

Te ara ki mua:

A framework for adaptive management of wild goats, deer, wild pigs, tahr, and chamois

Purpose

This document (Te Ara ki Mua) gives effect to Te Mana o te Taiao Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (ANZBS) 2020 as an adaptive framework for managing goats, deer, pigs, tahr, and chamois. Te Ara ki Mua aims to balance the different and sometimes competing values held about these animals and their management.

The challenge

For indigenous biodiversity to thrive, the ecological impacts of goats, deer, pigs, tahr, and chamois need to be managed while respecting the cultural, recreational, and economic values that these animals may provide.

- Introduced wild animals have no natural predators, which means that populations can increase quickly in some places. As a result, maintaining a balanced ecosystem requires management.
- Where there are too many wild animals, they can compromise the resilience, structure, and diversity of forests, shrublands, and native grasslands.
- Overpopulation of wild animals can impact on ecosystems and on the health and quality of the animals, on other species, and can lead to range expansion.

Te ara ki mua values

- Ecological: Ecological resilience is protected or restored, and endemic biodiversity thrives. Healthier ecosystems are more resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- Cultural: The people of Aotearoa New Zealand are effective kaitiaki for the mauri of te taiao and are able to exercise their right to access mahinga kai.
- Recreational: There are social, health, and wellbeing benefits to many people from an involvement in hunting activities.
- Economic: People prosper through hunting, farming, and commercial activities that rely on access to wild animals. Investment in regenerating shrubland and native plantings is protected.

Scope

This framework applies to wild animals managed under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977: Red deer (*Cervus elaphus scoticus*), Wapiti (*C. elaphus nelson*), Sika deer (*C. nippon*), Sambar (*C. unicolor*), Rusa deer (*C. timorensis*), Fallow deer (*Dama dama*), White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), Himalayan tahr (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*), Chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*), Wild goats (*Capra hircus*), Wild pigs (*Sus scrofa*).

The Game Animal Council Act 2013 defines deer, tahr, chamois, and wild pigs as game animals. A key objective of the Game Animal Council is to improve the management of game animals for recreation, commerce, and conservation. Wild goats are subject to the Wild Animal Control Act 1977 only and are not part of the Game Animal Council's statutory responsibilities.

Implementation

In partnership with whānau, hapū, and iwi, the Department of Conservation and Game Animal Council will implement this framework. It is guided by the overarching direction of Te Mana o te Taiao ANZBS 2020.

The approach to wild animal management is to be in accordance with the provisions of any relevant Act and regulatory instrument applying to the land.

Context

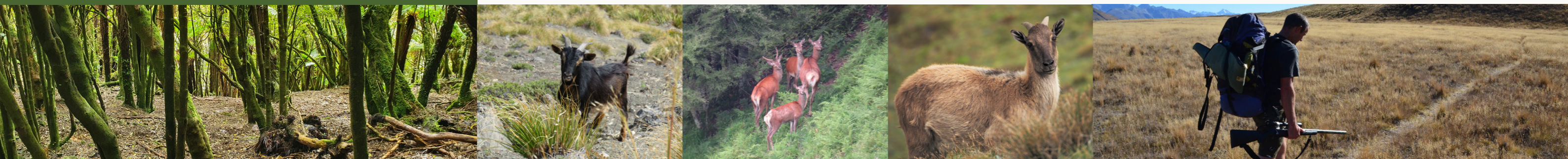
Te Mana o te Taiao Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020

Te Ara ki Mua Framework for adaptive management

- Regional collaborative plans
- Site-based adaptive management
- Monitoring and analysis of impacts of wild animals

L-R: Forest understorey impacted by wild animals Photo: Supplied Young feral goat in the tussock Photo: Supplied, Red deer group Photo: Supplied, Nanny tahr Photo: Supplied, Hunter with a rifle, Ashburton Lakes Photo: Supplied

June 2022: Published
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ANZBS Goals

Wild animals are actively managed across the sector at present. The ANZBS 2020 describes goals for further reducing the impact of introduced browsers.

2025 The impacts of introduced browsers, including valued introduced species (pigs, deer, tahr and chamois), on indigenous biodiversity have been quantified, and plans for their active management have been developed with Treaty partners, whānau, hapū, iwi, Māori organisations, and stakeholders.

2030 Introduced browsers, including valued introduced species, are actively managed to reduce pressures on indigenous biodiversity and maintain cultural and recreational values.

2050 Introduced browsers, including valued introduced species, have been removed from high priority biodiversity areas and threatened ecosystems and are under ongoing management elsewhere to maintain functioning ecosystems and cultural and recreational values.

Three pou (or pillars) provide direction and focus to guide toward the change needed.

Tiaki me te whakahaumanu: Protecting and restoring

Browsing pressure is reduced where necessary to enhance biodiversity, support ecosystem resilience, and improve the quality of game animals.

- Existing goat control is enhanced and expanded to new sites, especially in areas with vulnerable endemic plant communities.
- Priority sites for adaptive management are identified and site-based plans are developed through engagement and partnership with whānau, hapū, iwi, and stakeholders.
- Collaborative efforts prevent further range expansion by wild animal species.
- Deer-free areas are defended and maintained.
- Capability and capacity for sustainable recreational and commercial harvest is valued and maintained.
- Tahr are managed under the Himalayan Thar Control Plan 1993, with hunter-led management developed in places.

Whakahau: Empowering action

Efforts are coordinated and capacity is enhanced across the people, organisations, and agencies involved in wild animal management.

- The Department of Conservation fulfils the Minister of Conservation's responsibilities under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977 and other relevant legislation, and works in partnerships with whānau, hapū, iwi, and stakeholders to improve outcomes.
- The Game Animal Council seeks to improve the management of game animals including through the provision of advice to the Minister of Conservation.
- Management plans are developed locally and empower communities and landowners to participate in impactful wild animal management.
- Adaptive management provides a forum for collective action, learning and balancing of different values at place.
- Actions are underpinned by evidence, including mātauranga Māori and science.
- Skill and capacity needs are analysed to inform programmes to develop capability across the sector.
- Hunter-led management is encouraged where applicable.
- New Zealanders have access to quality recreational experiences and hunters are provided the skills and knowledge to hunt safely and successfully.
- Commercial activities that utilise wild animals are supported, contribute to good management outcomes, and are regulated where necessary.
- New Zealanders understand the role of wild animal management to achieve and maintain ecological resilience.

Tūāpapa: Getting the system right

An effective system for wild animal management is the foundation for collective action.

- Management agencies partner with tangata whenua and collaborate with stakeholders at place. Mātauranga Māori is integral to decision-making, design, and delivery.
- Central leadership, oversight, and coordination provide prioritisation and efficient use of resources.
- The impacts of wild animal populations are monitored to inform decision-making at place. Monitoring and analysis are undertaken to understand the outcomes of management on the Te Ara ki Mua values.
- Wild animal management is reviewed at a system level to identify the shifts required for a step change in performance. Areas for development or improvement include:
 - Systems for knowledge, science, data, and innovation
 - Systems for prioritising action at place
 - Implementing roles and responsibilities to best effect under relevant legislation
 - Legal and policy tools to balance conservation, recreational and commercial interests in hunting

L-R: Successful hunter with stag Photo: Supplied, Red deer hind Photo: Supplied, Wild pig monitored by trail camera Photo: Supplied, Fallow deer buck Photo: Supplied, Successful tahr hunt Photo: Supplied

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