

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 15 February 2025

1. **Signage for kids fishing area:** A request for an update from Hamilton Anglers Club regarding signs. Staff are continuing to work with landowners and administrative bodies to find suitable location for easy access fishing spots where interpretive signs and fishing information can be placed.
2. **Body cameras:** The Chair suggested that he had a camera which could be trialled by staff.
3. **Fish Regulations Review:** The Council voted to simplify the regions ~~sports~~-fishing regulations. Dr Daniel spent significant time and effort on the 2025 regulation review. This was communicated to anglers in the spring flyer, reel Life and a direct email to all licence holders in the Auckland/Waikato angler database (previous five years). Anglers were asked to provide feedback via an online survey, written letter or email. Feedback was received from 168 respondents to the online survey, 31 emails, and no written submissions. The feedback from anglers was used as the basis for the Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council 2025 Sports Fishing Regulations Review report which was considered by council prior to voting on the proposed regulations. Submitters were invited via email and Reel Life to speak on behalf of their submission.
4. **High Pathogenic Avian Influenza:** The Council raised concern about the impact of a potential outbreak on hunters participation and licence sales and whether the organisation was doing enough to ensure its long term financial sustainability. It was noted that regional and international experts should be involved in the discussion, particularly how hunting has been managed overseas in spite of HPAI circulating in waterfowl populations.
5. **Banding Reports:** Mr Jarvis-Child submitted three reports focused on game bird monitoring projects that were discussed at the meeting. The first report concerns the grallard population size estimates. The second report is related to harvest and hunter effort and explores how regulations may (or may not) influence this. These two reports represent his first look into the data. These two reports aim to inform council of the current status of both the population and harvest, and contextualise these estimates. While this work may help answer some questions it will undoubtedly prompt more. The third report is about a SMS pilot what was completed in 2024. This presents a new approach to estimating the non-reporting of bands that each year which is important to know when estimating population size.
6. **Operational Workplan:** The council reviewed the OWP and agreed to set strategic priorities for 3 years in line with council election cycles.

Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report

Banding

Councillors and volunteers were thanked for their help with banding, there was lower catches which there may have been a few reasons including abundant alternate food sources and predators may have been present.

Trend Counts

Aerial trend counts in January were carried out. The paradise Shelduck numbers in the King Country were under the threshold of 5,000 birds that were needed to declare a special shelduck season.

Wild and hatchery tag returns

There was a surge of tag returns over the holiday period from both wild fish and Lake Arapuni tagging project.

Permits

Many requests for permits particularly for pukeko and paradise shelduck on chicory crops.

Matamata-Piako combined WWTP consents – A submission opposing a district wide application to replace the resource consents associated with the wastewater treatment plants for Matamata, Morrinsville, Tahuna and Te Aroha, in the Matamata Piako District.

Waikato Regional Coastal Plan – hearing - Late last year we submitted on the Waikato Regional Coastal Plan seeking changes to better enable wetland restoration and enhancement in the coastal marine area. The hearing for this plan will take place in February where we will present a submitter statement summarising our original submission highlighting our outstanding concerns with the proposed plan.

Whangamarino Working Group meetings - Dani been attending the Whangamarino Working Ground meetings and workshops. The purpose of the group is to contribute to the development and delivery the Whangamarino Action Plan.

Fishing Access

With Access being one of our key objectives, staff have been investigating how we can improve our access information for licence holders. A new mapping system has been discussed.

Grass carp investigation

Adam assisted DOC in an investigation into the illegal release of grass carp into the Quarry Lake at Lake Pupuke. It was determined that the statute of limitations had expired and there were no grounds for continuing the investigation.

Access fund donation

A bequest has been offered to support the Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council Access fund. Once formalised the bequest will be presented to council to be accepted as per the donors wishes. The access fund is used to purchase properties or access to prime hunting and angling locations and staff are actively seeking hunter and angler contributions to the fund.