

NORTH CANTERBURY - Fish & Game Region¹⁰

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¹⁰ North Canterbury Fish and Game Region means the area so described in the NZ Gazette 24 May 1990, No 83 at page 1861, as amended in the NZ Gazette 3 September 1992, No. 141 at page 2958

1 Game That May Be Hunted or Killed - Duration of 2024/2025 Season

<i>Species</i>	<i>Season Duration (dates inclusive)</i>	<i>Daily Bag Limit</i>	<i>Hunting Area</i>
Grey, mallard and any hybrid of those species	4 May 5 May 2024	25	All Areas
	6 May to 28 Jul 2024	15	All Areas
	1 to 2 and 8 to 9 Feb 2025	10	Area B, Only over agricultural grain crops and green feed paddocks and more than 200 metres from any water body.
NZ shoveler duck	4 May to 28 Jul 2024	2	All Areas
Paradise shelduck	4 May to 28 Jul 2024	20	Area A
	4 May to 16 Sept 2024	20	Area B
	1 Feb 2025 to 9 Mar 2025	15	Area A, Only over agricultural grain crops and green feed paddocks and more than 200 metres from any water body.
	1 Feb 2025 to 9 Mar 2025	20	Area B, Only over agricultural grain crops and green feed paddocks and more than 200 metres from any water body.
Pūkeko	4 May to 23 Sept 2024	5	All Areas
Black swan	4 May to 28 Jul 2024	2	All Areas
California quail	4 May to 25 Aug 2024	10	All Areas
Cock pheasant	1 to 3 Jun, 6 to 7 Jul, 3 to 4 Aug 2024 (three weekends only, including King's Birthday)	1	All Areas
Chukar	4 May to 25 Aug 2024	2	All Areas

2 Definition of Areas

2.1 Area A: That area east of State Highway 1 from the Rakaia River in the south to Woodend Beach Road in the north.

2.2 Area B: The remainder of the region excluding “Area A”.

3 Shooting Hours

6.30 am to 6.30 pm (May to September 2024 inclusive).

5.00 am to 10.00 pm for the summer mallard and paradise shelduck season in 2025

4 Decoy Limit

No limit.

5 Special Conditions

No person shall wilfully leave on the hunting ground the body or a part of the body of any game bird shot in this region.

6 Refuges and Closed Game Areas

The following wetland refuges and closed game areas are closed to hunting:

	Wildlife Refuges	Location
6.1	Lake Grasmere Wildlife Refuge	Waimakariri Catchment
	Lake Pearson Wildlife Refuge	Waimakariri Catchment
	Closed Game Areas	Location
	St Anne’s Lagoon	West of SH1 about 3km north of Cheviot
	Rakaia Lagoon	Lagoon area north of Boat Creek marked by signage.
	Ahuriri Lagoon	Along Huritini/Halswell River, near Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere)

HUNTING IN NORTH CANTERBURY

North Canterbury offers some of the best waterfowl hunting in the country. The North Canterbury Fish & Game Region stretches from the south bank of the Rakaia to the headwaters of the Waiau Uwha, from the Southern Alps to the sea. Habitats range from coastal dunes to shallow wetlands, wide riverbeds, high country lakes, and mountain valleys. Mallard ducks are the most abundant and widespread game bird in the region. They have adapted well to the developed agricultural land which dominates the North Canterbury

landscape. Paradise shelduck (pūtakitaki) is the next most popular species among local hunters and, like the mallard, also does well in developed land. The region also sustains a reasonable black swan (kakiānau) population, mostly found on coastal wetlands. Grey (pārera) and shoveler (kuruwhengi) ducks are found in the region but do not favour open, developed land and tend to be concentrated in wet, swampy areas and irrigation storage ponds. Upland game birds are less prolific than in some other Fish & Game regions, but reasonable California quail numbers are present in the lower and middle reaches of the braided riverbeds. Several smaller pheasant populations are also present, and there are three weekends open during the June – August period for cock pheasant hunting in the North Canterbury region.

Pheasant hunters need to be clear on the exact location of the boundary between the North Canterbury and Central South Island Fish & Game regions, as there are differing regulations for season length and daily bag limits.

A number of hunters have been caught in breach of the North Canterbury rules, thinking they were hunting in the Central South Island region. To clarify, the North Canterbury boundary with the Central South Island region is the Acton Road, which runs from Rakaia Township east to the sea and the Rakaia Barr Hill Road, which runs from the township west towards the Rakaia Gorge. The entire Rakaia riverbed and its southern margins extending to the main parallel roads are in the North Canterbury region. Thus, North Canterbury Fish & Game Council regulations apply.

Most of the public land in North Canterbury is administered by Environment Canterbury and the Department of Conservation (DOC). Either of these organisations or the North Canterbury Fish & Game Office will be able to assist you with any access inquiries relating to public land hunting.

THE MAJOR HUNTING AREAS

Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere

is the jewel in the waterfowl hunting crown of New Zealand, a 20,000-ha wetland of national and international significance and the primary public land game bird hunting area in the region. It's such a good hunting area that hunters make annual pilgrimages from around the country to hunt the lake. Mallard ducks are the most popular quarry during the traditional hunting months of May, June and July. Black swans, paradise, and shoveler ducks are also present. It is important to note that Te Waihora is home to a large grey teal population, which are protected wildlife. Hunters

must always allow time to properly identify their target, especially during periods of low light. The best time to hunt Ellesmere is during a strong southerly wind. The rough conditions push off birds that usually roost in the middle of the lake and tend to fly to the downwind shore. The lake can also shoot well during strong northwest or northeast winds; once again, the downwind shoreline is the best place to hunt. Te Waihora has many maimais around the shoreline, and most Ellesmere regulars have one.

However, any hunter is free to use any maimai sited on public land that has not been occupied by 7:30 am. This is an excellent option for new or inexperienced hunters who want a taste of open-water game bird hunting without having to commit to the time and expense involved in constructing their own maimai.

Please note that a hunting permit is required to hunt on DOC-managed land on the shores of Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere. These are available from DOC by calling 03 379 4082 or e-mail christchurchvc@doc.govt.nz

Maimais On Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere

Require hunters to obtain permission and get a maimai registration tag from Fish & Game before being built. To do so, contact the office with GPS coordinates of your maimai. The construction of permanent maimais on public land and Ngāi Tahu lakebed at Te Waihora is subject to several conditions. Approved maimai construction techniques are available on the North Canterbury page of the Fish & Game website -<https://fishandgame.org.nz/assets/Hunting/Where-to-Hunt/Regional-info/North-Canterbury/DOCDM-1376692-Te-Waihora-maimai-construction-standards-March-2014-w-AS-TC.pdf>. We encourage hunters to refurbish an unused existing maimai first. Hunters with existing maimais that have not been registered should contact the Fish & Game office to obtain a maimai registration tag. There is no charge for these services.

The Braided Riverbeds

The Rakaia, Selwyn/Waikirikiri, Waimakariri, Ashley/Rakahuri, Hurunui, and Waiau Uwha rivers are also popular hunting locations. Many of these rivers have large tidal lagoons, which provide good hunting opportunities. Further upriver, ducks can be targeted using traditional decoy setups in open water areas. Good duck hunting is also available in places by flush hunting small springs and ponds, which are often found on the margins of major riverbeds. Licenced game bird hunters can hunt in most North Canterbury braided riverbeds except parts close to population centres. The Waimakariri AND Ashley/Rakahuri River Regional

Parks, administered by Environment Canterbury, recognise game bird hunting as a legitimate activity and have specifically designated areas for such use. More information and access maps are available at: <https://fishandgame.org.nz/northcanterbury/game-bird-hunting-in-new-zealand/where-to-hunt-game-birds/public-land-hunting-opportunityguidelines-in-north-canterbury/>; <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/your-region/living-here/regional-parks/waimakariri-river-regional-park/hunting-and-shooting/> AND <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/your-region/living-here/regional-parks/ashley-rakahuri-regional-park/>.

Please do not shoot outside these areas, which may put the future of game bird hunting at risk. Hunters need to be aware of rabbit poisoning operations in Canterbury riverbeds. While poison operations are of little threat to humans or to the safe consumption of any game birds killed, it is of real concern to hunters' dogs, which are susceptible to 1080 poison found in carcass remains for some months after a poisoning operation.

High Country Lakes

Some of the region's high-country lakes offer good game bird hunting opportunities. In some cases, hunting can be pursued without the owner's permission, but it is highly recommended that you put in the effort and talk to the farmer or manager concerned in advance. Please note that **lakes Grasmere and Pearson are wildlife refuges, and all hunting is prohibited.**



Private Land

Private land also offers good game hunting opportunities, but the owner's permission needs to be sought in advance.

Boggy Creek Game Bird Hunting Area

The Boggy Creek Game Bird Hunting Area is located at the end of Colletts Road on the western shore of Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere. DOC now owns the property; however, annual ballots are held by the North Canterbury Fish & Game Council for shooting stands in this area, and the ballots are open to all licensed hunters. Contact the North Canterbury Fish & Game office for details.

CLOSED GAME AREAS AND WILDLIFE REFUGES

Hunting is prohibited in the following areas:

Lake Grasmere	Waimakariri Catchment Wildlife Refuge
Lake Pearson	Waimakariri Catchment Wildlife Refuge
St Anne's Lagoon	West of SH1 about 3km north of Cheviot
Rakaia Lagoon	Lagoon area north of Boat Creek marked by signage.
Ahuriri Lagoon	Along Huritini/Halswell River, near Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere)

Please see the North Canterbury Fish and Game website for more information and the exact locations of wildlife refuges and closed game areas.

