



Hon Tama Potaka
Minister of Conservation
Private Bag 18888
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON 6160

Briefing to Incoming Minister (BIM)

Dear Minister Potaka

On behalf of the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust (NZGBHT), I welcome you to your role as the Minister of Conservation.

You join the sector at a significant time with key decisions to be taken to ensure we can build a more resilient New Zealand. It is a time where there is now widespread agreement about the need to prepare for and adapt to climate change and extreme weather events. The NZGBHT believes its work in the protection, restoration, improvement, or creation of game bird habitat plays a role in helping mitigate these events.

Wetlands offer a wonderful resource. As water moves into a wetland, the flow rate decreases, allowing particles to settle out, including nutrients and contaminants. They soak up flood events before releasing it gradually plus, in the other extreme, provide source water for downstream during a severe drought. More importantly, from a NZGBHT perspective, they provide rich habitat for waterfowl and a multitude of other wildlife species including whitebait inanga, tuna, mudfish, Australasian bitterns, marsh crakes and fernbirds.

We look forward to working with you on your priorities:

List new government's policy on conservation and habitat management.

Overview

This briefing provides you with information about the wildlife portfolio to support you in your role as the Minister of Conservation and explains how the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust (NZGBHT) can help you to achieve your manifesto commitments that are specific to wildlife, habitat and the natural ecosystem.

We encourage your commitment to:

- making the creation and maintenance of wetlands a permitted activity
- support conservation efforts on private lands
- *Show support by listing other relevant political policy*

The briefing begins with an overview of the historical significance of wildlife in New Zealand and the effects of

After this, the briefing outlines upcoming decisions, events and the work programme, then explains the wildlife and habitat responsibilities, the role of the NZGBHT, and its connections with other agencies.

Decisions in your first 90 days

- Appointment of a new Board. Every member of the Board holds office for a term of 3 years. The current Board was appointed in July 2020. New appointments were due July 2023, unfortunately the process was overtaken by Cabinet policy preventing new appointments out from a General Election. Despite, the Wildlife Act making provision for every member of the Board continuing in office until successors arrive, in 2022 the Board lost to bereavement one member (Jan Riddell) and seeks formalising a new Board of six members as soon as possible.
- Receipt of the annual Performance Report of the NZGBHT Board and its presentation to the House of Representatives for members' information. This report is forwarded to you via the Department of Conservation as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year (31 August).

Upcoming events in your first 90 days

- World Wetland Day, 2 February 2024
- Release of the annual Habitat Stamp. The 2024 stamp is an image of a mallard drake taken by David Towgood from Northland.



The Habitat Stamp (colloquially known as the 'duck' stamp) and the wider stamp programme belongs to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council. The NZGBHT plays important roles in its creation and benefits from the funding it provides. However, it is its wider promotion that the NZGBHT encourages you to participate in the marketing of World Wetland Day and the release on that day of the Habitat Stamp. In year's past this has included a press release by the Minister on 2 February and a photo opportunity with the release of the new stamp.

Work Programme

Key functions of the NZGBHT performed during the year include:

- promoting and advising prospective applicants on the protection, restoration, improvement, creation, or procurement of habitat suitable for game birds and associated wildlife.

- disbursing by way of grants such proportion of its funds each year as it considers appropriate for the purpose of carrying out its functions.
- recommending to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council the game bird or other wildlife species to be depicted on the following year's game bird habitat stamp.
- appointing, or selecting by competition, an artist to produce the stamp artwork of the species approved by the New Zealand Fish and Game Council.
- promoting the sale of game bird habitat stamps and associated products to game bird hunters and to the public.

NZGBHT as a public entity

The Game Bird Habitat Trust was established by the Wildlife Act 1953 (section 44B) and must comply with the Crown Entities Act 2004 as per the 4th Schedule of the Public Finance Act 1989. It is audited annually by the Office of the Auditor General. The NZGBHT also has charitable society status (Charity Registration number CC33828).

Under section 44F of the Wildlife Act 1953, it is governed by a six-member Board. Current members appointed by the Minister of Conservation in July 2020 are:

Andy Tannock (Chair)

Jan Riddell (deceased 2022), **Mark Sutton** and **Chantal Whitby**, after consultation with the NZ Council

John Cheyne, after consultation with the Director-General of Conservation

Neil Candy, after consultation with the Board of Ducks Unlimited NZ Inc.

There are a range of functions set out in section 44D, but primarily it is to improve New Zealand's game bird habitat and its secondary function is to improve the habitat of other wildlife.

The NZGBHT receives no funding from the Government or public sector generally, other than when acting as an agent to implement specific funded programmes. The bulk of its funding is provided through the Game Bird Habitat Stamp programme established by the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Stamp Regulations 1993. Although the Habitat Trust has charitable trust status it has yet to receive any significant donations. Additional funding via corporate partnerships is currently being explored.

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

Your key contacts at NZGBHT are:

Andy Tannock Chairperson, andy.tannocknz@gmail.com 0274 842 812, 230 Hal Road
BANNOCKBURN 8394.

Robert Sowman Administrator, gbht@fishandgame.org.nz 021 490 601, 15 Casel Street
MASTERTON 5810.

As set out in the Wildlife Act 1953 s44H, the Board is serviced by the Secretariat of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council. The costs incurred by the New Zealand Fish and Game Council in servicing the Board are paid for by the Board.

Key contacts at the NZ Council office are:

Corina Jordan Chief Executive, cjordan@fishandgame.org.nz 021 426 350
Carmel Veitch Finance Manager cveitch@fishandgame.org.nz 0274 405 064.

NZGBHT links with other agencies

- New Zealand Fish and Game Council - membership includes three Trustees recommended by the NZ Council. The Council provides secretariat services to the NZGBHT. The NZGBHT reports to the NZ Council recommending the method of habitat stamp selection, the image and levy set for the stamp on the game licence.
- Department of Conservation – membership includes one Trustee recommended by the Director General of Conservation. It is also through the Department that reports and recommendations are passed through to you, the Minister.
- Ducks Unlimited - membership includes one Trustee recommended by DU NZ.
- Fish and Game Councils – Field staff act as project referees and provide time in lieu for professional support.
- Queen Elizabeth II Trust – the protection of habitat is best created through a legal covenant by the QEII Trust. The NZGBHT has its own Habitat Agreement it seeks to sign with property owners receiving grants exceeding \$10,000 but this is not legally binding.

The NZGBHT would appreciate a regular exchange of ideas with you and the Chairperson once a year, on issues of significance to conservation and once a year with your senior conservation advisor and our Administrator on procedural and legislative matters.

The annual meeting of the NZGBHT in 2024 will be in Wellington on Thursday 22 August. A dinner is to be held for the Trustees on Wednesday evening of 21 August. You would be welcome to meet and greet the Board at either of these events.

Nāku noa, nā

Andy Tannock
Chairperson

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