

**Agenda for the Meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council
On 24th March 2022
At Otago Fish and Game Council office (or via Zoom)
Cnr Hanover and Harrow Streets Dunedin
Starting 1pm**

Timetable	Council Meeting
12.30pm	Light Lunch for those attending in person
1:00pm	Council Meeting
3:00pm	Public Forum (Mask and Vaccine pass compulsory)
3:15pm	Afternoon Tea
4:30pm	Meeting closes

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1.0 Present and Apologies

2.0 Matters to be raised not on the agenda

3.0 Declarations of Interest

4.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Minutes for the Meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council On Saturday 12th February 2022 At Wanaka Hotel, 71 Ardmore Street, Wanaka

The meeting opened at 9.50am. The chair welcomed all in attendance. The CE explained health and safety precautions due to COVID-19.

1.0 Present and Apologies

Present: Colin Weatherall (chair), Mike Barker, Rick Boyd, Ian Cole, John Highton, Adrian McIntyre, Vicky May (nee Whyte), Blair Trevathan.

Present via Zoom: Ray Grubb, Richard Twining (Ngai Tahu).

In attendance: Ian Hadland (CE), Bruce Quirey (OF&GC communications officer/minutes secretary).

Apologies: None.

The chair relayed to the Council discussions from the executive committee meeting held at 9am, 12th February 2022.

2.0 Matters to be raised not on the agenda

Otago Regional Council conflict of interest.

3.0 Declarations of Interest

The chair circulated forms for completion by Councillors to identify ongoing conflicts of interest to be included in the Council's Declaration of Interest Register.

No declarations of interest to items in this agenda

4.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Moved (Highton/Cole)

That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 25th November be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Carried unanimously.

5.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Cr Highton asked the CE to elaborate on the Forest and Bird / ORC High Court case to seek a declaratory judgement on whether the Freshwater Planning Process will hear the entire Regional Policy Statement.

Cr Highton sought an update on the status of Grey Teal.

6.0 Health and Safety Report – December 21 - February 22

Cr Highton noted a date error in the H&S Management Audit Checklist. CE agreed to correct this. Councilors also inquired about the incident requiring a doctor visit.

Moved May/Barker

That the Health and Safety Report be received

Carried unanimously

7.0 Items Requiring Decisions

7.1 Anglers Notice Recommendations for the 2022/2023 Fishing Season

The CE discussed the triennial review of the Anglers Notice for the Otago Region for the 2022/2023 Fishing Season. The Chair outlined the timetable for the Anglers Notice process.

Councillors agreed with a staff recommendation that the feedback process should consist of communications with the submitters and public consultation through the Otago Fish and Game Council Facebook and a newspaper notice.

Staff would provide a report to Council in May 2022 incorporating a summary of any further submissions, and final recommendations for consideration.

A Clarify Boat Rules

Table 1: Proposed Otago region boating regulations.

Note	Rule
2.1	Licence holders may fish from any boat, canoe, pontoon or flotation device.
2.2	Licence holders fishing from boats that are mechanically propelled must stay at least 100 metres from any anglers fishing from the shore.
3	Licence holders may fish from any boat, canoe, pontoon or flotation device provided it is not being mechanically propelled.
4	No licence holder may fish from any boat, canoe, pontoon or flotation device except in the tidal reaches of this waterway if applicable.

Recommendation A1

*That the boating regulations are changed in accordance with Table 1 and **Error! Reference source not found.***

Cr Highton said notes 2.1 and 2.2 should be removed from Table 4 and brought forward into Note 1 regulations. Cr Cole said 'mechanically propelled' should be changed to while 'under motorised power'.

Agreed to proceed to next stage of Anglers Notice review process subject to changes.

Recommendation A2

That boat fishing is not permitted on the Southern Reservoir.

Noting that Southern Reservoir is a drinking water reservoir, similar to Sullivans Dam, Councillors **Agreed** that the recommendation **proceed to next stage of Anglers Notice review process.**

B Increase Drift Boat Opportunities

Recommendation B1

That non-motorised boat fishing is allowed on the Hawea River.

Council **declined the recommendation** and agreed to undertake further consultation with anglers and angling groups over the next year.

Recommendation B2

That non-motorised boat fishing is allowed on the Makarora River below the Wilkin confluence.

Council **declined the recommendation** and agreed to undertake further consultation with anglers and angling groups over the next year.

Recommendation B3

That non-motorised boat fishing is allowed on the Clutha River above Albert Town bridge including Deans Bank section.

Council **declined the recommendation** and agreed to undertake further consultation with anglers and angling groups over the next year.

In declining recommendations 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, councillors said there was insufficient evidence for demand and lack of information on the potential impact of the proposed changes.

C Closure of small spawning streams

Recommendation C1

That the fishing season for Quartz Creek is closed year-round.

Councillors **declined the recommendation** and agreed to seek further feedback from anglers.

Recommendation C2

That the fishing season Twelve Mile Creek is closed year-round.

Council **declined the recommendation** and agreed to seek further feedback from anglers.

In declining recommendations 3.1 and 3.2, Council said proposals did not consider the rest of the catchment tributaries and would create inconsistencies.

D Glenorchy lagoons open year-round

Recommendation D1

That the Glenorchy lagoons are open to angling year-round.

Agreed to proceed to the next stage of the review process.

E Hore's Control Pond open November 1 to April 30

Recommendation E1

That the open season for Hore's Control Pond is changed to November 1 to April 30.

Agreed to proceed to the next stage of the review process.

Recommendation E2

That fishing from boats is not permitted on Hore's Control Pond.

Agreed to proceed to the next stage of the review process.

F Lower Greenstone River open year-round

Recommendation F1

That Greenstone River downstream of the Greenstone Station Road car park swing bridge is opened to fishing year-round.

Agreed to proceed to the next stage of the review process.

G Lower Manuherekia River open all year.

Recommendation G1

That the Manuherekia is open to angling year-round below Shaky Bridge.

Council eventually **Agreed to proceed to the next stage of the review process.**

Crs Cole and Boyd said the justification for change was weak and resulted in a split catchment which further complicates the regulations. However, Cr Highton and Cr May said the proposal did provide additional opportunity.

H Daily limit on catch & release

Recommendation H1

That no new regulations regarding catch and release are introduced.

Agreed to proceed to the next stage of the review process.

Councillors said it would be impossible to enforce catch and release regulations. Staff would develop communications to educate anglers on best practice catch and release.

The Council meeting was adjourned at 11.15am.

The meeting resumed at 11.25am.

A combined sports fish bag limit for southern lakes.

Recommendation 9.1

That lakes Wanaka, Hawea, Wakatipu, Dunstan and Roxburgh and the upper Clutha (excluding Deans Bank section), Hawea, Kawarau, and Shotover rivers are changed to a daily sports fish limit of four sports fish.

Councillors **deferred the recommendation from this review and agreed the matter should be referred back to staff to examine whether there is a different solution that might be considered in 12 months.**

Councillors acknowledged staff's concerns over fish identification by many anglers. However, Council expressed concern that a combined fish bag limit for southern lakes would effectively increase the trout limit.

I Mill Creek above Waterfall Park open to all anglers

Recommendation I1

That Mill Creek above Waterfall Park is open to all anglers

Agreed to proceed to next stage of the review process.

J Reduce sections of Clutha and Taieri rivers.

Table 2: Proposed Clutha River sections.

Section	Season	Method	Trout bag	Salmon bag	Notes
Lake Wanaka Outlet to Roxburgh Dam (excluding Deans Bank section)	1 Oct – 30 Sep	FSB	2	4	1,5,8
Deans Bank Section (defined by landmark posts 1km downstream of Lake Wanaka and 600m upstream of Albert Town Bridge)	1 Oct – 31 May	F	2	4	1,4
Below Roxburgh Dam	1 Oct – 30 Sep	FSB	4	1	1,5,7 9,10

Recommendation J1

That the Clutha River is broken down to the sections outlined in Table 2

Agreed to proceed to the next stage of the review process.

Councillors agreed to reduce the number of sections on the Clutha River from six sections to three, to simplify regulations and remove confusion for anglers.

Table 3: Proposed Taieri River sections.

Section	Season	Method	Trout bag	Salmon bag	Notes
Above Outram	1 Oct – 30 Apr	FSB	4	1	1, 5, 8
Below Outram	1 Oct – 30 Sep	FSB	4	1	1, 5, 7

Recommendation J2

That the Taieri River is broken down to the sections outlined in Councillors agreed to reduce the number of sections on the Clutha River from six sections to three, to simplify regulations and remove confusion for anglers.

Table 3.

Agreed to proceed to next stage of review subject to amendment which would continue to prohibit boat fishing from above Outram on the Taieri River.

K Review rules regarding multiple hooks**Recommendation K1**

That (with the exception of fly only waters) the use of treble hooks in Otago waters be permitted.

Recommendation K2

That note 13.2 – “The use of any legal lure with multiple hooks in a backcountry fishery is prohibited” is removed.

Recommendation K2 Alternative

Note 13.2 is retained and updated:

The use of any legal lure with more than a single hook with a single point in a backcountry fishery is prohibited.

The Council Agreed the updated K2 Alternative recommendation proceed to the next stage of the review process.

Councillors clarified the intent of the original rules for multiple hooks in backcountry and clarified the regulation to a single hook with a single point.

Moved Cole/Boyd

That the Anglers Notice report be received, consultation updates agreed and circulated for the next phase of input.

Carried

7.2 Proposed Easement over Waitepeka Wetland

The CE outlined a proposal by the Southland Technical Institute to install a wastewater system pipeline across the lower end of the Waitepeka Wetland. Clarification was being sought on the true alignment of the pipeline.

The Council moved (Highton/Barker) to

- 1. Agree in principle to an easement (subject to confirmation that an easement is required) across the Fish & Game Council property at Waitepeka.**

2. **The CE negotiate a reasonable compensation arrangement which provides enduring benefits to hunters or the wetland.**
Carried unanimously

Moved Boyd/Cole

That the meeting move into the Public Excluded Items.

Carried

8.0 Public Excluded Items

8.1 Confirmation of Previous OF&GC Public Excluded Minutes

Cole/Boyd moved

That Minutes of the previous public excluded meeting 25th November 2021 be accepted as a true and accurate record.

Carried

8.2 Lindis High Court Case Update

Moved Weatherall/May

1. That Council endorse the Executive Council decision to settle the High Court costs mediated with the LCG and agreed with the ORC settlement of above from its general reserve.

2. That the decision to pay agreed costs be brought into the public record.

Carried

8.3 Risk Management Report

Moved Weatherall/May

That the schedule of priority risks and action plan be adopted for the 2022/23 financial year.

Carried.

8.4 Cycle Trail Tracks Trust MOU – Bendigo Wildlife Management Reserve

Moved: Boyd/Trevathan

Accept MOU in principal as per the draft circulated subject to:

- i. **Remove multiple closure reference.**
- ii. **There be an initial closure period of 10 days at the beginning of the hunting season**
- iii. **Council will seek agreement with the cycle trail trust on mitigation and define the in-kind contribution before the agreement is signed.**

Carried

The Chair wanted the Council to record their appreciation to Crs Boyd, Trevathan and Cole for their input into the process.

8.5 Item not listed in agenda – Media coverage of ORC conflict of interest

Moved Boyd/Cole

That the meeting move out of Public-Excluded Items.

Carried

9.0 Financial Report

The CE updated the Council on the financial report, noting Otago was in a positive financial position with strong revenue and spending on track with budget. He suggested the Council move a proportion of funds into fixed investment. Council agreed.

Moved May/Boyd

That the financial report be received.

Carried

10.0 Chief Executive's Report

The CE spoke to his report, updating progress against the Council's three-year strategic priorities.

Paradise aerial counts undertaken in January had exceeded the 23,000 upper limit and triggered more permissive conditions for the 2023 summer paradise shelduck season. The CE hoped to have draft Lower Clutha Trust documents for the Contact Energy – Lower Clutha Sportsfish Management Plan Implementation ready for signing in March. Other matters in the CE's report discussed by councillors included the licence holder perceptions survey, wetlands promotion, and improving ranger visibility during peak user periods.

Moved Barker/McIntyre

That the Chief Executive's report be received

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 1.10pm.

The meeting resumed at 1.40pm.

11.0 RMA Planning and Consents Report

17 November 2021 – 31 January 2022

The CE updated the Council on progress of the Regional Policy Statement High Court hearing. Councillors raised concerns about the Lake Onslow water level and asked about angler access to weather monitoring at Onslow. Cr Barker complimented the Environmental Officer on the quality of the Onslow report.

Moved May/Cole

That the RMA report be received.

Carried

12.0 Committee & Delegate Reports

12.1 Clutha Fisheries Trust

Cr Cole verbally updated the Council on the work of CFT. Matters included management of Lake Dunstan shoreline and cycle trail placement. The next stage was to identify willows for removal.

CFT had also written to a landowner over concerns about access at Kidds Creek. A priority was research into non-migratory galaxids at Kidds Creek and the Nevis. The CFT made a submission to the ORC on values of the Clutha/Mata-Au rohe.

Moved Weatherall/Highton

That the CFT report be received.

Carried.

12.2 NZC

The Otago Region representative to the NZC, Cr Grubb, provided a verbal update on NZC matters. The Ministerial Review regional report would be available at the end of February. The resource allocation project would be rolled into any new regional structure as a priority. Regional chairs would meet at the end of April and discuss budgets. Under the Ministerial Review, NZC would look at corporate policies across the organisation.

Key NZC priorities were habitat and access. Other discussion points included the NZC CE appointment process, guides licence and a communications strategy.

Moved Chair/Boyd

That the NZC chair's report is received.

Carried.

12.3 Ngai Tahu

Ngai Tahu representative Cr Twining would update the OF&GC at its next meeting. The chair thanked Ngai Tahu for its interest in Fish & Game matters.

12.4 Conservation Board

Not present.

13.0 Correspondence

13.1 NZC to Otago

Nil

13.2 Otago to NZC

Nil

13.3 General Correspondence In

13.3.1 BDO Audit Proposal

The CE discussed a letter to BDO about its audit of OF&GC. BDO had a mixture of approaches to audits in other regions. The CE is looking to simplify auditing processes and costs.

13.4 General Correspondence Out

13.4.1 Wanaka - Cromwell trail - Bendigo Wildlife Reserve

13.4.2 Amalgamations NZ Fish and Game Councils

13.4.3 Conflict of Interest on the Otago Regional Council

The chair noted the Council had written to the Minister regarding concerns about conflict of interest on the ORC governance and was awaiting the outcome of that request.

Moved Cole/McIntyre

That correspondence be received and noted.

Carried.

14.0 Items to be Received or Noted

14.1 2022 Game Bird Moulting Count Report

The CE addressed the Council on the paradise shelduck trend count report, noting that the upper limit of 23,000 birds had been surpassed, triggering more permissive hunting conditions for the 2023 summer season.

Moved Trevathan/Highton

- **That the 2022 Game Bird Moulting Count report be received.**
- **That Council endorse the decision made at the November Council meeting to open the March paradise shelduck season to both Junior and Adult hunters.**

Carried

15.0 General Business

Cr May expressed concern about staff retention, noting reports were overcomplicated and staff needed to be out doing fieldwork. The CE sought Council feedback about the sort of detail expected in reports and the agenda.

Cr Highton appreciated the material in its current form.

The chair said he was more concerned about time demanded of the CE to prepare agendas for council meetings.

The chair concluded General Business at 2.25pm.

5.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

5.1 Management of Fenced Wetlands and Riparian Areas

Cr Highton was asked at the last meeting to provide a short background paper on his concerns about ongoing management of fenced riparian and wetland areas – presumably to develop a Council position on the topic

From a staff perspective the issues are well known. They are also quite complex to resolve with a 'one size fits all' policy as there is a diversity of wetlands and riparian areas in Otago and some very different approaches will be required to manage the values- including access - within them.

There is also national level policy to consider in the form of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (which covers protection and management of wetlands) and the National Environmental Standard for freshwater 2020 (which covers certain stock exclusion from wetlands)

One option to advance the discussion might be to get our Environmental Officer to report on the limitations of the National Policy and that may help narrow the discussion on what can be promoted through our advocacy work, and be achieved with on the ground activity.

For discussion

Ian Hadland
Chief Executive

Control Of Growth In Fenced Wetlands and Riparian Margins.

Background.

1. Fencing to protect wetlands and riparian margins is gaining momentum
2. There are many varieties of wetland with different vegetation and different proportions of native and introduced plants
3. Some are being planted with natives and others are to be managed to encourage re-establishment of native plant populations
4. A strong stimulus to this activity is coming through funding from Jobs for Nature channeled through catchment groups
5. This is seen as a positive development for water quality and quantity, biodiversity, and climate change.

Problem

6. Some wetlands and riparian margins where stock has been excluded can become very overgrown
7. In this situation rank growth of introduced grasses suppresses growth of natives
8. Introduced pest plant species like willow, gorse and broom can flourish
9. Control with spraying alone has problems
10. Overgrown margins become inaccessible to anglers and hunters
11. Landowners are becoming reluctant to take part in fencing and planting programmes if this means that they are not able to control pest plants through controlled grazing

Landowners wishes

12. To manage different wetlands according to their different requirements
13. To be able to control unwanted growth on wetlands and riparian margins through controlled grazing where this is required

Licence Holders wishes

14. To be able to access rivers and wetlands for fishing and hunting

For Discussion

15. Fish and Game's position on control of unwanted plants on fenced wetlands and riparian margins
16. Fish and Game's position on planting of native species in wetlands and on riparian margins in such a way as to maintain access: one or both sides, sequencing of plants, access points etc.

Reason for discussion

17. To maintain momentum in fencing and planting wetlands and riparian margins to achieve environmental goals it is necessary to
18. control unwanted growth of pest species
19. maintain collaboration with landowners
20. maintain access for fishing and game bird hunting

Additional Note

21. There is some evidence to suggest that when applied selectively that careful controlled grazing can result in better outcomes for native plants in some types of wetland.

Cr John Highton

6.0 Health and Safety Report

Health and Safety Report – December - March 2022

Covid 19

- One Staff member in Cromwell now has a Covid positive result, they are home isolating and there is no impact on the organisation at this time.
- Covid variant omicron continues to spread.
- As of 24th January 2022, we are at traffic light level RED. Our offices are presently closed to public. This will be reviewed regularly. As the infection spreads, staff are preparing to work from home if they choose to do so or are instructed to do so.
- Staff have discussed levels of response to covid, these will continue to be noted and updated at each staff meeting to decide if more restrictions or safety measures are needed for staff, council, rangers or relating to our buildings and events.
- Staff are to follow ministry of Health guidelines and use the online form when a close contact or case.
- Rapid Antigen tests, Masks, gloves and sanitizer are available to all staff.
- A national 0800 number is available to all F&G staff if they are feeling unsettled and wish to talk to someone privately.
- All staff are now double vaccinated. Most have received a booster

Events OHS plans are made before any events or field work outings.

OHS Audits

Completed audits:

- Office hazard audits
- Vehicle hazards and safety equipment
- Council policy

Next audits:

- Workshop. Field equipment, PPE gear

Incidents/Accidents/Near Misses

- Concern was shown over a cleaning person with a bad cold attending to our offices. This was sorted with the company involved.
- Infestation of black dead wood beetles in Window Treatments office. This has now been sorted.

Training

- A fire drill walk out was conducted in February at the Dunedin office and the fire procedure document has been updated and sent to all staff.
- One staff member is doing a refresher first aid course.
- New compliance person was inducted into the Dunedin office

Recommendation

That this report be received

Sharon Milne
Administration Officer
March 2022

7.0 Items Requiring Decisions

7.1 Operational Workplan and Budget overview 2022-2023

Attached is the draft workplan and budget for the Councils consideration. If approved this will be fed into the New Zealand Councils (NZC) budgeting and licence fee setting process with the final 2022/23 workplan being adopted at our July meeting.

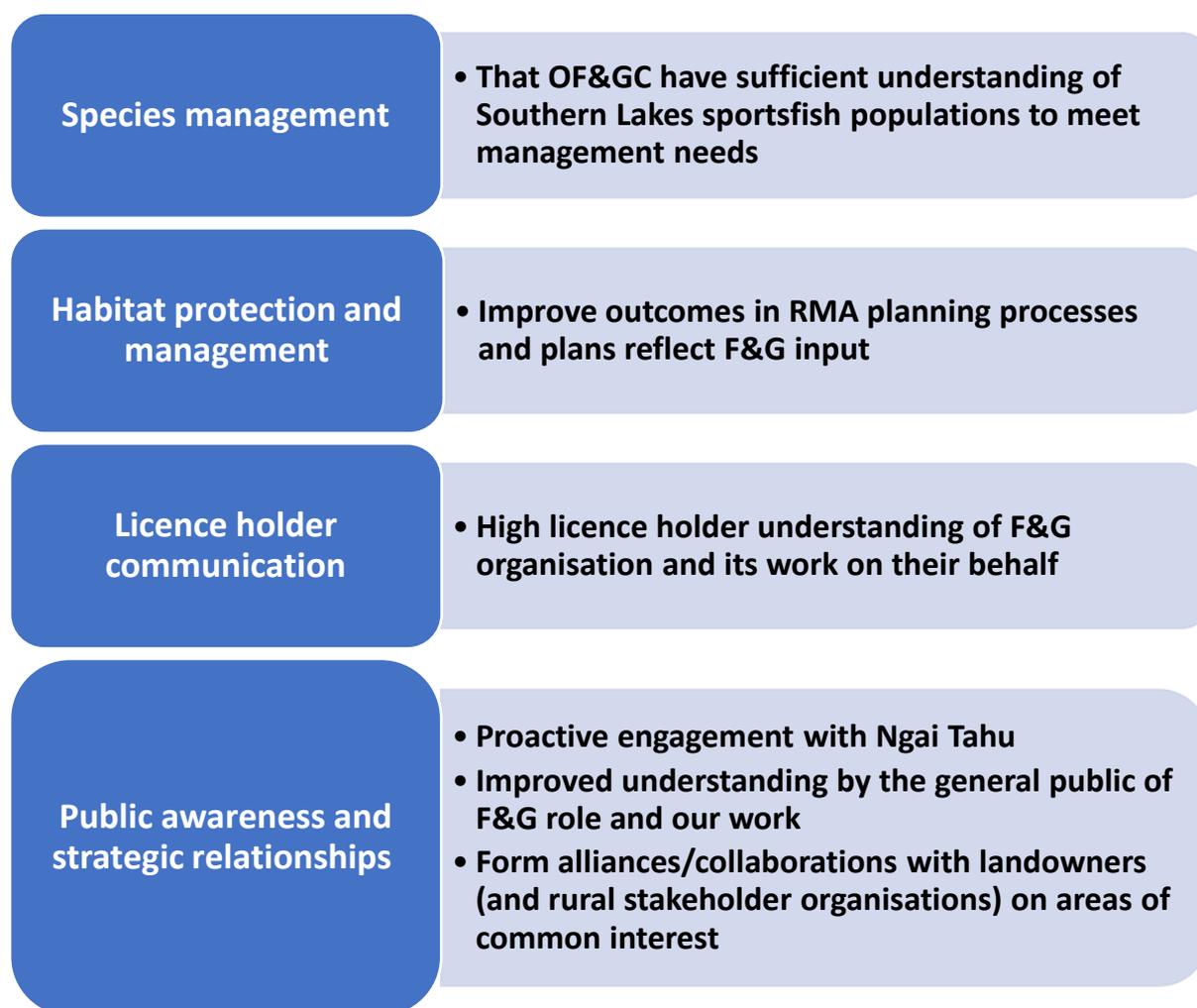
NZC guidance on budgets

New Zealand Council has provided little financial guidance except to say Councils should work up budgets based on bulk funds approved last year. Any additional spending above that needs to go through the contestable funding process at a national level.

Cr's will be aware that two years ago, the bulk fund for Otago was reduced 5% (as it was across the country) to allow for a Covid related reduction in licence revenue. That reduced Otago's operating budget by around \$50,000. Those austerity measures remain in place through to the end of this financial year.

2020-2023 Strategic priorities

At its February meeting Council rationalised its strategic priorities formulated two years previous. It's worth noting that they are in alignment with policy and objectives in the Councils (10 year) Sportsfish and Gamebird Management Plan. (Appendix 1)



2022/23 OWP activity related to priorities

Communications – Strategic communications with other stakeholders has been covered in previous workplans and time has been allocated to this work area again this year. The allocation of hours to internal communications to licence holders was deliberately high in this current year but staff believe that this could be reduced in favour of species management and habitat protection. Some concern was expressed that the high communication focus (particularly written) draws staff away from the frontline work that should be taking place. Opportunities will still be taken to promote the work that is being done on licence holders behalf.

Species – additional hours have been committed to species work which is directly related to the Southern Lakes fishery priority and to a lesser extent Poolburn Reservoir.

There is very little change in other outputs at this point but if some key contestable funding bids are approved there may need to be a slight shift in staff focus to ensure those projects are coordinated properly and completed. That can be adjusted before the OWP is finalised.

Other activities

There are a number of other tasks which are outside of those priorities which might be regarded as core business (gamebird monitoring counts, hatchery operations) in our annual operational work plan and those have been included in the budget. I doubt the Council wants any of this to be stopped altogether to pursue only those goals above.

I have also built in some projects and funding applications to address risks identified in the risk management plan which was agreed at the February meeting.

Weaving this all together into a coherent OWP is no easy task and despite efforts to simplify, the wider budget system is still stubbornly overcomplicated.

Budget

As you are aware around 85% of our budget is overheads (mostly salaries) with only around \$90,000 available to externally fund projects and other activities. As savings have been made in overhead costs (leases, technology savings etc) I have been shifting these across to fund external projects. Unfortunately, as costs rise this is doing little more than maintaining the project expenditure.

The table below shows the split between the output areas (without the contestable funding bids being added). You will note that this is similar to last year.

Output	2021-22	2022-23	Change
Species Management	\$164,607	\$196,717	20%
Habitat Protection & Management	\$254,311	\$225,785	-11%
Angler/Hunter Participation	\$138,329	\$124,310	-10%
Public Interface	\$224,176	\$212,939	-5%
Compliance	\$92,370	\$89,166	-3%
Licensing	\$24,269	\$11,255	-54%
Councils	\$53,384	\$50,852	-5%
Planning/Reporting	\$81,337	\$88,508	9%
TOTAL Bulk Fund Budget	\$987,438	\$987,711	0%

Contestable Funding bids

At the bottom of the Budget spreadsheet (attached) you will see that a number of contestable funding bids are proposed. These have been split into two sections; funding from the licence fee pool, and funding from Otago's own reserves.

Applications from national contestable pool (from the licence fee):

1. **CPI on Salaries (5.9%) - \$41,960.** Part of being a 'good employer' is to ensure staff salaries are keeping pace with inflation. To do otherwise means staff salaries are going backwards.

2. **Performance increments - \$9,000.** We have a number of high performing and deserving staff which require rewarding. Salaries must remain competitive if we wish to retain key staff in the short to medium term.
3. **Vehicle expenses – \$8,000.** Council has progressively downsized its fleet but the costs to run and maintain the remainder are still rising. Fuel and insurance are both increasing and the costs need to be covered. Estimated \$7000 more in fuel will be required and an additional \$1000 for insurance.

Spending from Otago Reserves

4. **Staff training – \$12,000 one-off spending from General Reserve** – A draw on general reserves to provide for staff (including the CE) to partake in a range of development training opportunities. Staff training has largely been on hold during the Covid pandemic.
5. **Southern Lakes Fisheries Advocacy/PR - \$24,000 one-off spending from Non Resident levy fund.** Funding for one or possibly two summer interns to act as advocates. This will assist in raising F&G profile at key fisheries, improve compliance, and angler success rates.
6. **Southern Lakes Fisheries Acoustic Surveys - \$55,000 one-off spending from Non Resident levy**
7. **Asset Replacement Fund Drawdown – (notification only) of spending from dedicated reserve - \$3,500** for replacement of one vehicle in the year. The Council has one surplus vehicle which it will dispose towards the end of 2023 and this funding will be used to further offset the cost of the replacement.

Recommendation

That the Council;

1. **Endorse the edited three year strategic plan priorities and objectives as circulated**
2. **Agree to the draft 2022/23 draft operational workplan and budget**
3. **Confirm the contestable funding bids from the national pool and notification of the proposed spending from reserves.**

Ian Hadland
Chief Executive
 15th March 2022

Appendix 1 – OF&GC Strategic Priorities 2020-2023

Output	Goals 2020-2023	SF&GMP Objective or policy #	Draft Objectives	What success looks like
Species Mgt	That OF&GC have sufficient understanding of Southern Lakes sportsfish populations to meet management needs	5.3.1, 6.4.9	Robust monitoring system for southern lakes fisheries established by 2023 with enough sensitivity to detect population change. Research proposal to investigate drivers for that change lodged to NZC for funding by 2024	Ongoing monitoring programme established to meet the Councils management needs - primarily maintaining a sustainable sportsfish population for anglers.
Habitat Protection & Mgt	Improve outcomes in RMA planning processes – Plans reflect F&G input	6.3.1, 6.3.3, 6.4.1 6.4.2, 6.4.17	Submissions reflecting F&G positions made on time and hearings attended for all planning matters impacting on F&G managed species, habitat and users. Joint freshwater and habitat outcomes developed with partner agencies and promoted through planning processes.	RMA planning documents recognise fish & gamebird values and protect important habitats that they depend upon. (Regional Policy Statement and Land and Water plan) Areas of agreement on freshwater outcomes are documented ahead of advocacy opportunities in planning processes
Licence holder communication	High licence holder understanding of F&G organisation and its work on their behalf	7.3.4	Improve licence holder knowledge of F&G activities by 10%- or two-unit points (in licence holder survey) by end of 2023 15% of fish and 10% of game licence holders have one face to face contact with F&G annually	Increased knowledge of F&G and its activities among licence holders will result in improved value for money in a licence Direct contact will improve opportunities for two-way communication with licence holders
Public awareness and strategic relationships	Improved understanding by the general public of F&G role and work	6.4.6, 8.3.1, 8.3.2,	Survey results from public perception of F&G survey analysed. PA programme established and implemented, based on an overall communications strategy, by end of 2023.	General public understanding is measured, and a communication plan implemented to address any gaps. Public appreciate Fish & Game as guardians of freshwater and heritage of hunting and angling.
	Proactive engagement with Ngai Tahu	5.5.9, 6.4.3, 8.3.4, 9.4.3	Iwi and F&G aspirations for freshwater outcomes shared, and aligned where possible, to achieve longer term protection of Otago freshwater and wetlands. Engage with Ngai Tahu in a conversation on cultural harvest of gamebird species under F&G management.	Regular engagement with iwi at a local level. Iwi and F&G aspirations agreed and shared to achieve greater protection of freshwater and wetland values. Cultural harvest of species is managed to provide opportunities for iwi to exercise tikanga? while maintaining sustainable gamebird populations in Otago.
	Form alliances/collaborations with landowners (and rural stakeholder organisations) on areas of common interest	6.4.4, 6.4.10, 6.4.13	90% of catchment group meetings attended by staff to engage and communicate F&G values. 100% of wetland development/enhancement enquiries are visited with 50% resulting in Habitat fund applications	Landowners and other rural stakeholder groups see F&G as a valuable organisation in habitat protection, species management and as a partner in wetland development projects, and also in fostering public access to those resources.

7.2 Proposed Policy on Authorisation to Take Sports Fish

Proposed policy for authorisations under Section 26ZR Conservation Act 1987 and special licences to take sports fish under Section 4A(1)(a) and (c) Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983

1. Purpose

The intention of this general policy is to outline the broad requirements and processes for Otago Fish and Game Council (the Council) to assess applications for, and where appropriate, issue Special Licences, as defined by Section 4A(1)(a) and (c) of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 or authorisations under Section 26ZR of the Conservation Act 1987, for the taking of sports fish (defined by Section 2A of the Freshwater Fisheries regulations) which would otherwise not be permitted by seasonal sports fishing regulations for licenced anglers.

2. Introduction

Research, monitoring and other assessment projects may require the taking of sports fish for purposes other than licenced recreation. In such instances a special licence is required as defined by Section 4(A)(1)(a) of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations where the taking of sports fish is for the purpose of “education, investigative research, or the carrying out of trials or experiments involving vessels, gear, or apparatus capable of being used in connection with the taking of sports fish” or 4A(1)(c) “any other purpose approved by the Minister.” Where the taking of sports fish proposes to use an electric fishing device (or any hazardous or narcotic substance) an authorisation is required under Section 26ZR of the Conservation Act 1987.

3. Special licence and authorisation assessment policy

- i. All applications for a special licence or authorisation be received by Otago Fish and Game Council in writing (including completion of any standard application forms where applicable).
- ii. Upon receipt of an application, Council staff shall review the application (on behalf of the Council) using the procedure in Section 5 of this policy.
- iii. For an application to be accepted for review it must contain the key information described in Section 4.1 and contain sufficient additional information required for the application to be assessed.
- iv. If the application is not accepted for review, Council staff may request additional information from the applicant or deny the application.
- v. The Council will endeavour to notify the applicant, in writing, as to the success of the application within 14 working days of an application being accepted.
- vi. The Council may impose conditions on the special licence or authorisation.

- vii. The Council reserves the right to charge a reasonable fee for the review and processing of an application, on a cost recovery basis. Fees may be waived at the discretion of the Council.
- viii. Under Section 4(A)(4) Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983, a special licence may be revoked by the Council by notice in writing to the holder. The Council shall give reasons in writing to the holder if it revokes a special licence granted.

4. Procedure for assessing applications

All applications are to be assessed against the statutory responsibility of Fish and Game “to manage, maintain, and enhance the sports fish and game resource in the recreational interests of anglers and hunters” and the current Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plan for the Otago Fish and Game Region.

4.1 Assessment of applications

A preliminary assessment of all applications will be made by a suitably qualified Council staff. The assessment will confirm that the application has sufficient information for detailed review and includes:

- i. Name and contact details of applicant/s.
- ii. Organisation affiliation/s making application.
- iii. Broad objective of proposed work or project requiring a special licence/authorisation
- iv. Location or project sites and timing for proposed work
- v. Methodology of proposed work, including equipment to be used
- vi. Names of person(s) undertaking the work
- vii. Qualifications of person(s) undertaking the work
- viii. Assessment of any potential impact of proposed work or project on sports fish and their populations

If the application fails to meet the preliminary assessment criteria (i-viii above), then the application will be rejected and returned to the applicant outlining reasons for rejection. Applicants may resubmit their application when the required information has been included. An additional fee for the secondary review of an application may be charged.

Accepted applications will then be further reviewed to determine the suitability of proposal for approval and assess it against Fish and Game’s statutory responsibility to manage, maintain, and enhance the sports fish and game resource in the recreational interests of anglers and hunters.

Areas of review may include:

- i. Purpose of special licence or authorisation application
 - a. Education
 - b. Investigative research
 - c. Trial of equipment
 - d. Removal
 - e. Other (i.e., monitoring, assessment of effects)

- ii. Impact on sports fish and the sports fishery
- iii. Value of the sports fishery (including social, cultural, ecological or economic values)
- iv. Impact on the experience of anglers
- v. Appropriateness of methodology to achieve the objectives of the proposal
- vi. Impacts of methodology on sports fish and their populations
- vii. Qualifications required for the work e.g., electric fishing
- viii. Requirement for an AEE for the work or project
- ix. Other relevant permits and authorities required
- x. Proposed regional and national reporting requirements
- xi. Previous applications or approvals granted to the application

4.2 Applications to remove or destroy sports fish

Where an application for a Special Licence or authorisations involves the removal or eradication of a sports fish population additional information will be required and all applications will be reviewed by the Council (see Section 5) and will be considered alongside any other relevant Council policy, including the Species Management and Interactions Policy (OFCG 2020). An example framework to guide the assessment of such applications is provided in Appendix 2.

4.3 Conditions

The Council reserves the right to apply conditions to any special licence or authorisation issued as appropriate.

Staff reviewing the application will contact the applicant to discuss specific conditions where appropriate.

Applications should be made on specific project basis are preferable. Multi-year special licence or authorisations will not be approved other than in exceptional circumstances where the applicant can demonstrate the justification for such an exception to be made with adequate supporting evidence. In such cases approval by majority vote of the Council will be required. The Council reserves the right to charge the applicant a reasonable fee above the standard base fee for the review and processing of any such application.

5. Approval of special licence or authorisation

Once the review of the application has been completed, a recommendation on the application is made to the Chief Executive (CE) along with any associated conditions and supporting information and if the CE's approval is granted, the special licence or authorisation will be issued to the applicant.

Where appropriate (e.g., due to the nature of the application, potential for significant effects) the CE may require that an application require full Council review and approval by a majority vote at a Council meeting. In such instances the application, any staff recommendation,

associated conditions and supporting information will be presented to the Council at their next meeting (held every 2 months i.e., this process should take no longer than 60 days).

5.1 Appeals

An applicant has the right to appeal the decision of the Council. All appeals must:

1. *Be in writing.*
2. *Be received within 10 working days of the Council decision.*
3. *Provide clear reason for the appeal.*
4. *An applicant may provide additional information in support of their original application for Council consideration.*

The Council reserves the right to charge the applicant a reasonable fee for the appeal review.

5.2 Amendments to a special licence or authorisation

The Council may make amendments to a special licence or authorisation on request from the applicant or when the Council deems such an amendment necessary. Requests for amendments by the applicant must be received in writing and will be reviewed as per the process outlined in Section 4.0. The Council will notify the applicant in writing of all permitted amendments.

Recommendations

- **That the Council approve the proposed policy for authorisations to use electric fishing devices and special licences to capture sportfish for the purposes of education and research**
- **That the base administration fee for applications for the 2022-23 financial year be set at \$200 plus GST**

This proposed policy is based on the policy document of Wellington Fish and Game Council developed by Dr Matt Kavermann with some changes made to adapt it for the purposes of the Otago Fish and Game Council.

Helen Trotter
Fish and Game Officer
March 2022

6. Appendix

6.1 Key legislation

Section 4A Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983

4A Special licences

- (1) The Minister may authorise any Fish and Game Council to issue special licences of the following kinds:
 - (a) authorising the holder to take sports fish for education, investigative research, or the carrying out of trials or experiments involving any vessel, gear, or apparatus capable of being used in connection with the taking of sports fish;
 - (b) authorising any disabled person, within the meaning of the Disabled Persons Employment Promotion Act 1960, to take sports fish by any means that would otherwise be unlawful;
 - (c) authorising the holder to take sports fish for any other purpose approved by the Minister.
- (2) In considering an application to issue a special licence under this regulation, a Council shall have regard to the following:
 - (a) any sports fish and game management plans approved for its region under [section 17M](#) of the Act;
 - (b) any relevant national policy of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council and any relevant general policy that has been approved under the Act;
 - (c) the potential the proposal has for adverse impact on the sports fishery.
- (3) Every such special licence shall specify the waters within the Council's jurisdiction in which the holder is permitted to take sports fish.
- (4) Every such special licence may be revoked by the issuing Council by notice in writing to the holder.
- (5) A Council shall give reasons in writing to the holder if it revokes a special licence granted to the holder under this regulation.
- (6) All fish taken pursuant to this section shall be disposed of as the Council directs, or as may be specified in the licence.
Regulation 4A: inserted, on 27 September 1990, by regulation 3 of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1990, Amendment No 9 (SR 1990/209).

Section 26ZR Conservation Act 1987

26ZR Using hazardous substances to catch or destroy fish

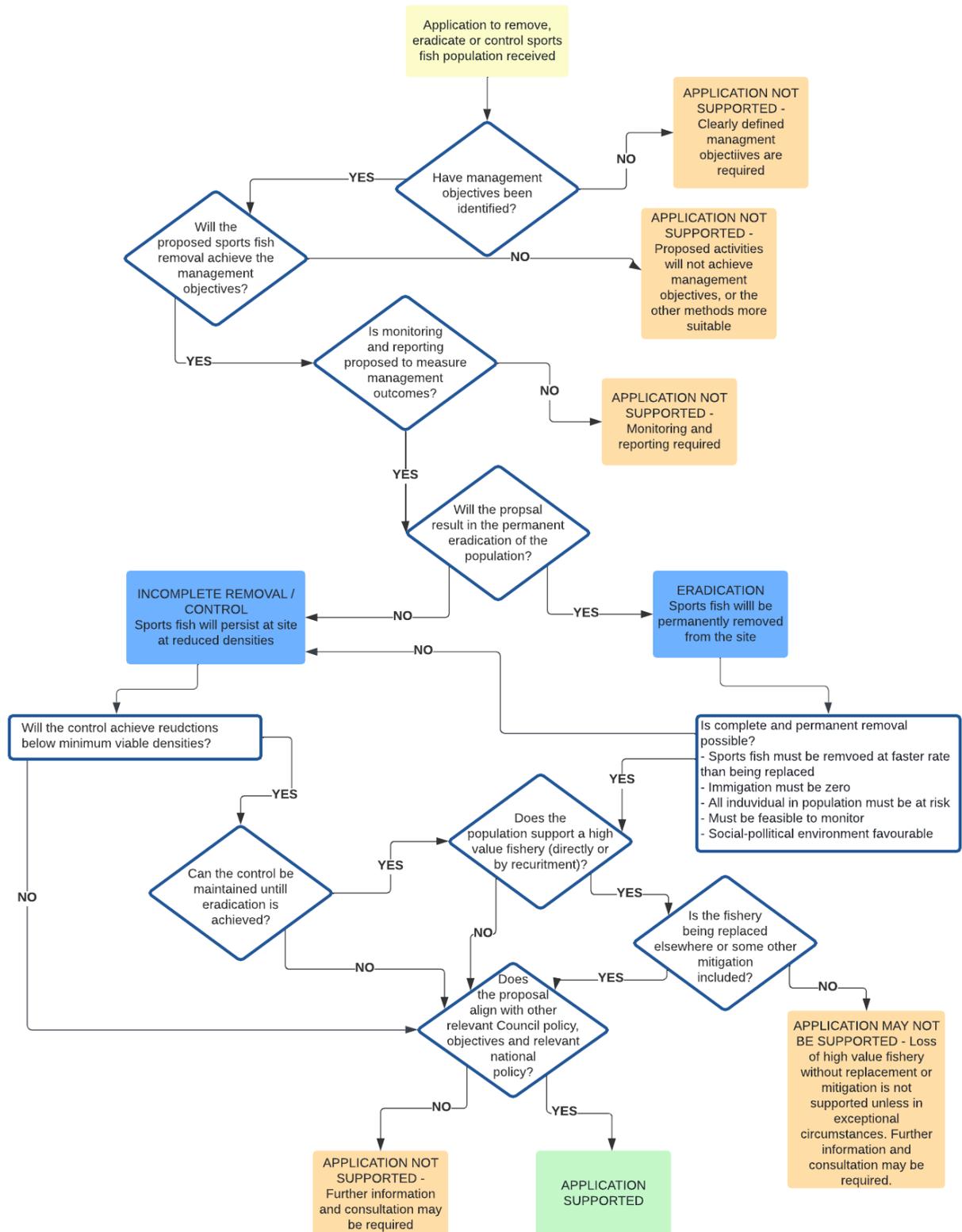
- (1) Every person commits an offence who, for the purpose of taking or destroying any freshwater fish, uses in any water any hazardous substance, narcotic substance, or any electric fishing device.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply to actions taken by—
 - (a) a fish and game ranger or an employee or a contractor of the Department; or
 - (b) any person authorised in writing for the purpose by the Director-General, the Director, or the appropriate Fish and Game Council.
- (3) In this section, the term **hazardous substance** has the same meaning as in [section 2](#) of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996.

Section 26ZR: substituted, on 2 July 2001, by [section 149](#) of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (1996 No 30).

Section 26ZR(2): substituted, on 7 July 2010, by [section 5](#) of the Conservation Amendment Act (No 2) 2010 (2010 No 54).

Section 26ZR(2)(a): replaced, on 22 October 2019, by [section 13](#) of the Conservation (Indigenous Freshwater Fish) Amendment Act 2019 (2019 No 55).

6.2 Guide for assessing Special Licence applications for the removal or eradication of a sports fish population



8.0 Public Excluded Items

- 8.1 Public Excluded Minutes from 12th February 2022**
- 8.2 Bullock Creek Springs – Issues and Options Discussion Document**
- 8.3 Lindis High Court Summary**
- 8.4 Contact Energy – Verbal Update**

9.0 Financial Report

Finance and Licence Sales 28th February 2022

9.1 Draft Finance Reports

The draft financial Profit and Loss report and Balance sheet for the period from 1st September 2021 to 28th February 2022 are below.

Expenditure at the 28th February for the 2021/22 financial year is \$1,116,344 (including levies \$479,620, agent commission \$64,200, depreciation \$29,100. This also includes \$42,918 of spending from our reserves. Six months (50%) into the financial year the council is 47% spent of budget. The annual expenditure budget \$2,137,042 (including levies)

Income from Fishing licence sales to date is \$1,653,717. The annual fishing licence sales budget income is \$1,690,619. This shows good revenue collection for the past 2 months. Income from other sources totals \$66,914.

Budget and expenditure figures are exclusive of GST.

The draft accounts show a surplus at 28th February 2021 of \$604,286

Funds Position at 28th February 2022

ANZ 00 account \$168,972.77
ANZ 70 account \$447,693.45

Term Investments as at 28th February 2022

ASB 0079 \$566,824 @ 1.5% Maturing on 11th July 2022
ANZ (new) \$500,000 @ 0.9 Maturing on the 17th May 2022

Donations and Grants (not in budget)

Who	For	Amount GST excl
General	Donation	9.00
QLDC	Bullock Creek Plantings	470.00
Rippon Vineyard	Bullock Creek Planting	300.00
Otago Community Care Trust	Take Kid Fishing Events	2,020.00
Total		\$2,799.00

Debtors

No general debtors

Capital Expenditure and Sales

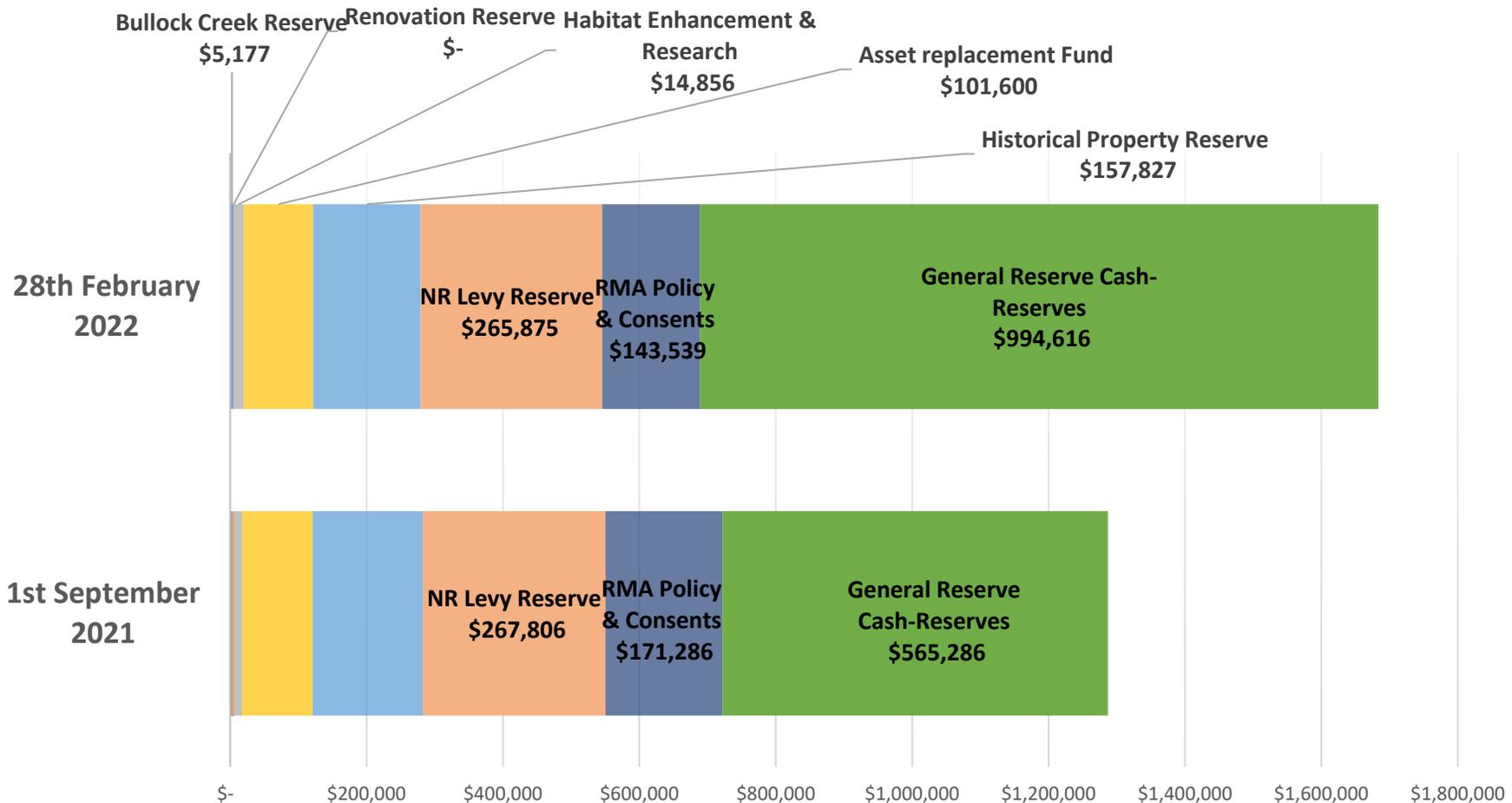
Ford Ranger sold for \$33,043 exclusive of GST via Trade Me in January 2022. This was reported in February but appears in this periods accounts.

Otago Fish and Game Reserves 28th February 2022

Otago Reserves Movements	Balance August 2021	Income (To) Reserve	Note	Outgoing (From) Reserve	Balance April 2021
Back Country Non-resident Levy	\$267,806	\$3,068.92	1	\$5,000	\$265,875
Habitat Enhancement & Research	\$11,756	\$5,500	2	\$2,400	\$14,856
Bullock Creek Reserve	\$2,806	\$3,525		\$1,154	\$5,177
Mining Rights Reserve	\$17,537		3	\$	\$17,537
Priority Consents Reserve	\$55,507		7	\$13,809	\$41,697
Historical Property Reserves	\$161,678		4	\$3,851	\$157,827
Renovation Reserves	\$2,767			\$ 2,767	\$0
Regional Policy Statement Reserve	\$59,349		5	\$6,950	\$52,399
Priority Plan Changes	\$38,893		6	\$6,987	\$31,906
Total				\$42,918	\$587,274
NZC RMA/Legal Fund Movements					
Regional Policy Statement add-on		\$60,000	8	\$	\$60,000

- Note 1 \$5000 a year for five years is to be taken from the Non resident fund for the Dr Donald Scott University Fund beginning. Agreed by Council May 2021. 2021/22 is year two.
- Note 2 Balance is \$14,856. Less committed but not yet paid out of \$9,500 so balance of \$5356 is available for dispersal by way of grants.
- Note 3 \$150,000 (Mining Rights) approved prior to 2018 by NZC from our reserves. Includes \$80,000 of Lindis expenses, agreed by Council July 2019.
- Note 4 Historical Property Reserve, used on development of the Wanaka site
- Note 5 OF&GC agreed to \$60,000 May 2020. NZC notified.
- Note 6 OF&GC agreed to \$120,000 May 2020. NZC notified. \$81,000 agreed to be spent by council September 2020.
- Note 7 OF&GC agreed to \$60,000 May 2020. NZC notified.
- Note 8 August 2021 NZC approved the use of \$60,000 to be reimbursed by the Regional RMA legal fund towards our Regional Policy Statement Planning Costs

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES FROM 1ST SEPTEMBER 2021 TO 28TH FEBRUARY 2022



Balance Sheet

Otago Fish and Game Council As at 28 February 2022

	28 FEB 2022	31 AUG 2021
Assets		
Current Assets		
Bank	616,887	720,937
Receivables		
Accounts Receivable	128,066	23,078
Total Receivables	128,066	23,078
GST	6,450	28,120
Investments	1,065,402	563,977
Inventory	17,222	17,222
Accrued Interest	803	803
Total Current Assets	1,834,831	1,354,137
Fixed Assets		
Property Plant & Equipment	1,365,176	1,359,279
Total Fixed Assets	1,365,176	1,359,279
Total Assets	3,200,007	2,713,416
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	9,180	45,252
Other Payables	141,030	163,393
Employee Entitlements	(5,927)	53,331
Total Current Liabilities	144,282	261,977
Total Liabilities	144,282	261,977
Net Assets	3,055,725	2,451,439
Equity		
Accumulated Funds		
Accumulated Funds	1,607,045	1,364,081
Current Year Earnings	604,286	242,964
Transfer (To)/From Reserves	155,520	122,678
Total Accumulated Funds	2,366,851	1,729,722
Dedicated Reserves		
Non Resident Levy Reserve	265,875	267,806
Habitat Enhancement & Research	14,856	11,756
Priority Plan Changes Reserve	31,906	38,893
Priority Consents Reserve	41,697	55,507
Regional Policy Statement Reserve	52,399	59,349
Mining Privileges Reserve	17,537	17,537
Historical Property Reserve	157,827	161,678
Renovation Reserve	-	2,767

	28 FEB 2022	31 AUG 2021
Asset Replacement Funding	101,600	103,618
Total Dedicated Reserves	683,697	718,910
Restricted Reserves		
Bullock Creek Reserve	5,177	2,806
Total Restricted Reserves	5,177	2,806
Total Equity	3,055,725	2,451,439

Profit and Loss

Otago Fish and Game Council For the 6 months ended 28 February 2022

	JAN 2022	FEB 2022	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR 2019
Income								
Licence Sales								
Fish Licence Sales	157,290	45,663	1,650,631	1,690,617	(39,986)	98%	1,690,619	1,682,748
Non-Resident Licence Revenue	466	277	3,069	-	3,069	-	-	6,839
Game Licence Sales	-	-	17	-	17	-	323,364	341,516
Total Licence Sales	157,756	45,940	1,653,717	1,690,617	(36,900)	98%	2,013,983	2,031,103
Other Income								
Contact Energy Mitigation Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	53,911
Govt Grants	(10,544)	-	10	-	10	-	-	-
Interest Income	1,563	179	1,986	2,418	(432)	82%	4,840	5,064
Fines - Fishing & Game Offences	17	-	202	1,000	(798)	20%	2,000	1,714
Rent Received	4,832	5,132	27,641	25,290	2,351	109%	50,590	68,479
Fishing Competitions	-	-	458	-	458	-	-	1,526
Profit on Sale of Fixed Assets	22,080	-	22,080	-	22,080	-	-	21,198
Donations & Grants	-	-	2,799	-	2,799	-	-	2,674
Merchandise Sales/Other	17	104	330	-	330	-	-	(249)
RMA Costs Reimbursed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	49,853
Sundry Income	-	5,837	5,908	-	5,908	-	-	1,537
Diversion - Habitat Enhancement and Research Fund	2,000	1,000	5,500	-	5,500	-	-	6,500
Total Other Income	19,965	12,253	66,914	28,708	38,206	233%	57,430	212,207
Total Income	177,721	58,193	1,720,630	1,719,325	1,305	100%	2,071,413	2,243,309
Gross Profit	177,721	58,193	1,720,630	1,719,325	1,305	100%	2,071,413	2,243,309

	JAN 2022	FEB 2022	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR 2019
Expenses								
Species Management								
Population Monitoring	3,744	-	6,224	15,002	(8,778)	41%	31,000	10,568
Harvest Assessment	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,000	2,704
Hatchery Operations	2,470	415	2,977	4,500	(1,523)	66%	9,000	7,983
Releases	-	263	671	1,600	(929)	42%	1,800	585
Total Species Management	6,214	678	9,872	21,102	(11,230)	47%	44,800	21,840
Habitat Protection & Mngt								
Contact Sports Fish Management Plan	-	568	1,872	-	1,872	-	-	36,219
Resource Mngt Act	-	604	48,223	1,000	47,223	4,822%	2,000	1,266
Approved Reserve Expense	2,768	2,128	34,365	-	34,365	-	-	141,000
Works & Management	61	327	2,977	2,500	477	119%	5,000	7,277
Habitat Enhancement Research Fund Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,739
Total Habitat Protection & Mngt	2,829	3,626	87,437	3,500	83,937	2,498%	7,000	191,502
Participation								
Access and Signage	173	161	1,178	1,250	(72)	94%	2,500	1,892
Back Country Surveys/Monitoring	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	822
OF&G Training Events	-	-	1,835	1,900	(65)	97%	2,000	804
Club Relations and Grants	-	-	230	700	(470)	33%	1,000	918
Total Participation	173	161	3,242	3,850	(608)	84%	5,500	4,437
PUBLIC INTERFACE								
World Wetlands	-	-	-	1,000	(1,000)	-	1,000	-
Liaison	-	-	-	502	(502)	-	9,000	111
Media Releases	-	-	384	3,500	(3,116)	11%	7,000	833
Total PUBLIC INTERFACE	-	-	384	5,002	(4,618)	8%	17,000	944
COMPLIANCE								

	JAN 2022	FEB 2022	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR 2019
Ranger Training and Expenses	-	-	3,222	5,000	(1,778)	64%	6,500	1,795
Compliance	-	-	-	2,501	(2,501)	-	5,000	8,621
Total COMPLIANCE	-	-	3,222	7,501	(4,279)	43%	11,500	10,415
LICENCING								
Agent Servicing	-	-	153	400	(247)	38%	500	177
Commission/Fees	5,489	1,607	64,200	76,078	(11,878)	84%	90,629	81,876
Total LICENCING	5,489	1,607	64,353	76,478	(12,125)	84%	91,129	82,054
COUNCIL								
Elections Council	-	-	-	500	(500)	-	500	-
Council Meetings	-	3,872	10,582	8,000	2,582	132%	15,000	8,080
Total COUNCIL	-	3,872	10,582	8,500	2,082	124%	15,500	8,080
PLANNING & REPORTING								
Reporting/Audit	-	-	3,844	16,000	(12,156)	24%	16,000	17,689
National Liason	-	-	-	999	(999)	-	2,000	421
Total PLANNING & REPORTING	-	-	3,844	16,999	(13,155)	23%	18,000	18,110
ADMINISTRATION								
Salaries	54,324	56,264	299,212	388,132	(88,920)	77%	776,272	675,407
Staff Expenses	497	235	8,595	7,298	1,297	118%	19,000	23,279
Office Premices	11,693	6,967	63,827	52,570	11,257	121%	95,600	100,740
Office Equipemnt	915	105	1,858	1,248	610	149%	2,500	5,409
Communications	1,229	2,045	10,380	11,400	(1,020)	91%	22,800	20,836
General Exp (incl Insurance)	14	73	2,002	2,648	(646)	76%	3,900	3,173
General Field Equipment	122	1,463	2,312	1,700	612	136%	3,300	1,334
Vehicles	5,364	3,062	31,495	25,498	5,997	124%	44,000	43,901
Total ADMINISTRATION	74,159	70,214	419,680	490,494	(70,814)	86%	967,372	874,079
Depreciation	5,030	5,030	29,100	-	29,100	-	-	61,476

	JAN 2022	FEB 2022	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR 2019
Loss on Disposal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	188
NZ Fish & Game Levies	239,810	-	479,620	479,620	-	100%	959,241	711,804
Corporate Liaison	8	-	8	-	8	-	-	-
Office General (was Petty cash)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	51
Wanaka Subdivision	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,366
University of Otago Research Grant	-	-	5,000	-	5,000	-	-	5,000
Total Expenses	333,711	85,189	1,116,344	1,113,046	3,298	100%	2,137,042	2,000,346
Net Profit	(155,990)	(26,996)	604,286	606,279	(1,993)	100%	(65,629)	242,964

9.2 Licence Sales

Fish Licence Sales 2021/22 Season to 28th December 2022

See appendix 1 for a table showing fish licence sales categories and numbers. This table shows fish licences sales for seasons 2021/22 and 2020/21 to the end of February of the season.

In summary, fishing licence sales in whole season licence equivalents (LEQs) 13,838.07 LEQs compared with 13,716.48 LEQs for the similar period last year. (0.8% ahead of last year)

Fish licence revenue from the Profit and Loss statement for the 2021/22 season recorded to 28th February 2022 total \$1,653,700 compared with \$1,596,188 for the 2020/21 season. These figures include both resident and non resident sales. Figures exclude GST and commission to agents.

The 2021/22 budget for fish licence sales is \$1,690,619 exclusive of GST.

Game Licence Sales 2022

These went on sale on Public Online and via agencies on the 10th March 2022.

A full adult gamebird licence has an increase of \$2 from the previous year.

9.5 Agents Debts

There were three agents with late payments, payment has now been made.

9.6 Recommendation

That the financial report be received

Sharon Milne
Administration Officer
15/03/2022

Fish Licence Sales To 28th February of the Season

2021/2022

Channel	FWF	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FWIA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWNC	FDNC	Total	Fish LEQ
Agency	2,386	3,451	6	748	164	0	9	149	485	12	386	0	44	0	0	1	7,841	
Eyede	10	9	0	5	0	0	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	
Online	2,062	2,482	50	304	392	0	21	271	1,713	57	424	6	169	0	1	1	7,953	
Total	4,458	5,942	56	1,057	556	0	31	425	2,199	69	810	6	213	0	1	2	15,825	13,838.07

2020/2021

Channel	FWF	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FWIA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWNC	FDNC	Total	Fish LEQ
Agency	2,470	3,461	24	710	167	0	10	154	581	16	391	0	85	3	0	0	8,072	
Eyede	8	12	0	9	0	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	
Online	1,909	2,436	64	281	391	0	27	284	1,627	92	384	3	178	1	1	1	7,679	
Total	4,387	5,909	88	1,000	558	0	37	439	2,212	109	775	3	263	4	1	1	15,786	13,716.48

FWF (Family), FWA (Adult), FWNA (Non Resident), FSLA (Senior Loyal), FLAA (Local Area),

FWJ (Junior), FWNJ (Junior non resident), FLBA (Long Break), FSBA (Short Break), FDA (Adult Day), FDJ (Junior Day)

FDNJ (day non resident Junior), FWNC (non resident Child), FDNC (day non Resident child day)

10.0 Chief Executives Report

10.1 Progress Against Councils 3 Year Strategic Priorities

Given the short period between meetings, a full update on progress will be provided to the May meeting.

10.2 Other Staff Activity

10.2.1 SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Regulations

The Anglers Notice draft agreed at the last meeting is presently out for consultation. Clubs and previous submitters have been contacted directly and the review has been advertised in the ODT and promoted through our social media channels. A webpage has been setup and submissions have been invited by way of online form to help keep feedback focused. <https://fishandgame.org.nz/otago/news/review-of-otago-freshwater-angling-regulations/>
The final report will be brought to the May meeting.

Hatchery

Hatchery feed is in short supply in NZ and staff have had some difficulty in securing feed required for the next year. Shipping and feed costs are also on the rise. We are fortunate to have found a supplier and taken delivery of enough to keep the hatchery running for the next year at least.

Cawthron Project – Future Fish

The organisation was approached late last year to contribute to a government funded research project being run by Cawthron Institute. It is a significant body of work which carries some risks and opportunities for the whole organisation. Regional managers have been kept abreast of the project and NZC is aiming to discuss this at its next meeting.

Below is a summary of the project:

Freshwater fish are a cornerstone of freshwater values in Aotearoa including biodiversity and ecosystem health. They help New Zealanders sustain their cultural identities and to care and connect with the natural world. However, we are failing to protect fish and the values they support, and so we are failing to protect and nurture healthy freshwater ecosystems and healthy people. There is an urgent need to address the increasing pressure on our native fish from pressures like human activity, climate change, and threats from other species. This research aims to transform the way we think about and manage freshwater fish through the co-development of new knowledge. One of the key challenges in doing something about the pressures on native fish are the differences in values and interests of the various groups of

people who care for New Zealand’s freshwater environment. This is why three place-based studies and a national policy working group will work toward fostering a shared understanding, respect and reconciliation of different values for fishes. Co-designed studies that investigate both social and environmental issues will help us understand how freshwater fish and fisheries can be enhanced and effectively managed in response to future climate change pressures. Studies will draw on expertise in fundamental and applied fish ecology, biophysical modelling, mātauranga Māori, environmental values, qualitative and quantitative social science methods, science-policy relations, and applied and critical policy analysis. A policy working group, made up of New Zealand’s leading fish management agencies, will be tasked to develop new planning tools and responsive policies grounded by Treaty principles to better integrate the management of native and introduced fishes in Aotearoa.

For discussion

10.2.2 HABITAT PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Contact Energy – Lower Clutha Sportsfish Management Plan Implementation

The sportsfish and habitat projects funded by Contact Energy are going well. Electric fishing of lower Clutha tributaries for the brown trout origin project is complete. The eDNA project will begin shortly and that will hopefully help identify tributaries used by wild salmon in the lower Clutha River.

Cr Weatherall, Boyd and I have met with Contact staff to advance the proposed Lower Clutha Trust documents (which include the proposal for a hatchery). Unfortunately they have again been delayed. As noted before, the section on its ‘purpose’ needs refining to ensure it aligns more tightly to the expectations set out in the consent conditions and subsequent discussions. We have again expressed our frustration at the slow rate of progress but hope to be able to provide a more positive update at the meeting.

CE/Chair to Update

Habitat Enhancement Fund (HEF)

A report on previous Habitat Enhancement Grants is provided for Council. It has been helpful to review these projects and it does provide an opportunity to both see work conducted and offer further advice on maintaining or improving what has been created.

10.2.3 USER PARTICIPATION

Backcountry Fishery user survey

Staff have completed the report on users of back country fisheries and that is included in this agenda for discussion.

Licence holder perceptions survey

The results from the third round of licence holder surveying were reported last meeting and additional analysis done to answer a question about representativeness of responses was circulated to Councillors a week later. The over 65's were over represented in the results. Future surveys will be tailored to ensure that demographics of respondents more fairly represent the actual licence holder database.

Gamebird Magazine

This should have been distributed by the time the meeting is held. Hopefully the Otago content meets with Councillors expectations. Any suggestions on content for next years issue welcome.

10.2.4 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Liaison

The CE has found it difficult to engage with key staff from other organisations with the present Covid situations. Hopefully that eases over the next few months.

10.2.5 COMPLIANCE

The usual wave of non-compliant anglers are slowly being processed by our new contracted staff member Joseph. Around 15 offenders are being processed at present - mostly via diversion.

10.2.6 LICENCING

Positive sales volumes

Cr's will note that the sales for the current season are still ahead of previous seasons but are flattening rapidly, no doubt associated with the Omicron outbreak.

Gamebird licences are now on sale and agents are noting steady interest. That is expected to ramp up with the distribution of the magazine.

10.2.7 COUNCIL

Elections

NZC have agreed to progress a workstream considering amendments to the Fish & Game electoral regulations and for this process to be actioned ahead of the 2024 Fish & Game elections. As part of this workstream they have agreed to support the *Electionz* national returning officer's recommendations as contained in the report previously circulated to you. Formal consultation with Councils on prospective changes will occur after NZC have considered a draft proposal at their August meeting but in the meantime they have sought initial feedback from Regional Councils.

You will be aware that Otago is the only remaining Council to have its CE delegated the role of returning officer. This is stipulated in the Councils governance manual. The report has highlighted Otago as an anomaly and has asked that it be brought into line with the other regions in having a single national returning officer.

The role of returning officer isn't a large body of work. Electionz coordinate most of the election paperwork for nominations and voting and provide updates to me as returning officer.

For discussion and feedback

Organisational Review and Amalgamations

The National Amalgamation Review Team has released its draft report on proposed amalgamations and this Council has now sent its feedback to the review team. It was largely in support of the recommendations proposed.

MOU with Central Otago Cycle Trails Trust signed

With agreement on the final parts of the mitigation package complete, the chair and CE have signed off the MOU for access across the Bendigo Wildlife Management Reserve.

Waitapeka Wetland easement application

The CE has met with a representative from Telford farms and there is little by way of practical mitigation to be negotiated. The incumbrance to the F&G property is minor and the benefits are considerable in terms of environmental improvements provided by the sewage system upgrade proposal.

CE to update.

10.2.8 PLANNING AND REPORTING

Draft 2022/23 OWP and budget

This is attached to the agenda and will need to be discussed at this meeting so it can be submitted to NZC by its March 25 deadline.

Recommendation

That this report be received

Ian Hadland

Chief Executive

16 March 2022

11.0 RMA Planning and Consents Report

31 January - 15 March 2022

Current Legislation, Policy and Planning Processes

Plan Change 8

A decision has now been released on the primary sector topics. It was uncontroversial and to date has not been appealed.

A date for the hearing on urban topics has been set for March 21. Fish and Game has reached agreement with the Otago Regional Council (**ORC**) and most other parties on the entirety of the plan change provisions. However, a small number of provisions have not been agreed at mediation by other parties and will proceed to hearing. The main topic in this group relating to Fish and Game's interest is whether provisions governing discharges of sediment from residential sub-division development should exclude activities in the Queenstown Lakes District. As Fish and Game's case is now the same as that of the ORC, staff have liaised with ORC staff as to evidence requirements for the hearing. It was agreed no evidence was required from Fish and Game. Staff have sought to be excused from the hearing and this request accepted by the Judge.

Spending on Plan Change 8 is on track to fall within the combined budget for Plan Changes 7, 8 and 1.

Regional Policy Statement

The High Court declaration case to determine which parts of the Regional Policy Statement will progress via the Freshwater Planning Process was held during the reporting period. It was not necessary for staff to attend.

Progress on this case has been stalled for most of the reporting period as it is difficult to prepare RPS case fully without knowing the outcome of the High Court Declaration. A minute has recently been released by the Commissioners in the Freshwater Planning Process setting out times and dates to proceed; however, it is unclear how this relates to the High Court timeline, where a decision is not expected for some months. Staff are preparing a Fish & Game case where they can, including by exploring witnesses and analysing submission points.

Deemed Permit Process

Last reporting period, it was noted that the processing of deemed permits had resumed, using the provisions set out in Plan Change 7, and by design did not need to involve Fish & Game. This process is ongoing and has resulted in substantially reduced RM work in this area.

Staff recommend that the Council turn its attention to the development of the Regional Policy Statement and Land and Water Regional Plan, as these will drive the allocation of water in the medium to long term.

Land and Water Plan Development

The development of the Land and Water Regional Plan is ongoing. The ORC is currently consulting on values within Freshwater Management Units and rohe. Staff have been preparing submissions to inform the consultation. In addition, the ORC has invited staff to attend information meetings on an economic assessment project to inform the LWRP and staff have done so.

Current Notification Processes

Applicant	Activity	Outcome
<i>Otago Regional Council applications</i>		
Pioneer Energy Limited	To vary existing consents to store and use water at Lake Onslow to increase the drawdown rate.	A submission in opposition has been written by staff and was supported by a complementary submission on behalf of the Teviot Angling Club. The applicant was placed the process on hold to meet with the submitters. Staff have recently been informed that the hearing process will continue and are working with the angling club to present complementary cases.

Written Approval Provided During the Period

Applicant	Activity	Outcome
<i>Otago Regional Council applications</i>		
Waitaki District Council	A global consent to undertake road maintenance activities	Following agreement on consultation, spawning and sedimentation conditions, written approval was provided.

No written approvals were provided during the period for consents from the following bodies:

- Queenstown Lakes District Council
- Central Otago District Council
- Dunedin City Council
- Clutha District Council
- Waitaki District Council

Recommendation:

That this report be received.

Nigel Paragreen

Environmental Officer 15 March 2022

12.0 Committee & Delegate Reports

12.1 CFT

12.2 NZC

12.3 Ngai Tahu

12.4 Conservation Board

13.0 Correspondence

13.1 NZC to Otago

Nil

13.2 Otago to NZC
13.2.1 Fishing Regulation App Development



15 February 2022

Di Taylor
Acting CE, New Zealand Fish & Game Council
Via email

Re: App development

Dear Di,

At our recent Council meeting, members discussed the complexity of angling regulations and the need for more modern and simple ways to communicate these to our licence holders.

The Council sees a georeferenced App (or webapp) as the most appropriate solution and asks that research into this technological improvement be advanced as soon as practicable.

It noted that it was proposed in the NZC 'roadmap' some years ago and Otago wrote about its delayed implementation (letter attached) mid 2020.

Can you please let us know where the app development process is up to, and a timeline for decision making around it.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Hadland".

Ian Hadland
Chief Executive, Otago Fish & Game Council

13.3 General Correspondence In

13.3.1 ORC Councillor Kelliher



OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL

Te Mana Arotake

100 Molesworth Street, Thorndon 6011
PO Box 3928, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Telephone: +64 4 917 1500
Email: info@oag.govt.nz
Website: www.oag.govt.nz

25 February 2022

References: LAMIA 464; EN/LCA/02-0007

Ian Hadland
Chief Executive
Otago Fish and Game Council
P O Box 76
Dunedin

Via email to: Nigel Paragreen nparagreen@fishandgame.org.nz

Tēnā koe Ian

OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR KELLIHER

I refer to your letter of 13 January 2022, raising concerns about Cr Gary Kelliher's involvement in Council discussions about environmental flows in the Manuherehia catchment. You have sent us some email exchanges between councillors and Council staff on the topic of Manuherehia water flows, including some involving Cr Kelliher.

You are concerned that Cr Kelliher is participating in Council discussions about Manuherehia matters behind the scenes, despite having declared a conflict of interest in two reports about the Manuherehia catchment at a 25 August 2021 Council meeting.

For reasons outlined below we are not able to investigate this matter. Our role in the area of personal financial interests of local authority councillors applies to formal council or committee meetings, not to how a councillor conducts themselves outside formal meeting processes. That is a matter for each councillor to determine using their personal judgement, and having regard to the need to avoid raising legal or reputational risk to the Council.

The Council's code of conduct is likely to be relevant, as is the Councillor's background and knowledge about the matter under consideration. In this case, some of the contact involving Cr Kelliher was initiated by others seeking his input, and we noted his background and expertise in our previous decision about his involvement in water plan change matters.

Section 6(1) of the Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968 (the Act) states that:

A member of a local authority or of a committee thereof shall not vote on or take part in the discussion of any matter before the governing body of that local authority or before that committee in which he has, directly or indirectly, any pecuniary interest, other than an interest in common with the public.

As you will note, the prohibition in section 6 applies to any matter before the governing body of the local authority or before a committee.

Section 6(5) of the Act makes it clear that the prohibition applies to formal meetings of the council or a committee, where minutes are kept. It requires a member with a financial interest to declare that interest to the council or committee meeting when the matter is raised, and for the disclosure of interest and abstention from discussion and voting to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

The Auditor-General is able to investigate breaches of section 6(1) of the Act – that is, breaches at meetings of the council or committees.

The prohibition in the Act and our investigation responsibilities do not extend to conduct outside formal meetings. Although the integrity of a councillor's conflict of interest declaration could be undermined by active participation in the same matter outside formal meetings, the Act does not govern such behaviour. However, these matters might be within the scope of a council's code of conduct, which can cover behaviour outside of formal meetings, such as use of council information and communications with staff and other councillors.

That said, I should note that the Auditor-General does not have a role in considering complaints about code of conduct breaches. A code of conduct is an internal mechanism for a council and will often set out a process for complaints to be investigated.

We note that you have made your complaint to us public. We have sent a copy of this response to Cr Kelliher and to the Council's chief executive for their information.

Nāku noa, nā



Jonathan Keate
Senior Solicitor Sector Manager

Copy:

- Cr Kelliher
- Chief Executive, Otago Regional Council
- Appointed Auditor, Otago Regional Council

13.4 General Correspondence Out
Nil

14.0 Items to be Received or Noted

14.1 Central Otago Habitat Enhancement Review

Introduction

This is a brief update on three completed Central Otago HEF projects for Council information.

Chip, Paulette & Fynn Duncan, Prospect Farm, Becks

Established: 2017
HEF Grant: \$1000 for plants

This wetland site contains three open water ponds approximately P1 (0.35 ha), P2 (0.39 ha) and P3 (0.5ha) in size. All three ponds are linked and are fenced. Survival of native plantings was poor due to feral deer browsing, dry conditions and planting inexperience. Many of the seedlings didn't survive and the land owner acknowledges they tried to plant too many plants without the expertise and follow-up maintenance. There has been natural recruitment in the head of one pond of *Carex* spp. Some of the plantings, particularly *Carex secta* have survived. Rank grasses and willows are providing cover. After talking to the landowners Fish & Game have agreed to supply surplus wetland plants this year to the site.



Prospect farm site before wetland planting 2017 (above) and February 2022 (below)



Riparian cover on Prospect Farm pond (February 2022)

Randal Aspinall, Wishbone Falls, Mt Aspiring Station

Established: 2017

HEF Grant: \$2365.22

This wetland was one of the smallest projects to obtain funding, it contains one narrow arm off Wishbone Creek and is about 75-80m long. Adjacent to the wetland is Wishbone Creek which has been fully fenced. Since the beginning of the project, numerous groups have become involved including;

The Touchstone Project

Central Otago Lakes Branch of Forest & Bird

Wai Wanaka

Te Kākano Aotearoa Trust

Te Kura o Take Kārara

To date 1314 plants have been planted within the initial area. Since then the entire Wishbone Creek is fenced up to Wishbone Falls. An additional 450 plants have been planted in this area. Although the wetland area is largely ephemeral the amount of water in it has diminished since the start of the project. Reasons for this are unknown. Nevertheless the HEF project and the additional work has fenced out stock and created a riparian corridor along the entire length of Wishbone Creek from the Mt Aspiring Road to Wishbone Falls.



Wishbone Falls site before HEF funding in December 2016 (above) and after fencing and planting February 2022 (below)





Wishbone Creek, December 2016 (above) and after fencing and planting February 2022 (below)





Wishbone Falls wetland, December 2016 (above) and after fencing and planting February 2022 (below). Note The standing water in the wetland area has largely disappeared.



Scott Paterson, Boggy Creek Wetland, Mt Albert Station

Established: 2017
HEF Grant: \$4050.00

This has probably been our most successful HEF project in Central Otago. The original wetland area has been increased to fence and create a 4.5 hectare area which is a mixture of low lying wet areas and open water wetland. Native plantings (F&G 200 plants, Wai Wanaka) have been successful though some plantings have suffered from high water levels and/ or lack of maintenance (competition from exotic grasses). Future plantings within the fenced area will greatly enhance the wetland further.



Boggy Creek wetland in 2017 (above) had the old fences removed and a new perimeter fence applied in 2018 to protect 4.5 ha of wetland. Shown here in March 2022 (below)





Boggy Creek wetland in June 2017 (above) and in March 2022 (below)





Boggy Creek wetland before fencing in June 2017 (above) and in March 2022 (below)



General Update of HEF

Since I took over the HEF programme in Central Otago approximately six years ago staff have assessed 15 potential projects (Excluding Bullock Creek Hatchery Springs HEF's) most of which have been wetland sites. Ten projects were recommended for financial assistance and have been completed.

A review of three wetland projects completed 4-5 years ago shows they have been successful in protecting riverine and wetland habitat from stock grazing. The establishment of native plantings at these three sites have had mixed results. The associated land holders are generally pleased with how the projects have developed and the learnings taken from the projects. While the Central Otago projects are a smaller component of the overall Otago HEF programme they have resulted in the promotion of wetland projects in their local communities with other farmers contacting F&G for advice.

Presently we have three Central Otago HEF projects in progress. Staff are currently working on a HEF application for a wetland enhancement project for the Bendigo Wildlife Reserve.

Recommendation: That this report is received

Paul van Klink
Fish and Game Officer
March 2022

14.2 2020-21 Season Backcountry Anglers' Survey

Background

Otago Backcountry Licence Endorsement (BCLE) holders have been regularly surveyed to monitor activity, satisfaction and other variables of interest including encounter rates and catch rates. Over the past 10 years non-resident licence holders have comprised approximately 50 % of all Otago BCLE holders. During the 2020-21 fishing season border closures due the COVID-19 pandemic meant non-resident tourist anglers were absent, presenting a unique opportunity to monitor the response of resident anglers to a sudden and dramatic decline in pressure from tourist and guided anglers which have often been cited as key factors contributing to angler dissatisfaction and displacement.

The objectives of the 2020-21 survey were to:

- Estimate the use (total angler days) for Otago backcountry fisheries during the 2020-21 season.
- Estimate the patterns of use between weekdays and weekend days.
- Estimate levels of guided angling activity during the 2020-21 season.
- Compare estimates with levels of use reported for previous seasons, particularly 2016-17 when a bimonthly survey of effort was also conducted, considering the effects of COVID-19 pandemic border closures.
- Investigate anglers' perceptions about how the border closures (and absence of non-resident anglers) influence their fishing behaviour, experience, and satisfaction during the 2020-21 season.

Methods

Anglers who held a BCLE for the 2020-21 season were surveyed via email bimonthly throughout the 2020-21 backcountry fishing season. There were four survey periods covering the months of (1) October-November, (2) December-January, (3) February-March and (4) April-May. A small number (<100) Non Resident Licences were present in the database. While the borders were closed to non-residents throughout the season incorrect licence selection or non-residents who entered as critical workers etc might explain these licences. The Non Resident Licences were not investigated further and for the purposes of this survey were included in the general sample of licence holders.

Anglers were asked whether they fished during that period and active anglers were prompted to report the number of weekdays, weekend days they had fished, whether they used a guide and how many fish they caught and released or retained. Based on the activity reported by respondents an estimate of total use (± 1 standard error) for each fishery in each survey period was calculated.

At the conclusion of the season all anglers who held a BCLE (all regions) were sent an end of season survey which asked some specific questions about participation on the Oreti River in

Southland (as part of a case study) as well as some questions about how their fishing behaviour and satisfaction compared to previous seasons.

Results

Response rates were >20 % for all survey periods. There were approximately 500 fewer BLE issued during the 2020-21 season compared to the previous two seasons. A 54 % increase in the number of resident Otago BCLE holders largely compensated for the absence of non-resident tourist anglers with the total number of Otago BCLE down just 16 % despite a 94 % decrease in non-resident BLE holders, who have comprised approximately 50 % of BCLE for the past decade. Male anglers made up 95 % of Otago BCLE holders and the median age for both female and male anglers was 54, in line with previous seasons.

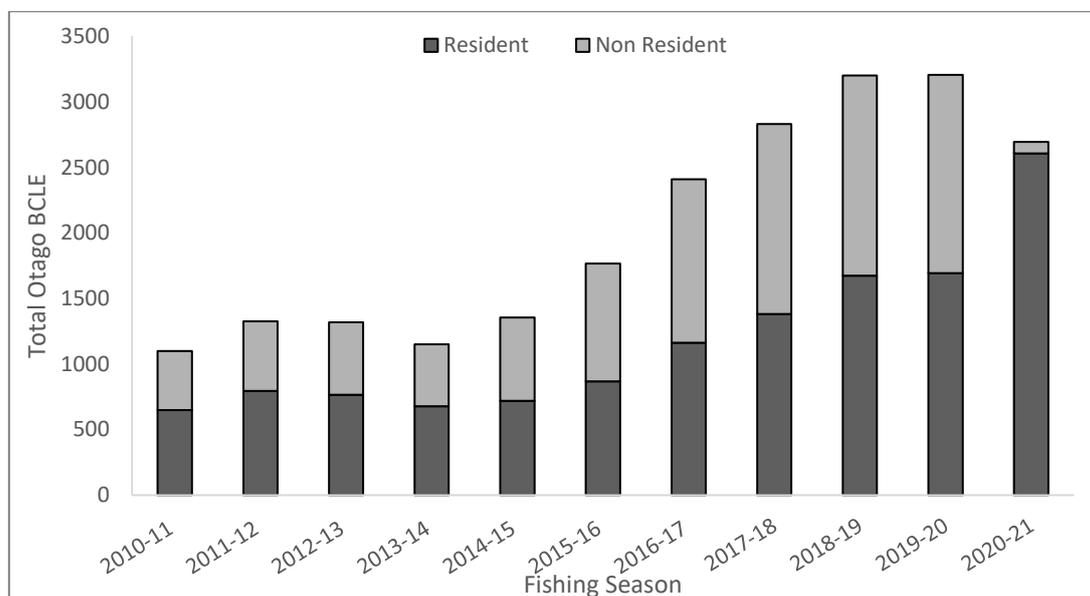


Figure 1. Total number of Otago Backcountry Licence Endorsements issued for resident and non-resident anglers for fishing seasons from 2010-2020

Total estimated angler days for the 2020-21 season

- There were 583 ±168 angler days estimated for the Caples River; use was relatively consistent throughout the season
- The Dingle Burn was popular in the early season and had low levels of use at the end of the season; total use for the season was estimated at 455 ±286 days.
- Estimated use of the Greenstone River was highest during Feb-Mar during the controlled fishery period. The estimated anglers days was 390 ±112, however it should be noted that the maximum allocated anglers days during the controlled fishery period is 354.
- Angling effort on the Hunter peaked in the Apr-May period and was the highest estimated for any Otago designated backcountry fisheries during any period. The total estimate of angler days for the season was 1051 ±339 days.

- The Lochy River received the least angling pressure of all the Otago designated backcountry fisheries. Use peak during the Dec-Jan period and the total estimated angler days for the season was 212 ± 27 .
- Total estimated angler days for the Nevis River was 736 ± 76 ; use was relatively consistent throughout the season with a slight peak in Feb-Mar.
- The Pomahaka, Wilkin and Young Rivers all showed a similar pattern of angler use throughout the season with angler days increasing from lower levels in the early seasons, remaining higher in Dec-Jan and Feb-Mar and decreasing at the end of the season in Apr-May. The total estimated angler days were: Pomahaka 1159 ± 176 days, Wilkin 516 ± 154 days and Young 417 ± 103 days.

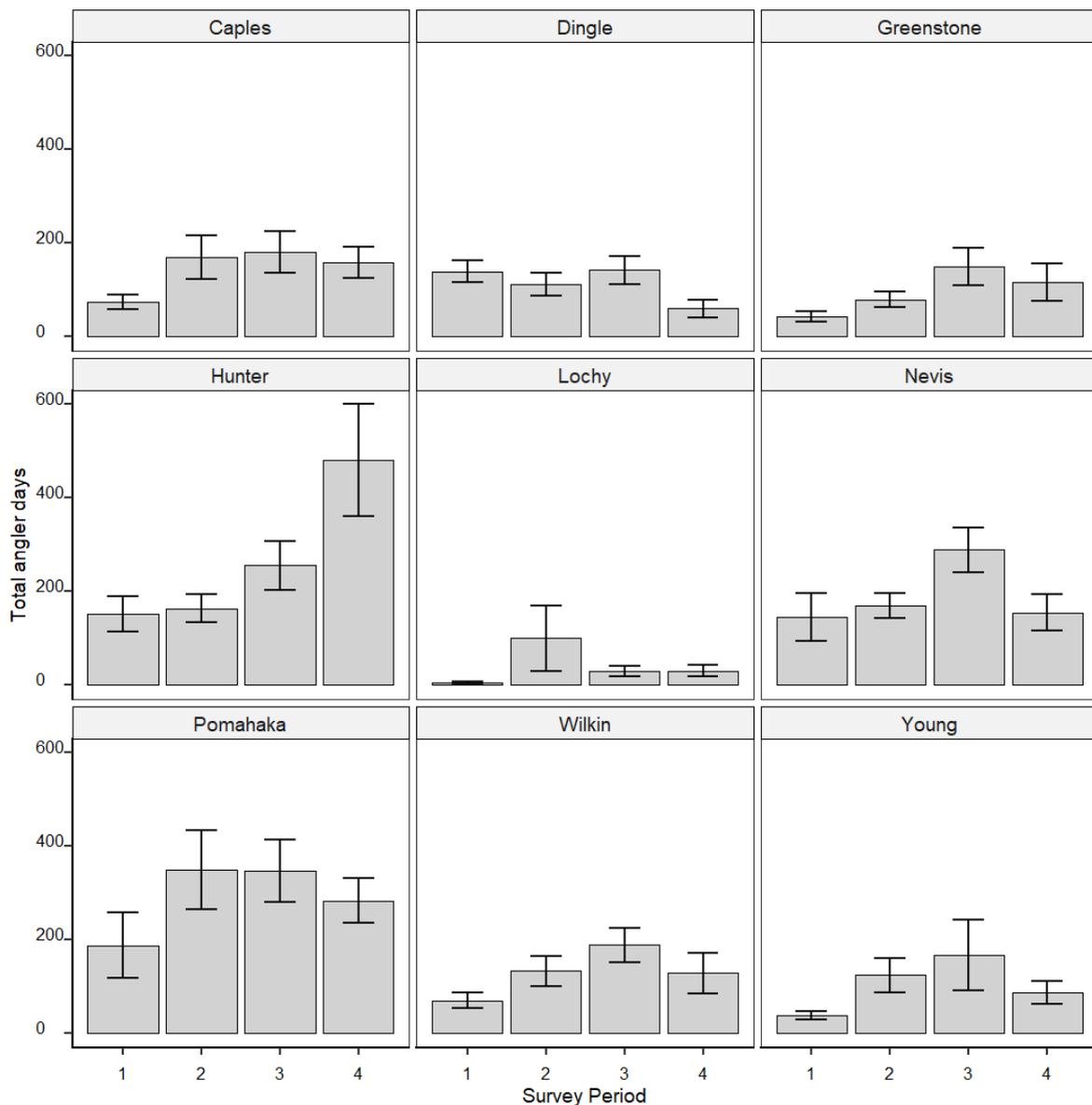


Figure 2 Estimated angler days for Otago designated backcountry fisheries in Oct-Nov (survey period 1), Dec-Jan (survey period 2), Feb-Mar (survey period 3) and Apr-May (survey period 4) ± 1 standard error. Note that only the Pomahaka and Nevis Rivers are open for fishing in October; for all other fisheries estimates for period 1 are for angling effort in November only.

Weekend vs weekday fishing effort

Predicted angler days were calculated based on fishing effort being evenly distributed over all days available within the survey period (i.e., anglers had an equal preference/likelihood of fishing weekend vs weekday days). This analysis did not consider the influence of public holidays. For 5 of the 9 rivers the estimated actual angler days were greater than predicted indicating anglers showed a preference for fishing weekend days over weekdays. This effect was most significant on the Pomahaka, Caples and Young Rivers. In contrast, actual weekend angler days on the Hunter, Greenstone and Lochy Rivers were less than predicted.

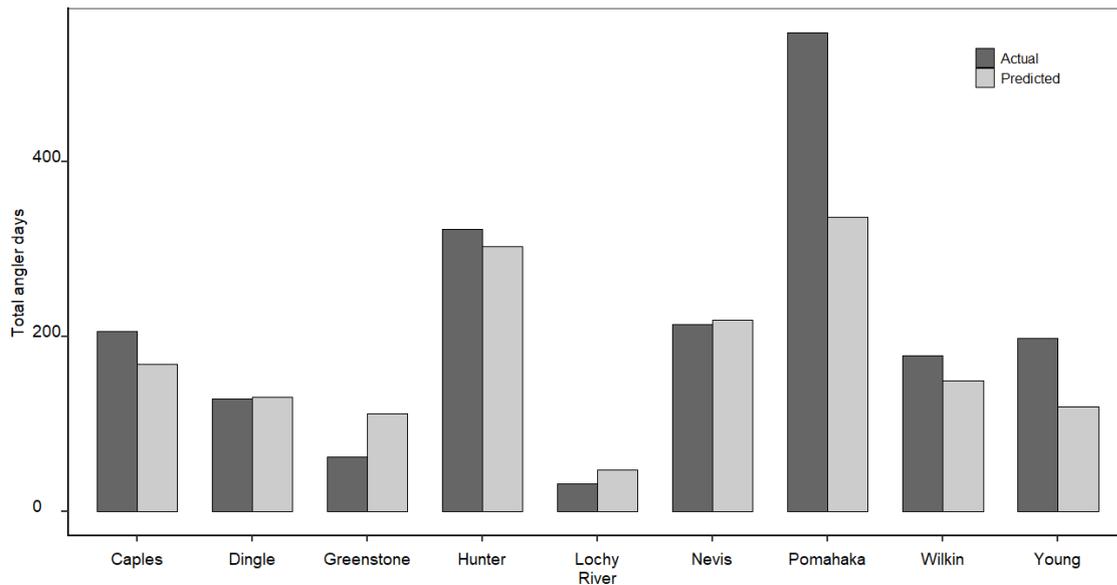


Figure 3 Estimated actual and predicted total weekend angler days for Otago Backcountry Rivers in the 2020-21 season

Guided angling

Overall guided angling was estimated to comprise 3.5 % of fishing effort on Otago designated backcountry fisheries. This is comparable to estimates of resident guided angling in previous seasons and ranged from <1 % for the Dingle Burn to 6 % of effort on the Nevis River.

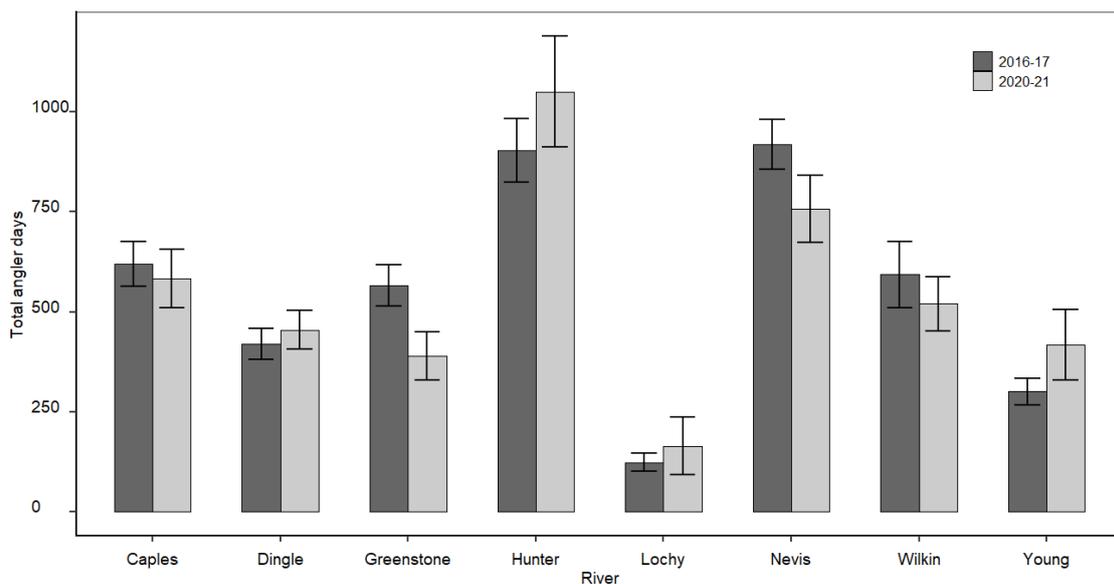


Figure 4 Estimated total angler days ± 1se for Otago designated backcountry fisheries in 2016-17 and 2020-21 seasons. Note that the Pomahaka River was not a designated backcountry fishery in 2016-17.

Comparison with previous seasons

The 2016-17 season provides a useful comparison for the 2020-21 season survey as angler effort was assessed using the same method and a similar number of BCLE were issued for both seasons~2400 in 2016-17 and ~2700 in 2020-21. The total estimated angler days for the 2020-21 season were comparable to the levels of use estimated for the 2016-17 season for most Otago designated backcountry fisheries. However, in 2016-17 an average of 46 % of total angler days across all Otago designated backcountry fisheries were attributed to non-resident anglers (range 20-67 %). In the 2020-21 season increased participation by resident anglers therefore largely compensated for the absence of non-resident anglers. Total angler day estimates for the Caples, Greenstone, Nevis and Wilkin River were lower for 2020-21 compared to 2016-17 and the Hunter and Young Rivers had higher use estimates; however differences were not statistically significant ($P>0.05$).

NZ Backcountry Fisheries Satisfaction Survey

A total of 933 responses were recorded for the satisfaction survey, including 268 responses from Otago licence holders, with 27 % of all BCLE holders identifying Otago as their main region for fishing designated backcountry waters.

Overall, 21 % of anglers reported they fished 'more' compared to previous seasons, 25 % fished 'less' and 35 % fished. For 19 % of BCLE holders 2020-21 was the first season they had ever fished a designated backcountry fishery.

For those anglers that provided a reason for why they fished more during the 2020-21 season 42 % cited reasons related to reduced pressure, particularly from non-resident tourist anglers and guides. Some anglers also indicated they had more time and had been motivated to fish new waters.

When asked about their overall satisfaction about half (49 %) of all anglers reported they 'enjoyed their fishing about the same' as previous seasons. However, 41 % answered that they 'enjoyed my fishing more' during the 2020-21 season. Of these anglers 60 % cited reasons related to reduced fishing pressure particularly by non-resident tourist anglers and guides as being the main reason they enjoyed their fishing more. Effects on both fishing (catchability, numbers and size of fish seen and caught) and well as experiential factors (feelings of solitude, peace). Comments from anglers suggest they felt less anxiety and stress about the potential negative impacts of other anglers on their fishing experiences:

"I was less nervous about fishermen using a helicopter to access the same water I hiked into."

"I generally felt more relaxed about getting to rivers, knowing that I wasn't competing with guides and their clients"

Those who were less satisfied, also noted factors related to fishing pressure i.e. other anglers on their preferred beat, or condition of the fishery i.e. low numbers, fish not active/feeding. Most anglers (58 %) described the catchability of fish as 'about the same' as previous season.

Encounter rates were apparently reduced with 58 % of anglers reporting they encountered less anglers than usual while fishing designated backcountry waters; 34 % of anglers said they encounter 'about the same' number of usual, while just 8 % said they encountered more anglers than usual.

Similar to the general survey results, for the Oreti River in particular 39 % of anglers said they fished Oreti River more in the 2020-21 season compared to previous seasons. Most anglers (51 %) were more satisfied with their experiences on the Oreti this season, reporting that they enjoyed their fishing more compared to previous seasons. Pressure related factors particularly the absence of tourist and guided anglers was the most common reason for the increased participation and satisfaction reported by anglers. This is further supported by the lower encounter rates experienced during the season with 73 % of anglers reporting they encountered fewer anglers than usual.

Overall 52 % of anglers felt the absence of tourist anglers due to COVID-19 related border closures influenced how they chose to fish during the season. Of these anglers:

- 47 % fished more frequently than I would have otherwise
- 21 % fished at different times of day than they have otherwise
- 25 % fished at different times of the season than they would have otherwise
- 48 % fished different beats/reaches on some rivers than they would have otherwise
- 50 % fished a backcountry river(s) that I would not have otherwise
- 31 % fished a greater number of different backcountry fisheries than I would have otherwise

It should be noted that anglers were not asked how important the absence of tourist anglers was or how this factor ranked compared to other factors influencing their fishing behaviour. Therefore, it cannot be assumed this was the main influence on participation for all anglers; although supporting comments would suggest it was a key influence for many.

Discussion

Increase uptake of BCLEs largely compensated for the absence of non-resident tourist anglers as a result of COVID-19 related border closures. Overall use was comparable to 2016-17 when a similar number of BCLE were issued. It is therefore likely that angler pressure was somewhat reduced compared to the previous two seasons when higher numbers of BCLE holders were active. Responses from anglers also suggest there was some reduction in pressure as encounter rates were reported to be lower.

Almost 20 % of BCLE holders fished a designated backcountry fishery for the first time during the 2020-21 season. About half of these anglers said they felt the absence of tourist anglers due to COVID-19 border closures influenced how (i.e., where, when, how often) they chose to fish during the season. Some of these anglers may have been prompted to visit a

designated backcountry fishery because of commentary about the lack of pressure in the backcountry and the excellent fishing opportunities available, and it is possible some may have previously avoided designated backcountry fisheries due to concerns about pressure/availability of water (i.e., displacement). While these anglers identified themselves as first time users of designated backcountry fisheries, it is important to note that they may have had previous experience on other backcountry or pressure sensitive rivers, which may have influenced their behaviour and perspectives. It is considered less likely that a significant number of anglers were displaced from designated backcountry fisheries as a result of angling pressure without any first-hand backcountry angling experience.

For the other 50 % of these 'first-time' BCLE anglers the absence of non-resident tourist anglers did not influence their patterns of fishing. For these anglers it is suspected that the interest in designated backcountry fisheries was likely influenced by COVID-19 travel restrictions which saw greater emphasis on domestic tourism and an increase in fishing licence sales in general. Comments from anglers support this idea with some saying they stayed at lodges or hired a guide to support New Zealand businesses.

Reduced angling pressure from non-residents/guide also influenced the fishing behaviour and satisfaction of existing backcountry anglers. This supports the theory of angler displacement (temporal, spatial and absolute) occurring on backcountry and pressure sensitive fisheries as anglers said they fished more, or differently when the pressure from non-resident tourist anglers/guides was not present.

There was some evidence that anglers preferentially fished weekends over weekdays. This is somewhat expected as residents typically work during the week and may have more time for fishing on their weekends. In comparison tourists do not typically face work constraints limiting the days they can fish. It is possible that this effect was lessened with COVID-19 related changes to work patterns (e.g., working from home, more flexible hours). Shifts in fishing effort from weekends to weekdays in response to COVID-19 lockdowns has been observed for recreational fisheries in Denmark (Gundelund and Skov, 2021). Based on the results of this survey however further investigation into use of a resident-only weekend period to manage fishing opportunities for residents on pressure sensitive fisheries is warranted.

The increased activity of resident anglers in backcountry fisheries is promising in terms of resident angling participation, however if assuming some of these anglers will return to the backcountry and non-resident tourist anglers return in the coming season(s) as border restriction are lifted, there is potential for a significant increase in fishing pressure compared to the last two seasons and even recent seasons pre-covid.

Recommendations

- That the Council continue to support the development Pressure Sensitive Fisheries management framework and the implementation of the Guides' Licence.
- That there is further investigation of a resident only weekend trial in Otago using the existing controlled period management mechanism.
- That this report be received.

Helen Trotter
Fish and Game Officer
March 2022

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References

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15.0 General Business