

Agenda For The Meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council On 25 July 2024, 12:30pm

(Starting 11:45am with a light lunch)

Timetable	Council Meeting
11.00am	<i>Executive Only Meeting</i>
11.45 am	Lunch
12.15 pm	<i>Councillor Only Session</i>
12.30 pm	Meeting Begins
2.00 pm	<i>Public Excluded session</i>
2.45 pm	Public Forum
3.00 pm	Afternoon Tea
3.15pm	Meeting resumes
5.00 pm	Welcome Southland Fish and Game Council
5.30 pm	Light Dinner combined councils
6.00 pm	Joint Meeting

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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 23rd May 2024 At 120 Scotland Street, Roxburgh

1.0 Present and Apologies

Present: Colin Weatherall (Chair), Mike Barker, Rick Boyd, Ian Cole, John Highton, Adrian McIntyre.

In attendance: Ian Hadland (CE), David Priest (Central Otago Operations Manager), Bruce Quirey (Communications Officer).

Present via video conferencing: Vicky May, Ray Grubb, Blair Trevathan, Paulette Tamati-Elliffe (Ngāi Tahu).

Apologies: Neil Harraway (Otago Conservation Board).

The meeting opened at 12.45pm.

The Chairperson welcomed the councillors.

2.0 Matters to be raised not on the agenda

None.

3.0 Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson asked Councillors to update and sign Declarations of Interest.

4.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Cr Highton asked about proposed improvements to the hatchery system.

Moved (Cr Boyd/Cr Highton)

That the minutes of the Council meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council held on 21st March 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Carried unanimously.

5.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Cr Barker noted about the general business item on alternative sources of finance that an NZC future finance report would provide suggestions to increase revenue.

6.0 Health and Safety Report April May 2024

Cr May asked about defensive driving track-time courses for staff.

The Central Otago operations manager noted staff had completed four-wheel-drive training.

The CE undertook to consider defensive driving training for staff and dashboard cameras, which were also discussed.

Moved (Cr Cole /Cr McIntyre)

That the Health and Safety Report be received.

Carried unanimously.

7.0 Items Requiring Decisions

7.1 Licence Fee Recommendations 2024-25

The CE said the Minister had suggested to NZC that he would not accept a licence price change. Otago had never received formal confirmation of that direction. It put the Council in a difficult position due to the tight fiscal environment, and translated to more exposure around levies and forced the use of reserves.

NZC proposed each region use 3.36% of reserves and forecast a loss for the year. It meant \$41,657 would be taken from Otago reserves as an additional levy.

The only contestable funding bid approved for Otago was the Designated Waters implementation work.

Failure to approve a contestable funding bid to recruit a staff member focused on advocacy and stakeholder relationships made it difficult to fully accomplish the Council strategic vision.

The role could be funded from reserves in short-term at the expense of other programmes.

Concerning licence ratios, no analysis or discussion about non-resident and designated waters fees had taken place.

The Chair noted NZC had indicated supporting continuation of the magazine and topping up the legal pool fund, both to be funded by the regions.

Councillors expressed discomfort supporting a recommendation that Council go into deficit. It was suggested the non-resident licence fee should increase. Councillors agreed feedback should be provided to NZC that legally it could only levy licence fees and not reserves.

The CE noted NZC had a programme to review licence categories and funding for a pricing optimisation project, but unfortunately it hadn't got off the ground yet. He suggested Council should encourage NZC to bring that work forward.

Cr Weatherall said Council should propose a resident whole season fee increase from \$153 to \$155 and leave this for the Minister to decide.

He supported a substantial increase in the non-resident licence fee.

(Ngāi Tahu representative Paulette Tamiti-Elliffe joined the meeting via video link.)

Concern was also expressed that Fish & Game would face heavy pushback from non-resident anglers if the fee rose too steeply, and too quickly.

It was suggested that research was needed to establish the value of the licence in return for the quality of the fishing experience.

Moved (Cr Grubb/Cr Boyd)

That Council propose to NZC an increase in whole-season fishing licence fees for 2024-25 to \$155 for residents and \$350 for non-residents.

Carried. (Against: Cr May and Cr McIntyre)

Crs May and McIntyre said they could not support any proposed increase to resident fees.

Councillors agreed NZC could only levy on licence fees, not reserves. It was expressed that reserves should not be used to fund cash flow.

There was discussion about the suitability of the current funding model whereby managers estimated the number of full season licence equivalents to be sold by each region, and surpluses went into the region's reserves.

Moved (Cr Grubb/Cr Boyd)

That Council advise NZC that funding practices should not put the organisation into deficit, and that legally NZC could only levy licence fees and not rely on regional reserves to top up deficits.

Carried.

The CE said the Council feedback to NZC should also point out a lack of transparency in the latest round of the contestable funding process, because operational input from managers was not sought. It was understood that there would be a new mechanism for contestable funding next year.

7.2 Draft Anglers Notice April 2024

Cr Cole raised a concern about the quinnat salmon population in Lake Wānaka. He said there was enough scientific evidence to support a change in the bag limit in Lake Wānaka to zero, and it could not wait for the triennial review.

The CE noted the Anglers Notice needed to be lodged to NZC by mid-June. He said it was not too late to make a notice change but there was a risk in any such process if licence holders were not consulted.

Other councillors said overfishing was not the cause of the issue and changing the bag limit in the next Anglers Notice would not make a difference.

Discussion about the Anglers Notice was paused.

Moved (Cr Weatherall/Cr Boyd)

That the meeting go into the non-public session.

Carried.

Cr McIntyre assumed the Chair role for the rest of the meeting.

Discussion about the Anglers Notice resumed after the non-public session.

Crs Grubb, attending online, left the meeting during an adjournment. After further discussion it was

Moved (Cr Boyd/Cr Barker)

That Council request staff to review the salmon bag limit in Lake Wānaka in time for the 2025/26 Anglers Notice.

The motion was carried (5/2).

Concern was raised that changing the Anglers Notice required a proper process, and there was mixed support for both points of view whether to change the Wanaka bag limit for the 2024/25 Anglers Notice.

Cr Cole noted that he had voted against the motion because he wanted the Lake Wānaka salmon bag limit to be reviewed this year.

Moved (Cr Boyd/ Cr Barker)

That Council agrees to the minor change to Blakely Dam season length being from 1st October to 15th April 2025, and all other regulations to remain the same.

Carried unanimously.

7.3 Regulation Setting Policy and Procedure

Regarding the staff report, Cr Boyd said he did not feel that the core goal of the draft “to maximise opportunities and enhance satisfaction” reflected the purpose of the Council regulation setting policy and procedure. The purpose was to have a good process to achieve the things that Council was required to do under law – to manage and enhance the resources. Policy process should involve stake holders in achieving that. For good law, the public needed to understand the reasons. The draft policy could be much simplified.

The CE suggested that staff could revise the draft policy and bring it back to the next Council meeting.

Cr Boyd and Cr Highton asked to be involved in drafting.

Moved (Cr McIntyre/Cr Cole)

That staff review the draft in consultation with Crs Boyd and Highton, and bring it back to the next Council meeting.

Carried.

Regarding consultation, Ms Tamati-Elliffe said under the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 the list was narrower than that mentioned in the draft report. She highlighted Waikoau Ngāi Tahu Rūnanga in South Otago.

8.0 Public Excluded Items

8.1 Draft Public Excluded Minutes of Meeting 21st March 2024

Moved (Cr Boyd/Cr Barker)

That the Public Excluded Minutes for 21st March 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Carried unanimously.

8.2 Otago Regional Policy Statement Potential Appeals

8.3 Council Property Update

8.4 Dublin Bay Lake Wanaka Bird Kill

The CE discussed a media release issued jointly by Otago and Southland Fish & Game councils which criticised MPI's investigation into recent bird kills at Wānaka and Te Anau. The MPI biosecurity unit had done a good job of their investigation which ruled out exotic disease as the cause of death. However, the CE was critical of the response by the MPI agricultural compounds and veterinary medicines (ACVM) group, which had elected not to do further testing. Fish & Game suspected diazinon was the cause of death in both incidents, but that needed to be confirmed through testing.

Otago and Southland F&G councils had agreed to share the cost of testing dead bird samples. These had been sent to ESR. The long-term aim was to have the agricultural use of the insecticide diazinon reviewed and banned by the Environmental Protection Authority. Diazinon was registered under the ACVM Act and its registration would expire in 2028.

The CE said confirmation that diazinon had killed the birds would make more of a case. There was no suggestion the most recent cases were deliberate. However, the insecticide had been misused deliberately to kill birds in the past. The same product was confirmed as the cause of death for 200 black swans in

Waihola in 2020. The CE said the Waihola case had come close to prosecution, but MPI decided it was unable to bring a case against the landowner.

The CE said he would keep the Council up to date about the test results.

Moved (Cr Highton/Cr Boyd)

That the Lake Wānaka, Dublin Bay Bird Kill report be received.

Carried.

8.5 Verbal Update on QLDC Easement Agreement

9.0 Financial Report

The CE suggested that Council take the financial report and the CE report as read. However, he needed feedback on NZC documents.

Cr Barker asked if a more satisfactory interest rate had been secured for a term deposit which had expired on May 2. The CE said the Council was holding some money to cover any property transactions in the near term. The new interest rate was around 6%.

Moved (Cr Cole/Cr Boyd)

That the Finance report and Licence Report to the 30th April 2024 be received.

Carried unanimously.

Moved (Cr Boyd/Cr May)

That, subject to Council's approval of the litigation, the Priority Consents Reserve \$41,697 and the Priority Plan Changes Reserve \$31,076 be made available for funding of the Otago Regional Policy Statement case.

Carried unanimously.

10.0 Chief Executive's Report

The CE asked Council for guidance on the Mt Iron Reserve vesting. In his view, the Council had no interest in the transfer between agencies, and did not want to have it publicly notified. Unless there was any objection at the meeting, the CE would reply to that effect on behalf of the Council.

Regarding Bullock Creek stormwater, the CE said he had not received an update from the Queenstown Lakes District Council on the revised easement agreement for the proposed pipeline.

Councillors asked about Designated Waters monitoring in the Hunter/Dingle and expressed concern about NZC plans to halt print publication of the regulation guidebook. It was pointed out that regulations would be accessible online and regions would consider a one-page regulation guide per region for distribution through agents.

The next Council meeting would be held on July 25.

Moved (Cr Barker/Cr May)

That the CE's report be received.

Carried unanimously.

11.0 RMA Planning and Consents Report

A question was raised whether the Council had objected or had any input into a gold mining consent application at Millers Flat. The CE responded that the Council did not object to the proposal.

12.0 Committee & Delegate Reports

12.1 Clutha Fisheries Trust

Cr Cole said the Clutha Fisheries Trust met in May.

CFT members and Fish & Game staff had attended meetings regarding lagorasiphon in the lakes Wānaka and Dunstan.

Lagarosiphon had been almost eradicated at Paddock Bay. He expressed concern that matting had left parts of the bay sterile. Revegetation of weed beds by native plant life was heartening. CFT wanted to know from NIWA what biomass studies had been done before and after the matting. There had been a noticeable decrease in cruising brown trout in the littoral zone of Lake Wānaka over the last 10 years.

Other matters included:

- Getting a wildlife report done on Lake Dunstan.
- Access tracks were ongoing, revitalising Kidd Creek public-right-of-way access in spring, opposite the Lindis River mouth.
- The trust was supportive of Isaac Davis' research regarding species interaction in the Nevis and Cardrona. More funding would be required.
- CFT was waiting to see a Bendigo Wildlife Management Area plan before committing to funding.
- Seeking an update on studies into lake snow.

12.2 Clutha Mata-Au Fisheries and Habitat Trust

Cr Boyd said the Trust met earlier today.

- The Trust was still in start-up mode. The proposed business plan was a work in progress.
- Critical milestones: the first requirement was to have a science-based assessment on the hatchery as a means of achieving the purposes of

the trust. Work had started and the answer was expected in late September.

- Then the Trust would look at the next steps to proceed with a hatchery, such as applying for a freshwater fish farming licence.
- He discussed the annual programme of work in previous years undertaken by Fish & Game.

12.3 New Zealand Fish and Game Council

Cr Barker said Councillors had all been sent summary of the last NZC meeting minutes, at which contestable funding bid were discussed. Other items not mentioned in the report were:

- F&G regions had begun using the SeaFlux web-based app for marine assets and operations.
- Ranger compliance update.
- Draft guide to sports management plans. Otago was one of the few regions which had a current sports management plan and was due to expire next year.

Cr Barker said a lot of time was spent discussing the magazine and NZC decided reluctantly the organisation could not afford to continue producing them.

In North Canterbury, rental levies would be paid to Ngāi Tahu for each of the maimais in Lakes Ellesmere/Te Waihora.

Cr Cole asked if there had been any progress about a guides' licence. Cr Barker said the guides licence was to be discussed with professional fishing guides by the NZC Chairperson Barrie Barnes at the next NZ Professional Fishing Guides Association annual meeting.

Several councillors expressed dismay that the magazine and regulation guidebooks may not be printed.

A question was raised if the Council was concerned about the Government's fast-tracking legislation.

The CE replied that entering fast-tracking legislation was one thing, but funding a fast-tracked proposal was quite different. However, it was a concern and NZC had made a submission to a select committee.

12.4 Ngāi Tahu

Ms Tamiti-Elliffe said she hoped to have a report prepared for the next meeting. Regarding consultation, Ngāi Tahu and the Council could do better together. There had been conversations among local hapu about the practice of gathering and harvesting putakitaki (paradise shelduck) using traditional methods. Ngāi Tahu hoped to work closely with the Council on it.

12.5 Conservation Board

None

12.6 Tiaki Maniototo

Cr Highton tabled a report.

13.0 Correspondence

The CE discussed correspondence with NZC regarding part of its revamp of national policy. He said two of the draft policies were a case of overreach into Otago F&GC affairs.

13.1 NZC to Otago**13.1.1 New Zealand Council Consultation Items**

Moved (Cr Cole/ Cr Boyd)

- 1. That Council reject adoption of the Draft Protected Disclosures Policy as national policy. Agree to adopt an updated version locally. Add to our Regional Policy list.**
- 2. That Council refuse adoption of the Draft National Health and Safety Policy as national policy and rely on Council's established version.**
- 3. That Council support the Draft Ranger Health and Safety Policy with the below amendments:**
 - Removal of the specific Health and Safety provisions – they are held elsewhere so do not need to be duplicated in this policy.
 - Clarify the annual declaration section so it only covers *Honorary* Rangers Health and Safety specifically when doing compliance work. Staff undertaking compliance work are covered in our own internal H&S system and this also covers honorary rangers working for Otago F&G on tasks other than compliance.

Moved (Cr Weatherall/Cr Cole)

That correspondence be received.

Carried.

14.0 Items to be Received or Noted**14.1 Aerial Mallard Monitoring 2024**

The CE discussed the staff report on aerial mallard monitoring. The monitoring data was not a good predictor of hunter success. Mallard monitoring was one of the few tangible projects that Fish & Game could demonstrate to game bird hunters it was doing, but the data was probably not driving Council's decision-making about regulations or accurately informing hunters of season prospects.

A year of review was proposed in the Operational Work Plan, transferring funds from aerial monitoring to a statistician for review. However, finding an alternative monitoring mechanism was not easy.

It was expressed that Council should continue monitoring because the Minister required it and gave Council some gauge what was happening to the population. It would be very important if a disease such as bird flu arrived.

Other regions, such as Southland and CSI, did get correlations between soil moisture data, bird monitoring and harvest data. It was noted that Otago had a greater variability in habitat and that was probably why no similar correlations were found here.

It was suggested that Otago and Southland council could form a duck committee and brainstorm ideas.

Cr Weatherall noted that two major documents from NZC – the future finance report and future governance report – would require serious consideration. He said they would be considered at the next meeting.

Cr Barker and Cr Boyd left the meeting at 4.50pm

Cr Highton asked if councillors would need to give an indication who would be standing at the upcoming Fish & Game.

The Council Chairperson, Cr Weatherall, asked councillors to discuss their intentions with him.

Moved (Cr Weatherall/Cr Cole)

- **That the Aerial Mallard Monitoring Report, Consent Report Takitakitoa Wetland 2024, and Opening Weekend Harvest Report be received.**
Carried.

15.0 General Business

Nil

Meeting closed at 5pm

Cr Cole noted that he would attend the July meeting via video conference.

5.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

6.0 Health and Safety Report

June and July 2024

Events/Work Requiring OHS Planning – Job hazard sheets completed.

- Spawning surveys
- Completion of Designated Water surveys
- Aerial Spawning counts

OHS Audits - Internal

Completed audits:

- Ranger training, support and policy
- Staff Training Schedule

Next audit areas:

- Hazardous substances
- Office audits
- PPE gear Cromwell

Incidents/Accidents/Near Misses/New Hazards

- Near miss of passenger being tipped from our boat while drivers were practicing/training manoeuvres at Lake Waihola. No lasting harm to boat or staff. Driver was new to the boat. Incident was discussed. More handles and foot grip to be added to the new boat.
- Diamond Creek hut. A battery had been placed on a shelf above the bed. This was removed to a floor position.
- A staff member dented and scratched a truck against a wall. No personal injury but truck needed insurance claim. Incident was discussed. More attention to driving and surroundings needed.

Training Completed

- Boat training day Waihola and recertification of skippers
- Oceana Gold OHS and hatchery induction update for staff

General Discussions, Actions

- Defensive driving course for staff – Looking for provider
- In car cameras – not considered necessary at this point
- Covid and flu about, stay away if sick.

Recommendation

1. That this report be received

Sharon Milne

Administration Officer

July 2024

7.0 Items Requiring Decisions

7.1 Otago Sports Fish and Game Management Plan 2015 – 2025 review

The Otago Sports Fish and Game Management Plan 2015 – 2025 (**SFGMP**) is nearing the end of its intended lifespan. Conservation Act 1987 section 17M requires that the SFGMP is reviewed within 10 years of the date it was first approved. The date which corresponds with this direction is 12 April 2025.

It was intended for the SFGMP development to begin in the 2024-2025 Otago work plan year. However, staff recommend that work begin prior to reduce the risk of, or length of time in which, the SFGMP is out of date.

The New Zealand Fish and Game Council (**NZC**) is currently writing policy on the development of SFGMPs around the country. The policies are likely to be in place towards the end of 2024, meaning the SFGMP review will need to be compliant with them. As it stands, the policies direct a much more stringent consultation process than is required by law. This will mean it is unlikely the SFGMP review will be completed prior to 12 April 2025; however, it will likely produce a more robust plan.

If work were to begin on the SFGMP review, the first steps are:

1. To engage with iwi to understand whether/how they would like to be involved; their aspirations for the SFGMP and initial thoughts on direction.
2. To conduct an analysis of the current provisions in the current context to identify which are still relevant, what could be improved and what gaps must be filled.
3. Upon the delivery of NZC policies on SFGMP development, develop a project plan.

NZC staff advise that it is critical Fish and Game Councils engage early with iwi and use this as an opportunity to develop the SFGMP in partnership, in order to fulfil the requirements of the Conservation Act section 4. This may also be an opportunity for Fish and Game Councils to build positive relationships and identify common goals with iwi.

Staff recommend that Councillors:

1. **Formally ask mana whenua, via the Ngāi Tahu representative to Council:**
 - a. **whether they would like to be involved in the development of a SFGMP;**
 - b. **how they would like to engage with the Otago Fish and Game Council in this endeavour; and**
 - c. **if they would like to meet with staff to discuss the above.**
2. **Direct staff to undertake an analysis of the current SFGMP provisions.**
3. **Direct staff to develop a project plan for the SFGMP review, upon delivery of relevant NZC policies.**

Nigel Paragreen
Environmental Officer
24 June 2024

7.2 Draft Otago Fish and Game Regulation Setting Policy July 2024

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and transparent framework that enables the Otago Fish and Game Council and its staff to effectively review and update regulations. This will help maintain the sports fish and gamebird resources and support the recreational and health-sustaining activities that depend on them.

Timeframes

This policy should be reviewed at least once during each Council term to ensure it remains aligned with the provisions of the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan and meets the strategic objectives of the Council. If significant changes in legislation occur, an earlier review of this policy may be necessary.

Review Schedule

Full reviews of the hunting regulations through the Gamebird Gazette Notice are also to be conducted on a triennial basis, taking place in the first year of the Otago Fish and Game Council's election cycle. The review process for these regulations is to follow an Otago Fish & Game - Gamebird Gazette Review Procedure (Appendix 1).

Full review of the fishing regulations through the Anglers Notice and Sports Fish Licences, Fees, and Forms Notice are to be conducted on triennial basis, occurring in the second year of the Otago Fish and Game Council's three-year election cycle. The review is to follow the Otago Fish & Game - Anglers Notice Review procedure. (Appendix 2)

Outside of the triennial reviews, only changes that require urgency or provide an increase in opportunity with minimal risk should be made. Changes enacted under an adaptive management regime, such as increasing a bag limit when the population is high, which were approved at a triennial review, should be permitted.

Regulation Principles

Regulations are to be set according to the following principles:

- Regulations are consistent with the current Otago Sports Fish and Game Management Plan (Relevant sections outlined in Appendix 3).
- Regulations align with the strategic priorities of the Otago Fish and Game Council.
- Regulations, and consultation on them, are consistent with statutory obligations.
- Regulations aim to optimize the satisfaction of licence holders.
- Regulations look to maximise participation and opportunity to sustainable limits.
- Regulations are based on the most up-to-date and sound scientific information.
- Regulations acknowledge the diverse abilities and interests of licence holders and aim to distribute restrictions fairly.
- Regulations recognise the importance of sustainably harvesting wild food.
- Regulations are enforceable in court.
- Regulations are consistent with the ethics of Fish and Game New Zealand outlined in Appendices 4 and 5.

Consultation

As a Crown Entity and willing Treaty Partner, the Otago Fish and Game Council has statutory responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, the Conservation Act 1987 and the Wildlife Act 1953.

The regulation review process will begin with consultations with Mana Whenua to enable their contributions to the direction of the process, identify concerns early, and seek shared goals and aspirations. The following organisations will be approached:

- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (TRONT)
- Rūnaka recognised in the SPGMP
 - Te Rūnanga o Otakou
 - Te Rūnanga o Hukanui
 - South Otago Rūnanga
 - Kati Huirapa Rūnanga Ki Puketeraki
 - Te Whanau o Otokia
 - Moturata Taieri Whanau
 - Te Rūnanga o Moeraki.
- Kāi Tahu ki Otago

Staff will also consult with key stakeholder groups on any major changes to regulations. Key stakeholders being:

- Department of Conservation (DoC)
- Ministry for Tourism
- Land information New Zealand (LINZ)
- Game Animal Council (GAC)
- Federation of Freshwater Anglers
- NZ Professional Guides association
- Currently active freshwater angling and gamebird hunting clubs based in Otago and Northern Southland.
- Neighbouring Fish & Game Regions.
- Otago licence holders
- General public, via a notice in the relevant newspapers.

Council will be provided a summary document of the consultation process. Council will take the feedback from the consultation and give it careful consideration when making their decisions.

Notification

Final Council decisions will be communicated back to submitters and key stakeholders to ensure transparency and evidence of a thorough and open public process.

Recommendation

That Council adopt the regulation setting policy and appended procedures.

July 2024

Appendix 1: Otago Fish & Game- Game Gazette Triennial Review Procedure.

1. Initial Notification and Consultation

Starts prior to game bird season commencing.

- Staff will consult with Iwi to:
 - Allow their input on direction of the process
 - Share harvest data from previous seasons, highlight issues, if any
 - Listen to their concerns
- Identify common ground and aspirations

2. Management Review

Completed July

- Staff will review the status of the Otago game bird populations incorporating up to date data on:
 - Niwa seasonal weather outlook
 - Species assessments - species populations and sustainability
 - Hunting trends - Hunter surveys of activity, harvest and satisfaction
 - Compliance and clarity issues
- Provide management review recommendations to Council and Iwi

3. Issues and Options Paper

Completed September

- Staff will prepare a draft report detailing issues and options informed by the Management review and Iwi consultation for Council approval
- Council will provide indications of their intent, to guide the consultation process.
- Issues and options paper released for consultation

4. Consultation

Completed November

- A letter will be sent to Iwi and key stakeholders inviting them to comment
- Direct emails will be sent to licence holders, including an online form for their responses
- Feedback will be summarised and included in a final report to Council for November meeting

5. Final Recommendations

Completed November

- Staff will compile and provide the Council and Iwi with a summary of feedback received during the consultation process
- Based on this feedback, the Council will make final recommendations on changes to the regulations at its November meeting

6. Game Bird gazette Notice approval

Completed December

- Staff will provide a draft Game Bird Gazette Notice recommendations, with proposed amendments marked up, to NZC for ministerial approval
- Staff will provide summary of Council decisions to Iwi, stakeholders, submitters and licence holders

7. Notification

Completed March

- Final approved Game Bird Gazette Notice notified to Iwi and stakeholders and communicated to licence holders.

Appendix 2: Otago Fish & Game Anglers Notice Triennial Review Procedure

1. Initial Notification and Consultation

Starts early year 1

- Staff will consult with Iwi to:
 - Allow their input on direction of the process
 - Share their concerns
 - Identify common ground and aspirations

2. Management Review

Completed October year 1

- Staff will review the status of the Otago fishery incorporating up to date data on:
 - Habitat issues including water quality and quantity
 - Species assessments - species populations and sustainability
 - Angling trends - Angler surveys of activity, harvest and satisfaction
 - Compliance and clarity issues

3. Issues and Options Paper

Completed October year 1

- Staff will prepare a draft report detailing issues and options informed by the Management review for Council approval.
- Council will provide indications of their intent, to guide the consultation process.

4. Final Consultation

Completed March year 2

- A letter will be sent to key stakeholders inviting them to comment.
- Direct emails will be sent to licence holders, including an online form for their responses
- Feedback will be summarised and reported to Council.

5. Final Recommendations

Completed April year 2

- Staff will compile and provide the Council with a summary of feedback received during the consultation process.
- Based on this feedback, the Council will make final decisions on changes to the regulations.

6. Anglers Notice approval

Completed May year 2

- Staff will provide a copy of the Anglers Notice with amendments marked up.
- Council will approve the Anglers Notice.
- Staff will provide the amended Anglers Notice to the Minister via the National Fish and Game Council.

7. Notification

Complete June year 2

- Staff will provide summary of Council decisions to stakeholders, submitters and licence holders.

Appendix 3: Relevant SFMP principles

5.2.3 - *There is a demand amongst anglers and hunters for a diverse range of recreational opportunities.*

5.3.1 - *To manage sports fisheries and game resources having regard to sustainability to meet the interests and recreational needs of present and future generations of anglers and hunters.*

5.3.3 - *To optimise angling and hunting opportunity and maintain or improve the recreational fishing opportunity spectrum available in Otago.*

5.4.1 - *Achieve sustainability through the following approach:*

(a) Ensure that the sustainability of the resource has precedence over utilisation (i.e., utilisation will be dependent on sustainability).

(b) In the absence of reliable information or in the face of uncertain information, a precautionary approach will be adopted in managing fish populations.

(c) Management decisions will be based on the best available information.

(d) The absence of information will not be used as a reason for failing to adopt management measures.

7.3.2 - *To minimize and simplify regulations controlling angling and hunting so that they do not become an impediment to participation, but not at the expense of precautionary management.*

7.4.2 - *Review annually angling and hunting conditions and assess them for relevance, clarity and simplicity.*

7.4.3 - *Liaise with other regions over the annual review of angling and hunting conditions and to seek consistency between regions.*

Appendix 4: Angling Code of Conduct

CODE OF CONDUCT

Please consider the rights of others and observe the anglers code of conduct

- Always ask permission from the land occupier before crossing private property unless a Fish & Game access sign is present.
- Do not park vehicles so that they obstruct gateways or cause a hazard on the road or access way.
- Always use gates, stiles or other recognised access points and avoid damage to fences.
- Leave everything as you found it. If a gate is open or closed leave it that way.
- A farm is the owner's livelihood and if they say no dogs, then please respect this.
- When driving on riverbeds keep to marked tracks or park on the bank and walk to your fishing spot.
- Never push in on a pool occupied by another angler. If you are in any doubt have a chat and work out who goes where.
- However, if agreed to share the pool then always enter behind any angler already there.
- Move upstream or downstream with every few casts (unless you are alone).
- Fish being returned to the water should be released as carefully and quickly as possible. Ideally leave the fish in the water and remove the hook with long-nosed pliers without handling the fish.
- While catch and release fishing is widely promoted by some as a conservation minded approach to angling it remains the angler's choice. However, the catching of large numbers of fish in a day can impact on individual fish and also on the angling experience for others. Fish & Game advocate hooking and landing a limited number of fish per day.
- Fish being retained should be killed as quickly as possible, ideally by spiking or stabbing the brain slightly behind and above the eye (also known as iki jime – pronounced "iki jimi").
- Always respect the environment, wildlife, other anglers and members of the public.
- Remove waste nylon and personal litter from the river banks and parking places.
- The only way we can protect our rivers in the long term is to CHECK, CLEAN and DRY all your gear before entering another river or lake anywhere in New Zealand.

REMEMBER TO TREAT OTHERS AS YOU WOULD WISH TO BE TREATED YOURSELF!

Appendix 5: Hunting Code of Conduct Summary – Full policy at <https://www.fishandgame.org.nz/assets/DMS/Hunting/Hunting-in-action/Hunting-Code-of-Practice-National-Policy-Nov19-Web.pdf>

GAME BIRD HUNTING CODE OF CONDUCT

Fish and Game New Zealand actively promotes responsible and ethical hunting practices. As game bird hunters we all have the following responsibilities, as detailed in the Game Bird Hunting Code of Conduct:

HUNT HUMANELY

- Shoot only within the effective range of our firearm and our capabilities, and only when a quick, clean kill is likely
- Retrieve all shot birds promptly and dispatch wounded game birds quickly and humanely
- Respect the resource, value our game birds and eat what we shoot

PROTECT GAME BIRD RESOURCES AND OUR HUNTING TRADITIONS

- Understand and observe all hunting regulations and licensing requirements
- Support game bird management and habitat enhancement activities
- Take no more than our immediate needs
- Share our knowledge and foster ethical attitudes and behaviour in hunting companions and youth

CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

- Remove all rubbish from the hunting area and dispose of offal and carcasses responsibly
- Use non-toxic shot and biodegradable products.
- Use established tracks and roads

RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

- Respect private property and always ask for access permission
- Be considerate of non-hunters
- Be aware of our safety and the safety of others when hunting
- Comply with the Arms Act 1983 and always follow the 7 Firearms Safety Rules:
 1. Treat every firearm as loaded
 2. Always point firearms in a safe direction
 3. Load a firearm only when ready to fire
 4. Identify your target beyond all doubt
 5. Check your firing zone
 6. Store firearms and ammunition safely
 7. Avoid both alcohol and drugs when handling firearms

For further guidance about responsible game bird hunting read the full Code of Practice at www.fishandgame.org.nz

STOP THE SPREAD OF AQUATIC PESTS

Protect our waters: **CHECK, CLEAN, DRY.** Check dogs, boots, decoys, boats and their trailers before you leave the area.

7.3 Adoption of 2024/25 Operational Workplan (OWP) and Budget

Background

In March 2024 the OWP and budget was circulated as a draft for approval and got the agreement of Council to be put forward into the national equation to establish licence fees and levies. Since then, the Minister has approved the Licence fees for next season which were promoted by the New Zealand Council after having assessed all budgets, including its own.

Workplan

The final Operational Work Plan (OWP) for next year is within this agenda pack. Its ambitious but manageable. Staff do try to retain as much flexibility as possible but any additional work added to the workplan at this point will mean having to let some other tasks go.

Additional funding approved

In addition to the base funding, the NZC has also approved and confirmed our contestable the spending from our own reserves. Unfortunately our contestable funding bids for governance training and an additional staff member were not approved.

Base fund	\$1,240,967
------------------	--------------------

Spending from Otago Non Resident Reserve:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated waters management | \$23,000 |
|--|----------|

Spending from Otago Property Reserve

- | | |
|---|---------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wanaka Maintenance (\$15K over 2 years) | \$7,500 |
|---|---------|

TOTAL OWP BUDGET 24/25 financial year	\$1,271,467
--	--------------------

Unfunded staff member

The Chair has asked that the role description from our contestable funding bid be recirculated. This is presumably so that the Council can consider funding the role from its own reserves.

The best **alternative option** would be to delay that decision until the Communications Strategy is adopted and subsequent Implementation Plan is drafted and costed out. (September this year). The reason being is that the role was to support our communications and strategic relationships workload and a lot of that is now captured under the Communications Strategy.

Development of the implementation Plan would give staff a clearer direction on the sort of resources required to implement the communications strategy, including staffing and any external costs. In saying that, it would also be helpful to know from Council the funding that they might assign to it so the implementation plan can be structured with that in mind. Either way, it would make more sense to return to council in September with firmer information to make an informed decision around final funding.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Council adopt the 2023/24 Operational Workplan and Budget***
- 2. That Council delay the decision for appointing a new staff member until implementation Plan for the Communications strategy is complete***
- 3. Council considers setting a indicative budget (from the Councils General Reserve) for the implementation of the Communications Strategy***

Ian Hadland
Chief Executive
17 July 2023

Appendix 1: New Staff Role Brief (draft from March meeting)

Focus: Advocacy/PR/Strategic Relationships

Term: Two year contract (remaining term of Strategic Plan)

Project areas:

Access – negotiating access, Access mapping, online mapping, access publications, new access opportunities (public roads, Doc land, tenure review land etc)

Emphasis on gamebird hunter access – Public land, F&G land, private land

Catchment Groups liaison – attend meetings, establish relationships, generate and enhance access and wetland development opportunities.

Other strategic relationships – Walking Access Commission, Game Animal Council, Angling and hunting/shooting clubs, Territorial authorities.

Implement Communications Strategy - Under direction of Comms officer

Other – Supports events, completes funding applications, CLE, and other F&G work.

Person Specifications

Knowledge: F&G, sportsfish and gamebird species and habitat, farming methods, familiar with local area

Skills: Negotiation, Communication, Relationship building, GIS/Online mapping, Publications/Website

Attributes: Outgoing, Brave/Resilient, Good communicator, warm and friendly

8.0 Public Excluded Items

8.1 Confirm Draft OF&GC Public Excluded Minutes from 23rd May 2024

8.2 Dunedin Office Replacement Update

8.3 Wanaka Subdivision Update

8.4 QLDC Consent Agreement – CE Verbal Report

8.5 Habitat Fund Application JM Wetland Development

8.6 Habitat Fund Application Hill Wetland Enhancement

8.7 Otago Fish and Game Council Communications Strategy Final Draft

9.0 Financial Report

Finance and Licence Sales 30th June 2024

9.1 Finance Reports

The financial Profit and Loss report and Balance sheet for the period from 1st September 2023 to 30th June 2024 are below.

Profit and Loss

Income

Licence Income

Total licence sales year to date is \$2,437,189 against annual budget of \$2,455,777 (99% of annual budget)

Fish licence revenue to 30th June 2024 totals \$2,068,510 (Fish sales \$2,026,261 + non resident revenue \$1,909 + Designated Water licence \$40,340) compared with \$1,929,191 for the same period of the 2022/23 season. Fish licence revenue is ahead of 2022/23 by \$139,319.

These figures include both resident and non resident sales.

The budget for fish licence sales is \$2,077,401 (sales are at 99.6%)

The makeup of fish licence income is different this season as the new designated waters licence system charges for selected waters.

DWLR and DWLN relate to resident and non resident designated water licences (DWL) sold in Otago, some is for other regions. The funds for these have been return to NZC to be allocated to the appropriate regions \$2,117.32 (GST excl) from Otago Region.

Other regions have sold our DWL to the value of \$3,636.78 (GST excl). This is refunded to Otago.

Central South Island Fish and Game and North Canterbury Fish and Game's Councils have the Salmon Endorsement Project. We have sold 512 Salmon endorsements with a value of \$2,113.04 (GST excl) this is returned to them.

Game licence revenue from the Profit and Loss statement for the 2023/24 season recorded to 30th June 2024 total \$368,679 compared with \$352,721 for the 2022/23 season to June 2023. Figures exclude GST and commission to agents.

Game licence revenue is ahead of 2022/23 by \$15,958. A full adult licence had an increase of \$6 per licence from the previous year. We sold less licences but had more revenue than 2022/23.

The 2023/24 budget for game licence sales is \$378,376 (sales are at 97%) exclusive of GST.

Other Income

Total other income year to date is \$817,636.

Areas of interest are:

- Wages Reimbursement is for work done for other regions. This includes assistance with CSIF&GC irrigation fish salvage and RMA assistance to NCF&GC.
- Contact Energy income is invoiced for project work as it is done.
- Interest is over budget as interest rates are higher than expected.
- Fine money from our latest court case is coming in monthly.
- Rent Received is below budget as the budget was made when we had the Cromwell section leased out.
- RMA cost Reimbursed is NZC payment towards Regional Policy Statement work.
- Other income is very high as we have the profit on sale of fixed assets that included the sale of the Chardonnay Street property in Cromwell.

Donations and Grants (not in budget)

Donation/Grant from	For	Amount GST excl
Bayfield High School	TAKF Lures	\$50
Otago Community Trust	TAKF	\$1,879
RICHO	Taiktaiktoa Wetland	\$1,000
Otago Regional Council Eco Fund	Bendigo Wetland	\$5,000
Total		\$7,929

Expenses

Expenditure at the 30th June for the 2023/24 financial year is \$2,289,342 against an annual budget of \$2,716,025. Expenditure at 84% with two months to go.

The main reasons for any variances are:

- Species Management – All categories are under budget. Game harvest surveys have yet to be charged.
- Habitat Protection – this includes \$36,819 of unbudgeted Contact Sports Management Plan spending, this will be on charged to Contact Energy Ltd.
RMA spending includes that claimed from NZC for RPS Works Management spending on wetland plant guards, stakes, soil, maimais and maintenance to the Wanaka grounds, all budgeted for.
Habitat Enhancement and Research Fund - Grants come from a reserve, funded from diversion payments.
- Participation – More signage to come, Back Country Designated Waters signage, surveys and monitoring has a budget in place, OF&G fishing training events are complete.
We had a grant from Otago Community Trust to go towards Take A Kid Fishing events.
- Public interface. Active with hunting and fishing reports and social media.

The communications strategy project has more plans. Statutory advocacy and media releases have been busy but use more time than expenses.

- Compliance- one difficult prosecution included.
- Licencing – Designated Waters (DW) IT Build – Otago Region’s contribution to designing and implementing the DWL system and data base. Finished.
Commission is made up from agent sales commission and bank fees associated with online sales.
- Council expenses – Five of six meetings accounted for. February planning meeting two days includes accommodation and food. Remaining meeting includes a dinner with Southland Fish and Game Council.
- Planning and Reporting – All expenses from accountant for the auditor in.
More national Liaison to come.
- Over Heads/Administration
Salaries, less casual work than planned. More staff training planned.
Office premises - an assessment was done on building insurance and it is much higher than budget.
General expenses – unexpected legal cost for Wanaka Hatchery/Bullock Creek \$11,689.
Vehicle fuel and maintenance costs are increasing.
- Approved Reserves Expenses - \$37,410. This is expenditure approved by the council for the Bendigo, Bullock Creek and Historical and Regional Policy Statement Reserves.
- Depreciation – Depreciation year to date is \$61,163.
- Levies – paid monthly as per budget. \$968,299 excl GST to date.
- University Research Grant – Dr Donald Scott \$5000 has been paid from the non-resident reserve as agreed by Council.

The profit and loss for the 10 months ended 30th June 2024 shows a surplus of \$965,484.

As there is very little income from licences now, this figure will decrease over the next two months.

Balance Sheet

Bank Funds Position at 30th June 2024

Bank	Value
ANZ 00 Account	\$ 210,763.37
ANZ 70 Account	\$ 806,618.35
ASB Account	\$ 75.57
Cash On Hand	\$ 50.00
Total	\$ 1,017,507.29

Term Investments as at 30th June 2024

Investment Bank	Amount	Rate	Maturity
ANZ 1000	Closed		16th May 2024
ANZ 1002	\$200,000	6.10%	20 th Sept 2024
ANZ 1001	Closed		25 th Sept 2023
ASB 81	\$200,000	6.10%	2 nd August 2024
ASB 80	Closed		2 nd May 2024
Total	\$400,000		-

ANZ 1001 was closed on the 25th September 2023 and added to the 70 account \$401,016.99

ASB 80 Has been closed at maturity 2nd May 2024 and added to the ANZ 70 account \$202,120.55

ANZ 1000 has been closed at maturity 16th May 2024 and added to the 70 account \$530,399.51

Fixed Assets and Capital Expenditure

The asset replacement fund has gone from \$95,161 to \$37,713 with upgrading one truck, one boat and buying a defibrillator, new laptop and Cromwell car charger.

Property sales and purchases are not part of the asset replacement fund.

Liabilities

Total Liabilities at 30th June are \$281,863.

- Other payables include visa card spending, game habitat stamp levy and mostly from reversal of income in advance from the previous year. This will be updated at the end of the year when the new figures are calculated.
- Employee Entitlements includes \$49,249 of outstanding staff annual leave.
- Designated Waters liabilities are money owed to other regions for licences relating to their region but sold in Otago. Most has been returned.

Debtors

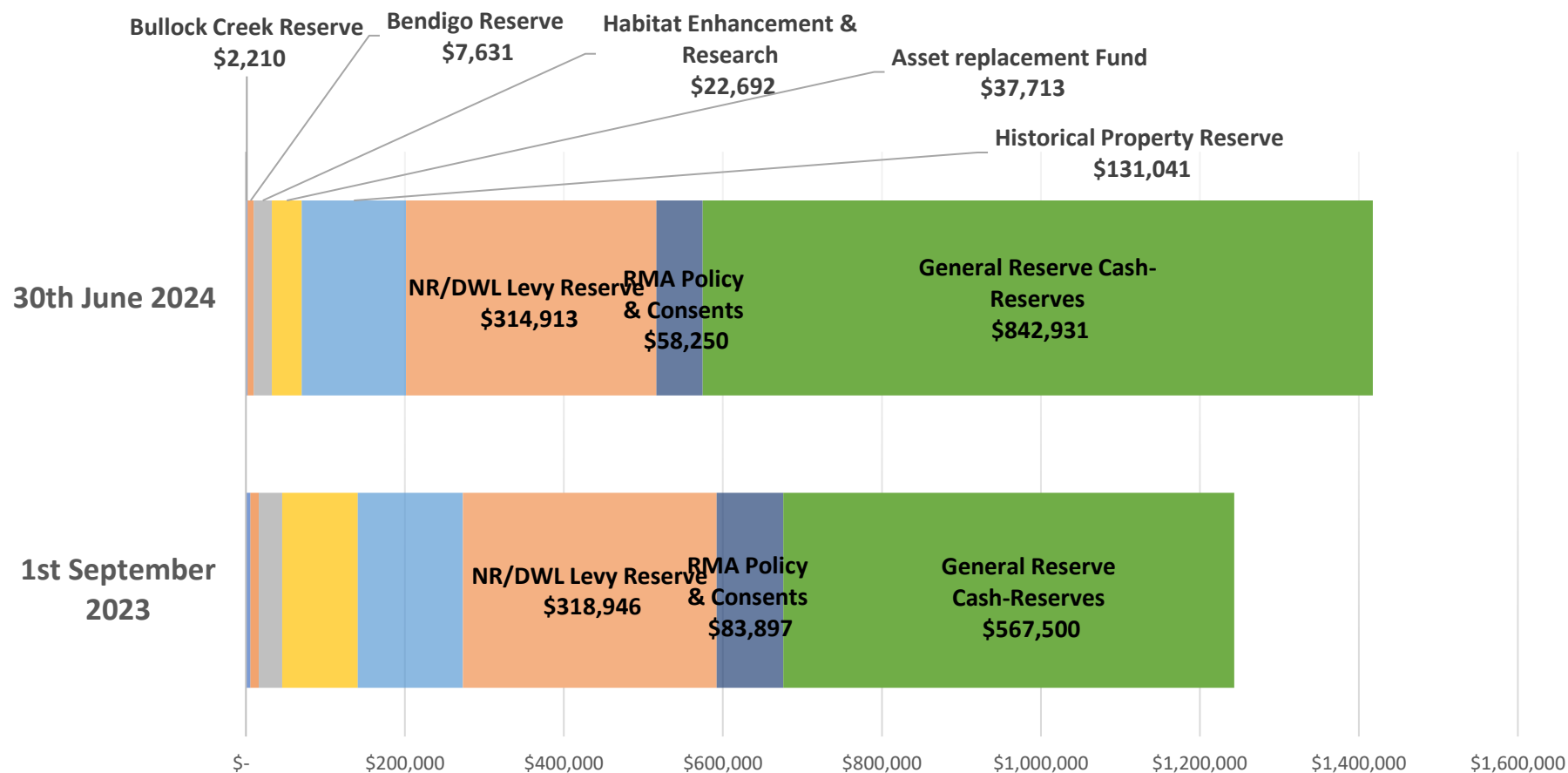
- No doubtful debts from agents.
- No doubtful debts in the general accounts

Equity**Otago Fish and Game Reserves 30th June 2024**

Otago Reserves Movements	Balance August 2023	Income (To) Reserve	Note	Outgoing (From) Reserve	Balance April 2024
Back Country Non-resident Levy	\$318,946	\$42,249	1	\$462,82	\$314,913
Habitat Enhancement & Research	\$29,502	\$15,100	2	\$21,910	\$22,692
Bullock Creek Reserve	\$5,437	\$3,500	3	\$6,727	\$2,210
Bendigo Reserve	\$10,592	\$5,000	8	\$7,961	\$7,631
Priority Consents Reserve	\$41,697	\$0.0	7	\$7,454	\$34,243
Historical Property Reserves	\$132,341	\$0.0	4	\$1,300	\$131,041
Regional Policy Statement Reserve	\$11,124	\$0.0	5	\$11,124	\$0
Priority Plan Changes	\$31,076	\$0.0	6	\$7,069	\$24,007
Total	\$580,715	\$65,849		\$63,545	\$536,737

- Note 1 Income is from late 2022/23 season non resident fishing licence and 2023/24 season designated water licence sales. \$5000 a year for five years is to be taken from the Non resident fund for the Dr Donald Scott University Fund. Agreed by Council May 2021. 2023/24 is year three. \$25,000 for 2023/24 Implementation of the Designated Waters set up and monitoring. Agreed in NZC and Council Reserve Budgets
- Note 2 Balance is \$22,692. Less committed but not yet paid out of \$1,000 so balance of \$21,692 available for dispersal by way of grants.
- Note 3 Bullock Creek council approved OF&GC HEF funding February 2024 \$3,500.
- Note 4 Historical Property Reserve – Dedicated to the purchase of other properties. Council agreed 2019 to use toward subdivision of ex Wanaka hatchery 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. This reserve is not required now and has been agreed by council (May 2024) to be used by Regional Policy Statement w.
- Note 7 OF&GC agreed to \$60,000 May 2020. NZC notified. This reserve is not required now and has been agreed by council (May 2024) to be used on Regional Policy Statement work.
- Note 8 Bendigo May 2022 \$3,414 and March 2023 \$3,000 council agreed to Habitat Enhancement funds for Bendigo. ORC Eco Fund \$5,000 June 2024

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES FROM 1ST SEPTEMBER 2023 TO 30TH JUNE 2024



9.2 Change of Titles for Financial Reserves

The following Reserves are proposed for renaming to better meet the needs of Council.

It is important that the Historic Property Reserve description changes to allow for future property transactions, including a potential Dunedin Office replacement.

The Non Resident Levy on licences no longer exists but NZC has agreed that Designated Waters licence revenue is allowed to be accumulated into a Reserve within the region they are dedicated to.

Table 1. Proposed Changes to reserves

Reserve name	Purpose
Historic Property Reserve	Historic Reserve from Property Sale in late 1990's – Dedicated to the purchase of other properties. Council agreed in 2019 to spend from this reserve to advance its ex Wanaka hatchery site subdivision
Change to	
Otago Property Reserve	<i>Funds from historic and recent property sales which is dedicated to acquiring and maintaining essential land and building assets in the Otago Region. This includes the purchase and/or maintenance of important sportsfish and gamebird habitat and public accessways to rivers and lakes.</i>
Reserve name	Purpose
Non-Resident Levy Reserve	Income collected from the Non resident Levy on Non-resident fishing licences to be used for Council requested research, projects and sensitive fisheries within Otago Region
Change to	
Designated Waters Reserve	<i>Income collected from the sale of Designated Waters licences to be used for Council approved research and management of Designated Waters and other pressure sensitive fisheries.</i>

9.3 Cash Flow Table and Forecast

Cash Flow Table and Forecast

	Sep-2023	Oct-2023	Nov-2023	Dec-2023	Jan-2024	Feb-2024	Mar-2024	Apr-2024	May-2024	Jun-2024	Jul-2024	Aug-2024
Total Income	\$ 474,550	\$ 532,187	\$ 277,361	\$ 353,586	\$ 207,667	\$ 118,314	\$ 145,459	\$ 230,884	\$ 136,707	\$ 20,677	\$ 24,082	\$ 15,158
Total Expenses	\$ 298,820	\$ 223,143	\$ 237,127	\$ 229,859	\$ 228,253	\$ 224,427	\$ 213,989	\$ 270,207	\$ 241,513	\$ 211,832	\$ 208,549	\$ 207,500
Net Profit	\$ 175,730	\$ 309,044	\$ 40,234	\$ 123,727	-\$ 20,586	-\$ 106,113	-\$ 68,530	-\$ 10,681	-\$ 75,283	-\$ 153,015	-\$ 184,467	-\$ 192,342

Cash	\$ 1,243,366	\$ 927,936		\$ 1,295,789		\$ 1,626,597		\$ 1,472,856	\$ 1,373,280	\$ 1,417,381	\$ 1,232,914	\$ 1,040,572
Less Reserves comitted	\$ 567,500	\$ 570,935		\$ 565,733		\$ 561,502		\$ 599,769	\$ 599,769	\$ 574,450	\$ 539,769	\$ 539,769
General Cash reserve	\$ 675,866	\$ 357,001		\$ 730,056		\$ 1,065,095		\$ 873,087	\$ 773,511	\$ 842,931	\$ 693,145	\$ 500,803

Italics are forecast estimates

Cashflow forecast as requested.

It should be noted that August is the leanest month in terms of cash reserves but these are generally restored in September when fish licence sales revenue start to come in.

Balance Sheet

Otago Fish and Game Council

As at 30 June 2024

	30 JUN 2024	31 AUG 2023
Assets		
Current Assets		
Bank	1,017,507	324,402
Receivables		
Accounts Receivable	144,532	160,475
Prepayments and Accrued Income	-	12,332
Total Receivables	144,532	172,806
GST	14,203	21,961
Investments	400,000	916,442
Inventory	15,599	15,599
Accrued Interest	8,328	17,017
Accounts Receivable - Other	5,928	-
Total Current Assets	1,606,097	1,468,227
Fixed Assets		
Property Plant & Equipment	2,034,173	1,329,054
Total Fixed Assets	2,034,173	1,329,054
Total Assets	3,640,270	2,797,281
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	39,202	77,178
Other Payables	190,237	253,200
Employee Entitlements	52,329	73,980
Designated Waters other regions	96	-
Total Current Liabilities	281,863	404,359
Total Liabilities	281,863	404,359
Net Assets	3,358,407	2,392,923
Equity		
Accumulated Funds		
Accumulated Funds	1,548,529	1,622,094
Current Year Earnings	965,484	(73,565)
Transfer (To)/From Reserves	269,944	172,028
Total Accumulated Funds	2,783,957	1,720,556
Dedicated Reserves		
Non Resident Levy Reserve	314,913	318,946
Habitat Enhancement & Research	22,692	29,502
Priority Plan Changes Reserve	24,007	31,076
Priority Consents Reserve	34,243	41,697
Regional Policy Statement Reserve	-	11,124

Balance Sheet

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	30 JUN 2024	31 AUG 2023
Historical Property Reserve	131,041	132,341
Asset Replacement Funding	37,713	91,651
Total Dedicated Reserves	564,608	656,337
Restricted Reserves		
Bullock Creek Reserve	2,210	5,437
Bendigo Reserve	7,631	10,592
Total Restricted Reserves	9,842	16,030
Total Equity	3,358,407	2,392,923

Profit and Loss

Otago Fish and Game Council For the 10 months ended 30 June 2024

	MAY 2024	JUN 2024	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
Income								
Licence Sales								
Fish Licence Sales	16,957	15,316	2,026,261	2,058,368	(32,107)	98%	2,077,401	1,888,362
Non-Resident Licence Revenue	-	-	1,909	-	1,909	-	-	105,135
Designated Water Licence Sales	448	3,636	40,340	-	40,340	-	-	-
Game Licence Sales	119,302	1,725	368,679	378,376	(9,697)	97%	378,376	354,010
Total Licence Sales	136,707	20,677	2,437,189	2,436,744	445	100%	2,455,777	2,347,507
Other Income								
Wages Reimbursement	5,447	1,787	12,310	-	12,310	-	-	14,941
Contact Energy Mitigation Income	-	22,158	43,776	-	43,776	-	-	68,972
Interest Income	20,092	2,169	51,021	47,290	3,731	108%	56,757	52,630
Fines - Fishing & Game Offences	-	-	2,700	400	2,300	675%	500	798
Rent Received	3,104	4,023	38,303	53,209	(14,906)	72%	63,849	53,747
Fishing Competitions	-	-	1,119	-	1,119	-	-	1,544
Profit on Sale of Fixed Assets	-	-	641,793	-	641,793	-	-	8,144
Donations & Grants	-	5,000	7,929	-	7,929	-	-	28,823
Merchandise Sales/Other	-	-	60	-	60	-	-	87
RMA Costs Reimbursed	-	1,595	1,595	-	1,595	-	-	60,000
Sundry Income	-	529	1,930	-	1,930	-	-	413
Diversion - Habitat Enhancement and Research Fund	880	880	15,100	-	15,100	-	-	18,460
Total Other Income	29,523	38,141	817,636	100,899	716,737	810%	121,106	308,559
Total Income	166,230	58,818	3,254,826	2,537,643	717,183	128%	2,576,883	2,656,066

Profit and Loss

	MAY 2024	JUN 2024	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
Gross Profit	166,230	58,818	3,254,826	2,537,643	717,183	128%	2,576,883	2,656,066
Expenses								
Species Management								
Population Monitoring	3,675	-	9,311	13,000	(3,689)	72%	13,000	49,063
Monitor key fisheries/Research Liaison	-	-	-	1,000	(1,000)	-	1,000	-
Harvest Assessment	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,500	3,500
Hatchery Operations	2,307	-	5,721	7,500	(1,779)	76%	9,000	14,731
Releases	351	-	862	1,000	(138)	86%	1,000	625
Game Bird Control compliants	18	-	53	-	53	-	-	444
Total Species Management	6,352	-	15,947	22,500	(6,553)	71%	27,500	68,363
Habitat Protection & Mngt								
Contact Sports Fish Management Plan	6,925	7,874	36,819	-	36,819	-	-	44,017
Resource Mngt Act	-	1,595	2,575	1,000	1,575	257%	1,000	64,042
Works & Management	1,573	1,468	9,846	10,500	(654)	94%	12,500	1,574
Habitat Enhancement Research Fund Grants	-	-	21,649	-	21,649	-	-	2,870
Total Habitat Protection & Mngt	8,498	10,937	70,889	11,500	59,389	616%	13,500	112,503
Participation								
Access and Signage	-	24	774	2,084	(1,310)	37%	2,500	2,499
Back Country Surveys/Monitoring	7,332	3,351	20,259	25,000	(4,741)	81%	25,000	116
Promotion Articles and Advertising	-	-	101	500	(399)	20%	500	-
Publications and Web Site	-	-	924	-	924	-	-	4,430
OF&G Training Events	-	-	2,088	2,000	88	104%	2,000	1,787
Club Relations and Grants	174	43	825	1,000	(175)	82%	1,000	1,083
Wetland Reserve Ballots	-	-	22	-	22	-	-	-

Profit and Loss

	MAY 2024	JUN 2024	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
F&G Advocacy at Popular Fisheries	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,026
Total Participation	7,506	3,418	24,993	30,584	(5,591)	82%	31,000	24,940
PUBLIC INTERFACE								
Liaison								
Liaison DoC Unin Govt CFT IWI	-	-	41	1,000	(959)	4%	1,000	765
Total Liaison	-	-	41	1,000	(959)	4%	1,000	765
Communication								
World Wetlands	-	-	27	500	(473)	5%	500	54
Total Communication	-	-	27	500	(473)	5%	500	54
Media Releases								
Advocacy Statutory	-	-	-	500	(500)	-	500	-
Weekly Fishing Reports/ social media	-	-	4,462	4,500	(38)	99%	4,500	2,940
Communications Strategy	62	12,185	12,388	20,000	(7,612)	62%	24,000	14,520
Media Release	-	-	-	500	(500)	-	500	400
Total Media Releases	62	12,185	16,850	25,500	(8,650)	66%	29,500	17,860
Total PUBLIC INTERFACE	62	12,185	16,918	27,000	(10,082)	63%	31,000	18,679
COMPLIANCE								
Ranger Training and Expenses	622	43	2,828	5,500	(2,672)	51%	5,500	5,941
Compliance	-	-	8,250	4,000	4,250	206%	5,000	6,649
Total COMPLIANCE	622	43	11,078	9,500	1,578	117%	10,500	12,590
LICENCING								
Designated Waters IT Build	-	-	21,023	31,819	(10,796)	66%	31,819	-
Agent Servicing	9	43	252	500	(248)	50%	500	172
Commission/Fees	5,530	550	85,625	110,510	(24,885)	77%	110,510	86,914
Total LICENCING	5,539	593	106,900	142,829	(35,929)	75%	142,829	87,087

Profit and Loss

	MAY 2024	JUN 2024	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
COUNCIL								
Elections Council	-	-	-	100	(100)	-	250	-
Council Meetings and Agendas	800	48	12,765	12,500	265	102%	15,000	12,462
Total COUNCIL	800	48	12,765	12,600	165	101%	15,250	12,462
PLANNING & REPORTING								
Reporting/Audit	-	-	15,804	16,000	(196)	99%	16,000	17,049
National Liason	-	-	223	500	(277)	45%	500	630
Total PLANNING & REPORTING	-	-	16,027	16,500	(473)	97%	16,500	17,679
ADMINISTRATION								
Salaries	77,441	65,708	761,952	822,554	(60,602)	93%	987,058	808,170
Staff Expenses								
ACC Levy	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,000	2,160
Fringe Benefit Tax	6,349	-	6,349	6,500	(151)	98%	6,500	7,217
Staff Training	1,235	-	4,467	5,000	(533)	89%	6,000	16,619
Staff Clothing Branded	-	-	1,358	-	1,358	-	-	572
Staff Personal Expenses	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Staff Expenses	452	910	5,300	6,668	(1,368)	79%	8,000	9,438
Staff Employment Expenses	59	-	59	2,000	(1,941)	3%	2,000	683
Total Staff Expenses	8,096	911	17,533	20,168	(2,635)	87%	24,500	36,689
Office Premices	2,280	1,460	79,209	98,169	(18,960)	81%	115,899	114,681
Office Equipmemt	244	181	2,337	2,250	87	104%	2,500	1,119
Communications	1,574	1,518	17,438	17,420	18	100%	20,700	23,017
General Exp (incl Insurance)	66	25	14,163	4,268	9,895	332%	4,600	2,720
General Field Equipment	22	1,133	2,635	2,968	(333)	89%	3,300	2,572
Vehicles	3,504	5,189	46,686	46,336	350	101%	54,000	60,078
Total ADMINISTRATION	93,227	76,125	941,954	1,014,133	(72,179)	93%	1,212,557	1,049,047

Otago Fish and Game Council Meeting 25th July 2024

Profit and Loss

	MAY 2024	JUN 2024	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
Approved Reserve Expense	15,580	5,100	37,410	-	37,410	-	-	61,697
Depreciation	6,498	6,554	61,163	44,530	16,633	137%	53,431	59,502
NZ Fish & Game Levies	96,830	96,830	968,299	968,300	(2)	100%	1,161,958	1,200,082
University of Otago Research Grant	-	-	5,000	-	5,000	-	-	5,000
Total Expenses	241,513	211,832	2,289,342	2,299,976	(10,634)	100%	2,716,025	2,729,631
Net Profit	(75,283)	(153,015)	965,484	237,667	727,817	406%	(139,142)	(73,565)

9.4 Licence Sales

Fish Licence Sales 2023/24 Season to 30th June 2024

See table following for fish licence sales numbers and categories for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 season sales to the end of June of the season.

Our previous Back Country Waters are now Designated Waters. Designated Waters are charged out at \$5 per region for the season for residents and \$40 a day for Non Residents (with a limit of 5 per region)

Note that DWLR and DWLN relate to resident and non resident designated water licences (DWL) sold in Otago, some are for other regions.

In summary, 2023/24 fishing licence sales, in whole season licence equivalents (LEQs) 15,245 LEQs compared with 14,669 LEQs to the 30th of June of the season. 576 LEQs ahead of last year.

Game Licence Sales to the 30th June of the Season

The Gamebird licence sales began online and at agencies on the 14th of March 2024.

See table following for game licence sales categories and numbers at 30th June of both 2023 and 2024 seasons.

In summary, game licence sales in whole season licence equivalents are 3,932 LEQs for the 2024 season compared with 3,982 LEQs for the same period.

50 LEQs behind last season.

9.5 Recommendations

1. That Council adopts the new titles and purposes for the financial Reserves as described in Table 1
2. That the Finance report and Licence Report to the 30th June 2024 be received.

Sharon Milne
Administration Officer
18/07/2024

Otago Region Fish Licence Sales to 30th June of the Season

2023/24

Sales Chan	FWFA	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FWIA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWNC	FDNC	SRSE	DWLR	DWLN	Total	Fish LEQ
Public	1938	2388	595	375	361	151	41	417	2714	2433	590	44	414	134	18	85	0	1531	644	16828	7,997
Agency	2074	2955	212	755	153	86	19	154	518	737	387	12	66	41	12	34	512	1397	138	10273	7,247
Total	4012	5343	807	1130	514	237	60	571	3232	3170	977	56	480	175	30	119	512	2928	782	27101	15,245

2022/23

Sales Chan	FWFA	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FWIA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWNC	FDNC	SRSE	DWLR	DWLN	Total	Fish LEQ
Public	2107	2358	537	363	397	188	34	344	2554	1981	531	40	351	80	15	40	0	0	0	13672	7,361
Agency	2191	3061	201	698	156	112	19	149	673	1016	391	20	77	67	9	21	626	0	0	9502	7,309
Total	4298	5419	738	1061	553	300	53	493	3227	2997	922	60	428	147	24	61	626	0	0	23174	14,669

FWFA (Family), FWA (Adult season), FWNA (Non Resident season), FSLA (Senior Loyal), FLAA (Local Area), FWIA (Adult Winter)

FLBA (long Break), FSBA (Short Break), FDA (Adult Day), FDNA (Non Resident Adult Day), FWJ (Junior Season)

FWNJ (Junior non resident season), FDJ (Junior Day), FDNJ (Non Resident Junior Day), FWNC (non Resident Child season)

FDNC(Non Resident child Day),SRSE (Salmon Endorsement),DWLR(Designated Waters Resident),DWLN(Designated Waters Non Res)

Some of the DWLs sold are for other regions, and other regions have some of ours

Otago Region Game Season licence Sales to the 30th June of the Season

2024							
Sales	GWA	GWJ	GWC	GDA	GDJ	Total	Game LEQ
Public	766	109	58	53	5	991	798
Agency	3087	229	80	12	0	3408	3,134
Total	3853	338	138	65	5	4399	3,932

2023							
Sales	GWA	GWJ	GWC	GDA	GDJ	Total	Game LEQ
Public	790	88	45	47	1	971	817
Agency	3116	237	93	14	1	3461	3,165
Total	3906	325	138	61	2	4432	3,982

GWA Full Season Adult, GWJ Full season Junior, GWC Full season Child
GDA Adult Day, GDJ Junior Day

10.0 Chief Executives Report July 2024

10.1 SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Spawning Surveys

EDNA kits were deployed into Southern Lakes tributaries in late May to expand our knowledge of catchments where salmon might be present and spawning. They have now been retrieved and sent for analysis. A report on that will be presented to the next meeting.

Staff have completed spawning surveys for salmon in the Makarora catchment and brown trout in tributaries of the Taieri.

With support of Contact funding, the lower Clutha, Pomahaka and Leithan have been aerial surveyed. No salmon were seen but trout spawning was noted and GPS'd, and added to our growing database.



Speaking of mapping spawning, the final touches have been made to the Spawning Model which has successfully predicted and mapped spawning reaches across Otago. It is well matched to present spawning areas and has given staff a good shortlist of locations to confirm spawning (and early rearing) on the ground. The report on the spawning model has been sent via the staff reports bundle.

Acoustics Survey of Southern Lakes

Acoustic surveys of Hawea, Wakatipu, Wanaka and Dunstan are reported on in this agenda. It's a large report which is designed to capture as much of the methodology and analysis as possible to ensure it is repeatable in future, even if the present staff are not involved for any reason.

Regulations

The Anglers Notice submission was lodged to NZC and the Minister accepted our minor change. One late adjustment to the wording describing single hook use in Designated Waters was required to ensure an enforceable and consistent regulation was used across the country. The proposed alternative to the late adjustment was for them to drop the restriction altogether.

Policy for regulation setting is attached to this agenda. Once adopted it will provide a positive direction for staff and future Councils.

10.2 HABITAT PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Staff have been involved with freshwater fish species interaction planning with a special focus on the Kyeburn River tributaries. The mapping exercise has been quite revealing in demonstrating the small areas where interaction is actually occurring.

Wetland/Reserve work

The iwi consultation phase of the Bendigo Wildlife Management Plan is now complete meaning the Plan can now be released for public submissions. Staff will keep you up to date with progress.

Staff have raised the difficulties of working in wetlands with the ORC, even if the work is positive such as planting natives, restoring water levels or pest plant management. ORC appear equally frustrated by the National Environmental Standard provisions as well, which are hindering positive restoration efforts.

10.3 USER PARTICIPATION

Designated Waters

The Designated Waters monitoring project has run smoothly and a staff report is provided. We have been successful in our contestable funding bid which will allow a further season of monitoring including drift diving of some of the more important waters.

You will have heard that Southland Region (and others) had their new Designated Waters turned down by the Minister. They did make a compelling case and had wide consultation on this so we look forward to seeing the Ministers final rationale for the refusal. It may impact of future regulation changes and the way they are presented to the Ministers office. Southland Region will be at our meeting so it will be good to hear their reaction first hand.

Publications

The magazine content for the next fishing season issue has been finalised and sent to the publishers. The magazine is set to be mailed out mid-August. Let's hope this licence holder publication is funded for a further year or two yet.

Our brochure stock is being updated and digitised ready for uploading to the website. It will also be linked to the online.

10.4 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Media

Social media content continues to roll out with staff producing some quality posts and videos. F&G Officer Sowrey deserves a special mention here with his waterfowl cooking videos. They have been fantastic.

Communications strategy

This is in its final form for Council adoption. Thank you to those Councillors who contribute to this latest draft. Next step is the implementation plan and how we might fund that.

10.5 COMPLIANCE

Prosecutions

A compliance report is within the agenda pack. New prosecution policy and infringement fines policy is coming down the line from NZC but it is not coherent. Staff will review our own prosecution guidelines (including standard reparation payments) for the September meeting of Council.

Rangers

Four rangers have retired and 12 have been approved for reappointment. These now need to be signed off by the NZC Chief Executive. The ranger warrants have a term of three years.

10.6 LICENCING

The present contract for licencing expires in August 2025 (it has an option for a two year renewal) and I have been encouraging NZC staff to advance a proposal for a refreshed agreement based on my learning from the USA agencies and vendors.

10.7 COUNCIL

Elections

Some preliminary promotion of elections is underway. Next step will be a call for candidates which staff will push out via our usual media channels including social media.

Next Council Meeting

Just a reminder that the next Council meeting is in Cromwell on the 26th September 2024.

Southland Councillors attending

Southland Councillors will be joining our Council after the Council meeting for an informal catchup. A light agenda is proposed but its primary focus will be an update on governance matters from NZC including the future finance and future structure papers.

10.8 PLANNING AND REPORTING

Budgets for 2024/2025

The licence fee has now been confirmed and the final OWP and budget is ready for adoption. If there is any changes to the Councils property holdings, there may be some adjustments required due to changes in rental income and leases paid. Apart from that it's an ambitious work programme but staff are determined to see it through.

The end of August is the end of the financial year and staff will be onto annual reporting shortly after that. The reporting standard have changed again so we are expecting to hear more about that in the next few weeks.

Training

All boat skippers have been back through refresher training in the last month to comply with the maritime safety plan. That includes myself. While I don't get on the water as much as I'd like, it seems easier to upkeep the qualification that to drop it. I do enjoy direct interaction with licence holders and it is good to act as cover for staff who need a break over our busy summer of fieldwork and surveying.



Recommendation

That this report be received

Ian Hadland

Chief Executive

July 2024

11.0 RMA Planning and Consents Report

13 May – 17 July 2024

Current Legislation, Policy and Planning Processes

Otago Regional Policy Statement (ORPS)

Staff have lodged the approved ORPS appeal points and we have yet to have dates set for hearings or mediation. Parties to the High Court processes have sought for a mediation process to take place and we await confirmation of whether that will go ahead or not. It seems likely that several smaller appeals can be resolved at mediation, improving the efficiency of the process.

Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) reform

The government opened and closed consultation on amendments to the RMA and other subservient national policy documents. Changes relevant to Fish and Game work include:

- Excluding the hierarchy of obligations within the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 from resource consent applications and resource consent decision-making processes
- Removing additional controls for coal mining consents, aligning consent pathways with those for other mineral extraction activities in or around wetlands and Significant Natural Areas (SNAs)
- Removing low slope land requirements regulating the access of farm animals to water bodies
- Removing requirements relating to intensive winter grazing
- Expediting the creation or amendment of national direction under the RMA.

It is understood that New Zealand Council staff made a submission on the bill.

Manuharekia Exemplar Governance Group (MEGG)

Staff formally withdrew from the MEGG in this reporting period. This decision was the result of a long and intense effort to repair a working relationship with the group's facilitators and funders. Staff's experience is that facilitation of this project did not occur in good faith and as such the resources required to participate why not a helpful use of licence holder funding. Ultimately the plan produced by the project is well outside its initial scope, being water quality, and contains factual errors which staff could not endorse. Despite stepping away as governors, staff have requested that Fish and Game be included as a stakeholder on any future projects.

The Central Otago Environmental Society withdrew around the same time, citing similar concerns. This project has since received an additional injection of \$1.9 million from central government to continue its work.

Signal Hill Reserve Management Plan

The Dunedin City Council has developed an updated Signal Hill Reserve Management Plan. Staff had previously submitted, seeking recognition and protection of the hatchery ponds on Opoho Creek. The draft plan recognises the site and staff sought that it and other known heritage sites be actively protected within the plan.

Current Notification Processes

Applicant	Activity	Outcome
Otago Regional Council applications		
Amec Mercury Ltd.	To extract gravel from the Strath Taieri and Outram Glen reaches of the Taieri River	A neutral submission was written by staff, outlining the need for better cumulative effect assessments.

Written Approval Provided During the Period

Applicant	Activity	Outcome
Otago Regional Council applications		
Contact Energy	To dredge sediment from the Bannockburn Inlet and discharge into Lake Dunstan	Staff had previously engaged with contact energy on this project and there was no need to suggest changes prior to written approval being provided.

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

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

Recommendation:

1. That this report be received.

Nigel Paragreen
Environmental Officer
17 July 2024

12.0 Committee & Delegate Reports

12.1 Clutha Fisheries Trust

12.2 New Zealand Fish and Game Council

12.3 Ngai Tahu

12.4 Conservation Board

12.5 Clutha Mata Au Sports Fish and Habitat Trust

12.6 Tiaki Maniototo

13.0 Correspondence

13.1 NZC to Otago

13.1.1 Appointments to the Game Bird Habitat Trust

Sent: Thursday, July 11, 2024 6:01 AM

To: Maggie Tait <mtait@fishandgame.org.nz>

Subject: Media Release - Appointments to the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust Board

Media release

11 July 2024

Appointments to the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust Board

The Minister for Hunting and Fishing, Hon. Todd McClay, has appointed board members to the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust.

The Game Bird Habitat Trust is an independent public entity established under the Wildlife Act 1953. Its functions include improving New Zealand's game bird habitat and the habitat of other wildlife.

The Minister has reappointed Andy Garrick, Mark Sutton and Chantal Whitby (nominated by the New Zealand Fish & Game Council) and Neil Candy (nominated by Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Inc.) along with Erin Garrick (nominated by the Director-General of Conservation). All appointments are until 30 June 2027.

Each year, the six Board members consider applications to fund projects for the protection, restoration or creation of habitat for game birds and other wildlife, disbursing grants from revenue the trust receives from the New Zealand game bird habitat stamp programme. Funding is provided through the game bird habitat stamp programme which makes an important contribution to habitat conservation in New Zealand.

Five dollars is paid towards this programme from every game bird hunting licence sold, which means hunters contribute a significant amount to habitat conservation every year. This, combined with the sale of stamps and other products to collectors in partnership with NZ Post, allows the Trust Board to distribute grants ranging in size from \$2,000-\$80,000 annually to landowners throughout the country.

Since its establishment in 1993, the Trust has allocated over \$2.5 million for conservation projects on both public and private land.

The Minister acknowledged the contribution made by the retiring member of the Board, John Cheyne who was first appointed in 2011 and has devoted 13 years to the work of the Board.

"Board members give their time and knowledge on a voluntary basis, and I would like to thank them all for their contributions."

Further information and a grant application form is available on the website:

<https://www.fishandgame.org.nz/environment/nz-game-bird-habitat-trust/>

Caption: Outgoing trustee with Chair Andy Tannock at Takitakitoa Wetland in Otago

Media Contact Maggie Tait 0273 469 570

Otago Fish and Game Council Meeting 25th July 2024

3.1.2 Future Finance Working Group

The Future Finance of Fish & Game

Prepared by - Future Finance Working Group

March 2024

Background

The Future Finance Working Group (FFWG) was formed in February 2023 and had its first meeting on 27 February 2023. Members appointed were D Phibbs (chairperson) and D Oakley (from National Council) and A Strong and N Juby (Chairs from Regional Councils -North Canterbury and Auckland /Waikato respectively).

The working group was tasked by New Zealand Fish & Game with taking a greenfield approach and to make recommendations to the National Council by November 2023 on 'how we might go about improving the future financing of New Zealand Fish & Game'.

A Terms of Reference was adopted by the Working Group in April 2023 and presented to New Zealand Fish & Game.

Initially a brainstorming session was carried out by the Working Group and several areas were identified to explore in more detail. However, it was important to - "communicate to the organisation that there will be a limit to what the Working Group can achieve under current legislation. We need to manage regional expectations by communicating that this process is largely driven by the need to be financially efficient in tough times. It is therefore unlikely, irrespective of the funding model that we recommend, that any regions will see large increases in budgets in the short term."

There were a wide range of topics that the Working Group covered and explored in detail. In broad terms these included but were not limited to -

- Financial efficiency within the organisation (increasing income and controlling expenditure)
- Reserves and reserves policy and practice.
- Licence forecasting
- Centralising licence sales and income
- Budgeting
- Review past reports and advice
- Governance and Finance

The Group explored and gained an understanding of the different aspects of the New Zealand Fish and Game financing model at specific meetings over several months and developed possible improvements and solutions to some of the issues facing the organisation. These are presented under similar topic headings in the report.

Discussion and potential solutions

Financial efficiency

Examining the New Zealand Fish & Game regions overall, it is evident that there is scope to improve financial efficiency. Resources are potentially wasted duplicating activity and functions which will have a financial cost to each region and the organisation as a whole. One of the key challenges the organisation faces is an aging and shrinking licenceholder base, the resulting financial implications, and what to do about it, therefore, developing a strategy to bring all stakeholders together to address

the challenges and achieve consensus is a key aspect if the organisation is to achieve any real financial efficiency.

In 2023 NZ Fish & Game commissioned Gary Crawford an experienced financial professional to investigate the financial efficiency of the regional Fish & Game organisations and come up with recommendations from an independent perspective. Although this report is separate from Gary's report and recommendations to New Zealand Fish & Game, this report will not go into in-depth financial analysis. However, there is likely to be some synergy in the areas of focus and potential issues within the organisation.

Some of the obvious areas are - exploring bulk purchasing power for assets or a common auditor, developing a common set of financial and other policies and procedures, exploring options for centralising financial policies and functions - considering legislative constraints and regional autonomy. There will likely be good financial and efficient practices within many of the regions that could be shared throughout the organisation by baselining a 'financially efficient standard'.

Increasing our Revenue

Reliance on licence income as a source of revenue is one of the weaknesses of Fish & Game as a whole. If licence sales are decreasing for whatever reason – the salmon issue in Canterbury is a good example – then this puts pressure on the organisation to achieve its financial goals. This is exacerbated in times of high inflation as increasing the licence cost can reduce licence unit sales due to consumer affordability. This appears to be a real problem in the 2023-24 season.

NZ Fish & Game has incorporated in its strategy the steps to maintain and increase licence sales. However, increasing other external revenue is an area that needs greater exploration.

- Many other organisations receive substantial funding from donations and bequests, Forest & Bird is an example as it asks for small weekly donations. This organisation needs to explore in more detail how to get our message out there (including overseas licence holders), especially the work that New Zealand Fish & Game does protecting our natural environment.
- Government and other Grants. Can this be linked to habitat protection? For example the jobs for nature fund.
- Use the online licence system as a way to increase revenue. There may be people who would pay more for a "special licence" or provide a donation, make this available on the licence purchasing system as an option. Or perhaps use the facility to sell merchandise.
- Identify 'lazy assets' within the organisation that could be better repurposed to help fund core functions.
- Utilising assets for functions; weddings, corporate etc. We have great office locations in places that incorporate scenic grounds.
- Many regions currently negotiate mitigation payments from entities such as power generation companies that affect angling and hunting opportunities – there may be potential to expand these.
- Provision of other services to organisations.

Resourcing and Budgeting

One of the key questions is, what is the optimal way of efficiently funding the organisation so that the organisation and licence holder get the best bang for their buck? There have been reports prepared for Fish & Game in the past that have considered this.

The key aspect is to ensure that scarce funds are utilised efficiently to enable the licence holder to hunt and fish as cheaply as possible. The status quo from a financial perspective is probably not sustainable and changes need to be made to ensure the long-term success of the organisation. Organisational costs are increasing due to inflation while revenue remains static or is slowly sinking.

The overall goal is to create a budgeting system that is fair, transparent, and incentivises regions to increase licence sales and raise external funding while allowing them autonomy to allocate financial resources where they will maximise the benefits to their region. Regions must support the proposed budgeting system and the need to address current funding challenges and concerns.

This report recommends a new financing approach for the organisation, partially based on angler and hunter activity. The funding model needs to be objective and data-driven, not subjective. An objective approach encourages collaboration and resource sharing. Any new approach adopted must not need amalgamations or legislative changes.

There is a need to address the issue of where licences are sold and how to coordinate sales. The idea of centralising licence sales via New Zealand Fish & Game and distributing the funds to regions accordingly was also considered and has some merit but is unlikely to be possible under current legislation. This could be considered in the future if legislative changes are made.

To move forward with a financial budgeting system that is fair and equitable for all regions. This would involve setting a base budget for regions based on objective numbers and provide a flexible amount for discretionary funding (contestable funding). This system would provide certainty for regions and incentivise them to increase licence sales. It is important for the organisation to embrace these changes and work together to create a more efficient, effective, and sustainable future for hunting and fishing in New Zealand.

In addition, New Zealand Fish and Game need to determine the best way to resource the organisation efficiently. Is it best to fund certain functions like legal, resource management, human resourcing, communication, policy, administration, finance, and accounting in each region? These are predominantly our fixed operating costs - circa 80% of costs. Or to have these roles within the wider organisation available so that every regional organisation has access to these services. This does not mean centralisation as the operational staff could reside within the regions as is the case currently. Resourcing common functions in this way is more cost-effective than each region providing the services autonomously and duplicating them, also freeing up staff to carry out the work that more directly benefits licence holders. This central back-office work promotes specialisation and reduces the overall cost to license holders.

Creation of a National Resource Management Act (RMA) “department”, led by a senior RMA team leader. The team leader will report to the National Council (or CEO who would report to NZC) but not necessarily be based in Wellington. RMA staff would be regionally based throughout the country but priorities would be set by the National Council in consultation with regions. They would undertake work nationally on a priority basis.

There are several benefits in favour of centralising RMA work.

1. Workload varies regionally depending on what is happening - the district plan cycle, major projects etc. Centralised staff management allows allocating staff time to the regions with the most need at that time.
2. Replication of skills. Once an RMA project has been completed, the staff member can join a team in another region carrying out similar functions.
3. It enables the setting of national priorities in RMA work.
4. It enables staff development and appropriate supervision.

There is also a case for applying this approach to other functions within the organisation as set out earlier.

Other shared services that should be considered are –

- Legal
- Resource management
- Human resources
- Policy
- Administration
- Payroll
- Finance
- Accounting

Recommendation 2. Separate out wages and general budgets

Implement a system where payroll and human resources are managed nationally. Staff would continue to be appointed and managed by regions to suit their individual needs. Performance evaluations and goal setting would be undertaken regionally but payroll and HR are managed from a central location. The system is analogous to the NZ education system. For example - the school board hires the principal. The principal hires and manages staff but they are paid directly by the Ministry of Education.

The benefits are -

1. It allows bulk funding of regions (excluding salaries) while maintaining staff job security.
2. It simplifies managers and councillors’ jobs.
3. It allows the standardisation of employment conditions.
4. It enables a consistent approach to HR oversight and the requirement to be a good employer.
5. It provides a better pathway to facilitate career development.

Staff numbers could be set collaboratively with the regions based on baseline information (from Crawfords analysis). It is incumbent on the New Zealand Council to set and justify staffing levels at each region. The New Zealand Council will need to develop a robust and objective system to

determine staff numbers. Some regions will be able to justify staff numbers above the line based on their local conditions and aspirations. However, these regions should have staff requirements reviewed annually to see if they are meeting set organisational objectives.

Consider opportunities and options to manage staff outside of the specific regions so that frees up the time of Regional Managers or reducing Manager numbers to two or four for NZ who specialise in managing the staff and work allocation for each region. Each region could have an Area Manager who does not manage the staff or report to the Council. The cost of employing 12 Regional Managers is 13% of the total national budget and presents an opportunity to reduce costs while not impacting the service line delivery.

Recommendation 3. The remaining budget (after salary and wages) is bulk funded.

Use the levy and grant system to bulk fund regions (excluding salaries). Regional councils can then decide how to spend these funds according to local needs (but also in line with the organisational strategy). The New Zealand Council (NZC) will monitor and audit according to their current statutory obligation to check that regions are meeting their own obligations. But this monitoring is focused on outputs, rather than intensive management of the regions. Calculating the exact proportions is beyond the group's capabilities so the proportions outlined below are our "ballpark" working figures and were used as an example to highlight how an allocation may be done. Further analysis and testing need to be carried out in future by NZ Fish & Game to determine if this manner of allocation is feasible and likely to be acceptable to regions or if other scenarios are appropriate.

This work should be carried out by an independent party.

After the principal allocation has been set aside for salaries within the organisation -

- ¼ of remaining license revenue is distributed based on proportional angler/ hunter usage – based on the most recent angler / hunter surveys.
- ¼ of remaining license revenue is distributed based on actual sales – LEQ's averaged over the previous three seasons.
- ¼ of remaining license revenue is distributed based on contestable funding- 3-5 year term.
- ¼ of remaining licence revenue is allocated to NZC/RMA. This provides a fixed budget for NZC.

The principle of the funding model should be based on angling and hunting participation and be fair and equitable to all regions including NZC. The reason for a formula based on criteria is that no single perfect system exists. By combining several criteria, it may be possible to get the most equitable result.

The criteria is provided in more detail in the Appendix at the end of this report as an example.

Recommendation 4. NZC independently reviews and collates all regional (and NZC) annual financial audits and regularly audits outputs.

NZC has historically not met the legislative requirements to audit regions. This failure has led to three DOC-initiated audits and caused significant organisational damage. Audits should be routine, starting with annual “checks of audits” by the NZC. All regions are audited annually but these are not reviewed by NZC to the Groups knowledge. Because this proposal gives regions significantly more autonomy with their non-salary budgets, it is important that outcomes are monitored effectively. The Conservation Act very clearly specifies that auditing regions is a central NZC role.

Audits are seen by some as punitive but need to become a regular (business as usual) health check.

Recommendation 5. That budgets are set based on the above-suggested formula but actual grants and levies are adjusted to reflect actual license sales at the end of the season.

One current failure of the system is that budgets are approved and levies / grants set based on forecasted license sales. If more licenses are sold in a region the region keeps the additional revenue. If fewer licenses are sold, the region must use reserves to top up the shortfall.

When licence sales fall below that forecasted in a levy-paying region then levy is paid on money that was never received. While occasionally is sustainable a sustained decline will deplete reserves. When licence sales exceed the forecast this money is often put into reserves at a regional level.

If reserves drop below 20%, NZC will then top this up. This leads to some regions building up large reserves and others requiring a reserve top up. This is due to the challenges of forecasting future sales (LEQ's).

It is recommended that budgets be set, and the final levy/grant is adjusted at the end of the season to reflect actual sales. This means that all regions will have the budgeted amount of money remaining - not an amount that is higher or lower than forecast.

This reduces the need for reserves and the issues and complexity that this creates. Of course dedicated reserves would remain as the status quo.

If an event like a cyclone, earthquake, or covid causes a large reduction in activity and license sales, the levy for that year will be reduced once actual sales are finalised. This means that the region will not have to deplete reserves for that year. If proportional activity and license sales for a region are higher than expected, the budget for the following three years will be lifted but the current year remains constant.

Recommendation 6. External funds generated within a region remain with the region.

Regions will have the freedom and incentive to move beyond license sales as their sole source of revenue. This is positive for the organisation.

There is a need for better governance performance to avoid potential issues at regional and national level. This includes financial literacy so that governors at regional and national level ask the right questions to reduce dependency on managers and staff to avoid potential financial issues.

There should be financial literacy skills and training for both regional and national councillors. It is important to have skilled and trained individuals on boards for effective governance be it of a financial nature or overall. To take this a step further independent experts on councils would be a good step to both improve governance and improve financial literacy. The experts could be appointed or co-opted on to Councils.

What would the proposed changes mean?

The Future Finance Working Group has endeavoured to come up with improvements and practical recommendations that do not require legislative changes but would improve and incentivise the financial efficiency of the organisation.

Any proposed change generates uncertainty which can cause apprehension. NZ Fish & Game will need to carefully consider and plan a way forward to minimise the negative effects of change if it chooses to implement the recommendations from the Working Group. Good communication is a key aspect. As is the integration of any recommendations from Gary Crawford's report.

NZ Fish & Game should carefully evaluate how change affects -

- Managers and staff
- Licence holders
- Governors
- Stakeholders

And come up with a plan that addresses the concerns that are identified. For example - resistance from regions and staff needing to move. There is a possibility of centralisation of some roles without physical relocation i.e. reporting structure could still be through NZC CEO.

Professional help will likely be required to develop and implement this plan, this would be better done externally to prevent a conflict-of-interest situation. This will need to be overseen by the NZC.

Final word

Although this report has only considered options and recommendations that don't require legislative change which was potentially problematic under the previous government, there may be better outcomes achieved if greater analysis was carried out incorporating improvements to the organisation that would require legislative change.

There are indications from Fish and Games' new Minister that the new government is more receptive to changes to the organisation that would require legislative change. Future analysis could consider and incorporate recommendations from previous reports prepared concerning Fish and Game that would require legislative changes however this was not within the scope of the Working Group.

In the future it may be possible to review the scope of not requiring legislative change – there is a new government and there may be opportunities for NZ Fish & Game to push for legislative change. So, we need to categorise the legislative changes vs non legislative which is a make-do approach.

Appendix

An example criterion for allocating a funding model that was explored by the FFWG is as follows –

1. Allocation according to usage is logical - but has some limitations.

- Some resources cost more or less to manage than others.
- Anglers / hunters that fish / hunt frequently more highly are worth more to a region than those that go out irregularly
- It promotes activity, not licence sales
- It puts significant pressure on National angler and hunter surveys – both of which have significant inherent margins of error caused by statistical accuracy and timing - a three yearly survey is vulnerable to local conditions such as drought, floods and societal factors (eg, Covid lockdowns) that coincide with the survey. These issues will need to be considered.

One change recommended is from total usage to “proportional” usage. By “proportional” we mean a proportion of where each individual angler / hunter surveyed spends their time. For example, if there are 2 hunters in 2 regions. One hunter hunts for 100 hours in a season, 70% in Region A and 30% in Region B. The other hunter hunts for 10 hours in a season, 30% in Region A and 70% in Region B. With allocation based on pure activity, Region A would receive 73 hours of activity and Region B 37 hours. However, because both hunters pay the same license fee, it makes more sense to split this proportionally - in this case they cancel each other out and their contribution to each region would be equal. This means it is better to focus on where their activity takes place by percentage, rather than hours.

2. Allocation according to license sales

- recognises that anglers / hunters would prefer not to travel to hunt / fish and generally only do so because of a lack of local opportunities. Some of their license fee should be used to develop and protect nearby resources.
- rewards regions for promoting and selling licenses - even when activity takes place out of region.
- encourages regions to act collaboratively to sell licenses.

3. Some contestable funding recognises that regions are different. Some resources cost more to maintain, and others may need development. However, contestable funding shouldn't be in perpetuity as circumstances change. Therefore, all contestable funding should be stringently evaluated against the national strategy and objectives and will need to be reapplied for every 3 years.

3.1.1.3 Future Structure Working Group Recommendations To NNZFGC



FUTURE STRUCTURE WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS TO NZFGC

Summary: These recommendations should be considered, along with additional insights that could be integrated into future strategies, especially concerning regional autonomy, public engagement, and attracting skilled and diverse council members.

Recommendations to NZFGC
<u>That</u> the Chair of NZFGC be elected from among the FGC councillors and serve a three-year term.
<u>That</u> the chair's appointment to NZFGC and all regional chairs be confirmed no later than the 28 th of February each year.
<u>That</u> the Chair of NZFGC be a paid position. NB: Legislation change required
<u>That</u> the composition of the NZFGC include members who are either elected or appointed by the regions. Their appointment should be for a three-year term. Three-year terms should extend beyond the three-year election cycle that is held in the regions so that major changes to the NZFGC does not occur every three years following the regional elections.
<u>That</u> the size of NZFGC reflect the number of regions, with the NZFGC empowered to appoint additional independent members with relevant expertise as needed to cover skill gaps. These appointments should be for a specified term and would be in addition to the regular members elected or appointed by the regions. This could include Te Ao Māori appointments with full voting rights.
<u>That</u> all Fish and Game Councillors receive financial compensation in the form of a meeting allowance payable on meetings attended.
<u>That</u> the voting process for NZFGC and FGC elections be retained with licence holders casting one vote for the FGC and each FGC either elect or appoint one of their members to NZFGC. Note: FGC nominees on the NZFGC provide a direct link back to the regional councils.
<u>That</u> the existing regional structure be retained, while also considering the potential for merger or amalgamation of smaller regions with larger ones.
<u>That</u> there should be no more than 7 Regional Managers, focused on key operational functions, within the organisation. Note: This will require some Regional Managers having to manage staff across several regions. The current structure is not sustainable with too many managers and too much duplication of functions across the smaller regions. This situation needs to be addressed with urgency.



That each FGC comprise a maximum of 9 members, with a maximum of 8 elected, and the option of an iwi nominee with full voting rights. This option will be pursued if desired by Māori.

NB: Legislation change required

That each region has no more than 3 subregions, with 1 person to be elected from each subregion. Note: Regions that have merged may require additional subregions which can be determined during the merger process.

That candidates hold a primary residential address applicable to the region or subregion they wish to represent, as shown on the NZ Electoral Roll.

NB: Legislation change required

That the electoral roll automatically includes any NZ resident licence-holders from the previous year with no opt-in requirement.

NB: Legislation Change required

That the electoral system becomes an electronic one with a postal option to those who request it. Note: The election process is becoming a very expensive one for NZFG and any means that will increase participation and reduce costs should be pursued.

That the NZFGC should review the eligibility requirements for voting in respect to type of licence held with 2 adults on a current season family licence being able to vote individually.

NB: Legislation Change required

That a "fit and proper" test for candidates be implemented to maintain high standards of governance. Note: This will require legal advice but could include police vetting and/or the signing of an affidavit when standing for election.

NB: Legislation Change required

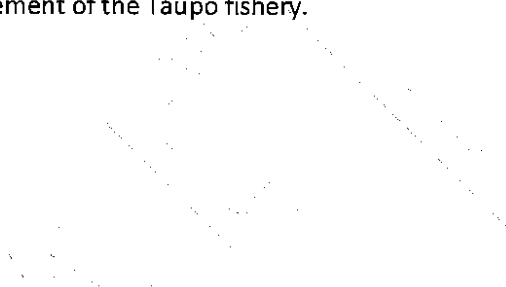
Additional Insights to be considered by the organisation:

- Maintaining regional autonomy while ensuring cohesive functioning with the NZFGC should be encouraged.
- Service delivery to sports fishers and game bird hunters with a focus on maintaining the resource and providing access to fish and hunt is key to the survival of the organisation and this requires strong regional focus.
- The importance of local staff and regional contact was highlighted.
- The need for transparency and public awareness of the organisation's work was emphasised.
- Promotion of hunting and fishing as a healthy recreation, the protection of the environment, and education to children should form part of the role of F&G.
- As part of Election process/campaign, there be a concerted effort to promote broader representation, emphasising diversity and equity to ensure a more inclusive and representative electoral outcome.
- Address iwi representation actively.
- Some functions done within the regions would be better managed nationally, while operational delivery would remain within the regions.
- Legislative Changes: Be prepared to present changes to Parliament, if necessary.



- Structure Optimisation: Regularly assess and optimise staffing and resources in line with the new governance structure.
- Collaboration and Cooperation: Encourage regions to collaborate, especially considering potential amalgamations.
- Transition Plan: Develop a comprehensive plan for transitioning to new governance structures, drawing on the experiences of the Wellington/Taranaki merger process.
- Funding and Resource Allocation: Determine funding needs for different governance structures, with consideration to the Future Finance Working Group recommendations.
- That the NZFGC consider initiating discussions on the management of the Taupo fishery.

Gerard Karalus - Chair
Future Structure Working Group



13.2 Otago to NZC

13.2.1 Feedback on 2024/2025 Licence Fee Recommendation

26th May 2024

Chief Executive Officer/Chair
New Zealand Fish & Game Council
Via email

Re: Feedback on 2024/2025 licence fee recommendation

Dear Corina/Barrie

Otago Council considered the NZC licence Fee recommendation paper at its meeting held on the 23th May 2024.

Approach by NZC to licence fee setting

Otago Council acknowledges that the Government wishes to save costs across all departments and our Minister has provided advice to New Zealand Council that he would not entertain a rise in licence fees. Otago Council suggests that NZC make a strong case back to the Minister to keep an open mind on movement in licence fees, especially against a background of rapidly rising costs.

Our Councillors considered that it would be irresponsible as governors – of this Council and yours – if they were to recommend retaining the current licence fees when the organisation is already working deeper into its reserves. It should be noted that last years licence adjustment was less than CPI and second year of no adjustment to the licence fee will only exacerbate the issue and larger licence fee increases will be required to catch up.

Bad practice to use reserves for operating expenses

Councillors also thought it very bad practice to use reserves to 'top up' a deficit budget. Budgets should be set to cover the cost of the organization, and not at some point below that. It is also unreasonable to demand that regions use their reserves to fund the national shortfall. This is not a sustainable model and needs urgent review.

Otago is resistant to using 3.36% of its reserves to fund this shortfall and believes this is unlawful. The Conservation Act is very clear about what may be levied (licence fees) and this request to fund – in a pro rata way – is tantamount to an additional levy. Otago Council respectfully requests that **NZC removes that portion of Otago's levy** until it can be determined that it is lawful under the Act, and reworks its budget so that it balances.

Levies and transparency

Guidance on levies has previously been provided to NZC by Sir Geoffrey Palmer in 2019. It provides pertinent advice for how levies should be established and consulted:

Levy power must be exercised fairly, reasonably and according to law

As a statutory power the New Zealand Council's levy power must be exercised fairly, reasonably and according to law. That is, the process for determining the levy must be documented, transparent and consistent with the purposes set out in section 26C(1)(f).

At a minimum:

a. The calculation of the costs of the administration of the New Zealand Council, advocacy and research must be clear;

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- b. The basis for determining the amount to be redistributed between regional Fish and Game Councils must be clearly articulated*
- c. The regional Fish and Game Councils must be given the chance to comment on the proposed levy and redistribution;*
- d. Their views must be taken in account by the New Zealand Council when it makes its determination*

Much of the transparency required above was covered off in the previous system through rigorous testing of budgets, overspends and new funding applications via the operational specialists in the regional managers group. That step was removed by NZC this year which removed the last thread of transparency, particularly over New Zealand Council projects. We were heartened to hear that the NZC is proposing to review this process for improvement before next years business planning round.

Ratios between licence categories

We note that Licence ratios (fees in relation to each other) were confirmed at NZC as unmoved. Otago acknowledges that this may have been because there is a body of work due to review and optimize the licence fee structure this year. It was noted there is unspent budget at NZC which should have advanced this work in the current year and we encourage NZC to undertake that work with haste.

Councilors believed that there should have been analysis and consideration of the Non-Resident licence fees. This Council has been forthright in the past about the present fees not aligning to the high-quality opportunity that New Zealand angling provides to overseas visitors. ***Council resolved that the Non Resident whole season licence fee be lifted to \$350.***

Licence fee recommendation

Council considered the proposed Licence fees for fishing and gamebird hunting. ***It rejected the NZC proposal of a \$153*** angling licence and proposed that NZC request the angling licence be raised \$2 to \$155. Otago Council agreed that the game licence could remain the same as last year as there is evidence of a reduction in value for money over time for that licence category. This, coupled with the increase in non resident licence, would help reduce the proposed deficit. Licence sales forecast

Council was satisfied with the licence sales forecast and the methodology used to arrive at it.

Summary of decisions of Otago Council

Council **agreed** to the following recommendations to be provided to the New Zealand Council on licence fees:

- a. That the 2024/25 adult whole season sports fish licence fee be set at \$155 (\$153 proposed) and that the adult whole season game licence remain at \$113 (inclusive of a \$5 fee for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp).***
- b. That the Non Resident whole season licence be raised to \$350 (from \$264)***
- c. All other ratios to remain the same with prices moving accordingly.***
- d. That the additional levy of \$41,657 (3.36%) be removed from Otago's levy demand until it can be proven that its is being lawfully taken.***

Please contact us if you need any further clarification.

Yours sincerely

Colin Weatherall
Otago Fish & Game Council Chair

Ian Hadland
Chief Executive

13.2.2 NZF&GC Policy Feedback

24th May 2024

Chair, Barrie Barnes
New Zealand Fish & Game Council
Via email

Re: New Zealand F&G Council (NZC) Policy Feedback

Dear Barrie

The NZC bundle of policy documents and information was presented and considered at our May Otago F&G Council meeting. Otago Council would like to offer the following feedback;

1. Draft Protected Disclosures Policy

The policy direction is supported and NZC should be commended in taking some initiative on policy development for new legislation. However, Council noted that it should be further edited and prepared for adoption and implementation at a Regional Council level rather than as National Policy. As presently written, the lines of accountability are unclear (eg NZC investigation lead of a complaint to a Regional F&G Council) and creates a risk for Otago Council if NZC does not deal with the complaint in a satisfactory way. The overuse of the term '*Fish and Game NZ*' which is not a statutory title of any of the parties further confuses the matter because it is unclear which Councils this covers – NZC or all 13 Councils?.

Council thought its adoption locally would better serve both Otago and NZ Council and lower the risk of miscommunication or mishandling by both parties. That is not to say that NZC couldn't act in a supporting role if required.

Decision: Council rejects its adoption as National Policy, but will adopt a local version of a Protected Disclosures Policy when have been made edits to create greater clarity.

2. Draft Health and Safety Policy

Otago already has its own Health and Safety Policy in place which is readopted annually (last adopted in February 2024) so believe National Health and Safety Policy is simply duplication. As presently written – in part related to the generalization of the title *Fish and Game NZ* - it has the inadvertent effect of making the NZC accountable for H&S incidents or litigation generated in the Regions where presently the PCBU (Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking) stops at the Regional Council level. Otago Council was unsure why NZC would invite additional liabilities (with the exception of Rangers) where it wasn't necessary.

Council also considered this an over reach of authority by NZC. While agreeing that a part of the NZC function is to develop national policy '*for carrying out the functions for sports fish and game*', this seems to be well outside of that role.

The legislation is quite clear that regions are to develop their own personnel policies as part of their good employer obligations (Section 26T of the Conservation Act) and that includes policy for worker health and safety. Otago Council has done that. It may be helpful for other regions who don't

already have a policy in place to be working from a generic F&G template and NZC is encouraged to develop that template.

NZC has an audit function which it should use to ensure that every region (and itself) have a fit for purpose health and safety policy in place. The policy should be clearer about that.

Decision: Reject adoption as National Policy, unless the duties and lines of accountability are more clearly defined and clarified.

3. Draft Ranger Health and Safety Policy

The policy is supported given the lines of responsibility extending down from the Directors role in appointment of Rangers.

Again, there is some confusion over title of the parties involved and the policy crossing over into regional responsibilities, particularly around staff undertaking compliance activity as part of their routine work in Regions.

Policy edits could include the removal of the Health and Safety provisions (the exists elsewhere so it is a duplication) and more clarity around the separation of regionally appointed staff from honorary rangers to ensure there is a defined split of responsibilities for each.

Decision: Agree to adoption, subject to amendments to clarify titles, roles and responsibilities.

As usual, Otago staff are happy to assist with adjustment to the documents to align with this feedback.

Yours sincerely

Colin Weatherall
Otago Fish & Game Council Chair

Ian Hadland
Chief Executive

13.3 General Correspondence In

13.3.1 Ray Grubb Resignation from Otago Fish and Game Council

Colin Wetherall
Chair
Otago Fish and Game Council
By email

Dear Colin

Please accept my resignation from the Council

It has been an honour and a privilege to represent our licence holders since 2009, and to work to preserve their access to our sport. It has also been a privilege to work with our Otago Councillors. I acknowledge their competence and skill which has made Otago, from my personal knowledge of the wider Fish and Game community, the leading Council in the country.

Good Councils need good leadership. Your excellent work as Chair, coupled with Ian's competence, is a credit to you.

Much good work has been done in my time and I am confident in Otago's continuing robust performance into the future. However the great disappointment has been the failure of the National Organisation to take advantage of the political opportunity created to reform, to modernize, to obtain efficiency, and to bring in independent Directors to assist elected Councillors in critical areas. These include developing a proper relationship with mana whenua, bringing more women into the sport and particularly into its administration, embracing better relationships with the wider farming and rural communities, and as a Conservation organization building closer ties to other environmental groups. Every Organisation needs vision, ambition, longer term horizons, and the ability to accommodate different perspectives. Recent events have led me to fear that without reform Fish and Game will not obtain those qualities, nor maintain the integrity necessary to ensure its relevance and to hold the respect of those important to our licence holders participation in fishing and bird hunting.

I never wanted to Chair the National Council, but consider there is no greater privilege in Fish and Game than to have the opportunity to lead our fight for our sport and our licence holders rights. Having held the position I have the greatest respect for those who preceded me, and for the incumbent, in what is most often a thankless task.

I wish you and my fellow Councillors well, and in particular thank Ian Hadland for many years of good natured debate

Kind regards

Ray

Rainsford J Grubb
1002/1 Harley Street
Nelson 7010

13.4 General Correspondence Out

Nil

14.0 Items to be Received or Noted

These reports are held in a separate file.

14.1 Bendigo Wildlife Management Reserve Works 2022-2024

14.2 Designated Waters Fishery and Controlled Fishery Report 2023/24 Season

14.3 Project 1122 – Creel surveys of Lake Hāwea

14.4 Development of a Spawning Layer

14.5 Acoustic Monitoring 2024

14.6 Habitat Enhancement Fund Project Updates

14.7 Compliance Summary Report

14.8 Summary of Fishing Competitions for the 2023/24 Season

15.0 General Business