

Pegging/Tagging/Marking Up. What's It All About?

Just over a century ago, around 1911 or earlier, quite a few hunters on two of the Waikato's then most popular hunting locations, Lake's Waikare and Whangape, decided they would "peg out" their exclusive claim to their maimai sites. They each erected a board on a stake having their name and hunting licence number on it. They got the idea from gold prospectors who "pegged out their claim" the same way, by putting their name and their mining licence number on a board on a stake to gain exclusive use of an area.

At first, pegging out by hunters seems to have been done entirely on their own initiative with no regulations to direct it. However, some unscrupulous hunters started getting others to mark out multiple claims for them, (in one case, up to 20 or 30!). Sometimes these prime sites were then on-sold. Whole shorelines were being locked up and one even fenced his location off! When opening weekend arrived, all the best spots were long gone. Upon hearing the inevitable complaints this caused, the Auckland Acclimatisation Society decided around 1912 that one licence should equal one maimai. By 1946, the "pegging up" system we have today had by then spread to nearly half of the Acclimatisation Society regions in NZ that preceded Fish & Game Councils. When the 1955 Wildlife Regulations were published, pegging-out rules for public land became law NZ-wide.

Tag numbers and names were then painted on a board. Issuing a physical tag to be attached to the claim board began 1963 in the Auckland Acclimatisation Society area. The scheme allowed the prior tagged hunter first dibs to their spot the following year. All the prior work on their pond, maimai, etc., would no longer be in vain. However, if they failed to turn up on time, their public-land spot was then available to any other licence-holder. After 2 seasons successful trial in this region, this widely acclaimed change was adopted NZ-wide and supported by a change in the Wildlife Regulations.

Your regulation booklet, that should have come free with your licence purchase, (in the mail, if you purchased online), describes the rules around pegging up on public land. You can also find this online. It states that someone who marked up a site the year before can mark up the following year any time they buy their new licence and hence learn their new licence number. However, they must mark it up in person. If by 10am on the official pegging day they have failed to do so, it is then available to anyone else if it is public land. Once pegged, no one else can peg another site within 90m of the existing one – unless invited to do so. An example of where this could be safely done is when 2 maimais are back-to-back on a narrow island and facing completely opposite directions.

You'll note that your licence says that it does not give you the right of entry onto private land. A polite request often works, mind you. It also means that pegging does not apply to private land. These regulations have always exempted land occupiers from the 90m rule on their own land. Such a situation might exist where a landowner's title goes to the water's edge and a legally claimed maimai is a short distance off.

Note that, we do not allow juniors to peg out their own stands in this region with a junior licence. The reason is simple. Adults have in the past purchased multiple junior licences because of their cheaper price and then used these to block out other hunters from an area. Hunter behaviour hasn't changed much since 1911!

In years past, when you purchased a licence you got an aluminium tag, later a plastic tag, either of them having the licence number on it. This then became a tear-off tag attached to the main licence, which then led to today's plastic credit card-like tag with both the licence holders name and number printed on it. However, because many people now buy online, and often at the last moment, late

arrival of the tags becomes a problem. To avoid this a temporary stand claim tag is able to be printed immediately the licence is purchased. However, it is stated clearly on it that a stand-holder should replace this temporary tag with their plastic tag "as soon as possible". That is important if you are hoping your tag will still there 12 months later to let others know your maimai tenure remains current.

Do not make the mistake of stapling the tag back to front and top and bottom and so hiding your name and tag number. It should be reasonably visible to other hunters. The tag must display your name, add a mobile number if you wish, but for security reasons do not add your address. Make sure the board with the tag on it very securely attached to the site least it disappears in the next flood or storm. Take photos showing the tag and the wider area to guard against claim-jumpers who would throw your tag away and say they never saw it. Also take photos, (a panning video is better), of the surrounding area to show you are 90m clear, should a new tag suddenly show up inside your circle. A witness is also good insurance as is a picture of the tag and the date on a newspaper of the day.

Because you have claimed a spot, there is nothing that says you have to build a maimai to confirm it. You might only moor a boat there and shoot from it, or you might just stand behind bushes next to where you pegged.

Legal shooting commences at 6:30am in this region. If the tagged-up hunter fails to turn up on any day within 1 hour after legal shooting time, then their public-land spot becomes available to any other licensed hunter to use for the rest of the day, even if the tagged hunter arrives later. Whether they are then allowed to join the hunter already present is entirely the firstcomer's call to make. Often another maimai is vacant not far off later in the season, but be sure to set your alarm earlier next time.

If you abandon a maimai for more than 2 years from last mark-up, note that you may be required to remove it.