



BIG GAME ANIMALS

Introduction

The law governing big game animals (deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs) in New Zealand is an uncomfortable mix of legislation amended and modified as different interest groups achieve ascendancy in promoting their causes, and as attitudes change. Current legislation and policy focuses solely on these animals as pests to be eradicated and takes no account of the resource value derived from their existence in New Zealand. Eradication is an impractical objective for the widespread ungulate species, particularly deer. Many New Zealanders are unwilling to accept that their support for the conservation of native species and ecosystems must necessarily come at the cost of denying any place in New Zealand's wild lands for introduced species such as deer.

The policy emphasis should be on a management regime recognising the historical, cultural, biodiversity and recreational value of these animals, while not neglecting the environmental responsibilities that come with managing such a resource.

The Big Game Hunting Council and Wild Animal Control Advisory Committee

Under the umbrella of the Confidence and Supply Agreement **UnitedFuture** has succeeded in setting up a Big Game Hunting Council Establishment Committee and Wild Animal Control Advisory Committee to better recognise these animals as a resource, enhance the management of recreational, guided and commercial hunting, and to improve the hunting sector's ability to provide the Minister of Conservation with advice on wild animal management and policy. Without doubt the establishment of these two bodies is the most significant political gain for big game hunting in a long time.

What next...

UnitedFuture is committed to building on our success in the last term of Parliament and ensuring the Big Game Hunting Council is given sufficient powers to adequately represent hunter's interests. We also wish to see greater hunter input to conservation management through statutory agencies.

Strengthening the role of the Big Game Hunting Council

It is **UnitedFuture** policy to:

- Make certain future Government's do not reduce the ability of the Big Game Hunting Council and Wild Animal Control Advisory Committee to carry out their designated functions.
- Ensure the Big Game Hunting Council is sufficiently supported to advocate for the interests of its membership directly to the Minister of Conservation and to the public generally.
- Strengthen the mandate and authority of the Big Game Hunting Council by giving it formal statutory backing. We envisage the Big Game Hunting Council working in a similar way to Fish and Game New Zealand, which in the long term will require legislative authority.

Representation of hunting interests within the existing policy framework

It is **UnitedFuture** policy to:

- Ensure that hunters are adequately represented on the NZ Conservation Authority and conservation boards through the creation of hunter-only elected positions.
- Commit the Minister of Conservation to ensure that the hunter's voice is better represented on decision-making bodies, and that hunting interests are considered and integrated with all other stakeholder and public interests within the national conservation policy and planning framework for public conservation lands.