

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 22 May 2025

Trend Counts – Councillor Dickey asked whether the trend count report would include the Manukau Harbour as he had noted a lot of Swan and Geese on it whilst out fishing. The C.E. explained that we cannot count this harbour during trend flights due to flying restrictions. A meeting is scheduled with the Airport to develop a long-term management plan for swan on the Manakau.

Easement on Stone Jug Road Property – The Chair asked whether staff are entirely satisfied with the final wording on easement. Mr Daniel indicated that there had been a lot of dialogue over a long period of consultation with mana whenua and the district council to land the current wording and the current wording is seen as a good compromise.

Taumarunui Prosecution - Councillor Annan requested an update on the prosecution against multiple defendants in Taumarunui. The CE indicates that he had accepted an offer to settle the case for most of the defendants without pursuing formal prosecution on that basis that the person who initially posted the video pleads guilty on all charges and others accept diversion which includes an admission of guilt.

Ranging Activities - Councillor Brown asked whether there were any plans to go back to the areas on Arapuni that had exhibited high rates of noncompliance. A plan has been made to check out the areas during spawning surveys and potentially go back next year to check some other maimais they hadn't made this year.

Budget licence forecast and licence fee recommendation – A discussion around the budget setting process for a number of items concluded that there is an urgent need to develop sound national policy on the topic in order to avoid the issues that occurred this year.

NZC Consultation documents – Concern was raised that there was a general disconnect regarding what NZC perceive their role to be when setting national policy especially when it comes to H&S noting that NZC is not a PCBU for regions.

General business - The Chair pre circulated an email highlighting that he would need to take a leave of absence from the Chairs role until November to begin a new business venture. Councillor Annan was elected as acting Chair, until such a time when Councillor Juby can return to the role.

Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Trend count

Trend count report - Waiting of data from Northland has held up the report for swan, paradise shelduck and Canada geese. This data will hopefully improve some of our population index estimates north of Auckland.

Population surveys

Lake Arapuni Spawning Survey – These are scheduled to begin in the first week of May 2025. In addition, Adam has contacted the owners of a private property on the upper Waione Stream and will attempt to establish a relationship to allow for spawning surveys and fish surveys.

Fish harvest survey

Wild and hatchery tag returns - The Whanganui and Whakapapa tagging has begun with three returns to date but unfortunately many are lacking the appropriate data. An article will be in the 2025/26 Magazine to inform anglers of their obligations/benefits in reporting tags.

Sterile fish report - The Sterile Fish Project is scheduled to come to an end with a final report on the project due later in the year.

Arapuni fishing competition - The Te Awamutu Fish & Game club's Lake Arapuni Fishing Competition was held 22-23 March. Anglers weighed 86 of the 128 fish caught on the weekend. Anglers rated their angling satisfaction at 8.9 out of 10 and only anglers that did not catch any fish rated their satisfaction less than 8 out of 10. Of the fish weighed, 45 were wild and 31 were tagged.

Fish harvest survey

Harvest Data – North Island Report - Staff are currently in the process of cleaning the raw data for the North Island Fish & Game regions. The aim is to have this ready for the end of the Gamebird season, either as a North Island report, or a New Zealand wide report.

Preparations For Hunter Survey - The survey will involve 6 periods with a minimum of 120 surveys per period. This year, we will aim to capture more responses during the opening weekend period, given the high proportion of hunting activity that occurs over these two days.

Trout Releases

Quarry Lake release – 200 x 2-year-old fish were released on the 15th April 2025. Releases are scheduled at:

- Quarry Lake for the July and September school holidays.
- Moana-nui, Tomarata and Whatihua lake releases will be conducted during May.

Regulations

2025 Fish Regulation changes - The significant regulation changes made by the council for the 25/26 season have required an overhaul of the fishing regulations and notes requiring significant revisions to the gazette prior to consideration by the minister.

HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

RMA

Climate Change Modelling - NZC funded Dr Adam Canning to produce a climate change study for trout habitat to inform regions of potential changes in the population. The research was consistent with AW monitoring where lowland streams in the north of the region will have diminished trout populations due to heat.

Proposed National Wastewater Environmental Performance Standards – Staff collaborated with members of the National Resource Management Act (RMA) team to develop a submission on the proposed National Wastewater Environmental Performance Standards.

Council Land

Stone Jug Road easement - The proposed easement that is to be placed on the Stone Jug Road property has been negotiated with the Ruapehu District Council and local iwi.

Maintenance Logs - Our pondholders have been trailing out a QR code method of recording their works on our wetlands. We are required to provide a summary of works completed on our wetlands to WRC each year, so this information will feed into that, but it will also aid in any funding we apply for on our wetlands.

Non-Council Land

WCEET - A WCEET funding Application for one project with Dave Dean – Pine Haven was submitted. This proposal is to retire, fence and plant out a stream with several ponds running through his drystock property.

PARTICIPATION

Access Negotiation

Hamilton Anglers' Kids Fishing Signs Request – The Hamilton Zoo has declined our request to have fishing or fishing signs at Horseshoe Lake.

National Access Strategy - Staff attended a national access strategy meeting where the AW strategy of an access fund and the purchase of land was discussed. It was suggested that staff time was better spent at a national level lobbying for the tools to open access.

Other Publications

Catch and Release Education – Staff presented to North Shore anglers club where the Catch and Release Education program was introduced.

PUBLIC INTERFACE

Liaison advocacy

Licence holder engagement – Dani attended Franklin Hunting and Fishing Duck night in April and David and Beau are respectively going to be attending the Hamilton and Warkworth H&F Duck nights end of April to give talks also.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Ranging

Ranging effort - 16 contacts, 6 licence checks, and 1 citation. Ranging occurred during drift dives on the Mangatutu, Awakino, Kauaeranga, Waikato and Whakapapa Rivers. One verbal warning and one citation for fishing without a licence were issued.

Maimai Disputes – Staff needed to resolve several maimai disputes and answer general hunting questions. Long term it will be helpful to develop an online registration app where people can log their stand claim at the time of tagging.

Legal

Prosecutions: Taumarunui case. Staff have spent considerable time preparing evidence briefs for the Taumarunui case.

Staff Training to Internalise Prosecution Costs – Ms Robertson is currently undergoing training in Fish and Game prosecutions under the guidance of Anthony Van Dorp, Senior Fish and Game Officer at Eastern Fish and Game.

PLANNING REPORTING

National Liaison

Invasive Species – Mr Daniel has been asked to participate in a national compliance group for the gold clam. The long-term plan for the gold clam has been released without adequate consultation and has several significant gaps that pose threats to Fish & Game.

ADMINISTRATION

OSH

Oxygen Cylinder Holder – An oxygen cylinder holder appropriate for larger cylinders was installed on the trailer for use with the fish tanker.