8
	21-Apr-92	-	-	-	1	-	-	4	-	3	4	-	-
	26-Sep-91	-	-	-	1	-	-	5	-	-	3+	2	A
	4-Apr-91	-	-	-	8	-	-	7	6	10	12	-	A
	28-Sep-90	1	3	4	8	-	-	4	1	4	3	4	C
	6-Apr-90	-	-	-	4	-	-	5	3	18	8	-	A
	2-Oct-89	2	3	5	6	-	-	14	3	4	12	13	VA
	26-Apr-89	-	-	-	7	-	-	10	12	10	24	-	VA
	27-Oct-88	-	-	-	11	-	-	22	4	18	32	-	VA
	6-May-88	-	-	-	4	-	-	6	9	3	12	-	4
	2-Oct-87	-	-	-	8	-	-	7	2	8	11	-	5
	9-Apr-87	-	-	-	8	-	-	8	9	10	6	-	8
	20-Oct-86	-	-	-	5	-	-	C	R	-	R	-	R
	12-May-86	-	-	-	6	-	-	A	C	C	A	-	A

Eels (continued)	Sampling Date	Site											
		O	P	E	9	11	12	10	6	7	8/K	N	5
	14-Nov-85				11			15	2	26	10		4
	28-Oct-84				5			13	7	53	4		32
	3-Oct-83				14			14	24	45			-
	26-Oct-82								1	11	3	4	-
	4-May-82				-				R	A			C

Koura	Sampling	Site											
	Date	O	P	E	9	11	12	10	6	7	8/K	N	5
	23-Oct-25	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	4	-	-		
	24-Oct-24	-	2	1	-	1	-	1	-		-	6	
	1-May-24				-	1	-	-	-	-	5		
	11-Oct-23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	2	
	15-May-23				1	-	-	-	-	-	1		
	25-Oct-22	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	2	-	2	
	12-May-22				1	-	3	-	1	-	2		
	6&7-Oct-20	-	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	27-May-20				-	-	-	-	-	2	-		
	15-Apr-19				-	-	1	-	-	-	-		
	9-Oct-17	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
	4-Oct-17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	
	1-Jun-17				1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
	23-Nov-16	-	1	2	1			-	-	2	-	-	
	19-Apr-16				1	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	22&23-Oct-14	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	
	3-Apr-14				-	-	-	1	-	-	-		
	3-Dec-13	-	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	
	11-May-13				-	-	-	1	-	-	1		
	21&22-Oct-10	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	22-Nov-08	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
	24-Apr-08				-	-	1	-	-	-	-		-
	30&31-Oct-07	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	27-Apr-06				-	-	-	2	-	-	2		-
	19-Apr-05				-	-	1	-	-	3	1		-
	27&28-Oct-04	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	11-May-04				-	1	-	-	-	-	2		1
	12-Nov-03					-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-
	17-Apr-03				-	1	1	-	-	-	-		-
	10&11-Oct-02	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
	30-Apr-02				-	-	-	-	-	-	3		-
	17-Apr-01				-	-	1	-	-	-	-		
	1-Nov-00	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
	28-Sep-99	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	6-Apr-99				-	-	-	-	-	1	-		-
	3-Oct-98	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-
	15-Apr-98				-	1	-	-	-	-	-		
	6&7-Oct-97	-	1	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
	22-Apr-97				-	-	-	1	-	-	-		-
	24-Oct-96				-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-
13-Oct-95	-	12	6	-	-	-	2	-	1	8	4	-	
28-Oct-94	-	1	2	2	2	1	-	2	2	-	5	-	
1-Apr-94				-	2			-	-	-		-	
23-Apr-93				5	1		5	-	1	5		-	
14&19-Oct-92	2	4	3	-			-	-	-	2	2	2	
26-Sep-91	1	2	-	1			-	-	-	-	-	-	
4-Apr-91				-			-	-	1	-		-	
28-Sep-90	-	3	-	3			1	1	7	3	-	-	
6-Apr-90				-			-	-	4	-		-	
2-Oct-89	2	C	-	-			-	-	-	-	-	-	
26-Apr-89				3			2	2	-	2		-	

27-Oct-88		C		-	1	2	C		-
6-May-88		2		6	-	-	-		-
2-Oct-87		-		1	1	1	12		-
9-Apr-87		1		5	-	3	-		-
20-Oct-86		-		-	-	-	R		-
14-Nov-85		2		10	-	1	-		-
28-Oct-84		-		15	-	-	10		5
3-Oct-83		-		-	-	2			-
26-Oct-82					-	-	5	C	-

Appendix 3. Photos.



Photo 1. Disused farm access ford located in Kapuni Stream 150m downstream of Opunake Road that is an impediment to fish passage.



Photo 2. Koaro from Kapuni Stream at Opunake Road.



Photo 3. Rainbow trout fry from Kapuni Stream at Site 11 adjacent to the Todd Gas Treatment Plant.



Photo 4. A redfin bully from Site 10 (Skeet Road).



Electric fishing survey of Tokiāhuru and Mangateitei Streams

1 - 2 December 2025

Report prepared by

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

September 2026



Photo: Taranaki Fish & Game Field Officers Jack Harland and Allen Stancliff electric fishing Omarae Stream a tributary of Waitaiki Stream in the Tokiāhuru catchment.

Reviewed by:

Allen Stancliff

Approved for release by:

Phil Teal

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SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ten sites in the headwaters and headwater tributaries of Tokiāhuru, Waitaiki and Mangaehuehu streams in the Whangaehu River catchment were surveyed by electric fishing in early December 2025, along with one site in Mangateitei Stream in the Mangawhero River catchment near Ohakune.

Trout were present at all 11 sites surveyed, with brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) found at eight sites and rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) at four sites. Brown and rainbow trout were found together at only one site. All trout caught in the Tokiāhuru, Waitaiki and Mangaehuehu catchment streams were small (28 – 250mm), apart from one larger adult fish seen in an unnamed tributary of Waitaiki Stream. The small size of fish is consistent with the findings of earlier studies that these headwater trout populations consist of stunted resident fish, with larger fish being much older than their size would indicate. An examination of trout otoliths would help to resolve the issue of how old these fish are.

The presence of trout fry (28-33mm) indicates that there had been successful spawning in winter / spring 2025. It is likely that larger, mature trout from downstream in the Tokiāhuru and Waitaiki streams move upstream to the headwaters to spawn, but this has not been confirmed. It is also likely that trout fry from the headwaters grow normally when they move to downstream reaches, as they do in the Hangatahua (Stony) River on the Taranaki ringplain. Electric fishing surveys carried out in the Taranaki Fish & Game Region to date indicate that headwater tributaries of the Whangaehu River support some of the highest densities of juvenile trout found in the region.

There is relatively little information available on the downstream fishery in Tokiāhuru and Waitaiki Streams. National angler survey results indicate that they receive only a modest level of angler use. Access may be an issue, but anecdotal reports indicate there are large high-quality trout present.

In Mangateitei Stream, brown trout were found both upstream and downstream of a bed control structure associated with a north island main trunk railway bridge. It is likely that this structure restricts the upstream passage of trout to times when it is inundated in floods. Mangateitei Stream provides important trout spawning and juvenile rearing habitat for brown trout from the Mangawhero River and it is recommended that winter trout spawning surveys are carried out upstream and downstream of the bed control structure to assess its effect on fish passage. More importantly, the structure needs full remediation to allow passage for all fish species.

No native fish were seen or caught at the 10 Tokiāhuru / Waitaiki / Mangaehuehu catchment sites electric fished in this study, although longfin eels (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*) were found in a Tokiāhuru tributary, Te Ununuakapua te Ariki Stream, in December 2024 and in Mangateitei Stream in the Mangawhero River catchment in the current study. The paucity of migratory native fish is consistent with the results of earlier studies and relates to the impacts of the highly acidic nature of the Whangaehu River on fish migration.

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a second year of surveys of headwater tributaries of the Whangaehu River that originate on the south-eastern slopes of Mt. Ruapehu.

In December 2024, electric fishing was carried out at four sites in the Wāhianoa River catchment, one site in Mākahikātoa Stream and nine sites in the adjacent Tokiāhuru Stream catchment, all located within Karioi Forest (Taranaki Fish & Game 2025a&b). With upstream / downstream surveys undertaken at six of those sites, this gave a total of 20 stream reaches fished. Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) were found in 17 of the 20 reaches, while brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) were found in three waterways. The average density of trout was higher than that found in other rivers and streams surveyed to date by Taranaki Fish & Game. The small size of trout was in line with the conclusions of earlier studies (Oates, 2018) that these headwater populations consist of stunted resident trout.

In December 2025, an additional five sites in the Tokiāhuru Stream sub-catchment of the Whangaehu River were surveyed in Karioi Forest (Figure 1, Table 1), along with five sites further west in the Mangaehuehu Stream sub-catchment of the Tokiāhuru in and adjacent to the Rangataua No.2 Conservation Area. One site in Mangateitei Stream in the Mangawhero River catchment near Ohakune was also surveyed.

METHODS

A team of Taranaki and Wellington Fish & Game staff used Smith-Root LR-24 Electrofisher machines to survey tributary and mainstem sites in the Tokiāhuru and Mangaehuehu Stream catchments and Mangateitei Stream in the Mangawhero catchment. Assistance was also provided by Lynette Baish from Ernslaw One Limited and Steve Haslett (Wellington Fish & Game Councillor).

The electric field created by the electric fishing machine causes fish to be stunned and drift with the water flow into a stop net or hand net, or to be forced to swim towards a hand-held anode. The voltage, pulse-width and frequency of the electrofisher was initially set at 400 volts, 60Hz and 25% respectively, but voltage was lowered to 300 volts, owing to the high conductivity encountered at some of the sites (Table 2).

The machine operator held an anode pole and used a single pass presence / absence assessment methodology to fish downstream towards a stop net and/or a hand net held by a second observer. Likely trout habitat within the river or stream was targeted, other than where the water was too deep or swift for safe, effective fishing.

Attempts were made to capture all fish seen, with captured fish held in a plastic bucket and then carefully identified, measured and released. The electrofishing machine time was recorded in minutes and the density of fish caught expressed as “fish per minute of machine time”. Water temperature and conductivity were also recorded (Table 2).

The electric field also causes pollution sensitive, behaviourally drifting mayflies and stoneflies to let go of the substrate and drift into the downstream stop net with the water flow. The number

and species composition of macroinvertebrates caught in the stop net gives a good indication of the quality and abundance of the invertebrate fauna at the site fished. However this was not thoroughly examined during these surveys.

Table 1. Map references for sites electric fished on 1-2 December 2025.

Site	Stream	Map Reference
1	Omarae	E 1816510 N 5630541
2	Waitaiki	E 1816535 N 5630486
3	Waitaiki left bank tributary	E 1816560 N 5630483
4	Waiharakeke Stream	E 1817895 N 5628783
5	Tokiāhuru Stream	E 1818048 N 5629100
6	Waiharuru un-named tributary	E 1815305 N 5634476
7	Waiharuru Mainstem	E 1814952 N 5634486
8	Mangaehuehu River	E 1813915 N 5635361
9	Waiākake un-named tributary	E 1812520 N 5632314
10	Waiākake mainstem	E 1812971 N 5631906
11	Mangateitei Stream	E 1810336 N 5633919

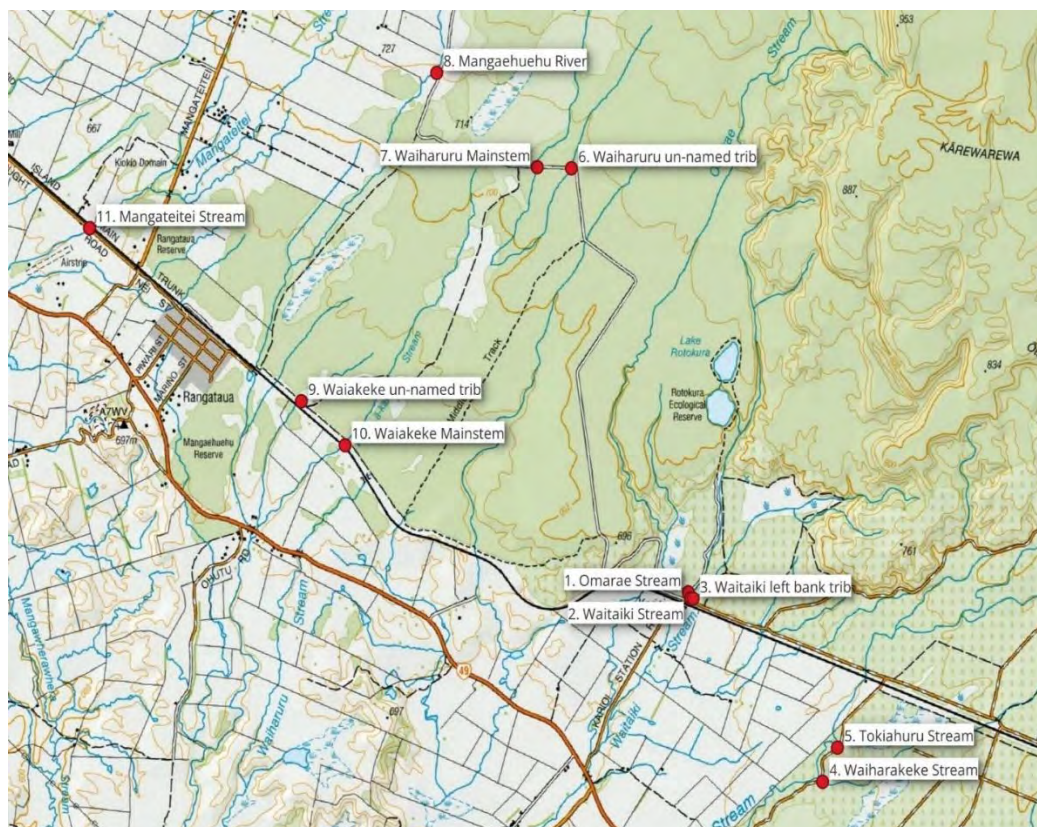


Figure 1. Survey sites in the Tokiāhuru Stream catchment (Sites 1 – 10), and Mangateitei Stream (Site 11) that were electric fished on 1st and 2nd December 2025.

RESULTS

Conductivity

Conductivity measurements were taken at 10 of the 11 sites electric fished (Table 2). Conductivity was much higher than expected at some sites (e.g. Omarae Stream) given the undeveloped nature and headwater location of the catchments, which indicates there were likely mineralised inputs from geothermal sources present. Measurements from Waiharuru and Mangaehuehu Streams (Sites 7&8, Table 2) were representative of conductivities expected in pristine, low nutrient streams.

Table 2. Conductivity (uS/cm), specific conductance (25°C) and water temperature (°C) for locations surveyed on 1st and 2nd December 2025. No measurements were taken at Site 10 (Wai ā-kake Stream).

Location	Site number	Conductivity (uS/cm)	SPC (25°C)	Water temperature (°C)
Omarae Stream	1	168.1	222.9	12.2
Waitaiki Stream	2	81.0	116.4	9.1
Waitaiki left bank trib.	3	92.2	130.6	9.5
Waiharakeke Stm.	4	116.1	142.3	15.4
Tokiahuru Stm.	5	103.2	130.3	14.1
Waiharuru Stm. trib.	6	76.3	111.5	8.4
Waiharuru Stream	7	55.7	77.6	10.2
Mangaehuehu Stm.	8	50.3	69.6	10.6
Wai ā-kake trib.	9	88.1	115.6	12.5
Wai ā-kake Stream	10			
Mangateitei Stream	11	67.1	88.4	16.4

Omarae Stream upstream from the Waitaiki Stream confluence (Site 1)

Omarae Stream, a tributary of Waitaiki Stream, is an entrenched stream rising high on the slopes of Mt. Ruapehu. It runs through native bush and production forestry before joining Waitaiki Stream just upstream of the north island main trunk railway. A section was fished immediately upstream of the Waitaiki confluence, with 15 rainbow trout 78 – 144mm in length caught at a density of 3.75 fish per minute (Table 3, Photos 1&2).

Table 3. Survey results for Omarae Stream (Site 1), 1st December 2025 (machine setting: 400 volts, 60pps, 25% pulse width).

Location	Species	Number	Shock time	Density (per minute)	Fork length
Site 1	Rainbow trout	15	4mins1s	3.75	78 – 144mm. Ave 110.5mm (n=12)



Photo 1. Omarae Stream (Site 1) upstream from Waitaiki Stream confluence.



Photo 2: A rainbow trout of 122mm fork length from Omarae Stream.

Waitaiki Stream downstream of Omarae Stream confluence (Site 2)

Waitaiki Stream is a clear, heavily vegetated spring-fed stream with a fine pebbly bed that looked suitable for trout spawning in places. One adult brown trout was seen but not caught. A further four brown trout 100 – 120mm in length were found, giving a density of 0.85 fish per minute of machine time (Table 4).

Table 4. Survey results for Waitaiki Stream just downstream of Omarae Stream confluence (Site 2), 1st December 2025 (machine setting: 300 volts, 60pps, 25% pulse width).

Location	Species	Number	Shock time	Density (per minute)	Fork length
Site 2	Brown trout	5	5min54s	0.85	100mm – 120mm (n=2) + 1 adult



Photo 3. Waitaiki Stream at Site 2.

Unnamed tributary of Waitaiki Stream (Site 3)

This unnamed true left bank tributary of Waitaiki Stream is located immediately opposite the Omarae Stream confluence (Figure 1) and has well-vegetated swampy margins and a swift flow (Photo 4). Four small brown trout (33 – 88mm) were captured at a density of 0.95 fish per minute of machine time (Table 5, Photos 5&6).

Table 5. Survey results for an unnamed tributary of Waitaiki Stream (Site 3), 1st December 2025 (machine setting: 300 volts, 60pps, 25% pulse width).

Location	Species	Number	Shock time	Density (per minute)	Size
Site 3	Brown trout	4	4min13s	0.95	33 – 88mm (n=3)



Photo 4. Unnamed tributary of Waitaiki Stream (Site 3)



Photo 5. Brown trout captured in an unnamed tributary of Waitaiki Stream (Site 3)



Photo 6. An 88mm brown trout captured in an unnamed tributary of Waitaiki Stream (Site 3).

Waiharakeke Stream (Site 4).

Waiharakeke Stream was sampled upstream of a vehicle crossing within Karioi Forest that had good riparian margins with undercut banks (Photo 7). Both brown and rainbow trout were caught, along with four koura (*Paranephrops planifrons*) (Table 6, photos 8 & 9).

Table 6. Survey results for Waiharakeke Stream (Site 4), 1st December 2025 (machine setting: 300 volts, 60pps, 25% pulse width).

Location	Species	Number	Shock time	Density (per minute)	Size
Site 4	Rainbow trout	6	4min1s	1.49	80 – 140mm Ave 111.7 (n=6)
	Brown trout	2		0.50	120mm (2)
	Koura	4			3 adults, 1 juvenile



Photo 7. Waiharakeke Stream (Site 4)



Photo 8. Lynette Baish (Ernslaw One Ltd.) and Jack Harland (Taranaki Fish & Game) measuring a rainbow trout from Waiharakeke Stream (Site 4)



Photo 9. An adult koura (*Paranephrops planifrons*) from Waiharakeke Stream (Site 4).

Tokiāhuru Stream (Site 5)

Site 5 in the mainstem of Tokiāhuru Stream was a swift flowing site, with good riparian vegetation and a gravel / cobble bed. Six rainbow trout 28 – 135mm in length were caught, with a density of 1.73 fish per minute of machine time.

Table 7. Survey results for Tokiāhuru Stream (Site 5), 1st December 2025 (machine setting: 300 volts, 60pps, 25% pulse width).

Location	Species	Number	Shock time	Density (per minute)	Size
Site 5	Rainbow trout	6	3min28s	1.73	28 – 135mm Ave 83.3 (n=6)



Photo 10. Tokiāhuru Stream at Site 5.

Unnamed tributary of Waiharuru Stream (Site 6)

This site was located in native bush in the Rangataua No.2 Conservation Area, situated on the southern flank of Mt Ruapehu, bordering Tongariro National Park (Figure 1, Photo 11). A total of eight brown trout, 74 – 190mm in fork length were caught (Table 8) at a density of 2.02 fish per minute of machine time.

Table 8. Survey results for an unnamed tributary of Waiharuru Stream in the Rangataua No.2 Conservation Area (Site 6), 2nd December 2025 (machine setting: 300 volts, 60pps, 25% pulse width).

Location	Species	Number	Shock time	Density (per minute)	Size
Site 6	Brown trout	8	3min58s	2.02	74 – 190mm Ave 120.9 (n=7)



Photo 11. Unnamed tributary of Waiharuru Stream (Site 6).

Waiharuru Stream (Site 7)

Brown trout were also caught at Site 7 (Waiharuru mainstem, Photo 12) in the Rangataua No.2 Conservation Area, with 17 fish 100 - 200mm in length giving a density of 3.98 fish per minute of machine time (Table 9).

Table 9. Survey results for Waiharuru Stream in the Rangataua No.2 Conservation Area (Site 7), 2nd December 2025 (machine setting: 300 volts, 60pps, 25% pulse width).

Location	Species	Number	Shock time	Density (per minute)	Size
Site 7	Brown trout	17	4min16s	3.98	100 – 220mm Ave 152.3 (n=9)



Photo 12. Waiharuru Stream in the Rangataua No.2 Conservation Area (Site 7).

Mangaehuehu Stream upstream from Rangataua (Site 8)

Mangaehuehu Stream rises high on the slopes of Mt. Ruapehu and is a clear mountain stream with a cobble bed where it was electric fished at Site 8 (Figure 1, Photo 13). It had the lowest water conductivity of any of the sites fished (Table 2).

Eight rainbow trout 65 – 170mm in fork length were caught, giving a density of 1.79 fish per minute of machine time (Table 10, Photo 14).

Table 10. Survey results for Mangaehuehu Stream (Site 8), 2nd December 2025 (machine setting: 300 volts, 60pps, 25% pulse width).

Location	Species	Number	Shock time	Density (per minute)	Size
Site 8	Rainbow trout	8	4min29s	1.79	65 – 170mm Ave 113 (n=7)



Photo 13. Mangaehuehu Stream adjacent to the Rangataua No.2 Conservation Area (Site 8).



Photo 14. Wellington Senior Field Officer, Dr. Matt Kavermann measuring a rainbow trout from Mangaehuehu Stream at Site 8.

Unnamed tributary of Wai-ā-kake Stream (Site 9)

This unnamed tributary of Wai-ā-kake Stream was electric-fished just upstream of the north island main trunk railway, in a slow-flowing area with dense riparian vegetation just downstream of native bush in the Rangataua No.2 Conservation Area (Photo 15). Six brown trout between 80mm and 150mm in length were caught at a density of 2.96 fish per minute of machine time (Table 11).

Table 11. Survey results for an unnamed tributary of Wai-ā-kake Stream (Site 9), 2nd December 2025 (machine setting: 300 volts, 60pps, 25% pulse width).

Location	Species	Number	Shock time	Density (per minute)	Size
Site 9	Brown trout	6	2min2s	2.96	80 – 250mm Ave 145.7 (n=6)



Photo 15. Unnamed tributary of Wai-ā-kake Stream (Site 9)

Wai-ā-kake Stream (Site 10)

Wai-ā-kake Stream was also electric-fished just upstream of the north island main trunk railway, in a swampy slow-flowing section with dense riparian vegetation just downstream of native bush in the Rangataua No.2 Conservation Area (Photo 16). Three brown trout and two koura were caught (Table 12).

Table 12. Survey results for Wai-ā-kake Stream (Site 10), 2nd December 2025 (machine setting: 300 volts, 60pps, 25% pulse width).

Location	Species	Number	Shock time	Density (per minute)	Size
Site 10	Brown trout	3	1min44s	1.73	140mm (n=1)
	Koura	2			1 small, 1 large



Photo 16. Wai-ā-kake Stream (Site 10).

Mangateitei Stream in the Mangawhero River catchment (Site 11)

Mangateitei Stream was electric fished in a section upstream and downstream of a bed control structure associated with a north island main trunk railway bridge just upstream of Dreadnought Road (Photo 17). Two brown trout fry were caught downstream of the bed control structure (Table 13) and four brown trout, including a 600mm adult were caught upstream of the structure. Two longfin eels (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*) and two koura were also caught upstream (Table 13).

Table 13. Survey results for Mangateitei Stream upstream and downstream of the north island main trunk railway bridge bed control structure (Site 11), 2nd December 2025 (machine setting: 300 volts, 60pps, 25% pulse width).

Location	Species	Number	Shock time	Density (per minute)	Size
Upstream	Brown trout	4	6min52s	0.58	43-600mm
	Koura	2			
	Longfin eel	2			
Downstream	Brown trout	2		0.29	42-52mm



Photo 17. Mangateitei Stream (Site 11) showing the rail bridge bed control structure.



Photo 18. Wellington Fish & Game Senior Field Officer, Hamish Carnachan, with a 600mm adult brown trout caught in Mangateitei Stream upstream of the rail bridge bed control structure.

DISCUSSION

Trout were found at all survey sites, with brown trout present at eight of the 11 sites electric fished and rainbow trout at four sites (Table 14 in Appendix). Brown and rainbow trout were found together at only one of the 11 sites. Only rainbow trout were found in Omarae Stream (Site 1) and yet only brown trout were found immediately opposite in Waitaiki Stream and an unnamed tributary (Sites 2 & 3) despite the closeness of these sites and there being no obvious barriers to fish movement. Conductivity was high in Omarae Stream compared with the nearby Waitaiki sites (Table 2). However, this was not a pattern as only rainbow trout were found in Mangaehuehu Stream, yet it had the lowest conductivity measured in the survey.

While a larger adult brown trout was seen in Waitaiki Stream, all other trout seen or caught in the Tokiāhuru catchment streams (Sites 1 – 10, Table 14 in Appendix) were small (33 – 250mm). This is consistent with the findings of earlier studies (Delich, 2023; Oates, 2018; Taranaki Fish &

Game 2025a&b) that these headwater populations likely consist of stunted resident trout, with larger fish being much older than their size would indicate. An examination of trout otoliths would help to resolve the issue of how old the larger trout are, but this has not yet been undertaken.

The presence of trout fry as small as 28mm (e.g. Tokiāhuru Stream, Site 6) indicates there had been recent successful spawning. It is likely that larger, mature trout from downstream in the Tokiāhuru and Waitaiki Streams move upstream to the headwaters to spawn, but this has not been confirmed. It is also likely that trout fry from the headwaters will grow normally when they move to downstream reaches, as they do in the Hangatahua (Stony) River on the Taranaki ringplain (pers. obs.)

There is relatively little information available on the downstream fishery. A drift dive survey of Tokiāhuru Stream in 1998 (Table 15) showed that there are large trout residing in the lower river, which is fast flowing and difficult to monitor. Results from five national angler surveys between 1994 and 2022 (Table 16) indicate that Tokiāhuru and Waitaiki streams receive only a modest level of angler use compared with more well-known Waimarino fisheries such as the Mangawhero and Manganuioteao. However, anecdotal reports from anglers indicate that there are large high-quality trout present. Angler access may be an issue, as most of the fishable parts of the Tokiāhuru and Waitaiki run through private land, with only a few public access areas. The lower reaches of the Tokiāhuru are also deeply incised, which can make access difficult.

Table 15. Drive dive counts of trout in Tokiāhuru Stream

RIVER	REACH	DATE	LENGTH (Metres)	BROWN TROUT /km			RAINBOW TROUT /km		
				SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE
Tokiāhuru	Below SH49	23.03.98	1800	0	0	0	lots	some	0
Tokiāhuru	Lower river	23.03.98	1000	6	8	6	0	2	0

Table 16. National Angler Survey results for Waimarino rivers and streams, 1994 - 2022

River or stream	1994/95	2001/02	2007/08	2014/15	2021/22
Tokiāhuru Stream	80	30			29
Waitaiki Stream	30	40	40	10	67
Mangawhero River	620	430	420	250	393
Taonui Stream	400	70	50	100	71
Whanganui River		189	371	674	1,005
Manganuioteao River	1,970	760	2,381	1,230	909
Ruatiti Stream	30		140	20	192
Orautoha Stream		30	80		

Waimarino Stream	20	40	50		13
Makatote River	120		5	13	4
Retaruke River	80	80	100	190	202

* blank = not fished by survey respondents

When results from the December 2024 survey are included (Table 14 in Appendix), it is evident that rainbow trout dominate in the eastern tributaries of the Whangaehu River, while more brown trout are present in the western ones. However, the small size of fish was a common feature of all waters electric fished (excluding Mangateitei Stream in the Mangawhero catchment).

It was reported in Oates (2018) that “*some 50 years ago, Forest Service personnel established a kind of temporary trout hatchery within a Karioi Forest stream and liberated fingerlings in multiple streams throughout the forest (K. Wood, pers. comm.). It is most likely that these historical liberations are the source of today’s resident population in Karioi Forest, thus explaining how trout came to occupy areas without migrating up the (acidic) Whangaehu River*”. As manager of trout fisheries in the area, it’s probable that the then Waimarino Acclimatisation Society was involved in this endeavour. More information on this may be available in the Society’s records.

Electric fishing surveys carried out in the Taranaki Fish & Game Region to date (Table 17) indicate that headwater tributaries of the Whangaehu River (i.e. Tokiāhuru, Wāhianoa) support some of the highest maximum and average densities of trout found in the region to date.

In Mangateitei Stream (Site 11), brown trout were found both upstream and downstream of the bed control structure associated with the north island main trunk railway bridge. However, it’s likely that the structure prevents the upstream passage of trout most of the time, apart from when flood flows are high enough to inundate it. Mangateitei Stream provides important trout spawning and rearing habitat for brown trout from the Mangawhero River and there is at least 5km of potential trout spawning habitat upstream of the bed control structure to the boundary with Tongariro National Park. There are 17 years of trout spawning surveys (between 1992 and 2014) of Mangateitei Stream upstream from the Mangawhero River confluence, but none in the area upstream and downstream of the bed control structure. It is therefore recommended that a trout spawning survey be undertaken in that area in late June or early July 2027. Contact could also be made with Horizons Regional Council and KiwiRail to discuss plans for structure modification to improve fish passage.

Table 17. Comparison of maximum and average trout densities recorded (fish caught per minute of electric fishing machine time) in the December 2025 Tokiāhuru catchment survey with those of previous surveys by Taranaki Fish & Game.

Catchment	Survey Dates	No. of sites	Maximum density (trout per minute)	Average density (trout per minute)
Mangawhero River	2-3 December 2015	9	7.0	2.40
Kaupokonui Stream	6-7 December 2016	9	1.1	0.36
Manganuioteao River	4-6 December 2017	11	2.7*	1.39*
Waiwhakaiho River	17-19 December 2018	9	1.50	0.63
Retaruke River	7 December 2020, 2 nd January 2021	4	1.80*	1.68*
Waingongoro River	5 – 8 December 2022	13	1.68*	0.30*
Waiongana/Mangaoraka Stream	11-12 th December 2023	11	1.53	0.515
Kapuni Stream	24 th October 2024	10	2.20*	0.996*
Manganui River	11-18 December 2024	22	0.811	0.137
Wāhianoa River	4 th December 2024	6	2.06*	0.87*
Tokiāhuru Stream headwaters	5 th December 2024	8	16.29*	5.97*
Kapuni Stream	23 rd October 2025	10	9.19*	2.16
Waiaua River	21 st November 2025	8	0.16	0.04
Tokiāhuru Stream headwaters[#]	1-2 nd December 2025	10	3.98*	2.18

* Includes rainbow trout

excludes Mangateitei Stream

Native fish and crustacea

No native fish were seen or caught at the 10 sites in the Tokiāhuru catchment electric fished in December 2025 (Table 14 in Appendix). In the December 2024 survey, five longfin eels were found in a slow-flowing section of Te Unuunuakapua te Ariki Stream, a tributary of Tokiāhuru Stream (Table 14 in Appendix) but none were found elsewhere, including in the Wāhianoa River and Mākāhikatoa Stream. Two longfin eels were found at the only site fished in Mangateitei Stream (Site 11) in the Mangawhero River catchment in December 2025.

The paucity of migratory native fish found in this study stems from the fact that the overflow from Mount Ruapehu's active crater lake, Te Wai ā-moe, directly feeds the headwaters of the Whangaehu River, making the river highly acidic with elevated concentrations of dissolved minerals and heavy metals (Deely & Sheppard, 1996). At times the acidity of river water can be as low as pH3 all the way to the estuary (Deely & Sheppard, 1996). When this happens, migratory native fish with a marine phase in their lifecycle will not be able to move upstream. However, outflows from the crater lake vary through the year, depending on rainfall, snowmelt and volcanic activity, and tend to be lowest in winter. At such times and in combination with dilution from tributaries with good water quality such as the Waitangi and Tokiāhuru streams and Mangawhero River, the pH of the Whangaehu River can be as high as 5 - 7 (Wells & Fowles, 1980; Deely & Sheppard, 1996; Chisnall & Keys, 2002). This provides a window of opportunity for migratory native fish to move upstream to reach tributary streams.

Chisnall & Keys (2002) note that the Tokiāhuru/Mangaehuehu River confluence was a traditional eel fishery location for Ngati Rangī Iwi, and that this is the first part of the Whangaehu River where its acid volcano-fed waters are significantly diluted. This would explain the presence of longfin eels in Te Unuunuakapua te Ariki Stream, a tributary of Tokiāhuru Stream and the lack of eels further upstream in the Wāhianoa and Mākāhikatoa streams.

The Mangawhero River joins the Whangaehu further downstream than the Tokiāhuru (see Figure 2 below from Oates, 2018) and accounts for 50% of the flow in the Whangaehu at this point (Wells & Fowles, 1980 cited in Deely & Sheppard, 1996). With greater dilution in the Whangaehu mainstem below the Mangawhero confluence it's likely there will be a more abundant eel population present in the Mangawhero River. Indeed, Maclean (2015) found longfin eels at four of nine sites electric fished in the upper Mangawhero catchment, as well as a single (12cm) shortfin eel (*Anguilla australis*). Maclean commented that eel densities were lower than would otherwise be expected, owing to the distance from the sea, the presence of the 15m Raukawa Falls at Kakatahi and the acidity of the Whangaehu River.

Koura were found at only sporadically in the December 2024 and 2025 surveys; in Waiharakeke, Wai ā-kake and Mangateitei streams in 2025 and in Te Unuunuakapua te Ariki Stream in 2024 (Table 14). The swampy margins and undercut banks of Waiharakeke and Wai-ā-kake streams appeared to provide the best habitat.

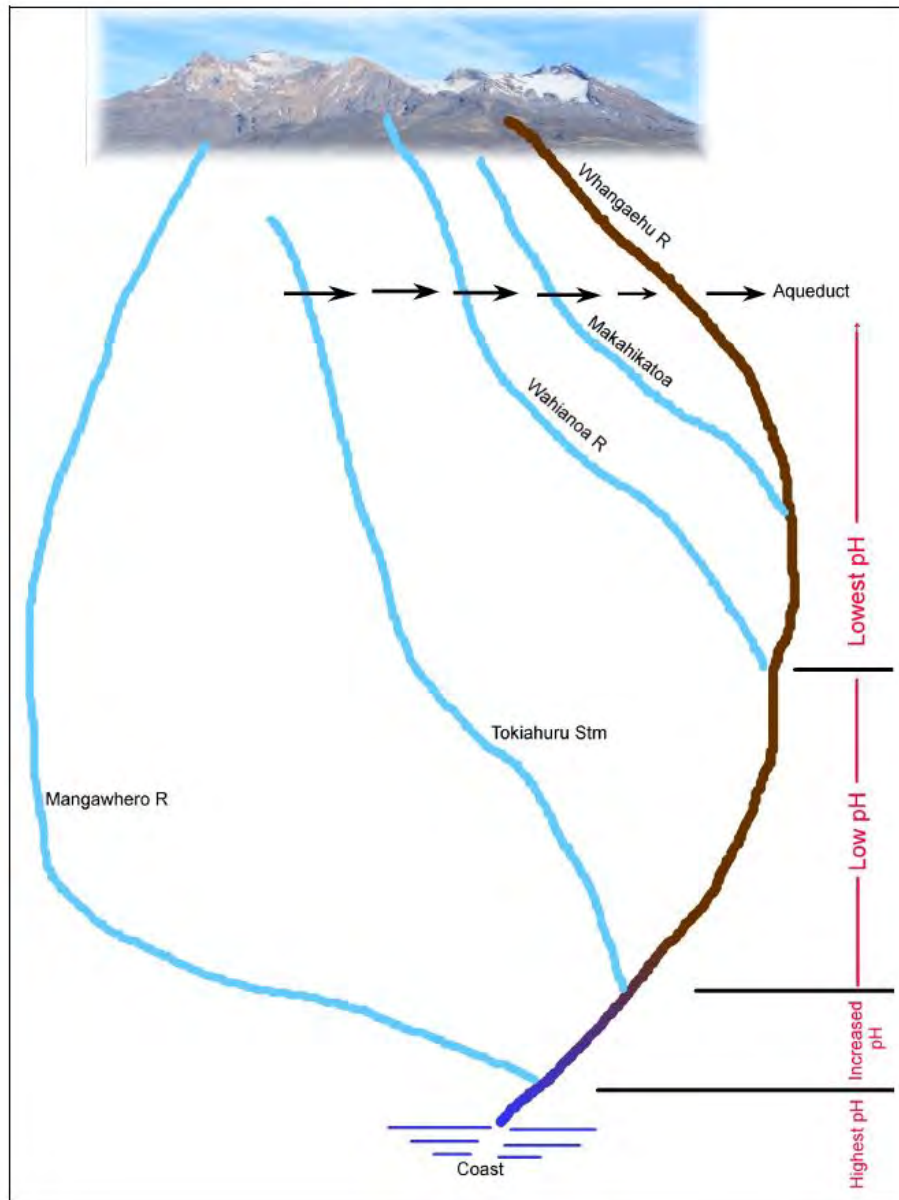


Figure 2. Schematic diagram of the Whangaehu River catchment showing tributary inputs and pH levels increasing in the Whangaehu River with distance downstream (from Oates, (2018)).

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Appendix

Table 14. Total numbers for each species found sites electric fished surveys of tributaries of the Whangaehu River in December 2024 and 2025.

Survey Site	Species							
	Brown Trout	Rainbow trout	Eel	Koura	Common bully	Shock time	Trout density (per min)	Trout length (mm)
December 2025								
Omarae Stream		15				4m1s	3.75	78 - 144
Waitaiki Stream	5					5m54s	0.85	100 - 120
Waitaiki left bank tributary.	4					4m13s	0.95	33 - 88
Waiharakeke Stm.	2	6		3		4m1s	1.99	80 - 140
Tokiāhuru Stream		6				3m28s	1.73	28 - 135
Waiharuru Stm. tributary	8					3m58s	2.02	74 - 190
Waiharuru Stream	17					4m16s	3.98	100 - 220
Mangaehuehu Stream		8				4m29s	1.79	65 - 170
Wai ā-kake Stream tributary	6					2m2s	2.96	80 - 250
Wai ā-kake Stream	3			2		1m44s	1.73	140
Mangateitei Stream	6		2	2		6m52s	0.87	42 - 600
December 2024								
Wāhianoa River Aqueduct Road (upstream)						7min5s	0.00	
Wāhianoa River Aqueduct Road (downstream)						8min5s	0.00	
Wāhianoa River W2 Main Road (upstream)		1				7min13s	0.14	
Wāhianoa River W2 Main Road (downstream)						7min12s	0.00	
Wāhianoa River W1 Whangaehu Road lower ford (upstream)		3				7min43s	0.39	134 – 156
Wāhianoa River W1 Whangaehu Road lower ford (downstream)		11				5min20s	2.06	90 – 250

Table 14 (continued). Total numbers of each species found at each site electric fished during December 2024 survey in tributaries of the Whangaehu River.

Survey Site	Species							
	Brown Trout	Rainbow trout	Eel	Koura	Common bully	Shock time	Trout density (per min)	Trout length (mm)
Wāhianoa River tributary Aqueduct Road		2				Not recorded		90 -130
Te Unuunuakapua te Ariki Stream (upstream)		13	5	1		5m10s	2.52	25 - 130
Te Unuunuakapua te Ariki Stream (downstream)		22				6m50s	3.22	25 - 150
Tokiāhuru Stream (wooden bridge)		4				1m47s	2.24	30 - 80
Te Unuunuakapua te Ariki Stream (Otahatekapua Rd upstream)		26		1		Not recorded		14 fry, 12 fingerlings
Te Unuunuakapua te Ariki Stream (Otahatekapua Rd downstream)		57				3m30s	16.29	50 fry, 80 - 280
Tokiāhuru trib. (Rock Rd.)	3	24				2m46	9.76	30 - 120
Tokiāhuru Stm. (Swamp Rd.)		1				1m2s	0.97	100
Tokiāhuru trib. (Terrace Rd.)		2				Not recorded		75
Tokiāhuru trib. (Terrace Rd.)		15				Not recorded		80 - 180
Tokiāhuru mainstem Link Rd box culvert (upstream).	13	15 + 12 unid				7m27s	5.36	80 - 180
Tokiāhuru mainstem Link Rd box culvert (downstream).	2	14 + 4 unid				2m42s	7.41	28 - 150
Tokiāhuru Stream at Terrace Road ford.		4				Not recorded		
Mākahikatoa Stm. (Aqueduct Road)		7			1	Not recorded		
Average trout density							2.91	

Unid = unidentified



November 2025 Fish Survey of the Waiaua River



Allen Stancliff and Jack Harland

June 2026

Fish Survey of the Waiaua River Catchment, 21st November 2025

Allen Stancliff and Jack Harland

An Internal Report prepared for Taranaki Fish and Game Council

June 2026

Taranaki Fish and Game

PO Box 662 New Plymouth 4340

Cover: Mid-reaches of the Waiaua River at Site 6.

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Summary

Eight sites in the Waiaua River near Opunake were electric fished on 21st November 2025 in a follow-up to a similar survey in February 2022, to provide information on juvenile trout recruitment and the river's recovery from a July 2021 headwater erosion event.

Brown trout fry were found at only two of the eight sites and their density was the lowest recorded in surveys in the region to date. While anglers report good numbers of adult trout in the river in the last two seasons, the fishery appears to be one based on only low levels of natural recruitment.

Longfin eel and redfin bully were found in a range of size classes throughout the river, which indicates that these species can negotiate the 4.5m Opunake hydro weir located at SH45, 2km from the river mouth. The freshwater shrimp, *Paratya*, which is a good climber, was also found upstream of the weir. A single juvenile galaxiid was found immediately upstream, while inanga and torrentfish were found only downstream. With the hydro scheme shut down since 1 June 2018 and the fish pass no longer operational, the weir presents a significant barrier to the upstream migration of native fish with poor or moderate climbing ability, as well as trout.

Introduction

Following a major headwater erosion event in July 2021, which devastated habitat in the Waiaua River's mainstem, Taranaki Fish & Game staff carried out an electric fishing survey in February 2022 at three sites along the Waiaua River mainstem, and two sites in tributaries that were unaffected by erosion. The purpose of that survey was to establish baseline information on the status of native fish and trout populations following the erosion event.

Results showed that nearly seven months after the flood, fish and aquatic macroinvertebrate populations in the Waiaua River mainstem had experienced only limited recovery from the effects of the July 2021 erosion event. While declining sediment loads were beginning to allow

macroinvertebrates to recolonise, it was expected that native fish and trout populations would require several years to fully recover.

Two significant left bank tributaries were not adversely affected by the erosion event. They continued to provide important refuge habitat for fish and invertebrates and would be a source for recolonisation of the mainstem as conditions improved. Native fish in these habitats may also provide pheromonal cues that assist the return of migratory native fish to the catchment (Baker & Montgomery, 2001; Baker & Hicks, 2003; Baker, *et. al.*, 2006).

In response to the damage to the trout fishery and to allow stocks to rebuild, angling regulations for the Waiaua River were amended to set a zero-bag limit for brown trout, with a 1-fish limit for rainbow trout and methods restricted to fly and spin fishing only. There have been no significant headwater erosion events since the July 2021 flood, resulting in several years of relatively stable habitat for trout population recovery.

Fish & Game also stocked the Waiaua River with hatchery-reared brown and rainbow trout during the period 2022-2025 (Table 1.). These fish were adipose fin-clipped to enable identification. The release programme has ended, with the last release occurring on 9th January 2025.

Table 1. Number of hatchery-reared brown and rainbow trout released into the Waiaua River, 2022 - 2025

Year	Hatchery Rainbow trout	Hatchery Brown trout	Total Released
2022	100	0	100
2023	303	0	303
2024	400	0	400
2025	47	115	162
Total	850	115	965

Reports from anglers during the 2024-25 season indicate that mature trout (both wild and hatchery) were present throughout the river (Appendix 1). As a result, the angling regulations for the 2025-26 season were amended to reinstate the original two trout daily bag limit with fly, spin and bait fishing allowed.

To gain a clearer understanding of trout recruitment within the catchment, a second electric fishing survey was undertaken in late November 2025. This report presents the results of that survey.

Objective:

To assess juvenile trout recruitment, the relative abundance of native fish and macroinvertebrates and habitat stability at sites in the Waiaua River catchment.

Methodology:

Five sites along the Waiaua River mainstem and three sites in two tributaries that were unaffected by headwater erosion (a total of eight sites), were selected for surveying by electric fishing. Five of the sites (3 mainstem and 2 tributary) were the same as those surveyed in February 2022.

Each site was fished using a Smith-Root LR-24 Electrofisher, with the voltage, pulse width and frequency set by observing the reaction of the fish. Ideally the fish will display taxis and not tetany. Taxis is an induced swimming action where nerves have time to repolarize, and the muscles have time to relax between output pulses of the electrofisher. Tetany is locking up of the muscles, the fish is stiff and there may be some slight quivering in the fins which in turn risks injury to the fish.

The survey involved fishing the range of habitats available at each site for a total of approximately 360 seconds (6 minutes) machine time. The operator held a hand net and fished downstream towards a stop net held by a second person using a single pass methodology. The team endeavored to fish the full range of habitats within the stream, other than where the water was too deep or swift for safe or effective fishing.

Attempts were made to capture all the fish seen, with captured fish held in a plastic container and then carefully identified, measured to the nearest millimeter, and released. However, where many fish of one species were captured, a sample was taken for length measurement instead. Eels were not measured, but classed by size as large (L), medium (M), small (S) and elver (E). Fish observed but not captured were also recorded, along with the fishing time of the electric fishing machine.

The electric field produced by the fishing machine causes macroinvertebrates to “let go” of the riverbed and drift into the stop net, giving an indication of the diversity and abundance of invertebrates present at each site.

The survey was undertaken by Allen Stancliff and Jack Harland of Taranaki Fish & Game, and Lachie Blundell from Francis Douglas Memorial College.

Study Sites

Table 2. Electric fishing sites in the Waiaua River, 21st November 2025.

Site	NZTM Coordinates	Comment
Site 1. Waiaua Fork Stream	E1683426, N5642623	true left bank tributary
Site 2. Waiaua mainstem upper	E1682968, N5643258	upper end of Ihaia Road
Site 3. Waiaua River 2 east	E1683013, N5640616	tributary off Kaweora Road
Site 4. Waiaua River 2 east	E1680705, N5638970	tributary upstream of Waiaua confluence
Site 5. Waiaua mainstem	E1680406, N5638985	mid-reach below Wiremu Road
Site 6. Waiaua mainstem	E1678010, N5635441	at Opunake water treatment plant
Site 7. Waiaua mainstem	E1674680, N5632198	above Opunake weir
Site 8. Waiaua mainstem	E1674506, N5632099	below Opunake weir

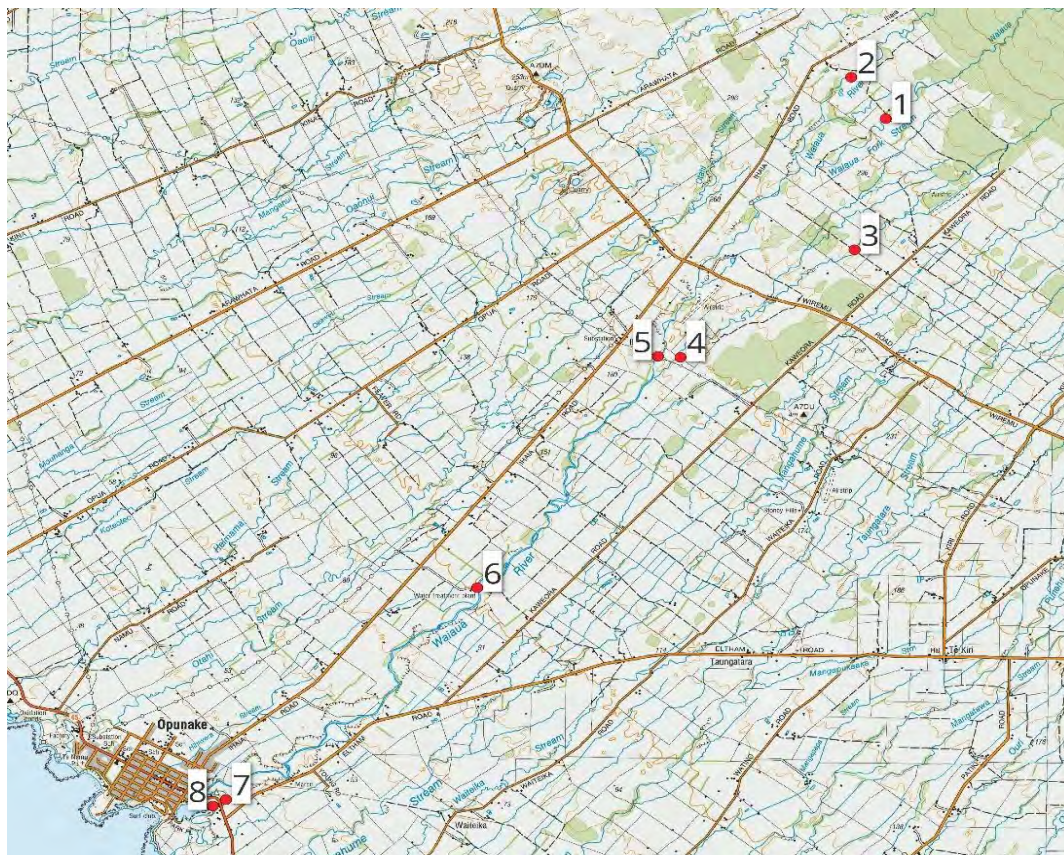


Figure 1. Location of survey sites in the Waiaua River catchment.

Results

On 21st November 2025, the Waiaua River mainstem was running relatively clear at a stable low flow of 1.7 m³/s (Figure 2). There had been several minor pulses in flow in the days prior to the survey, with the highest flow being 11 m³/s on 13th November. The day of the survey was fine and sunny with light winds.

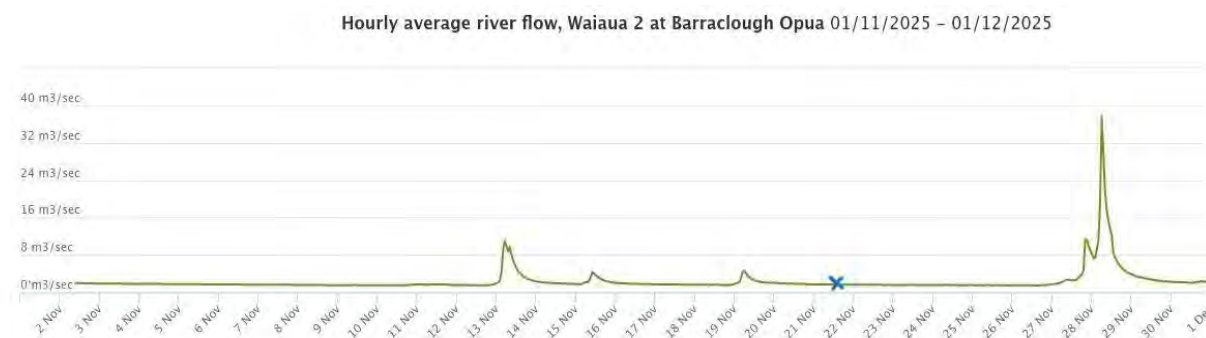


Figure 2. Flow hydrograph for the Waiaua River catchment, 1st November – 1st December 2025, showing flow at the time of the survey (data courtesy of the Taranaki Regional Council).

Water quality parameters, including temperature and conductivity, were measured at each site before electrofishing commenced. Conductivity levels were suitable for electric fishing and increased progressively downstream (Table 3). Water temperature also increased downstream, reflecting decreasing altitude and cumulative warming through the day as sites were surveyed sequentially from upstream to downstream.

Table 3. Conductivity (uS/cm), specific conductance (at 25°C) and water temperature (°C) for sites in the Waiaua River catchment surveyed on 21st November 2025.

Site	Conductivity (uS/cm)	SPC (25°C)	Water Temperature (°C)
Site 1. Waiaua Fork Stream	83.6	113.4	11.2
Site 2. Waiaua mainstem upper	89.0	120.0	11.5
Site 3. Waiaua River 2 east stream	91.0	116.0	13.7
Site 4. Waiaua River 2 east stream	118.0	144.1	15.5
Site 5. Waiaua mainstem	109.0	129.1	16.8
Site 6. Waiaua mainstem	129.9	138.8	18.6
Site 7. Waiaua mainstem	134.1	145.3	21.0
Site 8. Waiaua mainstem	137.1	146.3	21.7

Site 1. Waiaua Fork Stream

Site 1 was located in a true left bank tributary of the Waiaua River 1.7 km downstream from the National Park boundary (Te Papa-kura-o-Taranaki). The streambed was stable and comprised mostly cobbles, with some boulders and gravel present (Photo 1). The site was dominated by riffle and run habitat (80%) with few pools. There was good bank stability with fenced riparian margins. There were thin periphyton films present on the streambed and an abundance of aquatic macroinvertebrates, including *Deleatidium* mayfly larvae.

The number and size of each species caught is provided in Table 4. A single brown trout fry was found (Table 4, Photo 2).

Table 4. Survey results for Site 1 in the Waiaua Fork Stream tributary of the Waiaua River; 21st November 2025 (Shock time = 6 mins 18s @400 volts, 60pps, 4.25ms (25%) pulse width).

Species	Number	Catch rate (per minute)	Minimum length (mm)	Maximum length (mm)	Average length (no. measured)
Longfin eel	3	0.48			1L, 1M, 1S
Redfin Bully	4	0.63	70	84	78 (3)
Brown Trout	1	0.16	47		



Photo 1. Site 1 in Waiaua Fork Stream.



Photo 2. Brown trout fry (47mm) captured at Site 1 in Waiaua Fork Stream.

Site 2. Waiaua mainstem upper

Site 2 was located 1.9 km downstream from the boundary of the National Park (Photo 3). Only one small longfin eel was observed at this site (Table 5). However, an abundant, high-quality macroinvertebrate fauna was present, including some large stonefly larvae (Photo 4).

Table 5. Survey results for Site 2 in the Waiaua River mainstem; 21st November 2025 (Shock time = 6 mins 11s@400 volts, 60pps, 4.25ms (25%) pulse width).

Species	Number	Catch rate (per minute)	Minimum length (mm)	Maximum length (mm)	Average length (no. measured)
Longfin eel	1	0.16			1S



Photo 3. Site 2 in the upper Waiaua mainstem, looking downstream.



Photo 4. A stonefly larva of *Stenoperla prasina* from Site 2.

Site 3. Waiaua River 2 East Stream

Site 3 was located on a true left bank tributary, some 1.7 km upstream of Wiremu Road on private property accessed from Kaweora Road. The streambed at this site was very stable and comprised mostly cobbles, boulders and gravel, with shallow riffles and runs (Photo 5). Healthy populations of longfin eel, redfin bully and koura were present (Table 6), but no juvenile trout were found. There was an abundant high-quality aquatic macroinvertebrate fauna present. The river margins had been fenced since the site was last sampled in February 2022.

Table 6. Survey results for Site 3 in the Waiaua River 2 East Stream tributary of the Waiaua River; 21st November 2025 (Shock time = 6 mins 22s @400 volts, 60pps, 4.25ms (25%) pulse width).

Species	Number	Catch rate (per minute)	Minimum length (mm)	Maximum length (mm)	Average length (no. measured)
Longfin eel	13	2.03			3L,3M,4S,3E
Redfin Bully	7	1.09	62	93	
Koura	5+	0.78			juv. to adult

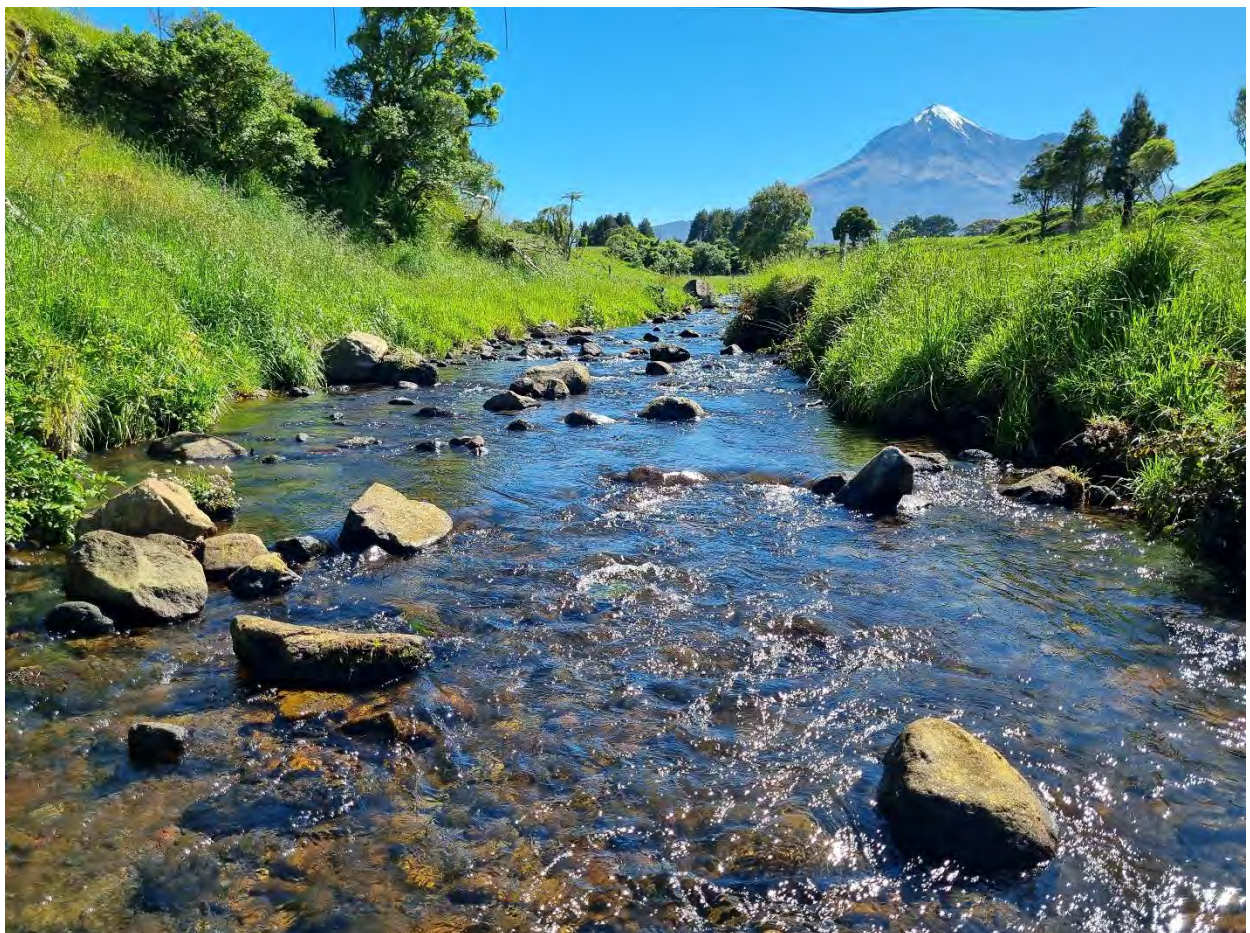


Photo 5. Site 3 in Waiaua 2 East Stream.

Site 4. Waiaua River 2 East Stream

Site 4 was located further downstream in the Waiaua East tributary, just upstream from its confluence with the Waiaua mainstem (Figure 1). The site was relatively deep with predominantly boulder habitat. Longfin eel and redfin bully were found (Table 7). There was an increase in streambed algal growth and a sparse, but high-quality invertebrate fauna present.

Table 7. Survey results for Site 4 in the Waiaua River 2 East Stream tributary of the Waiaua River; 21st November 2025 (Shock time = 5 mins 15s @400 volts, 60pps, 4.25ms (25%) pulse width).

Species	Number	Catch rate (per minute)	Minimum length (mm)	Maximum length (mm)	Average length (no. measured)
Longfin eel	6	1.13			2M, 4E
Redfin Bully	6	1.13	35	80	



Photo 6. Site 4 in the lower reaches of Waiaua 2 East Stream.

Site 5. Waiaua River mainstem, mid-reach

This site was located in the Waiaua mainstem downstream of Wiremu Road (Figure 1). Longfin eel and redfin bully were found (Table 8). A sparse to moderate density, high-quality invertebrate fauna was present.

Table 8. Survey results for Site 5 in the Waiaua River mainstem; 21st November 2025 (Shock time = 5 mins 58s @400 volts, 60pps, 4.25ms (25%) pulse width).

Species	Number	Catch rate (per minute)	Minimum length (mm)	Maximum length (mm)	Average length (no. measured)
Longfin eel	7	1.17			3M,3S,1E
Redfin Bully	6	1.01			60



Photo 7. Waiaua River mainstem at Site 5 downstream of Wiremu Road.

Site 6. Waiaua River mainstem at water treatment plant

This site was located in the lower middle reaches of the Waiaua River just downstream of the Opunake town water supply intake. There was quite a bit of sand and fine gravel in the runs at this site (Photo 8), while the riffles had a mix of sand, gravel and cobbles (Photo 9). Despite plenty of suitable habitat, only modest numbers of longfin eel and redfin bullies were caught (Table 9). However, a dense high-quality macroinvertebrate fauna was present.

Table 9. Survey results for Site 6 in the Waiaua River mainstem; 21st November 2025 (Shock time = 6 mins 12s @400 volts, 60pps, 4.25ms (25%) pulse width).

Species	Number	Catch rate (per minute)	Minimum length (mm)	Maximum length (mm)	Average length (no. measured)
Longfin eel	3	0.48			3E
Redfin Bully	13	2.10	35	80	



Photo 8. Waiaua River mainstem at Site 6 downstream of the Opunake town water supply intake.



Photo 9. Jack Harland and Lachie Blundell electric fishing in Waiaua River mainstem at Site 6.

Site 7. Waiaua River mainstem above SH45 and Opunake hydro intake weir

Longfin eel elvers were the most abundant fish caught at Site 8 (Photo 10), along with freshwater shrimp *Paratya curvirostris* (Table 10). A single trout fry was seen but not caught. A 60mm juvenile galaxiid was also caught and looked to be a koaro. A moderately abundant high-quality invertebrate fauna was present at this site.

Table 10. Survey results for Site 7 in the Waiaua River mainstem upstream of SH45 and the Opunake hydro intake weir; 21st November 2025 (Shock time = 7 mins @400 volts, 60pps, 4.25ms (25%) pulse width).

Species	Number	Catch rate (per minute)	Minimum length (mm)	Maximum length (mm)	Average length (no. measured)
Longfin eel	11	1.57			11E
Redfin Bully	2	0.29			
Galaxiid	1	0.14	60		likely koaro
<i>Paratya</i> shrimp	abundant				
Trout fry (unid)	1	0.14			



Photo 10. Waiaua River at Site 7 upstream of SH45 and the Opunake hydro intake weir.

Site 8. Waiaua mainstem below SH45 and Opunake hydro weir

Longfin eel elvers, redfin bully and inanga were caught at Site 8 which was relatively deep and bouldery (Table 11, Photo 11). *Paratya* shrimp were also abundant. A single 75mm torrentfish was caught in a riffle (Photo 12). The Opunake hydro fish pass from the river below the weir to the lake inlet channel was not operating at the time of survey and looked to have been out of service for quite some time.

Table 11. Survey results for Site 8 in the Waiaua River mainstem downstream of SH45 and the Opunake Hydro intake weir; 21st November 2025 (Shock time = 6 mins 14s @400 volts, 60pps, 4.25ms (25%) pulse width).

Species	Number	Catch rate (per minute)	Minimum length (mm)	Maximum length (mm)	Average length (no. measured)
Longfin eel	6	0.96			6E
Redfin Bully	16	2.57	35	90	
Inanga	15+	2.41			
Torrentfish	1	0.16	75		
<i>Paratya</i> shrimp	abundant				



Photo 11. Site 8 in the Waiaua River downstream of SH45 and the Opunake hydro intake weir.



Photo 12. Lachie Blundell with a torrentfish from Site 8 in the Waiaua River

Discussion

Water conductivity measurements were lower during the November 2025 survey compared with February 2022 (Table 12), although both surveys showed a progressive increase in conductivity down the catchment from top to bottom. Differences in conductivity between surveys could be due to lower water temperatures in the 2025 survey (11.2 – 21.7 °C compared with 13.7 – 23.6 °C in 2022) and/or reduced mineralisation owing to the catchment's recovery from the July 2021 headwater erosion event. In general, an increase in conductivity down a catchment is taken to indicate an increasing level of nutrient enrichment.

Table 12. Conductivity (uS/cm) and catch rates (per minute of machine time) at sites in the Waiaua River catchment surveyed on 21st November 2025 and 2nd February 2022.

Site	Conductivity (uS/cm)		Catch Rate (fish & koura/m)	
	2025	2022	2025	2022
Site 1. Waiaua Fork Stream	83.6	91.7	1.27	3.10
Site 2. Waiaua mainstem upper	89.0	102.0	0.16	0.00
Site 3. Waiaua River 2 east stream	91.0	109.9	3.90	10.40
Site 4. Waiaua River 2 east stream	118.0		2.26	
Site 5. Waiaua mainstem	109.0		2.18	
Site 6. Waiaua mainstem	129.9		2.58	
Site 7. Waiaua mainstem	134.1	147.0	2.14	4.20
Site 8. Waiaua mainstem	137.1	146.0	3.53	7.00

Catch rates of fish and koura were mostly higher in the 2022 survey (Table 12) which was surprising given that in 2022 the catchment was still very much in recovery mode from the 2021 erosion event. This could potentially be due to the surveys being carried out at differing times of the year (November 2025 cf. February 2022).

Brown trout fry were at low densities in both surveys, with just two fry found at Site 3 in 2022 (at 1 of 5 sites surveyed; Morison & Stancliff, 2022) and one fry found at each of Sites 1 and 7 in 2025 (2 of 8 sites). By contrast, 131 trout fry were found at nine of 10 sites electric fished in the nearby Kapuni Stream on 23rd October 2025, one month prior to the current survey. The Kapuni and Waiaua had similar flow regimes during the 2025 winter and spring trout spawning and fry emergence period, except that the Kapuni had two large floods in July 2025 that were only moderate, less damaging, events in the Waiaua.

Survey conditions were favourable for the 2025 Waiaua survey, with fine weather and a period of stable low flows preceding the survey. These conditions were well suited to electric fishing, with water depths and velocities suitable across all sites and with channel characteristics that allowed effective use of stop and hand nets.

The 2025 results therefore suggest that the Waiaua trout fishery is based on low levels of natural recruitment. Similar results were obtained in surveys of the Waiongana and Manganui catchments on the northern and central Taranaki ringplain, where brown trout fry were caught at just two on 11 sites in the Waiongana (Stancliff & Harland, 2025) and at nine of 22 sites in the Manganui River catchment (Harland & Stancliff, 2025). However, densities found in the Waiaua survey were the lowest recorded in surveys to date (Table 13).

Angler feedback during the 2024-25 and 2025-26 seasons indicates that there are now good numbers of wild adult brown trout in the Waiaua River along with hatchery rainbows and the occasional wild rainbow. Some photos from the last two seasons are provided in Appendix 1.

In respect of native fish, most of which are migratory requiring access to and from the sea, the 4.5m concrete diversion weir at SH45 for the Opunake hydro scheme (Photos 11 & 13) is a complete barrier to non-climbing species such as inanga and likely at least a partial barrier to climbing species. A fish pass connects the river downstream of the weir to the power scheme inlet race, but the pass has operated only intermittently since consents for the scheme expired on 1 June 2018 and not at all in the months prior to the current survey.

The presence of longfin eels in a range of sizes, including elvers upstream of the weir indicates that there is a pathway up over the weir for this species. Likewise, for redfin bully and *paratya* shrimp. A single juvenile galaxiid, likely a koaro, was found at Site 7 immediately upstream of the weir, but not at any other site. It's not known how much of a barrier the weir presents to climbing galaxiids such as koaro and kokopu. Inanga and torrentfish were found downstream of the weir, but not upstream. The weir is a significant barrier to the upstream migration of native fish (and trout), adversely affecting the diversity and abundance of native fish in the 17+km of river mainstem upstream and 12+km of tributary streams.

The Opunake hydro scheme was granted new consents in 2022, but it has not yet resumed operation. A build-up of sand and gravel at the river intake and sand ingress into the inlet race and Opunake Lake remains an issue. Even when the scheme was operating, variable flows in the fish pass and high water velocities in the race inlet culverts were less than ideal for upstream fish passage.

Table 13. Comparison of maximum and average brown trout densities recorded (fish caught per minute of electric fishing machine time) in the current Waiaua River survey with those of previous surveys.

Catchment	Survey Dates	No. of sites	Maximum density (fish per minute)	Average density (fish per minute)
Mangawhero River	2-3 December 2015	9	7.0	2.40
Kaupokonui Stream	6-7 December 2016	9	1.1	0.36
Manganuioteao River	4-6 December 2017	11	2.7*	1.39*
Waiwhakaiho River	17-19 December 2018	9	1.50	0.63
Retaruke River	7 December 2020, 2 nd January 2021	4	1.80	1.68
Waingongoro River	5 – 8 December 2022	13	1.68*	0.30*
Waiongana/Mangaoraka	11-12 th December 2023	11	1.53	0.19
Kapuni	24 th October 2024	10	2.20	0.996
Manganui River	11-18 December 2024	22	0.811	0.332
Kapuni	23 rd October 2025	10	9.19	2.16
Waiaua	21 st November 2025	8	0.16	0.04

* Includes both brown & rainbow trout



Photo 13. The 4.5m concrete diversion weir for the Opunake hydro scheme in the Waiaua River.

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Appendix 1: Angler caught trout from the Waiaua River, 2024-25 and 2025-26 fishing seasons
2024-25 Season



Photo 13. Jack Alvernaz with a wild Waiaua brown trout (TnT Guided Fly Fishing NZ).



Photo 14. Jack Alvernaz with a Waiaua hatchery rainbow trout (TnT Guided Fly Fishing NZ).



Photo 15. Jack Alvernaz with a wild Waiaua rainbow trout (TnT Guided Fly Fishing NZ).

2025-26 Season



Photo 16. Jack Alvernaz with a wild Waiaua rainbow trout (TnT Guided Fly Fishing NZ).



Photo 17. Jack Alvernaz with a wild Waiaua brown trout (TnT Guided Fly Fishing NZ).



Photo 18. Jack Alvernaz with a wild Waiaua rainbow trout (TnT Guided Fly Fishing NZ).

2025/26 Hatchery and Trout Liberations Report 2025/26

A summary of trout liberations from the Hawera Hatchery

Allen Stancliff

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

September 2026

TARANAKI FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

The Chairman

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

2025/26 HATCHERY AND TROUT LIBERATIONS REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Council's 2025/26 Annual Operational Plan has a species management objective to "Supplement trout fishing opportunities with appropriate stocking that is valued, cost effective in terms of the return to the angler and which retains community support".

The project planned results are:

- Undertake an annual trout stocking programme which concentrates on creating and maintaining valued lake fisheries;
- Undertake release of up to 200 17-month brown and rainbow trout into the lower Patea River and assess angler returns to gauge the potential for a long-term programme;
- Operate the Hawera hatchery in an effective, cost efficient and sustainable manner utilising volunteer support to meet the identified stocking objectives.

The Performance Measures are that the Hāwera hatchery operation is effective and within budget, with measures being the number of fish produced, the cost per fish and volunteer satisfaction.

3. HAWERA HATCHERY

There were 930 adipose-fin clipped brown and rainbow trout yearlings from the 2024 year-class (299 browns and 631 rainbows) held in the Hawera hatchery at the beginning of the 2025/2026 financial year.

An estimated 2,000 brown and rainbow trout fry from the 2025 year-class were also held at that time. These fish originated from 1,000 eyed brown ova and 2,000 eyed rainbow ova received from the Eastern F&G Region's Ngongotaha hatchery on 4th June 2025 (Figure 1). Rainbow trout from the 2025 year-class were adipose fin-clipped on 8th April 2026, with browns fin-clipped on 29th April 2026. At that time the count was 1,587 fish (489 browns and 1,098 rainbows), which was similar to the previous year (1,620 fish).

A total of 2,000 eyed rainbow trout ova and 1,000 eyed brown trout ova (2026 year-class for 2027 release) were received from the Eastern F&G Region's Ngongotaha hatchery on 4th June 2026. From these ova, approximately 2,000 fry were held in the hatchery at year-end (31st August 2026).

A team of nine volunteers ran the hatchery daily on Council's behalf. The funeral of long-serving hatchery volunteer Kevin McDonald was attended on 28/10/2025 and one new volunteer (Ian Reid) was added to the roster bringing the total back to nine. A dinner was held for the hatchery team on 17th August 2026.

2. RELEASES OF BROWN AND RAINBOW TROUT

During the 2025/26 financial year, a total of 1,279 yearling and up to 18-month brown and rainbow trout from the 2024 and 2025 year-classes were released into three lakes and two rivers in the region (299 brown trout and 980 rainbows; Tables 1 & 2).

Releases were made consistent with the release schedules presented to the March 2025 and 2026 Council meetings. In accordance with the Council's Sports Fish & Game Management Plan 2011, and relevant legislation (Conservation Act s26ZM), the Council only released trout into waters where they already exist.

Releases of 250 16/17-month brown and rainbow trout (150 browns and 100 rainbows) were made into the lower Patea River below Patea Dam in October and November 2025 in the second of five years of releases funded by Manawa Energy (now Contact Energy). Details of the releases are provided in a separate report. To date, there has been little feedback from anglers about the success of these releases and organised fishing events will be necessary to gather information.

A total of 308 well grown hatchery rainbows were released into the upper Patea River at Stratford for a kids' trout fishing promotion on 6th December 2025 (Photo 1). Unfortunately, 70 kids caught only 16 trout on the day owing to bright sunny conditions, but the fishing improved markedly once the fish settled in.

Releases into the Hangatahua (Stony) River in November and December 2025 provided on-going angling opportunity right through summer, autumn and winter 2026, as there were no large floods to re-start headwater erosion. A local angler sent in a photo of a brown trout from the Hangatahua (Photo 2). The fish had a large intact adipose fin, so may well have been a wild, naturally spawned fish.

For the 2024 year-class, the total number of brown and rainbow trout raised through to release was 1,527 fish (399 browns and 1,128 rainbows) from the 3,000 ova received in June 2024, which gave a survival rate of 50.9%. This result was below average (Figure 2), with survival just 39.9% for the browns and 56.4% for the rainbows, largely due to losses at the fry stage. The up side of having less fish is that they are larger and have less fin damage at release.

Survival to release for the 2025 year-class is tracking at a similar level to 2024, with 349 rainbows released to date and 1,238 fish held over (749 rainbow & 489 brown).

3. RELEASES OF TWO-YEAR-OLD RAINBOW TROUT FROM NGONGOTAHA

Lake Rotomanu

A total of 500 two-year-old rainbows from the Eastern Fish & Game Region's Ngongotaha hatchery were released into New Plymouth's Lake Rotomanu on 5th November 2025 (Table 3). These fish cost \$6,456.50 (GST exclusive) or \$12.91 each once transport and accommodation was included. No outside funding was obtained for this release.

Following the release, a family trout fishing promotion was held at Lake Rotomanu on Saturday 8th November 2025. A total of 130 children from age 1 to 17 registered for the event (Figure 5), which while successful in terms of participation, resulted in relatively few rainbow trout being caught on the day. Reasons for this are unclear, but may have been due to the brilliantly fine, calm conditions (Photo 3).

The 2025 event was held in conjunction with the Inglewood Rod, Hunting and Clay Target Club and Taranaki Hunting & Fishing and it was the sixth year that trout were released into the lake rather than corralled in a holding net. Hynds Pipe Systems kindly provided their BBQ trailer for this event and there was also sponsorship from New Plymouth PaknSave.

In an alarming development, 10-year-old Max Hamilton found an invasive freshwater gold clam shell (*Corbicula fluminea*) at Lake Rotomanu during the event, which marked the first time the high-risk pest was detected in NZ outside the Waikato River.

The lake was subsequently closed to motorised craft, the level drawn down and a 2-day trial netting to depopulate the lake of fish was held on 14/15 December 2025 in conjunction with a delimiting survey by Biosecurity NZ and Earth Sciences NZ. The survey confirmed the presence of live gold clams in the lake. Only two rainbow trout were caught in the netting, along with perch and a large number of eels.

The Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) decided at its 24th February 2026 meeting to contain the gold clam to Lake Rotomanu while it investigated external funding opportunities for a possible elimination attempt. The cost of eradication was estimated at \$600,000 to \$1.3 million depending on the method chosen and the TRC decided the cost to ratepayers was too high for it to proceed alone.

As of 31st August 2026, no decision has been made on whether to proceed with an attempt to eradicate the gold clam from Lake Rotomanu. Power boat restrictions remain, but the use of non-powered craft, fishing and swimming is allowed provided CCD is undertaken. However, a potentially toxic cyanobacteria bloom was confirmed at Lake Rotomanu on 11th August and the TRC advises the public to avoid all contact with the water, including swimming, fishing, and letting dogs near the lake, until further notice. Lake Rotomanu is currently at its full level, with the river inlet open to allow water into the lake when levels in the river are high enough.

Sattlers Dam

A release of 70 large, two-year+ rainbow trout was made into Sattler's Dam near Raetihi on 10th February 2026 (Table 3). These fish were donated by DOC's Tongariro National Trout Centre. Local anglers with email addresses were notified of the release.

4. PLANNED RESULTS FOR HAWERA HATCHERY TROUT RELEASES

5.1 *Undertake an annual trout stocking programme which concentrates on creating and maintaining valued lake fisheries.*

As shown in Tables 2&3, hatchery rainbow trout were liberated into four lakes in the region (including Sattler's Dam) during the year. Lakes Mangamahoe and Rotomanu are well used by anglers. Lesser numbers fish Lake Ratapiko, where the annual March/April lake level drawdown reduces fishery productivity. No release was made into Lake Namunamu as access has been restricted for harvesting at the surrounding Ngaruru Forest.

Two rivers were also stocked with hatchery rainbow trout during the year. In the case of the Hangatahua (Stony) River, the release of 250 16/17-month Hawera hatchery fish (149 browns and 101 rainbows) was successful in sustaining a productive and valued fishery during the year.

The release of 308 Hawera hatchery rainbows into the upper Patea River in the centre of Stratford enabled a kids' trout fishing promotion attended by 70 children to go ahead on 6th December 2025. The release provided ongoing opportunities for local anglers. Following 27 years of such releases, a wild rainbow trout population is also becoming well established in the upper Patea River.

5.2 *Undertake release of up to 200 17-month brown and rainbow trout into the lower Patea River and assess angler returns to gauge the potential for a long-term programme.*

In October and November 2025, 100 Hawera hatchery rainbow trout and 150 browns were released into the lower Patea River below Patea Dam in the second of five years of additional releases (2024 – 2028) in an agreed programme to assess whether releasing trout at a larger size increases the return to anglers. During the year there was little feedback from anglers as

to the success of the releases. Long-standing access to the power station tailrace has been stopped following a H&S Audit, denying anglers access to the most popular fishing site on the river.

5.3 *Operate the Hawera hatchery in an effective, cost efficient and sustainable manner utilising volunteer support to meet the identified stocking objectives.*

Operating costs for the Hawera hatchery over the period 1 September 2025 - 31 August 2026 came to \$13,418.85 (compared with \$13,876.32 in 2024/25, \$13,212.66 in 2023/24, \$12,119.64 in 2022/23, \$10,680.94 in 2021/22 and \$8,862.29 in 2020/21). This included the cost of trout ova (\$1693.13), fish food (\$3,303.46), insurance (\$1007.11), power (\$1,223.75), liberation and hatchery expenses (\$1,505.84), fish trailer expenses (\$480.03) and resource consent monitoring fees (\$4,205.53) but excluded staff time. While feed costs were reduced owing to a significant purchase falling into the previous year, the TRC consent monitoring costs increased by \$1,628.67 (from \$2,576.86 in 2024/25).

With a total of 2,517 trout raised at the hatchery in the 2025/2026 financial year, (1,279 released and 1,238 held over) this put the average cost of raising trout at the Hawera hatchery at \$5.22 per fish. However, in 2025/26 there was \$3,682 of income from Manawa Energy (\$3,386) and the Taranaki Electricity Trust (\$296), which brought the cost per fish down to \$3.79 (Figure 3). This compares to \$3.26 in 2024/25, \$2.47 in 2023/24, \$3.90 in 2022/23, \$4.27 in 2021/22 (no TET grant) and \$3.03 in 2020/21 (TET grant received) (all figures GST exclusive).

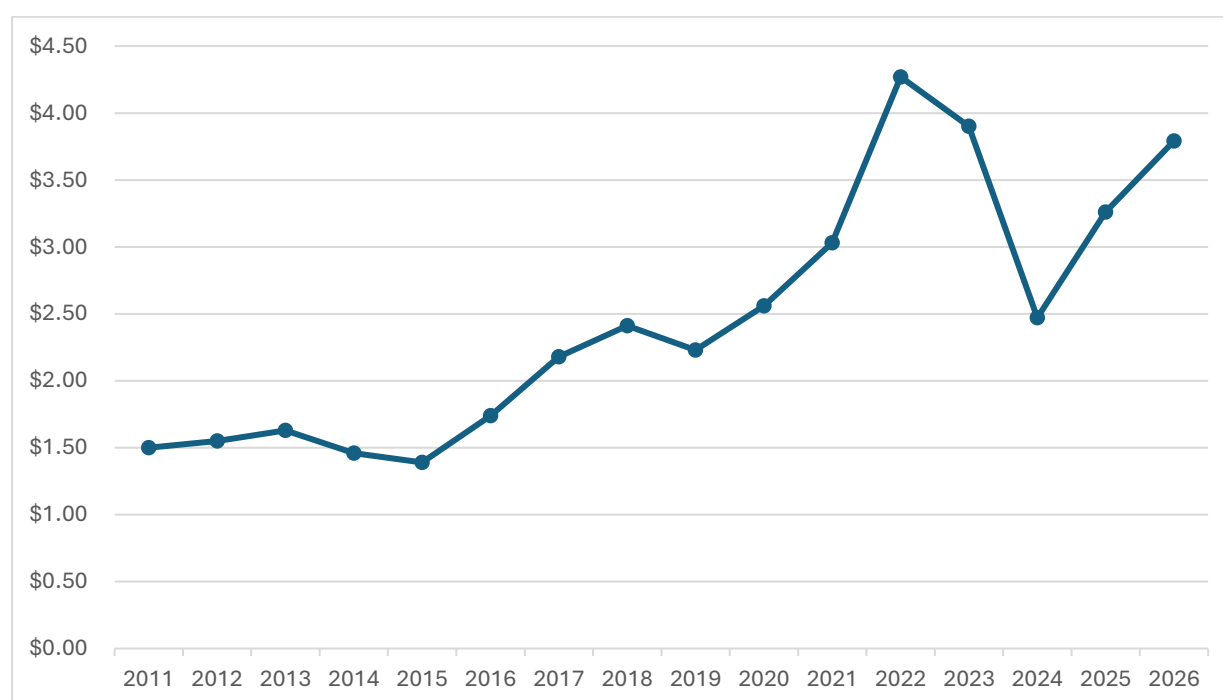


Figure 4 - Cost per fish produced vs year: 2010/11 to 2025/26

While costs continue to rise, the smaller number of fish raised in recent years and rearing some fish through to 16-18 months of age means that fish are now much larger at release, and they'll have better survival and higher angling value as a result.

The figure of \$3.79 per fish compares favourably with the cost of purchasing 2-year rainbow trout directly from the Eastern F&G Region (\$8.21 each, plus transport @ \$3.07/km),

particularly given that the oldest Hawera fish are much larger at release (1 – 1.5kg compared with 0.5 – 0.8kg).

Having trout available at Hawera retains the flexibility to release fish when receiving water conditions are suitable. As indicated in Section 4, the large Hawera rainbows raised for the Stratford, Hangatahua (Stony) River and lower Patea River releases would've cost at least \$12.91 each to buy and transport from Ngongotaha.

6. RECOMMENDATION

That the 2025/2026 Trout Liberation Report dated 3rd September 2026, be received.

Allen Stancliff

Senior Field Officer

3rd September 2026

TABLE 1 - Releases of fry, fingerling or yearling rainbow trout into Taranaki Region rivers and lakes during the 2025/2026 financial year. All fish raised at the Hawera hatchery were produced from Lake Tarawera-strain ova received from the Eastern Fish & Game Region.

Water	Release Date	Hatchery Origin	Fish Year Class	Brown Trout	Rainbow Trout
Lake Rotomanu	14.10.25	F&G Hawera	2024		122
Patea River (lower)	22.10.25	F&G Hawera	2024		100
Hangatahua River	20.11.25	F&G Hawera	2024		101
Patea River (lower)	25.11.25	F&G Hawera	2024	150	
Patea River (upper)	05.12.25	F&G Hawera	2024		308
Hangatahua River	11.12.25	F&G Hawera	2024	149	
Lake Mangamahoe	30.06.26	F&G Hawera	2025		149
Lake Ratapiko	12.08.26	F&G Hawera	2025		200
Total Released				299	980

TABLE 2 - Total number of fingerling, yearling or older brown and rainbow trout released into each water during the 2025/2026 financial year

Water	Number Released
Lake Rotomanu	122
Lake Ratapiko	200
Lake Mangamahoe	149
Hangatahua (Stony) River	250
Patea River (upper)	308
Patea River (lower)	250
Total Released	1,279

TABLE 3. Releases of 2-year-old hatchery rainbows in the Taranaki Region during the 2025/2026 financial year.

Water	Date	Hatchery Origin	Number Released
Lake Rotomanu	5.11.25	F&G Ngongataha	504
Sattlers Dam	10.02.26	DOC Turangi	70
Total Released			574

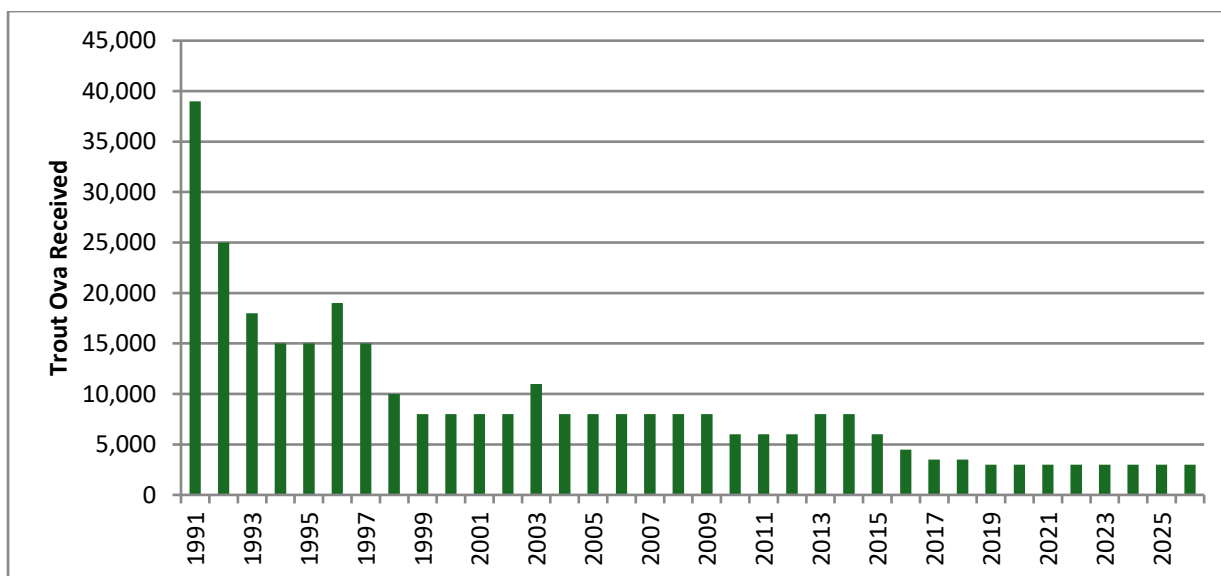


FIGURE 1. Trout ova received at the Hawera hatchery, 1991 – 2026.

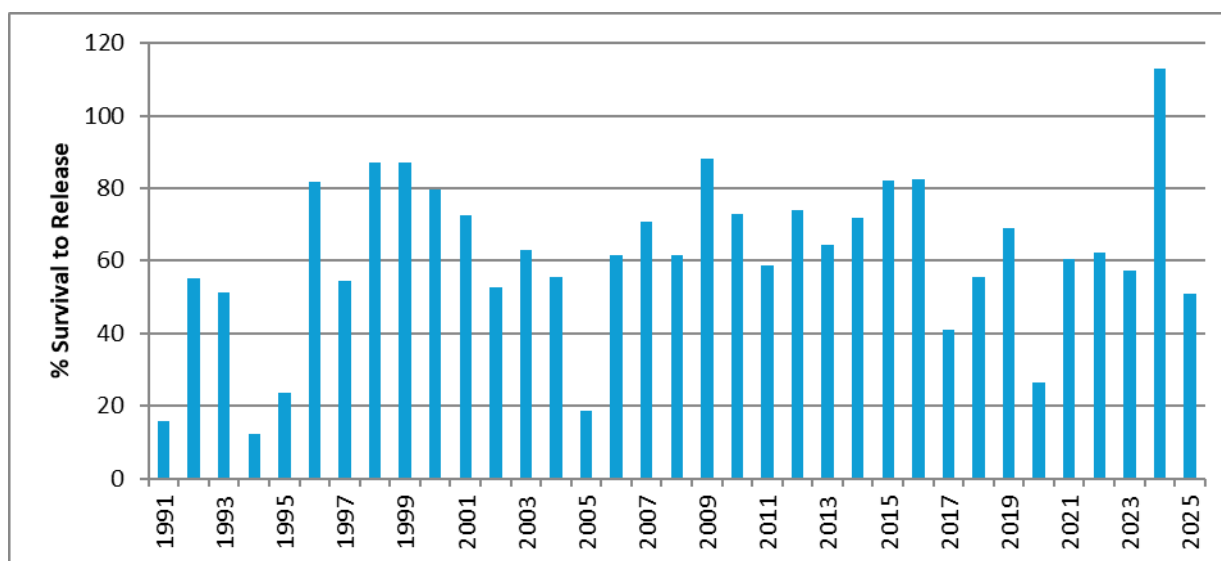


FIGURE 2. Trout survival to release as a percentage of ova received, 1991 – 2025.

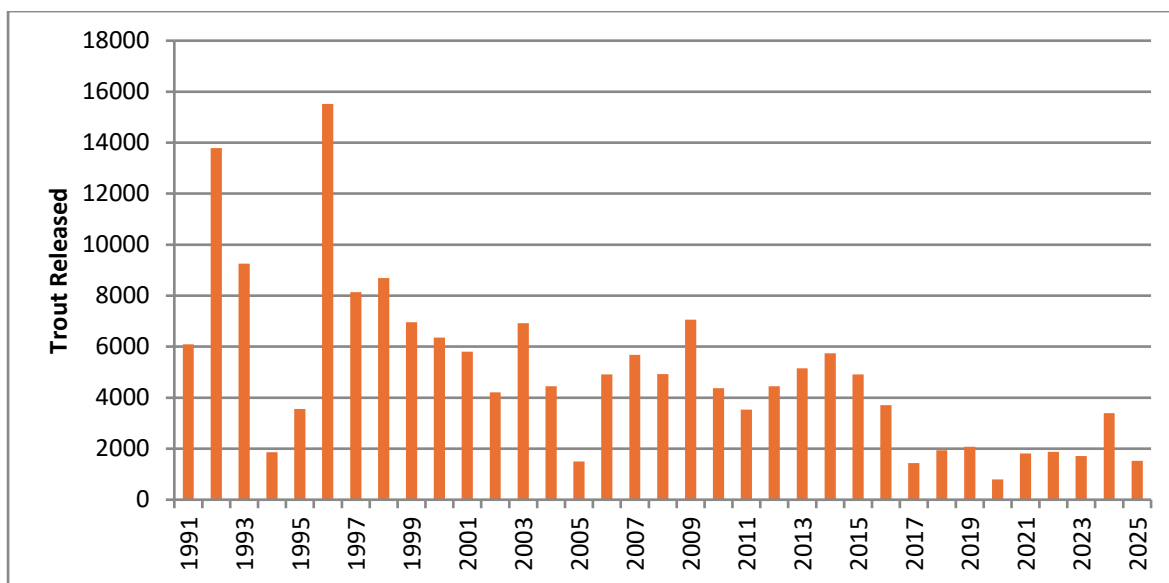


FIGURE 3. Total number of Hawera hatchery trout released, 1991 – 2026.

Photo 1. Hāwera hatchery rainbow caught at the Stratford kids' trout fishing day, 6th December 2025.



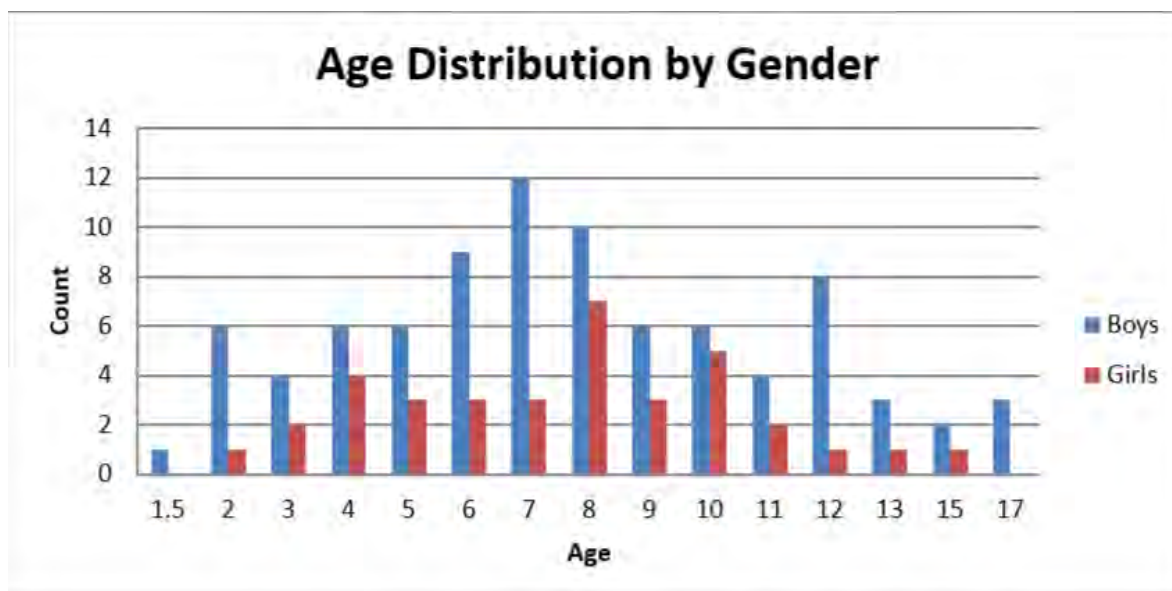
Photo 2. Hangatahua (Stony) River brown trout caught during the 2025/26 season (Photo by Chris Young).



Photo 3. Eastern region rainbow trout caught at Lake Rotomanu during the November 2025 family fishing day.



Figure 5. Age distribution of children who registered for the November 2025 family trout fishing day at New Plymouth's Lake Rotomanu.



Report on Lower Patea Trout Release – October / November 2025

Following a review of the 2017 – 2021 trout stocking programme in the lower Patea River downstream of Patea Dam, the Expert Panel supported the review's recommendation that 200 larger trout be restocked to the Patea River downstream of the dam, per year. Manawa Energy agreed to the revised restocking programme whereby Taranaki Fish & Game will raise and release up to 100 17-month rainbow trout and 100 17-month brown trout each year for a period of five years from 2024 – 2028, after which there would be a review of the effectiveness of the releases.

This report provides details of the releases that occurred in October and November 2025, the second year of the revised programme. Releases were carried out at the McColl's crossing site located some 3.5km downstream of Patea dam (1734000E, 5619575N NZTM) in accordance with Fish & Game's Methodology and Hazard Control Plan October 2025. Manawa Operations were contacted prior to each restocking to log an outage to ensure suitable flow conditions for Health & Safety reasons and to facilitate survival of the restocked fish. All trout were marked with an adipose fin clip to indicate their hatchery origin.

Rainbow trout

Eyed rainbow trout ova from the Eastern Fish & Game Region's Ngongotaha hatchery were received at Taranaki Fish & Game's Hawera hatchery on 23rd May 2024 and 100 well-grown fish were released into the lower Patea River on 22nd October 2025 at 17 months of age (Photos 1 & 2).

River flows were held steady at 24 – 43 m³/s immediately following release to provide favourable conditions for fish establishment (Figure 1). Water temperatures were in the 14.7 - 16.3 °C range immediately post release (Figure 2) and were also favourable for fish establishment.

Brown trout

Eyed brown trout ova from the Eastern Fish & Game Region's Ngongotaha hatchery were also received at Taranaki Fish & Game's Hawera hatchery on 23rd May 2024 and 150 well-grown fish were released into the lower Patea River on 25th November 2025 at 18 months of age (Photos 3 & 4). Brown trout are more difficult to raise than rainbow trout but this year, the average size at release was the largest we've been able to achieve at the Hāwera hatchery. The number released was higher than the 100 fish originally proposed, owing to fish availability.

River flows were around 6 m³/s at release and were then held steady at 19 cumecs for 24 hours post release to provide favourable conditions for fish establishment (Figure 3). Water temperatures were in the 20.1 - 21.7 °C range immediately post release (Figure 4).

Figure 1. Patea River Flow 20 – 27 October 2025 as recorded at McColl's Bridge (data courtesy Taranaki Regional Council).

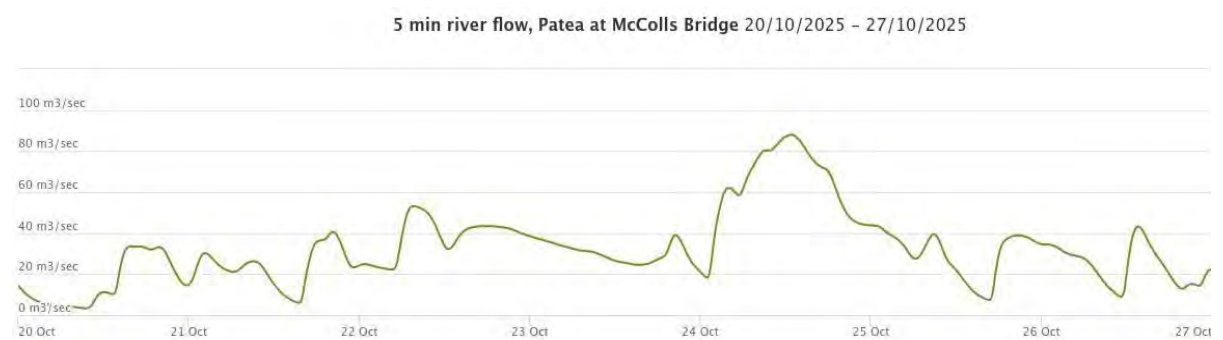


Figure 2. Patea River water temperatures 20 – 27 October 2025 as recorded at McColl's Bridge (data courtesy Taranaki Regional Council).

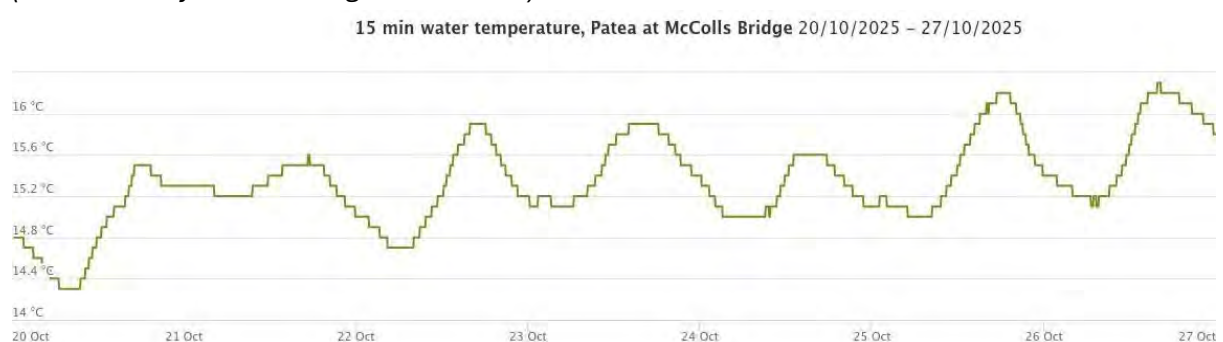


Figure 3. Patea River Flow 20 – 27 November 2025 as recorded at McColl's Bridge (data courtesy Taranaki Regional Council).

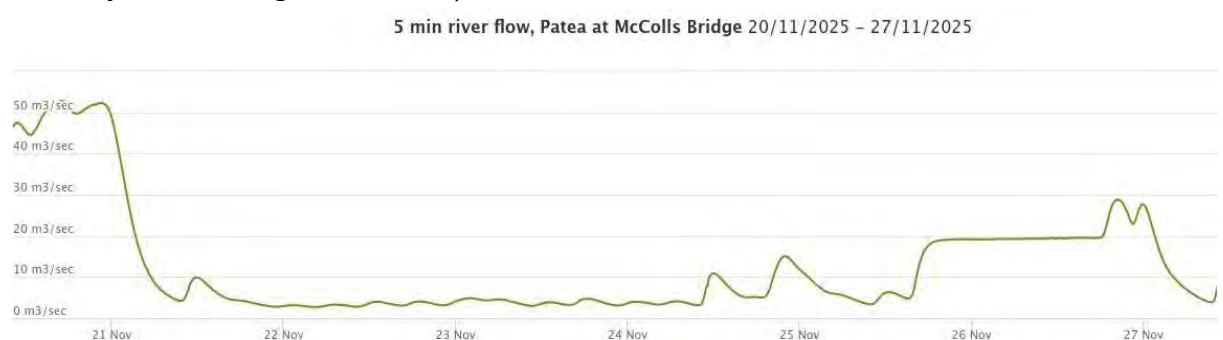
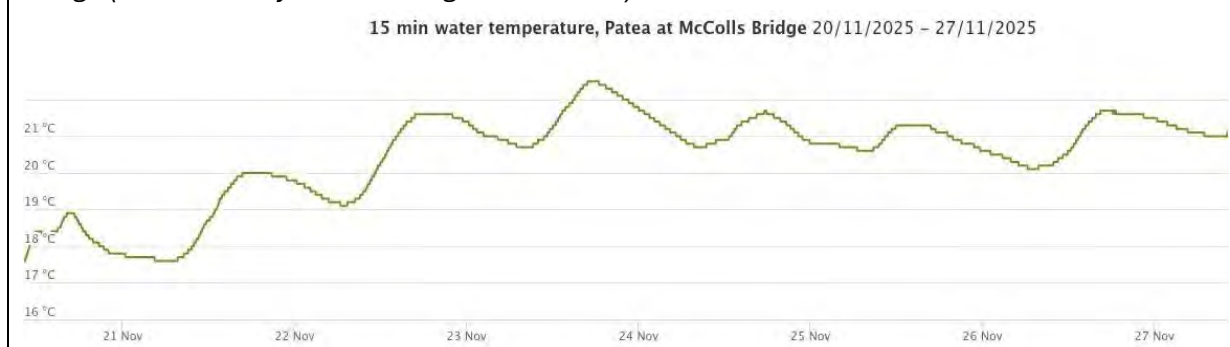


Figure 4. Patea River water temperatures 20 – 27 November 2025 as recorded at McColl's Bridge (data courtesy Taranaki Regional Council).



Recommendations

The release protocol as described in the 'Patea Trout Release – Methodology and Hazard Control Plan (2nd October 2025)' worked well and no changes are recommended for future releases.

Allen Stancliff

Senior Field Officer

Taranaki Fish & Game

27 November 2025



Photo 1. Rainbow trout being unloaded for release into the lower Patea River at McColl's crossing, 22nd October 2025.



Photo 2. Rainbow trout being released into the lower Patea River at McColl's crossing, 22nd October 2025.



Photo 3. Brown trout being released into the lower Patea River at McColl's crossing, 25th November 2025.



Photo 4. Brown trout being released into the lower Patea River at McColl's crossing, 25th November 2025.

Game Bird Population Monitoring in the Taranaki Region 2025/26

A. 2026/27 Game Gazette Notice Report

B. 2026 Trend Count Report

Purpose of the Project

Monitor and report information on the status of the region's mallard and grey duck, paradise shelduck, shoveler, swan and pukeko populations sufficient to assess harvest, identify and manage any population impacts, set effective regulations and inform management directions.

Strategic Outcome

Population status and harvest detailed for each gamebird species and used to guide the setting of game bird hunting regulations.

Supports the Taranaki Fish & Game Strategic Outcome: **Healthy Species, Habitats, and Ecosystems.**

Allen Stancliff

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

August 2026

Executive Summary - Game Bird Population Monitoring (2026)

Overview of Results

Trend count and harvest information was presented for grey/mallard duck, shoveler duck, paradise shelduck, black swan and pūkeko. Harvest information was also presented for pheasant and California quail.

No changes were made to the 2026/27 Game Gazette Notice from the previous year. All species were judged to be sustainably managed. However, a Gazette listing for an upland game property with special conditions was removed from the Notice, as the applicant stated they would not proceed in the 2026 season.

Statement of Service Performance

Planned Result:

Monitor and report information on the status of the region’s mallard and grey duck, paradise shelduck, shoveler, swan and pukeko populations sufficient to assess harvest, identify and manage any population impacts, set effective regulations and inform management directions.

Actual Result:

- A 2026/27 Draft Game Season Gazette Notice Report was presented to Council’s 13 December 2025 meeting;
- A 2026 Game Bird Trend Count report was presented to Council’s 14 February 2026 meeting;
- Project Report 1112 Game Bird Population Monitoring for the Taranaki Region 2026 was prepared.

- **Budget Variance**

	Budget (\$)		Actual (\$)	
External	15,500		8,210	
Internal	36,392	370 hours	40,621	413 hours
Total	51,892		48,831	

Comments:

Additional hours spent doing January 2026 trend counts. Combined Wellington / Taranaki January 2026 trend count aerial survey not undertaken due to inclement weather.

TARANAKI FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

The Chairman
Taranaki Fish and Game Council

2026/27 Game Season Gazette Notice report

This report provides an assessment of population monitoring and harvest information for the Council's information, with draft recommended conditions to be approved at Council's December 2025 meeting and re-confirmed following results of the January 2026 trend counts for Paradise shelduck and Black swan.

Background

Since 2016 the Council has had a policy of retaining consistent game regulations from year to year unless new information supports a need to make significant changes to protect the resource.

This reflects that detailed analysis of long-term harvest data from the Eastern Region indicates that large changes in bag or season length would be required to make any meaningful difference to the duck harvest.

There is also increasing evidence that maximising bag limits does not necessarily maximise hunter satisfaction. To maximise sustainable harvest also requires precise and accurate monitoring. However, with such patchily distributed and highly mobile species like ducks, it is both difficult and very resource intensive to achieve robust estimates. This is further complicated by the timing of the gazettal process which requires that Council agree next season's recommendations in December before we can measure this spring's production.

Second, total harvest is directly related to total effort and analysis by Eastern Fish and Game found annual changes in effort were best explained by changes in the duck population size. In other words, in years of low duck numbers, hunters spend less time in the field, and the total harvest is inherently smaller irrespective of any regulation changes. Hunter behaviour in Taranaki is expected to display a similar trend.

Collectively, all these factors suggest that rather than trying to maximise bag limits every year Council is better to set consistent season conditions which they can be confident do not impact on resource sustainability while providing sufficient opportunity and setting realistic expectations which ultimately result in greater overall hunter satisfaction.

This consistency from year to year also provides hunters with confidence that they are adhering to season regulations and can invest in equipment and/or habitat development and predator control programmes to improve the game bird resource. This paper is therefore presented from the perspective of whether there is any good reason to depart from the status quo for each gamebird species.

However, given the decision that the Taranaki and Wellington Fish & Game regions work more closely together, it is also important that regulations are as consistent as possible across the two regions. For this reason, Taranaki adopted a daily bag limit of 12 grey/mallard duck for the 2024

game season, an increase of two birds from the usual 10-bird limit. This follows a 15-bird limit for opening weekend of the 2023 season.

Current Population Status

Grey and Mallard Duck (Greyland/rakiraki)

Given the degree of interbreeding and hybridisation between mallard and grey duck these species are treated as a single population for this discussion.

From 2016 - 2019 annual aerial counts along 20 randomly selected transects were undertaken around the Taranaki ringplain in early April using a helicopter. After missing two years of flights (2020 and 2021) owing to Covid-19 lockdowns and covid-related budget cuts, aerial helicopter transect flights resumed in April 2022. However, owing to the increasing cost of using a helicopter it was decided to use a Cessna 172 fixed wing for the 2025 count, and to drop two coastal transects to reduce flying time. The 2025 count was carried out on 13th April in clear calm conditions. Flying in the morning reduced glare from the water on ponds and the pilot kept to the 500 feet observation level, meaning that count accuracy was the best that could be expected.

The 2025 count of 781 birds, over the 18 randomly selected transects surveyed was the lowest on record (Figure 1). It is not known how much of the reduced count (if any) was due to the change from using a helicopter to a fixed wing for the survey. It was certainly dry prior to the survey, with the TRC recording January to March 2025 rainfall in Taranaki at just 34 – 66% of normal. This changed in April, but there was still only one significant rainfall event prior to the 2025 survey, and the observers noted the almost complete absence of casual (standing) water in paddocks and in depressions that are very attractive to ducks.

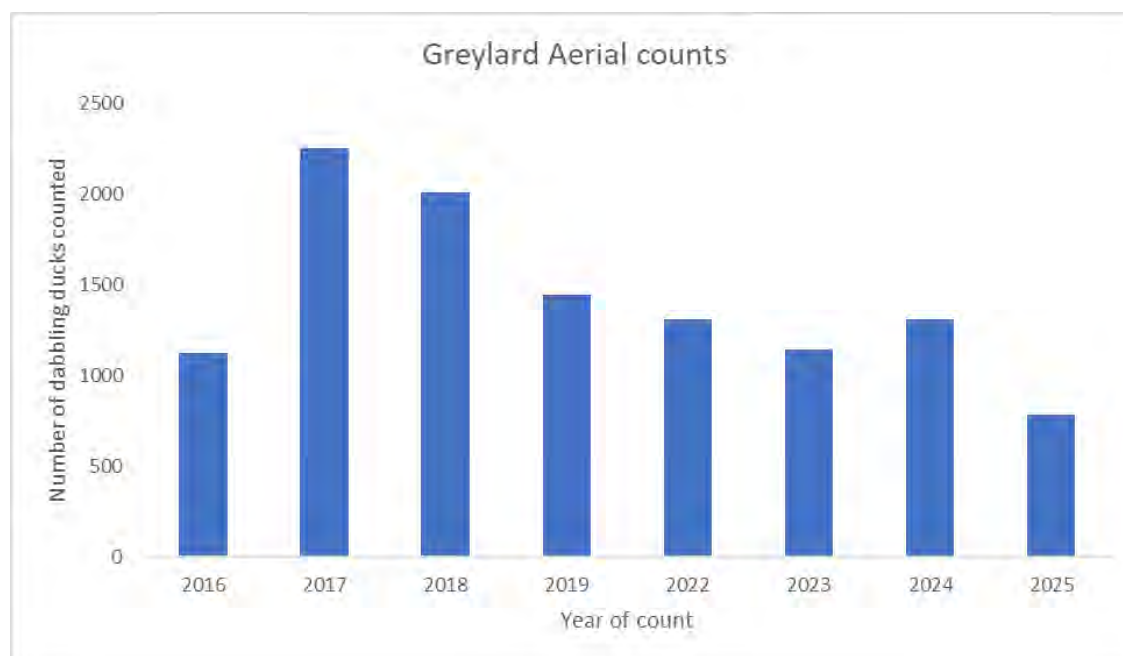


Figure 1. Total Greylands counted during helicopter aerial transects in the Taranaki ringplain, 2016 – 2025 (note: no counts undertaken in 2020 and 2021 and all counts adjusted to record only those from the 18 transects counted in 2025).

Hunter survey results for the 2025 season indicate that the hunter success rate for greyland duck of 0.66 birds/hr was right on the average (Figure 2). Hunting hours (20,885) and harvest (13,758 ducks) also remained stable (Figure 3).

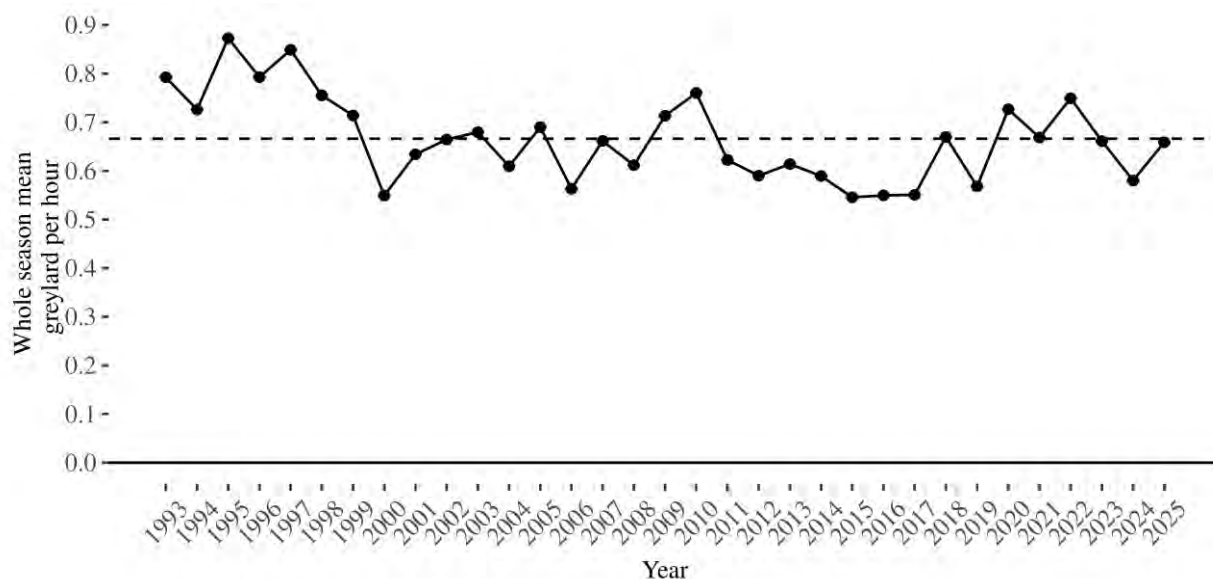


Figure 2. Average hunter harvest rate of greylards (ducks per hour) from the National Hunter Survey 1993 to 2025 seasons.

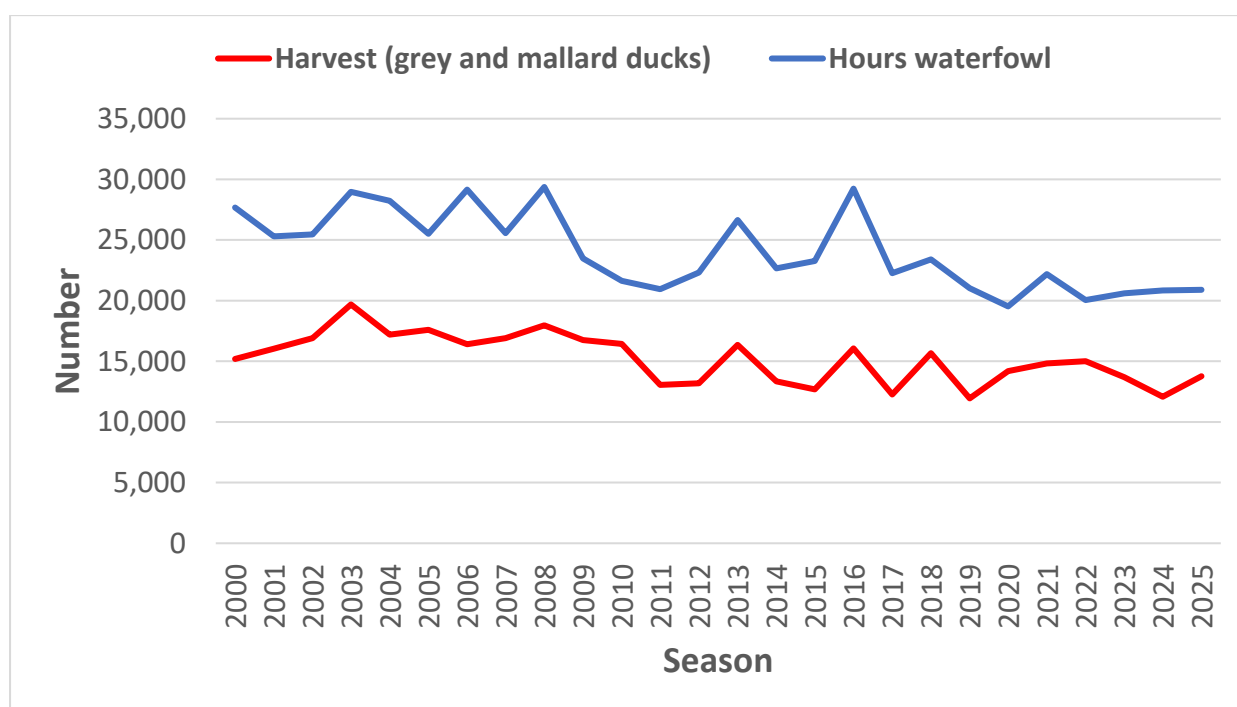


Figure 3. Total hunting effort (hours) and harvest of greylards in the Taranaki region 2000 to 2025.

The average 2025 opening weekend bag for greyland duck (5.0 birds) was below average, but very similar to 2024 (Figure 4). In both 2024 and 2025, the opening weekend had fine, clear and calm weather conditions which firmly favoured the ducks.

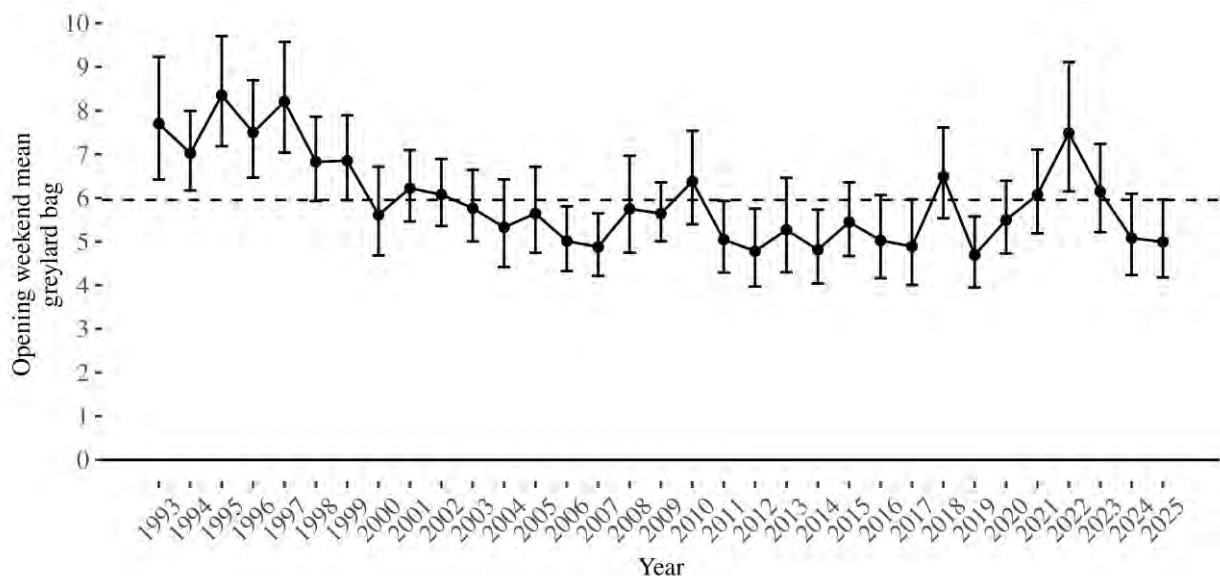


Figure 4. Average opening weekend bag for greyland duck in the Taranaki region 1993 to 2025.

Given this analysis, and the intention to align regulations between the Wellington and Taranaki regions where practicable, it is recommended that the Council set the usual 10-bird limit for greyland duck for the whole of an 8-week season in 2026.

Shoveler Duck

Monitoring of known aggregations of Australasian Shoveler Duck (Kuruwhengi) has occurred in early August each year since 2000. At this time, birds congregate to select mates before dispersing to secluded breeding sites. Monitoring occurs concurrently throughout New Zealand to reflect the view that the population is a single national population.

Across the Taranaki region 504 shoveler duck were counted at 28 sites on 3rd August 2025, which was the highest count since 2018 and 27% higher than the long-term average (368 ducks). In the 2025 national count, 12,250 shoveler were counted at 273 sites nationwide. The long-term trend indicates a stable population across the sites counted and no consistent change over the last two years (McDougall, 2025).

The low level of harvest in Taranaki during the 2025 game season (an estimated 18 birds, Figure 5) was consistent with recent seasons. The low harvest suggests shoveler are not generally targeted by Taranaki hunters and/or are not particularly prevalent in Taranaki during the game season. It is recommended that the status quo of a 2-bird bag limit and 8-week season be retained for 2026.

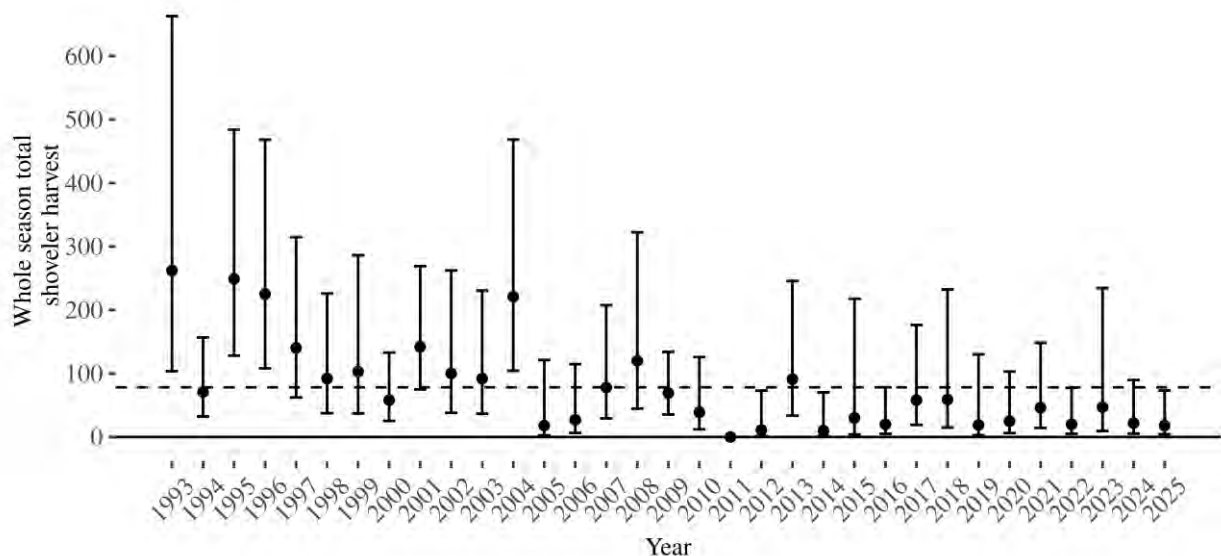


Figure 5. Estimated Shoveler duck harvest in the Taranaki Region 1993 to 2025 seasons (National Hunter Survey).

Paradise Shelduck

The paradise shelduck (Pūtangitangi) moult count in January 2025 in the Waimarino area (2,899 paradise shelduck) was lower than the 2024 count of 3,297 birds and the lowest count on record (Figure 6). The count represented 161 birds per moult site which was also a little lower than in recent years (Figure 7). The Whanganui count increased to 1,747 birds from 1,566 in 2024 but remained at a relatively low level. Counts in the Taranaki ringplain and eastern hill country areas increased to a total of 14,195 birds from 12,769 in 2024, but there was a slight decrease in birds per site (309 birds per moult site compared with 319 in 2024). The total count was still above the long-term average of 12,043 birds.

The counts suggest that the population is stable but at the ‘low end’ of the historical range of abundance in the Waimarino and Whanganui areas. The count in Taranaki remains at a relatively high level.

In respect of the harvest, the estimated total regional harvest of 5,723 paradise in 2025, with just 4,608 birds harvested during the main season was a decrease on the 8,521 birds harvested in 2024, but similar to the harvest in 2023 (5,833 birds; Figure 8). The long-term trend in total regional harvest is one of decline (Figure 8). Reasons for the gradual reduction in harvest could be related to declining bird numbers in the Waimarino/ Whanganui/ Waverley area. However, the whole season harvest rate of 0.22 birds per hour for paradise shelduck was well below average (Figure 9) and suggests that harvest was also reduced in the Taranaki ringplain area where bird numbers are relatively high.

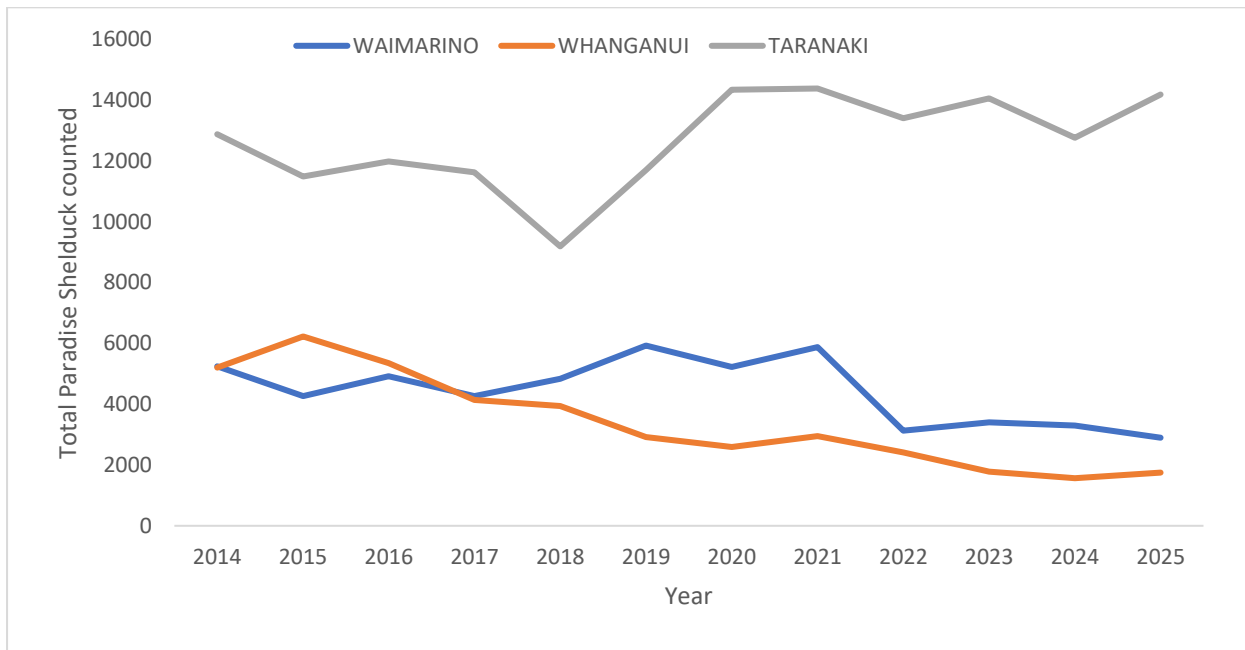


Figure 6. Total January trend count of Paradise shelduck in the Waimarino, Whanganui and Taranaki areas from 2014 to 2025.

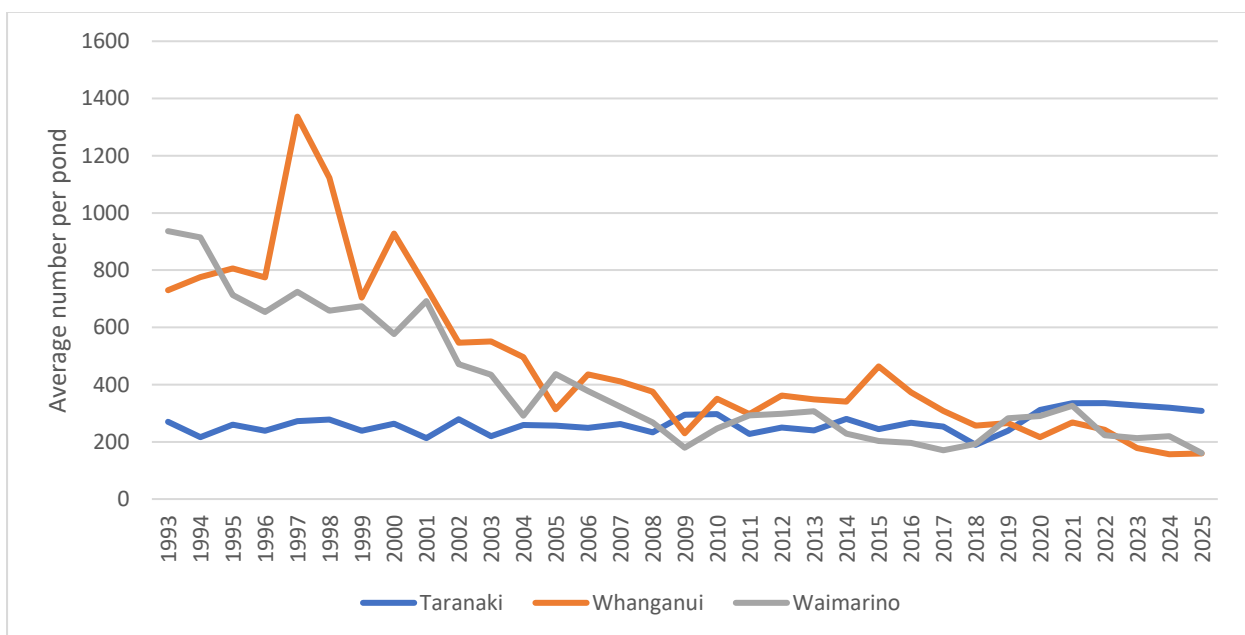


Figure 7. Average number of Paradise shelduck per moult site counted across the Waimarino, Whanganui and Taranaki areas from 1992 to 2025 moult counts.

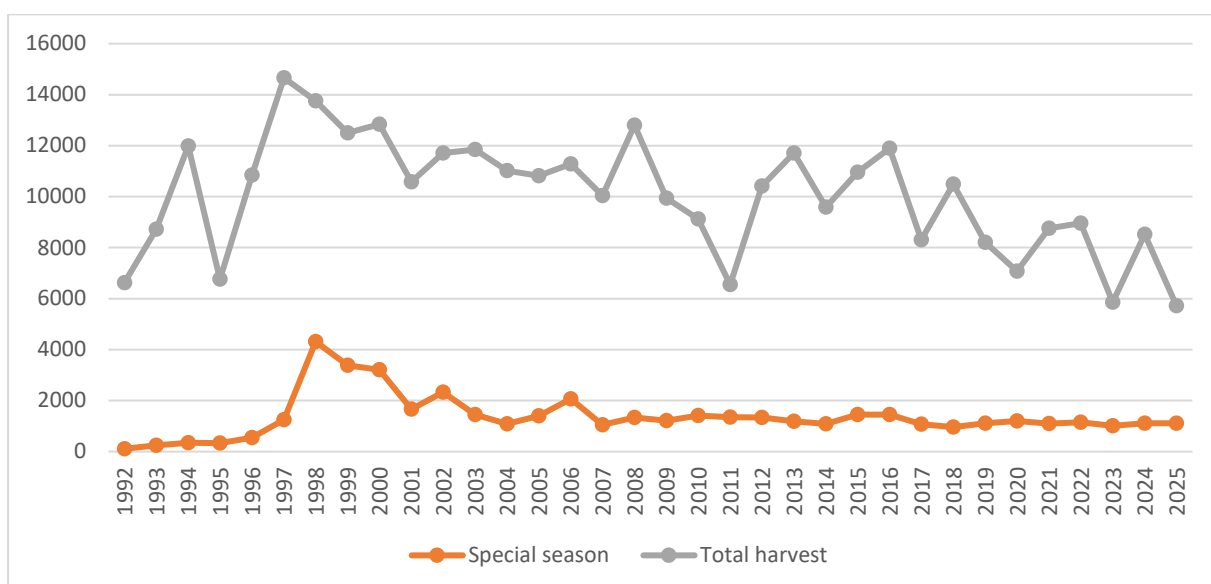


Figure 8. Estimated special season harvest and total annual Paradise shelduck harvest across the Taranaki region, 1992 to 2025.

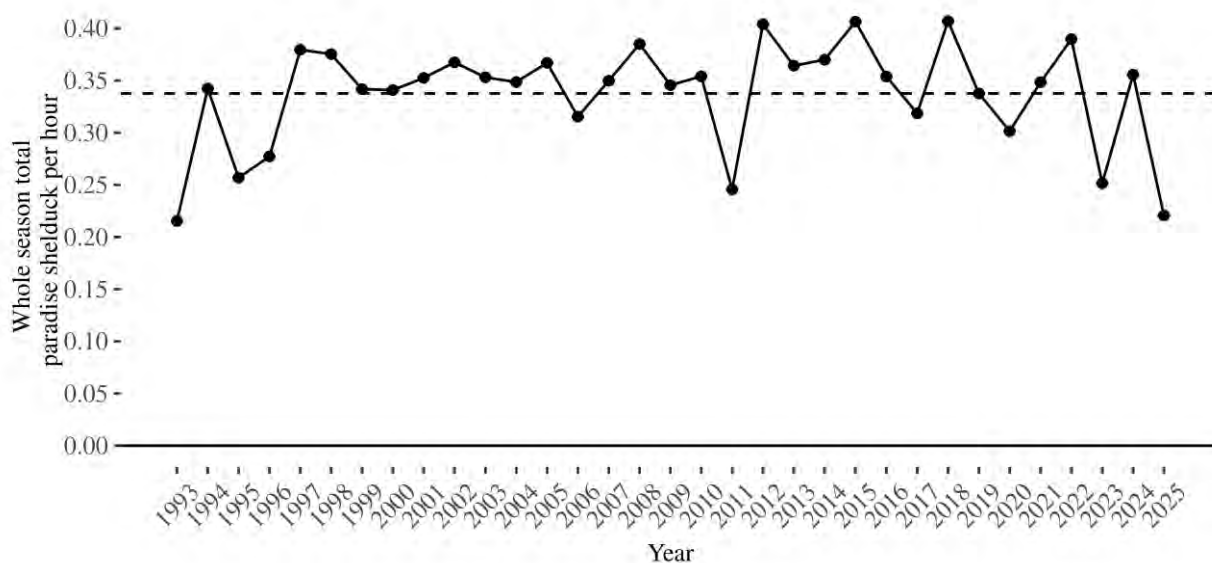


Figure 9. Whole season harvest rate for Paradise shelduck (birds per hour) in the Taranaki Region, 1993 - 2025. Data excludes harvest during the special summer season.

The special summer season for paradise shelduck in Area C continues to play an important role in the dispersal of post-moult birds that cause a nuisance to farmers by grazing and fouling areas of new grass, recovering hay paddocks and fodder crops like chicory. It also provides an additional hunting opportunity for licence holders and land occupiers. As Figure 8 shows, the harvest from the special summer season is consistently around 1,000 birds per year and this remains a small but increasingly significant proportion of the total annual harvest.

Manipulating the harvest is complicated by the need to set the special season regulations more than a year in advance, however it is recommended that the Council retain the current special season conditions. With population numbers in Areas A and B at the lower end of abundance, any

additional harvest from a special season is not supported in those areas. Any impacts from aggregations of birds there are best managed by working directly with the impacted landowners.

In respect of the special season in Area C, the Council resolved to extend season to 3 weekends including Taranaki anniversary day (total 7 days) in 2023. The 2026 dates are already set in the 2025 Gazette Notice and are 21/22 February, 28 February/1 March and 7/8/9 March 2026.

In 2027, Taranaki Anniversary Day falls on Monday 8th March, so the special season dates will be 20/21 February, 27/28 February, and 6/7/8/ March 2027. Including an extra weekend has resulted in the same hunting effort being spread out over a longer timeframe with a similar harvest. A 7-day season does allow for greater dispersal of paradise shelduck from moult sites and more hunter opportunity. Disturbance of mallards occurs a little closer to the main season, but the impact is unlikely to be significant.

On the basis that paradise shelduck populations generally appear stable, along with a moderate existing harvest, it is recommended that Council retain the status quo with an extension to the special season in Area C to include Taranaki Anniversary weekend. That is:

- A 10-bird daily limit for Areas A, B & C for an 8-week main season (as is also recommended for the Wellington F&G Region);
- A 3-weekend special season in Area C for 2027 (20/21 February, 27/28 February, and 6/7/8/ March 2027).

Black Swan

In 2016 the daily bag limit for black swan (Kakīānau) was increased from 1 bird to 2. Most Taranaki hunters choose not to harvest swan and the increase allowed the few who do to take an extra bird for the table. The harvest has generally fluctuated between 20 and 300 swan, with 345 harvested in 2025 (Figure 10). The 2016 increase in the daily bag limit doesn't appear to have significantly increased the harvest, which remains small overall.

Counts of black swan undertaken in January 2025 were on the long-term average in Whanganui (386 swan cf. an average of 346), Waimarino (27 cf. an average of 32 swan) and above average in Taranaki (542 cf. an average of 383 swan). The total count of 955 swan is lower than the count in 2024 (1,098 swan), but higher than in 2023 (805 birds).

Black swan are relatively mobile and it is thought that a single population extends over central New Zealand, if not further afield. The January 2025 trend counts in Nelson/Marlborough (including Farewell Spit) remain high, but counts have declined at Lake Wairarapa in the Wellington Region (Figure 11). Notwithstanding this, given the likelihood that swan from Nelson/Marlborough are moving to Lake Wairarapa following the moult and causing issues with adjacent landowners, Wellington Fish & Game is considering raising daily bag limits for swan during the 2026 season, along with also considering extended and summer seasons (see attached report).

However, given that the Taranaki counts and harvest remain stable, and swan are not causing significant issues with crop or pasture damage, it is recommended that the status quo (2 bird daily limit for an 8-week season) remain.

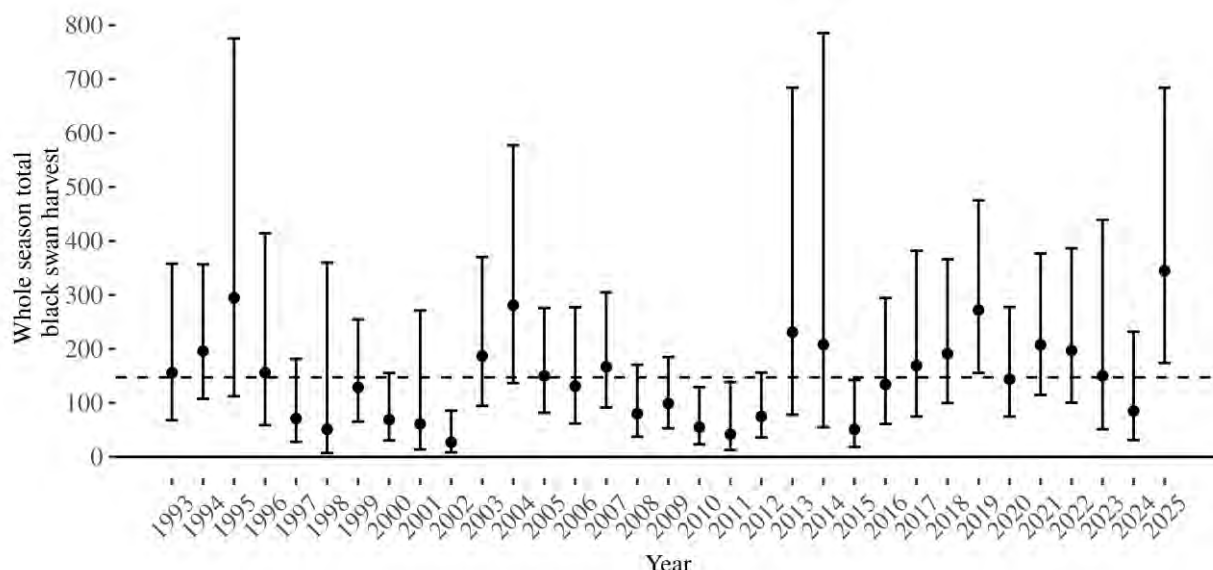


Figure 10. Estimated black swan harvest in the Taranaki Fish and Game region 1993 to 2025.

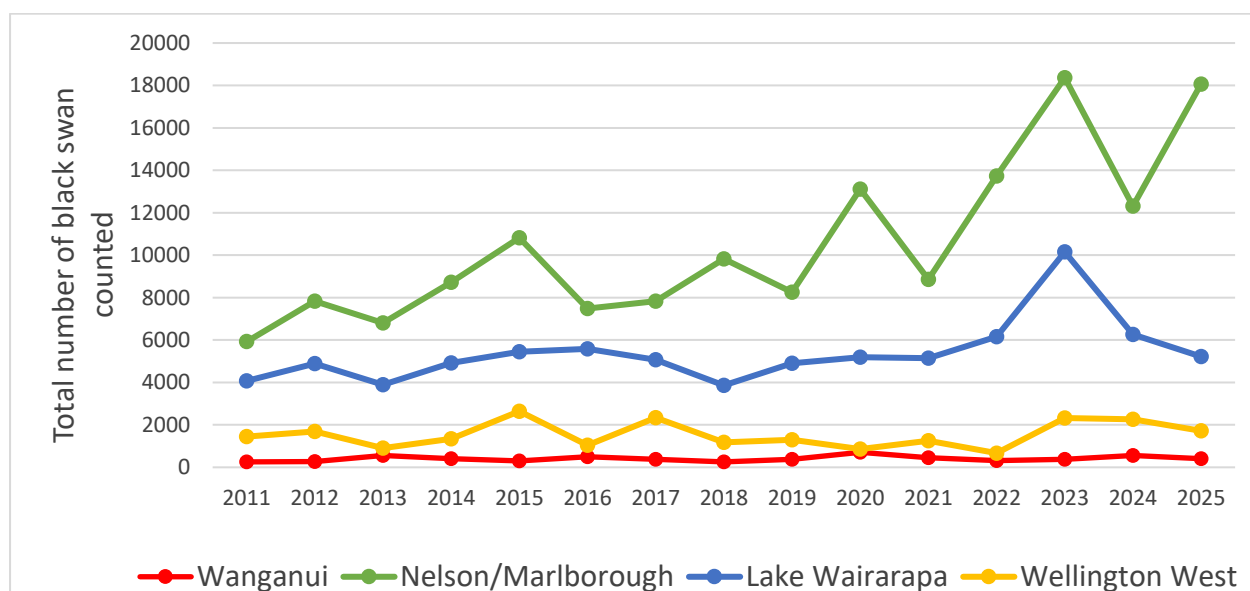


Figure 11. January black swan trend counts for the Taranaki, Wellington and Nelson/Marlborough regions 2010 to 2025.

Pūkeko

Early April counts of pūkeko have been made along 17 randomly selected transects around the Taranaki ringplain since 2005, although no counts were undertaken in 2020 owing to the covid-19 lockdown. Total counts have varied between 91 and 336 birds, with an average of 178. The April 2025 count was 243 pūkeko, which was lower than the 274 birds counted in 2024 (Figure 12).

The 20-year trend analysis (Figure 13) indicates that the population remains stable or slowly increasing, although birds are patchy in distribution with greater numbers in the wetter north and central Taranaki areas.

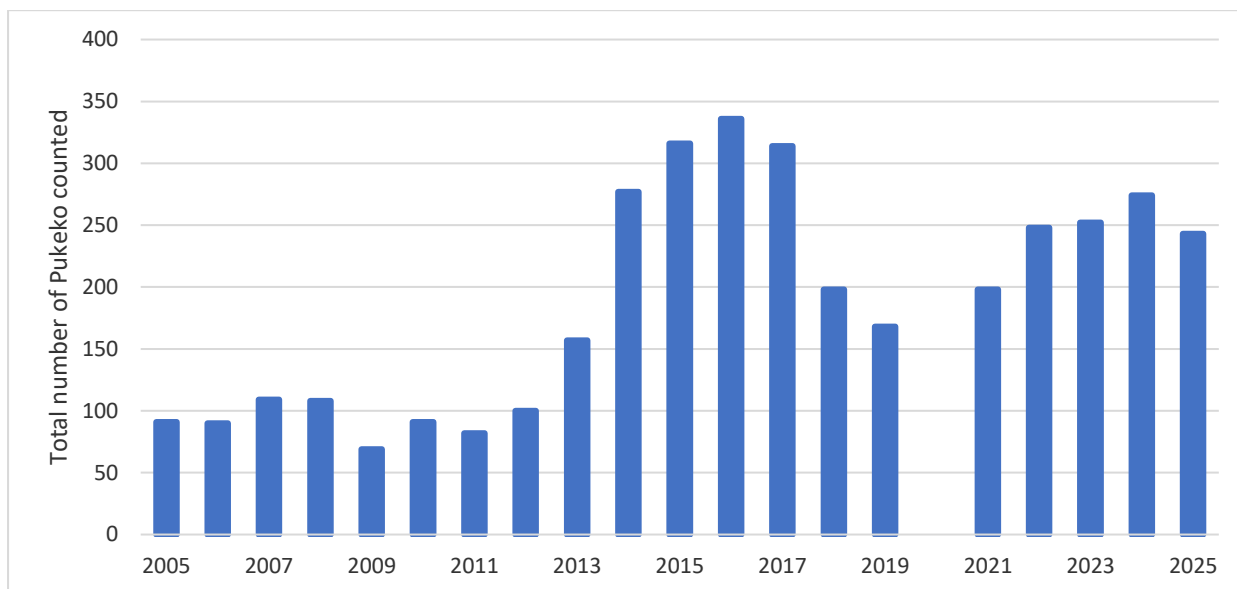


Figure 12. Total counts of pukeko along 17 randomly selected road transects around the Taranaki ringplain, 2005 to 2025.

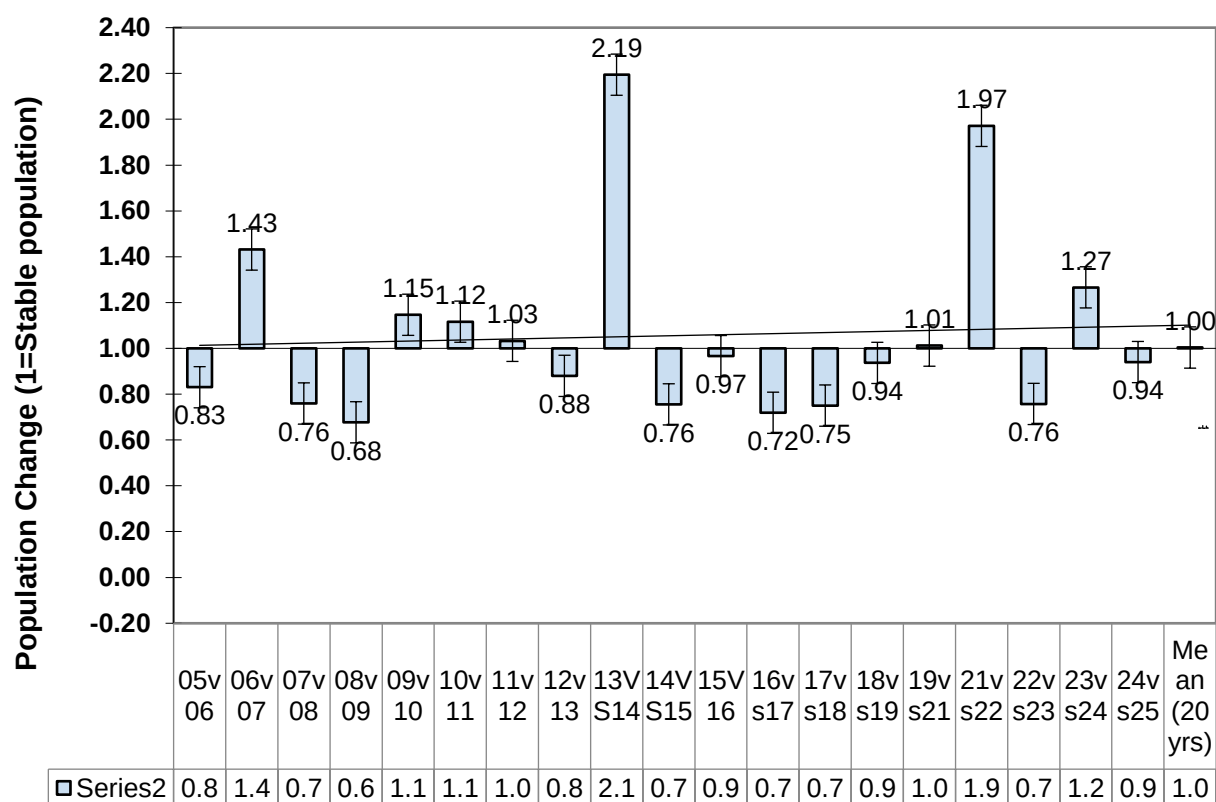


Figure 13. Route regression analysis of pukeko counts along 17 randomly selected road transects around the Taranaki ringplain, 2005 to 2025.

Counts in Whanganui were restarted in 2023 following initial counts from 2015 to 2017. These are also done in April and consist of 10 randomly selected road transects between Waverley and Turakina. The total count in Whanganui in 2025 was 97 pūkeko, compared with just 55 in 2024. The Whanganui counts are expressed in birds/km in Figure 14 below. There is not yet enough data from Whanganui to conduct trend analysis.



Figure 14. Pūkeko counts per km along 10 randomly selected road transects in Whanganui, 2016-17 and 2023-25.

During the 2024/25 year there were 30 permits issued to disturb pūkeko (cf. 49 in 2023/24) with 21 in urban areas and only 9 in rural areas. Most of the urban permits were issued for New Plymouth.

The estimated pūkeko harvest during the 2025 game season of 628 birds was the same as that in 2024 and below the long-term average harvest of 1,123 birds (Figure 15). This year, 226 pūkeko or 36% of the total harvest occurred during the 2-month extended season, compared with zero in 2024 (Figure 16).

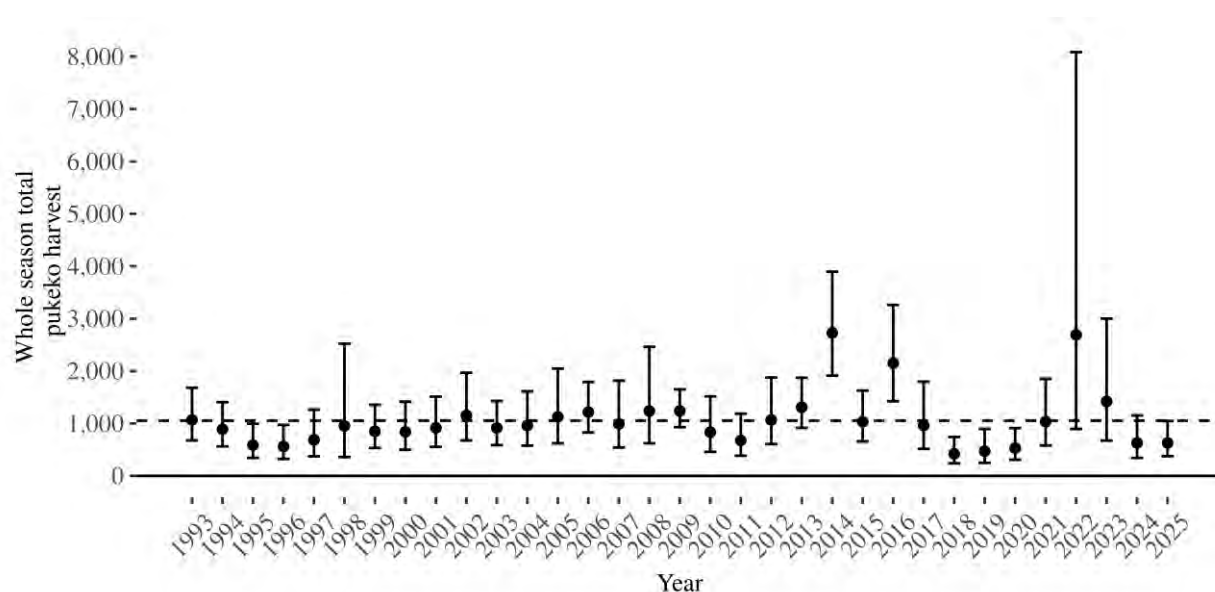


Figure 15. Estimated annual pūkeko harvest in the Taranaki region 1993 to 2025.

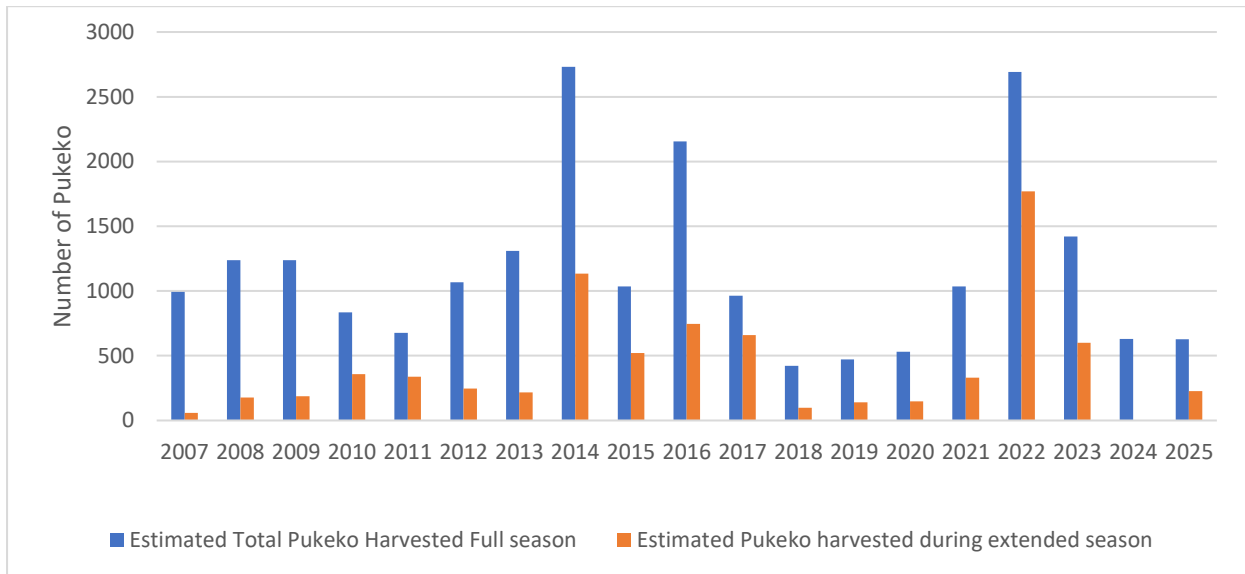


Figure 16. *Estimated pūkeko harvest during the Taranaki full season and the proportion taken during the extended season using gamebird hunter survey results.*

Area C currently has a 10-bird daily bag limit for pūkeko along with a 4-month season through to the last Sunday in August. The extended season enables hunters to target localised aggregations of pūkeko scattered over the ringplain and in problem areas around New Plymouth to address their impacts on agriculture and horticulture as well as to create additional hunting opportunity after the main duck season has ended. Past monitoring suggests that the Whanganui and Waimarino populations might struggle under this level of harvest if it was mis-directed, but in the case of the Taranaki ringplain population it appears that the harvest may be self-limiting. In other words, as the larger mobs are controlled, hunters may be less inclined to target pūkeko.

Given that monitoring indicates that pūkeko populations in Area C remain stable, it is recommended that Council continues with a 10-bird limit in Area C and a 5-bird limit in Areas A and B.

The Wellington Region is likely to recommend a 5-bird limit for pūkeko with the same season length extension as Taranaki and their 5-bird limit aligns with that recommended for Whanganui and the Waimarino.

Pheasant

The harvest of pheasant in the 2025 season was estimated at 122 birds and was very similar to the 116 birds in 2024 and the equal lowest estimate since 2011 (Figure 17). Hunting hours (844, Figure 18) were similar to 2024 (857 hours) but well below average. The harvest rate of 0.14 pheasant/hour was also below average (Figure 19).

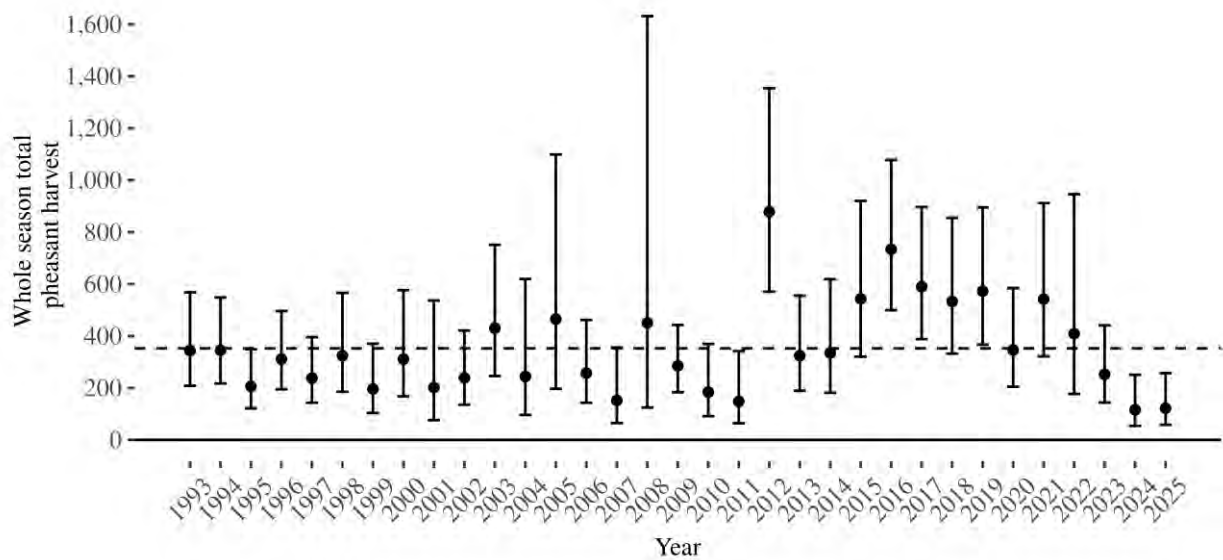


Figure 17. Estimated annual pheasant harvest in the Taranaki Region 1993 to 2025.

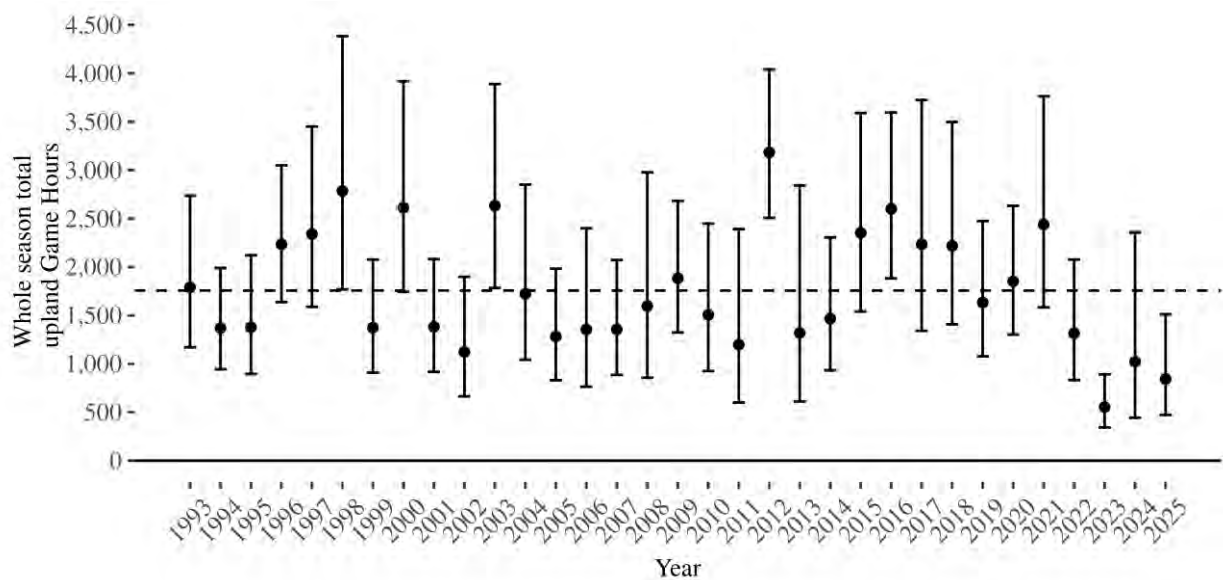


Figure 18. Estimated upland game hunting hours in the Taranaki Region 1993 to 2025.

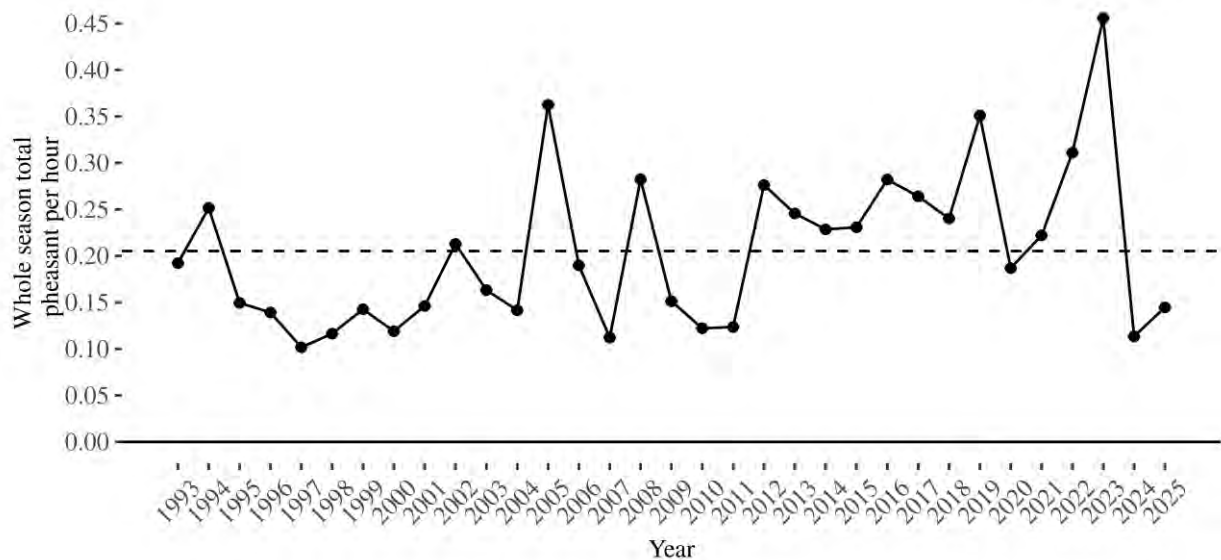


Figure 19. Harvest rate (birds per hour) of pheasant in the Taranaki Region 1993 to 2024.

While we do not have an estimate for the current size of the pheasant population, they have been very visible around much of the region in recent years. This may well reflect that large-scale predator control programmes and the planting of manuka, woodlots and riparian areas are potentially having a positive impact. As it is apparent that many populations still go largely un-hunted, the current level of effort and harvest suggests there is no need to further restrict the harvest, nor does there appear any justification to liberalise the regulations. Results of the gamebird hunter survey reported to Council in December 2018 indicate very strong support for the status quo of a 2-bird daily limit and four-month season. It is therefore recommended that these conditions be retained. The same conditions are likely being recommended for the Wellington Region.

California Quail

California quail are restricted in distribution with few substantial coveys remaining, though there has been comment that they are being seen more frequently, similar to the apparent increase in pheasant numbers. With such low numbers, hunters generally perceive hunting them as difficult and/or inappropriate. Harvest totals are small (an estimated zero birds in 2025; Figure 20) and variable, which in part is an artefact of the hunter survey design and the fact that just a few hunters shoot quail.

Such low levels of harvest indicate that the daily bag limit of 5 is for the most part irrelevant, however it does allow hunters to make use of the opportunity provided by larger coveys where these still exist. As such, it is recommended that the status quo of a 5-bird limit for a 4-month season remains. The same season length and bag limit is likely being recommended for the Wellington Region.

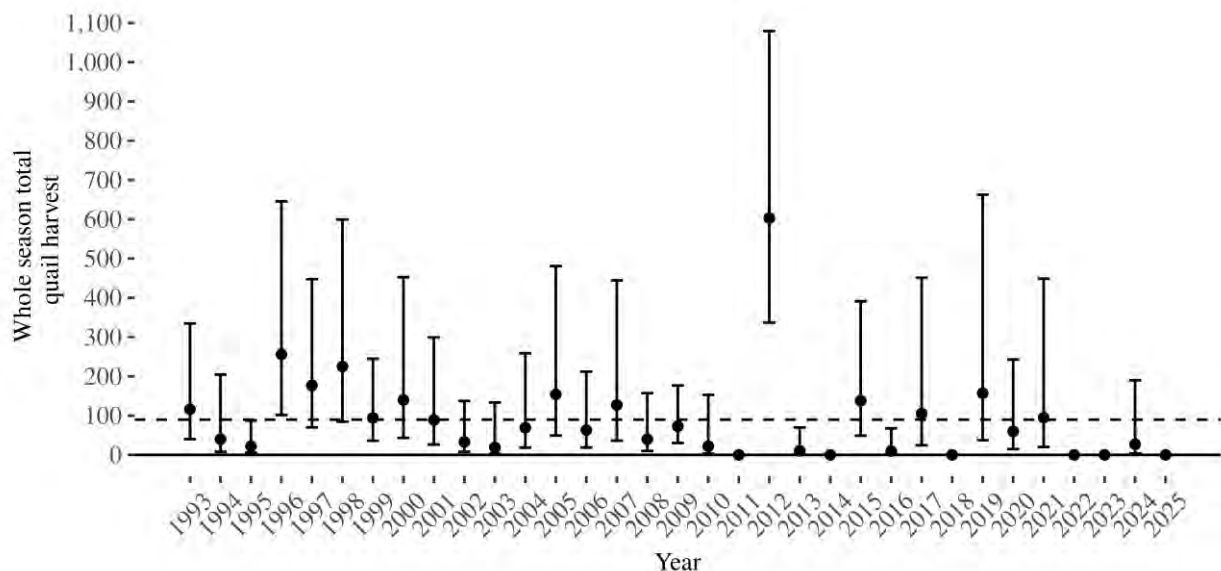


Figure 18. Estimated annual harvest of California quail in the Taranaki Region 1993 to 2025.

Bobwhite and Red-legged Partridge

Some backyard breeders have permits from the Department of Conservation to breed and release these species and there could also potentially be escapees from game preserves. The Council has therefore provided an opportunity for game bird hunters to harvest these species where they exist in the region.

Upland game property with special conditions

A *Gazette* listing for an upland game property with special conditions to enable syndicate (non-commercial) shoots for ring-necked pheasant on a property at 336A Kauarapaoa Road, Brunswick, Whanganui was approved for the 2025 season. However, the applicant has stated they will not be proceeding in the 2026 season and they are currently looking for another property. Therefore, it is recommended that the 2025 listing be removed from the 2026 Notice.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Taranaki Fish & Game Council receives the draft 2026/27 Game Gazette Notice report.

Allen Stancliff & Jack Harland
24 November 2025

TARANAKI FISH AND GAME REGION⁴

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	2 May to 28 June 2026	10	All areas
NZ shoveler duck	2 May to 28 June 2026	2	All areas
Paradise shelduck	2 May to 28 June 2026	10	All areas
	20 and 21 Feb 2027	10	Area C
	27 and 28 Feb 2027	10	Area C
	6 to 8 March 2027	10	Area C
Black swan	2 May to 28 June 2026	2	All areas
Pūkeko	2 May to 30 August 2026	5	Area A&B
	2 May to 30 August 2026	10	Area C
California quail	2 May to 30 August 2026	5	All areas
Cock pheasant	2 May to 30 August 2026	2	All areas
Bobwhite (Virginian) quail	2 May to 30 August 2026	5	All areas
Red legged partridge	2 May to 30 August 2026	2	All areas
Pheasant, both sexes	2 May to 30 August 2026	No limit	Upland game properties with special conditions in clause 6 for this Region.

2 Definition of Areas

2.1 Area A: That area within the following boundary commencing at Waiaruhe Road; then by that road, Owahakura Road, Whangaehu Valley Road and Fields Track to Kakatahi; then by straight lines to Pipiriki and Tawhata; then by Tawhata Road to the boundary; then by the generally eastern boundary of the region to Waiaruhe Road.

2.2 Area B: That area within the following boundary commencing at Waiaruhe Road; then by that road, Owahakura Road, Whangaehu Valley Road and Fields Track to Kakatahi; then by straight lines to Pipiriki and Makakaho Junction down the eastern bank of the Waitotara River to the sea; then by the sea coast and generally eastern boundary of the region to Waiaruhe Road.

2.3 Area C: The balance of the region contained by the westerly boundaries of Area A and B and the sea coast between the Mokau River and Waitotara River mouths.

⁴Reference to Description: *Gazette*, No. 83, of 27 May 1990, at page 1861

3 Shooting Hours

6.30am to 6.15pm.

4 Decoy Limit

No limit.

5 Special Conditions

5.1 Special Paradise Shelduck Season

Area C only: For the Special Paradise Shelduck Season on 20 February, 21 February, 27 February, 28 February, 6 March, 7 March and 8 March 2027, the hours of hunting are extended 6.30am to 8.00pm. In addition, all hunters, including land occupiers, must, within a month of the end of the season, provide the Taranaki Fish and Game Council with particulars of: the dates and locations where they hunted paradise shelduck; the hours hunted each day; the number of birds taken each day; and the number of birds not retrieved.

5.2 No person shall hunt, as specified, within 100m of any urban sewage oxidation pond.

5.3 No person may wilfully leave on the hunting ground any game bird(s) shot or parts of any game birds shot.

5.4 No person may shoot game from a boat on the Whanganui River downstream of Kemps Pole (Kauarapaoa Stream confluence).

5.5 Any licensed game bird hunter who has a Department of Conservation permit to take or kill wildlife for the purpose of hawking may hunt with an Australasian Harrier (*Circus approximans*) to take gamebirds. This is subject to the season length and bag limit for each gamebird species in clause 1 of this notice for this region and subject to any conditions imposed by the Director-General of Conservation under such a permit.

TARANAKI FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

The Chairman
Taranaki Fish and Game Council

2026 Game Bird Trend Count Report

This report presents the January 2026 trend count information for paradise shelduck and black swan. The Council made recommendations on the draft 2026/27 Game Gazette Notice at its meeting on 13th December 2025. As the final deadline for provision of regulation details to the NZ Fish & Game Council has passed (9th February 2026), this report is for the Council's information only.

WAIMARINO (AREA A)

Count data for paradise shelduck were collected from 13 Waimarino moult sites in early January 2026, compared with 17 sites surveyed in the previous year (Appendix 1, Table 1).

Five sites - Mangawherawhera, Waiharuru, Otamaraha, Morikau, and Mokonui were not surveyed in 2026. In 2025, these sites were counted with assistance from Wellington Fish and Game staff using a fixed-wing aircraft, however persistent poor weather prevented flights this year.

The total count for 2026 was 2,075 birds. If the five missing sites are accounted for using their 2025 counts, the extrapolated total would be 2,957 birds. While this figure is not precise, it suggests there has been no significant change in population levels within the Waimarino, given that the total count in 2025 was 2,899 paradise. The average number of paradise shelduck per surveyed moult site in 2026 was 159 birds, very similar to the 2025 average of 161 birds.

The counts therefore indicate that the Waimarino population remains stable, but at the lower end of its historical abundance range.

WHANGANUI (AREA B)

Paradise shelduck were surveyed at 10 sites in the Whanganui region, consistent with previous years.

The total count for 2026 was 1,525 birds, representing a 12.7% decrease from the 2025 count of 1,747, but remaining comparable to the 2024 count of 1,566.

The average number of birds per site where birds were present was 152, slightly lower than the 2025 average of 174.

Site-specific changes were notable: Lake Kaitoke declined from 717 birds in 2025 to 403 in 2026, and Lake Waikato decreased from 170 to 29. Conversely, increases were recorded at the Peat Waitotara site (from 11 to 126) and Lake Waiau (from 0 to 106).

WAITOTARA RIVER CATCHMENT (AREA B&C)

In January 2026, surveys were conducted at seven sites within the Waitotara catchment. A total of 12 birds were recorded among the ponds on the true right of the Waitotara River. Surprisingly, 112 birds were observed moulting at a pond on the true left of the river, representing the largest number recorded at this site since surveys began. In the previous three years of surveys at this location, no more than seven birds had been recorded. The site appeared to be a less-than-ideal moult location, with the pond margins densely lined with raupo and providing no obvious resting areas or easy access in and out.

TARANAKI PROVINCE (AREA C)

Counts of paradise shelduck were undertaken at 39 sites in January 2026, compared with 46 sites in January 2025 and 39 in 2024 (Appendix 1, Table 4). This included sites in the Taranaki eastern hill country, ringplain and coastal areas as far north as Mohakatino and as far south as Manutahi. Sites along the lower Mangaehu River (432 birds counted in 2025) were not counted this year owing to high river flows making river crossing unsuitable during the survey period.

The total count of 13,495 birds was 700 less than in 2025, although still above the long-term average (2008 – 2026) of 12,120 birds (Appendix 1, Table 4). It was found there had been an illegal cull of moulting paradise on a property at Tahora following the 2025 count, with numbers decreasing from 456 in 2025 to just 15 in 2026. A cull of moulting paradise had also occurred previously at another nearby site at Tahora. Along with ponds in the Rimuputa Road area becoming unsuitable for moulting paradise owing to a change in land use from sheep and beef to forestry, this has led to a significant decline in moult counts in the Tahora/ Whangamomona area, with just one site remaining (Moki Road).

Sites on the ringplain bounded by Hawera, Eltham, Stratford, Inglewood and Waitara held the bulk of the moulting population, much of which was located on town oxidation ponds. Highest numbers were almost exclusively in dairying country where the impacts of moult aggregations can be significant. New security fencing at the Opunake oxidation ponds appears to have alleviated the neighbouring farmer's concerns about paradise shelduck (and Canada geese) causing damage to pasture, while paradise have been burrowing under the security fence to access pasture adjacent to the Inglewood oxidation ponds. Chicken-wire secured to the bottom of the fence has been arranged to address this issue.

On the Taranaki ringplain there was a significant decline in the count at Wiremu Station inland from Opunake (1,000 birds in 2025 to 400 in 2026) which may be due to disturbance. There were increases at other sites, such as at the Manaia and Kaponga oxidation ponds and at upper Egmont Road (Appendix 1, Table 4). Overall, the population remains towards the high end of abundance and given the number of permits issued to farmers to disturb paradise shelduck (and mallards) causing damage to pasture and crops in Area C (21 so far in 2025/26), a 7-day / 3 weekend summer hunting season to disperse birds after the moult remains a useful tool.

BLACK SWAN

WANGANUI – WAVERLEY COASTAL STRIP

A total of 412 black swan were counted during a ground survey of 10 dune lakes in the Whanganui to Waverley coastal strip in January 2026 (Appendix 2, Table 5). This was slightly less than the count in 2024 (422 birds) yet still above the long-term (33-year) average of 349 birds.

Numbers of swan continued to increase at the Lake Kaitoke Wildlife Refuge, with 263 swan counted there compared with 176 in 2024 (Appendix 2, Table 5).

WAIMARINO - WANGANUI HILL COUNTRY

A total of 10 black swan were counted at seven sites visited in the Waimarino in January 2026 (Appendix 2, Table 6), which was less than the 27 birds counted in 2025 and below the long-term average of 31 swan. As swan are mobile and less abundant than other game bird species in the Waimarino, this change is not considered significant.

TARANAKI RINGPLAIN

A total of 520 black swan were counted at 29 sites visited in the Taranaki ringplain area during January 2026 (Appendix 2, Table 7). While this was a little lower than the 542 counted in 2025, the count was still well above the long-term average (2007 – 2026) of 390 swan.

CENTRAL NEW ZEALAND

Black swan are relatively mobile and it is thought that a single population extends over central New Zealand, if not further afield. The January 2026 count from Lake Wairarapa (4,194 birds) decreased further from its high in 2023, back to levels seen in 2018 (Figure 1). In Nelson, 9,400 swan were counted along Farewell Spit and the Puponga coast, with a further 251 at Westhaven / Lake Otuhie. Unfortunately, adverse weather has at the time of writing prevented aerial counts of swan in Wellington west and Marlborough. Results will be updated once they are available.

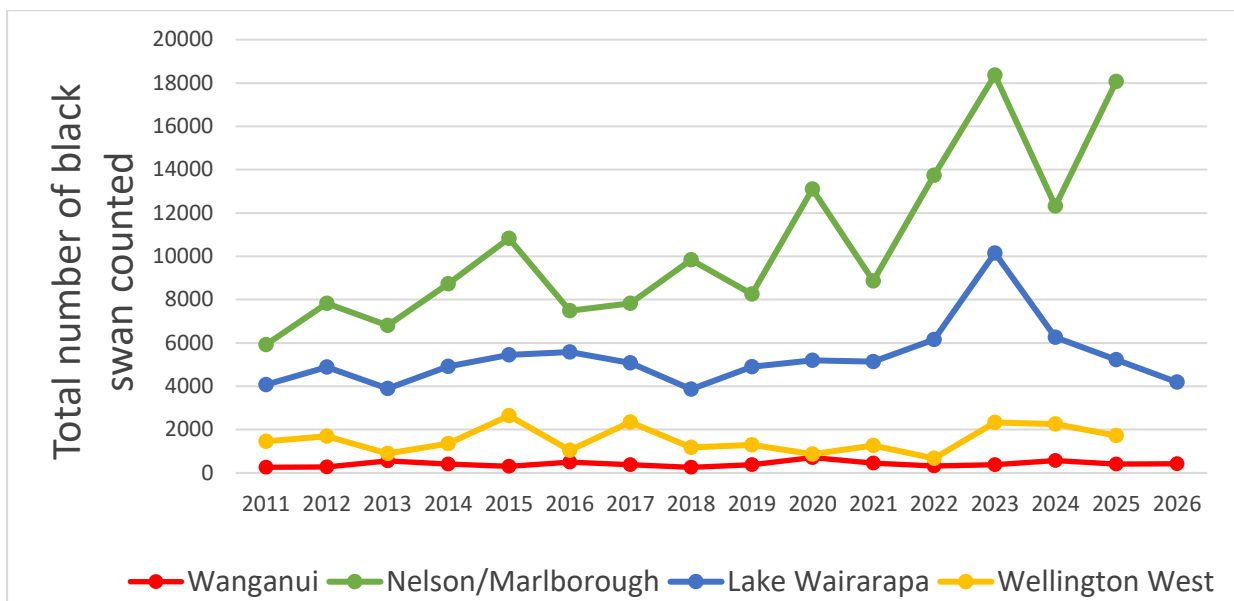


FIGURE 1. Central NZ trend counts for black swan, 2011 - 2026.

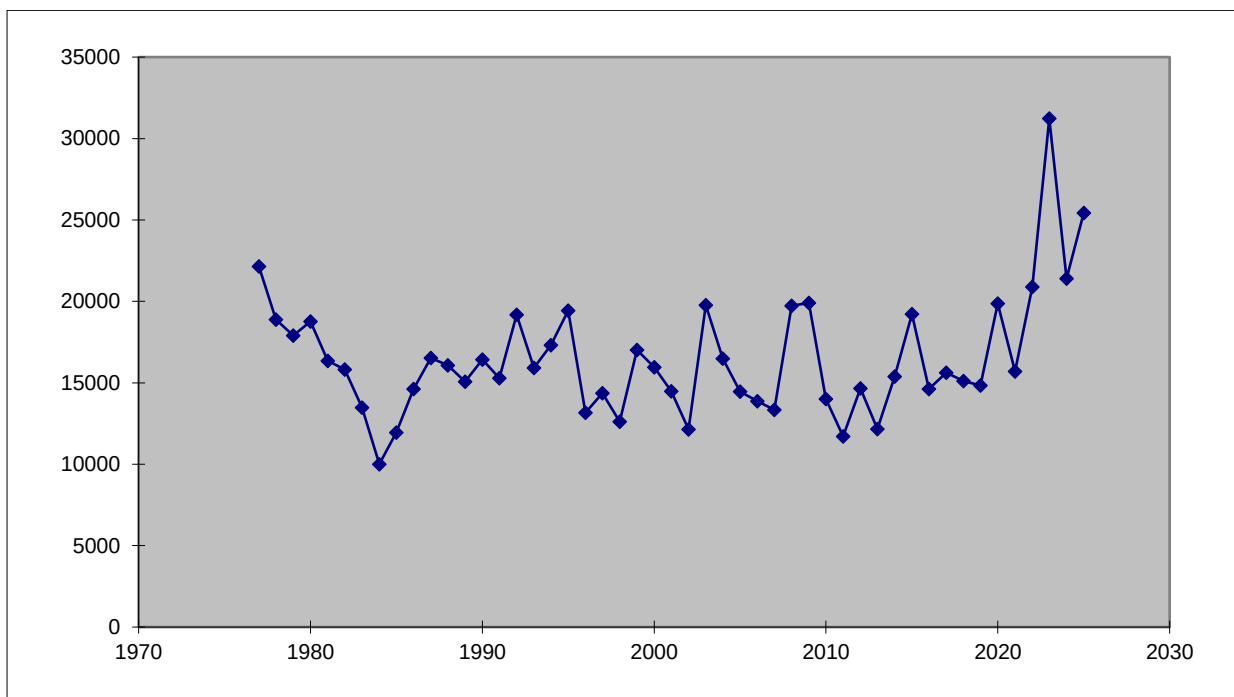


FIGURE 2. Central NZ trend counts for black swan, 1977 - 2026.

RECOMMENDATION:

- THAT THE 2026 GAMEBIRD TREND COUNT REPORT BE RECEIVED.

Jack Harland
Allen Stancliff
2 February 2026

TARANAKI 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	2 May to 28 June 2026	10	All areas
NZ shoveler duck	2 May to 28 June 2026	2	All areas
Paradise shelduck	2 May to 28 June 2026	10	All areas
	20 and 21 Feb 2027	10	Area C
	27 and 28 Feb 2027	10	Area C
	6 to 8 March 2027	10	Area C
Black swan	2 May to 28 June 2026	2	All areas
Pūkeko	2 May to 30 August 2026	5	Area A&B
	2 May to 30 August 2026	10	Area C
California quail	2 May to 30 August 2026	5	All areas
Cock pheasant	2 May to 30 August 2026	2	All areas
Bobwhite (Virginian) quail	2 May to 30 August 2026	5	All areas
Red legged partridge	2 May to 30 August 2026	2	All areas

2 Definition of Areas

2.1 Area A: That area within the following boundary commencing at Waiaruhe Road; then by that road, Owakura Road, Whangaehu Valley Road and Fields Track to Kakatahi; then by straight lines to Pipiriki and Tawhata; then by Tawhata Road to the boundary; then by the generally eastern boundary of the region to Waiaruhe Road.

2.2 Area B: That area within the following boundary commencing at Waiaruhe Road; then by that road, Owakura Road, Whangaehu Valley Road and Fields Track to Kakatahi; then by straight lines to Pipiriki and Makakaho Junction down the eastern bank of the Waitotara River to the sea; then by the sea coast and generally eastern boundary of the region to Waiaruhe Road.

2.3 Area C: The balance of the region contained by the westerly boundaries of Area A and B and the sea coast between the Mokau River and Waitotara River mouths.

3 Shooting Hours

6.30am to 6.15pm.

4 Decoy Limit

⁵Reference to Description: *Gazette*, No. 83, of 27 May 1990, at page 1861

No limit.

5 Special Conditions

5.1 Special Paradise Shelduck Season

Area C only: For the Special Paradise Shelduck Season on 20 February, 21 February, 27 February, 28 February, 6 March, 7 March and 8 March 2027, the hours of hunting are extended 6.30am to 8.00pm. In addition, all hunters, including land occupiers, must, within a month of the end of the season, provide the Taranaki Fish and Game Council with particulars of: the dates and locations where they hunted paradise shelduck; the hours hunted each day; the number of birds taken each day; and the number of birds not retrieved.

5.2 No person shall hunt, as specified, within 100m of any urban sewage oxidation pond.

5.3 No person may wilfully leave on the hunting ground any game bird(s) shot or parts of any game birds shot.

5.4 No person may shoot game from a boat on the Whanganui River downstream of Kemps Pole (Kauarapaoa Stream confluence).

5.5 Any licensed game bird hunter who has a Department of Conservation permit to take or kill wildlife for the purpose of hawking may hunt with an Australasian Harrier (*Circus approximans*) to take gamebirds. This is subject to the season length and bag limit for each gamebird species in clause 1 of this notice for this region and subject to any conditions imposed by the Director-General of Conservation under such a permit.

APPENDIX 1. PARADISE SHELDUCK

TABLE 1. Paradise shelduck trend counts in the Waimarino (Area A)

Site	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Pritts	70	50	0	0							3	12	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	32	20	15	10				18			
Browns	1592	1500	1800	2210	1875	717	1700	280	114	320	1320	944	435	363	423	378	358	319	463	102	265	230	300	150	41	380	450	316	42	60	61	70
Mokanui						900	740	510	342	9	68	21	42	43	15	18	15	3	1	3	4	7	5	27	18							68
Tohunga	657	342	0	200	240	12	8	0	0		13	0	0	0	0	0						101	150	2	0	0	0					
Roke	631	1000	800	1043	710	270	750	640	273	200	68	48	125	289	67	99	48*	64	143	316	0*	0*		0					255	145	187	379
Sue	1020	1348	1300	1068	880	1062	1300	360	561	500	530	477	428	460	123	250	309	287	357	186	103	34	90	192	243	315	275	111	63	45	2	9
Punch		375	400	676	360	380	410	270	220						0	0																
Raetihi oxy		700	850	250	480	650	310	520	390	395	444	*226	410	298	176	167	48*	205	0	264	7	210	132	310	450	420	300	132	155	520	422	431
Omeri				600	964	688	900	870	1446	540	210	280	372	331	312	270	206			144	153	116	150	119								
Fields Track							580		703	620	780	1181	495	411	302	383	286	348	310	5	3	0	17	0								
Harris									293	110	82	269	252	161	0		150	83	228	309	73	34	28	295	202	142	300	222	102	75	51	4
Taonui	370	38	750	850	600	814	1280	640	527	500	1222	675	630	353	432	385	494	440	518	135	93	127	147	117	279							
Aranui	248	180	340	344	362	415	35	440	369	400	314	294	342	223	265	249	218	239	160	167	167	125	80	47	121							
Waiharuru																															151	
Ohakune Lake									50	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0												
Ohakune Oxy									730	540	997	875	525	590	386	512	469	533	348	376	442	665	209	171	95	240	294	135	181	122	76	57
Mangawhera whera																															53	
Nat Park Oxy									986		1884	2000	1100	957	457	1102	824	785	1038	1254	1200	1225	1450	1670	2200	1800	2400	840	970	750	845	693
Tanupara 1									372	120	143	0	12	45	0	0						24	24	230	40	398	220	223	290	42	179	188
Tanupara 2									360	150	18	32	27	6	318	350	235	301	201	213	196	103	161	141	400	96	23	102	75	360	4	34
Papahau (2)									119	50	82	155	122	69	92	118	96	111	71	72	85	38	39									
Ohorea									195	0	2	180	142	195	45	243	187	152	193	0	59	198	48	0	9	16	3					
Lake Otamaraha										400	550	560	775	550	235	613	357	441	827	256	206	225	72	20	55	21	0	16	8	215	88	
Lahar Lake												72	10	0		0	4	0	0													
Ruatiti Flats												100			0	0				0	12	7	10	0								
Manson Estate										500	213	27	0	20	420	756	683	611	702	545	501	191	92	231	244	185	20	20	32	25	0	0
Kaahu Estate														120	4	16	77	96	107	119	31	8	0	0	0	0	0					
Blue duck lodge																						55	60	60	3	24	18					

Makakahi lodge																						284	234	178	198	164	134	117	128		98	68
Morikau (2)	1114	1000	1000	168	604	642	625	730	664	293	478	748	903	785	463		532	678	412	446	331	735	420	562	823	331	580	416	705	214	77	
Mokanui				490	340	370	360	400	402	190	189	112	585	422	134		641	560	670	340	336	144	330	297	500	660	800	411	353	600	412	
SH4 Kakatahi																										40	60	68	32	6	39	74
Total	5702	6533	7240	7899	7415	6920	8998	5660	9116	5837	9610	9062	7732	6691	4669	5909	6141	6256	6749	5252	4267	4918	4268	4834	5931	5232	5877	3129	3409	3,179	2,745	2,075

TABLE 2. Paradise shelduck trend counts in Whanganui (Area B)

Site	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
L Marahau	822	536	433	782	1600	1205	1105	1284	610	1740	988	910	731	616	1115	884	313	287	241	399	299	254	328	186	192	552	237	493	330	667	341	288	203	189
L Waikato								310	850	0	521	315	436	1351	490	625	574	982	673	749	721	562	721	771	490	358	391	515	420	45	132	135	170	29
Maewa	494	1144	1149	850	1700	1200	794	1377	1250	630	1115	605	870	1177	420	523	371	616	489	473	397	227	28	71	9	0	16	0						
L Waipu	874	647	835	692	710	964	215	742	250	60	128	370	175	173	394	575	326	287	251	438	531	1070	2430	1255	1200	980	920	470	670	631	338	325	234	326
L. Rotokauwau										300	0	330	134	334	222	420	178	654	685	127*	576	432	151	147	130	300	24	19	4	6	50	43	7	0
L. Kohata													46	4		10	4	23	13	0	0	0	4	0		1								0
L. Kaitoke													238	575	275	330	424	763	710	1024	1101	943	962	1140	650	153	720	562	730	483	290	325	717	403
Arranmore																												52	149	160	203	220	160	149
L. Westmere														204		420	129	342	268	586	257	535	547	594	515	402	522	428	545	337	328	190	204	187
L. Pauri																20	8	27	35	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1					0
L. Grassmere																0	12	0	17	8	23	2												
Lake Oturi+												445	250	185	530	485	380	376	321	370	289	240	212	93	137	293	71	14	31	39	12	10	26	2
Lake Waiau+													210	56	196	210	195	130	74	110	93	100	170	172	31	8	2	3	28	30	0	0	0	106
L Maumahaki +													45	120	60		70	65	82	170	245	60	10	41	33	39	20	35	40	20	90	30	15	8
Peat Waitotara -																				552	133							462	394	200	194		11	126
TOTAL								4725	3945	3860	3818	3458	3810	5655	5190	5709	3581	4552	5032	5712	5614	5209	6230	5349	4137	3945	2923	2591	2948	2418	1784	1566	1,736	1525

+Sites in Area C

* disturbed site

TABLE 3. Paradise shelduck trend counts in the upper Waitotara catchment (Area C)

Site Name	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
TLB Makakaho Rd	635	220	150	640	310	979	797	1029	770	730			508	431	525	106							1	0	141	122			114
“Kidney pond”		260	470	60	370	80																	Dry	Dry	0	22		0	
“Bush pond”		90	20	10	0																		430	285	0	19		4	
Ponds at top of Makakaho Rd		6	0																				0	9	2	12			
TRB Makakaho Rd	0	83	425	360	420	214	420	409	389	269			294	68	27	27							31	100	31	7		7	12
Makakahi Road Lower																									26	12		0	
TOTAL	635	659	1065	1070	1100	1273	1217	1438	1159	999			802	499	552	133							462	394	200	194		11	126

-- no count in 2008 & 2009

TABLE 4. Paradise shelduck trend counts in the Taranaki province (Area C).

POND LOCATION	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Waitara River	25	450	260	425	330	600	234		124	380	370	740	912	577	815	644	757	477	608	1154	1000	1007	615	100	240	345	103	468	434	135	482	332
Waitara River (Purangi)											70	98	233	307	400	302	287	249	365	366	368	580	712	283	347	380	400	372	383	243	279	88
TRB Waitara River			80	100	55	62	10		0					150																		
Huiroa Ponds	320	150	230	20	297	295	30		65	70	68	30	30	105	80	30	70	52	17	20	32	6	2	15	23							
Whangamomona	160	75		35	55	57	73		10	62	90	155	38	97	202	180	190	155	210	199	32	55	31	19	20	20	17	11	0	4	19	0
Huiroa			390	850	550	8	750	680	920	505	790	770	930	380	517	680	490	450	516	560	240	dry	0	0	205	195	260	45	195		82	
Huiakama															130	6	82	102	119	25	115	240	214	71	15	6	15	10	2		5	
Huiakama 2																															210	250
Tahora	50	115		195	90	115	266		30	330	270	156	125	0	100	133	68	99	7	53	39	66	176	130	210	302	455	294	455	572	456	15
K1 Tahora	0	370	250	290	340	190	160	324	450	600	590	530	530	465	415	260	5	20	47	4	78	230	300	233	410	153	55	105	105	33	0	11
K2 Tahora												85	136	120	27	55	110	101	17	93	102	137	177	23	6	15	41	1	5			
Rimuputa Rd Tahora																	145	4*	170	12			250	32	0	3	5	210	181	71	0	
Moki Road Tahora																					787	430	9	137	278	700	750	260	365	312	285	265
Mt. Damper		85	50	0	40	90	0		0			30	150	250	150	150	100	250	150	200	300	250	300	300	250	250						
Boar Road	500	450	250	780	675	610	550	660	714	635	520	715	580	680	800	607	217	183	196	140	126	151	94	37	35	0	2	11				
Waitaanga		25	35	35	0	170	154		30			22	12									80	100									
Lower Mohakatino Estuary (SH3)						100	130	170	177	202	300	250	250	186	320	243	194	165	253	263	302	409	441	301	313	104	234	215	18	181	35	105
Lwr. Mangaehu River	255			645	670	530	700	500	504	585	575	715	435	220	254	448		819	613	1100	913	884	605	565	490	472	727	209	374	766	432	

Upr. Mangaehu River																		245	40	20	30		55	70										
Lake Cowley (Waitara)	200	470	530	210	180	590	530	1000	820	1000	750	480	340	340	970	620	800	720	645	650	178	315	188	390	266	300	570	950	1180	980	830	920		
Lake Rataipiko	0	0	0	80	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0							
Tariki Road	300	20	13	0	50	90	35	13	0	55	0	0	0	0	57	4	59	41	29	20	7	0	4	0	0	0	0				5			
Croydon Rd JT	0		18	40	2	40	38	38	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	10	20		0	0	5	0				0	0							
Croydon Road									10	0	0	15	21	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	10	14	15	14	0	0					0			
Wiremu Station (Opunake)	1400	910	1650	1640	1300	1500	920	650	780	1100	1000	1000	1340	1075	1300	1640	1150	1140	950	1250	1000	700	1000	800	1000	1434	1300	1300	1300	575	1000	400		
Saunder's Road	300	430																																
Corbett Lake (Saunders Rd Okato)	1	9	190	270	300	450	385	700	500	200	650	295	295	66	300	275	335	405	185	260	295	500	270	210	460	470	575	330	250	490	345	265		
Oxford Road Lake												315	395	534	510	702	400*	10	260	240	57	0	13	2	17	47	75	4	2	0				
SH45 Omata	9	7	0	0	0	9	20	20	92	0	27	170	0	3	5	7	1	7	0	0	8	6	0	0	0	0								
Barrett Lagoon (New Plymouth)	350	430	610	550	620	700	650	340	300	600	615	570	703	450	590	827	581	640	587	826	670	640	950	335	620	663	780	500	680	850	900	720		
Umutekai Road	475	300	500	640	520	600	600	500	400	480	450	420	420	380	545	450	400	580	735	550	480	555	470	390	650	1038	1050	1150	1061	800	1000	950		
Alfred Road	550	300	226	263	157	277	126	194	305	380	305	490	638	730	810	487	686	622	590	600	450	330	400	205	420	400	90	20	7	34	30	45		
upper Egmont Road		70	180	28	30	85	160	200	6	2	3	0						105	285	360	385	270	330	370	178	425	550	800	500	600	104	600		
Richmond Rd.	50	110	72	31	5	45	50	180	385	350	490	475	620	875	770	775	450	420	411	435	285	407	450	430	114	220	270	128	90	220	124	83		
Upper Newall Road			190	90	30	0	0			0	7	0	0	dry																				
Punehu				0	70	54	36	8	15	4	3	19	0	7	0	2	38	60	3	15	5	5	0	62	0	0	0		1	45	105	36		
Hawera oxidation ponds (2)				20	70	95	122	190	200	260	260	274	320	415	450	394	421	483	347	460	485	490	350	475	360	414	476	355	470	380	380	455		
Waingongoro Road							60	23	2	55	210	470	365	90	0		10	33	204	285	195	600	40	470	750	733	650	1200	1160	0	80	176		

TABLE 4 (Continued). Paradise shelduck trend counts in the Taranaki province (Area C).

POND LOCATION	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Beach Road Omata (2)								12	0	25	0	0	0	1	3	7	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	8	11	0							
Perth Road (2)						0	0	0	18	0	0	2	5	8	2	5	1	3	10	7	5	5	5	6	0	0								
Upland Rd (2)										165	0	26	7	16	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0							
Waiwiri Road													40	30	30	30		0	0	60	25	20			0									
Kaipī Road													9	18	2	19	0	1		14	0	7			7	0	49	50	21	9				
Stratford oxidation ponds											375	300	450	564	617	900	1020	950	1123	1000	1050	1100	1240	1400	1180	1470	1769	1400	1300	753	1200	1600	1300	
Sangster Rd Rotokare (3)											40	70	7	7	0																			
Parihaka Station												300	415	472	430	450	170	47	300	135	62	47	2	120	dry	75	20	0	320		2	0	155	
Kina Road												100	450	59	45	25	200	130	145	360	506	265	220	204	180	45	130	170	100	195	330	155	195	
Nowells Lakes (2)								0	0	0	6	30	30	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	2	0	82	0	50	0	0	0	0	
Winstones Manutahi Road															145	2	7	8	23	83	6*	128	180	150	100	295	365	360	137	289	437	340	500	
Opunake oxidation ponds																135	220	279	344	350	320	440	385	400	470	635	770	600	500	780	770	1000	1400	
Rugby Road																			175	275	434	220	300	354	46	175	340	dry						
Inglewood Oxidation ponds												0	0	0	0	5	5	4	1	135	252	160	270	297	217	573	220	700	480	950	770	1000	1300	
Eltham Oxidation Ponds																				36	62	30	31	103	180	340	586	560	510	580	1000	950	1020	
Jimmy Stewart Wetland																						93	0	0	0	0								
Lake Mangamahoe																	0	0					16	20	49	87	149	78	112	103	116	311	273	
NPDC Waiongana																									158	260	79	217	210	212	246	253	275	
Durham Road upper																											600	300	226	350	152	400	12	
Manaia oxidation pond																										43	73	17	115	95	79	235	317	
Kaponga oxidation pond																											290	366	0	0*	200	207	490	
Patea oxidation pond																												31	0	0		11	2	
Komene Lagoon																												91	350	350	55	320	460	
Waipu Lagoons																														11	0	0		
Bell Block Oxy ponds																														66	118	145	60	
Opunake Lake																														18	3	0	3	
100 Wills Road																														14	0	1	17	

TABLE 6. Black swan trend counts in Waimarino and Whanganui hill country sites.

Site	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Browns	6	2	0	2	3	4	3	0	0	5	3	4	1	0	0	0	0		
Roke	12	14	3	5	1	4	8	0	0							16	15	11	8
Ohakune Oxy Pond	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	0	1	1	2	5	9	1	0	1
Raetihi Oxy Ponds (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Morikau (3)	12	0		2	4	6	6	1	9	6	9	8	13	16	8	5	6	4	0
Mokanui	5	0		3	1	0	6	8	8	6	7	14	12	5	1	3			
Taonui	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5							
Harris	6	7			0	0	6	5	5	3	1	9	8	5	2	0	6	0	0
Old Fields Track	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0								
Kaahu Estate	2	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	3	3	1	0	0					
Lake Otamaraha	10	1	3	5	2	12	7	0	1	0	6	0	4	0	0	4		0	
Waiharuru																		6	
Mangawherawhera																		5	
Sues							2	1	1	0	4	3	4	2	1	5	17	0	0
National Park Oxy Pnd							4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Makakahi																2		1	1
Total	61	24	33	23	13	31	45	20	24	24	36	45	43	30	17	44	45	27	10

TABLE 7. Black swan trend counts in north and south Taranaki.

POND LOCATION	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Lake Cowley (Waitara)	32	52	16	24	35	17	104	60	92	98	28	67	34	84	83	69	133	67	77	74	112	115	85	92	99	138	81	114	100	185	152
Lake Ngangana	1	6	6	6	7	6	5	4	9	6	5	3	4	5	0	2	1	0	0	1	7	0	4	1	5	6	0	0	7	4	3
Lake Mangamahoe	11	12	14	15	24	9	5	20	12	16	19	32	48	19	17	30	27	75	31	93	44	38	52	34	44	28	37	37	59	37	12
Umutekai Rd	0	4	3	5	0	5	0	0	10	0	3	0	0	3	1	0	5	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	1	3	1	2	0	0	0
Winstones Manutahi Rd				3	1							0	1	2	7	5	5	1	1	2	5	4	0	4	1	4	2	0	2	7	0
Barrett Lagoon	2	7	4	3	4	3	1	7		7	2	3	7	8	1	2	2	10	7	0	4	7	7	0	2	22	25	19	31	17	23
Alfred Road	18	16	13	15	17	18	22	14	20	30	32	39	42	24	28	40	56	42	50	47	38	72	30	14	14	5	5	10	0	0	14
Waipu Lagoons	0	3	4	0	4	0	6	0	0	0	4	3	4	1		3	6	3	2	1	3	2	0	4	4	6	5	5	6	0	
Bell Block Oxy Ponds	15	15	0	10	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	4	0	0	1	0	10	4	0	9
Tariki Road	0	1	0	0	4	6	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	7	2	0	0				8	
LandCorp Wiremu	6	5	4	0	6	3	1	0	0	3	5	2	5	2	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
Arawhata Road	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0				0	0	0	0	0					
Beach Road Omata	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Richmond Rd							6	0	6	0	6	9	0	5	4	4	5	4	4	1	4	2	1	1	1	7	3	1	1	1	2
Perth Road		0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0							
Upland Road								7	10	0		2	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0		0	0	0						
Komene Lagoon (Okato)									11	0	0	27	dry	1	1	dry	0		15	dry	dry	3	dry	dry	dry	7	5	8	33	0	3
Inglewood Oxy Ponds										6	5	4	0	0	0	3	6	5	0	3	7	2	5	3	1	7	10	4	0	7	0
Egmont Road																									1	8	5	0			
Clarke Rd													5	0			0					0	2	0							
Stratford oxidation ponds											0	3	2	2	3	7	7	11	17	13	18	17	13	4	20	27	37	43	58	68	44
Opunake Lake			0	0	0	0				0		0					0	11	5	14	0	2	5	5	2	0	4	2	9	3	0
Punehu			24	7	8	7	7	0	3	10	8	1	6	6	4	4	5	6	6	6	7	17	2	2	25	22	0	2	20	3	14
Opunake oxy ponds														8	1	6	1	4	5	6	3	5	2	1	3	5	4	2	0	0	3
Hawera oxidation ponds			140	118	111	83	47	57	39	25	37	42	51	81	73	84	132	130	120	135	151	101	80	92	108	145	94	68	102	79	202
Nowell's Lakes (2)			0	0		4	36	25	47	38	14	19	28	20	12	18	29	16	29	29	18	24	41	22	18	33	44	42	32	68	13
Lake Taumaha									1	8	0	6	1	1		4	0	1	0	5	7	5	2	16	4	5	3	1		8	2

Lake Kaikoura (Ball Rd)										5	0	5	2	0		9		1		0	0	7	12	18	7	29	13	10		5	2
Spence Road										7		2																			
Patea oxidation pond												5								9	2	7	8	2	3	3	1	1		0	0
Ihupuku Lagoon										3	0	0	0	0								0	0	0	0	0		1		0	5
Lake Maumahaki (2)										0	7	5		5	0	2	0	0	3	0	2	3	0	0	1	3	5	7	0	2	0
Manaia oxidation pond																								5	3	12	2	13	0	3	0
Tokaora quarry pond																								5	6	0	2	1	0	2	0
Hauroto Road																												11	6	7	6
100 Wills Road																												8	18	17	0
Eltham oxidation pond																									1	5	0	2	2	4	1
Waverley oxy																													7	8	
TOTAL	85	121	222	125	225	168	240	195	265	262	178	280	240	280	246	292	420	389	394	441	435	436	366	331	374	531	388	424	490	542	520



Taranaki Region 2025/26 Waimarino/Whanganui Banding Report

Purpose of the Project

The Taranaki 2025/26 Waimarino/Whanganui Banding Report summarises all banding work undertaken within the Taranaki Fish and Game region.

Strategic Outcome

Healthy Species, Habitats and Ecosystems. Contribute toward planned result 4 and 6 under the Species Management output class within the 2025/26 annual plan.

Strategic Monitoring Plan

Undertake annual gamebird banding in the Whanganui region.

Allen Stancliff & Corinne Deans

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

September 2026

TARANAKI FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

The Chairman

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

2026 Waimarino/ Whanganui Banding Report

For the last 10 years in February, staff, in conjunction with Eastern and Wellington Fish & Game staff and volunteers, have undertaken a duck banding programme in the Waimarino (2017, 2018, 2019) and Whanganui areas (2020 - 2026). This involved building traps and learning new techniques to develop an effective programme. This has proved successful and in the Waimarino in 2017 we banded 122 grey and mallard ducks at 3 sites (Table 1), 248 ducks at 4 sites in 2018 and in 2019, 148 ducks at 3 sites (a 4th site didn't 'switch-on' that year for unknown reasons).

In Whanganui in 2020 we banded 74 grey and mallard ducks at 2 sites, 289 ducks at 2 sites in 2021 554 ducks at 3 sites in 2022, 567 ducks at 3 sites in 2023, 383 ducks at 2 sites in 2024, and 467 over two sites in 2025 (Table 1). The reduced number of ducks banded in Whanganui in 2024 was due to a feral cat entering one of the traps, so that none of the 5 traps at the upper site caught ducks on the second day.

In 2026, 462 mallard ducks and 2 grey ducks were banded, with banding occurring at two sites over two days at a wetland near the Whangaehu River and at Lake Rotokauwau, both south of Whanganui. An additional 130 ducks that were already banded were also trapped.

As part of the programme, hunters were encouraged to return data on any banded ducks they shot, either via contact during the gamebird harvest survey, by articles in F&G magazine, hunting newsletters, newspapers, ezines or through personal contact.

The numbers of ducks banded, number of band returns, and banding location of returned ducks are summarised in tables 1, 2 and 3. Table 3 shows the percentage of bands recovered for each banding year and the total recovered to date.

Banding Year	Mallards banded	Grey duck banded	Total banded	Banding site
2017	87	35	122	Waimarino
2018	188	60	248	Waimarino
2019	105	43	148	Waimarino
2020	43	31	74	Whanganui
2021	281	8	289	Whanganui
2022	549	5	554	Whanganui
2023	553	14	567	Whanganui
2023 (Nov)	38	0	38	New Plymouth
2024	380	3	383	Whanganui
2025	455	12	467	Whanganui
2026	462	2	464	Whanganui
Total	3,141	213	3,354	

Table 1. Number of ducks banded 2017 to 2026

In Whanganui, the total band returns to date have varied between 6.2% and 20.3% (Table 3). The return for Whanganui ducks banded in 2026 was 7.8%, indicating a return rate sitting around the average mark for this 7-year period (note that total numbers of birds banded per year has varied).

In 2020, 9 out of the 12 Whanganui banded birds were shot locally within the Whanganui area, with another 2 shot in the Waimarino and one in Morrinsville, 265km away from where it was banded.

In 2021, 2 of the 8 banded birds were shot in Whanganui area, 4 were shot in the Waimarino, 1 was shot at Lake Aniwhenua east of Rotorua (175 km from its banding site) and 1 was shot north of Morrinsville (216 km from its banding site).

In 2022, most of the 50 Whanganui band returns were from the local Whanganui area and down into the Manawatu. There appeared to be little movement up into the Taranaki ringplain, with just one band returned from a duck shot at Kahui Road, some 129km from the banding site.

In 2023, nearly all 45 band returns were from birds shot in the local Whanganui/Manawatu area, with one shot in Masterton some 123km away and one shot in Taranaki at Upper Dudley Road Inglewood, 122km from the banding site.

In 2024, most of the 86 band returns came from the local area and Manawatu, with two ducks from Whanganui shot at Wataroa Road Pungarehu, some 139km away. One of the 33 birds banded at Lake Mangamahoe, New Plymouth was shot 185km away at Foxton.

In 2025, the average distance from banding to recovery was 19.9km. This distance was reduced to 13.4km if an outlier is excluded (a juvenile mallard drake that travelled from its 2023 Whanganui banding location to be recovered 472 kilometres north, near Dargaville). By contrast an adult mallard drake was recovered just 3.3 kilometres away from where it was banded over 6 years before in 2018 at Tohunga Junction.

In 2026, 97.3% of band returns (73 of 75) were from birds that were banded between 2022 and 2026 in Whanganui, with 70.7% (53 returns) from birds that were banded in 2025 and 2026 (Table 2).

Year banded	Gordon Site	Rotokauwau Site	Kaahu Estate Site	Total
2018			1	1
2021		1		1
2022		5		5
2023		7		7
2024	4	4		8
2025	10	7		17
2026	13	23		36
Total	27	47	1	75

Table 2. Banding site and year of banding for the 75 duck bands returned in 2026.

As in other years, most banded ducks recovered during the 2026 game season were from the local Whanganui / Manawatu area. Whanganui banded ducks were also recovered from Ohakune (63.5km), Ashurst (61.9km), Foxton (59km), Manaia (110km) and Huntly (282km). By contrast, a male mallard duck banded at Kaahu Estate in the Waimarino in 2018 was recovered

2.6km away, some eight years and four months later. Only one of the 75 band returns came from the Taranaki ringplain, which is consistent with previous years. The Taranaki ringplain provides good duck habitat and has consistent hunting pressure, yet few Whanganui ducks appear to go there.

These results currently do not include analysis of previously banded birds re-captured at banding sites. For example, in 2026, 130 previously banded ducks were trapped in addition to the 464 unbanded ducks, bringing the total trapped to 594. As in previous years, this indicates that ducks show a substantial level of site fidelity (i.e. the Whanganui banding sites are a good place to live).

We wish to sincerely thank the farm owner at the Whanganui banding sites, who has undertaken trap preparation and feeding for the last seven years (2020-2026). At the time of writing this report, the trapping of ducks for banding is paused while the spread of H5N1 bird flu in NZ is assessed.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the 2026 Whanganui banding report be received.

Allen Stancliff and Corinne Deans

13th August 2026

Table 3. Number of bands returned by hunters and the percentage of band returned, 2017 to 2026

Year	Total # banded	Recovered 2017	%	Recovered 2018	%	Recovered 2019	%	Recovered 2020	%	Recovered 2021	%	Recovered 2022	%	Recovered 2023	%	Recovered 2024	%	Recovered 2025	%	Recovered 2026	%	Total % recovered to date
2017	122	6	4.9	5	4.3*	3	2.7*	0		1	0.9*	1	0.9*	0		0		0		0		13.1
2018	248			12	4.8	6	2.4*	1	0.4*	1	0.4*	0		0		0		1	0.4*	1	0.4*	8.9
2019	148					3	2.0	0		3	2.0*	0		0		0		0		0		4.1
2020	74							11	14.9	1	1.6*	1	1.6*	0		2	3.3*	0		0		20.3
2021	289									2	0.7	8	2.7*	3	1.1*	4	1.4*	0		1	0.4*	6.2
2022	554											41	7.4	17	3.3*	14	2.8*	13	2.7*	5	1.1*	16.2
2023	567													25	4.4	26	4.8*	7	1.4*	7	1.4*	11.5
2024	383															40	10.4	13	3.8*	8	2.4*	15.9
2025	467																	38	8.1	17	4.0*	11.8
2026	464																			36	7.8	7.8

* Adjusted to account for banded birds shot in previous years

Game Bird Disturbance in the Taranaki Region 2025/26

Purpose of the Project

Proactively manage problem aggregations of gamebirds in the interests of both hunters and property owners and managers.

Strategic Outcome

Supports the Taranaki Fish & Game Strategic Outcome:

Public Perception & Legitimacy

Strategic Actions

Issue permits to disturb game birds under delegated authority from the Department of Conservation and implement a special hunting season for paradise shelduck in Game Management Area C.

Allen Stancliff

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

August 2026



Executive Summary – 1181 Game Bird Disturbance Report 2025/26

Overview of Results

- 58 permits to disturb game birds were issued under delegated authority 73848-FAU from the Director General of Conservation during the 2025/26 year.
- There were 22 permits issued for the disturbance of mallard ducks causing damage to crops (3 were for mallards only, 19 included paradise shelduck)
- 27 permits were issued for the disturbance of pūkeko.
- 27 permits were issued for the disturbance of paradise shelduck (7 were for paradise shelduck only, 19 including mallard duck, 1 included black swan).
- 2 permits were issued for the disturbance of black swan (1 included paradise shelduck).
- A 3-weekend (7-day) hunting season for paradise shelduck was held in Game Management Area C in late February and early March 2026 in which 87 active hunters spent 505.5 hours of effort to harvest 752 paradise shelduck, at a success rate of 1.49 birds per hour.

Statement of Service Performance

Planned Result:

Manage problem aggregations of gamebirds through implementation of a special Paradise shelduck season in Area C and proactively responding to and assisting landholders.

Performance Measure:

Implementation of special season including number of permits issued and harvest, along with number of permits to disturb issued.

Actual Result:

- 58 permits to disturb game birds were issued under delegated authority 73848-FAU from the Director General of Conservation during the 2025/26 year.
- A 3-weekend (7-day) hunting season for paradise shelduck was held in Game Management Area C in late February and early March 2025 in which 87 active hunters spent 505.5 hours of effort to harvest 752 paradise shelduck, at a success rate of 1.49 birds per hour.
- Results reported to Council on 17 October 2026 – A. Stancliff 2026. ***Project Report 1181 Game Bird Disturbance 2025/026.***

Budget Variance

	Budget (\$)		Actual (\$)	
External	2,000		2,433	
Internal	15,757	160 hours	17,727	180 hours
Income	1,250		1,256	
Total	16,761		18,904	

TARANAKI FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

The Chairman
Taranaki Fish and Game Council

2025/26 Game Bird Dispersal Report

This paper reports on operational activity conducted during the reporting period under project 1181. The objective of this project is to ensure the dispersal or control of congregations of game birds where they cause unacceptable damage.

A total of 58 permits to disturb were issued by Taranaki Fish & Game staff within the reporting period (60 permits issued last year). Note that some of the permits cover more than 1 species and in terms of pukeko, more than one problem per permit. The area with the highest number of permits issued was Taranaki (51) then Whanganui (7) and 0 permits were issued in the Waimarino. 40 Permits were issued between the months of November and May (16 last year).

Income of \$1,000 (\$575 last year) for the hire of gas guns was received during the year,

MALLARD

There were 22 permits (17 permits issued 2024/2025) issued for the disturbance of Mallard ducks, causing damage to crops (3 were for only mallards, 19 included Paradise shelduck).

BLACK SWAN

There were 2 permits issued to disturb Black swan (1 last year), with one including Paradise shelduck.

PUKEKO

27 permits were issued for the disturbance of pukeko, (29 permits issued 2024/2025).

Problem	No. permits issued	Disturbance method used
Damage to gardens	15	Trip traps (10) .22rifle (5)
Damage to pasture	4	.22 rifle
Fouling troughs / swimming pool	4	.22 rifle
Damage to fruit trees	7	.22 rifle / trip traps
Attacking chickens	1	trip traps
Damage to native plants	1	.22 rifle
Entering house	1	trip trap

PARADISE SHELDUCK

27 permits were issued for the disturbance of Paradise shelduck (7 were for Paradise shelduck only, 19 including mallard and one included Black swan. This compares to 26 permits issued 2024/2025.

Problem	No. permits issued	Disturbance method used
Damage to crops & pasture	27	Gas gun / Shot gun

Recommendation

That the Game Bird Dispersal Report – 2025/2026, be received.

Allen Stancliff, Senior Field Officer

1 September 2026

Valid From Date	City/Town	Species
3/09/2025	Stratford	Pukeko
24/09/2025	New Plymouth	Pukeko
24/09/2025	Waitara	Pukeko
25/09/2025	New Plymouth	Pukeko
10/10/2025	Hurdon, New Plymouth	Pukeko
13/10/2025	New Plymouth	Pukeko
24/10/2025	New Plymouth	Pukeko
17/11/2025	Stratford	Paradise shelduck & Mallard duck
17/11/2025	Opunake	Paradise shelduck & Mallard duck
3/11/2025	Inglewood 4388	Paradise shelduck & Mallard duck
19/11/2025	Stratford	Paradise shelduck & Mallard duck
25/11/2025	Hāwera 4678	Paradise shelduck & Mallard duck
25/11/2025	Hawera 4679	Paradise shelduck/Mallard duck
25/11/2025	Hawera 4679	Paradise shelduck/Mallard duck
28/11/2025	Hawera 4679	Paradise shelduck/Mallard duck
28/11/2025	Awatuna 4679	mallard duck
3/12/2025	Hawera 4679	Paradise shelduck/Mallard duck
3/12/2025	New Plymouth	Pukeko
4/12/2025	Stratford	Mallard duck / Paradise shelduck
8/12/2025	Tariki	Paradise shelduck/Mallard duck
8/12/2025	Inglewood	Paradise shelduck/Mallard duck
8/12/2025	New Plymouth	Paradise shelduck/Mallard duck
9/12/2025	New Plymouth	Pukeko
12/12/2025	Waitara	Paradise shelduck/Mallard duck
15/12/2025	Waitara	Paradise shelduck/Mallard duck
17/12/2025	New Plymouth	Pukeko
17/12/2025	Kaimata	Mallard duck / Paradise shelduck
19/12/2025	Okato	Paradise shelduck
22/12/2025	Eltham	Mallard duck / Paradise shelduck
3/01/2026	New Plymouth	Paradise Shelduck
12/01/2026	Inglewood 4388	Paradise Shelduck
18/01/2026	Egmont Village	Paradise Shelduck & Black swan
26/01/2026	Waitara	Paradise Shelduck
27/01/2026	Waitara	Paradise shelduck
2/02/2026	Kaponga	Paradise Shelduck
3/02/2026	Inglewood	Mallard duck / Paradise shelduck
9/02/2026	Whanganui 4584	Pukeko
11/02/2026	New Plymouth	Pukeko
18/02/2026	Startford	Mallard duck / Paradise shelduck
19/02/2026	New Plymouth	Mallard
25/02/2026	New Plymouth	Mallard
13/03/2026	New Plymouth	Pukeko
1/04/2026	Lepperton	Paradise shelduck
7/04/2026	Kapuni	Pukeko
15/04/2026	Whanganui 4584	Pukeko
8/05/2026	New Plymouth	Pukeko
22/05/2026	Whanganui 4584	Pukeko
6/07/2026	Ratapiko 4390	black swan
14/07/2026	Whanganui 4584	Pukeko
20/07/2026	Whanganui 4584	Pukeko
21/07/2026	New Plymouth	Pukeko
21/07/2026	Hawera 4610	Pukeko
23/07/2026	Whanganui	Pukeko
30/07/2026	Whanganui	Pukeko
18/08/2026	Hāwera 4610	Pukeko
18/08/2026	New Plymouth	Pukeko
18/08/2026	New Plymouth	Pukeko
28/08/2026	New Plymouth	Pukeko

TARANAKI FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

The Chairman

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

2026 Special Paradise Season Report

A 3-weekend (7-day) hunting season for paradise shelduck was held in Game Management Area C (Taranaki) on 21st – 22nd February and 28th February - 1st March and 7th, 8th & 9th March 2026, with hunting hours from 6.30am to 8pm each day. 2026 was the fourth year the season has been run over three weekends, including Taranaki Anniversary weekend. Previously, the season had been restricted to two weekends (4 days).

To participate in the season, hunters were required to have a 2025 game licence (unless hunting on the land they occupied), obtain a \$5 permit (free for land occupiers) and fill in and return a diary. The daily bag limit was 10 paradise shelduck per hunter per day.

The special season was held to:

1. Disperse flocks of post-moult paradise shelduck that can cause damage to areas of new sown grass, recovering hay paddocks and fodder crops such as chicory; and
2. Provide an additional hunting opportunity for licence holders and land occupiers.

RESULTS

Permits were issued to 135 hunters, of which 87 went hunting, 45 didn't go out and 3 could not be contacted for their results (Table 1). Of the 55 land occupiers issued with permits, 21 went hunting, 32 didn't go out and two could not be contacted for their results. The number of active participants in Area C was the lowest since 2001. This was despite Taranaki 2025 hunting licence holders residing in Area C and with an email address being contacted directly to encourage them to take part in the season.

Out-of-region hunters comprised 10.3% of participants (Table 2), which was a little higher than in 2025 (Figure 1). Auckland/Waikato licence holders made up most of the out-of-region participants (6 of 9 hunters). As usual, most hunters (78 in total) came from within the Taranaki region. However, just 6.9% of Taranaki's 1,126 2025 game licence holders (1,034 AWS + 92 JWS) participated in the 2026 special season.

The 87 active hunters expended a total of 505.5 hours of effort for a harvest of 752 paradise shelduck, which corresponded to a success rate of 1.49 birds per hour (Table 3). While the success rate was above average, the hours hunted and the number of birds harvested were the lowest on record for Area C (i.e. since the season began there in 1998). Harvest statistics presented in Tables 3 & 4 and Figure 2 confirm that a reduction in participation, and a reduction in effort by those that hunted was responsible for the reduced harvest.

While the special season harvest of paradise shelduck remained remarkably stable until this year, the total annual harvest over the wider region has been trending downwards in the longer term (Figure 3). While January moult counts in the Waimarino and Whanganui areas have also trended downwards, counts at moult sites on the Taranaki ringplain have remained at a relatively high level.

Of the 147 days spent hunting in 2026, 58 (39%) occurred on the first weekend, 49 (33%) on the second and 40 (27%) on the third weekend (Table 4). The total number of days hunted was well down on previous years, as was the average number of days per hunter (1.69). A lack of time to go hunting and the cost of ammunition were mentioned as factors adversely affecting participation.

Nevertheless, the season was still very useful in dispersing mobs of paradise after the moult and giving new and junior hunters an opportunity to participate. A 3-weekend special season has been gazetted in Area C in 2027.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE REPORT ON THE 2026 SPECIAL PARADISE SEASON, DATED 21st APRIL 2026, BE RECEIVED.

Allen Stancliff

21st April 2026

TABLE 1. Breakdown of Special Season Permits Issued, 2010-2026

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Nil Hunting	54	45	47	46	43	63	56	43	41	37	44	43	46	48	65	52	45
Not able to be contacted	10	5	3	6	2	3	0	2	2	3	3	4	10	6	6	3	3
Active Hunters – Area A																	
Active Hunters – Area B	19	16	12	14	8	9	18										
Active Hunters – Area C	111	102	130	116	114	132	113	99	94	104	109	108	105	92	111	134	87
Total Active Hunters	130	118	142	130	122	141	131	99	94	104	109	108	105	92	111	134	87
Total Permits Issued	194	168	192	182	167	207	187	144	137	144	156	155	161	146	182	189	135

TABLE 2. Origin of Participants in the Taranaki 2026 Special Season.

F&G Region	Area C	% from each Region
Auckland/Waikato	6	6.9
Eastern	1	1.1
Wellington	2	2.3
Taranaki	78	89.7
Total	87	

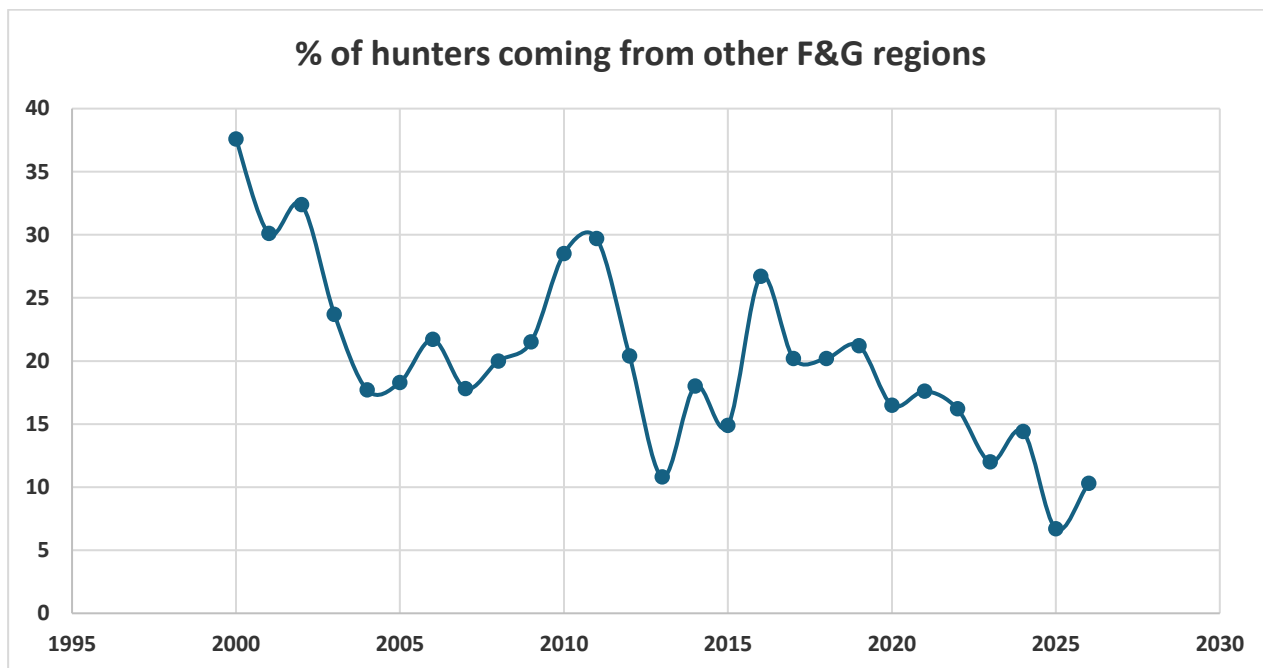


FIGURE 1. Proportion of Taranaki special season hunters coming from other Fish & Game Regions. No special season has been held in the Waimarino (Area A) since 2002 and in Whanganui (Area B) since 2016.

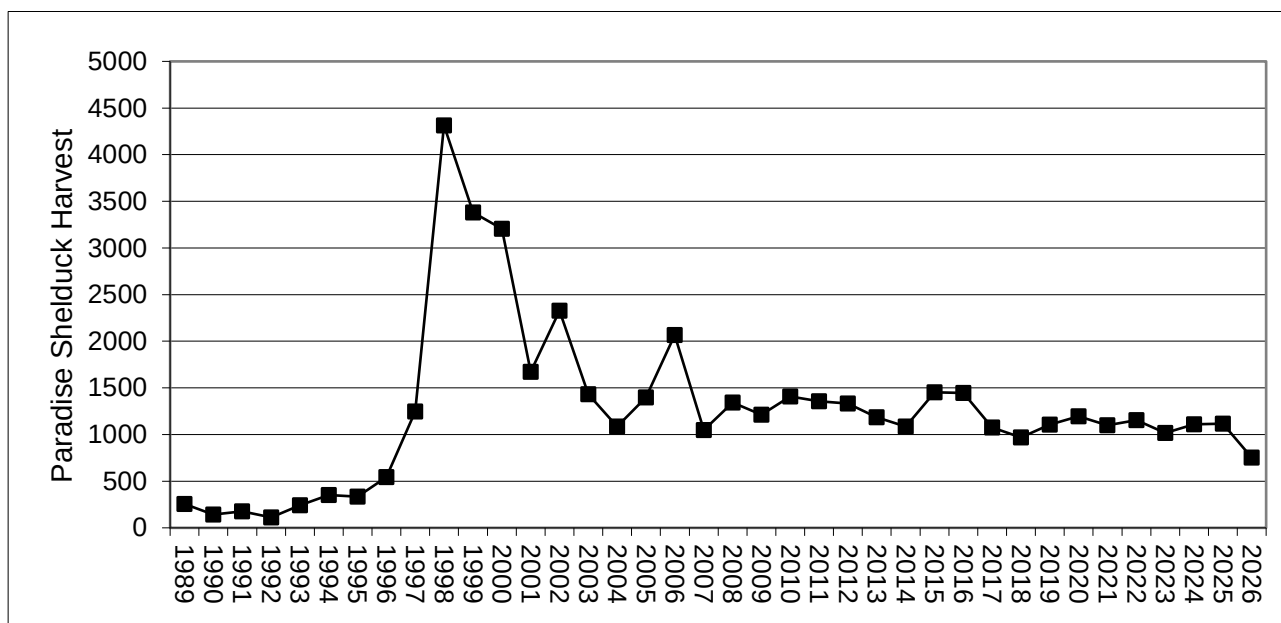


FIGURE 2. Taranaki region special season harvest of paradise shelduck. No special season has been held in the Waimarino since 2002 and in Whanganui since 2016. The first special season in Area C (Taranaki) was held in 1998.

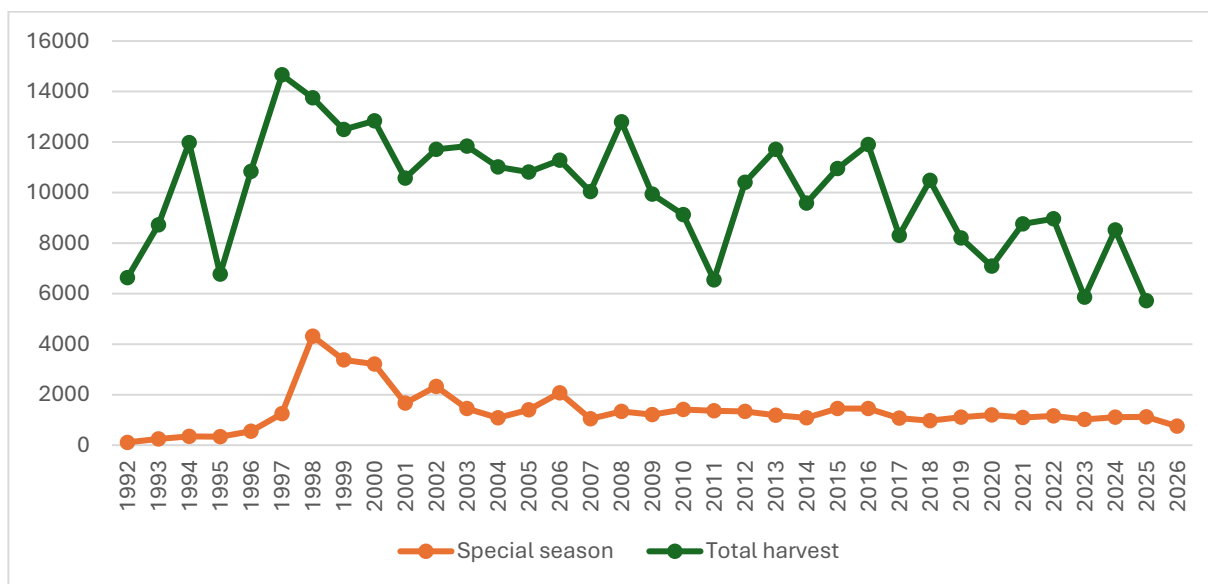


FIGURE 3. Taranaki special season and total annual harvest estimates for paradise shelduck. The total harvest estimate for 2015 does not include the harvest in Taranaki by hunters from other regions during the 2015 main season.

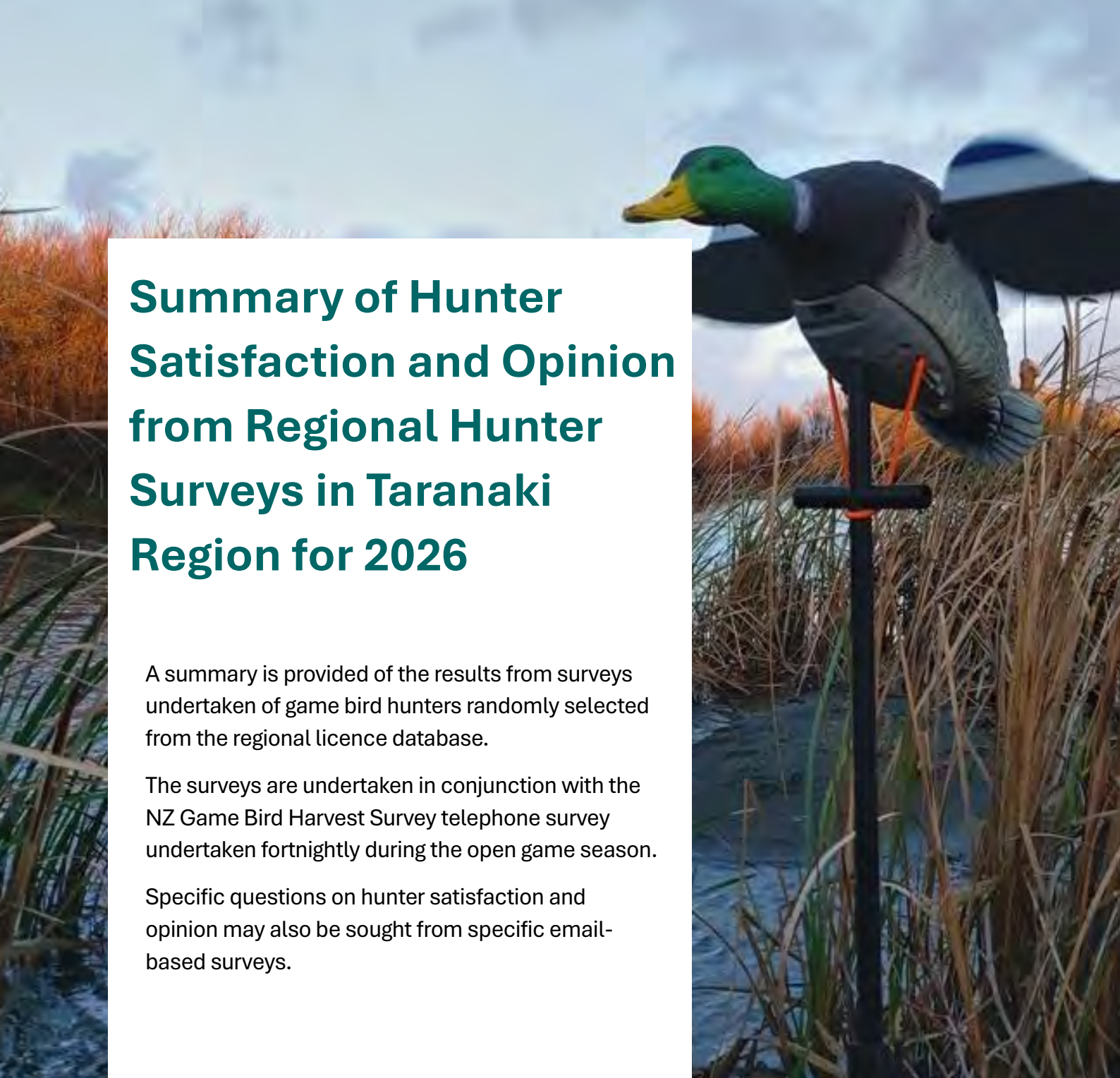
TABLE 3. Comparison of special paradise season harvest statistics. The season was extended to include Area C in 1998. There

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
No. Hunters	131	161	118	135	158	130	118	142	130	122	141	131	99	94	104	109	108	105	92	111	134	87
Paradise Shot	1,397	2,065	1,049	1,342	1,212	1,408	1,356	1,334	1,186	1,086	1,451	1,446	1,076	968	1,107	1,195	1,098	1,153	1,017	1,110	1,115	752
Not retrieved	49	58	70	41	26	35	52	37	65	71	33	33	56	49	35	36	36	33	26	26	23	
Banded	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Geese Shot	76	72	57	87	53	48	22	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--				
Hunting hours	1,125	1,479	949	--	1,068	997.5	932.5	1,026	849.3	845.8	1,040	960.8	716	728	750	868	897	820	713	742	817	505.5
Paradise/hour	1.24	1.40	1.11	1.67*	1.13	1.41	1.45	1.30	1.40	1.28	1.40	1.50	1.50	1.33	1.48	1.38	1.22	1.41	1.43	1.50	1.36	1.49
Paradise/hunter	10.7	12.8	8.9	9.9	7.7	10.8	11.5	9.4	9.1	8.9	10.3	11.0	10.9	10.3	10.6	11.0	10.2	11.0	11.0	10.0	8.3	8.6
Ave effort (hrs)	8.6	9.2	8.0	5.9*	6.8	7.7	7.9	7.2	6.5	6.9	7.4	7.3	7.2	7.7	7.2	8.0	8.3	7.8	7.8	6.7	6.1	5.8
Total Days	258	340	200	224	251	207	202	220	207	195	258	255	182	174	189	190	199	225	209	228	233	147
Days / hunter	1.97	2.11	1.69	1.66	1.59	1.59	1.71	1.55	1.59	1.60	1.83	1.95	1.84	1.85	1.81	1.74	1.84	2.14	2.27	2.05	1.74	1.69

has not been a season in Area A since 2003 and in Area B since 2016.

TABLE 4. Harvest Statistics for Game Management Area C (Taranaki). The season was extended from one weekend to two in 2015 and two weekends to three in 2023.

Harvest Statistic	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
No. Hunters	109	122	111	102	130	116	114	132	113	99	94	104	109	108	105	92	111	134	87
Paradise Shot	1,066	1,008	1,265	1,233	1,205	1,077	1,026	1,365	1,310	1,076	968	1,107	1,195	1,098	1,153	1,017	1,110	1,115	752
Paradise not retrieved	38	20	30	51	34	60	71	33	30	56	49	35	36	36	33	26	26	23	
Canada Geese Shot	87	53	48	21	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Geese not retrieved	1	1	1	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hours	443.5	837	884	827	938	793.3	799.3	995	866.5	716	728	750	868	897	820	713	742	817	505.5
Av. No. paradise / hour	1.55*	1.20	1.43	1.49	1.28	1.36	1.28	1.37	1.51	1.50	1.33	1.48	1.38	1.22	1.41	1.43	1.50	1.36	1.49
Av. No paradise/ hunter	9.8	8.3	11.4	12.1	9.3	9.3	9.0	10.3	11.6	10.9	10.3	10.6	11.0	10.2	11.0	11.0	10.0	8.3	8.6
Av. Effort in hours	6.1*	6.9	8.0	8.1	6.7	6.8	7.0	7.5	7.7	7.2	7.7	7.2	8.0	8.3	7.8	7.8	6.7	6.1	5.8
Total Days	187	187	180	176	200	186	183	246	230	182	174	189	190	199	225	209	228	233	147
Days 1st weekend								156	122	125	105	138	146	127	163	95	98	106	58
Days 2nd weekend								90	108	57	69	51	44	72	62	63	86	66	49
Days 3rd weekend																51	44	61	40
Av. No. days per user	1.72	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.86	2.04	1.84	1.85	1.81	1.74	1.84	2.14	2.27	2.05	1.74	1.69



Summary of Hunter Satisfaction and Opinion from Regional Hunter Surveys in Taranaki Region for 2026

A summary is provided of the results from surveys undertaken of game bird hunters randomly selected from the regional licence database.

The surveys are undertaken in conjunction with the NZ Game Bird Harvest Survey telephone survey undertaken fortnightly during the open game season.

Specific questions on hunter satisfaction and opinion may also be sought from specific email-based surveys.

Allen Stancliff

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

September 2026



TARANAKI FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

The Chairman
Taranaki Fish and Game Council

2026 Game Bird Hunter Opening Weekend Satisfaction Survey

For the third year running, Taranaki game bird hunters were surveyed as a part of the annual opening weekend harvest survey. Taranaki licence holders who hunted during opening weekend were asked about their level of satisfaction with their opening weekend experience. They were asked to rate satisfaction on 5-point scale (1 = very dissatisfied through to 5 = very satisfied). A total of 126 Taranaki hunters rated their 2026 opening weekend satisfaction.

While the 2026 opening weekend had blue-sky days with light winds that favoured the ducks, 80.2% of hunters contacted were satisfied or very satisfied with their opening weekend experience (Figure 1). This compares with 83.1% in 2025 and 88.3% in 2024.

Hunters who rated their 2026 opening weekend experience poorly, cited a lack of ducks, dispersal of ducks before opening day, a lack of hunters to move birds around and of course, the fine weather. For hunters who rated the opening weekend highly, ducks were only part of the equation, with comments like “great day despite the weather”; “saw ducks but didn’t hit anything” and “5 for the day and one for the ducks”. However, there were still those who “shot plenty of birds and had fun”. As has been found in previous surveys, it’s clear that coming together with family and friends to have an enjoyable weekend rates at least as high as shooting lots of ducks.

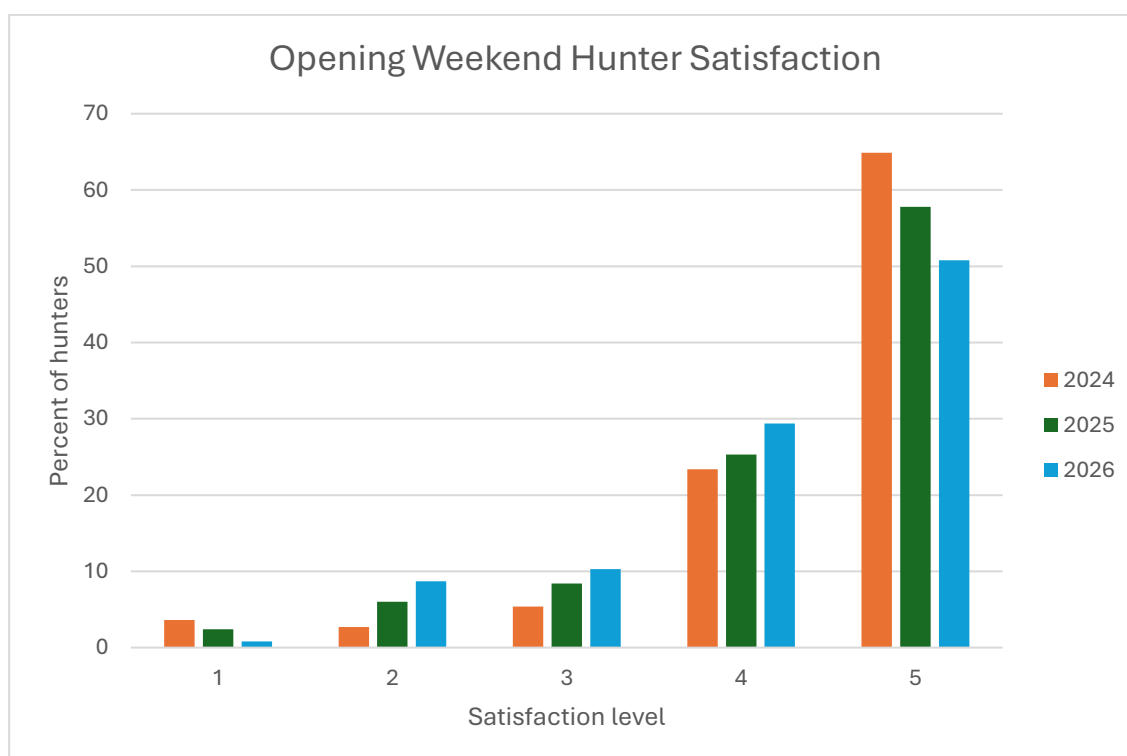


Figure 1. Taranaki game bird hunters' satisfaction with their opening weekend experience, 2024 – 26 seasons. 1= very dissatisfied; 2 = dissatisfied; 3 = neutral; 4 = satisfied; 5=very satisfied.

The 2024 and 2025 opening weekends were very similar to 2026 in that the region experienced fine, calm weather conditions which favoured the ducks, yet most hunters enjoyed their opening weekend experience.

Asking the satisfaction question involved extra work for the harvest survey interviewers and we thank them for their effort.

RECOMMENDATION:

- THAT THE 2026 GAME BIRD HUNTER OPENING WEEKEND SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT BE RECEIVED.

Allen Stancliff

21 September 2026

Compliance Report for the Taranaki Region 2025/26

Purpose of the Project

Provide effective compliance to protect resource sustainability (including revenue base) and user experience to maintain licence holder satisfaction

Strategic Outcome

Supports the Taranaki Fish & Game Strategic Outcomes:

Public Perception & Legitimacy

Attract & Retain Licence Holders

Allen Stancliff

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

September 2026

Executive Summary – Taranaki Compliance Report (2025/2026)

Overview of Results

Ranger Management and Training:

- The Taranaki Region began the 2025/26 year with nine warranted honorary rangers and two warranted staff members and ended the year with 10 warranted honorary rangers, one staff and one staff trainee
- Three honorary rangers and two staff attended a fish season training day in New Plymouth on 13/09/2025. Five honorary rangers and one staff attended a game season training in New Plymouth on 18/04/2026.

Compliance Activity:

- Rangers checked 22 anglers throughout the region during the year. No offences were detected, giving a compliance rate of 100%.
- Rangers checked 54 game bird hunters throughout the region. Three offences (2 offenders) were detected giving a compliance rate of 94.4%.
- Warrantless powers of entry and/or search (Sec 39 Wildlife Act 1953 and Sec 40 Conservation Act 1987) for entry to land were exercised on 30 occasions while carrying out game bird hunter ranging.

Statement of Service Performance

Planned Results:

Maintain a skilled honorary ranger team of at least 12 rangers consistent with requirements and objectives of the Compliance Policy and Strategy and also R3 principles

Undertake safe and effective compliance coverage across the Taranaki Region, including a target of 100 licence checks of anglers and also of hunters.

Process detected offences in a fair and timely way consistent with national prosecution guidelines.

Actual Result:

- Management of honorary rangers met the planned result in the Operational Plan;
- Compliance checks did not meet the target of 100 for anglers and hunters;
- Compliance with the regulations was 100% for anglers checked, which met the target of 95%;
- Compliance with the regulations was 94.4% for hunters, which did not meet the target of 95%.
- Three game offences (2 offenders) were detected and processed in a timely way consistent with national prosecution guidelines.

- Warrantless powers of entry and/or search (Sec 39 Wildlife Act 1953 and Sec 40 Conservation Act 1987) for entry to land were exercised on 30 occasions while carrying out game bird hunter ranging.

Budget Variance

	Budget (\$)		Actual (\$)	
External	3,000		2,139	
Internal	27,737	282 hours	16,229	165 hours
Income	1,000		870	
Total	29,737		17,498	

Comments:

TARANAKI FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

The Chairman

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

2025/26 Compliance Report

The Council's 2025/26 annual plan requires production of a compliance report detailing compliance activities, including ranger management and results for the year. The planned results for the year in the Council's annual plan were to: Maintain a skilled honorary ranger team of at least 12 rangers consistent with requirements and objectives of the Compliance Policy and Strategy and also R3 principles. Undertake safe and effective compliance coverage across the Taranaki Region, including a target of 100 licence checks of anglers and also of hunters. Process detected offences in a fair and timely way consistent with national prosecution guidelines.

Ranger management and training

The Taranaki Region began the 2025/26 year with nine warranted honorary rangers and two warranted staff members and ended the year with 10 warranted honorary rangers, one staff and one staff trainee.

Three honorary rangers and two staff attended a fish season training day in New Plymouth on 13/09/2025. Five honorary rangers and one staff attended a game season training in New Plymouth on 18/04/2026.

One new honorary ranger completed the CERT on-line training modules on 11th October 2025 and attended a CERT 1-day refresher at Rotorua on 21st November 2025.

One staff ranger (Jack Harland) left the Council's employment on 20th March 2026. A new staff member (Josh Murray) based in Palmerston North and shared 50:50 with the Wellington Region began work on 29th June 2026, has completed the on-line training modules and is in the process of obtaining his ranger warrant.

Compliance activities

Rangers checked a total of 22 anglers throughout the region during the season, which was a much lower number than usual. No offences were detected, giving a compliance rate of 100%.

There was a good turnout of rangers on opening weekend of the 2026 game season, with 54 hunters checked in the Waverley, Stratford and Tikorangi areas. Three offences (2 offenders) were detected in the Stratford area, with offenders being successful dealt with via diversion. The overall compliance rate for game bird hunting was 94.4%.

The number of anglers and hunters checked over the year, with offences detected, is shown in Table 1 below. The numbers checked did not reach the target of 100 identified in the Council's Compliance Strategy.

Table 1 Number of anglers and hunters checked and offences detected in the 2025/26 season

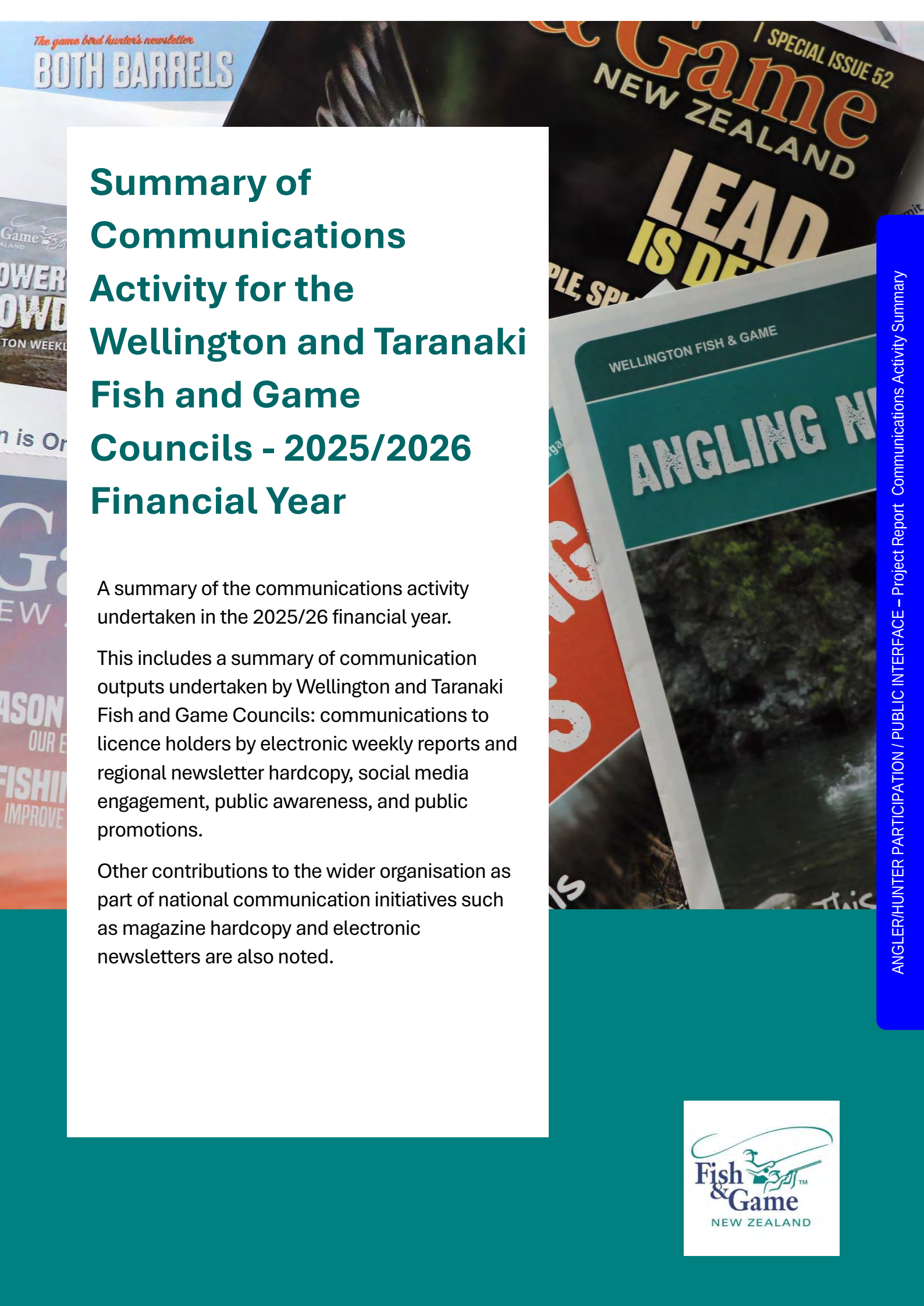
	Number of checks	% of total licences sold (using provisional 2025/26 figures)	Number of offences detected	User compliance rate (%)
Anglers	22	0.8% of 2,633	0	100%
Hunters	54	4.7% of 1,145	3	94.4%

RECOMMENDATION

That the Taranaki Fish & Game Council receive this compliance report for 2025/26 noting that:

- management of honorary rangers met the planned result in the Operational Plan;
- compliance checks did not meet the target of 100 for anglers and hunters;
- compliance with the regulations was 100% for anglers checked, which met the target of 95% compliance;
- compliance with the regulations was 94.4% for hunters, which did not meet the target of 95%.

Allen Stancliff
Senior Field Officer
7th September 2026



Summary of Communications Activity for the Wellington and Taranaki Fish and Game Councils - 2025/2026 Financial Year

A summary of the communications activity undertaken in the 2025/26 financial year.

This includes a summary of communication outputs undertaken by Wellington and Taranaki Fish and Game Councils: communications to licence holders by electronic weekly reports and regional newsletter hardcopy, social media engagement, public awareness, and public promotions.

Other contributions to the wider organisation as part of national communication initiatives such as magazine hardcopy and electronic newsletters are also noted.

2025/26 Communication Report

Purpose of the Projects

- 1 To provide anglers and hunters with information that will increase the satisfaction of the angling and hunting experience, including access and 'how to' information to enhance success.
- 2 To undertake actions that contribute to a positive public awareness of issues facing Fish and Game – and contribute to strengthening a positive social licence relating to angling and hunting pursuits.

Strategic Outcome Supported

Attract & Retain Licence Holders: Deliver well valued experiences for licence holders by understanding their needs, providing simple and effective communication, while making fishing and game bird hunting more attractive to a wider group of future participants.

Public Perception & Legitimacy: Enhancing the social licence to operate of angling and game bird hunting through positive messaging of natural environment protection, wild food harvesting, and wellbeing through undertaking outdoor recreational pursuits

Overview of Results

Fish and Game Magazine – Fish: 722 distributions

Fish and Game Magazine – Game: 982 distributions

Regional Wellington/Taranaki Newsletter – Fish: 5500 distributions

Regional Wellington/Taranaki Newsletter – Game: 5100 distributions

Weekly Regional Reports Fishing – Lower NI Lowdown: 28 reports – 12,733 sends (43% opens)

Weekly Reports Hunting – Game Bird Hunting Bulletin: 10 reports – 6178 sends (46% opens)

E-Zine – Fish - Reel Life & Both Barrels

Facebook Insights – 57,011 views, 14 Posts

Communications to Lapsed Licence Holders: 11 linked to time specific promotions

Press Releases: Reactive or specific time link

Statement of Service Performance

Planned Result:

Communications to Licence Holders - Magazine and Newsletters

- The provision of at least a two-page regional supplement in each of the two Special Editions of Fish & Game NZ magazine to be published during the reporting year.
- The preparation and publication of two regional newsletters to licence holders (one angling and one hunting focused) during the reporting year.
- A report by professional staff on the communications activity sent to licence holders will be presented to the Council by 31 August 2026.

Information to Licence Holders

- Provision of 'how to' information in hardcopy and digital form and maintaining regional information on the Fish and Game website.
- Provide weekly angling reports from September 2025 to April 2026 – using an electronic newsletter sent directly to licenced anglers.

- Provide weekly hunting reports from April 2026 to end of June 2026 – using an electronic newsletter sent directly to licenced hunters.
- A report by professional staff on the information resources developed for licence holders will be presented to the Council by 31 August 2026.

Public Awareness

- Contribute to public awareness campaigns co-ordinated by NZ Fish and Game Council.
- Undertake public awareness actions that focus on the positive aspects of angling and hunting, with a particular focus on the work undertaken by Fish & Game New Zealand.
- A report prepared by professional staff to summarise initiatives to maintain public awareness of issues affecting angling and hunting will be presented to the Council by 31 August 2026.

Actual Result:

Communications to Licence Holders - Magazine and Newsletters

- A three-page regional supplement in each of the two Special Editions of Fish & Game NZ magazine.
- Two eight-page regional newsletters to licence holders (one angling and one hunting focused).
- A report by professional staff on the communications activity sent to licence holders will be presented to the Council by 31 August 2026.

Information to Licence Holders

- Maintaining regional information on the Fish and Game website.
- Provide weekly angling reports from September 2025 to April 2026 – using an electronic newsletter sent directly to licenced anglers.
- Provide weekly hunting reports from April 2026 to end of June 2026 – using an electronic newsletter sent directly to licenced hunters.
- A report by professional staff on the information resources developed for licence holders will be presented to the Council by 31 August 2026

Project 1441 Public Awareness

- Contributed to *Re-Wild* public awareness campaigns co-ordinated by NZ Fish and Game Council.
- A report prepared by professional staff to summarise initiatives to maintain public awareness of issues affecting angling and hunting will be presented to the Council by 31 August 2026

Project Report presented to Council on 17 October 2026:

Project Report - Communication Report 2025-26

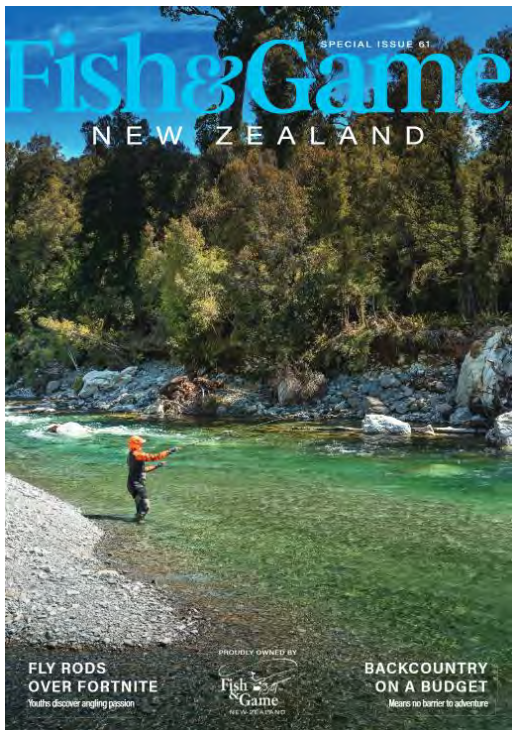
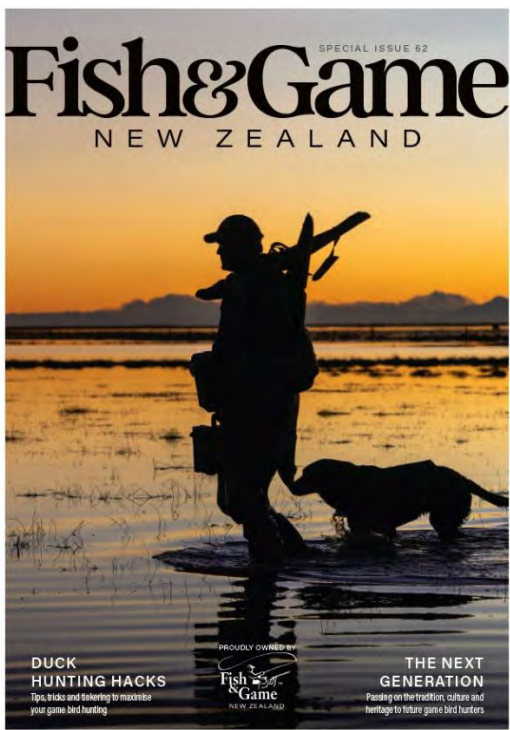
Comments:

- All work completed within schedule variance but increases in postage and EDM costs were higher than budget.

Selected Communication outputs for the 2025/2026 Financial Year

Fish & Game magazine (Project 1331)

The Fish & Game magazine is sent to every licence holder from the previous season – one issue for anglers, one issue for game bird hunters depending on which licence was purchased.

Purpose: <i>To communicate to anglers issues of high regional relevance or regional examples of relevant national issues in a magazine with long shelf life.</i>	Purpose: <i>To communicate to game bird hunters issues of high regional relevance or regional examples of relevant national issues in a high-quality magazine with long shelf life</i>
	
TFGC regional supplement features (3 pages)	TFGC regional supplement features (3 pages)
Distribution: 722 Taranaki region anglers ca.65,000 anglers nationally	Distribution: 982 Taranaki region hunters; ca.35,000 hunters nationally
Completion Date: July 2026	Completion Date: February 2026
Publication Date: August 2026	Completion Date: February 2026

A 2-page 2026 game season A4 colour flyer was also sent to 6853 rural box holders in the Taranaki Region.

WFGC Staff also produced feature articles and managed editorial and production of the main magazine.

Wellington-Taranaki Fish & Game Regional Newsletters

To communicate to Wellington and Taranaki anglers and hunters, issues of regional relevance, provide information to encourage participation, and provide an overview of the activities Wellington and Taranaki Fish & Game are involved in to emphasise the value of the licence.

Purpose: encourage licence purchase at a key sales period (late spring/pre-Christmas), including tips for improving participation with a moderately short shelf life (retained for up to one month).



8 pages - Content focused on providing information on the fishing resource for experienced anglers and providing tips for increasing success, and improving participation, amongst novice anglers

Print run: 5500

Completion Date: November 2025

Publication Date: November 2025

Purpose: encourage licence purchase including tips for improving participation with a moderately short shelf life (retained for up to one month).



8 pages - The newsletter is focused on issues relating to game bird hunting in the Wellington and Taranaki regions. It is produced annually to be distributed after the Fish & Game NZ hunting edition of the magazine, with distribution date targeted at (or about) mark-up day in early April.

Print run: 5100

Completion Date: March 2026

Publication Date: April 2026

Seasonal weekly reports

	
Purpose: To provide anglers with electronic-based information to encourage participation and help increase the value for money they receive from their licence including: • Providing information on weather. • River levels and weather conditions. • Provide information on techniques. • Links to river webcams. • Provide links to inspirational and aspirational web articles and multimedia content.	Purpose: To provide hunters with electronic-based information to encourage participation, by publishing basic weather condition details, as well as links to other hunting information and tips. Content includes: • Information on weather • Updates on season patterns of hunting and bird distribution • Providing information on techniques • Links to 'how to', recipe of the week
Reports (web and mobile friendly) were sent out at the same time, and on the same day, every week, when field work allowed. This regularity affords readers the chance to develop an expectation and anticipate receiving the publication – like the morning newspaper delivery. Our focus on regularity/consistency is aimed at giving the publication a professional 'feel'.	Reports (web and mobile friendly) were sent out at the same time, and on the same day, every week through the season, allowing readers to develop an expectation and anticipation around when they will receive the publication – like the morning newspaper delivery. This consistency increases the professional 'feel' of the publication.
# of reports: 28 (Thursdays, September – April)	# of reports: 10 (Thursdays April – June)
Report recipients: 12733	Report recipients: 9178
Average open rate: 43%	Average open rate: 46%

Fish & Game E-zine Fish – *Reel Life* and *Both Barrels*

	
<i>Reel Life</i> is a monthly email communication published by NZ Fish & Game Council. It combines content for each of the 12 regional Fish & Game councils that focus on: issues	<i>Both Barrels</i> is a seasonal email communication on the game bird hunting season. It combines links to content provided by each of the 12 regional Fish &

facing their region, recent activities undertaken as part of their operations, or season condition updates	Game councils that focus on: season prospects, issues facing their region, season condition updates.
Taranaki Fish & Game contributed content to all 12 issues of <i>Reel Life</i> during the reporting period	Taranaki Fish & Game contributed to all issues of Both Barrels

Fish and Game Hunting Knowledge Hub

During the reporting period, Wellington Fish & Game communications staff have assisted NZ Council identify, plan, develop and execute a broad range of extension resources aimed at helping anglers and hunters improve their success including the Hunting Knowledge Hub.

Hunting Knowledge Hub



Introduction into Game Bird Hunting

Welcome to the Fish & Game Hunting Knowledge Hub.



What to hunt

New Zealand offers a wide range of game bird hunting opportunities.



Where to hunt

Understanding where to hunt is crucial for game bird hunting success.



When to hunt

Game bird hunting starts the first full weekend in May annually throughout the country.



Equipment - gear list

Having the right gear is crucial for both success and safety in the field.



Shooting - how to

Explore this page for helpful guidance on preparation, safety and effective shooting practices.



Maimal / hunting blinds

Maimal, also known as hunting blinds, are a cornerstone of New Zealand waterfowl hunting culture.



Duck calling

Duck calling is a fundamental and very rewarding part of duck hunting.



Decoys

Decoys are an important part of duck hunting.



Dogs

A trained retrieving dog can greatly enhance your hunting experience.



Other bird species to hunt

Fish & Game manages game birds, but a few other species are targeted and considered desirable for food in New Zealand.



Game Bird preparation and butchery

When you take up game bird hunting, you will gain access to some of the finest wild game ingredients.



Recipes

Game bird hunting gives you access to some of the finest wild ingredients, prized for their rich, natural flavour.



Code of Conduct

Fish & Game New Zealand encourages all hunters to act responsibly and uphold the highest ethical standards while in the field.



Check Clean Dry

Protect Our Waterways: How you can help to stop invasive pests



High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI)

HSN1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) has now been detected in New Zealand.

Electronic Digital Marketing campaigns

Across the 11 direct electronic strategic communications campaigns with licence holders and stakeholders sent between August 2025 and June 2026, audience size averaged ~4,154 recipients per send, peaking at 6,303 for the waterfowl hunting extension email. Average engagement across all sends sat at **44.02% Open Rate**, **2.09% Click Rate**, and **0.67% Unsubscribe/Spam Rate**.

25 SEPTEMBER 2025

Exciting New Season Beckons!



A superbly conditioned rainbow trout caught from the Ruamahanga recently. Credit: Hamish Cornachai

The best fishing of the season is yet to come!

No images? [Click here](#)



December 2025

Get Set For Your Summer Holiday Angling Escape

We hope you're getting excited for the awesome angling that's instore this summer and over the Xmas break!

20 April 2026

Time To Get Your Ducks In A Row



12 June 2026

Extend Your Waterfowl Hunting Season



Hunters have increased opportunity to target black swan this season in the Wellington Fish & Game region. Photo: Nick King.

Recommendation

1. That the Council receives Project Report Fish & Game NZ – Wellington and Taranaki Region Communication Report 2025-26

Summary of Licence Agent Management and Licence Sales Channels for Taranaki Region for Financial Year 2025/2026

A summary of licence sales for sports fishing licence and game bird hunting licence sold through the various sales channels.

Issues relating to the management of licence agents is summarised for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

Trends in the way licence holders purchase their licences is analysed from data derived from the Licence Management System managed by an external provider ESL.

Corinne Deans – Administration Manager

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

September 2026

Project Report - Summary of Licence Agent Management and Licence Sales Channels for Taranaki Region for Financial Year 2025/2026

Purpose of the Project

To promote licence sales to the public through two readily available public channels: a network of physical licence agents and an online purchase channel.

Strategic Outcomes Supported

Attract & Retain Licence Holders: Deliver well valued experiences for licence holders by understanding their needs, providing simple and effective communication, while making fishing and game bird hunting more attractive to a wider group of future participants.

Public Perception & Legitimacy: Enhancing the social licence to operate of angling and game bird hunting through positive messaging of natural environment protection, wild food harvesting, and wellbeing through undertaking outdoor recreational pursuits

Overview of Results

	Public Online	Agency Online
Sports fish licence sales	2112	521
Game Bird licence sales	339	806

8 Licence Agents maintained in agent network channel

Statement of Service Performance

Planned Result:

- 2026 Game licences will be available through licence agents and/or on-line to participants throughout the region by 31 March 2026.
- 2025/26 fishing licences will be available to licence agents and participants throughout the region by 1 September 2025.
- An up-to-date data base of licence holders will be maintained.
- Progress reporting on licence sales will be provided to the Council throughout the year.
- A report prepared by professional staff to summarise licence sales will be presented to the Council by 31 August 2026.
- Council's Licence Agent Network is managed in line with adopted Council policy.
- A report prepared by professional staff to summarise licence agent network performance will be presented to the Council by 31 August 2026.

Actual Result:

- Appropriate actions undertaken to manage licence agent network performance and interaction with external provider for licence management system.
- An up-to-date data base of licence holders will be maintained.
- Progress reporting of licence sales provided to Council throughout the year.
- Project Report presented to Council on 17 October 2026:

Deans, C. 2026. Project Report -Summary of Licence Agent Management and Licence Sales Channels for Taranaki Region for Financial Year 2025/2026

Comments:

- All work completed within acceptable budget and schedule variance.

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

2025/26 Licencing Management and Sales Channel Report

Executive Summary

	Public Online	Agency Online
Sports fish licence sales	2112	521
Game Bird licence sales	339	806
At balance date 31 August 2026 a total of \$176.70 is outstanding (\$0 overdue and \$176.70 Current Month)		

As of 31 August 2026, we had 8 licence agents in the Taranaki Fish and Game region.

Agent	Sports fish licences sold	Game bird licences sold
1. Magnum Sports Stratford Ltd 20027	86	71
2. RFS Ltd, Raetihi 20005	19	13
3. Taranaki (Whanganui) Fish and Game Council 20015	20	-
4. Taranaki (New Plymouth) Fish and Game Council 20016	-	-
5. Taranaki Hunting & Fishing 20014	279	352
6. Visit Ruapehu i-Site 20024	-	-
7. Wanganui Hunting & Fishing 20017	107	327
8. Wilson Hunting & Outdoors 20001	10	43
Total	521	806

Sports fish and game bird licence sales by category are presented in Appendix 1 and 2.

Recommendation

That Council receive the 2025-26 Licence Agents Annual Report.

Corinne Deans
Administration Manager, Taranaki Fish and Game Council
31 August 2026

Appendix 1. Sports fish licence sales by category in Taranaki Fish & Game Region for the 2025/26 season to 31 August 2026.

Fishing Licence category	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26*
Family Fishing	154	135	124	105	128	111
Adult Whole Season	499	482	431	417	439	449
Non-Resident Whole Season	11	9	106	98	156	196
Loyal Senior Whole Season	72	79	83	84	95	95
Local Area Whole Season	47	39	43	45	38	55
Adult Winter	36	31	35	39	46	33
Adult Long Break	2	3	3	7	4	3
Adult Short Break	55	56	62	94	78	61
Adult Day	163	156	165	214	256	264
Non-Resident Day	4	30	245	289	385	466
Junior Whole Season	86	88	92	111	157	170
Junior Non-Resident Whole Season	1	3	5	4	10	27
Junior Day	29	46	42	61	95	70
Junior Non-Resident Day	0	0	7	4	16	12
Child Whole Season	164	141	234	400	562	587
Child Non-Resident Whole Season	0	0	4	3	2	12
Child Non-Resident Day	0	0	5	0	3	5
Sea Run Salmon Endorsement	0	0	15	11	6	12
Designated Waters - Resident	0	0	0	22	7	5
Designated Waters - Non-Resident	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Fish Licences	1323	1298	1701	2008	2483	2633
Whole Season Licence Equivalent	897	855	934	1,022	1,222	1309

* Data presented in this report is accurate as of 31 August 2026. Note that annual licence sales continue for the month of September and final licence sales results for the 2025/26 years will be reported in the Statement of Service Performance Report.

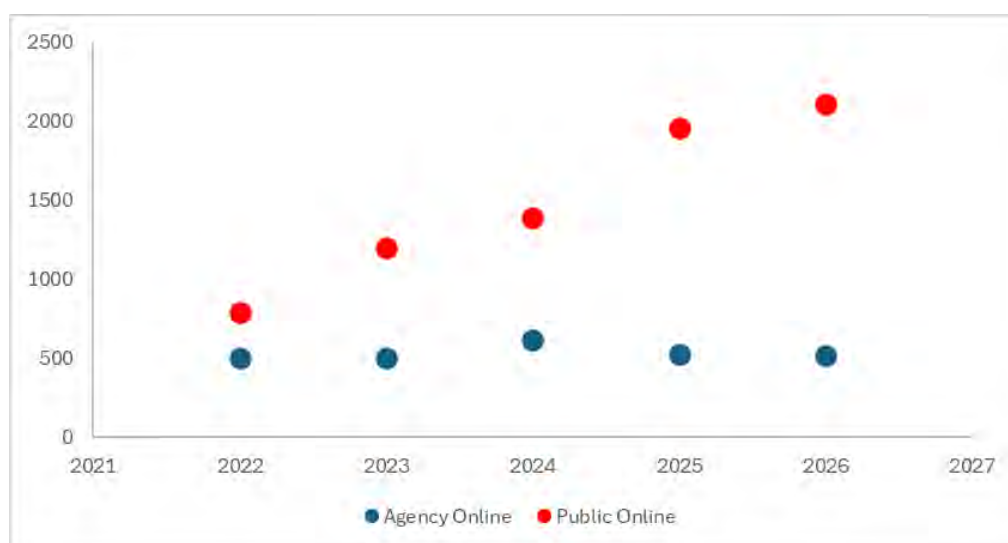


Figure 1. Sports fish licence sales by sales channel for the Taranaki Fish and Game region for the 2025/26 season to 31 August 2026.

Appendix 2. Game bird licence sales by category in Taranaki Fish & Game Region for the 2025/26 season to 31 August 2026.

Game bird licence category	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Adult Whole Season	1,081	1,091	1,056	968	1,034	943
Junior Whole Season	95	80	88	98	92	85
Child Whole Season	47	39	46	46	51	53
Adult Day	43	31	43	24	61	64
Junior Day	2	3	-	-	-	0
Total Game Licences	1,268	1,244	1,233	1,136	1,238	1,145
Whole Season Licence Equivalent	1,109	1,113	1,081	992	1,064	973

* Data presented in this report is accurate as of 31 August 2026. Note that annual licence sales continue for the month of September and final licence sales results for the 2025/26 years will be reported in the Statement of Service Performance Report.

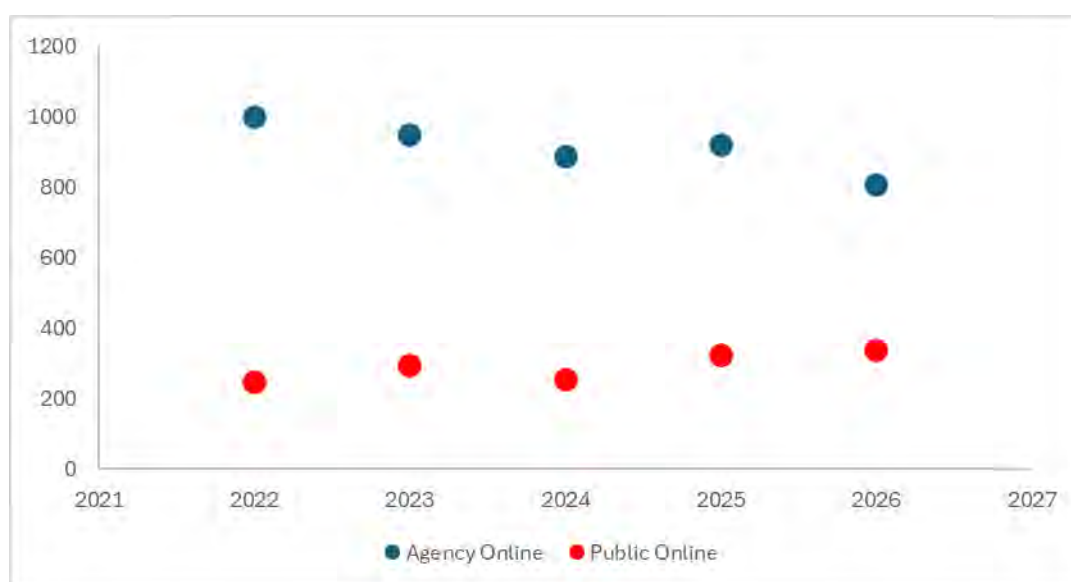


Figure 2. Game bird licence sales by sales channel for the Taranaki Fish and Game region for the 2025/26 season to 31 August 2026.





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