

Delivering on our 2023 Hunting and Fishing commitments

National supports the right of New Zealanders to hunt and fish. Tens of thousands of Kiwis grow up fishing in our lakes and rivers or in the sea. Many learn to hunt with their friends and family.

Hunters help to control animal numbers, protect biodiversity by eradicating pests, and provide food for their families. Hunting and fishing also foster tourism and are pillars of New Zealand's culture and heritage.

National believes conservation and recreation can work in harmony, and our plan supports the rights of New Zealanders to continue to hunt and fish while protecting and enhancing our natural environment.

1.	Establish a Minister for Hunting and Fishing	Complete.
2.	Strengthen the Game Animal Council and designate 'herds of special interest'	Complete. The Game Animal Council (Herds of Special Interest) Amendment Act 2026 clarified the ability to designate a herd of special interest in national parks will be passed by July. Two herds of special interest (wapiti and sika) were designated in July, with the Game Animal Council responsible for implementing the Sika Herd of Special Interest, the first time the GAC has been designated this responsibility.
3.	Change the law so game animals are not pests	Complete as not strictly required. Game animals are not classified as pests under the law, however a bill to provide express recognition of game animals as <i>valued introduced species</i> to be managed in line with their recreational value has been drafted as a member's bill.
4.	Guarantee access to public land for hunting and fishing	Complete. The <i>Access Charter for Recreational Hunting and Fishing on Public Conservation Land and Waters</i> was announced on 2 November 2024.
5.	Establish the 'Huts of Recreational Importance' Partnership to maintain huts in the DOC estate	Complete. Through the <i>Community Hut Programme</i> , the Backcountry Trust received \$4.2m in partnership with DOC to maintain and enhance 30 recreational hut projects in January 2025.
6.	Support Fish & Game New Zealand and protect trout and salmon fishing	Partially complete. Cabinet agreed on policy decisions to modernise and strengthen Fish and Game, and enacting legislation awaits first reading before the election.
7.	Not introduce recreational licences for game animal hunting or sea fishing	Complete.