

**Agenda For The Meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council
On Tuesday 18th March 2025
At Otakou Marae, 45 Tamatea Road, Otakou, Dunedin
Assemble at carpark at 9.45am for formal welcome (Powhiri)**

Timetable	Council Meeting
10.00 am	Powhiri, History and tour of Otakou Marae
12noon	Lunch
12.30 pm	Meeting Begins
2.00 pm	Public Excluded Session
2.30 pm	Open Meeting Resumes
2.45 pm	Afternoon Tea
3.00 pm	Public Forum
4.00 pm	Meeting Ends

Contents

1.0	Present and Apologies	3
2.0	Matters to be raised not on the agenda.....	3
3.0	Declarations of Interest	3
4.0	Confirmation of Previous Minutes.....	4
5.0	Matters Arising from the Minutes	13
6.0	Health and Safety Report February/March 2025	14
7.0	Items Requiring Decisions.....	15
7.1	Operational Workplan and Budget Overview 2025-2026	15
8.0	Public Excluded Items	20
8.1	Minutes of Public Excluded Meeting 25 th January 2025	20
8.2	Communications Implementation Plan - Review	20
8.3	Otago Property Update.....	20
8.4	Draft SFGMP Progress, Consultation and Draft Provisions	20
9.0	Financial Report	21
10.0	Chief Executives Report	35
11.0	RMA Planning and Consents Report.....	39

12.0	Committee & Delegate Reports.....	41
12.1	NZC – Mike Barker	41
12.2	Clutha Fisheries Trust Update – Ian Cole.....	42
12.3	Ngai Tahu	42
12.4	Conservation Board - Neil Harraway	42
12.5	Clutha Mata Au Sportsfish and Habitat Trust	43
12.6	Tiaki Maniototo.....	44
13.0	Correspondence.....	45
13.1	NZC to Otago.....	45
13.2	Otago to NZC.....	48
13.3	General Correspondence In	49
13.4	General Correspondence Out	50
14.0	Items to be Received or Noted	53
14.1	Paradise Shelduck Moulting Count.....	53
15.0	General Business.....	63

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
Saturday 25th January 2025
At Otago Fish and Game Council Office
Corner Hanover and Harrow Streets**

3.0 Present and Apologies

Present: Adrian McIntyre (Chair), Mike Barker, John Cruden, John Highton, Vicky May, John Preedy, Blair Trevathan, Colin Weatherall.

In attendance: Ian Hadland (CE), Jamie Ward (operations manager), Bruce Quirey (communications officer).

The meeting opened at 12.15pm and the Chair welcomed everyone.

Apologies: None.

4.0 Matters to be raised not on the agenda

None.

5.0 Declarations of Interest

Cr Weatherall said he had made an independent submission to Dunedin City Council on the Green Island landfill, and was aware OF&GC had also made a submission.

Cr May noted she was a Councillor on the Central South Island Fish & Game Council and a member of Teviot Angling Club.

6.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Moved (Cr May/Cr Preedy)

That the minutes of the Council meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council held on 28th November 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Carried.

7.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Chair asked if there were any matters to be raised from the previous minutes.

Cr Highton sought an update about access issues in Southland and if the issue was occurring in Otago. He asked if it was still legitimate to use access points where signs had been removed. He also wished to discuss the guides licence, High Court proceedings, and the Crawford Report.

The CE said the Council had withdrawn from the Otago Regional Policy Statement non-freshwater section appeal to the High Court.

He said Otago F&G had not received reports of its access signage being removed. While there was usually no formal agreement with landowners about access, in Southland some signs on legal roads had removed unlawfully. He said the Outdoor Access Commission mapping system showed the locations of unformed public roads. Cr Trevathan noted a recent incident of a spillway in Southland being allowed to go dry, and asked if there were similar risks in Otago. The CE replied that the last incident in Otago was when Idaburn Dam was drained, causing a large fish kill.

Cr Barker said Cr Weatherall had mentioned that OF&GC needed to consider filling gaps in its Council. The NZC Chair had sent correspondence which outlined the complicated mechanism by which those gaps could be filled.

6.0 Health and Safety Report – December 2024/January 2025

The CE said staff conducted an annual audit of health and safety requirements to reassure the Council that the organisation was complying with its obligations. There was a record of compliance to show staff were undertaking health and safety procedures and a health and safety plan. The NZC was asking OF&GC to report directly to them, however, the CE was not convinced health and safety needed to be reported on to NZC separately, as the Otago regional organisation is a PCBU (person conducting a business or undertaking) as defined under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Moved (Cr Highton/Cr May)

That Council receive the health and safety report for December/January and note the annual audit report.

Carried unanimously.

7.0 Items Requiring Decisions

7.1 Bendigo Wildlife Management Reserve Plan v13 7Jan 2025

The CE said the Bendigo Wildlife Management Reserve Plan had been a slow burn on and off the Council's table. The BWMR Plan was a stipulation when the area became a reserve. The plan was delayed until 2017 as Contact Energy needed assurances it would not impact on the energy company's operating

range. A management plan was supposed to have been built within three years but now, seven years on, it had been refined. The plan had been forwarded to iwi, a requirement under the Reserves Act.

The operations manager said the consultation period for the plan would last for two months. The minimum requirement for consultation was a month. The draft management plan was tabled for the Council to adopt for public notification. After submissions had been heard, the plan would go to the Minister for approval.

Planning would take into account a proposed cycle trail at the reserve, however, but it was not expected in the near future because the Government had withdrawn funding for new cycle trails.

The operations manager said the plan would have to be reviewed every three years. Spraying willows would be the next priority.

Moved (Cr Highton/Cr Preedy)

That the Otago Fish and Game Council adopts the draft Bendigo WMR Plan V13 and begins public notification pursuant to Section 119 of the Reserves Act 1977, with a two-month public consultation.

Carried

7.2 Anglers Notice Review - January 2025

The CE said only minor formatting changes to the Anglers Notice were recommended for the 2025/26 season. Other matters would be deferred to the triennial review. The triennial review procedure was then outlined. Staff would start the review process this year and submit a draft report to Council in October.

Councillors expressed concern about the salmon population in the lakes and a desire for waterway names to be translated into te reo Māori. Questions were also raised about the definition of Designated Waters.

Moved (Cr Highton/Cr Barker)

The draft Anglers Notice in Appendix 2 is adopted unchanged.

Carried.

Moved (Cr May/Cr Trevathan)

That the meeting move into Public-Excluded.

Carried.

8.0 Public Excluded Items

8.1 Draft minutes of Public Excluded meeting 28th November 2024

8.2 Risk Management Report

The meeting resumed at 2.20pm.

9.0 Financial Report

The CE invited questions about the financial report. The Chair asked about the Donald Scott Memorial Trust Fund, and the CE confirmed the commitment was for five years. In response to another question, the CE confirmed the general reserve had gone up because of licence sales and the property reserve had reduced because money had been spent on the new building project.

Cr May asked the Council for guidance on Council travel reimbursements because she lived outside the regional boundary.

Councillors **agreed** on paying the distance from the place of residence to and from any Council meeting not exceeding 350km each way.

Moved (Cr Highton/ Cr Barker)

- 1. That the Finance Report and Licence Report to the 31st December 2024 be received.**
Carried

Cr Weatherall said he wished to comment about audit management report for 2023/24, and thanked staff for the work done to produce it. He acknowledged matters raised by the auditors, however, they were simplistic, not of critical financial relevance, and were not communicated in a manner that improved the process. The Council struggled to get its financial report from the auditors prior to the Annual General Meeting. The matter would be raised with NZC because it was using the same group nationally. Cr Weatherall was concerned about the quality of the auditor's response and timeliness, and it was unfair to staff. He said he felt strongly about it because it had occurred during his term as Chair.

Moved (Cr Weatherall/Cr Barker)

- 2. That the Council receives and adopts the BDO Audit Management Report for 2023/24 financial year.**
Carried.

10.0 Chief Executive's Report

The CE noted that inward correspondence had a section on game bird monitoring from NZC. NZC had engaged a third party which might constrain what OF&GC could do on game bird monitoring.

He said the Game Bird Gazette had been agreed subject to the threshold from the paradise shelduck moult count in January 2025. If the count exceeded 23,000, the daily bag limit for the winter season would increase to 15. The reality was the threshold had been exceeded. However, an avian botulism outbreak at Waikouaiti was killing at least 1000 paradise shelduck, there could be further unknown consequences, and there was a high possibility of an avian influenza outbreak, which would devastate bird populations.

The CE suggested, therefore, that the Council consider leaving the paradise shelduck bag limit at the status quo.

Councillors expressed mixed opinions on whether to increase the bag limit.

The Chair moved

That the paradise shelduck daily bag limit for the 2025/26 game bird season remain at status quo.

Carried. Two against (Cr Highton/Cr Trevathan)

The CE noted the 150th Anniversary media event in December and thanked Cr Highton and staff for their efforts. A joint event with Friends of Bullock Creek would mark World Wetlands Day at Bullock Creek Hatchery Springs on February 2. Councillors requested branded shirts, name tags, and caps to increase their visibility at events.

The CE undertook to follow that up.

The next Council meeting would be held on March 18.

Moved (Cr Highton/Cr May)

That the CE's report be received.

Carried.

11.0 RMA Planning and Consents Report

Staff had written a neutral submission on a publicly notified consent to operate, close and provide after-life care for the Green Island Landfill. The CE said the hearing was coming up on March 18 and the environmental officer had recommended Fish & Game appear to profile the plight of estuaries, and in particular, Kaikorai Estuary.

Cr Weatherall said the hearing about was a life extension to the landfill, and life after that was as important as the current regime. The issues were pollution, noise, and mainly leachate.

Moved (Cr Trevathan/Cr Weatherall)

That the RMA Planning and Consents Report be received.

Carried.

12.0 Committee & Delegate Reports

12.1 CFT – Ian Cole (Chair)

A CFT report was tabled.

12.2 NZC - Cr Barker

Cr Barker talked to his tabled report.

There was discussion about NZC fatigue management guidelines. The CE noted that OF&GC's health and safety policy already covered fatigue management.

It was also noted that a report to NZC by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research had not taken into account income from guides. In response to a question from Cr Weatherall, Cr Barker said the Crawford Report would be presented to the NZC meeting on February 28-29. The CE said he had requested to see the provisions of the Crawford contract.

There was discussion about the appointment of a new Minister for Hunting and Fishing and the Ministerial Review.

Cr Weatherall said it was important this Council note and appreciate the work Cr Barker was doing and his appointment to the NZC executive.

12.3 Ngai Tahu – Paulette Tamati-Elliffe

Nil

12.4 Conservation Board

Nil

The Chair requested that a communication be sent to the Conservation Board inviting them to attend Council meetings. The CE said an agenda was sent.

12.5 Clutha Mata-Au Sportsfish and Habitat Trust – Rick Boyd (Chair)

A report from the Trust Chair was tabled.

The OF&GC Chair commended the efforts and achievements of Mr Boyd, and acknowledged the challenges in getting parties to sign documents and open a bank account.

12.6 Tiaki Maniototo - Cr Highton

Cr Highton talked to his tabled report. He said the Taieri Wai River Festival at Patearoa, attended by two Fish & Game staff and himself, had been a success. He was keen for a Takitakitoa visit, which was postponed last year, to go ahead. Tiaki Maniototo funding was to end in 2026, and staff had resigned to work elsewhere.

Tiaki Maniototo had requested F&G have a stand at the Maniototo A&P Show on February 12. CE noted that could be too short notice.

Tiaki Maniototo was focused on improving recreation sites, which was relevant for angler access. Cr Highton suggested allocating some funds relating to the recreational sites being developed. The CE said any proposal would certainly be considered.

Moved (Cr Highton/Cr Barker)

That the committee and delegate reports be received.

Carried.

13.0 Correspondence

13.1 NZC to Otago

13.1.1 Guides Licence

The CE said OF&GC had received a letter from NZC regarding progress towards a guides licence. NZC advised that the future of the guides licence rested with the Minister for Hunting and Fishing.

The CE said the Government was intensely interested in boosting tourism, and discussions were required about managing those effects.

13.2 Otago to NZC

13.2.1 Feedback Draft Sports Fish and Gamebird Management Plan Policy

The CE said if NZC advanced the policy that would be good, but he was not sure it would be in place in time for OF&GC's operational work plan.

There was discussion about grey teal and quail not being included, and the potential for technology that could be used to advantage.

13.2.2 Filling Councillor Vacancies

The CE said it would be easy to co-opt a non-voting Councillor to fill a vacancy but to get a voting member was a complicated process.

The Chair expressed concerns about a proposal by the anti-gun lobby that nobody under the age of 18 would be able to use a firearm. If that proposal in the review of firearms legislation was adopted, it would have serious consequences for junior hunters. The Ministry of Justice was calling for submissions now.

13.3 General Correspondence In

Nil

13.4 General Correspondence Out

Nil

14.0 Items to be Received or Noted

14.1 2024 Southern Reservoir Take a Kid Fishing & Adult Beginner Spin Fishing Classes

Cr Barker said feedback from the TAKF survey was positive. He requested that in future reports the survey questions be presented alongside the answers.

Cr Highton asked if OF&GC had any guidelines or policy on relationships with retailers and sponsorship. The CE replied that staff had worked with retail suppliers to support events, but it had to be treated relatively sensitively so as not to burn bridges with other retailers. Staff worked hard to get funding from community trusts to support these events. He did not believe a policy was required.

Moved (Cr Trevathan/Cr Barker)

Staff reports be received.

Carried.

The meeting advanced to general business.

15.0 General Business

Cr Preedy asked when the public would receive an update about efforts to restore a sea-run salmon population in the lower Clutha River. Cr Preedy said he was receiving

pressure from his local angling club for an update. He understood the Cawthron Report said the best way forward was to build a hatchery. Was the Clutha/Mata-Au Sportsfish and Habitat Trust going to make a public announcement?

Cr Barker, a Trustee, said he had moved a motion at a Trust meeting to go to the next stage and obtain consents, including agreement from Ngāi Tahu, to build a hatchery. The Contact Energy representative had not wanted to do that because two Trustees, Crs McIntyre and May, were absent from the meeting, and he had suggested the Trust get their consent via email before any public announcement was made. The Trust had subsequently obtained the Trustees' consent. Cr Barker said he did not know why there had not been any further publicity from the Trust.

The CE pointed out that the Trust Chair had provided Council a summary of key milestones for 2024, which was publicly available in the agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 3.55pm and resumed at 4.05pm.

14.2 2024 Licenceholder Engagement Surveys

A report was tabled on the licenceholder engagement surveys, and the communications officer gave a presentation.

There was a broad discussion of communication efforts. Councillors said angling clubs were not engaging in Otago Fish & Game communications, such as weekly fishing reports, monthly newsletters, or social media; the organisation should do podcasts; the timing of the surveys was questioned; and staff should create a list of action points.

The meeting ended at 5.05pm.

5.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

6.0 Health and Safety Report February/March 2025

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

- World Wetlands day
- Botulism breakout Waikouaiti
- Central Otago acoustic lake surveys
- Wetland planting and weeding
- Bird count flights

OHS Audits - Internal

Completed audits:

- Hazardous substances
- Boat Safety
- Office Audit Dunedin
- Council policy

Next audit areas:

- Vehicle Hazards and safety
- Main Hard Register
- Office Audit Cromwell

Incidents/Accidents/Near Misses/New Hazards – discussed with mitigation at meetings and record on file if needed.

- Collapsed wheel bearing on boat trailer, increased maintenance required
- Bullock Creeks hazards noted and FOBC informed
- Boat used in Didymo waters, need to clear water intake to limit water cooling problems. Also clean boat after use.
- Over tighten boat bung caused split and the boat took on water. Bung replaced.

Training Completed

- CERT (Ranger Safety) modules completed by one staff member
- First aid refresher course completed by one staff member

General Discussions, Actions

- More signage required in the Dunedin chemical storage area
- Discussions on botulism in birds, and also potential for avian bird flu in the Otago region.
- Discussions on dealing with difficult people
- Staff need to carefully balance time, take breaks and look after stress levels

Recommendation

1. To receive the health and safety report for February/March

Sharon Milne - Administration Officer - 7th March 2025

7.0 Items Requiring Decisions

7.1 Operational Workplan and Budget Overview 2025-2026

Attached to this agenda is the draft workplan and budget for the Councils consideration. If approved the budget will be provided to the New Zealand Councils (NZC) for their consideration in setting the licence fee.

If our budget is confirmed and the licence fee is set, the operational plan can be adopted.

NZC Guidance on Budgets

New Zealand Council has provided some financial guidance for their Zero Based Budget Process and recently released a complex spreadsheet to complete. There has not been time to fill out this detailed spreadsheet and neither has the reason for the additional detail required been well explained. My recollection of the zero based budget discussion was that it was to simplify, rather than complicate the system. The draft budget is in the standard format and links to our OWP.

The zero based budget process was a good exercise to properly assess the costs of just doing the basics. Our relatively no frills OWP has been costed out at more than last years bulk fund. That shouldn't come as any surprise. Most of the obvious savings have already been made over the years and against a background of rising costs it is impossible to reduce the budget in any substantial way.

The NZC adopted a tight schedule for draft budgets meaning that draft budgets need to be with that office by the 24th March 2025

No Policy for Assessing Budgets

At present there is no national policy support for how regional and NZC budgets will be assessed. Staff are unsure how the merits of projects at a regional level will be compared and what might happen if zero based budgeting doesn't result in regional savings. In our case it has confirmed that we have been underbudgeting in recent years and now need to 'catch up'.

2023-2026 Strategic Priorities - Confirmed

At the February planning meeting, Council confirmed its three-year priorities contained in Appendix 1. Development of specific outcomes for objectives wasn't achieved but that hasn't constrained the development of the draft operational workplan.

One of the bigger areas of work is the roll out of the **Otago Communications Strategy** as this covers a number of the strategic priorities agreed by the Council, particularly around relationships (including iwi), advocacy and recruitment and retention of licence holders.

Other Themes from the Planning Meeting

Several themes emerged from the planning workshop:

Species interaction – contributing to the work going on at present and leading our own project.

Increasing opportunities for gamebird hunting – improvements in access to private land, public land and better use of our own wetlands. Increasing hunter skill level.

Increased liaison with the rural community – through catchment group work, support for riparian and wetland work. Aiming to achieve better dialogue to enhance access and gamebird hunting opportunities.

Maintenance of Council owned properties – the need to undertake maintenance and development of land parcels owned by F&G (particularly wetlands) was highlighted.

Increased support for partner trusts – Greater support of the likes of the Clutha Trusts and other bodies undertaking F&G related work.

DRAFT 2025/26 OWP development

There has been a shift in staff hours towards meeting the objectives around these themes. They all align with the Councils strategic objectives.

Apart from this, the OWP has a lot of 'Business as usual'. I have taken the opportunity to simplify and refine the OWP because:

- There will be a degree of upheaval with the move of office in Dunedin at the end of this calendar year
- There has been talk of change coming to the organisation which could create disruption and draw staff away from key projects.
- There is a need to remain flexible.

Risk Management

Some of the projects are obviously linked to addressing risks identified in the risk management plan which was agreed at the February meeting.

Climate change work is set to continue with finalising the review on the potential impacts to sportfish and gamebird populations and their habitat, and to monitor and report on our own carbon footprint. Similarly, efforts to strengthen rural relationships continue to receive significant attention

Contestable Funding Bids

The NZC has decided to remove contestable funding requests from the budget process, replacing them with a requirement to submit a business case for any project changes exceeding \$30,000. At this stage, we do not have any projects that meet this threshold.

Additionally, there is no requirement to prepare a business case for expenditures from our own dedicated reserves.

Budget

Integrating these priorities into a coherent budget is a challenging task. Despite attempts to simplify the process, the standard national budget system remains overly complicated, and the newly introduced system is even more complex.

In response, I have developed a zero-based budget to support the work outlined in the OWP and to maintain our capacity to manage any potential changes the organization may face in the next financial year. This approach has resulted in a larger budget than last year's bulk fund.

Major differences from last year

- Some projects have been budgeted for rather than funded from our reserves (Drift diving, DW implementation)
- Increases in costs for insurance and rates
- Increase in asset replacement fund to replace vehicles
- Increase in rent costs and reduction in rental income until replacement office built.
- Small increase in salaries budget to ensure compliance with National Remuneration policy
- Increase in staff training budget which has been held down over the years.
- Anticipated income from doing external work (for Clutha Trusts etc)

Spending from Otago Reserves

It is anticipated that there will be spending (approved by our Council) from various reserves. There is a duty under present policy to notify this to NZC. The Council could do this at the time it approves the spending from these same reserves.

It is possible that some of the spending on projects could come from Otago's Non Resident Reserve. Given most of the costs are 'business as usual' rather than special projects, I have kept them in the body of the zero based budget as core business.

Asset Replacement

The asset replacement fund sits at \$13,161. We will need to replace two vehicles in the next financial year at a changeover cost of \$25k each. We have been running down this reserve over the last few years and there will be a need to increase the investment into it to cover future asset replacement for 2025/26 financial year. I have increased that fund accordingly to ensure our fleet stays up to date.

Recommendation

That the Council;

- **Agree to the draft 2025/26 operational workplan and budget.**

or

- **Agree on edits to the budget and workplan and authorise the chair and CE to finalise the 2025/26 budget to be submitted to NZC.**

**Ian Hadland
Chief Executive
7th March 2025**

Appendix 1: Draft Strategic Priorities 2023-2026

Sportsfish/gamebird species and habitat maintained and improved

- Understand climate change impacts on critical habitat and species abundance and distribution.
- Long-term monitoring programmes are established for sensitive sportsfish and gamebird species/populations
- RMA/NBEA planning documents recognise fish and game bird values and protect and restore the habitats that they depend upon.

Strategic relationships and advocacy enhanced

- Public and stakeholder perceptions (social licence) of Otago Fish & Game as a valid and respected organisation are improved.
- Alliances are formed with like-minded bodies for mutual benefit. (eg Industry groups, Game Animal Council)
- Landowners see F&G Otago as a valuable partner organisation in habitat protection, species management, and in fostering access to those resources.
- General public understand and value trout, salmon and game birds as public resource, and how angling and gamebird hunting contributes to people's wellbeing and kiwi way of life.

Recruitment and retention of licence holders improved

- Increased knowledge of Otago F&G role and activity by licence holders results in improved perceptions of value for money in a licence.
- Barriers to participation such as cost, regulation complexity, skill level and access are managed or reduced as far as possible.
- Licence holders see tangible 'evidence of service' through regular communication from the organisation.

Tangata Whenua/Mana whenua engaged

- Iwi and Otago F&G aspirations agreed and shared to achieve greater protection of freshwater and wetland values through RMA/NBEA processes
- Enduring and meaningful partnership formed with tangata whenua
- Conservation Act Section 4 responsibilities (treaty responsibilities) are understood, acknowledged and met.

8.0 Public Excluded Items

8.1 Minutes of Public Excluded Meeting 25th January 2025

8.2 Communications Implementation Plan - Review

8.3 Otago Property Update

8.4 Draft SFGMP Progress, Consultation and Draft Provisions

9.0 Financial Report

Draft Finance and Licence Sales 28th February 2025

9.1 Finance Reports

The financial Profit and Loss report and Balance sheet for the period from 1st September 2024 to 28th February 2025 for the 2024/25 financial year are below.

Profit and Loss

Income

Licence Income

Fish licence revenue from the profit and loss statement 28th February 2025 totals \$1,947,762 (Fish sales \$1,913,797 + Designated Water licence \$33,965) compared with \$1,912,813 for the same period of the 2023/24 season. Fish licence revenue is ahead 2023/24 by \$33,965.

These figures include both resident and non resident sales.

The budget for fish licence sales is \$2,090,400 for the full year.

Fish licences include designated water licences for specialist fisheries. Some of these are sold for other regions and other regions sell ours. Funds are sent to the appropriate region at the end of the year.

There were a few game licenses sold, these are incorrect online fish short term licence as were brought long before the summer paradise season.

Central South Island Fish and Game and North Canterbury Fish and Game's Councils have a sea run Salmon Endorsement Project. We have sold 380 Sea Run Salmon endorsements with a value of \$1,652 (GST excl) These funds will be returned to them.

Other Income

Total other income to 28th February 2025 is \$48,437.

Areas of interest are:

- Wages Reimbursement is for work done for other regions. This includes RMA assistance to NCF&GC.
- Interest is under budget as interest rates have fallen. Extra term deposits will provide more interest income in the future as they fall due.
- Rent Received is from yard lease in Cromwell. Budgets have not yet been adjusted for the sale of the Dunedin office and associated loss in rental returns
- RMA costs Reimbursed is NZC payment towards Regional Policy Statement work. There is not more to claim.

Donations and Grants (not in budget)

Donation/Grant from	For	Amount GST excl
Otago Community Trust	Take A Kid Fishing	\$2,900
Ricoh	Wetland Plants	\$1,000
Total		\$3,900

Expenses

Expenditure at the 28th February for the 2024/25 financial year is \$1,447,310 against a year to date budget of \$1,398,955. Expenditure at 103%.

The budget was approved before expenses of Dunedin rental and building costs were planned.

The main reasons for any variances are:

- Species Management – Populations Monitoring -This includes the Central Lakes acoustic survey and bird count flights
- Habitat Protection – RMA spending includes that claimed from NZC for Regional Policy Statement work. Works and Management is high due to expensive ground maintenance at the Wanaka hatchery site.
- Participation – Most fish training events and club relations, we had a grant of \$2,900 from Otago Community Trust towards Take A Kid Fishing events. Club relations is high due to new stock of giver aways for events. Game season club events will start soon. Back country surveys have been less than expected.
- Public interface. No spending in this area yet only work hours.
- Licencing – Commission is made up from 5% agent sales commission and bank fees associated with online sales.
- Council expenses – four meetings have been held, plus a meeting with the minister. Travel and accommodation cost have increased.
- Planning and Reporting – Some end of year accountancy assistance and the audit.
- Over Heads/Administration- Salaries -One less salary for the start of the year. Staff employment expense is high from assistance in employing a new staff member. Office premises – This now includes office rent in Dunedin, not part of the approved budget. Also includes office insurance cleaning power, rates and rental of storage space.
- Approved Reserves Expenses - \$26,518. This is expenditure approved by the council for the Bendigo, Bullock Creek and some Otago Property and RMA Reserves.
- Depreciation – Depreciation year to date is \$29,383.
- Levies to NZC – paid monthly as per budget. \$602,944 excl GST.

The profit and loss for the 6 months ended 28th February 2025 shows a surplus of \$542,548.

Balance Sheet

Bank Funds Position at 28th February 2025

Bank	Value
ANZ 00 Account	\$114,957.98
ANZ 70 Account	\$679,210.40
ASB Account	\$75.57
Cash On Hand	\$50.00
Total	\$794,293.95

Term Investments as at 28th February 2025

Investment Bank	Amount	Rate	Maturity
ANZ 1002	\$206,150	5.15%	20 th Sept 2025
ANZ 1003	\$500,000	5.55%	6 th June 2025
ASB 81	\$212,264	4.85%	2 nd Aug 2025
ASB 82	\$500,000	5.40%	10 th Sept 2025
ASB 83	\$300,000	5.25%	20 th Nov 2025
Total	\$1,718,414		

Fixed Assets and Capital Expenditure

\$37,190 remained from the previous year, \$2,835 extra was budgeted for 2024/25. The asset replacement fund is at \$13,161. The total includes the purchase of a ford ranger truck and computer laptop and sales of ford ranger truck and a 4 wheel drive bike.

Land and building transactions are not part of the asset replacement fund.

Liabilities

Total Liabilities at 28th February are \$277,910.

- Other payables include visa card spending, accrued accounting and audit fee expenses and income in advance.
- Employee Entitlements includes \$52,331 of outstanding leave entitlements and accrued leave reversal from the previous year.
- Designated Waters liabilities are money owed to other regions for licences relating to their regions but sold in Otago.

New Zealand Fish and Game Council Legal Fund Grant – Paid as Required

Agreed by the NZC June 2024 \$37,500

	To Use 2024/25	Used	Remaining
Regional Policy Statement NZC Legal Fund	\$20,510	\$20,510	\$0.0

Equity**Otago Fish and Game Reserves 28th February 2025**

Otago Reserves Movements	Balance 1 st September 2024	Income (To) Reserve	Note	Outgoing (From) Reserve	Balance 31 st February 2025
Non-resident DW Levy	\$314,913	\$33,965	1	\$11,952	\$336,926
Habitat Enhancement & Research	\$22,692	\$750	2	\$0	\$23,442
Bullock Creek Reserve Restricted Reserve	\$1,776	\$0	3	\$1,064.92	\$711
Bendigo Reserve Restricted Reserve	\$22,508	\$0	8	\$2,877	\$19,631
Priority Consents Reserve	\$34,190	\$0	7	\$0	\$34,190
Otago Property Reserves	\$1,008,566	\$0	4	\$122,222	\$886,344
Priority Plan Changes	\$24,539	\$0	6	\$3,700	\$20,839
Total	\$1,429,185	\$34,715		\$141,816	\$1,322,083

Note 1 Income is from designated water licence sales. \$5000 a year for five years for the Dr Donald Scott University Fund. Agreed by Council May 2021. 2024/25 is year four. 2024/25 Budget allows for \$23,000 for designated waters monitoring.

Note 2 Balance is \$23,442. Less committed but not yet paid out of \$4,000 so balance of \$19,442 available for dispersal by way of grants.

Note 3 Bullock Creek council approved OF&GC HEF funding February 2024 \$3,500.

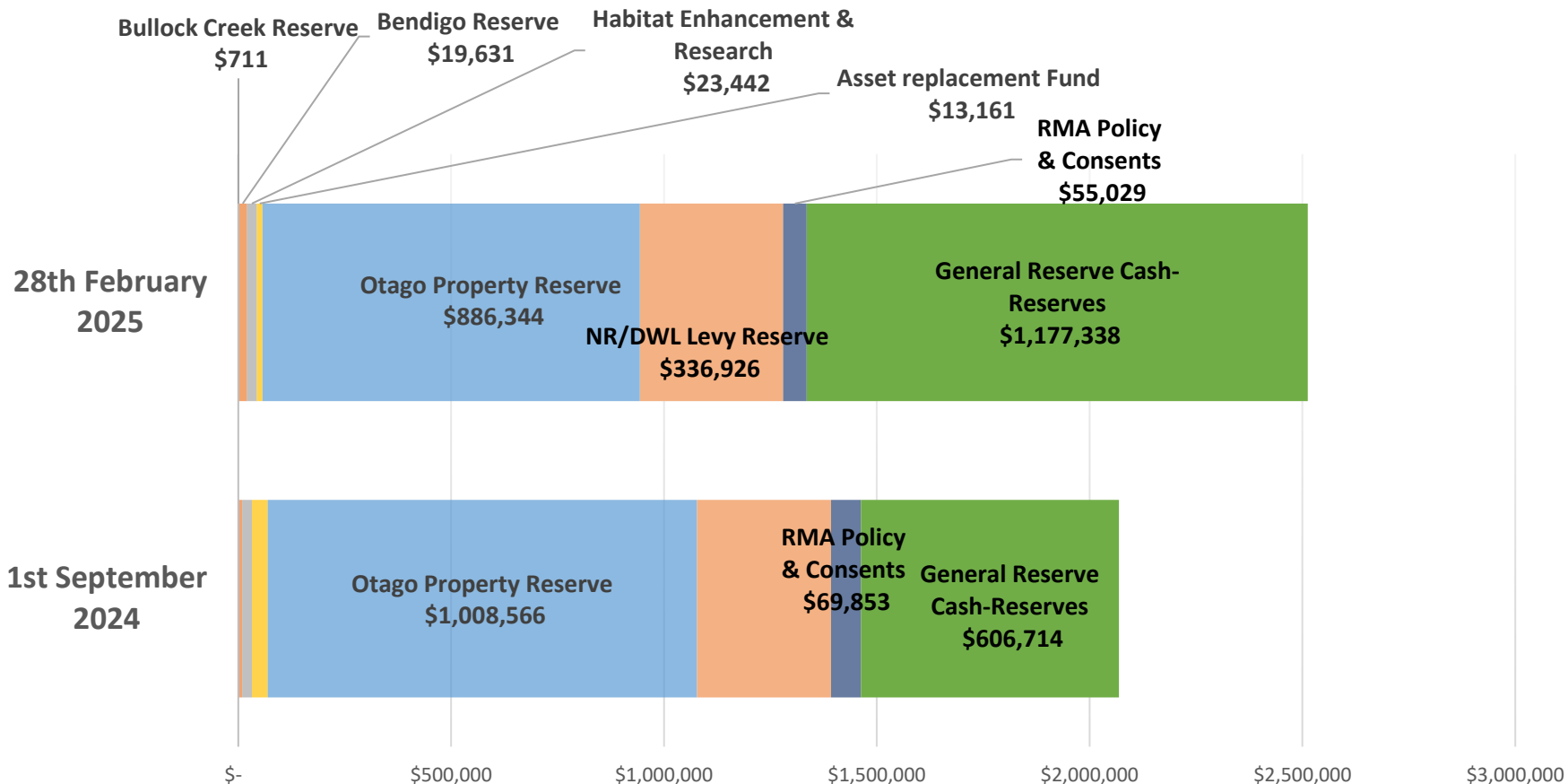
Note 4 Otago Property Reserve – Funds from historical and recent property sales, dedicated to acquiring and maintaining land and building assets in Otago.

Note 6 Wanka subdivision \$16,817 + Office build and rent \$103,179 + others \$2,227 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.

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. ORC 2nd Eco Fund \$5,000 June 2024

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES FROM 1ST SEPTEMBER 2024 TO 28TH FEBRUARY 2025



Balance Sheet

Otago Fish and Game Council As at 28 February 2025

	28 FEB 2025	31 AUG 2024
Assets		
Current Assets		
Bank	794,294	1,663,253
Receivables		
Accounts Receivable	204,588	202,738
Total Receivables	204,588	202,738
GST	-	32,465
Investments	1,718,415	406,083
Inventory	27,710	27,710
Accrued Interest	6,523	6,523
Accounts Receivable - Other	279	-
Total Current Assets	2,751,809	2,338,773
Fixed Assets		
Property Plant & Equipment	2,117,623	2,124,360
Total Fixed Assets	2,117,623	2,124,360
Total Assets	4,869,432	4,463,133
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	26,426	80,178
Other Payables	175,686	243,926
Employee Entitlements	62,271	90,055
Rounding	-	-
Salmon Endorsement	1,652	-
Designated Waters other regions	2,082	-
GST	9,792	-
Total Current Liabilities	277,910	414,159
Total Liabilities	277,910	414,159
Net Assets	4,591,522	4,048,974
Equity		
Accumulated Funds		
Accumulated Funds	3,204,580	1,548,016
Current Year Earnings	542,548	1,656,565
Transfer (To)/From Reserves	(490,849)	(621,979)
Total Accumulated Funds	3,256,278	2,582,601
Dedicated Reserves		
Non Resident Levy Reserve	336,926	314,913
Habitat Enhancement & Research	23,442	22,692
Priority Plan Changes Reserve	20,839	24,539

	28 FEB 2025	31 AUG 2024
Priority Consents Reserve	34,190	34,190
Otago Property Reserve (was Historical Property Reserve)	886,344	1,008,566
Asset Replacement Funding	13,161	37,190
Total Dedicated Reserves	1,314,901	1,442,089
Restricted Reserves		
Bullock Creek Reserve	711	1,776
Bendigo Reserve	19,631	22,508
Total Restricted Reserves	20,343	24,285
Total Equity	4,591,522	4,048,974

Profit and Loss

Otago Fish and Game Council For the 2 months ended 28 February 2025

	JAN 2025	FEB 2025	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
Income								
Licence Sales								
Fish Licence Sales	221,174	113,234	1,913,797	1,882,013	31,784	102%	2,090,400	2,052,245
Non-Resident Licence Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,909
Designated Water Licence Sales	8,378	7,778	33,965	-	33,965	-	-	40,340
Game Licence Sales	37	-	219	-	219	-	380,682	370,260
Total Licence Sales	229,589	121,012	1,947,981	1,882,013	65,968	104%	2,471,082	2,464,754
Other Income								
Wages Reimbursement	-	-	2,783	-	2,783	-	-	15,743
Contact Energy Mitigation Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	90,868
Govt Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,000
Interest Income	933	7,087	18,783	28,980	(10,197)	65%	57,966	59,739
Fines - Fishing & Game Offences	-	-	-	252	(252)	-	500	2,700
Rent Received	500	500	3,000	21,222	(18,222)	14%	42,450	45,207
Fishing Competitions	-	613	1,287	-	1,287	-	-	1,119
Depreciation Recovered on Sale of Fixed Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	475,880
Donations ,bequests and other Fundraising	1,000	-	1,000	-	1,000	-	-	17,929
Merchandise Sales/Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42
RMA Costs Reimbursed	-	-	20,537	-	20,537	-	-	16,990
Sundry Income	265	(13)	296	-	296	-	-	2,227
Diversion - Habitat Enhancement and Research Fund	-	200	750	-	750	-	-	15,100
Total Other Income	2,699	8,388	48,437	50,454	(2,017)	96%	100,916	748,544

Profit and Loss

Otago Fish and Game Council For the 2 months ended 28 February 2025

	JAN 2025	FEB 2025	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
Income								
Licence Sales								
Fish Licence Sales	221,174	113,234	1,913,797	1,882,013	31,784	102%	2,090,400	2,052,245
Non-Resident Licence Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,909
Designated Water Licence Sales	8,378	7,778	33,965	-	33,965	-	-	40,340
Game Licence Sales	37	-	219	-	219	-	380,682	370,260
Total Licence Sales	229,589	121,012	1,947,981	1,882,013	65,968	104%	2,471,082	2,464,754
Other Income								
Wages Reimbursement	-	-	2,783	-	2,783	-	-	15,743
Contact Energy Mitigation Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	90,868
Govt Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,000
Interest Income	933	7,087	18,783	28,980	(10,197)	65%	57,966	59,739
Fines - Fishing & Game Offences	-	-	-	252	(252)	-	500	2,700
Rent Received	500	500	3,000	21,222	(18,222)	14%	42,450	45,207
Fishing Competitions	-	613	1,287	-	1,287	-	-	1,119
Depreciation Recovered on Sale of Fixed Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	475,880
Donations ,bequests and other Fundraising	1,000	-	1,000	-	1,000	-	-	17,929
Merchandise Sales/Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42
RMA Costs Reimbursed	-	-	20,537	-	20,537	-	-	16,990
Sundry Income	265	(13)	296	-	296	-	-	2,227
Diversion - Habitat Enhancement and Research Fund	-	200	750	-	750	-	-	15,100
Total Other Income	2,699	8,388	48,437	50,454	(2,017)	96%	100,916	748,544

	JAN 2025	FEB 2025	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
Club Relations and Grants	-	-	466	500	(34)	93%	1,000	1,650
Wetland Reserve Ballots	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22
Total Participation	735	288	11,128	21,852	(10,724)	51%	31,500	27,177
PUBLIC INTERFACE								
Liaison								
Liaison DoC Unin Govt CFT IWI	-	19	19	500	(481)	4%	1,000	41
Total Liaison	-	19	19	500	(481)	4%	1,000	41
Communication								
World Wetlands	26	71	97	200	(103)	49%	200	27
Total Communication	26	71	97	200	(103)	49%	200	27
Media Releases								
Advocacy Statutory	-	-	-	300	(300)	-	500	-
Weekly Fishing Reports/ social media	560	700	3,080	3,600	(520)	86%	6,000	4,375
Communications Strategy	112	-	1,212	-	1,212	-	-	15,398
Media Release	-	-	140	-	140	-	-	-
Total Media Releases	672	700	4,432	3,900	532	114%	6,500	19,773
Total PUBLIC INTERFACE	698	790	4,548	4,600	(52)	99%	7,700	19,841
COMPLIANCE								
Ranger Training and Expenses	1,185	35	1,466	3,000	(1,534)	49%	5,500	2,828
Compliance	-	-	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	10,000	8,250
Total COMPLIANCE	1,185	35	1,466	8,000	(6,534)	18%	15,500	11,078
LICENCING								
Designated Waters IT Build	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21,023
Agent Servicing	-	-	85	250	(165)	34%	250	252

	JAN 2025	FEB 2025	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
Commission/Fees	6,838	3,665	64,087	83,615	(19,528)	77%	98,843	89,251
Total LICENCING	6,838	3,665	64,172	83,865	(19,693)	77%	99,093	110,525
COUNCIL								
Elections Council	-	-	-	500	(500)	-	500	-
Council Meetings and Agendas	3,605	1,981	10,515	8,500	2,015	124%	15,000	14,103
Total COUNCIL	3,605	1,981	10,515	9,000	1,515	117%	15,500	14,103
PLANNING & REPORTING								
Reporting/Audit	-	-	18,018	18,000	18	100%	18,000	16,156
National Liason	-	-	-	300	(300)	-	500	266
Total PLANNING & REPORTING	-	-	18,018	18,300	(282)	98%	18,500	16,421
ADMINISTRATION								
Salaries	68,291	80,768	427,784	490,912	(63,128)	87%	981,843	951,670
Staff Expenses								
ACC Levy	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,500	1,931
Fringe Benefit Tax	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,000	6,156
Staff Training	1,774	1,669	5,093	5,000	93	102%	8,000	6,765
Staff Clothing Branded	-	321	321	-	321	-	-	1,358
Staff Personal Expenses	77	(58)	(259)	-	(259)	-	-	-
Staff Expenses	549	289	2,546	4,000	(1,454)	64%	8,000	9,120
Staff Employment Expenses	43	-	7,062	1,000	6,062	706%	1,000	5,488
Employee Assistance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16,000
Total Staff Expenses	2,443	2,222	14,762	10,000	4,762	148%	27,500	46,818
Office Premices	16,882	13,080	97,361	51,372	45,989	190%	87,689	91,664
Office Equipment	45	295	1,299	1,800	(501)	72%	2,000	3,463
Communications	1,045	2,101	8,624	11,552	(2,928)	75%	23,200	19,740
General Exp (incl Insurance)	54	229	1,233	2,650	(1,417)	47%	3,600	14,350

	JAN 2025	FEB 2025	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
General Field Equipment	-	23	23	1,796	(1,773)	1%	3,300	2,769
Vehicles	2,619	3,435	28,968	33,000	(4,032)	88%	55,000	51,560
Total ADMINISTRATION	91,380	102,152	580,055	603,082	(23,027)	96%	1,184,132	1,182,034
Approved Reserve Expense	8,469	2,305	26,518	-	26,518	-	-	43,052
Approved Building WIP Mosgiel	806	4,060	48,994	-	48,994	-	-	-
Depreciation	5,071	5,071	29,383	29,364	19	100%	58,724	56,784
Fish Salvage	-	33	33	-	33	-	-	-
Gain on Disposal	(2,342)	-	(2,342)	-	(2,342)	-	-	-
Loss on Disposal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,169
NZ Fish & Game Levies	100,491	100,491	602,944	602,947	(3)	100%	1,205,887	1,161,958
University of Otago Research Grant	-	-	5,000	-	5,000	-	-	5,000
Total Expenses	223,537	228,536	1,447,310	1,406,121	41,189	103%	2,675,036	2,759,206
Net Profit	6,394	(99,136)	542,548	526,346	16,202	103%	(103,038)	1,656,565

9.2 Debtors

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

9.3 Licence Sales

Fish Licence Sales 2024/25 Season to 28th February 2025

See table following for fish licence sales numbers and categories for the 2024/25 and 2023/24 season sales to the 28th February of the season.

Fish licence sales for the 2024/25 Season were delayed. Sales began on 22nd July 2024 for both online and in agencies. Prices have increased for each category and there are no category changes.

Designated Waters are \$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, 2024/25 fishing licence sales, in whole season licence equivalents (LEQs), 14,070, LEQs this season compared with 14,137 LEQs to the 28th February of the previous season - 67 LEQs behind last year.

Short term fishing license numbers have increased in all categories. All non resident licences categories have also increased.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Finance Report and Licence Report to the 28th February 2025 be received.**

Sharon Milne
Administration Officer
10/03/2025

Otago Region Fish License Sales to the 28th of February of the Season

2024/25

Sales	FWFA	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWNC	FDNC	SRSE	DWLR	DWLN	fishTotal	Fish LEQ
Public	1964	2544	525	361	404	39	374	2083	1857	739	48	293	107	22	66	0	1532	504	13462	7,794
Agency	1753	2575	164	814	155	19	99	321	467	432	16	43	32	7	24	380	1150	197	8648	6,275
Total	3717	5119	689	1175	559	58	473	2404	2324	1171	64	336	139	29	90	380	2682	701	22110	14,070

2023/24

Sales	FWFA	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWNC	FDNC	SRSE	DWLR	DWLN	fishTotal	Fish LEQ
Public	1896	2321	510	370	342	34	304	1909	1549	528	37	266	93	12	56	0	1448	499	12174	7,202
Agency	2062	2914	167	751	151	14	105	365	464	364	9	43	30	10	25	504	1384	82	9444	6,935
Total	3958	5235	677	1121	493	48	409	2274	2013	892	46	309	123	22	81	504	2832	581	21618	14,137

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

10.0 Chief Executives Report

10.1 SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Gamebird Monitoring

A summary of Otago gamebird trend count flight is in the reports to be received section. It makes for interesting reading.

Angler Surveys

Interviews of lakes anglers continue to be undertaken, particularly at Lake Hawea as planned but numbers are quickly diminishing.

Acoustic Surveys

The acoustic surveys of the southern lakes has been completed. Work now begins on the analysis of sounder data and this will be reported before years end.



Botulism – North Otago

This is winding down now with reduced daily bird deaths in and around the Waikouaiti Water Treatment Plant. 1770 birds have so far been buried, over 90% of those Paradise shelduck. DCC management is now turning its attention preventing future outbreaks including not allowing birds to accumulate on the site. They are presently installing strobe lighting and have also applied for a permit to disturb wildlife to allow bird scaring methods to be used there, and at other sites.

Bird Flu Outbreak

NZC has been providing information to F&G staff about our potential response and the management of the lethal H5N1 strain of the influenza should it reach New Zealand shores. The webinar that some Councillors attended proved to be very informative.

Summer Parry Season

Staff have been making calls to gain harvest information from hunters who have participated in the nine day summer paradise shelduck hunting season which concluded on the 9th March.

10.2 HABITAT PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

RMA Update

[See separate report under 11.0]

Clutha Lagoon

I have opened the lines of communication with the ORC regarding a project on the lower Clutha Lagoons and a meeting is scheduled for mid April. Attendees will include ORC science head and their natural hazards staff. Given the rate of encroachment of the sea into the lagoon, this is a good team to start a conversation with.

10.3 USER PARTICIPATION

Publications

The gamebird edition the F&G magazine should be delivered by the time of the meeting. As mentioned, it will include short obituaries for Alan Hammond and Monty Wright.

10.4 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Advocacy

The Chair and Cr Weatherall and I met the Otago Federated farmers president and members last month. The discussion was cordial and wide-ranging including willow control and wetland management. There was a discussion about access, but this seemed to be positive.



World Wetlands Day event, Bullock Creek Wetland, 2nd February 2025

This went well with over 300 people visiting the wetland in an event co hosted with Friends of Bullock Creek. Some councillors were in attendance and may be able to pass on an update from their perspective.

10.5 COMPLIANCE

Prosecutions

The prosecution workload remains light due to good compliance over the latter part of the angling season. Staff and rangers continue to be active in the field through Autumn.

10.6 LICENCING

Licence sales have recovered well from a slow start across the South Island and are now only marginally behind, including in Otago. (see finance report). Kinder late summer weather push that along.

Licencing System – My understanding is that the licencing contract is up for renewal soon but we have heard little about a replacement. Perhaps our NZC appointee may know more.

Cr Barker to update

10.7 COUNCIL

Staffing

The Cromwell based Field officer Ben Sowry has resigned and advertising for his replacement is underway. Ben has made a big contribution to the organisation over the last three years and the legacy he leaves will be best represented by the planting site at Bendigo wetland which is looking outstanding.

Brian Turner Passing

The CE and some ex councillors of F&G attended the celebration of Brians life at Oturehua. Brian was a staunch advocate for the environment, wild rivers and for angling. He had deep connections to the organsiation and much was said about that at the funeral.

Property Update

The contract for the replacement regional office building has been signed and with all consents being granted, building is now underway. It's been a long haul so it is pleasing to see progress.

See separate report in Public Excluded agenda on other property matters including Wanaka stormwater and section disposal.

10.8 PLANNING AND REPORTING

Sports Fish and Game Management Plan

The Environmental Officer has completed the first round of consultation and further developed a draft of the next Sportsfish & Game Management Plan for the Councils consideration. That is in the Public excluded agenda.

Operational Work Plan (OWP) 2025/26 Development

Following on from January's planning meeting, I have drafted the OWP and budget for the next financial year. I've used the standard format for the budget rather than the complex spreadsheets delivered by a NZC consultant. The OWP aligns with the 2023-2026 strategic direction which has been set but I've also shifted staff hours around to ensure we are able to offer support to the two Clutha Trusts and further implement the communications strategy.

Next Council Meeting

The next Council meeting is in Roxburgh on the 20th May 2025.

Recommendation

That this report be received

Ian Hadland

Chief Executive

March 2025

11.0 RMA Planning and Consents Report

15 January 2025 – 10 March 2025

Current Legislation, Policy and Planning Processes

Otago Regional Policy Statement (ORPS)

An update can be provided in the public excluded section of the meeting if required, as RPS processes are being currently mediated.

Aside from staff attending mediation, there has been no significant progression since the Council last met to discuss these processes.

Sports Fish and Game Management Plan (SGMP) 2025

Since the last report, staff have undertaken early consultation and begun drafting the SFGMP 2025. A report on progress and draft provisions has been provided in the public excluded section of this agenda.

Current Notification processes

Applicant	Activity	Outcome
Otago Regional Council notifications		
The Dunedin City Council	A publicly notified consent to operate, close and provide after-life care for the Green Island Landfill	A neutral submission was written by staff which provides helpful information to inform a positive decision on the consent. Staff are currently reviewing evidence to confirm whether they need to attend the hearing. If they attend, it will be held on the same day as this Council meeting.

Written approval provided during the period

Applicant	Activity	Outcome
Otago Regional Council applications		
Clutha District Council	To abstract water from the Tokomairiro River for the purpose of providing Milton and surrounds with community supply.	A consent condition was negotiated to protect flows during the spawning season and written party approval was provided. Staff met with the applicant and discussed long term aspirations for relieving abstractive pressure on the Tokomairiro by moving the point of take downstream of the east and west branch confluence. This is outside the scope of the current consent, which is a 6 year interim consent processed via Plan Change 7 provisions, but will be taken into consideration by the Council.
Queenstown Lakes District Council		

Queenstown Lakes District Council	To undertake earthworks and landscaping adjacent to Bullock Creek, on land owned by the Otago Fish and Game Council.	Affected party approval was 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

Recommendation:

- 1. That this report be received.**

Nigel Paragreen
Environmental Officer
10 March 2025

12.0 Committee & Delegate Reports

12.1 NZC – Mike Barker

NZ F & G Council Meeting #173 held from Feb. 28 - March 2

1. Policies adopted for consultation:
 - Lone worker support for consultation:
 - Time in Lieu
 - R M draft policy
2. Discussion on the F & G submission on the Arms Act
3. Public access strategy and communications:
Request that regional F & G Councils complete their access workshop (on where access has been lost) and provide feedback to NZC. Consider co-ordination with other outdoor groups.

Note: Otago is one of a number of Councils that have not replied.

4. Supporting women anglers. Six actions were described that Councils could take in support.
5. R3 Strategy Implementation and ReWild Campaign progress report
6. Licence sales update presented
7. Communications report presented
8. Research & monitoring update presented
9. Alan Strong, Chairman of N. Canterbury presented a proposal developed by the N.C. Council for a new way to manage the NC region. This was subsequently accepted by the NZC although it will result in an increased workload for several NZC staff and the CEO.

Alan presented this again at the joint meeting with Chairs on Saturday March 1 and several other regions expressed an interest in also adopting this in the near future.

12.2 Clutha Fisheries Trust Update – Ian Cole

1. Wildlands Consultants have completed their avian study of Lake Dunstan - believe you have a copy?
2. Invites to the Native Fish Restoration Symposium will be sent out this week. Looking at options in mid to late May - Thursday/Friday 15/16, 22/23 or possibly 28/29
3. BWMR - The trust continues to support Otago Fish and Game management plan for the this area to the tune of \$15,000/annum
4. Additionally a couple of years ago, the trust has identified, with Fish and Game staff the removal of several willow trees [48] between Gilmour Road and Amisfield access suitable for removal. Aim is to open up this shoreline as it is becoming grossly overgrown. The trust had hoped to coordinate with the Cycle Trails Trust but that work has now been postponed. Options have been discussed to possibly poison those trees first. LINZ approval was given and the Trust now seeks to extend that period [initially 2 years. ORC will be contacted
5. Anglers Access - Trustees have identified historical legal access sites on the Upper Clutha and will continue to maintain and further negotiate others

12.3 Ngai Tahu

12.4 Conservation Board - Neil Harraway

1. We have been very concerned at the cuts to DoC budgets. Vital conservation projects are already woefully under-funded and vital visitor infrastructure already cannot be properly supported.
2. As a result, Otago and Southland Conservation Boards have started discussing ways of working together to better deliver conservation work at a more local level, and in a way that better gives effect to the Treaty partnership as required of DoC under S4 of the Conservation Act 1987.
3. We are submitting on the Government's proposals for conservation law reforms, including some charges for access. OCB recognises access charges for international visitors could deliver benefits, and recognises that some DoC processes such as concessions need to be streamlined. However OCB and other boards are very concerned that the proposed reforms would concentrate decision-making in the hands of the Minister and lead to short-term political outcomes.

4. We have submitted on the Fast Track legislation - again the major concern is that decisions with vital conservation implications can be made too quickly by Ministers without proper checks and balances.
5. We have submitted on the Treaty Principles Bill, expressing concern, given that conservation work is supposed to give effect to the Treaty especially regarding rangatiratanga over taonga such as freshwater.
6. We heard from Sustainable Tarras on their concerns about the proposed Santana gold-mine near Tarras which has fast track status. We asked for a letter detailing their concerns and their desired outcomes. Under the Fast Track legislation, Conservation Boards can comment on applications and consent conditions.

12.5 Clutha Mata Au Sportsfish and Habitat Trust

New Email Address: Now using chairperson@cluthasportsfishhabitat.co.nz for Trust business.

Manuka Island Habitat Work:

Ongoing habitat restoration with Habitat Restorations Aotearoa (Glen Riley). No site plan or project documentation exists so are following his lead. Awaiting Glen's input before arranging a site visit with Adrian.

Charitable Status:

Trust finally confirmed as a Charitable Trust on 7 February 2025

Catchup Meeting with Contact (13 Feb):

- Discussed Contact trustee replacement, Ngai Tahu engagement, special advisor, health & safety obligations, and banking issues.
- **Andrew Gray** appointed as Contact's replacement trustee.

Ngai Tahu Engagement:

Letter sent to 7 Runanga on 25 February; one response received so far.

Westpac Bank: Westpac no longer requires identity documentation from Ngai Tahu until they appoint a trustee. One request from the bank still pending.

Broodstock for Hatchery:

Discussion with Dr John Hayes revealed more options for broodstock than initially thought which is positive.

PhD Candidate Selection:

Reviewing and providing comments on PhD applications for the Lower Clutha project.

Cr Barker to update

Health & Safety:

Reviewing Contact Energy's H&S provisions and working on how best to apply them to Trust contractors.

12.6 Tiaki Maniototo

- Changes are being made pending the end of funding June 2026. TM will manage with fewer staff and be careful with budgeting as the operation runs down.
- Costings are being investigated to see if the nursery can be self-sustaining and left as a legacy project.
- At the same time UTW, the parent body, is building up its membership again in anticipation of being more active for example in planning
- A new series of Catchment Action Planning meetings began with a meeting on Feb 26 (vision and values). Fish and Game was represented by Jamie Ward. The next meeting is March 26 at the Patearoa school, 12.30 pm.
- Biometric report from Morgan Trotter and Eilis presented in a substantially revised form. Still not formally adopted.
- Jayde, Jack Mathieson ORC, Pete Ravenscroft and a Manawa rep visited the fish passage at the Taieri Weir
- ORC mapping of the Scroll Plain is still ongoing and remains a contentious issue

Further willow removal has been undertaken at Canadian Flat. More extensive willow spraying is being contemplated on the Maniototo.

- Emma Ahelzon was introduced as the new Nga Awa coordinator
- MIC. Minimum flow has been maintained, Logan Burn storage around 60%. A duck hunter has raised issues with oxbow water levels.
- Murray Neilson's ODT 17/2/25 opinion piece has caused some consternation

13.0 Correspondence

13.1 NZC to Otago

13.1.1 CEO Corina Jordan Resigns



RESIGNATION of Corina Jordan as Fish & Game NZ CEO

10MAR25

Fellow Fish & Game council members,

It's my sad duty is to advise you that Corina Jordan has resigned as Chief Executive of the New Zealand Fish & Game Council. She will leave Fish & Game in three months' time to take up the leadership role at the Game Animal Council.

I cannot overstate the positive impact of Corina's leadership on the Fish & Game organisation in the two and a half years she has been in the role and the size of the gap she will leave. Among things she has led:

- The building from the ground up Fish & Game's first Organisational Strategy and unifying values, developing a five-year Implementation Programme to deliver on the Organisational Strategy, and commencing implementing the first three years of the Plan.
- The development of an insights programme to ensure Fish & Game understands its licence holders and broader stakeholders, to support not only robust decision-making but also foster connections with its licence holders.
- The establishment and implementation of a social licence and brand campaign, ReWild.
- The development of a pathway for modernisation of the organisation's licencing system, including the establishment of a CRM, executive dashboards, and a digital ecosystem.
- A programme to review and modernise NZC financial systems and processes and review and update Fish & Games finance policies, including the adoption of zero-based budgeting to improve the management of licence-holder-provided funding.
- A collaboration process across the hunting and fishing leadership organisations, with the primary industries, eNGOs, politicians, and ministries to encourage wider participation in hunting and fishing and ensure that these pursuits remain relevant now and in the future.

Those initiatives are in addition to Corina introducing a wide range of positive changes to what I might call Fish & Game's 'business-as-usual.' For example, advocating on all matters relevant

to Fish & Game and licence holders and providing high-level professional support to the NZ Council and regional councils.

Of course, she has not done all this on her own, and in advising me of her resignation, she has been the first to acknowledge the part that Fish & Game's national staff, Fish & Game NZ Council, and many in the regions, council members and staff alike, have played in supporting her. I am pleased to acknowledge and accept Corina's insistence that she could not have achieved what she has without that support.

However, I must also advise regional councillors that as a national organisation, we might have collectively achieved even a great more in Corina's time, but for the active obstruction of some within our organisation, those 'some' include both staff and governors. Sadly, those I am referring to are part of a long-established pattern to frustrate any positive attempts to take Fish & Game nationally, collectively, into a positive future as an enduring national organisation to be proud of, meeting its intended statutory purpose.

A number of people have confirmed to me that, this obstructive activity has been present since the formation of Fish & Game. Those persons, often shrill about their imagined autonomy, are merely perpetuating the patterns by which their predecessors colluded to oppose almost any national initiative to advance the organisation's collective interests. And, like those who came before her in the role, Corina has had to deal with constant efforts to undermine both the national body and its Chief Executive, continually frustrating her genuine efforts. Among the latter that, I and others have become aware of, evidence now exists, they have often been in the form of cowardly and back door personal attacks. Moving forward, I assure you that these are activities that I will not tolerate, and you, as a governor, should not condone.

Those outside the organisation expect Fish & Game to work as a single coherent and cohesive organisation. I acknowledge that our 13-council 'federal' structure is not helpful in that regard, however, it at this time it is what it is. To operate as expected, and maintain our licence to operate, the organisation is dependent on its every part acting collaboratively and cooperatively and in a spirit of respectful mutual support. I will continue to urge the Minister for Hunting and Fishing to consider and implement the changes Fish and Game needs to fulfil its statutory purpose.

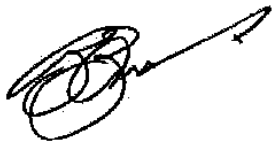
I have had the utmost pleasure in working directly with Corina and it's a huge loss to Fish & Game nationally. I admire and thank Corina most sincerely for persevering in the face of often distracting self-serving behaviours distant, at best, from those ideals.

I refer you again to the Hon Philip Wollaston's address circulated 28JAN25. I firmly believe, from reading, it clearly shows how far we have deviated from what was originally considered.

While we are very reluctant to see her go, we are thankful that Corina can give us three months' notice before she takes up her new role. We are grateful she is keen to complete a

number of the initiatives she has in train before she leaves. I have asked Corina to concentrate on the high-level initiatives and to transition all regional interactions and relationships, including manager's meetings, in whatever form they may now take, to Richie Cosgrove, deputy Chief Executive, who is more than capable to carry this forward.

As frustrating as it may be for 'some' I assure you, that as Chair of the NZ Council, I will keep working for the positive future of Fish & Game as the Hon Philip Wollaston intended. I ask you as a councillor to step up and join me 'on the train' are you up for it?



Ngā mihi

Barrie Barnes | Chair

New Zealand Fish and Game Council

Mobile 021 925 006

13.2 Otago to NZC

Nil

13.3 General Correspondence In

13.3.1 Response From James Meager to Visit Thank You Email

From: James Meager (MIN) <J.Meager@ministers.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 2:27 PM
To: Ian Hadland <ihadland@fishandgame.org.nz>
Cc: Megan Robinson <Megan.Robinson@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Meeting with Minister Meager - Otago Fish & Game Council

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Ian and Adrian,

On behalf of Hon James Meager, thank you for getting in touch.

We have passed on the below information to the Minister, for his consideration.

Thank you again for the opportunity to meet and for your email.

Regards,



Office of Hon James Meager

Minister for the South Island
Minister for Hunting and Fishing
Minister for Youth
Associate Minister of Transport

Phone: 04 817 6830

Email: J.Meager@ministers.govt.nz Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

13.4 General Correspondence Out

13.4.1 Thank you to Minister James Meager

From: Ian Hadland <ihadland@fishandgame.org.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2025 2:05 PM
To: James.MeagerMP@parliament.govt.nz <James.MeagerMP@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: Megan Robinson <Megan.Robinson@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: Meeting with Minister Meager - Otago Fish & Game Council

Kia ora Minister Meager!

Thanks for meeting our Council yesterday. We all thought it very productive. It was great to hear some of the material (which had only been talked about in the organisation) first hand. Your visit provided the Otago Council a degree of comfort, and enthusiasm, around the future of the organisation.

We did mention levies (50% of our income) and you seemed to have further questions on the how resources are allocated around the organisation, including to our coordinating office NZ Fish & Game Council. Please find a report attached, written by respected consultant David Hunt (Concept Consulting Ltd) on resource allocation for your information. Basically, angler and hunter effort has shifted south but the resources haven't quite followed.

Otago Council is determined to continue to make things *easier for people to hunt and fish* here and has specific projects to help break down barriers to participation (access, skills, knowledge, information etc)

Please let us know if there is anything further you would like to know. And also feel free to attend any of the upcoming meetings in our schedule (also attached)

Warm Regards

Adrian McIntyre, **Chair**

And

Ian Hadland | **Chief Executive**

Otago Fish and Game Council
PO Box 76, Dunedin
Cell: (027) 254 9700
Office: (03) 477 9076

Summary of Topics Discussed at the Meeting

From: Ian Hadland

Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2025 5:55 AM

To: Adrian McIntyre <point.farm@outlook.co.nz>; John Highton <john.highton@otago.ac.nz>; Vicky May <vmay@fishandgame.org.nz>; Blair Trevathan <Blair.trevathan@icloud.com>; Colin Weatherall <colinweatherall@xtra.co.nz>; j.hpreedy@actrix.co.nz <jspreedy@outlook.com>; Mike Barker <mbarker@fishandgame.org.nz>; John Cruden <johncruden@gmail.com>

Subject: Meeting with Minister Update

Hi Council and Staff

Good meeting with the Minister of Hunting and Fishing yesterday.

- **Vision:** Minister reiterated Min Todd McClays previous view that his vision for the future is to *'make it easier for kiwis to hunt and fish'*.
- **Access:** Didn't expand on other barriers to hunting and fishing as he saw them but was clearly passionate about access. Seemed interested that much of it was via the public roading network.
- **Structural change:** Didn't seem to have any appetite for amalgamations that were not promoted internally. He also didn't express anything directly about any other structural change coming. He understood the basic issues with governance 'in some regions'. Commented that National Party was supportive of local decision-making being made locally but did say there could be some centralisation of functions to make the system more efficient. He didn't elaborate.
- **Guides licencing:** Said the guides licence wouldn't be his highest priority but curiously took a note down to look at gamebird hunting guiding. I got the feeling guiding licences generally were not something he was interested in.
- **Tourism and Designated waters:** He did seem to understand the issues with mass tourism (and should as Sth Island Minister). He seemed surprised we had Designated Waters. (Probably because we didn't apply for any new ones.) I think we did a reasonable job of selling him the importance of those for managing the user experience.
- **Resource allocation:** The Minister was surprised about our levy payment (50%) and who and how that was decided. He said it wasn't clear to him how the \$s from a licence sale were distributed. Seemed interested in resource reallocation. Said it makes sense to spend your money where the angling and hunting effort is being undertaken. Clearly something to provide the Minister more information on.
- **Advocacy function:** Was pleased to hear that he supports our advocacy function and expects that to continue. He understands that its a statutory function, and an important one.
- **Litigation:** In saying that, he was clear that F&G needed to carefully decide before entering any RMA litigation. He clearly had a preference for other parties standing up

- before F&G. He had been well briefed (or at least has read some of the replies from regions to the questions raised on this topic that we had to reply to last year) on RMA spending I suspect so that was something to consider. Concerning that he may hold the view that some of the cases pursued were frivolous, but I can't think of any that were not directly relevant to protection of water or habitat.

- **Management of other species:** Something which clearly raised some interest, although he did comment on the body of work to be done to satisfy cultural interests in those species (eels/tuna and whitebait) but he didn't think that impossible. Perhaps something to follow up on.
- **Catchment groups:** There was a short discussion on catchment groups and the good work they had been delivering. It didn't sound like there was any hope of future govt funding and it was clear that he expected future catchment group work would be funded by others, including landowners.
- **Rural relationships:** Has clearly heard a lot of noise around the Southland FF vs F&G issue. Was also aware that the stoush hadn't got far out of that region and they should get together and work it out. I got the feeling that he thought one group had gone a bit far or on a bit long...

Thanks

Ian Hadland | **Chief Executive**

14.0 Items to be Received or Noted

14.1 Paradise Shelduck Moulting Count

Summary

In late January, 26,473 moulting paradise shelducks were counted across 95 wetlands, ponds, and lakes in the Otago Fish & Game Region. This is the highest recorded count in the last 35 years.

The count exceeded the management band of 16,000 to 23,000, meaning the daily bag limit should have been raised. However, due to the emergence of avian botulism, which led to significant bird deaths in East Otago, the Council voted to maintain the status quo for the next season.

Trend analysis indicates a stable paradise shelduck population over the long term (1990–2025) with a small increase over the last five years.

This season's increase was observed in most subregions, except for East Coast and South Otago. The Ida, Manuherehia, Dunstan, Maniototo, and West Otago subregions experienced the most notable growth.



Figure 1: High densities of paradise shelduck on the water, Paddock Bay Wānaka. Photo – M Court

Introduction

The endemic pūtangitangi/ paradise shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*) congregates every year to moult on large bodies of water all around New Zealand in late January/ early February. The birds take around three – four weeks to replace all their flight feathers (Williams, 1981), leaving them flightless and vulnerable to predation. During this period the typically scattered

species is mobbed together on particular waterways, providing a valuable opportunity for Fish & Game to survey numbers in the lead-in to the game bird hunting season.

As additional dams continue to be constructed over time, and considering the widespread distribution of moulting sites, a full population count (census) is not possible, however by counting a large number of sites it is possible to reliably discern long term population trends, particularly for paradise shelduck.

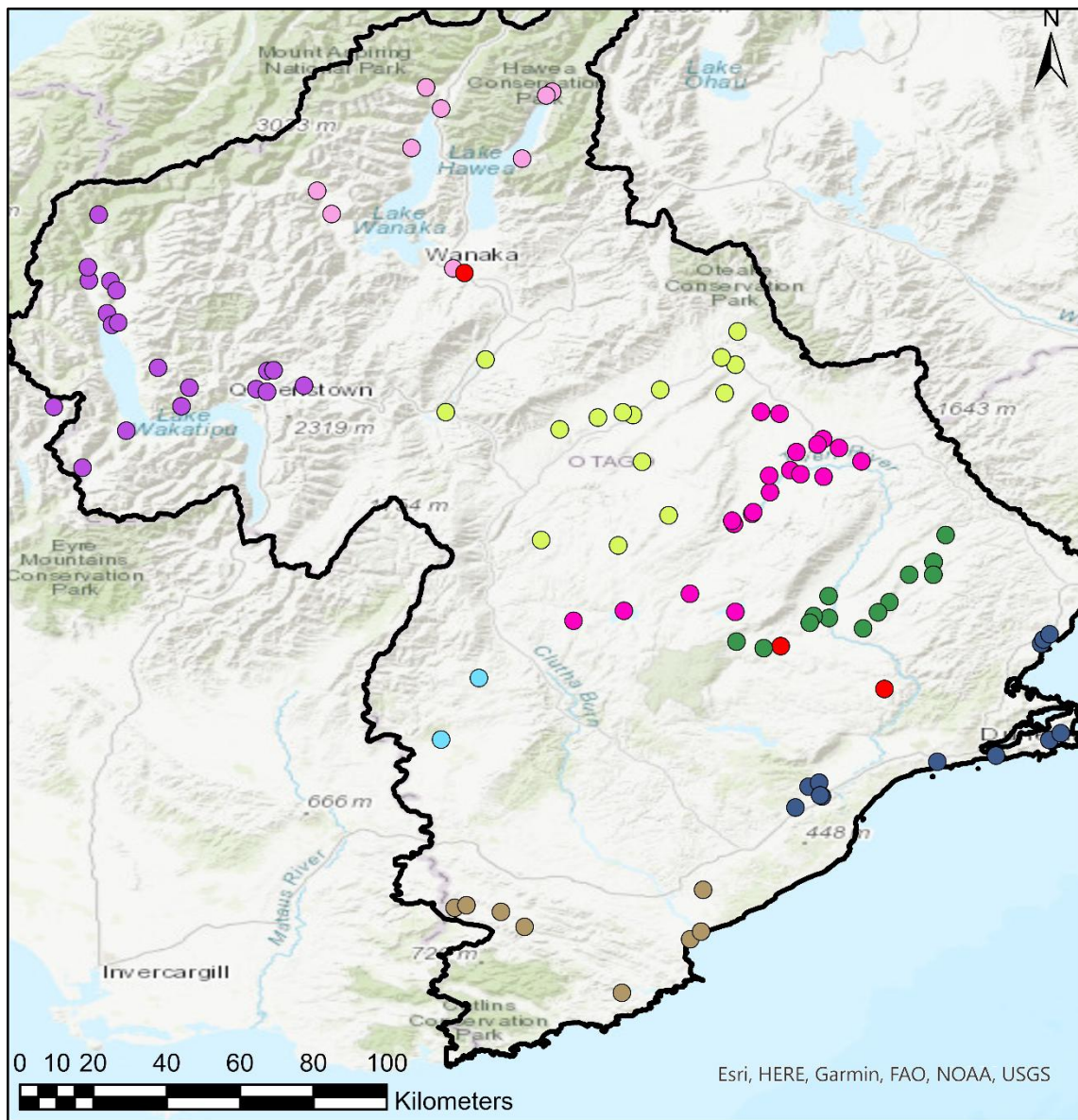
Methods

Moult sites are circled at low level in a fixed-wing light aircraft, typically a Cessna 172 due to its low stall speed and high mounted wing which make it easier for observers to count waterfowl. Low numbers of waterfowl are counted while circling. If high densities are spotted from the plane, estimates are made at the time and the mobs are photographed (Figure 1). Counts are then carried out later using computer software. Due to airspace restrictions around Queenstown airport, a small number of sites are counted on foot with binoculars and spotting scopes. This year there were 96 total moult sites counted (Figure 2).

Despite efforts to maintain consistency in the annual survey, such as using the same aircraft, having the same observers, surveying the same sites, and conducting the count at the same time every year, variations in the total bird count may occur due to external factors such as new pond constructions, staff changes, and inclement weather preventing access to all survey sites. These variations mean that the total bird count does not always fully explain trends in populations.

To account for changes in the monitored sites the data has also been analysed using route regression which is a Fish & Game standard operating procedure (Teal, 2003). Route regression minimises the effects of yearly variation, by averaging the long-term trends of natural logged counts at each monitored site over defined time periods (Stevens, 2021). Counts are natural logged to prevent variation in very prolific moult sites from overwhelming the data. A full scientific review by Sauer & Droege (1990) showed that “route-regression methodology is most efficient in the estimation of long-term (>5 year) trends and tends to provide conservative results for low-density species”.

Figure 2 shows the location of the monitored sites and the subregional breakdown of the Otago Fish & Game Region which is broken down eight subregions.



- East Coast
- Queenstown
- Upper Clutha
- Ida, Manuherehia & Dunstan
- South Otago
- West Otago
- Maniototo
- Strath Taieri
- Not Surveyed

Figure 2: Map of currently and previously counted moult sites. Otago Fish & Game boundary in black.

Results

Total Count

Figure 3 shows the long-term total counts for paradise shelduck as well as the linear trend for the period.

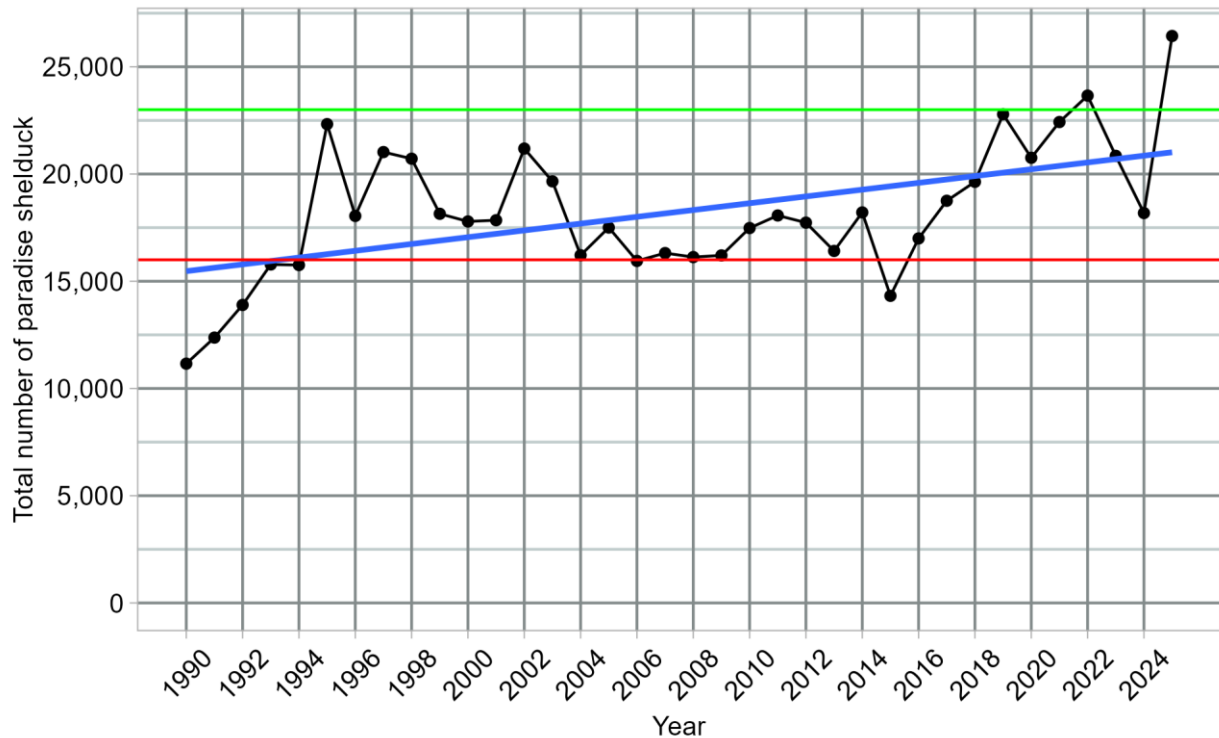


Figure 3: Long-term (1990-2025) count totals for paradise shelduck. Long-term linear trend shown in blue. The management bands of 16,000 and 23,000 shelduck shown in red and green respectively.

The count of paradise shelduck this year increased to 26,437 after dipping to a low count of 18,181 in 2023 (Figure 3).

In terms of total moult count there has been a statistically significant increase over time ($p=0.005$) however this increase should be viewed with caution as the sites that are monitored have changed over time and the number of sites monitored has increased over the same period.

This year's count falls outside the management band of 16,000 to 23,000, outlined in Priest 2023, meaning the daily bag limit should have increased for next season. However, due to the serious negative impact of avian botulism on the East Otago population and the threat of avian influenza (HPAI-5), the council opted to maintain the current limit rather than increase it.

Route regression

Figure 4 depicts the output of the route regression (details in methods). It shows changes in shelduck populations over several extended time frames in terms of a percentage change over time. It suggests that long term, the paradise shelduck populations in the Otago Region are notably stable.

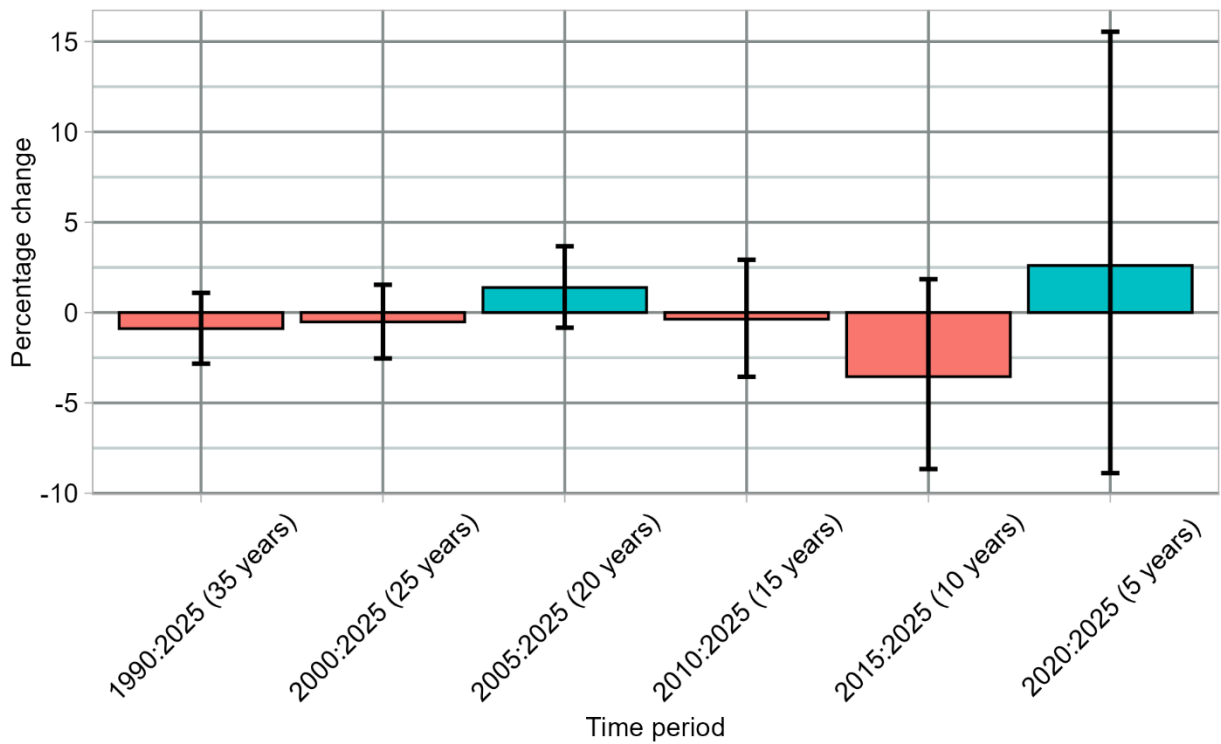


Figure 4: Proportional change in paradise shelduck numbers over varying periods with 95% confidence intervals. Increasing trend for period shown in blue, decreasing trend in red.

The route regression trend over the 35-year period is very close to zero, indicating no significant change at the population level. Our monitoring suggests that, with 95% confidence, the population may have decreased by a maximum of 3%. The confidence intervals for these trends are very narrow, giving us high confidence that there has been no substantial change in paradise shelduck numbers.

The trends for the 5-, 10-, 15-, 25-, and 35-year periods are all negative, suggesting a declining population over these time frames. Among the calculated periods, the 5-year range and the previous 20-year range show a positive estimated percentage change. However, the confidence intervals for these periods encompass zero, implying a small probability that the population may have decreased. If a decline did occur, it is likely to have been minor. For the 5-year period, confidence intervals range from +16% to -8%, highlighting the variability in the last five counts and indicating that short-term trends should be interpreted with caution.

Regional paradise shelduck counts

Figure 5 illustrates the short-term changes in the average number of paradise shelduck at each moult site in the eight subregions of Otago.

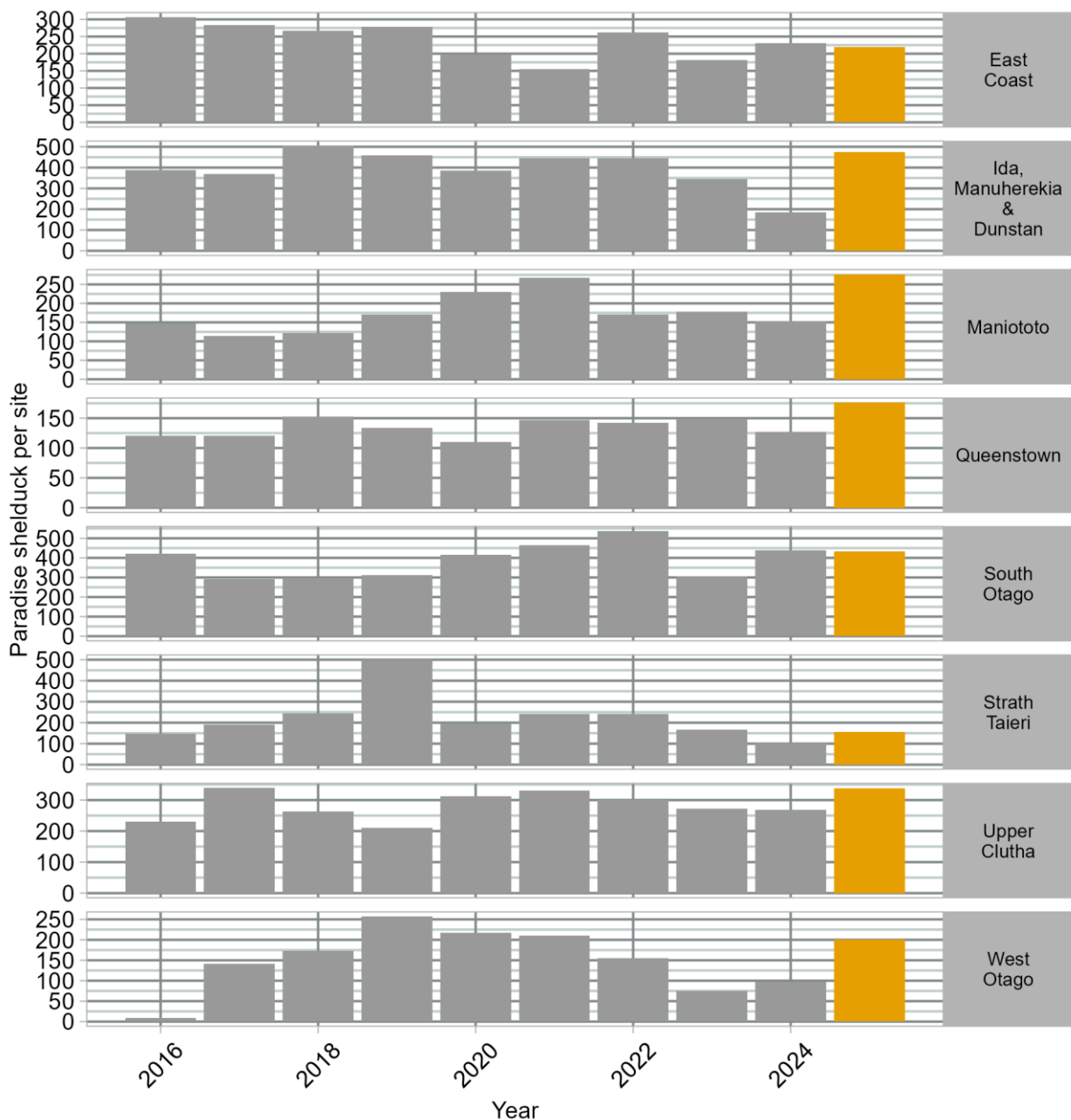


Figure 5: Total numbers of paradise shelduck per moult site broken down by subregion. Current year shown in orange.

Subregional count totals showed less consistent trends over time compared to the aggregated data for the Otago Region. While the overall total count increased, this trend was not observed in the East Coast and South Otago subregions.

Figure 5 highlights the primary driver behind this year's higher count: a significant increase in the average pond counts in West Otago, Ida, Manuhereikia, Dunstan, and Maniototo subregions. Smaller increases were also observed in Queenstown, Strath Taieri, and Upper Clutha.

Since each subregion's ponds are distinct and unique, comparisons between subregions should be made with caution.

Site trends

Figure 6 presents a geographical representation of the long-term trend at each monitored site.

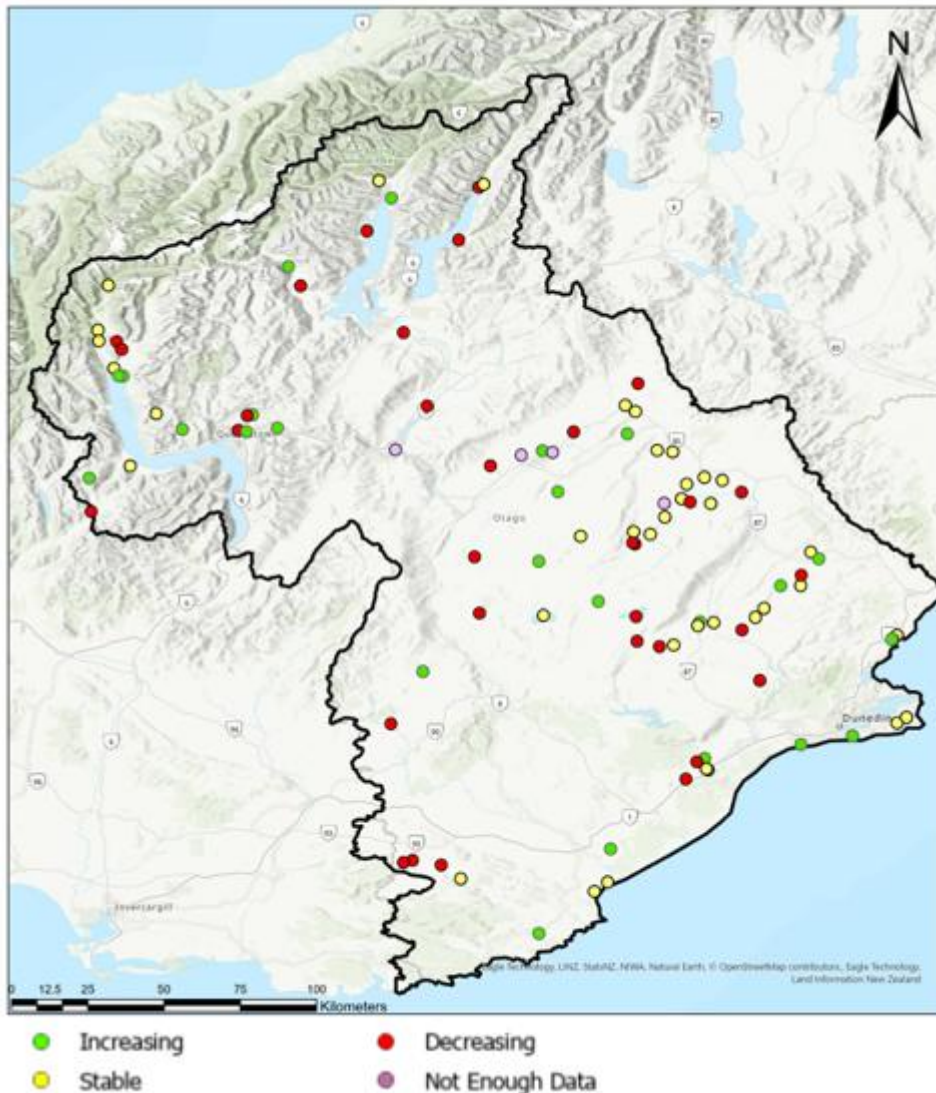


Figure 6: Paradise shelduck long term trends at each monitored moult site.

Individual site trends over the 35-year monitoring period were analysed using a Sen's slope estimator, which calculates the median slope between all possible data point pairs. This method was selected for its ability to handle highly variable data and datasets with missing values. Only sites with at least four counts were included in the analysis. Across the Otago Region, trends were evenly distributed among the three categories: increasing, decreasing, and stable. No strong geographical patterns emerged, though the Manherekia catchment appeared to have a relatively higher proportion of stable or decreasing trends compared to the region as a whole.

Discussion

Following a 2022 count of over 23,000 paradise shelduck, the Council expanded the traditionally junior-only March season to include adult hunters. At its December 2022 meeting, the Council set a new threshold, voting to increase the daily bag limit to 15 shelduck if the count exceeded 23,000 again. However, the 2023 count fell short at 20,800, and the limit remained unchanged.

At the December 2023 meeting, the Council adopted staff recommendations (Priest, November 2023) that if the trend count exceeded 23,000 birds, the daily bag limit would increase to 15 per day. Conversely, if the count fell below 16,000, the summer season would be suspended for following season.

The 2025 count recorded 26,473 paradise shelduck, surpassing the threshold for a bag limit increase. However, the Council voted to maintain the status quo due to an outbreak of avian botulism at the Waikouaiti sewage plant, one of the monitored sites. The disease resulted in the death of over 1,500 paradise shelduck, with concerns that it could spread to other moulting sites, leading to further losses and the threat of avian influenza (HPAI-5). As a precautionary measure, the Council opted to keep the existing regulations in place despite the population high count.

This year marks the highest recorded paradise shelduck moult count in Otago since this type of monitoring began. notable increases were observed across multiple sites, with Big Boggy Lagoon, Catlins Lakes, Lake Tuakitoto, Satinburn, Styx Basin, and Waikouaiti Sewage Pond all recording 600–800 more birds than their respective long-term averages. Satinburn, in particular, saw the largest increase, with over 1,500 more birds than its long-term average. One possible reason for the observed increase in Paradise Shelduck numbers this year is the higher than average total spring rainfall, which likely improved food availability throughout spring. The NIWA climate summary reports that Otago and Southland experienced a particularly wet spring, with rainfall exceeding 149% of normal levels in many areas. This resulted in above-normal soil moisture levels, especially in Central Otago, leading to pasture productivity. Additionally, the excess rainfall may have improved overall habitat conditions, including optimal water levels in ponds and rivers, which further supported the brood survival.

Between 1990 and 2025, the number of irrigation storage dams and moulting sites in Otago has increased notably with changing agricultural and horticultural water storage practices. To keep pace, new sites have been added to the annual survey, ensuring appropriate coverage of the moulting population. However, logistical challenges, particularly total flight time, within the survey time-window limits the number of additional sites that can be included. While expanding survey sites has been necessary to track landscape changes, it may have inflated total bird counts, potentially masking underlying population declines. To address this, a route regression analysis was conducted alongside total counts, providing an alternative assessment of population trends.

One of the key goals in game bird management is to balance hunting opportunities with sustainable populations. The route regression analysis confirms long-term stability in paradise shelduck numbers, suggesting that Council's harvest and habitat management strategies have been effective.

Additionally, the high confidence in these trends validates Otago Fish & Game's significant investment in data collection over the past 35 years, reinforcing the importance of long-term monitoring and management. Looking ahead, the New Zealand Fish & Game Council has indicated that it is reviewing standard operating procedures for game bird monitoring, which could further refine future survey methodologies.

Recommendations

That this report is received.

**Mason Court
Fish & Game Officer
February 2025**

References

- Priest, D. (December 2022). *Draft Game Notice 2023 (Gamebird hunting regulations) - Internal report for the Otago Fish and Game Council.*
- NIWA. (2024). *Climate summary: Spring 2024.* National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research. https://niwa.co.nz/sites/default/files/inline-images/Climate_Summary_Spring_2024_Final.pdf
- Sauer, J., & Droege, S. (1990). *Survey Designs and Statistical Methods for the Estimation of Avian Population Trends.* Washinton, DC: US Fish and Wildlife Service - U.S. Department of the Interior.
- Stevens, H. (2021). *Paradise Shelduck/Black Swan Trend Counts.* Temuka: *Internal report for the Central South Island Fish and Game Council*
- Teal, P. (2003). *Standard Operating Procedures for Game Bird population monitoring and regulation setting.* Wellington: Fish and Game New Zealand.
- Williams, M. (1981). *The duckshooter's bag.* Wellington: The Wetland Press.

Acknowledgments

A huge thanks to Jamie, who successfully fought off nausea while assisting me with the aerial counts, and to Ben for conducting the ground surveys and helping Jamie and me count the large number of parries captured in the photographs. Special thanks to Jayde for providing the R code and assisting with the statistical analysis, which was a great help.

15.0 General Business