

The 2022 Game Bird Season

Fish & Game
NEW ZEALAND
Hawke's Bay Region



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A home at Lake Oingo

Lake Oingo is situated in Omahu, surrounded by old Māori pā sites. Ever since Māori occupation around the 1200's, the lake has provided food for all those who visit and continues to do so today.

At the southern end of the lake there is a pā site called, Te Kairae. It was occupied by Ruakukuru who was from Ngāti Whatumamoā. Ngāti Whatumamoā were in Heretaunga before the arrival of Ngāti Kahungunu in the 1500's. Ruakukuru made a famous eel weir at the outlet of the lake and named it 'Hauhau'. Eels were an important staple food source for Māori before the likes of deer, pigs, sheep, or beef were introduced by Europeans.

Another pā site at Oingo is Motukūmara. It is located on the North Eastern side of the lake. Ngāti Kahungunu ancestors, Hikateko, Hinehore and Taraia II are some who lived there. The pā has karaka trees scattered throughout. The berries and the nuts of the karaka tree were used as a food source.



Motukūmara pā stands on the edge of the lake which was full of tuna (eels) and kākahi (freshwater mussels). As you walk around the lake you can still see many layers of kākahi that have been eaten and disposed of in shell middens, alongside burnt hangi stones.

At the North Eastern end of the lake there are the remains of an old pā harakeke. A pā harakeke is a special place where flax was grown and gathered to weave garments, make kete (baskets) and weave rope. The fibrous flax was some of the best around Hawke's Bay and this was noticed by Alexander Alexander who was one of the first Scottish traders to Aotearoa. He traded with Māori for their rope which was made from the flax at Oingo. The name of this special place is 'Te Taperenui'. Te Taperenui is still there, and the flax still grows strong to this day.



Junior hunter at pekapeka



Balloted Hunting Stands

This coming season Hawke's Bay F&G will have two balloted stands at Pekapeka wetland. To be eligible;

Junior hunters must:

- Have purchased a junior full season licence before April 6, 2022
- Have a parent/guardian to supervise and hunt with

Novice hunters must:

- Have purchased a full season adult licence before April 6, 2022
- Have never held a full season licence prior to this year

Get in touch with the Hawke's Bay Office for more information and to enter your name in the draw!

Let's talk about etiquette

Every year we field complaints about hunter behavior, mostly from other hunters who have had a morning ruined by someone doing something silly. Be it a vehicle driving up the Tukituki river bed at 6:30am on opening morning looking for a spot (yes that happened!) or hunters taking shots at birds well outside their shotgun's effective range. There are things everyone should do to make the experience more enjoyable for all hunters and keep out of the public spotlight for antisocial behavior.

Here are a few commonsense things we should all consider:

Drinking and drugs:

Its one of the 7 firearms safety rules. Alcohol and some drugs (both illicit and prescribed) dull and slow your mental and physical reactions which can easily lead to accidents. Hunters and firearms owners have come under increasing scrutiny in recent years and we should all be on our best behavior in order to continue doing the things we love. Recently we had another private land access spot taken away because a group of intoxicated hunters drove through farm fences and then argued with the farm manager. It's a small group but unfortunately the minority can ruin it for everyone. Keep the beers in the fridge and enjoy them with your mates once the guns are locked away.

Rubbish:

Cartridges, bottles, food wrappers... we have all seen this type of thing left behind by someone before us. The answer is simple-if you carried it in full you can carry it out empty. This also goes for the bodies of harvested animals which are often found by non-hunting members of the public. It's a bad look that can easily be avoided;

bury the carcasses after taking all usable meat or take them elsewhere and dispose of them properly.

Sky busting:

Is that bird on the edge of your shooting distance? Is the group too high to humanely target? If at all in doubt don't fire. Likely you will just miss and ruin any chance of the birds circling back to your area. The chance of wounding a bird is also much higher and it will ruin everyone else's shooting as well. Place a decoy at our maximum range and make sure birds are within this distance.

Space:

Respect each others' space. Always give other hunters enough room to hunt, especially if they are using decoys, they have put in the effort to set up their spot. If you have not sorted a spot to shoot come opening morning, it might pay to sit that one out and head out later – ducks will be around all season.

We sometimes get complaints that someone has pegged a spot already tagged by another hunter. When pegging out, make sure your tag is clearly visible for others to see and have a thorough look for any other tags. Keep in mind that you must be at least 90m from the next pegged stand; it might save a lot of awkwardness and angst come opening.

When hunting public spaces, keep in mind that you may encounter other users. Dog walkers, cyclists, anglers etc all frequent these public spaces. Most know to stay away over opening weekend, but never take it for granted. Always be aware of your surroundings-are there other vehicles when you arrive? How close and what direction is the nearest maimai? And as always, keep a keen eye on what is in your firing zone as this may change throughout the morning.



Gundog Training

There are few more rewarding hunting experiences than watching your dog carry out a textbook retrieve, lock up on point on a wily pheasant or indicate a deer in the bush. This is only the result, however. With the right approach, the process of training can also be extremely rewarding. While this article won't provide specific drills for training a gundog, it will try to provide a few tips that may help to guide your approach.

1. Don't be in a hurry! A mistake we all probably make at some point. Exposure at a younger age isn't a bad thing, but don't be in a hurry to train specifics too early. Let a pup be a pup.
2. Control their exposure. This is crucial in that first year, but is something to watch their entire lives. Dog learn through their exposure. If you are controlling this, then you can ensure they don't learn any bad habits. Let them explore all day, and you have no control on what they might find they enjoy and habits they may develop. This goes beyond gundog specifics; think about those shoes at the back door, and that TV remote...
3. Make them succeed. Every time you are exposing your dog to something new, set them up to succeed, not fail. Do not try to test or trick them; a successful dog is a happy dog and one that will want to work with you. If you don't think your dog will succeed, maybe hold off on running that training drill.



4. Keep it short and simple. This is a flow on from point 3. Young dogs can get distracted easily and lose their concentration. Stop while you are ahead. Always finish on a positive. 2-3 successful drills is plenty. 5mins, 2-3 times over a day is enough. Any signs of the dog losing concentration, STOP (ideally, you stopped before this point).
5. Gun shyness! Something many people risk for no reason. NEVER assume your pup won't develop gun shyness. As in point 2 and 3, control their exposure and make them succeed. Taking a pup and firing a shotgun within close proximity for their first exposure, is not setting them up to succeed. Start with low volume noises, while they are distracted. Lightly bang a pot while they are eating (don't make a fuss), bang and walk away. Do the same while someone is playing fetch, slowly building up the volume over time. \$2 Shop cap-guns are good once volumes increase. Don't be in a hurry to see if they are happy with the full volume of a shotgun. Start at a distance first. Set them up to succeed. Make it fun.

Don't be in a hurry. Control your dog's exposure. Make them succeed. Keep it short and simple. Make these points the foundation of your training and you will have a much greater chance of success.

There are plenty of resources out there on different drills for training. The key with working out what to use is... does it work? Simple really. A good drill, done properly, should show results (remember point 3?). There are some great gundog clubs and trainers in NZ if you want some advice on training technique. If you are with someone with a trained dog, and the dog is doing something really well, then ask how they trained that aspect.

Banding – not just bird bling

This year Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Staff caught and banded over 1,000 mallard and grey ducks in four locations throughout Hawke's Bay. The banding process starts in early January with site prep and feeding out maize. Staff monitor the uptake of maize as time goes on, continuously increasing the amount as it is taken to encourage more and more birds to the area. The traps are slowly put up to get the birds used to being around them to the point that they are completely set up with birds being free to come and go. When the desired amount of maize is taken nightly, staff close up the traps and head back first thing the next morning to band and release the birds caught.

This is where you the hunter comes in! It is hugely important to us for hunters to report bands from harvested birds. Not only does it enter you in the draw for a prize, but the information received gives us data to help model population dynamics and estimates and gives us a better understanding of the birds movements. All of this data informs our local F&G councils' decisions on our future seasons regulations.

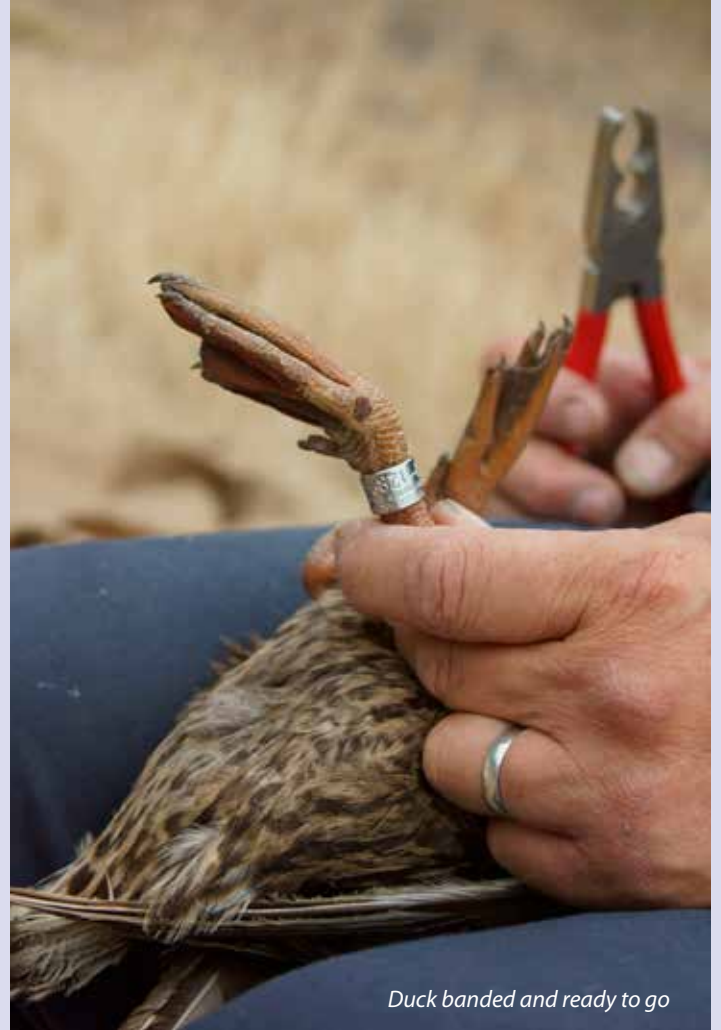
What we need from you:

- Your details so we can send you a band letter with the banding history of your bird.
- The date the bird was harvested and band number
- Region and nearest town/city and where it was harvested (the more accurate the better).

Last season we received 251 bands back from hunters who had harvested birds banded in Hawke's Bay. This was a great result and a significant increase from the previous seasons and provided some very interesting information. The oldest bird harvested in 2021 was a mallard drake banded near Takapau in January 2011 and was harvested at Pekapeka swamp in June at approximately 10.5 years old. The longest distance between banding site and harvest location was a mallard drake banded just outside of Hastings in February 2020 and recovered just outside of Wanaka in May 2021- an impressive distance of approximately 840km!



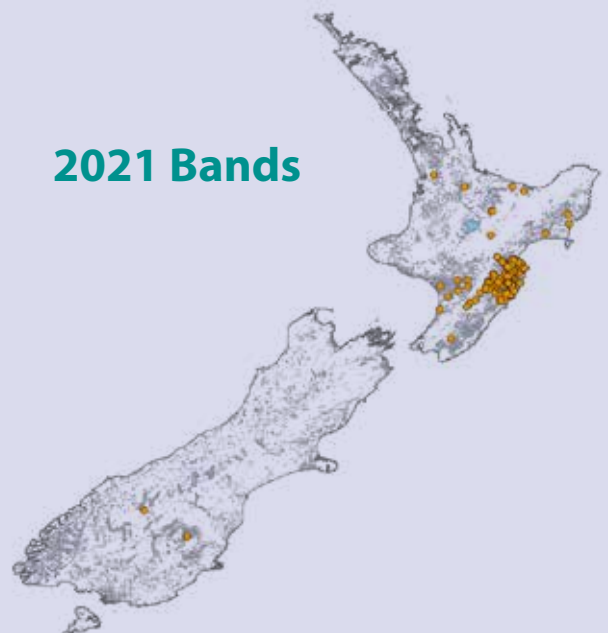
Mallards in a trap waiting to be banded



Duck banded and ready to go

If you harvest a banded bird please remember to submit your band details; they are easy to submit online and provide invaluable data for management of the resource.

2021 Bands



Hawke's Bay Habitat Projects



The past few years have been hugely productive for habitat work in the Hawke's Bay. In the last three years alone we have helped secure around \$53k of funding from the GBHT to create new and improve existing wetlands throughout the region. This funding assistance coupled with passionate and keen landowners has seen approximately 35 hectares of wetlands created.

The Gamebird Habitat Trust has also partnered with MPI to provide an additional \$360,000 over three years. This funding is specifically to supply plants for wetland development/enhancement and is a huge win for wetlands nationwide. We were very fortunate to tap into this opportunity and secure nearly \$56,000 across 6 projects here in the Bay during 2021. This will see nearly 19,000 plants in the ground over the next planting season.

Altogether, a total funding boost of around \$68,000 was secured in 2021 for Hawke's Bay wetland habitat projects – a great result and congratulations to all the winners. Keep up the hard work!

Feature wetland

We want to highlight the great work Hawke's Bay landowners are doing to create gamebird habitat and restore much needed wetlands throughout the region.

We hope to feature an awesome Hawke's Bay project in every edition of this magazine.

First up is the Tennent family on their property located near Takapau. This project began late in 2016 with the vision to turn a wide, poorly drained gully into productive wetland habitat for waterfowl.

Five years down the track after receiving funding from the Gamebird Habitat Trust, their vision has become a reality with a series of connected wetland areas being created from a swampy unproductive area of farmland. The wetland was designed in a way that each dam fills to create a cascading effect. This has vastly improved the habitat both waterfowl and other native biodiversity.

The area has been completely fenced off to protect it from stock and the beginnings of a re-vegetation project are well underway with a view to continue this work over the next couple of planting seasons.

Thanks to the efforts of the Tennent family, this great project has added to a network of wetland habitat throughout the Takapau region. This area was identified as high priority by Hawke's Bay Fish and Game staff due to the potential for the restoration of interconnected habitats that once characterized the landscape and proximity to larger water bodies such as Lake Whatuma.



2022 Gamebird License Fees and Important Dates/Information

Pegging out day – Sunday 10th April 2022
Opening morning – Saturday 7th May 2022
Day licences only valid from Monday the 16th of May onwards.

Whole season:

- Adult: \$100.00 (over 18 years 7/05/2022)
- Junior: \$23.00 (12 to 17 years)
- Child: \$4.00 (under 12 years, covers Habitat stamp)

Day licences (from Monday the 16th of May):

- Adult: \$23.00
- Junior: \$8.00



Opening Day Checklist

- Bacon and Egg Pie (peas or no peas?)
- 2022 Gamebird Licence
- Non Toxic Ammo



- Shotgun (restricted to 3 shots total)
- Decoys
- Dog
- Regulation Booklet
- Firearms licence and an understanding of the 7 basic rules of firearm safety.



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

