

FISH & GAME – SUMMARY SHEET

Fish and Game New Zealand is the collective brand name of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council and 12 regional Fish and Game Councils established in 1990 to represent the interests of anglers and hunters, and provides co-ordination of the management, enhancement, and maintenance of sports fish and game (Section 26B of the Conservation Act 1987).

Fish and Game councils are the statutory managers of sports fish and game bird resources and their sustainable recreational use by anglers and hunters New Zealand wide, except in the Chatham Islands and for fishing in the Lake Taupo catchment where it is managed by the Department of Conservation.

What is game bird hunting?

It is the sport of hunting ducks, geese, swans, pheasants, partridges and quail. The species available to game bird hunters are defined in the Wildlife Act 1953.

Is Fish & Game NZ a Government Department?

The Fish & Game councils are Public Entities, established under the Conservation Act 1987. Although Fish and Game reports to the Minister of Conservation, it is not funded by taxpayers. Almost all Fish & Game money comes from the sale of fishing and hunting licences.

What is a Fish & Game Council?

There are 12 regional Fish & Game Councils with regional offices. Councils employ professional staff to carry out their work. The total number of people employed by Fish & Game Councils around the country is about 70. There are also about 500 volunteer rangers who give up their time to ensure that fellow anglers and hunters have licences and follow fishing and hunting regulations.

Control of Bird Populations

Fish and Game manages waterfowl and upland game birds on behalf of recreational hunters. Management of these birds includes setting rules for how many birds can be taken by hunters and at what time of the year. Game bird species include Canada geese, ducks, swans, pheasants and quail.

Game birds are hunted and harvested at a rate that is sustainable and in most cases at levels that are appropriate to all people including farmers whose crops birds occasionally feed on. Sustainable game bird hunting ensures the birds are not over-hunted.

However some bird populations are unable to be managed through traditional hunting. Reasons for this include the intelligence of the bird, the rugged terrain they inhabit and the almost endless source of good quality food. Paradise shelduck, and Canada geese are in this group. In some cases population explosions result in the birds' health suffering and pressure from farmers to control the increasing population. As the statutory manager Fish and Game New Zealand has the responsibility to effectively manage these population increases.

The aim is to achieve desired population levels through recreational hunting. If this is not sufficient, then Fish and Game sometimes undertakes population control operations. In most cases this is achieved through organised hunts using a number of recreational hunters.