

The 2018 Game Bird Season



IMPORTANT GAME BIRD REGULATION CHANGES

**Shooting Hours
6:30am to 6:00pm**

**Shotguns limited
to 3 shots**

Features Inside

- Compliance
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- Improving Waterfowl Habitat on Farm Ponds
- Youth Hunting Opportunities
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Fish & Game Elections Around the Corner

Are you a Hawkes Bay angler or hunter (or both) who'd like a bigger say in how fishing and game bird hunting is managed?

Fish and Game councils provide an essential role in our 'user pays, user says' democratic management of sports fish and game birds. The system relies on local anglers and hunters being prepared to stand for the elected positions, and also voting for people to represent them on the regional Fish & Game councils.



There are 12 Fish & Game regions around New Zealand and a national office in Wellington. Hawkes Bay Fish & Game Council can have up to 12 elected candidates to represent the interests of anglers and hunters in our area. Meetings are held bi-monthly to consider important proposals, making decisions which have an impact on the region in both the short and long term – with a focus on enhancing and maintaining the sports fish and game bird resources.

The councillors elected from throughout the Hawkes Bay region will serve a three year term. Their tasks will

include setting regional fishing and hunting regulations, developing policy, prioritising management direction through work plans for staff, and promoting freshwater sports fishing and game bird hunting in our community.

If you'd like to have constructive and positive input into the management of our resources and protection of habitat, then note that names have to be put forward before August 2018.

As with any election, if you don't vote then you can't complain about the decisions made in the region. All you have to do to register to vote is tick the box when you purchase your licence. If you've already bought your licence and didn't register at the time, simply contact your local Fish & Game office to do so. If you want to know more about becoming a Fish & Game councillor then contact us at the office and we'll give you all the information you need. You are welcome to attend the next council meeting to see how it operates and meet sitting councillors – to see if it's your cup of tea

2017 Game Bird Hunting Season Compliance Summary

Hawke's Bay Fish & Game Rangers were out for opening weekend and checked 64 hunters. They also ranged throughout the game bird season checking another 21 hunters. Overall, three hunters were found hunting without licences, 4 using more than three shot, two for using a .22 air rifle and one shooting a pheasant not in flight. Another hunter was interviewed by F&G staff for shooting a native pied stilt and he was later offered diversion from prosecution by DOC and fined \$650. Another young hunter was warned for shooting two paradise shelduck out of season and with an air rifle.

Although last year was disappointing with the number of violations observed, we are hoping for a better year this season with no violations. If you see a ranger, please be courteous as he is just doing his job. If you are interested in becoming a ranger, contact the Hawke's Bay Fish & Game office.



Shooting Hours

The Hawke's Bay Fish & Game Council had concerns over the ability of game bird hunters to identify their targets during low light levels. We conducted a survey of licence holders and the results indicated that the majority of game bird hunters were in favour of a time reduction. With this support the hours were changed to **6:30 am - 6:00 pm**.

Important Events for Game Bird Hunters

Join Us For Duck Hunter Days

Hawke's Bay Fish & Game is starting an annual event to help hunters improve their waterfowl shooting. This year's event we will cover the basics including duck calling, decoy placement, adding motion to decoy spread, use of different types of blinds and much more. It is our hope that this event will become a regular event that game bird hunters can attend, learn some new techniques, and share their experiences.



Both events will be held at the Hawke's Bay Fish & Game office starting at 10:00am and going until 2:00pm.

Duck Hunter Education Day - 15 April 2018

Duck Hunter Education Day - 23 February 2019



Learn How to Pattern Your Shotgun

Hunters will always sight in a rifle before deer stalking, but most never pattern their shotguns. Like rifles, shotguns have different points of impact based on choke sizes, shot sizes and even different ammunition brands. Knowing how your shotgun shoots will improve your success rate.

Hawke's Bay Fish & Game will start an annual shotgun patterning day that will give hunters an opportunity to pattern their shotgun. Duck hunters are encouraged to bring extra ammunition to share and trade with other hunters at the event to determine the best shot for their shotgun. This year's event will be held at the rifle range behind the quarry at Roy's Hill. Next year's event location is yet to be determined, but will be announced through our Facebook page and at local retailers.

Steel Shot Patterning Day - 25 March 2018

Steel Shot Patterning Day - 30 March 2019



Duck Hunter Club Shoots

Hawke's Bay Sporting Shooters Association 11 March
Central Hawke's Bay Shooters Association 8 April
Kennels Gun Club 28 April

Duck Hunter Nights

Guns and Tackle, Napier - 3rd May at the Water Bar
in the Bluewater Complex - start time is 6pm

Contact: Hawke's Bay Fish & Game
PO BOX 7345
Taradale, Napier, 4141
Ph: (06) 844 2460 Fax: (06) 844 2461
Email: hawkesbay@fishandgame.org.nz
0800 LICENCE 0800 POACHING



Hawke's Bay Fish & Game staff have created a Facebook page to keep anglers and hunters up to date with our work and items of interest. Staff hope to tap into the younger generation of anglers and hunters and help them get into the sport and be successful. Search for "Hawke's Bay Fish & Game" and click "Like" to receive regular updates.



Last Year's Youth Pheasant Hunt

A successful youth shoot for 9 juniors was held on Father's Day 3 September 2017 at Tuna Nui station. The 8 boys and 1 girl had been randomly selected from junior licence holders that had purchased a junior game bird licence before the end of July 2017. The day started with a cooked breakfast and was followed by an in-depth safety brief before the juniors climbed into the Unimog and got the opportunity to shoot good numbers of pheasants on a game preserve. The juniors got to experience four separate drives in overcast conditions but they all did exceptionally well. A big thank you to everyone involved for making the day such a success and to the numerous volunteers that gave up their time. Thanks also to Tuna Nui station and NZ Game Birds for supporting this event.



Youth Pheasant Shoot for 2018 Season

Once again, Tuna Nui Station and Hawke's Bay Fish & Game will be holding a junior pheasant shoot on Father's Day the 2nd of September 2018. We are offering junior hunters who have purchased a full season licence a chance to put their name in a draw for 9 spots on this hunt. On this day juniors will experience a driven pheasant shoot under the close supervision of experienced hunters. Entries for this hunt will close on the 1st June 2018.

Eligibility

- Must be a junior on the day of the shoot
- Purchased a full season licence by 4th May 2018
- Have not been successful in the past
- Must be accompanied by one parent or guardian
- Have access to a shotgun and ear protection
- Make your own travel arrangements

To enter please fax (06 844 2461), post (PO Box 7345, Taradale) or email (hawkesbay@fishandgame.org.nz) the details below to Hawke's Bay Fish and Game.

1. Name of junior hunter.
2. Postal address
3. Phone no.
4. Copy 2018 Full Season Game Bird Licence
5. Name of parent or guardian



Junior/ Novice Waterfowl Stand at Pekapeka Swamp

Two stands have been allocated at Pekapeka Swamp as a 'Junior/Novice Stand.' These stands will be available via ballot for a junior licence holder/ novice licence holder and an adult licence holder to hunt for the entire 2018 game bird season. The stands will be balloted 3rd April 2018 to allow the junior to peg the stand on pegging day (registration closes Friday 31st March 2018). Junior shooters between 12 – 17 years of age are eligible. Novice shooters who have not had a previous full season licence are eligible.

To enter the above ballot please fax (06 844 2461), post (PO Box 7345, Taradale) or email (hawkesbay@fishandgame.org.nz) the details below to Hawke's Bay Fish and Game.

1. Name of junior/ novice hunter.
2. Postal address
3. Phone no.
4. Copy 2018 Full Season Game Bird Licence (to be provided before Peg Out Day 8 April 2018)
5. Name of parent/guardian/adult who will supervise/hunt with junior/ novice while hunting at all times during the season.

What's Happening with the Forestry Blocks for Pheasant Hunting?

As many pheasant hunters know, we have not been able to acquire access to forestry blocks over the past couple of years. We are in regular contact with Pan Pac, but unfortunately we were unable to negotiate access for this year. Pan Pac are mid way through the hand back process of the iwi land (this covers the majority of Kaweka, Guavas, Esk and Mohaka forest). Things are changing on a recreational access front and we will keep discussions going with Pan Pac and Iwi. We appreciate your patience and understanding of the process and will keep the pheasant hunters informed.

Hawke's Bay Fish & Game Implement 5 Year Waterfowl Habitat Plan

This year the Hawke's Bay Fish & Game Council approved the implementation of a strategic 5-Year Habitat Plan for waterfowl. The plan is available on the Hawke's Bay Fish & Game website or by contacting our office. The focus of this plan is on creating nesting and brood-rearing habitat. Staff have identified 5 key areas in Hawke's Bay to focus our efforts.

- 1: Creating and Restoring Wetlands
- 2: Enhancing Waterfowl Habitat on Farm Ponds
- 3: Enhancing Waterfowl Habitat in Drainage Ditches
- 4: Enhancing Waterfowl Habitat on River Berm lands
- 5: Predator Control

Currently, staff are working with various funding sources to get these efforts funded. In order to get funding we need to develop several projects involving multiple landowners. Along with the work, we will be trialing new methods of habitat enhancement and monitoring the results. This will allow us to develop simple enhancement techniques that we can provide to landowners.

To implement this 5-year habitat plan, we need the assistance of waterfowl hunters throughout the region. Do you know of a landowner or do you have a pond, drain or wetland that needs



enhancement for waterfowl? If so, please contact our offices. We will send a Fish & Game Officer out to look and provide you with a plan to create waterfowl habitat. We will then work with you to find funding to enhance your property. If we get enough interest in one area, we will apply for a large grant to fund the work to be done. In recent years, we have partnered with the Hawke's Bay Regional Council, QEII Trust, and Game Bird Habitat Trust to create waterfowl habitat in this region and will continue to work with them.

Pheasant And Quail Hunters Wanted for Diary System



Every year during the game bird season, Hawke's Bay Fish & Game do fortnightly surveys to determine the game bird harvest. These surveys provide valuable data on our game bird harvest. However, we do not get an adequate sample of pheasant and quail hunters to provide suitable information on our pheasant and quail harvest.

In order to gather a better understanding of Hawke's Bay quail and pheasant population and harvest, we are asking hunters to sign up to our online hunter diary system. The diary will include number of birds flushed, number of birds shot, hours hunted, general location hunted, and number of hunters in the party. This data will provide us with some useful information, which will be used in the future to make management decisions.

If you are a keen pheasant and quail hunter, please contact the Hawke's Bay Fish & Game office to sign up to the diary system.



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NEW ZEALAND GAME BIRD LICENCE 2018
MALLARD DUCK

Farm Ponds Wanted

With over 98% of Hawke's Bay's wetlands lost due to drainage, Hawke's Bay Fish & Game recognize that some of the greatest gains for waterfowl habitat in the Hawke's Bay Region are the improvement of farm ponds for breeding habitat. With farmers moving toward reticulated water, many of these ponds are no longer needed for stock water. By doing some fencing, digger work and plantings, these farm ponds can become small duck factories.

Hawke's Bay Fish & Game are looking for landowners who want to create waterfowl habitat in their farm ponds. Over the next few years, we will be trialing different planting regimes and farm pond enhancement techniques (see straw bale trial update on next page for example) to provide advice to landowners on ways they can enhance their ponds. If you have a farm pond that you would like us to look at and use for some of our trials, contact the Hawke's Bay Fish & Game office.

Simple Ways to Enhance Your Pond for Waterfowl



Ideal habitat for breeding waterfowl is shallow water with 50% open water and 50% vegetative cover (both marginal and emergent plants). Many ponds in the Hawke's Bay region are lacking the proper cover for waterfowl to successfully rear their young. Here are some simple ways to enhance your farm pond for waterfowl production.

1: Fence the pond: Fencing ponds is the simplest method to enhance waterfowl habitat. Fencing allows grass to grow and create nesting habitat, keeps water quality higher, enhances invertebrate populations. Ponds do not have to be fully fenced to add waterfowl habitat values. At least 1/3 of the pond should be fenced from livestock with an adequate buffer of grasses or sedges to create nesting habitat.

2: Establish marginal cover: Planting the margins of the pond with escape cover for duckling broods will help protect them from predators. Some of the best plants for this type of cover are Umbrella sedge (*Cyperus ustulatus*) and *Carex secta*.

3: Establish emergent vegetation: Emergent vegetation provides cover from predators and also habitat for invertebrates that are important food sources. One of the most common emergent plants is raupo which can take over a pond and needs to be managed. Other emergent vegetation includes a variety of sedges and rushes. *Bolboschoenus* species of sedges are one of the easiest to establish and provide good cover during the breeding season and die off during the winter.

4: Plant overhead cover: The old standby for overhead cover is the weeping willow, but caution should be used in ponds that do not have a steady water supply as willows require

a large amount of water and can dry out ponds. Hawke's Bay Fish & Game will be trialing some native shrubs and trees that will provide overhead cover including mingimingi and karamu.

5: Create loafing areas: Although ducks are water birds, they need to get on dry land to preen and loaf. The addition of several logs or the grazing of a section of a pond can enhance the value of a farm pond for waterfowl species

6: Create shallow water habitat: Most farm ponds are deep and have very little shallow water habitat that waterfowl need for foraging. The creation of shallow water in your farm pond will greatly enhance the pond for waterfowl.

Straw Bale Trials Show Promise for Enhancing Waterfowl Habitat

Last year Hawke's Bay Fish & Game staff initiated a trial to establish emergent vegetation in wetlands and farm ponds. We used *Carex secta* plants planted in Lucerne bales to establish overhead cover for waterfowl broods in ponds. The main goal of the trial is to provide landowners with a simple methodology to create cover in their farm ponds.

Preliminary results from our trial show that we can grow *Carex secta* in Lucerne bales placed in water. Within a few months, plant growth was good and overhead cover was already being created. After a year the *Carex secta* plants established a strong root system before the Lucerne decomposed. We are encouraged by the results and are looking at other emergent vegetation that we can trial next summer.

For those interested in the outcome, there is a copy of the report on the Hawke's Bay Fish & Game website or a hard copy can be obtained from our offices. We are currently developing a protocol for using straw bales to establish emergent vegetation that will be available soon.



Jeremy Hamarney



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Hunting Pukeko in Hawke's Bay

The Pukeko is one of Hawke's Bay's most abundant game birds yet it is the least hunted. It is unclear why hunters do not target them. They provide hunters with a challenge and despite the rumours they are quite tasty. Pukeko numbers are strong throughout the region and can provide hunters with some great game bird hunting.

Pukeko can be traditionally found in wetlands, but they can also be found throughout the orchards and vineyards in Hawke's Bay where they are seen as an agricultural pest. Their reputation for destroying crops makes it easy to find places to hunt. Most landowners are more than willing to allow access to anyone wanting to shoot pukeko. Orchards and horticultural cropping areas are always having issues with pukeko and hunters asking for permission will most likely be welcomed onto the property.

Successful hunters usually jump shoot or use flushing dogs to hunt pukeko around wetlands. This style of hunting can provide enjoyment for any hunter who enjoys watching their dogs work. Some hunters organize "drives" in which they push pukeko toward hunters. This style of hunting can lead to some fast shooting action, but requires hunters to be safety conscious.

Your favourite duck hunting loads will work on pukeko. Remember that pukeko are considered waterfowl so the non-toxic shot rules apply.

Pukeko: Eating an old boot or a fine delicacy?

Many hunters don't bother with pukeko because they believe that they are not good to eat. However, pukeko meat is very good to eat. You can grill it, fry it, or make a casserole out of the meat. There are some good recipes in Daryl Crimp's "The Wild Foods Cook Book". You can also find a New Zealand Fish & Game Youtube video on cooking pukeko:

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzHHIFvz6dM>).

Pukeko meat taste similar to venison and should be cooked accordingly. Like most game meats it is best cooked medium rare to rare. The breast and thigh meat are where most of the meat can be found. The leg meat is full of sinew and if cooked should be braised for a long time at a low temperature.

One of my favorite ways to cook pukeko breast is to coat the breast with some cajun seasoning, wrap in cling wrap, and refrigerate overnight. The next day place some grape seed oil in your frying pan and heat on high. Once the frying pan is hot, put in the breast and cook the meat on both sides so the meat is a medium rare. After frying, let the breast rest for a few minutes and then serve with your favourite sides.

If you have not tried to eat pukeko, Hawke's Bay Fish & Game encourages you to give it a try.

