

**NORTHLAND FISH & GAME COUNCIL**  
**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF A MEETING**  
**HELD AT THE NORTHLAND FISH & GAME OFFICE**  
**NELL PLACE, WHANGAREI**  
**7.00PM THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 2025**

---

**PRESENT:**

**Chairman:** Phil Durham

**Councillors:** Mark Bell, Cameron Shanks, John McEntee, Sean Brickland, Darryl Reardon, Kelvin Ellis, Lloyd Altham, Barrie Barnes

**Staff:** Craig Deal (Manager), Rachael Quin (Administrator)

**Members of the Public:** Ralph Correa (Northland Conservation Board), Noel Birchall

The Conflict-of-Interest register was circulated around the table for all councillors to sign and declare any conflicts.

**APOLOGIES:** Russell Daniels

**It was moved:** *That the apologies be accepted.*

*Cameron Shanks / Darryl Reardon* **CARRIED**

**Adoption of the Performance Report 2024-25**

The Chairman stated he was remiss in the Chairmans report for not thanking Cr Barnes for the good work he does on behalf of the licence holders. The Chairman reiterated that the appalling behaviour from some on social media directed at volunteers is unacceptable and acknowledged all effort and thanked the staff.

Noel Birchall thanked all councillors in volunteering their time and stated it was disheartening so few licence holders give back by volunteering for Council.

Cr Barnes praised the Council for their positivity and outlook.

The Manager acknowledged Rachael's effort in delivering a seamless and positive audit.

**It was resolved:** *That the Council adopts the Audited Performance Report of the Northland Fish & Game Council for the year ended 31 August 2025.*

*Kelvin Ellis / John McEntee* **CARRIED**

The chairman then presented the Annual Performance Report to the public.

**Previous Minutes**

It was resolved: *That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025 are confirmed as true and correct.*

*Mark Bell / Darryl Reardon*

*CARRIED*

### **Matters Arising**

#### **Leave of Absence**

Cr Barnes advised that Cr Peart had resigned due to a change in circumstances that left him unable to participate and noted that Cr Peart had advised the Minister.

Action: NFGC to advertise council vacancy in new year and advise the Minister.

#### **Consolidated Annual Reporting**

The Chairman wrote a letter to Cr Barnes to forward to NZC for collation.

#### **Wetland Repair**

Discussed later in the meeting.

#### **Health and Safety**

The Manager has not yet clarified Health and Safety policy wording with Adrienne Murray from NZFGC.

#### **Sports Fish and Game Management Plan**

The Manager wrote to the Minister regarding extending the deadline and received a response issuing a deadline of 30 June 2027 to have a new SFGMP published for the region.

It was moved: *The members of the public have speaking rights.*

*Kelvin Ellis / Cameron Shanks*

*CARRIED*

### **Managers' Report**

#### **1110 Species Monitoring**

The Chairman asked if correct safety protocols would be followed for duck banding in 2026. The Manager confirmed that staff would be under the leadership of the Auckland Waikato region and safeguards would be in place to mitigate the risks of handling live birds.

#### **1221 Jack Bisset Wetland**

The Manager discussed the complexity imposed by Northland Regional Council classifying Jack Bisset Wetland as a "Natural Inland Wetland". This could create delay and extra cost in having to obtain multiple resource consents to complete the repair work.

Action: The Manager will seek to obtain permissive wetland classification in writing and obtain a simple resource consent.

Cr Bell queried that the earth works be made stronger to withstand weather events and to consult an expert. Discussions around events, damage and difficulty in predicting.

Action: Obtain an engineering report for the wetland repair.

### **1315 Fish Tuition Day**

Cr Ellis queried if any Fish Day attendees have bought a licence since.

Action: Look up licences purchased by attendees since Fish Day.

### **Field Officers Report**

#### **1220 Underwood Wetland**

The Chairman asked about the progress in removal of weed mat clogging the structures. The Manager stated it is ongoing.

### **Botulism Management Program**

The Manager reported good progress at the Kaitaia Wastewater treatment pond dredging.

It was moved: **That the Manager and Field Officer's Reports be received.**

**John McEntee / Lloyd Altham**

**CARRIED**

### **NZFGC Update**

Cr Barnes advised that a summary of the last NZC meeting was emailed to councillors. Of particular note, he suggested NFGC organise a time with Corina for a workshop to ensure a distinct and timely submission due January. The submission workshop group is to be the Manager and Cr's Bell, Brickland, Shanks and Ellis. Cr Shanks is to be advised of the outcome.

Action: Manager to share the link for the meeting scheduled Monday 15 Dec at 7pm.

Cr Barners also reported:

- DOC are to be advised of any F&G legal proceedings currently
- Proactive teamwork
- Jill Meunch now fulltime as CFO
- A national draft policy to create consistency in game bird dispersal across regions
- Infringement notice policy now with Minister for approval
- Praise for NFGC for taking part in H&S audit. Report of region audits is available.

Action: Consideration of the North Canterbury Initiative and concept to be deferred until the February 2026 meeting.

### **2025 Shoveler Census Report**

The recommendation of reducing the bag limit for Shoveler from 3 to 2 was discussed and rejected.

It was moved: **The shoveler bag limit remain at 3.**

**Cameron Shanks / Mark Bell**

**CARRIED**

## **2025 Wetland Performance Report**

It was discussed and decided that the policy of Fish & Game owned wetlands being excluded from hunting over special season, should be included in the game regulations for clarity.

**It was moved:** *The addition of a special condition that Fish & Game wetlands are closed for hunting over the special season.*

*John McEntee / Kelvin Ellis* **CARRIED**

**It was moved:** *The 2025 Northland Game Bird Dispersal Report, National Hunter Harvest Survey Report, Shoveler Census Report and Wetland Performance Report be received.*

*Cameron Shanks / John McEntee* **CARRIED**

## **2026 Game Bird Notice**

A summary of analysis for the Northland region of the NZ Game Bird Harvest Survey for all game bird species taken in the 2025 open game season was circulated for the council's information. The Manager pointed out the proposed delay of one week for paradise shelduck special season, the reduction for shoveler bag limit and extending the pheasant season by one week. The 300m exclusion zone around oxidation ponds was discussed and considered justified. The following draft Game Gazette notice for the 2026 season was presented for the Council's approval:

### **NORTHLAND FISH AND GAME REGION<sup>1</sup>**

#### **1 Game That May Be Hunted or Killed—Duration of the 2026/2027 Season**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Season Duration (dates inclusive)</b>	<b>Daily Bag Limit</b>
Grey/mallard duck and any hybrid of that species	2 May to 28 June 2026	12
NZ shoveler duck	2 May to 28 June 2026	2
Paradise shelduck	2 May to 26 July 2026 20 Feb 2027 to 28 Feb 2027	25 25
Black swan	2 May to 26 July 2026 20 Feb 2027 to 28 Feb 2027	20 20
Pukeko	2 May to 30 Aug 2026 20 Feb 2027 to 28 Feb 2027	12 12
California quail	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	10
Brown quail	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	10
Cock pheasant	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	5

#### **2 Shooting Hours**

**(1)** 6.30am to 6.30pm, except the hunting of:

<sup>1</sup> Reference to description: *New Zealand Gazette*, 24 May 1990, No. 83, page 1861.

- (a) Paradise shelduck, pukeko and black swan on 20 Feb 2027 to 28 Feb 2027 will be from 6.30am to 8.00pm.

### **3 Decoy Limit**

No limit.

### **4 Special Conditions**

- (1) No person shall wilfully leave on the hunting ground any game bird(s) shot or parts of any game bird(s) shot.
- (2) Camouflaged Rowboats: Persons may hunt or kill game from an unmoored camouflaged rowboat.
- (3) During the 20 Feb 2027 to 28 Feb 2027 special open season, no person shall hunt within 300 metres of any urban sewage oxidation ponds.
- (4) Any licensed game bird hunter who has a Department of Conservation permit to take or kill wildlife for the purpose of hawking may hunt with an Australasian Harrier (*Circus approximans*) to take game birds. This is subject to the season length and bag limit for each game bird species in clause 1 of this notice and any other special conditions for the Northland Fish and Game region and also subject to any conditions imposed by the Director-General of Conservation under such a permit.

It was moved: *The Northland Fish and Game region 2026/27 be approved subject to the shoveler bag limit remaining at 3, and with a special condition excluding Fish and Game managed wetlands from hunting during the February special season.*

*Cameron Shanks / Sean Brickland*

*CARRIED*

### **Permits**

The council discussed the administration required in producing game bird hunting permits for Northland Fish & Game wetlands and the need to raise it as reasonable business practice. It was decided to provide a bundle permit for all wetlands at a discounted cost to encourage usage.

It was moved: *To raise the game bird hunting casual permit fee to \$15 for a single wetland and \$40 for a bundle permit.*

*Sean Brickland / Lloyd Altham*

*CARRIED*

### **Remuneration Policy**

The Remuneration Policy adopted by NZFGC was circulated and proposed for adoption by NFGC. Cr Ellis stated it was a sound, consistent policy, and supported its implementation.

It was moved: *To adopt the Remuneration Policy.*

**Gas Gun Hire**

The Manager outlined the options of either persevering with hiring gas guns or abandon and encourage farmers to purchase their own. To continue to hire out gas guns will require increased financial and time investment to meet WorkSafe Regulations. It was decided that persevering served a promotional purpose, in which case and extra spend will be made to upgrade the fleet.

**Health and Safety Report**

Northland Fish & Game is required to give a Health & Safety report at each council meeting detailing:

- The implementation and adherence to Health & Safety policy/manual
- Any new issues or hazards that have arisen and how these have been addressed
- Progress with any ongoing issues
- Outcomes of audits and reviews required in the Health & Safety manual
- Any near misses or injuries

The Manager advised that NFGC now has a subscription to Track Me app and the audit report is being worked through and tracked.

**It was moved:** *That the Health and Safety Report be received.*

*John McEntee / Kelvin Ellis*

*CARRIED*

**Executive Limitations Report**

**It was moved:** *That the Executive Limitations Report be received.*

*Barrie Barnes / Mark Bell*

*CARRIED*

**Financial Report**

The Manager informed the council that the current budgeted deficit is \$6715 which will come from reserves. This amount differs from the approved budget, as the advised amount from NZC did not include the original calculated amount from reserves. Jill Meunch has been advised and concurs.

**It was moved:** *That the Financial Report ending 31 October 2025 is adopted.*

*Sean Brickland / John McEntee*

*CARRIED*

**General Business**

Cr Brickland stated that he is impressed by the knowledge and passion of the Council.

Noel Birchall advised he has heard of an excessive number of swan culled in Lake Omapere over the last year.

Cr Shanks asked Cr Barnes about the role Corina Jordan holds with each organisation (Game Animal Council and Fish and Game).

The Manager advised that the Sports Fish Management Plan has a published due date with the Minister of 30/06/2027 which leaves a tight timeline. This was circulated to the council along with a proposed timetable and the potential risks. The Manager intends to share progress at each meeting and queried whether a subcommittee was needed.

Action: NZFGC COO will provide the West Coast SFGMP to the Manager and Chairman.

The Chairman wished the council a Merry Christmas.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.44pm.

***Phil Durham***

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Durham', with a stylized flourish at the end.

***Chairman***

