

## **2021-22 tahr plan reflects pragmatic management approach**

The Game Animal Council (GAC) is welcoming the release of the Himalayan Tahr Control Operational Plan 2021-2022 as a pragmatic approach to tahr management but remains committed to developing a long-term management programme for New Zealand's tahr.

"The Game Animal Council has worked closely with the Department of Conservation and stakeholder groups in the development of this plan and provided constructive science-based recommendations to help inform it," says General Manager Tim Gale. "We believe the more collaborative process the Department has embarked on has resulted in a better-balanced programme of tahr management for 2021-22."

"The GAC is pleased to see the majority of control work will be concentrated on areas with remaining higher densities of tahr and which are extremely difficult to access for recreational hunters. Most of these areas are west of the divide where we know tahr can have significant conservation impacts."

"For the more accessible eastern parts of the tahr range we continue to work towards greater hunter-led management that will enable official control work to concentrate on where it is most needed."

Halfway through the control period the GAC and DOC will conduct a review to ensure remaining operations are appropriately targeted. Control operations will also avoid areas close to huts popular with hunters and working in proximity to any ground hunters encountered.

"There are aspects of the Plan that we recommended be changed, such as the priority to remove all recognisable male tahr from national parks," says Gale.

"Attempting to eliminate the odd male tahr in the national parks is basically a waste of resources when the effort could be better spent controlling breeding animals in areas where tahr are having significant negative impacts on vegetation. However, outside of this the overall shape of the plan is pragmatic and proportional."

“The GAC remains firmly of the view that the Department and stakeholders should be working towards a revised Himalayan Tahr Control Plan and a longer-term management programme that provides for better protection of the habitat, a viable tahr herd and quality hunting opportunities through aligning permitted tahr densities with the environmental capability of different locations.”

“This requires an investment in monitoring herd density and vegetation impacts across the tahr range, which, if done properly, will take a number of years to complete. The Game Animal Council and broader hunting community can play a significant role in these activities.”

“The longer we put off doing this work the longer we limp along relying on potentially divisive annual control programmes based around the Himalayan Tahr Control Plan – a plan expressly set up as ‘experimental’ way back in 1993,” says Gale.

The Game Animal Council’s advice on the development of the Himalayan Tahr Control Operational Plan 2021-2022 is available at <https://nzgameanimalcouncil.org.nz/submissions/>.

*The NZ Game Animal Council is a statutory organisation responsible for the sustainable management of game animals and hunting for recreation, commerce and conservation.*

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