

NORTHLAND FISH & GAME COUNCIL
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF A MEETING
HELD AT THE NORTHLAND FISH & GAME OFFICE
NELL PLACE, WHANGAREI
7.00PM THURSDAY 22ND MAY 2025

PRESENT:

Chairman: Phil Durham

Councillors: Cameron Shanks, John McEntee, Russell Daniels, Barrie Barnes, Sean Brickland, Darryl Reardon, Kelvin Ellis, Lloyd Altham

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

Member of the Public: Ralph Correa (Northland Conservation Board)

The Chairman welcomed the councillors and the Northland Conservation Board representative. The Chairman introduced those present to Ralph Correa and summarised the role and responsibilities of Northland Fish & Game Council. The Conflict-of-Interest register was circulated around the table for all councillors to sign and declare any conflicts.

APOLOGIES: Mark Bell, Lewis Peart (leave of absence)

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

Cameron Shanks / Darryl Reardon **CARRIED**

Previous Minutes

It was resolved: *That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 28th March 2025 are confirmed as true and correct.*

Lloyd Altham / Russell Daniels **CARRIED**

Matters Arising

Waitangi Wetland

The Manager investigated existing Waitangi Wetland agreement and will work with Department of Conservation to terminate the agreement as the wetland no longer has hunting value due to housing encroachment.

It was moved: *That the Manager advise Department of Conservation that the agreement with Waitangi Wetland Management Plan be terminated.*

John McEntee / Sean Brickland **CARRIED**

Action carried over to next meeting

1225 Flaxmill Maintenance

Action: The Manager to investigate whether poplar pulp is a viable option.

1160 Trout Releases

The Hatchery Manager confirmed stock of 2-year trout for release in 2026. The council discussed numbers per reservoir and survivability with different environments. The Manager reported that there is minimal catch data and we would need more information in order to advise best liberation locations. Cr Ellis suggested the better fishery be selected for all stock (Whau Valley dam) and that more data be collected. Cr Barnes suggested research into the food (invertebrate) populations.

Field Days

The Manager has booked the Northland Field Days outdoor zone site for 2026.

Action carried over to next meeting

Wetland Management Costs

Action: The Manager to compile permit conditions and fees for review for 2026 season.

Policies for Consultation

The Manager consulted with Adrienne Murray regarding the New Zealand Fish and Game Council Health and Safety Policy and was advised that regional tailgate forms will suffice in lieu of a comprehensive SOP library in the short term, and that SOP's will likely be developed at a national level.

Action: The Manager is to give feedback to NZ Council stating that council is supportive of the policies for consultation.

Occupational Health Consultation

The Manager engaged with a General Practitioner and was given conservative advice on employee health and fitness until more specialist information is available for future decision making.

Managers' Report

1122 Game Bird Hunter Harvest

The Manager reported that the surveys are underway and the opening weekend satisfaction survey was positive with high hunter satisfaction.

1210 Resource Management Act

The Manager will be engaging on the proposed Kaipara District Plan to advocate in NFGC interests.

1221 Jack Bisset Wetland

The Manager advised the estimated cost and options for repairing the bund wall breach, proposing the underspend of wetland budget be held over for the repair in the next financial year. The Chairman commented that draining of the wetland is not catastrophic and could be

beneficial in enabling maintenance work. Cr Barnes wanted to know how it breached. The Chairman explained the nature of flooding in the Wairua catchment, particularly the inundation of water, post drought.

1511 Ranging

The Manager explained the of non-compliance detected on opening day and reported on the police response to the incident at Flaxmill Wetland on opening day. A request had been issued to those involved to submit another report to police describing the threats. Cr Brickland queried if increased pig numbers affect wetland wildlife. No effects had been reported.

It was moved: **That the Manager's Report be received.**

Darryl Reardon / Cameron Shanks **CARRIED**

Field Officers Report

The Chairman queried the current botulism status. Cr Shanks queried the location of oxidation ponds.

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

Kelvin Ellis / John McEntee **CARRIED**

Draft Anglers Notice 2025-26

The Council did not require changes to the proposed Anglers Notice 2025-26. Cr Ellis asked about perch in the region and how NZFGC manages them while Northland Regional Council considers them a noxious pest. The Manager explained the issues and tension with the differing classifications and the management strategy of allowing eradication efforts on populations that were the result of illegal releases outside of known areas. Note 1 in the Anglers Notice was accepted as a suitable regulation to cover the regulations around perch catch limit and minimum legal size.

It was moved: **That the Anglers Notice for the 2025-26 season be adopted.**

Russell Daniels / Kelvin Ellis **CARRIED**

NZFGC Update

Cr Barnes reported that the recent NZC meeting was primarily regarding the budget. Other points to note;

- Licence fee increase is out for consultation
- Upcoming meeting with the Minister to discuss licence fees
- Dame Lynda Topp to be ordained next week
- Budget sign off expected in June
- Corina Jordan is leaving end of the month

NFGC Ballot Policy

The policy was discussed and the Manager highlighted the more controversial points. Cr Shanks stated he was happy with the existing stand holder initial ballot clause. The Chairman queried if wetland water levels can be lowered as a means for weed control. The Manager asked if the wording in the "Notification" paragraph can be changed. Councillors agreed. The Manager asked if the stand holder permit exclusivity period be reduced from 9 days to Opening Weekend only. Councillors agreed.

Action: Manager update NFGC Ballot Policy and 2026 stand holder permit terms and conditions.

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 described the recent boat incidents and reported the Maritime Coordinator considers it to be of low concern and not required to be reported to Maritime New Zealand.

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

Barry Barnes / Sean Brickland

CARRIED

Executive Limitations Report

Nothing to report.

Financial Report

The current game bird sales were circulated.

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

Russell Daniels / Darryl Reardon

CARRIED

General Business

The Manager circulated a Vehicle Replacement Memorandum proposing replacement of the field officer vehicle in the 2025-26 financial year. Councillors were supportive of the plan.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Phil Durham



Chairman
