



# Goats

## Recreational hunting in Nelson/Marlborough

### History and dispersal

Captain Cook first released goats in New Zealand in 1773 to provide food for castaways. The Marlborough Sounds was one of the liberation areas. They adapted well to New Zealand conditions and numbers rapidly increased.

As land was developed goats were brought in to combat weeds, but by the 1890s it was recognised they were a threat to native vegetation. Since the 1930s goat control campaigns have been in place in an effort to reduce numbers.

### Current distribution and habits

Goats can live in a wide range of habitats from coastal cliffs and grasslands to mountains and forest. They can also tolerate extremes in climate from freezing to tropical, although they dislike rain and will head downhill to gullies and creeks for cover.

In winter they are found in bush on the sheltered side of ridges and spurs and feed only during the day. In summer they feed two hours from dawn and two hours before dusk, often heading downhill to creeks to drink. They have a consistent feeding route.

They prefer rocky areas with open sunny faces. High numbers can be found in grassland and scrubby hill country.

They are present throughout the Nelson/Marlborough area, apart from central and western north west Nelson, western and central Nelson Lakes National Park and Big Bush.

### Environmental impact

Goats breed all year round so herds build quickly. They are very agile and can exploit places other animals can't reach. Goats often occupy bluff systems that may be last refuges for highly palatable plants and they inhibit regeneration on steep naturally eroding slopes.

They have a preference for shrubs, trees and weeds and they defoliate and strip the bark from shrubs up to 2m from the ground.

They prevent forest regeneration by eating seedlings and saplings, cause significant damage in plantation forests and remove the most palatable species in grassland and shrub habitats.

They change vegetation cover affecting numerous invertebrates and indirectly other animals.

### Hunting opportunities

#### Kahurangi National Park

Taylor, Crow, Leslie/Karamea, Baton, Pearse, Ellis, Wilkinson, Kiwi, Mt Patriarch, Lockett range, Devil, Stanley, Knuckle Hill, Aorere goldfields; not found west of the Roaring Lion.

#### Murchison

Mt Mantell, Taylor Creek, Johnson Stream.

#### Abel Tasman National Park

Gorge Creek, Marahau, Holyoakes Clearing.

#### Mt Richmond Forest Park

Northbank, Pelorus, Wakamarina, Linkwater.

#### Marlborough Sounds

Throughout, but none on D'Urville Island.

#### Marlborough/Kaikoura

Found throughout.

