

**Schedule 5**

Tongariro, Whanganui,  
Taranaki  
Conservancy  
Hunting Dog Policy

Version 1.2

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### Version History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Author of change</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Reason for change</b>
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Dean Stronge</b>	<b>December 2004</b>	<b>Revision of certification procedure and clarity of contractor requirements following hunter training workshop 2004</b>
<b>1</b>		<b>November 2002</b>	<b>Approved by WF Carlin, Conservator, Wanganui</b>

## **Foreword**

This document outlines Tongariro, Whanganui, Taranaki Conservancy's policy on hunting dogs used by staff and contractors on official wild animal control operations within the conservancy.

This policy applies to all handlers and will form part of any new job descriptions and/or contracts.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **Part 1: Policy Overview**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Dogs are an essential tool in the Department's wild animal control programmes because of their ability to find wary animals in dense vegetation. The use of dogs in areas containing endangered bird life and/or adjoining areas of farmland is of concern to some members of the public and landowners. In order to address these concerns, Tongariro, Whanganui, Taranaki Conservancy has decided to formalise its hunting dog policy.

The focus of this policy is primarily on the handler. Handlers can have a number of dogs during their hunting careers but the common thread through each combination is the handlers themselves. Tongariro, Whanganui, Taranaki Conservancy believes that a policy that focuses on producing good handlers will result in better dogs.

### **2.0 Scope**

This policy applies to all departmental handlers and dogs within Tongariro, Whanganui, Taranaki Conservancy who work on official animal pest (e.g. goat, deer, pig) control operations. All contractors used on official operations will be required to meet the contractor standards. It is expected that staff and contractors who have undergone similar certification from other conservancies can be fast tracked through the certification process.

### **3.0 Rationale**

1. Management plans for Egmont and Whanganui National Parks require dogs used for official animal pest control operations to be specifically trained for the purpose.
2. Dogs potentially pose a risk to threatened wildlife, particularly NI Brown Kiwi and blue duck in many of the areas with animal pest control operations. This risk can be reduced significantly by training individual dogs to ignore threatened species and minimising the risk of dogs becoming separated from their handlers. This risk is also true in relation to farm livestock.
3. The effectiveness of hunting dogs at locating and indicating targets can be enhanced with training of dog and handlers.
4. National policy for dog control on public conservation land will require constraints on the use of dogs for hunting and the likely implementation of a training/certification requirement. Developing a Conservancy policy may ensure that we need to take only a minimal step to conform to any National Policy that may be adopted.

### **4.0 Certification**

All handlers and dogs used on official wild animal control operations must undergo the certification process.

There are three main certification levels.

1. **Interim Hunting Certificate:** This level focuses on the handler/dog relationship. Included are minimum standards for dog obedience and non-target aversion.
2. **Full Hunting Certificate:** This level focuses on the hunting style of the handler/dog.
3. **Handler Certificate:** The focus of this level is on the handler, their understanding of dog welfare issues, training and handling knowledge.

Part 2 outlines in detail the requirements of each certification level. Programme Managers responsible for official animal pest control operations in Tongariro, Whanganui, Taranaki Conservancy will incorporate handler/dog training and testing into their annual work programmes.

#### 4.1 Certifier

Departmental staff members who have a history of good dog handling have been designated as certifiers for Tongariro, Whanganui, Taranaki Conservancy. Programme managers are responsible for ensuring appropriate staff are appointed to this role.

It is the consensus of staff that those people best capable of assessing whether a handler/dog meets the criteria are those that work with them everyday. Rather than a one off test, possibly carried out under artificial conditions, certification should be on a peer review basis, taking into account the views of those who have worked alongside the handler/dog over a period of time. However, in order to maintain standards, the final say lies with the certifier(s).

#### 4.2 Renewal

Dogs and handlers will be reviewed every two years.

#### 4.3 Revocation

Certification can be revoked or suspended where the dog has injured protected wildlife, domestic stock or people, or where a handler has mistreated his/her dog. Any incident of this nature will be investigated by the certifier(s) on behalf of the appropriate manager. Following the incident report by the certifier(s), the manager may revoke certification or take other action as appropriate.

## 5.0 Standards

### 5.1 Breeds

Provided dogs pass the certification criteria, a handler can use any breed of dog.

However to maximise the chance of obtaining certification a handler should select a breed of dog that has been shown through experience to have a natural tendency and receptiveness to being trained as a hunting dog.

### 5.2 Hunting Styles

Every hunter/dog combination has its own particular hunting style preference.

Acceptable styles for use in Tongariro, Whanganui, Taranaki Conservancy include dogs that find and bail and/or dogs that find and indicate. Dogs that hold are acceptable only for use on official pig control operations. Unacceptable styles include killers, holders (except for the case of dogs used for official pig control operations) and dogs that make no noise (except in the case of indicator dogs).

The testing criteria have been designed to recognise that variations exist. It will be up to hunters to demonstrate the overall merits of each of their dogs.

### 5.3 Number of Dogs

Up to three certified dogs may be used to hunt at any one time in the field, only one of which may be at interim level.

It is recognised that there is a need for hunters to retain an adequate number of dogs to maintain efficiency and as such, managers may approve each handler to have up to four certified dogs if appropriate. This is to allow enough dogs to cover losses through accidents, old age, bitches on heat, with pups, to lend to a new hunter who has no dogs and at least a two year lead in before he/she has a competent dog.

### 5.4 Registration

All dogs used on control operations will be required to be registered and vaccinated.

### 5.5 Identification

After passing interim hunting certification all dogs need to be identified adequately. Identification marking will consist of a tattoo in the right ear of the dog. The cost of marking will be met by the Department. A register of dogs will be maintained by the Tongariro, Whanganui, Taranaki Conservancy Office.

## 5.6 Dog Allowance

Dog allowance shall be paid to the owners of each dog that has passed interim certification for use on official wild animal control operations. Dog allowance will be paid for a maximum of four dogs per handler; however a handler may have only two dogs at interim level at any one time.

Veterinary bills arising out of work related accidents will be reimbursed on an actual and reasonable basis.

## 6.0 Contractors

This policy applies to all contractors who use hunting dogs when employed to undertake wild animal control operations for the Department. This policy will form part of any contract.

Contractors must as a minimum meet the interim standards before being employed by the Department. Programme Managers are responsible for ensuring only contractors with certified dogs are employed.

## Part 2: Certification Requirements

### INTERIM HUNTING CERTIFICATE

#### *Certification Requirements*

- Any dog raised from a pup by the handler must pass interim certification by eight months of age <sup>(1)</sup>
- Any other dog must pass interim certification within four months of being acquired by the handler <sup>(1)</sup>

NOTE: (1) Because some dogs are slower to mature and/or some hunting styles (i.e. indicators) may take more time to develop than others a handler may, with approval from their manager, negotiate an extension to these time periods.

The following criteria have to be met by the dog in order to achieve an interim certificate;

- It must follow basic commands
- It must be stock proof
- It must show no gun shyness
- It must show non-target aversion e.g. protected fauna and non-target pests (i.e. possum, pigs deer and /or goats)

The Interim Hunting Certificate qualification will be based heavily on peer review. Final say however rests with the Certifiers who will be required to spend some time in

the field with the handler to confirm that all the criteria are met. A standard checklist has been prepared (appendix 1) which will be used by the Certifier to assess the dog.

As part of its non-target aversion training each dog will be required to pass a DoC approved avian avoidance training programme (see appendix 3).

## FULL HUNTING CERTIFICATE

*Prerequisite:* To undertake Full Hunting Certification a handler must have first completed the Interim certification process.

### *Certification Requirements*

- The handler must demonstrate that the dog hunts the target species in a style that is consistent with this policy all the while maintaining interim standards.
- Full certification must be obtained within 18 months of the dog obtaining interim certification <sup>(1)</sup>

NOTE: (1) Because some dogs are slower to mature and/or some hunting styles (i.e. indicators) may take more time to develop than others a handler may, with approval from their manager, negotiate an extension to these time periods.

The Full Hunting Certificate qualification will be based heavily on peer review. Final say however rests with the Certifiers who will be required to spend some time in the field with the handler to confirm that all the criteria are met. A standard checklist has been prepared (appendix 2) which will be used by the Certifier to assess the dog.

Any dog that fails to obtain Full Certification within the required timeframe can no longer be used on official wild animal control operations. In the case of departmental dogs, dog allowance will cease to be paid for that animal. A handler can resubmit a failed dog for certification at anytime. However, any additional training required to bring the dog up to specifications must be carried out in their own time and at their own expense.

A standard checklist has been prepared (appendix 2) which will be used by the Certifier to assess the handler/dog combination.



## HANDLER CERTIFICATE

*Prerequisite:* The handler must have completed the interim hunting and full hunting certificate.

### *Certification Requirements*

The hunter has to demonstrate a practical understanding of the following subjects

- Dog welfare
- Breed selection
- Training techniques
- Dog psychology
- Procedures outlined in this policy
- Predation issues

### Summary: Hunting Dog Policy at a Glance

Certificate	Prerequisite	Time Period	Number of dogs allowed	Dog Allowance	Dog Registration & Vaccination	Dog ID (Tattoo)	Certification Requirements	How Assessed	If fails to pass
<b>Interim</b>		Must be obtained within 8 months if dog is raised from a pup <b>OR</b> For any other dog, must be obtained within 4 months of being acquired	Staff may have up to 2 dogs at interim level. These dogs can be taken into the hills and trained on the hill although <b>only one</b> dog at interim level can be used while hunting at any one time	Up to 2 dogs	Required	Required	Must meet the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must follow basic commands</li> <li>• Must be stock proof</li> <li>• Must not be gun shy</li> <li>• Must demonstrate non-target aversion</li> </ul>	Peer review and assessment by Certifier(s) as per appendix 1 checklist	Resit until obtained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog cannot be used in the field to hunt</li> <li>• Dog allowance stopped for that dog</li> </ul>
<b>Full</b>	Interim Hunting Certificate	Must be obtained within 18 months of passing Interim Certification	Staff may have up to 4 dogs. These dogs can be taken into the hills and trained on the hill however <b>only three</b> may be used at any one time while hunting	Up to 4 dogs	Required		Must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain interim standards</li> <li>• Hunt the target species in a style consistent with the policy</li> </ul>	Peer review and assessment by Certifier(s) as per appendix 2 checklist	Resit until obtained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog cannot be used in the field to hunt</li> <li>• Dog allowance stopped for that dog</li> </ul>
<b>Handler</b>	Interim and Full						Must demonstrate a practical	Peer review and assessment by	Resit until obtained

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	Hunting Certificates						understanding of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog welfare</li> <li>• Breed selection</li> <li>• Training techniques</li> <li>• Dog psychology</li> <li>• The dog policy</li> <li>• Predation issues</li> </ul>	Certifier(s)	

# Appendix 1

## Interim Hunting Certification Assessment Sheet

Date:

Dogs Name:

Sex:

Age:

Handlers Name:

Certifiers Name:

### Basic Obedience

Handlers must be able to demonstrate that they have control of their dogs especially when they encounter members of the public. All dogs must therefore obey the following basic commands (Handlers can use their own words).

	<b>PASS</b>	<b>FAIL</b>
1) Sit		
2) Stay (dog sits and stays until called)		
3) Come here (dog comes to handler when called regardless of situation)		
4) Stop		
5) Get in behind (dog must stay with/behind handler/quad etc at all times and not break)		
6) Get up (dog gets into the truck on command)		

Comments:.....  
 .....  
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 .....  
 .....

### General Rules

The dog

	<b>PASS</b>	<b>FAIL</b>
1) MUST NOT bark in the truck		
2) MUST NOT bark on the chain or in kennels		
3) MUST NOT be overly aggressive to other dogs		
4) MUST NOT be aggressive to people		
5) MUST NOT be gun-shy		

Comments:.....  
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.....

Non-Target Criteria

The dog

- 1) MUST NOT chase goats, deer, pigs, sheep or cattle unless told to. Generally the dog must be able to be controlled in all situations. The dog should (unrestrained) follow the handler through stock and/or the target species without breaking and trying to chase the animals.
- 2) MUST be able to be controlled from a distance around livestock
- 3) MUST pass the avian aversion (interim) course

	<b>PASS</b>	<b>FAIL</b>

Comments:.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Certifiers Signature:

Interim Certification **PASS**

**RESIT**

## Appendix 2

### Full Hunting Certification Assessment Sheet

Date:

Dogs Name:

Sex:

Age:

Handlers Name:

Certifiers Name:

To pass Full Certification the dog must

- 1) Find and indicate the target species and/or
- 2) Find and bail the target species
- 3) The dog must be able to be kept in (without physical restraint) while the hunter is shooting
- 4) Bailing dogs must be able to be called off a bail by the handler
- 5) MUST have passed the avian aversion (full) course

PASS	FAIL	N/A

NOTES:

Dogs that hold or kill the target species will fail certification.  
 Dogs that are regularly lost especially overnight will fail certification.

Comments:.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

Certifiers Signature:

Full Certification

PASS

RESIT

