

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton
on Saturday 10th December 2022 commencing at 11:11am.

PRESENT:

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Chairman: N. Juby

Councillors: E. Williamson, D. Cocks, P. Shaw, C. Sherrard, G. Annan, M. Barker,
B. Barnes

Staff: B. Wilson, J. Dyer, D. Klee

Visitors: I. Bailey (UPWM), P. Dell (NWWA), B. Street, K. Parker, A. Welch
(UPWM), P. Hardy (DOC)

1. APOLOGIES:

G. Dickey, T. Clark (for lateness), A. Daniel, C. Robertson, M. Davis

It was moved;

that apologies be accepted.

Sherrard/Annan – CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

Nil.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF 15th October 2022:

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meetings of the 15th of October 2022 be accepted as true and correct records.

Annan/Cocks – CARRIED

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PUBLIC EXCLUDED MEETINGS OF 15th October 2022:

It was moved;

that the minutes of the public excluded meetings of the 15th October 2022 be accepted as true and correct records.

Annan/Cocks – CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Nil.

5. GOVERNANCE REVIEW:

Councillor Barnes provided an update on the Governance Review emphasizing that the Review had been coordinated by DOC and thus the reports produced were DOC's rather than Fish & Game's. The review report was "*sitting on DOC's table*" and nothing was going to happen in a hurry as DOC had other priorities. He suggested that the Minister of Conservation was unlikely to force the review this close to the national elections. Therefore, it was up to individual Fish & Game regions to implement the recommended changes as they see fit.

The Chairman reminded Councillors that many of the review's recommendations would require legislative changes. He also understood that the Northland region was still interested in merging with Auckland/Waikato.

Mr Wilson sought advice from Councillors as to what level of engagement staff should undertake with iwi noting that he encouraged staff to engage with iwi at a local/hapu level. Councillor Barnes agreed that this was appropriate, and that Dr Daniel was doing an outstanding job working with iwi groups in the Whanganui catchment. Councillors agreed that staff should continue to work with iwi at a hapu/local level especially on RMA and habitat restoration projects.

Councillor Clark joined the meeting at 11:23am.

6. GAME REGULATION 3-YEARLY REVIEW:

Councillor Dickey's recommendations on the review were distributed to Councillors (previously distributed by email).

The Chairman invited visitors to speak on their remits.

Mr Ken Parker spoke on behalf of himself and Bruce Street. He recommended that:

- Game season be moved back by 3 weeks
- Sex based limits.
- More protection for Grey Duck.
- Separate limits for Shoveler.
- Reduction in the limit for Mallards.

Mr Parker emphasised the impacts of climate change on the game season.

Mr Klee observed that sex-based limits were desirable from a biological viewpoint but they would be difficult to enforce and hadn't worked in the Eastern region. Councillor Sherrard considered that sex-based limits wouldn't work in his area due to difficulties in identifying mallard hens.

Mr Ian Bailey spoke on the change in shooting hours implemented for the 2022 season. He considered that the change was well accepted by hunters.

Mr Bruce Street expressed his opinion that harvest would be reduced in a delayed season because the duck population would be spread out over more water. The Chairman stated that any change in the starting date would have to be decided at a national level. Most Fish & game regions were adamant that there should be a single national open day for the game season.

Councillors Cocks and Williamson spoke on the need for Council to develop a strategy to increase duck numbers with defined targets (e.g., 3% increase per year).

It was moved;

that staff prepare a plan to maximise the duck population for the April meeting.

Cocks/Williamson – Tabled but not voted on

Mr Ian Bailey spoke on behalf of the Upper Piako Wetland Management Association requesting that:

- The game bird season be extended by 2 weeks.
- The daily bag limits of grallards be 8 birds until the second Monday of the season and 6 birds from then until the end of the duck season.
- Any hunter who shoots a bird must immediately stop shooting until a significant attempt has been made to retrieve that bird.

Mr Klee emphasised that the staff recommendation had to balance the expectations of hunters against the need to maintain and indeed increase the duck population. Staff were keen shooters themselves and did not recommend changes to penalise hunters.

Mr Andrew Welch replied that hunters greatly appreciate the efforts of Councillors and staff.

Councillors discussed the advantages of giving shoveler a standalone limit.

Councillors considered the staff recommendation to ban drift shooting between Cambridge and Ngaruawahia given the recent construction of a cycleway alongside this stretch of river.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that it was Council policy to review the regulations only once every 3 years, and to accept the staff recommendations unless there were significant governance issues.

It was moved;

that the staff recommendations as given in the staff report be accepted.

Annan/Shaw – CARRIED

The changes to the game regulations for the 2023 season are:

- Every person who hunts or kills game shall make all reasonable efforts to retrieve game they have shot as soon as is practicable after shooting it.
- No person is allowed to shoot at game if they have no means of retrieving it.
- No person may shoot game from any unmoored boat on the Waikato River south of the boat ramp at the confluence of the Mangawara Stream and the Waikato River at Taupiri to the Shakespeare St bridge in Cambridge for the duration of the open season.
- The shooting hours shall be from 6.30am to 6.15pm, except the hunting of paradise shelduck and pukeko on 18 February to 19 February 2024 will be from 6.30am to 8.00pm.
- Shoveler duck have a separate limit and are no longer included in a combined limit with mallard and grey ducks.

The meeting rose for lunch at 1:15pm and resumed at 1:50pm. I. Bailey, B. Street and K. Parker left the meeting.

The motion by Councillor Cocks was withdrawn and it was agreed that this issue would be put on the agenda for the March meeting with previously relevant reports circulated to Councillors.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

An email from Mr Ian Hazlewood was tabled requesting that there should be limits placed on the number of shooters coming onto the Piggott Wetland during the first two weeks of the game season.

Councillors agreed that this was not advisable because:

- Council land was public land.
- Itinerant hunters could only shoot from fixed stands.
- Pond holders were subsidized by general licence income.

8. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

6.1 Bi-monthly Chief Executives Report

In reply to a question, Mr Hardy informed that the survey of the Whangamarino Weir had recently been completed after a delay due to the recent wet weather and the resulting high flows in the Whangamarino River. Remedial work, if required would be carried out in February.

It was moved;

that the Chief Executive's Bimonthly Report and Financial Statements be accepted.

Annan/Shaw – CARRIED

9. COUNCIL MEETING TIMETABLE 2023:

It was moved;

that the 2023 timetable be accepted.

Sherrard/Williamson – CARRIED

10. WILDLIFE ACT REVIEW:

Mr Wilson emphasised that the Wildlife Act review was a total rewrite of the legislation that could potentially have impact on F&G's management and hunter's right to hunt native game birds. Mr Klee informed Councillors of some potential outcomes of the review.

It was moved;

that the report from Mischa Davis is received.

Annan/Sherrard – CARRIED

The Chair expressed his thanks to Mischa Davis for the report.

11. NZ COUNCIL MEETING TIMETABLE 2022:

Councillor Barnes summarised the outcome of the recent NZC meeting. He reminded Councillors that the Chairman Ray Grubb had recently resigned. The Executive Committee was comprised of himself, Greg Duley and Dean Phibbs. Mr Wilson agreed to circulate to Councillors a summary of the meeting prepared by the CE of the NZC, Ms Corina Jordan.

12. OSH REPORT:

It was moved;

that the OSH report for December 2022 is accepted.

Shaw/Cocks – CARRIED

13. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Mr Wilson requested guidance from Councillors on the Ministerial exemption of .410 shotguns from the lead shot restrictions. This exemption was currently being reviewed.

It was moved;

that the NZC be advised that Council supported an extension to the exemption of .410 shotguns from the lead shot restrictions.

Cocks/Williamson – CARRIED

Mr Wilson informed Councillors of his preliminary results from analysing historical game licence sales. The analyse indicated that turnover (20% - 30%) was due to:

- Older hunters leaving the sport (68+ years)
- Long-term licence holders missing a year before returning to the sport.
- New licence holders not renewing licences after 1 – 2 years.

There was minimal evidence that long-term holders were leaving the sport other than thru natural causes (e.g. old age).

There were currently relatively few hunters in the 40-48 age group because of poor hunter recruitment for this cohort some 15 years ago. This may have been a consequence of the introduction of steel shot limiting the number of affordable shotguns available to new hunters at the time. Mr Wilson emphasised that more analysis was required but it was very time consuming.

Councillor Shaw informed Councillors that he was having issues with the DOC traps he was using as the trap arms were twisting on the plate. Mr Dyer advised that replacement parts were available. Mr Klee suggested that it could be due to the age and heavy use of the traps.

Councillors discussed Councillor Dickey's recommendation that licence holders would like to see who was voting for what in the minutes. It was noted that Councillors could request that their vote in opposition to a motion be recorded in the minutes. The Chairman considered it good governance practice, and indeed expected, that all Councillors publicly supported Councils decisions.

Councillor Williamson recommended that staff coordinate a restoration project on Lake Waikare with other agencies including iwi, DOC and other interested parties. Mr Klee replied that such a project was already well underway, and that he would provide an update at the next Council meeting.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 3:10pm.