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September 1998
Pondering Nature: An Ethnography of Duck Hunting in Southern New Zealand

Carmen Mary McLeod

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

July 2004
Abstract

This thesis examines aspects of duck hunting, an activity which in recent times has met with growing disapproval from non-hunters. Once an unquestioned ‘rural (masculine) tradition’ within New Zealand society, shooting ducks and other game birds is now increasingly viewed as strange, or even immoral. Duck hunting contradicts a dominant (urban, romantic) construction of human-animal relations in New Zealand, where killing animals for human exploitation has become viewed as repugnant or unethical.

To illuminate these tensions, and to move beyond the caricature of a duck hunter as ‘mindless’ killer, I undertook periodic ethnographic fieldwork over a four-year period. I explored duck hunters’ experiences and understandings through extensive interviews, by observing duck hunting excursions and other related activities, and by participating in some of these activities. Theoretical issues raised in this thesis are thus grounded in the ethnographic data I gathered and from themes that emerged during my analysis of that data.

This ethnography shows that duck hunting is one way of acting out or expressing a ‘real’ and ‘authentic’ relationship with ‘nature’. This ‘authenticity’ is perpetuated through a wide variety of masculine ‘performances’, allowing duck hunters to escape from the ‘civilised’ (feminised) restraints of modern living, to a place where they revert to ‘natural’ masculine behaviours. Another important ‘authentic’ component for duck hunters is that they not only participate in ecosystems as ‘predators’, but also help to ‘build’ those very same (wetland) ecosystems: thus articulating a discourse of being ‘moral predators’. Arguably, these activities are only carried out for pragmatic hunting goals. I conclude, however, that these ‘nature building’ activities are far more significant for duck hunters than pragmatic exercises to counter anti-hunting criticism, or to increase hunting opportunities.
This thesis explains that duck hunting incorporates complex and diverse relationships that are simultaneously understood as 'natural' or within 'nature', yet also appear to be manifestations of human social and cultural expressions 'outside' of the natural world. Through key relationships with animals (especially ducks and dogs), duck hunters blur the line between humans/animals, and wild/tame binary notions. They also understand their relationship with 'nature' to be more than a purely 'visual' experience, immersing themselves within 'natural' places/spaces, and thus configuring duck hunting practices as a 'hands on' and 'intimate' approach towards 'nature'. These 'multi-sensed' relationships make no sense when framed within a nature/culture dichotomy; instead, the notion of nature-culture hybridity is far more appropriate (Franklin 2002). Building on this notion of 'multi-sensed' experiences within 'nature', I have developed the theoretical concept of 'ensemble', which relates to Ingold's (1993, 1995) ideas of dwelling in the 'taskscape'. In this view, duck hunting encapsulates an 'ensemble' of gendered performances, human-animal relationships, and human-'nature' interactions. It is through this 'ensemble' of different practices, meanings, and experiences that duck hunting is configured as a legitimate pastime.
Acknowledgements

My deepest thanks go to the participants in this research who allowed me to join in with their duck hunting activities, even though I am both a ‘townie’ and ‘a girl’. The openness and enthusiasm of many duck hunters provided me with a variety of fascinating and enjoyable experiences and I feel very privileged to have been so warmly included by them.

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*Nature is a damp place
over which large numbers
of ducks fly, uncooked.*

- Oscar Wilde

Introduction
What is nature? Oscar Wilde's witticism presents us with one definition. His 'nature' is "damp" - another way of saying that it can be unpleasant, uncomfortable and lacking in the comforts of human civilisation. Nature also has animals in it - large numbers that move around according to their own 'wild' agenda. And finally, nature is "uncooked", that is untouched and unprocessed by humans. The unspoken antagonist to Oscar Wilde's 'nature' is of course 'culture' (or 'civilization'). How an individual understands the relationship between 'nature' and 'culture', including their conceptions of what constitutes acceptable ethical behaviour within these arenas, will depend on the cultural meanings they associate with these terms - and the particular historical setting, social milieu and physical location in which they live.

This thesis explores the contested and disparate ways that 'nature' is constructed around a particular activity – duck hunting. I will examine how duck hunting relates to wider social issues and historical processes, explore some of the fundamental practices of duck hunting, and consider how duck hunters understand their actions and beliefs. I will also examine duck hunting as a 'masculine' activity, as a gendered performance, and by the end of the thesis, piece together the multiple components that render duck hunting into a meaningful and legitimate ensemble of 'natural' and 'social' relationships. Ethnographic research

---

1 Cited in Nabhan (2002).
2 Throughout this thesis I use the term 'animals' to include birds as well.
carried out in southern New Zealand over the period of May 1999 to December 2002, provides the foundation for this thesis. Southern New Zealand is a region that retains strong connections with the rural economy and social world, yet here, in common with the rest of New Zealand and other urban industrialised countries, hunting has increasingly become a contested activity. In this chapter, I will outline how this contested arena came to be the focus of my research and the theoretical issues that emerged from this research, which then provide the key framing question for the subsequent analysis.

1.1 Choosing the Topic

As an anthropology student, two areas of reflection and interest in my life and studies influenced my initial decision to make duck hunting the focus of my research. Firstly, my interest grew from observations I made in regard to wild ducks. These birds hold a unique place in New Zealand society as, while holding the status of wild animals, they are also frequently found living in urban settings. In terms of wildness and tameness, together with ideas of human/cultural and animal/natural, ducks seem to blur boundaries that are often understood as inalienable and impenetrable. Secondly, the ethical issues that arise out of killing animals for food is an area that has become very important to me personally, and which connects to an increasing interest within the social sciences in regard to human-animal relationships. I will expand on these two aspects to clarify how they became the starting points for the research problem in this thesis.

What is wild?

During my childhood my siblings and I were often taken on excursions to 'feed the ducks', an activity that seemed to be natural and timeless. I thought the ducks and other birds that came to snatch bread out of my hand had always been a part of the

3 Going to 'feed the ducks' is a colloquial term that is almost always focused around family groups taking bread to a park and giving this to the resident wild birds (most often waterfowl) that live there. Ducks are usually the most numerous species, but as the photograph below reveals, feeding swans and other waterbird species is also a common feature of this activity.
town gardens that we visited. This was a place where you could go and experience 'nature': trees, water and wild birds all apparently living independently from human interference (see Figure 1 below).

![Figure 1: The Author 'Feeding the Ducks' - Hamilton, NZ 1967 (Source: personal photograph)](image)

Wild ducks are also a common sight within the 'civilised'/urban landscape of the city where I now live. Just as in my childhood, ducks can be found in large numbers in the city’s parks, but they can also be observed in other more surprising settings such as throughout the university campus where I work. I have also noticed mated pairs waddling around some city streets, apparently feeling safe enough to nest in a ‘suburban jungle’. They are wild creatures, yet so familiar and ubiquitous in the New Zealand setting that people do not wonder that they are there at all.

During the month of May, however, my attention is drawn to ducks in relation to a very specific activity. May is the start of duck hunting season, and even those people who are not directly involved cannot help but notice this. For example, retail outlets change their front windows in the weeks leading up to the season.
One Dunedin\(^4\) hunting shop displays a giant picture of ‘Daffy Duck’ in the front window with the words: “It's duck huntin' season”. Another shop window is dominated by an intimidating male mannequin dressed in full ‘cammo’ gear - looking more like a commando than a hunter. The local newspaper also advertises a wide variety of products aimed at duck hunters, along with events such as the ‘world duck-calling competition’ to be held in a local hotel. In addition the clay-target clubs advertise special weekend meets where hunters can practise for the opening weekend of the duck hunting season.

It seems that quite literally from one day to the next, the ‘status’ of ducks changes: from comical creatures that entertain children at the city park or wild creatures that fly freely above the urban landscape, they then become ‘game birds’ to be hunted, shot and killed. While historically this change in ‘status’ was barely noticed, it now appears to contradict dominant attitudes towards human-animal relations, in which wild animals in particular are seen as ‘off-limits’ to humans.

My observations about ducks as a student seem, on brief investigation, to accord with some exciting theoretical observations by academics interested in the mobilisation of ideas around ‘nature’ in contemporary Western\(^5\) societies. Franklin (2002) argues that, over the past few decades, “we have seen startling transformations in the relations between humanity and the natural world” (Franklin 2002: 2). These transformations arise from concern about the impact of humans on the earth and the rapid destruction of the world’s biodiversity (Wilson

---

\(^4\) Dunedin is the largest city servicing the southern region of New Zealand.

\(^5\) The concepts of ‘the West’ and ‘Western’ societies are problematic and in common with Ingold (2000:6) I find myself “biting my lip with frustration” when using them. I acknowledge that there is, and never has been, any such thing as a monolithic ‘West’. The societies that come under the ‘Western’ umbrella (what Hannen (1992:6) has termed “contemporary complex cultures”) are richly diverse and multivocal – as are those societies considered to be ‘non-Western’. Having said that, however, there are important historical connections and processes that tie New Zealand society with other ‘Western’ societies and which differentiate them in some obvious respects from ‘non-Western’ societies. In regard to this thesis, I emphasize the differences in attitude towards animals and nature that arose out of the ‘Western’ tradition and Modernism, in which dominance and ‘civilization’ became the prevailing attitudes expressed towards the ‘natural’ world and Cartesian dualism became the fundamental framework for understanding the relationship between humans and ‘nature’.
1988) together with emerging moral discourses based on ideas of 'environmentalism' (Milton 1993; Dryzek 1997). This 'greening' of society imposes expectations that to be a good citizen one must express a sensitive, concerned attitude towards 'nature' and a humane and caring consideration of animals.

'Wild' animals in particular are considered to be closer to nature than domesticated animals (whether they be pets or 'livestock'), and thus often qualify for a special kind of reverence and care (Dizard 1999). I do not mean to suggest that all wildlife qualifies for this respect and there are, of course, many instances where people and wildlife come into conflict (Knight 2000). Increasingly in Western societies however, there is a new understanding that it is the human 'invasion' of 'nature' that has brought this about. Cronon (1995a) describes a dramatic example of this from Sierra Nevada, where a young woman out jogging near her home was stalked and mauled to death by a female mountain lion. The lion was quickly hunted down and shot to ensure she did not kill again. Shortly after this tragic episode two public appeals were started, one for the woman's two small children, and one for the lion's seven month old cub. From these appeals $9,000 was raised for the two children, while $21,000 was collected for the cub (Cronon 1995a: 48). Cronon uses this story to emphasize that humans assign different meanings to nature, particularly in the form of moral fables, thus: "the mountain lion can serve as a token of nature's savagery - or as an innocent victim of human beings who in their efforts to live closer to nature unthinkingly invade the lion's home" (Cronon 1995a: 50).

Like mountain lions, ducks also serve as metaphors in moral fables relating to nature, and they also generate conflicting moral understandings through these metaphors. This moral ambiguity is particularly clear in the tensions and disagreements between different groups over the hunting of ducks. In the USA and Australia for example, where hunting activities have historically gone uncontested,
there are now extremely hostile protests, which in some places have led to a variety of hunting practices being banned (Franklin 1999; Dizard 1999; Munro 1997).

It can be argued that these debates around hunting also represent the contestation of some of the social constructions that connect to 'the rural', particularly those relating to notions of rural masculinity. In New Zealand, a particular trope has developed around the image of the 'Southern Man', encapsulating traditional ideas of rural masculinity which value self-sufficiency on the land. The expected relationship between the Southern Man and animals is pragmatic - although some affection is allowed for his dog. The skills of hunting and killing animals are appreciated and expected as part of the provisioning role that an ideal rural man fulfills (Campbell, Law & Honeyfield 1999). This construct, however, now competes with contemporary values that emphasize an environmentally sensitive and non-violent urban masculinity and as such signals the disruption of many previously unquestioned gender relations (Law, Campbell & Dolan 1999: 15-16).

The divergent beliefs of hunters, and those who oppose hunting activities, return us to contrasting and contradictory images of 'nature'. In Western societies the word 'nature' is often used as if it is a universal reality. 'Nature' is also used, however, to express very specific personal values. When ideas of 'nature' are contested this is often because each of the disagreeing parties sees their claims as timeless and immutable. According to Jasper & Nelkin (1992) for example, many hunters claim they have a 'closeness to nature' and a 'realistic' comprehension of how the ecological system operates. Killing is seen as 'natural'; one of the necessary activities within the food chain (Jasper & Nelkin, 1992: 86).

In contrast to this, some animal rights activists view these claims as dishonest and immoral, and understand hunting activities as harming 'nature'. Joy Williams (1995) is one of the more outspoken and vituperative critics of hunting:
Hunters' self-serving arguments and lies are becoming more preposterous as nonhunters awake from their long, albeit troubled, sleep. Sport hunting is immoral; it should be made illegal. Hunters are *persecutors of nature* who should be prosecuted (Williams 1995: 265, emphasis added).

This perception of hunters as people who practice 'immoral' acts and who are 'persecutors of nature' is becoming more widely accepted in Western societies (Franklin 1999; Dizard 1999).

There is very little in-depth social science research available, however, on what social conceptions and relationships hunters have with 'nature', nor a good understanding of why hunting activities are still so popular. Hunting (and fishing) have become "enigmas in modernity" – because even as the killing of animals (even for meat) has become increasingly viewed with disgust: "hands on killing sports have enjoyed sustained popularity and growth during the twentieth century" (Franklin 1999: 105).

As the discussion above reveals, my initial observations in regard to ducks as animals that disturb ideas of wildness and tameness also connect to broader questions of how nature is understood and what these understandings then suggest in terms of appropriate actions towards animals. Activities such as hunting are areas where divergent ideas of nature are particularly obvious and thus present a useful area for research. Over time, these ideas have elaborated into key organising themes for my thesis.

*The Ambiguous Question of Killing Animals*

The second aspect influencing my choice of topic arose from not only my interest in the ambiguous and often confusing cultural meanings that are associated with human-animal relationships, but also in the ethical issues connected to the killing and consumption of animals. Specifically, research I carried out during my undergraduate years presented me with disturbing information in regard to factory
farming, and I became increasingly unsettled as the meat on my plate began to signify pain and death rather than a delicious taste and nutritious food.

My sense of unease in relation to meat does not appear to be an isolated experience. In her book *Dead Meat*, Sue Coe (1995) records her journey through American slaughterhouses portraying, through text and paintings, gory scenes of how animals live and die in the modern farming system. Alexander Cockburn’s introductory essay to Coe’s book highlights the importance of acknowledging the reality that the meat we eat represents the demise of an animal that almost certainly suffered to some degree during its life and death. He urges us to: “figure out if you can have a meal that squares with ethical standards you can live with, or even vaguely aspire to” (Cockburn 1995: 31).

But endeavoring to eat ‘ethically’ is a complicated business and varies considerably between individuals. Because I was not prepared to kill an animal myself in order to eat it, I decided to avoid meat in my diet—especially since I was living in a society where vegetarian alternatives were cheap and easy to find. I suspect that, like me, the majority of people in New Zealand society today would have difficulty if they were faced with turning a live animal into meat for their plate (both in a practical and ethical sense). Although there has been an enormous increase in livestock production over the past century, and a corresponding increase in meat consumption, the majority of people in industrialised countries have become separated from the processes that change a living animal into meat (Vialles 1994). While Norbert Elias’s (1978 [1939]) social history *The Civilizing Process* does not say a great deal specifically about attitudes around animals and meat, he does see an association between the general ‘civilizing process’ and the ‘uneasy feelings’ that the killing of animals for meat now evokes. Elias tells us:

6 Of course, vegetarian food choices are also part of a morally contested domain; for example, many animal species are killed in order for vegetable crops to be grown.
The manner in which meat is served changes considerably from the Middle Ages to modern times. The curve of this change is very instructive. In the upper medieval society, the dead animal or large parts of it are often brought whole to the table. Not only whole fish and whole birds (sometimes with their feathers) but also rabbits, lambs, and quarters of veal appear on the table...[However] today it would arouse rather uneasy feelings in many people if they or others had to carve half a calf or pig at table or cut meat from a pheasant [or duck] still adorned with its feathers...From a standard of feeling by which the sight and carving of a dead animal on the table are actually pleasurable, or at least not at all unpleasant, the development leads to another standard by which reminders that the meat dish has something to do with the killing of an animal are avoided to the utmost (Elias 1978 {1939}: 118-120, emphasis added).

Closely bound up with Elias’ ‘civilising’ thesis are far-reaching historical changes, such as urbanisation and industrialisation, which have led to a situation where, as William Cronon (1991) explains, it has become: “easy not to remember that eating [meat] is a moral act inextricably bound to killing” (Cronon 1991: 256).

Of course, some occupations and pastimes do still deal directly with the killing of animals, such as abattoir workers, farmers, and hunters. Of these three groups hunters are most likely to be portrayed as callous and unethical. As Matt Cartmill (1993) explains: “the stereotype of the hunter – as a violent, psychopathic male eager to shoot anything that moves – is a staple of popular culture, recurring in innumerable films, TV shows, and comic strips” (Cartmill 1993: 229).

Despite this negative image, some hunters argue that when killing animals they are at least prepared to face up directly to the ethical issues that relate to taking a living creature’s life – realities which the majority of people in the Western world now avoid:

Righteous modern man [sic] says, ‘Let us call ourselves ‘civilized’ and pick and choose which animals live and which die and by what means. Let us pay others to kill the animals we need for food and clothing; however, let us look with disdain upon those who still kill for themselves as did their ancestors and their ancestors’ ancestors (James 1996: 105-106).
This willingness to “kill for themselves” seems to me to be an important aspect that sets hunters apart from the majority of people in industrialised societies. Until relatively recently, the skills required to hunt were appreciated and admired. Clearly, that there has been a dramatic change in how hunting is now understood. As James (1996) points out, this change is also related to another important issue: how ‘civilized’ or industrialised countries, such as New Zealand, choose very specific animals to “live and die and by what means”. While the majority of the New Zealand population does consume meat, most of that meat will come from primary farm production (sheep and cattle) and factory farms (hens and pigs). ‘Wild’ foods have become the exception rather than the rule, and are consumed by a small minority of the population.

As I have outlined, my initial interest in the curious presence of wild ducks in the urban landscape along with a growing concern about the ethical discourses that relate to killing animals, were the starting points for the research question in this thesis. These areas of reflection and interest suggested a number of theoretical issues related to: human-animal relations; hunting and gender; constructions of ‘nature’; ethics of meat eating; and the contested discourses that relate to hunting in contemporary Western societies. Several questions arose for me out of these issues, such as; why do hunters kill animals themselves, as opposed to purchasing an already slaughtered creature conveniently packaged (and ‘de-animalised’) at the supermarket? I wondered if hunters feel some kind of enjoyment or pleasure when they kill an animal – and are they thus, ‘cold-blooded killers’? To what extent are pragmatic issues such as food provisioning a motivation for hunting? And why are men – rather than women – most commonly associated with hunting activities?

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7 Vegetarians are very much in the minority – estimated at around 2% of the population (Polson 1998).
8 In some cultural spaces ‘wild’ foods are presented as exotic and adventurous, such as at the annual “Wild Foods Festival” held in Hokitika on the west coast of the South Island. At this festival delicacies such as wild pork and venison, snails, sheep’s brains and testicles, and Hou Hou grubs are served to approximately 20,000 people in March each year. In general, however, the killing of ‘wild’ animals as opposed to ‘domestic’ animals has negative connotations for many people living in industrialised societies.
Over time these initial questions changed and shifted to develop as a ‘research dialogue’.

**The Research Dialogue**

In response to these questions, I decided to carry out ethnographic fieldwork with hunters. In engaging directly with hunters themselves and in observing their activities first-hand, I hoped to gain a better understanding than I would have if only relying on second-hand sources and descriptions (such as those found in hunting literature). I wanted to not only hear their point of view, but also to see, feel, and smell the hunting experience.

I decided to focus on duck hunting\(^9\) (as opposed to other forms of hunting) for three main reasons. Firstly, from a pragmatic perspective, duck hunting is an activity that offers the easiest access to research. It is an activity that involves individuals from all walks of life because it is less expensive, and located more accessibly, than big-game hunting. Deer hunting for example, is usually carried out in very rugged country - often accessed by helicopter - and typically involves a solo hunter or very small group. It would obviously have been very difficult for me, particularly as a woman, to carry out field research in this area, without any family or social connections to deer hunting. Pig hunting is also more difficult to access, and is typically represented as a particularly brutal and dangerous form of hunting - I felt I did not have the skills or experience to partake in this form of hunting activity.

I also chose duck hunting as the focus of my research because of its popular - almost iconic - place in New Zealand society. Shooting ducks is a seasonal event limited to a few months of the year, and during those months various social events

\(^9\) I have chosen, partly for consistency, to apply the term ‘duck hunting’ throughout this thesis even though the terms’ duck hunting’ and ‘duck shooting’ are used interchangeably in New Zealand. More importantly, ‘duck hunting’ is a broader term that signals that the social and cultural meanings around this activity must be understood as far more complex than just ‘shooting ducks’.
are associated with it - many of which are highly visible in the public arena. Television news stories are regularly shown in the week leading up to the opening of duck shooting season; stories which are usually presented in a ‘quirky’ or humorous manner, giving the impression that duck hunting is indulged by wider New Zealand society, even if not quite understood. Newspapers from past decades reveal that around opening season duck shooting always provides a topic of interest, often with a story and photograph presented prominently on one of the opening pages. This media interest suggests some fruitful research questions about the history of duck shooting in New Zealand society and how it has come to be the focus of such social ritual.

The third reason for narrowing my research to duck hunting was, as I noted earlier, the important and special place that ducks have within New Zealand society together with the ambiguous position they seem to hold in terms of wildness and tameness. Wild ducks have a special place in the collective childhood memory of New Zealand society - going to ‘feed the ducks’ in city gardens and parks is a common experience for many people. Mallard ducks in particular (the most numerous game-bird in New Zealand), with their gregarious social nature tend to interact frequently with people within human, ‘non-wild’ spaces.

With my initial decision made to embark on some initial fieldwork, I therefore decided to approach duck hunters and present myself as a complete novice (which I clearly was) who was curious and interested in participating in duck hunting activities in order to understand this activity more thoroughly. I did not explicitly explain my personal beliefs about avoiding meat as I did not want to alienate possible participants - and in the course of my research there were occasions when I was presented with meat which I chose to eat (partly to aid in a sense of solidarity). I was asked on more than one occasion whether I was “one of those animal rights people”, to which I truthfully replied that I was not. Despite my personal beliefs about meat-eating, I approached this research with an openness
and desire to understand how duck hunters construct their world-view and, in ethnographic terms, to experience and participate in a ‘culture’ different to my own.10

My early experiences of participating in duck hunting helped me to determine the themes that would be important in my research. The following is an extract from my fieldnotes, which demonstrates how important notions of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ are when considering this activity:

I walked as quietly as my newly purchased gumboots would allow me through long wet grass, dripping dew. Around me in the blue-grey light of the early morning, I could just make out the rolling and organised countryside of John’s farm. John and his ‘hunting mate’ Bill had invited me to accompany them on the opening morning of duck hunting season. We were making our way towards a copse of bush and trees that surrounded a pond – a little patch of wilderness left in the economically structured landscape of a working farm. But then I realized John was whispering to me and proudly explaining how he had dug out this area and developed the pond from a small stream that once flowed here. He said it had taken years to cultivate the trees and bushes that had looked so unplanned and spontaneously ‘natural’ to my eyes. Suddenly my conceptions of ‘wild’ and ‘cultivated’ were becoming confused. But then I heard quacking – some ducks were sitting on the pond and here at least I thought were some ‘wild’ elements for this scene. However, the ducks were Mallards, a species introduced to New Zealand less than a century ago. I wondered, did that make them less ‘natural’ or less ‘wild’? To further add to my confusion, John explained he had been “feeding the pond” with grain for the past two weeks to encourage the ducks to favour his pond.

As we drew closer to the pond, I could make out a small structure made from corrugated iron nestled in the trees with its front sitting at the edge of the water. This was John’s hunting hide, or ‘maimai’ as it is commonly called in New Zealand. We entered the back of the maimai through a Hessian cloth and John and Bill smiled excitedly to each other as they began loading their shotguns. John commented on how good it felt to be “away from it all”.

10See Chapter 2 for further discussion of the circumstances in which I carried out my ethnographic fieldwork and an explanation of how I situated my analysis.
As the sky began to lighten John moved to the front of the maimai and peered out: it was 6.50 a.m. and the sun was beginning to rise. I began to feel relaxed in the quiet bucolic beauty around me. Seven o’clock came and went – and we spent the next hour and a half waiting for ducks to land on the pond. As it turned out, 1999 was not a terribly good season for duck shooting. It had been particularly dry in Southland, I was told, and therefore Mallard numbers were not as high in this area as previous years but that was the “unpredictableness of nature”. John only managed to shoot one duck, which he dryly told me represented a “one hundred percent success rate” – only that one duck had landed on the pond during the entire morning we were in the maimai.

Later we made our way back to the farmhouse. I wanted to see the duck that John had shot and I found it lying rather forlornly in the back of the ‘ute’ close to a blue swandri which had been taken off by one of the men during the morning. It struck me to see this symbol of New Zealand rural masculinity lying beside the dead duck – both discarded without much thought. The blue in the duck’s plumage coordinated stylishly with the fabric of the jacket bringing to my mind the notion of a nature/culture ensemble (Fieldnotes May 1999).

FIGURE 2. Duck and Swandri
(Source: personal photograph)

11 Utility farm vehicle.
12 Swandri is a trademark name, which is often used as a generic term to cover a particular style of woolen shirt commonly used in farm and outdoor settings.
I came away from this first fieldwork experience thinking how problematic it was to understand ideas of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ in a dualistic way. The rural landscape we were in signaled to me a natural setting, free from the ‘artificialness’ found in urban spaces. Likewise, when I asked John what he meant by “getting away from it all”, he explained that duck hunting was a way of escaping the pressures of everyday life, which were, in his view, created by humans. Duck hunting allowed him to be within nature; to actively participate within natural systems and life-cycles. It was clear that John was conceptualizing a kind of nature/culture dualism, yet the actual experiential aspects of his hunting and the related activities such as pond building (and pond ‘feeding’) meant that it became very difficult to see where culture ended and nature began. John delighted in escaping to be in ‘nature’, but, almost paradoxically, also enjoyed having created some aspects of ‘nature’ himself. While the pond and trees were, in a sense, ‘created’ by John, ‘wild nature’ then took over and ‘operated’ his creation. Similarly, the ducks that visited the pond were introduced to New Zealand but are still ‘wild’ (not domesticated) ducks. It appeared to me that the boundaries between the duck hunters – in both their material culture and social behaviour – blurred and blended into the ‘natural’ (non-human) landscape. Furthermore, John portrayed himself as a ‘human’ escaping from ‘culture’ to immerse himself within ‘nature’, and to behave like an ‘animal’ (predator) in the food-chain – yet all the while still maintaining his ‘humanness’ or distinctiveness from being an animal.

Perhaps this mesh of human/nonhuman elements fits with Donna Haraway’s (1992) description of ‘cyborgs’ which she explains as: “compounds of the organic, technical, mythic, textual and political” (Haraway 1992: 42) or Bruno Latour’s argument that that there are only “natures-cultures” and hybrid humans and non-humans (1993: 104). Therefore, one of the key questions that came from this first excursion in the field was how ‘separate’ is the human (culture) from the nonhuman (nature) in activities like hunting? It appeared that not only are duck hunting activities experienced through complex interactions between ‘nature’ and
‘culture’, humans and nonhumans, but that the conception of these ideas appears to fluctuate – sometimes understood by duck hunters as fixed and rigid, and at other times blurred as the ‘natural’ and the ‘cultural’ bleed into each other – both literally and figuratively.

1.2 Conceptualising ‘Nature’

From this first fieldwork it was clear to me that, for one hunter at least, ideas of ‘nature’ were very important to the practice of duck hunting. In order to investigate and understand this idea more fully, I surveyed theory and literature that appeared relevant and, in doing so, discovered ‘nature’ to be a very elusive concept. Even providing a definition for what ‘nature’ constitutes (and means) is an exercise fraught with difficulty. The rest of this chapter provides an initial review of the key theoretical concepts that structure this thesis.

Defining Nature

In the contemporary world, meanings attached to the term ‘nature’ are diverse and often contradictory: as Raymond Williams’ (1983) much cited comment explains: “(n)ature is perhaps the most complex word in the language” (Williams, 1983: 219). One of the fundamental (but also complex) reasons for different understandings of nature stems from different perceptions of the relationship between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ and which characteristics are associated with these realms. Dualist notions of ‘mind’ and ‘body’ and ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ have a considerable intellectual heritage in Western society (see for example Oelschlaeger 1991; Evernden 1992; Coates 1998 and Glacken 1999). This understanding, founded on Cartesian dualism, posits the body separately from the soul or mind, and by extension ‘culture’ (people) as separate from ‘nature’.

Given these dualistic concepts, ‘nature’ is clearly a concept that changes over time, as Williams (1972) notes: “the idea of nature contains, though often unnoticed, an

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13 For example, Jan Dizard opens his 1999 book, Going Wild, with this quotation.
extraordinary amount of human history” (Williams 1972: 146). Keith Thomas (1983) provides a detailed historical account of the dramatic change in attitude towards nature in England from the early modern period through to the nineteenth century. During the Tudor and Stuart periods the dominion of (civilized) culture over a (brutal) nature was emphasized, and exercising that dominion (for example by hunting) was morally acceptable. William Somervile, for instance, asserted during the 18th century that: “though ‘bloody’ in deed, hunting was ‘yet without guilt’” (Thomas 1983: 29). But this assumption that the world and all its different plant and animal species were subordinate to, and for the unrestrained use of, humans was gradually challenged and according to Thomas: “by the end of the eighteenth century, a growing number of people had come to find man’s ascendancy over nature increasingly abhorrent to their moral and aesthetic sensibilities” (Thomas 1983: 300).

By the 1800s these ideas gave a different moral complexion to the nature/culture dualism: now ‘culture’ (civilization) was understood as corrupted, and ‘nature’ a place of natural goodness and order and even a palliative for urban life. This conception of nature is extremely powerful in industrialised societies today and provides a discursive framework described by Cronon (1995b) as “malign civilization” and “benign nature” (Cronon 1995b: 84). During the twentieth century, according to Franklin (2002), new discourses of nature surfaced partly as a result of the ‘postmodern turn’ in the social sciences leading to a kaleidoscope of conflicting meanings of ‘nature’ and a “wide range of ‘contested natures’” (Franklin 2002: 53).

As we can see from these historical changes, it appears that how ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ are conceptualized separately will critically impact on the relationship that is perceived between these two ideals - particularly when nature is seen as ‘pure’ and outside of humanity. If this discourse of nature as an opposing binary to human activities is accepted, then it is easy to see why human involvement is viewed as ‘contaminating’ nature.
Exploring ideas of ‘Nature’ / ‘Culture’ in relation to ‘Natural’ Places/Spaces

In recent times there has been an effort to transcend this dualist framework. Since the 1980s (building on the work of Foucault in the 1970s) explorations of ‘the body’ in the context of social theory have become far more prevalent (for example Shilling 1994; Turner 1996 [1984]), and these ideas are particularly important when considered in relation to ideas of nature/culture. Edward Casey (1996) argues (by way of phenomenology) that the idea of ‘place’ encapsulates the deepest form of embodied experience because it is the site where the ‘lived body’ coalesces with space and time:

> Just as place invades space from the bottom up, so culture penetrates place from the top down as it were. But only as it were, for the very directionalities of “up” and “down” are legacies of bodily orientation in places (as Kant reminds us) and are elicited by powers inherent in places themselves (as Aristotle affirms). It would be more accurate to say simply, and in conclusion, that as places gather bodies in their midst in deeply enculturated ways, so cultures conjoin bodies in concrete circumstances of emplacement (Casey 1996: 46).

Casey’s essay is incorporated in a volume of ethnographic accounts of ‘place’ and the consistent emphasis within these accounts is that the physical ‘embodied’ experience of place is important (see Feld & Basso 1996). This emphasis on examining the intersection between place and the embodied human experience within it connects to efforts to transcend an a priori separation of nature and culture (or society).

By talking of ‘space’, ‘place’, or ‘landscape’ (often also called ‘nature’) and their relationship with ‘culture’ or the social, a new kind of theoretical dualism arises in what has become a very fraught battle between proponents of ‘social constructivism’ and those who argue for ‘scientific realism’ (or ‘environmental realism’). One of the key reasons why there seems to be little room for conversations between these two theoretical positions is the assumption that the human and the non-human worlds are diametrically opposed. Social
constructivists are often painted as 'uber' relativists who find no reality outside the social world, whereas anti-constructivists are construed as understanding 'nature' as being completely outside of, and separate to, the human realm. However, as geographer Sarah Whatmore explains:

Only the most vulgar of 'constructionist' accounts suggest that the world is - to borrow Sheets-Johnstone's evocative phrase - 'the product of an immaculate linguistic conception'... Equally, only the crudest of 'realist' accounts refuse to recognize the contingency of knowledge claims about 'real world' entities and processes (Whatmore 2002: 2).

This epistemological battle has been of particular concern within geography (for example see Proctor 1998a; Gerber 1997) and environmental sociology (for example Macnaghten and Urry 1998), but has also arisen recently in the disciplines of anthropology and history, where it appears in slightly different guises. While the epistemological argument may be the same for each discipline, the research focus and language vary. Geographers are concerned with 'space and 'place' and the interface between social and natural worlds and have historically "inhabited this 'nature-society' settlement more self-consciously than other disciplines" (Whatmore 2002: 2). Sociologists (particularly those in rural sociology) are concerned with 'landscape' and the symbolic understandings that cultural groups utilise to define their relationship with the environment (see for example Greider and Garkovich 1991). Historians have also become embroiled in this area, especially those scholars who are working in the area of 'environmental history'. Cronon's (1995b) essay The Trouble with Wilderness; Or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature has been criticised, in particular, because of his argument against "a dualistic vision in which the human is entirely outside the natural" (Cronon 1995b: 80). (For a discussion of this controversy see Proctor 1998a: 355-358. For a critical perspective see Peterson 2001). Within anthropology over the past forty years, the nature-culture dichotomy has been a "central dogma" upon which many major theoretical approaches are based (Descola and Pálsson, 1996: 2). However, over the past decade several volumes
have sought to challenge this dualist paradigm on both empirical and theoretical grounds (Crumley 2001; Feld & Basso 1996; Decola and Pálsson 1996).

Other theorists, such as Donna Haraway (see also Soper 1995), have sought to integrate the constructivist insight that ‘nature’ must always be understood through ‘social’ eyes with the realist claim that the world consists of more than just ‘social’ manifestations. In Haraway’s view: “the world neither speaks itself nor disappears in favour of a master decoder. The natural world does not exist in pristine form, but neither is it “raw material for humanization” “(Haraway 1991: 198). It is important to be aware, then, that the ‘natural’ is physically shaped by human cultures but also, conversely, that the ‘cultural’ is also shaped by ‘nature’.

Sociologists Macnaghten and Urry (1998) address this debate by emphasising that there is a plurality of socially embedded ‘natures’. They also argue, however, in common with Casey (1996) above, that these ‘natures’ are connected to physically ‘real’ (space/time) places that people inhabit:

There is no singular ‘nature’ as such, only a diversity of contested natures; and...each such nature is constituted through a variety of socio-cultural processes from which natures cannot be plausibly separated... Our approach will emphasize that it is specific social practices, especially of people’s dwellings, which produce, reproduce and transform different natures and different values... It is through such practices that people respond, cognitively, aesthetically and hermeneutically, to what has been constructed as the signs and characteristics of nature (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 1-2).

In relation to the debate over the conceptualisation of the ‘social’ and the ‘natural’, Franklin (2002) argues (in common with Macnaghten and Urry) that “nature is socially embedded in the vectors of space and time, while being at once a physical reality, amenable to the senses and discursively ordered” (Franklin 2002: 38, emphasis in the original). Tim Ingold’s (1993, 1995) notion of dwelling has been particularly relevant to these theoretical underpinnings of nature. Ingold puts
forward ‘dwelling’ (following Heidegger 1971, 1977) as an innovative way to look at the relationship between humans, non-human animals, and the landscape (or ‘nature’). To ‘dwell’ in a landscape is to be enmeshed within it; to inscribe upon it layers of history that incorporate both technologies and manipulations of ‘natural’ phenomenon. By arguing for this perspective, Ingold rejects the nature/culture binary which depicts a real/natural landscape in opposition to the idea of landscape as sign.

Ingold (1995) essentially asks why human manipulations of the environment are regarded as outside ‘nature’ and ‘artificial’, whereas the impact made by animals tends to be viewed as occurring within ‘nature’ and therefore as ‘natural’ constructions. He rejects conventional explanations (based on Cartesian dualist foundations), which locate the difference in the cognitive processes, or symbolic understandings that precede human manipulation of the environment (‘culture’) – which are often contrasted with ‘unconscious’ behaviours of animals that are seen simply as the outward expressions of an animal’s genetic makeup (‘nature’). Ingold argues that both humans and animals ‘dwell’ in a landscape and take from that landscape information about how to live.

Crucial to Ingold’s (1993, 1995) argument is the temporal nature of dwelling both in the way that landscape is formed and in the way we are formed by it. Landscape is “neither ‘built’ nor ‘unbuilt’, it is perpetually under construction” (Ingold 1993: 162). The link between humans and their landscape manifests itself in what Ingold terms the “taskscape”, which he explains as an embodied and active relationship between the ‘social’ and the ‘natural’. Ingold does not separate technologies from the taskscape but rather underlines the importance of these in formulating the landscape around us. His concept of the taskscape incorporates an emphasis on the embodied and sensual experience of ‘dwelling’. This is an important concept for

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14 Ingold mentions the term ‘extended phenotype’ (coined by Richard Dawkins) which refers to: “genetic effects that are situated beyond the body of the organism” (Ingold 1995:60), and which in layperson’s terms would probably be called ‘instinctive behaviours’.
my research (as will be discussed further in Chapter 6), as Ingold is arguing that humans are active participants in ‘nature’, not outside observers, and that the embodied experience of the landscape and the taskscape incorporates a variety of senses. He particularly wants to focus attention away from the visual as the only way to experience a landscape:

Thus outside my window I see a landscape of houses, trees, gardens, a street, a pavement. I do not hear any of these things, but I can hear people talking on the pavement, a car passing by, birds singing in the trees, a dog barking somewhere in the distance, and the sound of hammering as a neighbour repairs his garden shed. In short, what I hear is activity, even when its sources cannot be seen (Ingold 1993: 162).

Macnaghten and Urry (1998) also argue that the ‘visual’ has become central in Western industrialised societies leading to an increasing “hegemony of vision” (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 113). They contend that a “romantic gaze” has come to dominate popular conceptions of how nature ‘should’ be experienced. The ‘romantic gaze’ connects to idealised notions of national beauty (the ‘true’ essence of the nation), “usually unpeopled, majestic and awe-inspiring” (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 187). The pragmatic and obvious human manipulations of the land (such as farming) tend to be overlooked, although, as Macnaghten and Urry point out, sometimes farmers can become symbolically constructed as integral to the romantic gaze as “makers of the land” (1998: 187) – and this is certainly the case in some constructions of rural New Zealand (such as the ‘Southern Man’ mentioned previously). One of the important understandings implicit in the romantic gaze is the celebration of an idealised countryside that is timeless and ‘unspoilt’.

The increasing dominance of the ‘romantic gaze’ leads to very specific notions of how the countryside should be ‘consumed’. Macnaghten and Urry illustrate this point by referring to the policies of the British Countryside Commission that are increasingly promoting “quiet and non-intrusive countryside activities (such as picnicking and walking)” (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 188), and which clearly
privilege a visual, passive, and 'romantic' construction of the countryside (and 'nature').

These insights raise an important orientating question for this thesis. If the construction of nature in industrialised societies such as New Zealand has increasingly become dominated by 'the visual', then are interactions with nature that involve a more 'multi-sensed experience' less common and increasingly contested? Franklin (2002) considers this question in regard to concrete examples, including 'nature sports' such as hunting (and fishing). He argues that in order to understand hunting (and angling), researchers must not merely attempt to "decode them [these activities] as social constructions", but also to consider the multi-sensory and embodied experiences that are an important component of these activities (Franklin 2002: 217).

As we have seen, many scholars now accentuate the interconnectedness of 'nature' and 'culture'. While this may be a growing emphasis within academia, it appears that a discourse connected to the 'romantic gaze' has become increasingly dominant in Western societies: a discourse that maintains the notion of distinct boundaries around the human and the 'natural' worlds. I do not mean to suggest, however, there is an homogenous experience of nature – as I have indicated above this is far from the truth and in fact contested 'natures' are a feature of industrialised and urbanized countries such as New Zealand.

One of the areas where this contestation is most obvious connects to different constructions of what constitutes an ethical relationship between humans and animals, particularly in connection to notions of 'nature'.

15 Franklin has carried out primary research looking at hunting and fishing in Australia (see Franklin 1996, 1998, 1999).
'Nature' and Human-Animal Relations

While the relationships between humans and 'animals' have always been important in anthropology\(^\text{16}\), recently there has been increased interest not only in how humans perceive and understand animals, but also in how animals might view humans (for example Noske 1989, 1993; Tovey 2003), leading to human-animal relationships being considered in far more dynamic terms (Mullin 1999).

It is important for this study to consider closely how nature is conceptualised because there is a crucial connection between these conceptions of 'nature' and 'culture' and the moral or ethical rules that are associated with them:

What we need to know about 'the other', whether animal or human, is where he, she or it fits in... Of animals, are they close or far, food or not-food, pets or vermin, domesticated slaves or savage monsters? Can we kill them with impunity, or only on set occasions in a special manner, or are they sacred and untouchable? (Leach 1982: 116).

In his discussion on taboos, Edmund Leach illustrates how 'moral rules' are linked with categories that are unfixed and thus vary between different societies, and even "between one situation and another within the same society" (Leach 1982: 115). Leach's observations are pertinent to a discussion on human-animal relations as they illustrate how moveable the line is between different categories - particularly in regard to what is 'human' or 'animal'. The categories of 'human' and 'non-human' differ across both cultures and time, making it impossible to provide an uncontested answer to the question: what is an animal?\(^\text{17}\)

In the contemporary Western world, animals provide a multitude of different and often conflicting meanings: as pets they can be understood as both commodities and family members; as livestock they are walking 'meat' supplies; as 'pests' they are vilified as destructive beings; and as 'endangered species' they are precious and

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\(^{16}\) For an overview of anthropology and human-animal relations see Mullin (1999).

\(^{17}\) See Ingold (1988) for recent cross-disciplinary essays around this theme.
apotheosised. Previous approaches to understanding the relationship between humans and animals have postulated that all cultural groups set boundaries between nature and culture and then use this dichotomy as an analytical tool on which to found myths, rituals, and classificatory world-views. Taking a structuralist approach, animal are ‘good to think with’ - providing important symbols and metaphors for human thought (Leach 1970). Looked at from another perspective, animals are also ‘good to eat’ - they have important material and practical impacts on human survival and means of production. Marvin Harris (1985) for example, argues from a materialist position that a genetically programmed ‘meat hunger’ explains the importance of meat and the symbolic importance of animals across different cultures.

Over the past two decades there has been a great deal of criticism of the assumption that all human societies have universal (biologically programmed) attitudes towards animals, or that a nature/culture dichotomy is manifest across all cultures. There is now a broad consensus that conceptualisations of nature vary historically and ethnographically. Marilyn Strathern’s (1980) research with the Hagen people of New Guinea provides an example of a society in which she argues: “there’s no nature and no culture... Each (term) is a highly relativised concept whose ultimate signification must be derived from its place within a specific metaphysics” (Strathern 1980: 177).

Similarly, with reference to various ethnographies of hunting peoples, Ingold (1994) explains that the people in these hunting groups have a relationship of sharing and “trust” with animals; exactly the same kind of relationship that occurs between the human members of these groups. However, the traditional anthropological assessment of hunter-gatherers, who describe their relations with animals in terms of human interactions, has been to say they are “indulging in metaphor” (Ingold 1994: 19). Ingold argues against applying the Western concept of ‘nature’ to hunter-gatherer groups, for in doing so is to “accord priority to the Western metaphysics of
Ingold sees the transition from hunting to pastoralism as being the explanation for the change in human-animal relations, signaling a shift from "trust to domination" (Ingold 1994). Having read Ingold's (1994) research, it struck me as important to investigate the relationship that duck hunters have with the animals that are involved in duck hunting practices. Are there elements of 'trust' in those relationships, or do duck hunters perpetuate the 'domination' of animals that Ingold suggests is inherent in Western societies. Both ducks and dogs appear to be central to the duck hunting experience. But the relationships between the duck hunters and these animals are complex and seem, in many ways, paradoxical - and, as with the duck hunters' approach to 'nature', riddled with contradictions. Literature from duck hunters and hunting in general express a love of animals, yet the hunters then shoot those same animals for which they profess such a great affection.

I also observed in my first fieldwork experience that the duck hunters seemed to enjoy 'talking' to the ducks with their duck callers in a manner that exceeded purely pragmatic efforts to attract the birds close enough to shoot. Similarly, the relationship between duck hunters and their dogs could also be seen in purely pragmatic terms - dogs being an important 'piece of equipment' for successful duck hunting. They are trained to recover dead and wounded ducks and without them, in many situations, a duck hunter is at a disadvantage to recover shot birds. But in the field for the first time I noticed that the dogs were also treated as 'mates' - they 'hang around' in the maimai with the hunters, eating food and being 'spoken' to (and sworn at) in a very similar manner to the way duck hunters relate to each other. While I think Ingold (1994) makes some vital points about the inappropriateness of applying the Western concept of 'dominated nature' to
hunter-gatherer groups, I also wonder about how consistently this notion can be applied across Western societies in the contemporary situation.

While Ingold (1994) argues that hunter-gatherers have a relationship of 'trust' with the animals they kill, it is unlikely that non-hunters would say the same about contemporary New Zealand duck hunters. It was clear to me, even after a preliminary investigation into duck hunting, that this activity has become increasingly contested in recent times. Animal rights and anti-hunting discourses construct duck hunters as having an 'immoral' relationship with animals. Duck hunting has been banned in several Australian states, and in recent times there have been protests against duck hunting in New Zealand. Franklin (1999) argues that in Western societies relationships with animals are increasingly imbued with very specific notions of what constitutes a 'moral' relationship:

In our reflections about animals in late modernity we reflect on ourselves; the issue is not the ethical consideration of the 'other' but the moral consideration of 'ourselves'. That reflection is increasingly couched in misanthropic terms: humans have become a sick and deranged species, destructive, out of control and a danger to themselves and others (Franklin 1999: 196).

It appears that hunters are increasingly being viewed as examples of 'deranged' and destructive humanity and therefore an important area of interest for this research is how duck hunters are responding to the growing critique of hunting. Is there a counter discourse that constructs their relationship with animals as being morally or ethically acceptable?

As this discussion on human-animal relations has revealed, one of the crucial areas for this research to explore is the way in which duck hunters construct their relationship with animals and how they relate this to wider discourses of 'nature'.

18 These issues are explored fully in Chapter 5.
These constructions will be particularly interesting in regard to how duck hunters respond to anti-hunting discourses.

One of the objections frequently highlighted in these discourses is an emphasis in regard to the violent ‘masculine’ behaviours that hunting perpetuates. Hunting practices are clearly gendered, as men are far more likely to be hunters than women, and hunting practices are also imbued with constructions of ‘masculine’ behaviours. The following section will explore how notions of gender, hunting, and ‘nature’ intersect.

**Nature, Gender, and Hunting**

In common usage, nature is frequently constructed as ‘feminine’, as popular terms such as ‘mother earth’ illustrate (Seager 1994). A framework that intrinsically links women with ‘nature’, and men with ‘culture’, is problematic because of its essentialist and dualist assumptions. “Dualistic ecofeminists” in particular, (such as: Adams 1995; Kheel 1995; Collard 1988), construct men in a binary morphology in which they sit in opposition to ‘nature’, and at the same time nature is linked intrinsically with women. Within this model, the outcome of patriarchy is domination and violence against both nature and women, because they are so intimately connected (New 1996: 83).

This dualist and essentialist gender framework has its roots in Sherry Ortner’s (1974) classic essay, in which she argues that the universality of female subordination can be explained by the similarly universal connection between the (inferior) female with (inferior) nature, and the (superior) male to (superior) culture:

My thesis is that woman is being identified with - or, if you will, seems to be a symbol of - something that every culture devalues, something that every culture defines as being of a lower order of existence than itself. Now it seems that there is only one thing that would fit that description, and that is ‘nature’ in the most generalized sense (Ortner 1974: 25).
In the three decades since this essay, Ortner’s ideas have been criticized19 (see, for example, MacCormack 1980), particularly because of the way she cross-culturally generalises conceptions of woman and nature. After undertaking some field research, problems immediately arose for me in terms of a theoretical model that posited inferior female/nature as a binary construct to a superior male/culture because the attributes that duck hunters link with ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ are the very opposite of this model. As will be discussed fully in Chapter 4, the male duck hunters associate many of their activities with ‘getting back to nature’ - a realm they portray as ‘natural’ and free from the artifice of ‘culture’, and thus both desirable and liberating. ‘Nature’, for many of them, is a place associated with a ‘real masculinity’ – unfettered by artificial (feminine?) civilization. Clearly, in the context of this research, theorising gender and hunting requires moving beyond the classic Ortner thesis.

It is also clear that hunting is a central theme in many discussions of ‘nature’ and gender. The widespread participation of men – and women’s general lack of participation – in hunting activities, is still understood by many people as a crucial model for understanding gender differences. An activity such as duck hunting, in which participation is so clearly linked to gender, raises the problem of how to explain this extreme imbalance. The low numbers of women who are involved in duck hunting (as in all other types of hunting) leads many people to suppose that biology must be the explanation for this difference. Others suggest that socialisation is the key to why women are so rarely hunters. The ‘nature’ versus ‘nurture’ debate in relation to gender has been the focus of an enormous body of literature developed over the past two decades since the second-wave feminist movement. Under particular criticism has been the idea that ‘sex’ determines ‘gender’ and that gender identity can be explained away as chromosomes and hormones (Connell 1995, 2002).

Some anthropologists, however, have argued for essentialist notions of gender, as can be seen in Gilmore’s (1990) analysis of “manhood and the hunt”. Gilmore contends that, to become a man, acts of extraordinary courage must be performed. Hunting (as carried out by men) is seen as one way in which those courageous performances manifest in both ‘primitive’ cultures and ‘modern’ societies:

At the primitive level, but not only at that level, hunting is the primary means of extracting value from nature by literally transforming wild animals into food. Because it is dangerous and risky, and because it supplies needed protein, hunting is the provisioning function par excellence. It is a necessary condition of subsistence that falls upon the shoulders of men, who are anatomically better suited to it than women and who, unburdened by pregnancy and nursing, have the necessary mobility (Gilmore 1990: 114).

Gilmore reproduces in his argument the central thesis of Washburn and Lancaster’s (1968) influential essay *The Evolution of Hunting*, in which human evolution is intrinsically linked with hunting and the sexual division of labour. What is of most interest to this current research is how the myth of ‘Man the Hunter’ became, and to a great extent still is, such a powerful narrative in Western societies. A recent article by a New Zealand journalist illustrates how biological essentialist arguments around the ‘man the hunter’ narrative are still being circulated:

Testosterone affects verbal ability and mental focus. When men were hunters, they didn’t require a large vocabulary to club small animals, whereas cave women would have found it hell to organise coffee mornings without a knack for talking. Similarly, men gained by having a one-track mind in pursuing the evening dinner and women benefited from being able to decipher runes while stirring gravy and supervising homework (*New Zealand Listener* 2004: 38).

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20 The history of the ‘Hunting Hypothesis’ is outside the scope of this thesis. For a detailed outline of the influence of Sherwood Washburn and the development of the hunting paradigm in human evolution see Haraway (1989).

21 Arguments around the degree of significance that hormone testosterone has in biologically determining gendered behaviour are highly contested and inconclusive despite the continued popular proliferation of ideas around the concept that “women are from Venus, and men are from Mars”, which this article purports. There is evidence that challenges the notion that hormones are the main determinant of gendered behaviour (Bateson and Martin 2000, Clare 2000, and Rose 2000).
In regard to this notion of a sexual division of labour, Mary Stange (1997) observes that: “Man the Hunter and Women the Gatherer are curiously alive and well, and still exerting a powerful mythic influence” (Stange 1997: 50). The reason for its enduring popularity, Stange argues, lies in the power of applying an historical account of humanity to the contemporary world: “In our beginning is our end. Stories of origins are so consistently compelling precisely because the past is an ideal screen onto which to project present realities” (Stange 1997: 21). The dominant gender discourses that prevail in the contemporary Western world are therefore seen as both the natural and necessary outcome of evolutionary forces.

This evolutionary projection of ‘Man the Hunter’ onto the contemporary sexual division of labour promotes and legitimises the notion that men inhabit the wider world, whereas women are responsible to a domestic sphere. This model is not only connected to supposedly different inherent behaviours between the sexes, but also to a separation between how men and women internalise and understand spatially. In *The Hunting Hypothesis* (1976), Robert Ardrey claims:

> What we can guess, with fair authority, was that the male, viewing from a hilltop the Texas-like space of Africa, saw it one way; the female, viewing the antics of her children in a quite different geographical perspective, saw it another (Ardrey 1976: 118).

Perhaps an argument could be made that men and women experience ‘nature’ differently, therefore producing different attitudes towards what is acceptable behaviour towards wild animals. Michael Bell (1998) argues that while overall men and women in Western societies experience the environment or ‘nature’ similarly, perhaps some patriarchal stereotypes do influence men and women’s understandings of nature. In his ethnographic study of a British village, Bell found that some women related stories about nature with a ‘nurturing’ component to them, whereas none of the village men did (Bell 1998: 169).
Associations have also been drawn directly between hunting and killing animals, and rape and sexual violence against women (Collard 1988, Williams 1995, Luke 1998). Most literature that depicts hunting activities as expressions of perverted sexual desire, does not involve any direct research with hunters or hunting communities, but rather relies on literature from the hunting fraternity. This can easily be taken out of context or present marginal hunting viewpoints as the majority view of hunting groups. Luke (1998) suggests that hunters in general perpetuate a kind of sexualised desire to possess animals (which he implies is not really 'love'), and presents a quotation from an American duck hunter to demonstrate how this desire perpetuates in a drive to kill for seemingly irrational or trivial reasons:

There is no incongruity in describing the disposition to shoot wild animals to death as loving, if one correctly understands the vocabulary being used. "Love" here simply means the desire to possess those creatures who interest or excite the hunter. Taking possession typically entails killing the animal, eating the flesh and mounting the head or the entire body. The identification between "loving" and possessing by killing and mounting is made in the following hunter's comments regarding two ducks he shot and stuffed: "'I saw these mountain ducks and fell in love with them,' says Paul, the tone of his voice matching the expression he wears...of most tender regard for something precious. "I just had to have a pair of them" " (Luke 1998: 629).

Connecting statements made by hunters, such as 'loving' the animals that they kill, with sexual predation is perhaps a far too simplistic interpretation of hunting that does not take into account wider ethical discourses that are expressed by hunters. One American hunter does not deny that there are 'sexual' aspects to hunting but also argues that he hunts for a wide variety of reasons:

A lot of deep thinkers claim that hunting is largely a sexual thing. I won't or can't argue that. I tend pretty much to agree, but hunting has more than sexual undertones (Hill 1972: 96).
It seems premature therefore, to explain hunting purely in ‘Freudian’ terms. Importantly, this literature also seems to ignore those women who hunt, unless they too are dismissed as mindlessly reproducing violent and predatory ‘masculine’ values. Therefore, this raises the question: within hunting discourse does ‘love’ of animals, always “simply mean the desire to possess”, as Luke (1998) argues above?

Some ecofeminist critics of hunting also see males as essentially violent and destructive, but also ground this perception in dualist conceptions of masculine and feminine roles; with ‘masculine’ domination and destruction sitting in counter position to ‘feminine’ nurturing and essential gentleness (see for example Kheel 1995). However, as a woman who hunts, Stange (1997) disputes that women are essentially nonviolent and seeks to reject stereotypes of ‘appropriate’ gender roles for both women and men. She argues:

In hunting, the dual functions of giving and taking life are fused; hence the frequent comparison of hunting to childbirth, and the complex symbols and rituals attached to Artemis. Male hunters can, if they choose, downplay the “feminine” side of things, but in this regard women – if they are being honest with themselves, anyway – cannot. Blood is a fact of female life, a continual reminder of our rootedness in the life-death-life process. By virtue of the interplay of biological identity and socially imposed role, the manifold implications of killing in order to live are for women necessarily very close to the surface of consciousness (Stange 1997 188).

While this research will not primarily focus on female duck hunters’ experiences (for reasons explained in Chapter 2), women who hunt (and kill) present fascinating areas for further research as they, like the ‘nurturing’ male hunter, appear to contradict the dominant gender order. It is clear, however, that constructions of gender and gendered practices are intrinsically linked to hunting, and to wider notions of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’.
The preceding sections of this chapter brings us to an important claim: studies of hunting are clearly a most useful way to investigate human-animal relationships, ideas of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, the ethics of killing and eating animals, and where gender intersects with these ideas. The following section will review prior studies of hunting in Western societies and ask why so few of these studies have been undertaken.

1.3 Research on Hunting

Hunting activities outside of subsistence cultures/societies are poorly understood. Hunting in traditional ‘hunter/gatherer’ societies is always presented in a cultural context, embedded in the social customs and beliefs of the people. An article from the *Dominion* newspaper (see Figure 3 below) exemplifies this by emphasising the ‘spiritual’ component of Maori bird hunting in relation to the kereru (native pigeon), for example claiming that: “from the knee of their elders they learnt about the bird and a strong spiritual relationship was built up” (*Dominion* 1991: 8). The writer of this column then draws an analogy between the last meal of kereru consumed by a dying Maori elder with the “taking of communion in a church or last rites”. Motivations for duck hunting, however, seem to be far more perplexing: “the reasons for ‘game bird’ hunting – other than for food – is obscure” (*Dominion* 1991: 8).

While the writer then goes on to say that some books do suggest some reasons for game bird hunting, such as: “being out to watch the sunrise, the companionship of other hunters and retriever dogs, excitement, ‘spine-tingling experiences’, and the challenge and the thrill” (*Dominion* 1991: 8), these motivations do not seem to explain this activity convincingly.
Outlook

specialy compiled for use as a classroom resource

A confrontation over wildlife

Today's Outlook is the third in a series which aims to show how the adult human world places values on animals. The information and activities lead students on to further research about animals.

Recently three cases in one year have been in the New Zealand Press involving species and their rights. Anoraki is the latest.

During the past two seasons the Hokitika District Council have been asked to make their predator control programme require hunters to ship in the heads of any bird that they have killed. The council's intention is to prevent the continued hunting of birds which is causing concern during the activity season. The public are concerned about the continued killing of birds and they have been the angry confrontation.

The current proposal is that the anti-hunting lobby is pushing, which is backed by many of the public and those concerned in the welfare of birds. They want the act to be changed to suit their views. However, the public are not convinced and they want the birds to continue to be killed.

As the anti-hunting lobby is pushing, the public are concerned with the killing of birds. The council's intention is to prevent the continued killing of birds and they have been the angry confrontation.

Do not proceed unless the council has been convinced with their views and the public are convinced with the public's views.

Let's follow up...

What is your opinion of this confrontation between humans and birds?

Discuss the issues with your classmates.

spirational link with kereru

This association between Maori and kereru predates Maori days. People have used the kereru as a symbol of protection and they have been a source of inspiration for Maori. The kereru is a bird that is associated with Maori culture and it is used as a symbol of protection.

Birds fair game to the settlers

The introduction of the European black swan to New Zealand in 1869 allowed the introduction of ducks for food. The Maori used ducks for food and they also hunted them for sport. The ducks were a source of food and they were also used as a symbol of protection.

Settlers to the country brought hunting sporting attitudes with them.

In Britain, hunting and shooting was reserved for the wealthy, who employed gamekeepers, and preserves were managed in order to maintain the supply of game. However, in New Zealand hunting and shooting were introduced to make the country a hunting paradise for wealthy landowners. The hunting and shooting were managed in order to maintain the supply of game.

It is important to remember that the introduction of ducks to New Zealand was a cultural change that had a significant impact on the Maori. The introduction of ducks changed the way that the Maori viewed the natural world and it changed the way that they lived.

Let's follow up...

WHAT is your opinion of this introduction of ducks to New Zealand?

Discuss the issues with your classmates.

FIGURE 3, "Confrontation Over Wildlife" (Source: Dominion 19/1, 16 July 8)
The article concludes, rather dismissively, that: "generally, the activity comes under the heading of 'sport' and 'recreation' and is far removed from the necessity of killing for food" (Dominion 1991: 8). What is important here is that even the subsistence hunting of traditional societies is seen as carrying far more significance than just killing for 'necessity'. Hunting in industrialised societies, however, tends to be reduced to an activity carried out for 'sport' or 'fun', rendering invisible any wider cultural or social relevance.

Rural Sociologist Thomas Heberlein (1987) notes that over the past two decades there has been an increasing interest in hunting in industrialised societies. Wildlife biologists were responsible for the earliest studies of hunters, but more recently various other disciplines such as psychology, sociology and geography have also applied their particular theories and research approaches to hunting in the Western world. Despite this growing interest, however, there is still relatively little known about the American hunter (Heberlein 1987), while internationally, hunting in Western societies is only now receiving more attention. One important exception to this is academic attention towards hunting and its connection to class issues in the United Kingdom, particularly in regard to fox hunting (for example, Thomas 1983; Bell 1994; Woods 2000, and Milbourne 2003). In contrast, in New Zealand, duck hunting and other types of hunting have been largely ignored within the social sciences.

Within anthropology, much ethnographic research has focused on hunting in non-Western societies. The hunting activities of 'hunter/gatherers' are often portrayed as vitally significant in the social and cultural lives of the people and analysis of

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22An area of specialization within the discipline of wildlife biology is that of Game Biology. The International Congress of Game Biologists meets biennially and the papers presented incorporate a certain amount of research into the social practices of different types of hunting within different societies. See for example Harradine (1991) on the British hunting community, and Schwenk (1991) on changes in German hunting.

23Fish and Game New Zealand has organized some social science research using their own staff as well as independent research organisations (see for example Brocklesby, Shaw, & Hewitt 1995). This has tended to be based on telephone surveys with some use of focus groups. This research has also been generated around specific issues relating to the management of gamebird hunting.
hunting used both to highlight how different societies are structured and to reveal the symbolic world of these peoples. This bias in anthropology can be attributed to the traditional interest in the 'exotic other'. While this is now a thoroughly debunked and criticised aspect of ethnography (see for example Rosaldo 1993), as I will argue further in Chapter 2, doing anthropology 'at home' still does not have quite the same prestige or legitimacy as studying non-Western or smaller-scale societies. Perhaps this bias has discouraged research on hunting in 'modern' societies. Perhaps also, hunting in industrialised societies is perceived as a marginal recreational activity practiced by only a small proportion of the population and therefore of little significance in terms of wider social trends. Garry Marvin (2002) also argues that because hunting practices in the contemporary Western world are regarded as "morally unacceptable practices", this is a likely reason for a lack of attention from academia (Marvin 2002: 139).

Those few social anthropologists who have carried out in depth ethnographic research on hunting, such as Heidi Dahles’ (1988, 1993) study of hunters in the Netherlands, and Stuart Marks’ (1991) research into the place of hunting in the southern United States - are excellent examples of what an excitingly insightful area of anthropological inquiry this type of research can offer. In her ethnography of the place of animals in the Scottish Borders (which includes examples of hunting), Kaoru Fukuda (1997, 1999) illustrates the heterogeneity of moral discourses in regard to the treatment of animals. Fukuda argues the importance of considering both broad shared social values, and individuals’ practical experiences of animals, which, in combination, produce varying constructions of appropriate ‘moral’ values towards animals.

Research from a few sociologists also provides tantalizing glimpses of contemporary hunting practices in industrialised societies. Jan Dizard’s (1994) focus on deer hunting in the Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts, Garry Marvin’s (2001, 2002) research on fox hunting and the complex relationship between the animals
and people involved in this activity, together with Franklin’s (1996, 1999) study of
hunters and anglers in Australia, all highlight the tensions and contested ‘natures’
that lie between hunting practices and the attitudes of the wider non-hunting
public. Comparative insights from all these studies will be used throughout the
following narrative of duck hunting in New Zealand.

1.4 The Structure of the Thesis
This thesis uses duck hunting to exemplify the interpenetration of nature and
culture. I will argue that such a sense of interconnectedness challenges the dualistic
notion of nature and culture as sharply distinct arenas. The world of the duck
hunter is a hybrid one, actively engaging with ‘nature’ rather than passively
observing it. Duck hunters manipulate and impact on ‘natural’ spaces with their
human bodies, ‘artificial’ buildings, paraphernalia, and technologies. These
‘cultural’ components, which are intrinsic to New Zealand duck hunting practices,
are not compatible with the dominant discourses of nature in contemporary
Western societies, where nature is increasingly constructed as ‘wild’, non-human,
and ‘naturally’ ordered. Duck hunters disturb this image with their noisy guns and
disruptive and overtly ‘masculine’ activities. Consequently, they are under
increasing pressure from anti-hunting groups who have fundamentally different
ideas about how ‘nature’ and animals should be consumed (both literally and
figuratively).

In agreement with Franklin (2000), I see hunting as important because it is an
example of the everyday nature experiences of people such as “hunters, anglers,
dog walkers, birdwatchers, walkers, and so on”, and it incorporates far broader
sensual experience of nature than ‘just looking’. These ‘natures’ are:

not mundane, sullied or reduced but fully formed around the actions of
people and the industries in specific environments and communities of
their own. Theirs is a nature in which humanity is included (Franklin 2000:
189).
The following chapters will extrapolate these ideas. Chapter 2 provides an outline of the research methodology used in this study, including some discussion as to why I chose an ethnographic research method for this research, along with an overview of the challenges that arise from doing anthropology 'at home' and studying a geographically 'unbounded' group such as duck hunters. This chapter also presents geographical information about southern New Zealand along with some background information on the regulatory framework that applies to duck hunting in New Zealand.

Chapter 3 discusses the historical background to duck hunting in New Zealand to provide some context as to how this 'tradition' has developed. New Zealand has strong social ties with Britain, and therefore it is important to consider how New Zealand duck hunting practices are connected to that heritage. In common with other settler states, such as Australia and the USA, hunting was introduced to New Zealand specifically to provide egalitarian hunting opportunities that would transcend the restrictive class hunting practices entrenched in British society. This historical chapter also considers the wildfowling practices of Maori before European contact, and examines how those practices were dramatically affected as Western values became imposed on them, illustrating that the egalitarian goals of the British settlers were actually not available to all.

Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive discussion of fieldwork observations that connect to the way duck hunting is practiced in southern New Zealand, with a particular focus on the issue of gender and gendered relations. Here I present information from participant observation and in-depth interviews to illustrate a variety of gendered 'performances' and practices, which are an intrinsic part of duck hunting in southern New Zealand. This includes ethnographic material on the physical space of the 'maimai'; the build-up to opening day; the 'rituals' of opening weekend, such as traditions relating to food and drink; and a discussion on the three key types of duck hunter and the variety of understandings of masculine
performances and identity that connect them to being a New Zealand man. This chapter also highlights the intersection between ideas of ‘nature’ and gender, which, often unconsciously, perpetuate ideals about how men and women should and should not behave in ‘nature’.

Chapter 5 is primarily concerned with the way in which killing ducks has become increasingly contested within animal rights and anti-hunting discourses. This chapter outlines the growing configuration of duck hunting within a framework of ethically questionable practices, and, in particular, the increasing construction of killing ducks as violent, destructive and without justification. Duck hunters have responded to this critique with a counter discourse that connects duck hunting practices to ‘natural’ and ‘competent’ (masculine) performances that are argued to be appropriate in ‘nature’. Killing ducks, however, is not a straightforward activity, and using interview and fieldwork material I will illustrate the ambiguous feelings that this activity provokes in duck hunters. This chapter also considers how the wider New Zealand population views the, once traditionally acceptable, use of firearms with increasing fear and unease. Duck hunters have responded by highlighting the utilitarian and pragmatic importance of firearms in the rural countryside, but express concern that urbanites’ increasing opposition to firearms use will affect the future of duck hunting.

Chapter 6 focuses on the complex relationships that duck hunters have with animals (specifically ducks and dogs), and with ‘natural’ wetland spaces/places. Through practices associated with duck hunting, such as duck calling, and the use of ‘gundogs’ to retrieve birds, duck hunters relate to ducks and dogs in varying and, sometimes apparently, contradictory ways. Duck hunters ‘talk’ to ducks, as well as shoot at ducks, and they also treat dogs as both family members and ‘working’ dogs. It is clear from the material presented in this chapter that many duck hunters get a great deal of pleasure from these complex human-animal interactions. This chapter also examines how duck hunters build relationships with
'nature', by literally 'building' 'nature'. Pond-building on farms, and contributions, both practical and financial, to larger wetland areas is an enormously important aspect of contemporary New Zealand duck hunting. I will demonstrate that these activities have more significance for duck hunters than purely pragmatic hunting goals. Like the hybrid human/animal interactions between duck hunters and animals, 'nature-building' activities reveal the complex mesh of natures-cultures that are an intrinsic aspect of duck hunting practices in southern New Zealand.
Chapter 2
Research Setting and Methods

The claim to attention of an ethnographic account does not rest on the author’s ability to capture (primitive) facts in faraway places and carry them home like a mask or a carving, but on the degree to which [s]he is able to clarify what goes on in such places, to reduce the puzzlement – what manner of men [sic] are these?

- Clifford Geertz (1973: 16) The Interpretation of Cultures

Introduction
In the previous chapter I outlined how duck hunting activities suggest a useful focus for research in regard to human-animal relationships and the contested and complex understandings of ‘nature’ that circulate in contemporary Western industrialised societies. This chapter offers background information on the setting for this research in southern New Zealand, including details of the geographical
area where I undertook fieldwork. In this chapter, I also provide a discussion of my research methodology, explaining why I took an ethnographic approach, as well as outlining some of the challenges that presented themselves in the course of my research.

### 2.1 Southern New Zealand

The fieldwork component of my research mainly took place within an area that can broadly be described as ‘southern New Zealand’ (although I also interviewed two ‘high profile’ duck hunters in the North Island). Using my permanent residence in Dunedin as a base, my fieldwork involved excursions (varying from day visits to a week away) to various locations within the two regions of Southern New Zealand: Otago and Southland (see map - Figure 5 below).

New Zealand is a highly urbanised country and at the time of the 2001 census, 86 percent of the country’s resident population was living in urban areas, with a high percentage located in the North Island. In comparison to the Northern regions, however, Otago and Southland have relatively low resident populations with 181,542 and 91,005 respectively (Statistics New Zealand 2002: 98-101). These regions are closely associated with farming production as well as with important tracts of spectacular ‘wilderness’ scenery that attracts large numbers of tourist visitors.

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24 In 2001, 2,829,801 people were living in the North Island and 907,476 in the South Island. Nearly one third of the county’s entire population resides in Auckland, New Zealand’s largest city (Statistics New Zealand 2002: 97-99). The high proportion of ‘urban’ dwellers is mainly caused by the generally accepted definition in New Zealand of any settlement over 1000 people as ‘urban’. 
FIGURE 5. Map of Southern New Zealand
Even with the high degree of urbanisation in New Zealand – or in fact because of the predominance of urban living – a distinctive national character associated with an idealised ‘rural’ has a strong hold on the national psyche. Rural areas are often understood as places where remnants of the ‘real New Zealand’ survive: close-knit ‘gemeinschaft’ communities, made up of nuclear families, who work on the land with a special affiliation with ‘nature’. Social theory has largely dismissed a dichotomous framework that contrasts impersonal ‘gesellschaft’ relations in the city with the caring community ‘gemeinschaft’ experience of the country as misleading and romanticized. However, in common with other industrialised countries (see for example Michael Bell’s (1994) ethnography of a British country village), these ideal types still have a powerful hold in New Zealand society. This nostalgia relates to the notion of the ‘rural idyll’, which is historically connected to the rise of anti-industrial values and disillusionment with urban living during nineteenth century Britain (Lowe 1989: 115). Such values were exported to the colonies during the mid-1900s.

Claudia Bell (1993, 1996) emphasizes that this nostalgia about the rural landscape plays a particularly important role in pakeha25 cultural identity. Crucial to this research are the different ways that people understand their identity in relation to the New Zealand landscape and the ‘natural’ components associated with it. As we shall see, there appears to be a concern from within duck hunting that the urbanites’ vision of the countryside and rural life does not include hunting. Bryce Johnson, Director of Fish and Game New Zealand (the regulatory body that oversees sport fishing and game bird hunting) explains:

We also have a critical job to win over the major cities to support our sport. We only have to look at the United Kingdom where the cities have turned on the country sports (Fish and Game New Zealand 2001-2002: 5).

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25 Pakeha is a term used to describe non-Maori New Zealanders – usually of European descent.
Notions of masculinity and femininity are closely bound up with discourses of ‘rural’ New Zealand. In particular, the ‘Kiwi bloke’ has strong rural and mythic connections. The Kiwi bloke stereotype celebrates a ‘hard’ man closely affiliated with ‘the land’. He is a man of few words, who displays little emotion. He is very practical and creative in a tight situation (archetypally thought to be able to solve any problem with a ‘No. 8 wire’) and the most important relationships in his life are with his ‘mates’ (male friends) and his dog (Law, Campbell and Schick 1999). This image is strongly associated with New Zealand’s colonial history (Phillips 1996) and the wider notion of the ‘frontier man’, discussed further in Chapter 4. In recent times, southern New Zealand has been clearly linked with this rural masculine construct, largely due to an advertising campaign for beer that began in 1990 that portrays working men in Southland and Otago (Campbell, Law and Honeyfield 1999). This ‘Southern Man/Pride of the South’ campaign draws strong associations between the men in the advertisements and the landscapes of southern New Zealand; the men, like the land, are strong, ‘untamed’ and ‘natural’ (the background landscapes tend to be ‘unpretty’, stark and strong).

Southern New Zealand, therefore, is strongly associated with cultural and mythical rural imagery and popular ideas, has low population distribution, and is closely connected to the farming sector. With these factors in mind, I thought it likely that hunting in this part of New Zealand would be fairly popular. Research from American studies note that rural socialisation is a strong predictor of hunting participation (see for example Heberlein and Thomson 1991). Duck hunting, however, is not an activity that can be undertaken without following fairly strict regulations, which rather belies the ‘natural’ or traditional rural values associated with it. Fish and Game New Zealand is the agency responsible for managing duck hunting and enforcing these regulations, which is effected through twelve regional councils. These councils are statutory bodies established under the Conservation
Act with a mandate to protect and enhance the sports fish (trout and salmon) and game bird ‘resources’.  

2.2 What is ‘Duck Hunting’?
In common usage the term ‘duck hunting’ describes various activities that actually include shooting not only ducks, but several different water bird species. A more traditional term is ‘wildfowling’, although this is less commonly used today. It is very important to realise that ‘duck hunting’ is a term that cannot be understood purely as a description of a hunting activity: it also encapsulates broad and varied cultural activities associated with shooting water bird species.

Fish and Game New Zealand uses the term ‘game-bird hunting’, to incorporate two distinct activities: waterfowl and upland game hunting. Fish and Game provide a ‘game-bird licence’ which allow the licencee to hunt both upland and waterfowl species – within restricted bag limits and seasonal constraints – and these restrictions vary from region to region in New Zealand. Duck shooting or hunting waterfowl, is a very distinct pastime and has commonly identified social activities associated with it, whereas upland game is much less so. For example, unlike the opening of the upland game season, the opening weekend for duck hunting has enormous social significance attached to it, as we shall see. My research focused on the activities that revolve around the shooting of waterfowl (mainly ducks) although many participants also shoot upland game too. Those waterfowl species that can be hunted include various ducks: the Mallard Duck; Grey Duck; Shoveler Duck; and Paradise Duck; along with Black Swan; Canada Goose, and Pukeko (or Swamphen).

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26 The history of the Fish and Game councils, which up until 1990 were known as Acclimatization Societies, will be discussed in Chapter 3.
27 Upland game includes quail, pheasant and chukor. In some parts of the country wild peacocks and wild turkey are also hunted and Draper (1999) notes that American hunters are coming to New Zealand in increasing numbers to take part in spring turkey shoots (Draper 1999: 139).
Waterfowl hunting, as I have noted, is more commonly called 'duck hunting' and has a far higher profile in the wider community than upland gamebird hunting – for example in the four years of research I did not see any television coverage of upland game shooting except in specialised hunting programmes. Duck hunting, on the other hand, is always featured in news items in the week leading up to the start of the season and the opening weekend itself. I am unsure exactly why there is a higher interest in duck hunting, but there are several possibilities. It may relate to the longer season allowed for upland game, which means it lacks the "phrenetic aura" that surrounds duck hunting (Byrne 1990: 5). It is also probable that the ritual and 'culture' of opening morning has historically attracted attention and this has continued into the present time. It may also be that some duck hunting is carried out in very public wetland areas, rather than the more isolated countryside where upland game birds are often hunted. Finally, because duck hunting has become the focus of anti-hunting protests from the early 1990s on, this has also given it a higher profile in the New Zealand community.

Determining how many people in New Zealand go duck hunting is not a straightforward task. This is partly because the game-bird licence incorporates both duck and upland game birds. In addition, landowners hunting on their own land are not required to purchase a licence. Some allowance must also be made for those people who choose to hunt without a licence (who could be described in old fashioned terms as 'poachers'). Over the past few years Fish and Game has also been trialling 'Family Season Game Licences' in the South Island, which allows the whole family to hunt under the same licence. But the regional Fish and Game Councils carry out a great deal of research on hunter participation, closely monitoring waterfowl numbers and the impact of hunting on them (for example Caithness 1986; Brocklesby, Shaw, and Hewitt 1995), and carrying out national hunter surveys each year. For the past four years, the Fish and Game New Zealand website, has provided a figure of 34,500 gamebird hunting licences sold. A comprehensive survey carried out by Nugent (1992) estimated the number of
people going out gamebird hunting in 1988 to be between 50,000 and 60,000. Nugent’s research was based on a postal survey of 8639 licensed firearm owners in order to estimate the total number of people who hunted (all game species) in New Zealand in 1988. These estimates included a breakdown of which different animal and bird species were being hunted. Nugent (1992) surmises that 56,551 hunters shot game bird species and, of that number, 53,753 hunters shot ducks, 11,001 shot pukeko, 6,610 shot swan, and 6,466 hunted Canadian geese28 (Nugent 1992: 78).

As I have indicated, duck hunting is a highly regulated pastime. I shall outline some of the regulations here to provide an idea of the rules that sit alongside and, to an extent, shape the social component of duck hunting activities. Duck hunting is a seasonal event that starts on the first weekend in May and continues until the end of July. Outside those times it is illegal to shoot waterfowl.29 Each year the twelve regional Fish and Game Councils set out bag limits and regulations for the coming season. In the past there has been a great deal of variation between the councils, including sale of licences that were only valid in certain regions. In recent times, however, there has been a move to standardize regulations across the country. A standard season game bird licence can now be used in all Fish and Game regions, although the bag limits for each region still vary and are set according to the seasonal assessment of bird populations. The hours for shooting also vary slightly according to the region’s available light (for example shooting hours in Northland are from 6.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. but in Southland shooting commences at 7.00 a.m. and finishes at 6.30 p.m.). Hunters must carry their game bird licence with them when they are hunting: Fish and Game rangers check hunters are holding a licence on a random basis. These rangers are drawn from the 70 professional staff employed by the Fish and Game in the regional councils, and from approximately 500 volunteer rangers (Fish and Game New Zealand 2003).

28 The total number of hunters estimated to be involved in gamebird hunting is less than the sum of the individual bird species because most hunters shoot more than one species (Nugent 1992: 78).
29 There are some exceptions to this: Paradise ducks may also be shot during February in some regions, and in areas where Canada Geese populations are large there are often extended seasons and special hunting seasons allowed.
Many hunting stands or hides (commonly known as maimais) are built on public waters and the right to use these stands for a season is staked by attaching a claim tag provided with the game bird licence. It is still possible on any given day however, for any other licensed duck hunter to come in and use the stand if the claimant has not occupied it within one hour of the official start of hunting. Those people hunting on their own land do not need to attach a claim tag to their stand or maimai. Duck hunters are allowed to put food out for waterfowl (commonly called ‘feeding the pond’) for thirty days prior to the commencement of the season. Although not legally enforced, duck hunters are encouraged to used trained gundogs to ensure that shot birds can be retrieved quickly, and those that are wounded are killed as soon as possible to reduce suffering (Fish and Game New Zealand 2001-2002).

Only shotguns may be used in the taking of wildfowl and can only be legally used if the hunter has a current firearms licence. Duck hunters are required to use the appropriate sized shot (12 gauge or less) and Fish and Game is currently phasing in steel shot to replace lead shot, which is regarded as an environmental contaminant. It is illegal to shoot ducks sitting on the water. It is also an offence to shoot protected bird species and there are severe punishments for any individuals caught doing this.30

While helpful, this brief overview of regulations in relation to wildfowl hunting in New Zealand can only provide a very superficial idea of the statutory requirements placed on duck hunters, and does not offer any deeper insights as to the social and cultural practices, motivations, or attitudes that duck hunters hold in regard to their duck hunting activities. While it is possible to gather some information through telephone surveys and focus groups, duck hunting is a pastime that can usefully

30 Under the Wildlife Act any person found shooting a protected bird may be imprisoned for a six month period or be fined $100,000 (Fish and Game New Zealand: Game Bird Hunting Guide 2001-2002: 6).
explored through ethnographic research. Brewer (2000) provides a useful definition of ethnography, which fits with the approach I took to my ethnographic fieldwork:

Ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by methods of data collection which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally (Brewer 2000: 6)

Given that my aim at the start of this project was to better understand the social meanings and activities of duck hunters, I determined this could be best achieved through observing and participating in duck hunting activities (along with extended conversations and interviews with duck hunters and other people closely connected to this pastime). Duck hunting activities are sensual activities - and therefore to appreciate these physical and embodied aspects it was crucial that I participated "in the setting", in as many activities as I was able. In the following section, I will expand on this and other fieldwork issues.

2.3 Fieldwork Issues and Methods
In my introductory chapter I outlined a range of theoretical interests in hunting that suggest a strong need for a deeply engaged, qualitative approach to hunting. Consequently, an historically contextualised ethnography appeared the best available way of exploring hunting in New Zealand. Over the past three decades, social anthropology has undergone a period of intensive and critical self-examination with respect to its theory, its methods, and its uses. At the heart of this critique is the central paradigm of social anthropology: scientific ethnography (Grimshaw and Hart 1995: 46). Erosion of 'classic norms', such as the notion of a scientific and objective ethnographer (Rosaldo 1993), the challenge to the idea of 'culture' as a discrete whole (Pasquinelli 1996), and criticism of the historical complicity of anthropological research with imperialist agendas (for example Said 1979, 1983), has challenged ethnographic authority and resulted in a 'crisis of
representation' (Clifford 1988; Marcus and Fischer 1986, Denzin 1996). Although anthropology's traditional interest in the exotic 'other' has been soundly critiqued, debates still surround the legitimacy of insiders versus outsiders in ethnographic fieldwork. Embarking on ethnographic fieldwork at this time therefore, is exciting but challenging. Embracing a "reflexive approach"\(^{31}\) in anthropological fieldwork places the ethnographer 'in the picture' with the people being studied - a far more vulnerable position than the 'traditional', objective, scientific approach, in which the ethnographer's identity was obscured (Tedlock 2000: 465). Practicing ethnography today presents fundamental ethical and personal questions that must be resolved by the ethnographer, such as what biases the ethnographer brings to the project, and how the people in the research are to be represented. Whereas 'traditional' ethnography followed a fairly standard model of inquiry, the contemporary scene has exploded, with enormous variety and experimentation within ethnographic endeavors (Goodall Jr. 2000; Denzin & Lincoln 2003).

Given such a multitude of possible research methods, the approach I took to researching duck hunting in southern New Zealand was shaped by practical as well as philosophical reasons. In her introduction to an edited volume, Vered Amit (2000) notes the wide variety in contemporary ethnographic fieldwork and the importance of 'circumstance' in defining method:

To explore these 'fields', some of the contributors stayed put in one site for many months, others made short periodic visits to one or several sites, saw some informants daily, others very infrequently, still others balanced face-to-face interaction with email, letters and telephone calls. It is the circumstance which defined the method rather than the method defining the circumstance (Amit 2000: 11).

The fundamental question I wanted to address at the outset of my research was: why do duck hunters partake in, and presumably enjoy, activities that revolve

\(^{31}\) To be "reflexive": "implies a shift in our understanding of data and its collection – something that is accomplished through detachment, internal dialogue, and constant (and intensive) scrutiny of 'what I know' and 'how I know it'" (Hertz 1997: vii-viii).
around killing animals? My initial research goal was to study the conflicting views of duck hunters and animal rights activists - however, while I certainly address the tension between duck hunters and wider society in this thesis, I found that duck hunting in New Zealand society, particularly in the more rurally connected South, is not as contested as I had anticipated. I first envisaged that I would observe duck hunters and animal right activists as equally active participants (although motivated for very different reasons) in duck hunting occasions. Over the four years that I participated in the duck hunting season, however, there were no protests of any kind in the area where I was based and very few in other areas of the country. In order to tackle the question posed at the start of this paragraph, I decided, therefore, that I would keep my research centred on the world of the duck hunter. As far as protesting against duck hunting was concerned, I determined to concentrate on how duck hunters regard people who object strongly to an activity that the hunters obviously enjoyed.

As discussed in the previous chapter, this focus arose from my growing interest in human-animal relations and the ethical issues connected to them. I also recognized in myself the desire to engage in research with a group that I did not understand - and that I could see was not well understood by the wider New Zealand population. Certainly, one of my supervisors looked absolutely astonished when I first suggested duck hunting as my research topic, knowing as he did my previous research had centred on vegetarians - a group that I can claim to have a certain degree of ready-made 'insider' status. However, it was this very closeness to the topic that was one incentive to turn towards a more unfamiliar research area, and which related to my interest in understanding the different ways in which people understand their relationship with animals and 'nature'.

I do not think, however, that I qualify as a complete 'outsider' when it comes to duck hunting in New Zealand. Although I began with no personal experience of hunting of any kind, one of the aspects of doing 'anthropology at home' means
experiencing a kind of liminality between insider/outside statuses. Although I am neither duck hunter, nor from a family of duck hunters, I do share a common broad cultural and historical background with all my participants. Also, through my family history, I have some familiarity with rural settings because many of my childhood holidays were spent on relatives’ farms.

Being a novice to duck hunting does have some disadvantages. Had I already been integrated with a group of duck hunters I would probably have been less obvious as a ‘researcher’ while in the field. I would also have had easier access to certain hunting areas. Yet there are some advantages to being a non-recruit, as the novelty and newness of the experience presented what are probably mundane details to a seasoned duck hunter in sharp relief to me. In contrast, a researcher who was already completely familiar with duck hunting activities might struggle to ‘see’ aspects that were regular occurrences.

I was concerned that my gender might make it difficult for me to be accepted into what appeared to be a very male-orientated activity. I discovered, however, that overall most of the male duck hunters were happy to share aspects of their duck hunting with me, some communicating their ideas and insights in conversations, others welcoming me into their actual experiences and activities. In some respects too, the dynamics of a male researcher would not necessarily guarantee a closer rapport with participants, as for example, a male researcher going into male arenas is more likely to be considered a threat or competition – expected to ‘perform’ or display masculinity. While I am aware that my presence must have affected the dynamics of the fieldwork situations I observed and participated in, I think I presented a non-threatening, ‘eager to learn’ persona that generally put participants at ease. I was aware, however, that some of the participants had expectations (or even fantasies) about a female researcher in such a masculine arena. One example occurred when I was reunited with a group of men with whom I had spent a day out on a duck hunting expedition. The men had invited me to participate in the
plucking and preparation of the ducks and the social events that accompanied this, on the following day. When they came to collect me from my motel, one man who, due to work commitments, was unable to come out duck hunting on the previous day had joined the group. As I climbed into their vehicle, the new fellow looked me over very closely with a rather peculiar expression on his face. There was a great deal of laughter from the other men. They then explained that their friend had been told I was young and ‘hot’ and had turned up for the previous morning’s duck shooting in a ‘cammo’ mini-skirt and high heels. I almost felt I should apologise for the rather more mundane persona that I presented!

Undoubtedly, a male researcher would have produced a very different ethnographic account of duck hunting and have been privy to areas that I was excluded from. However, the perspective that I developed through this research is equally valid for those exact reasons. I saw, and was presented with, experiences and information that a man is unlikely to have encountered. I also think it is important to acknowledge that the gender of the researcher makes a difference to ethnographic research, whether the researcher be male or female. In stating this I am consciously rejecting the historical (but perhaps lingering) tendency in anthropology to see men’s ethnographic research as gender-neutral, and women’s as emotional and ‘tainted’ by reflexivity (Bell, Caplan & Wazir 1993).

**Challenges of studying an ‘unbounded’ group**

One of the major challenges I found in this research was studying a group of people who are not located in a bounded geographical area. Even though ‘traditional’ anthropology, with its emphasis on bounded and discrete cultures that could be impartially observed and studied (Rosaldo 1993), has been thoroughly rejected, carrying out ethnographic fieldwork in the contemporary world is still rather confusing, with few ‘rules’ to follow. There also still appears to be a higher degree of status accorded to anthropological research that incorporates ‘traditional’ elements, particularly in regard to the researcher travelling away from home and
into the ‘field’. Gupta and Ferguson (1997) argue that there is a ‘hierarchy of purity in field sites’:

After all, if ‘the field’ is most appropriately a place that is ‘not home’, then some places will necessarily be more ‘not home’ than others, and hence more appropriate, more ‘fieldlike’. All ethnographic research is thus done ‘in the field’, but some ‘fields’ are more equal than others – specifically those that are understood to be distant, exotic, and strange (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 13).

Alongside expectations of what constitutes a legitimate field, is an emphasis on immersion in that field. I found in the course of my research that I was also placing levels of legitimacy on the different field sites that I visited. Day trips with duck hunters who lived locally did not seem to qualify as ‘real’ anthropology to the same degree as those trips when I stayed overnight in other towns or on farms. And even with those periods of being ‘not home’, but away ‘in the field’, I still suffered from a feeling of never quite practicing ‘proper’ ethnographic fieldwork as I was not completely ‘immersed in the field’.

Virginia Caputo (2000) describes how she struggled with staying ‘at home’ to research gender in the lives of Canadian children. She felt that her research was viewed as being less ‘authentic’ than those colleagues who traveled away to carry out research and who “confidently called themselves ‘Latin Americanists’, Africanists and so on” (Caputo 2000: 24). In order to illustrate that her research constituted ‘real’ fieldwork, Caputo’s incorporated both an arrival and departure story into her ethnography. A charming aspect of her arrival story tells of a ‘traditional’ type of gift given to ethnographers going away from home to study in an unfamiliar environment. A close friend gave Caputo a shoebox of novels and treats: “The box sat on my bookshelf for the duration of my field research, a constant reminder of my continual departure and return from the field” (Caputo 2000: 24). In common with Caputo, I found myself continually moving between ‘home’ and ‘the field’ and at times it was impossible to know where ‘home’ ended
and 'the field' began. Even now, with four years of on-and-off fieldwork 'officially' ended, I still find myself looking for information or talking to people connected to duck hunting activities and need to remind myself that I am in the 'writing up phase' of the ethnographic process and no longer 'in the field'.

The main reason my research could not be an extended period of time in a discrete geographical area related to the very structure of duck hunting as an activity carried out by a very wide cross section of people, who do not all live together in the same location. Further, the activity is seasonal – from May to July – and within those months, lone individuals, or small groups, carry out duck hunting activities in an enormous variety of locations and at varying times. In light of this, there are many different ways that research could be approached. A more traditional ethnographic study could be undertaken by living with family who are very involved with duck hunting, during a number of hunting seasons, over several years. Although such methodology could elicit an in-depth study, because so little social research has been carried out with duck hunters, I rejected this approach in favour of spending time with a cross-section of individuals in a variety of different locations.

Whilst 'traditional' ethnography focuses on a group of people who live together in quite a clearly defined area, an ethnography of duck hunters in New Zealand (although a small country) presented a geographic challenge. I began my research with the decision to focus on Otago and Southland. This decision was reached initially for pragmatic reasons – I could travel to rural areas from my place of residence quickly and cheaply. When not engaged directly in fieldwork excursions, I was still in a position to keep in touch with relevant local activities that related to duck hunting in the Southern region. By narrowing my research area to Southern New Zealand I was able to gain at least some conception of the duck hunters in this areas in some depth. If I had attempted to carry out ethnographic research throughout New Zealand, I would have needed to move around a great deal,
spend very brief periods of time with participants, and therefore have no opportunity to have any sense of ‘immersion’ in the field.

As my research progressed, I came to recognize that there are, to a certain extent, regional differences in duck shooting practices in New Zealand. Although my research was not broad enough to provide a thorough-going comparison of all the regions in New Zealand, I was able to gain some in-depth information about Otago and Southland, and with the addition of interview material, make some generalizations about both the regional ‘flavours’ of duck shooting and some commonalities that could be seen as a national New Zealand ‘flavour’. As it turned out, Otago and Southland are particularly fascinating areas as they incorporate more traditional ‘heartland’ areas where duck hunting is still extremely popular. Southland, in particular, presented some important aspects to this research in that building ponds has become a very popular pastime (this will be discussed further in Chapter 6).

Ultimately I discovered that my methods for investigating duck hunting in New Zealand were very much shaped by a combination of practical issues that related to my personal circumstances and the particular challenges presented by the area that I wished to explore. These methods, however, seems to fit with the disciplinary understandings of the challenges and limitations of carrying out ethnographic research at this time.

Participants
As previously noted, ethnographic research on duck hunting and other forms of hunting activities in industrialised countries, has been extremely sparse, and, as far as I can ascertain, no ethnographic research has focused on wildfowl hunters. This lack of research on the social world of duck hunting is problematic. Although the lack offers broad opportunities in terms of possible research foci, there was very little information for me to contextualise my research or to engage in comparative analysis. Ethnographic research on female duck hunters was one of the areas I
thought would be important to study. I rejected making women the sole focus of
my research, however, when I realised how little is known about the cultural and
social practices of duck hunting in general. Similarly, I decided that limiting the
participants in this study to any particular ethnic or occupational background
would not be appropriate as, until some research focusing on the established
‘tradition’ of duck hunting was first carried out, there would be no way to situate
or compare specific minority groups who quite possibly challenge traditional duck
hunting practices.

As I sought participants and became more aware of the way duck hunting is
practiced in New Zealand, I realised that the majority of people represented are
males of European or ‘pakeha’ descent. Consequently, the majority of the
participants in this research are pakeha men. Although the attitudes and
experiences of duck hunters who identify themselves as Maori is an important area
to explore for several reasons, only two of the participants in my fieldwork identify
themselves as Maori. Their comments and experiences are an important part of this
research, but I cannot make any claims to representing Maori experiences or
attitudes towards contemporary duck hunting in New Zealand. In the following
chapter, I provide a brief background on the impact of European settlers on
traditional Maori wildfowling practices, but more specific research on Maori
experiences in relation to duck hunting is outside the scope of this ethnographic
research. It remains an important area for future research.

Recruiting participants was carried out through various means. For the tape-
recorded interviews, I consulted both the Dunedin and Southland Fish and Game
Offices for the names of several dedicated duck shooters. I also relied on the
snowballing method, which elicited so many contacts that I was able to choose a
fairly representative sample in terms of age and socioeconomic status. I attempted
to get participants who representative a broad range of ages (the youngest
participant is in his mid-teens, and the oldest is in his eighties), and a wide variety
of employment situations. In terms of gender, I only spoke to a few shooters who were female, but this reflects the low percentage of women involved in hunting in general. I did, however, include some women who were partners and children of duck shooters to try and ascertain how this activity impacts on them. It is indicative of how popular and cross-occupational duck shooting is in this part of New Zealand that when I struck up a conversation about my research with a doctor, hairdresser, dentist, wine shop attendant, university lecturer, librarian, mechanic, checkout operator, engineer, cleaner, architect, and several taxi drivers - all made offers of putting me in touch with someone they knew who was a 'keen' duck shooter.

As previously noted, Southland and Otago have a relatively low population base and some participants have a high profile within the duck hunting community. In order to maintain anonymity for the participants, I have used pseudonyms throughout. Many of the participants in this research regarded the issue of anonymity as rather unnecessary - telling me they had 'nothing to hide' in regard to duck hunting. However, in line with the ethical guidelines laid down by the University of Otago, and in order to protect participants from any possible malicious reaction to their contribution to this research, I have made every effort to ensure anonymity.

**Interviews**

Over a three-year period I conducted forty in-depth interviews that lasted between 60 to 120 minutes. Most of these interviews were tape-recorded (although three participants requested that I take notes rather than tape their responses) and then transcribed for analysis. Those participants who agreed to the interview were provided with information sheets and asked to sign a consent form. Although these interviews were 'formal' in the sense that they were recorded and followed ethical requirements, I did not follow a formal interview structure with set questions that were the same for each participant. Rather, I had a list of possible questions that I
used as a guide but kept the interview open-ended to facilitate the interests and areas that were important to the individual participants (see Appendix A).

Subsequent to these interviews, and after some initial analysis of the material contained within the transcripts, I re-contacted some individuals to clarify or expand on some of the points of discussion in the interview (see Table 1 below for a summary of participants). As noted, I have used pseudonyms for all participants. I have also only identified the regional location where they live. Other personal details have also been kept deliberately broad. In respect to the age of participants I have only indicated the decade of their birth, and employment information is indicative of a general area rather than specific job titles. All the participants that I interviewed were offered the opportunity to review their interview transcript (although some declined this offer) to check for any errors in transcribing or to alert me to any content they were uncomfortable with being used in the thesis.

**Participant Observation**

An important component of my research was observing and participating in various duck hunting activities. I was invited on eight duck shooting expeditions and was fortunate to experience these in a variety of settings (sitting in maimais on farm ponds, 'stalking' along riverbanks, and taking a boat to lakeside maimais). As well as observing duck shooting, I also participated in some after-shooting social activities; assisted in plucking, gutting and preparing ducks for the freezer; attended clay bird club meetings; participated in a gundog club meeting; and attended two 'duck calling competitions'. In the course of my involvement in these activities I also spoke to approximately forty other individuals and put any comments of interest that they made into my field notes. These social, interactive, and 'embodied' components of the research made a critical contribution to my understanding of the appeal and meaningful experiences that duck hunters associate with shooting ducks.
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Key: dh = duck hunter; fdh = former duck hunter; ndh = non duck hunter; 
w = wildfowler (does not use shotgun)

TABLE 1. Background Information about Transcribed Interview Participants
Data Analysis

After the first two years of interviews and fieldwork I began to code the collected data in terms of various themes that were emerging. Once the bulk of my interviewing was completed I used ATLAS (a qualitative software tool) to organise my data under what I identified as the salient conceptual categories. Using a comparative analysis of my data, I then inductively constructed a theoretical framework for my ethnography. The tape-recorded interviews were a valuable resource that complemented the notes that I made after interviews and fieldwork. It was also important to me to present within this research the actual words of the participants. Even though I retained complete control over the framing of this data, by incorporating sections of interview transcript the participants – to a certain degree – are able to speak directly to the reader in their own words.

In saying this, however, I raise a contentious issue and draw attention to the question: whose representations are presented in this research? I have made it clear that I am situated within the research narrative and am not an ‘objective’ outsider. By placing myself within the research setting I am attempting to render transparent the processes through which this ethnography evolved: in doing so, I accept that this is my ethnographic account (or ‘fiction’) – and not an objective truth (James, Hockey & Dawson 1997: 12). Having declared this, however, I have endeavored to ensure that the experiences, motivations, and meanings that duck hunters expressed to me through my fieldwork and interviews are represented as faithfully possible – while recognising the biases and personal history that I cannot avoid bringing to this research project. I did feel, as the research progressed, that some of the participants were depending on me to put their viewpoints in a sympathetic manner to a public who are less than appreciative of their activities. While not seeking to take on the role of apologist for duck hunting, I have endeavored to faithfully report the participants’ points of view, as I see this as one of the fundamental responsibilities of the ethnographer.
Literature Review and Archival Research

I argued in my first chapter, that appreciating the historical setting and changes in social attitudes around nature/culture, human-animal relations, and gender, is crucial for understanding how hunting is constructed in the contemporary setting. Consequently, I carried out historical research to trace changes in wildfowl shooting in New Zealand during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by reviewing a variety of written material from both contemporary and historical sources. These texts included popular hunting literature in books and magazines, academic articles and research, and archival information such as newspaper articles and historical documents. I also spent four years highly sensitised to the mention of duck shooting in the society in which I live, and therefore collected relevant newspaper and magazine articles, along with recordings from television and radio programs that related to duck hunting. This general media information is incorporated into my research.

Conclusion

The ethnographic account presented here does not claim to provide the definitive work on duck hunting in southern New Zealand. Even in the limited geographic area of this research there remains enormous variety in practice and attitudes that make up this activity. As I have suggested, immense challenges exist in studying ‘unbounded groups’ and carrying out ‘multi-sited fieldwork’ (Marcus 1998). While I have tried to capture some of the similarities in the duck hunting milieu that allows a conception of an overall duck hunting ‘culture’ in New Zealand, the individuals who participated in this research provide very personal stories about their experience of duck hunting. My main goal was to try to attain some understanding for myself as to why some individuals enjoy duck hunting, and to then present my understandings in such a way that other people who are unfamiliar with duck hunting may also gain some insights as well. To try – as Geertz (1973) explains of the key role of an ethnographic account (in the opening quotation to this chapter) – “to reduce the puzzlement” as to “what manner of” people are duck hunters.
In order to understand the contemporary duck hunting situation, however, it is important to consider the historical processes that lie behind the development of the attitudes and practices associated with duck hunting. The following chapter sketches an historical overview of the factors that contributed to the development of duck hunting into the ‘tradition’ that is practiced in contemporary New Zealand.
Chapter 3

A History of Wildfowling and the Development of a New Zealand Duck Hunting 'Tradition'

Introduction: "One of the Great Rural Traditions"

In an article written for Metro magazine, Jon Gadsby, a well-known New Zealand comedic actor and satirist, nostalgically recalls duck hunting in his childhood. This article seems rather incongruous given that Metro is aimed primarily at the urban readers of a large metropolitan city of approximately 1.5 million people. Indeed, the magazine's catchphrase is "Essentially Auckland", while duck hunting is not an activity normally associated with a city lifestyle. Rather, it is an 'essentially' rural activity - associated with 'traditional' New Zealand rural life - as this quotation from an outdoors supplier demonstrates: "the duck season, especially opening weekend, is a huge tradition, once a rural tradition - in fact one of the great rural traditions" (cited in Gadsby, 2000: 105).
Gadsby identifies certain aspects that are important to this rural tradition, and which I recognize as features common to the duck hunting activities I have observed. Gadsby discusses these elements as he recalls when, as an eleven year old living in Southland, his father took him duck hunting for the first time:

Opening morning for me was like Christmas, Easter and a birthday all rolled into one. Dad and I would be up, long before the freezing Invercargill\textsuperscript{32} dawn, and multi-layering ourselves in all sorts of peculiar clothing. There were flasks of coffee to prepare and bacon sandwiches to be made. (For some reason, bacon sandwiches were always part of the mix.) Then it was off into the inky darkness, knowing that the only other headlights on the road were those of shift workers, insomniac milkmen or fellow duck shooters. And it didn’t just happen overnight. Months of careful planning went into the magic first Saturday in May. First there was the spot to identify and secure. Good places in swamps and on river bends were difficult to come by. A place on an established pond or lake took contacts, and good ones, preferably tracing back to the last ice age. Then there was the highly creative process of building a hide, or maimai (Gadsby 2000: 100).

Gadsby’s (2000) article is useful because it provides an overall image of duck hunting activities in New Zealand recognizable to both hunters and non-hunters alike. From Gadsby we learn that the opening morning of duck hunting is associated with darkness and the cold. He remarks about childlike excitement similar to feelings linked to Christmas or Easter. He explains that food and drink are important – bacon sandwiches seemingly an essential addition to the duck hunting experience. He also mentions building a hunting hide, while noting this hide is called a maimai in New Zealand. Finally, we get a hint that this is predominantly men’s business, as Gadsby and his father make their preparations without any female contribution.

But how and when did the features of contemporary duck hunting in New Zealand become established? Gadsby’s (2000) article does not provide any historical background to this ‘tradition’ and there is no mention whatsoever of indigenous

\textsuperscript{32} Invercargill is New Zealand’s most southern city. See Chapter 2 for a map of New Zealand.
duck hunting. Is this because the current scene is dominated by a European tradition, or are there other historical influences?

Tracing the historical development of New Zealand’s duck hunting ‘tradition’, however, is rather difficult. There are no social histories devoted solely to wildfowlers, while most professional or academic studies focusing on hunters have come from wildlife biologists employed by the various organizations overseeing game bird hunting in this country. Some information can also be gleaned from books written by duck hunters themselves. These books are, in the main, aimed at duck hunting enthusiasts and are a fairly recent phenomenon, with the earliest dating back to 1961 and the majority published after 1972. Earlier sources for a social history include a range of newspaper and magazine articles that provide useful information about past trends and attitudes in regard to duck shooting in New Zealand.

Background research on Britain, USA, and even New Zealand’s closest neighbour, Australia, indicates that some aspects of the duck hunting practices found in New Zealand are unique to this country. Although duck hunters from other countries could identify aspects in common with their own hunting practices, there are social and practical features of New Zealand duck hunting that are quite specific to this nation. These aspects have developed because of New Zealand’s unique social history, physical landscape, and ecological conditions.

As noted above, Jon Gadsby’s article makes no mention of Maori duck hunting practices and, aside from the word ‘maimai’, contemporary duck hunting in New Zealand does not appear to have an indigenous flavour to it. (Even the origins of the word ‘maimai’ are debated; this will be discussed in more detail below.) This chapter aims to tease out the origins or contributory factors that have led to duck hunting as it is practiced in New Zealand today. This is not a comprehensive history but instead provides some context for the contemporary duck hunting
scene. The first section briefly outlines Maori duck hunting practices before the
time of the European settlers. This outline is followed by a contemporaneous
overview of duck hunting as it developed in England. I then go on to discuss the
aspects of duck hunting that British settlers brought with them to New Zealand,
and consider how these developed into the duck hunting practices seen today.

3.1 Maori Wildfowling in Pre-Colonial Times
The first human inhabitants of New Zealand were Polynesian voyagers who
arrived here approximately 1000 years ago. Although the time of their first arrival
and the exact location of their Pacific homeland is debated, archaeological evidence
indicates that modern Maori are derived from people from islands in north-eastern
Polynesia (Davidson 1984:1). Linguistic information has been used to suggest that
these first settlers came from Tahiti and Rarotonga or possibly the Marquesas.33
There has been much debate as to whether the arrival of the first immigrants to
New Zealand shores was accidental or the result of carefully planned journeys in
well-stocked waka (canoes), but the theory of planned emigration is now most
widely accepted (Leach 1984:53; King 2003: 33-37).

These original settlers came to a country in which no large mammalian land-
dwelling animals had evolved, but there was an enormous variety of bird life
including indigenous species of duck. New Zealand flora and fauna is unique.
Once part of an enormous southern continent known as Gondwanaland, New
Zealand has animals and plants similar to other southern lands, particularly those
in Australia and South America. After New Zealand separated from
Gondwanaland approximately sixty million years ago, however, many distinct
species evolved. In particular, the New Zealand ecosystem is unusual because of

33 It is interesting that Bruce Biggs, a New Zealand historian, suggests the proto-Polynesian word for duck
(toloa) can be used as a piece of linguistic evidence against a Marquesan homeland. Toloa continues to be the
word for duck in the Marquesas, but was redefined in Tahiti and Rarotonga to mean gannet. In New Zealand,
toloa has become the Maori word for albatross (Sinclair 1996:6).
the large, browsing birds that evolved to fill the niches usually taken by grazing mammals\textsuperscript{34} (McDowall 1994: 2-4).

Evidence suggests that early Polynesian settlers carried food items and technologies to New Zealand. They also carried animals on these journeys, although it is unknown exactly how many were introduced – only the Polynesian dog (\textit{kuri}) and rat (\textit{kiore}) survived and multiplied. Staple Polynesia crops were also brought to New Zealand, including the kumara (sweet potato), which became an important food source for those Maori living in the more northern regions of New Zealand. Polynesian horticulture was particularly successful in warmer, northern areas and therefore Maori groups living in those areas were less reliant on wild sources of food. In contrast, the small and scattered groups of Maori who lived in the south of the South Island were heavily dependent on hunting (particularly fowling), fishing, and gathering wild plant resources (Davidson 1984: 35 & 115: Anderson 1983, 1998).

Throughout Maori society birds were highly valued, not only as food, but for many other uses. Persons of high status had their cloaks embellished with feathers, and feathers were also used to decorate other personal items (such as herb sachets hung around the neck). Some evidence also suggests the importance of birds in traditional Maori medicine: \textit{Pukeko} feathers and \textit{kakapo} feathers were used to swab wounds, bird oil smeared on to assist healing, and the skin of birds such as the \textit{pukeko}, blue duck, or paradise ducks were used like ‘sticking plasters’ to cover wounds (Riley 2001).

The centrality of birds in Maori society is likewise reflected in the variety and richness of myths and customs associated with different bird species. Murdoch Riley (2001) provides a useful overview of the different knowledges and beliefs in

\textsuperscript{34} New Zealand has only two native mammals, which are both species of bat (Clark, 1949: 30).
relation to birds that developed after Maori came to New Zealand. He emphasizes the empathy that the people felt with the 'natural world':

For hundreds of years the Maori honed their birding skills here and wove a complex superstructure of myths and legends. They spoke of birds as persons, much as they did of most other things in the natural world...They were at one with nature when they entered a forest, because they accepted that everything there, whether man [sic], plant or bird, was descended from a common ancestor, Tane. They believed nothing had come into existence by mere chance, nor was anything truly inanimate in nature (Riley 2001: 7).

Moller (1999a) also notes that the traditional Maori worldview places humans beings in the natural world with similar status to birds and animals, all being: "subject to the same natural laws and processes of the environment". He argues that this conception of humans as "part of nature" and not separate from it is the most fundamental and important difference between Maori and pakeha philosophy (Moller 1999a: 4).

Information as to how Maori hunted duck and waterfowl species in the period prior to European contact, and the social practices and beliefs associated with these activities, is unclear. More information can be found on how Maori utilized forest birds through such techniques as snaring and spearing (see for example Elsdon Best's (1979 [1942] popular book, Forest Lore of the Maori). Waterfowl species may not be a specific focus because, unlike contemporary New Zealand duck hunting practices, the hunting of these birds was integrated within general subsistence activities. Some insight can be gained, however, from three different sources: archaeological studies that examine early food processing sites or middens; ethnological information gathered by early Europeans; and Maori oral histories. I have focused my research on pre-colonial Maori wildfowling practices, as much as possible, within Southern regions to link with the contemporary situation explored in my ethnographic study.
Archaeological Accounts of Maori wildfowling

As noted above, Southern Maori did not develop any significant horticultural food production but rather made use of seasonal animal and plant resources, and, to achieve this, were required to live fairly nomadic lives. There are very few places where settlement lasted long enough to leave behind sites of archaeological significance. In North Otago, however, Shag River Mouth offers a site used for many years by Maori, and this location has been the subject of extensive study by archaeologists. From 1987 to 1989 excavations directed by Atholl Anderson, Brian Allingham, and Ian Smith (1996) investigated faunal remains and artifacts from what appears to have been a permanent Maori village site (Anderson and Smith 1996: 1-10). Amongst this archaeological information are the remains of several species of small birds, including ducks.

In their chapter on small bird remains found at the Shag River Mouth site, Richard McGovern-Wilson, Fiona Kirk, and Ian Smith (1996) provide some limited evidence of duck utilisation. The authors note that there have been few published references to small bird remains despite the number of excavations at Shag Mouth since the early 1870s. Some early writers recognise the importance of the leg and wing bones of small birds for manufacturing implements such as spear points,35 while McGovern-Wilson et al argue that the diversity of bird species represented in the Shag Mouth excavations suggest small bird hunting of a “broad ranging nature”. Most of these species occur in small numbers, however, and the authors suggest that such bird hunting was probably an opportunistic activity, with only a few species specifically targeted by the small bird hunters (McGovern-Wilson, Kirk, & Smith 1996: 225-229). However, they also conclude:

35 The results of the study in this chapter give a total of 4747 small bird bones or fragments, with 49 bird species or subspecies identified. Five species dominate the assemblages (New Zealand Quail, White-capped Mollymawk, Blue Penguin, New Zealand Pigeon and Fairy Prion). The authors also list a second group of birds that were moderately well represented and within this group is the Grey Duck (Anas s. superciliosa), which represented 1.1% out of the total assemblages (McGovern-Wilson, Kirk, & Smith 1996:223).
While the magnitude of fowling at Shag Mouth... is substantially less than the estimated mammal or moa totals, it nonetheless represents food enough for between 40 and 65 people to have one average sized bird per week for 20 years (McGovern-Wilson et al 1996: 229).

This evidence suggests that wildfowl did make up a small part of the diet of southern Maori, even during the period when the large Moa species (Dinornithiformes) were available to them. During this period, when small birds were a minor part of the diet, the feathers these birds provided may have been just as important to Maori as their flesh (Hamel 2001: 20).

But evidence from different strata at the Shag River Mouth site, lends support to the idea that ducks became a more important food source as environmental conditions changed and availability of Moa diminished:

Although estuarine (bird) species were the least commonly exploited small bird resource throughout the prehistoric occupation, they did increase significantly in proportion from the lower layers to the upper layers, raising the possibility that there was an increase in the availability of this habitat (McGovern-Wilson et al 1996:234).

While in the early ‘archaic’ period South Island Maori were able to exploit several Moa species, due to intensive hunting and loss of habitat, the Moa was extinct by the fifteenth century (Anderson 1998:205). Maori living in southern New Zealand then had to rely on other bird species living in the forest and wetland areas. Atholl Anderson (1983) concludes that from c.1350 to c.1550 Maori had to cope with an increasing shortage of big game. Offshore fishing thus became an important activity, and Anderson also points to evidence of fowling at Ototara in North

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36 The environmental changes and resulting species extinctions wrought by the early Maori settlers to New Zealand are typical of all human societal groups when colonizing new environments (Anderson 2002:32). Initial periods of overexploitation, resulting in extinction or severely reduced populations of animals, are the result of both direct use by humans (through hunting or gathering) or from human impact on animals’ habitats (for example by deforestation) or the introduction of predator species by humans (in New Zealand, such animals as cats, rats and stoats). As the diminished animal and plant resources start to affect human groups, conservation measures become increasingly important. There is some evidence that pre-European contact, Maori increasingly put tapu restrictions in place to protect diminishing natural resources (Belich 1996).
Otago, dated to c.1500. This site indicates that a variety of both open country and coastal birds were being utilized, with ducks in particular apparently an important food source (Anderson 1983: 26).

The faunal remains of birds found in early archaeological sites such as Shag River Mouth, and Otarara provide evidence that southern Maori were utilising ducks as a resource, but provide no social information as to how fowling was practiced. There is no way of knowing which members of the Maori community went duck hunting (such as whether it was divided along gender lines), what rituals or beliefs were connected to duck hunting, or what techniques they used to catch the ducks. To gain some insight into the social dimensions of Maori waterfowling, ethnological evidence gathered by early Europeans can provide some ideas about duck hunting activities at the time of colonial and pre-colonial contact.

**Ethnological Accounts and Oral Histories of Maori Wildfowling**

Historian James Beattie (1994 {1920}) gathered information in the early part of the twentieth century in an attempt to record some of the Maori subsistence and cultural activities that he saw were being dramatically affected by the British colonists. Beattie includes a section on 'Bird-Catching' with a paragraph that deals specifically with duck hunting:

For these birds a *koromahanga* called a *paeke* was made and stretched across lagoons (*roto*). Pegs or stakes were put in water and held the snare at a height to catch birds’ heads as they swam along. The ducks caught were the *parera* (grey duck), *putangitangi* (paradise duck) and *parera-kowhio* (blue mountain duck). A small grey teal was also sometimes caught but it was very rare and he [Beattie’s ‘informant’] never heard its name mentioned. At the Otu lagoon *putangitangi* were formerly very numerous and when moulting was on the hunters would place snares round the shores and drive (*aru*) the moulting (*maunu*) birds into them (Beattie 1994 {1920}: 505).
In January 1844 Bishop Selwyn observed duck being caught by hand near Timaru. He describes the reaction his guides had when they saw Paradise ducks in moult on a small lagoon:

The natives immediately threw off their blankets and rushed into the water, which was shallow and about a furlong in length. After an animated chase of two hours...they captured eighteen, which formed a seasonable supply of food in this thinly inhabited country (Selwyn, cited in Anderson 1998: 143).

There is also evidence of very sophisticated operations that some Maori groups used to capture ducks. At a number of sites around New Zealand, Maori have constructed canal or ditch systems. These canals had a variety of possible uses, including both drainage and irrigation for horticulture as well as being a method of faunal harvesting (specifically eels and waterfowl). There has been some debate about the usage of these canal systems, but it is clear in some sites at least, that they were used for duck harvesting, quite possibly along with horticultural usages (Barber 1989).

A description from W. H. Skinner in 1912 provides a fascinating picture of how canals at Cloudy Bay in Marlborough were used as a highly efficient and well-managed method of catching wildfowl:

Another use (aside from eeling), and probably their principal one, was for the capture of the innumerable wild fowl that bred and frequented the lagoons inside the Cloudy Bay (Whanganui a Tam) “Boulder Bank” (Te Poko hitai). During the moulting season, which was for the Putanigitangi or Paradise duck the months of January, Feburary and March, the birds being unable to fly were easily taken by hand in the narrow water lanes and cross drives. When in this condition they were known as Maumi, or ‘flappers’. The parera or grey duck moulted in April and May, and were dealt with in the same way as the Paradise ducks. They were slowly herded up and driven into the catchments and there quietly sorted out. Each duck as it was caught was carefully felt-over, and if in good condition was appropriated for the larder, if in poor condition it was passed over and released (Skinner, cited in Brailsford 1981: 71).
More recently, Bill Axbey's (1994) *The Bird Hunters*, written primarily as a practical guide to improving duck hunting skills, includes a chapter on Maori bird hunting in both forested and wetland areas. Axbey refers to two well-known New Zealand historical figures who observed Maori duck hunting during the nineteenth century: William Colenso and Sir Walter Buller. Colenso came to New Zealand as a missionary-printer in 1834. He was also a keen botanist and spent much time exploring the North Island. Colenso wrote about Maori killing large numbers of Paradise ducks during the moult and observed that the ducks were rounded up by canoe and then killed with sticks. After cleaning, the birds were dried and then stored for future use, with their feathers being used for ornaments (Axbey 1994:37). Axbey also refers to a 1878 description by Buller, a journalist, barrister, and noted ornithologist. Buller wrote several books on New Zealand birds and it is possibly one of these that Axbey refers to. This description relates to the taking of grey duck although it is unclear in which location:

The preserves where the ducks bred were carefully guarded by *tapu* and from October to February no canoes were permitted on the lakes and no fires allowed in the vicinity. In the moult season (February and March) the birds were unable to fly through loss of quills (flight feathers), and at this time the closed season was removed and the population prepared for a duck hunting expedition. Men with dogs took cover in the scrub, women in canoes paddled out into the lake then jumped in the water and drove the ducks ashore. They were caught by the dogs on short leashes and killed by the Maoris [sic] biting their heads (Buller, cited in Axbey, 1994: 38).

In *The Welcome of Strangers: an Ethnohistory of Southern Maori A.D.1650-1850*, Atholl Anderson (1998) also provides some ethnological information on Maori fowling. At Lake Ellesmere (near present day Christchurch), Maori in canoes drove large numbers of wildfowl, such as Paradise Duck, Grey Duck, Brown Duck and Grey Teal, into fence-traps (Anderson 1998: 143).

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37 Tapu can be translated as sacred, but also carries the meaning of forbidden or restricted (Evison 1993; Dacker 1994: 148).
One of the participants in my research (Samuel) was familiar with some of the early oral histories relating to Maori hunting and gathering practices. Samuel alerted me to an interview with an elderly Maori man recorded c.1910: *Mahinga manu Wai Maori*, which he translated as ‘Hunting for Fresh Water Ducks’. This manuscript also provides a description of Maori groups at Lake Ellesmere using canoes to drive moulting ducks into “stockyards” or “corrals” erected out into the water from a sand spit. Each of the “corrals” would be under the control of one family. Once the ducks had been driven into the corrals, the families would kill the ducks in their designated area. The slaughtered ducks were then loaded on canoes and taken back to shore. From there the ducks’ feathers were removed and the ducks were boned, cooked, and then placed in kelp bags and gourds for storage.

The archaeological, ethnological, and oral history accounts discussed above give an impression, albeit an incomplete one, of Maori duck hunting activities before European contact. It seems that ducks were a regular source of food for Maori and were most likely gathered on a seasonal basis. In more marginal areas, such as southern New Zealand, it is likely that duck became a more important source of protein after the Moa became extinct.

Unfortunately, the above examples provide little information about the social organisation of wildfowling. From Sir Walter Buller’s account, however, it is clear that at least on some occasions, both men and women participated in catching ducks and from the contribution of one of the participants in this study it seems clear that duck hunting for the Maori in pre-European times was not perceived as an activity for men. There is also evidence that some Maori, at least, managed their duck resource with a *tapu* being imposed during the breeding season. Several sources also suggest that the moult was used as an opportunity to drive ducks into an area where they could be caught and killed. Several of the ethnological accounts

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38 This manuscript is attributed to T. T. Tikao, but Tikao is probably the person who translated and recorded the information rather than the actual person who gave the information. This manuscript is held in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Polynesian Society Collection, MS1148.
mention dogs as an intrinsic part of some wildfowling activities. The variety and sophistication of Maori techniques indicate that many Maori groups were successfully managing and exploiting the wildfowl resource. The canal system used in Marlborough provides an example of an extremely sophisticated and efficient method of catching ducks. Another technique employed by some Maori was the placing of snares across rivers and lakes. To the British settlers who came to New Zealand, however, Maori fowling techniques, along with other bird hunting practices, were regarded as unsophisticated, unethical, and primitive. As New Zealand came under the auspices of British law, Maori hunting practices were increasingly marginalised and, ultimately, almost completely outlawed. In the following section, I will discuss the hunting tradition that the British colonists came from in order to explain why their cultural practices relating to duck hunting, and hunting in general, were so different.

3.2. Wildfowling in Britain Before the 20th century

In the following section I overview duck hunting in Britain from medieval times through to the nineteenth century. During this period, Maori in New Zealand and the poorer classes in Britain practiced similar subsistence activities in relation to waterfowl. These activities were predominantly carried out as a means of supplying food and used parallel techniques, particularly netting and snaring. Large numbers of ducks were also gathered during the moult in both countries. As the following discussion shows, however, by the end of the nineteenth century significant changes occurred in Britain which were to alter the way people hunted ducks in many countries throughout the world. One of those changes was the development of the gun as a practical weapon for shooting game, while the other relates to the class system in Britain, which increasingly restricted access to traditional wildfowling practices.
**Game Laws and Class**

An important feature of hunting common to all of northern Europe was the establishment of hunting as an activity mainly available to the wealthier and noble classes. Cartmill (1993) argues that the increase in human settlements and corresponding decrease in forested areas during the Middle Ages led to hunting becoming a privilege controlled by the aristocracy.\(^{39}\) Large areas were designated as royal forests or game sanctuaries and the peasantry were forbidden to hunt within these areas. The aristocracy hunted various birds (including waterfowl) and small animals with hawks or falcons (Figure 7), often with great fanfare and display (Cummins 1988; Trench 1967).

![FIGURE 7. Detail from the 'Alphonse Psalter' (14\textsuperscript{th} century): (Source: Kear 1990: 100)](image)

This inequitable arrangement led to people of different social strata considering hunting in different ways. For the vast majority of poorer people who were excluded from the hunt: “hunting became associated with freedom, feasting, and rebellion against the authorities” (Cartmill 1993: 61). For the aristocracy however, hunting became an expression of upper-class status. As the hunt became increasingly ritualised, hunting practices became manifestations of the aristocratic world-view, with etiquette and ceremonial usages that became increasingly formalized (Cartmill 1993; Brander 1971; Hobusch 1980).

During the seventeenth century, the poorer classes in Britain had their access to hunting curtailed even further. In 1671, during the reign of Charles II, the Cavalier Parliament passed an Act which prohibited all freeholders whose income from their land was less than one hundred pounds a year from killing (Trench 1967:122). This Act, based purely on a person's wealth, took away the right to hunt from the vast majority of the population. This law was in place for another one and half centuries and understandably, caused a great deal of resentment. The wealthy and privileged became ‘qualified’ persons and could hunt anywhere and shoot anything they wished unless ‘named’ and specifically warned off by a landowner or gamekeeper (Marchington 1980:69). This meant that ‘unqualified’ persons were even prohibited from killing game on their own land and only a tiny proportion of the British population had the legal right to hunt:

Excluding gamekeepers, there were probably no more than twenty or thirty thousand qualified persons in a population of about five million. Never was an act so blatantly passed in the exclusive interest of the class which passed it (Trench 1967: 122).

In the century following the game Act of 1671, illegally taking small game such as hares and wildfowl incurred even harsher penalties. Prior to this, the line

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40 The 1671 Act was also highly incongruous. For example, it was lawful to buy game, but not to sell it. An unqualified tenant farmer was allowed to kill rabbits on his farm (but not hares), yet a qualified person could kill game on land belonging to anyone (Trench 1967:122).
between 'qualified' and 'unqualified' persons had been far less distinct because the focus of game laws was on royal forests; areas from which all but those in royal circles were excluded anyway. Also, historically deer were the main concern of game restrictions and small game had "excited less jealousy" (Trench 1967: 123):

In one vital respect poaching had changed since the fifteenth century: then all kinds of men, rich and poor, noble and base, had stolen the king's deer; now poaching was a class crime, committed by the poor against the rich. As such, it was far more severely punished (Trench 1967: 123).

During the eighteenth century the number of acts passed with regard to small game grew enormously. In the first sixty years there were only six acts related to poaching of small game, while in the next fifty-six years thirty-three acts were passed which mainly tightened up the law surrounding the taking of small game and also increased the penalties for poaching (Trench 1967: 124).

These harsh penalties continued into the nineteenth century. Due to their fear of going to the gallows or being whipped, transported and imprisoned, many poachers operated in armed gangs and if discovered, they resisted arrest. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars and during the slump in farming that followed, resentment against the Game Laws reached its zenith. According to Trench: "agrarian distress was so widespread that...men would risk the gallows rather than see their families starve" (Trench 1967: 148). When gamekeepers charged a pauper from Bedford with resisting arrest, he was subsequently hanged for his misdemeanor. The man had been attempting to get food for his pregnant wife and two children (Trench 1967:152).

For nearly a century, reformers lobbied for changes to the game laws and finally, in 1831, a Game Act was passed that brought about radical changes to hunting rights. Most of the old game laws were done away with, while the Act also abolished harsher punishments and the outmoded and unjust qualifications to kill game. Anyone was permitted to kill and sell game if they held a certificate. Daytime
poachers could only be arrested if they persisted in their hunting activities after being warned off by the owner, occupier or gamekeeper. If arrested they were usually fined, although night-time poaching still carried the punishment of imprisonment or transportation (Trench 1967: 154). Although these changes did not stop poaching, by making the sale of game legal they did decriminalise the activities of many hunters who wanted to sell their catch: "And by abolishing the qualifications, they purged the game laws of gross social injustice" (Trench 1967:155). This, therefore, was the political environment surrounding hunting in the decades prior to European migration to New Zealand.

This section on game laws, and the class issues relating to them, provides a picture of the general milieu that surrounded hunting in Britain from medieval times until the nineteenth century. During those centuries it is clear that hunting became viewed as a fashionable pastime for the aristocracy, while constituting a food gathering necessity for the poorer classes. What is interesting in regard to this study is that duck and snipe were exempt from the Game Act of 1671 and could be shot by 'unqualified' persons so long as there was no trespassing involved (Trench 1967: 151-152). This raises questions as to who hunted ducks, for what reasons, and using what methods? Were wildfowl such as ducks regarded as less socially significant prey?

John Marchington’s (1980) History of Wildfowling provides a detailed history of wildfowling in Britain. Marchington carried out extensive archival research and provides a thorough overview of all books relating to wildfowling published in Britain since the fifteenth century. The first publication to provide some clear indication of attitudes towards wildfowling was The Boke of St Alban’s published in 1486. This book reveals that during the fifteenth century wildfowling was not regarded as a sport in its own right but rather an activity pursued principally for food by the poorer classes (Marchington 1980: 37). Snaring and netting were the main methods used. There were three main types of netting technique. Drag
netting required two or more people to pull a net over sleeping or resting birds. Flight nets, which are still used today by ornithologists to catch and ring birds, involve suspending a net between two poles in the flight path of the desired quarry. Fowlers also used clap nets, which involved calling birds down into a location where the hunters were hidden, at which point they pulled a cord that dropped or 'clapped' a net over the birds (Marchington 1980: 23-24).

By the sixteenth century the improvement in early firearms technology was to have a far-reaching impact not only on British hunting practices but also in countries all around the world. At this time, the handgun had developed to a form where it could be aimed and handled with reasonable success. Both the aristocracy and peasantry appreciated its advantages. The matchlock gun41 proved to be more powerful than the crossbow and became the weapon of choice for the aristocracy to use on large animals that lived in the forest.

**FIGURE 8. Peasants Shooting Ducks c.1566**
(Source: Akehurst 1972:4)

41 The matchlock gun fired by bringing the touch-hole into contact with a slow-burning match by means of a trigger.
For the peasantry, a wider variety of wildfowl could be killed using a gun rather than a bow, because the small shot gave a wide spread (Figure 8 above). While in 1542, citizens and landowners were permitted to use guns, this was only on the condition that they acquired a royal licence - and this licence was only available to those persons whose income was at least one hundred pounds. As wildfowl were an important addition to food for the peasantry, particularly in winter, the illegal use of guns was widespread (Akehurst 1972: 5-6).

Yet the arrival of the gun did not have an immediate effect on wildfowling. The Hunter's Prevention: or, The Whole Arte of Fowling by Water and Land, written by Gervase Markham and published in 1621, provides a picture of fowling at that time. Markham's text reveals that other methods such as using nets, dogs, or by driving moulting birds into an area where they could be caught (just as Maori were doing in New Zealand) were still very popular. Those in the poorer classes who were using guns to shoot wildfowl were largely doing so to 'fill the pot'. The firearms they used for this purpose were heavy, long-barreled fowling pieces that were employed by creeping up on large groups of sitting birds. Richard Akehurst (1972) summarises:

Fowling with a gun had not yet established itself as a sport or as a respectable form of hunting. Birds for the table of the gentry were taken by netting with the aid of dogs, while hawks and falconry were used for sport. Fowling with a gun was still too closely associated with the peasantry creeping up on their quarry and taking a 'pot shot' (Akehurst 1972: 8).

Using a stalking horse was also popular for a time. Those wealthy enough to own a horse could use the animal to steal up until they were within shooting range of a group of wildfowl (see Figure 9 below). For less wealthy individuals, Gervase Markham suggests making an artificial stalking horse from old canvas stuffed with straw (Markham, cited in Marchington, 1980: 67-68).
By the latter part of the seventeenth century, the idea that shooting birds could be 'sport' began to develop in Britain. After the restoration of the Monarch in 1660, King Charles and his court returned from their exile in France having acquired a taste for the newly fashionable sport of shooting flying birds (Akehurst 1972: 9). This new fashion was also connected to the development of the flintlock gun, which ignited the gunpowder with a spark produced by the strike of flint on steel (rather than the use of a slow-burning match) (Kear 1990: 101; Trench 1967: 123). New, lighter fowling pieces made it much easier to shoot flying birds (Akehurst 1972) but as will be discussed below, very specific species began to be associated with this new 'fashion'.

42 A full discussion on the technological development of guns is outside the scope of this thesis. See Richard Akehurst (1972) for an overview of changing firearm technology in regard to hunting.
After the game Act of 1671, which made hunting the exclusive right of the landed gentry, the law made a distinction between different species of birds. The Act defined partridges, pheasants, and moor fowl (grouse) as ‘game’, birds stringently protected from ‘unqualified’ hunters. However, as mentioned above, any person could take wild ducks regardless of their property assets and as long as they did not trespass (Munsche 1981: 3-4).

By the beginning of the eighteenth century shooting game-birds and small animals had become firmly established in Britain (and throughout Europe) as a recreational activity or ‘sport’ amongst the landed gentry. The degree of importance that this activity had within the wealthy classes is reflected in the proliferation of portraits painted at this time which depict “a country squire in shooting habit, with his shotbelt round him and his fowling piece held so that it could be clearly seen. Other details might include his favourite dogs gazing affectionately at him, and woods and meadows in the background” (Akehurst 1972: 23).

As shooting became increasingly popular with the gentry during the eighteenth century, some traditional methods of catching ducks by the poorer classes were becoming unacceptable. For example, the practice of taking wildfowl during the moult was banned in 1710 due to concerns about severe declines in the wildfowl populations (Kear 1990: 71). The impact of the increasing use of guns to shoot game birds was also to have a toll on bird populations. The mass production of muskets43 during the eighteenth century brought prices down (another contributing factor to the popularity of ‘rough’ shooting) but this also resulted in the killing of huge numbers of wildlife (Wigglesworth 1996: 18).

A small book called Pteryplegia or, the Art of Shooting-Flying written by a Mr Markland (1767) (first published in 1727), provides a useful insight into game bird

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43 During the eighteenth century, muskets were produced in large numbers to supply the new militia who were charged with countering civil unrest in Britain at that time (Wigglesworth 1996: 18) Also see Mingay (1990) for broader socio-historical background on the English countryside.
shooting at this time. Interestingly, this early book on shooting birds as 'sport' raises issues still relevant in contemporary New Zealand duck hunting. Structured in a long poem, Markland provides instructions as to how a 'true sportsman' should prepare and embark on a shooting expedition.

The poem opens with the hunter and his friend rising early, feeling hopeful, having prepared all the necessary hunting paraphernalia the night before. They call their dogs and pocket a bottle of spirits to take along on their outing:

My Friend and I with hopeful Prospect rose
And scorned the longer Scandal of Repose:
No dull Repast allow'd; our Tackle all
O'er Night prepared, the cheerful Dogs we call;
In a close Pocket snuggs the cordial Dram
Youth to the Old, and Crutches to the Lame! (Markland 1767: 1-2).

Markland then advises that the 'sportsman' should forgo fashionable male accessories such as long lace cuffs: "No flapping Sleeves our ready Arms controul; Short Cuffs alone prove fatal to the Fowl", and to leave high-heeled footwear at home: "Low-Leathern-Heel'd our lacquere'd Boots are made: Mounted on tott'ring Stilts raw Freshmen tread; Firm footing an unshaken Level lends, But Modish Heels are still the Woodcock's Friends" (Markland 1767). He also suggests a dram of brandy for flagging spirits, but strongly cautions against drinking too much. He warns that if drunk, not only will a sportsman's aim be affected, but also any nearby livestock are in danger of being killed:

Th' unpointed Eye once dull'd, farewell the Game:
A Morning Sot may shoot, but never aim.
Marksmen and Rope-dancers with equal Care,
Th' insidious fasting Bottle shou'd forbear.
Else each who does the Glass unwisely take,
E'er Noon a false and fatal Step will make;
The first will Turkeys slay, and make Pigs squeak,
The latter, ten to one, will break his Neck (Markland 1767: 18).
The last part of the poem has a strong emphasis on gun safety, as the following section shows:

UNGUARDED SWAINS! Oh! Still remember this,
And to your Shoulders close constrain the Piece,
For lurking Seeds of Death unheard may hiss!
The Gun remov'd, may in the firing fly,
Wrench from your Hands, and would the Standers-by!
(Markland 1767: 29).

While many of these elements would probably be relevant to contemporary New Zealand duck hunters (and I will touch on those relevancies later in this chapter), there is one obvious difference. The game birds that Markland places the most importance on in his poem are woodcocks, snipes, partridge, and pheasants, while ducks have less prestige. As noted earlier, the shooting or netting of wild ducks was associated with the food gathering activities of lower classes, whereas shooting partridges, pheasants, and grouse had become the fashionable activity of the aristocracy. During the nineteenth century, shooting these specific gamebirds became one of the most recognised images of aristocratic hunting exclusivity, no more so than during the 1860s with the advent of the fashionable 'sport' known as the 'battue'. This activity required gamekeepers to raise large numbers of gamebirds, pheasants being particularly popular, which were then released or beaten out of bushes in front of waiting hunters. This type of shooting was always carried out on private land and by invitation only (Trench 1967: 171-173).

In contrast, shooting waterfowl such as ducks along the shore or in the fens was not popular with the aristocracy in the early part of the nineteenth century. A passage from The Shooter's Companion, written by T.B. Johnson and published in 1819, indicates how disdainfully the moneyed classes then viewed duck shooting:

Duck-shooting, therefore, or what is called flighting, is chiefly followed by the peasantry who reside on the borders of the marsh...As numbers of wildfowl frequent many parts of the sea-coast of this kingdom, so pursing them may be regarded as a diversion by some: it appears to me however, as
a very illegitimate kind of sport at best: - well enough in the hands of that class of the community, to whom it affords a precarious subsistence; but by no means calculated for true sportsmen (Johnson cited in Marchington 1980: 107).

But this attitude was changing. One person who had a great deal of influence over the gentry in persuading them that shooting ducks was a fashionable and enjoyable activity was Colonel Peter Hawker. His book *Instructions to Young Sportsmen in all that relates to Guns and Shooting* was published in 1814 with various editions that followed. Hawker introduced waterfowling as a sport to the wider literate sector of the public. He also insisted it was a "respectable sport for gentlemen" (Hawker, cited in Marchington, 1980: 73-79).

One of most popular methods of duck hunting that was favoured by early gentlemen waterfowlers was punt-gunning. A heavy punt-gun was positioned on the foredeck of the narrow, flat-bottomed punt and attached to the vessel to ensure that the punt took up the recoil (see Figure 10 below). The object of punt-gunning was to sneak up within range of groups of wildfowl as they sat on the open water of fens, harbours and estuaries. The punt-gunner lay prone in the punt and attempted to stealthily propel himself within range (Marchington 1980: 163-164). Marchington suggests that punt-gunning was the ultimate 'man's sport':

Punt-gunning as a sport had everything a manly man could desire - a big, very big, gun; personal command of a salt-water craft, with all the thrills and dangers of the sea; an arduous, demanding activity to test one's endurance and character; the occasional great triumph and all the romance of ordinary wildfowling multiplied by the circumstances (Marchington 1980: 163).
As we shall see, these masculine 'manly' ideals were brought to New Zealand by early British settlers and became an intrinsic aspect of this country's duck hunting 'tradition'. Punt-gunners were divided into two groups: those who shot for the professional market and amateurs who were seeking sport. The great majority of ducks and geese that were sent to market came from professional punt-gunners. For the amateur, punt-gunning was an expensive sport. Aside from the expense of the boat, large gun and ammunition, transport to estuarine areas was also expensive to organise (Marchington 1980: 140-181).

As the nineteenth century drew to a close punt-gunning gradually fell out of favour for various reasons. The draining of wetlands and increasing pollution affected wildfowl habitat. Punt-gunning activities were also affected by a disease that spread through *zostera* grass\(^4\) and caused a major decline in wildfowl populations in estuaries and marshes. In addition, the twentieth century saw increased marine traffic and the cost of maintaining the punt-boat equipment escalated. However, Marchington cites the greatest reason for the decline in punt-gunning as the disappearance of suitable recruits to the sport: "The social changes emanating from

\(^4\) *Zostera* grass is a type of eelgrass that wildfowl feed on. During the 1930s a worldwide disease killed off vast areas of this grass, which grew in saltwater estuaries and marshes. Many wildfowl in Britain had to change their feeding locations to inland freshwaters (Marchington 1980:196).
the Great War went far towards the elimination of the wealthy leisured classes and, while many hard-working men still sought relaxation in arduous pursuits, the complications, uncertainties and expense of punt-gunning were too much” (Marchington 1980: 197). Punt-gunning as a popular shooting sport developed and then faded from popularity in the space of 150 years.45

While amateur punt-gunning was an activity restricted to wealthy gentlemen, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the growing middle classes became increasingly enthusiastic about shooting as a sport. The involvement of some gentlemen sportsmen in wildfowling earlier in the century gave the sport a higher social status. Crucially also, in the latter part of the 1800s several technical changes helped to make the flight shooting of wildfowl even more popular with the moneyed and leisure classes. The breech-loading shotgun, became increasingly efficient and made the killing of flying birds a much easier prospect. The industrial revolution brought factory production, and good quality firearms were mass-produced at affordable prices (Kear 1990: Marchington 1980; Carr 1981). The other enormous impact of industrialization was rapid urbanization of the English population and their resultant disconnection from the countryside. As fewer people practiced subsistence activities on the land, activities such as hunting offered alternative ways for people to ‘reconnect’ with ‘nature’ and the landscape: “Industrialization, which seemed to detach people from the land, encouraged the search for connections through play and study” (Dunlap 1999: 309), and as previously noted, increased nostalgia towards the countryside (Lowe 1989: Mingay 1989).

The nineteenth century added elements that made the experience of shooting birds over water a lot more comfortable. Dogs were bred and trained specifically to retrieve ducks and geese, saving the hunter from getting wet. During this time

45 It was still being practiced around British shores during the 1960s although by that time only four individuals were licensed to operate punt-guns (Jamieson 1989: 12).
popular breeds such as Labrador, golden retrievers, poodle ("puddle hound"), and Irish water spaniel were all developed, adding both companionship and comfort, to waterfowling. Another appealing feature to the growing middle classes was the introduction of rubber "Wellington" boots during the 1860s, which were practical and reasonably priced and also aided in making the duck hunting experience a warmer and drier one (Kear 1990).

Important changes in transport also affected the numbers of people who could go duck hunting. The development of railways made it easier to travel the long distances required to access wildfowl habitat not on private land. All these changes, however, did not make the increasingly fashionable sport of shooting waterfowl into an egalitarian pastime. It was still only people with some disposable income and time available to them that could afford to take up wildfowling for sport or 'fun' (Marchington 1980; Carr 1981).

FIGURE 11. Two 'Gentlemen' Shoreshooting with a Dog c.1820 (Source: Kear 1990:102)
One distinctive aspect of British wildfowling was the emphasis on shore-shooting (see Figure 11 above), as opposed to shooting ducks over ponds - which, as we shall see, is very popular in New Zealand. The first reference to pond shooting in Britain was not until 1860 in H. D. Miles's *The Book of Field Sports*, where the author advises: "Never forget that the secret of success in Duck-shooting is to rise early, and be at the most likely dykes just at dawn of day" (Miles, cited in Marchington, 1980: 201). While inland duck shooting was being carried out during the early part of the nineteenth century, this did not involve flight-pond shooting. Most importantly in relation to New Zealand's connection to British wildfowling, building hides was not widely practiced during the nineteenth century. Some shooters did hide in the open expanses of the marsh by digging some sort of hole that might be lined with a tub. Building a hide alongside a pond and then calling ducks into the area was not, however, very popular (Marchington 1980: 205).

By contrast, during the nineteenth century, in Continental European countries (in particular France and Holland) the vast majority of wildfowlers evolved a practice of tethering call-ducks on water to decoy wild ducks close enough to be shot. The fowlers in these countries were known as *huttiers* as they concealed themselves in hides known as *huttes*. Marchington suggests that the main reason that Britain favouring punting and open-shore shooting methods instead of the Continental system was due to environmental differences: Britain being dominated by open marshes and estuaries, whereas countries such as France and Holland had largely undrained inland marshes (Marchington 1980: 209).

The *huttier* method was still not in wide use in Britain at the end of the nineteenth century as this extract from Henry Sharp's *Practical Wildfowling* published in 1895 indicates:

This method of enticing fowl to come within gun-shot of the concealed sportsman does not appear to have been adopted in the country to anything like the same extent that it has in America, France and Holland (Sharp, cited in Marchington, 1980: 211).
It seems unlikely then, that early British settlers who arrived in New Zealand during the nineteenth century brought with them the practice of duck shooting from a hide. This raises an interesting question about where this now popular practice came from, a question which will be explored later in this chapter.

To summarise, the nineteenth century saw radical changes in attitude towards wildfowling. Gentlemen punt-gunners helped to popularise shooting ducks and geese around the British shore and marshland areas. The growing middle classes of the late 19th century were enthusiastic shore-shooters. However, the poorer classes in Britain were still unable to participate in the growing sport of wildfowling as shotguns and ammunition were expensive pieces of equipment. The advent of the railways made transport to wildfowl areas easier, although families on low wages had little money for travelling. In addition, working-class people were restricted in leisure time that was available to them. Therefore, although shooting wildfowl did not have quite the same elitist association as other hunting activities such as the ‘battue’, it was still not an egalitarian pastime. It is perhaps more important to clarify that the notion of hunting that developed during the nineteenth century was increasingly based on the idea of hunting as a ‘sport’. This type of hunting must always exclude people who are living a subsistence existence, because the ‘sportsman’ essentially shoots for fun and pleasure, while the poorer individual hunts for food and survival. In the following section, I will discuss the development of the hunting ‘sportsman’, and consider how this idea relates to British imperialism and the development of a New Zealand duck hunting tradition.

3.3 British Imperialism and the Hunting ‘Sportsman’
During Victoria’s reign, a rigid system of rules developed that dictated how animals and birds were to be hunted. Thomas Dunlap (1999) in *Nature and the English Diaspora* argues:
The central element distinguishing the Victorian hunt from other ways of killing animals was its emphasis on self-imposed limitations that made for a 'fair chase' and gave the quarry a 'sporting chance' (Dunlap 1999: 60).

This system has its roots in the technical advances to the gun that occurred in the nineteenth century, along with social efforts to distance 'sport' shooting from the subsistence activities of the lower classes. The early 1800s saw the invention of the breech-loading gun, which broke open at a hinge and could be loaded near the ignition system. (Prior to this time guns were muzzle-loaded, requiring both gunpowder and projectile to be pushed down the barrel). At around the same time the percussion cap was invented, allowing the gun to ignite by percussion as opposed to the old system of a spark produced by clashing flint on steel. This system replaced the flintlock guns that had developed in the seventeenth century. A further advance came during the 1860s, when the first gun cartridges, containing both a charge of powder and a bullet, came onto the market. This made loading and using guns a much cleaner and easier prospect (Kear 1990: 101-102).

As it became easier to shoot flying birds, and as guns became powerful enough to kill even large game with one cartridge, so the ideal of dispatching animals with one shot started to dominate shooting etiquette. During the early part of the nineteenth century, wounding birds or firing multiple bullets into game was quite acceptable but the hunting sportsman was increasingly expected to obey strict rules when shooting. It became 'unsporting' to shoot a 'sitting bird' as the real sportsman took the more difficult approach of shooting a bird 'on the wing' (Kear 1990: 102; Dunlap 1999: 60). By 1907, shooting (or netting) of 'flappers' or moulting birds, while popular in the previous centuries, was viewed not only as unsportsman-like, but also unpatriotic:

There is not much of interest to write upon flapper-shooting, for it cannot by any stretch of the imagination be magnified into a pastime worthy of the name of sport. The shooting of immature or imperfectly-feathered ducks, as they flap painfully and laboriously up from reed-fringed dyke, or out
from the long grass or rushes, is to be highly deprecated as *utterly un-British* (Fallon, cited in Marchington, 1980: 253, emphasis added).

The development of the sportsman’s ‘code’ encapsulated British notions of masculine behaviour and promoted very specific ‘manly’ ideals. When the British hunting model was introduced, however, these ideals often conflicted with rival hegemonic masculinities in societies outside Britain. In the USA, for example, according to the British hunters, shooting female deer or songbirds was regarded as ‘unmanly’ or even cowardly, yet for other cultural groups this represented masculine achievement. For example, pueblo Indian men in New Mexico who brought home wagons of deer (including bucks *and* fawns) were men of honour as they provisioned for the community, and within the Italian immigrant community, men who shot a brace of sparrows or songbirds with one shotgun blast were admired as they were seen as practicing a frugal method of providing meat for the family (Warren 1993: 39).

Hunting rituals of the nineteenth century, therefore, constructed a discourse with specific ideals of nationhood, class, and gender. The emphasis in hunting became increasingly one of ritual significance as opposed to economic pragmatism – with a significant change in what was regarded as acceptable moral practice in relation to killing animals. Of course the ritualistic element in European hunting has a long history, but the nineteenth century hunting ‘code’ led to far more restrictions on the subsistence activities of the poorer classes and on indigenous peoples in colonial countries. John MacKenzie (1988) makes a strong connection between British imperialism and hunting, which he argues were also bound up with the notion of animal preservation.

The development of restricted access, the increasing categorisation and regulation of hunting sports, the appearance of ‘preservation’ on the European aristocratic model, and the exclusion of local hunters were all closely bound up with the development of a hunting ‘code’ (MacKenzie 1988: 299).
In the interests of 'sport', access to game could be limited to only those people who operated within the hunting 'code'. In some African countries, sportsmen expressed concern at the decline in animal stocks and argued that preservation measures must be imposed to allow for both the survival of species, along with hunting for sport. The Africans' traditional hunting activities were blamed for the decline in game resources and therefore game laws were aimed at bringing these non-'sporting' and non-English activities to a halt. MacKenzie (1988) argues that by denying many African peoples access to traditional sources of game, an important source of protein was taken from their diet. He also notes that by the end of the nineteenth century indigenous hunters in both Africa and India were transformed into 'poachers' (MacKenzie 1988: 298-299).

Alongside the discourse of a 'sporting' code, the new science of 'natural history' gained momentum during the nineteenth century, and led to many hunters regarding themselves as "naturalist-sportsmen" (Marchington 1980: 148), or "hunter-naturalists" (Dunlap 1999: 60). This scientific, Western knowledge gave hunters an added cultural legitimacy particularly when dealing with the 'unscientific' and 'primitive' practices of indigenous peoples:

The true sportsman was a natural historian and a scientist. Killing was in a sense legitimated by his understanding of the quarry, its environment and its anatomy, and his knowledge of firearms and ballistics added an extra scientific dimension. The hunter had become a member of an exclusive club, its rules defined by Western technology and science (MacKenzie 1988: 300).

Although the 'hunter-sportsmen' often broke the 'rules' of this club, the hunting practices of indigenous hunters were seen as fundamentally more 'cruel'. Since making a 'clean kill' was the most crucial aspect of being a hunting sportsman, the hunting methods used by indigenous peoples, which involved such 'primitive' technologies as traps, snares, and spears, could easily be portrayed as 'unsporting' and backward (MacKenzie 1988: 300). Technology now defined fairness (Dunlap
and 'ethical' hunting practice was only attainable to those people who killed with guns and Western attitudes.

### 3.4 Duck Hunting in Colonial New Zealand

The first Europeans to shoot ducks and other wildfowl in New Zealand were Captain James Cook and his crew on their visits to New Zealand in the latter half of the eighteenth century. These explorers shot and ate an enormous cross-section of bird species (both shags and albatross being contenders for the stewpot). During his second voyage, Cook's fellow shipmates record him as being an enthusiastic duck shooter: "Cook is as rapturous as anyone over the wildfowl hunting... he was out himself, for twelve hours, returning wet through, though with plenty of fowl" (cited in Beaglehole 1974: 325-328).

European settlers came to New Zealand throughout the nineteenth century, growing in number from an estimated 2,000 in 1839 to 256,000 by 1872. At the turn of the twentieth century there were nearly 1 million Europeans, mainly of British origin, living in New Zealand. In particular, the first waves of settlers found a physical environment that was very different to their homeland and which posed many challenges for them (Graham 1996: 52). They needed to arrive from Britain with a comprehensive array of equipment and supplies if they were to survive and establish themselves. One item of equipment that was highly recommended in 1845 was a "good double-barrelled fowling piece" (Wakefield cited in Draper 1999: 16). By the latter part of the nineteenth century, shotguns were being produced in New Zealand, 'for New Zealand conditions'. In the following advertisement (Figure 12) the emphasis is on the practical, long-lasting attributes of the gun, which is described as "plain but well finished" and affordable in price:
Because the flora and fauna in New Zealand were so different from Britain, it was often difficult for the early settlers to obtain food (McDowall, 1994:4-5). The emphasis on taking wildfowl in the first settlement years, therefore, was not so much premised on 'sporting' aspects but on acquiring fresh meat:

Gentlemen settlers brought fine fowling pieces and rifles with them, but most used firearms of a more prosaic nature. The age of wildfowling had arrived in the colony, half a world away from its origins and traditions. Initially it was a necessity; in time it would also become a sport (Draper 1999: 16).

A further glimpse of these early years can be found in a compilation of notes made by a Mr W. Roberts during 1856 and 1857. He published these notes in 1895: "in an effort to record some items of interest that otherwise would have been lost in the history of the colony" (Roberts 1895: preface). These notes cover a journey Roberts made from Nelson to Bluff and the first two years of the settlement of Murihiku (Invercargill). Roberts (1895) comments in the preface that his book illustrates the differences between "present comforts" and the rough life of the pioneers. He
provides an extended section describing flora and fauna including various segments on birds – all described visually and then ‘gastronomically’ – showing that the emphasis during this period appears to be on shooting birds for food rather than ‘sport’. In July 1856 he notes: “There are a good many pigeons (carpophaga, N.Z.) Maori Kuku or Kereru. It is a pretty copper-purple bird, head, neck, and breast coppery-green, abdomen white with little pink feet. It is excellent eating, but they are seldom seen now” (Roberts 1895: 52). In the following extract Roberts provides not only a vivid picture of how early British settlers exploited wildfowl but also an indication of the impact that British colonial society was having on native bird populations:

Outside the bush there were a number of native quail46 (Coturnix, N.Z.; Maori, koreke). It was a small bird, reddish-brown, spotted with white on breast and abdomen. They were most delicious eating. Their eggs were nearly as large as a pigeon’s egg, buff thickly spotted with brown. As they could not fly far they are now nearly extinct, for they could not escape from the bush fires, and were easily shot, or caught by dogs, cats, and rats... We sometimes shot a Paradise duck or sheldrake (casarca variegata; Maori, putangitangi). It is a large-sized duck, the back black, penciled with white; the head, neck and breast in the male black, in the female white. The shrill call of the duck is exceedingly disagreeable, that of the drake is a prolonged guttural equally unpleasant. In lonely places the cry almost frightened the traveler, and made him feel very melancholy. They were very tough eating when fresh, but good when hung or buried for a week or so... The grey duck (Anas superciliosa; Maori, Parera) was the nicest for food. It is a grayish brown, varied with yellowish-white, upper part of neck yellowish-white, with two small bands of dark-brown on the cheeks, speculum green, margined above and below with black. They generally were seen in small flocks. The teal (Querquedula gibberifrons; Maori, Tete) was a small brown duck with a white bar on the wing, speculum green. It was difficult to shoot as it always dived at the flash of the gun, and was so wild it was not easy to get within gun-shot range of it. The Swamp-hen, or Turkey, Pukeko (Porphyrio melanotus) was a bird of a deep black color, with an indigo-blue breast, and white feathers in its tail. It had long red legs and bill. The Maoris [sic] have a tradition that it was imported by them when the first immigrants came from Hawaii. In the early days it was never seen beyond ten miles or so from the sea coast (Roberts 1895: 53)

46 Now extinct.
Clearly, Mr Robert’s recollections do not frame wildfowl hunting in the context of sport but rather as a food gathering exercise. Recollections from early settlers in the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, suggest that the connection between shooting birds over water as a sporting activity (rather than a subsistence activity) was quickly established in the new colony. Alexander Bathgate, an Otago settler, describes the opportunities he observed in 1874:

The sportsman may get a very good day’s duck-shooting in different parts of the country. The grey duck (*anas superciliosa*) and teal (*anas gracilis*) being plentiful in places, while the noble paradise ducks (*casarca variegata*) are very abundant among the stubble in some parts of the interior. In the swamps there is also the *pukaki* [*pukeko*] (*porphyris milanotus*), or swamp-turkey, a bird which rises well and affords good sport (Bathgate 1974 [1874]: 84-85)

Likewise, the remembrances in the following passage from the early 1880s, written by Mr. R. Thomas (an early commercial traveller) provides a good idea of how the British attitude towards duck hunting - and what constituted ethical, ‘civilised’ shooting behaviour - was then being practiced in New Zealand. Shooting ‘for the pot’ is associated with less ‘sporting’ approaches such as firing on (sitting) ducks on the water, whereas waiting until the birds are the air is thought of as creating a kind of ‘fair competition’ between the shooter and the birds. Thomas’s duck hunting expedition is carried out with the aid of a Maori guide who provides and paddles a *kaiwaka* (a small canoe used for transporting foodstuffs). After a few hours of paddling quietly through canals lined with reeds, Thomas has shot over fifty birds from a variety of different species. One can only imagine what the Maori guide thought of this rather deadly ‘sport’.

In perfect silence, my brown skinned paddler caused the little canoe to glide through the water into a narrow passage between lofty reeds into the lagoon to our left. Creeping slowly along we could hear the cries of duck and whistling of Teal and Widgeon at no great distance ahead of us. “Bravo!” whispered I, “We are in for good sport.”…Peeping through my screen I saw a sight that made my heart rejoice. Fully 300 Grey Ducks,
quite a number of Teal and ten or a dozen Black Swan were within gunshot.

Before opening fire, I lay for a few moments, watching the family party. It was almost a shame to disturb them, but this view did not influence me for long, as anyone fond of sport with the gun can well imagine. Sentiment, in this sport is all very well for the ultra-humanitarian, but does not, for any appreciable length of time, influence the British gunnery on the warpath at the opening of the game season; whatever men of other nationalities may think on the subject. It was not my intention to shoot for the pot, or in other words, take sitting shots - I would give the birds a sporting chance on the wing (Thomas 1974 [c.1880s]: 23).

The new fowling firearms imported from Britain and later produced in New Zealand allowed for enormous numbers of birds to be killed with ease. It appears, from the following article published in a Dunedin newspaper in 1866, that controlling the taking of wildfowl became a matter of concern very early on in New Zealand’s colonial history:

We are glad to learn... steps [are being taken] to prevent, during the breeding season, the wholesale destruction of such wildfowl as we yet possess in the Province - viz, the wild ducks and pigeons that frequent our waters and woods. This is quite a step in the right direction, for it is quite time that a stop was put to the indiscriminate and illadvised slaughter that has been hitherto practiced; these conservative measures are necessary to ensure the more rapid reproduction and multiplication of wildfowl not to speak of thus increasing the attractions of our forests and river scenery. Since the Society stopped the use of swivel-guns, the increase of the wild ducks upon our rivers and lakes has been marked, and a source of increasing satisfaction to the true sportsman, who would scorn to kill his bird out of season (Otago Daily Witness 1866: 14).

It is not clear who was responsible for the ‘indiscriminate’ slaughter mentioned in this article. It is unlikely that it was directed at Maori, because, as I mentioned earlier, there is evidence that during the breeding season the hunting of ducks was tapu - at least for some Maori groups. However, the people responsible could just as easily have been hungry European settlers. The article’s final line about the idea of a “true sportsman” is very interesting, and reveals how successfully British
'rules' and traditions regarding hunting waterfowl had been brought to New Zealand within only a few decades of colonisation.

The article also mentions the banning of the 'swivel-gun', another name for the punt-gun. From this comment it is clear that some punt-gunning enthusiasts made it to New Zealand. This activity was banned very early on in Otago, although it did continue in other parts of New Zealand for at least a little longer. In 1873, Lieutenant-Colonel St John wrote enthusiastically about punt-gunning on the Napier Lagoons. At least some of these early punt-gunners were shooting wildfowl for the market, but the complaints of amateur hunters may nevertheless have been a factor in banning this type of hunting method. A letter was published in the Hawke's Bay Herald on 3 March 1985, for instance, complaining about the slaughter of large numbers of ducks for "the shops". This person, who signed himself 'Sportsman', was concerned that the punt-gunning activities had seriously lessened duck numbers (cited in Draper 1999: 21).

The enormous destruction wrought by the early British settlers in New Zealand on the native wildlife was not peculiar to this country. Historians of North America (for example Cronon 1991) and Australia have observed similar scenarios as European colonists went on orgies of killing made possible with the new firearm technology of the nineteenth century. Dunlap (1999) describes New Zealand (along with Australia, Canada and the United States) as "colonies of settlement". He argues:

Unlike the "colonies of empire," where a small ruling class dominated a much larger population of "natives," here the Anglos47 were not only masters but by far the largest group of powerful actors. Here, and only here, predominantly English-speaking Europeans dispossessed and almost exterminated the earlier inhabitants, allowing the illusion that the lands were "vacant" or "wilderness (Dunlap 1999: 2).

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47 White European settlers are sometimes termed 'Anglos', which is a contraction of Anglo Saxon.
Bird populations began to drop at an alarming rate, due not only to the large bags of birds that were taken, but also to the loss of habitat as large tracts of wetland were drained. In New Zealand as elsewhere, the British expansionist programme during the nineteenth century led to enormous changes to the physical landscapes. This kind of 'ecological imperialism' has recently become a popular area of research (see for example Crosby 1986; Dunlap 1999).

**Impact of European Colonialism on Maori Hunting Practices**

Since European settlement, an estimated eighty-five percent of New Zealand's wetlands have been drained (the most extreme example known anywhere in the world) (Park 2002: 151). While hunting pressure on bird populations cannot be dismissed entirely, loss of habitat during the nineteenth century appears to be the primary reason why native bird numbers dropped so dramatically by the close of that century.

Of course, colonialism had a profound impact on the indigenous peoples, as well as the environment. The effect of the European settlers on Maori iwi and their established living patterns was far-reaching and ultimately irreversible. Vast tracks of land were taken from Maori, leaving them without access to their traditional hunting and gathering sources. Harry Evison (1993) explains, in his history of the impact of colonisation on southern Maori, the devastating impact that European settlement and loss of land had on the Ngai Tahu people:

The use of traditional *mahinga kai*\(^{48}\) for protein foods - particularly eels, lampreys... and waterfowl such as the paradise duck, - was still vital to Ngai tahu because they had too little land to produce sufficient alternatives. Unfortunately for them the impact of European settlement and pastoralism was relentlessly destroying these *mahinga kai*. Natural grasslands, shrublands [sic] and forests, were burned by European farmers to create the pasture and crop-lands they needed, thus destroying the wildlife habitats... Moreover, the fencing of settlers' runs and farms, and

\(^{48}\) Also known as *mahika kai*: "naturally occurring land-based (including freshwater) food resources (Dacker 1994: 147)."
the law of trespass, generally prevented Maori access to what *mahinga kai* survived (Evison 1993: 406).

While Maori had well-established social practices around hunting, British settlers introduced new animals and different hunting techniques. Maori hunting practices became subject to the newly established Colonial government and the Acclimatization Societies that had authority over introduced game. Legislation was passed that greatly restricted hunting native birds, which were important traditional food sources for Maori. In an effort to stop settlers spreading into areas that were regarded as spiritually significant, Maori gave some areas to the government to be placed under national care – for example, the Tongariro National Park in the central North Island, which was created in 1887. While Maori were still allowed access to this land, they found their traditional hunting practices were denied after gifting the land to the government, because the game on the land had become subject to pakeha law (MacKenzie 1988: 297).

Did Maori adopt the pakeha way of wildfowling when they found their traditional hunting methods increasingly restricted by law as well as philosophically challenged by the European settler’s ethos of the hunting sportsman? There is evidence that many Maori were enthusiastic about the firearms that the settlers brought with them. From the early 1770s onwards, Maori were trading for muskets and tribal warfare escalated (Crosby 1986: 236-237). It is likely that the efficiency of the hunting shotguns that were available in the nineteenth century also impressed Maori. As Maori lacked projectile weapons, guns were appreciated for the ease with which they could kill birds (King 2003: 131).

In Otago and Southland today, however, only a small number of *Ngai Tahu* Maori are involved in duck hunting. One of the participants in this research (Grant), who is part of that tribal group, told me that the Acclimatization Societies who managed introduced game increasingly sidelined Maori. He explained that Maori who wanted to be involved in shooting game, were told to: “go back to their eeling”
which was seen as the appropriate pastime for 'native' people. As traditional hunting practices were increasingly marginalised and pakeha shooting was not a familiar cultural practice, generations of Maori lost contact with the hunting experience. Grant is a very enthusiastic duck shooter but he has noticed that usually only those Maori who have pakeha duck hunters in the family are likely to be introduced to the sport.

In summary, it is clear that the hunting practices that developed in New Zealand after European settlement excluded and marginalized Maori, despite (as the following section will explore) the goal of creating a hunting system that did not exclude or disadvantage any person no matter their class situation. Indeed, no one would be excluded - provided they obeyed and adopted very specific cultural hunting practices.

**The Acclimatization Movement**

The British settlers who arrived in New Zealand encountered a landscape unfamiliar to them. Their initial goal was to reshape the New Zealand 'wilderness' to make it more like the homeland they had left behind. The native bush, birds, and peoples were all viewed as inferior curiosities thoroughly in need of "Europeanization" (Crosby, 1986:227). It was taken for granted in some quarters that New Zealand was to become the 'Britain of the South' - with some 'improvements':

The colonists had a vision of New Zealand as a rural Arcadia where anyone might become one of the landed gentry, and they were keen to furnish it with game to provide the sport which at Home in England had been reserved to that elite (Galbreath 1993: 1).

Clark (1949) also notes that the “underprivileged classes, especially those who had lived for a generation in the relative freedom of pioneer life, were even more avid to enjoy the sport and food available only to their father at a poacher’s risks” (Clark
107

1949: 266). The native birds of New Zealand, however, were regarded by many as being "too tame" for sport.49

During the 1860s, an organised effort began to introduce new animal and bird species into New Zealand. These 'Acclimatization' policies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries introduced "an extraordinarily diverse zoological cocktail" into the country (MacKenzie 1988: 296), including many animals for the specific purpose of providing game to shoot. A wide variety of foreign birds were brought into New Zealand, mostly originating from Britain, for a variety of reasons: some practical, such as to control insect pests; some for sentimental reasons as colonists missed the familiar English birdsong; and some were specifically introduced as game birds (Thomson 1926: 6). Birds that could be hunted for 'sport' were of special concern because indigenously New Zealand (like Australia) only had ducks and pigeons, which were considered "hardly sufficient" (Dunlap 1999: 65). As a writer in the 1920s explains:

Nature neglected New Zealand in providing game animals; man has remedied the omission. Nature will do her part in supporting them; let man do his part in protecting them (Donne 1924: 295).

Over the last few decades of the nineteenth century, twenty-four Acclimatization Societies50 were formed; each responsible for the introduction and management of flora and fauna into a specific region of New Zealand.51 The Protection of Animals Act (1873) provided for the registration of these societies and also included restrictions and protection for game birds, both native and introduced. Many of the

49 For example, one hunter in the first decades of the twentieth century describes shooting "100 to 200" putangitangi (paradise ducks) in one morning, but dismissed the birds as being "too tame for sport" (Jones cited in Evison 1993:415).
51 In 1990 the Acclimatization Societies were dissolved and replaced by twelve Fish and Game Councils who are elected by licence holders. These regional councils operate under the national Fish and Game New Zealand council, which is a non-governmental organization, financially supported through licence revenue (McDowall 1994: 459). There will be further discussion about Fish and Game New Zealand in the following chapters.
introductions were unsuccessful as the imported animals and birds could not always adjust to the New Zealand landscape. The various societies introduced no fewer than 25 different waterfowl species for the purposes of hunting, but only four of those species eventually became established: the Mute Swan, Black Swan, Canada Goose, and Mallard duck (Caithness, 1982: 9). Although extremely common in contemporary New Zealand, the Mallard was not easily established, as this extract from a 1926 natural history book shows:

Continuous efforts have been made to naturalize mallards in New Zealand both by acclimatization societies and private individuals. The Otago Society began its importation in 1867, and repeated the experiment frequently in the years following. The Canterbury, Wellington, Auckland and Southland Societies have also attempted to naturalize the species. But unless the birds are carefully watched and protected they invariably disappear. In more recent years small tame flocks have been kept by some of the societies, and young birds reared from these have been scattered far and wide. In this way the mallard has become partially established in the southern part of the South Island, and, indeed, was common enough in Otago in 1915 for the Acclimatization Society to grant licenses to shoot them... Without a very close protection the mallard cannot survive. Even with this it is far from being common (Thomson 1926: 6).

Up until the 1930s, therefore, duck hunting by British settlers was mainly focused on the native Grey Duck. The photograph below (Figure 13) (held by the Wellington Acclimatisation Society) reveals: “large game hunting bags in the early years were mostly grey duck with a few swan” (McDowall 1994: 299). There was a sharp decline in their numbers after a few decades of European settlement, mainly due to the enormous reduction in the Grey Ducks’ wetland habitat.

52 Significant Mallard populations were established after 1937 when American Mallards (which appear to have been more suited to the New Zealand environment) were introduced (McDowall 1994: 307).
53 The Blue Duck and the Brown Teal quickly became rare and were removed from the hunting list (McDowall 1994: 298).
54 The Grey Duck is also a less adaptable and ‘wily’ bird than the Mallard, and this contributed to a further decline once the Mallard became established (McDowall 1994: 295).
The colonial gentry in New Zealand were strong supporters of the Acclimatization agenda. Several parliamentarians were also leaders of Acclimatization Societies, such as W. D. Murison, who was both president of the Otago Acclimatization Society in 1867, and the Member for Waikouaiti (Galbreath 1993: 3). George Vogel, a famous historical New Zealand figure, was on the committee that initially established the Otago Society. From the outset, therefore, the Acclimatization movement was initiated and controlled by New Zealand's wealthy and politically important elite (McDowall 1994: 18).

For the many working-class colonists who had dreamed of coming to a land where hunting was available to all, the 1861 Protection of Animals Act must have caused disappointment. This Act was mainly passed in an effort to protect and manage the introduced game birds and animals. It smacked, however, of the old elitist British hunting system. Rather than applying a quota system that allowed people from all backgrounds to hunt acclimatised game, the Act clearly favoured the wealthy. Intending hunters (of introduced game) had to pay a five-pound licence fee, which was equivalent to a month's wages, and hunting was prohibited on Sunday, which
was the worker’s only day off. This fee was reduced in 1867 to two-pound, ten shillings, and the ban on Sunday hunting eventually removed (Galbreath 1993: 113).

While it does appear that the general philosophy of the Acclimatization Societies was to make hunting accessible to ‘everyone’ and not just the elite (McDowall 1994: 26), it is clear that this philosophy intended to incorporate British settler society rather than Maori. British settlers established a set of rules and social understandings as to what constituted ‘ethical’ hunting practices which differed markedly from traditional Maori hunting practices. Because the British hunting ethos was incorporated into the legal system of the developing colony, Maori hunting, while initially allowed in a marginalised fashion, was to ultimately become outlawed.

Legislation regarding the hunting of birds in New Zealand initially related to strictly controlling access to those species introduced by the Acclimatization Societies. Native birds were not as highly valued as they were unfamiliar and did not fit into the traditions that had developed in Britain around gamebird hunting. A complete distinction, therefore, was made between introduced game, and birds native to New Zealand. Introduced species were strictly controlled by licences, season lengths, and bag limits. In regard to native game birds, there were several legislative acts from the 1860s onwards which controlled the length of hunting seasons and which species could be shot, however, there were no bag limits and no licence was required to hunt native birds. By 1908, the Acclimatization societies were calling for bag limits for native birds to be set as enormous numbers of birds were being shot - with examples of individual hunters taking 200 - 300 birds in a day (McDowall 1994: 66-67).

55 As stated earlier this current research has not focused on the impact of British colonisation on Maori hunting practices but this is an important area for future research.
There is evidence, however, that by the beginning of the twentieth century these attitudes were beginning to change as 'native' animals and birds became increasingly cherished because they were seen as contributing to a New Zealand sense of identity. Dunlap (1999) argues that for the European settlers that came to New Zealand (in common with all settler societies) there was an impulse to feel related to, or a part of, the land. This impulse or sentiment towards the landscape and the animals living within it took different forms in different New Zealand generations. Initially, the drive was to make the new land like the old - to establish some kind of familiarity to 'home' - and thus feel a sense of belonging and relatedness. Later generations, however, reversed this logic as they took pride in their sense of being 'a new people', forged from 'a new land'. They began to celebrate the differences found in the New Zealand landscape that differentiated them from 'home' (Dunlap 1999: 309).

In the opening decades of the twentieth century the appreciation of 'native nature' steadily increased (Dunlap 1999: 201) and, by 1953, the Wildlife Act gave absolute protection to most of New Zealand's native birds. The exceptions to this today are Paradise Duck, Grey Duck, Shoveler and Pukeko, which can only be shot legally by an individual with a game-bird licence.56 (The population levels of these birds are monitored and bag numbers adjusted to ensure the numbers are kept at 'harvestable levels'.) Increasingly, non-hunters have expressed uneasiness that native birds are being shot. This unease and concern for native birds is likely to be linked with the lack of native mammals in the New Zealand biota, leading to native birds holding a vital place within New Zealand society and also being central to

56 The other main exception to the Wildlife Act is the 'cultural harvest' of titi56 (commonly known as Muttonbirds). Titi are migratory seabirds with large populations found on islands off Stewart Island (Rakiura). Only Maori belonging to the tribes from those islands are entitled to collect titi. Tribal rights to harvest these birds were formalized between the crown and Rakiura Maori before the passage of the Wildlife Act (King 1994), and first established in 1864 when Stewart Island was ceded to Britain (Wilson 1979). Titi harvesting (or muttonbirding) involves pulling juvenile birds from their burrows, or stupefying fledglings at night. The birds are then processed and were traditionally preserved in kelp bags. (See Eva Wilson's (1979) Titi Heritage: the Story of the Muttonbird Islands for a comprehensive history of titi Harvesting.)
discourses of nationhood. This is most clearly seen in the affectionate term used for New Zealanders: Kiwis.

Since the 1960s the conservation movement has gained momentum as a reaction against, and recognition of, the environmental damage that has occurred from human ‘development’ (NZCA 1997). One concept often expressed within this movement is that of ‘intrinsic value’, which reflects the idea that all life forms have “such beauty or value in their own right that it is a sacrilege to hunt or kill them” (Moller 1999a: 5). The idea of preservationism is connected to this concept, a philosophical approach that sees wilderness areas as self-creating, evolutionary, ecosystems that are damaged or become ‘unnatural’ with human intervention (Oelschlaeger 1991: 289). By extension, animal species introduced by humans are not seen as part of the ‘natural’ landscape. Preservationism contrasts with the philosophy of game management, which sees animals (both native and introduced) as harvestable resources, and implements management strategies that ensure animal populations can sustain hunting. Increasingly, those species introduced by Acclimatization Societies as game animals were understood as existing in New Zealand solely for the purpose of being hunted, as the following extract from a Forest and Bird57 magazine explains: “perhaps it is time to consider greater protection for this endemic bird (the Shoveler) and concentrate hunting pressure on the flourishing waterfowl species which have been introduced for this purpose” (Graeme 1992: 3, emphasis added).

In summary therefore, the Acclimatization movement was initially bound up with colonial discourses about ‘improving’ the ‘impoverished’ New Zealand environment through introducing plants, animals, and birds into the country. But this attitude soon changed and as the appreciation of native New Zealand species

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57 First established in 1923, the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand is New Zealand’s largest national conservation organisation. Its stated mission is to “preserve and protect the native plants and animals and natural features of New Zealand” (Forest and Bird 2000).
grew so also did a discourse about introduced animals being ‘unnatural’ interlopers or ‘pests’ – and therefore acceptable, or even desirable, hunting quarry. As these ideas of wildlife became established in New Zealand society, so too did the tradition of duck hunting, which (as we shall see in Chapter 5) remained uncontested and unquestioned within pakeha society until very recently.

3.5 The Development of a New Zealand Duck Hunting Tradition
During the twentieth century the New Zealand duck hunting ‘tradition’ referred to by Gadsby (2000) at the beginning of this chapter, became established. As noted, the early British settlers brought with them particular approaches and customs towards hunting waterfowl, however, these were adapted to suit the unique environmental and ecological conditions they found in New Zealand. Many early settlers also abhorred the notion of transplanting the British hunting tradition to this country unaltered, because of the elitist and exclusionary aspects inherent in that tradition. Duck hunting as it is practiced in New Zealand today, therefore, is unique to this country and an amalgam of many difference historical threads. This chapter has shown how some aspects can be traced back over three hundred years to Britain. The development of flight shooting as a fashionable sport has some components that appear to fit with Gadsby’s (2000) description of a typical Southland duck hunting experience: components such as shooting birds, involving men (and not women), and a chance for friends (mates) to have fun together. Markland (1767) also mentions the excitement and anticipation of gamebird hunting, just as Gadsby does. Both men also comment on special clothing worn for the occasion. Other historical aspects of British wildfowling traditions are also highly relevant to duck hunting in this country. As I have shown, technical changes to the gun and the process of industrialisation made wildfowling an affordable activity for the middle-classes. The development of ‘rules’, such as killing a bird with one shot while ‘on the wing’, became established in Victorian England. Additionally, the types of bird species regarded as ‘game’ in New Zealand, were clearly drawn from British traditions, so that introduced birds, such
as sparrows and thrushes, were regarded as aesthetically pleasing and definitely not on the menu, even once their numbers could have sustained hunting pressures.

As I have also shown, in the settler countries such as New Zealand, where these hunting traditions were imported, the hunting techniques of the indigenous peoples became framed as ‘cruel’ and uncivilized. Thus, the duck hunting tradition established in this country has not incorporated trapping or snaring as an acceptable method of taking birds. The overall techniques and cultural framework for duck hunting in New Zealand, therefore, are overwhelmingly British in origin.

There are, however, some crucial differences between British and New Zealand duck hunting. When the British settlers arrived in New Zealand, ducks and other waterfowl were important sources of food. Although ‘sporting’ aspects of shooting ducks also arrived quickly on the scene, New Zealand did not have the same negative associations with ducks and peasant food provisioning as was the case in Britain. The relatively recent connection to pioneer society in New Zealand history also incorporates a particular construct that includes a certain romantic view of provisioning from the land. Images of stoic and resourceful men in rural spaces are interwoven through New Zealand history and these dominant notions of masculinity have a strong hold today (Phillips 1996).

In common with Australia and linked to these dominant constructions of masculinity, hunting was widely accepted in New Zealand because it was a way for men to express a ‘manly’ and resourceful relationship with ‘nature’: a kind of “naturalization process” that connected them to the land (Franklin 1996: 51). In addition, Franklin (1996) argues that in the past Australian hunters have been “insulated from moral blame” because they have been hunting introduced or exotic species (Franklin 1996: 46), and the New Zealand duck hunting ‘tradition’ also appears to have been associated with saving New Zealand’s indigenous species by destroying introduced ones. Hunting, therefore, became an activity that not only
perpetuated gendered constructions connected to resourceful, rural, masculinities, but was also associated with a discourse that depicted hunting as heroically caring for New Zealand’s environment.

Some of the most useful information about the development of the duck hunting ‘tradition’ in New Zealand during the twentieth century comes from books written specifically by and for duck hunters themselves. These books are a fairly recent phenomenon, which in itself is rather curious. It may be that duck hunters have previously been content with the various sports magazines available for most of the century, or possibly duck shooting in New Zealand has not typically been viewed as a serious enough topic for a book? Only around fourteen books on this topic have been published over the past forty years. Of these, three can be regarded as practical ‘how-to’ instruction books and are quite short in length. The rest of the books, while also including sections with practical information such as how to build a hide, how to call ducks, how to recognize birds, and so on, also incorporate some fascinating historical snippets and rather telling statements about how duck hunting is experienced in New Zealand society. These books are all written by duck hunters and quite a number of the authors reveal very personal information about their opinions and attitudes.

Ian Dee’s (1974) book, *Duck Fever* includes a Publisher’s note which states that this book: “is a notable first, since no written work of any size has yet been published on duckshooting as practiced here in New Zealand” (cited in Dee 1974: 5).58 Dee’s book is of a highly personal nature. The introduction provides an interesting impression of duck shooting in the early 1970s, with Dee talking about the enthusiasm for duck hunting being a kind of “fever” that “affects thousands of shooters throughout New Zealand every year”. During autumn, those people who are “infected” will begin to clean and rub down their guns “lovingly”, and begin

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58 *A Shooter’s Guide to Wildfowling* was published in 1960 and 1971 by the Department of Internal Affairs, however, those books are in pamphlet form and were primarily aimed at helping duck shooters identify wildfowl and ensure that protected species were not shot.
encouraging their dogs to get fitter. The place of women in this picture is clearly one of non-involvement and disapproval:

Long-suffering wives become grim-lipped as they survey unmown lawns and neglected household chores. They envisage more nights of struggling for their share of the blankets while husbands toss and turn in their dreams brought on by expectant anxiety as opening day draws close (Dee 1974: 8).

Indeed, women are generally absent from most early duck hunting literature unless referred to as "long-suffering", although some evidence exists in some books published in the 1990s that hunters are making an effort to include women. Parkes (1992) includes a photograph of his wife and suggests: "one of the best ways to get time off for hunting is to take your wife with you!" (Parkes, 1992: 96). References to women duck shooters in the historical record are very few. Although not strictly part of this study, an interesting photograph taken in 1929 (Figure 14 below) is included in Phillip Holden's (1992)  *Golden Years of Hunting in New Zealand*, showing a woman pheasant shooter.

![FIGURE 14. Woman Pheasant Shooter c.1920s](Source: Holden 1992:214)
No text accompanies this picture apart from: “The modern New Zealand Sportsgirl of 1929” (Holden 1992:214). Although it is not possible to draw any definite conclusions from this picture, it is most likely that this woman was part of a shoot on private lands with pheasants that were raised and released.

Keith Draper (1969) records one rare example of a woman being included in a duck shoot in his biography of Fred Fletcher, a well known hunting and fishing personality who died in 1967. During the 1930s, Fred took a visiting English Lieutenant and his fiancée out on a duck hunting expedition. ‘Miss Street’ surprised everyone by being interested in calling ducks:

His fiancée was intrigued with the duck call and I gave her a few elementary lessons in its use. She soon caught on... We had several good shots after that and Miss Street greatly enjoyed her role as caller. She became quite adept and used to cajole birds into range with the guile of an experienced duck-hunter (Fletcher, cited in Draper, 1969: 75).

The lack of reference to women in duck hunting literature quite possibly connects to broad social expectations of gender and gendered behaviour within particular sites, issues I consider in more depth in Chapter 4. What is clear, however, is that a male duck hunter is central to the traditional image of New Zealand duck hunting.

Another important component of ‘traditional’ duck hunting that is frequently referred to in duck hunting books revolves around the building of a maimai – the popular term in New Zealand for a hide, where shooters remain out of sight while calling ducks into range of their shotgun. ‘Jump-shooting’, the term for sneaking up on ducks in rivers or lakes, is also discussed in these books, but for many people the maimai seems to be a central feature of duck hunting. Details about how this term was adopted are not altogether clear. Parkes (1992) explains that ‘Mia-Mia’ is an aboriginal word that “somewhere along the way changed the vowel order” which was picked up in New Zealand (Parkes 1992: 81). Draper (1999) refers to A. W. Reed’s Dictionary of Maori Place Names published in 1962 which explains that the
term came to New Zealand from Australia with gold-diggers and that it is an Aboriginal term for a bivouac that is made from leaves and brush (Draper 1999: 191). Many people assume maimai to be a Maori word. If so, it could possibly be derived from the word ‘mai’ which has several definitions, amongst them, a flax garment or a skirt made of undressed flax. Some language books define maimai as “a haka to welcome guests to a hangi” (cited in Ballett 1997: 31).59

The construction of the maimai itself can vary enormously, from positively palatial to the barest shelter. The duck-hunting books also provide contrasting variations on how a shooter might use a maimai. Some books portray it as a place of action whereas for others it is a place for relaxation. Jamieson (1989) explains that he places comfort in his maimai as a high priority:

Other keener, fitter men can plod the sodden marshes with disobedient dogs, and trickles of cold water running down the backs of their necks. I’ll settle for comfort. Once inside, I don’t care if it snows. Snugged in waders, a quilted hunting jacket and a tartan wool cap with earflaps, I can read Playboy and sip laced coffee far from the noise of traffic, newspapers, even – bless their hearts – grandchildren. All the mod cons of civilization are there, and none of its disadvantages (Jamieson 1989: 8).

Jamieson concludes, rather self-deprecatingly: “even the ducks co-operate. They don’t come within a mile of the place” (Jamieson 1989: 8). The passage quoted above makes it clear that the duck shooting experience means a lot more to some hunters than just firing at ducks. For Jamieson, it is also an escape from the demands and expectations of family and wider society. The most salient feature of the New Zealand maimai that is revealed through these books, although not actually stated, is the understanding that it is a masculine space. (This aspect, and a more in-depth discussion on the maimai, will be explored in Chapter 4.)

59 The ‘true’ origins of the term maimai may always be obscure, and the original source is, perhaps, now irrelevant. As with many terms that enter the popular lexicon, maimai has developed in meaning and significance over time and the tradition now associated with is far removed from its origins.
By the 1940s a ‘tradition’ of duck hunting in New Zealand was well established. The following poem written during that decade encapsulates the essential components of what had become the ‘traditional’ New Zealand duck hunting experience: an emphasis on ‘manly’ skills and masculine comradeship; the utilisation of the shotgun as the ‘ethical’ weapon of choice; the popular use of the hunting ‘hide’ or maimai; and the appreciation of duck hunting as a way to enjoin with the ‘natural’ world:

**May Morning**

*Dawn, and the wind on our faces*
*At the lakes’ edge;*
*Guns wading in to their places*
*Out in the sedge;*
*Shouted last-minute instructions*
*Passed in the murk;*
*Dogs, making canine deductions,*
*Whimpering for work*

*Alistair, cold though elated,*
*Back to the breeze*
*Thinks of a warm bed vacated*
*To come out and freeze;*
*Mac in the shallows concealing*
*At the mouth of the creek,*
*Proclaims with much candour and feeling*
*His boot’s sprung a leak.*

*Eastward, the grey mists are clearing*
*A path for the light;*
*Beating of wings within hearing,*
*Still out of sight.*
*Each from his chosen position*
*Sees the day born;*
*Watches the glorious transition*
*Of night into morn.*

*Volley of gunfire ringing*
*Round the lake sides;*
*First flight of duck are seen winging*
*Straight for the hides.*
*Ah, what a scene for reflection*
*At close of the day;*
*What pictures for Mem‘ry’s collection*
*Of Mornings in May.*

*(Temple Sutherland c.1940, cited in Orman and Morgan 1978:132)*
Conclusion
In this chapter I have provided an overview of the history of wildfowling and duck hunting to identify factors that have influenced the development of duck hunting as it is practiced in contemporary New Zealand society. The information available on Maori wildfowl hunting practices prior to European colonisation suggests that these indigenous practices were not incorporated into the duck hunting tradition which had developed by the first decades of the twentieth century. Rather, it is clear that British settlers established the duck hunting tradition that has now become familiar in New Zealand. This tradition appears to have some strands strongly connected to British hunting traditions, such as: the use of the gun as an ‘ethical’ and ‘sporting’ weapon; hunting discourses based on Western technologies and science; hunting as a recreational activity connected to ‘escaping’ to ‘nature’ from industrialised and urbanized life; and the concept of shooting birds as an activity for men. There are some aspects of the New Zealand duck hunting tradition, however, which appear to have developed from the specific and unique conditions found in this country, such as: the maimai as a central feature of duck hunting; the widespread popularity of pond shooting (as opposed to the more common shore-shooting in Britain); and an emphasis on egalitarian hunting opportunities so that no person is excluded due to their class position (although this was not really put into practice until the twentieth century). This egalitarian approach has also meant that ducks do not have the same associations with the lower classes as in Britain. In the twentieth century, furthermore, the shooting of introduced ducks became associated with discourses about rescuing ‘native’ New Zealand from ‘invading’ species.

One of the key components of the New Zealand duck hunting experience appears to be the connection between ‘maleness’ and duck hunting, which in the New Zealand situation is further associated with pioneer society and notions of the ‘frontier’. Literature written by duck hunters connects duck hunting activities with specific masculine discourses about self-sufficiency and stoicism, and women are
very rarely mentioned except as reluctant observers. Clearly, gender is central to
the New Zealand duck hunting experience and the following chapter will explore
some of the fundamental practices of duck hunting in southern New Zealand and
the gendered performances associated with it.
Chapter 4
Mates in Maimais: The Gendered Practices of Duck Hunting

I may be prejudiced, but somehow I think that wildfowling is one of the last forms of strenuous relaxation left to the man whose heart and soul are so essentially masculine that he must by necessity escape from the shams, conventions and orthodoxies of modern life


Introduction
Frank is in his sixties and has the etched face of a man who has spent a lot of his life outdoors. I contacted Frank because several people told me he was a really ‘keen’ duck hunter and also a really ‘good’ bloke. There was something about those two adjectives that had a ring of familiarity to them and then I realised that was because they are a part of a New Zealand’s masculine mythos as enshrined in the writing of
Barry Crump.60 I approached Frank with some trepidation, as I was a little put off by the association I had made between him and Barry Crump’s somewhat intimidating masculinity. What I discovered on meeting Frank, however, was a ‘tough’ man, but not an unapproachable one. His life experiences had been very different to mine and yet we discovered enough in common to develop a rapport. Frank is an exceptionally enthusiastic duck hunter and he wanted me to understand why he enjoys it so much. From my initial discussions with Frank I gained some understanding of the passion that some men have for duck hunting. Frank felt good about himself when he was duck shooting and carrying out activities associated with it. A very important part of this enjoyment was the connections it allowed him with other men in a ‘natural’ setting:

It is the fact of being out there – we are all together and you have a kind of closeness, a kind of bond – it is hard to explain, it is so totally different to anything else. You are out in the countryside, you are away from telephones, you are away from noise, it might be blowing and it might be raining or drizzling but that doesn’t matter. You are out with your mates waiting for ducks to fly past – but if they don’t it doesn’t really matter (Frank).

In this chapter I will provide a broad-ranging description of duck hunting activities and practices, and illustrate that gender is a fundamental issue in duck hunting and how it is experienced. Such understandings of gender are inextricable from ideas of nature and where and how men and women fit into both ‘natural’ and ‘unnatural’ (or ‘civilised’) landscapes. The realm of duck hunting incorporates sites that are strongly invested with gendered meanings and cultural expressions that relate to being ‘masculine’ (and often not being ‘feminine’). These meanings and expressions encapsulate different relationships: between men; between men and women (even though women are often physically absent); between men and animals; and between men, ‘nature’, and the environment. To varying degrees, the

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60 Barry Crump’s first book, A Good Keen Man, was published in 1960. His books encapsulate the stereotype of the New Zealand man as a self-sufficient, roving male with excellent hunting and bush skills, and an essential ‘natural’ goodness.
duck hunters I spent time with actively – and often quite self-consciously – constructed different notions of gender as an expression of where they understood their place in the world to be.

One of the most challenging and difficult aspects of trying to make sense of the gendered nature of duck hunting is the variety and multiplicity of ways that 'masculinities' and 'femininities' are expressed in this activity. 'Being' a duck hunter manifests itself in different, and often paradoxical, ways. It is also important to realise that the duck hunting experience is dynamic and not static: wider historical and social processes constantly impact on how duck hunting is conceived, practiced and, ultimately, experienced.

4.1 Female Researcher Dabbling in a Male Pond

It is impossible to escape the 'masculine' orientation of duck hunting. Here I mean 'masculine' in both the sense that males dominate duck hunting but also in the sense that it is associated with behaviours that are commonly ascribed to being 'masculine' – in contradistinction to being 'feminine'. I was warned of these behaviours as I embarked on my fieldwork and, interestingly, these warnings came not only from people who had no involvement with duck hunting, but also from some people who are enthusiastically involved in it. Specifically, as a woman researcher, there was concern about the 'roughness' of the places I wanted to go to visit: 'roughness' both in the sense of the landscape but also in the sense of the behaviour of the men. Rough men in a rough landscape – this image resonates with the notion of a 'traditional' New Zealand masculinity and especially the ideas of both the "masculine rural" and the "rural masculine" (Campbell and Bell 2000) – ideas that I will return to later in this chapter. Underlying concern about my going into this 'rough' landscape were assumptions connected to embodiment and space – a woman's body did not belong in this 'masculine' spatial domain.
But what is ‘gender’? Focusing on ‘gender’ in the social lives of people is challenging. Our lived experiences are pervasively shaped by gender, yet when aspects of gender are highlighted people often become uncomfortable. Questioning, or even making an observation about the dominant gender order can elicit antagonistic or defensive reactions. When I embarked on my research process I was aware that there might be some problems in terms of being accepted. I was thus careful about the persona that I presented to the men I spent time with: I tried to appear competent, down-to-earth, and friendly. In particular, I did not want the participants to feel threatened or challenged by my interest in their duck hunting activities, particularly in terms of the ethical issues relating to killing ducks. However, while I was making an effort to allay any concerns about my being a closet animal rights activist, I was unprepared for the defensive and sometimes antagonistic responses that I elicited from some men purely as a woman asking questions about what was essentially ‘men’s business’.

Given these responses, a case could be made from an ‘insider’/‘outsider’ perspective that a male researcher would be more ideally suited to study duck hunting. A male with no experience of duck hunting might standout as a novice, but not as ‘a man’. He would, therefore, be able to get the ‘insider’s’ point of view more easily as he would not ‘disturb’ the ‘normal’ practices of the duck hunting scene. In contrast, my very presence as ‘a woman’ in the male dominated arena of duck hunting often brought constructions of gender into sharp relief.

While I made an effort to become involved and participate in some duck hunting activities, there was nothing I could do to change the ‘outsider’ status that my very gender or ‘femaleness’ created in the field. In my fieldwork this gender awareness was most salient in the ‘blokes only’ circumstances, where one of the primary motivations for going duck hunting was specifically to be with an exclusively male

61 Although being a male does not necessarily guarantee access to all ‘male worlds’ either. Class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation may limit what male informants are prepared to share with a male researcher. See Warren (1988) for further discussion on gender issues in field research.
group. In contrast, with those men who placed a strong emphasis on including family and friends (a group I have called ‘community’ duck hunters) I was integrated into the activities relatively easily because there were recognised ‘embodied’ positions that women hold in this group. I had, therefore, the experience of feeling both an ‘insider’ and an ‘outsider’ at different times. As my fieldwork was ‘multi-sited’ experiencing a range of ‘inside-edness’ and ‘outside-edness’ is, perhaps, an outcome to be expected. For me, however, this dual perspective was very much connected to the attitudes of the men and the place they understood women to have in how they constructed their duck hunting experience.

**Gender and Hunting**

Concepts of hunting and masculinity are closely intertwined themes in European cultural histories and are thus a powerful metaphor for defining ‘maleness’ (see Cartmill 1993; Bergman 1996). As discussed in Chapter 3, hunting (and angling) in Britain is strongly socially differentiated, reflecting the long history of the elite having almost exclusive access to hunting resources. The situation, however, was quite different in the USA which, in common with New Zealand, promoted itself as a place where all members of society could have universal access to hunting (Franklin 1999). Although, in reality, this universality did not hold for all individuals because it still incorporated social restrictions based on gender. This reflected an influence from Europe where the progressive restriction of access to hunting for women became entrenched during the nineteenth century as rules and etiquette became increasingly male orientated (MacKenzie 1988: 21).

Recent hunting statistics from the United States confirm that the vast majority of hunters are still male, with approximately 21 percent of the male population participating in hunting compared to only 2 percent of the female population62 (Cartmill 1993: 233). As discussed in Chapter 2, it is estimated that in New Zealand

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62 However, Mary Stange (1997) argues that it is significant that the number of women who hunt has doubled over the past decade. This dynamic will be discussed further below.
between 40,000 to 50,000 people are directly involved in duck hunting (Nugent 1992). It is very difficult, however, to accurately ascertain how many duck shooters are women, as the licence application does not specify the gender of the licence holder, and women can also go shooting if their family holds a 'family licence'. It is clear, however, from anecdotal evidence and discussions I have had with Fish & Game staff, that women make up a very small proportion of duck hunters in this country.63 The Sporting Shooters Association of New Zealand estimates that, of the entire hunting fraternity in this country, less than 1 percent are women (Gedhill 2000).

4.2 Three Different Types of Duck Hunting Experience
As previously noted, special challenges apply to carrying out an ethnographic study on such a geographically ‘unbounded group’. Trying to understand and generalise about the behaviour of duck hunters in connection to gender is especially difficult. Duck hunters come from a wide variety of social positions and family backgrounds. Although there is a sense of an overall New Zealand duck hunting ‘culture’, there remains no single type of duck hunter or duck hunting experience. Even so, I was able to identify three broad types of duck hunting experience: 'dedicated' duck hunting, 'blokes only' duck hunting, and 'community' duck hunting. These categories were distinguished by key gender dynamics, which related to attitudes towards hunting skills; attitudes towards the inclusion of women and family members; and various different practices including those related to alcohol. Such categories should not be thought of as exhaustive, nor do I want to imply that duck hunters are always strictly one of these types. Some duck hunters, for example, may spend part of their duck hunting season being a 'mates only' duck hunter or a 'dedicated' duck hunter, and then switch to being more 'community' or family orientated for the rest of the season. Despite these provisos,

63 Fish and Game New Zealand have made an effort to ensure that the information they provide, both in the pamphlets they produce and through their website, is presented as inclusive for women. Their website, for example, provides contact details for women and beginners who want help in getting started in duck hunting.
the three categories do provide some broad indications which help to structure my analysis.

**The ‘Dedicated’ Duck Hunting Experience**

The ‘dedicated’ duck hunter will usually hunt alone or with only one or two carefully chosen companions, and will go on hunting trips throughout the season. They place a great deal of emphasis on hunting skillfully and ethically. This type of duck hunter will go to many different locations and has a wide knowledge of ducks and their habitat. This hunting is usually the most successful in terms of the number of ducks and other wildfowl that are shot and this hunter puts a lot of emphasis on the provisioning aspect of their duck shooting. Many (although not all) of these dedicated duck hunters also engage in other types of hunting and, as such, are proud that they are not dependent on the supermarket for their meat. They do not consume alcohol while hunting, although there may be some kind of celebration during the evening of opening day once the hunting is over. Paul, one of the participants in this study, is a good example of this type of hunter:

> I go with the same guy all the time...but for other hunters there is a much bigger social aspect – it wouldn’t worry me if I didn’t see another hunter. I mean I love going out with other guys but they have got to be the guys I want to go with and when we go there is no alcohol – we are dedicated to hunting ducks. And that is the primary goal of the day – to get out there and shoot ducks – that’s what we do (Paul).

**The ‘Blokes Only’ Duck Hunting Experience**

The ‘blokes only’ duck hunter is usually part of a group of four or five men who put a great deal of emphasis on the social aspects of the activity. This type of duck hunter usually only goes out on opening weekend, and views this weekend with a great deal of anticipation and excitement. This activity may be carried out in a farm maimai, or often, on public waters. The ‘blokes only’ duck hunter does not usually include family members directly in their activities in any way. The provisioning aspect of duck hunting is not as important either, although a few ducks may be taken home for the freezer or given away. The degree of shooting skills in this
group of hunters varies a great deal. Alcohol is also a very important component of
the opening weekend. Some groups consume small amounts in the maimai, and
then enjoy a lot of alcohol once the hunting has finished. Some notorious stories
circulate about a small minority of these hunters being very drunk in the maimai.
James, an example of the blokes only approach, describes his view of hunting:

What happens with a lot of people is that it is a social traditional get
together where a group of guys get together and do their thing which for a
lot of hunters they might not see each other until the opening weekend.
They would prefer that the women weren’t there and most women let the
blokes go away and do it for the one weekend (James).

The ‘Community’ Duck Hunting Experience
The ‘community’ duck hunter is predominantly from a rural background, or will
have some family connection to a rural location. A farm setting is the most
common site of duck hunting for the community duck hunter, who typically hunts
with extended family members or very close friends, with social conventions going
back many years. The ‘community’ duck hunter usually puts time and money into
building or developing a pond, or has assisted a family member in doing so. A
variety of different hunting events on the opening weekend of the season include
family members in a range of different activities. While opening day may be a very
‘blokey’ occasion, children and other family members are often invited to join in
with the men on the Saturday night and Sunday of opening weekend. Similarly,
partners and non-hunting family members will sometimes come and watch. There
are often traditional meals or barbeques for everyone to participate in. After the
wider family involvement of opening morning, the ‘community’ duck hunter will
usually shoot several more times during the season, although these trips are far
more low key and may only involve one other family member or friend. The degree
of skill in this group of hunters varies a great deal. While some ‘community duck
hunters are very serious about their hunting (in common with the ‘dedicated’ duck
hunter), they also place a great deal of emphasis on social interactions and family
involvement in their hunting. Alcohol usually does not feature largely in the
mimai until the hunting is over and guns put away, and issues to do with firearm safety use in general are extremely important to this group. Len, a representative of ‘community’ duck hunting, sums up this approach:

Duck hunting for me is not a stand-alone activity. Don’t get me wrong I like shooting ducks, but I also like the family and social traditions that we have that go along with it. It’s a great excuse to see the ‘rellies’ (relatives) and old mates, have a good laugh, and eat and drink too much. I don’t think I would have pursued duck shooting if it wasn’t for the family and social thing (Len).

The participants introduced in the following sections of this chapter reveal a variety of different approaches to duck hunting, while also highlighting how this male-dominated pastime negotiates and constructs notions of (rural) ‘masculinity’. Attitudes towards duck hunting and ideas generated around masculinity often vary depending on whether a person is involved in ‘dedicated’, ‘blokes only’, or ‘community’ duck hunting. These attitudes incorporate different emphases that are placed on relationships with people, animals, and ‘nature’. These relationships also reflect the pleasures that duck hunters find in the duck hunting experience and ways that discourses around the idea of a ‘natural masculinity’ are legitimized (Franklin 1998).

4.3 Messy ‘Masculinities’

Masculinity has traditionally been seen as self-evident, natural, universal: and above all as unitary and whole, not multiple and divided (Buchbinder 1994: 1).

It is no longer widely accepted that gender categories are essentialist and unchanging. The conceptual term ‘masculinity’ (singular) has lost currency amongst gender theorists who deploy the alternative plural form – ‘masculinities’ – as more appropriate to their purposes (see for example, Connell 1993, 1995; Buchbinder 1994; Gutmann 1997: Whitehead 2002). In everyday Western currency, ‘masculinities’ is a term that has diverse connotations and understandings associated with it, and yet, although difficult to define and explain, behaving in a
In the context of this study, it is important to recognise the connection and tension between ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’. So often ‘femininity’ is the unspoken binary opposite measured against ‘masculinity’. These gender binaries often signify the masculine side as being something and the ‘other’, the feminine, is defined as being the negation (or inferior version) of that thing. As Nancy Jay explains: “that which is defined, separated out, isolated from all else is A and pure. Not-A is necessarily impure, a random catchall, to which nothing is external except A and the principle of order that separates it from Not-A” (Jay 1981: 45). Underlying the understanding of many expressions of masculinity is a fear of expressing effeminacy, but more usually opposing, feminine ideas are hidden – ‘be a man’ (also meaning ‘don’t be a women’), ‘harden up’ (also meaning ‘don’t be so soft’). Occasionally, however, the feminine is revealed in negative ‘don’t’ statements as the following incident revealed to me in terms of my own research.

While buying some wine in a bottle store I overheard two employees discussing the upcoming opening weekend of duck hunting. Both men looked to be in their early forties and their conversation became quite terse, as they appeared to have quite different approaches to alcohol consumption in connection to duck hunting. The first man expressed uncertainty about opening morning as the group he usually went hunting with had become quite intoxicated the year before and he had felt unsafe with them. The second man’s response to this was to say, “don’t be such a girl”. The first man went on to explain that he liked having a drink (as “much as the next man”) but not while firearms were being used, to which the second man repeated several more times, ‘don’t be such a girl’ while looking around at other people in shop looking for (I am guessing) someone to endorse his ‘masculine’ response to what he clearly saw as unfounded (and ‘unmanly’) concerns (Fieldnotes 2001).

This incident provides a telling illustration of the gendered symbolic and behavioural duality often expressed in relation to being ‘masculine’. The first man’s expressions of concern and fear, particularly as they were voiced explicitly,
were clearly attributes that the second man connected with being ‘feminine’. The second man was not prepared to engage with the first man – not even to acknowledge his concerns as valid, nor to provide any suggestions as to how the situation might be resolved – because he dismissed these issues completely due to their ‘girlishness’.

**Judith Butler and the ‘Performance’ of Gender**

This fieldwork anecdote clearly shows that the expression of ‘masculinity’ is often connected to notions of biological maleness, and therefore men who display ‘feminine’ behaviours, such as the man at the bottle shop, are often the objects of ridicule and derision. In the same way, women who express or exhibit ‘masculine’ behaviours are frequently constructed as being ‘butch’, or ‘unfeminine’ and therefore seen as aberrations outside the ‘normal’ gender order. Understanding gender relations as binary opposites where biological sex (male, female) determines gendered personhood (masculine, feminine) has been challenged by gender theorists such as Judith Butler (1990, 1993) who argue that gender is “free-floating” and fluid rather than fixed:

> When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one (Butler 1990: 6).

Given this new idea of gender, in *Bodies That Matter* (1993), Butler examines the connection between categories of ‘sex’ and issues of materiality and performativity. She argues that binaries of form/matter and soul/body have been created by the exclusion of femininity. It is, furthermore, through the exclusion of the feminine that the creation of these binaries is made possible (Butler 1993: 35-39). Therefore
the binaries are actually defined against that which they exclude: for example, you can only be ‘masculine’, when you are not being ‘feminine’.\textsuperscript{64}

Butler focuses her analysis on the notion of ‘performance’, arguing that an individual’s gendered persona is the exterior product of “acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires, [which] create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core” (Butler 1990: 136). Butler sees the production of self and gender as a ‘discursive effect’; that is, the cultural and linguistic codes that operate in a society create and shape the gendered identities of men and women. These identities ‘congeal’ over time - through the repeated gender ‘performances’ that are shaped by the cultural representations that saturate modern society (Butler 1990, 1993).

But how can we define the terms ‘sex’ and ‘gender’?\textsuperscript{65} This has been a topic of anthropological inquiry (and debate) for many decades.\textsuperscript{66} The term ‘gender’ is relatively recent, however, having been introduced into feminist studies during the 1970s in an effort to differentiate between notions of universal, biological ‘sex’ differences and the enormous variation in cross-cultural ‘sex roles’ that were by that time well documented (such as in the ethnographic fieldwork of Margaret Mead (1964 [1950]). ‘Gender’, as a term of analysis, therefore, was created in an attempt to “challenge the essentialist and universalist dictum that ‘biology is destiny’ (Stolcke 1993: 20; also Haraway 1991: 127-148).

\textsuperscript{64} Butler contends that these binaries are part of a phallogocentric worldview and, drawing on Platonic philosophy, she illustrates that only where male-controlled heterosexuality is hegemonic in a society will there be the differentiation of gender and sex (Butler 1993:50-52).

\textsuperscript{65} These terms are highly problematic and contestable. In addition, the term ‘gender’, which is an English language construction, is not always easily applied in other linguistic contexts (Del Valle 1993: 2). (For further discussion, and for a brief history on the historical background to the introduction of ‘gender’ as a category of analysis, see Stolcke (1993): 19-22).

\textsuperscript{66} A discussion on the history of the anthropology of gender is outside the scope of this study. For a brief outline see Sanday (1990) and for a more comprehensive discussion on feminist anthropology see Moore (1993).
But this division between sex and gender is no longer stable. As Henrietta Moore (1993) explains, the influence of Foucault in anthropological discourse has led to: “the distinction between sex and gender on which feminist anthropology has rested its case (falling) away” (Moore 1993: 197). In particular, Butler’s (1990) interpretation of Foucault’s (1984) work *The History of Sexuality Vol. I*, has led to the argument that perhaps there is no difference between ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ partly because, if gender is constructed in a variety of ways across cultures, then those categories that explain sexual difference are also culturally constructed. Moore (1993) takes up Butler’s (1990) argument specifically in relation to ethnographic research and explains:

Ethnographic material suggests that the differences between women and men which other cultures naturalize and locate in the human body, and in features of the physical and cosmological environment, are not necessarily those which correspond to the constellation of features on which Western discourse bases its categorizations (Moore 1993: 198).

Butler’s conception of gender identity and performativity, therefore, denies any ‘reality’ in the materiality of bodies and the discursive identities associated with them. She argues that ‘sex’ is not a natural, a priori category but is the outcome of an indoctrination process perpetuated over time so that categories of sex (and gender) appear to be unchanging norms (Butler 1990). In other words, through the observation of cultural representations of masculinities and femininities, and through unconscious imitation and gender performativity, a person gradually develops a sense of their sex, sexuality, and gender. Thus:

in this understanding, the sexed/gendered body materializes through the dynamics and processes of discourse. It is named in discourse and so comes to make its appearance as sovereign and given and thus apparently, outside discourse. In the process, however, it conceals the means of its invention (Whitehead 2002: 193).

The sex and gender characteristics that are regarded as ‘normal’ do change over time and, therefore, Butler argues, the notion of ‘sex’ is only recognisable according
to current socially approved characteristics (Butler 1990: 14). Butler sees the dominance of heterosexual relations (the 'heterosexual matrix') in Western societies as perpetuating highly regulated practices of gender and, as a result, limiting the gender performances that are regarded as 'normal'.

Butler’s ideas of ‘performance’ and ‘performativity’ have been enormously popular and influential across many disciplines. However, as geographer Lise Nelson (1999) points out, these concepts are not always applied in the way that Butler intends (see also Brickell 2003). In her critique of how geographers have incorporated Butler’s theory, Nelson specifically highlights the problem of incorporating the notion of agency in regard to gendered ‘performances’. Butler (1990) has argued that agency is an unnecessary ‘fiction’ and any sense of a core identity is produced through unintentional ‘slippages’ that occur through: “repetitive, compelled performances of hegemonic identities” (Butler 1990: 6).

While theoretically compelling, Butler’s notion of performance is problematic from an anthropological perspective as there is little sense in her work of the notion of performance as practice. In particular, there is little attention to: “actual historical practices, institutions, or concrete discourses” (Busby 2000: 12). Applying Butler’s theory in ethnographic research, therefore, makes it difficult to understand how individuals experience their specific (and varied) gender experiences. Nelson (1999) also takes up this point:

If we reduce concrete subjects to compelled, unreflexive performers of dominant discourse(s) we miss the how and the why of human subjects doing identity, a process directly tied to their lived personal history.

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67 Butler (1994) makes a clear distinction between ‘performance’ and ‘performativity’: “(t)he former presumes a subject, but the latter contests the very notion of the subject... what I’m trying to do is think about the performativity as that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names” (Butler 1994).


69 Although Butler does suggest that one way of subverting gender roles (creating ‘gender trouble’) is through drag. She argues that drag “subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and of the notion of a true gender identity” (Butler 1997: 258-259).
intersubjective relationships, and their embeddedness in particular historical moments and places (Nelson 1999: 349).

So if one wants to use Butler’s idea of performitivity in regard to a kind of overall gendered order, problems arise over instances where there appear to be awareness or contestation of that order. In particular, as I will discuss further below, there were moments in my fieldwork of what seemed to me to be very aware, very deliberate, and sometimes highly parodic gender ‘performances’. I want very much to use the word ‘performance’ here – not least because the ‘performance’ could only take place within a particular site (‘stage’), and was ‘performed’ for a very particular audience. That is, among the duck hunters I met, along with repetitive (unconscious) acts that created an overall gendered personhood out of a ‘non-gendered’ body, sometimes there appeared to be very self-conscious ‘masculine’ performances that were only acceptable within a very specific time and space and in many cases involved male bodies exclusively.

Chris Brickell (2003, 2004) argues that Erving Goffman’s (1987 [1959]) writing on performance is still worth considering even though Butler rejects “Goffmanesque” ideas of performativity (carrying theatrical connotations) as “putting on a mask or electing to play a role” (Butler, cited in Brickell 2003: 171). Brickell (2004) suggests that in utilizing Goffman’s theories of the self, it is possible to incorporate both the notion of reflexive agency in connection to masculine ‘performances’, as well as the unconscious reproduction of gender suggested within ‘performativity’. In doing so, Brickell allows that:

Researchers can investigate how masculinities are done and how these performances are received within social interaction; how frames, schedules, and specificities of culture and history condition masculine performances and their reception; how tensions around front - and backstage - play out; and how illusions of masculine authenticity are reproduced and congealed (Brickell 2004: 9).
Brickell (2003, 2004) and Nelson (1999) articulate an approach to performance that is relevant to this current research, which I have developed in the course of this fieldwork and in my analysis of the place of gender in duck hunting practices.

**Masculinities in Rural Spaces**

A further problem that I encountered in using Butler’s theory was her lack of discussion about how notions of gender vary in different spaces and places, specifically between the rural and the urban. This section will consider the connection between rural sites and spaces and ideas of masculinities, drawing on a number of theorists writing in the rural area in combination with some of my own fieldwork insights.

Ideas of the ‘rural’ have a strong hold on the collective New Zealand psyche. A recent television promotional advertisement for *Country Calendar* summarised the importance of rural life to the configuration of social identity by saying: “There’s still an enormous fascination and nostalgia for the rural way of life”. In New Zealand ‘the rural’ and ‘the masculine’ are strongly linked motifs. These motifs are also bound up with images of nationalism - to the extent that it is fair to say representations of New Zealand nationhood should actually be read as displays of New Zealand masculinity (Matahaere-Atariki 1999). Jock Phillips’s (1996 (1987)) history of the pakeha male provides a convincing narrative connecting constructions of rural discourse with the lived and perpetuated understandings of manhood in New Zealand. Even with the majority of people in New Zealand living urban lifestyles, the stereotype of the Kiwi male as pioneering, self-sufficient, and strongly connected to the ‘land’ is still a powerful motif found in advertising.

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70 Although ‘space’ and ‘place’ are terms most commonly associated with social geography, over the past decade these terms have also become increasingly popular within anthropology (Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga (eds) 2003).

71 *Country Calendar* is an enduring and popular weekly documentary that focuses on farming and other rural life-styles.

72 Connell (1995) also emphasizes that it is crucial to consider how practices that maintain hegemony change and alter over time: for “hegemony... is a historically mobile relation” (Connell 1995: 77). This highlights how ‘traditional’ ideas of masculinity are very much specific to particular times and embedded in the cultural milieu of specific social groups.
and popular culture — such as in the Speights beer advertising campaign mentioned in Chapter 1.

‘Rural’ and ‘urban’ are not clear-cut terms, however, and these ‘spaces’ should not be conceived as discrete or unconnected: they actually operate in a similar binary to gender. In terms of this current research, however, it is crucial that the actual duck hunting activities are, in the main, located very much within a rural ‘space’ and are imbued with masculinities that are associated with the rural (rather than the urban). These masculinities are constructed as being intrinsically heterosexual. Heterosexuality is conventionally linked to having children within a traditional family context, even if the reality of rural life is far more diverse than this discursive construction portrays. Jo Little (forthcoming) argues that gender theory has tended to emphasize sexuality and gender identity in relation to the “urban body”, while the “rural body” has been overlooked. In an earlier article, Little (2003) is particularly interested in understanding the relationship between expressions of sexual identity within rural spaces and the dominant assumptions of heterosexuality that pervade Western societies. She contrasts the idea of ‘scary’ ‘heterosexualised’ urban spaces (drawing on Hubbard’s (2000) research on prostitution) with rural spaces, which are often coded as very ‘unscary’ places as they constitute dominant gender relations where conventional forms of moral heterosexuality are normalised and reinforced as benign.

These assumptions about rural heterosexuality are relevant when deconstructing duck hunting practices. In keeping with Little’s theories, I found that the ‘community’ duck hunters (and to a large degree the ‘dedicated’ duck hunters too) demonstrated a ‘non-threatening’ component in their attitudes towards women. They also displayed a confidence in fairly traditional ideas about family and gender roles: the men were providing for their families through hunting. They ‘reproduced’ the notion of a naturalised, rural, heterosexuality through their connection to having children; the ‘natural’ outcome of the heterosexual act. This
was further strengthened by the ‘natural’ rural spaces where they were carrying out their duck hunting activities - through observing the cycles of (male/female) mating and reproduction amongst different bird species, nature itself seemed to echo this ‘unscary’, rural, heterosexuality.

Little (2003) argues that further research is required into the more ‘conventional’ sexualities which tend to be associated with rural communities (at least in an idealised sense), and which are strongly connected to the central role of the family. However, while the ‘dedicated’ and ‘community’ duck hunting roles fit into this idea, I also encountered clear examples where the reproduction of heterosexuality was connected to some ‘scary’ and aggressive sexualities. In other words, some practices of embodied and masculine performance were connected to brutish behaviour where talk (but, significantly, never physical acting out) of the heterosexual act tended to treat women as passive vessels for male sexual pleasure.

This version of heterosexuality was not connected to reproduction but to the idea of sexual performance and domination over women as a sign of masculine power. It was also a rejection of restraining ‘femininities’ - the niceties of civilisation - and an endorsement of liberating, ‘natural’ ‘masculinities’. And, rather intriguingly, these men could also look to nature for some aspects that echoed this rather brutal approach - Mallard ducks often mate very aggressively with the females, holding them down with their beak, and occasionally drowning the female in the process (Furtman 2001: 10). What is revealing is that some, (although not all) of the participants in this research, participated in the ‘blokes only’, ‘brutish’ masculinities for a very short period of time before returning to expressing the more family orientated or ‘benign’ gendered identity. The duck hunting events, therefore, provided a highly delineated time and space where those men that chose to could ‘behave badly’ - or ‘naturally’, as was the interpretation presented by several participants.
The Rural Masculine' and the 'Masculine Rural'

Campbell and Bell (2000) argue that rural masculinities can be understood through two different (although often overlapping) analytical lenses. The 'masculine rural' encompasses the various ways that masculinity is constructed and manifested within rural spaces and sites. These constructions may be both marked and unmarked. The unmarked category connects to Donna Haraway's (1991) description of masculinity as a 'god-trick': omnipresent, yet unseen and unmarked. The unmarked masculine rural is apparent in ideas of good farming being the product of the "hard-working, competitive individualist working alone by the sweat of the brow" (Campbell and Bell 2000: 540). By comparison, an example of the marked masculine rural is the usually unquestioned categorisation of the farmer (or rural person) as a 'he', thereby rendering invisible the labour, and even the physical presence, of rural women.

The 'rural masculine' is, on the other hand, the construction (and legitimisation) of masculinities through connections to symbolic notions of rurality. These masculinities have "floated free" from any real connection to actual experience in a rural landscape, and may be found both within rural and urban spaces. The rural masculine is a composite image that combines masculinity (the 'social') with the rural (the 'natural'). Campbell and Bell (2000: 540) emphasize that notions of the 'rural' lend a special legitimacy to constructions of masculinity as they provide a wider 'natural' context outside the social which can be interpreted as presenting 'deeper' and more 'real' ways of 'being a man'. Robert Bly's (1992) Iron John and the mythopoetic movement provide examples of how popular constructions of the rural masculine can be. 73

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73 Bly sees Western society as creating men who, to their detriment, are becoming increasingly 'soft' and 'feminised' and prescribes, amongst other things, workshops in rural settings where men can reconnect with their 'wild', 'deep masculinity' (Bly 1992). For a critique of the mythopoetic movement and "masculinity therapy", see Savran (1998: 169-176), Connell (1992) and Coad (2002).
Duck hunters are a complex mix of both the ‘rural masculine’ and the ‘masculine rural’, and this reflects the complex interdependence between image and materiality in the configuration of these discourses. Some duck hunters live on farms and within rural landscapes and have a sense of ‘lineage’ or biography connecting their duck hunting activities directly to historical and social experiences they have with the land around them. Therefore, duck hunters who live in rural areas tend to construct their ideas of masculinity within rural spaces and sites (fitting with the notion of the ‘rural masculine’) although, as we shall see, the construction of these ideas is also influenced from outside the rural as well. Some duck hunters live in cities and towns, and their duck hunting may only be tied to the opening weekend. In my interviews and fieldwork some men were clearly expressing masculinities that they associated with the ‘rural’, although their expressions of such discourses had not grown out of inhabiting or living in a rural setting. They were also perpetuating quite an historical notion of rural masculinity, encapsulating a nostalgic component connected to a more ‘natural’ past, when men could express themselves with more freedom outside the constraints of modern life.

I would argue, therefore, that the notions of a ‘masculine rural’ and ‘rural masculine’ can be used to illustrate the blurred boundary between the rural and the urban. Campbell and Bell (2000) stop short of taking their theoretical framework into issues of nature/culture, but I think that it is important to acknowledge that ideas of rural masculinity are often not only the product of romanticised urban longing or advertising manipulation, but also come from actual gendered experiences in the rural landscape. This acknowledgement then encapsulates the hybridity of ideas around ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, the ‘natural’ and the ‘civilised’ – and also highlights how difficult, or even impossible, it can be to pick where the boundaries of these ideas start and end.

The previous sections reveal that issues relating to gender order and gender relations are crucial areas that must be considered in relation to duck hunting.
Duck hunting practices are one way that the participants in this research reproduce, explore, contest, reject, and react to, the gendered behaviours that are ‘expected’ of men and women within contemporary New Zealand society, and the theoretical framework of gender performance is a salient way to analyse key moments in these practices.

When looking at duck hunting, it becomes clear that many historically accepted gender performances are changing and are thus increasingly contested. As the following material will reveal, the ‘tradition’ of duck hunting encapsulated clear and separate sites of gender for men and women. Men and adolescent boys went hunting and women (whether wives or mothers) and girls stayed at home waiting for the ducks to be brought home for them to pluck and cook. Not only have these traditional gender positions changed enormously, but so too has the whole notion of what it means to be a ‘man’ or a ‘woman’. As I shall show further, the ideal of the ‘rural masculine’ still has a strong idealised and mythic hold in New Zealand, and rural space provides some men with a chance to act out and ‘perform’ this ideal. The ‘rural masculine’, however, also has deeply ironic undertones to it. Increasingly, the wider public has become familiar with the idea of ‘gender’ as a ‘performance’ through popular films such as Priscilla: Queen of the Desert (Coad 2002: 135-140), or parodying stereotypes such as the ‘southern man’ advertisements for Speights beer, which challenge traditionally accepted ideas about masculinity and sexuality. Law, Campbell and Schick (1999) make this point in connection to the ‘black singlet’ (see Figure 16 below), an item of clothing that has iconic connections to masculinity and the rural:

Representations of ‘typical’ blokes pop up everywhere from serious literature to television advertisements, so that practices of ‘blokish’ masculinity in New Zealand now carry the weight of a certain self-consciousness. Can a Kiwi male still pull a black singlet over his head without a slight flicker of irony? (Law, Campbell & Schick 1999: 14).

74 The ‘black singlet’, is an iconic item of clothing in New Zealand, presented in many traditional images of men working ‘on the land’, and closely associated with the construction of the strong, stoic, rural male.
Although both men and women who step outside the gender order are still at risk of social censure and antipathy, there is a sense that the widely accepted (and perpetuated) gender order of previous New Zealand generations is far less stable and straightforward than it used to be. My research provides some examples of this increasing ambiguity, as what would a few decades ago have been considered ‘normal’, ‘masculine’ behaviour within duck hunting practices is now experienced in a far more problematic and complex manner. The following sections of this chapter will present detailed examples from fieldwork data and interviews, which reveal the rich variety of practices and performances associated with duck hunting in Southern New Zealand.
4.4 Practicing Duck Hunting in Southern New Zealand

Opening Weekend - A 'masculine extravaganza'

The opening weekend of the duck hunting season in New Zealand is a fascinating opportunity to observe gender performances, both in the Butlerian sense of unconscious reproductions of 'traditional' masculinities, and also in the sense of dramatic and even parodic performances that appear to mock those same traditions. The practices of opening weekend are what the wider New Zealand non-hunting population most associate with duck hunting, but the extraordinary displays of overt 'masculine' behaviours associated with this weekend are not always interpreted positively. After opening weekend, the 'Letters to the Editor' column in many newspapers typically include letters from several people who found the behaviour of some duck hunters of concern. Many duck hunters compress their entire duck shooting experience into this weekend\(^{75}\) making it both a temporary and 'temporal' identity. It is temporary because many individuals only 'become' duck hunters for a very short period of time; and it is temporal in that this identity is restricted to a very tightly defined time period. I argue that this transience heightens and intensifies some of the 'masculinities' commonly associated with the opening weekend.

It is important to emphasize, however, that not all duck hunters isolate their duck hunting experiences to the opening weekend. Some may still participate in the opening weekend 'experience', but also continue to hunt throughout the three-month season. From the field research I carried out though, it is clear that the social aspects of duck hunting manifest most intensely during the opening weekend and are important to all three types of duck hunting experience.

\(^{75}\) It is very difficult to estimate how many duck hunters only go out hunting on opening weekend, as those people who want to hunt on this weekend must purchase a full-season licence. Many people have an opinion on this: I heard estimates ranging from sixty to eighty percent of duck hunters.
The Excitement and Anticipation of Duck Hunting

One of the most endearing aspects of duck hunting that I encountered was the tremendous excitement and anticipation that many duck hunters expressed with regard to opening morning. For many it was like reliving childhood excitement about an event of extreme pleasure and many also used the allegory of Christmas to express this anticipation. One of the regional newspapers in Southland specifically referred to this metaphor in its front page article on the opening of duck hunting in 1999: “Like excited children on Christmas morning, they rose in their thousands across the district, eager for the night to be gone” (Ensign 1999: 1). Ian Dee (1974) similarly describes the effect that this excitement has on sleep the night before opening day: “They (wives of hunters) envisage more nights of struggling for their share of the blankets while husbands toss and turn in their dreams brought on by expectant anxiety as opening day draws close” (Dee 1974: 8).

Over a cup of tea in a cosy Southland farmhouse I chatted to John and Louisa about the excitement of opening morning. Louisa is very supportive of her husband’s duck shooting and regards his enthusiasm towards duck hunting with affection. John described how excited and impatient he was on the night before opening morning in a slightly embarrassed way. He seemed to be aware his boyish behaviour did not fit with the image of a stoic farming man:

I find duck shooting’s more - well, not more exciting than Christmas - but it’s like being a kid waiting to be able to get up and open the presents. I’m waiting to be able to get out there...you know. Sometimes you can’t sleep the night before and you’re all keen. Like this year I woke up - I think it must have been about one or so and I couldn’t get back to sleep. So at two o’clock I got up and cleaned my gun [laughs] (John).

Many other duck hunters I spoke to also expressed this excitement, but always with a slightly rueful and embarrassed air. Paul, for instance, is a very enthusiastic duck hunter who also sees himself as very capable and skilled: during the course of the interview he continually emphasized his competence and dedication. When I asked
also serves as a special kind of social space - specifically, a masculine space. Not only do men build maimais, but men also usually have complete control over how the maimai will be decorated and ultimately used.

![Maimai on Farm Pond: Front, Back and Inside Views](Source: Personal Photographs)

Most of the maimais that I saw were examples of 'masculine understatement': functionality was imperative and decoration minimalised - or at least 'masculinised'. There was also a great deal of variety in the level of comfort sought by duck hunters: generally keeping fairly warm and dry was the priority, but a minority went for the 'deluxe' maimai set up (comfortable chairs, television, heating and so on).

Many duck hunters that I interviewed expressed a great deal of pride in their maimais and went into a great deal of detail in explaining the building process and history behind decisions such as where it would be built and how it would be constructed. While the inside space of the maimai is very much a social 'cultural' space, a great deal of effort is put into making the outside of the maimai look as 'natural' as possible. Along with building the actual maimai structure, the surrounding landscape is also developed and altered to varying degrees. (I will discuss the significance of the development of the 'natural' space around the maimai in Chapter 6). Whether a maimai is built on public land or private land has
an impact on how the maimai is decorated and used. For obvious reasons, maimais built on private land can be more personalised than those on public waters:

Maimais on private land are generally constructed quite differently, like you have the opportunity of having beds and carpets, you name it, and all the flash gear and are quite impressive edifices, really. But on public water of course, there is nothing safe because it can get pinched and exposure to weather, so generally they are made fairly spartan, but well built (Larry).

There seems to be a code of honour amongst the duck hunters in terms of respecting the maimais and property that have been set up by other people. This idea can be connected to a sense of a male fraternity, with codes of honour that members obey lest they risk censure, or worse, being kicked out of the club:

[Are people fairly respectful when they are using someone else’s maimai?]

Yeah, generally, I mean anyone can use your maimai at the same time so you: ‘do unto other as you would do to yourself’. They are all designed to be abused and kicked and they get wet with boots and dogs and they get slimy - but they are generally well set up. There was one maimai up there that had decoys set up for several weeks out in the open. I know I could have taken them if I had wanted to and no one would have been any the wiser... Generally theft of decoys is not a common problem which I am surprised about actually, because they were ‘supermags’ which are worth $20 a piece - so several hundred dollars worth of decoys are just floating all on their lonesome. But they stay there and stay there, which is quite a good indicator of the honesty of the hunters (Larry).

Those maimais that are very comfortable become the stuff of legend and many duck hunters made comments about some of the well-known structures in their area. As the following section will explain however, palatial maimais were not really associated with ‘serious’ duck hunting.

I’ve heard of one they built on this huge pond and they buried the maimai in the side of it and it had a room big enough to have a dance in it. And you turned a switch and the gas lights would come on, and they had soundproofing so no noise could go through to the front where the shooters were. It was just amazing - they had somewhere to park the boats, and then you’d go up to like the sleeping and kitchen area and at the
front was one shooting area and on the top was another sleeping area. I heard they buried a generator in a pit so that the noise didn’t disturb (Doug).

Well some of them are fanatical about how they make their maimai. I know this old guy...and he’s got armchairs and a television and all the pictures on the walls. You know it’s all about going out and occupying this place and shooting a few ducks out the front – which is really incidental to the whole matter of being there (William).

Amongst some hunters that I would categorise as ‘dedicated’ duck hunters there tended to be an emphasis on foregoing any extras in the maimai; instead there was a focus on what a ‘proper’ maimai should be about – that is, a device that provides some basic shelter, less a space for ‘socialising’ but rather for ‘shooting’. This emphasis on plainness and utility in the maimai is possibly connected to a concern that too much attention to decorating and comfort is moving towards femininity and away from the ‘appropriate’ arrangement of a masculine space. Both Gary and Edward, for example, enjoyed opening morning, but they emphasized that opening weekend for them was still primarily about shooting ducks. Edward, in particular, told me that he chose his hunting companions on their ability not to talk much during the day’s shooting. He also stressed the ability to be stoic about the discomfits that can be associated with hunting, and perpetuates the image of a traditional New Zealand man who ‘makes do’ with minimal equipment.

[Do you have a very big maimai?] It isn’t very big. But it’s a proper basic maimai – I mean it hasn’t got chairs in it but three shooters can squeeze in it and two can shoot very comfortably (Gary).

[Do you have your own maimai?] No, we build one every year – we shoot on the river and sometimes the river can change. Some years we don’t even build one, we just use the natural cover because the gear these days is so much better, you know, that camouflage, waterproof clothing and what have you. So you can stand out in the pouring rain and shoot quite comfortably. You just need a bit of shelter for your gear and bits and pieces (Edward).
Being a 'Good Mate'

Spending time with male friends is a very important and enjoyable aspect of duck hunting. Many duck hunters develop enduring friendships based around the shared experience of going duck hunting together. William is an older man whose professional life has been in wildlife management. He is extremely knowledgeable about ducks, but for him the companionship of going duck hunting was of primary importance:

It’s the company you keep – the friendships and being able to go out in the maimai with your friends. And when you go out with your friend you get just as much enjoyment from watching him shoot a bird, you know, whether you do it or he does, it makes not a difference – it’s this friendship thing (William).

William spoke of a wonderful connection that he had with his school friends who began duck hunting together after they all returned from the Second World War.

I think it was about 1946 before I got back home again. And it was then that I went with these guys and we started doing duck hunting. And it was an old schoolboy friendship that lasted for 56 years. It is no longer existing though – they are all dead (William).

Another participant, Ron, had a special filial relationship that focussed around duck shooting and had been maintained for many years.

[Are you still hunting with your brothers?] Yes, we do that every year – have done for the last forty years. We get together – my brothers live all over the country and they all come down and we meet at the same place each year [small Southland town] and stay at my brother’s. We all stay there and it is great fun, it really is. We talk about 40 years ago, 30 years ago, 20 years ago – what it was like...and you are all fired up and wearing silly hats and blowing your duck call and all that sort of stuff (Ron).

Craig has developed a close friendship with two duck hunters. While they all have their own maimai they share these depending on the particular situation of each
year. Craig also involves his children on opening morning and he explained that it was important to find other men who shared the same ideas and values.

Basically I’ve got a couple of guys that I shoot with all the time and we’ve all sort of gotten to know each other down there over the years and we sort of help each other out now and share maimais – it’s a pretty good system. The kids are joining in now but that is something we are all okay with (Craig).

Ben, on the other hand, is part of a more formalised arrangement between hunting companions. He and his wife Sally, along with four other families, have spent a great deal of money on developing a pond and maimai. He has given up a certain amount of freedom in terms of how he practices his duck hunting as a compromise for developing a duck hunting set-up that he sees as ideal:

No, this is really serious stuff. Last year there were five shareholders in the pond, or stakeholders you know, and we have got a sort of pact as to who can shoot there – one fifth allows one gun, so if I wanted to take Sally along there we are allowed to take one gun. So if I have a son for example in twenty years time who is into duck shooting, I am allowed to take him there but we are only allowed to share a gun. So there are five guns allowed on the pond – so we have got a constitution (Ben).

There are also instances of conflict between hunters, however, especially in the public areas where many groups of hunters are forced to share waterways that can inevitably feel very crowded – particularly on opening morning:

Some guys decided they were going to shoot – they were on the opposite side and down further... But once we had ducks coming in and circling, there was a lot of abusing going from one maimai to the other down there and the biggest thing is that we all had camouflage masks, but these guys didn't have that and you would see the ducks – they were shying off because they could see these guys' faces. The white face itself isn't bad it is the movement of it. There were a lot of ducks that could have been shot at if it weren't for these wankers. And my mate got that browned off because he would have ducks circling and then this dick would just fire a shot in our direction just to scare them off. I thought they were going to come to blows but I said I was not going to put up with that (Terry).
Despite this kind of episode, the majority of duck hunters I spoke to emphasized the feeling of closeness and similitude that they felt with their hunting companions. Opening weekend in particular seems to offer an opportunity for a kind of ‘man to man’ dialogue where conversations are unfettered by the presence of women:

I still like to be involved and be a part of duck shooting. You know, just getting out there away from the girls... and you’re hearing more bullshit than truth, basically (laugh) - and I guess that’s what I enjoy (Doug).

Eating in the Maimai - ‘Manly’ Foods
The atmosphere in a maimai on opening morning is very exciting and there are many ‘rituals’ that accompany the actual shooting of ducks. For many duck hunters with whom I spoke, and in all the maimais I visited, food was an important component, particularly on opening day. This is something that is also frequently mentioned in books on duck hunting in New Zealand. It is significant the men almost always prepare the food for themselves (even in households where the wife or partner usually organises and prepares the meals). Within the masculine ‘space’ of the maimai, it seems that the men want to control all the elements that make up the duck hunting experience - keeping the space as ‘untainted’ by women as possible. (However, I would not like to make too much of this – several of the women I spoke to said they would not be prepared to organise anything to do with the duck hunting so perhaps the lack of female involvement, for some men at least, was a matter of practical reality rather than a philosophical statement). What I found most interesting about the food in maimais was the juxtaposition of provisioning, which is commonly associated with men, and cooking or providing food for friends and family, which is commonly associated with women.

One of the foods that seems to have developed somewhat of a tradition in the maimai is bacon. This was one of the crucial elements of Jon Gadsby’s (2000) duck

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77 In New Zealand, ‘man-to-man’ does not mean ‘telling the truth’, as it might elsewhere. Rather, in popular usage, it means being true to a particular kind of masculine discourse, which encompasses humour and abuse.
hunting weekend as he describes what he and his father must organise in the early hours of the morning:

There were flasks of coffee to prepare and bacon sandwiches to be made. (For some reason, bacon sandwiches were always part of the mix) (Gadsby 2000: 100).

Meat is often discursively connected to masculinity (Fiddes 1991; Adams 1990), and therefore is perhaps perceived as a more 'manly' foodstuff to provide in the maimai. Certainly, in the maimais I visited, meat was provided in a variety of ways: bacon was fried up on a gas cooker (along with eggs and baked beans); straps of dried venison were handed around along with some wild pork; the ever popular bacon sandwiches were provided in two maimais, and in another steak sandwiches were served up around morning tea-time.

FIGURE 18. Duck Hunters Eating Oysters in a Maimai
(Source: Southland Times 1999, Monday, May 3: 3)
The above photograph (Figure 18) also presents another interesting example: oysters, which are traditionally associated with increasing sexual performance but which also have a regional significance in Southland\(^78\) where this maimai is located. The duck hunters are also having a ‘tipple’ as an accompaniment to their oysters, which raises the issue of the drinks that accompany food in the maimai. In the majority of maimais that I visited, consuming alcohol was generally regarded as an activity for after the guns were put away, (although in one maimai a can of beer was consumed around 10 a.m. with morning tea). Both tea and coffee (usually served in a thermos) were the most popular beverages. There is, however, a traditional association between duck hunters and ‘hard’ drinking, which, as the following section will explore, has recently become quite a contentious issue.

**Drinking mates – alcohol and duck hunting**

The more ‘toxic’ aspects of duck hunting ‘masculinities’ tend to occur amongst the ‘blokes only’ duck hunters, which feature performances around heavy drinking, sexist, and ‘anti-family’ behaviours. These performances most often transpire on the opening weekend, which is also the period most scrutinized by the general public. This ‘drinking culture’ seems to have been a feature of duck shooting for a long time. New Zealand writer Michael King (1988) observes in his contribution to *One of the Boys: Changing Views of Masculinity in New Zealand* that alcohol was a traditional feature of his father’s hunting trips. Beside the text of his article, King provides a photograph of his father and friends before their hunting expedition in the 1950s (Figure 19 below). He adds this caption to the image: “Duck-shooting cronies fortify themselves for their ordeal at the Martinborough Hotel” (King 1988):

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\(^78\) Bluff is New Zealand’s most Southern port and an important area for harvesting oysters.
Many hunting magazines and books over the past few years make mention of drunkenness in regard to duck hunting and urge hunters to practice restraint so as not to 'bring the sport into disrepute'. Kerry Butler (1989) an enthusiastic duck hunter who has published his own book on this subject, links alcohol consumption in the duck hunting context with men trying to present a 'macho' image:

The problem is that an image has developed over the years of a duck shooter swigging out of a hip flask while sitting in his maimai. So a lot of hunters feel they are not quite the real thing unless they pack out a good supply of booze for the day. It is quite pathetic the way people follow this fashion or tradition, because it is only really a matter of the macho image they are trying to create which makes them do it (Butler 1989: 29).

This passage provides an example of the contested images of masculinity that reveal themselves in duck hunting. Another book written for duck hunters during the 1980s emphasizes that the current generation of duck hunters is different from previous ones in terms of being more responsible with alcohol and shooting:
I won’t shoot with drinking shooters. Forget the ‘traditional’ view of duck shooters as whisky/gin swilling heroes. You and I have more sense and, as younger/newer shooters, need to set the proper example of safe firearm users (Parkes 1987: 23).

Doug, a duck hunter who strongly opposes the combination of shooting and alcohol, warned me to choose the people I accompanied duck hunting very carefully, as: “some blokes overdid the piss (alcohol) and tended to act a bit silly”. I noticed in my research that there appears to be a widespread concern amongst duck hunters about the consumption of alcohol while still out in the field. The ‘traditional’ macho image, with its hyper-masculine performances, appears to conflict with increasingly articulated sensitive/ible masculinities. As the men arguing in the alcohol shop demonstrated, for many men there is a concern that moving away from hyper-masculinity equates to moving towards femininity – and ending up not being as Butler (1989) explains: ‘quite the real thing’. Here, however, we can see a traditional construction of masculinity (the ‘hard drinker’) has become increasingly contested.

The public perception of drunken duck hunters presents a bad impression of this pastime and increases antipathy towards duck hunting in general. Understandably, this is an area of great concern to many duck hunters. The ‘traditional’ image of a hard drinking, ‘macho’ duck hunter appears to be linked (not unreasonably) with current concerns in wider society with firearm safety. It appears that, while in the past macho drinking ‘performances’ were more universally admired and associated with ‘natural’ expressions of masculinity (particularly the rural masculine), the contemporary situation is one of increasingly negative associations. This shift in understanding has led to a certain degree of policing going on amongst the duck hunters themselves, who often use the explanation that they do not want to give negative ‘ammunition’ to anti-hunting groups:
I enjoy having a few beers - I might have a couple of stubbies at lunchtime when we're sitting around before we go out - but I'm not into going out and getting drunk. And I think people have given it a bad name by doing that, you know, and that's when accidents happen because there's firearms involved (Andy).

I just don't choose to. I have been with other people and they had a few beers...but definitely save the whiskey for after the duck shooting but not during it - definitely. But I feel blood sports are under pressure because of the change in public attitudes to firearms and it really concerns me the level of drinking among hunters because it's just creating ammunition for the anti-blood sports lobby and it's dumping on it for the wrong reason (Gary).

I think the whole drinking thing is something that could creep up behind us and bite us on the behinds if we're not careful. Once there is an accident... all of a sudden it's going to be a big issue (Tylor).

Those duck hunters with wives and partners were also under pressure from within their private lives to act responsibly. John, a Southland farmer, explained that his wife only agreed to “give him permission” to go duck hunting if there was no alcohol in the maimai while shooting. (Although John also said he would not like to drink alcohol in the maimai and risk an accident anyway, but thought it was a good idea to let his wife feel she had some “say” in what he was doing.) He and his friends organised a drinking session the evening of opening day and his wife came and collected him afterwards. As John’s compromise indicates, many duck hunters have a real awareness of the risks of drinking alcohol and driving, which has undoubtedly altered some of the traditional post-shooting drinking arrangements.

Attitudes towards drinking and duck hunting reflect the variation in commitment and motivations that duck hunters have as well as the fluidity of masculinities. Although Ron enjoys socialising during duck hunting, he also considers shooting ducks as being paramount. He was highly disparaging of those duck hunters who, particularly on opening weekend, prioritise drinking and socialising over shooting. To Ron this kind of duck hunting was not quite ‘real’:
They are the kind of people that go out there for that particular reason (drinking alcohol) and they don’t experience the real kind of duck shooting experience. Loaded up with beer, go out and blast the sky to pieces and come home and say, 'yeah we went out duck shooting this year and yeah, we got two ducks' and 'oh no, not going to go out again' and 'had my fun', and then get back to whatever they do normally do, like go to the pub and things (Ron).

Two duck hunters made rather dry comments about the connection between the consumption of alcohol and the 'safety' of the ducks:

Oh yes, there are some people out there who think a duck dying or getting shot is a side issue – it is just this great gigantic booze up and the fact there is so much alcohol involved – which there shouldn’t be – the duck is relatively safe (Larry).

Yeah, we never take alcohol up to the maimai. Always leave that for later (laugh). Yeah, guns are too dangerous to, you know, be drinking. The ones up the road there – I’ve gone up to their ponds and they’re as drunk as skunks and you do feel unsafe around people like that. Although the funny thing is, the ducks are probably the safest of all because those guys are so drunk (John).

In contrast, some duck hunters were quite open about their desire to socialise and drink alcohol and placed far less emphasis on the actual shooting aspects of duck hunting. This suggests that the more luxurious and comfortable maimais often operate as social drinking spaces:

(Sophie, William’s partner): Drinkers tend to have maimais that tend to be more comfortable.
(William): They have these elaborate maimais with bars and sofas and all sorts of modern conveniences.

You spend most of the year preparing all this fancy equipment for one day, you know, and each year you get better seats in the maimai. The current maimai has got couches in it and a fireplace so it is a great maimai. It is no good for duck shooting but it is great for sitting in and having a couple of cold ones [beers] – that’s what it gets used for now (James).
The enthusiastic consumption of alcohol in connection with duck hunting manifests itself most obviously during the opening weekend experience. In fact, it would be more correct to say that the drinking is a component of the socialising between men that is such a crucial aspect of the start of the duck hunting season. Several men commented to me that drinking large amounts of alcohol (and the ‘laddish’ behaviour that accompanied it) only occurred once a year and was not something they did in their ‘normal’ lives:

I really enjoy the night before opening day - we get together, drink a lot of piss and have a lot of laughs. We probably overdo it a bit but it’s important to let off a bit of steam you know, and we only do it once a year (James).

Campbell (2000) examines the connection between masculinity and drinking in his ethnographic study in Methven and Mount Somers, and discusses the disciplines or ‘rules’ that govern drinking behaviour. One of the crucial differences that I found in the drinking ‘performances’ of duck hunting was the lack of adherence to the strict ‘disciplines of drinking’ that Campbell observed. These disciplines revolved around a particular kind of mental acuity: being able to produce enormously detailed local knowledge, in combination with colossal self-control over the physical affects of drinking large amounts of alcohol. I hypothesise that these divergences lie in the different spaces where the drinking performances were taking place. The ‘natural’, out-of-doors space of duck hunting is, I suggest, associated with letting go of the restrictions of ‘civilised’ disciplines, such as careful control of bodily functions.

This relaxing of strict drinking codes for men may also connect with Fairweather and Campbell’s (1990) distinction between everyday drinking and celebratory drinking, the latter being a space where the ‘disciplines of drinking’ are relaxed. Opening weekend certainly fits with the designation of ‘celebratory’ drinking, however, there are still crucial differences between duck hunting drinking

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79 Located in the Canterbury region, South Island.
performances and the Methven research, as unlike the celebratory drinking observed in the Fairweather and Campbell (1990) study, women are most often not present at the duck hunting celebrations.

Certainly, local knowledge is important in drinking and socialising after duck hunting but this mainly comes out in the form of reminiscing about the events of previous years. This reminiscing tends to centre around different personalities and their exploits and gives the group of men a sense of unity through their shared history. Equally important was connecting specific events to specific places, which were often described in detail and in personal terms. For example, after a few drinks at a barbeque on opening day Doug was telling the story of a duck that after being shot had become caught in the top of a poplar tree. The poplar tree’s position was described as: “beside the stream that old Jack got his truck stuck in”. While remembering and retelling these stories was important, the accuracy was not a high priority, and there was a general acknowledgement within many of the groups of socialising duck hunters with whom I spent time that “telling a few lies” was part of the fun. These reminiscences defined who was a part of the social group, and being able to trace one’s history to these stories a powerful guarantee of future involvement.

Bodily control over the effects of large amounts of alcohol was, moreover, the subject of jokes and, in some cases, rather colourful performances. Unlike Campbell’s (2000) experience of rural pub performances, there was no real sense that masculinity equated with bodily self-control, rather the opposite. “Holding one’s piss” or repressing the urge to urinate was not a feature of duck hunting and drinking, in fact being able to ‘piss publicly’ was expected. (One group of men had the side of the farm shed marked with lines and names to show where individuals had urinated on the wall). My preference to find somewhere private to ‘relieve myself’ was regarded with some scorn (“why walk all the way to the farm house when you can duck round the side of the shed”). However, as a woman I was let
off to a certain extent - my female body was not expected to engage in the 'masculine' drinking antics. For the men, getting intoxicated to the point of slurring, falling about, and having 'pissing' competitions were perhaps further ways of reconnecting with the notion of a 'natural' masculinity.

There was, however, also an understanding that this behaviour was not necessarily regarded favourably outside those groups who particularly embraced the 'undisciplined' drinking sessions. I visited one participant, whose duck hunting group I had spent opening morning with, several weeks later and found him rather embarrassed at the alcohol consumption and behaviour that had occurred during the weekend. In some ways I felt I had spoiled some of the enjoyment for him, because as a woman and outsider observing this group of men, I had brought with me (unintentionally) an element of censure.

*Being a 'Hard Man'*\(^{10}\) - Heterosexuality and Duck Hunting


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\(^{10}\) Jock Phillips (1996) uses the term 'hard man' in the title of a chapter, which examines the contribution of rugby to a gendered stereotype of the New Zealand male.
One of the clear attributes associated with being a hunter is heterosexuality. Pervasive cultural constructions link "rurality, masculinity and heterosexuality" together (Bell 2000a: 559 emphasis in the original). While the 'mates' can get together in intimate surroundings such as a maimai, the assumption is that the discussions around sex, which inevitable develop, will be about sexual attraction to women (not other 'mates'). Several feminist scholars have drawn a link between heterosexuality and hunting, claiming that these practices in combination encourage and validate forms of men's predation (for example, Collard 1989; Kheel 1995; Luke 1998). Here I want to discuss in detail, the connections between ideas of gender performance and, particularly, how these relate to duck hunters' use of sexual innuendo and the expression of misogynistic ideas in their hunting experience. Duck hunter Kerry Butler comments in his book:

As you can imagine, on these relaxed social shoots the topic of conversation invariably turns to that age-old subject that men enjoy discussing when they get together - and it's not the weather, or even duck shooting (Butler 1989: 108).

As I have discussed, the maimai is mostly understood as a 'men only' space; a space in which ideas about women are frequently used, even though women are physically absent. In some cases they become objectified and reduced to objects of sexual desire. While maimais are most often very plain and 'practical' a few of them are decorated with Playboy and Penthouse centrefolds. I was invited to one maimai that had a number of these pictures on the walls, and several participants mentioned maimais they knew that were decorated in this way. However, it was clear these are very much the minority. Many maimais are on farm ponds which children and wives will visit, even if they are not actively joining in the duck hunting activities, and this is probably one reason why men would not like such pictures in their maimai:

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81 Bell argues that books written in the mythopoetic genre have essentialised this link between heterosexuality, masculinity, and the countryside (see for example Robert Bly's Iron John).
My uncle's maimai is quite male orientated. Like Dad would never have those kind of pictures in the maimai on our pond, but my uncle has some quite dirty pictures on the walls and some, you know, dirty books and stuff. I guess it sort of male orientated as such. I don't think Dad likes me and my brother seeing that stuff but it's not his maimai (Mary).

Jamieson (1989), who was mentioned in Chapter 3 in regard to the development of a New Zealand duck hunting tradition, lists aspects of being in his maimai that he finds enjoyable. This list is devoid of any reference to women except obliquely when he mentions reading *Playboy*. His reference to having none of the 'disadvantages' of civilisation suggests that, amongst other things, he wants to enjoy women as passive sexual objects without any 'real' women around to challenge or question him. In a sense he wants to express his 'natural' masculine nature, but ironically he does this through the cultural lens of the 'girlie' magazine (Jamieson 1989: 8).

Some of the images that duck hunters circulate with each other also link sexual intercourse with duck shooting. One of the groups of men which I spent time with had a cartoon which depicted a naked man and women in a maimai. The women was bent face down over a table with the man behind her in a position suggesting he was having sexual intercourse with her. Sitting on the woman's back was a glass of beer and the man was also using her body to lean his shotgun against while shooting at a duck. The caption at the bottom of the cartoon reads: 'it doesn't get any better than this'. Pornographic images like these suggest that sex with a woman rates along side other 'natural' pleasures like drinking and shooting ducks. The misogynistic elements of the picture (which treat the woman as a passive sexual vessel) are also intertwined with a rather ironic and humorous play on the idea of masculine 'Kiwi ingenuity'. The man in the cartoon resolves the problem of how he can do three things that he really enjoys at the same time.

While fantasy may be expressed pictorially, it is also reproduced through discussion and the maimai provides a space for telling stories and sharing fantasies
relating to sex. Butler’s (1989) duck hunting book mentioned above, provides a practical guide to duck hunting but also emphasizes the pleasure he gains from the male companionship in a long-standing arrangement he has with two neighbouring farmers. Each man spends opening morning in his own maimai with ‘invited guests’ but for the rest of the season the three men shoot together on each other’s ponds. Butler’s group has extended ‘blokes only’ duck experience throughout the whole duck shooting season, which is more commonly a once a year event. The conversation between the men is very important to Butler and he appears to relish the opportunity to share male fantasies without any women present to constrain the conversation:

A certain person in our group (I won’t mention any names) happens to be a particularly randy little devil. So he keeps us in fits by fantasising out loud about such unlikely things as having a female ranger visit us to check our licences, who promptly loses control and has her wicked way with him on the floor at the back of the maimai, while we continue shooting ducks. Could you imagine us being able to concentrate? (Butler 1989: 108).

While pornographic images and sexual fantasies may be popular with some, the reality of sexual intercourse actually being incorporated into the duck hunting experience seems rare. One story that I heard, told of a wealthy individual in the Southland community who was rumoured to have hired a prostitute to accompany him to his maimai on opening morning. However, this story was not greeted with a great deal of admiration, as it was generally agreed amongst the group of men I was with, that opening morning was meant to be about “shooting ducks”, not “shagging some whore”. This apparent distain for paid sexual services could be associated with ideas that affiliate rural and ‘natural’ spaces with very particular notions of masculinity and heterosexuality. The powerful imagining of ‘masculine’ desires as domineering and conquering feminine sexuality is at odds with using the services of a female sex worker who has overtly sought out a sexual encounter on her financial terms, and thus challenges the heterosexual assumptions of male sexual dominance and female passivity. Heterosexuality outside the dominant
construction of masculine sexuality, such as prostitution, may be seen as deviant and outside 'natural', (and 'moral') rural, heterosexual activities, and, in addition, understood as belonging to an 'urban' space (Hubbard 2000; also Bell and Valentine 1995).

While most of the dominant discourse about ideas of sex that I observed during my fieldwork portrayed women as passive sexual objects, there was one interesting exception. During the course of an interview with a young married couple who own a farm, we were talking about how some men seemed to enjoy having naked pictures of women in their maimai. The husband declared that he did not need them, not when he had the 'real thing' available to him. At this comment his wife blushed and looked rather uncomfortable. She then said to me in a whispered conspiratorial voice: "Let's just say we've had a few good times in the maimai". This couple's implication that the maimai was a place that they associated with male and female sexual pleasure was rather at odds with the image that I had built up of the maimai as a 'blokes' space (and often the site for sharing male sexual fantasies) but where women were often unwelcome as real, breathing individuals. I cannot say how commonly other couples make use of the farm maimai for 'marital relations', but this example does highlight the rich variety of the duck hunting experience. I should clarify, however, that the husband and wife's 'good times' were not during the opening weekend, when the maimai was clearly delineated as being a 'men only' space.

In this chapter I have suggested that there are three main categories of duck hunter: the 'dedicated' duck hunter, the 'blokes only' duck hunter and the 'community' duck hunter. As a female researcher it was difficult for me to participate in the 'blokes only' category - I was fortunate enough to have some men who were prepared to allow me to participate in what was usually a 'woman free' day. Two 'blokes only' groups of men invited me to accompany them on opening morning and then participate in post-shooting activities. On both occasions as more alcohol
was consumed the conversation became increasingly peppered with references to sexual matters.

I think it would be fair to say that at times a certain amount of effort was put into attempting to shock and embarrass the female researcher. In my field notes, I wrote of one incident that occurred when I was invited to participate in plucking and preparing ducks for the freezer. I was with Neil, Terry, Mac, and Pete, who enjoyed mixing the practical business of plucking and gutting ducks with a social occasion where whiskey and Speights beer were consumed in large quantities:

The men set up a kind of production line to deal with the ducks. Neil cut their heads off - then I was given the job of pulling a tuft of chest feathers out. I was concentrating hard on trying to look competent (and also trying to give the impression that pulling feathers out of decapitated ducks was not an unusual activity for me). A few minutes later Terry called out ‘hey mate have a look at this’. He was holding a duck in his hands and Mac and Pete came over to see what he was excited about. There was a certain amount of laughing and then some comments that were made in low voices. I looked up to see all three men looking at me and Terry said: ‘hey Carmen, you should have a look at this. It is probably important for your research’. I stepped closer to the three men. ‘Have you ever seen a duck’s prick’, one of them asked? Rather confused, I admitted I had not, but in the spirit of my research endeavour I said it would be interesting to become more familiar with duck anatomy. Terry parted the feathers on the duck between its legs and showed me a tiny thing sticking out from the feathers. The other men were laughing, and I was confused as to what the joke was. ‘The duck’s got a hard on” someone said. “Yeah” said Terry, “at least he died happy” (Fieldnotes May 2000).

Another group of men who invited me to come to a barbeque on the Saturday night of opening day enthusiastically began telling crude jokes after they had consumed quite a few drinks. One of the older men was concerned that I would be offended and told the younger men to “tone it down a bit”. I tried to reassure him that I could cope with the situation, as I sensed some resentment from the other men. The connection between crudeness and hunters is one that opponents of duck hunting

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82 Male waterfowl are one of the few birds to have a penis (Furtman 2001: 10).
tend to emphasize and connect to stupidity. The following cartoon (Figure 21) from the USA, with its goofy ‘Homer Simpson’ like hunter, suggests that a duck hunter can be easily distracted and fooled by anything vaguely sexual in nature:

![FIGURE 21. Duck 'Decoying' a Hunter](Source: www.citybrat.com/p203.htm)

The connection between duck hunting masculinities (masculine performance) and sexual control of women is one area where this study is comparable to another ethnography of hunting. In his ethnographic research into hunting in the Southern United States, Stuart Marks (1991) suggests that hunters (along with most men) are worried about two basic problems of identity: where they fit into the social hierarchy of other men and in their relationships with women. Through “folklore about animals”, Marks argues that men can come to know who they are as “sexual and social beings” because the shared assumptions that men may have about gender can be seen in a ‘real’ and concrete reality in the animal world.
When a man listens to a joke or participates in a hunt, he is confronted with an image of himself. Even if only for a moment, the uncertain becomes sure, the ambiguous becomes obvious. The vivid images of men’s stories, the obscenities and violence, the ethnic and racial jokes, and the lewd sexual fantasies exemplify a masculine world and a deep-seated dependence on women (Marks 1991: 160).

Marks outlines how buck hunters project their understanding of masculine ideals onto their perceptions of bucks and does. Bucks are seen as majestic, discriminating, and territorial, whereas does are inferior, ‘stupid’, and non-discriminating animals. Does are a danger to the bucks, however, because during the mating season the bucks do “weak” and “foolish” things in order to find a mate. The does, therefore, are capable of exposing how “frivolous and ephemeral” the bucks (‘masculine performances’) really are. In doing so, they threaten the attributes that the hunters ascribe to bucks: “freedom, male autonomy, and status” (Marks 1991: 161).

At a young age, hunters are introduced to this masculine order by their fathers, and over time these constructions develop into a kind of “masculine mystique” which has a “semisacred quality” (Marks 1991: 162). In keeping with Butler’s (1990) ideas of performitivity, Marks sees the hunters trying to act out these ideas in their everyday life and: “for these individuals, failing to live up to the norms embodied in this ideal is to slide down the slippery slopes towards feminization” (Marks 1991: 162).

Marks’s argument illuminates a discourse that seems to exist for many men – the belief that in their everyday life a man’s normal ‘masculine’ nature is being continually repressed by women and ideas of ‘polite society’. Many of the men I spoke to seemed to enjoy the opportunity that hunting allowed them: to be with their ‘mates’ and ‘relax’ those strictures. Although several said that they enjoyed it for a weekend, they also hinted that short periodic returns to this kind of ‘unhindered’ male time was enough for them:
Before we got this pond I got invited to quite a few different ponds and yeah, I have seen it all. I have seen all sorts of carrying on and no females and it is a great atmosphere, like it is a good weekend and the guys really do get on. You’ll have a few beers and maybe a few arguments... but it’s a great atmosphere and a lot of men like having a weekend off from the wife’s nagging (Terry).

I’m going away for a week’s deer hunting in ten day’s time, and that’s with three mates so that’s going to be a real bloke’s week for sure – and I enjoy that. But that doesn’t mean to say you need to do that all the time (Gary).

What is clear is that duck hunting activities give some men the opportunity to get away from the ‘niceties’ and perceived restrictions of everyday life. These men feel they can get ‘back to nature’ and behave more ‘naturally’ – that is, in a way that men would behave all the time if it were not for the restrictions that are placed on their behaviour when women are around. Although the nature/culture binary has traditionally associated men with culture (and the civilized), and women with the ‘other’ nature (uncivilized and wild) – these men connect ‘nature’ with the notion of a ‘natural’ masculinity and women as the civilizing constraints on those masculine ideals.

**Duck Hunting and “Rural Gay Masculinity”**

Amongst the groups of male duck hunters that I met, homosexuality was most often articulated in derogatory terms that emphasized that being gay meant somehow being ‘less masculine’. One of the participants seemed explicitly concerned that because duck hunting often involves groups of men getting together that it might be connected with homosexuality:

Duck shooting has always been the man’s domain – they go out and they call it a male bonding, which sounds like a bunch of homosexuals having another *Mardi Gras* (Terry).

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83 This term comes from David Bell’s (2000a) essay.
This perceived paradox of hunting and homosexuality connects to entrenched and powerful ideas that circulate around issues of identity in rural/urban spaces and perceptions of what it means to be a homosexual/heterosexual man. These ideas are clearly demonstrated in Southland media reports that came out in April 2001, which discussed targeting gay tourists, and outlined what would be the ‘appropriate’ activities for these visitors to the region. *The Southland Times* front-page article headline declared: “Gay is OK”, with a subtitled article inset into this main feature that claimed: “Hunting Probably Off Gay Itinerary” (*The Southland Times* 2001: 1):

Gay tourists were unlikely to go hunting, shooting and fishing with southern men on their New Zealand holiday, Auckland-based gay tourism wholesaler Alex Beck said yesterday…His gay clients were not the macho hunting bloke-types and he advised Invercargill Mayor Tim Shadbolt against this as an option for any gay visitors. “They’re very much into nature and ecotourism. I wouldn’t expect they’d be into duck shooting and deer hunting – just very normal activities” (*The Southland Times* 2001: 1).

Mr. Beck, the tourism wholesaler quoted by the *Southland Times* not only makes generalised claims about what gay men would want on their holiday, but also generalises about hunters, describing them as “macho hunting bloke-types”. In Mr. Beck’s experience, gay men are not “macho blokes” but are “into nature and ecotourism”. He implies therefore that macho (straight) men are not as nature-friendly, while it is also clear that, in his view, hunting activities are not “normal”. Mr Beck’s “gay clients” are most likely urban, with a fairly high disposable income, which connects to Bell’s (2000a) essay, highlighting how the countryside is increasingly idealised by city dwellers - and this includes “privileged urban homosexuals” (Bell 2000a: 554). For many people, including the tour operator in this newspaper article, a distinct dualism exists between ‘butch rurality’ and ‘effeminate urbanity’. This binary represents the different ways that sexuality, gender, and rurality (or nature) are constructed (Bell 2000a: 558) and I will come back to this discussion in Chapter 5.
The experiences of gay men in the traditionally heterosexual arena of hunting are very poorly researched. This is an area that needs to be explored further, however, as it reveals much about the powerful cultural constructions attached to ideas of gender, sexuality, and rural spaces/places. Some general research on rural homosexuality has explored the marginalisation of gays and lesbians in rural social spaces (Kramer 1995), while David Bell (2000a; 2000b) and David Shuttleton (2000) in contrast, present examples of more positive associations between rural spaces and the gay male body. Only one of the participants in this current study identifies himself as being gay and while I present a discussion on his experiences of duck hunting, I realise that this is not nearly enough information to provide a comprehensive picture of the experiences of gay men and women who are involved in duck hunting (or hunting in general).

Jake was brought up on a farm. His parents still live in the old family home on the land that Jake remembers ranging over as a boy. He has been an enthusiastic duck hunter since his early teens and regularly returns to his parent’s farm during the duck hunting season. Jake presented some wonderful challenges to ideas of sexual orientation and the assumptions about behaviour associated with homosexuality and heterosexuality. I have been Jake’s friend for several years, and I must admit that I was deeply surprised to learn he was a duck hunter (which made me realise the preconceptions that I have about what I considered ‘normal’ activities for gay men). Jake is very softly spoken and has what could be described as quite ‘effeminate’ mannerisms, but he is also very competent at using a shotgun and carrying out work around the family farm. Although Jake lives in a town, it is a town very closely connected to the rural area surrounding it. By comparison with these rural characteristics, Jake is also very cosmopolitan and frequently spends his weekends enjoying the gay club scene in Christchurch and Auckland. His holidays are usually spent overseas and always in large cities. I asked Jake whether he thought it was unusual for a gay man to be a duck hunter:
I don't know, because I don't really know any other gay duck shooters. [Do any of your gay friends think that it's a strange thing to do?] I haven't really asked them. I suppose I come from a farm and it's a 'farmy' thing although I don't think my (gay) flatmate goes duck shooting and he's from a farm. So I don't know, I suppose it's how you're brought up when you're younger. [So your flatmate doesn't go duck shooting?] I don't think so - he might damage a nail (laugh) or he might get bruised on the shoulder (Jake).

In some ways Jake's answer about how his gay flatmate might worry about damaging a nail, seems to perpetuate the idea that gay men are 'feminized' males. In the context of the interview, however, Jake made this comment in a very self-aware manner that suggested he was making a joke of this exact perception of gay men.

Jake enjoyed the social orientation of his family's duck hunting arrangements, which meant that he had only ever hunted with his brother and his father. He seemed unsure about whether he would want to hunt with anyone else:

I don't know. I suppose if someone I knew - like from one of the farms around here - asked me to go duck hunting I might go. But I really like getting together with Dad and my brother and going duck shooting and then we have a special dinner on the Saturday night with Mum and some old family friends join in too. I'm not really into the kind of rough, kind of rude duck hunters (Jake).

So, even though some homosexual men do participate in duck hunting, it does not seem to be coded 'gay'. There does not seem to be a cultural project called 'gay duck hunting', most likely because the dominant cultural discourses surrounding duck hunting in Southern New Zealand are so closely connected to heterosexuality.

**Being a 'Frontier Man' - Provisioning 'From the Land'**

As discussed in Chapter 3, hunting (and angling) in Britain is more socially differentiated than New Zealand and this reflects the long history of the elite having almost exclusive access to hunting resources. Yet the situation was quite different in the USA which, in common with New Zealand, promoted itself as a
place where all members of society could have universal access to hunting (Franklin 1999). The other key similarity between the USA and New Zealand was the creation of romantic imagery around the idea of the ‘frontier’. The notion of the frontier is very powerful. While originally it was thought of as an imaginary line or border within a physical landscape, it is now a powerful cultural idea around which ideas circulate. McKenzie (2001) argues that: “frontiers used to be thought of in purely linear terms...Frontiers (and the plural is essential) are now recognised to be very much more complex phenomena, hidden as well as visible, mentally and physically constructed as well as geographically expressed and surveyed” (McKenzie 2001: xi).

Historian Paul Carter argues that the frontier has been a “persistent feature of speech” which is essentially conceived of “as a line, a line continually pushed forward (or back) by heroic frontiersmen, the pioneers. Inside the line is culture; beyond it is nature” (Carter cited in Russell: 2). Lynnette Russell (2001) emphasizes the connection between the frontier and the creation of the masculine archetype of the ‘frontier man’. This image grew out of a “process of mythologising the frontier as a place where brave European men conquered nature” (Russell 2001: 2). Of course this ‘nature’ included not only landscape and animals but also the indigenous peoples who were already living in the lands that were colonised.

Although the actual frontier histories of the USA and New Zealand are quite dissimilar in many respects, one potent similarity can be seen in this ‘masculine’ archetype that came out of the mythic ‘frontier’ period. The main components of the ‘frontier man’ are self-sufficiency, self-control (particularly in terms of concealing emotion), and being a man’s man - a ‘mate’ in New Zealand - a man who is most comfortable with other men (Phillips 1996). When I accompanied a group of men for a morning of duck hunting, this notion of the frontier appeared to manifest itself clearly - particularly in the low-key, pragmatic, and ‘staunch’ manner in which the men were talking and acting, and even visually in the way
they walked away from me in a line with their shotguns ready to shoot ducks along a ‘frontier’ river (Figure 22).

FIGURE 22. ‘Frontier Men’  
(Source: personal photograph)

One of the frontier man’s key talents is the ability to ‘live off the land’, and for many duck hunters, duck hunting becomes a way to express a kind of provisioning that symbolises an escape from the complicated ‘modern’ world:

I know you can go down to the supermarket and pick up a chicken for seven bucks and get two good meals out of it but I will spend all weekend trying to shoot the duck out of the sky to make half a meal – but I guess I do it to express the need...that I know I have caught the bird myself and I can provide for myself without relying on the supermarket (Grant).

[Do you like the fact that you are taking responsibility for killing your own food?] Oh yeah, that’s a big issue for me, a big issue. And I shoot way more than our family can eat and I get a lot of pleasure out of giving it to other people. The fish and game I shoot probably make up three-quarters of our diet – yeah, almost to the stage where my family is sick of it [laugh]. (Tylor).
From when I was a little fella I wanted to go and shoot ducks and bring them home for the family...and so finally when I was twelve Dad let me go hunting and I brought home a few birds for Mum and the rest of the family. I was really proud, you know... and I still love being able to hunt and bring home meat and not have to depend on the supermarket or other people to kill for me (Doug).

Doug, in particular, took the provisioning aspect of duck hunting very seriously and took a great deal of pride in bringing home food to his family even as a teenager. He would go hunting by himself quite a lot and he told me his mother especially would praise him for providing meat. He felt some unhappiness that his partner did not share his mother’s enthusiasm and did not like him to bring home any ducks he shot.

FIGURE 23. Young Duck Hunter Proudly Showing off his ‘Provisioning’
(Source: personal photograph)
The importance of provisioning is linked to the historical mobilisation of hunting as an expression of political struggle. As discussed above, one important promise made to the early immigrants to New Zealand from Britain was an egalitarian hunting paradise. Wild game birds were an important component of early settler life as they provided protein in a very limited diet. The early days of settlers, in New Zealand and other countries, are steeped in cultural myths and meaning and in New Zealand intrinsically linked to "virile men" (Phillips 1996: 99). Often, these times are viewed nostalgically from the present as they symbolise a more simple time, free of the complications of modern life. In particular, they represent a time when people seemed more in control of their lives (a time before society was being swept away on the "juggernaut" of modernity (Giddens 1990). If you wanted food you just went out and got it yourself - people and nature seemed to be connected much more closely, unlike today when supermarkets are our hunting grounds.

The preceding section has shown that duck hunting is closely associated with performances of masculinities that are tied to ideas of nature, and of 'natural' masculinities. In many cases, duck hunting is perceived as an opportunity to escape from the 'cultural' restrictions that male duck hunters experience in their everyday lives. (Looked at from an Eliasian perspective, this appears to be a kind of 'anti-civilizing process'.) Eating, drinking, talking about sex, enjoying embodied outdoors experiences like getting wet and feeling cold, are all constructed within a discourse of masculine performances that are temporally and spatially bounded. On some occasions, some duck hunters express awareness of the 'over-the-top' behaviours or performances that they are participating in, but they understand them to be acceptable because they are limited to such a narrow period of their lives. Even though they would probably not enjoy or endorse such behaviours in their everyday experiences, in the specific spaces manifest in the duck hunting 'culture', and in the particular 'nature' places where hunting takes place, it is a treasured and eagerly anticipated annual 'release'. Having observed and discussed the extraordinarily 'masculine' practices and performances that feature in duck
hunting in Southern New Zealand, the following section examines what positions women might have within these gendered practices, and how women who shoot ducks fit into this framework.

4.5 The Place of Women in Duck Hunting Practices

Why don't more women go duck hunting?

An activity such as duck hunting, where participation is so clearly linked to gender, raises the problem of how to explain its extreme gender imbalance. The low numbers of women involved in duck hunting (as in all other types of hunting) leads many people to suppose that biology must be the explanation for this difference (see below for duck hunters’ views on this). Others suggest that socialisation is the key to understanding why women are so rarely hunters. The ‘nature’ versus ‘nurture’ debate in relation to gender has been the focus of an enormous body of literature, developed over the past four decades since the second-wave feminist movement. As previously noted, particular criticism has been leveled at the idea that ‘sex’ determines ‘gender’ and that sex identity can be explained away as a matter of chromosomes and hormones (for example, Connell 2002; Butler 1990).

The idea that women are ‘nurturers’ and men are ‘providers’ is a still a powerful dualistic paradigm, even with the inroads that feminism has made into dispelling the idea that biology determines gender roles and gendered personhood. Because ‘hunting’ is an activity that has such a loaded history in terms of the ‘nature’ versus ‘nurture’ argument, it is perhaps unsurprising that, amongst the duck hunters that I interviewed, many articulated biological explanations as to why so few women hunted:

Basically women don’t have that, well say, interest - they have a maternal instinct which is quite strong. If women want to have babies, they will have babies and I think it is the same thing - it (hunting) is just a natural thing that men do and women don’t (Larry).
It's a man's thing, always has been and - okay, I am just on sixty years old but I still believe it is a male instinct thing - that part of hunting for animals and birds etcetera. It is part of the food gathering exercise and I guess it is an inborn thing and women don't have that. I don't believe they do - they will tell you different - but I don't believe they do (Ron).

I think it probably relies on a very primitive part of males. I do believe that in the male there is a very strong warrior instinct which we see on the rugby field or we see males taking up pursuits in life that very much show what I would call the warrior side of us and duck shooting is just one more of those (pursuits)...and I guess that may be a reason why the females generally don’t get hooked on it (Len).

Phillips (1996) also makes Len’s connection between a ‘warrior instinct’ and rugby, however, Phillips interprets this connection not as a biological one (as Len does) but something deeply embedded in the social aspects of New Zealand’s recent colonial history. In particular, he emphasizes that the male pakeha stereotype was created by an imbalance in the ratio between men and women in the latter part of the nineteenth century, which led to the development of a rather rough, and ‘hypermasculine’ culture which seriously challenged colony’s social order. Several strategies were employed by the colonial authorities to subdue and control this situation, such as encouraging the development of family farms and linking masculinity with marriage. Rugby football was also promoted as a suitable outlet for masculine ‘virility’ because it allowed for “the muscular virtues of the pioneer heritage”\(^{84}\) to be kept alive, but contained within the “respectable boundaries” of the rugby football field (Phillips 1996: 86).

Tony, like Len, seems to reiterate the idea of biological difference as an explanation for why few women go duck hunting, and for him there are very clear gender dualisms that dictate which behaviours are appropriate for women (and men). Tony does not like the idea of women duck shooting, as it clearly does not fit with what he regards as ‘normal’ behaviour for women:

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\(^{84}\) These ‘muscular virtues’ were valued by the state as in times of war this meant there was a population of men who could easily be molded into soldier material (Phillips 1996).
I am going to step on some toes here but I don’t think most women would want to go duck shooting anyway. I just think it is a real blokey activity. Whenever I have seen a woman duck shooting I have always thought: ‘oh my god, that’s just something else’. It is really sexist, but you see them there and often they are farmers’ wives and they walk around in their swannies and they are sort of – I want to use the word hick, but I don’t as well. I just find it really weird that women would go out and go shooting in that sort of setting. I mean there is no real reason why they can’t but it doesn’t stop me from thinking that it’s a bit weird, that’s not what a normal girl would do (Tony).

It is clear from Tony’s comments, however, that he is aware his viewpoint could be regarded as ‘sexist’, suggesting that he at least partly understands ‘normal’ as a contestable social construction. In the following extract Larry, another participant, also observes that the traditional gender order is changing, but he is somewhat dubious about the motivations of women hunters (in the USA in particular). Larry suspects that women are becoming involved in an effort to show they can ‘do anything a man can do’, rather than being motivated by a ‘true’ desire to hunt which, from his earlier comments, he appears to connect to instinctive behaviour in males only:

Although today’s society says that women should do everything a man can do and that is changing but generally most women have no interest...And you just definitely get that impression that a lot of the American hunter women – a lot of them – are forced. They force themselves to do it simply because they want to be the women’s lib’ thing - whether it is good or bad, I don’t know (Larry).

While many male participants articulated ideas of gender binaries in regard to hunting, particularly the notions of men being ‘naturally’ aggressive, while women are ‘naturally’ nurturing, several women also endorsed this type of explanation. Two women participants (not duck hunters themselves) put forward the idea that women are instinctively more nurturing than men, and this partly explained – at least for them – why they did want to shoot ducks:

85 ‘Swandri’ jacket.
I think women enjoy more sociable things that are not quite as savage because I find it actually distasteful to kill things for the sake of killing them. I think it just goes against the nurturing nature that most women have - they just don’t like killing things and to them it is not fun. It’s actually unnecessary and just distasteful (Therese).

I remember firing a gun once and I didn’t like the feel of it - perhaps it is the violence of it, shooting, killing. I think women are more peaceful than men are - it could partially be that as well - more nurturing rather than killing...men are the more aggressive animals, there is no doubt about that (Margaret).

This example illustrates that both men and women play a part in maintaining the ‘traditional’ gender order associated with duck hunting. As with broader gender prescriptions of New Zealand society, most people perpetuate ‘normal’ behaviours in regard to gender because these behaviours are inseparable from their sense of worth and identity.86

While the belief that women are naturally more nurturing was obviously a popular explanation for women’s lack of involvement in shooting ducks, several hunters thought the physical demands of duck hunting activities were also deterrents. The following two participants explicitly explained that the discomfort of duck hunting put women off being involved:

I think it (duck hunting) is perceived as a man’s thing. I wonder whether women are silly enough to get up at the crack of dawn and freeze their backsides off and catch nothing. I think that is part of it for women (Grant).

In a way it’s not an environment that a lot of women would feel comfortable in. Plus, it can be really unpleasant - like hunting out on the estuary is really quite cold, and you can be miserable and it’s hard work. It can be risky too, with bad weather and boats and all that sort of stuff (Craig).

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86 On the “logic of practice” or how the normative experience of gender is rooted in everyday interactions and the structure of formal organisations see (Bourdieu 1990 {1980}; Connell 1987, Smith 1987).
Craig, however, then went on to suggest that perhaps this was not a straightforward gender question as he thought some men would also struggle with the uncomfortable conditions:

Not that some women wouldn’t be capable of handling it – probably better than some men. There’s a lot of men who don’t like that sort of hunting (Craig).

There was a definite split in how the men in this research understood women’s participation in duck hunting. Some men were extremely enthusiastic about women taking part in the shooting aspect of duck hunting although, as both the following extracts reveal, sometimes the men appear to be far more enthusiastic than their female partners:

Well if Louisa wanted to come shooting, I’d buy her a gun so she’d be able to come out herself. It would be fantastic, but I’m not sure how keen she is to try it (John).

Oh, I’m sure there are guys out there who think it’s a man’s thing but personally myself I don’t see anything wrong with it, you know. As long as they’re comfortable with what’s going on and they find the right group I’m sure it would work. No, it wouldn’t worry me. I mean if Tracy would come hunting that would be great. I always wished I could have had a partner that would shoot beside me, but it’s not going to be so life goes on (Doug).

As I have already shown however, it is clear that for some men duck hunting is a time when they enjoy being away from the women in their life, most obviously epitomized by the ‘blokes only’ duck hunter, while for others – such as the ‘community’ duck hunters – women are welcome to join in their duck hunting practices. As the following section will explore, however, there are a variety of different activities that women can be included within duck hunting activities.
'Woman the Plucker'

In ‘traditional’ duck hunting there are very clearly delineated activities for men and women. King (1988) recalls the importance of gender in determining how his parents experienced duck hunting:

Another opportunity my father enjoyed that my mother seemed not to have was the odd weekend away with friends, duck-shooting, rabbit-shooting or fishing. These were boisterous affairs, what we saw of them, much alcohol being loaded into the cars along with rifles, guns, ammunition and fishing rods. They also resulted in food, though it was my mother who had to pluck birds and cook carcasses (King 1988: 140).

Duck hunting especially highlights distinctive gender relations because, whereas other types of hunting such as deer, pig, and goat hunting have no special role for women (except perhaps cooking the game meat), duck hunting has traditionally had a very distinct role for the female partner (and sometimes children) of a duck hunter – to pluck the ducks.

Attitudes towards whether women should do the plucking have changed radically in the last twenty years. Whereas it was once a routine aspect of duck hunting that the female partner would pluck and prepare the ducks for cooking, this is no longer the case. Most men now seem to accept that they bring home the ducks ready for cooking; that is, gutted and plucked. Although one participant (Gary), told me his wife was expected to pluck and cook the ducks he brought home because this was “part of the deal”, this seemed to be a less common attitude in general now. Perhaps this change in expectation that women will do the plucking reflects the fact that women have more power to accept or manipulate gender relations within their home life than the women of previous generations. Several older women that I spoke to in this research reminisced rather unfavourably about plucking ducks. Therese’s recollection for instance, provides a vivid picture of post hunting activities during her childhood on a North Otago farm during the 1960s, and the expectation that the women would pluck (and cook) the ducks:
At about half past ten or so they would wander back with these ducks and we would be expected to pluck them. It was a real performance plucking the ducks. We would sit outside – hopefully it was nice and fine, and we would sit on boxes or crates usually and the feathers would just go everywhere. The cats were always extremely interested sitting around looking very anxious and hopeful that we would give them something. And then when we had plucked them as much as we could because the wing feathers are really hard to get out especially the little pinfeathers across the top of the wings, which are impossible to get out, and we would pull and pull and pull at these. And we would find bits of pellets in the ducks and we would squeeze the pellets out because we didn’t want to eat the lead shot. Eating them is not very nice with bits of lead shot but however, when we had got them to a stage where they were mostly sort of bits of fluff and wee bits of pin feathers and things, Dad would hold them over a naked flame and singe off the rest of the feathers. Then I think Dad gutted them and Mum stuffed them and roasted them up (Therese).

Significantly, an older couple that I spoke to together had rather divergent memories about how the plucking and preparation of the ducks brought home from hunting. While listening to this couple talking it was clear that the duck hunter was rather put out at his wife’s less than enthusiastic recollections around what was clearly an activity she felt obliged to do:

[CP to William’s wife: Did you help with the plucking of the ducks?]
William’s wife: Oh, did I ever, yes, yes. Well, I did initially you know, when my husband was doing a lot of hunting – I did quite a lot of plucking.

William: I did a bit of sporadic hunting, the odd bird or two. But before I knew, I was working in other employment, and shot at the weekend and went to work on Monday morning.

William’s wife: And that’s when the ducks got left for me to pluck.

William: Well, you hopped out there and started doing it...when I was at work (laugh).

Williams’s wife: Oh dear – let’s face it, I couldn’t bear to see them hanging there for too long. And of course in those days we didn’t have refrigerators and I can recall you bringing home a wheelbarrow full of ducks.

William: Yeah, that’s right. In those days the bag limit was fifteen.
William’s wife: Yes, and you’d go away for the weekend and come home with all these ducks and well the fact was, you couldn’t keep them longer than a week. So you just had to pluck and eat them as fast as you could.

Several participants recalled that while their mother was expected to be supportive of her husband’s duck hunting, it was definitely more of a fun time for their father. I asked Therese if she remembered how her mother felt about duck hunting and whether she ever expressed any kind of annoyance at her father’s activities:

Well, I think she was annoyed at being woken up so early in the morning because they made no attempt to be quiet at all. She used to get a bit huffy about all the preparation that was involved in getting these blasted ducks cooked and roasted up. But oh, she didn’t grumble all that much, but we could tell it wasn’t as good a time for her as for the men (Therese).

Ron’s recollections of his mother’s attitude towards his father and his brothers going duck hunting reveals how she articulated (and was expected to follow) specific activities related to her gender: for her men hunted, and women cooked:

Mum thought it was a waste of time - a man’s thing: ‘don’t know why you bother getting up at four o’clock in the morning hunting poor wee birds’ - and all that sort of thing... But Mum would cook them, that was her job (Ron).

In contrast, in Trudy’s family, the women established a ‘rule’ that if the men shot any ducks they were required to pluck those ducks and not expect the female family members to do that task.

We have got this rule that if they [father and two brothers] shoot it, they pluck it. [Who made that rule?] Mum and I will cook it but we won’t pluck it. I have a go at plucking ant I really didn’t like it so I said: ‘look, no. I am not going to do it any more - I didn’t shoot it’. I’ll cook ducks, I don’t mind doing that, but I won’t pluck them. So yeah, I think it is a rule that has just sort of developed (Trudy).
The contemporary situation for duck hunters’ partners is diverse. Many women have nothing whatsoever to do with their husband’s or partner’s duck hunting activities. Many of the ‘blokes only’ duck hunters simply disappear for the weekend and several women I spoke to said they had ‘no interest’ in what went on when they were away. One woman even said she had told her husband not to bring back any ducks because she did not like them and would not cook them. Some other women, however, do continue to support their husbands in ‘traditional’ duck hunters’ wives roles. A television news item on the opening weekend of duck hunting in 2003 showed a group of women, described as five “hunters’ wives” waiting on the edge of Lake Ellesmere for their husbands to return from hunting on the lake. The camera panned over tables that had been set up with food and hot drinks prepared for the men. A television reporter interviewed one of the women who explained why she and the other wives were there: “we are just here to cook the meals and look after them and make sure they are warm when they come back” (TVNZ 2003).

On family farms, where ‘community’ duck hunting is more common, women often spend the opening day of duck hunting relaxing together in the home while the men and adolescent boys spend the day in the maimai. These activities reflect not only distinct expectations about behaviour in relation to gender, but also quite distinct ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ spaces. For some families, however, this is not a rigid division. One family that I stayed with over opening weekend had an extremely relaxed attitude about gender relations and gendered sites in regard to duck hunting. The teenage daughter of the family spent the morning shooting with her father, uncle, and brothers in the maimai, while at lunch time the younger children, mother, and aunt joined the duck hunters in the maimai to eat lunch and hear tales about the morning’s shooting. Although perhaps somewhat unusual, this family illustrates that there is now more diversity in the roles women can adopt in duck hunting activities that in the past, and that for some families at least, duck hunting activities are not rigidly delineated along gender lines.
'Duck Hunters' Widows' and 'Home Alone' Families

In Southland, particularly over the opening weekend, women in some communities employ some fascinating strategies to cope with the men going away duck hunting. These strategies can be interpreted as opportunities for 'female bonding', and sometimes reflect stereotypical notions of how women socialise (specifically indoor activities that revolve around 'gossiping'). For example, the small town of Wyndham regularly holds a function on the Saturday night of opening weekend especially for the female wives and partners of duck hunters:

Mum and I usually go down - with some other friends, the other wives of the guys who are shooting - we all go down and we have a great night. [What sort of things do you do?] We just like sit around and you know, catch up on gossip and it great fun and sometimes they have like a live band or something and you get up and dance away. It is just a great social time, everyone is just having a great time. Sometimes they will put on a meal or something - like you pay $5 and they put on this buffet (Trudy).

Some wives and partners have more informal arrangements during duck hunting that also tend to fit in with stereotypes of 'feminine' socialising, such as getting together for a 'nice lunch', to drink wine, and, of course, to talk. The following two comments also highlight how some women take the opportunity to enjoy the 'male-free' time and space that duck hunting accords. This notion of 'male-free' time complements the 'female-free' time enjoyed by some men in their 'blokes only' duck hunting weekends:

My mum and the wife of one of the other shooters will often go out and meet up on the Saturday or something and have a nice lunch or something like that and they will tend to have nothing to do with it and really enjoy their weekends without any males around the house because in both families there are no daughters (Tony).

Because he [husband] is not there my friend and I take the chance to get together without any men in the house because you know we get together less in recent years. But we have stuck with doing it and it's really good
because it’s nice when women talk, you know, to have no men butting in and you can talk stupid and laugh and yell and you know be crazy, can’t you – because a lot of laughing goes on. And it is always mixed with very lovely food and wine. But that is something just for us. It is the only night of the year that he is not there (Betty).

In Southland, the term ‘duck hunter’s widow’ is a well-known phrase used to describe the wives and partners left alone, particularly on opening weekend. One group of women have actively taken up this term and organised a shopping and dining tour for any women who wanted to join in.

### Wives duck out shopping

**By Duane Allen and Amanda Watson**

In the case of a group of Invercargill women, fury translates to spending power while scorned has a lot to do with the first weekend in May. Duck Shooters’ Widows has been on the road now for four years and there is never a problem selling tickets. Organiser Gayleen Sutherland said she originally started making the retail ramble in a car with four friends.

Four years ago she was joined by her cousin Sandra Cocker when Duck Shooters’ Widows took to the road on a larger scale. This year 45 women, mostly from Invercargill, took all day Saturday to tour Southland, stopping off at Dacre, Lochiel, Winton, Centre Bush, Mossburn and Balfour.

Having a dedicated duck shooting husband meant opening weekend was an ideal time for the social day out, Mrs Sutherland said. Only about half of the women who went on the trip had husbands who were duck shooters but all found the day a good social event.

Mrs Cocker’s husband doesn’t even shoot — how can he when he’s in charge of babysitting three children?

For $35 women were guaranteed no ducks, a seven-stop boutique shopping tour of Southland, as well as lunch, morning tea and lucky ticket prizes.

![FIGURE 24. “Wives Duck Out Shopping”.

In the above article (Figure 24) from The Southland Times, a journalist describes this arrangement as a kind of vengeful act played upon the duck hunters who have ‘abandoned’ their wives. When read carefully, however, this article does not actually present a straightforward picture of dualistic gender roles (such as, men-hunt while women-shop), as we are told: “Mrs Cocker’s husband doesn’t even shoot – how can he when he’s in charge of babysitting three children.” While this article suggests a new kind of ‘feminine tradition’ has developed to counter the
'Woman the Hunter'

While the role of plucking is no longer widely assumed to be 'women's work', and female partners appear to have far more choice as to what degree they want to be involved in their partner's duck hunting activities, there also appears to be a shift in support for women who want to take on the role of hunting for themselves. In *Woman the Hunter* (1997), Stange draws attention to the increase in the number of women in the United States who have taken up hunting over the past decade, doubling from one to over two million female hunters (Stange, 1997: 1). Stange argues that women who hunt disrupt both patriarchal and feminist models, which use hunting as a 'root metaphor' for dualistic gender order.

While the Men-Hunt-Animals/Women-Gather-Plants template serves as a patriarchal framework for justifying division of labour and essentialist arguments about gender difference (see for example Shepherd 1973), some ecofeminist writers use this same model to argue for fundamental differences between women and men most notably around the notion that women are innately nonviolent and nurturing (Collard 1988) - a notion that I have shown to have powerful hold amongst some participants in this study.

As a feminist who enjoys hunting, Stange rejects these arguments and urges that the dualistic assumptions embedded in Western ideas of 'nature' and 'culture', together with the supposed 'natural' place and behaviours that men and women inhabit within those realms should be rearranged. In doing so Stange, in common with many of the participants in this current research, conceptualises a hybrid nature-culture model in which hunters (Stange emphasizes both male and female here) act out a personal 'multi-sensed' relationship within 'nature':

And every hunter brings a world of human meaning to bear upon her participation in the cycle of life and death. As was remarked much earlier, the hunter confronts the nonhuman world *in person*, an animal like the others, but with a particular knack for crossing boundaries, and an obsession for making sense of things. She returns with blood under her fingernails, and with meat - which, later on, lusciously sauced and served
with wine and the story of the hunt, is indeed the best of foods (Stange 1997: 187, emphasis in the original).

Although there is clear evidence of a large increase in women’s participation in hunting in the USA, the degree to which women’s involvement in hunting in New Zealand is increasing is very hard to gauge. A newspaper article in June 1998, however, suggests that women are taking a higher profile in large game hunting in New Zealand. A prize giving for the Conservation Department’s “Big Hunt Competition” at Wainuiomata saw three women taking the top prizes. The reporter at the event observed:

In a sport always dominated by the real Kiwi bloke, the result subdued many of the macho male entrants. Another male bastion had fallen. There was disbelief - and in some cases a tinge of envy (Sunday Star Times 1998: C3).

Amongst duck hunters in southern New Zealand, there is also a sense that attitudes towards women’s participation in shooting ducks are changing. In explaining this one participant, John, highlights the difference between his parent’s generation and his own:

The attitudes have changed that it’s only a man’s sport, you know, the idea that women aren’t allowed. People have changed their attitudes and if women want to come along, they’re more encouraged now than: ‘oh no, you’re not allowed down here’. Like mum, she won’t go near the pond because she thinks it’s just a man’s sport... I think it’s the younger generation who are wanting to join in (John).

While the discourses of equality for women (or equal opportunities for men and women) are widely articulated in New Zealand society, the reality for women who attempt to participate in traditionally male arenas is far from easy. The number of women involved in duck hunting is still very low, despite concerted efforts over the past few years by organizations like Fish and Game New Zealand to promote women’s involvement. In an article written for the Sporting Shooters Association
of New Zealand (SSANZ), Roberta Gledhill (2000) draws on her own experiences from talking to women inside and outside shooting sports and outlines why she thinks more women are not involved in hunting and shooting sports. Gledhill suggests that women are put off by men who treat them as sexual objects rather than people: “all we really want is for you to treat us like people - like shooters - and not like objects” (emphasis in the original). Some women even experience open hostility when they go to shooting ranges and other clubs associated with shooting sports. Gledhill also draws attention to the lack of role models for women (apart from infamous mythical characters like Annie Oakley and Calamity Jane). While New Zealand does have some very successful female shooters, they tend to be overlooked by the media (as are women’s sports in general). Gledhill also draws attention to what she terms the “Man’s Gun” mystique: that is, advertising and cultural myths which have built up a picture that associates guns with men. Shotguns are notorious for ‘kicking’ and this is often cited as a reason for women not to use a shotgun, but Gledhill argues that ‘kicking’ happens for both men and women and it is just a matter of finding a firearm that physically suits the individual (Gledhill 2000).

Over the past few years, Fish and Game New Zealand have taken a very pro-active approach to trying to encourage women to become involved in duck hunting, including setting up a special ‘women shooters’ section on their internet web page. Surveys organized by Fish and Game New Zealand indicates two main explanations as to why more women are not participating in duck hunting. Firstly, many women are made to feel unwelcome by male hunters, and secondly, women lack the confidence to try the sport because they lack the necessary skills. I would hypothesise further and say that being made to feel unwelcome is not the only problem, but that there is no ‘cultural space’ for women shooters. As many of the

87 Nadine Stanton and Teresa Borrell did receive a fair amount of media attention during the 2002 Commonwealth Games, as they secured New Zealand’s first gold and silver medals in shooting events. When interviewed on a television news item, Nadine Stanton revealed that going duck hunting was one of the ways that she practiced and improved her shooting skills.

duck hunting activities, particularly on opening morning, revolve around male sociality and, to a large degree, enjoying a female-free space, it is very difficult for women to feel they belong in this scene.

One way that Fish and Game New Zealand appears to be attempting to create a 'space' for women within duck hunting is through advertising. A brochure outlining Fish and Game's role in managing the sports fish and game bird resource depicts a young female duck shooter under the words “a New Zealand tradition” (Figure 26). This image is rather ironic (at least at the present time), as young, blonde women are far from being an established part of the duck hunting tradition - at least as being equal shooting partners with men.

FIGURE 26. ‘A New Zealand Tradition’
(Source: Fish and Game New Zealand Brochure: A New Zealand Tradition)
Fish and Game New Zealand have also recently established a programme called “Becoming an Outdoor Woman”, which is based on a similar, highly successful course running in the USA and Canada. The New Zealand Outdoor Woman programme is currently targeted at women in the Auckland/Waikato area and offering them the opportunity to spend a weekend learning firearms safety, outdoor cooking, wetland ecology, and fly fishing. The weekend ends with a small ‘fashion show’ demonstrating a range of outdoor clothing (Fish and Game New Zealand Outdoor Women 2004). Underlying some of Fish and Game New Zealand’s impetus for making duck hunting more accessible to women is an awareness that women’s opinions are important to the ongoing acceptance of hunting. In a game bird hunter’s guidebook, the director of Fish and Game New Zealand states: “our public opinion surveys show a decline in public support for game bird hunting, especially among women, and we only have to look at Australia to see nationwide campaigns to outlaw duck hunting” (Fish and Game New Zealand Game Bird Hunting Guide 2000-2001: 4).

FIGURE 27. “Take a Mate Duck Hunting”
Source: Otago Daily Times 2002, July 6-7: A12

For more information on the USA and Canadian programme, ‘Becoming an Outdoor Woman’ (BOW), see http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/bow/
During 2001 and 2002, Fish and Game introduced a strategy to encourage duck hunters to enlist novices to try out duck hunting by offering them a free licence for a two-week period (see Figure 27 above). The use of the word ‘mate’ is particularly important here, because the list of possible ‘mates’ provided in the advertisement includes the hunter’s wife. This creates a double meaning for the word ‘mate’, which in duck hunting would traditionally only be used in reference to male friends, but can also be understood here as the (male) duck hunter’s female sexual partner. While this advertisement reveals assumptions about duck hunter’s being in heterosexual relationships, it also provides a ‘space’ for ‘wives’ to become duck hunters. This in turn has connotations of a ‘natural’ relationship where male and female hunt together (à la animal nature programmes that show mated animals hunting together). Stange (1997) likewise emphasizes that the desire to be with her husband and to ‘know’ him more fully is a key reason why she became a hunter:

We were antelope hunting, my husband, Doug, and I – or rather, he was hunting, in the sense of active stalking, armed, with the intention of killing, and I was along for the trip. This had been our habit for somewhat more than a year, since shortly after we were married and I moved with him to Montana... Hunting was so much, and so deeply, central to the identity of this man I loved that a part of me felt I would not truly know him until I shared something of this experience (Stange 1997: 12).

Three of the women participants in this research who shoot ducks were introduced to duck shooting by their husbands. Lisa, in common with the two other women, explained that a great deal of her enjoyment of duck hunting derived from spending time with her husband:

You probably figured too though, that I like going to be with my husband, and I really feel that that is part of it for me. Yeah, I do enjoy his company and to have those times with him are special (Lisa).

For other women I spoke to who participate in the shooting aspects of duck hunting, their introduction to duck hunting came about during their childhood and through the encouragement of their father. Although male duck hunters that I
spoke to all generally said they would not exclude their daughters from duck shooting activities, the majority with children still mainly only had sons shooting with them. Reasons for not including daughters were usually framed in terms that girls are just not interested in the 'uncomfortable', wet, cold aspects of duck hunting nor the 'killing side'. This attitude however, is markedly different when we compare urban and rural areas, with girls on farms generally being introduced to firearms at a young age. (Differences in attitude towards hunting in rural and urban areas will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5). Shooting rabbits was a very common experience for girls who come from farming backgrounds, even when they were excluded from the male duck hunting rituals. It seems clear that for women to become involved in duck shooting activities they need to be actively encouraged by a man who is important their lives - either their father or their partner. Whether the current efforts from Fish and Game New Zealand will help develop a generation of hunting women who might encourage more girls into wanting to be duck hunters cannot be determined at this time. Although traditional assumptions about dualist positions for men and women are contested and challenged to a certain degree in New Zealand society, it is clear that duck hunting is still strongly shaped by 'masculine' and 'feminine' performances.

4.6 Children: Passing on the 'Tradition' of Duck Hunting

Having talked about adult men and women in relation to duck hunting in southern New Zealand, it is now appropriate to consider how children are introduced and incorporated into duck hunting practices. For many duck hunters, the relationship with their father was a key reason for their introduction to, and continued participation in, duck hunting. Research carried out in the USA highlights that while a rural upbringing is strongly tied to the likelihood of a person taking up hunting, having a father that hunts is most often critical to hunting participation (Stedman & Heberlein 2001). Significantly, the duck hunters who are not introduced by their father usually come to duck hunting because a male relative (older brother, uncle, or cousin) has encouraged them. Several participants also
mentioned that while their father was not a duck hunter, the father of a friend had invited them to participate in duck shooting activities.

Some people who are introduced to duck hunting by their father, develop a tradition that continues for many years. This time can become extremely important because of the opportunity it allows for a father and son to spend together. Norman introduced his son to hunting when he was a child and they still hunt together even now that his son is in his late twenties.

My son Matt does a lot of hunting in his own right but opening weekend is something that Matt and I have done, I guess, since he was 7 or 8. He has always come with me and he has grown up with it and it is a quality weekend time and I preserve that like hell. We will go and visit the maimai a couple of times and I guess late February, out come the decoys, the preparation goes in, the guns come out. We go and practise down on the beach or go somewhere else and just start mentally preparing and we energise each other as we get towards the opening weekend (Norman).

Norman also included his daughter on duck hunting trips and as the following extract reveals, for Norman duck hunting (and other types of hunting) are very much a family activity.

When we go to the beach and throw a few clay targets we always give her [Norman’s daughter] an opportunity to throw a couple. We do quite a bit of rabbit hunting... and we shoot possums - we are into those sort of outdoor activities. I have always given the kids that opportunity. This year, ducks were flying pretty fast and we decided she might start with some swans and her first shot down was a swan and that was a thrill and then it took a while but she got another one, and then a couple of ducks later in the day. But she has always been part of the involvement... and she has been encouraged to have a go (Norman).

Many male hunters recalled that learning to shoot ducks was a special and exciting time during their boyhood years specifically because of the time they spent with their father. It was also a time when they learned special skills and were taught social etiquette and ethical beliefs in regard to killing ducks:
I can remember as a boy waiting for dad to come home - you know when he went duck shooting and I couldn't go - so it was just a matter of time. I was too young to go and I was: "can't wait!" sort of thing - you know. And a lot of times that I went when I was younger, I wasn't shooting - I was just with Dad (Andy).

My dad has always liked that sort of thing, farming and the whole shebang really so he and a friend of his go duck shooting, it is more probably an opportunity to go out and spend a long weekend away from their wives more than anything else yeah so they go and basically all of the sons from both of those two families used to go along as well so, yeah, I just sort of started that way really (Tony).

It doesn't happen to everyone, but you'll shoot it [a duck] and then it's dead and then you actually pick it up and you start shaking. It's the whole: 'oh my god, I've just killed something'! But my Dad was really good. And yeah, so I was shaking and I didn't know what was wrong with me and my Dad said, 'oh, you've got hunter's shake. Good on ya son' (laugh) (Doug).

John relayed in detail a story about how his four-year-old son behaved on a duck hunting trip:

Our four year old came with me duck hunting. He was far too noisy in the maimai though, if any ducks came they would be miles away. And, when I shot these ducks the other week up the river, he was with me and I told him to stop and wait away back out in the paddock, and I was just about up to the river and then I heard him running up behind me and he was saying: "I wanna pee, wanna pee", and I said: "Shhhh, you haven't got time" (laugh). So I knew I had to just stand up and shoot otherwise he was going to scare them all away before I had a chance. So, I had to rush it [And did you get them?] Yeah, I got the three - and then he forgot about having a pee because we were too busy chasing after the ducks floating down the river to catch them. Well, he loves coming out to the pond. He might have a mean streak him, I dunno, but he likes these things being shot. (Louisa (John's wife): No, he's just a boy with a gun really (John).

Many of the duck hunters are aware that passing on skills and understanding to children is important if duck hunting is to continue:

I think all kids are interested in what dad's doing. They are interested in the ducks, they want to be outside with me when I'm plucking them. Tom (5-year old son) wants to shoot everything and kill everything and do that
sort of boys stuff too. But, I don't know, I don't know whether they will or won't. I'd like them to understand it – like it doesn't really worry me whether they actually want to go and kill things but I want them to understand why people do. I want another generation to accept that hunting is okay, basically. That's the important thing (Tylor).

To a large degree these relationships between fathers and children perpetuate the gendered performances of the duck hunting tradition. However, those men that include their daughters (or wives or partners) challenge normative ideas about what roles women should have, particularly in regard to their involvement in such a traditionally male arena as duck hunting. There are many male duck hunters who welcome women's involvement in shooting ducks and who do not practice an exclusive, 'blokes only' style of duck hunting.

FIGURE 28. Duck Hunter with his Two Sons
(Source: personal photograph)
Conclusion

This chapter has presented details from fieldwork observations and interview material to illustrate the complexity of ideas and practices that are associated with duck hunting in southern New Zealand. This chapter has also shown how understandings of gender are a fundamental aspect of the duck hunting experience, and that these understandings are interwoven with ideas of 'nature' and 'culture'. The notion of performance is also useful in considering duck hunting, as it can be used to describe both how gender performance produces a sense of a stable gendered persona - being 'masculine' or being 'feminine' - as well as the dramatic, self-aware, masculine performances that some duck hunters perpetuate, particularly over opening weekend. Individuals who participate in duck hunting activities reveal a complex and fascinating array of different 'masculinities'. For many, the anticipation of the duck hunting season leads to excitement and pleasure not unlike childhood eagerness for Christmas. The opening weekend of the season itself could be described as a 'masculine extravaganza' as many men indulge themselves in activities and behaviours outside their normal routine. Indeed, in the masculine space of the maimai, rituals centred on eating, drinking, and talking, are punctuated by shooting ducks.

I have discussed three different categories of duck hunting experience: 'blokes only', 'dedicated', and 'community' hunting. While emphasising that these categories should not be considered exhaustive or immutable, this chapter has shown how different practices and masculinities manifest themselves within these categories. The 'blokes only' duck hunting experience strongly emphasizes male sociality, discussions around heterosexual prowess, the consumption of large quantities of alcohol, and performances around the effects of that alcohol. In contrast, the 'dedicated' duck hunter is more likely to privilege hunting skills and abilities over the 'undisciplined' performances of the 'blokes only' duck hunter. The 'dedicated' duck hunter also most closely adheres to the 'traditional' stereotype of New Zealand masculinity, which encapsulates self-sufficiency, stoicism, and
pragmaticism within a rural or 'natural' space. Finally, the 'community' duck hunter practices a more family-oriented style of duck hunting, although this may still perpetuate very distinct notions about separate activities for men and women in relation to duck hunting (such as women in supporting roles rather than actively shooting ducks). The 'community' duck hunting experience is, however, more inclusive of children and women and less likely to include the 'hyper masculine' performances of the 'mates only' experience. In common with the 'dedicated' duck hunter, the 'community' duck hunter also places an emphasis on being able to 'provision' for family and friends by providing ducks for food.

To engage in duck hunting, a person must have a sense that it is appropriate for them to be physically in that environment and engaging in that activity. This chapter has illustrated that the gender order and gender relationships that are perpetuated in duck hunting practices cannot be explained by any kind of biological essentialism, rather, they are reproduced by both men and women who pass on this sense of embodied appropriateness (or non-appropriateness) in the landscape to the next generation. For many men, practicing duck hunting represents an opportunity to retreat from the restrictions of the 'civilised' or 'cultural' spatial order they perceive as imposed by women (or femininity) in ordinary life into a 'natural', masculine, place and space. For many duck hunters, the 'place' is a real structure - the maimai - where masculine performances and social practices take place. Both the physical place and cultural space are 'masculinised' by the men's performances, and those performances can only be expressed through the rejection of anything understood as 'feminine'. The 'natural' landscape in which duck hunting is practiced can, therefore, be considered to be a gendered landscape: a complex mesh of 'natural' and 'cultural' ideas within which performances of gender occur. In the following chapter, I will explore how this same landscape is also dominated by moral and ethical discourses. Duck hunters mobilise very distinctive ideas in regard to acceptable and ethical behaviours when practicing duck hunting, but these ideas are increasingly in conflict with wider
public opinion. Like gender, issues regarding ethics and human-animal relations are complex and multifaceted: a complexity that is admirably demonstrated in the practice of duck hunting.
Chapter 5
Dreadful/Delightful: The Contested Discourses of Killing Ducks

FIGURE 29. Gary Larson Cartoon – ‘Duck Hunter’
(Source: Reproduced in the Otago Daily Times 1999, Tuesday, October 5: 1999)

I cannot remember the shot; I remember only my unspeakable delight when my first duck hit the snowy ice with a thud and lay there, belly up, red legs kicking.

- Aldo Leopold [1987 (1949)] A Sand County Almanac, p.121.

Introduction
In the above quotation from A Sand County Almanac, Aldo Leopold (1987 [1949]), an important and highly regarded wildlife conservation writer, describes the delight he felt on shooting his first duck. While duck hunters understand this delight, many non-hunters do not. It is perhaps perplexing that the man credited with developing the term the “ecological conscience” (Knight and Riedel 2002), could also have been such a fervent and enthusiastic hunter. How can taking ‘delight’ in the killing of animals go hand in hand with conserving, protecting, and ‘loving nature’?
In the preceding chapter I presented extensive examples of the practices of duck hunting in southern New Zealand with a discussion of the gendered character of those practices. Many of these insights about gender are concerned with how hunters position themselves in relation to nature and animals. The overall argument of this thesis connects duck hunting with nature/culture hybridity, gender, and human-animal relations. This chapter moves from issues of gender in hunting to my next key issue: human-animal relations - specifically, in regard to ethical discourses associated with the killing of ducks. As we shall see, for those people who shoot ducks, the act of killing is part of an enjoyable activity, which is constructed as being ethically justifiable. For many non-hunters, however, this pastime represents mindless cruelty on an enormous scale. The main focus of this chapter is to explain how duck hunters configure and construct killing game birds into an ethically defensible position. Using fieldwork and interview material, I also illustrate the variety of ways that duck hunters have recently configured a counter discourse to anti-hunting critiques. Crucially, duck hunters assert that they have a more realistic and appropriate view of nature and animal life cycles than the average urban dweller who might criticise them. These divergent ideas indicate how different ethical discourses can be associated with rural ('natural') and urban ('civilised') settings and also reflect the heterogeneity of discursive positions in regard to which activities are acceptable within those different settings.

5.1 The Contemporary Contestation of Hunting Practices

In many ways, the American experience of hunting is similar to New Zealand’s, in that hunting wild animals connects to ideas of escape from the constraints of civilisation, testing and proving ‘manhood’, and images of becoming ‘one’ with nature. The American historical figure Daniel Boone epitomises this ideal of ‘man’ conquering and taming the wild. In New Zealand, a parallel image can be found in

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90 One important difference between the USA and New Zealand is attitudes towards gun ownership and control. While hunting and owning a gun in the USA “are woven together into a libertarian individualism” (Jasper & Nelkin 1992:83), New Zealand has maintained much tighter gun controls.

91 Almost without exception it is males who are associated with this imagery.
the writings of Barry Crump (1960, 1992), where iconic characters revel in hunting a variety of different creatures to show masculine independence ‘living off the land’, while simultaneously rejecting (or at least not relying on) modern conveniences and civilisation. Until recently, the skills and lifestyles (however much fictionalised and romanticised) of Daniel Boone and Barry Crump have been widely admired, even if not actively emulated by many Americans or New Zealanders. However, these images of stoic and resourceful men have recently been challenged, particularly as the hunting practices so closely associated with this type of lifestyle have come to be interpreted in far less positive ways. Sociologists James Jasper and Dorothy Nelkin (1992) argue, for instance, that: “these images (of hunters) have grown stale, sometimes even laughable” (Jasper & Nelkin 1992: 83). They refer to a Bloom County cartoon strip in which a character is commenting on the ‘lunacy’ of contemporary American life: “This morning, I was watching one of those manly hunting shows on TV... some big cracker wearing fatigues was holding up a fat, deceased duck whose fanny he’d just shot clean off. Then he said this: ‘Healthy-lookin’ sucker, ain’t he?’” (Breathed 1989: 59). In this portrayal, duck hunters are seen as ignorant and unethical - even as representing a kind of malignant masculinity.

In a similar vein, American novelist Joy Williams (1995) expresses her extreme distaste for recreational hunting in her essay The Killing Game. Here she links hunters with a multitude of negative characteristics as well as suggesting that the majority carry out hunting incompetently and kill with careless abandon:

But hunters are piggy. They just can’t seem to help it. They’re over equipped...insatiable, malevolent, and vain. They maim and mutilate and despoil...The majority of hunters will shoot at anything with four legs during deer season and anything with wings during duck season. Hunters try to nail running animals and distant birds (Williams 1995: 256).

In New Zealand, criticism of duck hunting has similarly become more vocal over the past few decades, and, where it was once considered a ‘natural’ form of food
provisioning, it is now increasingly viewed as an ‘unnatural’ “social problem”.92 These protests against duck hunting, however, have been fairly small-scale, and there appears to be little impetus towards banning duck hunting which, as we shall see, has already occurred in some states in Australia. Nevertheless, since the early 1990s in particular, examples can be found in the ‘Letters to the Editor’ sections of New Zealand newspapers, of correspondents articulating a perception of duck hunting as ‘unethical’ and ‘cruel’. The following letter to a Dunedin newspaper clearly exemplifies a particular discursive position against duck hunting and indicates that some members of society have little liking for duck hunting activities— or indeed the duck hunters themselves:

Why, in these enlightened post-colonial times, do we still have the annual carnage of duck shooting and allow heavily armed shooters to wander at will, taking pot shots at any poor duck, swan or goose that does not spot them first? Being allowed to stride around with a rifle [sic] over one shoulder and a smelly game bag over the while dressed like a freedom fighter seems to give shooters the confidence and arrogance to ignore signs such as “no shooting”. It is very disconcerting to bump into heavily armed shooters while taking the dog for a walk and it is sickening to see badly shot birds lying half dead and in pain...and it is downright infuriating that the rights of a shooter who has paid for a licence...and follows a few minor rules has the right to kill a generous quantity of birds in front of someone like me who finds the whole “sport” disgusting (‘Bird lover’, Otago Daily Times 2003a: 14).

This letter raises several issues that highlight increasingly contentious attitudes towards duck hunting. Firstly, “Bird lover” clearly expresses a perception that living in “post-colonial times” constitutes a shift in dominant discourses in regard to acceptable ethical treatment of animals since colonial times. Or, put another way, the correspondent makes the point that he or she lives in a ‘modern’ society, which, as such, has different relationships with animals than in the past. A second issue this letter raises is a deep concern with firearms. These negative connotations around guns are exacerbated by the wide use of camouflage clothing in

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92 Lyle Munro’s (1997) case study of duck shooting in Australia, which he describes as being constructed as a “social problem”, will be discussed further below.
contemporary duck hunting which, although used for purely practical reasons by most hunters, is, for many non-hunters, now associated with extremist militant personas or psychopathic killers. Finally, the correspondent clearly perceives the shooting of ducks as a cruel activity, leaving birds suffering and “lying half dead in pain” – and he or she can find no justification in what they clearly view as a disgusting “sport”.

This rejection of ‘traditional’ discourses integral to duck hunting (and hunting in general), must be understood in the context of both broad changes in human-animal relationships across Western societies over the past two hundred years (which relate to systemic changes in human-animal interactions and relations), and of some specific issues arising in the last quarter of the twentieth century (mainly associated with the ascendance in popularity of the ‘animal rights’ movement). In the first part of this chapter I outline the broader historical changes relating to human-animal interactions and then discuss conflicts between animal rights protesters and duck hunters in New Zealand, comparing these with an Australian case study of the same issue. In the second part of this chapter I present explanations from duck hunters about how they comprehend the killing component of their duck hunting and how they position themselves in regard to people who protest against them.

**Overview of Changing Attitudes Towards Killing Animals**

In his detailed historical account of changing attitudes towards the natural world in Britain, Keith Thomas argues (1983) that between the sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries dramatic changes occurred in the way that animals were categorized and conceptualised. The anthropocentric theological teachings of Tudor and Stuart England confidently placed the natural world at the service of human needs and desires. The relationship between animals and humans was not contested, as widely-taught dogmas said that: “all the creatures were made for man, subjected to his government and appointed for his use” (Sir Matthew Hale 1677, cited in
Outside the Bible, further justification for this attitude came from classical writers such as Aristotle:

In like manner we may infer that after the birth of animals, plants exist for their sake, that the other animals exist for the sake of man, the tame for use and food, the wild, if not all, at least the greater part of them, for food, and for the provision of clothing and various instruments. Now if nature makes nothing incomplete, and nothing in vain, the inference must be that she has made all animals for the sake of man (Aristotle 1984: 1993-1994).

Acts of animal slaughter were largely treated with moral and emotional indifference: for example, country gentlemen would entertain guests by setting their dogs onto tame ducks and country fairs had contests for biting off the heads of live sparrows and chickens (Thomas 1983: 148). By the end of the eighteenth century, however, this confidence that animals could be exploited without compunction was replaced by a far more “confused” understanding of human-animal relations (Thomas 1983: 301). Thomas links this transformation to the extremely rapid urbanisation of the English countryside by the mid nineteenth century and the impact of industrialisation. These intense and rapid processes of urbanisation and industrialisation resulted in an increasingly romanticised notion of nature and a change in attitudes towards animals, as: “towns created a longing for the countryside; cultivation for unsubdued nature; (and) new-found security from wild animals, for species protection” (Lowe 1989:113).

The rise of a scientific natural history, which introduced new modes of classifying the natural world, was also a factor. The previous classificatory framework provided an understanding of the world through human analogy and symbolic meaning; in contrast, the new scientific naturalists saw the world as a natural scene to be viewed and studied as an observer from the ‘outside’ - a scene not automatically assumed to have human meaning or significance (Thomas 1983: 89).

93 In 1700 the majority of the British population lived in rural areas. By 1800 however, 25% were living in towns and by 1851 the overwhelming majority of the British population were living in cities and urban areas (Thomas 1983: 243).
At the same time, systematic observations of animals revealed more similarities than previously thought between humans and animals, particularly in their capacity to suffer (Thomas 1983: 177). This newly-recognized similarity to humans created a new moral status for animals and sympathies widened so that animals in the wild were also considered ‘fellow creatures’. An English traveler to Italy in the 1840s for instance: “reacted with horror to the local habit of cooking nightingales, goldfinches and, worst of all, robins: ‘What Robins! Our household birds! I would as soon eat a child.’” (Thomas 1983: 117). This was in stark contrast to Elizabethan times when robins were considered a delicacy (Thomas 1983: 117).

In nineteenth century Britain, feelings of repugnance towards serving recognizable animal carcasses for carving at the dinner table became prevalent (Mennell 1991: 126; Elias 1978 (1939): 118-120). It also became offensive to see the “gory” slaughtering of animals in public, which led to British slaughterhouses being progressively hidden so as not to offend the “sensibilities” (Mennell 1985: 308). By the end of the nineteenth century, the slaughtering and preparation of animals for food – once an unremarkable part of everyday life – had become an activity that made the majority of urban dwellers feel very uneasy (Thomas 1983: 300).

During the nineteenth century, two disparate but idealised views towards nature and animals also emerged, which continue to be manifested in contemporary Western societies such as New Zealand. In these two discursive constructions, both stemming from the Romantic Movement, we can simultaneously see the foundation for an anti-hunting ‘animal rights’ position, and an opposing and contrasting, pro-hunting standpoint, often articulated by hunters. Romantic literature from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries contains divergent views towards hunting, with some writers “celebrating the hunter as a noble half-savage” who “roams the forest communing with nature and brimming over with bittersweet
longings” (Cartmill 1993: 120). This view of nature also romanticised hunter-gatherer subsistence and exalted the idea of re-connecting to a ‘natural’ lifestyle (including our ‘animal passions’) and favoured provisioning from the wild, “as a therapeutic palliative to the pathologies associated with modern urban living” (Franklin 1999: 27).

In contrast, writers such as Goethe and Schiller saw hunters taking delight in destroying innocent animals and failing to be sensitive to their “spiritual” importance: “whenever anything moves, the hunter shoots it. He thinks that every living creature, no matter how vital and alive, was made just for him to pop in his game bag” (J. W. Goethe and J. C. F. von Schiller cited in Cartmill 1993: 121-122).

This view portrays nature as a benign realm where animals live in balance and harmony, and implies that humans need to look to nature to once again learn how to be sensitive to their environment and connect with the ‘natural rhythms’ of the wild. In this perception of nature, hunting is both disruptive and unnecessary because it is assumed that a vegetarian diet can meet most human dietary requirements (Franklin 1999: 27).

Franklin (1999) argues that while both of these views grew out of the Romantic Movement, their conceptual frameworks are completely different. In the first view, interactions with animals (including hunting them) are not only permissible but also necessary for those people who want to really ‘understand nature’. Franklin sees this construction pointing to “a sociology of humans-animals in modernity that centers on a new consumption of animals and the natural world” (Franklin 1999: 27). In contrast, the second view lays the foundation for a revolution in human-animal relations. In this construction, humans must end all exploitation of animals, including those activities that are widely perceived as benign (such as pet keeping).

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94 For example this verse of German Romantic Poetry: “O let my love sing like a thrush, In the greenwood’s blossoming crown, And leap away like a fleeing roe, So that I can hunt it down” (Uhland cited in Cartmill 1993: 120).

95 The nineteenth century also saw the development of the contemporary vegetarian movement. See Spencer (1995) for a history of vegetarianism.
The aim of this viewpoint is to “liberate” animals from their human exploiters so that they can live their lives separately – free from human intervention (Franklin 1999: 27). In the following section I will explore how this second viewpoint has been manifested in the contemporary Animal Rights Movement and outline how this discursive position has impacted on duck hunting.

5.2 Animal Rights and Anti-Hunting Discourses

Given the constraints of space, I cannot provide a complete discussion on the Animal Rights Movement,96 nor cover the philosophical arguments in depth here, but I can sketch in the background of what duck hunters perceive and experience as an opposing discourse that threatens or repudiates their hunting practices. As Yearly (1993) observes, “during the late 1980s the vocabulary of animal rights and animal welfare rapidly entered everyday language, indicating a fundamental change in common ways of considering animals and signaling an expansion in the kinds of being held to have moral rights” (Yearly 1993: 61). Jasper and Nelkin’s (1992) The Animal Rights Crusade, points to three key aspects that contributed to the sudden growth of the Animal Rights Movement in the last decades of the twentieth century in Western countries: the trend in anthropomorphic sentiments towards animals; anti-instrumentalism; and the rhetoric of ‘rights’ that proliferated during the 1960s and 1970s.

Anthropomorphism can be defined as “the attribution of human characteristics to nonhuman entities, especially animals” (Jasper and Nelkin 1992: 12). Significantly, this definition is relatively modern, coming into use about a century ago (Midley 1983: 125). While there are certainly previous examples of sentimental attitudes and “spontaneous tender-heartedness” (Thomas 1983: 173) towards animals in Western history, there has been a significant intensification in the emotional relationships between humans and animals in more recent times. In particular, relationships with

pets have taken on a far greater importance in people's lives in industrialised and urbanized Western societies (Serpell 1986; Ritvo 1987; Franklin 1999). Franklin (1999) connects this to changes in ontological security97 in the late twentieth century, which have led to humans looking to pets for companionship and emotional relationships.98 Pet owners often treat the animals living in the house as family members; one American survey of cat and dog owners reveals that the majority of owners talk to their pets and approximately half keep photographs of their pets on display or in their wallets (Jasper and Nelkin 1992: 19).

Likewise, sentimental anthropomorphism is a staple theme in children’s books and entertainment: from Winnie the Pooh, to Pokemon, animals (or animal-like creatures) are presented as living human lives with human feelings and concerns. Perhaps the most well-known presentation of an anthropomorphic animal is ‘Bambi’, in the film of that name. This 1942 movie has had a powerful influence on contemporary attitudes towards hunters and wild animals, as well as shaping many generations of children’s perceptions of nature. It has been described as: “the most powerful piece of antihunting propaganda ever produced” and caused an outcry from the hunting fraternity when it was released in the USA (Cartmill 1993: 162).99

Importantly, these widespread anthropomorphic attitudes towards animals which are common in urban America (and New Zealand) - contrast (and in certain instances, conflict), with utilitarian sentiments towards animals that are still more prevalent in rural areas (Jasper and Nelkin, 1992: 18-20). Hunters sometimes criticise anthropomorphic expressions towards animals, saying they are

97 In particular, anxiety about the lack of security in contemporary family life and the loss of a wider sense of community (Franklin 1999:84-86).
98 Serpell (1986), Ritvo (1987), and Franklin (1999) all provide a comprehensive historical overview tracing the increasing importance of pets in contemporary societies.
99 See 'The Bambi Syndrome' in Cartmill (1993) for a discussion on the production of the Bambi film, and the changes that were made from Felix Salten’s (1924) novel Bambi: A Forest Life.
'unrealistic' - which, as we shall see, is also an idea expressed by some duck hunters in southern New Zealand.

The depiction of animal anthropomorphism is not always sentimental. Some artists and writers use such images to make political statements (Jasper and Nelkin 1992: 20) and some cartoonists deploy them to make strong comments about hunting. Gary Larson's humorous, and sometimes surreal, cartoons often depict anthropomorphic images of animals that can be interpreted in different ways. His cartoons often challenge conventional understandings of human-animal relationships by placing humans qualities into animal scenes (and vice versa) (Minahen 1997). In the two cartoons (Figure 30) below Larson seems to suggest a certain horror at the idea of 'turning the tables' between people and animals, as the ducks in these scenarios live human lives in which hunters have intruded.

Anthropomorphic attitudes towards animals have persisted (or even intensified) over the past few decades as urbanisation continues, and, for the majority of the
Western world, direct tactile interaction with animals is limited to pets. Ironically, however, many contemporary city dwellers have a feeling of closeness with wild animals, through a variety of different media.

Twentieth-century biological sciences have revealed the genetic similarities and shared evolutionary history of animals and humans, while animal behaviourists have discovered ways to communicate with primates, and also emphasize that animals communicate with each other (Jasper and Nelkin 1992: 19). Wildlife documentaries provide all this information to wide audiences, as well as presenting intimate portraits of animals’ lives so that (like human celebrities) people feel they ‘know’ them. Research on natural history television programmes in New Zealand suggests that these programmes are the most important source of information about animals and the environment for New Zealanders. Such programmes often present humans as an intrusive threat to the environment, representing ‘culture’, not ‘nature’, and, more subtly, provide an anthropomorphic framework which projects human emotions and values onto animal behaviours and lifecycles (Hunt, cited in Moller 1999b).

Although anthropomorphic and romanticised sentiments towards animals have clearly intensified during the twentieth century, Jasper and Nelkin (1992) also point to the growing disillusionment with instrumentalism as another important factor in the emergence of the Animal Rights Movement. During the 1960s, protest movements in the United States grew against the authority of corporations and of the State, as, in particular, ecological and feminist critiques challenged the status quo:

These protesters associated instrumental reasoning with capitalist priorities; guided by profit more than by human needs; or with bureaucratic preoccupation with smoothly functioning organizations more than with the quality of life of employees... They often implicated science as the very essence of instrumentalism, creating knowledge with little regard to its social and moral consequences (Jasper & Nelkin 1992: 21).
Concerns that nature was being exploited were also associated with this anti-instrumentalism and the notion of living in ‘harmony’ with ‘nature’ became popular as environmental causes proliferated. Anti-instrumental beliefs of the 1960s and 1970s, emphasized the importance of moral values over material benefits, as instrumental reasoning became associated with ruthless capitalist priorities. A variety of different philosophies emerged out of this broad dissatisfaction with ‘modern life’, including the ‘New Age’ movement, which quickly spread to industrialised countries outside of the USA. This movement was crucial to the development of the Animal Rights Movement as it popularised the notion of spiritual connectedness with the natural world, while concurrently, promoting consumer choice through New Age magazines. These magazines provided ‘alternative’ products and urged the consumer to consider the processes that lie behind conventional products, such as the cosmetics industry’s use of animal testing. Through these publications, consumerist strategies were made available to people who wanted to take active steps towards changing institutional practices (Jasper and Nelkin 1992: 22-23).

The third important component that Jasper and Nelkin (1992) connect to the growth of the Animal Rights Movement is the “rhetoric of rights” discourse of the 1960s and 1970s, which presented a dramatic new aspect to human-animal relations when arguments about ‘human rights’ were considered in association with animals. One of the most well known advocates of animal rights is Australian philosopher, Peter Singer100.

Singer’s (1990 [1975]) Animal Liberation is regarded by many as the founding manifesto for the modern Animal Rights Movement. Singer’s choice of the title Animal Liberation was a deliberate effort to connect his arguments with the highly topical liberation movements of the 1970s. Singer draws an analogy between

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100 For other philosophical arguments in regard to ethics and animals see Clark (1997) Animals and Their Moral Standing; and Midgley (1983) Animals and Why They Matter.
racism, sexism, and an attitude called, 'speciesism'. According to Singer, to say that animals should have no rights because they are animals is no more logical than to say that women should not have rights because they are women, or that 'Blacks' should have no right because they are 'Blacks'. Saying that status as a woman must, in itself, imply that women have no rights, is sexism; to say the same about 'Blacks', is racism. Therefore, Singer argues, it must follow that to say the same about animals is "speciesism" (Singer 1990 {1975}: 4-6).

Singer advocates the type of Utilitarianism philosophy, first put forward by Jeremy Bentham in the early nineteenth century, proposing that the principle of equal consideration of interests should include members of species outside human beings, if those other species have the "capacity for suffering and/or enjoyment or happiness" (Singer 1990 {1975}: 7). Regarding duck hunting, Singer emphasizes the Utilitarian argument and suggests that even if a duck is killed painlessly it is wrong to take away the pleasure it was having in living its "pleasant life":

A duck shot by a hunter (making the shaky assumption that the shooter can be relied upon to kill the duck instantly) has probably had a pleasant life, but the shooting of duck does not lead to its replacement by another. Unless the duck population is at the maximum that can be sustained by the available food supply, the killing of a duck ends a pleasant life without starting another, and is for that reason wrong on straight utilitarian grounds. So although there are situations in which it is not wrong to kill animals, these situations are special ones, and to not cover very many of the billions of premature deaths humans inflict, year after year, on animals (Singer 1993: 133-134).

In Animal Liberation, Singer cites a well-known passage from Jeremy Bentham on the treatment of animals, the most oft-quoted lines being: "The question is not, Can they reason? nor Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?" (Bentham 1822, cited in Singer 1990 {1975}: 7, emphasis in the original). It is this concern for the suffering of animals (above any discussion of abstract 'rights'), that is most often underscored in animal rights literature.
As I have outlined, there are three key components that Jasper and Nelkin argue support the growing popularity of the Animal Rights Movement: the widespread promulgation of anthropomorphic attitudes towards animals in Western societies; anti-instrumentalism and the increasing influence of ‘alternative’ lifestyles and lifeways; and the mainstreaming of an ‘animal rights’ philosophy. Jasper and Nelkin also hint at the importance of space and place in terms of mobilising and justifying animal rights discourses. Elder, Wolch and Emel (1998) more explicitly argue that specific places are associated with specific human-animal relations and practices and that the spatial context determines the legitimacy of those practices. As we shall see, duck hunting has become extremely problematic in a highly industrialised and urbanised country such as New Zealand, because ‘wild’ spaces and ‘wild’ animals have very specific discursive values attached to them that legitimate certain activities or interactions (such as photographing animals), but not others (such as shooting/killing animals). In the following section, I outline a case study from Australia which reveals that dominant discourses regarding ‘wild’ wetland areas no longer appear to construct hunting as a legitimate activity within such places. This case study also highlights how animal suffering – a key concern in animal rights discourse – became inextricably linked with duck hunting practices and thus garnered a great deal of public antipathy, leading in turn to enormous changes to the practice of duck hunting in Australia. Following this Australian case study, I compare and contrast the actions taken by animal rights activists against duck hunters in New Zealand.

**Australia and the “Duck Wars”**

In Australia, duck hunting has been a very contentious issue over the past two decades, resulting in a ban on all recreational duck shooting in some states. This outcome is mainly due to frequent fracas between animal rights activists who call themselves CADS (Coalition Against Duck Shooting), and duck hunters shooting on wetlands in the state of Victoria – wetlands that are regarded as the ‘home’ of

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101 Recreational duck hunting was banned in WA in 1990 and NSW in 1995 although permits for control of water birds can be issued where they may potentially damage agriculture (Ballarat Courier 2003).
duck shooting in Australia. On CADS Internet home page, suffering and cruelty are presented as key reasons for why duck shooting should be banned:

Shooters using shotguns inflict horrific injuries to these gentle and defenceless waterbirds. When a shooter fires, pellets spread and birds are often shot through the wings, eyes, feet or bodies (CADS Homepage 2003)

Sociologist Lyle Munro (1997) analyzed the television new items and feature stories from 1993 and 1994, which relate to the conflict between CADS and the duck hunters and argues that the media played a crucial role in galvanizing public support for the anti-hunting group. CADS were officially formed in 1989 as an offshoot of Animal Liberation Victoria and their ongoing goal is to carry out non-violent direct action against duck shooting. They are opposed to the more militant activities of groups such as the Hunt Saboteurs and instead aim to carry out tactics that focus on “rescuing” ducks (that is, confiscating or retrieving injured birds), and “minor harassment” of duck shooters. This harassment incorporates methods such as using whistles (or sometimes light planes) to frighten off the birds. The media has dubbed this campaign, “duck wars” (Munro 1997).

The CADS campaign literature provides three main reasons for its anti-duck shooting protest: firstly, duck shooting is cruel; secondly, rare and protected birds are being illegally shot; and thirdly, lead pollution from shotguns is damaging the environment. However, the main focus of the campaign is centred on the cruelty of duck shooting, the argument that successfully mobilised public support. CADS depicts duck shooting as a “cruel, cowardly, violent and anti-social act and very much a male macho activity” (Levy, cited in Munro 1997: 143), a stance Munro suggests struck a chord in a society “weary of violence” (Munro 1997: 143).

A news item shown on ATV in 1994 reveals how the ‘duck wars’ analogy was being utilised by CADS. Munro provides a description of some of the images presented in this television footage. His description reveals how hunting activities may
become synonymous in the minds of the public with violent and bloody incursions between humans, a link reinforced by the ‘warlike’ camouflaged clothing worn by the hunters. In this way hunters are seen not only as a threat to animals, but also to innocent (non-hunting) human bystanders:

Shot of dozens of dead ducks on the footpath; some are held up to the camera by different protesters. The dead ducks are carefully lined up in the fashion of the war dead and in keeping with the Coalition’s designation of the wetlands as a “war zone”. A large bloodstain is clearly visible on the footpath (Munro 1997:148).

Munro (1997) argues that CADS was highly successful in employing media coverage to present duck shooting as an issue of animal cruelty. The director of CADS, Laurie Levy, was pertinent to the success of this coverage as his previous occupation as a television cameraman made him aware that graphic images tell a very powerful story. According to Levy: “two pictures come out of every season - a hunter dressed as a soldier carrying a semi-automatic and shooting at a defenseless bird. Or there is the simple image of a rescuer coming out with a wounded bird. The second of concern and compassion will always beat an image of violence” (Levy, cited in Munro 1997: 145). Levy is not only aware of the importance of the media but also clearly incorporates this awareness into strategic decisions about how protest activities are planned:

Well I guess we’ve analysed our work constantly and been critical about it. We have analysed our interviews to see how we have been performing through the media, how our opponents have been performing through media, how the media is handling the issue and we change our tactics to suit the prevailing conditions (Levy 2002).

As Levy indicates, the use of images of suffering animals is known to have a powerful affect. Research on the Animal Rights Movement has examined how activists use ‘moral shocks’ to motivate people to take action on behalf of animals (for example, Jasper and Poulson 1995). There are, however, certain pitfalls for activists in this approach, as extreme tactics or rhetoric can alienate potential
supporters. CADS opted to make rescuing wounded ducks the main focus of their activism, and in doing so elicited considerable public support. Duck rescues have a lot of dramatic appeal – including a narrative of good and evil. Duck 'rescuers' are presented as 'heroic', bravely wading out into water to bring back wounded ducks,\(^{102}\) while hunters are presented as the evil force in this story - often dressed in camouflage fatigues, with 'warlike' painted faces, and holding guns (Munro 1997: 148-150).

CADS' Internet website also emphasizes that duck hunters are essentially cruel and “enjoy killing”. The activities of the duck hunters are described as “destroying” (rather than shooting or hunting) and their motivations for hunting as intrinsically ignorant and backward: “The only reason native Australian birds were killed is because hunters derive pleasure from their destruction...[Duck shooting is] “a cruel, unethical and unnecessary relic from a bygone age”. The web page ends with two stickers that can be purchased for $2.50 each. One simply reads: “ban duck shooting” the other adds to this: “big guns - little dicks” (CADS Homepage 1999).

Looking at the literature and media coverage relating to the duck hunting situation in Australia it is hard to know anything about the duck hunters themselves beyond the caricatures of mindless killers dressed in fatigues. Some evidence can be found that Australian hunters are aware of this image and, in order to counter this anti-hunting discourse, they must represent and display positive hunting practices:

We must...resurrect our gentlemanly, ethical traditions to avoid being stigmatised by the non-hunting public as oafish louts obsessed with bloodlust (Mad Duck 2003).

\(^{102}\) The birds were displayed for the camera before being quickly hurried off to mobile veterinary clinics for treatment (or to be euthanased).
Despite this strategy, there has been an enormous fall in the number of licensed duck shooters in Australia over the past 10 years and in 2000, there were only 27,500 licensed duck hunters in Australia (a drop in some states by over 50%). Over 80% of duck hunters (approximately 23,000) are from the state of Victoria where the ‘duck wars’ took place. The Northern Territory, Queensland, and Tasmania all have fewer than 1000 licensed duck hunters each. The entire Australian Capital Territory state is a wildlife refuge, while recreational duck hunting has been banned in New South Wales and Western Australia. South Australia has the second largest number of licensed duck hunters at around 2000. This decline is connected to a number of factors: compulsory waterfowl identification tests introduced in most states; changes in firearms legislation; and a general antipathy towards duck hunting from wider society (RSPCA 2002).

Although duck hunting has some popularity in South Australia, there has also been pressure to ban duck hunting in this state. In 1998, a bill to amend the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 was introduced into the South Australia Parliament, with the intent of banning the hunting of ducks and other game birds. A consortium of eight South Australian animal welfare and animal rights organizations (calling themselves the Duck Defence Coalition) presented information in support of this bill, and stressed that wounding and suffering were inherent aspects of duck hunting. In his critique of the bill, Dr Grahame Webb (Chairman of the IUCN-SSC Australia New Zealand Sustainable Use Specialist Group) emphasized that: "the issue of wounding appears to have been chosen for political and public relations purposes, and may have little real value in resolving the fundamental philosophical conflict that underlies the proposed ban" (Webb 1998: 19). Webb argues that, even if all ducks were killed 'cleanly' and no wounding occurred, the proponents of the bill would not be satisfied as the

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103 The bill failed to be passed even with the support of the RSPCA. The involvement of the Society drew sharp criticism from Field & Game Australia, who said: "The campaign to ban waterfowl hunting by the RSPCA was clear evidence that Australia’s oldest and most respected Animal Welfare Organisation has been infiltrated by animal rights activists and had now moved their focus to largely unproven and academic animal rights philosophy" (Field & Game Australia 2000).
fundamental philosophies of animal rights and animal liberation adherents are against all uses or killing of wildlife. These philosophies are at odds with the 'sustainable use' approach of hunters and wildlife managers (Webb 1998: 19).

The concepts of 'animal rights' and 'sustainable use' raised in this example from South Australia, are two opposing discourses that shape contemporary arguments around hunting (related to the different interpretations of nature developed from the Romantic movement discussed earlier in this chapter). At the heart of these ideas are completely divergent notions of 'nature' and where humans fit in with the 'natural' world. Animal rights discourses have been connected to the 'preservationist' approach to the environment which sees: "nature as only being perfect and unsullied if humans have not impacted on it" (Moller 1999b: 46). In contrast, the 'sustainable use' approach accepts human exploitation of natural resources, provided this is based on sustainable practices that do not incur any dramatic ecological change or endanger any wildlife populations. As Moller (1999b) points out, these beliefs are part of a continuum and that both hunters and animal rights activists will declare a respect (and even love) for animals, however, they see the: "boundaries of ethical human behaviour differently" (Moller 1999b: 46).

Yet these boundaries are not fixed, as examples from both New Zealand and Australia illustrate. The issue of animals as 'pests' has seen instances of "ironic alliances" between preservationist groups (sometimes referred to generically as "greens") and hunters where both groups have sought to destroy introduced species while simultaneously protecting and favouring indigenous species (Franklin 1996: 54). Franklin (1996) describes two dominant discourses that had a major impact on how animals and 'nature' were conceptualised in Australian society. "Britainisation" discourses of the early settler years promulgated a desire to alter and shape the Australian landscape so that it conformed to British ideals of a beautiful 'nature' (as was also the case in New Zealand). By the beginning of the
twentieth century, however, this process had lost momentum and was replaced by a developing sense of national identity tied to an elevation and appreciation of native flora and fauna - a discourse which Franklin terms “Australainisation” (Franklin 1996: 45). As discussed in Chapter 3, New Zealand has followed a similar course to Australia, with intensive acclimatization activities of many introduced species during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and then a complete transformation in terms of appreciation of native species.

Because of these two historical discourses, hunters in both Australia and New Zealand have, until the last three decades, enjoyed little criticism of their activities. This is due to the popular construction of hunters in both countries as being motivated to kill animals for pragmatic reasons, rather than for “pleasure” - as is the more common perception of hunters in Britain and the USA (Franklin 1996: 53). Crucially, Australian and New Zealand hunters have also been able to hunt introduced species, which are not symbols of national identity, and which present a ‘justifiable’ discursive position to the non-hunting public (keeping ‘pest’ animal populations under control, and thus helping the environment to return to its ‘natural’ native state).

The current Australian situation in regard to duck hunting illustrates how duck hunting practices can be associated with completely divergent discourses. The ‘animal rights’ position, presented by CADS, constructs duck hunting as “cruel”, “violent” and “anti-social”. Munro (1997) furthermore, makes it clear that CADS present a more compelling discursive position through the media than the gun lobby’s counter images of ordinary ‘blokes’ partaking in a traditional outdoor sport. It is also clear, however, that historical discourses about the relationship between ‘nature’, humans, and animals are important factors in the construction of duck hunting in Australia as a ‘social problem’. In the following section, I outline the activities of animal rights activists in New Zealand in relation to duck hunting, while in the second half of this chapter, I will focus on how duck hunters
themselves conceptualise and mobilise pro-hunting discourses in the face of the anti-hunting position.

**Opposition to Duck Hunting in New Zealand**

The most high profile animal rights group associated with the Animal Rights Movement in New Zealand, is SAFE (Save Animals From Exploitation). This organisation was founded in 1932, and began a campaign specifically targeted against duck hunters in 1990. The decision to target duck hunters in this country was directly linked to the activities of animal activists in Australia. According to the national New Zealand Fish and Game Council, SAFE: “received direct planning assistance” from the Australian Animal Liberation organization in that year. In 1990, SAFE announced plans to disrupt hunting at Lakes Ellesmere near Christchurch but apparently “got their dates wrong” and missed the opening weekend (New Zealand Fish & Game Council 1991a). In 1991, however, the SAFE protests gained national media coverage as protesters used sirens and drums to scare the ducks away from Lake Ellesmere. Some of the protesters were hit by shotgun pellets, which SAFE interpreted as a deliberate act of violence against them. The police did investigate the incident, but determined it was an accident (Otago Daily Times 1991: 1).

While SAFE has continued with organised protests in various locations throughout New Zealand, there appears to have been no escalation in tension since the early 1990s, nor a perceptible groundswell against duck hunting in general, despite an incident in 1999, when SAFE organised a flotilla on the Waikato River to play loud music to frighten away the birds in the area. During this incident, protesters claimed that shots were deliberately fired over their heads: a report of the incident in the SAFE magazine (see Figure 31 below) interprets this as a “predictably violent” response from hunters (SAFE 1999a).
Other protests have involved dumping dead ducks on the doorsteps of hunting stores (SAFE 1999b), while in 2001 SAFE activists marked the opening of the duck hunting season with a ‘funeral’ procession through the centre city district of Christchurch, followed by a simulated ‘mass slaughter’ of activists dressed in Donald Duck suits (SAFE 2001: 10).

While animal rights protests against duck hunting have been shown on television and reported through newspapers in New Zealand, this coverage does not appear to have generated the same degree of negativity from wider society as has occurred in Australia. From my examination of duck hunting within these two countries, I suggest there are four important differences between Australia and New Zealand that could explain the divergence in media coverage and wider public conceptions of duck hunting.
Firstly, New Zealand has a large population of introduced Mallards. To most people, these birds do not have the same status as native birds and, although regarded affectionately by many New Zealanders, their very commonness means there are no concerns about the extinction of the species as a whole. By comparison, rare and endangered waterbirds are a major concern in Australia, for example, the recognisably low numbers of the Freckled Duck. Franklin (1996) argues that Australian hunters and “greens” have an uneasy alliance in their common goal to protect indigenous species, while concurrently destroying introduced species. Consequently, hunting indigenous ducks (which breaks this “alliance”) has produced the most vehement anti-hunting protests (Franklin 1996: 54) and thus a major feature highlighted in CADS’ campaign against duck hunters in 1998, was the illegal shooting of Freckled Ducks.104

While New Zealand also has rare and protected waterfowl, it has not seen the same focus on illegal shooting of protected species in this country. As in Australia, however, New Zealand duck hunters are expected to carefully identify the bird they intend to shoot before taking the shot (and most of the hunters I observed were indeed fairly assiduous about doing this). Other indigenous birds are protected due to their habitat. For example, in some regions, such as Southland, there is little risk of shooting protected birds as Mallards are overwhelmingly represented in this area. In addition, one of New Zealand’s rarest ducks, the Blue Duck (Whio), lives in turbulent mountain streams in Southern New Zealand (and a few Northern areas), however, due to the rugged habitat where these birds live there is far less risk of them being shot accidentally. There has also been some publicity generated about the native New Zealand Grey Duck, but wildlife biologists argue this species is disappearing through interbreeding with the introduced Mallard, rather than from hunting pressures (Williams 2000).

104 For example CADS’ homepage in 1999 was titled: “Why Duck Shooting Should be Banned”, and claimed: “protected species are illegally shot by shooters... including the rare and threatened Freckled Duck. These birds are unique to Australia. In 1993, Department of Conservation Officers counted 300 Freckled Ducks on Lake Buloke... yet shooters illegally shot 272. 1994 saw the same slaughter of Freckled Ducks on Buloke” (CADS 1999).
A second difference in attitudes towards duck hunting in Australia and New Zealand, possibly relates to Australian climatic and topographic conditions, which affect duck populations and often lead to numbers too low to allow hunting. Vast areas of the Australian interior are virtually uninhabitable, while severe drought conditions frequently cause migration of waterbirds to relatively few wetland areas. In 2003, for example, the duck hunting season was cancelled in Victoria and South Australia due to drought. Six years of very dry conditions in South-Eastern Australia led to many birds migrating to wetlands in Victoria, resulting in a concentration of the region’s breeding birds in a few wetland areas, which were thus highly vulnerable to hunting pressures\(^\text{105}\)\(^\text{\textnormal{}}\) (Sunday Age 2003). In New Zealand, drought conditions are not nearly as severe, and wetland habitat is found throughout the country. Waterbirds are, therefore, relatively sedentary and do not migrate to the same degree as in Australia, and are also not as dependent on limited wetland areas (Byrne 1974).

Another significant difference between Australia and New Zealand is the variation in firearms legislation and wider public conception of firearm users. Specifically, the New Zealand government has not applied the same firearms restrictions as the Australian government.\(^\text{106}\)\(^\text{\textnormal{}}\) In the wake of the Port Arthur massacre in 1996, Australia banned all semi-automatic weapons, including the semi-automatic shotguns with a two-shot capacity extensively used by duck hunters; one factor that is connected to the rapid decline in duck shooting (Levy 2002). These increasing restrictions are the topic of concern for many firearms owners who, in many cases, do not agree with the Australian government’s measures (see, for example, Australian Shooters Journal 1998). There is a similar and growing discourse of unease in New Zealand connected to firearms and their association with crime and military use (as will be discussed further below), however, New

\(^{105}\) Although a proportion of hunters disagree with some decisions to ban hunting, arguing that the bird populations could sustain limited hunting and that the drought conditions are just being used as an excuse to stop duck hunting. See for example [http://meta.ozhunting.info/duck.htm](http://meta.ozhunting.info/duck.htm)

\(^{106}\) In 1992, in the wake of the killings at Aramoana, New Zealand amended the Arms Act so that semi-automatic military style weapons had to be registered separately.
Zealand has not seen the direct connections made between recreational shooting activities and the criminal misuse of firearms as has been so obvious in Australia.

Finally, media discourse connected to animal rights activism in New Zealand has quite a different 'flavour' to the Australian situation. (As I have not carried out any interviews with animal rights groups from either country, my information here is based on media sources.) Over the four years that I carried out field research, I recorded and analysed television news coverage of duck hunting in New Zealand, along with the coverage in newspapers and magazines. In television reports, the SAFE protests, while followed by the media, were always presented alongside interviews with duck hunters. Sometimes extended ‘human interest’ stories, focussing on the duck hunters, were also shown.107 From this evidence we can see that the overall impression presently given by the two main New Zealand television stations, is one of support for duck hunting as a traditional (although perhaps slightly eccentric) pastime.

In comparison, the personality of Laurie Levy appears to be a large part of the success of the Australian campaign against duck hunting - not only because of the way he utilised the media, but also because of his personal presence. In photographs and in a television news items, he comes across as just as ‘macho’ as the duck hunters. For example, photographs displayed on the CAD website (see Figure 32 below) suggest a man who is not afraid to confront duck hunters holding shotguns, and he presents the image of a man fighting for a righteous cause. Importantly, Levy personifies a strong, self-sufficient, and aggressive masculinity (an image previously associated with hunting), and connects this ‘traditional’ masculinity with anti-hunting and animal rights. The angry and aggressive masculinity of the duck hunters, with their guns and fatigues, is thus framed as a deviant masculinity. This representation of Levy allows for a powerful masculine

107 For example, a TV1 news item “Person of the Week’ in May 2001 focussed on an elderly duck hunter who has been hunting for many years, and a Country Calendar episode in the same year that presented a story on Di Pritt, an Ohakune farmer, and very enthusiastic duck hunter.
discourse to be associated with animal rights activism, which is more often connected with ‘feminine’ attributes and being ‘soft’ towards animals.

These images contrast quite markedly with the spokesperson for SAFE in New Zealand for the past few years, who is a younger, quietly spoken individual, who perhaps fits more into the stereotype of a gentle ‘animal-lover’, less likely to be taken seriously in a country where a traditional construction of masculinity is utilitarian and undemonstrative attitudes towards animals. In both the 2002 and 2003 duck hunting seasons, SAFE activists have gone to Lake Ellesmere to protest against duck hunting and to set up ‘mobile surgeries’. However, in both years, the Canterbury weather was also very clear and calm and thus few ducks were flying low enough to be shot. The SAFE spokesperson’s comments on the impact of the weather on duck hunting, reflect the far gentler, non-aggressive impression he presents, an approach which might also be interpreted as ‘feminine’:

Well, it’s been a beautiful day from our point of view. It’s a blessing for the ducks. You know it’s been gorgeous weather - duck shooters will be very angry about this (TV3 2002).

News coverage of duck hunting on New Zealand’s two main national television channels, generally presents duck hunters as friendly, ‘ordinary’, New Zealanders, and personal details and comments that are revealed about them add to this
impression. In one news item, for example, an older duck hunter is described as: “a granddaddy with 30 years experience on the lake”. Another duck hunter discusses his favourite recipe for cooking duck, saying they taste especially good with apricots (TV3 2002). In New Zealand, therefore, in contrast to Australian events, the ‘confrontations’ between duck hunters and animal rights activists have (until the present time, at least) been presented as contrasting discursive positions, rather than a duality between a noble cause against a miscreant one. Duck shooting is, therefore, not framed in New Zealand as a serious “social problem”, as Munro (1997) found in Australia. But despite these differences between New Zealand and Australia, the constant presence of anti-hunting discourses, is a crucial dynamic in both countries. Over the past thirty years (especially in the past decade since the SAFE protests) these discourses have configured important changes in duck hunting practices in New Zealand. In the following section, I discuss the counter discourse mobilised by duck hunters in the face of this opposition.

5.3 The ‘Re-Decoying’ of Duck Hunting

I argued in Chapter 3, that in the early decades of the twentieth century, duck hunting in New Zealand developed into a ‘tradition’ recognisable to most New Zealanders; a tradition connected to rural masculine practices, in which men going out to shoot and kill ducks is constructed as legitimate and unproblematic. The previous sections of this chapter have shown that, since the 1970s, a counter discourse has grown, particularly in highly urbanised and industrialised countries, which confronts and disrupts these previously accepted activities and frames them as harmful and illegitimate relationships with both animals and ‘nature’. The rest of this chapter explores the arguments mobilised by duck hunters to counter the ‘animal rights’, anti-hunting discourses in depth, and considers the way in which these hunters legitimate their position by articulating hybrid nature/culture relations with animals and ‘nature’. What becomes clear in the following sections is

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108 Another important contribution to a legitimising discourse of duck hunting in the media is the widely perpetuated coding of ‘rural’ in New Zealand as ‘authentic’, ‘real’, and ‘masculine’, and not ‘hillbilly’, ‘backward’, or ‘uncivilized’ (an alternative presented in Bell’s (1997) ‘Anti-idyll, Rural Horror’).
that duck hunters mobilise their counter discourse around very different notions of 'nature' than those articulated by the anti-hunting position.

From 'sporting codes' to 'sporting ethics'
The Fish and Game Councils, formed out of the restructured Acclimatization Societies in 1990, are responsible for managing game bird populations and their habitat to ensure that bird numbers are high enough to cope with hunting pressure. These regional councils are responsible for educating hunters about the game bird regulations in their region, providing a variety of different brochures and other materials to facilitate this. In addition, the national council located in Wellington, coordinates various activities and represents hunters (and anglers) on issues of national significance. With the development of animal rights protests, in the early 1990s, the national Fish and Game New Zealand council became very proactive in alerting hunters that their behaviour and hunting practices were being more closely scrutinised than at any time in the past.109

In an effort to counter anti-hunting discourses appearing in the 1990s, Fish and Game New Zealand mobilised a specific counter discourse to anti-hunting rhetoric. These traditional 'sporting codes' that developed during the nineteenth century were repackaged with a greater emphasis on being 'ethical codes'. Nineteenth century 'sporting codes' were closely related to class and imperialism. In New Zealand today, however, these 'codes' are much more closely focused on sporting 'ethics': killing must be done 'carefully'; the animal killed 'cleanly'; and the hunter must behave 'responsibly'. In general hunting literature and game bird hunting guides, Fish and Game New Zealand have made it clear to duck hunters that they are expected to follow explicit codes of ethical conduct. In a hunting supplement published in the Otago Daily Times (1999) for example, Fish and Game Otago urge hunters to follow these "sporting ethics" and emphasize that the perceptions of the

109 For example, the opening address from the Director of Fish and Game New Zealand in the 2001-2002 Game Bird Hunting Guide is titled, "Threats to Game Bird Hunting".
general public must be taken into consideration, as the long-term viability of duck hunting depends on it:

In today's society, many members of the public have grown to regard firearms and hunters with suspicion and fear. The future of duck hunting will largely depend on the public image of hunters (Otago Daily Times Supplement 1999: 3).

Fish and Game Otago explain the importance of carefully identifying the bird that is being shot to ensure it is not a protected species, and to also take care to shoot to kill outright. Once again, they stress that an individual hunter's actions can have an impact on the future of duck hunting:

Passing and incoming birds must be clearly identified. If in doubt don't shoot. The killing of protected species invites a public outcry and will certainly affect the future of our sport...All hunters appreciate the freedom and independence of sport hunting, yet some put this at risk. In poor light it is very difficult to estimate the effective killing range. Risking a shot may not only deny other hunters the opportunity to bag a bird, but could cripple a bird resulting in a slow and painful death. This can only add weight to the arguments of those opposed to hunting (Otago Daily Times Supplement 1999: 3).

While before the 1990s, Acclimatization Societies also made hunting regulations very clear to duck hunters, the last ten years have seen a major shift in the Fish and Game New Zealand organization, as it proactively represents game bird hunting within a discourse of ethically legitimate human-animal relations. The hunting fraternity increasingly realizes that not only animal rights discourse, but also wider 'green' and anti-hunting discourses, are real threats to the ongoing practice of duck hunting. This realisation has led to concern from the hunters themselves that the bad behaviour of one person can put duck hunting as a whole at risk; a concern that a participant in my research articulated:

My real worry is that out of the couple of hundred thousand hunters that we have - one of them will do something stupid. You wait all year and you've worked hard for it and you're entitled to it - you've paid your
licence fee and to have some well-intentioned, misinformed greenie who is hardly out of high school interfering with what you're allowed to do, there is a strong impulse to apply some summary justice. But that's wrong - you must not do that. And I can understand the frustration and the temptation to do something about that. I mean punching somebody in the nose would be bad enough - using a firearm would be absolutely inexcusable, absolutely inexcusable. Because you would do immense damage to the image of hunting (Maurice).

New Zealand Duck Hunters' Response to Anti-Hunting Discourses

While duck hunters in New Zealand have not had the same negative publicity as their counterparts in Australia, they are nevertheless very aware of the influence of the anti-hunting lobby both in this country and overseas.

**WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:**

1. **AVOID CONFRONTATION.** You represent thousands of your fellow hunters. So keep your cool. Be courteous. Ignore derogatory comments and try to distance yourself. By all means remind them, politely, that they are interfering with a lawful recreational activity, but remember that they are out to provoke you (for publicity). DISAPPOINT THEM. Don't ruin your day in the field with a shouting match — their minds are made up anyway. So, just calmly state your case and walk away. Avoiding conflict will reduce the anti-hunting group's ability to achieve their primary goal — publicity.

Above all, do nothing with your gun that could in any way be construed as menacing. Observe the strictest guidelines of firearm handling safely.

2. **ACCURATELY RECORD ANY DISRUPTION** — date, time, place, description of protesters/protesters, car registration numbers — and photos. They hate being photographed. Take your camera, notebook and pencil.

3. **REPORT THE INCIDENT** — People who harass law abiding hunters in the field are breaking the law. Quickly report them to your local Fish and Game Council. The contact address and telephone number are printed elsewhere on your licence.

4. **CALL THE LOCAL POLICE** — The Police are obliged to enforce the laws equally for both hunters and anti-hunters.

5. **REPORT ANY RUMOURS OF PROTESTS** to your local Fish and Game Council. Warning of a protest received in time will permit the Fish and Game Council to alert the local Police and to marshal Ranger personnel.

6. Remember that your commitment to hunting is stronger than their opposition. If the protesters don't get a reaction from you they are likely to get bored and go home. There is always another day and place for hunting during the season.

7. **Always attempt to hunt with trained gundogs.** This lessens the likelihood of wounded/non-recovered gamebirds that can be obtained and used by the protesters. Know your game and non-gamebirds, and leave the latter strictly alone.

8. **Now, as never before, gamebird hunting needs an unimpeachable image.** Lead by example, showing at all times ethical and legal behaviour, and endeavour to encourage such behaviour in other hunters.

... YOU HAVE THE RIGHT — AND THE RESPONSIBILITY

**FIGURE 33.** Advice for Duck Hunters About Dealing with Protesters
(Source: Southland Duck Hunters Licence 1991-92 Season)
In 1991 in particular there were rumours that SAFE were going to target Otago and Southland. Fish and Game, therefore, ensured that hunters were warned that they might be approached by protesters and incorporated into the game bird licence a list of suggestions as to how to deal with protesters (see Figure 33 above).

I found in the course of interviewing participants who were duck hunting at this time, that the threat of protesters caused a great deal of anxiety. Doug recalled how he felt in 1990: he and his hunting friends took the warnings from Fish and Game very seriously even though they were hunting on private farmland in Southland, and were thus unlikely to be affected:

We worried that year, the farm we were on, but we worked out that we weren't close enough to any road bridges because we were further in, and people don't walk up farm land too far because they might meet the farmer at the other end saying: 'get off my property', basically. And then the owner of the land said, 'oh no, I think we're okay' (Doug).

I asked Doug what he was particularly worried about and he explained there were two particular aspects of concern. Firstly, he was not sure how he would cope, or respond, if confronted by someone whose purpose was to stop (or at least inhibit) his duck hunting. He was sure he would not respond violently, but he felt very unsure as to what response he would give and thought it most likely he would probably have to abandon hunting for the day. Secondly, Doug was concerned that he has always had an enormous emotional and financial investment in his duck hunting preparations, and that these would all go to waste if he was forced to leave by protesters.

Another participant voiced similar concerns about the effect of protesters on the financial outlay that hunters make. I spoke to John in 1999, just after the SAFE protests on the Waikato (which involved playing loud music) were reported on television. John found the story quite humorous, but he explained he was lucky because all his duck hunting was carried out on his farm pond in an isolated area in
Southland. It was extremely unlikely, therefore, that an animal rights activist would ever confront him on opening morning:

The only protest I heard of this last season was up in Hamilton. A group got some kind of a raft, and a band on it and they went to – I think it was the Waikato River – but it was a big river where there was a lot of hunters. And they got out there at five o’clock in the morning and started playing really loud music. And you can imagine there were some really angry people [laugh]...and there would be because, well there’s quite a bit of money wrapped up in it, you know, with all your ammo and then if you feed your ponds and your guns and gear and all that. And all the food [laugh] (John).

A participant who lives in the North Island (but is staying in Dunedin while studying at the University) has himself witnessed animal rights activists protesting on the Waikato and had a far angrier response to the protesters’ activities:

There was one incident when I was shooting at some stage on the Waikato river. A lot of people have maimais on the Waikato river on little islets and they build them on the side and you can drive around the Waikato river and you can see them (although) you often have to be fairly deep into the countryside to see them and you have to use back roads... So one time about 4.30 to 5.00 o’clock in the morning, everyone is just getting out into their maimais and these duck hunting protesters snotted [sic] around in their big jet boat down the river with one of those enormous CO2 horns and they loosen off the horn, scared all the birds away - and no one got to shoot for the entire day. They may have got a shot in the evening but the whole morning was fucked and that is just not on - I mean it is perfectly legal, everyone has paid their licences, there are no ecological complications and so that sort of thing really yanks my chain, that’s just being totally disrespectful of the way a person wants to live (Tony).

I asked duck hunters what they thought about the protesters’ point of view. There were a variety of responses. Some hunters thought the animal rights perspective was inherently wrong, but understood that these protesters wanted to stand up for something that they believed in. Behind this acceptance of their right to protest was, I think, an awareness that they wanted to live in a society where different
lifestyle choices and philosophies could be practiced even when they were fundamentally opposed to each other. Gary attempted to sum up this view:

I've got two problems with it - part of the problem is that they've got a huge potential to affect my lifestyle and I don't think they've got the right to do that. But in terms of where they're coming from I've got a problem with that, in that they are basically anti-killing and I find that illogical. You know, because what they do to sustain their lifestyle... they don't seem to recognize that their impact on the planet is huge and what they are doing here... is causing a lot of environmental harm. And they don't recognize it, and to me killing something isn't wrong, you know. I just have a problem with killing everything or killing somebody else. And so philosophically there is a huge gulf between me and them - but I'm also scared of them because they have the ability to affect my lifestyle (Gary).

Other participants supported the right of the animal activists to protest as long as they stayed within the law to do so. The following two hunters even accepted that the activities of anti-hunting protesters played a useful part in keeping duck hunters aware of the 'rules' they were expected to follow:

Well they have got their right - anti hunters and the gun lobby are the biggest threat to water fowl hunting that there is and they are strong and serious threats but they have got a legitimate place and I think given some simple balance, they help temper water fowl hunting and make sure that hunters are playing by the rules and doing it ethically and soundly and, you know, making hunters look introspectively at themselves - waterfowl managers likewise (Paul).

I think they have their place because I think a lot of the issues that they bring up are good ones because if there isn't a controlling issue on both sides - then you probably would have some indiscriminate flaunting of laws and flaunting of rights and I do believe you need a balanced programme and I do believe these people provide that. I don't believe they should go out on a rowing boat and stand about waving around on opening day for duck shooting and saying you know, 'I am here to protect the ducks', because as sure as hell someone is going to get wild with them and they are going to get a pellet in their eye but I do believe that they have their rights to do what they think, I really do (Ron).
5.4 Legitimising the New Politics of Duck Hunting

The previous section reveals that the discursive landscape of duck hunting has altered dramatically over the past decade, and that, in an effort to justify the continued practicing of duck hunting, Fish and Game New Zealand, together with duck hunters themselves, have been forced to present a pro-hunting counter discourse that constructs the shooting of ducks as encompassing ‘ethical’ practices. The duck hunters I spoke to presented a variety of explanations about how they constructed duck hunting as a legitimate activity. One of the key themes behind these explanations is one of ‘competence’ in nature - something that the duck hunters accord to themselves, but not the anti-hunting protesters. The rest of this and the following chapter outline the substance and complexity of new discourses about duck hunting.

Hunting as an Embodied ‘Natural’ Activity

One of the key differences between anti-hunting discourses and ‘wildlife management’ (the discursive framework within which hunting is constructed) is that anti-hunters “tend to think of game animals as individuals, assigning them human emotions and qualities”, whereas game managers are concerned with the overall animal population. In the game management view, individual animals “come and go by natural processes, of which hunting is a part” (emphasis added) (Jones 1991: 13). Many duck hunters feel that those people opposed to duck hunting have an unrealistic notion of these processes, and emphasize that humans killing animals for food is just participating in the ‘food-chain’; an important manifestation of evolutionary processes:

Well they have their rights to a personal opinion and I have no real comment on that. It is just like someone who has a religious belief - I am quite contented that they hold that but I would be very disappointed if they come and try to stick it on me too much. I feel a lot of these issues are very similar to that because I see that in nature you have only got to look at the way the system works and you see that we very much are a group of animals on earth which peck on each other and are always being eaten by other ones, and it is part of the food chain. I guess as we progress in
Dunedin or New Zealand on this path that we are going at the moment we will eventually think that it is too distasteful to use animals as part of the food chain. I don't know that it is very clever - I think it is just the way that humans have developed to become extremely concerned about those types of issues. If you go back 100 years, people were not concerned in the slightest (Len).

I think that people that protest against hunting are fairly unrealistic - I mean hunting is how people... how you survive and just because in the last couple of centuries or whatever it has been narrowed down to sheep farming and beef farming, you know that is just a modern way really. I mean where do they think they came from, how do they think people get food? I think they are probably just impractical and maybe just, I don't know, I don't like to say it - soft. I probably just can't understand them (Lucy).

Taking 'Responsibility' for Killing

Other hunters felt that in killing animals themselves they were taking responsibility for something that most urbanised people did not want to face up to:

I think the other problem is that people think we are divorced from the natural process and that is creating a lot of problems when people don't like people going hunting because [they think] killing is bad. But everything must kill something, you have got to kill a grain of wheat to eat it - still 60% of the genetics of a grain of wheat are quite compatible to us so whatever you are dealing with you have got to kill something to eat. A lot of Buddhists revere life but that is one of the biggest, I won't say, hypocrisy - but they get other people to kill their meat for them rather than do it themselves. For some reason they don't want to do the actual dirty work themselves - they don't want to take responsibility for it (Larry).

This idea of taking responsibility for killing is emphasized in a lot of duck hunting literature, which also often highlights the hypocrisy of criticism from non-hunting New Zealand society given such widespread acceptance of the killing of vast numbers of domesticated animals:

From the start, hunting has always been an art, but today it faces opposition based on sentiment from a population that quite happily eats a million electrocuted chicken (Axbey 1994: 117).
Some duck hunters also emphasized this connection between the killing of domesticated animals and hunting wild animals:

I think sometimes they [anti-hunters] are emotive and irrational... and I think sometimes too while they are opposed to hunting they still eat their meat and those animals get killed somewhere, whether it be in a freezing works - and it is difficult to see how their logic totally applies (Paul).

**Relationships with Nature: Hunters' 'Realism' Versus Protesters' 'Naivety'**

Several duck hunters were deeply concerned at the risks to personal safety that the protesters sometimes took and were worried that someone was going to get seriously hurt if the confrontational tactics continued. These participants thought the protesters should find other ways to air their views:

Well, because it becomes so dangerous is the problem - if you get protesters running around. If it was me personally, then I would just have to call it quits because you can't really risk shooting people for that sort of thing. But it's pretty disappointing when it comes to that, because there are other ways that they can raise their things without having to drive around in boats in front of people and try and scare off the ducks. But that's what they tend to do, is try to go for the big dramatic thing, rather than fight it through the courts, or fight it through legislation (Jake).

I think the differences should be aired not on the place of hunting like in a maimai or a lake or a mountain top, it shouldn't be there, it should be somewhere where there is a controlled environment because a place of hunting is not a controlled environment. People have firearms... too many of them on either side can be called radicals. You get the hunters who are strong-headed and you get the conservationists who are strong-headed and put those two groups together - and you have got firearms and alcohol involved - it is a powder keg. So those things have to have a mediator or some type of off location discussion to solve issues - it does not take place out there, no (Ron).

One participant not only emphasized the danger that activists put themselves in but also provided a dramatic story about some protesters being rescued by duck hunters. Maurice perceives animal rights activists as generally being idealistic young urbanites who are unprepared for the 'realities' of the outdoors:
On other occasions the protesters have been out in bitterly cold weather and had to be rescued by hunters because they were suffering from hypothermia - and that was quite serious. I'm not sure where that happened - either on Lake Wairarapa or on Lake Ellesmere. Kids once again with no affinity to the outdoors, with the best intentions in the world, with an anthropomorphic unrealistic view of the world, decided that they would go and save the place. Well, you can't fault them for their intentions but you can fault them for their actions. Well, the hunters had to rescue these kids because it got bitterly cold - they got wet and hypothermia happens with young people very quickly - slim young kids with no residual fat, like me, to keep them warm. They lose their body heat very quickly and they can't generate it again. And they were in trouble and they had to be rescued by the hunters and it was fortunate - and to their credit - that these guys were mature enough and sensible enough to know what to do, and helped these kids out of it (Maurice).

**Urban Values Versus Rural Values**

Here Maurice highlights the idea that urban “kids” are not as realistic, or adequately knowledgeable about ‘nature’, as rural hunters who are able to perform in the ‘wild’. Although not always voiced overtly, many duck hunters understood objections to duck hunting as a product of different values held in the country and in the city. One participant provided an interesting analogy to protesting at duck hunting - protesting at a theatre. Terry lives in a rural Southland town and his thoughts on anti-hunting attitudes reflect important aspects of where support for duck hunting does and does not lie. As previously noted, it is very difficult to generalise about duck hunting in a class sense, but as Neil indicates, there are definitely tensions between urban and rural activities and interests:

They have got their right to protest and that, but not when they start going to somebody's pond - like Lake Ellesmere and causing merry hell and blowing trumpets and what not. Those guys have outlaid a lot of money and...how would they like it if we went to the theatre or whatever they like to do. We don't go in there and start boo hooing and yahooing when all the punch lines come out and all the important parts - we don't do that so why should they do what somebody has paid to do legally and they are entitled to do it. So why should they disrupt us (Terry).
With the acknowledgement that urban values differ from the rural, and that urban dwellers have different conceptions of how to relate to ‘nature’, many duck hunters fear the power that far larger urban populations may have over duck hunting practices. Neil, for example, also expressed concern that the anti-hunting movement emanating from urban centres will curtail duck hunting in the future:

There is a growing antipathy mainly in Auckland and Wellington, maybe Christchurch, probably Auckland more than any place else, against duck hunting and blood sports in general. There is a movement that is growing now, the anti hunting movement and I suppose it will overlap into the anti gun sort of people. Yeah, that’s bound to happen in fact eventually, it will grow – it has grown in Britain, huge now and in America. We are usually twenty years behind so it is bound to happen here. We are constantly being warned that if we do come up against anti hunting people that we don’t antagonise them – that we keep out of their way, you know, ensure we don’t get in confrontational situations with them that nobody is going to win anyway. So you are better off not to start a war between us but it will certainly affect the way we operate, and I think it will affect quite a few people’s thinking who don’t hunt (Neil).

Maurice, however, was confident that the traditional values associated with duck hunting were well enough ‘entrenched’ as to allow the practice to continue:

So there’s lots of hardworking and dedicated people involved – but because it has been there for so long it is assumed to be a birthright heritage, and that’s probably not an unreasonable attitude, but in fact it’s not – it’s a privilege. It’s a privilege that’s hard won and hard kept and you could lose it quite easily by mismanagement and if the population at large decided that hunting and killing things was no longer acceptable – it could be lost quite easily. And a lot of people fear that – I don’t, I think that it’s too well entrenched now in the New Zealand psyche. It will be challenged and so it should be from time to time (Maurice).

William felt that in Southland there were probably people who do not necessarily agree with duck hunting, but still enjoy eating duck or being involved in ancillary duck hunting activities:
But the anti-hunting lobby down here, I wouldn't say is very strong. I don't know of any evidence where there's been a protest or a demonstration about it at all. I know generally speaking the anti-hunting lobby is quite vocal in Australia and there's a little bit of it that has come here. But it has never raised its head locally. I think there's probably lots of people who don't go along with the concept of hunting game birds for recreation, but you know even if they disagree they are perfectly happy to take part in duck dinners and that sort of thing (William).

The previous section presents specific examples from duck hunters as to how they construct a counter discourse to anti-hunting rhetoric. For many duck hunters, hunting practices embody 'natural' activities found within nature. Some hunters also emphasize their willingness to kill animals for themselves, a 'responsibility' the majority of New Zealanders no longer take on for themselves. These examples exemplify a particular discursive position that constructs duck hunting practices as a 'competent' relationship with 'nature'. As I have shown, this competence is also clearly gendered and also closely associated with rural values - that is, constructed as a kind of 'rural masculine competence'. Many duck hunters consider that the animal rights activists in contrast, have a relationship with 'nature' that is inconsistent, incompetent and naïve. They may have "the best intentions in the world" (as Maurice explains), but those intentions are not 'realistic'. This leads to the anti-hunting protesters' actions being interpreted by the duck hunters as 'feminine' or 'soft'. When confronted with the 'harsh realities' of 'nature', these 'idealistic' urbanites lack the masculine competence of the duck hunters who have a far more embodied relationship with 'nature' - or, as Maurice says, "an affinity with the outdoors".

5.5 The Ambiguous Experience of Killing Ducks

I now want to return to one of the central features of the counter discourse mobilised by duck hunters in answer to anti-hunters' critiques. Perhaps the most striking differences between pro-duck hunting discourse and anti-hunting discourse are issues that relate to killing. In this section I would like to consider in depth the ambiguities surrounding watching ducks die. As previously noted, the
majority of people in New Zealand eat meat, but most are now separated from the processes that actually transform animals into meat. Killing animals has become an unfamiliar process to most urban dwellers, and it is hard to grasp why hunters choose to shoot animals when, in modern industrialised societies, there is no longer a dependence on wild animals for food. Because for many people there is no ‘justification’ for hunting (except perhaps pragmatic motivations such as pest control), killing is understood as an act of perverse pleasure. For me, as a non-hunter, one of the most important goals of my research was to try and understand not only why people shoot ducks, but how do they feel when they do so.

Observing ducks being shot and killed presented the most ambivalent experiences of my fieldwork. On some occasions I became caught up in the excitement of the morning - perhaps because of the preparations I had participated in and the engaging personalities of some of the duck hunters I spent time with. Indeed, there were moments when I found myself hoping that the shotguns firing around me would lead to ducks falling from the sky. In these moments I understood the thrill of duck hunting and why an activity that focussed around killing could be ‘fun’. On other occasions, however, the beauty and serenity of the setting and the wildness and the freeness of the gossamer ducks had me hoping the hunter’s aim would not be accurate. And sometimes, I felt sickened and sad when I saw wounded ducks diving under water to try and escape hunters or flapping along the ground unable to take to the air. I spoke to many duck hunters at length about how they understood and explained the killing component of duck hunting, and I was surprised to find that my ambivalence about killing was, in many cases, also shared by the duck hunters themselves. Killing was not unproblematic or ‘mindless’: many hunters had spent a great deal of time thinking about what killing a duck meant both to them personally and how it might relate to broader philosophical questions.
How important is it to hunters to make a ‘clean kill’?

One of the key anti-hunting discourses that generates antipathy towards hunting practices is the notion that hunters ‘enjoy’ killing. The following letter to a newspaper exemplifies this view:

Fish and Game...defends duck shooting on the basis that it is a form of farming. There are significant differences. Most farmers consider the actual killing of their animals as the most unpleasant aspect of their occupation. Blood sport enthusiasts take some sort of perverted pleasure in personally killing birds and animals (Otago Daily Times, Dick Donaldson, Letter to the Editor, 2003b, June 2: 16).

When I discussed the issue of whether killing was ‘pleasurable’ with the participants in this research, I found that many duck hunter would focus on the issue of making a ‘clean kill’ (that is killing the bird quickly so that when it fell from the sky it was dead). These two issues are closely connected, because as the following interview extracts reveal, killing birds is not considered a ‘pleasurable’ activity, but rather an activity that entails ideals about killing quickly and humanely. In their attempts to achieve these specific ideals about killing, duck hunters are once again associated with of a kind of competence in the countryside – if they meet the requirements, they become ‘competent’ killers.

Two key reasons emerged for hunters to make a ‘clean’ shot: firstly, a pragmatic desire to see a job done ‘properly’, and secondly, a concern that an animal should suffer as little as possible. The following three interview excerpts are examples of the first approach, where killing a bird quickly is regarded as being ‘tidier’, more efficient, and less bother:

I prefer to seem them drop - as in dead - it’s a lot more tidier than to have find them and kill them (Jake).

I try and decoy my ducks and get them close - and that’s my objective - to have ducks very close. Then they’re easy for me to hit, easy to pick up, and they’re dead. For a start I don’t like wasting ammo, I don’t like having to send my dog long distances - either down rivers or whatever - it’s just
inefficient to me. It's an inefficient hunter who takes long shots or wounds ducks. Yeah, I think it is a big issue to kill your ducks clean and you do that if you're being a good hunter (Craig).

Craig also explained that discipline and self-control were required in order to achieve a 'clean' shot. He regarded the practice of taking a lot of long-distance shots in the hope of hitting a couple of ducks as poor hunting:

I think the biggest thing is to have the will power, or the judgement, not to shoot - to not take long shots, or shots which are beyond your capabilities - and that's probably one of the biggest things to get people to do, you know. People live by the theory: where there's lead, there's hope [laugh]. I see it on the estuary a lot where, once the long-range shooting starts, it just carries on. Because everyone's doing it, so you just take whatever you can and if you get one or two every now and again, so be it. And it's just hopeless (Craig).

As mentioned above, aside from pragmatic reasons, the other key reason for making a 'clean' shot is closely related to concerns about killing humanely - although, as the following comments reveals, humane concerns sometimes incorporate shades of pragmatism too:

That's the ultimate aim (to make a clean shot). We are not there to chase wounded ducks or anything - one, it is inhumane and the other, it wastes a lot of time...shooting them dead that is the objective rather than chasing 'woundies' flapping around at the side of the pond. It is pretty important to be humane about it (William).

You should kill them quickly but that is not always possible... if they fall on the water or on the ground and they are not dead you shoot them again to get them out of their misery and I think we practise that to a large extent - we do try to do the thing humanely (Neil).

Dad was very anxious to make sure that no duck that he had winged was left to die slowly, a horrible painful long-winded death...Dad was very, very concerned that no duck was actually left wounded and suffering. He used to teach us that it was cruel to leave something wounded and that we had to actually either leave it alone all together or kill it humanely and quickly and none of this torturing business - he couldn't stand that sort of thing (Therese).
Several duck hunters felt that it was very difficult to make a clean shot. Some even thought that while it was desirable it was 'unrealistic', and to a certain degree beyond the control of the hunter:

You like to (make a clean shot) but shit it is hard, everyone likes to - no one likes to see some bloody bird flapping around everywhere - no one likes to see that. But it is nice when you drop a duck cleanly but it doesn't always happen so what do you do I mean, just try (Tony).

I don't know that's a realistic question, as I don't know as a duck shooter that you have much control because, if you are shooting at a duck, you are shooting with a very broad blunt instrument, you might say, and you are hoping at best you will be able to bring the duck down. You really don't have any control over the degree of the process, I don't believe (Len).

The crippling loss is real, it happens. The level depends on how good a shot you are, and also whether you've got a dog, and also the terrain you're hunting. Like, if you're hunting on a farm pond with grazing to the edge, there are not many places a duck can hide but if you're shooting down at Waituna lagoon there's plenty of places where it can hide. Even the best people, with the best dogs will put a pellet in something as it flies half a mile away (Gary).

Generally speaking, hunters agreed that if a duck is wounded then there is a 'responsibility' for the hunter to find the bird and kill it. Many duck hunters appear to take this responsibility seriously, with the hunting fraternity placing a great deal of pressure on finding and killing a duck quickly. While the humanitarian aspect may be the first reason for this course, there also appears to be an etiquette component. Leaving a duck suffering is just 'not done': it is bad hunting practice and found to be offensive by most duck hunters:

I think most hunters and most shooters that I know of make every endeavour to do that (make a clean shot) and also any bird that is downed, I don't know of anybody who wouldn't go out and try absolutely to get that bird and make sure it was dead - it is just one of the things that you do (Ron).

It's unfortunate yeah, you see the poor old duck and you know you have dropped him and you know he is not totally dead and you might spend
twenty minutes trying to find it and he is trying to keep away from you – it can get quite emotional, it really can. If you want to think on the same wave length of the poor old bird, you are trying to find him and he is trying to avoid you and the longer it is out there and you are looking for it the more you think about it so you don't really have an option because if you don't kill it then, it is going to die slowly anyway because it has got lead in it. It will get lead poisoning or a predator will get - it whether it be stoats, weasels or hawks, they will get it, so you have just got to remember and say, 'OK you made a mess of your first shot so it is better off killing it cleanly and humanely' (Ron).

As the above quotation highlights, once a duck is wounded it is not always easy to find. Ducks are very adept at hiding amongst bushes or weeds around waterways. They are also able to dive under the water for extended periods of time. Retrieving dead ducks - and especially locating wounded ones - is much easier with a gundog. Some hunters regarded any hunting without a dog as inhumane and unacceptable:

If there is a duck that we can't see and we know it is there, we will send the dog after it. I think people who go shooting without dogs are not very nice; you shouldn't do it (Neil).

I mean you are trying to kill it cleanly but it is not nice to have the ducks screaming and flapping all over the place and if they are wounded they can get away. They can go and burrow into the weeds and disappear, which again with the dog that is not a problem because the dog will sort them out anyway (James).

'Finishing Ducks Off' – How do hunters feel about this?
Killing a duck by hand is a far more intimate process than shooting at birds in the air with a shotgun. There was interesting variety in how different duck hunters felt about killing a duck more directly, such as wringing its neck. Several of the hunters found the task to be particularly unpleasant, and some avoid this by shooting the bird again at close range. Those people who work on farms, or came from farming backgrounds, seem most untroubled about killing animals in general, and able to
cope with the tasks required for killing the birds. For Len, who identifies himself as a 'townie', wringing necks was not easy:

Generally Gavin, or one of the boys, wrings their necks - I am not very good at wringing their necks, I am not all that enthused about the idea - shows the 'townie' in me, I guess. Whereas country boys are quite different. People who are brought up with it - it is just like doing anything else in life, nothing unusual at all. Yes, constant exposure certainly takes away any of those strange feelings (Len).

In contrast, Jake and Ben, who were both raised on farms, were completely familiar with the techniques required for killing animals by hand:

I have grown up on a farm so I guess I have sort of been brought up with that sort of thing [killing animals] so it's not a 'squeamishy' thing [So do you wring their necks?] Yeah, or pull their necks - very quickly (Jake).

I was brought up on farms and we used to kill sheep for the house - and I've always been into shooting animals and things. So no, I don't have any problem with blood and guts and things like that. [And what about if you have got a wounded duck; are you happy to wring its neck?] No problems! (Ben).

Only one participant expressed killing in a more unusual way: for him the act of killing an animal was always "mundane", and also sometimes "enjoyable". This comment was unusual because if other duck hunters felt the same way they did not openly admit it, perhaps because this kind of comment might bolster the claims within anti-hunting discourse that hunters 'enjoy killing'. Craig's comment, however, clearly reflects a different relationship with animals than would be experienced in an urban upbringing:

It is always a mundane act having to kill an animal, you sacrifice something but it is something I have grown up with...we lived off the land really and killing a duck or killing a rabbit was just second nature... To just kill something off - it makes you feel good sometimes, the need to go and kill something...but I suppose just being brought up on a farm and it was sort of just like a second nature thing, killing something for food (Craig).
Most hunters, in contrast, acknowledged they did not like wringing a wounded duck’s neck, but thought it was an unpleasant task that just had to be done. I observed many ducks being killed by hand and it is obviously takes a certain level of skill and acquired technique to ‘finish off’ a duck quickly and efficiently. Some hunters more or less ‘snapped’ the duck’s neck with their hands, while others swung the duck around in a wide circle to accomplish the same thing. One hunter told a story about his daughter Clare’s early efforts learning to ‘finish off’ a duck:

Jess (the gundog), swims out into the pond and brings a duck right to the back door of the maimai and the next minute I turn around and Clare - who was only six or seven at the time - was holding this duck and it had a broken wing and Clare said: ‘oh, can I keep it, can I keep it’. And I said ‘no, look you are going to have to kill it, put it out of its misery, it is not fair, you wouldn't like to be getting carried around by a big monster and then dropped down at somebody’s door, then picked up and cuddled. The duck will be absolutely terrified’. So I showed her how to tip the neck back and give it a flick, and it breaks the neck, it is called wringing the neck and she was quite happy about this and 10 minutes later we heard this weird noise and we couldn't work out what it was and we turned around and here she was sitting outside the maimai with this wounded duck going round and round and round trying to wring its neck - she wasn't doing a very good job, so it was one dizzy duck and one broken neck and I showed her how to do it again. After that she was quite happy (Terry).

If Clare is any indication, there is little difference in regard to attitudes to killing and the gender of the duck hunter. I asked Lucy, a very experienced and enthusiastic duck hunter, how she felt about the killing aspect of duck hunting. While I had not interviewed enough women duck hunters to make any generalisations, I was curious to see if she was more ‘squeamish’ or upset by killing ducks. Lucy admitted she disliked wringing the duck’s neck very much (although so did some male duck hunters). What was particularly interesting were her observations that concern about wounded ducks was less prevalent amongst those hunters who only hunt on opening day, and that she had taken on the responsibility of ‘finishing ducks off’ for others as well as herself, even though she disliked the task enormously:
I can't stand wounding animals. I try and make the first shot the shot they are dead from - I can't stand having to wring necks so, yeah, it is absolutely 100% the most important thing. [Who taught you how to wring a duck's neck?] Just the guys I shoot with, but I'm not very good at wringing necks...but if I didn't do it half of them would just leave them lying around to die - like I will go around and make sure they are dead. [So are you more particular about that than the guys are?] Probably more than some of them - like, as I say, there are one or two guys that I go with all the time and they are great but then there are a lot of guys who go out on opening day and are only there for that one day and I don't think they could care less, so I keep an eye on those ones and do the deed for them (Lucy).

While some hunters felt empathy and distress in dealing with wounded ducks, some hunters thought this approach could be overdone. One hunter in particular doubted that ducks have a complex enough nervous system to experience real pain:

Humans can't imagine what animals feel - they talk about ducks feeling pain and other things but I wonder what sort of agony they really go through. The brain is small, the nervous system is primitive so the amount of actual physical pain they suffer...I don't think they really do. You know the more intelligent animals are, the higher degree of pain they suffer - dogs, which are pretty high up on the thing - they can feel pain, and we know this because if you inflict pain - they yelp. I don't believe that as you go down the lower scales - you know, as they get more primitive - that their nervous systems cause them to suffer greatly - I think there is a lot of bullshit about that (Neil).

Neil's comment about the sounds that animals make when they are hurt, introduces another interesting aspect that emerged in my research. In discussing their feelings about coping with wounded ducks, several people mentioned other types of hunting that they were involved in. While dealing with wounded ducks was often seen as distressing, the subject of the sounds that wounded animals make seemed to be an important component that increased the discomfort of the hunters. As Neil implies, ducks do not make much noise when wounded, and thus are often regarded as less upsetting than, for example, goats. Goats appear to be most disconcerting, as they make very human sounds when hurt:
I haven't really felt squeamish about wounded ducks, but sometimes when you shoot goats, they sound like people screaming. But ducks don't really make a sound - not Mallards - Paradise ducks do sometimes, they honk around the place - but dogs usually get them pretty quick or you shoot them (Billy).

The only time I have ever felt squeamish is to shoot a larger animal. I went goat shooting when I was quite young and I wounded a goat and it screamed like a woman, and that gave me a hell of a fright and made me feel pretty bad - but you just strive to make a good clean shot (Edward).

The worst experience would be - not so much with ducks because that is pretty quiet - the worst you will get with a duck is the flapping around, they will dive and they will go into the weed into the bottom and die... The worst would be if you hit a rabbit particularly with a 22 - if you hit him in the back end he will run off and go squealing and squawking. That happened with my kids; that's not a pleasant experience (Norman).

Ducks don't tend to make a lot of noise either when they are wounded, they don't scream like some animals do - or cry, they don't really do much (James).

Another component that some duck hunters found upsetting or affected the choice of gamebird they would shoot was those species that tend to mate 'for life'.

I have been more squeamish I suppose, about shooting 'parries' [Paradise ducks] and obviously geese and things like that. You would probably be more squeamish about them because there is the whole couple thing - they all fly around and its not very nice when you shoot one of them and the other one goes off and then flies back and has a look and then flies back - that's not the nicest thing (Tony).

If you are going to shoot swans you shoot a young swan, maybe a year old and you can tell the difference by the size, colour, plumage, beak - you can tell how old they are, pretty much so. But no, we don't shoot swans - we always felt sorry for them because they mate for long periods of time. We have shot swans a long way back - two fly over, you shoot one and the

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110 A wildlife manager explained to me that the mating 'for life' description should not be taken literally. A bird whose mate was killed would most often find another mate, and there were also instances of 'divorce' (changing of mates) amongst species that pair-bonded. However, there are still some significant differences between those species that mate with many different partners in a season and throughout their lifespan (such as Mallard ducks) and those that pair bond for many years and raise offspring together (such as Paradise ducks and swans). One of those behavioural differences is that mated birds will look for their partner if they are shot.
other poor old swan just flies around and around and you think: 'oh bugger it', you know, 'I wish I hadn't done that', and sure enough you know someone else is going to shoot the other one. Instead of heading for safety, they think: 'oh where's my mate gone'. They are very loyal mates and because that one's gone down they hang around, and they do that quite frequently. So no, we don't shoot them (Ron).

Despite this sensitivity, once game birds are dead, their bodies are not accorded any kind of special care or attention. While I saw ducks thrown into a bucket, most duck hunters dump the ducks onto the ground in a pile until they are ready to depart the field. Quite a large number of ducks can be shot in a short period of time, particularly in the excitement of opening morning when several people are shooting simultaneously. I accompanied one hunter about a month into the season on a quiet morning's shoot and he simply dropped the ducks on the floor of the maimai until the morning's shoot was over (Figure 34). The ducks at this stage appear to be in a kind of liminal state - no longer a living animal and worthy of 'ethical' considerations, but not quite 'meat' either, at which stage their bodies become the focus of careful culinary ministrations.

FIGURE 34. Three Dead Ducks
(Source: personal photograph)
Age and Changing Attitudes towards Killing

Several duck hunters mentioned that they thought their attitudes towards hunting had changed over time. They noted that, while killing had been carried out enthusiastically and without much thought when they were young, as they became older it had become far more problematic:

I started out when I was twelve or thirteen and I think it is a boy thing that you want to kill things. You know, perhaps chase something and beat it to death with a stick, or shoot something...I'm probably more squeamish about things now. When I say squeamish, I've got a bit more of an understanding of things dying now, than I ever did have before...I think there is a wee bit of a difference between enjoying hunting or getting a kick out of killing. And I think probably when I was younger I used to get a kick out of killing things. But now I don't (Craig):

When I was a boy I used to go out with my cousin on horses to this creek...and we went down and saw these ducks and we would run after them and grab them. They were flappers, you know, younger ducks that couldn't fly. And we would get them and drown them in the creek. We were like - I can't even describe the word for it - we were like murderers going out and getting them and bashing them and drowning them (Tylor).

I was only 15 years old then when I first started shooting - I was out hunting with my father long before that but then it was sort of, 'my dad shot this, my dad shot that', you didn't think about the death part of it. When you went say with a firearm yourself, it was, 'I can do what my dad did, I'm bringing home the ducks now and I am a good shot'. No I don't know at that stage I ever felt squeamish about it...and you didn't really sort of feel for the ducks at all, absolutely not, not really. I do now though, very much so, in fact almost to the point of: 'do I bother any more' - the older I get I am very much becoming an animal person, not only birds and ducks, but animals. In fact I intend to - when I eventually leave this place of abode - I will probably leave quite a substantial part of what I have to animals - that's how much I feel about animals (Ron).

In recent years, you know, I've thought about this duck hunting thing...you know out there with my mate shooting these ducks, and thinking about the morality of blasting something out of the air with a shotgun. And you know, as I get older the more I think back to my war time experiences, which you know, I have extremely vivid memories of what it is like to be shot at. And it isn't a very pleasant experience (William).
As these responses indicate, attitudes towards killing animals, and feelings about animals in general, are not static and, over the course of a person’s life, their attitudes can change quite significantly. Craig and Tyler imply that an increased empathy for living creatures appears to have curtailed their boyish bloodthirsty activities. Ron expresses a conflict between his growing affection for animals as he ages and his previous enjoyment of going duck hunting. William also articulates an increasingly empathetic attitude towards ducks, which he relates to growing older and the wartime memories that he finds himself recalling more frequently. William’s direct experience of the violence of guns being used against humans is unusual in New Zealand society, and limited to those older returned servicemen and women who, like William, served in the Second World War, Vietnam, or Korea.

In summary, the preceding section has highlighted the complex and ambiguous issues that manifested around the killing of ducks. As we can see, the duck hunters who participated in this research are all generally aware of anti-hunting discourses that frame duck shooting as a kind of perverse activity in which hunters take ‘pleasure’ in killing. In response, duck hunters have mobilised a counter discourse which places duck shooting practices within a framework of ‘ethical’ killing. While a ‘clean kill’ is not always achieved, the duck hunters always intend to cause as little suffering as possible to the ducks: a discursive position consistently highlighted by hunters. This previous section has also illustrated how, for many duck hunters, killing is not an ‘easy’ or straightforward task, and the enjoyment they have in participating in duck hunting practices is mitigated to a certain extent by the ‘unpleasant’ aspects of killing.

But there is a further central aspect to discourse and counter discourse in terms of duck hunting in New Zealand. While pro-hunting discourses now emphasize the ‘ethical’ dimensions of contemporary duck hunting practices, one of the most powerful objections to duck hunting, and hunting in general, is constructed around
the use of firearms. As the following section will explore, in New Zealand firearms have increasingly become associated with violent confrontations between humans. This aspect of anti-hunting discourse moves the focus of concern away from human-animal relations, and presents a 'rural-urban rift' discourse in which the legitimacy of using firearms, and the contestation of that legitimacy, are embedded in both the specific contexts of urban or rural sites and the different discourses associated with those sites.

5.6 The ‘Guilty’ Pleasures of Guns

As outlined in Chapter 2, I do not have much experience with firearms. Aside from watching my cousins using an air gun on my uncle’s farm, I did not regularly observe people using guns during my childhood, nor have I been taught how to use any kind of firearm. I went out into the field, therefore, with perceptions of guns formulated primarily by the negative associations with violence that are portrayed in film and television. I found my first experience of being around shotguns very frightening and, although by the end of my research my perception of guns had definitely changed, I never achieved the relaxed demeanor that people who have grown up with guns have. In the following extract from my field notes I wrote about the fear I felt on my first opening morning:

When we entered the maimai I went and sat on a low bench positioned against the back wall. John and Bill, talking in whispers, began digging around in bags and getting themselves organised. Through the camouflage net at the front of the maimai I could see blues and pinks blossoming across the morning sky as the sun began to rise. I began to relax in this contemplative atmosphere, but was quickly reminded that meditating on the rising sun was not the reason we were there. With practiced familiarity the men were loading their shotguns. My stomach clenched and I felt really frightened. I told myself to stop being so ridiculous but seeing the guns in the men’s hands seemed to conjure up every violent film I had ever seen. Then John pulled a balaclava over his head and Frank smeared camouflage paint onto his face and the atmosphere in the maimai became even more oppressive and threatening. John smiled at me through his balaclava, consolidating all my fears that he had turned into an unhinged psychopath with murderous intent. The menacing ambience suddenly dissipated however, as John began making loud quaking noises with his
duck caller. I suppressed my desire to laugh hysterically - quacking like a duck is a serious matter in the maimai on opening morning (Fieldnotes May 1999).

In New Zealand society, in common with many other highly urbanised countries, firearms are commonly associated with violent crimes and well-publicised, horrifying mass killings. In films and television, images of people using firearms as weapons are depicted on a daily basis. For those unfamiliar with duck hunting and firearms, the men pictured in the photograph below (Figure 35) would very likely be read as threatening and dangerous to people - rather than ducks.

![Figure 35. “Serious Southland Hunters”](Source: *Fish & Game New Zealand Magazine* (1997) Issue 4: 9)
In keeping with this, in 1998, one of SAFE’s specific goals was to make quite overt the connection between hunting and violence:111

This year, SAFE also plans to highlight the correlation between hunting, guns and violence. The most obvious example is the recent slaying in America of five young school girls and a teacher by two boys, aged eleven and thirteen. These boys were taught to fire rifles and shoot animals by their fathers... You might ask how could it happen? How can a child become capable of such atrocity? Many studies have shown people who are capable of abusive and violent acts towards animals can easily turn towards people. Hunting is a violent act which demands a weapon designed to kill...With duck shooting still holding a title as one of the country’s favourite recreation activities, SAFE firmly believes 46,000 gung-ho shooters must contribute to perpetuating violence in this country (SAFE, Safeguard Magazine 1998: 5).

In the USA, control over the ownership and control of firearms is extremely liberal, in keeping with the fact that the right to carry arms is enshrined in the American constitution.112 Deaths from gun-related killings in the USA are extremely high and rate second behind only automotive accidents.113 In contrast, as a result of the killings at Port Arthur in Tasmania in 1996, the Australian government has implemented very tight restrictions over gun ownership. This includes the instigation of a national programme to buy-back semi-automatic and pump-action rifles and shotguns. As a result duck hunting is now tightly controlled, with licences only issued when a person provides three signatures from landowners who have pest problems with ducks (Dyer 1997: 25).

The control of firearms in New Zealand is also conservative, with strict rules governing the licencing and storage of firearms, although not to quite the same

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111 A media release in April 2004 indicates that SAFE is currently still emphasising this connection: “If we are serious about addressing violence in our society, we must disarm the approximately 40,000 duck shooters to help make New Zealand a much safer place, for ducks and people alike.” (SAFE 2004).
112 Michael Moore’s (2002) film Bowling for Columbine provides an historical background into the American ‘gun culture’.
113 In 1998 there were 30,708 gun-related deaths. It is estimated that there are over 200 million guns in circulation in the USA, which equates to a gun for almost every United States citizen (American Medical Association 2001).
degree as Australia. In New Zealand, a person who wishes to own a gun must apply for a licence through the Police and this must be re-applied for every 10 years. In stark contrast to the USA, within New Zealand, handguns require a special licence (every individual weapon requiring separate registration) and are mainly used in clubs – as a result handgun ownership in New Zealand is extremely low.\textsuperscript{114} Even so, for those people who are not familiar with the use of firearms – and I include myself in this category – guns are fearful objects that represent violence and death.

In New Zealand, as throughout the Western world, attitudes towards firearms have changed dramatically over the past forty or so years. A fairly ‘relaxed view’ prevailed before the 1960s, however, increases in criminal violence and its association with firearms have increased significantly throughout the Western world in the last decades of the twentieth century (Thorpe 1997: 160). As well as actual increases in gun-related violence, the perception of firearms as dangerous and anti-social has grown enormously. The use of firearms has also become increasingly associated with pathological behaviour. Even though New Zealand has relatively low gun-related incidents and fatalities,\textsuperscript{115} the most commonly presented images of firearms in this country are guns in the hands of dangerous sociopaths and vicious criminals. There have also been high profile cases in New Zealand, and internationally, where firearms have been used in mass killings that, according to Thorp (1997), have understandably contributed to a feeling of unease (Thorpe 1997: 166). A duck hunter specifically described to me the changes he has observed in regard to how firearms are perceived when carried in public:

If you go back forty years, firearms were such a commonplace item in our lives that no one thought twice about it, but, as I quite often relate to people, things are different now. When I was quite young in my early days with firearms, I could go to Alan Miller, gunsmith or one of the gunsmiths

\textsuperscript{114} See Thorpe (1997) for details of firearms control in New Zealand.
\textsuperscript{115} In the six years before 1997 firearms offenses averaged around 4,000 per year, which is about 1.7% of all violent crime. Accidental deaths from firearms are less than 1% of total accidental deaths. By far the majority of people killed by firearms are suicides, which make up 73% of firearms deaths (Thorpe 1997:164-167).
in town, purchase a rifle, walk out the door with it unwrapped. I would always take the bolt out of it because I always thought it is reasonable that people should be able to see quickly that it was not in going condition. But I used to see a lot of people take rifles out with the bolt in place and closed, they could have been walking down the street with a loaded firearm and no one batted an eye - and that was less than 40 years ago. Now that is probably a long time to you Carmen, but it is not very long to me. I mean that would have been probably thirty-five years ago, thirty-five to forty years ago. People would walk down the street carrying a firearm just like you carry the shopping. But then I became conscious of the fact that people were getting a bit more fussed about that - it happened over a period of time - so you had to carry them wrapped or in a carrying bag. But these days, you are scared to look like you are carrying something that is even that shape - you need it disguised in a suitcase or something, because of the reaction you get. And that change has happened in such a short time (Len).

Another duck hunter felt that the way the media and film and television have presented firearms is a large reason for the public’s concerns about guns:

Basically I think that with urbanisation and with the propaganda that comes across on TV, you know, the media has a lot to blame, like these gung-ho violence movies which tend to be trendy and common because people want some release. And people are starting to gradually build in their concern or opposition to firearms and it is not necessarily related in any way to an actual firearm related problem. Okay, there might be more firearm violence but let’s look at it across the board and get a relative perspective on the whole thing...There is not one TV show on at the moment that shows firearms used for commercial or recreational events that portrays them as safe, reasonable, non-harming, legitimate, enjoyable and satisfying pastimes... So I mean that is the issue and people get it drummed into them and they see - the media, the media plays up all these gun violence things. The media has got a lot to answer for (Paul).

As a result of such depictions, one duck hunter felt that most of the opposition to duck hunting stemmed more from a fear of guns killing people, than from a concern for animals being harmed:

I really think it comes down to the firearms and the shooting of people - that’s really what makes it hard, it’s the firearm, really. Sometimes I don’t feel it’s the animal, it’s the firearm (Doug).
The Embodied Pleasures of Firing Guns

For many duck hunters, the enjoyment of using a gun is a large part of the pleasure that they get from duck hunting. I fired a shotgun on two occasions, and gained some impression of the skill that is required to not only aim correctly, but to also anticipate the movement of the bird. For some people the enjoyment is in the using of the shotgun, taking pride in being an accurate shot:

I think the power of it is part of it for me, that feeling that it can do what I want it do to - the accuracy thing is a challenge. I enjoy trying to get it on the target or on the animal - what else - oh I think more when I said the power of it, I enjoy the kick back of it - it is a bit of a thrill to feel that...you have got to put it in the right part of the shoulder - there is a technique to get control of that (Lisa).

It is quite good fun, I never used to use shot guns when I was a kid, I always just used to use 22s and shotguns are fun, you know. Like I know they are dangerous fun, if they are not used correctly, but it is all in the user. Like it is not the gun itself that is behind the butt so to speak, so they are cool - it is quite cool using a shotgun. It is not like a sick interest I have got or anything, I don't know... I just use them - although there is something quite good fun about have a five shot gun and just going boom, boom, boom, but other than that it is not just a fascination with guns as such, its just that you need to have a gun to do what you are doing (Lucy).

Other participants also appreciated the guns themselves; taking pleasure in the way they look and they way they were manufactured:

I take great pride in the firearms that I have - both rifles and shotguns, I have a number of each. They are the best you can buy and are maintained in that order as well - I look after them very well. I have always had Brownings, our family is a Browning family, we have had Browning shotguns, Browning rifles - everything is Browning because that is the best you can buy. And we look after them very well and we are quite proud of owning them, we treat them with respect, we don't abuse them - nor any other people, they are all kept under lock and key, as mine are now (Ron).

It was extremely important to me because from a very early age I developed a very keen interest in firearms except I tried to make it my career. At one stage I was keen on developing an interest in ballistics as far as evidential work was concerned and I would have liked to join that scientific aspect of firearms but there were no openings with the police at
that time. But I had quite a heavy involvement in the scientific side of firearms and I had a reasonably extensive collection and generally an interest in the science and design, which is another one of my fields. The safety aspects were paramount to me and I did my best to train people as I went through life (Len).

In addition to this overall appreciation, some particular firearms are special because they remind hunters of specific times and experiences, and several participants mentioned how attached they were to their first shotgun:

I have got an old one that I should never have kept. It probably should be pensioned off - it was my first shotgun. I bought it for a few pound and it still shoots okay. It is probably going to struggle as we go over to steel shot rather than lead shot, but it has still got a bit of character about it; its got a few experiences. Even from the fact that it reminds me of something that happened a long time ago - but that's part of what it's about, you know (Norman).

Firearms' Safety

When I discussed the issue of firearms' safety with duck hunters, it seemed to be something that was taken very seriously by most. There appears to be constant monitoring within groups of duck hunters as to whether individuals are maintaining safe firearms' practices, together with an awareness of the serious repercussions if someone is careless:

You are generally aware that you have got the potential to kill someone and most people are generally pretty switched on - like people get relaxed about cars and that is why we have so many accidents, whereas with a firearm you know exactly what it can do and you have seen what it can do with things at a close range with a shot gun - it is not a pleasant sight. And so you are constantly aware that you have got to be careful. With firearms' safety everyone is looking at everyone else with a gun and you are on the ball - everyone is always checking everyone else out (Larry).

Even with most duck hunters being conscientious about safety, several participants had stories about close shaves and, in a few cases, fatalities connected to duck
hunting. Ron, for example, felt that an awareness of safety had improved in recent times:

I have seen some awfully bad accidents. I have seen some terribly silly things, not in recent times because I think the safety factor is getting through to most hunters these days, I do believe that. There are still people that drink when they are shooting... but even way back, going back 30 odd years, I remember we used to shoot a wee bit around some of the big ponds near a Lake in Southland. There were some maimais that were spaced about 100 metres apart and by the end of the day, say 4 o'clock in the afternoon, these guys were getting pretty tanked up and they all started shooting each other in the maimais... and you could hear the pellets whistling through the maimais and the other guys in the other maimais would all duck down for cover and someone would retaliate - and that's the sort of silly things that happened. You know you could easily get a pellet in the eye, but those things went on, they did, believe me, we were there and watched it happen - but that is going back a long time. But in those days you didn't realise the dangers, that was before we had younger people with us - that's when you realise the dangers that were there (Ron).

Another hunter, Tony, mentioned that one of the men who traditionally shot with his family was regarded as being very unsafe in the way he carried his shotgun; rather than exiling this man, however, the group organised a strategy to avoid walking to the maimai with him:

I have felt unsafe with some of the people, just the way they carry their guns. One in particular - a friend of Dad's, will sometimes sling it [his shotgun] behind his back. And usually I don't like it if he is around - but people know that he does that and they know that he doesn't think, and so they sit there and go: 'right, now we will make sure we know where John is going and to make sure we are not going to walk with him, John can bugger off five minutes early and start shooting first' (Tony).

Another duck hunter argued that educating children about guns made it safer for them:

I have always been trying to foster an understanding of firearms and the safety aspect because I maintain that if kids today come across something like a firearm and they pick it up and play with it, and someone has foolishly left a loaded firearm somewhere, then someone will get hurt. But
if you train children from a very young age how to handle a situation like that I think it is good work, I think it is well done. A bit like, I mean we have a lot of dangerous implements around our houses and we teach our kids how to live with them (Len).

One duck hunter was involved in a school programme to introduce older children to claybird shooting, but was frustrated at the negative reactions that people had towards the course being offered at all:

It is really hard because I think talking to someone who is on any opposing view - if they have got the complete opposite view, you know, it makes it really hard and more so when it is something you really enjoy. There are so many reasons why you are out there [shooting] and I get a wee bit disappointed and frustrated. Like I take kids out shooting at school and there are quite a few people who just see it as people and guns and rather than seeing it as a sport thing or being a hunting thing or being a way of life - they just see guns equal violence and death (Sally).

The duck hunters’ comments presented above regarding the use of firearms, suggest there is a building frustration that the hunting discourses that present the use of firearms as legitimate and positive practices is losing ground to a counter discourse which presents firearms as weapons of harm. Anti-hunting discourses construct hunters, in using firearms, not only as violent killers of animals, but also as potential threats to humans as well. Many duck hunters specifically equated this antipathy towards firearms with a growing rift between urban and rural values.

**Urban Values versus Rural Values**

The use of firearms in New Zealand is most prevalent within rural communities where, particularly in farm situations, guns are used as a ‘tool’ to control pest species. However, for many people guns symbolise far more than just pragmatic values. For some people, such as British wildfowling enthusiast John Marchington (1972), using a gun is connected to a discourse of rural “wholesomeness”, whereby shooting in the “outdoors” is the paramount method for attaining intimacy with ‘nature’:
But of all the advantages I can list for shooting the most important is that it gets people into the countryside. There is about country people a wholesomeness, a healthy soundness of character, a tranquility of mind, that is absent from most city dwellers and it stems from close contact with nature. In an increasingly artificial age any sport that takes the participant outdoors is to be encouraged and none does this better than shooting (John Marchington 1972: 19-20).

Although discourses of the ‘rural’ often construct the countryside as sites of “bucolic tranquility and communion with nature”, a place to escape from the ills of the urban, there is also an opposing counter discourse of the “anti-idyll” (Bell 1997: 94). David Bell’s (1997) essay focuses on some of the frightening and horrific images circulating in connection with the rural in the American mythos, specifically with regard to horror films like Deliverance, where the rural is presented as “monstrous” and a dangerous place for city folk to visit (Bell 1997: 105). The rural also occupies an ambivalent position in New Zealand society, with highly romanticised and idealised versions of rural life,116 countered by visions of bleak and dangerous places populated with backward and violent country folk117, or, as Tony argues below, unsophisticated “hicks”. Tony is particularly concerned that negative urban conceptions about country people added to the lack of acceptance of hunting with firearms:

I think it is something that country people do, and I will use the word hick again - I think a lot of people think that hicks go shooting, not helped by the fact that most of Southland shoots and most of the Waikato and King Country - it is prevalent in rural areas so that is not going to help people's perception of it (Tony).

This concern about the association between hunting and deviant or backward rurality, is also a concern of wildlife managers in the USA. In an effort to counter

116 For example, television programmes such as Heartland celebrate small New Zealand communities nostalgically re-inventing ‘traditional’ rural values and thus presenting: “versions of New Zealand that are clearly desirable to viewers: sentimental notions of a way of life that other people (those people so willing to be filmed) are keeping intact on our behalf” (Bell 1995: 146).
117 New Zealand cinematic history includes many films that could be described as ‘anti-pastoral’. Sam Neill explores some of these films in his documentary A Cinema of Unease (1995).

the negative image that urban people have of hunters, wildlife management organisations are distributing booklets, such as the examples below (Figure 36), which try to explain the motivations and justifications for contemporary hunting. *Fish and Game New Zealand* have also published a leaflet tailored to the New Zealand situation entitled *Hunting is a Fact of Life*, which is based on the American version.

![PLACING HUNTING IN PERSPECTIVE](image)

**FIGURE 36.** "Fiction Versus Fact" & "Hunting is a Fact of Life"
(Source: (1) *Wildlife Management Institute* publication: cover page; (2) *Fish and Game New Zealand* brochure: *Hunting is a Fact of Life*)

The pamphlet from *Fish and Game New Zealand* presents hunting as a pragmatic exercise, focused around food gathering and the appreciation of nature. It also strongly promotes the contributions of duck hunters towards wetland conservation. The pamphlet features cartoon images of rural folk that are humorous and unthreatening, while simultaneously constructing the rural as a ‘natural’ space where ‘natural’ activities, such as hunting, take place. Both of these
examples of wildlife management hunting promotional materials can be seen as efforts to counter negative constructions of 'the rural'. *Fish and Game New Zealand* explain that one of their “most important tasks” is to show (urban people) “that hunting is a fact of New Zealand life, and a recreational activity that is acceptable, ethical, and enjoyable” (*Fish and Game New Zealand Brochure: Hunting is a Fact of Life*).

As well as different constructions of hunting within urban and rural New Zealand, there are also significant differences in attitude in relation to gun ownership and use. An inquiry into gun control carried out in 1997 showed that the following groups have a higher proclivity to use firearms: farm owners or managers (39%); inhabitants of small towns or rural areas (21%); those living in the Southern region (18%) (Thorpe 1997: Appendix 6). The higher use of firearms (and presumably higher acceptance of their use) in the South and in rural areas connects to a study carried out for *Fish and Game New Zealand*, which found that the acceptability of gamebird hunting increased, the further South a person lived: 41% of people living in the Auckland area considered gamebird hunting acceptable, in comparison with 65% of people living in the South Island. The same study found that support for duck hunting was around 45% in metropolitan areas, but that 65% of the population in small towns and rural areas supported duck hunting (Brocklesby and Hewitt 1996: 22).

Given such statistics, hunting has been described as a “characteristically rural activity” that “contributes to a place-based rural identity” (Stedman 1995: 522). Studies in the United States suggest that rural socialisation is a strong predictor of future hunting participation (Stedman 1995; Heberlein 1987). Other studies have similarly revealed that rural hunters are likely to have more extensive social networks incorporating hunting interests and a higher commitment to hunting than their urban equivalent (Decker, Brown & Enck 1991: 670). In discussions with duck hunters in this current study, the most common explanation for disapproval of
duck hunting was different ethical values between rural and urban settings. Many participants felt, for example, that people living in large cities had lost touch with the ‘realities’ of the ‘natural world’:

People down here are part of the country, they are part of the environment. In Auckland people are divorced from the environment, there are people who have never left Auckland in their entire life and that is a pretty sad statement but that is a fact of life and when you are divorced from the environment...you tend to be far more unrealistic about what goes on [in the environment] (Larry).

I regard myself as a hunter, I have been after most animals like thar, deer, pigs, goats, and I have been in most of the mountain ranges in New Zealand. I spent two weeks down in Paroko between there and the West Coast walking for two weeks, hunting in there and getting lost twice. I believe that most sincere hunters have more knowledge and feeling and empathy towards animals than those people who sit in the city and think: 'oh those people out there shooting those nice wee animals'. They don't know or realise what it is like to be out there and they don't know and realise the predators that are there that eat other animals that are a lot worse than human beings - or can be - it's a fact (Ron).

Rural country people generally know the wildlife about them - what they are, and how they fit into the system. It's just two quite different approaches to it. My father's generation - most, if not all people, had a very close affinity with the land and swamplands and hunting. So you didn't need to tell them that that thing flying past wasn't a shag or a hawk - they knew what it was. A lot of town people don't know, a lot of town people don't care, a lot of town people don't even see them - there's quite a difference. So demographic groups have quite a different headspace, quite a different attitude (Maurice).

Other hunters are concerned that, because of their larger population bases, urban areas are able to dictate their ‘city’ values to people in rural areas:

The more you look at it you think: yeah, these people don't know how to live - and they would die in the midst of plenty because... their stone age hunter gatherer skills have been lost - because they have no concept of it. The urbanised, in fact, are divorced from reality. What would happen if you have nothing: 'where would I go? How can I get food?' That is the reality of how we have got to live. If we turn the electricity off in the world what would happen? Simply by the flick of a switch all the power goes off,
bang, most people in the cities would die... So the problem we have got is urban people who are the majority and then rural people who are the minority and of course you can also have a democracy, the tyranny of the majority occurring... I think the principle is that the urbanite people are having a tyrannical reign over the rural lifestyle (Larry).

We've been told by the national Fish and Game office that Auckland's where the bulk of the decisions are made - if you convince Auckland, you convince New Zealand - but that's crazy. It's probably true. You've got one and a half million people in Auckland, that's half the population of New Zealand who don't understand why we want to shoot ducks in Southland. Well, they've got the political clout to annihilate us [laugh] (Craig).

The Uniqueness of Southland - Last Bastion of Duck Hunting?
As Craig says, duck hunters believe that urbanites in large cities such as Auckland do not understand why people would "want to shoot ducks in Southland". As a region, Southland is unique and has the strongest support for duck hunting activities in the entire country. One of the ways this support and enthusiasm for duck hunting manifests itself is associated with the arrangement of the usually immovable Saturday rugby games. At the beginning of the duck hunting season, Saturday rugby matches are re-scheduled to earlier in the week so that players can go shooting on opening morning:

The big issue is... I don't know if you've heard of it in Otago, but rugby was put off on the Saturday of opening weekend. Yeah, big debates went on about how rugby was put off and teams defaulted on Saturday because everyone wanted to go duck shooting. And all the old guys were saying: "well look, we used to go out on opening morning and shoot our ducks, and then go and play rugby at one o'clock or two o'clock and then back in the maimai ready for the night shoot. The Southland hunters - rugby players - didn't want to do that because they wanted to have a few beers. But no one was actually saying that, you know, about this issue...so now all the games are played under lights on Wednesday or Thursday nights now (Tylor).

This also occurs in Otago with many clubs and schools (for example, Otago Boys' High School) rescheduling rugby matches during the week to allow players to be free for the opening of the duck hunting season.
Several participants also highlighted the uniqueness of Southland as a region that has retained a sense of rural community and rural values:

I think in Southland we're really lucky because it's very much a rural community and there is such a high participation rate [in duck hunting]. I think there's five thousand duck hunters in Southland and so there's not many families who haven't got someone - or a relation - or someone who goes hunting and it's more accepted. I think if you went to Auckland - I'd hate to be in a situation where you're surrounded by one and a half million people where only very few of them hunted. Or most of them didn't hunt... so no, it's not an issue down here at all - no one says you shouldn't go and shoot birds (Craig).

Something quite unique has happened in Southland. Firstly, the human population is very small - I think there's around about 80 thousand people in all of Southland - more than half of those people have a direct contact with rural communities and farmlands, so that they are in tune with things rural. So there is the highest per capita involvement in duck hunting in the South, than anywhere else in the country - still not a lot of people. The balance to that is Auckland, where there's a million people and there's now probably three generations of New Zealanders who have no direct contact with anything beyond the city limits and have no affinity with things rural - they are truly cosmopolitan people. To cosmopolitan people hunting is a big gun that makes a lot of noise and kills things; to rural people a gun is just a tool to harvest meat with; it's quite different (Maurice).

Other hunters echoed the idea that in Southland (and, to a certain degree, Otago), those values closely associated with agriculture meant it constituted an area where understandings of hunting and harvesting were still prevalent and, that this approach also meant a general acceptance of firearms as "tools":

Southland and Otago are really high duck hunters per population and I am sure that is a major reason why it is not a problem down here... down here there is a rural base - I mean, every farmer has got a gun haven't they (Ben).

Part of the anti-shooting thing is that fear that people have of firearms and then the other reason, of course, is it's less accepted today than it was to kill things. And it's different in Southland because we are still predominantly agricultural based. There's a hell of lot of people that don't work on farms, but there's no one in Southland that doesn't know very well - or have relatives - that farm. And you know, on a farm - a farm is about growing
animals for...for killing. And so Southland, as a society, is much closer to that reality. And also just because of the sheer number of people that shoot here in Southland - people that fear firearms are usually people that aren't exposed to them. People that are exposed to firearms reckon - they're just another tool. So again in Southland, the more you're exposed to firearms the less you fear them. So I reckon that's the two reasons. It's just that we're sort of behind the times a little bit - you know, society is much agricultural so less anti-killing and much more familiar with people wandering around with guns (Gary).

Gary's comments highlight the two key areas of contention between animal rights discourses and the discursive position of duck hunter hunters: the issues of killing, and of the use of firearms to carry out that killing. The discussion above about firearms reveals how many hunters stress that guns are ‘tools’, and thus, intrinsically linked to rural farming practices. While many duck hunters do not live in rural areas, it is clear that one of the key counter discourses mobilised against anti-hunting claims - and particularly the concern with firearms - is the construction of duck hunting as an ‘authentically’ pragmatic rural activity. In this way, using a gun in the countryside to shoot ducks symbolizes the acknowledgement of the life and death processes that occur in the ‘rural’ and within ‘nature’; a ‘reality’ from which many duck hunters emphasize ‘urbanites’ are separated.

Conclusion

From the fieldwork material presented in this chapter, it is clear that the practice of duck hunting - until very recently widely constructed as an unproblematic ‘tradition’ - has become a site of contestation in New Zealand. This site of contestation connects to both broad, structural historical changes, such as presented by Thomas (1983) regarding urbanisation and industrialisation, and by Mennell (1985, 1991) regarding the new ‘sensibilities’ established by the end of the nineteenth century making it ‘offensive’ to see animals being killed, as well as to contemporary development of an ‘animal rights’ discourse over the past thirty years. Franklin (1999) argues that animal rights discourses and the hunters’
'sustainable harvesting' discursive position are based on fundamentally different ideas about nature. While both profess a 'love' and concern for animals, understandings of the relationship between humans and animals are extremely different. Animal rights advocates construct the view that animals are like humans (with 'cultural' human rights), whereas hunters in contrast, construct humans to be like animals (embedded in 'natural' life-cycles' and food chains).

As this chapter has outlined, during the 1990s, SAFE animal rights protesters began a high profile campaign against duck hunting. Even though the majority of duck hunters will not physically be confronted by a protester, the animal rights and anti-hunting discourses presented by the protesters have become widely disseminated in New Zealand society and duck hunters have mobilised a counter discourse in answer to this critique. To legitimate this 'new politics' of duck hunting, Fish and Game New Zealand stress that duck hunters are required to follow very specific 'ethical' codes. Duck hunters closely monitor themselves and their fellow hunters to ensure that they are making an effort to kill 'cleanly' and quickly. Together with the 'ethical' discourse of responsible killing, hunters also construct themselves as being skilled at 'competent' (masculine) performances within nature. This 'competence' in 'nature' has developed in opposition to the 'incompetent' and naïve (feminised) performances that many duck hunters attribute to animal rights protesters. Duck hunters also articulate a further legitimizing discourse in which duck hunting is embedded within rural lifeways, where animals are experienced more pragmatically as 'units of production'. Another contested area is the use of firearms; perhaps the most contentious aspect of contemporary duck hunting. The 'sport' hunting discourse in its entirety, which developed during the nineteenth century, is based around the use of the gun as a more 'ethical' method to kill animals than the 'primitive', subsistence activities of indigenous peoples, or the English peasantry. In more recent times, however, the gun has become associated with a very particular discourse, separate from rural 'pragmatism', and inextricably connected to violence against humans.
It is clear from this chapter that one of the fundamental points of contention between anti-hunting and pro-hunting discourses is the relationship that humans have not only with animals, but the wider site of ‘nature’. The Gary Larson cartoon at the beginning of this chapter implies that in shooting and removing a duck from the harmonious flying formation, the duck hunter has damaged or ruptured the ‘balance’ of nature. This image clearly suggests a binary nature/culture morphology, in which the activities of the duck hunter are intrusive and ‘alien’. In the following chapter I examine a significant discourse constructed by duck hunters that argues against this binary construction, and instead positions duck hunting as a pastime that incorporates ‘nature building’ rather than ‘nature destroying’ practices. As we will see, duck hunters discursively position their relationship with ducks in a far more complex framework than just ‘killing’ them, but also provide and ‘care’ for ducks through wetland building and conservation activities; activities which have far more meaning for many participants than simply providing habitat for potential gamebirds.
The previous chapter reveals that killing ducks is not a straightforward activity for duck hunters, but rather imbued with ambiguous meanings and practices. Duck hunters construct killing as an ethically acceptable practice closely connected to 'natural', 'real', and 'competent' performances within rural spaces/places. Duck hunters mobilise an argument in regard to killing ducks that accentuates a 'natural' relationship with 'nature' and animals, while also constructing hunting practices as perpetuating and participating in 'natural' lifecycles - a 'realism' about 'nature' that non-hunters are missing. This chapter shifts the focus of concern away from the
way in which duck hunters construct the killing of ducks, and looks more closely at the ‘natural’ relationships that are at the centre of both the practice and legitimation of duck hunting practices. This chapter explores the relationship between duck hunters and animals (especially ducks and dogs), and between duck hunters and ‘natural’ spaces/places, revealing that these relationships feature complex interactions that cannot be clearly delineated into categories of human/animal, wild/domesticated, natural/artificial, or nature/culture.

6.1 Communicating with Ducks

The photograph at the beginning of this chapter (Figure 37) is an intriguing one that resonates very closely with the themes in this thesis. The duck hunter appears to be able to communicate with ducks, as whatever noises he is making with the duck caller has induced two ducks to come very close to him. The duck hunter himself is dressed in camouflage clothes and to a certain degree appears to merge into the ‘natural’ landscape behind him. But of course this ‘natural’ landscape is actually a city park that has been developed by humans but in which many wild ducks make their home. The duck hunter appears to be enjoying the close contact he is having with the ducks, and many duck hunters in this study also reiterated this pleasure, but how can we match this image of non-violent ‘communication’ between the duck hunter and the ducks, with the knowledge that he will shoot at those same ducks if they happen to fly over his maimai on opening morning?

Paul, a participant in this research, has a deep affection for waterfowl made obvious by the enormous variety of objects filling his house that celebrate ducks. In speaking to Paul, it is clear that he experiences a tension between understanding ducks both as ‘populations’ which he can ‘harvest’, and as individual creatures, which he admires and enjoys looking at. Paul’s comments encapsulate the paradox

119 Of course we have no idea if this picture was set up – perhaps, in fact, the photographer used bread to lure the ducks close to the hunter for this shot. It is true, however, that some duck hunters practice their duck calling at the city gardens and measure their success by the amount of interest in their calls that they get from ducks.
of feeling admiration and affection for ducks, and yet also taking pleasure in killing them:

Waterfowl are beautiful creatures - animals are beautiful creatures, no matter what they are. And it comes down to how you feel in any way, shape or form about taking a life. I mean, I like waterfowl and you can see that around me here that I have a little bit of waterfowl orientation [spreads his arms to indicate towards the paintings and ornaments of different waterfowl that fill the living room we are sitting in] and it is me, and I love it and I don’t mind killing them. I mean, I shoot them because they are a harvestable resource so I know that I am not endangering them (Paul).

The 'Fun' of Duck Calling

As I suggested in my opening comments, one aspect of duck hunting that is enjoyed by many duck hunters, including Paul, is duck calling. The chief goal of duck calling is to produce realistic sounds that fool ducks into coming into land near a hunter’s position and thus allowing a close-range shot. There is something rather comical about adult males make quacking sounds, and yet, successfully fooling ducks into believing they are being hailed by their own species requires a great deal of skill and practice. It is very impressive observing duck hunters who have these skills, as they can literally control the movements of ducks in the sky through the sounds that they make. Many duck hunters describe duck calling as a 'fun' activity:

I love being able to call ducks, you can call them from a mile away sometimes and they are going the other way and you get them to fly back and fly round, and round, and round - yeah, that’s fun (Paul).

Trying to call them in, you know, they’re miles away and you get on the quacker and [laugh] and then when they don't come around, then you give them a real squawk. But yeah, it's just the fun of being out there and trying to get them to come... and not this last year, but the year before, one of my nephews and I were having a competition to see who could call in the most (John).
For some duck hunters, the enjoyment of duck calling even supersedes the shooting component of duck hunting. Andy, for instance is happy to call in the ducks and let his father do the shooting:

Probably the most enjoyable thing for me now, is calling the ducks - that's a big thing for me. Like it doesn't really worry me if Dad shoots them, or whatever, you know. I'd rather call the ducks around and see their response of actually decoying them (Andy)

Andy’s enthusiasm translates into hours of continuous calling and, not surprisingly, he is usually exhausted at the end of opening day:

I like to have a few drinks on the Saturday night but usually I’m that stuffed! [From getting up so early?] Well, it's more the calling for me, because I'm doing so much calling. Sometimes I call that much that I've got a headache, and I've got a numb lip, and my hand is actually sore with calling because I’ll be doing it for such long time. And there's a lot of ducks flying around and you're trying to attract their attention, you know. So I'm not a sit down person. Dad and Sharon will be sitting down having a cup of coffee and I will never sit down for the whole day. I'm up there looking around, calling, and I'm into it (laugh) (Andy).

Duck Calling Competitions
Dunedin and Invercargill both host ‘duck calling competitions’ held in local taverns. These events are very male dominated (one event I attended had only four women in the room and two of them were bar staff). Alcohol and rather crude jokes (told by patrons throughout the night over a supplied microphone) were important features of the evening. As part of these events, a mock maimai is constructed on a stage and those people who enter the duck calling competition are required to stand behind the maimai and make a variety of different duck calls as instructed by the competition organiser. In both the duck calling competitions that I attended the first prize was a shotgun, supplied by a local hunting retailer. Dressing up for the competition was also encouraged, although not all the people attending the competition enthusiastically embraced this. (On one of the evenings someone also turned up dressed as a large yellow chicken, much to the amusement
and confusion of the audience). There were, however, still some impressive examples of camouflage clothing and blacked out faces. The duck calling competition appears to provide a chance for a group of mainly male duck hunters to get together and have some very 'masculine' fun, although there were certainly some examples of more practical networking between duck hunters - such as discussions about camouflage clothing, decoys, and the like:

In terms of calling there is a local calling competition and that's been going 7 or 8 years now. I have only won it once - you tend to have a few beers and go a bit silly (Paul).

Over the past few years the media have focussed on the duck calling competition both in television and in newspapers. One participant in this research discussed why he thought the media were so interested in this 'competition' and argued that perhaps the comical duck hunting calling competition presented a less ethically contested or challenging subject matter than duck hunting did:

It is a social event and it's a bit of fun. There are good prizes and the standard of calling is pretty good as well. It is something that the media pick up on because it is probably a little more politically correct than to see someone killing something - you just see them blowing something. Yeah, it is amusing to the media and it's interesting, so they pick up on it more so than duck shooting (Edward).

**Duck Calling in the Park**

Another aspect of duck hunting that has been highlighted several times through the media is the connection between duck hunting and the city park environment. Over the past few years there have been three separate stories showing photographs of duck hunters in Dunedin's botanic gardens calling to the ducks (such as Figure 37 above). One participant talked about how he listens to the ducks in the gardens to perfect his duck calling:

I had such a passion for it - I could blow a duck call anyway but I used... to take the girl I used to live with to the gardens for lunch. She would think I was taking her to the gardens to lunch but I would sit there and listen to
the ducks quacking. [That's a perfect place.] Oh it is, and everyone's happy - she said: 'why do we always go to the duck pond', and I would say: 'oh it is so sunny here, we can throw the crusts in'. Quack, quack, quack, quack - and so that's basically what I did and I would go and listen and I mean I was focused; I was focused on water fowl hunting and it is a passion and I would go out and practice (Paul).

Duck Callers

The duck callers used by duck hunters to make the quacking noises come in a wide variety of prices and styles. Edward told me “some hunters will have three or four different duck calls”. Paul, who has a great deal of enthusiasm for duck calling, has skills that are highly regarded in the duck hunting community. For Paul, a duck caller is similar to a musical instrument - and like a musical instrument some players are better than others:

The calls I use now are actually custom built in the United States - very nice calls. I just enjoy using them... there are a lot of callers that call ducks, people have a lot of variation, and some say one is better than the other but it is in how you use it. Some are better than others, don't get me wrong, but it is how you use it. To me it's just like a musical instrument, to me I just like blowing a duck call and that is just the way it is. I guess it has been a passion and the guy that makes the calls, I have been in the States three times going to see him and it is interesting (Paul).

The following story published in New Zealand duck hunting book, relates to Paul's description of duck callers being like musical instruments and provides a humorous insight into the 'musical possibilities' of duck calling:

Probably the best callers I have ever heard were two brothers who shot in the centre of Lake Whakaki in Wairoa. To entertain the dozens of shooters round the lake they would play 'Three Blind Mice', 'Old McDougall' and other items. One day they were in full swing with 'Three Blind Mice' when a Mallard drake that had been circling about 800 metres up just couldn't stand it any more and hurtled down into the decoys. He was dead before he hit the water. The bloke blowing the caller never missed a beat and finished with 'Come to the Cookhouse, Boys'" (Axbey 1994: 49).
One older duck hunter recalled that duck callers were not available (or widely used where he was living) in New Zealand when he was duck hunting fifty or so years ago, and therefore duck hunters used their fingers to call in ducks:

You would see them in the distance and you would quack them in - we didn't have 'quackers' in those days - it was all by mouth, we did it by mouth, imitating them, saying 'come in you buggers!' You would give the feeding call and they would circle around and then you got them (Harry).

*Herding Ducks in the Sky*

The following two interview extracts provide very vivid descriptions of what calling in ducks is like and how exciting it can be for the duck hunter. I think there is also an exhilaration in being able to affect or control a 'wild' creature - a kind of connection that transcends the normal day-to-day human/nature interactions:

What do I do? Do you want me to go through it, okay, we have got some ducks out there, we will make it tough, the ducks are a kilometre away right - they are moving down the river, we are in my maimai in the Waitaki now, in the willows, they can't see the decoys - they don't know there are decoys there but there are, 60 or 80 decoys. I am camouflaged up - especially the face - because remember water fowl have evolved with your ugly mug chasing them for thousands of years so they have evolved enough to know that that means trouble... So you have got to sit there and movement - hunters have got to realise that movement is so bad. There are some ducks that are 40 metres there and they are coming around and they are looking, just looking, not really committed and even if you moved slightly - that could be it... Now you wouldn't realise it but those ducks would just stay high and circle and not come within good range because you have moved. They are used to avoiding predators you see so [to them] it is an unnatural movement. It is not just a bit of a branch moving softly. And they won't tell you anything else but their flight pattern will change five degrees and away you go. So anyway the ducks are there - you call them with a hail call, a really loud call, screaming and the more volume the better and then they start coming towards you and you keep screaming at them until they get 200 metres and then you go to a loud quack, you know an excited hen, and I keep doing that until I have got good control of the ducks and they are focussed on me and they now know I am there and they know the decoys are there and it is basically once you have got them, there you are watching what they are doing - the body angle, the speed, the wing beat, the way their heads are turning, looking. You will not keep calling hard all the time but then let them slide a little bit through the sky
and then call them when you want them to turn with a quieter quack or then let some silence come...and then they turn so you get them back a bit coming on the wing right where you want them. Now this doesn't happen all the time but you can control it and if the ducks are working well – you can control thirty per cent of the flocks and then you can let them slide round until they are in to a good position – they might be 30 metres up and you can hit them with a hen on the water call or a landing call and... they start coming right on in and you shoot them. [What's a landing call, I haven't heard that before?] It is just a hen on the water, just a song...It's relaxed, its really relaxed, it is like, 'hey come on in the water's fine, bring your pina colada' (Paul).

We always carry our duck calls at the ready as we normally always do, (and) we ducked down behind some cover and started all blowing our duck calls and quacking away there. And this duck starts coming around – and when you know, you probably do know that Mallards actually send out scouts, Mallard ducks - Greys don't, but Mallards do – and they will go out and suss [investigate] the area to see whether there is any danger. And if there isn't they will call other ducks around that have been out... so you call that fellah around and he gets a bit of confidence so he starts quacking away up there and the rest of the Mallards come in. And we could see these birds sort of forming, and they kept moving around and got up to a bunch of about 25 ducks from one, and this is probably 10 minutes later – ten minutes! Now you take ten minutes watching your clock and see how long that is - so we kept calling and we were just about out of puff by this time. We were sort of in a gully with a wee bit of a 'pondy' bit in the river and we actually called those ducks right down on to that water until they landed and there would have been I think about 25 or 26 ducks. A lot of people might have thought when they saw the duck we originally saw: 'oh look at that silly old duck two miles high' and then kept on going. But that is part of the enjoyment - we called those ducks right down. And we were so excited doing that, we never hit anything...well the excitement of getting all these ducks down there and everyone stands up, 'right oh, lets go'. So we fired our shots and nothing falls out of the sky so we fell over ourselves laughing and blaming everybody else for firing too soon. But that's one of the better mornings that we have had, even though we saw nothing else for the rest of the morning (Ron).

Less 'Serious' Duck Calling
As previously mentioned, it takes a great deal of practice to become accomplished at duck calling. Some duck hunters work hard on their skills and have a very modest assessment of their level of skill, such as Norman who sees himself as a "squeak and blow guy":
We wouldn't be great duck callers like some people are - there are some very good duck callers, some very good ones. I am a squeak and blow guy basically, but we get by. We get the odd one... but we have to get a bloody sight better than we have been and that is the focus this year, you know, so I suspect at Christmas time someone will end up with a new duck call (Norman).

While for some duck hunters duck calling is taken extremely seriously, there are others who take a rather less solemn approach and prefer to just wait for ducks to come in of their own volition:

[And who does the calling - is it one person or do you take turns?] No, we pretty much all suck, so we don't. The odd person will do it but I have never really seen it have particularly good results so we try and stay away from it. To be brutally honest, I have always found that people frighten them away more than anything else. I just go dead silent and shifty around the back - I usually shoot with a friend and we usually take a maimai together and often we will just like pile food up and just eat until some ducks arrive and it is: 'here we are' - then, bang! (Tony)

I guess because we were shooting on a pond, we didn't do a great deal of calling - mostly we just sat back. My uncle did a wee bit but really not much, we had decoys etcetera but generally the ducks would just come in and we would sort them out then (James).

As the interview excerpts have shown, duck calling incorporates a variety of different approaches and practices. Within these practices we can see that the relationship between duck hunters and ducks is an extremely complex one. It is a relationship that at times appears to be purely exploitative and even 'cruel'. Yet duck hunters also have a great deal of affection for ducks as a species; some duck hunters even feel sorry for the individual birds that they shoot. Importantly, duck hunters perceive themselves to be predatory animals, practicing a 'natural' relationship within 'nature' and with the ducks. But they are also moral predators - encapsulating a kind of human/animal hybridity where human ethics are intermeshed with notions of 'natural' animal behaviours.
While the duck hunter's experience a kind of 'nature'/culture hybridity, so too do the ducks. As we have seen, they are a confusing mixture of 'wildness' and 'tameness' - wild animals that nevertheless seek out humans for food and make use of the wetlands built especially for them. In this sense they are interacting with human technologies becoming kinds of 'cyborg' animals (Haraway 1992). In the lead up to the duck hunting season this year (2004), this notion of cyborg - a blurring of technologies and the organic - was exemplified in a new decoy duck promoted to duck hunters. One of the hunting shops had a large advertisement in the front window for a 'Roboduck', which is purported to mimic the movements and activities of 'real' ducks. Several duck hunters made wry comments to me during the course of my fieldwork about accidentally shooting the plastic decoy ducks they had put out to lure ducks onto their pond. With 'Roboduck' the problem might presumably be even more difficult. The imperative for 'exact copies' of nature embodied by decoys such as 'Roboduck', illustrates an excellent example of the blurred boundaries of 'natures' and 'cultures'. The cyborg decoy ducks (such as 'Roboduck') utilised in duck hunting, sit on ponds and lakes - some 'swimming' through the water, others even periodically flapping their wing - attracting 'real' ducks to come to them, and, sometimes, even fooling duck hunters into shooting at them. Clearly, duck hunting practices include a fascinating and complex combination of relationships between humans, their technologies, and wild animals, such as ducks. In the following section, I will explore the equally complex relationships between duck hunters and their dogs.

6.2 Duck Hunters and Dogs

A man, his dog, a good gun, and time to spare to enjoy fresh air and the balm of bush quietness, far from the rush and hurly-burly of city hustle and bustle. The drone of bees instead of traffic, the rustle of wind in dry fronds, and the slow mournful call of the swamp bird. These are the times to cherish. And what better companion with which to relax than one's faithful gundog.

John Monk (1969), cited above, explains the general pleasure of getting away from the pressures of urban living to go duck hunting. He overtly highlights the central position that dogs have in this pastime and the intimate and intense relationship some duck hunters have with their 'gundog'. For many hunters, dogs are an intrinsic part of their enjoyment of duck hunting, although the level of involvement in the hunters' lives varies. Some duck hunters have dogs who are also family pets, as is the case with the dog pictured below (Figure 38) with North Canterbury Fish and Game Field Officer, Ross Millichamp:

![Figure 38: Duck Hunter and Dog](Source: Fish and Game New Zealand Magazine (2001) Issue 12: 36)

This photograph was included in a special photographic essay dedicated to gundogs in a 2001 issue of *Fish and Game New Zealand Magazine*. In this article, Millichamp describes the relationship that he has with his dog: "it [the dog] plays with the kids, sneaks to the lounge hearth for comfort and warmth, yet works his
tail off after waterfowl and upland game in the harshest autumn conditions. Many of us hold our dogs to heart as best mates” (Millichamp 2001: 35).

The notion of dogs as ‘mates’ – a term constructed in New Zealand as a particularly ‘masculine’ kind of friendship – connects once again to the iconic writing of Barry Crump. In his books, Crump describes his relationships with dogs as some of the most important in his life, sometimes even admitting he prefers his canine ‘mates’ to human ones. In Crump’s first, and perhaps most well-known book, A Good Keen Man, he provides this humorous disclaimer in which it appears he regards the dogs in his life in explicitly human terms: “The names of dogs [in the book] have been changed to protect them from possible embarrassment” (Crump 1960).

Many of the duck hunters that I met during the course of this research, also had significant relationships with dogs. In expressing his fondness for his dog, Paul implies that his dog is the ideal companion because they share the same interest in hunting:

Because I am single I have got no ties. I am answerable to my dog and he always wants to go hunting – so we get on great (Paul).

For some participants, relationships with dogs have surpassed the pleasures of shooting. Alex, in the past an enthusiastic duck hunter, has found more recently that spending time with her dogs is more of a priority than shooting ducks:

I like going out with the dogs, I am not so much worried about now whether I shoot anything or not, it gives the dogs a run (Alex).

**Human-Dog Hybridity - Sharing the Senses**

Several hunters expressed an intriguing relationship with their dogs, which involved the merging of human and animal senses. Larry explained that the bond between the duck hunter and dog is an ‘extension of human senses’ and the dog as a kind of “essential bridge” between the hunter and ducks. William also
emphasized that a dog’s sense of smell was useful for humans and a key to the early association between humans and dogs. Both these quotations encapsulate a sense of human-animal hybridity, as the duck hunter and the dog merge their abilities in an effort towards a common goal:

Well it [a dog] is an essential tool, I mean in the sense they have got a nose that we haven't got and the ability to get wet in cold weather, which is something we are not quite able to do - so they are an extension of our senses, which we haven't got. I mean things like their ability to get into a tight rush because of their small size - so they are an essential part...I think a lot of people work their dog and hunting with the dog and the whole process is three way: the man, the dog and the duck, they are all intertwined as one unit, not man and duck, it is the dog that is almost the essential bridge between the two (Larry).

And really man's association with dogs was related to man's realisation that dogs had this sense of smell, which was so acute, and something that man didn't have. And it was entirely relevant to the success of the chase (William).

Larry also seemed to sometimes blur the lines between dogs and humans in describing the loyalty that some dogs have to one particular person. Larry had even experienced a dog’s ‘dislike’ towards him, which was demonstrated by the dog damaging the ducks that were retrieved for him:

But certainly once you get a bond with a dog, it is almost like a human. You understand the dog and each dog has its own characteristics and foibles and strong points and become a bit devious - it is like a human with their strengths and weaknesses and distinctiveness. No two dogs are the same and some are almost robotic in their actions and have been trained that way, and others will have a bit of life in them. And they can do some interesting things and they can get annoyed. Some dogs I know that if they don't like you, they will crunch a duck - they will retrieve for you - if they don't know which duck has been shot by which person they will crunch them. Like I had a friend of mine whose dog didn't like me and he would always crunch my ducks, [but] not his ducks (Larry).
Conflicting Relationships - Utilitarian Versus Sentimental Attachment

In describing their relationship with their dog, many participants presented conflicting ideas. Several duck hunters emphasized that the dog was a 'tool' and therefore had value in a purely utilitarian way. It was also clear that many participants also had a deep sentimental attachment to their dog; an attachment which some individuals tended to downplay - perhaps because sentimental feelings towards animals has 'feminine' associations.

He is essential; he is a tool. I mean he is my buddy. I lost a dog, it drowned duck hunting... I burst into tears, I tell you, I was ugly! [Was the water too deep?] No, she got washed down into a channel full of willows way down below me and I didn't know she had gone away down there and got drowned. [After that] I went hunting for a few times without a dog and got dirt on my nose looking for the ducks, it was hopeless (Paul).

One participant described how her usually stern father was very attached to his 'gundog' and was far more affectionate with her than he was with the working dogs on the farm:

My father had this dog - he absolutely loved this dog. A black Labrador, I can't remember the name - Jess or something like that, a very ordinary sort of a name. But oh he loved that dog and she was the top dog, I mean there were the farm dogs and they were just working dogs but she was the pampered pet. She used to sit beside him in the truck. She was hopeless around the sheep of course, she wasn't allowed out around the sheep. But she was a great retriever... He had her for years, but you know she was great - he thought she was wonderful. She would bring back anything you know? She would go through all the gorse bushes and down into the horrible swampy disgusting filthy bits and bring back this duck. He was always so amazed that she could bring it back with no bite marks in it. He just thought she was wonderful; it was a very satisfying relationship for him (Therese).

Clearly, many duck hunters have both a pragmatic and emotional attachment to their dogs: not only do they admire their dog's abilities to carry out tasks associated with duck hunting, but they have an emotional and sentimental attachment born out of companionship. As we have seen, these dogs are also often members of a
family - they participate directly in other activities outside duck hunting, and in many cases families include children who are also closely attached to these dogs. Labradors are one of the most popular breeds used by duck hunters and their generally gentle, non-aggressive nature also makes them popular family pets. One good example of Labradors being treated as members of the family, comes from a participant who is not a duck hunter herself, but who helps out in an interesting way during the duck hunting season:

We have actually got two Labs - one of them goes duck shooting and the other one doesn't. The one that doesn't go, she distracts the other dog from doing what he is supposed to do and she doesn't like going and fetching the ducks, so she is not really very good. So Dad leaves her at the house and I have to entertain her while they take the other dog away, so she doesn't get lonely (Trudy).

Teaching Gundogs to Retrieve
Dogs who are taken out duck hunting are taught to retrieve dead and wounded birds without biting into the bird, or eating it. They are trained to use a 'soft mouth' when picking up birds and to bring the bird straight back to the hunter. Several duck hunters I spoke to mentioned the 'embarrassment' of training a new gundog. Just as small children can embarrass their parents with anti-social behaviours, young dogs can 'embarrass' hunters by breaking duck hunting etiquette and not 'performing' like a 'good' 'gundog' should. However, many dogs seem to understand what is being asked of them fairly quickly, which is a matter of great pride and emotion for some duck hunters as their dogs improve and master the tasks put before them:

The dog has got to have it in him or her. Basically, you select a duck dog for the natural hunting ability and your requirement really is to teach him discipline, I mean basically you teach him to go by hand signals or by call to go a particular way and to retrieve - a sort of etiquette of retrieval, but the dogs definitely have to have that hunting instinct in it. Some dogs you don't have to train, they will just do it and they learn and will teach

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120 This is a key difference between waterbird hunting and upland game hunting. Dogs involved in upland gamebird hunting are taught to 'point' at hidden coveys of birds such as quail.
themselves and get better and better and better. Like the first time I took my pup out, he was absolutely hopeless in trying to retrieve the decoys and it was quite embarrassing really, and he would go out and look at the duck and not know what to do with it and fumble and bite them and take it to someone else. Oh, it was horrible (Larry).

The dogs love it (going duck hunting) and it is a bit like with a child you know, it is really good seeing them developing (Ben).

I think she is pretty good really. Like we went out the Tuesday after opening day - opening day was the first day she learned what to do - and the first duck she retrieved was a wounded 'Parry' [Paradise duck] and it was still flapping, and I was so rapt. I mean she just carted it from way up on the hill, carted it way down to the pond and I was thinking, for a start, she wouldn't even pick it up and she did. And she got to the pond and she must have just lost her grip and it got away and got into all the rushes around the pond and I thought, 'this will be interesting'. But she was straight in there and next thing she comes out like a submarine out of all these reeds and rushes, and: 'here's the Parry'. She had it from up the back end and it was flapping and she had it in her mouth and was just swimming straight towards me with this big bird - it would have been the most perfect photo - and it was the first duck she had retrieved. And of course when she realised how excited I was with her bringing it to me - I was just about in tears with excitement - she thought: 'oh wow this is what you do, OK', and she pretty much had it 'sussed' after that (Lucy).

Some duck hunters put a great deal of time and effort into training their dogs and have various different methods to achieve the specific tasks they require the dogs to learn. The following two examples are only two of a wide variety of approaches:

You train dogs not to kill because generally when they do they just go crunch and bite it and split the breast meat open and make a hell of a mess. So you have got to teach the dog to be soft mouthed. And you can teach it by filling a sock up with gorse, and things like that, so they learn that hard biting hurts and they eventually get locked into that so when they hold the bird it is gentle. Initially, they are a bit soft and drop the bird and eventually they know exactly how hard to bite and that is a learned thing (Larry).

I was actually unemployed when I got Bess. For the first six months I was in between jobs so Bess spent six months from when she was about 9 months old and I put in training every day just with a wee starter pistol and duck wings. I had duck wings around all the fields like I would go
away, get a duck wing and drag it all around the paddock all over the place, and then tie it to a tree and tell her to find it. And she would sniff and follow the whole track and I would fire a starter pistol [and say]: 'go find, go find'. It took ages but I was able to do it because I wasn't working. Most people do it at weekends because that is enough - because a dog has only got about a fifteen-minute attention span anyway, but it is a big game to them and they love it. Bess didn't mature until she was three. She would pick up ducks and drop them on the other side and it was just a game to her, but that is how you train dogs - it was all a big game to her and she realised after a while she would have to bring them and after a while she matured and just got better and better (Terry).

Many participants emphasized that they took a great deal of pleasure in watching their dog 'work' and that they felt that this was matched by the mutual pleasure the dogs experienced in being involved in duck hunting:

I didn't personally (have a dog) but some friends had a dog and the dog was extremely skilled and that was a pleasure to have that dog along too, so we did enjoy that aspect of it. It was actually amazing to see a good dog and the way the dog was obviously enjoying the duck hunting - it probably had more enjoyment than anyone and fulfilled the role very well (Len).

You are wasting your time in a lot of situations shooting ducks because you can't retrieve them so it is really rewarding to have the dog there when you shoot a duck - to have the dog go out and put in a good find and bring it back and they love it as well. I shoot with a friend on a certain river and this year we shot 45 ducks on it in a day, which is our limit, and we didn't lose one duck - the dog got the whole lot; just one dog! She did a great job (Edward).

**Affection for Old Dogs**

Although many duck hunters expressed a great deal of pride and pleasure in their dogs' accomplishments, a few duck hunters offered a rather humorous contrast. Two participants described their dogs as being essentially 'useless' at assisting in duck hunting and yet still included them in these activities. Because these dogs are treated as one of the family, they do not have to fulfil any kind of practical purpose in regard to duck hunting:
[Do you have a dog?] Yip, she's useless though (laugh)... she likes to tag along to the maimai and watch the proceedings - she won't go near a duck though (Gary).

[Do you have dogs?] Yeah, they are bloody useless too. Bruce had a couple of dogs and they were labs, yellow labs but by the time I was shooting they were very, very, old and pretty useless. Oh I suppose they were okay, but one was really old and basically it had arthritis and it snored - it was a bastard of a dog. You would head off in the morning and it wouldn't get up, just sit down there by the fire and say: 'no buggar off, its too cold or too wet', or whatever. And then when the guns start going it would eventually trot down to see what was happening. It would stay around for a while and have a look. It might venture into the water, but that was highly unlikely, and then he would go back again and have another sleep (Tony).

One participant emphasized that, even though a person may grow attached to a dog, it was important to temper this as much as possible with the realistic understanding that dogs have a far shorter life span than humans. In some respects, Larry appears to think of dogs as being comparable to cars:

[So do you get quite fond of your dogs?] Oh you always do - if you have got a good dog you certainly do, but then a lot of the guys are fairly realistic about it and they know that after about 8 or 10 years they bring the next pup on and the old dog is retired....you have to give them a bullet - as one is beginning to fade, one is reaching his prime you have got the next pup coming on and you roll them over - you get 8 to 12 years out of a dog. It is just a matter of how many k's [kilometers] they have done ... I mean it is always sad if you have to put your dog down, especially if you have had one for 12 years or something. Some guys can't do it, but some guys are a bit hard nosed and they just shoot the dog, whereas others just let the dog get older and older and eventually the thing becomes quite degenerate - which is not nice for the dog - so normally we just put them down straight away before they go over the edge. I have seen some people keep their dogs and it is not nice, the poor dog's got no teeth left and can hardly walk and is blind and deaf and arthritic...I mean a lot of them are incontinent and it is a pointless exercise. With wild dogs you are lucky if you get 6 years (Larry).

In his book Keeping Faith with Fin and Feather Roger Sutton (2002), a well-known duck hunter and wetland conservationist from the Southland region, describes the
difference in life span between humans and dogs as one of "nature's great anomalies" as he recalls the last time he went out into the field with his dog, Meg:

On the walk back to the vehicle old Meg had always trotted in front. On this last occasion I noticed that she was following behind by 20 yards or so. When I stopped and looked back she would stop and sit down. I could see she was exhausted in a way not previously experienced and it was obvious that I had to do something about it... We both lay down in the fern for a long rest during which I fed Meg with what remained of our lunch... The rest of the walk back to the vehicle was very long, very slow and very sad. I would not have been the first to lament the fact that man lives seven times longer than dogs. Having regard for the splendid nature of man-dog relationships, this great contrast in longevity must surely be one of nature's great anomalies (Sutton 2002:163).

Sutton's (2002) account of the death of his dog is a moving one, and illustrates the emotional investment that some duck hunters have in their relationship with their 'gundog'. The dogs that I observed in the course of my fieldwork seemed to enjoy their involvement in duck hunting activities very much. Through their expression of this enjoyment (such as, wagging their tails, jumping around and licking people, and leaping into the water without hesitation to retrieve a duck), they appeared to contribute to the pleasure of the duck hunters - not only in a practical manner, but also in an emotional way. This 'mirroring of enjoyment' seems to me to be an important component of the relationship between duck hunters and dogs and indicative of the way in which these dogs are constructed as not simply 'animal' and often related to in quite human terms as a member of the family - or as a mate. Just as duck hunters seem to blur the boundaries between what is animal and what is human, they also blur the line between what is human 'culture' and what is non-human 'nature'.

In the following section I will shift the focus of the narrative from the central animal relationships that manifest in duck hunting, to the highly important relationships that duck hunters have with 'nature' in 'natural' spaces/places. As the following discussion will show, many of the 'natural' places important to duck hunters are
actually places that the duck hunters have directly, or indirectly, made a contribution to creating - through activities I describe as ‘nature-building’. Before discussing my own research, I will outline a case study by Jan Dizard (1999), which makes a useful comparison to the relationships that New Zealand duck hunter’s perpetuate within ‘natural’ spaces/places, and reveals the paradoxical and contradictory discourses that are often constructed within contemporary Western societies in connection to landscapes that are perceived as ‘wild’.

6.3 The Quabbin Controversy
In the early 1990s, sociologist Jan Dizard (1993, 1999) carried out research on growing conflict over the management of a large tract of ‘wilderness’ area known as the Quabbin. The Quabbin was established during the 1940s in order to supply the Boston area’s increasing human population with a reliable water supply. The nearby Swift River Valley was dammed to create New England’s largest body of fresh water, with 55 acres of forest also developed (either deliberately or through natural reclamation) around the reservoir to stabilise soil and act as a watershed.

FIGURE 39. Three Views of the Quabbin - (In, from top to bottom: 1927, 1939 and 1989) (Source: http://www.the-spa/nomortal/three.htm)
As the above photographs illustrate (Figure 39), the landscape was changed dramatically by the development of the reservoir and land around it. The resulting ‘wilderness’, with its flourishing flora and fauna, became an important place that many people not only enjoyed visiting\textsuperscript{121} - but also found (to coin Lévi-Strauss) to be a ‘good to think about’ ‘natural’ place.

In the forest areas around the reservoir,\textsuperscript{122} the white-tailed deer population soon reached very high numbers and by the mid 1960s there was clear evidence that their eating habits were having a detrimental impact on tree regeneration. Under the canopy of mature trees, ferns spread over the forest floor as younger tree shoots and saplings were eaten or damaged by the deer. In 1991, the agency set up to watch over and manage the Quabbin - the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) - determined that the most efficient way to deal with the deer problem was through a tightly controlled cull by licensed hunters. This decision caused a furore as people questioned not only over whether the deer should be culled, but also other management practices by the MDC, such as logging.\textsuperscript{123}

The Quabbin was perceived by many opponents of the deer cull and of logging as a kind of natural, self-regulating ‘sanctuary’ that should not be disturbed by humans. The sentiments expressed by the following person were fairly typical of those people advocating against ‘interfering’ in the forest:

\begin{quote}
I think the Quabbin Reservoir, if left alone, would just naturally return itself to some sort of equilibrium and natural order that would not have a negative effect on water supply or the animals... (Interview extract from Dizard 1993: 119).
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{121} Although originally public access was prohibited in the reserve, over time the MDC did allow some recreational use of the area including walking, and very carefully controlled sport fishing (see Dizard 1993:114).
\textsuperscript{122} It is estimated that by the early 1950s there were seventy to eighty deer per square mile - a density six times more than the deer population outside the Quabbin Reservation (Dizard 1993: 116).
\textsuperscript{123} The MDC carried out small-scale logging for fire suppression and to reduce risk of disease and encourage species mix in the forest (Dizard 1993: 115).
Dizard argues that most of the people who criticised culling activities in the Quabbin had a concept of nature as a realm that is “benign, self-healing, paradoxically ever changing and ever constant”. Humans were understood as “interlopers in this scene: arrogant, clumsy ignorant intruders” (Dizard 1999: 132). This understanding conceptualizes the Quabbin as a ‘moral landscape’ (Proctor 1998b) imbued with meanings of right and wrong.

Dizard connects imbuing ‘morality’ into the landscape with the discourse of ‘environmentalism’ that has developed in Western countries since the 1960s. Over the past decades, the impact of humans on the environment has become the focus of enormous concern and the feeling of impending ecological disaster is a widely disseminated anxiety attached to ‘post-modernity’/‘late modernity’ (Beck 1986; Giddens 1990). As a result, those areas where ‘nature’ appears ‘untouched’ by human interference have become increasingly regarded as precious and fragile landscapes that must be protected from human ‘contamination’. However, as Dizard argues, the problem is that no part of the world is now ‘untouched’ or ‘pristine’: “humans have been around too long and had far too great an effect on nature to permit a return to some original state, whatever that might have been” (Dizard 1999: 23). Although acknowledging there are complex and difficult issues connected to this argument, Dizard urges that humans should see themselves not as separate from ‘nature’ in the role of passive “spectators”, but rather accept the responsibility of being “active stewards” of ‘nature’ (Dizard 1999: 211).

‘Mini-Quabbins’: New Zealand Farm Ponds

One of the things that struck me about the Quabbin case study were the similarities between the Quabbin and the creation of ponds by duck hunters in southern New Zealand (see Figure 40 below). Like ‘mini-Quabbins’, these ponds look like ‘wild’ areas but were initially human constructions. Like the Quabbin, they serve a variety

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124 The enormous popularity of Rachel Carson’s (1972 {1962}) *Silent Spring* is marked by many scholars as the beginning of the contemporary environmental movement (Dunlap 1999:247; Macnaghten & Urry 1998:45).
of purposes, some utilitarian and some that could be termed purely 'nature aesthetics'. The practical uses of the farm pond include providing drinking water for stock, and providing habitat for game birds that can be hunted. However, like the Quabbin, these ponds also become important habitat for non-game species and an enormous variety of flora and fauna flourish in these areas. Furthermore, like the cross-section of values attached to the Quabbin, many of the duck hunters who have these ponds emphasize the enjoyment they get from spending time in this landscape not only in terms of activities relating to hunting, but also in terms of 'nature appreciation'.

FIGURE 40: 'Before and After' Photographs of a Farm Pond Development. (Source: Fish & Game New Zealand brochure: Creating and Enhancing Wetlands)
To the average person, a well-established pond looks like a ‘natural’ feature in the landscape – and they often stand out in the pastured and fenced environment of a farm as little ‘nature refuges’. If one considers ‘nature’ to be outside the human realm, then these areas are full of paradoxes. The area is originally dug out, perhaps dammed and then planted and developed by humans; ‘natural processes’ then take over to produce a self-sufficient ecological system. The pond, however, must be regularly monitored and maintained by the landowner to avoid unwanted plant or animal ‘pests’ and to ensure the water does not silt up. These ponds, therefore, are ‘built’ by humans, operated by nature, and maintained by humans. The farm pond, like the Quabbin, thus constitutes a space where it is impossible to locate where ‘culture’ ends and ‘nature’ begins.

Such transformations of landscape take place not only with duck hunting in mind, but are also comfortably embedded in longer historical discourses about landscape, as I will discuss in relation to wetlands in the following section.

6.4 From ‘Bogs’ to ‘Wetlands’

In recent years, wetland areas have increasingly become the focus of conservation efforts, with a parallel and major change in how these areas are perceived. This growing appreciation of wetland habitat is an example of how values associated with different kinds of ‘nature’ can change over time. Even the name ‘wetland’ denotes a change in understanding, as earlier terms are now seen as nomenclatures that connect to the negative connotations of a different era. Historically known as “swamps, marshes, mires, morasses, bogs”, wetlands have been widely regarded as places of melancholy, death and disease in European societies (Giblett 1996: xi). With the rise of capitalism, wetlands were considered wastelands that needed to be drained in order to become ‘productive’. Since European settlement in New Zealand, approximately ninety percent of wetlands have been drained for housing, commercial development, and agricultural production. Geoff Park (2002) explains that the Pakeha settler culture – used to the aesthetic appeal of the “flat openness”
of the British fens - did not appreciate New Zealand’s dense swamp forests and found the “towering, vine-tangled kahikatea” unwelcoming and unsettling (Park 2002: 153). In contrast, Maori settlements were often concentrated along floodplains, estuaries and lagoons to make the most of the rich and diverse flora and fauna within these wet areas (Park 2002: 161).

Along with an emphasis on making wetlands economically ‘productive’, the English land laws brought to New Zealand made a clear distinction between waterways and dry land. Clear delineations had to be made between swamps and lakes, rivers, and estuaries - distinctions that Maori did not make. Rather, Maori emphasized the relationships and interconnections within the wetland ecosystems, such as cycles of fish-spawning and eels running to sea (Park 2002: 160). Very quickly, however, the ‘ecological imperialism’ (Crosby 1986) of the colonial British re-shaped the New Zealand landscape. In 1844, a surveyor by the name of Tockett described Southland in 1844 as a “vast swamp unfit for human habitation” (cited in Sutton 2000: 52). The consequent draining of the ‘swamps’ in both southern New Zealand specifically and throughout New Zealand in general, however, provided highly productive farmland upon which this country became economically dependent. At this time, the draining of wetlands was clearly understood as a metaphor for taming and purifying ‘nature’ as this comment from Charles Hursthouse (a colonist-farmer) reveals:

> The cultivation of a new country materially improves its climate. Damp and dripping forests, exhaling pestilent vapours from rank and rotten vegetation, fall before the axe; and light and air get in, and sunshine ripening goodly plants. Fen and marsh and swamp, the bittern’s damp domain, fertile only in miasma, are drained; and the plough converts them into wholesome plains of fruit, and grain, and grass (Charles Hursthouse 1857 cited in Park 2002: 151).

By the latter part of the twentieth century, however, wetlands began to tell a new ‘moral fable’ (Cronon 1991) about nature. Since the 1970s, an international movement aimed at preserving existing wetlands and development areas has
grown in popularity and influence. In an echo of Thoreau’s idyllic views of wetlands as primitive, and ‘real’ examples of the raw and ‘natural’, wetlands now represent a precious and sacred ‘nature’: “I enter a swamp as a sacred place, a sanctum sanctorum. There is the strength, the marrow, of Nature” (Thoreau, cited in Giblett 1996).

Leading the international drive for wetland conservation is the Ramsar Convention Bureau based in Switzerland. This organization was established in February 1971 when the representatives from eighteen nations signed a treaty in Ramsar, Iran, in an effort to preserve wetland habitat on a global scale (Mathews 1993). In 1996, the anniversary of the signing of the convention (February 2nd) was officially designated “World Wetlands Day”. In New Zealand, several organizations (such as conservation groups, regional councils and Fish and Game New Zealand), are involved in various activities and events, which aim to draw attention to wetland preservation both on this day and year round.

In a full-page promotion from various groups for World Wetland Day in 2001, the manager of Fish and Game Otago heads his an article with the, perhaps unexpected, statement that: “Hunters help Wetland Conservation” (Otago Daily Times 2001: 10). The manager explains that duck hunters contribute in two ways: directly by contributing to building ponds and maintaining wetlands; and also indirectly through the fee they pay for their gamebird licence, from which Fish and Game New Zealand apportion a percentage towards wetland habitat. The emphasis on duck hunters as wetland conservers and saviours is a growing rhetoric from Fish and Game and is also - understandably - echoed by duck hunters themselves. It appears to have grown in strength in an attempt to counter mounting criticisms from anti-hunting groups. I do not mean to imply, however, that duck hunters’ concerns for wetlands and the ‘nature’ they experience in their duck

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125 For example, Fish and Game Otago own 135 hectares of wetlands in the lower Taieri and South Otago, manage a further 224 hectares of wetland area, and assist with the management of 2000 hectares of wetlands in the Otago region (Otago Daily Times 2001: 10).
hunting practices, is purely a strategy to counter anti-hunting discourse. Nor do I want to suggest the converse: that creating habitat is purely an exercise to increase duck populations for shooting at. As the following section reveals, duck hunters have multifaceted attitudes, and demonstrate complex actions, towards building ponds and contributing to wetland enhancements. These attitudes and actions need to be considered as part of the multiplicity of discursive and corporeal components that make up duck hunting. Duck hunters enmesh themselves within the landscape; or as Ingold (1993) describes it, the “taskscape” - actively and continually manipulating ‘nature’ so that it is a ‘be-wildering’ web of the ‘natural’/‘wild’ and the ‘cultural’/‘technological.’

6.5 ‘Nature-Building’: Duck Hunters’ Relationships with Wetlands
Many New Zealand duck hunters see wetland conservation and development as an important and ‘morally’ worthy aspect of contemporary duck hunting. Duck hunters may express this concern for wetland areas through financial contributions towards habitat conservation, but it can also be seen as a feature of the actual shooting of game and the resultant population control. Many hunters argue that they are keeping natural populations within a manageable range, which minimises damage to the natural environment and ensures there is enough food for sustainable wildfowl populations. This discourse constructs duck hunters as ‘responsible’ predators: they are caring for the overall bird species while at the same time as acting out the ‘natural’ behaviour of an animal higher on the food chain.

This idea that hunters care for species, and the environment in general, is reiterated in Thomas Heberlein’s (1987) research in the United States. While hunters may kill millions of individual animals, Heberlein argues they also contribute politically and financially to improving the habitats of both game and non-game species (Heberlein, 1987: 6). This dual role of caretaker/killer is a very confusing
dichotomy for non-hunters\textsuperscript{126} – particularly when the species being hunted are ducks; birds that have such a general appeal to the broader population.

Wildfowl hunting in New Zealand is an especially interesting example of the caretaker/killer dichotomy because \textit{Fish and Game New Zealand} use a portion of the gamebird licence fee collected from duck hunters to maintain and develop wetlands. One brochure published by Fish and Game emphasizes the importance of duck hunters in the development and maintenance of wetland areas:

Wetlands were once called swamps and had no value in our agricultural economy. Many thousands of hectares were drained for farming and in the amount of habitat left for native and introduced birds, fish and other species dwindled. Hunters were one of the few groups that opposed this and the work they did so that game birds could survive helped turn the tide of destruction. \textit{Many of the wetlands that still remain owe their existence to the efforts of hunters} (\textit{Fish and Game New Zealand Brochure: Hunting is a Fact of Life}, emphasis in the original).

Most hunters I spoke to were aware that their licence fee contributed to wetland conservation and felt this was an important justification for their hunting activities, particularly when these activities were criticised. William, for instance, argued that, although the general public and other environmental organizations may express concern about the loss of wetlands, duck hunters are actually putting money into developing and preserving them:

But habitat creation provides benefits for the non-game species and that's the really good thing.... And you get all these well-meaning people, like Forest and Bird Protection Society, being extremely unhappy about the demise of wetlands. We've only got 10 percent of our natural wetlands left now. But they're not doing anything about it! You know, it's the duck hunters and the administrative activities associated with it that are trying to turn the clock back (William).

\textsuperscript{126} Another problem is associated with the tension between conservation and preservationist discourses. For many people conservation is about caring for animals (and not killing them) – even though the reality of conservation often involves culling some animals for the benefit of other species.
Pond Building, ‘Nature-Building’

For many duck hunters who live on farms their contribution to wetland development is a very personal pond-building project (although this activity is certainly not limited to rural farmers). Building a pond allows duck hunters to not only ‘participate’ in the ‘natural’ world that is available, but also to build new ‘natural’ places.

Pond building has become increasingly popular in New Zealand, particularly in the Southland region, where the particular environment conditions, and extensive areas of rural land, make it possible for landholders to create small-scale wetland habitat. During the 1960s, in response to concerns about the loss of wide tracts of wetland habitat, a ‘farm pond scheme’ was initiated by the Southland Acclimatization society, which contributed a small subsidy for those landowners willing to develop a pond on their land. Since the 1990s, the Southland Fish and Game office has also been very proactive in encouraging pond building. They offer free expert advice and practical assistance to those people who wish to add a pond to their land. In 1999, approximately one hundred pond-building projects were carried out in Southland (Sutton 2000: 54).

A pond takes many years to develop (the average time being 8 to 10 years) before planted trees will have reached full maturity and provide optimum cover for the pond: in the case of oak trees, it takes this long for acorns to be providing food for various species such, as Mallard ducks, to feed on. These ‘mini-Quabbins’ are also hybrid native/introduced environments; the Mallard and the Oak being introduced species, while other native species such as other birds, plants, and eels also make farm ponds their home.

The photograph below (Figure 41) is an example of one of the ponds that I visited during my fieldwork. This pond was created in an area that was originally a small

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127 There are also large wetland projects in the Southland area. See Roger Sutton’s (2002) Keeping Faith with Fin & Feather for a comprehensive history.
gully with a very shallow and narrow stream running through it. It took the farmer who developed this pond nearly seven years to get it to this stage. The pond has become an important feature on the farm and a place that the farmer enjoys visiting throughout the year, and not only during the duck hunting season.

![Pond Created by a Southland Farmer](Source: personal photograph)

Some landowners do not stop at building one pond but develop several. These areas are obviously appreciated for their aesthetic appeal, with the wife of one duck hunter even comparing some ponds to the 'garden of Eden':

He's got the most amazing place this man, I think it's like the Garden of Eden, actually. He's built all these ponds, a series of ponds, beautiful ponds, and he's surrounded it with lawns, trees... it really is an amazing place. I don't know what the Garden of Eden was like [laugh], but you know, I thought about it when I looked at it - there was even an apple tree
there too [laugh]. We had to creep along quietly and all these ducks were on the ponds... and I would say two thousand rose up and flew away (William's wife).

There was a little creek that ran through the boundary of the farm and my father developed it and a family friend extended it and developed more - he developed another pond and then he brought another piece of land across the road about 10 years ago and developed another pond over there as well (Margaret).

The pond that I shoot on was the first pond that they built... So Dad built the pond - the first pond - and then from that he built his big pond and then from that my brother also built a pond, and there's another little pond that's not man-made but sort of formed with the rivers. Because it's in the Hokonui hills sort of area there's little creeks and stuff, and that's how the ponds are formed. [Did Fish and Game help at all, like with advice and stuff like that?] They did with Dad's big pond - they had to, because it's quite a large area. I'm not too sure how big it is - but it looks like a big sort of lake. And yeah, for planning resource consent, he had to get proper consent for it. But I don't think he did for the original ponds, because that was done nearly thirty years ago (Jake).

One participant explicitly commented on the many years of commitment required to build a pond:

But nowadays it involves the maintenance of the created area that you do your hunting on. The realisation is now coming that if you build a pond, from the moment you finish building it starts to deteriorate with sedimentation and undesirable vegetation - and that has to be maintained... every so many years it has to be done (William).

Another participant, Gary, works in Invercargill but owns a farm where he has developed a pond. He found the experience highly enjoyable. He made the interesting observation that he thought the enjoyment was probably similar to that of people who do a lot of gardening. It is not just the produce that you get out of the garden that is appealing, but a variety of aspects including the process of gardening itself - just as the process of building a pond can be 'good fun':
I've got a farm with one [pond] on it...it's good fun [laugh]. I've really enjoyed you know, planting... and making it - yeah, it's good fun...This is the eleventh year, so it's eleven years old - so it's just coming right now. All the trees are now starting to come away, so it's really good. [When you planted and developed your pond... did you plant things that you knew would create food?] Oh yeah, definitely, but of course because I've planted oaks I don't think I've had an acorn yet - so that hasn't worked yet. So all I've provided is cover - but in twenty years time someone is going to have a magic pond [laugh]. Who ever lives there in twenty years time... is going to have a magic time because of all that food. But the eldest oaks are probably eleven years old, so all I've provided is cover (Gary).

[Do you think you would build another pond?] Oh yeah... it's really good fun...well, I mean, a lot of people think that you build a pond for duck shooting - well, you do - but a hell of a lot people build a garden just because they like building a garden... And so to me, duck shooting is part of it, but it's not only why I built a pond. I get the same out of my wetland as a gardener gets out of their garden, and so I get that benefit plus the duck shooting. So yeah, building a pond is good fun. I've gone and helped other people build their ponds because it is such good fun (Gary).

Trudy, who is not actively involved in shooting ducks, is nevertheless expected to help maintain the pond and maimai on her family's farm: aspects of the activity she enjoys very much:

On our farm there's one main pond with just the maimai and stuff but then there's a few more little ponds... and occasionally they'll have a couple of ducks on them, but dad and my brother don't usually worry about them. We shoot the main pond. [Did your dad build the pond and the maimai himself?] It was actually a family thing - we all built the maimai and helped with the pond... The pond would only be about five years old. There was a little one there but we sort of extended the pond and about three years ago we actually built the maimai, so it was a big family project. It was actually a lot of fun and we are actually going to extend it after this season is finished, so that will be another family project (Trudy).

Before each duck shooting season we have got to fill up the pond - we have to sort of dam up one side so the creek takes its other path and fill up the pond. So we make a dam each year and we put the decoys out and feed the pond. I normally do help with that - I don't at the moment because I am up in Dunedin at Uni [University] - they are normally doing it while I am still there - but if I was at home I would help (Trudy).
Sally and Ben, a married couple who are both involved in duck hunting, explained how they had pooled together with a group of enthusiastic duck hunting friends on an ambitious pond-building project. Photographs that I saw of this pond were very impressive as it is very large, although at the moment the foliage around it is still in early stages of growth so the pond is yet to acquire a ‘natural’ look:

(Ben): And then we built this pond, five of us went in - we spent four and a half thousand dollars building the pond. It was $816.36 each we spent. We built this magnificent pond, it was an acre and half of water and we shoot approximately 250 and 300 birds on that on opening weekend.

(Sally): But the guys that have gone in are probably the top echelon of duck hunting, they are really pedantic about the sport and so they have built this pond.

(Ben): It will be a magnificent pond - give it 10 years.

(Sally): A duck paradise - they sort of built it as a hunting pond, not just: 'lets put in a bit of water and hope ducks come to it'. It is cultivated.

(Ben): We have fenced it and planted flaxes and oak trees and we have spent a lot of time there...I mean I look at our pond now with a real sense of satisfaction, I have had a fairly major part of being involved with it, I mean it is just like building a house and you see it completed and it is satisfying and building a fence and building a duck pond to me it is a sense of satisfaction...in ten years time I just know that pond there is going to be a [picture] postcard, because that is what it is going to be like.

Through the building of ponds, and a general commitment to wetland conservation and development, duck hunters present a particular discourse that constructs their duck hunting practices within a ‘moral landscape’ (Proctor 1998b). There is a widely articulated narrative from the duck hunting community that they are prepared to spend time and money on developing and protecting wetland areas, something that the wider non-hunting public has not done. In carrying out these projects, many species other than gamebirds benefit, and this is often highlighted by duck hunters. As we have seen in the interview extracts above, however, pond-building and wetland development are far more than just environmental discourses to justify duck hunting practices. For many duck hunters, ‘nature-building’
activities give them enormous pleasure as they watch wetland areas develop. These projects often involve wider family, or groups of friends, who enjoy the camaraderie of ‘building’ nature together. This physical enmeshing of duck hunters within the landscape leads us to a crucial aspect of duck hunting practices; the importance that many duck hunters place on having an embodied relationship with ‘nature’.

6.6 Duck Hunters and ‘Nature’: An ‘Intimate’ and Embodied Relationship

To me hunting is a very intense personal relationship between myself, the prey, and the environment in which the chase occurs... I take great pleasure in and spend the vast majority of my time seeking just the right place to attempt to kill some ducks. In a sense, I am hunting for an ecosystem in which to participate. This participation, to me, is a form of ecological worship.


When I began talking to duck hunters at the beginning of my research, I was startled at the deep feelings many participants expressed in regard to ‘nature’ and some animals. Having deep feelings about ‘nature’ is, of course, nothing unusual – after all, ‘concern for the environment’ is a widely promulgated discourse in contemporary New Zealand society. What is perhaps confusing about duck hunter’s relationship with nature (at least from a non-hunter’s perspective) is that they both love ‘nature’ but also want to kill aspects of it.

Edward, for example, explains that he loves being “out there” in nature - but that this enjoyment was enhanced by being able to shoot ducks:

It is being in nature, being out there - the opportunity to be out there and do it is a big thing for me but I also want to shoot a lot of ducks while I am out there (Edward).
As I have explained, many New Zealand duck hunters understand their activities as being part of a 'natural' relationship with 'nature' particularly because (as discussed in Chapter 5) they also understand themselves as participating in the ecological food-chain. This understanding of nature is very much about touching, participating, and immersing oneself in 'nature' in very tangible ways, as well as acting out the 'natural' role of 'predator': an understanding that encapsulates an embodied relationship with 'nature'. But, as we have seen with their pond-building, there is also an important new emphasis in this embodied, 'moral predator' discourse: that duck hunters maintain and create habitat for birds to live in:

Humans do play their part in the whole food-chain circle, like harvesting and eating birds and providing habitat and that. I don't think they understand that. It's a big thing in America, organisations like Duck's Unlimited, who actually provide a lot of public awareness that hunters provide the habitat and create the environment for birds to live or protect the birds. If it wasn't for hunters the birds probably wouldn't be there (Tylor).

One of the important reasons for disagreement between hunters and anti-hunters is founded on different conceptions of 'nature' and where humans are positioned in regard to the 'natural' world. Ironically, although these two stances interpret the nature/human relationship differently, they have a common foundation for both their interpretations: the influence of a Romantic discourse. As noted in Chapter 5, Franklin (1999) highlights two very different articulations of nature that developed during the nineteenth century - both influenced by the Romantic Movement, and both ideas founded on the notion of 'natural' relationships developing from interactions with nature. While some Romantic literature celebrated hunting as a way to commune with nature and a way of reconnecting to a more 'natural' lifestyle, other examples saw nature as a benign realm that humans needed to observe in order to learn how to rediscover gentleness and harmony. Despite these differences, both views also see humans as needing to connect to the 'natural
rhythms of the wild', which have been lost through modern living, and also, crucially, both views understand 'nature' as being at risk and in need of 'saving'.

American hunting advocate Randall Eaton (1998, 2001) merges Romantic ideals of nature with aspects of Romantic love to explain that, by directly participating in the food chain, hunters 'consummate' their relationship with 'nature':

Hunting is how we fall in love with nature. The basic instinct links up with the spiritual, and the result is that we become married to nature. Among nature pursuits, hunting and fishing connect us most profoundly with animals and nature...The hunter participates directly in the most fundamental processes of life, which is why the food chain is for him a love chain (Eaton 2001).

This discourse of hunting also emphasizes that humans are animals, and thus through hunting they can participate further in the "fundamental processes of life", and express their animality by immersing themselves in the 'real' ('natural') world. Grant describes humans as being 'dressed up animals' and therefore subject to the same natural forces as (undressed?) animals. Many animals, for instance, will die from 'natural' phenomenon such as adverse weather conditions. Grant stresses that humans also die from causes related to the weather and that this is one of the 'natural' process that duck hunters understand through their knowledge of 'natural' life cycles:

The further people get away from those things the less, in my point of view, the less they actually understand that we are still just a dressed up animal... and they feel that nature is that wonderful thing that will go on and yet, whether we go out and shoot the duck or not, some of them [the ducks] are going to die. And probably more than we shoot are going to die over that winter. Like this winter particularly, many animals could not have handled two weeks of snow coming through at two separate times, a couple of periods of warm weather then another hit with that cold would have taken out a heap of wildlife of all sorts. And probably it has also been the cause of some old humans coming to the end of their cycle - the cold, and so on. gives an old lady 'a cold' and she gets pneumonia and dies and they say: 'oh she died of old age' - but she died of the cold spell. It is just a normal and natural thing, and animals do it too (Grant).
This discourse, which propounds an active participation in 'nature' processes, contrasts markedly with those constructions of nature that favour a 'visual' relationship between humans and the 'natural' world, in which contact with 'nature' is done visually and ideationally. This discourse also connects to Macnaghten and Urry's (1998) notion of the 'romantic gaze' discussed in Chapter 1. To give a practical example, tramping is an enormously popular pastime in New Zealand and one of the most implicit understandings relating to this activity is, 'look but do not touch'. One duck hunter argued that even when just 'looking' at 'nature', as a hunter he had gained the ability to 'see' more of 'nature' than a non-hunter would:

You know you notice things that a lot of people don't notice. I would say that the hunter would probably be a more observant person in the field than anybody. You get trampers who walk through national parks and never see an animal. They might be listening for birds and things but you will get a hunter going on that same tramp and he will observe a lot more that that person because that's what you are sort of trained to do over the years (Paul).

Doug likewise thought that urban folk have a different understanding of nature to hunters (whom he clearly constructs within a rural discourse), and also articulates an approach strikingly close to Macnaghten and Urry's (1998) notion of a visual and 'hands off' approach to nature:

I think people have different understandings of what nature is...you know, I think a person who lives in a city will have a different impression of what nature is than say, a person who hunts. People from the city seem to have the idea that nature is something that you go and look at but 'don't touch'. But a hunter like me wants to get involved with nature - we do like to touch and be a part of natural processes - and killing is just one of those processes (Doug).

In the following quotation from Paul, we are presented with a vivid description that encapsulates the embodied aspects of duck hunting, and which articulates most clearly one of the key discourses in contemporary New Zealand duck
hunting: that hunters have a far more "intimate appreciation" of the 'natural' world than non-hunters. This intimacy is attained through a variety of corporeal experiences, involving getting dirty, getting wet, feeling cold, smelling mud, and also importantly, relating to a muddy dog, along with touching and looking closely at the feathers of a duck that has been shot:

I think they [duck hunters] have a different view and I think they have got a more hands on approach than a lot of people because they are - depending on what they do - they are involved in a lot of it: they get dirty, they get wet...Whereas someone might sit in a boat and sail around and stay clean and keep their feet dry – these guys [duck hunters] are in gumboots in mud and, you know, more in depth. They are involved with more of a... I can't even put it in words either, you know - they are in their waders, it is cold, it's frosty, they are in situations at times and places where the average person who uses the outdoors doesn't see or doesn't venture. Cold frosty mornings, windy cold horrible weather on a lake in a boat, there's mud, your dog smells of the, you know, the RPD layer because it has sunk through and there is anoxic mud all over your dog and there is cold water running down your neck and hail hitting in your face and you are thinking: 'gee if we don't get across this lake soon the tide is going to be out and we are going to get stuck in the mud'. So you have to drag your boat across 50 meters of mud, you get to the other side, absolutely stuffed and then you realise you have left something in the maimai. So... you don't just go and see the Shoveller on Lake Waikoloa - you shoot one and you touch it and you can see its feathers so you have a much more intimate appreciation - 'intimate appreciation' are the words I was looking for... for the natural world. That's what I think (Paul).

**Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on the 'intimate' and interconnected relationships that duck hunters experience with animals and 'nature', key aspects of duck hunting in southern New Zealand. Two kinds of animals are crucial to the duck hunting experience: ducks and dogs. Duck hunters relate to ducks in a far more complex way than just being determined to kill them. Many duck hunters enjoy communicating with ducks through duck calling, and for some hunters, 'talking' to ducks takes priority over shooting them. Calling ducks successfully requires a great deal of skill, and some practiced duck hunters can even control groups of ducks in the sky through their duck caller. Duck hunters’ relationships with 'gundogs' also
provides a key aspect of enjoyment for many hunters and appears to display a kind of human/animal hybridity in which dogs are often treated as honorary humans and have human relationships, such as being treated like family members or regarded as 'mates'. Through these key relationships with animals, duck hunters blur the line both between humans and animals, and notions of wild and tame, and construct this mesh of natures-cultures as being a natural outcome of being in a rural/non urban space. This notion of experiencing 'natural' relationships through duck hunting is further expressed in the activities that revolve about wetland development and conservation. Most duck hunters articulate conservationist ideals in regard to preserving and developing New Zealand's wetlands; a stance which could be interpreted as a strategy to answer criticisms from the wider public. In addition, however, many duck hunters in southern New Zealand have taken on pond-building projects that cannot be explained as being purely 'PR' exercises, or efforts to increase hunting opportunities. Rather, for many duck hunters, pond and wetland developments are exercises in 'nature-building', where they understand themselves as enmeshed in a symbiotic relationship with 'nature'. This understanding also incorporates a strong moral discourse, relating to the 'creation' of habitat for many different species (not just game birds), to which duck hunters can point in order to counter suggestions that their wetland efforts are driven simply by pragmatic motives. My final section in this chapter explored the embodied practices of duck hunting through which duck hunters participate in a 'moral landscape' (Proctor 1998b), where, as hybrid human-animals, they enact the legitimate role of predator within the 'food-chain'. These embodied practices are a key discourse in contemporary New Zealand duck hunting, which construct hunting as one of the only ways to be in synergy with 'natural' ecological processes and to consummate a truly 'intimate' relationship with 'nature'.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

We sat, guns across our knees and stowed away very large quantities of scones, bread, cake; and tea from the thermos flasks. Everyone was in a wonderful mood. The sun shone warm upon our grateful persons. (That the fine weather would send the ducks high meant little to us, because no more were likely to come our way, anyhow.) We talked of the day’s shooting, and of days gone by, and yet to come.


In this thesis, I have presented an ethnographic narrative incorporating fieldwork experiences, interview material, and an analysis of duck hunting practices in the southern New Zealand region. I began this ethnographic study seeking to investigate the question: why do some individuals kill ducks? As my research dialogue developed this question broadened to become a question about: why do some individuals hunt ducks? In order to understand duck ‘killing’, one must ask a broader question about duck ‘hunting’ because it is only in this context that it is possible to decipher the cultural framework in which ‘killing’ ducks is located.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I demonstrated in my literature review that not only is there a significant lack of ethnographies of hunting in contemporary, industrialised, urbanised societies, but that hunting ethnographies are a good site for investigating a wide range of related cultural phenomenon: particularly in regard to the construction of human-animal relations, gender, and ‘nature’. The following section will reflect and summarise the key findings in this thesis as far as they constitute an ‘ethnography of hunting’. I will then proceed to consider the broader themes raised in this thesis through the lens of this duck hunting ethnography.
7.1 An Ethnography of Duck Hunting

**Historical Narrative**

New Zealand clearly has an established duck hunting ‘tradition’ widely recognized by hunters and non-hunters alike and depicted both in specialist duck hunting books and in the wider media. This tradition is a relatively recent one, only becoming established in the first decades of the twentieth century. In it, we find certain practices that are clearly connected to the British hunting traditions brought to New Zealand by British settlers in the second part of the nineteenth century. Intertwined with these practices are specific aspects that clearly developed in this country and which have contributed to the uniqueness of New Zealand’s duck hunting tradition.

The traditional wildfowling practices in Britain - in common with the bird subsistence practices of pre-colonial Maori - were based around snaring or netting technologies. In Britain, however, access to hunting was delineated very much along class lines, firstly because of large areas of land being designated as royal forests or game sanctuaries, and secondly because of game laws, which excluded poorer classes from hunting except in those areas known as commons. By the latter part of the seventeenth century, and as firearms technology improved, the idea of shooting birds for ‘sport’ began to develop as a fashionable activity for the landed gentry. In Markland’s (1767 [1727]) poem (the earliest recorded prose regarding shooting birds) we see that ‘masculine’ comradeship and canine companionship were all important components of shooting birds even from the earliest days of this practice. By the nineteenth century, industrialisation and urbanization processes influenced a growing romanticism towards the countryside and ‘nature’, and at this stage shooting ‘sports’ became a way to ‘escape’ from the constraints of industrial Britain.

The wildfowl shooting activities of the nineteenth century were, however, dominated by shooting etiquette such as an emphasis on killing ‘cleanly’ with one
shot (with the improved firearms technology of the day making this possible), and also encapsulated masculine ideals designating which animals were suitable ‘prey’ (that is, killing them would be a ‘masculine’ achievement), and which were unsuitable (and, therefore, ‘unmanly’ kills). These ‘sporting’ shooting etiquettes were also closely tied to the new science of natural history that legitimized hunting through a specific scientific, Western discourse, which stressed the knowledge and technologies that the ‘hunter-naturalist’ practiced (MacKenzie 1988; Dunlap 1999).

These etiquettes and symbolic strategies were part of a ‘hunting code’ which, through colonization and British imperialism, was taken to countries such as New Zealand in the nineteenth century, and which positioned the subsistence hunting practices of indigenous peoples as ‘cruel’ (‘unsporting’), and ‘unscientific’. In New Zealand, the Maori hunting strategies of pre-European contact were eroded both through the discursive construction of ‘native’ hunting as ‘backward’, and also through the confiscation of lands and the corresponding lack of access to mahinga kai (places where food was procured) (Evison 1993).

For British settlers from the underprivileged classes, emigrating to New Zealand offered the possibility of freedom of access to hunting: “a wide variety of game, and freedom to take it at will, regardless of social and economic position - these symbolized for them (as could little else) a new freedom from galling class discriminations” (Clark 1949: 266). The last decades of the nineteenth century did not, however, quite present the hunting paradise these settlers dreamed of. The early Acclimatization Societies established in order to (amongst other things) introduce British game birds for ‘sport’ were run by the colonial elite, and initially high licence fees and the banning of hunting on Sundays (the only day off work for most workers), kept recreational hunting out of the reach of all but the wealthy. By the first decades of the twentieth century, however, more reasonable licence fees were in place and Sunday hunting allowable.
By the end of the 1930s, just as the introduced Mallard was also becoming widely established, the New Zealand duck hunting tradition familiar to many New Zealanders today began to take shape. This ‘tradition’ perpetuated a specific gendered discourse relating to masculine comradeship and ‘manly’ skills (in the countryside); the use of the shotgun as an ‘ethical’ and ‘sporting’ weapon; the use of dogs to retrieve ducks; and the popular use of the ‘maimai’ (hunting hide).

The historical background presented in this thesis highlights the importance of considering any hunting study within the context of the specific “national discourses relating to the natural world and human-animal relations” (Franklin 1999: 117). While there are certainly areas of commonality (as I discuss below), hunting in contemporary ‘Western’ societies should not be assumed to be practiced in an homogenous fashion with identical meanings and discourses across different cultures. Hunting studies such as Dahles (1993) and Marks (1991) illustrate some of the varieties of hunting practices within different national boundaries. In her research on hunting in the Netherlands, Dahles (1993) found that hunting was based within a social group she termed the “new leisure class”: predominantly middle-class and middle-aged professionals living, and exerting political influence, within rural communities (Dahles 1993: 172). In common with Britain, therefore, hunting within the Netherlands tends to be associated with social elites and “resented as symbolic of domination and oppression” (Franklin 1999: 120). This contrasts with the historical features of New Zealand duck hunting (and other types of hunting) which has featured as available to the ‘common people’ since European settlement.

Marks’s (1991) ethnographic research into hunting in North Carolina (southern United States), presents another different historical trajectory. Although New Zealand and the United States are similar in the romanticisation of ideas of the ‘frontier’ and the ideal of hunting as available to all echelons of society, Marks’s history reveals changing rhetorics around hunting over a three hundred year
period. While European settlers to the United States were "astounded by the variety and abundance of wildlife in the New World" (Marks 1991: 33), it is clear that access to different game species were connected to very specific ideas and attitudes regarding 'race' (in regard to native Americans and black slaves) and social position. Even in the contemporary American hunting situation there still survives some elitist connections between quail hunting – the celebrated and exclusive quarry within Southern (USA) hunting – as an unacceptable game for blacks (and poor whites), who are expected to hunt animals such as rabbits and 'coons'.

Duck hunting in New Zealand today, therefore, brings together a historical rejection of indigenous hunting, an eventual establishment of hunting as a non-elitist activity, and a specific environmental configuration of wildfowling that is associated with wetlands, Mallards, and maimais. This particular historical style of hunting is recognisable in a few other colonial contexts (such as Australia and the USA) but there remain many specific aspects that are unique to the New Zealand situation.

**Gendered Performances**

The importance of gender established in the New Zealand duck hunting 'tradition' is still obvious in the contemporary practices of duck hunters in the southern region. I have identified three different types of duck hunting experience in which various 'masculinities' are emphasized: the 'dedicated' duck hunting experience; the 'blokes only' duck hunting experience; and the 'community' duck hunting experience. The 'blokes only' duck hunters place a priority on masculine sociality; shooting ducks is of secondary importance. In contrast, the 'dedicated' duck hunters emphasize their shooting skills and ability to 'provision' for themselves. 'Community' duck hunters, in contrast, place prominence on social conventions, established over many years, which include family and friends. These categories should not be considered exhaustive, or even stable, but provide a useful
framework within which to understand a variety of different gendered duck hunting practices.

For many men ‘going duck hunting’ incorporates a wide variety of masculine ‘performances’, allowing them to escape from the ‘civilised’ (feminised) restraints of modern living, to a place where they revert to ‘natural’ masculine behaviours. For many, these ‘performances’ incorporate a childlike anticipation of the duck hunting season; the preparation and consumption of specific foods and drinks on opening weekend; the articulation of heterosexual fantasies (particularly important in the ‘blokes only’ duck hunting experience); while for others traditional, rural, family roles are stressed (especially by ‘community’ duck hunters). The maimai also constitutes a major feature of the duck hunting experience for many duck hunters, and represents both a practical structure for concealment and protection from the elements, and also a ‘masculine’ social space that provides a retreat from ‘civilisation’ during the duck hunting season.

Specific understandings of rural space are also central to duck hunting in New Zealand, understandings which are intrinsically linked to an iconic New Zealand past, closely tied to a discourse of the frontier, where men provision and live off the land (particularly important in the ‘dedicated’ duck hunting experience). Duck hunting can thus be understood as a mesh of the ‘masculine rural’ and the ‘rural masculine’ (Campbell and Bell 2000). Masculinities are constructed and manifest both through embodied, ‘real’ experiences of being within rural space (‘masculine rural’), as well as through symbolic notions of masculinity reproduced outside any ‘real’ rural place (‘rural masculine’). My argument here is that, for many duck hunters, construction of gender and masculine performances are based on both ‘real’ (and ‘natural’) rural experiences, but also shaped by nostalgic (and ‘social’) constructions of New Zealand manhood.
The connection between masculinity and hunting appears to be a feature common to ethnographies of hunting in Western societies, although not necessarily identical across, or even within, different societies. Dahles (1993), for instance, observed a particular kind of competitive masculinity in her research that is not a dominant feature of duck hunting in Southern New Zealand. Dahles (1993) argues that hunters in the Netherlands "measure their strength or cunningness by comparing themselves to their animal competitors. For this reason, sportsmen prefer those animals which behave like an equal (human) opponent - a male, wearing "weapons" and fighting back" (Dahles 1993: 180). While duck hunters in my ethnographic research certainly expressed their enjoyment of the 'challenge' of duck hunting, this was not closely tied to any anthropomorphic behaviour of the birds, but rather to the various combined challenges presented by the environment, calling birds into close range, using a firearm, and retrieving the ducks. It is possible that research into other types of New Zealand hunting - such as deer or pig hunting - would reveal different discourses around masculinities.

This point brings up an important issue to consider when carrying out research on a variety of different hunting types within a society. In Dahles (1993) research, for example, she describes a variety of different hunters under the generic term of "sportsmen". I would be curious to know if there were in fact any variations between the different game being pursued, and the masculinities performed in the pursuit of that game. Dahles suggests that all hunters in the Netherlands "measure their power and abilities against strong, cunning and preferably male opponents" (Dahles 1993: 182), whereas I would be very reluctant to make any generalizations about masculinity and hunting in the New Zealand context, as, from even a limited exposure to other popular 'outdoor' traditions such as pig and deer hunting - and an assortment of different fishing activities - I see a variety of issues arising which are not features of duck hunting (and vice versa). The masculine performances associated with duck hunting are clearly quite specifically delineated in cultural historical terms.
Marks's (1991) ethnography also includes a variety of different types of hunting, but makes it clear that specific gender discourses are generated in association with the hunting of different animals. The ideals of masculinity associated with bucks and does in Carolina, for example, make an interesting parallel with the understandings generated around ducks in the New Zealand situation. Marks explains that some hunters ascribe positive masculine attributes to the bucks, while the does are associated with 'silly' feminine qualities (Marks 1991: 160-161). As I outline in Chapter 3, some duck hunters (who were also 'blokes only' hunters) discussed admiringly the aggressive mating tactics sometimes employed by Mallard ducks. Other duck hunters (more often the 'community' duck hunters) highlighted the 'family' orientation of waterfowl, such as the protective behaviour of mother ducks, and species such as swan and Paradise Ducks, who 'mate for life'.

The theoretical construct of 'gender performance' which I have developed in the context of my ethnographic research of duck hunting provides a very useful analytical tool for this type of research, and one which I believe could be usefully employed in future ethnographic hunting studies. As I highlight in the following section, the theoretical idea of gender performance is also salient in relation to duck hunters' construction of 'competent' performances when in 'nature'.

**Killing Ducks**

Over the past two hundred years, far-reaching changes such as urbanization and industrialization, and the 'separation' of the countryside from the city (Williams 1973), has led to widespread repugnance towards seeing animals being killed. No longer is it necessary to check if an animal is healthy and the meat fresh, as we expect that those issues will be safeguarded through standardized food safety regulations. During the past thirty years in particular, the growth of the animal rights movement has heralded a significant new discourse within human-animal relations. Jasper and Nelkin (1992) connect the development of this discourse since the 1960s to three main social concepts: increasingly anthropomorphic attitudes
towards animals and romantic notions about nature; the 'New Age' movement and the growth of 'alternative' lifestyles; and the 'rhetoric of rights' philosophical position. Clearly, these different societal changes have contributed to opposition to killing animals, particularly for 'fun' or recreation.

In Australia this shift has manifested itself in what have been termed the 'Duck Wars', where the activities of the animal rights group CADS (Coalition Against Duck Shooting) has resulted in a groundswell of public opinion against duck shooting. One of the important factors leading to this opposition has been CADS' charismatic spokesperson, Laurie Levy, who presents an aggressive, self-sufficient, and pragmatic masculinity more commonly associated with hunting behaviours. In presenting this 'macho' persona, Levy explicitly contradicts the characteristics more commonly ascribed to animal rights activists or animal 'lovers', such as being sentimental, 'soft', and feminine.

Duck hunters in New Zealand have also had to contend with opposition. In response to increasing disapproval from non-hunters, New Zealand duck hunters have configured a particular social construction of killing ducks into a powerful legitimating discourse. This discourse, unlike the Australian situation, positions the actions of animal rights activists as 'unrealistic', 'naive', and (implicitly) 'feminine'. Duck hunting in New Zealand, therefore, encapsulates practices that are understood by many duck hunters to act out, or express, 'realistic', 'competent' (masculine), and morally justifiable behaviours within nature (and rural space).

Killing ducks, as many duck hunters in this study explain, is not an 'easy' or 'fun' act. A lot of duck hunters have very ambivalent feelings about killing ducks, particularly when it involves wringing a duck’s neck or killing it at close range. This compassion and concern for animals leads duck hunters to see themselves as different to other predators because they stress a compassionate and 'sporting' approach to the killing aspect of their activities (unlike animal predators that may
'play' with their prey). In consequence, duck hunters are constructing and presenting themselves as 'moral predators'.

These different ethical discourses relating to killing ducks also highlight the tensions between discursive values associated with 'the rural' and 'the urban' – particularly when considering the use of firearms. For many duck hunters in southern New Zealand, using a shotgun to kill ducks is a crucial aspect of their enjoyment of this activity. Increasingly, however, wider society views firearms with suspicion and fear. One way in which duck hunters counter this discourse is to position firearms use as an important historical feature of rural life, and, within an 'everyday' rural context, guns are constructed as being just one more farming 'tool'. This explanation is not, however, always interpreted as positively as duck hunters would hope. Although within New Zealand society a discourse associated with an iconic and idealized rural still has a strong hold, there is also an 'anti-idyll' (Bell 1997) discourse which constructs the rural as 'backward' and 'ignorant'. Several duck hunters expressed concern that urban dwellers (who made up the majority of the New Zealand population) could mobilise significant political pressure in relation to firearms use and have an extremely negative effect on duck hunting (as has been the case in Australia).

The counter discourse developed by New Zealand duck hunters does have some parallels with other hunting ethnographies. Dahles (1988) describes the Dutch sportsmen's "code of honour" or "weidelijkheid" which is often referred to by hunters in the Netherlands in response to criticism from anti-hunters. Until 1978, when the Royal Dutch Hunting Association drew it up into an official set of rules, the weidelijkheid was an unwritten code encapsulating various rules about ethical hunting conduct. Included in the weidelijkheid are specific prohibitions that hunters place on themselves, such as not shooting sitting birds (such as wild ducks), avoiding "risky shooting" that may result in wounding rather than killing game
and, in the event of wounding, ensuring that the animal is found and dispatched quickly (Dahles 1988: 20).

Interestingly, Dahles argues that this hunting code of honour is rather pointless when presented to people who are against hunting per se, because to them the "hunting sportsmen's standard of civilized behaviour is of no importance. They consider hunting uncivilized; and to them it does not matter at all whether sportsmen live up to their code or not" (Dahles 1988: 18). Dahles goes onto suggest that there is no one "standard of civilization", an idea which has relevance to the New Zealand duck hunting situation, particularly when rural activities such as duck hunting become framed as 'uncivilized' and 'backward'. This argument suggests that no matter how much duck hunters construct their hunting practices as ethically correct or 'civilised', when measured by a different standard - particularly an urban one - hunting will always be considered unacceptable. The contested issues surrounding hunting are not part of a 'rational' ethics debate, therefore, and it is clear that wider cultural meanings are crucial to the sense of hunting legitimacy as configured by duck hunters and their supporters.

This idea can be explored further by considering ethnographies of fox hunting in Britain. In his ethnography of the place of such hunting in British country life, Norton (1999) similarly examines the conflict between rural and urban ideas about hunting. Norton problematises the idea that 'the rural' and 'the urban' are distinct and clearly bounded spaces, particularly through his ethnographic material of people living in country areas, who present a plethora of complex and contradictory attitudes towards hunting and who thus illustrate the variability of country life. In his ethnography Chiderley, Bell (1994) also presents a complex picture of life in a country village. Bell argues that fox hunting is one of the activities that fits his notion of 'resonance' (a complex metaphor that seeks to explain social categories as an amalgam of both social and 'natural' experiences)
(see Bell 1994: 227-241). Bell observes that, “through resonance, the natural other appears to villagers in categories with a social sound to them” (Bell 1994: 239).

In regard to my ethnography of duck hunting, I have shown that while urban and rural are complex spaces that do not constitute clearly delineated physical places, ideas of the rural and the urban nevertheless have a strong hold within New Zealand society. The ‘new politics of duck hunting’ while at first glance appearing to be a reaction to anti-hunting sentiment, are in fact far more complex and relate more closely to Bell’s (1994) idea of resonance. The ‘natural’ rural setting of duck hunting presents a variety of ‘natural’ experiences, which also have a “social sound to them”: duck hunters see themselves as ‘predators’; expressing a competent (masculine), ‘natural’ relationship with the landscape and the animals within it, as the following section explores further. What this New Zealand ethnography of duck hunting clearly shows is that an analytical framework around the ‘ethics of killing’ is too limited to explain what is happening.

**Human-Animal Relationships**

Hunters have far more complex relationships with animals than simply killing them, and it is very important in any hunting ethnography, therefore, to try and understand the complex features of human-animal relations within the hunting context. This thesis has identified some key relationships that duck hunters have with both ducks and dogs. These relationships are filled with contradictions, encapsulating a complex mix of pragmatic ‘exploitation’ and emotional attachment. These relationships also blur the boundaries between animal/human and wild/tame. Through duck calling, many duck hunters take a great deal of pleasure in ‘communicating’ with ducks, an enjoyment that appears to exceed the practical goal of calling ducks in close enough to shoot them at close range. One duck hunter even described an incident where the excitement of calling and being able to ‘control’ the ducks in the sky leads to him and his companions failing to successfully shoot any ducks at all. This man still describes this event as one of “the
better mornings”, even though no ducks were bagged. For the duck hunters in this incident, the thrill and the challenge of ‘communicating’ with, and then controlling, the ducks provides a great deal of fun and comradeship between the duck hunters - and a sense of being truly connected to ‘nature’ - that exceeds any pleasure of actually shooting ducks.

Duck hunters also have enormous enjoyment from their relationships with the ‘gundogs’ that accompany them when they go duck hunting. Some participants articulated extremely deep and emotional feelings about their dog, who, in many respects, was considered as ‘family’. Other dogs are treated more like ‘mates’ - and I noticed that they appeared to echo a particular kind of stoic, masculine ‘performance’. Many dogs ‘hang around’ in the maimai - apparently listening and only making the odd comment (the occasional whimper or canine vocalisation). Many dogs will also jump into cold water without hesitation to retrieve shot ducks. They then come back to sit in the maimai - cold, but uncomplaining - and seem to present an animal rendition of the strong, silent, ‘masculine rural’ (so frequently mobilised, for example, in beer advertising in New Zealand).

The place of dogs in the New Zealand context can be usefully compared to Marvin’s (2001, 2002) exploration of the place of foxhounds in British fox hunting practices. His ethnographic research also presents an example of the complex relationship between the human ‘social’, and animal ‘natural’ worlds. Through the example of foxhounds, Marvin (2001) reveals how blurred the line is between these two ideas. These dogs are domesticated and only exist through human manipulation (breeding techniques). Foxhounds, that is, have no ‘purpose’ outside of their use within a hunting context (unlike Labradors - the breed commonly used in New Zealand duck hunting - which are often utilized in other roles such as a family pet). In one sense, foxhounds could be considered purely a product of human creation, yet in the context of hunting they are expected to ‘perform’ in a manner that is: “similar to that of a pack of wild dogs. They constitute a culturally
created pack, a pack created for performance; each hound is specially bred for its role in this performance" (Marvin 2001: 274). The performance of the foxhounds is observed and enjoyed by the humans who participate in the foxhunt, and a great deal of this enjoyment is connected to the perception that the hounds are engaging within a 'natural' sphere. Humans are then connected to this sphere by their participation in the foxhunt. This 'involvement on two levels' encapsulates a complex mesh of ideas relating to nature and culture:

Woven through foxhunting is a shifting balance between ideas of, and representations of, the natural and nature and culture, expressed as human concerns. This is not simply a natural relationship between animal predator and animal prey - although it has elements of that; neither is it a relationship between human hunter and animal prey - although it has elements of that too. The event is both alternately and simultaneously natural and artificial (Marvin 2002: 153).

Marvin's ethnography clearly articulates that human-animal relations in hunting inevitably lead to difficult questions about nature - and the same transition is apparent in this ethnography of duck hunting.

**Human -'Nature' Relationships**

Closely connected to duck hunters' relationships with ducks and dogs is their relationship with 'nature' or 'natural' spaces/places. Many duck hunters accentuate the embodied aspects of this relationship through a key argument: to truly 'know' or understand 'nature' you need to participate in a 'multi-sensed' way with the life and death aspects that occur within 'nature'. In constructing their relationship with nature in this way, duck hunters reject an increasingly dominant (urban) discourse which frames 'nature' and humans in a dichotomous relationship, and with an increasing 'hegemony of vision' and corresponding 'romantic gaze' (Macnaghten and Urry 1998). Rather than constructing 'nature' as a 'visual experience', duck hunters immerse themselves within 'natural' places/spaces, and configure duck hunting practices as a 'hands on' approach towards 'nature'.
As I have argued, ‘natural’ places/spaces within duck hunting do not exclude human bodies or human technologies. In building and developing ponds and wetland areas, duck hunters become ‘nature-builders’, yet the ‘wildness’ of this nature is simultaneously mediated by ‘humanness’. In a confusing mesh of introduced and native species, ‘natural’ and human-made constructions, New Zealand ponds and wetlands encapsulate hybrids of natures-cultures.

Many duck hunters now explicitly position duck hunting practices within an environmental discourse associated with wetland development and protection. Some individuals put significant time, money, and physical effort into developing wetland habitat on their own land- as can be seen in the large number of farm-ponds that have been constructed in Southland over the past few decades. Other duck hunters may not put any direct effort into wetland development but stress that, through their game bird licence, they are contributing to it. Importantly, many duck hunters explain their efforts in regard to wetlands as being of real environmental value, and contrast this to those people who may express environmental concerns but do not act on them. In regard to New Zealand wetlands, duck hunters conceivably have a solid case as, historically, the duck hunting fraternity has been the most vocal and active in calling for wetland preservation and development.

But this concern is not restricted to New Zealand, or to duck hunting. One of the features of the contemporary world is that the entire earth is understood as being affected by humans, and therefore no true ‘wilderness’ (outside of human contact) exists. Dizard’s (1999) approach to this has been to advocate that the way forward for human relationships with the ‘natural world’ lies in responsible ‘stewardship’, but he also concedes that this will not be an easy or uncontested route. The duck hunters whom I encountered through my fieldwork have found an interesting way to mediate this responsibility and also to present an ‘ethical’ discourse to counter criticism from anti-hunters. Effectively, duck hunters construct themselves as
hybrid animal-humans: the animal component appreciates and exhorts ‘natural’ relations with animals and the ecosystem, while their human side takes on the responsibility of stewarding, creating, and caring for spaces that are dominated by ‘natural’ life-cycles. Through these relationships with animals and ‘nature’, duck hunters are able to be truly ‘intimate’ with nature – something which, they argue, non-hunters do not appreciate.

This review of my thesis as an ‘ethnography of hunting’ points towards a multitude of reasons as to ‘why people hunt ducks’. To conclude, I want to look beyond this question and ask, ‘why duck hunting succeeds’ as a cultural activity. What makes it so legitimate? How can duck hunting persist at a time when animal rights discourse and broader anti-hunting views relating to new urban sensibilities (which emphasize romanticism rather than pragmatism with regard to human-animal relations) has grown increasingly dominant in Western societies such as New Zealand?

### 7.2 Duck Hunting: An ‘Ensemble’ of ‘Natures’ and ‘Cultures’.

Here I would like to return to my first fieldwork experience, where I noted that a dead duck and a man’s *swandri* shirt seemed to sit together as a kind of nature-culture ensemble in the back of a utility truck. The concept of ‘ensemble’ is a useful one, worth exploring further in the context of this research, and which I would like to relate to Ingold’s (1993, 1995) notion of the ‘taskscape’.

As I outlined in Chapter 1, the taskscape allows us to conceive of landscape as a place within which both humans and animals ‘dwell’ and which is “perpetually under construction” (Ingold 1993: 162) – by both humans and animals. Ingold does not, therefore, separate human technologies from the taskscape but rather emphasizes their importance in shaping the landscape around us. Ingold also highlights the embodied experience of the landscape as incorporating multi-
sensory experiences. He does not give any preference to visual perception, and uses hunters as an example of the "interactivity" found within the taskscape:

Hunters... are alert to every sight, sound or smell that reveals the presence of animals, and we can be sure that the animals are likewise alert to the presence of humans, as they are also to that of one another (Ingold 1993: 162-163).

Also essential to the taskscape is Ingold's (1993, 1995) argument in regard to its temporality. Ingold adopts the notion of the "A-series" of time128 in which he conceptualizes the taskscape as retaining some patterns from the past, incorporating current events, and including some projections into the future: "Thus from the A-series point of view, temporality and historicity are not opposed but rather merge in the experience of those who, in their activities, carry forward the process of social life (Ingold 1993: 157). Using this temporal model of landscape, I refer to the opening quotation to this chapter as an example of how duck hunting practices fit within the idea of the taskscape. The duck hunters sitting with their "guns across [their] knees", stowing away "very large quantities of scones" together with other food and drink, represent an embodied contemporaneous moment in a taskscape. We know from this quotation, however, that the hunters have spent time in this landscape in the past, and they plan to carry on doing so in the future: "we talked of days gone by, and yet to come". In the past, we might assume the hunters have spent time duck hunting - and therefore making subtle changes to the 'physical', 'natural' landscape - or perhaps they have had a larger hand in shaping the land through developing a pond or wetland area. In whichever manner, these duck hunters have dwelt, and continue to dwell, with this landscape. This merging of past, present, and future duck hunting practices, creates a type of taskscape within a 'natural' landscape which will last as long as the people and their descendents (in

128 Ingold differentiates A-series time ("in which time is immanent in the passage of events") from B-series time, "in which events are strung out in time like beads on a thread" and therefore treated as separate and isolated happenings (Ingold 1993: 157).
this particular example) continue to actively participate in these duck hunting practices.

Ingold’s (1993) notion of the taskscape relates to my idea of duck hunting as a nature-culture ‘ensemble’ because the meanings and relationships that duck hunters construct in regard to ‘nature’ do not represent an essential or singular idea, but rather are configured out of an enormous variety of complex social and ‘natural’ experiences. These experiences are embodied within particular places, over time, and encapsulate ensembles of human-animal and human-‘nature’ relationships.

The idea of an ‘ensemble’ encapsulates three particular meanings which help illustrate why duck hunting still ‘works’, or succeeds, as a cultural activity at a time when human-animal relations are increasingly dominated (at least at the idealized level) by affectionate and ‘non-violent’ relationships – and when areas designated ‘wild’ have become viewed as areas where humans should not intrude (Cronon 1995b). We can see this relevance if we look at the various definitions of ‘ensemble’. Firstly, the term ‘ensemble’ can be applied in the sense of a general effect that is achieved when a thing is viewed as a whole. Secondly, ‘ensemble’ can be considered within a musical context, where a group of people unites in the performance of a musical passage. And thirdly, ‘ensemble’ can be used in relation to a combination of clothing items making up a complete costume or outfit. These three slightly different meanings can be fruitfully applied in the context of duck hunting and the cultural meaning generated through participation in this pastime.

For duck hunters, the multiple discourses generated through duck hunting practices – which relate to notions of gender, relationships with animals, relationships with nature and so on – are an assemblage of parts which, when taken together, create a kind of ‘Gestalt’ whole; an overall “general effect” which is more than the sum of its parts. This concept suggests why it is difficult for non-hunters
to appreciate what ‘duck hunting’ entails – and why it is enjoyable – because it encapsulates a multitude of meanings that are embedded in specific experiences, but which make sense as an overall cultural activity to the duck hunters who experience them.

The definition of ‘ensemble’ in its musical application is also salient, because for many duck hunters a great deal of pleasure in duck hunting is connected to the ‘group performance’ of the duck hunting experience. For the majority of duck hunters, uniting individuals to produce a combined (and harmonious) ‘presentation’ is like a musical soiree in its clear delineation of where and when it takes place. As I have shown, opening weekend is the most popular time for this ‘presentation’. This definition of duck hunting as a ‘musical’ ensemble highlights the exciting and transient aspects of duck hunting practices.

The definition of ‘ensemble’ as a kind of co-ordinated clothing outfit is also useful because it can be linked to the importance of duck hunting as an embodied experience. Duck hunters enjoy ‘wearing’ this ensemble – being surrounded by, and interacting with, both ‘natural’ (non-human) and ‘social’ (human) processes in the landscape. This variety of ensemble pieces are mixed and matched in different ways by different duck hunters: no individual’s ‘outfit’ (embodied duck hunting experience) is identical to another’s.

Thus, duck hunting in southern New Zealand is an ensemble of intertwined and interconnected meanings – historically generated and embedded in the specific New Zealand cultural context. These meanings are associated with gendered experiences within the landscape; masculine performances that privilege heterosexuality, pragmatism, and an ideal of ‘frontier’ manhood. These duck hunting masculinities are constructed as being a way of returning to ‘natural’ behaviours repressed within the civilized (and feminised) world outside of duck hunting. Duck hunting also incorporates an ensemble of ethical discourses, where
as ‘moral predators’ - a kind of human-animal hybrid killer - duck hunters position themselves as having a more ‘realistic’ and ‘competent’ relationship with ‘nature’ than non-hunters and urbanites. As ‘nature-builders’, moreover, duck hunters literally create for themselves ensembles of natures-cultures. The active role that duck hunters play in the development of wetlands and ponds problematises the conventional dichotomy of ‘natural’ versus ‘cultural’ places. These wetland areas, melding human constructions and natural processes (or taskscapes), reveal an intimate and embodied relationship with ‘nature’ which allows duck hunters to escape from the problems of modern (civilized/urbanized) life.

Throughout this thesis, and implicit in my use of the theoretical notion of ‘ensemble’, I have presented what might appear to be a contradictory sense of duck hunting - one which emphasizes the heterogeneity of the duck hunting practices, and another which implies that there is an homogenous New Zealand duck hunting ‘culture’. In the final section of my conclusion, I want to explore the tension between the ‘particular’ and the ‘general’ which is an inherent aspect of doing ethnographic research, but which also suggests some useful reflections in regard to ethnography as a methodological approach for researching hunting.

**An Ethnographic Ensemble**

As I outlined in Chapter 2, ‘doing ethnography’ in the contemporary world is enormously varied. No longer do anthropologists seek to analyse and map out cultures as discrete wholes that are bounded and unchanging, but rather they explore the multitude of different discursive meanings generated both by collectivities and by individuals - meanings that are conceptualized as continually undergoing processes of “construction” and “negotiation” (Handler 1994: 27). Abu-Lughod (1991, 2000) has similarly argued for the application of the ‘ethnography of the particular’, where, rather than attempting to describe the single synthesized

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129 This use of the term ‘culture’ should not be confused with the frequent references in this thesis to ‘culture’ used in its broadest sense as a binary opposition to ‘nature’, where it essentially means ‘not-nature’, but rather human ‘civilization’.
culture of a group, or to analyse the full complement of institutions that supposedly make up any society, the emphasis in ethnography is on: “individual differences and the contestatory nature of discourses and social life within all communities” (Abu-Lughod 2000: 263).

While I have not completely embraced Lughod’s ‘ethnography of the particular’ in this research, I have presented a wide variety of different experiences and meanings associated with duck hunting practices in my ethnographic account. Alongside this, however, I have also provided generalised statements that suggest, in some instances, certain coherences within these practices. To some degree, these ‘coherences’ produce a sense of a southern New Zealand – and, in some instances, a national New Zealand – duck hunting ‘culture’. This tension between ‘particularity’ and ‘generality’ is, perhaps, not as problematic as might appear at first glance, but is rather a feature of ‘doing ethnography’ today. As such, it is also an outcome of the heightened reflexivity that is one of the ‘consequences of modernity’ (Giddens 1991).

The word ‘culture’ has a multiplicity of meanings in contemporary Western societies (Jenks 1993). The idea of culture is constantly used as a conceptual tool in all kinds of public discourse. Anderson (1996) argues that ‘pre-modern’ people lived in their cultures ‘as fish live in water’ and therefore had no need for a conceptual notion such as ‘culture’ (Anderson 1996: 15). In urbanized, industrialized countries such as New Zealand, however, ‘culture’ and ‘culture difference’ are widely disseminated concepts, which influence the continual reflexive assessment of discursive values and meanings. This ethnography has shown how duck hunters not only have extremely individual experiences of hunting and construct their own meanings from those experiences, but also have a sense of sharing duck hunting practices within a community of duck hunters – a commonality that could be considered a ‘culture’.
Most importantly, senses of 'cultural coherence' are often constructed both by people from outside duck hunting and from within. 'Outsiders'—such as animal rights and anti-hunting groups—conceptualise individual hunters as belonging to an homogenous group who configure identical meanings and (un)ethical understandings with regard to animals and the environment. In response to this depiction, hunters often construct a counter discourse about duck hunting that suggests contemporary duck hunting 'culture' is inherently ethical, 'eco-friendly', and legitimate.

I began researching the diverse group of duck hunters within this ethnographic account with the desire to focus on the particular individuals and their unique situated knowledges, meanings, and experiences. It soon became clear, however, that I could not dispense with a sense of some kind of coherent New Zealand duck hunting 'culture' (and 'tradition') when this coherence was constructed and understood both by individuals who ally themselves with duck hunting, and by those who do not.

This broader focus returns us to the concept of ensemble, which can also be usefully considered in connection to ethnography and in attempting to deal with this tension between theorising the 'particular' and the 'general'. This ethnography has presented an 'ensemble' of duck hunting practices and meanings; an ensemble dominated by several components—gendered performances, human-animal relations, and human-'nature' relations. By using an ethnographic approach it is possible to capture both the 'general' cultural overview (the overall 'effect' of the 'ensemble' that different individuals construct and highlight), and also to encapsulate the variability of meaning and 'particular' unique experiences of individual duck hunters. It is through the ensemble of different practices, meanings, and experiences, that duck hunting is configured as a legitimate cultural activity, and also why it is difficult for non-hunters to appreciate, because they see only 'pieces of the ensemble' rather than the 'whole' effect.
In this thesis, I have shown that duck hunting is one way of acting out or expressing a 'real' and 'authentic' relationship with 'nature'. This authenticity is becoming more important as the sense that contemporary life is progressively becoming more 'artificial' increases. This, perhaps, explains why both duck hunting and 'feeding the ducks' are such appealing pastimes. While they may appear to incorporate very different practices, they both allow 'ensembles' of 'multi-sensory' nature-culture experiences. At the end of this research endeavour I can see that, in taking my children to feed the ducks, I am seeking to act out a relationship 'within nature' similar to that produced by the motivations of many duck hunters. Interacting with ducks in a 'natural' landscape – whether it be feeding them, calling them, building habitat for them, or even shooting at them – allows us to experience an embodied and 'intimate' relationship with 'nature' which simultaneously 'resonates' (Bell 1994) with social understandings too. Conceptualising this 'intimacy', and the enormous variations in expressing it, requires us to dispense with a binary nature/culture framework, and think instead of complex ensembles of 'natures' and 'cultures'.

(Source: personal photograph)
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Appendix
Pool of Potential Interview Questions

Background Information
- What is the participant’s year of birth?
- Where was the participant born?
- Were you brought up with any religion?
- Does the participants have any religious affiliations now?
- What is the participant’s occupation? (If a farmer, what sort of farm and how large?)
- Who do you live with?
- Does the participant have any children or dependents?

Relationships with Family
- Whereabouts does the participant go duck hunting? Is it on their own land?
- Who taught the participant to hunt?
- Who does the participant hunt with now?
- Is the participant’s family or spouse/partner involved directly or indirectly in duck hunting (e.g. do children observe, does partner/spouse prepare the duck for eating etc).
- Is the family supportive of the participant’s duck hunting activities?
- How important is it to the participant that hunting activities continue with the next generation? (Are they involving their children or other people’s children in their hunting activities?).

Preparation for Duck Shooting
- What kind of activities are involved in preparing for duck shooting?
- Does the participant have a maimai? If so, what is it like? What is required to maintain it and are those activities enjoyable?
- What kind of clothes does the participant wear? Do they camouflage their face etc?
- Does the participant have a hunting dog? If so, what training is involved? Is their dog good at retrieving ducks?

**Gender**
- Does the participant see hunting as an important time in relation to friendships ('mateship')?
- How do male participants regard women in the field? Why do they think so few women hunt?
- Are male hunters happy to hunt with female hunters and vice versa?
- In all male parties, what do their conversations usually revolve around?
- How do female participants perceive duck hunting? Are they encroaching on a largely masculine pastime? Do they have problems with men who are resistant to women hunters? Or are they accepted without comment? Do they think the numbers of women hunters are increasing?
- How committed is the participant to duck hunting?
- How does the participant feel about alcohol and duck hunting?
- Is alcohol consumed in the maimai or after the duck shooting at some other venue?

**Ethical Issues**
- How important is it make a clean shot (kill the duck outright)?
- Has the participant ever felt squeamish about ducks they have shot - perhaps when beginning duck hunting?
- Does the participant worry about the duck suffering?
- Is it important to the participant to avoid shooting protected bird species?
- Does the participant eat the ducks that they shoot? Or use them for feathers etc?
- How does the participant perceive hunting in general? Do they see it as a 'natural' human activity? (i.e. Do they link it to human evolutionary arguments?)
- What does the participant think about animal activists who protest and disrupt duck hunting?

Environmental/Conservation Issues
- Is the participant aware of wetland conservation issues?
- Do they see themselves as making an important contribution to caring for wetland habitats?
- How much time do they spend on maintaining or looking after wetland?
- Are they members of Ducks Unlimited? Or active in any other organisation that is involved in wetland conservation?
- Is being a ‘part of nature’ an important feature of duck hunting for the participant?
- Do they spend a lot of time observing their surroundings (i.e. nature watching/bird watching)?
- How knowledgeable is the participant about the life cycle and behavior of birds and about the wetland habitat in general?
- Do they own the land that they hunt on? If so, do they expend a lot of effort in maintaining a wetland on their land?
- Do they help maintain a wetland on someone else’s land?

Urban/Rural differences?
- Does the participant see duck hunting as available to anyone who wants to do it?
- How much money do they spend on their sport?
- Have previous generations of their family hunted ducks too?
- Do they own the land that they hunt on? If so, do they expend a lot of effort in maintaining a wetland on their land?
- Does the participant see duck hunting as a more rural pastime?
- Do they think duck hunting threatened by increasing urbanisation?
Administration of Hunting
- How easy is it for the participants to be involved in duck hunting? Is it cheap/expensive?
- What type of licence does the participant usually purchase (full-season, part-season or weekend)?
- Are suitable shooting places easily available?
- Does the participant think duck hunting is well managed by Fish & Game? What role(s) do they think Fish & Game play in relation to gamebird management?
- Does the participant think Fish & Game are too restrictive on bag limits, hunting season period etc.?
- Do they think Fish & Game are helpful in providing advice about hunting?

Firearms
- Does the participant enjoy using guns?
- Does the participant do other hunting besides waterfowl?
- Is using a gun a large part of the motivation to shoot ducks?
- What do they think about the gun licensing process? Is it difficult/easy?
- Does the participant take part in clay-bird shooting or belong to a gun club?