



**EASTERN
FISH AND GAME COUNCIL**

***MEETING
AGENDA***

12 March 2026

AGENDA

The 220th Meeting of the Eastern Fish and Game Council

Venue: Eastern Fish & Game Region Offices
Paradise Valley Road
ROTORUA

Date: **Thursday, 12 March 2026**

Commences: **11.00 AM**

	<u>Page</u>
1 Welcome (11AM)	
2 Apologies	(R)
3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (12 February 2026) (11.05,10min)	(R) 1
3.1 Identification of Items for Council Policy	(R)
3.2 Matters arising from the meeting of 12 February 2026	
4 Notification of Items for General Business	
5 Conflict of Interest Register	13
6 Health and Safety Report (11.15, 10 min)	(R) 15
7 Anglers Notice Review (11.25, 15min)	(R) 17
8 2026 –27 Operational Work Plan & Budget (11.40, 20 min)	(R) 26
9 Fish & Game Reform Discussion (12pm, 15min)	(D)
Working Lunch (12.15PM – 12.45PM)	
10 Operational Reports (12.45, 20 min)	31
10.1 Finance Report	(R) 31
10.2 Management Report	(I/D) 40
10.3 Licence Sales Report	(I/D) 48
11 Liaison Officers Reports (1.05, 10 min)	(I) 49
12 General Business (1.15, 20min)	
13 Public Excluded (1.35, 30 min)	(R) 50
14 Meeting Closes (2.05)	

R = resolution required, D = for discussion/advice, I = for information only

**UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 219th MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW
ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 11 AM.**

Present

Crs. Lindsay Lyons, Alec McIver, Pat Swift, Kevin Coutts, Scott Nicol, Murray Ferris, and Mark Sceats (online via teams)

In attendance

Arash Alaeinia, Kate Thompson, Eben Herbert, Matt McDougall (for General business) Eastern Fish & Game; Barry Roderick and Bernie McDowell.

1.0 WELCOME

1.1 Cr Lindsay Lyons opened the meeting at 11.00am welcoming all including members of public Bernie McDowell and Barry Roderick.

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 There were no apologies for the 219th meeting of the Eastern Fish & Game Council, however Cr Murray Ferris informed Council that he would need to leave early due to the significant delays in returning to Gisborne.

2.2 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Kevin Coutts) that the apologies for the 219th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [26/02/2.2]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (11 DECEMBER 2025)

3.1 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Alec McIver) that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2025 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [26/02/3.1]*

3.2 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY

3.3 There were no items for inclusion in Council Policy.

3.4 MATTERS ARISING

3.4.1 Cr Kevin Coutts wished to raise that a discussion he had had with Matt McDougall during the meeting was not sufficiently reflected in the minutes. Cr Lindsay Lyons clarified that the minutes were not intended to be a verbatim record of discussions, but rather an overview. Arash Alaeinia suggested that the recording could be reviewed and the minutes updated if necessary. Kevin advised that this was not necessary but wanted to formally note his concern.

3.4.2 Cr Lindsay Lyons asked whether the communication had been sent to the New Zealand Council noting Council's concerns about the changes to the family licence. Arash Alaeinia confirmed that this had been actioned.

4.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

Cr Mark Sceats - Waikaremoana hut

Cr Alec McIver - Sale of hunting rights

Cr Lindsay Lyons - Okareka/Tarawera ramp closures

Bernie McDowell - Gamebird numbers

5.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

5.1 Councillors were asked to inform the chair of any conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest were recorded.

6.0 HEALTH & SAFETY

- 6.1 Arash Alaeinia highlighted the updated layout of the health and safety report as recommended by the recent Health & Safety audit.
- 6.2 *Agreed (Kevin Coutts/Scott Nicol) that Council receives the Health and Safety report. [26/02/6.2]*

7.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDIT

- 7.1 Arash Alaeinia summarised the significant gaps as identified in the recent Health & Safety Audit;
- H&S Policy is Out of Date
Administrative update required – processes are operating effectively.
 - Hazardous Substances Register
Register is in place; however, Safety Data Sheets require five-yearly updates to remain compliant.
 - H&S Meetings
H&S is discussed at weekly staff meetings but no dedicated meetings. Quarterly H&S-focused meetings to commence in March.
 - Evacuation Plan
Plan exists but must be updated to include landslides and earthquakes.
 - Fire Evacuation Drills
Drills are conducted but not formally recorded. Records will now be retained internally and drills to incorporate other areas if the property not just the office. (Previously sent to Fire and Emergency New Zealand.)
- 7.2 Arash also commented on the areas noted for improvement and believed that many of these would be addressed once the New Zealand Council (NZC) establishes standardised policies across the country. He felt it would be useful for a clearer distinction in future audits between minimum compliance and “gold standard” best practice.
- 7.3 Cr Lindsay Lyons commented on the inclusion of KPI’s for Managers. Cr Scott Nicol noted that, overall, the audit represented a positive outcome, with most identified gaps being administrative.
- 7.4 Cr Mark Sceats advised that the audits had highlighted regional variations with different regions facing different H & S risks. He said the NZC were working to develop a comprehensive H & S Policy while still recognising those regional variances.
- 7.5 *Agreed (Alec McIver/Scott Nicol) that Council acknowledges receipt of the Health and Safety Audit and receives an update on progress of implementation at successive Council meetings. [26/02/7.5]*

8.0 ANGLERS NOTICE REVIEW

- 8.1 Council was informed that this year staff undertake the biannual full review of the Anglers Notice. Matt Osborne provided background to the four proposals received to date including:
- Opening of lower sections of tributaries of Lakes Aniwhenua and Matahina to year-round fishing (submitter Barry Roderick)
 - Additional winter shoreline area Okere Arm - Lake Rotoiti (submitted by Staff)
 - Redefine soft bait definition to exclude malleable putty style baits which could lead to deeper hooking (submitted by Staff)
 - Increase prominence of “All Other Waters Not Listed” within the regulation guide. (submitted by Staff)
- 8.2 Cr Kevin Coutts questioned whether it would be worthwhile increasing the daily limit on Lake Rotorua, given the high catch rates and the abundance of fish. Matt Osborne

- advised caution noting that the high catch rate was enjoyed by anglers, and the Lake Rotorua fishery supported the Lake Rotoiti fishery through the Oahu Channel.
- 8.3 Matt advised that, to date, only two responses had been received following advertising of the Anglers Notice process to the community. Neither response related to the Anglers Notice, both concerned licensing matters.
- 8.4 Cr Lindsay Lyons expressed thanks to Barry Roderick for his submission.
- 8.5 ***Agreed (Scott Nicol/Murray Ferris) that Council agreed to the consultation process and time frame for considering changes to the 2026-2027 Anglers Notice. [26/02/8.5]***
- 8.6 ***Agreed (Scott Nicol/Murray Ferris) that Council did not identify any additional issues for the 2026-2027 Anglers Notice and supports the dissemination to clubs and public the four submissions put forward for the 2026-2027 Anglers Notice at today's meeting. [26/02/8.6]***

9.0 GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR THE 2026-2027 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

- 9.1 Arash Alaeinia advised that full consultation with staff had not yet occurred due to significant workflows in January combined with annual leave. Moving forward, he suggested commencing the process in October of the prior year. Arash noted that last year the number of priorities had been reduced from five to four. Given that many objectives are business as usual and stipulated under the Conservation Act, he proposed reducing the number again to three core priorities.

The proposed priorities for Council consideration were:

- 1 Licence numbers and Revenue
- 2 Access
- 3 Increasing Opportunities for Fishers & Hunters

Arash highlighted a very tight turnaround before the next meeting at which the draft budget and Operational Work Plan (OWP) would be presented to Council on 12 March for submission to the New Zealand Council by 14 March 2026. He added that Council needed to be aware that, if it wished to introduce new work programmes, it would need to consider what could be removed, given the limited time and resources available.

- 9.2 Cr Mark Sceats noted that the Zero-Based Budgeting approach is to be carried through for inclusion in the new Fish & Game Bill.
- 9.3 Cr Scott Nicol requested that “natural environment” be incorporated within the description for Priority 2 - Access, noting that the organisation not only supports the habitat of species within the river systems, for example, but also the protection of river systems more generally.
- 9.4 ***Scott Nicol/Murray Ferris) that Council reviewed its priorities and programmes for the 2025-2026 year and did not identify any changes it wished to see incorporated into its Draft Operational Work Plan for the 2026/2027 year. [26/02/9.4]***

10.0 FISH AND GAME REFORM DISCUSSION

- 10.1 As the meeting was ahead of schedule the Chair suggested Council advanced item 13 “Fish & Game Reform Discussion” to fill 30-minute slot prior to breaking for lunch.
- 10.2 Arash Alaeinia distributed a draft summary of the submission points for the Eastern’s Council’s submission to the Fish & Game Reform. He noted the NZC’s “Preliminary Position” and “Rationale” was recorded in the corresponding columns, with Eastern Council’s comments to date outline below. He advised that Eastern’s feedback to date had been provided in a letter to the Minister.
- 10.3 Eben Herbert suggested that Council take the time to review the document. He requested that any further feedback be directed to the Chair for collation to avoid duplication. Eben also offered to speak directly to Councillors who needed further information or wished to discuss specific points.

- 10.4 Eben advised that, to date, there was no clear indication of when the Bill would be released and commented on the significant amount of legislative change needed to go through prior to this year's Election.
- 10.5 Council Scott Nicol sought clarification that where no comment had been recorded from Eastern, this indicated support for the NZC position. Eben confirmed that, for many of the proposed changes, Eastern Council supports the NZC position or supports that position subject to other conditions. He added that Councillors were welcome to provide further comment on those items also.
- 10.6 Cr Lindsay Lyons thanked Eben for the work undertaken to date. Council proposed a deadline of 27 February for any additional feedback and supported convening a special meeting once the Bill was released.
- 10.7 Council confirmed that the feedback currently being provided is interim, based on the information available to date, and is subject to further consideration once the Bill is released and reviewed in detail.

11.0 Council adjourned the meeting at 12.03pm for lunch.

11.1 The meeting recommenced at 12.30pm

12.0 DRAFT NZ CROP DEPREDATION POLICY

12.1 Council discussed the draft crop depredation policy and supported the overview from staff which had identified several areas which were deficient. It was noted that the draft was developed using, as a starting point, an outdated version of policy established in the central South Island and did not consider nuances of other regions. Its focus was primarily on farmers and crops and overlooked the broader range of damage and nuisance caused by game birds. Council agreed with the staff recommendation that NZC engage with regions and specialist staff to review the policy.

12.2 *Agreed (Kevin Coutts/Murray Ferris) that Council requests that NZC engage and receive input from specialist staff around the Country to create a practical and workable policy and operational guidelines that meet the legislative requirement and is able to be used and implemented nationally. [26/02/12.2]*

13.0 STATISTICAL CONSIDERATION FOR GAME BIRD MONITORING AT A NATIONAL LEVEL – PROTEUS REPORT

13.1 Matt McDougall informed Council that the primary monitoring methods identified within the latest Proteus Report had been undertaken in the Eastern Region for many years. He explained that the former Game Bird Research Committee, in collaboration with Proteus, had developed a framework several years ago which concluded that banding and aerial transect counts were the most effective methods for monitoring game bird populations. Aerial transect surveys had been conducted for several years but were discontinued in the Eastern and Auckland Waikato regions due to topographical constraints which limited their effectiveness because aircraft were unable to safely operate at low altitudes. He expressed disappointment that specialist staff were not consulted prior to commissioning the report as this would have provided insight into the work already undertaken.

13.2 Cr Lindsay Lyons expressed frustration over the lack of consultation with regional staff and Council agreed that this should be highlighted to the New Zealand Council.

13.3 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Murray Ferris) that Council supports the findings of the Proteus Report and its recommendations and directs the Manager to write to the NZC expressing disappointment at the lack of engagement with regional staff prior to commissioning work of this nature, particularly given the cost involved, to ensure the work had not already been undertaken. Cr Mark Sceats abstained [26/02/13.3]*

14.0 R3 REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION – PILOT PROGRAMME

- 14.1 Arash Alaeinia felt that it is positive that attention is being given to R3 but felt that it would have been beneficial for the paper to go to the regions first so a more robust and practical plan could be developed. Once strengthened, it could then be submitted to Council for consideration.
- 14.2 Council's discussion included questions about whether the Women and Junior Outreach programmes should be broadened to include initiatives aimed at encouraging men to participate in the sport. There were also queries regarding the cost of the "ReWild" campaign and whether its effectiveness is measurable.
- 14.3 Cr Lindsay Lyons asked whether the funds previously allocated to the "Fish for Gold" promotions could instead be directed toward R3 initiatives? Kate Thompson provided background on the establishment of the reserve, and Arash Alaeinia agreed that R3 initiatives would be consistent with the original purpose of the fund. Council expressed support for directing these funds to R3 initiatives and requested that management investigate this further.
- 14.4 Cr Pat Swift asked about progress on the development of an access app? Arash Alaeinia advised that NZC is exploring opportunities for a single-source management tool that would incorporate the website, CRM, licensing system, and access information. In the interim, Eastern has signed on to the access mapping system recently developed by the Auckland/Waikato Region.
- 14.5 Arash Alaeinia informed Council of the opportunity for one of our staff to attend an R3 workshop hosted by Otago Fish and Game, which was to be presented by a leading R3 expert from the United States.
- 14.6 Agreed (Scott Nicol/Murray Ferris) that Council supports the principle and acknowledges that operationally Eastern is already involved and participates. That NZC develops a more robust marketing and R3 plan that is both measurable and practical in consultation with the regions and specialist staff to help increase sales and revenue and requested that updates be provided on the measured results. [26/02/14.6]***

15.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

Finance Report

- 15.1 Cr Lindsay Lyons queried the audit costs of \$11,000, noting that many regions were paying more than \$15,000. Arash advised that some South Island regions were disputing the costs, as their auditor had charged each region individually for a particular process, rather than applying a single organisation charge. Kate Thompson added that some regions do not prepare their own financial statements which resulted in additional accountancy costs. Arash noted the audit costs nationally were significant and had been identified as an area where savings could be made. However, he advised little could be done while regions remained individual legal entities.
- 15.2 Agreed (Alec McIver/Kevin Coutts) that the payments for November and December 2025 totalling \$507,768.70 be approved. [26/02/15.2]***

Management Report

- 15.3 Arash Alaeinia noted that the start of the year had been a busy period for both fisheries and game bid management, with surveys, compliance work, transect counts, and banding projects underway. He thanked staff for their hard work during this time and also acknowledged the work Mark Sherburn had done in supporting Simon Aston with the development of the Ngo Fishing Club.
- 15.4 Arash advised that the Kids' Fishing event would be changed this year to include earlier events in March and April, as fish had grown to a size to support this. The August event would be cancelled, as weather conditions are typically poor at that time of year. He confirmed that the change was supported by the Rotorua Angler Association.
- 15.5 Cr Lindsay Lyons acknowledged that thanked Arash for the work he undertook over the Christmas period responding to the boat ramp closures which were announced on Christmas Eve.

Licence Sales Report

- 15.7 Arash reported that licence sales were down on the previous year, reflecting the national trend across the organisation. He noted that weather may have contributed to Eastern's result. Kate confirmed this, advising that day licences were down, with the excellent weather last year having boosted sales of this category. She added that the downturn in family licence sales had also contributed to the overall result. Cr Kevin Coutts questioned the downturn of over 300 family licence sales. Kate responded, advising that while some of these had been replaced by individual licences in other categories, there was still a net loss in both revenue and participant numbers.

16.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

- 16.1 *Report from Bay of Plenty Conservation Board*
No Report
- 16.2 *Report from Department of Conservation*
No Report.
- 16.3 *Report from New Zealand Council*
Cr Mark Sceats advised that much of the New Zealand Council' recent focus had been on legislative changes, including the Firearms Act, the RMA reform and the Fish & Game reform.
- 16.4 Cr Lindsay Lyons informed Council that, in future, he intends to provide a report from the Chair to keep members informed on his meetings and developments. These reports may be written or delivered verbally during meetings, dependant on time. He noted that although previous meetings had produced little of consequence, recent events indicate that more meaningful updates could now be shared.

17.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

- 17.1 *Cr Mark Sceats -Waikaremoana hut*
Council discussed the lease arrangements for the Fish & Game Hut at Waikaremoana. Arash Alaeinia advised he had made multiple attempts to liaise with Tūhoe in mid 2024 to early 2025 without success. The discussion primarily focused on relationships, particularly Tūhoe's reluctance to communicate with Fish & Game. Arash noted that staff working in the area had reported no concerns and he highlighted Fish & Games positive relationships with the likes of the Waikaremoana Boating and Fishing Association and Genesis Energy. Council also briefly discussed news regarding issues raised against Tūhoe by various hapū groups.
- 17.2 Cr Murray Ferris left the meeting at 1.44pm.
- 17.3 *Bernie McDowell – Duck numbers and shortening of Game Bird Season length*

Bernie spoke to Council on behalf of hunters he knows questioning the rationale for reducing the Game Bird season back to four weeks this season, he felt that this was counterintuitive to Council's objective of increasing participation and licence sales.

Summary questions and answers:

- Q1 Bernie McDowell - How do we know what the population is, many birds recovered in the location Bernie hunts have been banded outside of this region?
- A1 Matt McDougall - 87% of Eastern banded birds are recovered within 50 kilometres of where they were banded and over 90% within the Eastern region. We do know that the birds move around, there is a track of birds between the Waikato and Kaituna/Coastal BOP however the number of birds that go out of the region is surprisingly small. We also assume that the number of birds that come in are offset by the number of birds that go out.
- Q2 Bernie McDowell - How do we always average virtually the same number of birds per season even though you say one year is a poor breeding season and the next is good.
- A2 Matt McDougall - We have banded birds in this region since 1998, since then the population has shown a steady decline more so in the last 10 years. This is consistent with land use changes with conversions to dairy, and kiwifruit. A lot of the small ephemeral wetlands are gone, and this really impacts the breeding season.
- Q3 Kevin Coutts - You mentioned that you won't know the results of last season's extended season until the end of the 2026 season. This year, we're not going to have a drought, and we appear to have had a decent breeding season, wouldn't it have been worth, with these favourable conditions, running with the extra two weeks for another season so you would know the impact of it?
- A3 Matt McDougall - We will never know the impact as we do not have a control. Council has two responsibilities the first is to manage the population on behalf of the Crown, the second is to ensure the harvest is sustainable. Our research shows that the population is declining. There are areas with large numbers of ducks from the Tarawera River to Orini, but we are managing 33,000 square kilometers. For example Reporoa, the East Coast, and Taupo numbers are low in comparison to BoP. It's these small areas with lots of ducks that support the rest of the region. Over 90% of original wetlands in the BoP have been drained, most of the breeding occurs in the drains, a lot of the little wetlands are not producing.
- Q4 Bernie McDowell - Have we considered surveying the impact of Weka's on ducklings?
- A4 Matt McDougall - No, as Weka are protected, however Pukeko also have significant impact on duckling survival. A special Pukeko season is underway now but unfortunately hunters do not always take up this opportunity.
- Q5 Cr Kevin Coutts - Were hunters at Orini and Awaiti reserves surveyed?
- A5 Matt McDougall - The annual Game Bird hunter survey randomly surveys 840 hunters from across the region. A high percentage (over 40%) of those surveyed last year shot zero or very few birds. He said that some hunters may be in a privileged position of being able to take a good number of birds due to their hunting location, however if hunters continue to shoot zero or very few birds he noted that this will also impact licence sales and participation.
- Q6 Cr Kevin Coutts - Does this reflect hunter skill more so than birds available.
- A6 Matt McDougall - Hunter skill not assessed.
- Q7 Cr Lindsay Lyons - Auckland Waikato region no longer allow feeding out, this seems to draw birds in?

- A7 Matt McDougall – A survey conducted a number of years ago had shown no real difference in success of those feeding out vs those that didn't. However, it was noted that those who feed out tend to hunt for longer and therefore have more success.
- 17.4 Cr Lindsay Lyons thanked Bernie for attending and asking the questions, noting that this provided Council with answers to issues they may not have previously considered. Cr Scott Nicol emphasised that the decision had not been straightforward and acknowledged the frustration felt by some hunters, including Bernie and conveyed respect for their concerns.
- 17.5 *Cr Alec McIver - Sale of hunting rights*
 Cr Alec McIver provided Council with an update regarding the reported sale of a bull tahr hunt at a recent Safari Club International (SCI) event in the United States. The hunt package included a helicopter flight into the wilderness area of Aoraki / Mount Cook National Park. Attended by CEO F & G, and Game Animal Council, Corina Jordan. He raised this as a concern as this type of access to wilderness areas is not available to New Zealand hunters and the hunting fraternity were not happy and concerned about what this may lead to in the future.
- 17.6 *Cr Lindsay Lyons - Okareka/Tarawera ramp closures*
 Arash Alaeinia provided a detailed update on developments over the holiday period regarding the proposed closure of boat ramps at Lake Okareka and possibly Lake Tarawera due to the gold clam threat. He advised that the outcome of several meetings resulted in a change in their position, and they decided not to proceed with closures at this stage. Instead, staff had been placed at the Okareka ramp to educate users, particularly checking whether boats are arriving from the Waikato region. Arash expressed frustration at the lack of consultation, noting decisions were made just before Christmas when councils were closed. After repeated follow-ups in January, a multi-agency meeting was eventually held. He said the meeting largely went in circles, with agreement that the problem must be addressed at the source (Waikato). However, MPI's legislation lacks enforcement power limiting effective action. For now, efforts remain focused on advocacy and education, with further meetings planned to engage with other lake communities (Rotoiti, Rotomā, etc.).
 Additional practical measures discussed at the meeting included installing boat wash stations (with prior research undertaken by Adam Daniel, including review of U.S. systems), introducing boat registers to track vessels from high-risk areas, and implementing camera/number plate recognition systems to identify boats travelling from the Waikato.
- 17.7 Council discussion also highlighted inadequate signage and limited visible enforcement at Waikato boat ramps, reinforcing the view that stronger source control is required. Cr Pat Swift suggested that fines for non-compliance, such as failing to complete QR codes, may need to be considered

18.0 MEETING CLOSED

18.1 The meeting closed at 2.32 pm.

.....
Lindsay Lyons
Chairman

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

- 2.0 APOLOGIES**
2.2 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Kevin Coutts) that the apologies for the 219th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [26/02/2.2]*
- 3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (11 DECEMBER 2025)**
3.1 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Alec McIver) that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2025 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [26/02/3.1]*
- 6.0 HEALTH & SAFETY**
6.2 *Agreed (Kevin Coutts/Scott Nicol) that Council receives the Health and Safety report. [26/02/6.2]*
- 7.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDIT**
7.5 *Agreed (Alec McIver/Scott Nicol) that Council acknowledges receipt of the Health and Safety Audit and receives an update on progress of implementation at successive Council meetings. [26/02/7.5]*
- 8.0 ANGLERS NOTICE REVIEW**
8.5 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Murray Ferris) that Council agreed to the consultation process and time frame for considering changes to the 2026 -2027 Anglers Notice. [26/02/8.5]*
8.6 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Murray Ferris) that Council did not identify any additional issues for the 2026-2027 Anglers Notice and supports the dissemination to clubs and public the four submissions put forward for the 2026-2027 Anglers Notice at today's meeting. [26/02/8.6]*
- 9.0 GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR THE 2026-2027 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN**
9.4 *Scott Nicol/Murray Ferris) that Council reviewed its priorities and programmes for the 2025-2026 year and did not identify any changes it wished to see incorporated into its Draft Operational Work Plan for the 2026/2027 year. [26/02/9.4]*
- 12.0 DRAFT NZ CROP DEPREDATION POLICY**
12.2 *Agreed (Kevin Coutts/Murray Ferris) that Council requests that NZC engage and receive input from specialist staff around the Country to create a practical and workable policy and operational guidelines that meet the legislative requirement and is able to be used and implemented nationally. [26/02/12.2]*
- 13.0 STATISTICAL CONSIDERATION FOR GAME BIRD MONITORING AT A NATIONAL LEVEL – PROTEUS REPORT**
13.3 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Murray Ferris) that Council supports the findings of the Proteus Report and its recommendations and directs the Manager to write to the NZC expressing disappointment at the lack of engagement with regional staff prior to commissioning work of this nature, particularly given the cost involved, to ensure the work had not already been undertaken. Cr Mark Sceats abstained [26/02/13.3]*
- 14.0 R3 REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION – PILOT PROGRAMME**
14.6 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Murray Ferris) that Council supports the principle and acknowledges that operationally Eastern is already involved and participates. That NZC develops a more robust marketing and R3 plan that is both measurable and practical in consultation with the regions and specialist staff to help increase sales and revenue and requested that updates be provided on the measured results. [26/02/14.6]*
- 15.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS**
15.2 *Agreed (Alec McIver/Kevin Coutts) that the payments for November and December 2025 totalling \$507,768.70 be approved. [26/02/15.2]*

5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

Ref: 7.02.01

25 February 2026

1. Purpose

A standing agenda item to disclose any Councillor (“Member”) Conflict of Interest or potential Conflict of Interest, and record this in the Councillor Conflict of Interest Register.

2. Background

In 2016 the Eastern Fish and Game Council adopted a revised policy and rules for dealing with Conflicts of Interest and these include providing a standing agenda item to allow Councillors to disclose any Conflict or highlight any potential conflict. The “Interest Register” ring binder will be circulated in the first part of each meeting for Councillors to record any interests. The Council should then discuss how it wants to deal with any interest or perceived interest identified.

Conflict of Interest (refer s2.7 Governance Policies) means when the member can be shown to have actual bias or apparent bias in respect of a matter¹ i.e:

- (i) A member can be shown to have actual bias when a member’s decision or act in relation to a matter could give rise to an expectation of financial gain or loss (that is more than trivial) to the member (and/or to the member’s parent(s), child(ren), spouse, civil union partner, de facto partner, business partner(s)/associate(s), debtor(s) or creditor(s)).
- (ii) A member can be shown to have apparent bias when a member’s official duties or responsibilities to the Council in relation to a matter could reasonably be said to be affected by some other interest or duty that the member has.
- (iii) A member’s “interest or duty” includes the interests of that member’s parent(s), child(ren), spouse, civil union partner or de facto partner that may be affected by the matter at issue. It also includes the interests of a person with whom the member has a close, personal relationship where there is a real danger of personal favouritism.
- (iv) There is no Conflict of Interest where the member’s other interest or duty is so remote or insignificant that it cannot reasonably be regarded as likely to influence him or her in carrying out his or her responsibility.

A potential conflict of interest (refer s2.8 Governance Policies) arises when:

- (i) There is a realistic connection between the member’s private interest(s) and the interest(s) of the Council;
- (ii) The member’s other interest could specifically affect, or be affected by, the actions of the Council in relation to a matter;

¹ “Matter” means:

- (i) The Council’s performance of its functions or exercise of its powers as set out in Part 5A of the Conservation Act 1987, subject to the Council’s statutory purpose set out in section 26P(1) of the Conservation Act; or
- (ii) An arrangement, agreement, or contract made or entered into, or proposed to be entered into, by the Council.

- (iii) A fair-minded lay observer might reasonably consider that the member's private interest or duty may influence or motivate the actions of the member in relation to a matter; and
- (iv) There is a risk that the situation could undermine public trust and confidence in the member or the Council.

Conflicts of Interest should be dealt with as follows (refer s1.13 Standing Orders):

1.13.1 Every member present at a meeting must declare any direct or indirect conflict of interest that they hold in any matter being discussed at the meeting, other than an interest that they hold in common with the public.

1.13.2 When a conflict of interest arises in respect of a matter, the affected member will:

- (i) not vote on issues related to the matter;
- (ii) not discuss the matter with other members;
- (iii) conform to the majority view of other members present as to whether to be excluded from discussions regarding the matter and/or leave the room when the matter is discussed;
- (iv) not, subject to the discretion of the Chairperson, receive further papers or other information related to the matter.

1.13.3 Where a member can be shown to have a potential conflict of interest, the Council (excluding the affected member) will determine an appropriate course of action, which may include the following:

- (i) applying some or all of the actions applied to a member with a conflict of interest (set out in 1.13.2 i) – iv) above);
- (ii) providing a written explanation outlining why there is no legal conflict of interest that can be made available to all Fish and Game Councils, licence holders and other interested parties.

1.13.4 The conflicted member will be given the opportunity to be heard by the Council on the points raised and the member's submissions will be taken into consideration by the Council.

1.13.5 The minutes must record the declaration and member's subsequent abstention from discussion and voting.

Councillors should take this opportunity to disclose any Conflict of Interest they are aware of now and record it in the circulated Conflict of Interest Register. If during the course of the meeting a conflict or perceived conflict is recognised, then this should be disclosed at that point in time.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That Councillors disclose any Conflict or potential Conflict of Interest, record it in the Interest Register, and Council agrees on how to deal with any Conflict of Interest raised.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Ref: 9.10

25 February 2026

Background

As part of its commitment to Health and Safety and to providing a safe working environment, the Eastern Fish and Game Council receives a Health and Safety report at each meeting. This report outlines the following:

1. Implementation and adherence to the Health and Safety Plan, including Health and Safety as a standing agenda item at staff and ranger meetings;
2. Monitoring and reporting in accordance with the Health and Safety Plan;
3. Risk management, including the identification and treatment of new or emerging hazards;
4. Training programmes, including information sharing and training of staff and volunteers;
5. Health and Safety incidents, including near misses or injuries, and updates on previous incidents;
6. Recommendations to Council.

Reporting Period: January – February 2026

1. Implementation and Adherence to the Health and Safety Plan

- Regular weekly staff meetings are held.
- Minutes from the Health and Safety section of each meeting are emailed to all staff.
- Visitors to the office and contractors are required to sign the desk register.
- The hazard register is updated as required.

Tailgate forms were completed for the following activities:

- Nil for the reported period.

2. Monitoring and Reporting

Workplace Accident Register as at 25 February 2026

Number of workplace **injuries** in the 2025–2026 year: 1 (2024-2025 year: 3)

Number of workplace **near miss incidents** in the 2025-2026 year: 1 (2024-2025 year: 0)

3. Risk Management (Identification and Treatment)

Health and Safety notes are recorded during weekly staff meetings and emailed to all staff.
Key notes for the reporting period include:

- 26 January 2026:** Slips from heavy rain in region, longer times for banding due to detours, ensure vehicle tyres are ok, and all servicing is up to date.
- 2 February 2026:** Hot weather – ensure water is avail for staff and dogs
- 9 February 2026:** Hot weather – ensure water is avail for staff and dogs
Ensure vehicle servicing is up to date
- 16 February 2026:** First full H & S meeting to take place 9 March at 9am
High winds past few days, be aware of trees/limbs falling
Possible slips from heavy rain
- 23 February 2026:** No meeting

4. Training Programme

Nothing to report.

5. Health and Safety Incidents for this period

Nil

6. Recommendation

That Council acknowledges receipt of this Health and Safety Report.

7. ANGLERS NOTICE REVIEW

File: 1.07.01

20 February 2026

1. Purpose

To review the 2025-2026 Anglers Notice and identify any changes to the current regulations that might be warranted in the 2026-2027 season.

2. Background

The Anglers Notice review provides an opportunity to amend regional sport fishing regulations. Licence holders and the public can submit on issues they may have identified with the current regulations for consideration by Council.

Council has developed a comprehensive approach to dealing with the Anglers Notice. The policy approach splits regulations into those that serve a social function and those that serve a biological function. Social regulations are those that affect the angler and principally relate to angling methods. Waters are categorised based on trout densities, and levels of angler use. These categories are used to determine how social based regulations should be applied. Biological regulations are those that affect trout populations and include bag and size limits. A matrix was developed considering biological objectives associated with sustainability, harvest allocation, and specific population manipulations. Any changes to the Anglers Notice must not conflict with the Anglers Notice policy which is provided in Appendix 1 to this item.

This approach has greatly simplified the task of reviewing the Anglers Notice and enables regulations to be confirmed or amended quickly and efficiently.

A full review of the regional regulations (Schedule 2) is undertaken every second year. A less comprehensive process is conducted in the year between. This year (2026) represents a year in which a full review is required.

This process involves;

1. At the February Council meeting, submissions received to the Anglers Notice were presented to Council for discussion. Council received the suggestions. Staff have sought feedback from clubs, Iwi, Statutory partners and public through mailout of letters and advertising via website and the Reel Life ezine.
2. Prior to the March meeting, Councillors will receive any feedback received through an Agenda item. The public consultation timeframe closes 20th March (a week after the meeting due to quick meeting timeframes) to enable public to view suggestions and reply.
3. At its May 2026 meeting, the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council will receive any additional correspondence received regarding suggested changes along with a draft to the Minister of the changes to the 2026-27 Anglers Notice. Council will accept resolutions on remaining proposals and finalise the 2026-27 Anglers Notice.

3. Correspondence received since last meeting

Two responses to the process were verbally presented at the February 12th Council meeting. These were licencing issues as opposed to Anglers Notice submissions. One called for a boat licence rather than having licences issued to anglers. This would allow guests to go out fishing without having to go through the process of getting day licences.

The second asked for provision to have an electronic licence ‘tag’ that could be stored in a google wallet rather than carry a physical licence as all/ most anglers are now carrying smart phone

No correspondence has been received regarding the Anglers Notice, or in response to mailout of letters post the February 12th Council Meeting at the time of report writing. Clubs, Iwi organisations and statutory organisations have been given until 20th March (a week after the meeting due to quick meeting timeframes) to enable viewing of tabled suggestions and to formulate replies.

4. Tabled suggestions for consideration

4.1 Open up lower sections of tributaries of Lakes Aniwhenua and Matahina (Whirinaki, Horomanga, Mangamako, Waihou, Waikopu Streams) to year-round fishing.

4.1.1 Outline

A submission was received seeking greater angler opportunity within the tributary streams of the lower Rangitaiki River system. The submission stated that Lakes Matahina and Aniwhenua contain high fish numbers and experience low angler usage. It sought to ‘Open up the lower stretches of the tributary streams to year-round fishing’.

This will create opportunity for anglers whilst still protecting the spawning areas of the streams.

4.1.2 Staff Recommendation.

The National Angler Survey has been on five occasions since 1994-95. Its estimates for the waters involved are as follows.

	<i>1994-95</i>	<i>2001-02</i>	<i>2007-08</i>	<i>2014-15</i>	<i>2021-22</i>
Lake Matahina	884±337	588±222	357±150	354±36	357±57
Rangitaiki R. above Matahina	1411±397	6418±1877	3534±649	906±73	440±126
Rangitaiki R. Aniwhenua Dam to Matahina	3557±1430	2355±1578	1175±456	1118±119	799±115
Rangitaiki R. below Matahina	715±214	770±341	317±121	559±105	575±172
Lake Aniwhenua	11327±1693	9838±2153	2357±626	1493±136	598±86
Waihua S.	306±305	271±122	116±61	296±160	-
Mangamako S.	-	-	-	-	48±30
Horomanga S.	1240±514	187±66	1793±1147	565±416	116±28
Whirinaki S.	1714±517	747±195	2178±587	1250±128	481±59

The last National Angler Survey was conducted during the 2021-22 season which still had partial covid-19 lockdown for the Auckland/ Waikato areas and Non-resident anglers were still unable to enter the country. Despite this, the table illustrates a general drop in angler usage of the Rangitaiki system since the boom-angling period of the mid 90's when Lake Aniwhenua was considered a trophy fishery due to the proliferation of water net and the vast resource of snails that made up the rainbow trout food web.

The recommendation is that the following sections of waters are opened to allow angling all year. Bag limit would be two trout per person per day. Fly and spin methods would be permissible. Opening these lower stretches to year-round angling would provide greater opportunity.

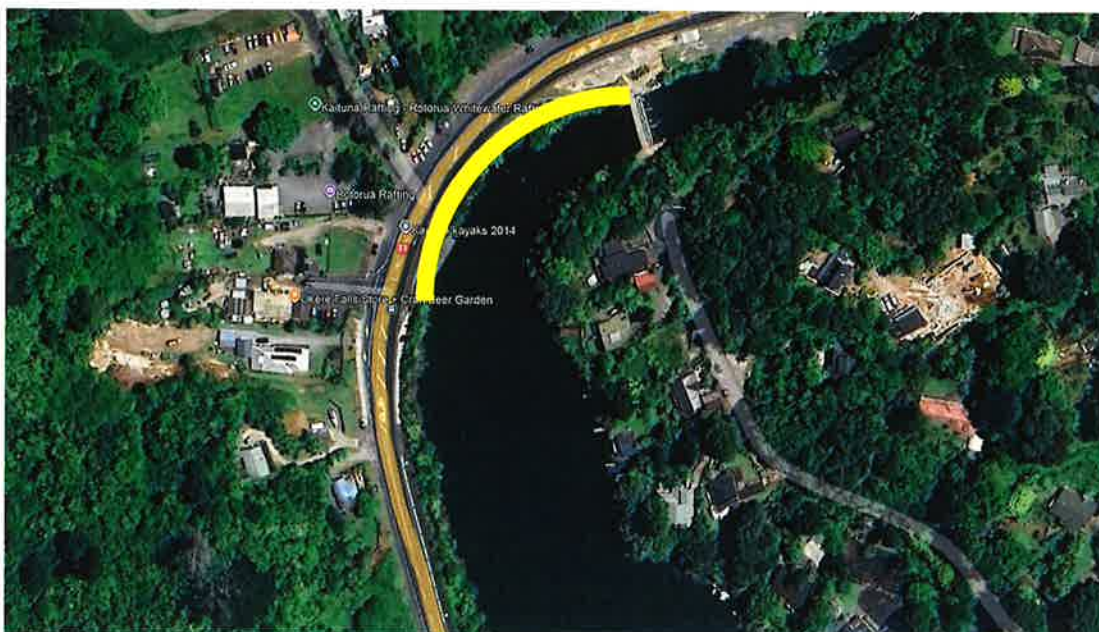
The upstream sections of these waters would remain 'All other Waters' open 1 October to 30 June and closed from 1 July to 30 September to protect spawning values.

Water	Section of Water	Open Season	Distance this will open
Whirinaki	Downstream of Troutbeck Rd.	Open All Year	6km
Horomanga	Downstream of Troutbeck Rd.	Open All Year	6km
Mangamako	Downstream of Galatea Rd.	Open All Year	0.1km
Waikokopu	Downstream of Galatea Rd.	Open All Year	1.5km
Waihua	Downstream of Galatea Rd.	Open All Year	0.5km

4.2 Extend Lake Rotoiti Winter fishing area to include “The 130m section of the SH33 shoreline from the Lake Rotoiti Control Gates at Okere Falls to the upstream end of the Public Jetty opposite the Okere Falls Store.”

4.2.1 Outline

There is currently one winter shoreline fishing area on Lake Rotoiti, situated down the Eastern end of the lake (Tapuackura Bay landmark to Hinehopu landmark). There is very little spawning habitat available at the Okere end, with a little occurring near the Okere jetty, but opening this area to year-round fishing would increase participation through the winter period on Lake Rotoiti.



The Rotorua lakes Council are also interested in providing a wheelchair fishing platform at the jetty that would assist mobility impaired anglers in their sport.

4.2.2 Staff recommendation

Having the option of some year-round angling opportunity provided at the Western end of Lake Rotoiti would be valuable to anglers. Any impact on the small amount of spawning activity occurring in the area near the Okere jetty would have little consequence to the overall Lake Rotoiti trout fishery.

4.3 Defining a softbait within the regional definitions.

4.3.1 Outline

Currently a softbait isn't well defined within Schedule 1 (National regulations) or Schedule 2 (Regional regulations). As technologies and marketing develop, new preparations are made available for purchase. Some of these are malleable putty type preparations all being marketed as 'soft baits' The intent when allowing scented softbaits for use within Eastern Region regulations was that a minnow style soft plastic could be fished that imitates natural prey. Scented variations were made legal because packaging and foreign imports made it very difficult to discern what was scented and what was unscented. The new malleable putty type 'Trout Bites' and "Corn" could lead to deeper hooking than a traditional style soft plastic minnow.

4.3.2 Staff recommendation

Staff wish to see anglers being successful and encourage participation in angling. We don't wish to be alarmist and make a problem out of what isn't currently an issue. The use of the malleable putty style 'soft baits' is not thought to be high; however, we are trying to close a loophole in the regulations of what may be considered a bait than a traditional soft bait. Other regions utilise wording in their regulations that says "A softbait must be actively fished so as to imitate a baitfish." That is all very subjective, in what constitutes active.

Staff recommend instead placing a description in “Definitions” at the start of the Eastern Regulations as below.

1. Definitions;

“Softbait” means ‘A soft plastic lure that imitates a baitfish, crustacean, or koura’.

4.4 Make ‘All Other Waters Not Listed’ more prominently displayed within regulation guide

4.4.1 Outline

Any water not listed within the regulations automatically falls under the first entry in Table 3. *Open Season, Permitted Methods, Daily Bag Limits* and is assigned a 1 Oct-30 Jun Open Season, Fly/Spin methods and 2 fish per angler/day bag limit. This occurs because we are unable to list all regional waters within the guide.

As anglers may search alphabetically by the water they are seeking, they may miss this first entry in the table. To make it more prominent we are proposing making the text bold to stand out more clearly and repeating the entry at the end of the regional table.

4.4.2 Staff Recommendation

This would help to alleviate confusion by being more prominently displayed.

5. Remainder of Process

Following the February 12th meeting, letters were sent to clubs, Iwi and Statutory organisations updating them that the process had begun and that four suggestions for change were being considered by Council. The letter requested that any comments pursuant to the four tabled suggestions be received by Council by 20th March 2026. This would allow Council to be informed prior to the finalisation of the Anglers Notice Process at the May 28th meeting.

6 Resolutions

6.1 That Council identifies any proposals requiring further information and discussion following this meeting.

APPENDIX 1. Anglers Notice Policy

Ref: 1.07.01

05/04/2024

1. Background

Fish and Game New Zealand spend a significant amount of time each year considering changes to the Anglers Notice. Changes to the regulations have, in the past, generally occurred in an ad hoc fashion, often in response to specific requests from anglers. Council has recognised that this has resulted in the inconsistent application of regulations across the region. To resolve this situation Council has developed policy which determines how and when regulations apply. The underlying approach taken to developing the policy has been to clearly identify the need for regulations or the issues, which may prompt specific regulations to be considered. The purpose of this policy is to remove inconsistencies and simplify the regulations and reduce the amount of time that council are required to devote to the process.

The policy has been established around two key groups of regulations within the Anglers Notice. The first group of regulations are those that have a biological effect on the fisheries and may have direct effects on trout populations. The biological regulations are the primary focus of the Anglers Notice Policy and have been developed to ensure ongoing sustainability of the fishery resource.

The second group of regulations are those that serve a social function and relate to the way anglers interact with each other.

2. Biological Regulations

Biological regulations are required to ensure the sustainability of the trout populations or fishing opportunities, or to provide for specific management objectives. Criteria for biological based regulations will generally be qualitative in nature and based upon dive counts, trap runs, angler surveys etc.

Policy 2.1 The biological regulations applied to waters shall be based upon the following table;

Category	Description	Regulation Applied
<p><i>Sustainability I</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure adequate recruitment of juveniles to provide later harvest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect spawning rearing waters. Closure of waters and season length most effective tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close waters to fishing if they provide significant proportion of recruitment. Length of closure related to importance of contribution, availability of other spawning, fishing opportunity potentially provided and duration of spawning.
<p><i>Sustainability II</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure adequate survival of adults to spawn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect sufficient fish through to maturity to enable them to spawn. Size limits most effective tool for protecting fish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size limits guarantee protection of fish to maturity. Size limits can be adjusted based upon knowledge of harvest rates.
<p><i>Harvest Allocation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To share available harvest Bag limit most effective. 	Moderate or high demand & limited fish availability.	River fisheries that attract moderate to high use and/or contain limited numbers of fish (currently 2 fish bag limit)
	High demand & high fish availability.	Restrict excessive fish harvest to enable equitable allocation (currently 8 fish)
	Low demand & high fish availability.	No bag limit.
<p><i>Management Objective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enhance specific component 	Enhance specific component of fishery for deliberate management objective.	Combinations of size limits, season length and bag limits. Requires specific project proposal and justification.

3. Social Regulations

The Anglers Notice contains a number of regulations that affect anglers rather than the fish they are targeting. These regulations can be considered social in nature and are set to control the impacts that anglers have upon each other. These regulations are imposed to maximise the

opportunities available and the quality of the angling experience. Social regulations generally relate to how anglers are allowed to fish (permitted methods) and are applied based on the intensity of the angling that occurs, and therefore the potential for anglers to impact upon each other.

Council has stated a desire to reduce barriers to participation such as over-regulating by making rules simpler for anglers to understand. Measures of angler use have been reworked and greater clarity given to where anglers may fish from unanchored boats so that shore-based anglers are not disproportionately affected by boats drifting or trolling within close-proximity.

The Policy no longer preferentially allocates ‘fly fishing only’ waters at stated pressure levels, however, this does not preclude Council from recognising ‘fly fishing only’ areas. What it does allow is for Council to exercise greater flexibility in which waters are reserved solely for fly only anglers.

Fishing methods

Policy 3.1 Setting of method restrictions for waters shall be based upon the following framework.

Water Category	Level of use of water (threshold)	Methods Available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake edge fisheries and associated migratory spawning waters 	Low Intensity Use (<i>< 30 anglers/100m/season</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All methods including bait in certain circumstances*,
	Moderate to High Intensity Use (<i>>30 anglers/100m/season</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fly, Spin, Bait (in certain circumstances)* No unanchored boats at stream mouths, high intensity locations and lake outlets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower density river fisheries based on resident trout populations 	Any Intensity of Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All methods including bait in certain circumstances*

***Bait fishing has a biological effect on trout populations and because of the high hooking mortality shall not be applied where fish may be legally required to be released due to size limits or restrictive bag limits. Bait fishing would only therefore apply in waters where there were no bag or size limits.**

Bait

Policy 3.2 (i) Bait fishing will only be permitted in waters that have no bag limits or no size limits.

- (ii)** Bait in the Eastern Region shall only include;
- Natural fly.
 - Natural insect.
 - Natural spider.
 - Natural worm or worms.
 - Natural crustacean.
 - Natural fish (excluding fish ova, or any portion of a fish, or shellfish (mollusc).
Fish can only be sourced from the water where the fishing is to occur).
 - Uncoloured bread dough.

Boats in winter shoreline areas

Policy 3.3 Fishing from a boat shall not be permitted in designated winter shoreline fishing areas from 1 July to 30 September.

8. 2026-2027 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

Ref: 8.02.01

26 February 2026

1. Purpose

To consider proposed projects, budgets and additional funding cases for the 2026-2027 Operational Work Plan (OWP).

2. Background

Operational Work Plans (which come into force on 1 September each year) are developed over several months from February onwards, and involve a review by Council of strategic priorities, core functions, project objectives, allocation of resources, and performance measures. The process usually includes seeking Council's approval for the submission of applications to the NZ Council managed Contestable Fund, or for the utilisation of regional reserves to increase bulk funding for specific purposes.

The steps involved in developing the OWP for the 2026-2027 year and an update of where we're at in relation to these are as follows:

1. Council reviews priorities and project areas it wishes to focus on over and above core functions (February meeting).
2. Staff compile a draft work plan and budget (excluding internal costs) and identify potential additional funding cases it believes warrant consideration. Council will review this 1st draft at its **12th March** meeting. Then the draft budget and cases need to be submitted to the NZ Council by their deadline of **13 March**.
3. **28 March**, A summary of all Regional Budgets will be circulated to Regions.
4. NZC Council Budget Meeting on **11 April**, will review impact of regional budgets on Licence Fee and will inform regions of the outcome their budget proposals. A licence fee consultation document will be distributed to Regions following this meeting by **16 April**.
5. Staff revise projects and resourcing including hours and internal costs to take into account outcomes of NZC budget meeting and circulate the second draft of the Eastern OWP to Council ahead of its **28 May** meeting.
6. The second draft of the OWP and proposed licence fee consultation is considered by Council at the **28 May** meeting and projects, budgets and targets are reviewed and refined as necessary.
7. **30 May**, All regional responses on Licence Fee proposal returned to NZC.
8. Draft OWP is circulated to clubs and other interested parties for comment if they wish.
9. Feedback from this consultation is considered and incorporated, if Council considers appropriate, into the final OWP presented for approval at Council's meeting on **30 July**.

As indicated above, the operational planning cycle commences now with a review of current priorities and goals. Council needs to determine whether changes to these are needed within the next OWP year in response to changing circumstances and/or other factors.

3. Outcomes from Council's Meeting in February

Council reviewed its priorities, and supported the idea to streamline its key priorities from 4 down to 3. With no additional work plans added, but some outputs reviewed and refined.

2026-2027 Priorities

1. **Increasing Licence Numbers and Revenue** – without sustainable income through our licence membership and revenue, EF&G cannot carry out any tasks or responsibilities. This should be our key priority that all other priorities flow from. Using an R3 approach to Retain, Recruit, Reactivate anglers and hunters and to develop additional income sources.
2. **Access** – Enabling anglers and hunters to locate, access and utilise resources through habitat maintenance, advocacy to safeguard/ expand publicly accessible habitat and development of improved information sharing platforms for licence holders.
3. **Increasing Opportunities, Fishers & Hunters** –Enhancing angler & hunter satisfaction through trusted science, surveys, practical & easy to use regulation, efficient hatchery practices and gamebird banding.

4. Direct Costs

A detailed summary of adjustments in the draft budget prepared for the 2026-2027 OWP year as compared to the 2025-2026 plan we're currently operating to are as follows:

5.1 Species Management (increased overall \$11,801)

- The Population Monitoring output expenditure has been reduced by \$2,839. Taupo and BoP areal transects were completed in 2025-26. As these are now completed biannually the waterfowl monitoring budget requirement is reduced (\$4,039). The cost of datawatch tags from Hallprint in Australia have increased (\$1,600), and drift dive costs reduced (\$400).
- Harvest Assessment budgets are unchanged.
- Hatchery costs have been increased by \$14,640 due primarily to increased fish food and insurance costs. An additional \$10,000 has been allocated to the Hatchery budget to update and safeguard water supply infrastructure and this is proposed to be drawn from reserves.
- Game bird control budget remains unchanged and is for the purpose of zon gun servicing and miscellaneous expenses.

5.2 Sports Fish & Game Habitat (no change)

- Habitat expenditure budgets remain unchanged, with costs associated with reserves management, landowner assistance, habitat creation and enhancement.

5.3 Participation (increased overall \$400)

- Minor increases to pamphlet production and hut maintenance costs
- Angler/hunter training, and Communications budgets are unchanged.

5.4 Public Interface (increased overall \$5,500)

- The Statutory Liaison/Public Promotions budgets are increased (\$5,000) for R3 initiatives and this increase is proposed to be funded from the Fish for Gold Reserve.
- The maintenance budget within the Facilities/Visitor output has been top up by \$500.

5.5 Compliance (no change)

- The Ranging budgets are unchanged and relate to compliance equipment, training, and legal fees associated with prosecutions.

5.6 Licensing (increased \$40)

- A small increase is needed to provide for increased costs of couriering regulations to East Coast agents.

5.7 Council (increased overall \$2,300)

- Council’s Meetings budget is increased by \$2,300. The makeup of the Council and associated travel costs largely dictates what the Council budget should be. The last couple of years we have been over budget which has been a result of additional meetings and not budgeting sufficiently for travel.

5.8 Planning/Reporting (reduced overall \$2,500)

- The Management/Strategic Planning budget is reduced by \$2,000 with this amount being shifted to the “Promotions Budget” for R3 initiatives.
- Reporting, Audit and National Liaison budgets have reduced by \$500.

5.9 Adjustments to Income within Outputs

- Reduced orders for fish from other F & G regions reduces Hatchery revenue by \$17,000.
- Other net changes to revenue totalling \$950 relate to reduced income from fishing competitions and grazing.

Summary of adjustments

Overall Operational Output expenditure in this preliminary budget after removing one off contestable fund bids for the 2025-26 year has been increased by net \$38,491.

Table 1 – Adjustments to budget by Output Area

Output	Adjustment Expense	Adjustment Income	Net Increase
Species Management	\$14,801	-\$17,000	
Sports Fish & Game Habitat Participation	\$0	-\$150	
Public Interface	\$400	-\$800	
Compliance	\$5,500		
Licensing	\$0		
Council	\$40		
Planning/Reporting	\$2,300		
Total Outputs	-\$2,500		
Total Outputs	\$20,541	-\$17,950	\$38,491
Administration	\$56,922		
Asset Replacement Fund	\$12,376		
Total	\$89,839	-\$17,950	\$107,789

Administration expenses are increased by \$56,922. Of this \$32,732 relates to staff salaries adjustments (2.5% CPI and step related increases). The balance of the increase is primarily related to ongoing building maintenance (\$15,000) which is proposed to be funded from reserves, subscriptions including a new Xero cost (\$2,080), insurance (\$2,660), and various small adjustments across several administration areas.

In 2026-27 we have budgeted to undertake re-staining of the office building, painting of window/door frames, and polyurethaning of soffits. The last re-stain of the admin building occurred is 2015. A budget of \$15,000 has been allowed and is proposed to be funded from reserves. Quotes are yet to be obtained therefore this figure is indicative.

6. Contracting to the New Zealand Fish & Game Council

Provision for staff contracts to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council will continue and have been budgeted at \$23,130 for the year. The services to be provided at this stage are licensing and CLE assistance to the New Zealand Council.

7. Resourcing

7.1 Bulk Funding

Eastern Region currently (2025-2026 OWP year) has a bulk funded operational budget of \$1,373,683 and after removing one off contestable funds for the current year (\$35,500) we go into the 2026-2027 budget round with what we would normally be called a base fund of \$1,338,183. Given the new process of Zero-Based Budgeting, we essentially go into each year with a starting point of Nil. Our first draft of the operational budget for 2026-2027 would usually be set at this level, and increased subject to this Council, and the NZC's approval of proposed CF bids. Instead, our first draft has been prepared at the increased level of \$1,445,972 subject to Council approval of the proposed increases sought. Over the coming weeks we hope to have a better understanding how this will be presented for consideration by the National Office staff and the New Zealand Council.

Table 2 – Bulk fund 2025-26 with adjustments for 2026-27

Approved Budget 2025-2026		\$1,373,683
Less one-off expenditure		-\$35,500
Base Fund 2026-2027		\$1,338,183
Increased Costs 2026-2027	\$89,839	
Reduced Income 2026-2027	\$17,950	\$107,789
Proposed Budget 2026-2027		\$1,445,972

The total increased expense below.

Table 3 – Summary of increased funding

Area	Amount	Background
Salaries	\$33,289	2.5% (confirmed NZC office), level advised
Reduced income	\$17,950	Hatchery, grazing, fishing comps
Increased costs	\$10,174	Summary of various budget adjustments
Asset Replacement	\$12,376	Increase Asset Replacement Fund (General reserves)
Hatchery	\$10,000	Water supply infrastructure (Water retic reserve)
Buildings	\$15,000	Re-stain admin building (General reserves)
Participation	\$6,000	R3 initiatives (Fish for Gold reserve)
Lake Tarawera	\$3,000	Food web research (Non-resident reserve)
Total	\$107,789	
Funded by Licence fee	\$61,413	
Funded by Reserves	\$46,376	
Total	\$107,789	Increase to funding for 2026-2027 OWP year

7.2 Allocation of staff hours

Staff hours will be reviewed and adjusted where necessary in the next draft of the 2026-2027 OWP. Hours will be allocated in accordance with the project areas and priorities Council has determined to the extent this can be accommodated without compromising our ability to deliver on our core activities and statutory functions including monitoring, licensing, compliance, Council support, planning and reporting, and administration of the Council. The Eastern Region will continue to contribute a component of its overall staff hours to assisting with national Fish & Game programmes including waterfowl monitoring and research, compliance, environmental planning, licensing, Health and Safety, and other tasks as may arise. Eastern's contribution to these national projects is justifiable on the basis of its size and the number of staff it employs, which has enabled it to retain specialists in a number of fields. Some of this assistance is cost recoverable but a substantial component is not, and is provided for the benefit of other regions and that of the organisation as a whole.

8. Recommendations

8.1 That Council considers for approval the draft OWP for the 2026-2027 year and the accompanying budget including:

-proposals for increases to budgets as ongoing requirements,

-proposals to draw down Eastern Region's reserve funds for

- Lake Tarawera \$3,000 – Non resident reserve

- R3 Promotions \$6,000 – Fish for Gold reserve

- Maintenance \$15,000 – General reserves

- Hatchery \$10,000 – Water reticulation reserve

- Asset replacement \$12,376 – General reserves.

10. OPERATIONAL REPORTS

10.1 FINANCE REPORT

Ref: 8.03.01

25 February 2026

1. Purpose

To inform the Council of the year-to-date financial position, and approve payments for the month of January 2026.

Tables within this report:

Table 1	Profit and Loss to 31 January 2026
Table 2	Balance Sheet as at 31 January 2026
Table 3	Variance Report to 31 January 2026
Table 4	Bank Transactions January 2026
Tables 5 & 6	Credit Card Transactions January 2026

2. YTD Profit and Loss

The Profit & Loss statement for the period ending 31 January is provided in Table 1.

Summary

The net position for the 2025-2026 Financial Year YTD is \$309,845 surplus against a budgeted surplus of \$333,523 net variance \$23,678 (deficit).

The net deficit variance of \$23,678 is a result of income being lower than that budgeted by \$18,647, and increased expenditure \$5,031.

Income	Var YTD	Expenses	Var YTD
Licence Sales	27,409 ▼	Depreciation	19 ▼
Other Income	8,762 ▲	Operating Expenses	9,300 ▼
		Administration Expenses	14,350 ▲
	18,647 ▼		5,031 ▲
		Net	23,678 ▼

A more detailed summary is provided in the following notes.

Income

Licence Sales

Licence revenue is currently reporting at \$27,409 below budget. A more up to date picture of licence sales is provided in the Licence Sales Report.

Other Income

Revenue from other sources for the period totalled \$15,401 and is made up of the following:

MOJ Fines Dec/Jan	\$1,096	Interest Waikaremoana Fund	\$3,733
Fish food, tours	\$108	Interest General	\$3,900
Rentals	\$6,424	Miscellaneous	\$87
Donations	\$53	Total Other Income	\$15,401

Species Management

The expenditure reported within the Population monitoring budgets was significant in January and included aircraft hire for the transect counts (\$10,251), Hallprint tags for the Datawatch programme (\$7,334), and wages and miscellaneous materials associated with the banding project.

Hatchery spending in January included various equipment and materials for hatchery maintenance. The usual expenses associated with, rates, electricity, oxygen, and fuel are also reported. The Species Management output is under budget YTD \$127.

Habitat

Reserves Management spending for the period related the purchase of a solar electric fence battery. Over budget YTD \$522.

Participation

Expenditure reported within the Participation budgets relates paper cups and teaspoons for fishing tuition, and hut electricity. Under budget YTD \$1,215.

Public Interface

The spending within the Public Interface output was related grounds maintenance costs for painting the Octagon, and the cost of the EDM for the F & G Reform. Over budget YTD \$150.

Compliance

Compliance expenditure includes the usual 0800 Poaching service and cell phone costs. There is also a cost reported for legal fees for a prosecution. Under budget YTD \$1,248.

Licensing

Licensing costs include agent commissions, the fees associated with the Public Online sales. YTD costs are under budget \$7,688. This is partly due to reduced licence sales, as well as a shift to online sales, which has reduced the overall cost of sales.

Council

The cost of the recent advertising of the Council vacancy is reported in January. This expense was not budgeted and as a result contributes to the overspend reported YTD of \$890.

Planning

An expense has been recorded within the R3 budget related to printing of “Catch Me If You Can” stickers, and design work for an interactive sign for the Hatchery grounds. YTD the Planning output is under budget \$585.

Administration

Salaries	Over budget \$10,260 YTD due to increased annual leave accruals and additional staff costs with tanker driver training.
Staff Expenses	Staff expenses for the period are related to food for staff working in Waikaremoana, including the recent fishing competition. Over budget YTD \$386.
Staff Houses	Rates were paid as budgeted and expenses were incurred related to Real Estate agent commissions, and plumbing and electrical repairs. Over budget YTD \$1,132.
Office Premises	Again, rates were paid and standard electricity, cleaning, rubbish removal, and alarm monitoring costs are also reported. The Office Premises budget is overspent \$4,015 YTD due to the additional costs incurred for painting o the administration building roof.

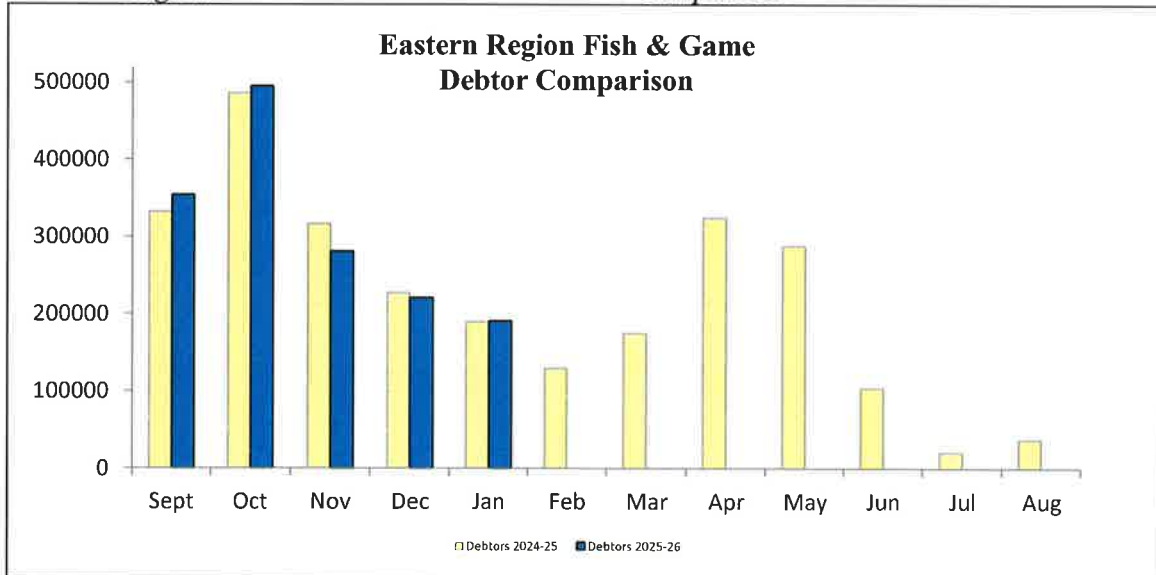
Office Equipment	Office Equipment expenses include the phone system and eftpos lease costs, and a minor maintenance cost. Under budget YTD \$316.
Communications/ Consumables	Communications spending includes the 0800 service, Garmin InReach, staff cell plans and the 2Talk calling plan needed to utilise the IP phones. Expenses are also reported relating to stationery, Starlink, photocopying, and courier bags. Under budget YTD \$1,101.
General	General Expenses are reported for the Survey Monkey and Xero subscriptions. Other spending within the General Expenses budgets related to tearoom supplies. Under budget YTD \$2,130.
General Equipment	Maintenance spending related to mower repairs, and a 300hr service on Whio's engine. Expenses are also reported for the seaflux subscription, and fuel. Under budget YTD \$1,741.
Vehicles	Vehicle maintenance expenditure for the period included repairs to flat deck, and one set of replacement magnetics. The insurance premiums for the three new vehicles are reported in January, and other vehicle costs relate to RUC's, and fuel. Over budget YTD \$3,845 and this is expected to reduce as the year progresses.

Cash Position: As at 31 January 2026

\$ 876,584 (includes \$48,989 Asset Replacement Reserve)
 \$ 499,449 (Waikaremoana SFHEF – Restricted Reserve)
\$ 1,376,033 Total

Debtors: Outstanding Debtors \$190,730 as at 31 January 2026 (\$189,903 as at 31 January 2025).

Eastern Region Fish and Game - Debtors Balance Comparison 2024/25-2025/26



Agent debtors are all up to date with payment. Two debtors for other projects are one month overdue, and these have been followed up by staff.

3. Variance Report (Table 3)

The variance report shows the actual result including staff hours entered for each project area to provide Council with an overview of the staff time component of the Operational Work Plan.

Table 1 Profit and Loss - Council

Eastern Fish and Game Council
For the month ended 31 January 2026

Income	Jan 2026	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Total Budget	Var YTD	Var %
Licence Income	124,462	973,591	1,001,000	1,469,319	(27,409)	-3%
Other Income	15,401	93,095	84,333	239,923	8,762	10%
Total Income	139,864	1,066,686	1,085,333	1,709,242	(18,647)	-2%
Operating Expenses						
Depreciation	8,266	37,146	37,165	89,195	(19)	0%
1100 SPECIES MANAGEMENT						
1110 Population Monitoring	18,913	25,189	24,000	37,339	1,189	5%
1120 Harvest Assessment	0	168	760	3,340	(592)	-78%
1140 Hatchery Operations	2,051	40,232	40,955	106,150	(723)	-2%
1180 Game Bird Control	0	0	0	400	0	0%
Total 1100 SPECIES MANAGEMENT	20,964	65,588	65,715	147,229	(127)	0%
1200 HABITAT PROTECTION/MNGMNT						
1220 Works & Management	243	1,073	700	14,200	373	53%
1230 Assisted Habitat	0	149	0	22,000	149	0%
Total 1200 HABITAT PROTECTION	243	1,222	700	36,200	522	75%
1300 PARTICIPATION						
1310 Access	0	1,093	2,200	4,800	(1,107)	-50%
1340 Other Publications	0	962	1,000	2,000	(39)	-4%
1350 Training	21	330	550	850	(220)	-40%
1370 Huts	35	650	500	1,450	150	30%
Total 1300 PARTICIPATION	56	3,035	4,250	9,100	(1,215)	-29%
1400 PUBLIC INTERFACE						
1410 Liaison	0	0	50	100	(50)	-100%
1440 Public Promotions	140	248	500	1,000	(252)	-50%
1450 Visitor Facilities/Education	101	802	350	500	452	129%
Total 1400 PUBLIC INTERFACE	241	1,050	900	1,600	150	17%
1500 COMPLIANCE						
1510 Ranging	68	368	425	1,000	(58)	-14%
1520 Ranger Training	0	138	500	1,000	(362)	-72%
1530 Compliance	100	671	1,500	4,000	(829)	-55%
Total 1500 COMPLIANCE	168	1,177	2,425	6,000	(1,248)	-51%
1600 LICENSING						
1610 Licence Prod/Distrib	0	0	60	60	(60)	-100%
1630 Commission	3,506	31,612	39,240	58,773	(7,628)	-19%
Total 1600 LICENSING	3,506	31,612	39,300	58,833	(7,688)	-20%
1700 COUNCIL						
1720 Council Meetings	858	3,740	2,850	8,500	890	31%
Total 1700 COUNCIL	858	3,740	2,850	8,500	890	31%
1800 PLANNING/REPORTING						
1810 Management & Planning	580	1,115	1,100	2,500	15	1%
1830 Reporting/Audit	0	0	500	12,500	(500)	-100%
1840 National Liaison	0	24,839	24,939	99,555	(100)	0%
Total 1800 PLANNING/REPORTING	580	25,954	26,539	114,555	(585)	-2%
1900 ADMINISTRATION						
1910 Salaries	84,597	448,049	437,789	1,096,315	10,260	2%
1920 Staff Expenses	112	8,055	7,669	43,000	386	5%
1930 Staff Houses	2,521	12,434	11,302	18,150	1,132	10%
1940 Office Premises	2,210	53,063	49,048	59,900	4,015	8%
1950 Office Equipment	244	1,169	1,485	3,650	(316)	-21%
1960 Communications	1,352	5,201	6,302	14,600	(1,101)	-17%
1970 General	394	13,558	15,688	18,870	(2,130)	-14%
1980 General Equipment	1,143	8,443	10,184	18,800	(1,741)	-17%
1990 Vehicles	7,797	36,344	32,499	65,400	3,845	12%
Total 1900 ADMINISTRATION	100,369	586,316	571,966	1,338,685	14,350	3%
Total Operating Expenses	135,253	756,841	751,810	1,809,897	5,031	1%
Net Profit	4,611	309,845	333,523	(100,655)	(23,678)	-7%

Table 2		Balance Sheet	
		Eastern Fish and Game Council	
		As at 31 January 2026	
Assets		31 Jan 2026	31 Aug 2025
Bank			
Westpac Current Account		14,297	10,694
Westpac Call Account		140,104	201,047
Petty Cash		268	237
Investments		723,944	614,650
Waikaremoana Fund Investments		499,449	493,035
Total Bank		1,378,061	1,319,663
Current Assets			
Accounts Receivable		190,730	37,109
Accounts Receivable - Hawke's Bay & External parties		687	94
Inventory - Fish Stock		232,334	232,334
Prepayments and Accrued Income		0	6,885
Total Current Assets		423,751	276,422
Fixed Assets			
Buildings		1,049,503	1,049,503
Land		102,000	102,000
Motor Vehicles		616,728	478,550
Office Equipment		65,959	65,959
Plant & Equipment		192,508	192,508
Accum Dep Land & Buildings		(825,081)	(813,441)
Accum Dep Motor Vehicles		(172,841)	(154,813)
Accum Dep Office Equipment		(52,773)	(49,948)
Accum Dep Plant & Equipment		(144,683)	(140,030)
Total Fixed Assets		831,320	730,288
Total Assets		2,633,133	2,326,373
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable		34,022	34,940
Accruals and Prepaid Licences		88,092	101,883
Employee Entitlements		119,911	133,365
Game Bird Habitat Stamp Levy Clearing		39	0
GST		14,545	(4,935)
PAYE Clearing		27,570	26,263
Salmon Endorsement Clearing		87	0
Staff Social Club		1,781	1,671
Westpac Business Credit Card - A Alaeinia		34	(1,901)
Westpac Business Credit Card - K Thompson		1,994	598
Rounding		1	0
Designated Waters Clearing Acc		723	0
Total Current Liabilities		288,799	291,883
Total Liabilities		288,799	291,883
Net Assets		2,344,334	2,034,489
Equity			
Accumulated Funds		1,298,627	1,183,352
Asset Replacement Reserve		14,700	14,700
Back Country Fisheries Reserve		153,252	153,252
Breeding Programme Reserve		5,018	5,018
Fish for Gold Reserve		14,000	14,000
Hatchery Water Reticulation Reserve		16,109	16,109
Hunter Ballot Reserve		14,012	14,012
Waikaremoana Sportsfish Habitat Enhancement Fund Reserve		490,425	490,425
Current Year Earnings		309,845	115,275
Awakaponga Water Reticulation Reserve		27,826	27,826
Property Maintenance Reserve		520	520
Total Equity		2,344,334	2,034,489

Table 3 2025/2026 REPORT OF VARIANCES BETWEEN TOTAL BUDGET AND YEAR TO DATE ACTUAL EXPENDITURE AND INCOME as at 31 January 2026

Schedule B Code	Project	EXTERNAL COSTS		HOURS		INTERNAL COST		NETTABLE INCOME		NET COST		NET COST	Variance	%
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual			
1110	Species Monitoring	\$ 37,339	\$ 25,189	2,101	1,084	\$ 159,848	\$ 90,054	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 197,187	\$ 115,243	\$ 81,944	\$ 58.4	
1120	Harvest Assessment	\$ 3,340	\$ 168	786	400	\$ 59,800	\$ 33,230	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 63,140	\$ 33,398	\$ 29,742	\$ 52.9	
1140	Hatchery Operations	\$ 106,150	\$ 40,232	3,128	1,328	\$ 237,983	\$ 110,325	\$ 68,000	\$ 14,946	\$ 276,133	\$ 135,610	\$ 140,523	\$ 49.1	
1160	Releases	\$ -	\$ -	134	179	\$ 10,195	\$ 14,871	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,195	\$ 14,871	\$ (4,676)	\$ 145.9	
1170	Regulations	\$ -	\$ -	80	13	\$ 6,087	\$ 1,080	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,087	\$ 1,080	\$ 5,007	\$ 17.7	
1180	Control	\$ 400	\$ -	36	5	\$ 2,739	\$ 415	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,139	\$ 415	\$ 2,724	\$ 13.2	
	TOTAL - SPECIES MANAGEMENT	\$ 147,229	\$ 65,588	6,265	3,009	\$ 476,651	\$ 249,975	\$ 68,000	\$ 14,946	\$ 555,880	\$ 300,617	\$ 255,263	\$ 54.1	
1210	Resource Management Act	\$ -	\$ -	1,538	594	\$ 117,014	\$ 49,347	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 117,014	\$ 49,347	\$ 67,667	\$ 42.2	
1220	Works & Management	\$ 14,200	\$ 1,073	970	323	\$ 73,799	\$ 26,833	\$ 11,650	\$ 13,710	\$ 76,349	\$ 14,196	\$ 62,153	\$ 18.6	
1230	Assisted Habitat	\$ -	\$ -	658	130	\$ 50,062	\$ 10,800	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,062	\$ 10,800	\$ 39,262	\$ 21.6	
1240	Assess & Monitor	\$ -	\$ -	72	9	\$ 5,478	\$ 748	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,478	\$ 748	\$ 4,730	\$ 13.6	
1250	Lake Waikaremoana	\$ -	\$ -	0	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 0.0	
	TOTAL - HABITAT PROTECTION & M	\$ 14,200	\$ 1,073	3,238	1,056	\$ 246,352	\$ 87,728	\$ 11,650	\$ 13,710	\$ 248,902	\$ 75,091	\$ 173,811	\$ 30.2	
1310	Access	\$ 4,800	\$ 1,093	670	231	\$ 50,975	\$ 19,191	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 55,775	\$ 20,284	\$ 35,491	\$ 36.4	
1330	Newsletters/Information	\$ -	\$ -	276	74	\$ 20,999	\$ 6,148	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,999	\$ 6,148	\$ 14,851	\$ 29.3	
1340	Other Publications	\$ 2,000	\$ 962	30	1	\$ 2,282	\$ 83	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,282	\$ 1,045	\$ 3,237	\$ 24.4	
1350	Training	\$ 850	\$ 330	807	235	\$ 61,398	\$ 19,523	\$ 12,250	\$ 1,621	\$ 49,998	\$ 18,232	\$ 31,766	\$ 36.5	
1360	Club Relations	\$ -	\$ -	36	32	\$ 2,739	\$ 2,558	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,739	\$ 2,558	\$ 181	\$ 97.1	
1370	Huts	\$ 1,450	\$ 650	50	7	\$ 3,804	\$ 582	\$ 400	\$ 261	\$ 4,854	\$ 971	\$ 3,884	\$ 20.0	
	TOTAL - ANGLER & HUNTER PARTICI	\$ 9,100	\$ 3,035	1,869	580	\$ 142,197	\$ 48,184	\$ 12,650	\$ 1,882	\$ 138,647	\$ 49,337	\$ 89,310	\$ 35.6	
1410	Liaison	\$ 100	\$ -	205	73	\$ 15,597	\$ 6,065	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15,697	\$ 6,065	\$ 9,632	\$ 36.6	
1420	Communication	\$ -	\$ -	168	23	\$ 12,782	\$ 1,911	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,782	\$ 1,911	\$ 10,871	\$ 14.9	
1440	Public Promotions	\$ 1,000	\$ 248	146	4	\$ 11,108	\$ 332	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,108	\$ 580	\$ 11,528	\$ 4.8	
1450	Visitor Facilities/Education	\$ 500	\$ 802	681	11	\$ 51,812	\$ 914	\$ -	\$ 931	\$ 52,312	\$ 785	\$ 51,527	\$ 1.5	
	TOTAL - PUBLIC INTERFACE	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,050	1,200	111	\$ 91,298	\$ 9,221	\$ -	\$ 931	\$ 92,898	\$ 9,340	\$ 83,558	\$ 10.1	
1510	Ranging	\$ 1,000	\$ 368	1,146	576	\$ 87,190	\$ 47,852	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 88,190	\$ 48,220	\$ 39,970	\$ 54.7	
1520	Ranger Training	\$ 1,000	\$ 138	116	80	\$ 6,825	\$ 6,646	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,825	\$ 6,784	\$ 3,041	\$ 69.0	
1530	Compliance Prosecutions	\$ 4,000	\$ 671	308	105	\$ 23,433	\$ 8,723	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,277	\$ 22,433	\$ 7,117	\$ 15,316	\$ 31.7	
	TOTAL - COMPLIANCE	\$ 6,000	\$ 1,177	1,570	761	\$ 119,448	\$ 63,221	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,277	\$ 120,448	\$ 62,121	\$ 58,327	\$ 51.6	
1610	Licensing	\$ 60	\$ -	146	55	\$ 11,108	\$ 4,569	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,168	\$ 4,569	\$ 6,599	\$ 40.9	
1620	Agent Servicing	\$ -	\$ -	91	22	\$ 6,923	\$ 1,828	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,923	\$ 1,828	\$ 5,096	\$ 26.4	
	TOTAL - LICENSING	\$ 60	\$ -	237	77	\$ 18,031	\$ 6,397	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18,091	\$ 6,397	\$ 11,695	\$ 35.4	
1710	Council Elections	\$ -	\$ -	0	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 0.0	
1720	Council Meetings	\$ 8,500	\$ 3,740	707	417	\$ 53,790	\$ 34,643	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 62,290	\$ 38,383	\$ 23,907	\$ 61.6	
	TOTAL - COUNCILS	\$ 8,500	\$ 3,740	707	417	\$ 53,790	\$ 34,643	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 62,290	\$ 38,383	\$ 23,907	\$ 61.6	
1810	Management Planning	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,115	290	166	\$ 22,064	\$ 13,791	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 24,564	\$ 14,906	\$ 9,658	\$ 60.7	
1820	Annual Planning	\$ -	\$ -	104	17	\$ 7,912	\$ 1,412	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,912	\$ 1,412	\$ 6,500	\$ 17.8	
1830	Reporting/Audit	\$ 12,500	\$ -	486	210	\$ 36,978	\$ 17,446	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 49,478	\$ 17,446	\$ 32,030	\$ 35.3	
1840	National Liaison	\$ 200	\$ -	284	97	\$ 20,086	\$ 8,058	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,286	\$ 8,058	\$ 12,227	\$ 39.7	
	TOTAL - PLANNING/REPORTING	\$ 15,200	\$ 1,115	1,144	490	\$ 87,037	\$ 40,707	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 102,237	\$ 41,822	\$ 60,415	\$ 40.9	
	TOTAL	\$ 201,889	\$ 76,778	16,230	6,501	\$ 1,234,805	\$ 540,076	\$ 97,300	\$ 33,746	\$ 1,339,394	\$ 583,108	\$ 756,286	\$ 43.5	

10.2 MANAGEMENT REPORT

25 February 2026

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

1111 River Fisheries Investigations

Rangitaiki River Water Quality Monitoring

Monitoring of the Rangitaiki River is due to take place in latter part of February or early March. If the river is suitable for drift diving (Secchi disc reading >3m) then staff will undertake drift dive trout counts. If the water clarity is <3m water parameters (temperature, oxygen) will be recorded at sites along with visibility.

1112 Datawatch

During the 5 months following the season opening, a total of 295 datawatch tags have been returned and entered into the database. The distribution is as follows:

Lake Okareka	3
Lake Okataina	46
Lake Rerewhakaaitu	11
Lake Rotoehu	4
Lake Rotoiti	72
Lake Rotoma	2
Lake Tarawera	157

*tags entered in datawatch database to 24/2/2026

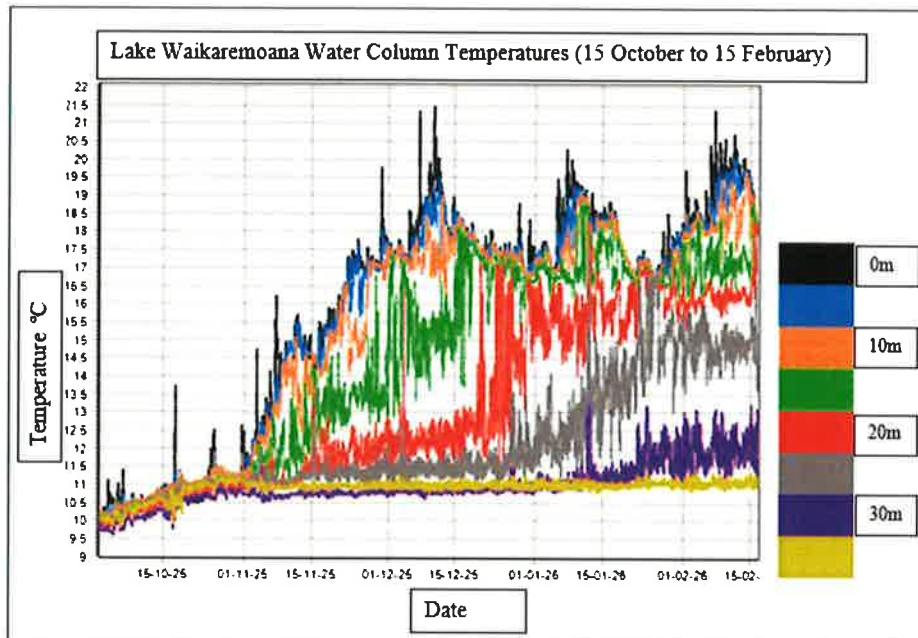
Compared with returns received and entered at the same stage last year (19 February 2025), the total number of tags returned is increased by 19 (+6.9%). Lake Tarawera was the most improved lake in terms of returns (up by 25 returns). Rotoiti was increased by 9 returns and Lake Okataina increased by 6 returns. Lake Rotoma has had the biggest decline in returns compared to last season (down by 18 returns) whilst Lake Rerewhakaaitu was down by 3 returns.

An additional 42 returns have recently been downloaded from the Survey Monkey datawatch portal. These are yet to be entered into the Datawatch database.

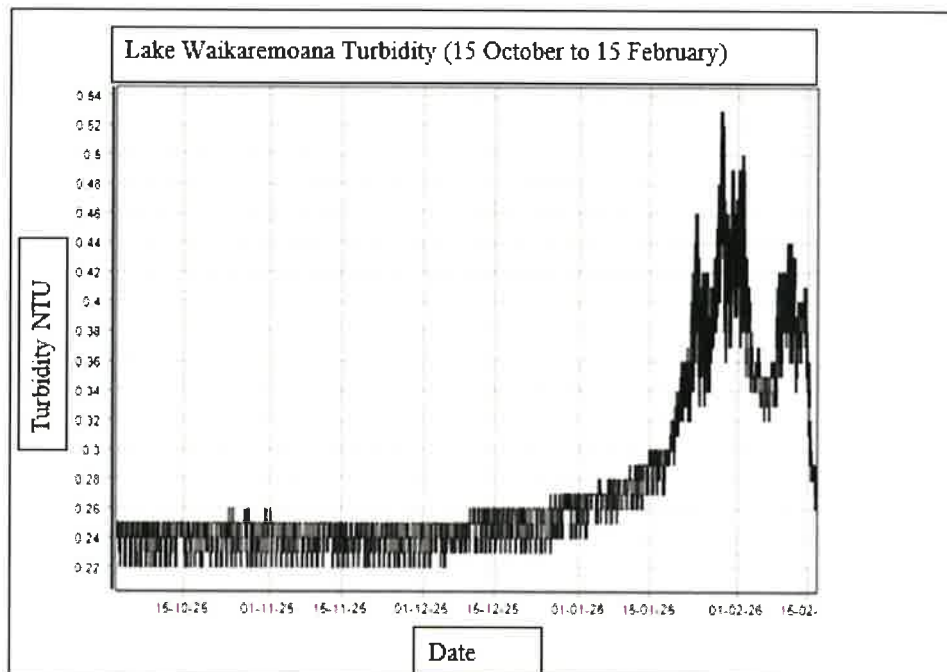
1113 Lake Waikaremoana

Lake Waikaremoana Monitoring Buoy Update

The Lake Waikaremoana Water Quality Monitoring Buoy has been reliably sending through data throughout the season. There is still an issue with the weather station attached to the top of the buoy not communicating. This provides wind direction and strength and localised rainfall. However much of the important rainfall in terms of the catchment falls in the high country to the North of the lake and feeds into the big catchments of the Hopuruahine, Mokau and Aniwaniwa. These bring in the large sediment loads.



Stratification started during early November with Lake Waikaremoana’s surface waters separating by temperature. The heat pushed down strongly to the 20m mark (red line) pre-Christmas. From that point the windy, wet weather that has predominated throughout the Eastern Region has cooled and mixed the top 15m of the water column (black, blue, orange and green lines) through the periods 14th December to 5th January and 15th January to 1st February. Top waters were around 3°C cooler for much of the period compared to an average summer.



The big storms hitting the Coromandel, Tauranga and East Coast from mid-January have highly affected the amount of sediment entering the lake through runoff from streams and wave action creating shoreline erosion. This is likely to have some negative consequences for the food chain - algal production and flow on effects to zooplankton and smelt.

1115 Lake Fisheries Research

Ngongotaha Stream trap

The Ngongotaha fish trap has not been operated for the month of February at the time of report writing. The trap was installed on the 23rd of February.

1121 Lake Fisheries Creel Surveys

Summer Creel Survey

The summer angler creel surveys for the 2025-26 season began in mid-October and will conclude toward the end of March. Reporting is due end of August 2026. To date numbers of anglers surveyed are down on the 2024-25 summer due largely to the poor weather encountered over the normally very busy Christmas/ New Year period. Boat fishers struggled to get on the water given the wind state.

1141 Hatchery Operations

Staff are making progress on various maintenance projects in preparation for upcoming liberations and trapping season and have been assisting with game bird banding over the reporting period.

Fish locations at 23rd February 2026:

Location	Type	Age	Qty (approx.)	Comment
Hatchery	Rt	0+	70,000	Liberations 2026
Tank A	Bt	0+	1,000	Liberation 2026
Tank C	Brook	2+	6	Brood
Tank E	Brook	0+	200	
Tank F	Brook	2+	20	Brood (W)
Pond 4	Rt	0+	6,900	Autumn liberations 2026
Pond 5	Rt	0+	6,900	Autumn liberations 2026
Pond 6	Rt	0+	6,900	Autumn liberations 2026
RW1,2	Rt	1+	4,950	2+ for 2026 KF programmes

1161 Sports Fish Liberations

No liberations of sports fish took place for the reporting period.

Fish were collected by DOC Northland Tara-iti (Fairy Tern) programme, and Paradise Valley Springs for display purposes.

1171 Anglers Notice

Post the February 12th Council Meeting, letters were sent to clubs, Iwi organisations and Statutory DOC managers advising that Council had opened the Anglers Notice process for the season and that four suggestions for change were being considered. These recipients were asked to provide any feedback on the four suggestions by 20th March 2026 to enable all feedback to be considered by the Eastern Council prior to the May 28th Council meeting when the process will be finalised.

An update to the Anglers Notice has also been advertised on the Eastern Fish & Game website, and within the February Reel Life ezine. At time of report writing, no feedback had been received.

HABITAT PROTECTION AND MAINTENANCE

1211 RMA Planning

Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Fish and Game is continuing to liaise with BoPRC on the review of the Schedule of Important Trout Habitats in the region. Consultation via the RESOF group is continuing. Regional Council's work to implement the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPSFM) is underway and early discussions are occurring on some early drafts of the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and chapters of the Regional Natural Resources Plan (RNRP). Comments have recently been submitted on a draft version of the fish passage provisions for the RNRP. Comments have also been submitted on the *Changes to Freshwater Management in the Bay of Plenty* document. Due to upcoming changes in the RMA space, BoPRC has recently put freshwater planning on hold. No new developments.

A submission was lodged on some proposed amendments to the Regional Pest Management Plan. No new developments

Waikato Regional Council

In March 2018 Auckland/Waikato and Eastern Fish and Game Councils lodged a joint submission on Waikato Regional Council's Healthy Rivers/Wai Ora: Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1. Council hearings were held mid-2019. Decisions were released in May. A/W Fish and Game Council, with support from Eastern, have appealed a number of matters. No new developments.

Gisborne District Council

No new RMA planning developments.

Other

Bay of Plenty Regional Council has established a group to provide advice in relation to policy development for NPSFM implementation. Fish and Game is part of this Rural and Environmental Sector Organisation Forum. The most recent meeting in October was missed. The next meeting has not yet been scheduled.

The most recent Bay of Plenty Forestry Liaison Group meeting was attended in late August. The next meeting is scheduled for late February.

The NZ RMA team has been very active recently with a number of important workstreams on the go – including development and consultation on Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plans, access, freshwater fish species interaction and passage, water allocation and limit setting, and the development of practice notes, along with a submission on afforestation on Crown

Land, and a review of DoC’s consultation document on Charging for Access to some Public Conservation Land.

A large upcoming work stream is the development of a new Eastern Region Sports Fish and Game Management Plan to replace our recently expired version. Work on the plan as a whole has temporarily been put on hold due to uncertainty over upcoming changes in Fish and Game reforms. With that in mind, the Minister for Hunting and Fishing has recently granted an operational extension of our existing plan until 30 June 2027. However, there are relevant elements of the upcoming review that will need progressing in the 12 months.

Another important workstream involves the Fish and Game reform itself. We have been advised that the Bill is complex, with more than 60 policy changes being introduced alongside the development of a stand-alone Act. The notification of the Bill was originally scheduled for late 2025. There is no confirmed date for notification, but we have been advised that it remains to be likely in early 2026. While NZC will be submitting on the Bill, we have also been advised that regional councils should also submit individually. In our case, we are continuing to work on a submission that captures those matters which are most important to us, and incorporating feedback provided by our Council.

NZC has recently submitted on the Natural Environment and Planning Bills.

1212 Consent Applications

Date	Authority	Applicant	Type	Resource Involved	Action
31 Jan	GDC	GDC	WP – construction works water	Hangaroa River Gisborne	No concerns email

1221 Reserves Management

All wetland reserves second round of mowing has been completed. The final mow prior to season commencement will be undertaken mid-April. Water reticulation channel and track pest plant spraying has been completed within Awaiti and Kaituna reserves. Orini, Bregmans and Waewaetutuki will be undertaken early March.

Water reticulation pest weed excavation by machine is unfortunately being delayed due the availability of machines which are being used to undertake remedial works for roads and land damages as a result of the storm rain events over past weeks. We hope to have at least Awaiti and Kaituna water channels completed by the end of March.

Awakaponga has now had the security gate padlock replaced and gate welding upgraded to mitigate angle grinder cutting. The reserve tracks have now also been mowed. We continue to consider alternative engineering water source structures to regularly supply water within our resource consent limits.

1231 Respond to Landowner Requests for Assistance

No landowner requests for habitat assistance have occurred since the last Council report.

ANGLER AND HUNTER PARTICIPATION

1311 Maintain & Enhance Access

Angler access maintenance work continues work at various locations around the region. This will continue over the next few months into Autumn. Some work is being carried out by a contractor in Kaingaroa Forest on the Rangitaiki River system, as well as other work by staff.

1312 Signage

Signage maintenance continues around the region.

1331 Electronic Newsletters

Reel Life was produced for February/March 2026, covering regional prospects, Anglers Notice, winter licence sales, catch and release advice and biosecurity.

1333 Fish & Game Website

Minor changes were made to the website over this period, including the addition of a page on the Anglers Notice.

1334 Social Media

A variety of posts were made to Facebook and Instagram, including news, inspirational fishing opportunities, the RMA Bill, special Pukeko and Swan season, and biosecurity news. Facebook has 3.4k followers.

1341 Information Pamphlets

Two Eastern brochures were added to our website.

1354 Fishing Competitions

Two fishing competition permits were processed for the period.

1361 Fish & Game Club Communications

Discussion with Rotorua Anglers Assn regarding a Children's fishing event in Autumn.

1371 Fish & Game Huts

Maintenance is up to date at both the Waikaremoana Hut and Wairua Hut. We still have no update from DOC regarding the Wairua toilet situation.

PUBLIC INTERFACE

1411 Statutory Liaison and Political Awareness

Nothing to report

1421 Public Communications

Local articles in the Ngongotaha Community Newsletter and the Free Adventurer paper.

1441 Public Promotions

Regular postings on Facebook promoting the activities of the team and the great fishing. The NGO Fishing Club (Free Kids Fishing Club – set up by local angler) that we have supported is gaining great traction and lots of FB postings and engagement.

COMPLIANCE

1511 Ranging

Ranging continues to be focusing on the Rotorua Lakes and tributaries especially the Lake Rotorua stream mouths and lower streams with a number of offenders dealt with mostly for fishing without licences. Boat angler surveys and compliance checks have been impeded by poor weather conditions.

Planning for the game season ranging operations has commenced, with liaison nationally, and with NZ Police and Firearms Safety Authority.

Contacts 2025-2026 year.

1417 contacts with anglers have been made for the 2025 – 26 year to the end of January Overall compliance is in excess of 98 %.

Contacts: Year 2025-2026 year

Month	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	Last 5 yr average
September	51	35	36	42	54	36
October	718	520	856	627	712	689
November	66	16	161	154	125	83
December	182	182	256	253	166	232
January	352	212	217	150	360	267
February	140	12	117	198		124
March	93	111	185	101		131
April	238	25	81	13		102
May	203	203	175	161		208
June	141	52	80	88		97
July	57	36	59	47		49
August	32	13	29	70		33
Total	2,273	1,417	2,252	1,904	1,417	2,051

1521 Ranger Training

Ranger training is up to date.

Rangers

We currently have 7 honorary rangers located around the region. They contribute to ranging and with assistance to staff as they can.

1531 Prosecutions

5 offenders currently have active matters pending resolution in relation to 7 offences, and this includes active court charges.

Offences 2025-2026 Year:

For the 2025-26 year to date 17/02/2026, we have dealt with 15 offenders for 20 offences as tabled below.

Offence table 2025-2026 year to date – 17/02/2026

Offence name	Number of offences
Fishing without licence	12
Fishing in closed waters	5
Fish with more than 1 rod	2
Fails to give details to ranger	1
Total number of offences	20

Offences Pending Resolution

Offences table – pending resolution as of 17/02/2026

Offence name	Number of offences
Fishing without licence	5
Fishing in closed waters	1
Fails to give details	1
Total number of offences	7

PLANNING AND REPORTING

1841 NZ Fish & Game Liaison

Licensing

Kate Thompson continues to provide regular updates of licence sales and other information requests to the New Zealand Council and regions. There have been no recent meetings or significant workstreams for the licence working group. The Game magazine distribution is on target.

National CLE Liaison Role

This role is continuing led from this region. This has focused on preparing submissions on the new Arms Bill 2025, matters around other legislation changes, and game season compliance planning and liaison, and advice as requested to other regions.

10.3 LICENCE SALES REPORT

26 February 2026

1. 2025-2026 Fish Licence Sales

1.1 Fish licence sales for the 2025-26 season compared with the 2024-25 season YTD to 25 February are summarised in Table one.

1.2 Total sales year to date are 1.8% (138 LEQ's) down on 2024-25 Season results. This result is improved on the January update which reported a variance of 2.5%.

Table One: Fish Licence Sales 2025-26 vs 2024-25 YTD to 25 February

Licence Category	Agency Online	Public Online	Total YTD 2024-25	Agency Online	Public Online	Total YTD 2025-26	Inc/Dec on prior Season
Fish Adult							
Family Season	858	1,291	2,149	764	977	1,741	-408
Season Non-Resident	745	1,089	1,834	776	1,228	2,004	170
Loyal Senior	79	170	249	73	253	326	77
Local Area Adult	241	289	530	229	290	519	-11
Winter Adult	835	654	1,489	912	728	1,640	151
Long Break Adult	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Short Break Adult	17	30	47	16	31	47	0
Day	113	497	610	91	488	579	-31
Day Non-Resident	371	1,914	2,285	277	1,712	1,989	-296
Total Adult	3,507	6,576	10,083	3,312	6,483	9,795	-288
Fish Junior							
Season	176	302	478	169	387	556	78
Season Non-Resident	5	16	21	4	20	24	3
Day	80	259	339	56	314	370	31
Day Non-Resident	10	31	41	8	27	35	-6
Total Junior	271	608	879	237	748	985	106
Fish Child							
Season Non-Resident	2	9	11	2	13	15	4
Day Non-Resident	2	10	12	16	20	36	24
Total Child	4	19	23	18	33	51	28
Total Fish	3,782	7,203	10,985	3,567	7,264	10,831	-154
Whole Season Equivalent (LEQ)			7,667			7,529	-138
Variance between Seasons							-1.8%
\$ (excl GST)			\$1,040,110			\$1,021,343	-\$18,768

Summary 2025-2026 Season YTD Actual vs Total Budget

2025-26 Annual Budgeted FISH LEQs	9,005	100.0%	\$1,221,548
2025-26 Actual	7,529	83.6%	\$1,021,343
Variance to budget	-1,476	-16.4%	-\$200,205

11. LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

11.1 Conservation Boards

- Bay of Plenty Conservation Board

11.2 Reports from Other Agencies

- Department of Conservation

11.3 Report from New Zealand Council

- Cr Mark Sceats

15.4 Report from the Chair

- Cr Lindsay Lyons

13. PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION

Ref: 9.01.01

26 February 2026

1. Purpose

(i) To discuss email relating to employee of Eastern F&G shared by email from NZC Chair.

2. Background

To discuss confidential staff matters.

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

GENERAL SUBJECT OF EACH MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED	REASON FOR PASSING THIS RESOLUTION IN RELATION TO EACH MATTER	GROUND(S) UNDER SECTION 48(1) FOR THE PASSING OF THIS RESOLUTION
NZC Chair defamatory email regarding an Eastern F&G employee without due diligence.	Good reason to withhold exists under section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982	Section 48(1)(a)(ii): That the public conduct of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist.

This resolution is made in reliance on Section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by Section 9 of that Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public are as follows:

ITEM	REASON UNDER ACT	SECTION	PLAIN ENGLISH REASON
Protect the privacy of natural persons.	Sec. 9(2)(a)	Information provided identifies a particular person or can easily be connected with a particular person.	Once the person to whom the information relates consents to its disclosure.
Protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence ... where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.	Sec 9(2)(ba)(i)	Disclosing the information would jeopardise the relationship with the supplier because the supplier may no longer trust the Council to hold its information in confidence.	Not unless there is a public interest in disclosure of the specific information.

Note: Section 48(4) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 provides as follows:

“(4) Every resolution to exclude the public shall be put at a time when the meeting is open to the public, and the text of that resolution (or copies thereof):

(a) Shall be available to any member of the public who is present; and

(b) Shall form part of the minutes of the Council.”

3. Resolutions

3.1 That pursuant to Section 48 (1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, the public be excluded at ... pm from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely, to Confidential staff matters.

3.2 That Council moves out of public excluded at ... pm.

3.3 That the public be re-admitted to the meeting at ... pm.