

NORTHLAND

Game Bird Hunting Regulations 2025/2026



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SCAN FOR
ALL REGIONS
REGULATIONS

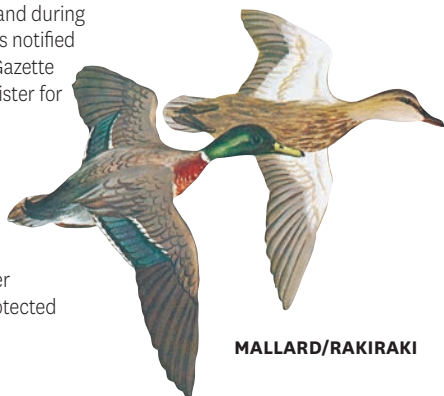
NEW ZEALAND DUCK SPECIES

GAME SPECIES

(NAMED IN BLACK)

These species may be hunted, but only in such regions and during such open seasons as notified in the New Zealand Gazette each year by the Minister for Hunting and Fishing.

NOTE: Important recognition features are the large areas of white under the wings of the game ducks and the smaller overall size of the protected ducks.



MALLARD/RAKIRAKI



**PARADISE SHELDUCK/
PŪTAKITAKI**



**SHOVELER/
KURUWHENGI**



GREY DUCK/PĀRERA

PROTECTED SPECIES

(NAMED IN RED)

These species are absolutely
protected at all times.

DO NOT TARGET



BROWN TEAL/PĀTEKE



GREY TEAL/TĒTĒ-MOROITI



SCAUP/PĀPANGO

The regulations printed in this guide booklet are subject to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing's approval. A copy of the published game notice in the New Zealand Gazette is available on www.fishandgame.org.nz along with further information on game bird hunting.

GAME BIRD HUNTING CODE OF CONDUCT

Fish and Game New Zealand actively promotes responsible and ethical hunting practices. As game bird hunters we all have the following responsibilities, as detailed in the Game Bird Hunting Code of Conduct:

HUNT HUMANELY

- Shoot only within the effective range of our firearm and our capabilities, and only when a quick, clean kill is likely
- Retrieve all shot birds promptly and dispatch wounded game birds quickly and humanely
- Respect the resource, value our game birds and eat what we shoot

PROTECT GAME BIRD RESOURCES AND OUR HUNTING TRADITIONS

- Understand and observe all hunting regulations and licensing requirements
- Support game bird management and habitat enhancement activities
- Take no more than our immediate needs
- Share our knowledge and foster ethical attitudes and behaviour in hunting companions and youth



CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

- Remove all rubbish from the hunting area and dispose of offal and carcasses responsibly
- Use non-toxic shot and biodegradable products.
- Use established tracks and roads

RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

- Respect private property and always obtain access permission
- Be considerate of non-hunters
- Be aware of our safety and the safety of others when hunting
- Comply with the Arms Act 1983 and always follow the 7 Firearms Safety Rules:
 1. Treat every firearm as loaded
 2. Always point firearms in a safe direction
 3. Load a firearm only when ready to fire
 4. Identify your target beyond all doubt
 5. Check your firing zone
 6. Store firearms and ammunition safely
 7. Avoid both alcohol and drugs when handling firearms

For further guidance about responsible game bird hunting read the full Code of Conduct at www.fishandgame.org.nz

STOP THE SPREAD OF AQUATIC PESTS

Protect our waters: **CHECK, CLEAN, DRY.** Check dogs, boots, decoys, boats and their trailers before you leave the area.

HUNTING LICENCE VALID NATIONWIDE

All game bird hunting licences can be used in all Fish & Game New Zealand regions. Day licences are valid only on or after the second Monday of the new season. It's important to note that if you're hunting in other regions you need to read up on the local regulations at www.fishandgame.org.nz. Fish & Game New Zealand sports fish and game licences are issued online, are processed electronically and comply with the Electronic Transactions Act 2002. Licences are issued centrally by a person authorised to issue licences on behalf of each Fish and Game Council.

GAME BIRD HABITAT STAMP

A game bird habitat stamp must be displayed on every licence to hunt or kill game¹. The purpose of the Habitat Stamp Programme is to raise funds for habitat enhancement. Five dollars (\$5)² of the game licence fee is assigned to the stamp as income for the programme. If you own or help manage suitable game bird habitat including wetlands, you are welcome to apply for funds raised from the habitat stamp programme. To apply see the Game Bird Habitat Trust website <https://fishandgame.org.nz/environment/protecting/protecting-nz-game-bird-habitats/the-nz-game-bird-habitat-trust> for details. Applications close June 30.

SHOTGUNS AND USE OF NON-TOXIC SHOT

Game bird hunting can only be undertaken with a shotgun of a 10 gauge or smaller (including 12, 16, 20, 28, .410). Mandatory use of non-toxic shot applies to all waterfowl hunting, (Cl5, Open Season for Game Notice)).

This ban is mandatory across all lands (public and private) whilst hunting water fowl within 200 metres of all waterways and wetlands.

For more information refer below or to www.fishandgame.org.nz

WILDLIFE ACT 1953

The hunting of game is governed by the provisions of the Wildlife Act 1953. The Minister for Hunting and Fishing declares an open season for game annually in the New Zealand Gazette (see below). Some important provisions of the Wildlife Act are covered here. The Act and its companion Wildlife Regulations 1955 can be viewed in full online: <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/>

WILDLIFE DECLARED TO BE GAME ³

Hunters are reminded that only the following lists of species are game birds that they are permitted to hunt and kill.

¹ Section 19A(1) of the Wildlife Act 1953

² Section 72(3A)9e) of the Wildlife Act 1953

³ Schedule 1 Wildlife Act 1953

Waterfowl

- Kākīānau/black swan (*Cygnus atratus*) (except on Chatham Islands).
- Duck:
 - Pārera/grey duck (*Anas superciliosa*) and any cross of that species with any other species, variety, or kind of duck (except on Chatham Islands).
 - Rakiraki/Mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and any cross of that species with any other species, variety, or kind of duck (except on Chatham Islands).
 - Pūtakitaki/paradise shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*). Putangitangi
 - Kuruwhengi/Australasian shoveler duck (New Zealand shoveler) (*Anas rhynchotis*).
- Pūkeko (*Porphyrio melanotus*) (except on Chatham Islands).

Upland Game

- Chukar (*Alectoris graeca chukar*).
- Red-legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa rufa*).
- Pheasant (any bird not being a domestic bird, of the genus Phasianus and any cross of any such bird with any other species, variety, or kind of pheasant).
- Quail:
 - Australian or brown quail (*Synoicus*). *Synoicus ypsilophorus*
 - Californian quail (*Lophortyx californica*).
 - Virginian or bobwhite quail (*Colinus virginianus*).

RESTRICTIONS ON THE TAKING OF GAME

(S18, Wildlife Act 1953)

No person shall use more than one shotgun or any live decoy.

USE OF LEAD SHOT AMMUNITION OVER WATER

(C15, Open Season for Game Notice)

It is an offence to possess, or hunt waterfowl with 200 metres of open water using lead shot ammunition.

LICENCE TO HUNT OR KILL GAME

(S19, Wildlife Act 1953)

It is an offence to hunt or kill game unless the person holds a current game licence, except in some circumstances where that person is a resident occupier as defined in the Wildlife Act.

OCCUPIER OF ANY LAND

(S19(3), Wildlife Act 1953)

“...the occupier of any land, and the spouse or partner and any one son or daughter of the occupier, may, during an open season, hunt or kill on that land without a licence (but subject to all other restrictions imposed by game regulations.” The occupier of the land is normally the owner if she/he personally resides on the land, but this privilege can be transferred to farm manager or sharemilkers by a written statement indicating such to Fish and Game if the owner does not personally reside on the land. Note that the Act allows for hunting by three people; the occupier, his/her wife/husband/civil union partner or de facto partner and one son or daughter on that land - but no other land. Except a run-off farmed in conjunction with that land.

SHOOTING OF GAME NOT IN FLIGHT PROHIBITED

(S22, Wildlife Act 1953)

It is an offence for a person to shoot or attempt to shoot at any game bird not in flight except where a game bird is already wounded by shooting.

OBSTRUCTING RANGERS

(S40, Wildlife Act 1953)

It is an offence to obstruct a ranger. The maximum penalty is 2-years imprisonment and/or \$100,000 fine.

TAKING PROTECTED WILDLIFE

(S67A, Wildlife Act 1953)

It is an offence to hunt or kill protected wildlife. The maximum penalties for hunting or killing absolutely protected wildlife is up to two years imprisonment or \$100,000.

GAME HUNTING EXCLUSION AREAS

Closed game areas means a part of a region that is for the time being excluded from the open season in the region, but does not include a wildlife sanctuary or a wildlife refuge or any area in which the shooting or hunting or killing of animals is prohibited under or pursuant to paragraph (j) of subsection (2) of this [Wildlife] Act or any other Act. There is no open season for game birds on property in a closed game area. It remains legal to have a dog or a gun on such land, but not to use them to hunt game birds (which also applies to the landowner). (s2. Wildlife Act 1953). Each closed game area is administered by a Fish and Game Council.

WILDLIFE REFUGES

It is illegal to take a dog or a gun onto Wildlife Refuge land, unless specifically permitted in writing to do so, or to harm or disturb any wildlife including game birds on that land (s14(3) Wildlife Act 1953). Wildlife Refuges are administered by the Department of Conservation.

The remainder of this hunting guide is made up of regional details and hunting conditions contained in the Gazetted Game Notice. These conditions are set out in the:

FIRST SCHEDULE:

Hunting conditions generally common to all Fish and Game regions.

SECOND SCHEDULE:

Regionally specific hunting conditions, including bag limits, closed and open game areas, shooting hours and the like.

FIRST SCHEDULE

This notice revokes all previous Open Season for Game Notices and shall come into force on 3 May 2025.

Hunting conditions generally common to all fish and game regions

1 Bag limits

- 1.1 No person shall take or kill, on any one day, more than the number of game birds specified as the daily bag limit for the Fish and Game Region in which the game is taken.
- 1.2 No person shall possess, on any one day, more than the number of game birds specified as the daily bag limit for the Fish and Game Region in which the game is taken, except on Sunday 4 May 2025, when that person may have in their possession twice the number of game birds specified as the daily bag limit for Saturday 3 May 2025.
- 1.3 A person may possess more game than specified in clause 1(2) of this Schedule, if all such game is labelled with the following details:
 - (a) The name and address of the person by whom the game was taken;
 - (b) The number of the licence to hunt or kill game held by the person by whom the game was taken;
 - (c) The name of the Fish and Game Region by which that licence was issued;

- (d) The name of the Fish and Game Region in which the game was taken; and
- (e) The date on which the game was taken.

2 Waiver of Restrictions on Baiting for Waterfowl

A person may hunt or kill game of the family Anatidae (waterfowl) during the open season for game in all Fish and Game Regions, except Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Region, where food has been cast, thrown, placed or planted any time during the year.⁴ In the Second Schedule, Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Region, Special Condition 4(10), applies to restrictions on baiting.

3 Magazine Shotguns

A person may hunt or kill game birds, as specified, in any Fish and Game Regions with any magazine shotgun of a calibre 10 gauge or less, which includes magazine extensions that comply with the Arms Act 1983,⁵ other than in the:

- (a) Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Region;
- (b) Eastern Fish and Game Region;
- (c) Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Region;
- (d) Wellington Fish and Game Region;
- (e) Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Region;
- (f) West Coast Fish and Game Region.

For these six Regions special conditions in the Second Schedule apply.

4 Shot Size

No person shall use, in any shotgun used for the purposes of hunting and killing game, any cartridge containing any shot size having a larger retained, per-pellet energy at 90 metres than lead BB.

5 Use of Lead Shot Prohibited

5.1 No person may possess lead shot, or use lead shot, while hunting or killing waterfowl within 200 metres of open water with any gun. Non-toxic alternative shot must be used, such as steel.

5.2 For the purposes of this requirement, "waterfowl" means any of the following game species:

⁴ Section 17 of the Wildlife Act 1953.

⁵ Amended notification to section 18(1)(c) (iii) and (v) of the Wildlife Act 1953 as authorised by the Minister of Conservation under section 18(1) of that Act.

- Black swan (*Cygnus atratus*);
- Grey duck (*Anas superciliosa*) and any cross of that species with any other species, variety, or kind of duck;
- Mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and any cross of that species with any other species, variety, or kind of duck;
- Paradise shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*) also known as Paradise duck;
- Australasian shoveler duck (New Zealand shoveler) (*Anas rhynchos*);
- Pūkeko (*Porphyrio porphyrio melanotus*).

5.3 For the purposes of this requirement, “open water” means either:

- (a) any area of land or seabed covered permanently or seasonally by water wider than 3 metres; or
- (b) any area which is temporarily covered by water wider than 3 metres at the time of such possession or use, and that is contiguous to an area referred to in paragraph (3)(a).

6 Camouflaged Rowboats

A person may hunt or kill game within the following Fish and Game Regions, from unmoored camouflaged rowboats, subject to the excluded periods for the regions specified below: ⁶

- **Northland** – no excluded period
- **Auckland/Waikato** – excluding 3 and 4 May 2025 for the whole Auckland/Waikato region and excluding 5 to 7 May and 10 and 11 May 2025 for the Waikato River north of the boat ramp at the confluence of the Mangawara Stream
- **Eastern** – excluding 3 and 4 May 2025
- **Hawke’s Bay** – excluding 3 and 4 May 2025
- **Taranaki** – no excluded period
- **Wellington** – excluding 3 and 4 May 2025
- **Nelson/Marlborough** – no excluded period
- **West Coast** – no excluded period
- **North Canterbury** – excluding 3 and 4 May 2025
- **Central South Island** – excluding 3 and 4 May 2025
- **Otago** – excluding Clutha River 3 to 11 May 2025 inclusive

⁶ Section 18(1)(f)(vi) of the Wildlife Act 1953.

- **Southland** – excluding the Mataura, Aparima, Oreti, Waiau and Waimatuku rivers and their tributaries, 3 to 31 May 2025 inclusive and excluding that part of the Oreti River below the Dunn’s Road bridge for the whole season.

7 Restriction on Taking of Game

No person shall use any vehicle propelled by mechanical power (including motorised watercraft) to chase or kill game, except in such circumstances and at such times as authorised by the Conservation Act 1987 and Wildlife Act 1953.⁷

8 Pegging Day

- 8.1** Stand claimants who claimed and occupied a stand during the 2024 Game Season may claim that stand at any time prior to pegging day (up to 10.00 a.m. on 6 April 2025) following the purchase of the 2025 game licence. If you are in the Auckland/Waikato Region, then the above mentioned applies **only to Adult Whole-Season Licence Holders** and does not apply to Junior Licence Holders as it does in all other Fish and Game Regions.
- 8.2** Otherwise, unclaimed stands can only be claimed any time after 10:00 am on 6 April 2025 in all Fish and Game Regions.
- 8.3** A stand may be claimed by planting on it a stake having either a board or identifying label attached, plainly identifying the name of the claimant and the number of his/her licence. The hunting stand claim tag provided with the licence must be completed with the name of the claimant and affixed to the board or identifying label.
- 8.4** The licence holder claiming a stand must be present in person at the stand when marking it up.
- 8.5** No one can claim more than one stand.
- 8.6** A stand cannot be claimed closer than 90 metres to a stand already claimed by another person without that person’s consent.
- 8.7** Any stand not occupied by the claimant within one hour after the opening hour of hunting, on any day, can be occupied by another licence holder for the remainder of the day.

9 Conditions

These conditions will expire at the end of the open season for game.

⁷ Section 18(1)(f)(v) of the Wildlife Act 1953.

SECOND SCHEDULE

Regionally specific hunting conditions, bag limits, closed and open game areas, and the like.

1 Game That May Be Hunted or Killed - Duration of the 2025/2026 Season

Species	Season Duration (dates inclusive)	Daily Bag Limit
Grey/mallard duck and any hybrid of that species	3 May to 29 Jun 2025	12
NZ shoveler duck	3 May to 29 Jun 2025	3
Paradise shelduck	3 May to 27 Jul 2025	25
	14 Feb 2026 to 22 Feb 2026	25
Black swan	3 May to 27 Jul 2025	20
	14 Feb 2026 to 22 Feb 2026	20
Pūkeko	3 May to 24 Aug 2025	12
	14 Feb 2026 to 22 Feb 2026	12
California quail	3 May to 24 Aug 2025	10
Brown quail	3 May to 24 Aug 2025	10
Cock pheasant	3 May to 24 Aug 2025	5

2 Shooting Hours

6.30am to 6.30pm, except the hunting of paradise shelduck, pūkeko and black swan on 14 February 2026 to 22 February 2026 will be from 6.30am to 8.00pm.

3 Decoy Limit

No limit.

4 Special Conditions

- 4.1** No person shall wilfully leave on the hunting ground any game bird(s) shot or parts of any game bird(s) shot.
- 4.2** Camouflaged Rowboats: Persons may hunt or kill game from an unmoored camouflaged rowboat.
- 4.3** During the 14 February 2026 to 22 February 2026 special open season, no person shall hunt within 300 metres of any urban sewage oxidation ponds.
- 4.4** Any game bird licence holder who has a Department of Conservation authorisation to take or kill wildlife for the purpose of hawking or falconry may hunt with an Australasian Harrier (*Circus approximans*) to take game birds. This is subject to the season length and bag limit for each game bird species in clause 1 of this notice and any other special conditions for the Northland Fish and Game region and also subject to any conditions imposed by the Director-General of Conservation under such a permit.

HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES IN NORTHLAND

The Northland Fish and Game Region extends north from a line midway to a point between the North Head and South Head of the Kaipara Harbour, then runs due east to a point just north of Wellsford and then a line running northeast to cross the coastline approximately 4.6km north of Te Arai Point. Northland region offers a wealth of accessible hunting opportunity throughout the region including Fish and Game managed wetland properties, pine plantation forestry and extensive harbours.

TAKE A MATE HUNTING

2025 whole season game bird licence holders can take a mate hunting who has not purchased a game bird licence within the last THREE years or has had a previous mate's licence. Hunting for the mate will be permitted on Opening Weekend ONLY for \$5.00 which is the cost of the habitat stamp. Take A Mate Licences must be purchased through the Northland Fish and Game office in Whangarei.

The recipient of the mate's licence must be accompanied by an adult whole season licence holder and it only applies within the Northland Fish and Game region. The mate must comply with the game bird hunting regulations.

There is no better opportunity to introduce your friends, workmates, spouse, son, daughter to game bird hunting.

PERMITS

Full details and payment must be provided at the time of issue. A permit is required for each licence holder and is not issued for a party or any group of hunters. Permits are issued for the full length of the open game season (May to August).

Part of the fee for permits issued to Flaxmill Wetlands and Jack Bisset Wetlands permanent stand holders are used as a contribution towards predator control operations within those areas.

Hunters requiring a permit must provide the following details:

- Name, postal address, email address and phone numbers
- Date of birth
- Game bird licence number
- Firearms licence number
- Vehicle registration
- Dog's name, breed and registration number.

All permits issued to licence holders will be accompanied with a map detailing the areas open to hunting.

Adult licence holders wishing to hunt on Fish & Game properties who are not stand holders can obtain a permit after 11th May 2025 at the casual rate. The exception to this is the new Underwood Wetland where casual hunting permits will be available from 5th May 2025.

Junior and child licence holders wishing to hunt on the Fish & Game properties who are not stand holders can obtain a free permit after 11th May 2025.

<i>Administrator</i>	<i>Place name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Permit fee</i>
NFGC	Jack Bisset Wetland – Stand Holders Fee	Whangarei	\$35.00
	Jack Bisset Wetland – Casual Hunters Fee	Whangarei	\$10.00
	Flaxmill Wetland – Stand Holders Fee	Dargaville	\$35.00
	Flaxmill Wetland – Casual Hunters Fee	Dargaville	\$10.00
	Kawakawa Wetland	Kawakawa	\$10.00
	Borrow Cut Wetland	Kerikeri	\$10.00
	Underwood Wetland	Dargaville	\$10.00

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Licence holders wishing to hunt on Department of Conservation administered lands must obtain their permit from their local DOC office in Dargaville, Whangarei, Kerikeri or Kaitaia.

TE PAKI FARM

Hunting at Te Paki Farm and Te Werahi Wetlands is now authorised by approval from local Iwi Ngati Kuri. All licence holders MUST contact John Macpherson, Field Officer in Kaitaia on 021 858 423, to obtain the appropriate contact details.

RANGIPUTA LANDCORP FARM

is allowing hunting. Due to the M-Bovis outbreak, hunting will be strictly controlled and inductions will be necessary. Licence holders will need to contact Colin Rakena, the Farm Manager on 0274 350 982 to arrange access. Other hunting opportunities include peacock, turkey and Canada Goose.

FORESTRY PERMITS

To hunt on permitted forestry lands managed and owned by Manulife Investment Management, Northland Forest Managers Ltd, and Rayonier Matariki Forests, a permit must be obtained

through the office of Northland Fish & Game. The permit is a legal requirement which enables the hunter to enter the forest, carry a firearm and use a dog on those properties.

The cost of the permit for the whole season is \$50.00. This fee covers all processing fees; coloured maps detailing the areas open to hunting plus Public Liability insurance while hunting in any of these forests. Some maps are now only available through free applications that can be downloaded to a cell phone. Applications for these permits can be made either by emailing or logging onto the Fish & Game website:

<https://fishandgame.org.nz/northland/game-bird-hunting-in-new-zealand/northland-hunting-locations-and-access/>

Email: northland@fishandgame.org.nz

Please note a **Kiwi Aversion Certificate** may be required for hunting dogs in some forest blocks. Please check the permit conditions to see where this rule applies.

Kiwi Aversion Certificates can be obtained through the Department of Conservation office in Whangarei. If you are interested in your dog being trained, please contact your local DOC office or search: <https://www.kiwiavoidancetraining.nz/>

TE HIKU FOREST

is a privately owned pine forestry block that extends along the Ninety Mile Beach. The whole season permit fee of \$30 covers all processing fees, colour map and includes a contribution towards a predator control operation for the benefit of game birds.

Permits can be obtained at Hunting & Fishing Kaitaia, Riders Sports Kaitaia and through Northland Fish and Game office.

PROTECT OUR WATERWAYS

STOP THE SPREAD OF FRESHWATER PESTS



CHECK



CLEAN



DRY

Photo: Barry Harcourt



BLUE DUCK - WHIO, A THREATENED SPECIES.

In parts of the country whio (blue duck) populations are increasing in response to predator control, and birds are being seen from time to time on farmland in the vicinity of forested streams. They commonly do low level flights up and down streams in early morning and evening meaning a quick shooter can easily mistake them in low light. This threatened species is fully protected, and apart from setting conservation efforts back a step, killing one can mean a \$100,000 fine.

Please take care to identify your target beyond all doubt so whio, along with all of our other protected birds, are not mistakenly shot.

CHECK ON YOUR MATES

Need support?
Text/free call 1737
anytime anywhere

1737

Or contact your GP or Health
Improvement Practitioner



**Public access to your
next special spot?**



Pocket Maps

Offline public access maps of Aotearoa.
Anytime. Anywhere.



It takes more than luck

to get a duck

A good bag, and a safe, enjoyable day hunting has nothing to do with luck. **This duck season we urge hunters everywhere to:**

- » Have a plan for their maimai, so everyone knows what to do before the first ducks arrive.
- » Always treat every shotgun as if it is loaded.
- » Handle your shotguns with care - never lean them where they could slide or be knocked over.
- » Do not drink alcohol before or while hunting, or hunt with anyone else who has been drinking.

