

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at 156 Brymer Road on the Saturday the 29th November
2025 commencing at 11.30am

PRESENT:

Chairman: N. Juby
Councillor's present in person: S. Smith, M. Barker, E. Williamson, O. Kent, P. Dell, A. Sapich,
D. Cocks, G. Annan.
Staff: D. Klee, D. Lelievre, B. Jarvis-Child
Members of the Public: Sean McGrath, Shane McGrath, Bruce Inwards, Eric Best,
Mick Innes, Colin Sherrard.

1. APOLOGIES:

G. Dickey, T. Clarke, A. Brown, P. Hardy (DOC representative), A. Daniel.
It was moved;

that apologies be accepted.

Annan/Cocks– CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

Nil.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THE 27th SEPTEMBER 2025:

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of the 27th September 2025 be accepted as true and correct record.

Annan/Dell– CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Council expressed disappointment that the mapping initiative being led by regional staff across the country, and led by Beau, has not been supported. The feedback received by Councillors has been overwhelmingly positive and anglers are commenting how much easier it is making for them to access the resource and understand the regulations. Councillor Dell asked what our current contractual obligations were to the existing external provider. The CE explained that he had requested but not received any information regarding the existing contract.

5. TRI-ANNUAL GAME BIRD REGULATION REVIEW

The Chair outlined the process by which Council sets game regulations, including the species monitoring, hunter surveys and seeking direct feedback from licence holders through the remits. He noted that there were sometimes tensions between providing maximum hunter opportunity through liberalising regulations and maximising game populations, and it was the Council's job to weigh up the potential trade-offs in making their determination.

Six members of the public attended the meeting and four indicated they wished to address the Council regarding the game regulations. The Chair invited each person to address the Council and provide their perspective.

Eric Best addressed the council and spoke to his written submission, advocating for an increase in season length and lifting the ban on pond feeding.

Mick Innes, representative of the Northern Whangamarino Wetland Management Association, addressed the meeting, highlighting concerns around the wetlands' degradation. Season Length was cited as the primary issue when it comes to regulations as in many years there isn't enough water in May.

Bruce Inwards spoke to his submission, the key issues related to the short season length, creating a lack of opportunity and inability to foster recruitment into the sport. He wished to see the season lengthened to increase opportunity for hunters.

Sean McGrath addressed the council, suggesting there was no issue with duck populations but rather that the current season was too early before the wetlands in the region received sufficient rainfall. He sought an increase in season length or a shift in the season to alter in June.

The Chair thanked submitters for taking the time to engage and present their views. He also thanked Mr Jarvis-Child and Ms Lelievre for their excellent reports. Councillors subsequently went around the table outlining their views on submissions and staff recommendations, which provided Council with several scenarios that could be implemented.

All Councillors present gave their opinions and rationale for their preferred regulations with a wide variety of views expressed.

Bruce Inwards left the meeting at 1.01 pm

It was moved;

that option B in the staff report be adopted (increasing in season length to 6 weeks for grallards, no change in bag limit).

Barker/Sapich – CARRIED

Councillor Williamson wished to have his vote against the motion recorded.

It was moved;

that all other regulations be accepted in line with staff recommendations

Annan/Smith – CARRIED

Staff noted that there had been one further request which resulted in a minor boundary realignment of the lighthouse station registered release site

It was moved that the proposed boundary realignment be accepted.

Smith/Barker – CARRIED

Council rose for lunch at 1.30pm

The meeting reconvened at 2.10pm

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

6.1 Bi-monthly Chief Executives Report

Trout Releases: The Chair suggested that Council should formulate a trout release policy to clarify that releases in the Auckland/Waikato region are for put-and-take fisheries where there is insufficient natural recruitment to facilitate a wild fishery and focused in areas to facilitate fishing near major urban centres, primarily to provide opportunities for children and those with disabilities. The CE explained that he would raise this with the team's fisheries manager, draft some appropriate wording and suggested Council could formalise this when they conduct their next policy review.

EDNA monitoring: The Chair asked whether any agency was doing incursion investigations for perch in the likes of Karapiro using EDNA. The CE explained that EDNA may not be the best tool, given that during incursions, there may only be a few individuals that enter the new environment and may not be shedding enough DNA through a large lake like Karapiro to get a positive result until the population establishes.

Council Meetings: The Chair requested that Ms Simmonds sends electronic meeting invites out for Council meetings to all Councillors.

7. OUTGOING COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Council discussed the letter to NZC concerning the budget and levies for the current financial year. The CE was asked to provide an update. He confirmed no response had been

received, but he suggested that it would be on the agenda for the NZC meeting the following Thursday, although no agenda had been provided at this stage, so he could not confirm the process from here.

It was moved;

That that the Chief Executive wait until a after the NZC meeting for a formal response to the consultation letter. Based on whether the NZC address the concerns therein, the CE is to notify NZC and national office that the Auckland/Waikato region may be unable to pay its levy instalments due to its low reserves and will need to seek a resolution to the concerns outlined in the correspondence sent to NZC.

Cocks/Dell – CARRIED

8. 2026 COUCNIL MEETING DATES

It was moved;

That the draft meetings dates for 2026 proposed in the agenda be adopted.

Dell/Smith – CARRIED

9. LEGILATIVE REFORMS

Discussion was held around the reforms, noting further delays and new timeframes. In the interim Council noted that their meeting with Corina Jordan was helpful in clarifying the process and noted her suggestion that Council should begin drafting submissions and engaging with its licence holders. It was also noted that Councillor Dell has significant expertise in coms with his work in the media and further. It was moved;

That the CE work with Councillor Dell to prepare key communications to broadcast to licence holders in order to keep them informed about the reform process. The draft release should be circulated to council via email before sending.

Sapich/Kent – CARRIED

10. COUNCIL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Council requested that a register of interest be developed and maintained for all council members and that this be tabled each year at the AGM.

The 2025 Council and Chief Executive performance evaluations were tabled. It was noted that on average both were highly satisfactory. Further discussion ensued regarding areas which had received some lower scores and how those areas could be improved. It was also suggested that forms could be updated to provide more room for specific examples.

11. INFRINGEMENT SYSTEM AND COMPLAINE POLICY

The CE outlined the police infringement system and some of the benefits it provides in terms of streamlining prosecutions. It would mean a significant reduction in overall workload for compliance staff compared to the current diversion process. The drawbacks include that the level of fines are generally much lower than what is currently imposed by the courts in our region.

Councillors questioned whether the compliance policy would impact our ability to maintain this regions policy of prosecuting offenders hunting or fishing without a licence. The CE explained that the option of prosecution will still be still available for regions depending on the circumstances of individual cases, but it is likely that if adopted there would be more defined pathways and a likely expectation that low level offences including Hunting and Fishing without a licence will be dealt with via infringement rather than court prosecutions.

That the CE draft a response to NZC on the infringement and compliance policy documents outlining councils' position and circulate to council via email before sending.

Williamson/Kent – CARRIED

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY AND WELLBEING

The CE updated Councillors on progress with establishing the get home safe system. There appeared to have been no further progress at a national office and therefore the West Coast, Northland and Auckland/Waikato regions have joined single enterprise account that other regions can opt into as they decide to adopt the system. Being on a single enterprise account will mean better coordination and information sharing between regions. We have now ordered a new in-reach mini unit and plan to start using the system in the New Year as we get into our busy field season.

It was moved;

that the H&S&W report for November 2025 is accepted.

Cocks/Williamson – CARRIED

13. GENERAL BUISNESS

Whangamarino: The CE updated Councillors on the latest anoxic event in Whangamarino after heavy October rainfall. Field staff had increased surveillance activities and it appears at this stage that the fish kills were localized and small scale. Subsequently the oxygen levels have settled and no further fish kills were observed in the previous 3 week period. The CE noted that temperatures are rising quickly so there is a strong likelihood that outbreaks will start occurring in the usual WWTP hotspots soon and contractors had begun their surveillance and dispersal regimes in line with approved botulism management plans.

Firearms on F&G Land: Ms Lelievre had received a request asking whether an exemption could be made to carry firearms on council wetlands for approved predator control operations. Councillor Cocks raised concerns that if exemptions are made, more people will want to have one and could then facilitate the use of firearms for other purposes. It was requested that Ms Lelievre go back to the individual to put a formal proposal to council at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 4.12pm