



New Zealand Game Animal Council

STRATEGIC PLAN

Sustainable management of game animals and hunting for recreation, communities, commerce and conservation.

May 2023



Game Animal Council
NEW ZEALAND

**Mō ō tātau wairua, mō ō tātau
oranga, mō ō tātau whānau, e
whakarato mai ana te taiao.**

**The natural environment provides
sustenance for our spirit, our
wellbeing and our families.**

About the Game Animal Council

The New Zealand Game Animal Council (GAC) is a statutory body established under the Game Animal Council Act 2013 to represent the interests of the hunting sector and improve the management of game animals (deer, tahr, chamois and wild pigs) while contributing to positive conservation outcomes.

The GAC was established under the Game Animal Council Act 2013. Creating the GAC was viewed as a mechanism for addressing the conflicts that have challenged the administration of game animals in New Zealand. The management of game animals in New Zealand reflects the influence of societal attitudes, research and scientific knowledge, advances in technology, and government policies.

Game animals are viewed variously as an asset for tourism; a recreational sport resource; a food source; wild animals to be controlled or eradicated; valued introduced species; pests; the basis of a wild venison export industry; a part of the farmed livestock industry; and a resource for industries based on professional guiding and trophy hunting.

The GAC provides an opportunity to secure the future of game animals and hunting by embodying modern management principles and attitudes whilst remaining mindful of New Zealand's unique situation with respect to the conservation of native species.

About this Strategic Plan

The GAC approved its first five-year Strategic Plan in 2019. The Council reviewed the Plan in February 2020 and determined that it mostly remained fit for purpose. However, it was identified that reprioritisation based on the GAC's current and future funding and resources was required.

This Strategic Plan was approved by Council in November 2022 and further reviews will be considered bi-annually, or as required.

This Strategic Plan along with the Minister of Conservation's annual Letter of Expectations will inform the development of the annual Statement of Performance Expectations, Work Plan and Budget, which will inform the GAC's priorities and actions for the forthcoming year.

Our Vision

Sustainable management of game animals and hunting for recreation, communities, commerce and conservation.

The Game Animal Council is a national body working to improve the management of hunting and game animals for the benefit of all stakeholders. It works cooperatively both within the hunting sector and, as importantly, with those outside the hunting sector. In being effective the GAC is openly communicative and democratic, with a sound structure and governance, backed by appropriate legislation and sufficient, sustainable funding. It is accountable to its stakeholders and produces better outcomes for them, is respected for its balanced advocacy based on good science and research and gives authoritative advice.

Our Purpose

To achieve the sustainable management of game animals and hunting by fulfilling the functions of the Game Animal Council Act 2013.

Our Mission

To liaise with communities, mana whenua, government and other stakeholders to develop enduring solutions to achieve the sustainable management of game animals and hunting.

Statutory Functions

Under the Game Animal Council Act 2013, the GAC's functions in relation to game animals and hunting are:

- to advise and make recommendations to the Minister
- to provide information and education to the hunting sector
- to promote safety initiatives for the hunting sector; including firearms safety
- to advise private landowners on hunting
- to develop, on its own initiative or at the direction of the Minister, voluntary codes of practice for hunting
- to raise awareness of the views of the hunting sector
- to liaise with hunters, hunting organisations, representatives of tangata whenua, local authorities, landowners, the New Zealand Conservation Authority, conservation boards, and the Department of Conservation to improve hunting opportunities
- to conduct research, including research on the hunting of game animals
- in respect of herds of special interest for which the Minister has delegated management powers under section 20 to the Council –
 - to undertake management functions that are compatible with the management of public conservation land and resources generally
 - to exercise its powers for the effective management of the herd
- to operate voluntary certification schemes for professional hunting guides and game estates
- to promote minimum standards and codes of conduct for certified hunting guides and game estates
- to investigate complaints and take disciplinary action in relation to certified hunting guides and game estates
- to provide any other services to hunters that the Minister is satisfied are ancillary to the Council's other functions
- to perform any other functions conferred on it under this Act or any other enactment
- to assess the costs of managing herds of special interest and make recommendations to the Minister on ways to recover those costs.



Tikanga Whakahaere

Our Values and Guiding Principles

Kotahitanga (promoting togetherness)

We work together to achieve our common goals.

Manaakitanga (showing respect and care for people)

When engaging with people, individually and collectively, we ensure that all our activities are conducted in a way that is mana-enhancing for those involved and reflects the values of fairness, respect and consideration.

Whakapapa (the connection between all of us and our ancestors)

We continually strive to better understand and contribute to the mātauranga (knowledge) continuum that binds us to one another across generations.

Whanaungatanga (connection between people)

The full potential of our work is realised through working together as a whānau, which encourages us to celebrate our common interests, applaud our diversity and reinforce connections with our wide group of stakeholders.

Pūkengatanga (expertise)

Collectively we have a wide range of skills and expertise that we use to achieve our outcomes.

Kaitiakitanga (guardianship)

Our guardianship is exercised by practising and promoting good stewardship of both native and valued introduced species (our taonga) and the habitats where they exist.

PRINCIPLES	HOW WE EXPRESS THEM IN OUR WORK
We are constructive	We work constructively with stakeholders to develop and improve the management of game animals and hunting.
We are solution-focused	We work to find common-ground and propose practical solutions to problems.
We collaborate with other stakeholders	The scale and complexity of the challenge means isolated actions will not achieve the necessary results. We will work alongside stakeholders to give effect to Our Vision.
We are evidence-based	Decisions are made taking into account available research and science. Where possible, empirical evidence is used to make informed decisions.
We give effect to the principles of Te Tiriti ō Waitangi	The principles of Te Tiriti underpin all aspects of the Council's work.

Strategic Objectives and Workstreams

OBJECTIVE ONE

Provide well-considered advice and recommendations to the Minister of Conservation on matters relating to game animals and hunting.

- Ensure the Minister of Conservation is kept well informed of issues that are relevant to the hunting sector and the management of game animals in New Zealand.
 - Ensure the Minister of Conservation is aware of the views of the hunting sector.
 - Ensure the Minister is provided advice on improving the management of game animals and hunting.
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OBJECTIVE TWO

Develop positive relationships between the Game Animal Council and stakeholders through effective liaison, advice, and communication.

- Implement communications that:
 - Ensures that stakeholders have easy access to timely information about the work of the GAC.
 - Ensures stakeholders can engage with the GAC on issues that affect them.
 - Ensures the GAC is perceived as an authority on issues to do with game animals and hunting.
 - Continue to build on the GAC's credibility in the game animal and hunting space.
 - Recognise the special relationship tangata whenua have with the land and develop true and valued relationships with Māori where interests intersect with game animals and hunting.
 - Maintain a positive working relationship with the Department of Conservation since the management of game animals and hunting will often intersect with the overall management of public conservation land.
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OBJECTIVE THREE

Enhance the quality of game animal herds while maintaining or enhancing conservation outcomes.

- Assist to implement Te Ara ki Mua and other relevant game animal management frameworks.
- Establish and manage herds of special interest (HOSI).
- Liaise with stakeholders to help manage game animals that are not HOSI.
- Liaise with stakeholders to improve hunting opportunities through identifying and facilitating hunter and management access to game animal populations.

- Ensure that game animal management decisions are made considering available research.
 - Develop a strategy to guide research pathways.
 - Establish best practice game animal management principles and guides.
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OBJECTIVE FOUR

Raise awareness of the views of the hunting sector.

- Raise awareness of the views of the game animal hunting sector in all relevant forums.
 - Endeavour to have the interests of the GAC, game animals and hunting adequately addressed in legislation, policy and planning.
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OBJECTIVE FIVE

Promote hunter safety and education.

- Improve safety outcomes for hunters by promoting key outdoor and hunting-specific safety information.
 - Implement education programmes for recreational hunters that address firearms, bow hunting, outdoor safety requirements, and species-specific management and hunting practices.
 - Improve the effectiveness of hunters in managing game animals by:
 - Working to increase the number of people hunting in New Zealand.
 - Increasing hunters' knowledge and success in harvesting the appropriate animals through the provision of information and education.
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OBJECTIVE SIX

Improve the acceptance of hunting as a safe and legitimate activity, and game animals as valued introduced species.

- Keep stakeholders informed about hunting and how it is practiced in New Zealand.
 - Liaise with stakeholders, including the public, about game animals as valued introduced species and how through hunting they are an important contributor to the health, wellbeing, prosperity and conservation landscape of New Zealand.
 - Educate stakeholders and the public on the role of hunting and hunters in the management of game animals and the conservation of indigenous species.
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OBJECTIVE SEVEN

Promote standards for hunting and management of game animals.

- Establish voluntary codes of practice for recreational hunting where required.
 - Provide advice to landowners for managing hunting and game animals on their land.
 - Provide support to the commercial hunting sector (including hunting guides and game estates) through the development of codes of conduct and training programmes where required.
 - In conjunction with the guided hunting and game estate industry, establish certification schemes and encourage all who work in those industries to become certified.
 - Ensure hunters understand the need to comply with all relevant legislation, regulation, and sector standards.
 - Work to ensure legislation and regulations are appropriate to reinforce compliance.
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OBJECTIVE EIGHT

Develop and uphold appropriate governance and management mechanisms.

- Develop and maintain an organisational structure that enables the Game Animal Council to deliver upon its functions and responsibilities.
 - Complete all statutory requirements on time.
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The GAC will prioritise these objectives taking into consideration feedback from its stakeholders, and will measure and report on progress in annual reporting mechanisms and Work Plan processes.

