

HUNTING WAIRAU LAGOONS

NELSON MARLBOROUGH REGION

A permit is required to hunt this area which is now issued through the Richmond Fish & Game office

ACCESS

ACCESS 1. HARDINGS ROAD

The easiest and most common place to access the lagoons. Park at car and follow walking track between oxidation ponds either out to Waverly shipwreck, or cut left once past oxidation ponds. A good place to access maimai's for decoy hunting, and pass shooting.

ACCESS 2. WAIRAU MOUTH - BOAT ONLY

Not recommended unless experienced, and have a shallow draft boat with mud motor. Can be fantastic hunting, as there is far less pressure here.

ACCESS 3. REDWOOD PASS ROAD

A good option for hunting during a Southerly. Permit and gate code required. Apply to the Blenheim office for permit/access rules and gate code (with strict access conditions).



WAIRAU LAGOONS INTRO

The Wairau Lagoons are about 2,000 ha of saline marsh and mudflats between the Wairau River mouth and the Vernon Estate to the south. They have been a popular place to hunt, since early Maori occupation 1200 years ago. Over 90 bird species have been recorded here. These days, it is a great option for hunters in the Nelson Marlborough region.

Besides the obvious main channels in the northern part of the lagoons, and Te Aropipi Channel, which runs along inside the seaward Boulder Bank, few parts of the lagoons exceed a metre in depth.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Get your permit from Fish & Game (email nelsonmarlborough@fishandgame.org.nz)
- Mud in some areas can be very deep and care should be taken in unfamiliar areas.
- The water is brackish, and shotguns require careful cleaning.
- Fresh water should be taken for gun dogs.

After Opening Weekend, most maimai's in the Lagoons will be available for casual hunters to use. Scout one you like the look of, and it'll likely be available for you to use (unless stand holder turns up within 1 hour of daylight)

Contact us: nelsonmarlborough@fishandgame.org.nz
Blenheim office 03 578-8421 | Nelson office 03 544-6382

DECOY HUNTING

Successful decoy hunting can be largely weather dependent on wind conditions. One of the best times to hunt here is during a strong Southerly, tucking up in the SE part of the lagoon with a dozen or more decoys. It also pays to take confidence decoys. 1-2 swan decoys will make your decoy spread more attractive to wary mallards.



Big water decoy hunting is challenging and very rewarding when it comes off. Remember to place a decoy at your maximum effective range, and use this as a guide for ethical shooting range.

PASS SHOOTING

Pass shooting is a popular way to hunt at this location. It is possible to get some great action, especially with swans, shoveler and Canada geese. The first step is to identify regular flight paths that gamebirds take. This will be between daytime loafing areas and evening feeding grounds. Position yourself along a flight line that gives you the best chance at passing birds. This may be in the evenings when birds leave daytime loafing areas and head inland, or in the morning when birds are returning to refuge areas.

Try and hunt them in conditions that bring the birds lower, or alternatively, if hunting on a clear night, by positioning yourself to maximise the light of the fading western sky.

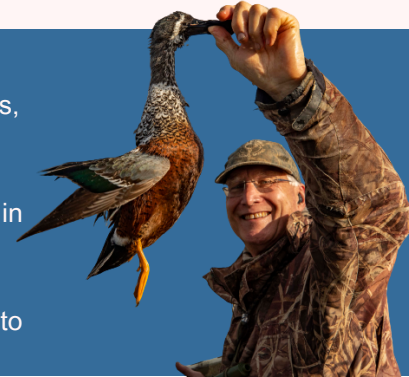
The key to successful flight path hunting is to be flexible, know your birds, know the area, adjust and adapt.



SPECIES AVAILABLE

The Wairau Lagoons are a haven for many waterfowl and native species. Besides mallard ducks, shoveler are very common here, and the lagoons has one of the highest populations in New Zealand. The Lagoons also hold very high numbers of swan, and excellent hunting can be had for these birds. Canada geese are abundant, and large mobs can be found leaving the lagoons in the evening and returning in the morning.

NOTE: The protected grey teal population in particular is increasing and hunters must take care to positively identify their target.



CODE OF CONDUCT

- Fixed shooting stands above mean high water springs only.
- Moored floating stands 200 metres from any other marked stand.
- No plant material likely to drop viable seed to be used for maimai cover.
- No disturbance to archaeological sites, artefacts or native plants.
- No litter including spent cartridges.
- Wheeled vehicles restricted to formed roads.
- All boats restricted to five knots.
- No dogs other than trained retrievers during the open game season.



- Pick up your shells
- Grab any other litter
- Keep your maimai tidy

