

# AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF

If you require further elaboration or clarification of items contained herein, or any other matters relating to F&G business, please don't hesitate to contact your local councillor or the office.

## **Matters arising from the Council Meeting of 26 February 2022**

1. The Chairman welcomed Di Taylor NZFC Chief Executive and thanked her for attending the meeting.
2. The Chairman congratulated Clare Robertson for completing her Master's degree, and Mischa Davis for the recent birth of a daughter.
3. A letter was tabled from the Minister of Conservation, Kiri Allan, approving the Auckland/Waikato Sports Fish and Game Management Plan.
4. The Chairman reported that he had called the Chairman of the Northland Fish & Game Council, Phil Durham, to discuss the Regional Structure Review. Mr Durham was adamant that Northland was not interested in any merger.
5. The Chairman had also met with Councillor Debbie Oakley and staff from the Eastern Fish & Game Council. This was an excellent meeting, and although Eastern was not interested in merging with Auckland/Waikato it was agreed that both councils would continue to work together constructively. The Chairman noted that he will try and attend the next Eastern meeting.
6. Mr Wilson was asked how Council's reserves were invested. He replied that they were invested in term deposits that were usually 9 – 12 months duration. Councillors agreed that returns from term deposits had been low compared to other investment opportunities in recent years. It was agreed that Mr Wilson prepare a report for the next Council meeting on alternative investment options.
7. Dr Daniel's report on proposed changes to the sports fish regulations was tabled. The following regulation changes were approved:
  - Bait fishing becomes a legal method in the lower Waihou River
  - A nil bag limit for the Waione River
  - Allow for the possession of two assembled fly rods if only one is in use (policy change)
  - "Roach pole" is referred to as "coarse fishing pole"
8. Dr Daniel's report on the Ohinemuri River trout fishery was discussed. The report concluded that the mainstem of the Ohinemuri is too warm to sustain a quality trout fishery, although other water quality and habitat requirements are well within the acceptable limits for trout.
9. Councillors considered the request from the NZ Council for nominations for representatives on the Research Strategy Sub-Committee of NZ Council. Councillors agreed that Mr Klee would be excellent in this role due to his extensive experience in co-ordinating Fish & Game research projects.
10. Councillor Cocks asked whether the sex-based regulations for mallards would be introduced for 2023, and what publicity would this initiative be given. Mr Wilson replied that the 3-yearly review of the game regulations would be coming out later in the year including consultation with licence holders.
11. Councillors discussed the draft report on the future regional structure of Fish and Game Councils. Concerns were expressed over conflicts of interest by the report authors and how these had been managed. The Chairman offered to write to the implementation group asking for details as to how COI was handled by the regional structure panel.

## **Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report**

**Botulism:** We are dealing with about a dozen outbreaks on WWTPS in the Waikato, Waipa and Hauraki areas. Most of the plants have botulism management plans required under the conditions of consent. David Klee has been actively working with plant operators for around a decade now to try and implement good management practice. We have also assisted 3 separate pest control contractors to ensure that they have the specific tools and skills to manage outbreaks.

**Lake Ngaroto Outbreak:** David Klee has been out to the lake to assist with the clean-up and onboard contractors hired by Waipa DC to mitigate the outbreak. The response at staff level has been great but some of rhetoric coming from the council is disconcerting.

**NES-Freshwater:** We met with the Ministry of the Environment to discuss the proposed changes to the National Environmental Standards for wetlands.

**Waipa District Plan:** The Waikato District Council has released the report of the Independent Hearings Panel on its decisions on the submissions made by submitters, including F&G.

Most of our submissions were either fully accepted or accepted in part, including:

- Hunting and freshwater fishing accepted as rural activities, including noise provisions.
- Earthworks for conservation activities accepted as a permitted activity in the rural zone (but not in SNA's).
- Maimai accepted as permitted structures for waterfowl hunting in the rural zone.
- F&G information signs permitted.

**Paeroa Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Consent Application:** Clare Robertson made a submission on the application by the Hauraki District Council for a 5-year temporary consent to operate the Paeroa WWTP. Including the need to for a Botulism Management Plan.

**Matarangi Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Consent Application:** Clare also made a submission on the Matarangi WWTP consent proposal, and again included the need for a Botulism Management Plan.

**Predator-free Franklin:** Councillor Geoff Dickey has taken the initiative in looking at how our pond-holders can take advantage of the *Predator-free Franklin* programme.

PFF has recently secured additional funding for pest control in the North Waikato. They can supply expert advice on pest control network planning, density, and control method selection. They can also supply landowners and volunteer groups with a variety of either free or subsidised equipment and training in how to use it effectively.

**Comprehensive Consent for Wetland Maintenance (Waikato District Council):** We received notification from the Waikato District Council that they have approved our consent application for maintenance earthworks on our wetlands, including work in significant natural areas. However, we still have a lot of work to do before getting consent from the Waikato Regional Council. This work includes carrying out a wetland vegetation survey. We've contracted wetland ecologist Britta Deichmann to provide and identify wetland habitat type and what plant species are present within our wetlands, and what mitigation methods in accordance need to be carried out.

**Williamson Wetland:** David Klee went through the Williamson Wetland prior to Christmas and logged all the traps he could find, sprayed around them, and set up the trap NZ app for pond holders to use. It is requirement of the predator control plan, lodged under the resource consent, to keep track of the control activities occurring and record the catches.