

New Tactical Plan for Tahr Management Agreed

A new tactical plan for reducing the overall number of tahr in the Southern Alps was agreed at the meeting of the Tahr Liaison Group meeting in Christchurch yesterday.

The Minister of Conservation, Hon Eugenie Sage, had asked the Game Animal Council to work with the Department of Conservation and key hunting sector groups to develop a plan to support DOC in reducing the number of tahr on public conservation land in the Southern Alps.

The GAC consulted widely within the hunting sector and presented a draft plan to DOC last week as the basis for further consultation. The GAC plan and key principles developed by DOC formed the basis for discussion by the Tahr Liaison Group. The Tahr Liaison Group, including Conservation Boards, Ngai Tahu, Forest and Bird, farming interests and hunters all agreed the plan provided a path forward.

“The whole hunting sector has come together and worked constructively to develop an operational plan that will reduce tahr numbers whilst still providing sustainable hunting opportunities for recreational hunters, hunting guides and tahr meat recovery operators” said Don Hammond, Chair of the Game Animal Council.

The Tahr Liaison Group agreed to the following key points going forward:

1. A staged, adaptive approach entailing an initial reduction of 6000 female tahr utilising a combination of DOC culls, commercial meat recovery and Aerial Assisted Trophy Hunting (AATH) offsets. DOC will focus initially on National Parks and difficult areas of the West Coast. Ongoing consultation will efficiently coordinate these operations, ensuring use of the most appropriate approach in each location.
2. No recognisable male tahr will be culled.
3. Recreational hunters, hunting guides, AATH operators and tahr meat recovery will account for another 4000 tahr prior to Spring 2019.
4. Progress against objectives will be reviewed regularly.
5. Further scientific information will be gathered to inform future decisions on tahr management.

“The Game Animal Council recognises the contribution and cooperation from all parties including the Minister and DOC and this has resulted in an outcome that leads to lower tahr numbers while ensuring ongoing hunting opportunities” said Don Hammond.