

Policy Document – Our Game Animals

The NZ Outdoors Party believes that our wild deer, tahr, chamois and pigs are a valuable recreational, social and food resource. Hunting is an integral part of our history and culture and it should continue to be so, forever.

Currently the Department of Conservation is responsible for the management of our game animals in the conservation estate, with the Game Animal Council providing a lesser consultation role only.

DoC's performance in this respect has been both varied and conflicted:

- They are obliged to exterminate introduced species in National Parks (Section 4(2)b of the National Parks Act.;
- They are under pressure by internal and external sources who believe all game animals are pests to be destroyed;
- But they administer eight Recreational Hunting Areas (RHAs) - 178,000 ha, which is approximately 2% of the conservation estate.

DoC also create conflict with recreational hunters by using aerial 1080 (as do OSPRI) and issuing of WARO permits including for the highly contentious practice of Aerial Assisted Trophy Hunting (Heli-Hunting) of Tahr.

The Game Animal Council (GAC) was established to give the whole hunting sector a far greater say in game management but is beset with three problems:

1. It is struggling to raise funds for its own existence.
2. Its Council members are selected by Government ministers.
3. It is only a consultative body and has no legislative teeth other than where a 'Herd of Special Interest' is declared (HOSI), albeit no HOSI's have been approved yet.

The NZ Outdoors Party thus wishes to see the following policies and legislation enacted by Parliament:

Policy 1: The Game Animal Council Act and other relevant legislation to be redrafted to give GAC statutory powers to manage all large game animals on the public estate for the benefit of recreational and commercial hunters and with regard to the sustainable management of the conservation estate. DoC will then become a consultative body in this respect, rather than a management one.

Policy 2: GAC to be transformed into a hunter elected Council reflecting the Fish & Game model.

Policy 3: Conditional upon the above two policies we will only then review the benefits of a rec hunter licence or tag system – “no regulation without representation”.